

International Organizations, Social Science Research and National Policy Making in Brazil: is it only evidence that matters?

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Abstract:

Although this might be a view that runs contrary to common sense, social science research for policy is not so much about providing answers or evidence as about changing the way questions are understood, so that researchers and policy-makers (but also other publics) can begin to think differently, thus critically building the contours and contents of social problems. It is possible to have bad evidence-based policy making if the evidence used is biased, flawed or incomplete. Depending on the purposes of data collection, evidence may serve unjust policy objectives: statistical data and cartography, for instance, may be skillfully controlled and technically manipulated. By means of an exploration of some complex links between politics and social scientific knowledge, this chapter argues that the aspiration to universal applicability (and by extension to an ultimately benevolent problem solving character) on the part of evidence based policy making is problematic. Consequently, it suggests that the accumulation of scientific evidence that, nevertheless, does not address conditions of unequal distribution, misrecognition or disempowerment will not necessarily lead to deeper social transformations. On the basis of this theoretical background, and through the experience of USAID in the agenda setting of public policies related to violence against children and adolescents during the 1990s in Brazil, this chapter analyses the nexus between social science and decision-making rooted in a more critical, problem building research-policy paradigm. As a conclusion, this chapter emphasizes new roles assigned for citizens, researchers, politicians, activist networks and international organizations, and intends to contribute to the development of a wider public sphere for the construction and dissemination of social science research and policy agendas.

Introduction

In the vast field of linkages between social science research and public policies, knowledge includes what is produced within research centers and universities, but also non-scholar and non-academic organizations. At the same time, the making of public policies involves national and international governmental and non-governmental actors, which means that the conception of public policy-making supposes complex and dialectical dynamics of politics and players, including issues relating to recognition of identities (those social subjects and demands that are included in the policy-formulation agenda), participation of actors (those actors who are invited to take an active part in the decision-making process), the nature of norms (the different kinds of policy norms dealing with universality and/or particularity, general objectives and/or focused results), and co-responsibility in implementation (the monopoly of the State in public action *versus* pluralistic approaches in public service provision and public-private partnerships).

International organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union, and many others, are undoubtedly consequential in influencing national policy making. Such organizations are ultimately beholden to their member states, especially those which count on substantial material or symbolic resources, but officials within international bureaucracies can, nevertheless, act on their own within sometimes broad mandates. In many contexts, international organizations can be the transmitters of international norms, cultural or social values, and science patterns, thus playing a key role in the “global knowledge politics”. As we will develop in part one of this chapter, they have formulated and disseminated efficiency criteria for the development of social sciences, and have emphasized evidence based policy-relevant research as a “best practice”. Their agenda-setter and transmitter roles doubtlessly apply to the case of scientific development and social policy making in developing countries. In this connection the second part of this chapter will analyse the experience of USAID in the agenda setting of public policies related to violence against children and adolescents during the 1990s in Brazil.

Finally, by means of an exploration of some complex links between politics and social scientific knowledge, this paper argues in its third part that the aspiration to universal applicability (and by extension to an ultimately benevolent problem solving character) on the part of evidence based policy making is problematic. Consequently, it suggests that the accumulation of scientific evidence that, nevertheless, does not address conditions of unequal distribution, mirecognition or disempowerment will not necessarily lead to deeper social transformations. As a conclusion, this chapter intends to frame the understanding of the nexus between social science and decision-making rooted in a more critical, problem building research-policy paradigm, which emphasizes new roles assigned for citizens, researchers, politicians, activist networks and international organizations, and contributes to the development of a wider public sphere for the construction, conduction and dissemination of social science research problems and policy agendas.

1. Social science and policy-making: practices from some international organizations

We have chosen to analyze the role of four major international organizations here: the United Nations University, the European Union, the World Bank, and OECD. The basic criteria for selecting these organizations are the following: a) the four organizations in focus have put into place a series of projects and debates to foster the importance of policy social research and evidence-based public policies. They have also published documents, books, policy papers, etc. that reflect upon the linkages between social science and policy-making; b) their means, both human and financial, are of great relevance, and their contribution to the construction of models based on their own work is considerable, both regionally and worldwide; c) they tend to express different cultural and political perceptions and interpretative frameworks of how social transformations, development, and governmental policies should be globally thought of, decided upon and implemented. In other words, we suppose that this variation in world visions should also result in distinct conceptions of how social science research and public policies relate to each other; d) they also announce in their programmes that they adhere to diverse methods of work in the implementation of answers in order to promote closer ties between social science knowledge and the making of public policies¹.

1.1 - Case One: The United Nations University (UNU)

UNU develops its mandate in the field of science-policy linkages focusing on two major modalities: (i) building situational diagnoses on several issue areas, and (ii) transforming multidisciplinary research and knowledge into policy-relevant prescription and analysis. Within this second modality, it also develops models and scenarios, and evaluates the implications of different policy options. In fact, UNU presents itself as a think-tank for the UN, and attempts to give answers to complex global governance questions and to communicate them to a diverse audience, including Member States and academia, but also the private sector and NGO networks.

UNU affirms that its science-policy communication activities include, for instance: a) the involvement of practitioners in research by facilitating their participation in workshops

¹ Methodologically speaking, it is important to assert that this research is the result of information that was exclusively collected by means of the international organizations' Internet pages, since there has been no possibility to undertake interviews and/or produce primary data for this analysis. This is a clear shortcoming of this part of our chapter that must be acknowledged at its outset. We do believe, however, that websites and Internet reports show what these organizations intend to render visible to a larger public audience, thus making the analysis of discourses and narratives that we produce herein valid on the basis of the material that has been used and consulted. For a full-fledged version of the report, see MILANI, Carlos R. S. *Evidence-based Policy Research: critical review of some international programmes on relationships between social-science research and policy-making*. Paris: UNESCO/MOST Programme, Policy Paper n. 18, 2009, 58 p.

and by bringing in mid-level management from key organizations as visiting scholars for two to three months in order to provide an opportunity for joint reflection; b) quick publication of policy/research briefs for each research project; c) policy advocacy (direct or through the media, particularly targeting national governments, civil society organizations, and global institutions); d) organization of policy forums to disseminate the implications of UNU work; e) undertaking more rapid short-term projects or forums on urgent economic, political and social problems. These short-term and urgent projects require a particular methodology, since they suppose more consultation with end-users in the formulation and implementation of such policy-oriented projects.

In its Strategic Direction Report (2007-2010), UNU reaffirms the need to disseminate information for policy-makers in a format that is accessible, mainly through short, readable policy and research briefs. As a matter of fact, UNU has been publishing “Policy Briefs” since 2005, mainly based on the research done by four of its institutes: WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research), whose major thematic interest has so far been research on spatial disparities; CRISP (Center for Research Innovation and Science Policy), working on issues relating to sciences and technology policies; EHS (Institute for Environment and Human Security), whose motto is: “Advancing human security through knowledge-based approaches to reducing vulnerability and environmental risks”; and IAS (Institute of Advanced Studies) based in Tokyo, whose thematic field includes issues relating to global environmental governance and sustainable development.

In addition, it is important to say that, like many other UN institutions in the aftermath of the launching of the Global Compact by Kofi Annan at Davos in 1999, UNU is also involved in promoting alliances with the corporate sector, through its “Partnership Initiative”. UNU acknowledges that it is important to “engage private enterprises in the work of governments and the United Nations, to build sustainable and equitable societies together, and to mobilize comparative advantages in pursuit of a world free from want and from fear”. It reaffirms that business companies recognize that “addressing global problems such as poverty, environmental deterioration and trade imbalances through a Corporate Social Responsibility program is an investment opportunity”. Through this Partnership Initiative (and here we cite the institutional rhetoric in the field of public-private partnerships), UNU supports efforts for national governance programmes together with long-term private business investment; corporate partners may enhance their credibility, image and reputation; and corporate partners may gain first-hand access to the University's extensive international networks. Moreover, private partners can have first-hand access to UNU research that shapes global values and policies. What is the role for the corporate sector in policy-making and social science research funding? What are the dangers for the future development of democracy when corporations are directly involved in public decision-making and funding of policy-relevant social science research? By quoting such remarks from UNU Internet pages and raising these questions we intend to suggest that some reflection is needed on the actual results of public-private partnerships in the funding of social science research, and the involvement of private companies in public policy-making and implementation. We will come back to this issue in the third part of this chapter.

1.2 - The European Union and the European Research Area

In 2000, the EU decided to create the European Research Area (ERA), which was announced as the starting point for the development of a future unified research area all across Europe. This ERA should enable researchers (i) to move and interact, benefit from high-level infrastructures and work with networks of different European research institutions; (ii) share, teach, value and use knowledge effectively for social, business and policy purposes; (iii) optimize European, national and regional research programmes in order to support the best research throughout Europe; (iv) develop strong links with partners around the world so that Europe benefits from the worldwide progress of knowledge, contributes to global development and takes a leading role in international initiatives to solve global issues. Moreover, this research area should inspire the best talents to enter research careers in Europe, incite industry to invest more in European research – contributing to the EU objective to devote 3% of GDP for research, and strongly contribute to the creation of sustainable growth and jobs.

It is true that such a huge strategic change is still in the making in Europe, and that the reality of research is very diverse across the European continent. The creation of ERA coincides with budget cuts and reduction of posts in many European countries, which is just one expression of contradictions between what Brussels announces as its policy priorities and European national realities. With 80 per cent of public sector research in Europe being conducted at national level, mainly under national or regional research programmes, spending on science and research in the European Research Area is still far too low (around 1.9% of GDP) for the region to catch up with the United States (approximately 2.6% of GDP) or Japan (2.7%)².

According to information made available in EU Research Directorate reports, seven years on the creation of ERA has become a central pillar of the European Union for growth and jobs, together with the completion of the Single Market, the European innovation strategy and the creation of a European Higher Education Area. Today, there are still strong national and institutional barriers which prevent ERA from becoming a reality. Fragmentation remains a prevailing characteristic of the European public research base. Researchers still see career opportunities curtailed by legal and practical barriers hampering their mobility across institutions, sectors and countries. Businesses often find it difficult to cooperate and enter into partnerships with technological research institutions in Europe, particularly across countries. National and regional research funding remains largely uncoordinated. This leads to dispersion of resources and excessive duplication. Reforms undertaken at national level often lack a true European perspective and transnational coherence.

For these reasons, the European Commission has published a Green Paper reviewing progress made with respect to the European Research Area, raising questions for debate. The Commission sought answers to these questions and solicited further new ideas in a

² See: Euractiv Foundation at www.euractiv.com.

public consultation which lasted from May to August 2007. Following the public consultation results (over 800 written submissions), the Commission and Member States launched a series of new initiatives to develop this research area, called the “Ljubljana Process”, and five initiatives on specific areas of the ERA Green Paper. As far as knowledge-use and science-policy linkages are concerned, the Green Paper and the consultation process show some interesting features. It acknowledges that access to knowledge generated by the public research base and its use by business and policy makers lie at the heart of the European Research Area, where knowledge should circulate without barriers throughout the whole society. Another feature that should draw our attention is that social sciences are very rarely referred to. The Green Paper mentions the central relevance of effective knowledge-sharing notably between public research and industry, and in this case exact sciences and engineering are also considered important.³

1.3 - The World Bank

Three main activities have been analysed within the broad spectrum of programmes implemented by the World Bank in the field of social science and public policy linkages: the Policy Research Reports (and related Policy Research Working Papers), the Knowledge for Change Program, and Modeling Tool to Monitor the MDGs (addressed to policy makers, and based on the Development Data Platform). First, the Policy Research Reports (PRRs) aim to bring to a broad audience the results of World Bank research on development policies. These reports are designed to contribute to the debate on appropriate public policies for developing economies (*our emphasis*). PRRs are supposed to help policy makers take stock of what is known and clearly identify what is not known, and they should thus contribute to the debate in both the academic and policy communities on adequate public policy objectives. Because they summarize research, the PRRs are said to provoke further debate, both within the Bank and outside, concerning the methods used and the conclusions drawn. With regard to these Reports, the WB recalls that the Policy Research Working Papers are more addressed to Bank researchers and the design of future Bank programmes.

In both types of World Bank reports, the production of empirical evidence rooted in quantitative methods is considered more strategic insofar as it should contribute to efficient public spending and thus greater government accountability. Social impact

³ In the consultation process, for instance, it is said in the Green Paper that “regarding the main factors hindering efficient knowledge transfer to industry, most of the 528 on-line respondents consider cultural differences between the business and science communities to be a ‘very’ (293) or ‘fairly’ (146) important barrier” (The ERA New Perspectives, Public Consultation Results, p. 68). On page 74, it reaffirms that it is very important to increase the transparency of how scientific results feed back into policy-making and ensure multidisciplinary expertise in decision-making processes. On page 75 of the Green Paper, there is another mention of the issue of dialogue between researchers and civil society. Responses during the consultation process highlight that the major advantage of their contribution to citizens’ better understanding of research and the clarification of its social relevance for policy-making. Here, the matter of an “advocacy of research-policy linkage” seems to appear as an important issue. For more detailed explanations, see: http://ec.europa.eu/research/leaflets/index_en.html.

analysis is another example of policy-relevant research methodology that the World Bank affirms using in support of beneficiary countries. According to the Bank's explanation on the objectives and use of such PRRs, *evidence-based public policies are those which have demonstrated benefits of focusing on what works, and therefore resulting in more efficient spending of public funds*. It goes without saying that, in this case, there is a strategic approach to creating knowledge and steering its usage by developing countries in the policy-making process (*our emphasis*).

There is another question to be raised in relation to PRRs, their dissemination and reaching out to the policy-making community worldwide. In a report published by the World Bank itself, it is said that the way the Bank's analytical work is disseminated and discussed is often inadequate. Reports tend to be long and often are not fully read even by policy makers. In many cases they are not translated into local languages or discussed outside a limited group of government counterparts.⁴

Second, the Knowledge for Change Program (KCP) serves as a very well-funded vehicle for the pooling of intellectual and financial resources for data collection, analysis, and research supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development. Launched in 2002 by the World Bank's Development Economics (DEC) Vice Presidency and its founding donors, Finland and the United Kingdom, KCP aims to encourage and facilitate the Bank's dialogue with partner agencies, developing country managers, and other interested parties. A subsidiary objective of this programme is to give support to data collection and analysis, and improve research capacities in the Bank's client countries. The KCP funds are said to have played an important role in influencing opinion-formation on development policies mainly through the World Development Reports (WDRs). The WDR 2008, for instance, has been cited by Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug, the Gates Foundation, Kofi Annan, several leading economists and, of course, support for agriculture projects is being scaled up significantly by the Bank Group itself as well as by many other donors. Herein resides one major influence of knowledge produced by the World Bank: it addresses its own constituencies direct (mainly donors and clients), and sets development agendas in several world regions, particularly in less developed Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries.⁵

The methodological focus of the KCP, according to the World Bank, is to move rapidly into areas and development issues where the creation of new knowledge is likely to assist the formulation of better policies with a greater impact on poverty. The three trust funds established under the KCP support activities relating to overarching themes of (i) poverty dynamics and delivery of basic services; (ii) investment climate and trade and integration; and (iii) global public goods. As far as the first theme is concerned (poverty reduction), for instance, one of the main activities refers to the development of impact assessments, which tend to be considered a fundamental means to learn about the effectiveness of development interventions in achieving results. With approximately 11.8 million US dollars of donor contributions for the development of this activity (since its launching),

⁴ See: *Meeting the Challenges of Global Development: a Long-term Strategic Exercise for the World Bank Group*, October 2007, p. 64.

⁵ See: Knowledge for Change Program, *Annual Report* (2008).

the World Bank gives support to countries in designing evaluation methodologies, and facilitates global learning on development interventions based on such evaluations. WB is also initiating a series of projects which aim to assess the development impact of some new interventions in key areas such as education (school-based management), infrastructure (slum upgrading), health (HIV/AIDS), and rural development (land reform). Moreover, the Bank also uses poverty measurement as a tool for monitoring, describing and forecasting income poverty and inequality, including aggregate poverty measures, sharper poverty profiles, and better household surveys.⁶

In the field of capacity building, the Bank's efforts have been channelled through country-level support to academic and technical institutions via its lending programme and associated technical assistance. The Bank offers training and courses, mainly via the World Bank Institute (WBI), and provides research grants to networks such as the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), the Economic Research Forum for the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey (ERF), and the Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC) – for countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These networks are in turn now part of the Global Development Network (GDN).

These capacity-building activities are monitored by researchers inside the WB Group. One should recall that, with a significant central research department and myriad research activities throughout the organization, the WB Group constitutes one of the largest concentrations of development researchers in the world. The Bank's full-time researchers are mainly found in the Development Research Group (DECRG) within the Development Economics Vice-Presidency. These researchers in DECRG are embedded within a vast development agency (with a global staff of about 8,500) that is oriented towards the implementation of development projects in developing countries. What is the role of research in the development practice at the Bank?⁷ Is the profile of researchers (disciplines, schools of thought, background) who are recruited by the WB an influential factor in research design and scientific options?

Ravaillon (2007), a professional with more than twenty years of research experience with the WB, affirms that the Bank has mainly developed two kinds of research. First is evaluative research, which is broader than impact evaluation, and attempts to assess whether development policies are effective, and under what circumstances they tend to be more effective. It embraces both “micro” interventions in specific sectors and policies,

⁶ The procedures and criteria used under KCP are also worth describing. Proposals should demonstrate relevance to the objectives of the programme and details of key aspects such as innovation, partners, country participation, deliverables, and development impact. A log frame-type matrix summarizing project objectives, inputs, outputs, outcome/impact, performance indicators, risks and critical assumptions, is required as part of each application for funding under the KCP, to facilitate evaluation. The criteria for assessing proposals include the degree to which proposals are innovative, provide new knowledge and/or pilot/demonstration impact; demonstrate country participation and ownership; incorporate developing country capacity building; can apply to a different country or region; and achieve results while remaining cost effective.

⁷ See: Ravaillon, Martin. 2007. *Research in Practice at the World Bank*. World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper.

and it includes both *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluation. Evaluative research must be driven by questions formulated by policy makers, and not by preferences for certain types of data or certain methods. In evaluative research design, policy questions should constitute the driving issue, although the WB tends to focus more on methodological questions relating to data collection, software design, data analysis, etc. Policy should not fit the methodology, but vice versa.

The second type of cross-cutting research developed by the WB can be termed methodological research, which should help expand the tool kit routinely employed by policy makers and analysts, including the data collected and the methods used to analyse data. The Bank has become a major producer of development data, and WB researchers have played a crucial role. Nevertheless, Ravaiillon (2007) recalls that “not every important piece of development research has an immediate and clear policy implication” (p. 1). Why? The author puts forward three main features to explain this: (i) policy makers and practitioners must still understand the potential for research to inform policy processes, and also be ready to pay for the costs associated with research development; (ii) policy makers should increase their perception of benefits once research projects address what they consider to be “relevant questions”; (iii) research projects should also result in *credible answers, which can be based on evidence (our emphasis)*.

Of course, we should also say that this dialogue between researchers and policy makers is highly political, and involves micro background features of the research team, as well as (and mostly) macro institutional development factors. Schick (2002), for instance, through the analysis of a government-sponsored study of race relations in New Zealand schools, shows how political and institutional pressures and a positivist-empiricist research culture further supported a mechanistic approach to social inclusion. In her article she argues that a meaningful approach to difference and voice in inclusive research requires critical attention to the conditions of communication and the micro-politics of the day-to-day interactions that shape the meaning of social categories in practice.⁸

That is why policy research should not be limited to research projects on technical and methodological issues. Social science research may be rooted in a diverse set of ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, including action-research, critical theory, and post-positivist research. As Cox and Sinclair (1996) assert, the world of research tends to divide the social reality into separate spheres, creating subdivisions that are dictated by arbitrary (and often very conservative) intellectual conventions. There is no such thing as *the* theory, since all theories are based on a context, and can relate to either ontologies of problem-solving (taking the world and its institutions as they are, seeking for solutions to concrete society problems) or problem-building (looking for the historical background, complexities and deep causes of social problems). In the first case, the number of intervening variables is limited; research is based on a particular problem to be analysed, thus producing laws and regularities. In the second case, there is no divide between research, society and politics; research is ontologically normative and

⁸ See: Schick, Ruth S. 2002. When the Subject is Difference: Conditions of Voice in Policy-oriented Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (5): 632-651.

epistemologically critical, since it seeks to produce social change according to a certain set of values. Critical social research is problem-building insofar as it does not separate facts from values, problematizes society and social relations, and is not oriented towards adaptation and maintenance of a given *status quo*.⁹

Choucri (2007) rightly complements this reasoning affirming that there is a direct connection between knowledge and political factors, such as power, influence, capability, war and peace. This connection is generally acknowledged but seldom addressed head on by academia or international agencies. If we accept the idea that knowledge is power, it is obvious that its application is necessary for the actual realization of power. Power is embedded in concrete social relationships; it is not an abstract attribute of a single and isolated political actor. That is why knowledge may become both instrumental (i.e. leading to change) and contextual (constrained by conditions). Parenthetically, the formulation of evidence-based policy is precisely the use of knowledge for the pursuit of policy, and the resort to knowledge as a legitimization mechanism.¹⁰

Thirdly and in order to conclude on the Bank's activities in the field of research-policy linkages, under the programme "Modeling to monitor the MDGs" in the Development Data Platform, one can find other policy research tools available for decision-makers. The modelling methodologies being used by the Bank to understand the challenges of achieving the MDGs at country as well as global level use software programmes to deliver computable general equilibrium (CGE) models (neoclassic economics). These are used to analyse macroeconomic data, along with micro data gathered in detailed household surveys. Policy makers using these tools are supposed to be able to analyse various policy scenarios, while also comparing the outcomes of actual policies and programmes, with the counterfactuals. These computerized models can explain not only what happened as a result of a given policy, programme or project, but what would have happened had the policy, programme or project not been implemented. This modelling draws on the Development Data Platform. The Bank's Development Data Platform (DDP) is a web-based data tool that provides access to statistics from more than 75 key databases. Users can also access record-level data and documentation from over three thousand household surveys. The DDP Micro-data incorporates both innovative IT design and development and a substantial effort to locate and format household survey data.

As a matter of fact, this brief analysis of the World Bank's philosophical foundations in defining the role of knowledge in policy-making shows its normative options in the use of social science methods, particularly relating to neoclassical economics and functionalist sociology, but also to econometric and statistical modelling. The appeal to quantitative methods and the production of empirical evidence stems from the fundamental notion that evidence-based public policy is rooted in research that has undergone some form of quality assurance and scrutiny. This is the kind of social science

⁹ See: Cox, Robert W.; Sinclair, T. J. 1996. *Approaches to World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 6: Social forces, states, and world order, pp. 60-84).

¹⁰ See: Choucri, Nazly. 2007. *The Politics of Knowledge Management*. Paper prepared for the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge.

research that is supposed to bear the monopoly of the scientific nature and the methodological rigor.

As a matter of fact, such “scientific” developments in the field of policy research aim to “modernize” government by making greater use of evidence, especially evidence from the social sciences. Evidence-based policy-making strives to use only the best available evidence to inform policy. This evidence is rated in terms of its quality and the use of a relevant research design and is mainly quantitative. O’Dwyer (1994) says that evidence is broadly defined as research conducted systematically using scientific principles but there are differing interpretations of the strength and quality of findings produced by different types of research methods. Availability and validity are key issues.

What is not recalled in policy briefs or institutional reports is that there is some disagreement in the literature about whether or not “evidence-based” policy-making is better than other forms of policy-making. Neither do they do recall that evidence-based research policy also reflects a conception of the kind of linkage that can be set up between social science research and public policies. Institutional research reports do not mention, moreover, that it is generally recognized in the literature that evidence is not the only factor influencing policy-making.¹¹ Knowledge (and evidence is also knowledge) also comes with diverse degrees of uncertainty that are seldom acknowledged by international agencies. Policy-making, as politics, is present everywhere. Its context and conditions are often very distinctive. As Choucri (2007) says, that is why knowledge management focusing on policy issues can seldom assume that “one size fits all”.

1.4 - The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the field of education

In 1968, OECD’s Directorate for Education’s Section on Research and Knowledge Management set up the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), whose main mandate is to promote studies on research, innovation and knowledge management. A new research focus emerged in 2003, building on recommendations by the CERI Governing Board, which stressed that “evidence-based policy research is a vital complement to other practical and innovative processes in teaching and learning and should not be neglected by policy makers as a source of innovation”. The project has centred on a series of workshops (see box below) which brought together researchers, experts and policy makers to exchange experiences and practices. These workshops have reviewed main aspects of evidence-based policy research (methods, transaction costs, and capacities), and have also discussed what constitutes evidence for research in education, how that evidence can best be used, and how to identify best practices in the field. As a result of these workshops, in June 2007 CERI released a book entitled “Evidence in Education: Linking Research and Policy”. At its very introduction the book states the

¹¹ See: O’Dwyer, Lisel. 2004. *A critical review of evidence-based policy making*. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Southern Research Centre, AHURI Final Report, No. 58.

following: it is crucial that educational policy decisions are made based on the best evidence possible.

Several documents made available by CERI on the Internet reiterate that evidence-based policy is defined as “the conscientious and explicit use of current best evidence in making decisions and choosing between policy options”. Evidence-based policy research (EbPR) is thus defined as the research that is used to produce evidence-based policy. This seems obvious, but it creates at the same time an important differentiation, since EbPR is distinguished from “purely scientific research” in that the former is oriented to informing action while the latter is oriented towards developing theory and testing hypotheses. Both types of research cannot be considered mutually exclusive; however, the formal justification given in OECD’s documents for setting up such a distinction is the following: “burdens and standards of proof of causality are very different and in many cases evidence-based policy is obliged to use the best available evidence at a given moment in time”.¹²

Box 1 CERI Workshops on Evidence-Based Policy-Making in the field of Education		
Workshop	Where?	Main questions and focus
First held in April 2004	Washington D. C.	What constitutes evidence? Comparing advantages and shortcomings of a range of established social science research methodologies.
Second held in January 2005	Stockholm	How diverse are stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, practitioners and the media)? Communicating needs, priorities and outputs.
Third held in September 2005	The Hague	What are the effective mechanisms for mediating between research and policy/practice? Defining the roles and achievements of brokerage agencies (good practices).
Fourth and final held in July 2006	London	How to implement evidence-based policy research? The focus was on implementation, scaling up and sustainability.

Of course, one cannot separate this formal distinction from the reasons why OECD’s Member States and CERI have decided to invest (time, funds, expertise) in EbPR in the field of education. In the reports and Internet material that we have consulted, we can read that OECD shares some fundamental working principles, as follows:

¹² See: Burns, Tracey and Schuller, Tom. *Evidence-based Policy in Education: new opportunities and challenges*. Paris, Centre for Educational Research and Development, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, draft version, 2006. See also: *Evidence-Based Policy Research: the next step*. Report drafted by Olaf McDaniel, Lotte van der Linden, and CBE Consultants BV (Amsterdam). Session organized by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the OCED Conference on Evidence-Based Policy Research. The Hague, September 2005.

- (i) There is a growing concern with accountability, transparency and effectiveness of educational policies and educational research in OECD countries.
- (ii) The information readily available for policy-making is often unsuitable, either because the rigorous research required for policy needs has not been conducted, or because the research that is available is contradictory and does not suggest a single course of action.
- (iii) OECD countries share a belief that education and knowledge are increasingly important factors in innovation and economic growth.
- (iv) There is a need to set up a clearer definition of educational research, and more consistent support for it.
- (v) It is necessary to shift from a linear to an interactive model of research utilization, for instance, by means of employing teachers as researchers and identifying the knowledge needs of stakeholders.

On the one hand, what such principles reaffirm is evidently relevant from the viewpoint of micro relations within the world of educational research: *inter alia*, the way research is conducted, who it involves in its methodological development and scientific process, the scientific opening to demands stemming from policy makers, policy epistemic communities, and non-formal groupings. At the same time, no one would currently dare say that policy makers need not be accountable for their actions and decisions *vis-à-vis* civil society organizations and citizens. On the other hand, what such tenets seem to ignore is the contextual reality within which we need to situate the dialectical, contradictory and political relationships between social science research and policy-making. These principles do not integrate questions of political autonomy (of individuals, associations, NGOs), funding, institutional development, training capacities and public-private tensions that are fundamental variables in today's analysis of science-policy relationships under a mode of regulation and a discourse that tends to privilege an ethics of the market over an ethics of the public good.

It is true that experts participating in the series of workshops organized by CERI acknowledge that EbPR is a complex and potentially contentious issue which generates serious political debate. They recognize that it is unlikely for there to be a set of conclusions or recommendations which sit comfortably with every OECD policy regime. Among the most important reasons for the lack of success of EbPR in education, OECD's experts have pointed out the following: (i) short-term politics: there is no time to include the present EBPR results in the practice of the political decision process; (ii) there are no structural links between research and schools; (iii) misinterpretation of research by media and politicians; (iv) lack of interaction between research, policy and practice; (v) research results often do not fit into policy's agendas or interest; (vi) absence of suitable mechanisms or incentives at school level to feed evidence into classroom practice; (vii) teachers have to respond to immediate classroom needs and cannot wait for research results; (viii) present EbPR does not provide sufficient classroom tools to play an important role; (ix) researchers and practitioners do not speak the same language and operate in isolation from each other; (x) negative evaluation results can be interpreted (by

public and politicians) as proof of bad policy; (xi) politicians often have their specific ideas and are frustrated when evidence tells them that they are wrong.

These explanatory factors apply to the reality of OECD countries in the field of educational policies, and demonstrate that there can be no single best method or type of evidence-based policy research. National contexts are variable, and the key is for research and policy communities to deploy appropriate and contextual combinations of approaches and methodologies which match the characteristics of the policy issues under consideration. They must also have the capacity to select, implement and evaluate these combinations. Governance (including types of political arenas, backgrounds of political culture, the meaning and importance of authority, and institutional mechanisms of policy dialogue) between these two epistemic communities (the science community on one side, and policy community, on the other) is central in the definition of future scientific and political cooperation schemes.

How does OECD attempt to foster these dialogues? Of course, through some traditional mechanisms embedded in international cooperation (policy briefs, workshops, publications, which we have already mentioned in the analysis of other multilateral organizations), but also with the support of brokerage agencies, such as the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) within the University of London,¹³ the Knowledge Chamber of the Netherlands,¹⁴ the Danish Knowledge Clearinghouse, What Works Clearinghouse (USA), the Canadian Council on Learning, and the Social Care Institute of Excellence (United Kingdom). Many of the agencies have been created as a result of the OECD/CERI workshop series (box 1). These brokerage agencies are also distinguished in their goals and means, with New Zealand's Best Evidence Synthesis Programme providing an example of a brokerage programme within the Ministry, whereas the Canadian Council on Learning, although also federally funded, is separate from the provincial Ministries. The United States' What Works Clearinghouse functions in collaboration with a number of other institutes and subcontractors, and also conducts consumer surveys and questionnaires to ensure that the service it provides is meeting the demands of the users (researchers, practitioners, policy makers, etc).

With the support of relatively well-funded external agencies, CERI has, for instance, been able to establish a series of criteria for what it considers to be sound, rigorous and relevant EbPR. It is worth noting that all these criteria deal with methodological issues only, as follows:

¹³ Formed in 1993, EPPI-Centre works on health and education policy-relevant research. For details, see: <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk>. It is interesting to read EPPI-Centre's glossary, where we can find the following definition of evidence: "research evidence is knowledge and understanding developed by empirical and conceptual research. There are many types of research, all with their own methodology for creating and evaluating evidence".

¹⁴ Established in June 2006, the Knowledge Chamber of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is a meeting point for the top of the ministry and knowledge institutes, such as advisory councils and planning offices. It formulates subjects on which more knowledge is needed. Knowledge questions here feed back into the process of evidence-based policies.

- Causality claim: to what extent does the research method ascertain whether a causal effect happens or not?
- Explanation claim: to what extent does the research method explain how or why the causal effect is happening?
- Transportability: how far is the evidence such that the results can be applied to most (or all) of the relevant field in different settings of time or space?
- Stability: will the evidence be reasonably stable over time in its application?
- Validity: does the research use instruments which measure what it is intended to measure?
- Variability: to what extent does the research method involve or permit variation in the type of intervention?

Such questions are thought-provoking in the understanding of the research-policy linkages. CERI has set up these (methodological) criteria focusing on a very particular field of action (educational policies), based on social realities of OECD countries and available macro educational indicators that allow for such a generalization. What is the reality of other countries and regions in the world? Moreover, experts involved in EbPR tend to share a certain number of philosophical principles (the role of social science research, the distinction between theoretical research and EbPR, the acceptance of current governance structures that lead international relations, etc.) and training backgrounds (levels of expertise, experience and practice in the field of EbPR), thus constituting a quite homogeneous epistemic community. Again, what are the differences amidst stakeholders in terms of intellectual involvement and experience with issues relating to the policy-research nexus in other settings?¹⁵

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In part one of this chapter, the aim was not to undertake a thorough evaluation of science-policy linkage programmes being implemented by multilateral and bilateral organizations; rather, our aim has been to introduce briefly some practices and understand (both contextually and ontologically) the main tools that are highlighted in their communication strategy as a means to foster the dialogue between social science research and public policy formulation. In sum, the first part of this chapter has shown a

¹⁵ In the analysis of international organizations, it is important to note that UNDP does not have a particular programme on evidence-based public policies; however, it develops many tools in which it presents good practices for decision-makers, guides for action in the field of democratic governance, as well as development indicators and methodologies for building indicators. One example is the “Guide to Civil Society Organizations Working on Democratic Governance”, published by the Oslo Governance Centre: this guide offers a snapshot of more than 300 civil society organizations working on democratic governance at global and regional level, and it provides information on CSOs across UNDP’s priority democratic governance areas. In the field of indicators, one can recall the “Governance Indicators: A User’s Guide”, which is a joint collaboration between the Oslo Centre and the European Commission, providing direction on how to use and where to find sources of governance indicators. Intended for the non-specialist user, this guide brings together information on how to use indicators and where to find material on those sources in one easy-to-use package. Finally, one can also refer to the “Governance and Conflict Prevention database”, which allows UNDP practitioners to access information electronically on best practices and lessons learned in UNDP governance and conflict prevention activities for policy formulation efforts.

profound sense of continuity and regularity in the way programmes and activities are thought of and implemented by the four selected international organizations. To a larger extent, irrespective of their diverse foundational philosophies these organizations share the need to invest in evidence-based policy research, and promote policy dialogues as an instrument to build a broader consensus on the role of empirical evidence in policy research. Regardless of their cultural differences and specific political mandates, they all disseminate policy briefs, build databases and promote policy forums.

2. The case of USAID and the problem of sexual violence against children and adolescents in Brazil (1994-2004)

The history of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) goes back to the Marshall Plan and the need for Europe's reconstruction after the Second World War. Since its creation in 1961, USAID has been the main US agency, together with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (set up by George W. Bush in 2004) in the promotion of America's cooperation for development and technical assistance world-wide. According to data made available by OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate, between 1994 and 2004 the US was the main contributor of official development aid (ODA) in absolute terms, showing an evolution from approximately 10 billion to 19.7 billion US dollars; however, in 2004 this represented only 0.17% of its GDP.¹⁶

USAID is an independent federal government agency, but it receives foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. Therefore, it goes without saying that North-American foreign aid policy also works as an instrument of "soft and cooptive power" in the maintenance of American political status in the international system.¹⁷ In the case of Latin America, for instance, aid policy is nowadays officially designed to support governments in their fight to strengthen liberal democracy, create long-term stability for economic growth, and promote security – one of US government's priority since 2001. Currently, the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean oversees sixteen bilateral

¹⁶ Data from www.oecd.org/dac.

¹⁷ This concept was articulated by Joseph Nye, who first made a distinction between "behavioural power" ("the ability to obtain outcomes you want") and "resource power" ("the possession of resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want"). Professor Nye presented behavioural power as a continuum: at one extreme would be "hard or command power" (defined as "the ability to change what others do through coercion"), followed next on the same continuum by inducement. At the other extreme was soft or cooptive power (defined by Nye as "the ability to shape what others want through attraction"), preceded by agenda-setting. Joseph Nye also addressed the types of resource power needed to exercise hard and soft behavioral power: material economic and military strength, for example, would be linked to coercive hard power, while the attractiveness of one's culture, the mastery of institutions and capacity to influence policy making would be associated with soft power. In this context, Joseph Nye argued that as much as military strength, the dominance of US culture and its capacity to set policy agendas world-wide would sustain American great power status. In: NYE, Joseph. *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990.

missions, four regional programmes, and a Washington-based programme for Cuba, with an overall budget of approximately USD 963 million.¹⁸

In 2004, the main Brazilian bilateral partners were Japan (51% of the total ODA), Germany (18%), the United Kingdom (13%), France (9%), Canada (5%), and the United States (2%). Today the US bilateral programmes include a variety of themes, such as economic growth and youth employability, environmental protection and energy development, corporate social responsibility, as well as public health. USAID in Brazil states its objectives as follows: to preserve natural ecosystems, promote sustainable forest management, mitigate climate change, and promote clean energy technologies; to support efforts to prevent and control tuberculosis and malaria; to promote economic empowerment and social inclusion for disadvantaged persons (including those living with HIV/AIDS); to foster trade-led micro and small enterprise development to expand economic opportunities to disadvantaged people, and build partnerships with public and private sector entities to achieve development goals. In the particular case of public health goals, USAID has been working closely with the Brazilian National Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS Programme in order to promote quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS, to expand HIV testing and counseling, and support training and capacity-building activities particularly through non governmental organizations.¹⁹ It is in 1994 that USAID starts its first activity in the field of protection of childhood and teenage in situation of social vulnerability, and launches the POMMAR programme (“Prevenção Orientada a Meninos e Meninas em Risco”) in the field of prevention for boys and girls at risk.

In the 1990s, the international cooperation agenda was more open to integrate “soft issues” such as environmental protection, social and cultural dimensions of development, human rights or urban planning. In a less obstructed political context where transnational networks of activists can expand more freely emerged the theme of global public action against sexual exploitation of children. In 1996 governments of 122 countries, together with non-governmental organizations, the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) campaign, UNICEF and other agencies within the family of the United Nations, gathered together in Stockholm for the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, and have stated that, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, and their rights are to be enjoyed without discrimination of any kind”. The commercial sexual exploitation of children was then considered a fundamental violation of children’s rights: it comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person. That means that the child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual

¹⁸ See: USAID Report for Latin America and the Caribbean (2009), which is available at www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean.

¹⁹ See: USAID Country Profile for Brazil (2009), which is available at www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/index.html.

exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.²⁰

Domestically, mainly because of wealth concentration, socioeconomic disparities, practices of violence within families, and social values and myths related to gender, race and the status of women and children in society, Brazil had at this time one of the worst child prostitution problems in the world and a thriving sex tourism industry that had developed in more impoverished federate-states, such as Ceara, Bahia, Mato Grosso do Sul and Amazonas. A survey undertaken in 1997 identified 65 localities of prostitution in six cities in Mato Grosso do Sul, and many of the prostitutes were young girls. In fact, Brazil is still one of the favorite destinations of paedophile sex tourists from Europe and the United States. In Sao Paulo, 64% of denunciations of physical aggression against children are related to domestic violence, and the majority of children who live on the streets do so because of family violence. Moreover, child sexual exploitation often implicates public figures and political leaders.²¹ In Brazil it is still extremely difficult to quantify sexual violence against children and adolescents due to problems related to impunity and invisibility of these clandestine and criminal practices, but also because of lacking official statistics and prevailing social taboos. In 2000, there were approximately fifty thousand annual cases of sexual violence against children and adolescents, according to data reported by the Ministry of Justice. The Brazilian Multiprofessional Association for the Protection of Childhood and Adolescence (ABRAPIA) reports that seven children or teenagers are sexually abused every hour in Brazil.²²

How and why has this startling social problem been incorporated into the national public policy agenda? In brief, box 2 below presents main domestic and international events having taken part in the agenda-setting of public policies related to sexual violence against children and adolescents in Brazil (1994-2004).

²⁰ First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Declaration and Agenda for Action, 1996.

²¹ Survey by the Ministry of Justice, UNICEF and the government of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, "Child prostitutes used in sex tourism in Pantanal", 17 September, 1997. See also: United Nations Study, "UN proposes pact on family violence", ALC News Service, 24 July 1998. Many reports can also be found at www.cedeca.org.br.

²² Data and historical background from KOSHIMA, Karin Satsuki Lima. *Cooperação Internacional e Políticas Públicas: a influência do POMMAR/USAID na agenda pública brasileira de enfrentamento à violência sexual contra crianças e adolescentes*. Salvador (Bahia, Brazil): Universidade Federal da Bahia, Master Dissertation (research director: Carlos R. S. Milani), 2006, 232 p.

Box 2 Domestic and international chronology of events	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1988	Brazilian Republican Constitution (Title VIII, Chapter VII, art. 227, paragraph 4).
1989	International Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 19, item 1 and 34).
1990	World Summit for Children (Special Session on Children), held at New York (United Nations headquarters).
1990	Brazilian law n. 8069 on the rights of children and adolescents, known as the ECA (“Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente”). The ECA foresaw the creation of participatory councils at national, federate-state, and municipal levels as a means for the follow-up and monitoring of legal measures.
1991	Creation of the National Council on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA), where governmental representatives and non governmental members are equally present.
1991	Establishment by 31 non governmental organizations of the Center for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (CEDECA, Bahia).
1993	National Parliamentary Commission on Prostitution of Children and Adolescents (CPI).
2000	National Plan to Fight Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents (approved by CONANDA)
2003	First National Interministerial Meeting that sets up this social problem as a national public policy priority.

Source: Adapted from Koshima, *op. cit.*, chapters 2 and 3.

These national and international facts have directly contributed to the emergence of children and adolescents as new social subjects, but also as subjects of rights, thus building the contours of a distinctive paradigm in the development of their sociopolitical status in Brazil. The 1993 Parliamentary Commission was a cornerstone in the dissemination all over the country of the need for urgent public measures to protect these rights. Among 930 municipalities where situations of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents were identified (including trafficking, pronography, sex tourism, prostitution), 292 (31.8%) were located in the North-east, 241 (25.7%) in the South-east, 161 (17.3%) in the South, 127 (13.6%) in the Center-West, and 109 (11.6%) in the North region of Brazil. Before the 1990s, this type of sexual violence was narrowly considered as a private and family matter.

National and international civil society organizations and social movements have also played a key role in bringing into the debate a broader human rights approach and a public good perspective. As a result, in 2003, for the first time in Brazilian political history, President Lula recognized the fight against these violent crimes as a national policy priority, setting up an interministerial committee eventually responsible for the development of the first national programme in this social sector. In 2004, combatting sexual violence against children and adolescents was institutionalized as a national public policy priority, which however does not mean that the social problem has so far been solved.²³

In such a process of institutionalization and legitimation of the rights of children and adolescents as a national public priority, what has been the role of USAID and POMMAR in terms of policy development?

Karin Koshima asserts that there are three phases in the development of POMMAR: mapping (1994-1997), mobilization (1998-2000) and policy dialogue (2000-2004).²⁴ In 1993 a first socioeconomic survey designed by USAID revealed that an impressive number of children and adolescents were at risk of social and sexual violence, particularly in three cities in the North-east (Fortaleza, Recife and Salvador). POMMAR was launched immediately after that, in 1994, in the wake of the National Law 8069 (ECA) and as a result of a demand mainly put forward by many of those non governmental organizations which had been set up in the beginning of the nineties, thus still in search of their real social goals. Such organizations considered the ECA as a key political instrument in order to promote public policy changes and define new measures of social assistance. USAID/POMMAR gave support to these NGOs, and organized the First Seminar on Street Children in Brazil, counting on the participation of more than fifty governmental and non governmental organizations. At the end of this seminar, it was suggested that POMMAR should work as a clearing house and a network builder, and also give support and technical assistance to innovative pedagogical experiences.²⁵ In 1998 POMMAR received new funding from USAID, which allowed it to consolidate its thematic areas (such as art-education) and emphasize the need for decentralization of its projects (culminating with the establishment of two new offices in Fortaleza and Salvador). In its third phase POMMAR gave impetus to the economic dimension of the problem of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and worked hand in hand with governmental and non governmental organizations in the eradication of child labor in urban areas. In 2002 with the fight against sexual violence were

²³ According to the National Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH), in 2009 there were 15,345 denunciations of sexual violence against children and adolescents through public telephone calls. The 100 phone number had been created in 1997 by non governmental organizations, and was integrated by the federal government as a public service in 2003 (free calls). In January 2010, the federal government announced a public expenditure of approximately 51 million US dollars for this policy priority (the highest amount since 2003). See: www.direitoshumanos.gov.br.

²⁴ See also KOSHIMA, op. cit.

²⁵ See the report: POMMAR. *Prevenção Orientada a Meninos e Meninas em Risco: 10 anos*. Brasília, 2004.

associated activities to hamper trafficking of children and adolescents for sexual purposes. In its third phase, POMMAR opened an office in Brasília as a means to foster political articulation with ministries, public governmental programmes and national forums.

Box 3 USAID/POMMAR's institutional, financial and methodological support	
<i>Number of organizations</i>	<i>Thematic area</i>
36	Education and professional development (art-education, child labor)
8	HIV/AIDS assistance and prevention
14	Sexual violence and trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes
6	Health, family support and advocacy

Source: Koshima, *op. cit.*, p.121.

One key aspect in USAID/POMMAR's involvement with this policy area in Brazil between 1994 and 2004 was the financial, technical and methodological support given to governmental and non governmental organizations, thus contributing to the development of a national policy network capable of designing public policies to fight against this kind of sexual violence (see box 3 for a summary of its actions and organizations supported between 1994 and 2004). POMMAR worked together with the North-American non governmental organization *Partners of the Americas* and gave support to a series of national NGOs through a ten-year budget of approximately 11 million US dollars. In spite of lacking consolidated data and nation-wide evidence on the issue of sexual violence against children and adolescents, POMMAR decided to fund the participation of partner organizations in national and international events as an instrument for building national capacities in this policy area (for instance, capacities in terms of management, monitoring, and evaluation), and for contributing to the institutionalization of this kind of sexual violence as a public priority in Brazil. Of course this avenue of cooperation between USAID/POMMAR and non governmental organizations was also traversed by some obstacles, such as the 2003 reaction of Brazilian governmental and non governmental organizations to political changes in the Bush administration's strategies in the field of HIV/AIDS.²⁶ However, as one can see in box 4 below, USAID/POMMAR was able to politically build its legitimacy during these ten years of intense activities as a result of its acknowledgement by both governmental and non governmental organizations working in this field in Brazil.

²⁶ In February 2003 the Secretary of State (Colin Powell) instructed USAID to promote sexual abstaining and not the distribution of condoms in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Social projects dealing with sex workers, harm-reduction or abortion should also be avoided. The reaction in Brazil was resulted in the rejection by public authorities and NGOs of the aid package of 40 million US dollars, because the criteria applied by USAID would harm national efforts to control and prevent HIV/AIDS.

Box 4 USAID/POMMAR's participation in key events: I (invited only); F (financial support for the activity); T (technical support for the activity); FO (financial support for the participation of NGOs in the activity); FR (fund-raising); L (political lobby).							
<i>Year</i>	<i>Activity</i>	I	F	T	FO	FR	L
1994	First metropolitan conference on prostitution of girls and adolescents and public policies	X					
1995	Seminar on the exploitation of girls in Brazil	X					
1995	Parliamentary front for the end of violence, exploitation and sex tourism against children and adolescents (C&A)	X					X
1995	First seminar on the exploitation and sexual abuse of C&A in North-east metropolis		X	X	X		
1995	Launching of the first national campaign against sexual exploitation of C&A			X	X		
1996	Seminar against sexual exploitation of C&A in the Americas				X		
1996	Stockholm First World Congress				X		
1997	ECPAT First Meeting		X	X	X		
1998	ECPAT Second Meeting		X	X	X		
2000	Establishment of the National Day to fight against sexual violence of C&A						X
2000	National plan to to fight against sexual violence of C&A		X	X	X	X	
2001	Yokohama Second World Congress				X		
2002	National research on trafficking of women and adolescents for sexual exploitation purposes			X	X	X	
2003	First national seminar on trafficking and sexual exploitation of C&A			X	X	X	
2003	Creation of the interministerial commission to fight against abuse and sexual exploitation of C&A			X			

Source: Koshima, *op. cit.*, p.193.

3. To end with a new beginning: is it only evidence that matters?

In the conclusion of this chapter are raised some critical issues on the reasons why international organizations have been able to reach such a broad rhetorical and normative consensus around evidence-based social research and policy-making, sometimes irrespective of national practices and contexts – as we have shown in the second part of this chapter. We also sketch a series of questions for future research projects.²⁷

To begin with, as Richard E. Lee *et al* (2005) affirm, it should be recalled that social science has, since its institutional development in the nineteenth century, had an “ambiguous relationship” with social policy. Using the metaphor of a “*tumultuous marriage* in which the rules of conjugality were never fully established or agreed to by both parties”, the authors recall that the linkages between social science and policies have also gone through the myth that the accumulation of data (usually statistical data) would illuminate the directions in which the State might proceed, by means of various new policies and reforms, in order to alleviate the ills that the associations of information could perceive. This was also the influence of a positivist and functionalist problem-solving spirit adopted by natural science, which was transmitted to social sciences in their historical development. During the 1950s and 60s, this thinking began to get institutionalized essentially in the more industrialized States (the United Kingdom, the United States, later in Australia and Germany). This institutionalization has also reached multilateral organizations, including through the implementation of some programmes described in part one of this chapter.

The idea behind the empiricist creed was that the promotion of social policy was not politically neutral, thus it was more appropriate for social scientists to play a role that would be “value-neutral” and “professional”. This gives rise to the waves of programmes on “applied social science”, as opposed to merely theorizing about social relations or merely undertaking empirical research.²⁸ To sum up, there were two contradictory positions: Max Weber and Robert Merton, tenors of science as truth and the principle of axiologic neutrality on the one hand, opposed to critical thinking and problem-building theories defended by thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci and Karl Manheim, on the other. Nevertheless, even when research indicates scenarios for practical action, it takes more than knowledge and social science research to make policy. One should recall variables such as social creativity and individual imagination to build workable proposals, but also social mobilization and political support or contestation (i.e. the *politics* of science-policy) to transform these proposals into policy (or avoid their becoming policies).

²⁷ Our reasoning is based on a series of arguments that we have also developed in previous publications. For further details, see: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2005. *Les relations entre les sciences et la décision politique : le chercheur, les institutions politiques, les décideurs et la gouvernance*. In: Solinís, Germán (org.). *Construire des gouvernances: entre citoyens, décideurs et scientifiques*. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 288 p.

²⁸ See: Lee, Richard E.; William J. Martin; Heinz R. Sontag; Peter J. Taylor; Immanuel Wallerstein; Michel Wieviorka. 2005. *Social Science and Social Policy: from national dilemmas to global opportunities*. Reference Paper for the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus, Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Montevideo (Uruguay), UNESCO, MOST 2, 30 p.

The relationships between social science and policy-making can be thought of on at least four levels of analysis: the researcher, his/her methodological and ontological choices; the historical processes of institutionalization of social sciences (nationally and, in more recent times, internationally); the motivations of decision-makers; and, finally, the structures of political governance that organize the contexts where these relationships and key actors evolve (State, international organizations, brokerage agencies, social movements, NGOs, corporations). These four levels are particularly relevant for a more acute analysis when one notes that with globalization, decision-making tends to move beyond symbolic and material frontiers of the State (from public to private, from national to global). Questions such as “what is the utility of social science research?”, “who funds research and why?”, “who are the decision-makers in policy-making?”, “who defines the priorities?” or “how legitimate are influential international agencies in setting up national priorities?” become central for policy debates in democratic societies both in industrialized and developing countries.²⁹

This is because globalization is not merely a competition for market shares and well-timed economic growth initiatives; neither is it just a matter of trade opportunities and liberalization. Globalization has also evolved into a social and political struggle for imposing cultural values and individual preferences: the current global economic system optimizes the values and criteria of performance, efficiency and productivity. Nowadays, performance defines the new *locus* for the belonging of global subjects that ought to thrive on the accomplishment of short-term responsibilities at any cost. Being efficient and cultivating performance has become the new global avatar for the myth of progress and development; global performance provides a new sense of universality for national communities. It goes without saying that such an over-estimation of economic performance, which in general one finds in the discourse of many global economic players, has direct implications for democratic life in general, and for the analysis of science-policy nexus in particular. According to these global market ethics, political negotiations must also follow the pattern of efficiency and, thus, fall into the market’s timetable; there should be no room for doubt and long deliberation in a global risk society.³⁰

As O’Dwyer (2004) asserts, political decisions about social policies are rarely the direct outcome of social science research. They are more usually the result of conflicting

²⁹ Speaking at UNESCO in 2006, Professor A. H. Zakri (Head of UNU Institute of Advanced Studies) appealed for international help to foster relevant research programmes in the developing world, where “the pressures are greatest, the need most acute and it is really a matter of life and death”. Nevertheless, instead of pinpointing the inequalities in North-South relations in the field of university and scientific development, Professor Zakri stated that many universities in developing countries are not relevant, affirming that a universal characteristic of university success is “relevance” or “research utility”. “Universities and the research they undertake need to be relevant – to their government’s policy, to their people’s educational needs and to their community’s needs” (quote).

³⁰ See: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2006. Globalização e contestação política na ordem mundial contemporânea. In: *Cadernos do CRH* (UFBA), v. 19, p. 377-383. See also: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2008. Bridging divides between environmental governance and transnational contestatory movements: culture of politics and institutional perspectives in the sustainable development agenda. In: *International Studies Association (ISA) 49th Annual Convention*, 2008, S. Francisco (California), Archives of the 49th ISA Annual Convention.

pressures by social actors – entrepreneurs, workers’ organizations, religious authorities, special interest groups, and the media. The study of the role of USAID in Brazil goes in this same direction. O’Dwyer (2004) shows, however, that there has recently been increasing interest in Australia in evidence-based policy-making (EbPM), mainly stemming from new policy developments in the UK. Multilateral organizations play a major role in disseminating views and methods on how to think and act in the field of social science-policy nexus, as we have described in the first part of this chapter. Based on the Australian reality, the author mentions the international success of an evidence-based approach to health, education, criminology and social work, which has stimulated this change. While the concept of empirical evidence should help to promote more and better use of research findings and a more systematic use of knowledge, it is difficult to produce the necessary kinds of evidence to inform other policy sectors (such as housing and urban policy) in such a way as to label these policies “evidence-based”. This is principally because of the difficulty in isolating the effects of interventions in housing and urban issues from wider social processes and their geographic variations.

This distinguishes EbPM from public policy based on more conventional policy development processes where intuitive appeal, tradition, politics, or the extension of existing practice may set the policy agenda. EbPM is not synonymous with good policy-making, but evidence-based policy-making is more likely to be good policy-making in some particular fields. Here, again, excessive generalization (both thematically and across countries or cultural contexts) may be a perilous temptation. It is possible to have bad evidence-based policy-making if the evidence used is biased, flawed or incomplete. One could also say that, depending on the purposes of data collection, evidence may serve unfair and unjust policy objectives.³¹ Statistical data as well as cartography are “texts”, and may be skilfully controlled and technically manipulated.

Some factors influencing the use of an evidence-based approach in policy-making that should also be taken into account are: prevailing public opinion, organizational culture, incompatible time frames in policy-making and research, values and ideology of both researchers and policy makers, control of power, political goals, as well as institutional development and degree of autonomy of the social science community. Carol Weiss (1979) identifies “four I’s” which characterize policy-making in general: ideology (people’s basic values – of policy makers and wider society); interests (personal or organizational, such as personal career aspirations or maximizing budgets); institutional norms and practices (for example, the US congress works largely through face to face contact – reading is not part of the norm and so written documents of research findings are likely to be ignored); prior information (policy makers already have information from various sources).³²

Based on these four “I’s” and because “research utilization” is associated with a variety of different meanings and interpretations, Weiss (1986) later identified seven different

³¹ See: O’Dwyer, Lisel. 2004. *A critical review of evidence-based policy making*. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Southern Research Centre, AHURI Final Report, No. 58.

³² See: Weiss, Carol H. 1979. "The Many Meanings of Research Utilization", *Public Administration Review*, 39 (5): 426-431.

models of research-policy relationships: (i) the knowledge-driven model (basic research highlights an opportunity → applied research is conducted to define and test these findings → appropriate technologies are formulated → application occurs); (ii) the problem-solving model (evidence is produced in a particular field in order to solve or shed light on a particular policy problem); (iii) the interactive model (information for policy-making is not only produced by researchers, but also by planners, practitioners, interest groups, journalists, etc.); (iv) the political model (research is used as a means of legitimization of policy decisions); (v) the tactical model (research is an excuse for inaction); (vi) the enlightenment model (cumulative research and information over time sensitizes policy makers to new issues); (vii) and research as part of the intellectual enterprise of society (research is not an independent variable affecting the policy process, but rather policy interests often set the parameters of research and the scientific agendas).³³

The first two models are very linear in their nature, and presuppose relationships between the world of social sciences and policy-making communities that are spontaneous and free from pretension or political calculation. Both share positivist principles in their epistemology and methodology. They seem to inform many policy-research projects and EbPR programmes analysed in part one of this chapter. The third model is rooted in a phenomenological understanding of social reality, where human interactions tend to erase conflictual situations, confrontation and absolute opposition. The other four models take the politics of science-policy relationships into account, and suppose different functions and uses of research by policy makers.

An example of how to understand these models could come from a UNU seminar organized in 2007 on the topic “Strengthening Linkages between Science and Policy”. This seminar was held as part of the 21st Pacific Science Congress in Okinawa, Japan, in June 2007. The two main questions addressed during this seminar were: (i) Why, despite recent advances in biotechnology, nanotechnology, medicine and environmental sciences, do more than 1 billion people around the world continue to live in extreme poverty without access to proper nutrition, safe drinking water and basic medical services, and survive on less than 2 USD a day? (ii) Why, despite unequivocal evidence that global warming will continue to cause dramatic changes in wind patterns, precipitation and extreme weather that will negatively affect human populations, are policies mitigating these effects being debated?

The main conclusion of this 2007 seminar was that tenuous links between science and policy can be seen as one of the primary reasons why better technologies are not accessible to the poorest people on Earth. The seminar report presents conclusions that may induce an uninformed reader (an uninformed policy maker?) to think that simply through greater investments in science policy the benefits of technological innovations and economic growth would trickle down to all individual members of a society, regardless of established patterns of domination, exclusion and social reproduction of inequalities. It would be naïve to think of major global ecological crises, world food

³³ See: Weiss, Carol H. 1986. The many meanings of research utilisation, in M. Bulmer (ed.), *Social Science and Policy*. London: Allen Unwin.

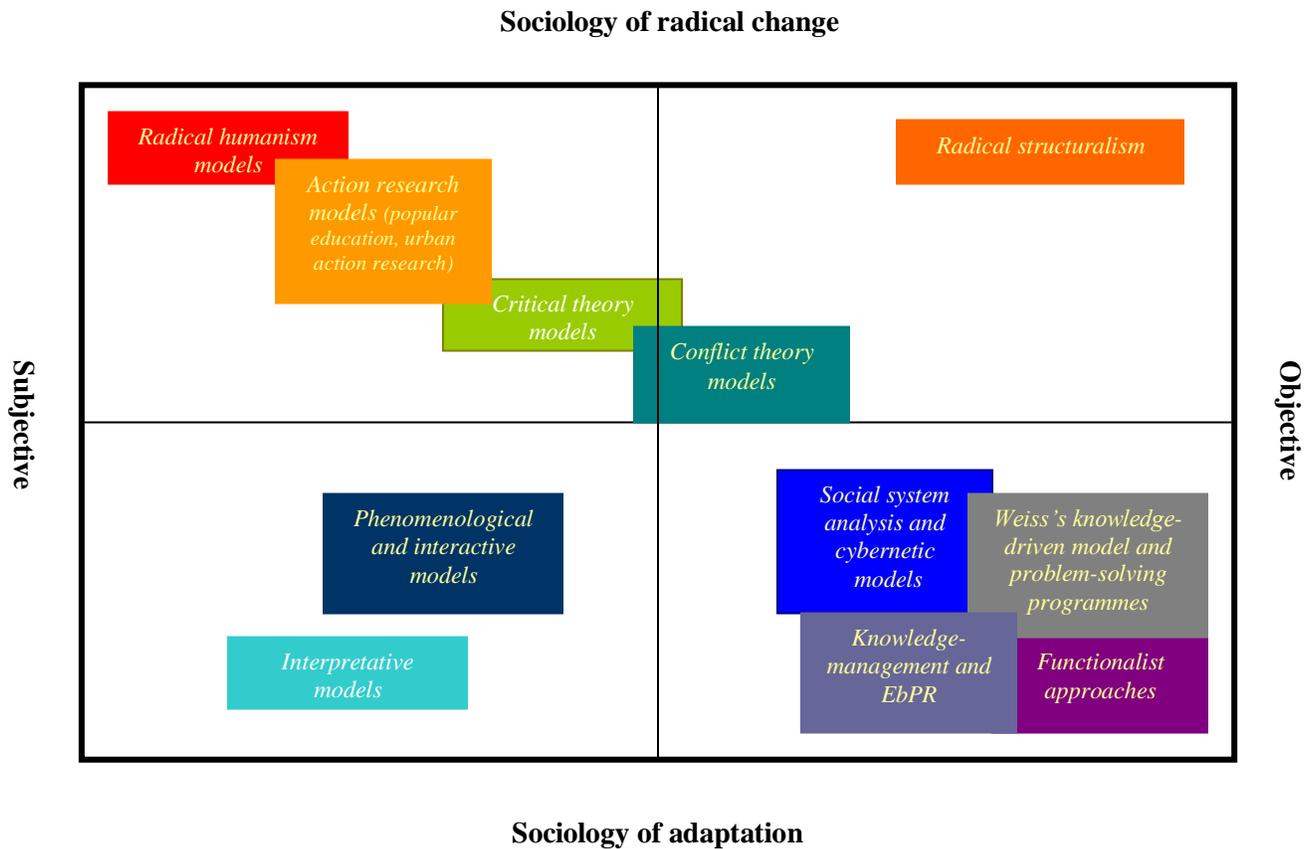
security and climate change only as a problem of access to technology and insufficient investment in sound research-based policies. Building such a simplistic answer to the questions raised during the seminar may also show how the “narrative of linkage” can be used as an excuse not to tackle power relations that are inherent in society, both nationally and internationally. It would also demonstrate how difficult it may be to set aside the first three models introduced by Carol Weiss. It seems there is no doubt that a paradigm shift is needed in the way science-based advice (and social science-based advice in particular) is translated into successful policy if we are to achieve environmental sustainability without compromising social justice worldwide.

Based on Burrell and Morgan (1979), let us build a figure (see figure 1) where we can find two analytical dimensions for understanding major premises in building models on social-science and policy linkages. The horizontal axis deals with objectivity and subjectivity, and refers to sources used in social science research in order to construct an ideal of social reality. The objectivist approach to social science is rooted in an ontology of realism, a positivist epistemology, a deterministic conception of human nature, and a nomothetic methodology. The subjective approach to social science is based on an ontology of nominalism, an anti-positivist epistemology, voluntarism, and an ideographic methodology. The vertical axis presents the normative and ontological perspective of social sciences before the idea (or need) of social change: upwards one can situate perspectives of radical change (a sociology of deep social transformations), whereas downwards we find a sociology of regulation and adaptation within the *status quo*.³⁴ This second axis corresponds to the role that the researcher may assume in defence of transformative social sciences, including through their relationships with policy networks and non-scholar communities. In this sense, the presentation of intellectual ideas through social science research may threaten a certain notion of truth which has claimed a false appearance of universality.

This figure shows the legitimacy of alternative perspectives. It entails a culture of debate, argumentation and dialogue in the analysis of other models for understanding linkages between social science and policy-making. Hopefully, it will also provide the means for an international organization such as UNESCO to embrace other frames of reference and not worry too much about orthodoxy. Of course, the legitimacy of non-functionalist paradigms is not assured today, and should not be taken for granted. However, unveiling the ontology and epistemology of EbPR models adopted by the large majority of international organizations today may also allow for a more pluralistic debate on the issue of social sciences and public policy linkages.

³⁴ Burrell, Gibson; Morgan, G. *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann, 1979.

Figure 1: Paradigms and Models in the Analysis of Social Science and Policy Linkages



What critical possibilities does this figure offer in the understanding of the role of EbPR promoted by many multilateral organizations? How can it support emancipatory conceptions of the linkages between research and policy? These are difficult but necessary questions. As Lather (2008) affirms, the time has come to break out of the regulation, standardization and surveillance of research and the speculation on what it would mean to be a “mature” or “objective” science, and move beyond, towards a more complex scientificity, where the empirical becomes more interpretive, not less.³⁵ There is therefore a need to refuse to concede science to scientism, and reopen the debate on when, why and how research matters in policy-making. Statements on how “rigor” in research is the most direct route to better policies must also be discussed based on the actual policy-making process, and the options made by models presented in figure 1.

There is a clear need to shift the discourse away from the focus on “objective” and technical questions of research design and methods in order to move towards the analysis of dialectical relationships between research and policy. Questions on method and design

³⁵ See: Lather Pathi. 2008. New Wave Utilization Research: (re)imagining the research/policy nexus, *Educational Researcher*, 37 (6): 361-364.

are not irrelevant, but they seem to have erased the key role of political behaviour of political actors in current international programmes dealing with EbPR. As Lather (2008) shows, the interest in research that informs policy and practice is shared across disciplinary boundaries and methodologies and among the “interdisciplines” that have long characterized the field of education. The “alternative” models presented in figure 1 may also raise pertinent (and different) questions to the understanding of the linkage problem. One of the issues is how the theory/practice or basic/applied distinctions are to be thought. Taking the complexity into account entails a more philosophical and less instrumental (re)thinking of the research/policy nexus.

Thus, it is useful to note that research for policy is not so much about providing answers as about changing the way questions are understood, so that people (researchers and policy makers, but other publics too) can begin to think differently, thus critically building the contours and contents of social problems. Working towards a more complex scientificity entails a sort of “philosophy of negativity” (Lather, 2008), where modes of contestation would be as constitutive of the very scientific field within which one locates one’s research work. Of course, this would mean shifting the standard of intelligibility for policy research away from the positivism that underpins hegemonic understandings of evidence, objectivity, reason, measurement, value-free facts, research utilization and responsible knowledge production.

As Pawson and Tilley (1996) affirm, in conducting research, sponsored research in particular, political considerations mitigate reflexive impulses that might undermine the authority of the research. Apart from structural factors building the politics of science-policy relations, what goes on “behind the scenes” at both meso- and micro levels is also a significant aspect of knowledge production. Factors such as professional, situational, cultural and interpersonal relationships between researchers are rarely addressed in methodological sections of research reports or in texts relating to methods. Researchers’ attempts to situate themselves in relation to their work signal an awareness of the centrality of research identities to the process of knowledge production but often do not address the ways in which research relationships and settings shape research findings, analyses and reporting. Research grounded in a commitment to social change inevitably begins with at least a provisional presumption that social difference, inequality and spatial disparity are both organized and knowable.³⁶ Contrary to the positivist and rationalistic creed, political rationales need not be discarded as criteria for some research and policy decisions.

Another final key aspect that we would like to highlight has to do with the research process itself. Who participates in the definition of the policy research agenda? Whose interests are taken into account? Contrary to the common sense that may prevail in “participatory projects”, it would be naive to think that a history of exclusion can be overcome by “including” individuals already identified and selected because they are disempowered by those very structures. Calling “them” empowered is not enough. If we

³⁶ Pawson, R.; Tilley, N. 1996. How (and how not) to design research to inform policymaking, In: C. Samson and N. South (eds.), *The Social Construction of Social Policy: Methodologies, Racism, Citizenship and the Environment*. London: MacMillan, pp. 34-52.

are concerned about issues of voice and exclusion in the production of knowledge, then it is critical to recognize the situated character of the research process itself.³⁷ As Schick (2002) recalls, these conditions of research are at least as influential in shaping the meanings research produces, publicizes and legitimizes as the superficial markers of identity foreseen in the research design. As the reality of public policies related to violence against children and adolescents during the 1990s in Brazil shows, no matter who decides what categories will be used and how they will be defined in principle, in practice, inclusiveness and critical participation are produced in the micro-politics of day-to-day interaction and common production of knowledge and social experience. Indeed, designing qualitative research practices that attend to these relationships more self-consciously and reflexively may offer a more productive challenge to exclusion in knowledge production.³⁸

³⁷ For a critical account of participatory experiences in Brazil, see: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2008. O princípio da participação social na gestão de políticas públicas locais: uma análise de experiências latino-americanas e europeias. In: *Revista Brasileira de Administração Pública*, v. 42, p. 551-579.

³⁸ See: Schick, Ruth S. 2002. When the Subject is Difference: Conditions of Voice in Policy-oriented Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (5): 632-651.