The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

POLICYMAKING AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

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The purpose of this paper is to provide a basis for a discussion of how policy analysis may be applied to the field of early childhood care and development (ECCD). It is hoped that the results of the review and discussion, when applied to analysis of particular situations, will lead to a more informed, active and successful involvement by ECCD advocates in the process of policy formulation as well as to improvements in the content and evaluation of ECCD policies and/or

[1] This paper has been prepared as part of a project on ECCD Policy and Planning funded by the United States Agency for International Development. The project aims both to review ECCD policies and to document the policy process in selected countries.

other policies affecting ECCD. Because the paper is written in the first instance for participants in the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, an important part of the paper will deal with the ways in which "external" organizations become involved in and influence policy process and policy outcomes. [2]

The paper begins with some general considerations related to policy and policy formulation. The following section is devoted to the ways in which the international context and international organizations affect national policy formulation. Then, three different frameworks for approaching policy analysis are discussed and a scheme for analyzing policy is set out. A final section presents conclusions and some cautious thoughts on what constitutes an effective policy.

Policy: Some General Considerations

What is Policy?

There is no one accepted definition of "policy."[3] The four definitions that follow illustrate differences and commonalties. In her article on "How Policy Affects Early Childhood Care and Development", Judith Evans (1996) draws on two slightly different dictionary definitions, both taken from the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1969). These are:

> "Any plan or course of action adopted by a government, political party, business organization or the like designed to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters."
>
> "A course of action, guiding principle or procedure considered to be expedient, prudent or advantageous."

For his analysis of "The Dynamics of Education Policymaking," Wadi Haddad (1994), whose framework will be considered later in the paper, took as his working definition of policy the following:

> An explicit or implicit decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, or initiate, sustain or retard action, or guide the implementation of previous decisions. (4)

Finally, selecting one of many possible definitions from a broader literature:

> A set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and means of achieving them within a specified situation where those

[2] The paper is written as part of a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development.
[3] The challenge of carrying out something called social policy analysis, focused on early childhood care and development, has led me over the past year or so to read material from general literature on public and social policy, to participate in a workshop on social policy in Mexico, and to converse with friends trained in political science. My hope was that I would be able to arrive at a much clearer vision of what the experts say is social policy and how it originates. I hoped to find a model that would guide and ground analysis of ECCD policies. One result of this activity has been to discover that the study of policy and politics is at least as inexact as the study of other social topics and that there is considerable disagreement about how to focus social policy analysis.

decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve. (Jenkins 1993, 34)

These definitions all describe policy as something that influences future decisions and/or actions. But even within this small collection of definitions, we see a number of important distinctions and qualifications to be kept in mind when approaching policy.

- Policy functions at different levels. Policy can include general principles, goals and courses of action, but also the guidelines, plans of action and procedures necessary to achieve those goals.

- There are various ways of articulating policy. Policy may be embodied in a constitution, laws, a set of directives, a plan or a set of decisions. Although these expressions of policy represent codified policy, it is possible also to imagine policy as something unwritten. For instance, a speech of a major government official may not codify policy but may nevertheless set out policy quite explicitly. Or, policy may need to be inferred from actions and programs because no position has been taken formally. In theory, then, policy can be explicit and codified or it can be implicit and vague.

- Policy is not the province of a single set of actors. Sometimes definitions of policy refer specifically to political activity or to a political actor or group of actors, as indicated in one of the definitions. Policy can also be made and adopted by a wide range of organizations including governments and political parties, but also businesses, non-governmental organizations, and others.

- Policy can "sustain or retard action"; it can be facilitative or restrictive. In general, our concern will be with policies that facilitate rather than retard or restrict action, recognizing that there may be occasions when restriction is also "expedient, prudent or advantageous" and can have a beneficial effect on actions.

The general literature dealing with policy provides us with other critical distinctions not included specifically in the definitions presented above. For instance:

- Policy may be issue specific or general and strategic. Social policy tends to be broad and strategic, setting out goals and strategies for attending to the social (as contrasted with the economic) condition of people in a society. Issue specific policy concentrates on particular fields or sectors defined by a particular set of problems.

  Although the focus of this paper on early childhood care and development seems to make it issue specific, that is not the case. The fact that we are dealing with ECCD and not, for instance, merely with "preschool education" complicates policy and policy analysis because early development, although bounded by a specific age span, reaches across many sectors of activity, each of which may have its own issue specific policy. Moreover, the welfare of children is influenced as well by general or strategic policies. Although it is relatively obvious that some sectoral policies (education and health, for instance) will have a direct effect on young children, ECCD is also affected indirectly by general policies dealing with the

economy, employment, forms of political participation, the treatment of disadvantaged or minority groups, etc.

- Policy can be formulated at international, national, regional or local levels. For the most part, policymaking is thought of as a national activity. But, for instance, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which more than 180 nations are signatories, has achieved the status of international policy in the sense of providing general goals, principles and guidelines. However, how these goals and principles are to be achieved in each country and setting is not specified.

Policymaking and the Policy Process

Policymaking has two main dimensions: it is carried out by some set of actors and according to some sort of process. What actors will be involved and the process that will be followed will certainly be influenced by where one locates policy in relation to the policy distinctions identified above. For instance, formulation of policy that is issue-specific and at the municipal level is highly likely to involve a different set of actors and processes than the formulation of policy that is strategic and national. Policy expressed in the form of laws may focus on legislative bodies and lawyers and have a relatively established procedure, whereas policy that sets specific guidelines for turning laws into actions may involve very different actors.

From the literature come several differences in perspective and distinctions that should be taken into account when discussing and analyzing the policymaking process.

EX-ANTE VS. POST-HOC POLICY

Sometimes policy is created because it is expected to be a force driving decisions; in this case, policy precedes decisions and is expected to change the manner in which decisions are made. This contrasts with a view of policy as the codification of experience—a kind of systematizing of decisions made. The first position is related closely to a rational and managerial view of policy. The second may arise from a kind of laissez faire treatment of a particular topic, or it may arise from a process of successive and incremental adjustments over time as operational problems appear.

POLICY AS THE RESULT OF A RATIONAL PROCESS VS. POLICY AS A NEGOTIATED (POLITICAL) PROCESS

Both the analysis of policymaking and the way of going about creating policy will be very different if policy is seen as a rational process rather than as a negotiated and essentially political process. If policymaking is seen as rational, it implies that truth is fixed and identifiable, and that decisions can and should involve choices based primarily on technical and cost-benefit criteria; a management and “scientific” bias predominates resulting in right and wrong “solutions”. If policy is seen as a negotiated process, truth and good are in the eye of the beholder, and, because there are many parties with an interest in seeing their version of the truth prevail, policy must be negotiated. Choices will be made more on the basis of experience and on social and political criteria than on technical criteria derived from science or management principles.

If policymaking follows a rational paradigm, the primary task is seen as obtaining and disseminating to decision makers the information that is needed to apply proper technical criteria in order to arrive at the correct solution. If policy formulation follows a negotiated, or political paradigm, the primary task is seen as promoting a process that will allow various points of view to be presented and discussed by the groups who stand to be affected most by a policy, applying agreed-upon rules as just. In order for this kind of policymaking to happen, it is necessary to recognize experience and tradition as well as science as valid sources of knowledge. It is also necessary to recognize imbalances of power among the participating actors and to seek ways of moderating or compensating for these imbalances in the discussion.

Few, if any, political science experts would argue today that policy is the product of an entirely rational process in which objectives are clear, fixed and agreed upon, and in which technical/scientific information and management criteria are the only determinants. It is increasingly recognized that all the information necessary to make a totally rational decision will never be at our fingertips. Moreover, available information is always subject to multiple interpretations, is sometimes inaccurate and can be manipulated. Not everything can be quantified. And common sense and experience indicate that individuals and groups in contemporary societies will have different objectives influenced by their social condition, their specific needs and their expectations. Thus, while scientific information may play a part in decisions, experience and negotiation must play at least as important a role.

Thus, while few would argue the opposite extreme—that policy results purely from political negotiations, with total disregard for science and management knowledge—it is evident that policy and policy formulation cannot be separated from politics, which is essentially a process of negotiating power. Knowledge is one source of power. But other sources, such as the control of force, resources, tradition or beliefs, and organization, provide other bases for power.

I have dwelt at some length on this aspect of policymaking because a rational and managerial approach to policy is central to the work of many, if not most, of the international organizations that make up the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development[4]. Moreover, because international organizations are supposedly "external" to policy processes functioning at a national or local level, a main source of influence is knowledge. I will elaborate this point in the following section.

International Influences on National Policy

Models for analyzing policy and policy formulation are usually conceived and applied in a national context. Most models have originated in the United States or Europe. Moreover, we live in a post-colonial world. Perhaps for these reasons, policy models have not incorporated

[4] At the time of writing this paper, these organizations include: Aga Khan Foundation, Bernard van Leer Foundation, USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank, Save the Children/USA, Christian Children's Fund, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, International Youth Foundation, and Education Development Center.

international influences in an important way. However, when analyzing policy in Majority World[5] countries and in a rapidly "globalizing" world, international influences on policy must be accorded an increasingly important role. Indeed, in spite of the decline of overt colonialism since World War II, the impetus for policy change often seems to come from ideas originating outside a country. Let us look briefly at two reasons for the continuing and growing international influence on national policy.

A shrinking world. Perhaps the greatest international influences on national policies that affect ECCD and policy formulation are very general influences that have little to do directly with ECCD, but which influence the context and conditions in which ECCD occurs. The influence that is currently receiving a great deal of attention is the trend toward globalization, understood in its economic, social, and cultural senses. The economic trend toward open, competitive economies has had major effects on families and children, sometimes positive, but often devastating, particularly at the lower end of the economic spectrum. In many settings, poverty levels have increased with the advent of these policies and income distributions have widened. This trend has conditioned social policies, ECCD policies, sectoral policies and program lines, mainly through adjustments in budgets that favor ECCD, but also through such associated trends as "privatization" and decentralization. Such policies have also had an effect because they have reinforced the idea that human capital (or human resources) plays an important role in international competition, creating a new climate for investments in education and health and fostering a tighter relationship between early development and schooling.

Technological change is central to globalization. On one hand, such changes in communication and transportation and the Internet have brought distant parts of the world closer together; on the other hand, changing technologies have implications for the content of programs and the methods used. Open communication, increased international interaction, and open markets are having their effect on culture and on values. Cultures are disappearing or are being rapidly modified. Cherished values, such as altruism, cooperation and solidarity, seem to be weakening in the presence of the global onslaught of materialism, competition and individualism.

Growth of international organizations and international law. Another way in which international influences have grown is through the expansion of supranational organizations, including both the United Nations family and the spread of transnational corporations. This trend has helped to accelerate globalization; indeed, some would say that economic globalization is the product of the international organizations working in league with transnationals. More directly, the following alliances have resulted: UNICEF has become a major actor on the world scene in the area of children's programs and policies; the World Bank, regional banks, UNESCO and others have become increasingly involved in programs affecting ECCD; and international NGOs have also achieved an important presence in the field of ECCD.

[5]Majority World is used instead of such designations as: Third World, developing countries, or the South.

Associated with the growth of international organizations has come the creation of international "Conventions" which, if subscribed to by a sufficient number of nations, take on the character of international law. One such convention that has had a particular effect on children is the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We have, then, international ideologies, international economic programs and resources, and international legal influences working at national levels to effect results as policies are being created. In many cases, as suggested, these influences are very indirect. In others, however, they are very direct and are embodied in the negotiations of international organizations with particular governments or other groups in the society. These are the influences that I would like to examine more closely.

How do international organizations seek to influence national policies? International organizations working in national contexts face the common dilemma of any external agent working in a local environment, be it a central government working at a state level in a federal, decentralized system, or a non-governmental organization working with local communities. There are at least two fundamental and related characteristics that these organizations have in common. First, by definition, they are outsiders. Therefore they do not control the decision-making apparatus or process and cannot, presumably, dictate decisions. There is obviously relatively little that can, or should, be done about this (unless we wish to return to a colonial past) if national or local sovereignty is to be respected; external agents cannot expect to dictate or set policy. However, the purpose of most external organizations, whether explicitly stated or not, is to introduce changes that, according to their way of viewing the world, will bring about improvements in human well-being. The introduction of change, in the contemporary world, can be difficult unless the process is supported by (or even induced by) changes in policy. As a result, external organizations have developed a range of strategies to try and influence policy without violating national (or local) sovereignty. Central to most of these strategies is an expression of faith in knowledge and in the notion that a rational approach to policy can prevail.

A second problem for many (not all, but many) external agents is that they are convinced that they are custodians of the truth. They often have a difficult time accepting local wisdom and methods, and related decisions as valid, particularly when they seem to contradict the agents' own wisdom, and when they create barriers to the agent's plan of action. In such situations, convincing with knowledge means selling or "marketing" ideas assumed to be correct. Dialogue and discussion and negotiation are not put at the center. Little is done to identify the points in common which can lead to common action, creating a more collaborative climate and allowing room to negotiate differences. The rational approach prevails.

The centrality of a rational approach to policy by international organizations is linked to strong belief in science, and, in some cases is directly linked to the management orientation of a banking community. This view has recognized value linked to a particular ideological base but it is also an extraordinarily convenient view because, as noted by Haddad, "of its use in de-politicizing decisions—it assumes that there exist 'correct' solutions to problems rather than 'political' accommodations of warring interests, and that these solutions can be discovered by the right technical experts." (6) Put in another way, while focusing on the power of knowledge, a rational

approach may serve as a kind of smoke screen or distraction, permitting political activity, in the name of truth, that might otherwise be questioned. Indeed, as most international civil servants will indicate, work with national governments requires a great deal of negotiation and compromise, and it is hoped that presenting strong arguments will be convincing enough that other ways of trying to influence policy and action will not be called upon.

What are the strategies that have been devised by international organizations (in a post-colonial world, and ruling out force) to affect the policy process? What are the basic sources of authority or power to which international organizations turn?

Law is power. By creating and enforcing international agreements/laws, international organizations establish, with the involvement of many countries, agreed-upon definitions of what is right and appropriate. In the case of ECCD, the Convention of the Rights of the Child provides some bases for leverage on policy. Interestingly, however, the treatment of child "development" in the Convention is extremely general and diffuse, making it more difficult than it might be to call on the Convention in a concrete way.

Scientific knowledge is power. By provision of new knowledge. There are at least two parts to this strategy. The first is strengthening the knowledge base. Support may be provided for research, for local studies that are felt to be important for their implications on policy and practice, and for efforts to synthesize and translate information, making it more readily available. A second dimension to the knowledge strategy has less to do with the creation of knowledge and more to do with getting it to the proper people, who can then use it to inform and pressure decisions. This can occur, for instance, by making knowledge available to a general public or to practitioners, who then apply pressure on decision-makers by bringing researchers and policy-makers together in various fora, and/or by pointed and conscious advocacy efforts directed to key individuals in various parts of a government concerned with policy making.

The activities of the Secretariat of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development fall largely in this category. Faith in the power of knowledge has been the centerpiece of our activity. We have worked hard to collect and disseminate knowledge, to translate the latest research findings into implications for action, to create new indicators that can inform the policy process. We have tried to find ways in which this knowledge-transformed-into-information will get directly to influential people. And yet we often remain frustrated because our information about the importance of early childhood care and development is not accepted. Or, the information is fed into the process but interpreted in an entirely different way. Or, policies are created that, according to our perspective, reflect "rationality" but they are not translated into action. Faced with these results, it should become clear that we need to be more involved in negotiating than in selling a point of view, and that negotiation requires respecting other sources of knowledge, including experience, that are not in the same category as the "scientific" knowledge to which we give preference.

Control of technology is power. By provision of technical support. For particular technologies to work well, a change in policy is often required. Thus, the introduction of a technology may be a way, not only of bringing about a program change, but also of introducing a basic policy change.

This strategy is close to that of a knowledge strategy, but in this case knowledge comes embodied in a technology that has been shown to work elsewhere, and often comes embodied in particular people, chosen by an international organization, who will help a country understand and put a particular technology in place. Although external organizations usually accept the need for adapting imported technologies, it is not common for such organizations to give a prominent place to a consideration of local technologies or to a process of local invention (or re-invention)[6].

Seeing and doing makes believers. By supporting pilot or demonstration work. Again, the emphasis is on information or knowledge, but with a different twist. Essentially the strategy represents an attempt to build policy in an incremental way; policy is approached in a "post-hoc" manner by constructing alternatives to the present policy and programming, and then showing the value of these alternatives as a basis for proposing an agenda. If one can get a government to believe in a particular way of doing things by showing them that it works, then an adjustment to policy will follow, allowing a project or program to grow and to go to scale. The potential virtues and possible pitfalls associated with pilot or demonstration projects have been widely discussed.

Power lies in alliances. By building alliances with groups who have authority or who, if mobilized, create pressure for change. This strategy must be applied with great caution precisely because of its essentially political nature and its potential effectiveness. If the alliances or partnerships sought are with those who are already in power, the result can be to perpetuate power in settings where the present power structure reinforces and perpetuates social and economic inequalities, leading to appropriate criticisms from the citizenry of international interference. If the alliances are sought with groups who do not have power, this threatens existing leadership and can lead to charges by governments of inappropriate interference in local affairs by outsiders, a charge that may be correct if the external agent takes too great a leadership role. But governments and civil societies are seldom monoliths; there always seem to be ranges of opinion within these groups about courses of action. This allows some room to seek allies in seats of power as well as in other settings in order to open the dialogue and to present options for changes in the course of action.

Control of resources is power. By providing resources from outside. In this case, leverage on policy and programs may result from making access to resources contingent on making changes in policy. This strategy can be powerful, but it can also be dictatorial, depending on how it is handled and particularly when the quantity of resources offered is relatively large or strategic. Change can be bought, but the risks can be high.

An analysis of policy should be able to sort out which of these strategies has had what effects under what conditions.

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[6]See R. Myers (1995) "In Defense of Reinventing the Wheel" in which an argument is presented for fostering local re-invention (more than just adapting an imported technology).

The above presentations should make it clear that any discussion of policy, particularly one that incorporates attempts by "external" agents to influence policy, must be concerned with the ethics of the process.

With these distinctions about policy and the role of international organizations in mind, let us examine several frameworks that have been used to describe and analyze policy and policymaking.

Three Frameworks

In this section I will present and comment upon three complementary frameworks, each of which has a different purpose. The first, derived by Moncrieff Cochran from descriptions of ECCD policies and programs in 29 countries[7], is intended to provide a basis for describing and explaining variations in ECCD policies and programs from country to country; it explores the fit between society and provision of ECCD services. Cochran's model sets out the goals of ECCD policies and then spells out the kinds of influences that shape the policies and programs that e-merge as responses to those goals. The second model, coming from within the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, was created for use in describing and analyzing the education policymaking process. Its emphasis on the dynamics of the policy process distinguishes it from the Cochran model which looks more at conditions affecting the contemporary process, including historical factors, but does not go "inside" the process. The third framework, provided by Judith Evans, is intended for use by those who would like to create ECCD policy in a particular context, setting out a sequence of actions that might be taken to that end. Evans's model codifies experience and takes into account many of the non-rational aspects of the policy development process. The advantages of each of the models are drawn upon in an attempt to set out my own framework at the end of the section.

Explaining Policy Profiles—Cochran

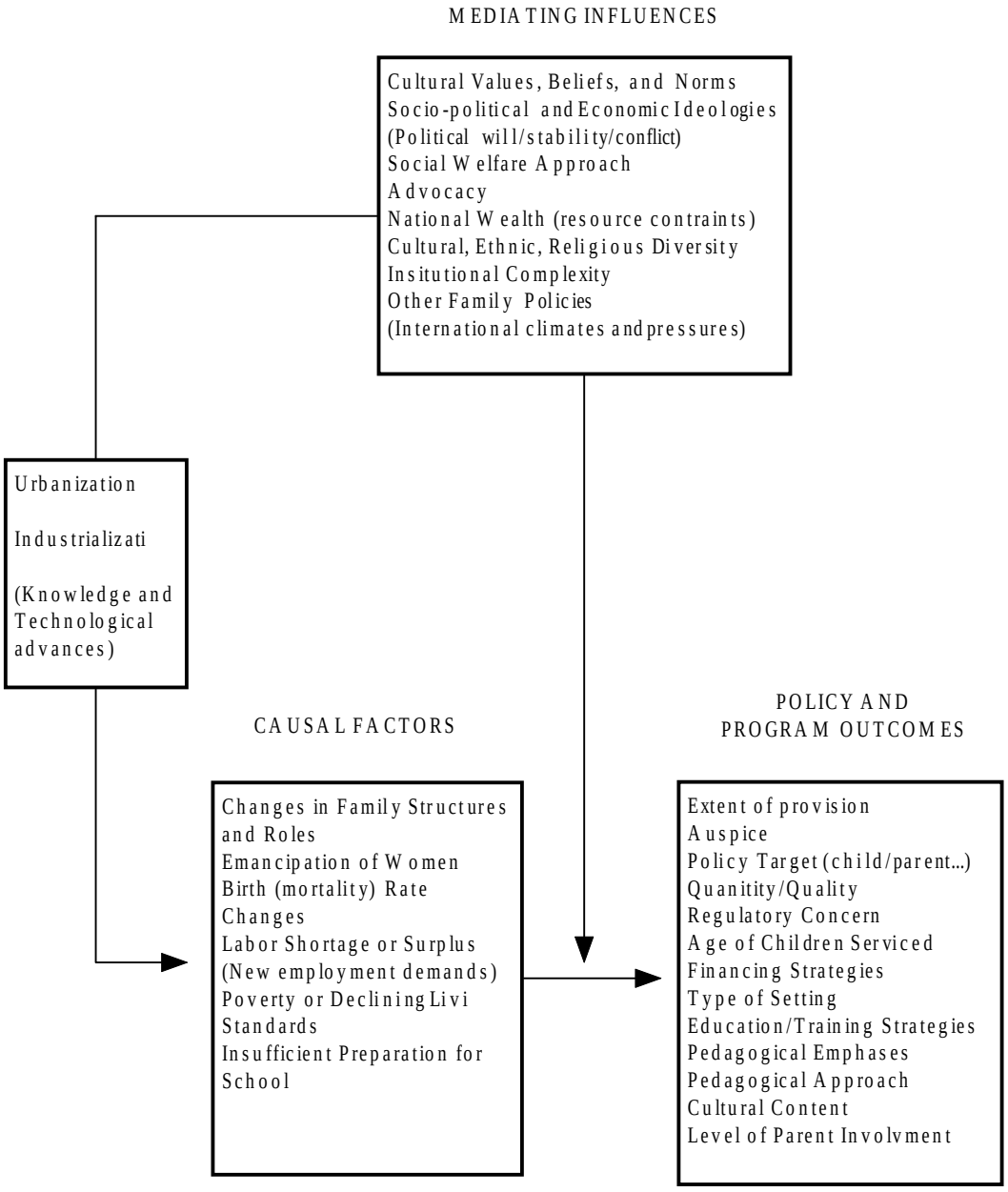
The general model presented by Cochran is captured in Figure 1. Cochran's model is set out in four broad categories, each of which will be presented in summary form and commented upon in the paragraphs that follow.

■ HISTORICAL FORCES FOR CHANGE

(labeled urbanization and industrialization in Figure 1). To the far left in the diagram are "…those historical changes that have resulted in major restructuring of families and led to the need for additional family supports." In this category, Cochran has included urbanization and

[7] During the 1990s, Cochran conducted a global comparison of public child care policies and programs called the International Comparison of Child Care Policies and Programs. The country case studies and a general model to explain the nature of policies and programs, derived from analysis of the cases, was published in Cochran, 1993 and in a slightly different version in Cochran, 1996.

FIGURE 1. A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING THE FIT BETWEEN SOCIETY AND ECCD SERVICES[8]



[8]M. Cochran. "Fitting Early Child Care Services to Societal Needs and Characteristics," in World Bank, **Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Future**, A document prepared for the Conference on "Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Future," April 8-9, 1996, Atlanta, Georgia, The Carter Presidential Center.

industrialization as the two main historical motors for change. The broad forces for change have effects on both the more immediate causes (or motivation) for change and on factors mediating change.

Comment: As one of the general historical trends that drives change, we might include also changes in knowledge and technology. Indeed, technological change has made possible a great deal of industrialization and is leading us into a post-industrial period. The current "globalization" trend, with its economic, social and cultural dimensions, is as closely related to technological change as it is to a change in economic ideology. For instance, independent of the physical condition of children or their levels of poverty or their presence in an urban or rural area, changes in knowledge and technology have brought with them the need for a different kind of socialization from that which occurs in the family or the tribe or the church. It has created clear intergenerational gaps, with many families unable to handle the educational tasks that were previously their province. Recognizing this, many families demand a kind of education or socialization in the early years that they know they are not in a good position to provide. Changes in health technology have made possible a reduction in infant and child mortality, affecting also the way in which children's needs are defined and the way in which very young children are perceived by their families.

■ CAUSAL FACTORS

The category labeled causal factors, "...contains those present-day needs and circumstances in a given society that have stimulated action in the form of child care policies and programs." Included as causal factors are: changes in family structures and rules; emancipation of women; birth rate changes; labor shortage or surplus; poverty or declining living standards; insufficient preparation for school; lack of service infrastructure; immigration or migration; and political change or conflict.

Comment: In this category of causal changes, one might include other changes such as changes in the infant mortality rate or changes in the objective condition of children related to economic changes or social disruptions. In addition to labor shortage or surplus, changes in the type of employment available might be included. The item labeled "insufficient preparation for school" may be the concrete manifestation of some other sort of change going on in society—a change in the perception by families or governments or both of the needs of children if they are to be socially adjusted human beings and productive citizens.

Most of the items in the causal category can be associated with a particular kind of change in the condition of children or in childrearing patterns and practices that, in turn, calls for some kind of action in terms of a change in child care and development policy and practice. For instance, the trend toward nuclear and one-parent families, combined with other causes, means that there are less adults available to care for children, leading to the need for alternative forms of care. The emancipation of women leads to greater competition among the various roles that women have always had to balance, with less time given to the traditional role of childrearing. Changes in employment possibilities will affect economic status which can affect the ability to provide for children, but may also affect the hours available for child care or the ability to combine child care and work, as new jobs replace old. These changes bring demands for help with care and

development. Migration to a new setting brings with it a need to adjust childrearing patterns to the new setting, something that may be difficult to do without help. Changes in birth rates and infant mortality rates may mean that societies change from a survival to a development mentality, redefining needs for young children, with attendant new demands. The growing importance of schooling in determining future economic and social position (hence a need to prepare for schooling) may create a need for kinds of early socialization that was not previously felt.

Two items that do not seem to fit so well into this causal category are the lack of service infrastructure and political change or conflict. These might better be handled as mediating conditions.

■ MEDIATING INFLUENCES

Cochran points out that, "...even when two societies experience the same kinds of needs for child care, the programs that they create to meet those needs may look quite different. This is because of a set of mediating influences that operate as a kind of filter, legitimizing or making possible certain kinds of child care responses and screening out other kinds." The mediating influences identified by Cochran are: cultural values, beliefs and norms; socio-political and economic ideologies, including the particular approach taken to social welfare; advocacy; the level of national wealth; the extent of cultural, ethnic or religious diversity; institutional complexity; and the existence of particular policies influencing the family.

Comment: Among the mediating conditions, one might include also: the level of political will and changes in international climates and pressures. The specific item, "level of national wealth" might be generalized to a category of "resource constraints" that could include not only financial constraints but also human resource constraints and the lack of a service infrastructure presented by Cochran in the category of causal factors. In the same vein as "institutional complexity", we might include the manner in which decisions and planning take place in a particular country. Finally, one might add previous experience with alternative technologies as a mediating condition.

■ POLICY AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Finally, a set of policy and program outcomes are set out by Cochran that "result from the child care needs experienced by the families in a given society, as shaped by mediating influences like religious beliefs, family values, the prevailing economic system, and available resources." These outcomes are described in such a way that one can create a profile for a particular country by indicating where, along a continuum, the country is on each dimension. The dimensions of the policy and program profile, as provided by Cochran, are set out in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: POLICY AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES[9]

POLICY
Provision _____ + _____Nonprovision

AUSPICE:
Single _____ + _____Multiple

TARGET AS
Child _____ + _____Parent/ Community

EMPHASIS
Quantity _____ + _____Quality

STANDARDS
Regulated _____ + _____Unregulated

CHILDREN
Younger_____ + _____Older

FINANCING
Public _____ + _____Private

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

LOCALE
Center_____ + _____Home

STAFF TRAINING
Preservice_____ + _____Inservice

CURRICULUM GOAL
School Development_____ + _____Readiness

PEDAGOGY
Teacher-directed_____ + _____Child-directed

PARENTS

Involved_____ + _____Uninvolved

[9] Taken from: M. Cochran. "Fitting Early Child Care Services to Societal Needs and Characteristics," in World Bank, **Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Future,** A document prepared for the Conference on Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Future, April 8-9, 1996, Atlanta Georgia, The Carter Presidential Center.

Comment: These dimensions provide a useful starting point for considering the dimensions of policy and programs to be analyzed. Using the same kind of format and even some of the same categories, one might consider additional dimensions. For instance, under "Targeting" it would be interesting to know not only if policy targets the child or parents, but also what ages within the early age range are selected, whether the approach targets all children (or families) or only some disadvantaged groups, and whether there is targeting of certain ethnic groups or not. The category of children or parents could be expanded to include targeting of policy to communities or to organizations or the values of the culture in general, all of which are legitimate approaches to bringing about change in child development. Or, when regulation is mentioned, sub-categories might include whether the regulation is standardized or flexible and whether it is culture blind or culturally adjusted. It would be useful to know, also, whether a policy facilitates participation or whether it is essentially imposed. Related to this point, it would be good to know whether a policy promotes a "compensatory" approach, as contrasted with a "constructive" approach.

When applying the Cochran framework to specific situations, it may be that there is no articulated policy with respect to the various policy dimensions set out. Instead, it may be necessary to infer policy from the characteristics of the particular programs that are being carried out. In this case, the characteristics of "policy" must be applied to looking at particular "programs", not in this case to see if policy moves consistently to action, but to infer policy from actions.

The Cochran Framework and Motivations for Change of ECCD Policy

Looking at the Cochran scheme, we see that the motivation for changes in policy can come either from changes in the condition of children, families and society, or they can come from changes in the mediating conditions. It is possible, for instance, that changes in family structures and roles (a causal variable) have existed for some time suggesting a need for changes in policy, but that cultural values (a mediating variable) have prevented change that occurs only as values change. Causal conditions are often created by broader trends that are hard to influence. Many of the mediating conditions, on the other hand, seem more malleable (levels of awareness, resource levels, political awareness, the approach to social welfare). Others (cultural diversity or basic cultural beliefs) are not easy to change. In general, however, the category of mediating conditions offers a fertile ground for individuals or organizations seeking changes in ECCD policy. Accordingly, programs of advocacy can be directed toward creating political will. The introduction of new resources can change not only the ability to pay, but it can also affect organization. Changes in other family policies can have indirect effects on an ECCD policy. Changes in governments may provide opportunities to bring about policy changes that could not have been contemplated previously. Changes can be made in a planning process that can favor policy and program changes for ECCD. And, new technologies can be introduced that help to change perspectives and open up new decision options.

Describing the Policy Process—Haddad

Haddad's conceptual framework for policy analysis is set out in Figure 3. The model describes the education policy cycle in terms of eight processes (or elements) and is intended to "highlight the dynamics (flow, procedure interaction) of policymaking." The framework covers pre-policy decision activities, the decision process itself and the post-decision activities. A brief look at each of the elements of the framework reveals the following:

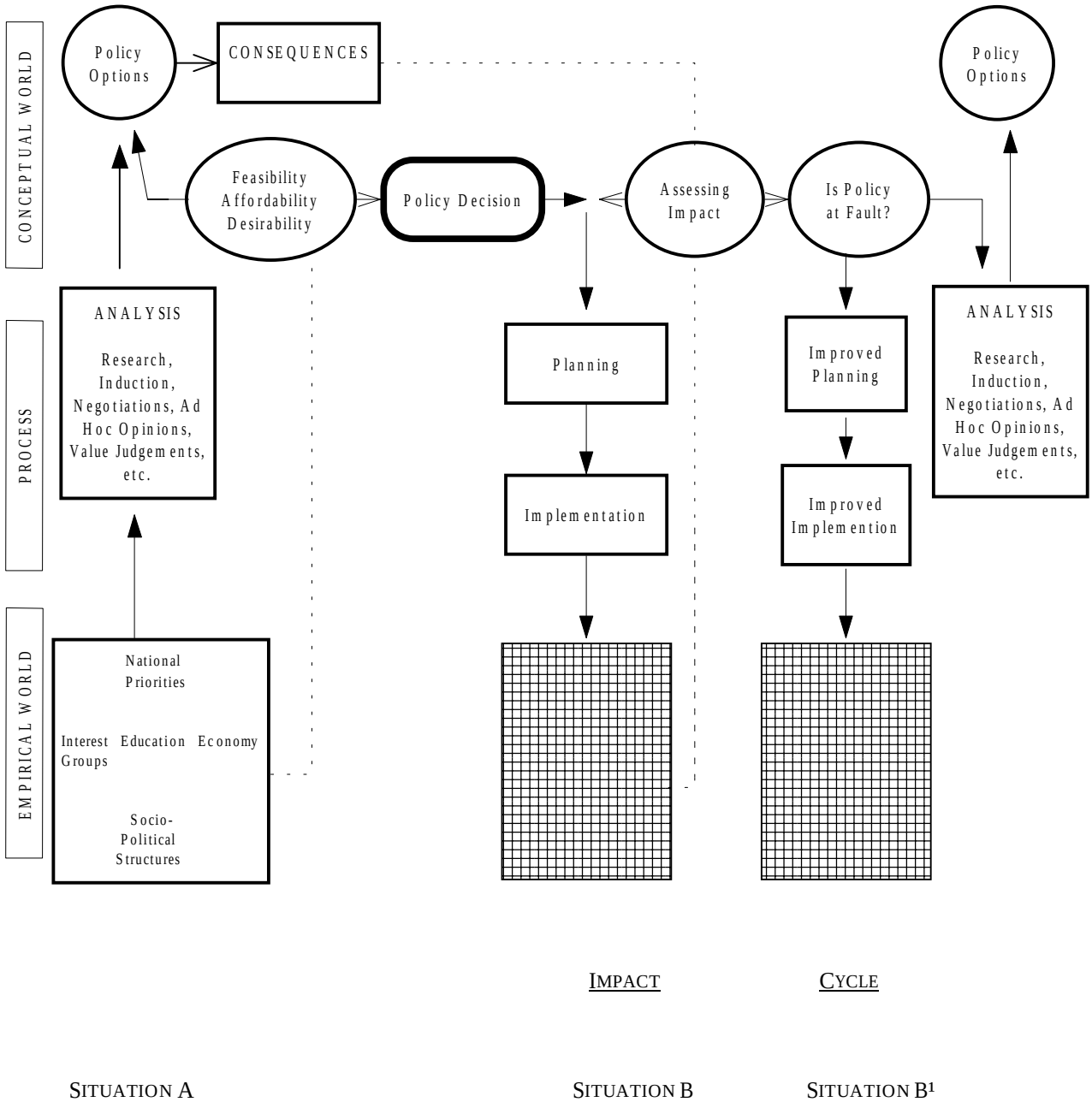
Analysis of the existing situation. As part of this process, it is suggested that an analysis consider (and describe): the country background (the general character of the country), the political context, and the economic context prior to an analysis of the sector (in this case education). Six categories are suggested for the sectoral analysis: i) access (including both supply and demand) to educational opportunities, ii) equity in the distribution of educational services (by gender, region, urban/rural location, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background), iii) structure of the educational system, iv) internal efficiency (student flow and student learning related to the quality of determinants of achievement), v) external efficiency (the relationship to figure 3), vi)evolution (with particular emphasis on the centralization of power and the degree of institutional autonomy in the system, including the degree of privatization). Each of these categories is described more fully in text of the Bank study.

The process of generating policy options. "New policies are usually generated when the present situation of the sector and its context is perturbed by a problem, a political decision or a reorganization scheme (overall national planning)." Four modes of accommodation are sketched. i) The systematic mode is characterized by generation of data, formulation and prioritization of options and refining options, with information coming from a sector analysis and from the existing body of professional knowledge. ii) The incremental mode emphasizes seeking solutions quickly to adjust to present difficulties (for instance difficulties that are identified in public debate) rather than to anticipate future ones. iii) The ad hoc mode is defined by changes forced upon the educational system by changes that have nothing to do with the functioning of the system (e.g., a major political event). iv) The importation mode results when innovations or fashions in vogue elsewhere are used to promote change, often related to stimulus provided by foreign specialists operating as consultants for international agencies.

Evaluation of policy options. Policy options are compared with the present situation in order to determine their desirability, feasibility and affordability. Desirability is assessed in terms of the potential impact on various interest groups or stakeholders, as well as for the society as a whole, in relation to such goals as growth, equity and unity. "Feasibility means checking whether the resources of personnel and time are adequate to implement the proposal". Affordability requires looking at costs in several senses: monetary (public and private) costs, opportunity costs, and political costs.

FIGURE 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY ANALYSIS[10]

Formulation Evaluation Adoption Implementation Assessing Adjustment New Policy



[10] Taken from: W. Haddad. **The Dynamics of Education Policymaking. Case Studies of Burkina Faso, Jordan, Peru and Thailand.** Washington: The World Bank, Economic Development Institute, 1994. EDI Development Policy Case Series, Analytical Case Studies, No. 10, p. 11.

Making the policy decision. Here, it is recognized that the ideal of a rational or optimal decision, in terms of the criteria outlined may not be made, in which case the task is to identify weaknesses and prepare adjustments for them. A decision can be checked in terms of the factors ignored in the process, how radical a departure the decision is from current policy, its consistency with policies in other sectors, the degree to which its success can be measured, and whether it can be put into operation easily or not.

Planning for policy implementation. This part of the process requires not only a clear technical plan, but also a plan to mobilize political support among the many possible competing and conflicting interests that may make implementation of a policy difficult or impossible.

Policy implementation. This stage is included in the framework because "... much policy formation, *de facto*, takes place during this stage." Putting policy into practice inevitably leads to the need for some reconsideration in regard to the abstract policy formulated. The need for such adjustments, it is suggested, can be reduced by making pilot studies a part of the process.

Policy impact assessment. Here, emphasis is placed on whether the effects of the policy in question have been desirable (in the terms originally envisioned), affordable and feasible.

Subsequent policy cycles. This stage is included to show that the process is iterative and never-ending.

After setting out these elements, Haddad indicates that:

> The framework can serve as a guideline for the study of the dimensions of policymaking (processes and actors) over time. It can serve two major functions: (a) analysis *of* policy, i.e., analysis of existing policy content and its constructive process, and (b) analysis *for* policy, i.e., enlightening and influencing policies. First, it allows the introduction of a diverse set of variables and a detailed set of policymaking stages that provide approximation of the actual policymaking process. It can thus be used to assess existing country policies within the context of environmental variables: country situation, national perceptions about policy problems, policy 'rationales', policy roots (spread and depth) in the national structure, etc. Second, policy analysis may be applied to evaluate projected policies, through a process of defining parameters of the environment, predicting outcomes of different policy options in a wide range of situations and under diverse conditions, and assessing the chances for the success of implementation of policy decisions within the country's elasticity for change.

Comments on the Haddad Framework

Although an attempt is made in this framework to escape from a purely rational paradigm of policy formulation, the model is, at root, a rational model, bringing in political variables at several points. The paradigm does not:

- Try to indicate how the various elements of the situation analysis impinge on the policy process and outcomes.

- Place much emphasis on the way in which broader public and social policies affect educational outcomes except to suggest that these policies should be more or less in harmony with education policies.

- Pay much attention to who is involved in the process at the different stages. Some attention is given in the discussion of the situation analysis to different elites [outside and inside education; social and economic elites as well as the military are mentioned] and to the position of political parties and bureaucrats in the sector. But a systematic effort is not present to set out who the main stakeholders might be or how they might be involved in the process. Moreover, the emphasis is always on elites or professionals or bureaucrats, and no role is assigned to front-line workers, participants or beneficiaries.

- Pay much attention to practical experience as an important source of knowledge, putting stress instead on "professional" inputs. Experience enters either after a policy is set—through adjustments (element 6)—or through some kind of pilot process. The absence of this dimension in the initial stages of policymaking is consistent with the comments made in the preceding point about the lack of participation of front-line workers and beneficiaries.

- Treat "political will" as something that is crucial to the decision-making process itself; rather, it is seen as something that needs to be present in order to implement decisions. The policy process, by implication, should be in the hands of those with the technical knowledge and know how rather than in the hands of politicians.

- Indicate how the criteria of desirability, feasibility and affordability might be defined. Apparently, these criteria are assumed to pre-exist and defining them is not seen as part of the policy process or discussion. However, harking back to the earlier definition of policy, if goals and guidelines are included as part of the content of policy, then these should be part of (if not the heart of) the policymaking discussion.

Guidelines for Policy Formulation—Evans

The framework presented by Evans is also concerned with the policy process. It is not derived from a review of literature but is based on a systematization of her experience in several countries, countries in which Evans, upon the request of international organizations and governments, assisted in the process of creating ECCD policies and programs. The purpose is to formulate (or reformulate) ECCD national policy. Here, emphasis is placed on analysis "for" policy rather than analysis "of" policy.

The first step in the process as set out by Evans involves choosing a person or a governmental agency to coordinate the process, one which will have the power or access to power necessary for views and reviews to be taken seriously. It is suggested that the Prime Minister's Office or a Planning Office will often get the cooperation of high ranking officials from various ministries whereas a ministry of lower status may be limited to considering changes in policy for its own sector. Evans suggests that it is important that the formation of national ECCD policy not be seen as a unilateral education policy because ECCD deals with the whole child in its family and community context.

Next, a mechanism should be evolved for a broad constituency to become involved in developing the policy. “This can include citizen groups, non-governmental agencies and the private sector. When a broad-based constituency is involved in the process of creating the policy, and includes representatives of all the people who will ultimately be affected by the policy, it is much more likely to be accepted, embraced and implemented.” (p. 8) A Task Force mechanism is suggested, with representatives from the different constituencies, which will carry out a review and make recommendations.

The review should respond to the following questions:

- Why should we invest in ECCD programs?
- What is the need and what is the demand for ECCD programs?
- What coverage is provided by current ECCD programs and in what ways does this coverage respond to need and demand?
- In the best of all worlds, what would we like to see in terms of ECCD provision?
- What are some short-term and long-term goals we can set in order to move toward the kind of coverage and provision we envision?
- Where are the gaps in service and why do these gaps exist?
- What would be the most productive role for this government to take in addressing the gaps and supporting the provision of quality services?
- What supports and resources—legislative, financial, human, organizational and technical—are available for the creation and maintenance of ECCD programs (including governmental, non-governmental, and international resources)?
- What are the costs associated with different models of ECCD provision?
- Who is currently paying those costs, and who will pay them in the future?

Evans suggests a particular design, organization and timetable for such a review.

Then, in Evans’s model, the lead government agency must take responsibility for taking recommendations through the legislative process. In so doing, it will be necessary to anticipate possible opposition (perhaps from a group that was not included in the policy-formulation process or from a political party not in power). The fact that this can sometimes take a great deal of time means that a long term commitment to the process is necessary, and that goals should be framed in terms of long-term national goals rather than as stop-gap measures to respond to immediate pressures.

Comments on Evans’s Framework

Although framed in an operational way, Evans’s approach has much in common with the Haddad model. Working in what Haddad would call the “systematic mode”, Evans’s procedure

involves setting and choosing among policy options, based on analysis providing information that can be used to determine the desirability, feasibility and affordability of a particular policy.

By way of contrast, however, Evans is more explicit than Haddad about the relationship between policy and politics. This is shown in her brief discussion of the agency chosen to co-ordinate the exercise. She insists on the necessity of including a broad set of constituencies in the policy-formulation process, including those who would be directly affected by the outcomes; in this sense, the process is more political than technical. And considerable emphasis is placed by Evans on the step of gaining official approval; the Haddad model moves quickly on to formulation of a plan and to implementation (a phase that is not taken up by Evans). However, the Evans procedure seems to assume that the political system with which one is working is a democratic system with more than one political party, with a legislature that has power, and with a will to allow broad participation in a process. She also seems to assume that governmental and non-governmental organizations will be able to work together. In many countries these conditions do not prevail.

The systematization of experience by Evans provides us with useful tips for setting up an analysis "for" policy. Embedded in her procedure are suggestions that obviously arise from her own analysis "of" policy, but the procedure does not provide us with a framework for such an analysis.

Gaps in Policy Frameworks

Taking an overview of the above frameworks, and looking also at a general literature, I have the feeling that most frameworks are lacking in at least three respects.

- The first lack relates to a sense of history[11]. It seems to me that tradition and the accumulations of history, looking beyond trends in urbanization and industrialization, can have an extraordinary effect on policy and that this is not often captured in the models and discussions of policy. In some cases, the path to policy reads very much like a historical novel.

- Second, personalities are left aside in most analysis. Yet when looking at particular cases, I have found that the backgrounds and personalities and persistence of particular individuals have had an important effect on policy formulation, often in ways that reflect the specific experiences and history of the individual as much or more than they reflect a broader history and experience. Occasionally, the path to policy reads like a soap opera.

- Third, I also felt that, as I indicated earlier, the frameworks for national policy analysis were weak in the way in which they treated international influences on policy.

These dimensions of policy need to be incorporated into analyses of ECCD policy.

[11] Clearly, this comment is less applicable to models that flow from a Marxist tradition.

An Amalgamated Framework for ECCD Policy Analysis

The utility of the three frameworks described depends to some degree on whether one is more interested in an analysis "of" policy, in which case the analysis is essentially retrospective, or an analysis "for" policy in which the intent is to create new policy. In both cases, however, the categories provided by both the Cochran and Haddad frameworks are very useful (taking into account suggested additions). The Evans model is most appropriate for formulating new policy. Drawing on and adapting elements from the three models, I will now attempt to present an amalgamated framework that might be applied to documenting the policy process and analyzing ECCD policy in a particular setting. Such an analysis begins with an analysis "of" policy but carries forward into an analysis "for" policy as it feeds into a negotiation process of the kind suggested by Evans.

First, three key choices are discussed that should be made when approaching an ECCD policy analysis and then a set of questions to be answered in a policy analysis is presented and elaborated upon.

Delimiting the Analysis: Three Decisions

1. Choosing the level of analysis.

1.1. Policies may be analyzed at different organizational levels running from international through national to local policy. With the current tendency toward decentralization, analysis at sub-national levels are becoming more frequent although the most common approach is to examine policy at the national level. Deciding which of these levels will be the focus of analysis is important because the processes and actors as well as the immediate contexts will be different.

1.2. Policy analysis may also be carried out at one or more of the following levels of generality:

–General public policies that affect ECCD (i.e., broad differences in economic and political policies, such as new-liberal vs. Keynsian policy, or a welfare state policy, or authoritarian vs. democratic rule, or the separation of church and state vs. the fusion of church and state).

–General social policy, as it frames and affects ECCD (i.e., differences in expressed goals and in the way in which social policy is focused/targeted, organized, financed and implemented)

–ECCD policy (if such exists) looking across sectors. Sectoral policies that, taken together, may define ECCD policy

–Programs that respond to ECCD needs and demands (in the event that ECCD and/or sectoral policies are not well-defined and ECCD policy needs to be inferred from programs).

An analysis of the ways in which general economic and social policies affect ECCD will be very different from an analysis of the specific policies directed toward ECCD. For the most part, ECCD analyses and suggestions for policies affecting ECCD concentrate on specific policies

directed toward improving the health, nutritional status and welfare of young children, taking into account the broader policy context set by the more general policies. This is so even though the affect of general policies on welfare may be greater than specific ones.

2. Choosing the age groupings of children. ECCD policy analysis may need to be carried out separately for policies affecting children at different points in the period from birth to approximately 8 years of age—the age span often taken for programs of early childhood care and development. One set of categories follows[12]:

2.1 Children from birth through age 2. In this case, it is likely that a major part of the analysis will be of programs related to health and nutrition, with attention also to parental education and programs of childcare mandated for very young children.

2.2 Children from age three through entrance into primary school. In this age range, while looking at health, nutrition, parental education and childcare, much more attention will be given to educational policies that are linked to the preparation of children for entrance into primary school.

2.3 Children during the first two years of primary school. Here, educational policy becomes central, but the influence of health, nutrition, and welfare policies must not be forgotten.

3. Choosing the set of policies and time period to be analyzed.[13] An historical dimension is important in any analysis of policy; and, as indicated in the previous section, the models of political science (particularly those from North America) seem to lack a historical dimension. History provides us with an understanding of the dynamic change processes that have shaped policy—of the intertwined and shifting technological, demographic, economic, social, and cultural forces at work. It is advisable, therefore, to begin an analysis of policies by looking first at changes over time in the context and conditions affecting policy, and then focus in on a particular time period or a particular set of policies to be analyzed. The basis for choosing the particular period or set of policies depends in part on the intent of the analysis.

If the purpose of our analysis to contribute to the general understanding of how social forces influence ECCD policies, it makes sense to choose a critical "turning point" in a country's history (such as the relatively recent independence of an African nation, or a sharp economic up/downturn, or war, or a particular demographic transition when, for instance, infant mortality goes below a certain point) and analyze policies before and after that point. The turning point and analysis should probably be related to a particular set of hypotheses about influences on policy. The actual turning point and corresponding time period chosen is less important in this case than what that time period represents in terms of a particular constellation of broad social

[12] Often systems are organized somewhat differently from these age breaks and it is necessary to adjust to the particular situation that presents itself.

[13] This section and the presentation of an amalgamated model have benefited a great deal from suggestions made by Moncrieff Cochran on an earlier draft.

variables for which a hypothesis is created, and examined. Here, we can paint on a broad canvas, and time is our friend. For such an analysis, we can draw heavily on the Cochran model.

If our purpose is to get inside the policy process and to understand how certain policy decisions actually came to be made in a particular context at a particular time, then the broader sweep of history frames our analysis. But our attention must focus more on the particulars of how options were formulated, evaluated, and adopted (as set out in the Haddad model), taking into account not only social and organizational structures, but also personalities and power relationships. To do this kind of analysis over a long period of time is extremely difficult. Here, as in the case of an attempt to understand broad social forces at work, the particular period to be chosen will turn on how well we think the time period would illustrate the specific hypotheses we have about how the process works.

When either of the above is connected to a desire to use the results of an analysis to influence or propose policy for the future, it usually becomes crucial to look closely at the most immediate past and/or at how the period during which the particular policies one would like to change came into being. Historical analysis continues to provide a base for understanding, but the emphasis is clearly on the present and may center on decisions made during a particular planning cycle or in relation to a recent change of government or a key event that led to policy. If the analysis is focused on a particular policy decision, a period surrounding that decision and brought up to the present will be chosen. In the framework that follows, I will assume that the primary intent of analysis is to support advocacy and/or change in a contemporary setting.

Following Evans, a set of questions will be framed to guide the analysis. The categories of information established to try and answer the questions are closely related to those provided by Cochran and by Haddad. In order to simplify the presentation, I will assume that the analysis focuses on national level policy in a country of the Majority World, includes an examination of both general and specific policies, concentrates on children under the age of 6, and is centered on the five-year planning period just before the present. The questions to be answered deal respectively with: 1) changes in context and conditions (using categories from Cochran); 2) changes in the objective condition of children and families, 3) changes in policies and programs (drawing on Cochran); 4) policy processes (drawing on Haddad and Evans), and 5) the effects of policies on children.

- How have the forces that shape policy changed over time?
  - –How did the conditions change prior to the particular period of the analysis?
  - –How did conditions change during the period of the analysis?
- How has the objective condition of children and families changed over time?
- How have policies changed over time? What policies were in place at the beginning of the period being analyzed? How did policies change prior to the particular period of the analysis? How did policies change during the period?
- How have programs changed over time?

- Is there a link between the changing context and the changes in policy and programs?
- What process was followed in producing the policy and program changes during the period of analysis? How did the process meet (and overcome) possible mediating conditions?
- Have changes in policy been effective in bringing about changes in programs, in the availability and use of resources, and in the condition of families and children?

  –What program changes occurred?

  –What changes occurred in the allocation of resources?

  –How has the condition of children changed?

Each of these questions will be discussed in turn.

How Have the Forces that Shape Policy Changed over Time?

The listing of contextual variables that follows can help explain changes in policy. The categories of information are each linked to hypotheses about why policy change may have occurred or failed to occur during the period. Some of the variables listed are those that are labeled as causal variables in the Cochran model; others are "mediating" variables. Sometimes these are difficult to distinguish; for instance, an economic crisis can produce poverty which may result in a compensatory program, but will also mean lack of funds, limiting the possibility of making a policy change to respond to the new conditions. A distinction has been made between changes in the national and international contexts.

In any particular context it is unlikely that all of the following factors contribute significantly to an explanation of why change has occurred or why it has not. The listing may help to identify forces that have been most important in producing change, but also to identify points of leverage or windows of opportunity for those seeking to produce policy change; clearly some of the following contextual variables can be changed more easily than others.

■ THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

Urban concentration. Changes in the degree of urban concentration affect employment, family structure and functioning, social organization, beliefs—all of which bring changes in childrearing patterns. This creates new needs/demands for alternative child care options and can lead to policies intended to provide for ECCD outside the home or to changes in social security laws and provision of services related to work.

Migration. Migration to cities and/or temporary migration for work abroad affects child care and education, requiring adjustments in childrearing patterns in order to maintain child welfare. Policies may be created to help families adjust to their new setting. Migration may create a need for new policies to deal with the special condition of migrant children who accompany parents during their temporary employment or the condition of children left behind with relatives.

Birth rate. A declining birth rate makes it easier to respond to demand within budget constraints. High birth rates create conditions in which families cannot easily support their offspring, creating demand for policies to assist them. Declining birth rates, combined with the growth of school enrolment, will change child care conditions because fewer siblings will be available to provide care. This can provoke changes in policy toward the provision of additional services outside the home.

ECONOMIC VARIABLES:

Economic ideology and policy. Changes in the prevailing economic ideology and associated policies (neo-liberal, Keynsian, etc.) regarding trade, employment, financing, etc., will require changes in the way ECCD is approached. For instance, the shift from a welfare state ideology to a market ideology may lead to privatization of ECCD and to a limited compensatory role by the state focused on a very few who are in extreme poverty.

Income per capita. Changes in income per capita will influence child welfare by affecting the number of family members required to work to make ends meet (creating competition with the caregiving function) and by influencing the ability to pay for care and development programs (at government and family levels). This can both stimulate and inhibit policy change.

Employment. Changes in the level of employment will affect child welfare through changes in income per capita as well as through pressure to bring women into the labor force. More women in the labor force will create demands for alternative child care. Changes in the types of employment available (in terms of hours, distance to work, physical demands, benefits, etc.) affect the ability of family members, particularly women, to care for children at home, leading to pressures for policy change.

Income distribution. High (or increasing) levels of poverty will stimulate the need for "compensatory" policies and programs.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL VARIABLES:

Social policy. Changes in social policies reflecting changes in ideas about the balance of social responsibility of the state, communities and families will lead to changes in ECCD policy. For instance, the shift to a compensatory social policy may bring a shift from a universal approach to provision of services to a targeted approach to ECCD.

The family. The shift toward nuclear and one-parent families creates new needs for child care as traditional support structures within the family erode.

Status of women. Both the women's movement and economic pressures on women to take paid labor force jobs bring changes in the status of women which create competition between childcare and other roles. The changing status of women can be a causal factor leading to changes in ECCD policy. However, the continued low status or subordination of women can be an intervening variable that inhibits policy change.

Cultural variation. A richly textured society will display differences in values, beliefs, and practices related to childrearing, making it more difficult to formulate ECCD policy than it is within a culturally homogeneous society.

Schooling. With the advance of schooling, the availability of siblings for child care is reduced, and the pressure to prepare children better for school increases, both of which help to motivate rethinking of ECCD policies and programs.

Values and beliefs. Shifts in social and religious values (e.g., from altruism, cooperation and solidarity to materialism, competition).

Crime. Changes in the level of crime can affect the social view of childrearing practices and help to motivate changes in ECCD policies, with ECCD looked at as a preventive measure.

POLITICAL VARIABLES:

Stability/conflict/change. Political changes, whether occurring as a result of conflict or within a pattern of regular transitions can produce policy changes as new forces and actors seek to make their imprint on society.

Ideologies. As suggested above, shifts in ideologies (e.g., welfare or socialist to free market, or vice versa; authoritarian to democratic) will be accompanied by changes in policy affecting ECCD.

■ THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

There will be a number of general international trends, such as globalization in its various dimensions, exerting influence on national policies. International economic conditions may have a major effect on national economies as occurred throughout Latin American during the "lost decade" of the 1980s. However, because the focus of our analysis is on ECCD policies, more specific attention is given here to international conditions and changes directly related to ECCD. The categories of information that follow are derived from the analysis of how "external" organizations influence policies

- International agreements, declarations, conventions. Participation by nations in major international events (the Conference on Education for All or the Summit for Children) and the signing of international conventions (the Convention on the Rights of the Child) can motivate national policy changes.
- Knowledge and Advocacy. New knowledge and its incorporation into advocacy efforts can stimulate policy change.
- Resources. The availability (or lack) of new international grant or loan funds for ECCD will influence the willingness of countries to change ECCD policies.
- Technology. The appearance of new technologies will influence policy.

- Experience. Accumulating international experience with alternative ECCD models will stimulate new thinking and policies.

How has the Condition of Children Changed over Time?

The changing conditions which are described by information gathered in the above categories will presumably affect, and be reflected in, indicators that describe the actual and changing status of children. Evidence of the lagging status of children (relative to some national or international standard) is increasingly providing a stimulus to policy formulation and to new programs. Information about the changing status of children may serve both the analysis of why particular policies and programs came into being and, if a comparison is made before and after approving a particular policy, an analysis of the effectiveness of the policy. The following indicators will be useful in describing the condition of children:

- Infant mortality rates. Declining infant or child mortality rates shift emphasis from survival to developmental delays, bringing a new need and demand for integrated attention.

- Morbidity. A relatively high incidence of morbidity provides an incentive to create ECCD policies and programs designed to alleviate the problem. For instance, a policy to integrate health programs into childcare or early education centers may result. Or, the result may be to create stricter norms for programs with respect to health.

- Nutritional status. A relatively high incidence of nutritional problems could lead to policy changes with respect to food production, marketing strategies, supplementation, or nutritional monitoring.

- Psychosocial development status. Lagging psychosocial development, including inadequate preparation for schooling, provides incentive to create policies and programs that are directed toward incentive.

- Schooling progress and performance. High levels of repetition and low performance in primary schools can lead to policy changes, such as making pre-school obligatory in the year just prior to school.

- Child abuse. Increasing evidence of child abuse stimulates new policies designed to curb abuse.

How Have Policies Changed over Time?

Answers to the first two questions should provide one with a basis for predicting whether or not changes in policy have occurred. When describing the context for ECCD policies, we included information about general economic, social and political policies and how they have changed. Here we focus on specific policies. In most settings today, however, a specific ECCD policy will not exist. Accordingly, analyses will need to be carried out on a sectoral and/or organizational basis by looking at policies affecting care and development during the early years within health, education and social welfare and perhaps within other sectors such as agriculture (if it is responsible for nutrition programs rather than health), women's programs, rural and urban

development, etc. In describing these policies, the characteristics of the profile set out by Cochran, with suggested additions made in this paper, may be helpful. Summarizing those points in a slightly different way, we would like to know what policies tell us about:

- the goals to which ECCD actions should be addressed (survival, integral development, care, preparation for schooling, rehab, equal opportunity vs. equal results; coverage/quality);
- who is to be entitled (universal attention vs. attention focussed on particular groups; ages of children; child vs. parent/community);
- who will be responsible for funding, planning, implementation, oversight (national vs. local; public/social/private);
- characteristics that should frame ECCD actions (multi-sectoral or not; integrated or not; participatory or not; adjusted to cultural variety or uniform; regulated or not;);
- what general strategies can be used and which are favored (center-based vs. home-based; custodial vs. developmental).

The extension of policy in regulations can also tell us:

–what methods are preferred (teacher vs. child-directed; frontal vs. active pedagogical approach);

–what general norms should be followed (adult/child ratios; size of groups);

–what content should be included or emphasized;

–how training is to be carried out;

–what mechanisms and criteria are to be used for monitoring actions;

–how accountability will work.

These categories of information will be picked up when examining programs.

How have Programs Changed over Time?

A description of programs and program changes over time allows one to see whether programs are in place and the kinds of changes that seem to be occurring without policy in place or without changes in policy. It lets one see whether policy changes are actually associated with program changes. It also allows one to look for consistency (or the lack of consistency) between what policy suggests should happen and the programs in place as well as the changes in programs.

Is There a Link between the Changing Contexts and Policy and Program Changes?

Here, we try to relate policy and program changes to the shifts in context that were described earlier. Did the context change in such a way that one would expect policy and program

changes? Did the objective situation of children and families change significantly as a result of more general changes, or were some of the mediating conditions that applied previously overcome? For example, did new knowledge and advocacy efforts make a population aware of a circumstance that had already existed for some time? Or, were previous resource constraints removed by a change in economic conditions or by an infusion of international resources? Did a change of government occur that brought new actors with a new awareness (or with a desire simply to do something new)? Were international pressures brought to bear? The analysis should also explore whether or not particular individuals were key in producing the change.

A second approximation to answering this question must come from interviews with participants in the process. In this way, one can begin to understand what specific events or people provided the impetus to change. As suggested earlier, the detailed analysis of policy change may read more like a soap opera or good theater than like hard science. The following questions, which are intended to describe the process followed in formulating policy, not only allow one to judge the process from several angles, but will also help get behind appearances in answering why changes occurred.

What Process was Followed in Producing the Policy Changes?

–Who took the initiative?

–How participatory was the process? Who was involved and in what capacity?

–How did personal relationships and ties move the process?

–What analyses were carried out to aid decision-making? By whom? Using what method? How were the results fed into the process?

–What was the role of international organizations or influences?

–What options were considered?

–What criteria were applied in the decisions?

–What barriers were encountered?

–What compromises were required?

Has the Change in Policy Been Effective in Terms of the Following?

Finally, it seems important to try and see whether policy changes have been effective in bringing about changes in programs, in the availability and use of resources, and in the condition of families and children. From the above analysis, we will already know what program changes have occurred during the period. But it is also important to ask about:

- The availability of resources for ECCD (changes in government budgets and other resources).
- Organizational changes in support of ECCD (governmental and non-governmental changes).
- Outcomes (effects on the condition of children, families, and society in terms of equity, respect for differences, participation or other "desirable" criteria).

In trying to answer this last question, we are forced to confront a more general question which we will now take up, about what makes for good and effective policy.

How Should Policy be Judged?

It is one thing to try and provide descriptions of existing policies and of policy processes according to an existing framework; it is another to try and determine what constitutes a "good" or an "effective" policy. Even to ask this question is somewhat risky, but the question should not be avoided even if it cannot be resolved once and for all. In the Haddad model, the three criteria for deciding among policy options are: desirability, feasibility, and affordability. These criteria are useful in a general way but are not very clear-cut. Desirability, a social criterion, has to do with the definition of the kind of country and world one would like to live in, with visions of the future, with utopias, and with the conception of the kind of child and person one would like to see develop in order to move toward our social goals. These will obviously differ from person to person and from place to place as each society takes responsibility for setting its own goals. Feasibility, which depends both on technical criteria adjusted to particular settings and on "mediating" variables, will obviously differ from place to place. Affordability is a relative term that, to my way of thinking, depends as much on how priorities are set and on political will as it does on the particular level of resources available. What is deemed "affordable" in one society may not seem to be "affordable" in another with even less overall resources because the priority assigned is different.

In each setting, then, an important task is to determine what, for that setting, constitutes the desirable, the feasible and the affordable. Definitions of these criteria for a good policy should emerge from those who are part of a particular polity and those who will be affected by changes in policies and programs. Indeed, the more important question when judging policy may not be "how" but rather "who" should judge policy. Focussing on "who" suggests that the criteria and goals brought to a process of policy formulation by an external/international organization must be seen simply as one among many inputs into a policy discussion. With that qualification in mind, it seems appropriate and even necessary, nevertheless, for external organizations to be clear about their own criteria—about what they would like their input to a discussion to be. Organizations need to be extremely alert to their own values and biases.

In 1993, the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development carried out an exercise to determine what criteria it thought should be applied to policy and programming in order for it to be considered desirable, feasible, affordable and effective. The reader will recognize

results of this exercise in some of the categories suggested to describe policies and programs used earlier. According to this statement, a good policy is one that:

- seeks to assure that all children, without distinction of gender, race, language, religion or of any other kind, have the opportunity to develop to their full potential;
- enables families (who have the primary responsibility for their children) and communities to fulfill their responsibilities of childrearing and protection.

It is also a policy that takes into account principles of learning and development by:

- beginning with attention to children pre-natally;
- recognizing the need to change the environment within which development occurs (including the immediate family, the community, social institutions and cultural beliefs) as well as the need to change the child;
- taking a holistic and integral approach to development;
- following the recognized sequences of development;
- allowing for individual and social variability in children's rates and styles of development;
- promoting active learning;
- incorporating various forms of learning; and,
- including attention to adults who help children develop as well as to children.

Policy should enable ECCD programming that:

- seeks integration in conceptualizing, planning and delivering services, establishing content and promoting use;
- fosters participation by prime beneficiaries;
- builds child-focussed partnerships;
- builds on inherent strengths and local childrearing practices beneficial to development;
- takes an intergenerational view involving children, youth and adults;
- is open to diversity and to complementary approaches;
- seeks quality;
- aims at universal attention, but with special recognition of children living in conditions that put them at increased risk of delayed or debilitated development;
- seeks cost effectiveness; and,
- incorporates monitoring and evaluation into programs from the outset.

In many respects, this statement strikes me as sound and sensible, providing a number of crucial criteria for judging whether or not a policy sets the appropriate parameters for future actions. At the most general level, however, I think the statement is weak in terms of its definition of what is desirable. Why? At the center of trying to define what is desirable for any society are a set of potential tensions and even trade-offs among multiple goals, all of which are considered important. Especially important are the tensions among economic growth, social equity, and respect for diversity. In the Consultative Group's statement, the principles of equity and of attention to diversity are incorporated. However, equity is defined in terms of equal opportunity of all children to develop to their full potential (with special recognition of children living in conditions that put them at risk). Reference is made in the statement to diversity in terms of gender, race, language, and religion—as characteristics that should not interfere with development. Later reference is to openness to diversity, without defining what is meant. The statement does not concern itself with economic growth, presumably taking growth as part of a general context for development.

Applying my own set of values, I would say that if an ECCD policy is to be a good and desirable one, seeking both equity and respect for diversity, it must incorporate a vision that looks beyond equality of opportunity and even beyond programs that seek quality by trying to compensate for existing inequities. A challenge, if policy is to be judged as good policy from my standpoint, is to set guidelines that will permit actions to be judged in terms of their effects on children (not just improving access or in terms of inputs). Moreover, policy and programs should seek equity defined in such a way that the standards used respect diversity by being equitable but not necessarily identical for different groups. This policy challenge is one not yet met in the field of ECCD.

In other respects, I find the statement extremely useful for judging good policy, as something that fosters programs that: respect established principles of child development; are directed toward all but with special attention to children at risk, and are integral, participatory, collaborative, and "constructive" rather than compensatory in their approach, as well as qualitative, and cost-effective, with evaluation included from the outset. If policies try to codify these principles in ways sensitive to particular contexts, we should at least be pointed in the right direction.

A Closing Comment

Having set out criteria that might be applied according to both a statement of the Consultative Group and in personal terms, it seems appropriate to close by emphasizing again the importance of attending to negotiation and the political process when thinking about policy. If policy is to result from a negotiated process based on a multiplicity of definitions of what is desirable and feasible, and also on different sources of knowledge, including accumulated experience, then the most important part of both formulating and judging policy will be to assure that participation in those processes involves as broad a spectrum of potentially affected groups as possible within a context that is open, equitable, respectful, and representative.

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