SOCIAL POLICIES:

RE-THINKING ESSENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The recent history of the Third World's development processes has been stimulating in some cases, and has recompensed collective and individual efforts. Unfortunately, however, in many other cases it has been an experience in collective frustration. The case of Latin America is illustrative; it is said that the efforts of the region during the decade of the eighties were lost. The economic crisis, the impoverishment of the lower and middle classes, the dismantling of major social programs, the environmental deterioration and the violence shadowed achievements in democratization of political regimes and in the relative social mobility and cultural integration (ECLA, 1990a; World Bank, 1990). The worst of it all is that the path to recovery of lost ground seems to have vanished.

Some proposals have begun to emerge, and many measures to be implemented. Thus, productive transformation with equity (ECLA, 1990b), education for all (WCEFA, 1990a), sustainable development (ECLA, 1991), are being mentioned. While new economic models to be followed seem to be clear, proposals in the social area have yet to be defined. This is not difficult to explain, for here is the crux of historic change: human development. The response to the change that Latin American societies require for advancement will have to be not only scientific and political, but also profoundly ethical.

The present document seeks to discuss some aspects of this complex topic, taking social policies as the entry point. After all, it is social policy that, through action or omission, will forge the new generations, the only real resource that Latin America and the Third World have to achieve a better future. We do not discuss here human development models, or social policies contents since, it is our first assumption, there is a basic agreement about their final goals. We rather aim at examining the obstacles to implementation and evaluation of new policies since, and it is our second assumption, the most critical area will be the mechanisms for social intervention themselves. This position does not deny the importance of conceptualizing human development, it rather points out to the fact that present circumstances demand such conceptualization to be developed along the practice. Thus, we will deliberately leave this issue pending, hoping to stir up a reflection based on experience rather than on theory. Our discussion starts by an operational definition of what will be understood by social policies, followed by a theoretical proposal to be analyzed, and will conclude with the review of a set of problems related to the issue.

CONCEPT AND CONTEXT

The conceptualization and practice of social policies cannot take place outside a wider reflection on the many aspects implied in Third World development. Otherwise, the context for their design and evaluation would be lost. It is questionable, for instance, to consider social policies from a sectorial perspective only, or as a complementary resource for other policies oriented towards economic adjustments or productive restructuring. More appropriately, they may be considered a strategic part of a set of development policies. There are ethical reasons for this viewpoint, in addition to very pragmatic reasons: human development alone can guarantee in the

long term that actions taken in the fields of economic, technological and natural resource management policies reach their objectives.

Conceptualization of social policies is in itself a difficult exercise, for not everybody understands them in the same way. In this document, social policies are understood as actions designed and implemented by the state or with the state support to attain personal human development. Typical social policies involve activities seeking to promote human survival, early child development, nutrition, integral education, learning capacities, family development, prevention of health problems, social security and social participation (United Nations, 1989). They are not the equivalent of what is known as social services, which are instruments of social policies. Nor do they refer to all social aspects of development. They do not include management and reproduction of resources whose value is based
on scarcity, nor the reproduction and conservation of environmental resources. Specifically, they relate to strategic actions on crucial moments and aspects in the life of a human being which may be attended within the framework of activities carried out by social institutions.

There is no definition of personal human development universally accepted, but there seems to be consensus in that it does not exist where there is poverty, unemployment and inequality (MacPherson, 1982; UNDP, 1990). Persistence of large sectors of the population unable to satisfy their basic needs in health, education, employment, housing or recreation, who suffer the lack of material and economic opportunities for survival, and who do not enjoy the same living conditions and opportunities as other sectors do, has made it evident that economic growth, wherever it occurred in Latin America, was not sufficient to bring about that development. Human development, in its most essential aspects, is still a goal to be reached by large population groups of the region.

It is important that this concept of human development, understood here as essential development, be discussed again in Latin America. Faced with the failure of the economic development actions applied in the eighties, the need to re-orient the development process towards productivity, international competition and incorporation of modern technology has been presented (ECLA, 1990b). Although the search for a development model based on these principles may be correct, social policies must not be placed in a complementary or remedial role. If this were to occur, the economic proposal would fail for -as the history of the post-war development programs applied in the Third World has shown- there is no economic development if there is no social development in the human terms previously expressed. The search for Latin America's new path must begin by centering the discussions about development policies on the individual and collective aspects of human development. This, however, will not be an easy task in the nineties.

The nineties will be a decade marked at its birth by a deep crisis in the socialist utopia, which apparently had targeted a more humane development model than that of Western capitalist societies. However, Europe's real socialism crisis has indicated that its policy instruments did not lead to the social and economic development necessary for success. The influence of this fact on the conceptualization and implementation of new social policies in the region will be remarkable. Although attempts may be made to keep discussions limited to the technical aspects only, it will be impossible to avoid the ideological debate and the impact of the re-definition of the political parties's positions on them.

The new social policies will also have to take into account the persistence of mechanisms of dependence and domination. Economic, industrial and technological development reached in Latin America has not eliminated the conditions of dependence so widely discussed in the region during the fifties and sixties. Although the discussion of this situation has lost its timeliness, and dependance has apparently disappeared beneath the cloak of greater economic integration and the emergence of subregional markets, this is not really so. Dependance and domination will surely continue to affect the design and implementation of new social policies. The impact that dependency had on the collapse of Latin-America's social programs when deterioration of commercial exchange terms and foreign debt payment made them even more unfeasible or precipitated their dismantling, cannot be denied. The social implications of new economic measures seeking pragmatic relations with the developed world are an important question. What will the social impact of the new model of open economy proposed for the region be?

To all the above, the fact that class structure, although somewhat transformed, continues to feed large social and regional inequalities must be added. The domination pattern of capital cities over the interior of the countries has not disappeared. The concentration of wealth has not diminished notably, and in some cases has in fact increased (ECLA, 1990a). In addition, the state has not improved its efficiency or effectiveness; to the contrary, it has become a heavy weight on society, already exhausted by populist, party-tied and even irresponsible management. Under-development processes have not weakened; although transformed, they continue to exist and have become stronger. Current and future social policies will undoubtedly be affected by all these circumstances.

There is the hope that the new economic policies will create a more favorable institutional framework for re-distributing the benefits of development. This hypothesis is not really new. Development planning, which began after World War II, basically was an exercise of economic planning in which the social aspects were treated within a residual model. It was expected that benefits of development would reach the entire population as a by-product of industrialization, greater employment, urbanization and increased income per-capita. With higher income, families would be able to meet and solve their basic needs. The state should only intervene when that were not possible: the cases of abandoned children, the elderly, the socially marginal. In the sixties, however, social aspects began to receive growing consideration. Education, health, housing, family welfare and others were paid more and more attention because the residual effects were insufficient and because, due to ideological and populist reasons, governments became involved in rapid social modernization (Hardiman and Midgley, 1989). In many cases this position led to a disorganized growth of social services, chronic fiscal deficits and a populism which, in the long run, also contributed to the social services crisis in the eighties. Besides, the implementation of social policies was so centralized that they were identified as programs of the government in power, not as state policies, rendering them more vulnerable.

It is now argued that the introduction of competition and privatization will allow new social policies to be more efficient and effective (Irarrázabal, 1990). However, this is not necessarily equivalent to human development. It will therefore be necessary to investigate how these principles can operate within the context described above in order to achieve the essential development.

It is possible to distinguish several roles for social policies: remedial, preventive and developmental (MacPherson, 1982; Dubey, 1980). Emphasis placed on the need to minimize the negative impact of new economic policies on the social body may lead to a markedly remedial

concept. It is necessary to insist on the fact that new social policies cannot be reduced to assistance programs for abandoned children, the elderly, the marginal population, or to emergency programs for the hungry and unemployed. Social policies have to go further: they should be instruments for development of the human being, so that he may reach by himself the benefits expected from the new economic models.

THE SYSTEMIC APPROACH

An important feature of human development problems is that their solutions are not exclusively "social" (Boeninger, 1982); Technological, economic and environmental ingredients are needed. For example, early child stimulation requires not only adequate training of mothers in order to handle child-mother interactions, but also a minimum of technology, income or employment conditions which allow them time to interact with their children, as well as a favorable social and natural environment. Social treatments require psychological, social, technical, economic and environmental resources. They are the solutions most difficult to design and implement. From the scientific point of view, this means that the treatment of human development problems is an extraordinary challenge that can only be confronted through an approach amenable to multidisciplinary, multidimensional and inter-institutional work both for research and social intervention.

A systemic approach could be useful for this purpose. Already applied in several fields to analyze phenomena from different angles and perspectives, the systemic approach permits to capture an array of inter-relations and inter-actions. In the field of social sciences, this theoretical proposal was virtually limited to the thought of the structural-functionalist in the sixties and to the ideological and theoretical controversy it generated. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to try again the systemic view as a tool for implementation and evaluation of social policies. It may prove to be fruitful at a moment when the dominant paradigms of social sciences are in crisis and there is a large quantity of partial generalizations. To that purpose, the systemic approach could be provisionally understood as a modality of theory construction that allows to conceptualize a set of behaviours, values, technologies, and environmental resources which affect human development from different angles and at different moments.

The need for a systemic analysis framework has became evident with the multi-sectorial character taken on by the classic social problems. Education, health, social security, employment, recreation and community development cannot continue to be sectorially treated. The most recently accepted positions in world forums and endorsed by governments mention that, for example, efforts to reach the goals of universal health and education should begin with actions by diverse social groups and different sectors of the state (WCEFA, 1990a, 1990b, PROMEDLAC, 1991). The newest academic and research approaches follow the same lines. Theory, research and practice indicate the need for a multidisciplinary, inter-sectorial and inter-institutional approach. However, the social sciences do not seem sufficiently prepared to face this challenge.

During the past decades, the region's predominant social sciences paradigms were not oriented towards social engineering, but towards diagnosis and criticism of current social structures and development models. However, recent historical circumstances are leading towards greater pragmatism. The differences between capitalist and socialist development models are not longer as clear as they once were. Discussion tends more towards how to do things to reach greater efficiency and effectiveness. These new attitude and need demand clear social intervention

models. The problem is that this type of resources is not available. The proposal here is to complement the systemic approach with the social engineering concept, not with the idea of reducing social policies to technocratism but of presenting the need to tackle social problems both in their immediate and long term implications. A case in hand that illustrates this point is family planning in which not only the daily sexual and emotional aspects of the couple have to be taken into account, but also the long term impact on family organization, and size and structure of the population. Although the proposal may generate some disagreement, there is nothing in principle against a re-conceptualization of the idea of social engineering within the context of present needs and changes.

The task is methodologically complex because there is not always consensus on what the human development needs are (Irarrázabal, 1989). Societies, specially the underdeveloped ones, are characterized by the existence of heterogeneous interests. This is particularly so in Latin America, where inequality has increased. Research based on neo-positivist assumptions has thus far been unable to capture this diversity of interests. Neo-marxist orientations, on the other hand, are too general and have tended to over-simplify reality. Apparently, research on social policies will have to be epistemologically "conciliatory", if something like that is indeed possible.

Cook (1985) proposes that scientific research on this area be oriented towards "multiplism", taken to mean the execution of studies converging towards the same theoretical objective, despite each study's singular data source. Multiplism can be considered as a call to research with different actors, diverse data analysis, competing interpretations, multiple definitions, varying methods, different research tasks, multiple causal models, competing hypotheses, and analysis of the generalization of results over diverse populations, time periods and contexts. It is obvious that one of the major problems of this proposal is the integration of different valorative perspectives, hypotheses and results. Although multiplism is not a panacea, it seems to be a working perspective more in tune with the systemic approach required by new social policies.

Independently of whether the epistemological and methodological proposal of "multiplism" is accepted or not, it is clear that research on new social policies will have to innovate upon current valorative, conceptual, methodological and institutional frameworks. In the remainder of this document, diverse problems to be sorted out in the areas of data collection, elaboration of diagnoses and evaluations, implementation of interventions, and human resource training, required to face this formidable challenge will be discussed.

DATA AND METHODS: A CHALLENGE TO CREATIVITY

Implementation and evaluation of new social policies will require information which respond to the new multi-disciplinary and inter-sectorial perspective. Creativity will be necessary for data collection and analysis to be timely, reliable and useful. Although they are simple, these requirements present a great challenge, given the current situation of scarcity of all sort of resources in the institutions concerned. It will be difficult to rely on traditional methods such as national censuses and surveys and complex multivariate analysis, not only because they are insufficient, but also because they are costly and difficult to process. In most countries, administrative decentralization and regionalization will require instruments manageable by individuals working in the interior of the countries. Besides, democratization processes have opened an important space for participation by local organizations and communities. Within this context, centralization and authoritarian control of information will increasingly be less viable,

despite the fact that decentralization processes will not necessarily mean greater autonomy in decision for the moment. Although decentralization is actively sought, as in Chile and Colombia, it is necessary to take into account that central governments will still hold a great deal of control, and that the habits and inertia imposed by daily work routines will persist.

Multi-sectorial execution of social policies can be a more viable task at the local level, given the closeness to the beneficiary. Information generation and exchange may possibly be facilitated by mutual support between local groups of government officials, the private sector, and community leaders. Nonetheless, this road will have many obstacles.

Much information periodically collected is lost because it is not available. In some cases it is not processed; in others, it is inaccessible due to administrative obstacles. In several countries, the law forbids access to primary sources of census data. Although this may seem surprising, there is not always a clear objective for obtaining information. Much data continues to be collected by inertia, or because it is legally required, but once collected, they are simply piled up and stored away. An example is the case of data on migratory border movements. Resources to make use of what already exists are not sufficient; and the new resources are usually provided earmarked for new items that can not be accumulated to the previously collected material. Another serious problem are governmental administrative periods, including those of the ministers and directors, which affect data collection and processing. Depending on the length of the period, it is commonly observed that programs are paralyzed every four or five years. As the state's research capacity constantly decreases (and the same happens with action-oriented NGOs), evaluation of what is being done cannot be performed. Furthermore, there are no channels to disseminate the work being done. Even internally, within a single government agency, there is no knowledge of the work carried out by its different departments. In planning agencies, all the work is duplicated with every administration or director. And, in addition to this waste of resources, information does not reach the user. Teachers, social workers, physicians, judges, attorneys, etc., continue to work blindly, receiving only concrete data on new budget cuts.

The problems encountered are not only legal, political or administrative; they are also purely technical. Information on small towns (populations under 100,000 inhabitants) is not collected by periodic household surveys made in several countries because the sampling framework applied does not produce data generalizable at this level. This situation occurs not only in rural areas, but also in poor marginal areas of urban centers. One of the challenges is to create data collection systems which would allow the more strategic organizations of these localities (schools, health centers, municipal authorities, development corporations, professional organizations, etc.) to have a minimal information flow. The involvement of the private sector, especially of private enterprises and NGOs, in the task of supporting research and generating information needed for regional and local planning should be also considered. They tend to be much closer to problems than central government agencies are.

Whatever the solutions to join the few or many human and institutional resources extant at the local level may be, it will be crucial to have social indicators which monitor the work's efficiency and effectiveness. The major difficulty to be faced is that currently available methodologies produce too general indicators which are unable to identify the sources of problems relative to, for example, persistent school drop-out rates, adolescent pregnancy, child abandonment or juvenile unemployment. It will be necessary to study how to identify the target populations, how to obtain information in a rapid and valid way, and how to reach the beneficiaries. For these

purposes, it is not only necessary to conduct research from a substantive perspective, but it is also indispensable to carry out methodological research. Unfortunately, this type of research, closer to social engineering, is not yet sufficiently popular.

Another great challenge will be to bring the benefits of technological revolution in the field of informatics to the communities, local organizations and governments. Access to the most modern technology in this field is no longer an unreachable dream. Probably this is the moment to re-examine the basic assumptions with respect to its use, and to recognize that the instruments needed to resolve their problems must be placed in the beneficiaries' hands, since the state is increasingly unable to respond. Advanced scientific research must not only provide viable methods to collect necessary data, but also friendly processing systems which allow union leaders, youth, mayors, health workers, local school teachers, etc., to attain a minimum understanding of the meaning of such information for the employment, health or education quality realities of their communities.

Municipalities in several countries have been granted the right to make social policy, which in turn makes it necessary to generate the appropriate data and processing programs required to support municipal activity. A serious local difficulty is that information generated in different sectors does not coincide, since the macro-level social policy objectives are different. It is common to observe that high-risk populations are differently defined in the health, justice or educational sectors. In practical terms, this means that although the health promoter, teacher, judge and agricultural extension worker sit at the same table, and although they understand their daily local problems, their capacity for action will be limited because they work within different administrative frameworks, with different policy definitions and with data bases that are not complementary nor cumulative. Under these circumstances, how can programs be monitored and evaluated? How can experiences be complemented?

Some of the ideas currently being explored are, for example, municipal information systems that integrate vital statistics, census information and continuous statistics; elaboration of programs which permit disaggregation and manipulation of census data at the level of small geographic units (Conning, Silva and Finnegan, 1988); data banks on local and regional investment projects for the operation of development corporations; installation of health alert systems based on methods that collect and process data on infant mortality in a rapid and reliable manner (Guzmán, 1988; Arretx, 1990); programs to obtain national and sub-national population projections (ECLA, 1988); development of indicators on quality and relevance of education, etc. All these ideas are oriented, more than towards data collection, towards development and implementation of information systems which will allow data to be collected and analyzed in a manageable and rapid way. The current circumstances require accessible, friendly and reliable procedures. Although it may seem surprising, this will be a very difficult test for social scientists' methodological imagination.

DIAGNOSIS: IDENTIFYING THE BENEFICIARY

Identification of beneficiaries is not a simple task because social policy objectives are usually formulated in a very general manner. Social crisis and acute social inequity in the region have led to the proposal of focusing social policy efforts on groups in extreme poverty and need. This has been the philosophy of the Chilean regimen, and one which pragmatically tends to become generalized throughout the region. It should be noted that the proposal to organizing

social policies around intervention targets should be thoroughly discussed, since many social problems tend to have their roots in the way distribution of development benefits takes place, and not only in the individual characteristics or local circumstances. Some typical examples of poverty's important structural determinants are income distribution, land-holding structure, and property systems of urban lands. Historically, experience has shown that policies which seek better income distribution tend to benefit society as a whole, and lead to development. One of the problems that Latin America has been unable to solve to date is an extremely unequal income distribution. Discussion of the role of these factors should not be set aside, but included in the desire for an effective social engineering.

Multi-dimensionality of social policies impact makes it difficult to identify all possible beneficiaries, but the most direct and immediate beneficiaries, as well as any possible negative impact must be recognized, at the very least. This last aspect includes identification of those who might be prejudiced, since social policies will doubtlessly affect the interests of some or many social groups. Social research based on a systemic approach would have more possibilities to examine this diversity of positive, neutral and negative effects (Miller and Fredericks, 1987). Likewise, it is crucial to understand that the beneficiaries of some social policies may not be those of others, and that while the interests of a single individual may be well met by some actions, they may be badly affected by others.

With respect to the above, some interesting examples may be mentioned. Multiple school shifts, which favored greater attendance in Colombia and other countries which applied this measure, also led to lack of activities and partial vagrancy of the students who attended in the morning or the afternoon, with a negative impact on community life. In several countries, the prohibition for pregnant adolescents to return to school, in order to avoid the "bad example" from spreading, has also meant psychological and social ruin for the mother and the worst possible family environment for the newborn. The requirement that part of educational costs be taken on by families, in order to improve the quality of local education, will surely affect portions of the family budget intended for other things in the short run. The policy of creating child welfare homes will benefit children insofar as early interaction, but at the cost of crowding and poor learning practices. However, in the long run, this type of programs may be more beneficial than direct food subsidies if it allows mothers freedom for employment outside the home. Expansion of health and social security services may be beneficial for the groups which have never had access to them, but will perhaps result in deterioration of services offered to other beneficiaries.

These examples show that the concept of beneficiary is actually, another variable. Focusing social policies is thus a questionable operative criterium, from the philosophical point of view, as well as from that of social engineering. However, thus far it has been the only one proposed and implemented. The Chilean experience is interesting. In this case, identifying beneficiaries was based on individual data, since the policy was to provide individual benefits. Preliminary evaluation of results has drawn important conclusions. The methodology does not allow families or other groups to which the individual in question belongs to be identified and worked with. Therefore, it is not possible to operate over the proximate determinants of poverty, which in many situations condition the poverty factors at the individual level (Vergara, 1990). This lack of attention to proximate determinants, in the case of Chilean social policies, indicates how important values implicit in social policies may be. Although by that time social research had already shown the importance of contextual factors, ideological orientations prevailed.

Within the so-called context, it is not only important to consider the characteristics of the immediate family nuclei and community, but also the quality of goods and services offered at the local level (Vergara, 1990). Social policies have centered their attention on coverage problems, rather than on the service quality offered or on the fact that quality varies with territory. Services offered in a poor marginal zone differ in quality from those given in an integrated urban zone. Thus, even when the right of access to a benefit is granted, social differentiation in supply distort the effects sought. Thus, it is not unusual that the most benefited are the least marginal areas, given their better position in the social structure and access to the sources of power. This situation clarifies the need for a social ecological approach towards social policy, in order to identify the beneficiaries and to analyze the benefits offer. Social policies have a territorial expression which must be considered.

Given the large volume of the poor population, and the magnitude of unsatisfied needs, it is illusory to think that poverty will be eradicated by focussing more precisely the available resources (Vergara, 1990). No doubt it is necessary but not sufficient. It is crucial to assign enough funds to achieve this objective and, furthermore, follow a policy which includes identification of both the individual and his context in its methodology. A systemic approach is indispensable, not only to facilitate an effective individual impact, but also to act upon the proximate determinants of poverty. If this were not so, social policies could only follow a remedial,inefficient approach.

Some examples could illustrate this type of problem. It is not enough to provide mothers with food supplements for their children, if the internal family rules of food distribution which favor men over women, and the head of the household above all, are not also acted upon. It has been observed that the price differences between subsidized food and that sold at the market generally cause mothers to re-sell what they receive. It is not enough to re-educate mothers on better nutritional habits, if food conservation and cooking methods are not considered. Family size and structure, which might include non-nuclear members to help in food purchase and preparation, are factors which may weigh more in the choice of foodstuffs than all possible technical arguments about the better nutritional quality of certain types of food. It is not enough to design training courses for teachers to improve instructional quality if school resources are not taken into account, in addition to local culture and the incentives employed to motivate the teachers to apply what they have learned. It is not enough to provide the right to attend a health center if the appointment system is inadequate and there are long waiting periods. In the long run, only non-working mothers will attend, which may be those with the fewest health problems, and those living in the best economic conditions.

For all of the above, it has been seen that community participation is important in the process of qualifying demand and identifying action nuclei. This has been postulated many times, and perhaps with excessive enthusiasm, since it is a rather difficult task. On one hand, the empirical reference of the concept of community tends to be made up of very heterogeneous, socially and economically stratified populations, where solidarity is more the researcher's or social promoter's wish than a reality. On the other hand, it is difficult to find a situation in which the community rejects services offered. Under these circumstances, identification of intermediate agents is very important. In this respect the NGOs can play a new role in adapting government activities to local needs, since under the new decentralization schemes, they can provide their experience in identifying local productive and social projects (Vergara, 1989). It must again be noted that only using a systemic approach will it be possible to analyze and move within this great social complexity.

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IMPLEMENTATION: SOCIAL INTERVENTION RECONSIDERED

Implementation of social policies in the past has left several lessons: the currently existing alternatives dominate the type of program results; implementation is a process occurring in a series of stages which are not always successive and integrated; it tends to be pursued multiple objectives which in practice actually compete among themselves; decisions made at the level closest to implementation are those which tend to have greatest impact (MacLaughlin, 1985).

On the local level, factors such as background and training level of personnel; the degree of commitment among managers; the local system of demands, which may be complementary to, in competition or in conflict with the objectives sought; and support of local groups, including potential beneficiaries, are the primary determinants of how and how well the programs run (O'Toole, 1989). As these factors vary from one place to another, services provided will also vary in different contexts. Simply having managers committed to the project, finding that the program objectives are not in conflict with political or economic interests, and that there is an interested community will lead to total success in one place, while in another spot unmotivated managers, conflict of interest with local "caciques" and an indifferent population will translate in complete failure.

In the long term, the manner in which a program is designed weighs less than the manner in which the program is specifically executed. Procedure is most important for success. A change of school curriculum implemented by a school director through discussion with the teachers may lead to a very different result from that achieved by a simple administrative bulletin stating the new contents for the next term. The first case may result in active and informed participation of teachers. The second may encounter passiveness, resistance, and even confusion. The alternatives chosen will make the same program a very different thing when applied in diverse locations.

Implementation is a real complex process of successive and sometimes simultaneous stages, especially when working within organizations with little degree of institutionalization. Where underdevelopment is greater, so is complexity, since policy implementation generally parallels institutionalization of organizational frameworks. This makes implementation a learning and adjustment process more than one of installation of new programs. It is necessary to acquire new capacities, learn new rules of behavior and be converted to new beliefs. It is necessary to learn to fulfil new tasks, provide services in accordance with new objectives, and feel and think in a different way (MacLaughlin, 1985).

The multiple dimensions and categories of social policies foster the existence of diverse implementation philosophies. One of them is to seek compliance with new dispositions, invoking norms and sanctions; another is induction, through reinforcement and incentives, in order to motivate the population; yet another is beneficence, based on technical assistance and donations (Bardach, 1980). These philosophies are not exclusive; one and the other may be used, as the implementation process moves from one level to another and progresses through time. Those who participate in the implementation process emphasize different aspects and philosophies. At the end, policy becomes whatever the participants recognize as central to the policy in question, in

accordance with their own interests. In this way during the process some unforeseen objectives come to light, and the final results may not be the ones expected. Thus, implementation of social policies becomes part of a complex social intervention process. The original social policy is clarified, specified and modified as intervention in the social body takes place. The decision which often has greatest impact is the one finally made by the health promoter, teacher or local bureaucrat at the moment service is provided (MacLaughlin, 1985). The face of public service is that of these individuals, who are anonymous to the system, but finally invest policies with their vital content. Their actions are crucial, as shown by many examples which could be mentioned. A revealing case is that of the study that detected that many women who had had positive results in a Papanicolaou test, a routine introduced by several health programs in the region, never understood the result communicated to them by the physician and never showed up for treatment despite the fact that they could be mortally ill (Ramos and Pantelides, 1990). Examples can also be found in schools, vocational training centers, family orientation agencies,children's welfare homes or nutritional centers. In some instances, there are cases of decisions which do not greatly affect the lives of individuals, but in other cases, they represent fundamental decisions for individual and collective development.

The major risk in the social intervention process implicit in the development and implementation of social policies is that the system lacks the capacity to control and evaluate the final product. Perhaps the worst consequence of the state crisis in Latin America is the impossibility to make anyone liable for their good or bad work. The loss of the society's, the community's and the individual's "auditing" capacity is one of the current crisis' most negative impacts on human development. One of the most urgent research tasks in this respect is to generate knowledge with respect to the recovery of public and social responsibility, and to make effective control mechanisms operational. One of the greatest costs of social policies (and not exclusive to them, either) is inefficient bureaucracy and corruption of public agencies. A typical case is that of losses due to corruption in social security systems (Urrutia, 1990). There is nothing more demoralizing, nor more ethically corrosive, than a corrupt and unpunished state. Wherever it exists, any attempt at social ethics for human development crumbles.

Social control or "auditing" of social policies is a complex area for research and operation, from the points of both supply and demand. Social policies surge in response to a group of needs for products, techniques and services. Both the state, through its programs, and the private sector seek to satisfy that demand. But as is well known, this demand does not appear in an integrated or coordinated fashion. Ideally, social policies require coordination of three basic systems: an information system providing a data base on needs, goals and achievements, a planning system leading to adequate allocation of resources, and an efficient budget execution system placing the resources where they are required on time. Each of these systems is an area which should be "audited" by society. Social research in this area must answer the following questions:

- What type of institutional arrangements will be needed so that identification of needs and goals, measurement of achievements, allocation of resources and execution of expenditure in social policies can be controlled in some way by the state itself and the communities involved?

- How may control over the social responsibility that many operating NGOs must have be exercised, and how may it be exercised over many donors and development agencies?

- How should control on the social impact of economic, technological and other kind of policies be exercised? How should the impact of these policies on social policies be monitored?

Modernization of the state's structure is an issue that must be implicitly or explicitly considered in order to answer these questions. The bureaucratic power structure divides into sectors actions which should be carried out in an integral fashion, thereby affecting the state's capacity to implement re-distributional social policies as well. It is not strange that actions attempted from social sectors such as education or health be taken back by those undertaken from the economics, finance or industry areas. Sectorization sharpens the conflict of interests between diverse policies and makes communication between sectors handling different concepts and data difficult. If sectorial rules of conceptualization and implementation differ, integrated use of knowledge is impossible.

Regulations covering the state's sectorial actions are of great importance. Each government sector has operative rules. This may be an advantage or a disadvantage to respond to local needs in a flexible and timely manner, and represent an obstacle to multi-disciplinary use of knowledge. For professionals whose career takes place in the public sector, policy and program norms are practically the only source of knowledge and recycling. This is frequently observed in health and education sectors, where innovation occurs almost exclusively when service provision regulations change. Sectorial norms also define the space available for action by promoters, teachers, physicians, etc. One of the problems of implementation at the local level will precisely be the negotiation space permitted by each sector's norms. It is hoped that with decentralization and regionalization, local governments will enjoy greater working space to compromise between local needs and the state's vertical structure. This is most crucial in social policies, for which the cluster of local factors is highly important at the moment of implementation.

Certainly, one should not ingenuously believe that new policy implementation could take place outside the framework of institutions currently existing in the region. It is true that implementation of selective policies requires specialized institutions; but in the early stages, there is no alternative to basing activities on what already exists and making use of institutional, material, technical and human resources available (Vergara, 1990). That is why experience and stability of institutional resources is so important for policy success. Unfortunately, the state and economic crisis has led to discontinuity. The under-development in which both public and private institutions operate leads on many cases to the dismantling of some structures in order to create others. Instable financial resources, personnel turn over, normative changes in administration prevent to apply social policies successfully and effectively. The succession of educational reforms or health plans are well-known examples of the situation. At any rate, whatever amount of social policy that can be produced in the region must be implemented from institutions in crisis.

All the problems mentioned indicate that social policy implementation will be a hard process. One thing will be to discuss the need to face new social policy design, implementation and evaluation in a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial manner, as part of a systemic approach. Quite another to achieve integrated activities in practice. Attention must be paid to the institutional frameworks to be used. Research on this last aspect is urgent, especially to reach minimal rationality and set priorities in the allocation of public and private funds to diverse programs. This policies integration is basic since poverty problems respond to sets of individual, family and collective determinants. That effective social intervention should adjust itself to a systemic approach is a principle being accepted in public forums, but it will be difficult to apply, given the

complexity of the implementation process, the weight of underdevelopment itself, the anachronisms of the state structure, and the lack of appropriate social engineering systemic models.

Research on effective social intervention within the current framework of crisis and all types of scarcity is, perhaps, the greatest challenge, and requires the most urgent answer. The major question is how to do things. The decentralization and regionalization processes, the local governments new role, and the democratization process are new and very favorable conditions to be taken into account. But not much time is available. In most cases, rapid studies will have to be designed mainly to support professionals and technicians working at the local level with very few resources, pressured by the seriousness and urgency of unsolved needs, and without concrete intervention tools or final diagnoses of the situation they hope to act upon.

EVALUATION: AN ETHICAL AND TECHNICAL PROBLEM

Evaluation is implicit in any discussion of social policies. Once evaluation exercises are begun, distinction should be made between values which orient policies and technical evaluation criteria (Klein, 1982). Academic discussion of social policies tends to refer to the value of its content; in this case, it is a meta-activity that goes beyond the apparent content, oriented towards the underlying social philosophy. The technical discussion is quite different,it does not question the underlying values; rather, it accepts them and operates from them. Both types of discussion are complementary. Another of the current challenges is to re-formulate them within the framework provided by the change of the state's role in the region and the recently historical changes in the fields of capitalism and socialism.

What values will orient new social policies? Current history will re-define the content of values such as social equality, equity, individual achievement or freedom of choice. The discussion of social goals and their translation into specific social policy objectives is basic to re-define the limits of the state's, society's and the individual's liability with respect to human development. However, this necessary academic discussion will not be easy, since the value structures corresponding to models prevailing until recently will persist, despite the ongoing historical changes. Scholars will need to display courage and imagination to creatively discuss fundamental values, in accordance with historical changes, and experiences of social policies success or failure.

Another challenge even more difficult to face is to link evaluation as a meta-activity to evaluation as a technical activity. Ideally, to make technical evaluation viable, the objectives must be clearly defined, and cause-effect relationships between social intervention activities (for example, the kind of educational curriculum or family planning service) and the expected effects (such as greater educational achievement or fewer pregnancies) must be known. But the problem is difficult to solve since the intended social policies are ambitious and very often have general objectives. Thus, the cause-effect relationships to be considered not only multiply, but become increasingly blurred as a result of complex interactions between organizational, political, social, cultural or legal factors at different levels.The solution, starting from a clear identification of social indicators,is not easy. Any idea of a social welfare dimension (education,or ideal family size) is in itself multi-dimensional, valorative and resists being encapsulated in a simple series of social indicators (Klein, 1982). Known social theory and available experience do not allow us to be certain as to what social indicators thus far invented actually mean. But efforts must be pursued, there is no other way to carry out technical evaluation, without which it would not be possible to know whether the underlying values chosen are being historically accomplished or not.

To the problem of uncertainty as to what social indicators actually mean, another difficulty may be added: what time frame is necessary to achieve a significant impact? To the uncertainty as to the causal mechanisms of our as yet elemental social engineering, we must add the uncertainty about the time horizon required for a social change to become institutionalized. Under these circumstances, what may be requested of a social researcher and of a planner?

Experience with positivist evaluation models has not been satisfactory. The classic evaluation system based on the hypothetical-deductive model supposes a rationality that is non-existent in current social policy, and requires clear and operationally defined objectives, stable program parameters, and criteria for measuring success. Inputs such as results from policies and programs are considered in a static fashion as within an experimental design, and results are treated as the effects of a controlled treatment. Inputs and results are defined in constant and uni-dimensional terms, and rarely incorporate elements such as context and the implementation process. An environment with simple structures is pre-supposed, as is a hierarchy with singular authority, few complex interactions, and a rational rewarding system (MacLaughlin, 1985). Experience with Latin American social policies and programs proves impossible to make this type of assumptions. Objectives are not only general but changing, implementation mechanisms vary through time, and there are no definite authority or rewarding structures.

Research on social policy will have to explain at a technical level not so much what should be done, but how to do it, what will result, and why. Research must focus more on analysis of the processes involved, than only on knowing whether the objectives were achieved or not. But, although the types of social intervention will have to be discussed from a technical point of view in order to answer basic questions, their meta-political discussion will be unavoidable. And for that purpose, research must generate objective technical results on which to base it, and must then be able to elaborate a new social ethic to which all those providing social services -that final but crucial point of all social policy systems- must adjust themselves.

The many difficulties previously noted will surely mean that the distance between the academic and the technical discussions will never disappear entirely (Klein, 1982). However, this may be borne. The situation which must be avoided is that, due to these circumstances, financial and political pressures for immediate and clear results lead to abandonment of academic discussion, reducing reflection on social development to technical evaluations. The separation between both types of discussion is one of the greatest intellectual and practical risks the region currently faces.

TRAINING: THE NEW PROFESSIONAL

Conceptually and practically, the systemic approach to social policies requires a new profile for the researcher and the professional of the social sciences. The disciplinary focus, based on formation in sociology, anthropology, economics, psychology, education or law, is no longer sufficient. New social policies must be oriented towards a multi-disciplinary and inter-sectorial focus which will innovate social planning procedures.

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Social planning has been carried out from a sectorial perspective, which is consistent with the traditional disciplinary and institutional specializations. Thus, services are offered by sector: education, health, employment, justice or social security. This, in practice, has kept social planning separate from economic planning. Since the time in which the working group presided by Gunnar Myrdal met in 1969 under United Nations auspices to revise the concept of social planning and recommended integral planning, little progress has been made towards a concept that is now recovering special interest (United Nations, 1971). The proposal at that time was that social planning should be understood as socially committed economic planning: the planner should be an economist with social awareness (Hardiman and Midgely, 1989). However, little importance was attached to implementing these concepts in terms of training needs, organizational responsibilities and professional roles. The proposal assumed that common professional training, especially in economics, would be sufficient for social planning. The risk of applying strict economic efficiency criteria to social plans and policies was not foreseen. Recent academic history in Latin America is that of a divorce between the different disciplinary traditions, to the point that economic criteria predominate in practical planning and development leadership (as shown by the activities of the governments). With few exceptions, the final decisions on social programs are made by the Ministries of Economy and the central banks throughout the region.

Many factors have contributed to this situation, but among the most important is the fact that social engineering models for human development have advanced less rapidly than economic models for analysis of economic growth. There is, of course, a large potential which should be taken into account. But to do so, training of human resources in an innovative professional profile has to be provided.

Multi-disciplinary formation based on the handling of quantitative and qualitative techniques is required, along with the mastering of new information technologies, and a clear systemic and practical orientation. As opposed to the economic planner, the social planner must have a different methodology, appropriate for his task: the social planner must consider social needs and social problems (Hardiman and Midgely, 1989). But, in light of what has been discussed thus far, this professional "must be" will be difficult to achieve. Here is, surely, Latin America's main challenge to implement the social policies it needs so much. Because, in addition to all the above, new social policies will have to be designed, implemented, and evaluated by the few or many professionals remaining in government, NGOs or universities after these years of crisis.

Formation of necessary human resources should address to creating the technical and managerial capacity needed to work in both the public and private sectors. The capacity to win credibility from potential beneficiaries and mobilize community resources will be crucial. If new social policy is to be based on the principles of privatization and free operation of competition mechanisms in institutionally open markets, training of new professionals will require drastic changes. The concept of social manager will have to replace that of social administrator.

Social management is not popular among social scientists. However, institutional changes and the processes of economic and technological transformation will require greater capacity in developing solutions and evaluating results. Social engineers with a systemic, non-fragmented view of social problems, will have to emerge, hopefully as a result of action rather than omission by professional training and social research centers.

CONCLUSION

We have consciously left aside discussion on what human development is and on how to define social policies content, but expect to have shown that despite clarity and agreement on those definitions, there is still a long and difficult way to achieving effective impact. When dealing with an issue as complex as this, it may prove more rewarding to search simultaneously both for conceptual clarity and solutions to the problems faced in practice.

Human development is basically an ethical enterprise. In the public sector, social policies are the major institutional instruments for its promotion and achievement. But for that to indeed occur, several conditions must be met. Policies should be based on a systemic perspective of knowledge, including consideration of the social, technical and environmental aspects affecting social problems. Data and collection methods should be accessible to those who make decisions and provide services. Knowledge of problems must be socialized and even democratized when both the collective and the individual should and may take part. The state, the society and the individual must be able to control the levels of social liability among those involved in the implementation processes. The ability to evaluate achievement of goals and values pursued must exist.

Human development as an ethical activity is not, then, merely a question of academic axiology. It also involves science and technology. Therefore, during the region's current historical moment, social research must target new methodological and practical directions. It is not enough to propose goals; the path towards them must also be indicated, and the manner in which results may be measured. All this will demand the ability to summon, ideological pragmatism and managerial capacity from social science professionals. Human development is no longer a matter of good desires. Meeting this challenge may perhaps be the best way of rescuing the social utopia that has always illuminated Latin America's most dramatic historical moments.

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