

**HOW STAKEHOLDER POLITICS SHAPE THE
TRAJECTORY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION POLICY:
A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE**

JULIANA SHAMBASE KACHASU SELETI

2007

**HOW STAKEHOLDER POLITICS SHAPE THE
TRAJECTORY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION POLICY:
A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE**

by

JULIANA SHAMBASE KACHASU SELETI

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Education Policy)**

in the
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria

SUPERVISOR
Professor-Jonathan Jansen

**PRETORIA
SEPTEMBER 2007**

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to two special people in my life who never lived to see me reach this goal. Firstly, my father Mr Godwin Banda Kachasu who in my early years-taught me by example the virtues of hard work and the moral value that good things in life do not come easily. Secondly, my grandmother Mrs Edna Mzyece who, without realising it, encouraged me from a young age to appreciate education and aspire to excel in it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people contributed in different ways to the production of this thesis. Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Jonathan Jansen who encouraged me to enrol for doctoral studies. He made me believe in myself. I would also like to thank him for his scholarly guidance throughout the period of my studies.

A number of people in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector made themselves available to be interviewed for my data collecting process. Their contribution made a great difference to the understanding of ECD policy processes that are interrogated in this thesis. I would like to express my appreciation of their willingness to share their personal accounts of the development of the ECD policy in South Africa.- The following participated in the interviews: Ms Marie Louise Samuels, Director for ECD in the Department of National Education, Pretoria; Ms Jill Sachs, ECD Manager Department of Education, KwaZulu Natal; Ms Genevieve Koopman ECD official, Department of Education, Gauteng; Ms Francesca Johnson, retired official, Department of Education Western Cape; Ms Ruth Thornton, ECD Specialist Wozobona ECD NGO; Mr Eric Atmore, Director, Centre for Early Childhood Development Cape Town (CECD); Ms Linda Biersteker, Research Specialist in ECD, Cape Town; Mr Leonard Saul, Executive Director, South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD), Pretoria; Ms Carol Block, Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU), Cape Town; Ms Jane Evans Director Ntataise ECD NGO Vijoenskroon; Ms Patsy Pillay, Director New Beginnings ECD NGO Durban; Ms Pam Pickens, Director Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE) Durban; Ms Lydia Motsoeng, Trainer Ntataise; Ms Nonhlanhla Maduna, Trainer (TREE); Ms Duduzile Majola, Trainer (TREE); Ms Ntombi Msimanga, Trainer (TREE); Ms Thobekile Zulu, Trainer (TREE); Ms Princess Zulu, Trainer (TREE);

Ms Snoeks Desmond, ECD Specialist Durban and Mr Roy Padayachee, Deputy Minister of Communications.

I would especially like to thank my husband for being there for me and for understanding the implications of the doctoral work for our relationship and the home environment. His words of encouragement always echoed in my mind as I was working on this thesis. I appreciate his kindness and his gently nagging me to wake up in the middle of the night to work on my thesis.

My children Kalembe, Seleti Limbani Seleti and Twasanta have always been my inspiration for wanting to excel in life. I thank them for the times when they listened to me when I needed someone to talk to while working on my thesis. I especially thank Twasanta for his patience and understanding during the thesis-writing process.

Last but not least I thank my mother Mrs Derby Kachasu, my sister Emma Kachasu and my house keeper Helen Zulu for doing an excellent job of managing the home.

ABSTRACT

This study provides an analysis of how Early Childhood Development (ECD) stakeholders participated in the education policy processes in the country, with the emphasis on the development of White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education (ECE) policy in South Africa. The policy was the first ever early-education policy in South Africa. Early Childhood Development in this study is used as the general term for all aspects of childhood development and growth, in the years between birth to nine. Early childhood Education is specific to the education component of ECD.

The policy position called White Paper 5 was a culmination of new education policy processes, which started in the late 1980s and early 1990s in anticipation of the post apartheid government. At the centre of this policy process were ECD stakeholders who played a pivotal role in initiating and exploring ECE policy options for a new South African dispensation.

This study traces the role that stakeholders played in the ECE policy processes from the time that they managed to place ECE as a policy concern on the agenda of the National Education Coordination Committee's policy forums from 1990 to 1994, when other ECE policy developments started that led to the establishment of the first Directorate for ECD in the Education Department and eventually the production of White Paper 5.

The principles of participation and consultation, upon which the political struggles for new policies were built, were taken seriously, into the post-apartheid era from the 1990s to 2000. However, consultation and participation became, more rare as the new government structures started taking on stakeholder roles in the development of ECE and in ECD in general.

This was starkly demonstrated when government decided to finalise White Paper 5 for ECE without the direct involvement of the ECD stakeholders. The study shows that the ECD stakeholders did not anticipate or prepare themselves for a different role in the new democratic South Africa, in which government priorities would shift from consulting stakeholders and forging partnerships to delivering on political mandates under, constraints of time and resource.

The study also asserts that the role of stakeholders and their participation in the ECE policy processes between 1990 and 2000 played a crucial role in the development and production of White Paper 5, thus stakeholders participated in and influenced the development of the first ever landmark policy on ECE in the country.

DECLARATION

I, J.S.K. Seleti (student number 23178592), declare that:

“How stakeholder politics shaped the trajectory of the early childhood development policy in South Africa: The case study of early childhood development in South Africa”

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I did not previously submit this thesis for any degree at another university.

Juliana Kachasu Seleti

Date: September 2007

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CCECD	Coordinated Committee for Early Childhood Development
CECD	Centre for Early Childhood Development
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELRU	Early Learning Resource Unit
GO	Government Organisation
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NIWC	National Interim Working Committee
NPA	National Programme of Action
RTO	Resource and Training Organisation
SAAECE	South African Association for Early Childhood Education
SACECD	South African Congress for Early Childhood Development
TREE	Training and Resources for Early Education
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Co-operation

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE

1.1	Introduction to the study	1
1.2	Rationale	12
1.3	Argument	14
1.4	Organisation	16
1.5	Conclusion	20

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE LITERATURE ON STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION POLICY PROCESSES: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

2.1	Introduction	22
2.2	Policy process studies	22
2.3	Policy processes in South Africa	26
2.4	Defining participation in policy development	28
2.5	Policy research in the ECD field	40
2.6	Conclusion	42

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN ECE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

3.1	Introduction	44
3.2	Perspectives on the stages theoretical framework	45
3.3	Stage theory and ECD policy analysis	50
3.4	Incremental approach to stakeholder participation	54
3.5	The interactive model	54
3.6	Conclusion	55

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1	Introduction	56
4.2	Research design	58
4.3	Literature review process	59
4.4	The study of documents	62
4.5	Stakeholders as resources of data	66
4.6	Questionnaires as data source	67
4.7	The methodological approach: A qualitative case study	68
4.8	Data analysis and interpretation	70
4.9	Validation	71
4.10	Limitations	72
4.11	Conclusion	72

CHAPTER FIVE

SETTING THE AGENDA FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

5.1	Introduction	74
5.2	The arguments for ECE policy	75
5.3	Exclusion of ECE from the pre-democracy policy agenda	82
5.4	Establishment of a national ECD voice	84
5.5	ECD in transition	86
5.6	The birth of the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development	88
5.7	SA ECD Congress and the development of the ECD policy	91
5.8	The Establishment of the ECE directorate 1998	94
5.9	The impact of reconstructing ECE in South Africa	97
5.10	Conclusion	99

CHAPTER SIX

STAKEHOLDERS' IDENTITIES, INFLUENCES, INTERESTS AND ROLES IN THE SHAPING OF ECE POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

6.1	Introduction	101
6.2	Defining stakeholders in education policy process	104
6.3	Stakeholders in South Africa's Early Childhood Education policy process	108
6.4	Identity of government as the policy maker	109
6.5	Individual's participation in the ECE policy process	111
6.6	ECD practitioners and caregivers as stakeholders	115
6.7	Organisational stakeholders in the ECE policy process.....	116
6.8	Stakeholders by gender, race and leadership	118
6.9	Stakeholder interests in the policy processes	120
6.10	Stakeholders perspectives on the ECE policy process	132
6.11	Conclusion	133

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE ECD STAKEHOLDERS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD

7.1	Introduction	134
7.2	Apartheid government interactions with ECD stakeholders	136
7.3	The post-apartheid government relationship with ECD stakeholders.....	137
7.4	The interim ECD policy-adoption stage	140
7.5	The national ECD Pilot Project and the ECD Audit	145
7.6	Stakeholder expertise in the ECD Pilot	147
7.7	The national ECD Audit	149
7.8	Stakeholders and the national ECD Audit	151
7.9	The development of White Paper 5	153
7.10	Stakeholder participation in the development of White Paper 5	156
7.11	Power and politics in the ECE policy process: The communication gap .	159
7.12	White Paper 5 and the preceding ECE policy products	162
7.13	Conclusion	165

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1	Introduction	167
8.2	A narrative synthesis of the main findings of this research	
8.3	The theoretical meaning and value of this study	182
8.4	Potential areas for further inquiry.....	184
8.5	New knowledge.....	185
	List of references.....	187
	List of interview participants.....	197
	Addenda	198

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE

1.1 Introduction to the study

Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa, as stated in White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education (ECE), means:

“a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential” (Department of Education, 2001 d, p14).

In the context of this study the chronological age being referred to in ECD is the period from birth to five, which is the targeted age range for which White Paper 5 was designed. The concept of early childhood development is used in this study as an umbrella term for young children and all aspects and issues that relate to them, such as their rights and needs and other matters that impact on their development.

The term Early Childhood Education (ECE) is used in this study to refer specifically to the education aspects of children from birth to five as covered in White Paper 5. The two acronyms ECD and ECE are used differently in the study according to the context in which they are being applied. This distinction is important, as at most times these two terms are used interchangeably as though they mean the same thing. The focus of this study is to explore the

unfolding of ECE policy processes within the context of the birth of policy development in South Africa between 1992 to 2001.

The process of transformation in early childhood education (ECE) in South Africa cannot be examined in isolation from the overall pre- and post-apartheid reform processes in the country. Through lobbying by early childhood development advocate groups, children's rights and needs were by the early 1990s identified as a critical component of the human capacity development strategy for transformation in the anticipated new South African democracy.

It was a great achievement for the ECD sector when the South African Government, at the dawn of a new democratic government led by the African National Congress (ANC), instituted policy mechanisms for meeting children's needs and rights across all government departments. The government ensured that all key departments dealing with children's rights and services had in place policies, policy frameworks, guidelines, and legislation to direct the provisioning of the relevant ECD services.

It is outside the scope of this study to examine and evaluate all the ECD-related policy reforms across the whole of South Africa's government system. Suffice it to say that during the beginning of the transformation period, the early 1990s to the present, several child-related policy initiatives have taken place. The development of these policies to a large extent involved intense collaboration with ECD stakeholders and the same stakeholder groups and individuals targeted in this study participated in some of these ECD policy collaborative initiatives.

A Department of Education Report on ECD Policies and programmes mentioned that:

“With regard to inter-sectoral collaboration, many of the policies and or programmes explicitly require such collaboration. Several of the policies were developed inter-sectorally. This together with the common principles on which the policies rest, is helpful for collaborative work”, (Department of Education, 2001 a, p15).

Policy transformation in ECD was conducted by means of consultation and partnership with the relevant ECD stakeholders. This process of consultation took on different characteristics depending on the nature of the policy being initiated. Stakeholder collaboration and partnerships in policy development and implementation were emphasised by the new government in order to institute democratic principles of freedom of expression, using consultative methods in the policy reform processes. In the Department of Education this commitment to consultative models of policy reform was clearly expressed in White Paper 1 on Education and Training:

“The Department of Education is committed to openness and consultation in the management of education. However, it has inherited in existing roles laws a fragmented system of education consultation, which reflects the racially divided nature of the former South Africa. These must be replaced by a representative body or bodies, which can provide effective channels for advice to the Minister and be available for consultation by the Minister on matters within his or her competency. (Ministry will support similar legislative at provincial level.) In preparation for setting up the new structures, the Ministry will seek the advice of a wide range of stakeholders in education and training, including especially the organized teaching profession, organized students, parent organizations and the National Education and training Forum” (Department of Education, 1995, p1).

The principle of consultation in developing the new government policy system required the development of internal mechanisms for working with relevant stakeholder groups and individuals in the creation of the first ever early-childhood education (ECE) policy in the country.

This research describes and explains the consultation and partnership processes that government developed with ECD stakeholders over time. The aim of this research is to investigate how and who produced and shaped the development of White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education. The development of White Paper 5 was a long process, which entailed inter-organisational collaboration among ECD stakeholders and partnerships with the Department of Education.

The ECE policy development and formulation was not exactly a linear process; the policy processes unfolded gradually over time and through various stages. At every stage in the policy development process different forces influenced, shaped and directed the final policy product. In essence, the policy development processes were complex and characterised by some very positive experiences, but also by tensions. This study examines strengths and weaknesses in the ECE policy development process with regard to stakeholder participation and consultation.

The study also examines the developmental roots of ECE policy for South Africa. In so doing it attempts to answer the following questions:

- Who were the major role players in the development process of the Early Childhood Education policy in South Africa?
- What were the factors that motivated their interest in this process?

- What was the nature of the stakeholder relationships during and after the ECE development process?
- How did stakeholder participation and interaction affect the final production of what became known as White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education?
-

The above questions provided the study with a backdrop through which to trace the development trajectory of ECD policy in South Africa. The roots of the ECE policy provide the starting point for understanding the ECE policy process and stakeholder involvement in it. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) project, which was conducted between 1990 and 1992, was the formal policy process that introduced into ECD the concept of stakeholder consultation at national level. Even though it was conducted before the democratic government was in place, NEPI modelled the groundbreaking policy processes that the new democratic South Africa would adopt. NEPI, which researched policy options, including ECD, on behalf of the broad democratic movement in education, was a project of the National Education Co-coordinating Committee (NECC). NECC was formed in 1985 to coordinate the mass-based education structures and organisations and to lead the struggle against the inferior apartheid education system (World Bank Report, 1985).

The NEPI report adopted the use of Educare to describe and discuss the care and education of young children in the country. At this stage the country had not yet come to an agreed upon definition of ECD and the acceptable terminologies to be used in the sector. The NEPI Early Educare Report (1992) argued for increased investment in early childhood care and education. The report provides strong evidence in support of the arguments for government

intervention in early childhood care and education. In concluding, the report states that:

“There are strong, social, political, economic and programmatic arguments for increased support of early childhood care and education. In situations where initial schooling is of poor quality, it is essential to adopt a combined approach of upgrading primary schooling and providing for the healthy development of children, before they go to school, to ensure continuity in the learning environment. Early childhood programmes are likely to be most effective when they have a broad development focus which meets the needs of the whole child in an integrated manner” (NEPI Educare Report, 1992, p 94).

The NEPI report provided a substantial and persuasive ECD political position, which in turn had a profound impact on subsequent ECE policy development processes. This is evidenced, for instance, in current ECE policy leanings toward developmentally appropriate and integrated programmes, especially for children from birth to five (Department of Education, 2001,d). This approach by government has its roots in the NEPI report, which was a formal representation of what the ECD sector wanted in the new South Africa.

The other policy process that informed this study was the ANC’s Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), popularly known as the ‘Yellow Book’. The framework formed the basis of the new South Africa’s education system. This policy document articulated a policy stand on ECE, which was based on a strong notion of the importance of fulfilling children’s rights and needs through government programmes and services

The study also evaluated the results of a research on the situational status of ECD in South Africa, produced in August 1994 as a World Bank Report on Early

Childhood Development in South Africa. This report was also a remarkable achievement in the early days of the ECD policy process. It was produced with sponsorship from the World Bank and played the important role of shedding light on the ECD situation in South Africa. It also clarified policy options for future ECE policy. The World Bank research was one of those early policy initiatives conducted solely by stakeholder representatives and an international consultant in the absence of a democratically elected government.

The other major processes that had an impact on the ECE policy process unfolded between 1994 and 2001. These were for example, the development of the Interim Policy for ECE in 1996 and the ECD Pilot conducted to test the Interim Policy in 1997 to 2000. Early Childhood Development (ECD) stakeholders participated in these processes through provincial and national forum activities. Various governmental and non-government organisations and structures, such as the Training Resources in ECD in KwaZulu Natal and the Centre for Early Childhood Development in Cape Town, contributed to the production of the pre-ECE policy documents that were intended to inform the national policy on ECE. The extensive interactions of ECD stakeholders at this stage can be attributed to the socio-political context of the struggle to actualise the newly attained democratic freedom through policy transformation. It was another form of a struggle within the context of the democratic dispensation because sectors had to fight to have their issues on the new political agenda. Individuals and organisations were therefore involved in jostling in political arenas for the recognition of their sectors in preparing for a new South Africa in

which government and non-government organisations would operate democratically.

After 1994 the development of the ECE Policy in the new Department of Education flowed from the political mandate to deliver on the promises made in White Paper 1, in which government had committed to ECD provisioning. The emphasis in this White Paper was on the need to develop children and the sector through programmes that reached the children's families and communities. The White Paper also emphasized the consultative development of ECE policies by referring to the development of formal inter-departmental committees, nationally and provincially, to support inter-sectoral collaboration for the development of appropriate programmes and services for children.

The White Paper 1 position on ECD was in line with, and based on, the ANC's policy framework for education and training, in which it is stated that:

“The ANC proposes that early childhood Educare should form part of a comprehensive, national community development strategy linking economic and social development, including housing, health, welfare and education. This will require:

- That ECE is accorded appropriate priority in the national and provincial government's reconstruction and development programme, including the deployment of state resources.
- The joint responsibility for planning ECE strategy and resourcing be given to the relevant government departments at all levels of education (education and training, health, welfare). The Ministry of Education and Training and Provincial Education and Training Authorities should coordinate the process.
- The representative consultative structure be established at national, provincial and local levels to guide policy and implementation.
- That the priorities for delivery be planned at local level in relation to local needs and circumstances, in

collaboration with all concerned inter-groups, service organisations and funding” (Department of Education, 1994, p 94-95).

In the years after the new government came to power, these ECE policy promises in this most foundational policy document in the history of education in South Africa were considered in the forging of the delivery process for the ECE policy.

The following major ECE policy documents were of interest in this study in relation to the formulation and analysis of White Paper 5 (Dept. of Education, 2001,d)

- **The NEPI Educare Report**

This report was of importance to this study because it was one of the earliest products of the ECE stakeholder's policy processes in this country. Lobbying and advocacy by stakeholders helped to give ECE a voice on the NECC through which the NEPI Educare process was conducted.

- **World Bank Study on ECD in South Africa**

This study was conducted between 1993 and 1994. It was another of the ECD stakeholders' initiatives, which provided vital information on future ECD policies. Key stakeholder individuals coordinated the processes with support from the Centre for Education Policy and Development (CEPD).

- **The Interim ECE Policy**

The Interim ECE Policy was developed during 1995 and 1996, through a process of intense consultation and collaboration. It was the first ECE document

to provide a sense of what ECE policy would look like in South Africa. Several role players were co-opted to make an input and give feedback on various draft versions of the document. The main focus of the Interim Policy was on government's commitment to a Grade R year of preschool experience, mostly based in schools with some in Community based sites. The Interim Policy was followed by the:

- **National Pilot on Early Childhood Development**

The National Pilot on Early Childhood Development was designed to test the interim ECD policy, particularly in relation to the Grade R system and models of provisioning. This was a collaborative effort with various stakeholders such as NGO training organisations, universities and research institutions, mainly from the ECD sector. One of the outcomes of the Pilot was the national ECD Audit.

- **The ECD Audit**

The Early Childhood Development Audit was conducted in 2000. This provided the country with an opportunity to gather statistical data on the state of education provisioning in the country. The Audit was a countrywide process, which required massive consultation and collaboration mechanisms between the Department and the ECD stakeholders at national, provincial and district levels. The next critical policy step in the ECE policy process was the White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education.

- **White Paper 5 on ECE**

This represented government's intentions with regard to providing ECE in the country. The White Paper focused on the provision of Grade R in the schooling

system and a limited number in the community sites. It also committed to an inter-sectoral and integrated system of making provision for the pre-Grade R and the birth to five year olds. This process did not involve direct stakeholder involvement as the other processes did.

The stakeholders' motivations and intentions in participating in the ECE policy processes varied, depending on their specific interests in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and ECD in general. The influence of various stakeholders on the ECE policy seems to have been problematic. Their involvement in the ECE policy processes seems to have decreased after 2000. As a result, there appears to be a chasm in the ECE policy between White Paper 5 on ECE and what the sector supported in the preceding ECE policy documents, such as the Interim Policy for ECD. No clear explanation is given for the apparent discrepancies in the policy document.

This research will attempt to provide some empirical explanations for this puzzle, by tracing ECD policy and the development processes and by explaining the context and origins, as well as the social and political nature of the agents and influences shaping the policy processes and outcomes.

The Early Childhood Education policy development process was designed to be informed by the principles of democracy, equity and social justice. The White Paper on Education and Training (White Paper I) states that:

“The Ministry will seek the advice of a wide range of stakeholders in education and training, including especially the organised teaching profession, organised students, parent's organisation and the National Education and Training Forum” (Department of Education, 1995,p1).

The government actively encouraged stakeholder participation at different levels and stages of the ECE policy development process. A concerted effort was made by various ECD stakeholders to participate in the first ever ECE policy process, because the new government had put ECE policy on its Education agenda (Education White Paper 1, 1995). Competing interests in the ECD sector would be played out in this young democracy.

1.2 Rationale

In developing countries, the discrepancy between initial policy thinking and final policy adoption remains a veritable “black box” in policy research. Over the last three decades, research in Early Childhood has led to the recognition of the importance of education in the early years. As educational reforms have unfolded in various countries, some have taken a keen interest in developing a policy specifically for ECE (Meade & Padmore, 2002; Groak, 2002). With the increased recognition that the ECD field has been receiving, policy studies in this sector have been initiated and conducted mainly in order to direct government ECE implementation processes and procedures.

Policy research has also largely concentrated on why it is important for governments to invest in early childhood education (Eming, 2002; Katz, 1999; Barnett & Ship, 2002; Graoak, 2002). However, many ECE policy studies depict a neat and flawless process resulting in a positive and linear portrayal of both policy process and outcome. There is a lack of studies in the ECE field that critically analyse the contested and “messy” aspects of the policy development process and its subsequent production and implementation.

This study has therefore been motivated and stimulated by two major factors: the emergence of the first comprehensive ECE policy in post-apartheid South Africa, and the need to unravel the controversial, intricate, contradictory and contested aspects of the ECE policy development process. This will be done by identifying and analysing the forces that shaped ECE policy in South Africa's democratic transition. This study will consider how, at different stages of the process, various stakeholders and other role players influenced the content and direction expressed in the final product.

The aim of the study will be to find out how stakeholder power and authority intersected and countered each other to produce a particular policy outcome as represented in White Paper 5 on ECE. The roles of the major stakeholders and their perceptions of ECE policy process will be examined and critically analysed in order to obtain an understanding of how far original ECD stakeholder positions corresponded to or diverged from the positions represented in White Paper 5 for ECE. The study will uncover the dynamics of the relations that unfolded in the process and how they impacted on the final policy product.

Such an empirical study on the ECE policy development process in South Africa has not been conducted previously. It is relevant and timely, especially when viewed against the background of the ECE implementation processes such as the: "The Grade R Conditional Grant Programme". This programme was the process through which White Paper 5 was implemented. Its purpose was to introduce and phase in Grade R in the South African school system and in a few selected community sites.

The research will contribute much needed empirical knowledge on how ECE policy is developed, using the South African experience as a case in point. The research will demonstrate some sector-specific dynamics that existed and continue to exist with regard to White Paper 5. The newly constructed role and place of childhood in South Africa will also be reflected in the way interest groups participated and projected children's interests within policy formulations.

This study will also help explain that stakeholders in policy development processes are sometimes confronted with constraints in participating fully in a policy process. For example stakeholders' socio-economic contexts can inhibit their commitment to a policy development process, even when they know and understand their role in the process.

1.3 Argument

It is now well established in research that policy development and formulation is not a neat and linear process, as many studies tend to assume (Ball, 1999; Levin, 1999). Rather, policy processes unfold over time, during which a policy goes through various stages of development. At each stage of the policy development process there are different forces that can influence the shape and direction of the final policy product. In essence, policy development processes are complex and characterised by conflict because of the value laden nature of social policies. This aspect of the policy process is often not adequately articulated or addressed in policy development studies. As Ball (1990) observed:

“Abstract accounts lend towards tidy generalisations and often fail to capture the messy realities of influences, pressures, dogma, expediency, conflict, compromise, intransigence, resistance, error, opposition and pragmatism in the policy process (p9).

This study argues that the development of the ECE policy process was a difficult and long undertaking that started to unravel from the late 1980s onwards. The development of the ECE policy started at a critical historical time in South Africa. It was at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle when political groups were preparing for the end of apartheid and the beginning of a new democratic South Africa. One of the major activities was the preparation of possible policies for the new South Africa. In education several policy areas were identified, one of which was ECE.

The processes involved several different historical developments in ECD, which were all linked to the ECD sector's aspiration of achieving the development of an ECE policy for the country. The processes involved can be summarised as:

- The development of possible policy options for the ECD sector.
- The establishment of new ECD structures to assist with among other things the development of ECD policies in the country.
- The establishment of a directorate for ECD in education.
- The development of the interim policy for ECE.
- The testing of the possible ECE policy
- The final development of White Paper 5.

This study asserts that the most important aspect of the policy processes in ECD was the presence and role of the ECD stakeholders. The achievement of the ECE policy was attained through the initiation of ECD stakeholders at a time

when there were no democratic government systems in place to lead this process.

This study provides important lessons on how stakeholders participated in the ECE policy process, from leadership roles in the early years of 1990 to 1994, to partnerships with government from 1994 to 2000. The development of White Paper 5 in 2001 gave rise to some controversy, as the stakeholders felt that they had not been part of it. This study traces and defines how stakeholders' participation unfolded in the development of White Paper 5.

1.4 Organisation

The chapters in this study are divided into four major sections. Firstly I introduce the subject, secondly I outline the methodology and theoretical approach adopted for data analysis; thirdly I provide a historical analysis of the development of ECE policy in South Africa and fourthly I discuss perspectives on the ECD stakeholder and government relationships during the ECE policy process.

Chapter One introduces the subject of the thesis, its rationale and significance for the ECD field and ECD policy research. It also provides an overview of the socio-political environment in which education policy reform took place in South Africa and highlights the situation of ECD in that context. The chapter also explains the new government's approach to policy development, that of stakeholder consultation and partnerships as a way of counteracting the previous apartheid government's approach of selective and discriminatory consultation. Chapter One also sets out the motivation and rationale for the

study, focusing on the need to investigate the development of ECE policy, in order to provided an empirical understanding of how stakeholder involvement and participation in the ECE policy process was pivotal to the production of White Paper 5 on ECE.

Chapter Two explores the literature, which formed the basis of the research. The chapter establishes the status of knowledge of stakeholder participation in policy processes; evaluates the strengths and limitations of this knowledge base, especially in relation to the ECD sector; explains the contribution of this study by way of theory and research to our understanding of stakeholder interests and influences on education policy reforms. This chapter also provides a review of literature on the stages theoretical framework that the study uses to analyse stakeholder participation in policy development. The stages theory is seen as a rationale model for policy analysis; it views policy as unfolding in a series of stages. In this study, the stages theory is applied to explain that stakeholder participation, interest and influences as well as consultation with the protagonists of a specific policy differ according to the identified stages.

Chapter Three defines and discusses the stages theoretical perspective and outlines how it was applied in the study to trace stakeholder participation in the ECE policy process in South Africa. The chapter provides a broad view of how stage theory has evolved as a policy analysis tool and sketches its merits and disadvantages according to various policy analysts. Other policy analysis theoretical approaches to understanding stakeholder participation in policy processes are also discussed briefly, namely the incrementalist and interrogative approaches.

Chapter Four is the methodology chapter. It describes how the study was conducted. It sets out how the research data was collected and explains why the methods used in the study were chosen. The chapter discusses and justifies the qualitative approach used. It explains how interviews and documentary analysis were applied to gather data and how the target groups for the interviews were sampled; and which critical documents were analysed and reviewed in the course of the study.

Chapter Five is the first of the chapters examining the development processes in the ECD sector that led to the development of White Paper 5. The chapter provides a backdrop to the events and developments that gave rise to the new national ECD organisation in the country, the South African Congress for ECD. The chapter also introduces the concept of ECD in South Africa as part of the socio-political struggle for freedom, aiming in this case to help children attain their rights through the provision of equal and quality ECD services and programmes. The focus areas of the chapter are: the arguments for ECE policy; the ECE agenda-setting stage; the pre-democracy ECD structures; the exclusion of ECE from the pre-democracy education agenda; the establishment of a new ECD voice; the establishment of the ECE directorate and the impact of the reconstruction of ECD in South Africa.

Chapter Six continues with the theme of the development of ECD in South Africa, and reveals stakeholder perspectives on their position and situation in the ECE policy process in the country. The chapter provides insights into the ECD stakeholder perspectives on their roles, interest and influence. It also lists the ECD stakeholders in South Africa and provides an analysis of the

stakeholders' perspectives on those stakeholders who participated and how they participated in the ECE policy process.

Chapter Seven offers an analysis of government and stakeholder relationships and interactions during the development of the ECE policy. The chapter focuses on how the ECD stakeholders' relationship with government evolved and changed through the stages of the ECE policy development process. The chapter also discusses how the stakeholders themselves interacted with one another and collaborated in certain stages of the ECE policy, and how the inter-organisational stakeholder relationships, as well as the stakeholder relationship with government, disintegrated. The chapter concludes that the ECE policy process overlooked the need to develop a policy on stakeholder and government partnerships, which contributed to the disintegration of the ECD stakeholder scenario.

Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter and attempts to identify the common link across the whole ECE policy development process. The chapter sets out the findings on the nature of the ECD stakeholder involvement in the ECE policy process and the contribution these stakeholders made, both before and after the apartheid era. The chapter summarises the development of the ECD sector from the early 1990s when the reconstruction of the sector started with the creation of a new national ECD organisation that aimed to unite the stakeholders under one umbrella, namely the SACECD. It also outlines various ECE policy development milestones that included overall education policy reforms such as the NECC, NEPI and ECD link to the ANC's Policy framework on Education and Training as well as White Paper 1 on Education and Training

Policy. These milestones were used as the framework for the study of stakeholder participation in ECE policy.

This chapter also provides particulars of the study's contribution to ECD research, especially in the South African education-policy trajectory context. It shows how the study has contributed to providing some theoretical explanation of how stakeholders participated in the development of the ECE policy, using the stages approach.

This chapter identifies some possible issues for further studies as discovered in the course of the research; it highlights, for example, the need for further studies on the ECD stakeholder inter-organisational relationship during the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era. The aim of such studies would be to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the South African ECD stakeholder body in order to find a remedy for the current fragmentation in the sector. The other critical area for further studies is the revision of the ECD stakeholder relationship with government in the ECE policy processes with the purpose of developing policy models for ECD stakeholder and government partnerships.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background to the research undertaken in this study; it has shown the importance of the study in relation to the overall role, recognition and development of ECD both nationally and internationally. The chapter has looked at how ECD as a sector became infused into the whole reconstruction and policy reform process of the country from the late 1980s right

through the 1990s. The rationale for the study has been discussed with a focus on some international perspectives on stakeholder consultation and on how research sometimes fails to focus on the “messy” side of the policy development process, for example the gaps and tensions in the consultation processes to which most people who believe in democracy adhere, albeit in theory more than in practice. The rationale also delves into the need to understand how the stakeholder role in the ECE policy process contributed to the final product, White Paper Five on ECE. This chapter has discussed how there is a need to explain the specifics of the ECE stakeholder involvement in the ECE policy process in the context of the complexities that the process entailed. Some of these complexities were outside the sector, such as the new political systems and priorities that were being put in place. Lastly, the chapter provides an overview of the chapters in this thesis.

This introductory chapter has set out what the study is about. The following chapter is an overview of the relevant literature pertaining to policy processes and stakeholders’ involvement.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE LITERATURE ON STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION POLICY PROCESSES: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

Research on stakeholder involvement in policy processes is not an area that has received much empirical attention in policy studies. As Lewis (2005) states:

“Despite all the policy frameworks that include public opinion and organized interests as integral parts of the policy processes, few empirical works include these determinants in their analysis”.
(p21).

This is even more so in education policy studies, where research on stakeholder involvement in the policy process is very scarce. In the field of early childhood development it is difficult to find empirical works on ECD policy processes and studies that focus on stakeholder involvement.

The purpose of this review is to establish the status of knowledge of stakeholder participation in policy processes, to evaluate the strengths and limitations of this knowledge base, and to justify the contribution of this study by way of theory and research to our understanding of stakeholder interests and influences on education policy reforms.

2.2 Policy process studies

Because of the lack of adequate empirical work on stakeholder participation in education and ECD policy development processes in particular, this review concerns examined literature from different fields of study that focuses on

stakeholders, interest groups, and civil-society involvement in policy development. The aim was to gather different perspectives from various study domains on how stakeholders participate in other policy processes and then to apply aspects of these perspectives to the education and ECD context.

The study also benefited from studies and literature dealing with policy development processes either broadly or with reference to specific issues in political science. This was useful in that there were a number of studies, which focused on generic issues in policy processes. This helped the study to make sense of where, when and how stakeholders participate. Not all studies mention stakeholders in the policy processes, but some do with the intention of explaining various issues, such as who has sufficient authority and power to make a certain policy happen.

Policy process studies cover various topics, and aspects of the policy development process that are thought to take place in stages or phases. Sabatier (1999), Heinemann, William and Bluhn (1997) and King et al (1996) relate the development of policy to an “innovation process”. King et al (1996) mention that:

“A way to characterize this innovation process is to group its activities into a set of logically related categories. Like others we conceive the innovation process as having stages or phases. Although there are many ways of viewing the process we have settled on four phases that we believe capture its essence no matter what the innovation, creation, design, implementation and institutionalisation”(p9)

Invariably, most of these studies focus on various definitions and explanations of the policy development stages or phases. They also tackle various issues and questions relating to the stages of the policy process which according to

Jann and Wegrich (2005), are agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation.

There are many views on what the stages of the policy processes are; the inference that can be made from the different perspectives is that all policy processes have a beginning, a middle and an end. Research issues in policy process studies vary amongst different disciplines and study domains. Some studies research policy issues that cut across the different stages while others are specific to one or more stages. Richardson (1979) has established that this segmentation of the policy process sometimes leads to different groups' (whether well organised or not) inhabiting different stages or segments of the policy process. Some groups realize that the best way to be involved in the policy process is to be recognised by government as consultants, for example. Within education and early childhood development, this has been very prevalent especially in the context of South Africa's new post-apartheid dispensation. Expert skills in certain aspects of education have been considered a necessity to inform and guide government on particular policy issues. As Lewis (2005) argues:

The policy making process is not consistent across issue areas, depending on the area, differing numbers and types of legislative committees executive departments may play important roles. Similarly, the public may play a larger role in some areas than others. Interest groups certainly can play various roles, acting as a public or clientele representative as a broker of political information or as a political expert policy makers rely more heavily on these non-governmental forces in some policy areas and less in others. (p 4)

Therefore the need for different role players is emphasised in most policy development activities across different countries.

Official Government documents are often narrative discussions of the intention to involve interest groups in the policy development process and of how the policy consultation will be implemented. Some studies, therefore, look at government attempts to involve stakeholders in the policy development process. The Journal Education Policy Formation in Africa, contained case studies of Anglophone Africa on Education Policy Formation. The articles take a historical perspective, examining transformation from colonial education to that after independence. Botswana is one of the countries studied that had a mechanism in place for stakeholder participation in the policy transformation process. However, this was not effective in ensuring that all stakeholder views became part of the final policy product. Swartland and Hartwell (1994) state that:

“Botswana has developed a process of systematically consulting on policy issues at the village, the district and national levels. However, with a very high proportion of national resources derived centrally from mining, with a sophisticated and strategic macroeconomic policy, and with rapidly growing and changing educational system, those at the village level and those outside the inner circle of government are de facto, unable to effectively participate and attain ownership in policy development”(p77).

This study makes the useful observation that stakeholders in policy development processes are sometimes confronted with constraints in participating fully in a policy process. Stakeholders' social and economic contexts can inhibit their commitment to a policy development process, even when they know and understand their role in the process. This study, in

considering the role of stakeholders in the policy development process, highlighted the lack of information on how, the stakeholders interacted and how such interactions eventually affected the policy process and outcomes.

2.3 Policy processes in South Africa

The promise of a new South Africa sparked much deliberation and many discussions about a new approach to policy processes, particularly after 1994. Policy development was pivotal to the growth and development of the country. Dismantling the old system required a firm policy base and tenable processes of developing it. Researchers therefore developed a great interest in the policy processes that government was putting in place. Sehoole (2002) for instant states that:

“The literature shows a boom in policy research in the post 1990 period. The changed conditions brought about by the unbanning of the liberation movement that signalled the beginning of the formal demise of the apartheid system in Feb 1990 shifted the emphasis from what was seen as the politics of reconstruction. The struggle around policy required new tactics and skills. There was an upsurge in the undertaking of policy research that emerged out of a realisation that with the prospects of the dawn of democracy in South Africa there would be a need for alternative policies to apartheid. In response to this need, different strategies were adapted which involved large-scale policy research organization of workshops conferences and seminars” (p65).

The major research activities in ECD were the NEPI (1992) Educare investigation, The World Bank report on ECD in South Africa (1990), the ECD Pilot (2000) and the ECD Audit (2001). These initiatives provided much-needed data on various aspects of policy possibilities for ECE in South Africa. Research was critical to the understanding of how policies should be formulated, but the extent to which these research initiatives were used to inform the final White

Paper 5 ECE policy has not yet been empirically established. This requires another research process.

It is apparent that during the 1990s, stakeholder consultation became something different from what it had been during the apartheid period, and discussions around this process became popular in academic circles. Schreiner (1994) for example, dealt with the issue of forums in South Africa's Public Policy making. He analysed the policy processes that engulfed South Africa in the early 1990s and demonstrated how, during that period, there were many mass forums on policy discussions. This was partly because the country was still building its consultation capacity and techniques and there were no clear sector-based forums yet where specific issues could be discussed. At that time public forums were critical for policy construction and sharing. Schreiner (1990) says:

"Public policy making is the process whereby interest organizations institutions of civil society interact with public authorities (The state and government, including political parties) in the formulation and or implementation of public policy. Public Policy is seen as comprising a wide spectrum of instruments including laws and regulations through to more informal guidelines and policy approaches which are integrated to the process of governance and social order"(p2).

Schreiner's approach to policy processes reveals that consultation in policy development happens at different levels. It is at mass forums, which are macro-level consultative processes (Sehooole, 2002) that various issues come to the politician's attention. Some issues are taken seriously; some are not. What is important for a sector in such forums is to have representatives who have authority and expertise, not only in their field, but also in the understanding of

politics and policy processes (Colebatch, 1998). This study discovered that ECD became an agenda issue in the reconstruction of South Africa through such forums, and that the presence of politically astute ECD individuals helped pave the way for the recognition of ECD in the new government's policy agendas.

It is crucial to have influential representatives of the sector at public forums. The task of the sector's representatives is to sway or convince the policy makers about the sector's beliefs and why they should be incorporated into the policy process (Song & Miskel, 2002).

2.4 Defining participation in policy development

Participation in policy processes has become an area of interest in policy research, focusing on different issues. Some studies want to discover what purpose is served by participation in policy, with the intention of providing some form of model of how stakeholders can participate effectively in a policy processes (Webler, Tuler & Krueger, 2001). Other studies focus on stakeholder or interest group participation in a policy process, in order to understand how their participation influences the policy being developed (Song & Miskel, 2002). The participation of stakeholders in policy is determined by several factors, as stated earlier, chief among them being the political arena or environment. The historical context, which is linked to the political environment, can also be used to analyse the nature of participation in policy development.

Interest-group involvement in policy process is a topic that has received a little more attention within the political science field. In this field, the major focus of interest group studies is on the nature of political-party interest groups and their political interests; however, some studies and literature also look at interest-group involvement in the processes of developing policies.

The study has therefore gathered the majority of its literature sources from the political-science field. This literature was analysed in the realization that characteristics of interest-group involvement in the policy process have unique features, but that they also have commonalities despite being evaluated in different disciplines or domains.

Various terms are used in policy studies to define people or groups who participate or take an interest in policy development processes. The most prominent terms in the literature are: network groups, interest groups, stakeholders, role players, pressure groups and simply groups. What emerges clearly in various studies is that terms are used interchangeably without being clearly distinguished; however, some authors do define the terms they use without necessarily comparing them with others. Smith (1993) for instance states that:

“Policy networks are a means of categorizing the relationship between groups and the State. Networks exist where there is some exchange of resources between state and groups. This can range from a limited exchange of information to the institutionalisation of a group in the policy process”(p 7).

Richardson (1993:p 1) defines a pressure group as ‘any group which articulates demands that the political authorities in the political system or sub system

should make an authoritative allocation. There is a sense in the literature that some of these groups comprise individuals and groups from various backgrounds and professional interests, while others may comprise people from similar backgrounds and professions. The composition of the group is often determined by the policy interest, domain and the problem on which they are advocating. Song and Miskel (2002) state:

The category of interest groups “is defined for our study as including membership organizations, advocacy organizations not accepting members, business, other organizations or institutions, or any association of individuals policy actors or groups, whether formally organized or not, that tries to influence public policy (p 2).

Interest groups may therefore consist of parents, workers, political parties, academics, government staff, students or learners, researchers, NGO representatives, associations and unions. This lack of clarity on how to define participants in the policy process makes it difficult to analyse and understand the roles they play and the influence they have on specific policy processes. There is a lack of evidence on how stakeholders in ECE policy are defined in the context of policy processes.

There is substantial literature to support the view that one critical aspect that makes a group easily identifiable is the extent of their influencing power and ability to organise. Richardson and Jordan (1979) noted, for example, that:

“The process by which education policy is formed in Britain is relatively closed, dominated by the professional interest. In a very real sense Britain’s education policy has been determined by the interplay of various groups including the Department of Education and Science, which has its own interest to pursue within the education industry. There is little or no evidence to suggest that parents, who clearly have a very direct interest in education policy, have had much influence on it, parents have never been organized on a national basis” (p173).

The beliefs, values and vigour of a group are therefore an essential aspect of its organising power. It enables the group to build a case out of a particular issue and use it to influence policy makers’ views and decisions and final policy outcomes (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

“Interest groups share the fundamental goal of swaying policymakers to incorporate the group’s beliefs into public policy. The extent of their success depends largely on their relative influence. By definition then, the beliefs of groups who are perceived by policymakers as more influential carry more weight in the policy making process than the beliefs of those groups perceived as less influential” (p 4).

In education, parents represent a critical interest group which, in South Africa, has been given power and recognition through School Governing Bodies as defined in the South African Schools Act. They, do not, however, play major roles in policy processes because of their lack organisational abilities at national level. In early childhood development organised parent involvement, for whatever reason, is unheard of.

Various factors in the policy development process affect stakeholder participation. The type or model of a policy process affects the manner in which and the extent to which interest groups participate in a particular policy process. There are various theories about these policy models. For instance incrementalist type models of policy process focus on small quick-fix type of

changes to an existing policy. Sometimes, however, these changes, meant to resolve problems within the policy; result in a major policy change (Sutton 1999). In such processes it is very difficult for stakeholders to play any significant role. Sutton (1999) also discusses:

“Policy as Interactive Learning,’ which argues for an actor perspective, emphasizing the need to take into account the opinions of individuals, agencies and social groups that have a stake in how a system evolves. The approach promotes an interaction and sharing of ideas between those who make policy and those who are influenced most directly by the outcome”(p11).

The key issue in this model, which, it is submitted, is also a weakness, is the assumption that, through pressure, interest groups have the power to change a policy in the policy process at any given time. The question is: how often does such interest group pressure really work? Through pressure, interest groups have the power to change policy processes and products. The ability to influence others by force or being persuasive through more positive means, need t be considered here.

Some literature therefore looks at models of policy processes and their effects or relationship with stakeholder involvement even in other fields such as Environmental Studies. Webler *et al* (2001) looked at a case study in which they identified five discourses about ‘good’ public participation processes in policy development. It was concluded that participants in the study had drawn on social discourse about stakeholder participation in policy and had come up with five perspectives:

“One perspective emphasises that a good process acquires and maintains popular legitimacy through a consensual democratic process. A second sees a good process as one that facilitates an ideological discussion among a core of stakeholders. A third focuses on the fairness of the process paying special attention to creating high quality democratic deliberation and to achieving participation by all segments of society. A fourth perspective conceptualises participatory process as a power struggle. A fifth perspective highlights the need for leadership and compromise in combination with collecting insights and fostering deliberation among a wide range of the public”(Webler *et al* 2001, p435).

The above study captures perspectives in the literature about the issues to which many stakeholders in other fields could relate and with which they could identify in terms of what a good participation process in policy should be. The study also associates stakeholder participation with the ethos of democracy.

There is also a substantial literature on the approaches of the policy formation process to stakeholder interest and influence. Some of these approaches are classified as Marxist, pluralist, corporatist and state entered (Smith, 1993; Sutton, 1999). Such literature examines stakeholder participation, particularly within the context of party-politics studies. However, some works focus on stakeholder involvement in specific policy processes and examine the role of the stakeholder. It is evident in such studies that most researchers found it easier to examine stakeholder roles in a single aspect of the policy process. The most common being the topic of agenda setting or the origin or agenda setting stage and the implementation stage.

In the education field most studies focus on stakeholder involvement at the implementation stage of the policy process. In the political-science field, studies

on the role of the state in policy processes dominate the literature (Constidine, 1993).

Few studies look at what Constidine calls 'segmented policy making', that is the role of stakeholders in a particular policy issue. He states that:

"In order to make them manageable or through historical enactment, issues are routinely broken down into smaller fields and these are colonized by particular groups or elites. For instance, most political systems divide the education field into specific institutions for kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary teaching. In addition, separate responsibility is allocated for the running of trade and technical training, or for specific occupations such as nursing and for apprenticeships. This segmentation, by creating multiple arenas of power and influence limits the role of any particular policy actor some influential actors may be able to cross boundaries and give effect to preference in a number of areas but this may be difficult for a number of reasons" (Constidine, 1993, p134).

This study disagrees with Constidine because the segmentation that is applied in education is based on certain specifications about what the different fields require in order for policy planning and delivery to be implemented effectively. Consequently, stakeholder organisations take the approach of being organised based on education fields to ensure that the stakeholders use their expertise in the field to lobby and advocate as well as challenge government policy direction and implementation. The organisation of stakeholders around the specific fields of education does not limit stakeholder participation to their specific fields only. Often stakeholders participate in several education stakeholder groups, partly because policy issues in education cut across various fields, for example Special Education and Early Childhood Development.

Other education fields, unlike ECD have produced rich literature on policy studies in the policy-development process (Ball, 1990; Levin, 2001). This

literature provides a diverse knowledge base about the conceptions and approaches of the policy process. It is important to understand that for a long time the policy process was viewed as linear and prescriptive (Mooiji & De Vos, 2003), because in reality that is how government generally operates. Prescriptive, top-down policy processes should never be legitimised, especially within the context of a supposedly democratic dispensation. It would be very disenfranchising if interest groups in any political dispensation, particularly a democratic one, accepted or tolerated a prescriptive model of policy processes. History has shown that interest groups have reacted in various ways to the imposition of prescriptive types of policies

The literature that mentions stakeholder involvement in education policy development processes comprises studies that focus predominantly on some aspects of education policy development such as the origins and implementation of policy (Ball, 1999, Street, 2001). Some studies look at the relationship between government and non-government organisations (NGO's) in the education policy implementation process.

“NGOs tend to identify with those who are neglected and disadvantaged. They feel an obligation to underserved communities and often deliver education in situations where government policy and practice has failed, filling the gaps where government has most difficulty in provision. They often see the government's incompetence in lacking the capacity to provide adequate services. NGO's often rate government as conservative, cautious and bureaucratic, while they themselves can provide an honest analysis of situations, think creatively, provide comprehensive problem-solving strategies and act innovatively” (MacKenzie, 2003,p3).

Often government uses NGOs' advantageous positions in communities to implement the programmes of certain policies. In most education fields, the more so in Early Childhood Development, NGOs have, in collaboration with government, implemented innovative policy projects with positive results, but often with very little effective impact in terms of programmes becoming full-scale programmes, for instance at national level. Few NGOs have had a direct impact on government policy or practice, particularly if a project or programme had no government approval or there had been no consultation on it (MacKenzie, 2003). Most NGOs work independently without government funding. They do their own fund raising.

Both government and NGOs are realising the need to work together and collaborate on policy process initiatives. There have, for example, been several initiatives in the South African ECD policy context in which both parties have collaborated on training and the provision of resources to ECD sites (ECD Pilot Study, 2001). It is therefore evident that NGOs, as an interest group, have a better chance of participating effectively in the implementation stage of the policy process than in any other stage. Some individuals are consulted on specific aspects of the policy process stages, but are not involved in the decisions made when policy is adopted and formulated. As in any other government policy process, government wields the power when it comes to policy decisions and direction. In Britain for instance:

“The 1988 Education Reform Act in England set in motion a series of far-reaching changes to English education policy with a firm and clearly articulated objective: To recast the education system by implementing centrally-controlled policy structures as the catalysts for improvement in educational services ... While the Act introduced new educational curricula, it also addressed directly who should be accountable for the successes and failures of the education system, and where decisions about education policy should be made“(Finkelstein, 1999, p33)

Ball (1990,) suggests focusing on several aspects, when one studies the origins of education policy. He categorises these aspects as: the role of the key actors, the political stake, which interest groups were particularly influential, what specific processes were important, and the relationship between the local experiences and the rest of the world. Ball (1990) further emphasises that policy needs to be explained in relation to what it is that individuals and groups actually do and say in their arenas of influence. It should also be recognised that policy processes happen within complex social systems defined and represented by very fluid ideological, economic, and political structures and beliefs. Education policies cannot therefore be examined in isolation from what is happening within and around the domains in which they are being developed. Various factors and forces that have an influence on the process must be taken seriously and accounted for in trying to understand the full picture of the policy development process that leads to a policy product.

Unfortunately Ball's (1990) plea for policy trajectories to be studied, using what might be termed a holistic perspective that takes into account both the compromises and the conflicts that occur in a policy development process, has not yet gained ground. Researchers avoid dealing with the messy aspects of education policy processes. For example Hammond (2001), in her article *Policy*

and Change, examines how a top-down, linear approach to policy change can be replaced by a more inclusive approach integrating bottom and top-down approaches, which is more empowering for all. The article represents what Ball (1990) would call a “neat” examination of a policy process.

Hammond’s (2001) article highlights the inside story of how underhanded bureaucratic influences sometimes do not allow for bottom-up interests to be fed into the policy processes. Hammond in this article fails to articulate the need for change to happen from the top in order for it to have an impact on what happens to policy at the bottom. Instead she focuses on the need for policy makers (bureaucrats) to find ways of helping implementers (teachers) change their minds about policy change. Hammond (2001) states that:

“They (the bureaucrats) must build capacity for and commitment to work required, rather than assuming that edicts alone will produce new practice. The more policies impose inflexible constraints, the less possible and likely it is for motivation and learning to occur” (p 647).

This is a critical and valid argument but it is contradictory to her overall view that there is need for an integration of bottom-up and top-down approaches in a policy change process. In the above citation, Hammond is demonstrating that a mind shift by teachers at the implementation level must be motivated from the top. The article does not clearly explain that the top also needs to undergo a radical mind shift in order better to understand the implementation stage of the policy process and therefore allow for dealing with change in a more democratic and inclusive way.

It does not matter, therefore, in what context education policy is being implemented. Stakeholders need to be partners. Levinson and Sutton (2001) in their book *Policy as Practice*, advocate a socio-cultural approach to policy trajectory studies, and pose the question:

"What would education policy studies look like if they re-conceptualised the notion of policy itself as a complex social practice, an ongoing process of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts" (Levinson & Sutton, 2001, p1).

Levison and Sutton view education policy as a powerful tool in reconstructing society and the individuals who live in it. Education in their view determines various notions of what individuals become in society. Among other socio-cultural approaches, they encourage an ethnographic approach to education policy studies as a way of understanding the power dynamics intrinsic to the formation of authoritative policy (Levison & Sutton, 2001). They are critical of the linear model of policy formulation and they state that:

"In most contemporary educational studies, policy is conceived in terms of multilateral, national, state, or local directives that legislate institutional structures, proper codes of conduct and academic standards for schools. Such directives are thought to originate in negotiations amongst institutional actors and 'stakeholders' who wield power at these various levels. Once formulated, policy then filters down to be implemented in the varying school contexts to which it might apply (Levison & Sutton, 2001,p5).

Levison and Sutton make a very valuable historical analysis of how the policy process has been studied over time, and mention the roles played by various stakeholders and how they, particularly the implementers, are perceived in the policy process. However, they mention the issues concerning stakeholder roles

and relationships and how these influence the policy process before the policy product is developed. Their articles focus to a large extent on various stakeholder responses to specific ready-made policy products and contexts.

2.5 Policy research in the ECD field

In the ECD field, research that attempts to address policy trajectories largely consists of narrative discussions on various policy processes with a focus on current discourse around the benefits of governments' investments in ECD (Fitzsimons, 1999; Evans, 1994). These studies are useful in explaining the factors that are prerequisites for the ECE policy development process. The studies vary from large-scale comparative studies to individual analyses of national or programme-specific policies. In these studies information about influences on ECD policy processes is considered, but not in a critical and analytical manner. Stakeholders and their roles are usually viewed in a positive light.

In essence, ECD policy research focuses on what motivates or justifies the development of ECD policy. Within these study contexts, some information on what motivates ECD policy is revealed. Van de Gaag (1999) researched the economic benefits of investing in ECD and argued that there is a close link between the field of human development and ECD. In both fields the need for education, health and quality have to be addressed. Van de Gaag highlighted the need to look at both adults and children as social capital. The economic argument therefore becomes a factor upon which arguments for the

development of ECD policy are based. In a longitudinal study Barnette & Ship (2002) discovered that for every dollar spent on high-quality ECE programmes there was a four-dollar return. Such studies are done to strengthen the economic argument so as to demonstrate the need for an ECD policy. Stakeholder views and perceptions of such factors influence their understanding of ECE policy and the process of attaining it.

It is well known that in much of Africa there are various ECD stakeholders who provide services to young children and those who care for and educate them. Most of these stakeholders are non-governmental organisations and individuals who provide leadership and other relevant services in ECD at different levels of the sector's structures and systems. However, it is difficult to find studies that focus on how these organisations participate in and inform the development of ECD policies through all the stages of the policy process. This is the case both in countries where ECD policies are fully developed and those where processes have just started or are far advanced such as South Africa.

In the literature on ECD policy development there is a dearth of studies that deal directly or indirectly with the formulation of ECE OR ECD policy, the role players' disputes and compromises and how these shape the final policy product. However, one can use existing ECD policy-related literature to gain insight into what factors motivate government and NGO stakeholders to participate in ECE policy development processes, and how they try to use such factors to their benefit when participating in any stage of the policy process.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed some of the relevant literature on the development of policy, and stakeholder involvement in these processes. It has shown that research into policy processes, is dynamic and that many factors influence and determine the processes and the end product. One of the factors identified in the literature as having a pivotal role on how policy unfolds is that of the socio-political context of the policy issues. The socio-political context affects many different aspects of the policy process, including the role of stakeholders. The chapter has demonstrated that stakeholders are viewed as critical players in the policy process, but also that, depending on the political context the extent to which they are co-opted into the process varies. The chapter has indicated that there is an acknowledgement in policy studies that the policy process has stages or phases and that these stages are defined differently by policy analysts. The categorisation of policy has unfolded into the stages theory. The chapter has shown how this theory has evolved and that its understanding of policy processes has been assessed in various ways.

The chapter has also discussed the fact that certain limited studies trace the involvement of stakeholders in the ECE policy development process as well as in education. An application of the stages theory to stakeholder participation reflects the different roles stakeholders play in the unfolding of policy; and shows that sometimes stakeholders are not consulted, for example, during the formulation and decision-making stage.

This chapter shows that even though there is some research into stakeholders' roles in education policy processes, there is need for more research into ECD

stakeholders in ECD policy development. This is important especially because ECD, as a Cinderella field in education, has always been in the care of the NGO sector and much more attention should be paid to its role in policy. The next chapter provides a theoretical context for this study's analysis of stakeholder involvement in the ECE policy development process in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STAKEHOLDER

PARTICIPATION IN ECE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

Stakeholder participation in policy processes is analysed by means of several theoretical frameworks. This study has applied the stage theory as a theoretical framework through which to investigate the participation of ECD stakeholders in the ECE policy development processes that resulted in the production of White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education. Stage theory enables the policy processes to be divided into phases. The literature provides various definitive phases that can be adopted to apply to a specific policy analysis intervention. This study has applied three stages: the agenda setting stage, the adoption stage and the formulation decision-making stage. The stages theory allowed this research to examine and analyse the processes and events that gave rise to the ECE policy in this country from 1990 to 2001, and the involvement of the stakeholders in these processes.

This chapter discusses the stages theoretical approach with a view to contextualising the theory in the light of the aims of the study. I have therefore discussed the different perspectives on stage theory as portrayed in the literature, and also discussed how stage theory is defined. I also demonstrate the application of stage theory in this study, and lastly I briefly discuss other theoretical approaches in stakeholder-participation analysis.

3.2 Perspectives on the stages theoretical framework.

It is generally believed that theoretical frameworks help to simplify the policy phenomena, making it easier to identify the complex components that make up the processes. This study found that to be the case. The application of stages theory to the study made it possible to identify the ECE policy events and issues over the period covered by the study, namely 1990 to 2001, and to examine stakeholder involvement at the different stages.

Stage theory has been used extensively in policy analysis. However, over the last three decades it has been much criticised. More particularly it has been misinterpreted as conceptualising the policy process as one with rigid phases that come and go, when in reality the policy process involves much interaction across the phases or stages. Some policy authors disagree with the concept of stages or sequential approaches, stating that policy processes are too complex to be analysed and simplified using formulas such as stages or sequences.

John (1995) argues that:

“In no way does the policy-process correspond to the linear model except in the minimal sense that a formal policy has to be proposed, legislated on and implemented. The more policy analysts acknowledge complexity in decision-making, the more the linear idea dissolves. The policy process becomes more about attempts to counteract the unanticipated effects of public decisions than about responses to the demands that caused the policy to be introduced in the first place. Thus there is no beginning and end to the public policy; for the most part, there is only the middle” (p 26)

This study acknowledges the impure nature of the ‘stages’ in the policy processes, but disagrees with John’s implication that the policy process is so complex and indistinct that there are no stages at all. His view that policy for the

most part only has a middle makes me question his understanding of the word 'processes.' Any policy process or for that matter any process-related phenomenon has stages and the notion of 'process' itself connotes the beginning, middle and end of the process. Therefore the concept of stages or sequences can justifiably be applied in policy process analysis, because even though the stages are not distinct or clear or in a logical sequence, they exist in any policy process. First policy making frequently, but by no means always, follows the stages (Anderson, 2000). The policy process is always segmented in some manner. Such divisions entail practical distinctions grounded on principles of efficient, timely implementation. (Jann and Wegrich (2005) have also observed that:

“Right from its origin, the field of policy analysis has been tightly connected with a perspective that considers the policy process as evolving in a sequence of discrete stages or phases. The policy cycle framework or perspective has served as a basic template that allows to systematize and compare the diverse debates approaches and models in the field and to assess the individual contribution of the respective approaches to the discipline” (p 2).

This study utilises the stages theoretical framework to analyse stakeholder participation in the education policy process, in the realization that these stakeholders participate in different stages of the policy processes. It is also acknowledged in the study that policy stages are not rigid but flexible. Inevitably the policy makers and participants move across these stages to inform and influence policy in the various stages. It is important to note that different versions of the stages approach have evolved since the late 1950s. As Jann and Wegrich (2005) observed:

“Subsequently a number of different variations of the stages typology have been put forward, usually offering further differentiations of (sub) stages. The versions developed by Brewer and de Leone (1983); May and Wildavsky (1978); Anderson (1975) and Jenkins (1975) are among the most adopted ones. Today the differentiation between agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation (eventually leading to termination) arguably has become the conventional way to describe the chronology of a policy process” (p2).

An example of a recent theoretical policy framework that in my opinion is a version of the stages theory is the policy process approach.

“The idea of policy as a process is based on the idea that policy evolves in phases over a period of time. A process approach to policy making traces the making of policy from the inception of an idea to the implementation and evaluation of the policy that was adopted to give effect to the idea” (Van Niekerk, Van der Walt & Jonker, 2001, p93)

Some policy development authors discuss the stages in the policy process without using the phrase “stages theoretical framework”. Anderson (2000) states that:

“to provide a conceptual framework to guide the examination of the policy or functions that can be readily distinguished analytically, although they may be empirically more difficult to pull apart, the following categories or stages are employed ... problem identification and agenda setting, formulation, adoption implementation and evaluation” (p39).

Anderson does not emphatically align himself with the stages theoretical framework, but he recognises that the policy processes have separate categories that form a whole.

Anderson (2000) also mentions that the formation and implementation of policies are seen as political in that they involve conflict and struggle among

individuals and groups, officials and agencies with conflicting ideas, interests, values, and information on public policy issues. Formulation and implementation are not the only stages that are political in the policy process. All the stages in the policy-making processes in all domains are political phenomena and as long as different participants and interest groups are involved, fighting for power and control of a particular policy will characterise every stage.

There is agreement in the literature that stakeholders are critical role players in the development of education policy (Sutton, 1999, Webler *et al* 2001, Richardson & Jordan, 1979). There are no adequate case studies focusing on the participation of stakeholders in policy development, particularly not ones based on the stages theoretical framework. There is need for a better understanding of how, at every stage of the policy process, stakeholders are brought in to play their role in some way or other. This study provides some insights into how stakeholders perceive themselves in relation to education policy processes, particularly in the formulation of ECE policy.

This research examines and analyses the ECE development process and the roles of the participating stakeholders, using the Stages Theoretical Framework.

According to Sabatier (1999):

“This framework was very popular among education analysts in the 1970s and 1980s. The framework divided the policy process into a series of stages, usually agenda setting, policy formulation and legitimization, implementation and evaluation and discussed some of the factors affecting the process within each stage” (p6).

Sabatier (1999) is critical of the Stages Theoretical Framework, saying that it has outlived its usefulness. Among the reasons he gives for his argument against the theory is that:

“It is not really a causal theory since it never identifies a set of causal drivers that govern the process within and across stages. The sequence of stages is often descriptively inaccurate. The stages heuristic approach has a very legalistic, top-down bias in which the focus is typically on the passage and implementation of a major piece of legislation. The assumption that there is a single policy cycle focused on a major piece of legislation over simplifies the usual process of multiple interacting cycles involving numerous policy proposals and statutes at multiple levels of government (Sabatier, 1999, p7).

In response to Sabatier’s (1999) criticism of the framework de Leon (1999) says that the framework was never designed to be a theoretical model, but a “policy process device to help disaggregate an otherwise seamless web of public transactions as was too regularly depicted in political science” (de Leon, 1999, p24). In spite of the criticism levelled at the framework it is clear that many education analysts and researchers, when they study various aspects of education policy processes that can be related to a specific stage in the education process, inadvertently use the Stages Framework (de Leon 1999; Levin, 2001). Levin (2001) warns that:

“It is vital to remember that although the division into component parts is useful for analytical purposes, in reality reform is not neatly divided in this way, nor can any set of headings adequately represent the complexities of a reform process. In political analysis, discrete categories and periods are devices of the analyst, not the experiences of those directly involved”(p3).

It is important to use the stages approach with caution; indeed, the stages provide a useful device for analysis. However, even as devices they provide

lenses through which to concretise policy experiences, in the case of this study, experiences of stakeholder participation.

3.3 The stages theory and ECE policy analysis

The stages theory has been applied in this research as a device through which to analyse ECE policy events and their products, during a specific time within the broad period in which the ECE policy development process took place. The research took cognisance of the fact that stakeholder experiences and interactions are not bound or confined to any identified stages. A holistic and integrative approach was used to analyse the identified stages of the ECE policy with regard to the fact that policy experiences, events and relationships always impact on each other.

In the study the stages framework has also been used to show how events intersect at every stage, creating expected or unexpected effects on the policy product. Levin's (2001) components of the stages framework will be adopted in the study. These components and the questions raised in each of them will enable the study to identify the factors and forces that influenced the ECE policy process and to demonstrate the relationships that unfolded in the process and their impact on the final ECE product. The categories of the stages theory of Levin (2001) and Jann and Wegrich (2005) were used in this study:

Agenda setting: problem recognition and issue selection. Policy-making presupposes the recognition of a policy problem. Problem recognition itself requires that a social problem be defined as such and the necessity of state intervention has been expressed" (Jann & Wegrich, 2005,p12).

Adoption. How do policies as finally adopted or made into law differ from those originally proposed? What factors lead to changes between proposal and approval? Who supported and proposed various policies and to what effect? (Levin, 2001,p3)

Policy formulation and decision-making. During this stage of the cycle, expressed problems, proposals and demands are transformed into government programmes, policy formulation and adoption (Jann & Wegrich 2005, p12).

The overall guiding principles in the application of the stage theory variables is that the policy process is a political process and that the realities of what happens in each stage impact on one or all of the other components. Heinemann *et al* (1997) use the agenda setting process to illustrate this point:

“A second set of factors that affect agenda setting is political, a kind of consensus may emerge that certain circumstances call for government consideration; this consensus is often a product of bargaining, negotiation and compromise among the multitude of actors. Third, visible political actors are central in deciding what to decide about policy. Among them are the president, congress key high level appointees, top administrators, media parties and interest groups. If few or none of the visible actors is in favour of placing a problem on the agenda it is highly unlikely that it will be considered” (Heinemann *et al*, 1997,p56).

The stakeholder influences at each policy stage and their relational dynamics within and across the stages were analysed in this study in the context of the anti-apartheid political-struggle environment. The roles of political actors even in the ECD reconstruction process have revealed that any policy issue requires politicisation for it to gain legitimate recognition. All issues that become important government priority areas first have to go through the political systems and become a political agenda item.

It is apparent from this study that the highlight of the agenda setting for the ECE policy process was the identification of ECD as a critical aspect of the new

democratic South Africa. This was evidenced by the inclusion of ECD in the early policy planning processes. Some of the critical processes for ECD were the NEPI investigation process, the World Bank study on ECD in South Africa and the creation of the new national organisation, the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development. The study has shown how stakeholders at this stage led these processes because the new government had not been formed. The mass political movement prior to the abolition of the apartheid system had realised the need to identify policy issues so as to ensure readiness to govern when the new government was elected.

Various ECE policy processes that demonstrated government's intention to develop an ECE policy characterized the adoption phase of the ECE policy process. A major achievement at this stage was the development of the Interim ECD policy. In order to inform the next stage of the policy development, namely the policy formulation and the decision, the Interim Policy needed to be tested, so a national ECD Pilot was conducted. Stakeholders and the new government had a very close partnership, both in the conceptualisation of the Interim Policy and in the implementation of the ECD Pilot. The Pilot was a cross between a test of policy and an implementation of the ECE Policy in the country. This was because at the end of the three-year pilot implementation, government quickly introduced another programme, the Conditional Grant for Grade R. This was to ensure that the services that had been offered in the pilot would be continued and expanded. There was no break between the two implementation processes, so that those charged with implementation of the second

programme could learn from the pilot and plan new programmes based on the findings of the pilot.

White Paper 5 was developed at the policy formulation and decision-making stage in the ECE policy process. This was done internally in the Department of Education. This is where the study found Levin's (2001) assertion that changes in education accompany changes in political processes to be true. Levin (2001) also mentions that:

“As governments become interventionist and education becomes a priority the relatively slow processes of negotiation and accommodation disappear. Groups within the system and outside are sometimes seen as part of the problem of policy process: they are thus excluded. Political agendas more than consultative processes become more important” (p1).

Much to the fury of the ECD stakeholders, the formulation of White Paper 5 was done without their involvement. They were not physically part of the process that developed the paper. Government political imperatives necessitated the quick writing up of the policy. This raises questions about the role of stakeholders in the formulation and decision-making stage of the policy process.

Stakeholders had participated and collaborated with government during the other ECE policy processes. They informed the policy products of the agenda-setting and adoption stages. The White Paper was developed with reference to information from the policy products of these early stages. However, government had to apply other variables in order to decide what was to go into the final ECE policy.

3.4 Incremental approach to stakeholder participation

Another way of understanding participation is to use the incremental approach. This approach looks at policy processes as changing existing policy. In this approach the view is taken that when policy is being initiated very specific skilled participants are needed, but that mass participation for example is not. This approach promotes an interaction and sharing of ideas between those who are most directly affected by the outcome (Sutton, 1999). This theory was not applied in this study, as the ECE policy process was not an incremental policy exercise. There was no ECE policy to be changed but a new one was required.

3.5 The interactive model

The interactive model stresses that the process of policy formulation is an interactive process in which all role players are engaged in constant interaction and communication about different elements of the policy being developed. In this approach there is an understanding that policy reform, especially at initiation level, can be altered or reversed at any stage. Various pressures may cause changes to occur. In this model, according to its proponents, stakeholders can exert pressure for change more than in the stages model (Sutton, 1999).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter discusses, defines and examines the stages theoretical framework as a tool for the analysis of data in this study. It demonstrates that the stages theory as a tenet for policy analysis can be effectively applied to other aspects of policy processes such as stakeholder involvement in education policy.

The chapter has provided different perspectives on the stages theory, with the aim of providing information about its effective application in the context of the ECE policy process in South Africa. The literature cited on the stage theory also reveals that the theory, though once very popular, has become less so in recent years, with some policy analysts labelling it as too linear. However the chapter sets out the advantages of the theory in the context of understanding stakeholder involvement in the ECE policy process in South Africa from 1990 to 2000.

Stage theory is also discussed as a tool demonstrating the links between the different ECE policy processes so as to show the nature of stakeholder participation in all of the ECE policy processes. Other theoretical frameworks are mentioned briefly, by way of justifying the use of stage theory in this study

The data-collection process was also conceptualised in such a way as to be used in the context of stage theory. The following chapter discusses and outlines the methodology used to conduct this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This research represents a case study of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) policy development process in the South African transition to democracy from 1990 to 2001. The study is not specifically about child development phenomena, even though ECE policy does affect all aspects of child growth and development. The methods applied in this study were not those specific to early childhood development environments. This is not to say that ECD research methods are unique or very different from other methods used in the social sciences. Qualitative studies in early childhood studies borrow usefully from linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, psychology, and sometimes anthropology. Depending on the study, various approaches are used such as the participant observation, interpretive, case study or constructivist approaches. As in other fields of study, qualitative approaches in ECD often borrow methods and strategies from each other (Walsh, Tobin & Graue, 1993).

This study is a qualitative case investigation that uses interviews and documentary analysis as the key sources of data. Interviews were conducted with ECD stakeholder groups, several of whom played a central role in the development processes of the ECE policy in South Africa.

ECD stakeholder participation and influence were traced through each of the various stages of the policy process. Major policy players were targeted, both

as organisational representatives and individuals. In this study, officials of the Department of Education at national levels were considered to be policy makers and those at provincial levels to be implementers. The stakeholder groups included in the interview sample were relevant non-government organisations (NGOs) such as Training Resources for Early Education (TREE), the Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU), the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD), WOZABONA, the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD), and the South African Institute for Early Childhood Training. Members of various ECE policy-related structures and committees such as the Coordinated Committee for Early Childhood Development (CCECD), the Early Educare Committee for the National Education Policy Investigation and the National Programme of Action (NPA), were also included in the interview sample.

Early childhood practitioner perspectives on the ECE policy development process and product were also sought through interviews with a small sample of practitioners. These practitioners were those who were involved in various aspects of the policy processes such as the Early Childhood Development Pilot Project were approached for interviews. There was an initial intention to interview other role players, such as donors and international organisations, but this did not materialise, as it was difficult to establish the relevant contacts. In some cases people who had been involved in some of the ECE policy activities were no longer working in those organisations. For instance, I was informed that the person who had been in charge of the European Union-funded ECD Audit in

2000 and who had been targeted for the interview had left the country. No one else wished to be interviewed.

The study sample also evaluated, analysed and interpreted various international and national ECD and ECE policy-related documents. These documents played an important role in informing, contextualising and shaping stakeholder perspectives and beliefs about different aspects of the ECE policy process and outcomes in the context of South Africa.

Some important documents analysed included the ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), White Paper 1 on Education and Training (1995), the Interim Policy on Early Childhood Education (1996), the National ECD Pilot Project (2001), the National ECD Policies and Programmes (2001), The Nation wide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa (2001), White Paper 5 for ECE Policy (2001), the South African Constitution, The African Children's Charter, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Documents from certain stakeholder organisations pertaining to their histories, programmes and events were also useful in giving an understanding of their involvement or non-involvement in policy processes in the country.

4.2 Research design

This research attempts to answer the question how stakeholders participated in the ECE policy development process from the early 1990s to 2001. Historically, the study traces the status and situation of ECE policy in South Africa between 1990-2000 and analyses where the stakeholders were involved and in what

capacities. I argue that stakeholders have been important role players in the development of ECD in the country and that their participation in the ECE policy was significant in shaping policy outcomes. It is not enough, however, to acknowledge policy participation. It is also necessary clearly to define stakeholder identities, roles and interests, their interactions with government and the relationship of key participants. The nature, extent and consequences of participation in the production of the White Paper for Early Childhood development also require examination and analysis.

The research findings in this study were interpreted by comparing data from various sources against the conceptual framework offered by stage theory and the information gathered. Interview results were evaluated and assessed against the information from relevant documentation certain specific data; this also helped to deal with generalisations that were coming though in the interviews about certain aspects of the ECE policy process. (Sharan, 2003).

4.3 Literature review process

I conducted an extensive literature review during the period of the study. The focus of the literature review was on empirical research that dealt with stakeholder involvement in policy processes, especially in education. There was a particular emphasis on seeking information and data relating to stakeholder involvement in the early childhood development policy-making processes as well, since the case study concerns the development of the early childhood education policy process in South Africa. The purpose of the literature review

was to obtain insight into writing and research on the involvement of stakeholders in policy processes, so as to inform and shape this study's arguments and position on this subject.

The literature review was also conducted to clarify the conceptual framework through which the research findings would be analysed. In this regard the review focus was on literature dealing with the stages theoretical framework.

The literature review process was a very difficult one because of the challenge of finding research material dealing specifically with stakeholder involvement in education policy processes and, more particularly, early childhood development. There was an extensive and rich literature base on education policy generally, but scant attention was paid to stakeholder involvement.

The literature review process applied in this study was in many ways a new experience in the technique of searching for sources across different fields of study and then applying the information gathered to the specific area being studied. At first the literature review process concentrated on education policy and early childhood development publications. It proved difficult to find publications in these two fields that concentrated on stakeholder involvement in policy processes, so the literature search had to shift to other fields of study such as political science and public administration. This switch from education policy to political science was very fruitful, providing insights into literature on stakeholder involvement in policy processes, particularly from a political perspective. Sometimes this literature also referred to specific fields of study such as education and other social sciences.

A limited research review was also done of literature dealing with policy processes concerning specific projects or programmes. Some of these referred to the involvement of stakeholders in the development of policy for a specific venture, for example ones relating to agricultural projects.

A greater challenge was to find relevant literature dealing with research methodology on stakeholder involvement in policy processes. It appears that little attention has been paid to critical research on methodology in policy processes.

The most critical lesson to come out of the study's literature review process was that policy processes are closely linked to political processes and that one cannot therefore study education policy phenomena without having some understanding of politics and how it affects various other social systems such as education (Kingdom, 1995). Through the study of stakeholder roles in different political and policy development processes, it was also possible to apply the information gathered to stakeholder involvement in the education policy processes in South Africa. This was not an easy process because many of the arguments in the political science arena were very specific to its disciplinary environment and phenomena. However, the literature review revealed certain generic factors in stakeholder involvements in policy. These indicate that there are common variables in the way stakeholders are viewed across different fields of study, both in the social sciences and the science fields.

4.4 The study of documents

The study of documents is often an important method of policy data gathering in qualitative case studies. Policy reports and documents provided the validation basis (Steinar, 1989) for most of the issues in the ECE policy process, especially from government's perspective. In this research document, analysis and review played a crucial role in providing background information and data on various aspects of the ECE policy development process, such as the political and social environment in which this policy process happened. The documents were also useful sources of information on factors that motivated stakeholder participation in the ECE policy development process. The documents helped inform the research into the shifts and changes in the content of the draft policy documents at the different stages of its development. The study attempted unsuccessfully to establish what had happened to the draft provincial policy documents which some of the provinces had developed, but failed to obtain copies of them. The problem of obtaining these documents was threefold in that some provinces had not developed any, some had developed them but did not know where they were, or else the relevant people who might have had them were no longer in the provincial offices.

International ECD policy documents such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and The African Charter for the Child were also reviewed and their influences on ECE policy in South Africa examined and evaluated. The stages at which these documents affected the ECE policy development process, and their impact, were also examined in the light of the democratisation process the country was undergoing.

This research therefore concentrated on a review of the most relevant national documents namely the NEPI Educare Report, the Report of the World Bank South African Study on Early Childhood Development, the ECD Pilot Study Report and the Report on ECD Policies and Programmes, The ECD Audit and White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education. These documents provided crucial information on the background and purpose of the different stages of the ECE policy development processes.

4.4.1 The NEPI Educare report

The NEPI Educare Report was developed as part of the overall education investigation into the options for a future democratic education dispensation in South Africa. This investigation was conducted under the auspices of NECC. The report provided several options for ECE provisioning in South Africa, including examples of programmes for children, practitioners and caregivers. This document was examined in order to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the policy approaches it was propagating in the context of the reconstruction and redress principles. However, the most important issue for this study was to find out which consultation processes were used in the process of information gathering for the report and to identify the key role players.

4.4.2 The World Bank Study on Early Childhood Development in South Africa

This study was conducted through the Centre for Early Childhood Development and it was published five months after the first democratic elections in the

country. It was an ANC -led investigation .The main objective of the study was to conduct a holistic analysis of the various ECD interventions that sought to establish strategies for addressing past discrimination and neglect of young children. The main interest to the researcher of the World Bank Report was the information on who was involved in the study and what level of consultation there had been, both internationally and nationally.

4.4.3 The Interim Policy on ECD

The Interim Policy was one of the first formal ECE policy initiatives conducted by the new Department of Education. The document was the first expression of the government's intention to introduce the reception year (Grade R) in South Africa. The document highlighted government's recognition of the importance of the early years of life in relation to lifelong learning and holistic human development. This document was examined in order to gain insight into government's commitment to provisioning for early childhood. The participation and consultation processes in the development of this policy were also of great significance for this research. This policy was also an important topic in the interviews.

4.4.4 The ECD Pilot study report

This was a study conducted by the Department of Education in collaboration with various NGO training organisations in ECD to test the Interim Policy's proposal to introduce Grade R in schools and community-based sites. The ECD Pilot process introduced a different form of collaboration between government and the ECD stakeholder body; for example, the NGOs were used as training

agencies. This document was analysed in order to identify the different role players and how they participated in this project.

4.4.5 Report on ECD policies and programmes

The report on ECD policies in the country stemmed from the Department of Education's snap survey of the ECD policies in the country. This was done in 1996. The interest of this document to the researcher was in the information on the inter-sectoral process applied in the survey, which involved government departments and different ECD stakeholders at both national and provincial levels.

4.4.7 The ECD Audit

The Audit was a countrywide survey on the situation of ECD in post-apartheid South Africa. It was conducted in 2000 by the Department of Education in conjunction with the European Union, who funded the project. The inter-sectoral collaboration in the Audit was analysed with reference to its difference from other collaborative initiatives in the other ECE policy processes mentioned above, for example, the ECD Pilot.

4.4.8 White Paper Five on Early Childhood Education

White Paper 5 on ECE was produced in 2001 by the Department of Education. It was the final White Paper on ECE produced by the government after the production of the Interim ECE policy. The document outlined government's final decisions on the provision of ECE in the country. The focus of this policy was on the establishment of Grade R and on an inter-sectoral approach to provisioning for the Pre Grade R. It stated how and where this provisioning would take place.

The interest of this document to the researcher was that it provided a basic understanding of its reflection of the other policy documents and visions for ECE in South Africa. In addition, it set out in how far this document was produced through a consultative process.

Overall, the above documents provided the study with varied background information on the whole of the ECD and ECE policy process in South Africa. It was possible, through these documents, to gain a much-needed perspective on the historical transition of ECD and to reflect on how stakeholder involvement changed and evolved during the transition activities. The study of documents also provided important information on the direction of and motivations for the ECE policy development process from the socio-political perspective. This information was analysed and interpreted with reference to the factors and influences that finally led to the production of White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education.

The study of documents provided insights into how the role of stakeholders shifted during different stages and activities. This process also helped to convey an understanding of the different arguments on the need for an ECE policy in the country.

4.5 Stakeholders as sources of data

Most of the stakeholders approached for interviews were very supportive, enthusiastic and willing to share their knowledge and recount their personal experiences of the ECE policy process in the country. They spoke with great

passion and emotion about what had happened in the sector during the ECE policy process. They spoke freely of their disappointment but also of their satisfaction with certain aspects of the ECE policy process. They explained when they had participated, when they had not, or that they had not participated at all. The interviewees almost always gave suggestions on the conduct of future policy processes and on who should be involved. Their recollections of the ECE policy processes and their roles in them sometimes identical but were sometimes different. A few of the people interviewed struggled to remember certain details of the ECE policy process and could not at times recollect what role they had played or, for instance, why they participated in certain stages of the policy process.

4.6 Questionnaires as a source of data

Different questionnaires were used for each category of interviewee; namely government officials, non-governmental organisations, independent early childhood development specialists, practitioners and trainers. Some questions were similar and others were specific to the individuals in the category. The questions enabled the study to gather facts about the ECE policy process and perspectives and opinions on certain aspects and stages of the process and how it should inform future processes. The questionnaire was very useful and worked well as an information-gathering tool. In some instances the interviewees provided more information than was required for specific question and in some cases this resulted in other questions in the instrument, being responded to earlier. At times, the interviews gave answers that were too simple

and further probing was used to obtain an elaborated response. The questionnaires did not require to be changed or abandoned as happens in some cases. It worked satisfactorily.

At the planning stage of the study, I initially intended to mail the questionnaires to most of the selected participants together with self-addressed envelopes or in the form of email. However, the few attempts made to use this method proved ineffective because the responses were inadequate. One-on-one interviewee sessions proved imperative. In these sessions conversation and further interrogation were possible. Telephonic interviews were also envisaged but were abandoned as being too impersonal and costly. The face-to-face interviews proved satisfactory and all responses given were relevant as evidence of stakeholder involvement in the ECE policy process.

4.7 The methodological approach: A qualitative case study

The case study on the development of White Paper 5 on ECE was chosen for this research, because it was a landmark achievement in government's education policy. It signalled government's commitment to ECE as an important but previously ignored area of education and its intention to develop it, as part of the whole education system. The ECE policy development process had all the relevant characteristics required for the case study: a) a recognizable historical process; b) identifiable role players; c) it was politically well placed as a priority area of education development; d) it was a participatory in certain aspects of its development; e) my relationships in the sector made it a viable

option for data collection purposes through interviews; f) the historical moment at which it was being developed made it interesting because of the great interest it created within the ECD sector; g). White Paper 5 was also the only document available on ECE policy in the country as prior to this there had never been an ECE policy development process. Tellis (1997) states:

“Case studies can be single or multiple-case designs, where a multiple design must follow a replication rather than sampling logic. When no other cases are available for replication, the researcher is limited to single-case designs” (p4).

The ECE policy development process therefore provided several variables of interest in connection with policy development phenomena, which made it attractive for a case study inquiry. It is envisaged that this case study in ECD policy will contribute to the understanding of a specific, often ignored aspect of ECD studies, that of policy processes and stakeholder involvement. This is particularly important because ECD, both nationally and internationally, has historically been driven by the NGO sector. The NGOs have always been in the forefront of development of the Early Childhood sector. This particular case study is relevant and appropriate as it provides perspectives on the representation of the relevant ECD stakeholder groups. As a case study, this research methodology gives an in-depth representation of all the relevant role players and agencies in the ECE policy process in South Africa.

Case studies often render themselves appropriate for the triangulation of data. In this study, the triangulation of data was enhanced by the fact that interviews with the different role players provided different views and perspectives on the same issues, thus allowing for multiple sources of data. The primary documents

that were directly linked to the policy process could also be used for the triangulation of certain data.

Observation is expected to be a component of the research methodology of case studies. However, this study could not apply observation, as the process being studied was one that had historical value and meanings.

4.8 Data analysis and interpretation

The data collected was firstly categorised into common categories and themes related to the research questions. This was made manageable in the case of the interviews because the information contained in the different responses given by the interviews could be examined and clustered accordingly into relevant categories. The clustering process ensured that the information corresponded with the themes and issues developed from the critical questions of the study (Cohen et al 2000). The categorised information was then organised into relevant chapters and the stages theory framework used to describe and interrogate the information. The data analysis and categorisation were followed by interpretation and analysis, which were informed by the theoretical framework of the study.

Another aspect of the data analysis and interpretation was the investigation of the relationship between the data from the document analysis process and the interviews data. This was done in order to examine the consistencies, if any, between the interview data and the data from the documents. A similar packaging process of the results of the document analysis was employed in

order to strengthen the validity of the interview data as against the document data.

4.9 Validation

In this research, the validation strategy entailed a process of ensuring that the interview process, questions and results were aligned and correlated to the identified variables from the broad research questions. Both the interview and documentation analysis processes were conducted within the conceptual framework of stage theory (Winter, 2000). This was done to ensure that the information being gathered was informing the ECE policy development process within the Stage Theory framework, with regard to the focus on stakeholder roles and interactions.

The interview protocol was tested for clarity and changes made as required. In order to test levels of bias, convergent validity was used by making comparisons of the interviewees' responses (Cohen et al 1997). Where the levels of bias were too obvious and too high, the interview results were disregarded and other interview responses to the same questions were used instead. I also employed intuition during the interviews, to estimate the trustworthiness of the information being gathered. Comparisons between the documentation data and the interview data and vice versa were also applied in evaluating the validity of the information being gathered.

4.10 Limitations

The major limitation of the research is that it relied heavily on interviewing individuals who had been involved in the ECE policy development process at different stages over a long period of time (1992 to 2001). There were challenging constraints in the data-collecting process, as a result of difficulties in locating appropriate individuals or groups for the interviews. In addition, interviews had to be conducted with individuals who were spread across the country. Logistically it was a challenge to get all the relevant people required to participate in the research. The actual number of people interviewed for this study decreased from the 50 envisaged to 17.

The other limitation of the study was its heavy reliance on interview data that is naturally subjective and dependent on each interviewee's own perceptions of the ECE policy development process in South Africa. Some of these interviewees had strongly entrenched views and beliefs, which at times conflicted with the goals of the interview sessions. Some participants tended to use the interviews to vent their frustrations about the government. This resulted in the collection of data which was very subjective and that could not be used easily during data analysis.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the key aspects of the methodology conducted in this study. It has provided some details on the social environment in which the ECE policy was developed. An overview of the methods used in the data

collection process in the research was described. The most important sources of data, namely documents and interviews were discussed.

The chapter also discussed validation methods, emphasising how, in particular, the interviews that in many cases provided questionable responses had to be dealt with by comparing them with other responses to similar questions. The most critical challenges of the research during data collection have also been analysed. The following chapter analyses the situation, background and beginnings of the ECE policy development processes in the early 1990s in relation to data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SETTING THE AGENDA FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

5.1 Introduction

The inception of an Early Childhood Education policy in South Africa was a long process, which like other education policy processes was affected by and entwined with the transformation and reconstruction politics of the struggle against Apartheid. The political backup for ECD in the formal political structures was not as highly charged as that of other education policy initiatives prior to transition to the democratic dispensation. There was more intense political focus on, for example, the Higher Education policy processes as illustrated by Sehoole (2002).

This chapter describes how early childhood education found its way onto the political agenda of the ANC between 1990 and 2001. The study found that ECD was not initially on the agenda of suggested education policy reforms that were being crafted in anticipation of a new government. ECD stakeholders, upon discovering that ECD was not initially on the education policy agenda of the ANC, embarked on an exercise to push for ECD recognition using the political avenues to which they had gained access. Information gathered from the interviews and relevant documents studied is used in this chapter to explain how and why the political arena was used in the development of ECE policy. . In essence the chapter describes the agenda-setting process of the ECE policy

process in the country in the context of the socio-political factors that prevailed at the time. This is done with reference to the general change in ECD that led to the development of White Paper 5 for ECE.

Stage theory plays a crucial role in this chapter as it provides a framework for understanding the progression of events, activities, and challenges in the ECE policy process.

5.2 The arguments for ECE policy

The ECE policy discourse was precipitated by the education policy dialogues taking place in South Africa's political policy forums in the 1990s. These discussions were influenced by the socio-political context of the time. The period from 1990 to 1994 was one of intense political upheaval, as well as excitement about the prospects of change. In South Africa, far more than in many other countries, there was a distinct relationship between ECD and politics. This study found great significance in the extent to which politics determined the shape and form of ECD, in both pre and post-apartheid times. In other words, it was inevitable that ECD became a political issue, given the historical context in which its agenda for ECD was developed. It was a time of political upheaval and uncertainty but also of great excitement, high expectations and hope as many looked forward to a free and democratic South Africa. The ECD sector had very little choice but to join in the political excitement and seek the recognition of the sector inside the political arena. Although some ECE stakeholders believed that the emergence of ECE policy

discourses began in the 1980s, this study found that the move towards agenda setting for ECD policy in the country gathered momentum in the early 1990s. This is evidenced in this study by the fact that the first official ECE policy document was the 1992 NEPI Educare report. Others followed, with the final one being the Interim ECD Policy of 1996.

5.2.1 ECE as a policy issue

The critical period 1990 to 1994, the agenda-setting stage of the ECE policy, was very significant in the history of ECD in this country. This is because it was set in a political context of intense preparation for and anticipation of the new democratic dispensation. This was prior to the first ever democratic election of 1994. At that time the political party that was most active in preparing and expecting to lead the new democratic South Africa was the African National Congress. In ECD, ANC cadres seized the political opportunity to organize and mobilize the sector at every possible level of the ANC structures. Old apartheid ECD structures were being replaced by the new structures that were considered appropriate, relevant and representative of the new ECD movement in a democratic South Africa.

This intense politicisation of ECD during the agenda-setting stage was not well received by all in the ECD sector. There were those who felt that the politicisation of ECD had brought disunity to the sector, but disunity had already existed in the context of apartheid through segregation and discrimination. An analysis of some of the information in this study indicates that some members

of the ECD sector felt that the politicisation of ECD was crucial in preparing the ECD sector's new function and position as a custodian and advocate of the rights and needs of children in the new democratic dispensation. The discourses and arguments about "the new face of ECD" for the new democracy placed emphasis on different ECD organisational formations which would usher in equity and unity across the racial divide and ensure access to better opportunities and resources for all the children of South Africa and those who worked and cared for them. At this time, powerful arguments emerged explaining why ECE policy was desirable for the sector. The following aspects were, mentioned by those who participated in the interviews for this study and were used as the main rationale for ECE policy development in South Africa:

- to fill the gap caused by the lack of any ECE policy,
- to address discriminatory ECD service provisioning,
- to put children first
- to address fragmentation and the lack of coordinated service provisioning.

5.2.2 Rationale for ECE policy

5.2.2.1 Filling the gap for lack of any ECE policy

This study found that respondents' arguments and explanations of the need for ECE policy at the dawn of the new democracy varied but were generally similar in essence. NGOs and government officials interviewed gave very similar reasons why an ECE policy was needed. Most respondents said that the apartheid government did not have an ECD policy for education and that the

new government therefore needed to do something about it. However, there appeared to be a contradiction in that some respondents seemed to believe that there was a policy in existence but that it was for white children only. Some respondents even mentioned that the apartheid-government ECD policy was for White, Indian and Coloured children only, while African children were not catered for by any policy. As one respondent declared:

Government pre-1994 didn't have any major policies that supported ECD in any way. It was primarily for white children and in the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal it catered for coloured children and Indian children and those were the kind of classifications and there were policies that governed that. For example, white education provided opportunities for white children to go to preschools, public preschools, between the ages of three and six; coloureds and Indians got what was called grant-in-aid it was some kind of support but not full coverage - that was the kind of history for the education department previously prior to 1994 and the NGOS world under the guidance of the African National Congress set up a process where they started looking at it was the late eighties (GO4, government official).

5.2.2.2 Addressing discriminatory ECD service provisioning

The need for ECE policy in the new dispensation was also strongly linked by some NGOs to the need for racial equity in the sharing of resources. There was a perception that in the apartheid-era ECD NGO sector, resources were predominantly benefiting white NGOs, and that the non-white NGOs were struggling for financial support, especially from foreign donors. It was, therefore, envisaged that ECE policy would introduce some form of order and regulate the situation to ensure equity in the dissemination of resources.

It appears from this study that the ECD sector argued for the initiation and eventual development of the ECE policy because there was none during the

apartheid era. The sector saw the new political dispensation as an opportunity to make a major difference in the lives of children through the development of a new ECE policy which would lead to equal early -learning experiences, with resources and support from government. One interviewee mentioned:

“1992 we were coming to the end of apartheid days. During apartheid there had been no policy for African children necessarily and even though one didn’t know what the future would hold, but looking at the way things were developing it was going to be necessary to have a policy which included all children in the early childhood field and therefore it was absolutely essential that one had a policy that was all encompassing and took note of children that were excluded from any realistic policy or negative policy” (NGO4, ECD organization representative).

Another respondent reiterated similar sentiments on the need for a new policy that would eradicate racial discrimination in the education of young children:

“We came from a history of apartheid and separate provision for different race groups and very unequal provision; and while there had been many exciting developments and there was some good provision for white children, the provision in the main for African children was either non-existent or reached so few children as to be totally impotent and not useful at all” (NGO1, ECD organisation representative).

The eradication of discrimination through an ECE policy emerged as a very important argument for the development of the ECE policy. The ECE policy was visualized by many in the ECD field as the solution of the problem of discriminatory services that prevailed during the apartheid era. It was the ultimate instrument that would usher in a new dispensation for the young children of the country. It would ensure equal and increased services through properly coordinated provisioning with financial and material support from the government.

5.2.2.3 Putting children first

An argument was advanced in some quarters of the ECD sector that the new dispensation needed to put children first. There was a perception that during the apartheid era children had been generally neglected. It was argued convincingly, especially by the white NGOs that during the apartheid era had worked in underprivileged black communities and provided various forms of ECD services, that African children had suffered severe neglect and violation of their rights. As one respondent said:

“It was inevitable that we needed to look at young children with a start of the new democracy and the change in South Africa as being key role players and a key constituency that needed a lot of input, if they were to become valuable citizens for the future of the country” (NGO1, ECD organization representative).

5.2.2.4 Addressing fragmentation

Another argument that emerged in the discussions with interviewees was that there was a need for ECD policies in the country as a whole to help deal with issues of fragmentation. This argument arose from the premise that in the apartheid era there was much duplication of ECD services. Lack of coordination between departments meant that the distribution of ECD resources, even for children who qualified according to apartheid policies of segregation, was not efficient. There were no effective and efficient ECD systems and structures of provisioning. The new dispensation would therefore create an ECD policy environment for better and more efficient ECD service provisioning for the education and care of all South African children, not just a selected few. To a large extent, the ECD sector visualized ECE policy not only as a solution to the

lack in ECE of a structured system of provisioning, but as dealing with the disunity in the limited services that were available.

It is also important to note that, during the apartheid era, ECD, like everything else in South Africa, was structured along racial lines, which led to disunity and fragmentation in the ECD sector. ECD groups and organisations worked in isolation from each other, in both the government and non-government arenas. The characteristic features of the sector, even among NGOs, were racial divisions, suspicion, mistrust, dependence on concerned whites by black recipients of ECD support, and limited uncoordinated provisioning of ECD services to a few privileged non-white children. The state of government ECD services was described by one of the interviewees as:

“Well what I gathered at that time there was a fragmented policy at that point, and because the pre-democracy government of that time separated the education roles from the care roles, social development and health as caring they separated those they did see as one offering to the child and so that caused the fragmented policy. With fragmented policy it caused duplication of services, because we were so fragmented departments didn’t talk to each other in terms of how they allocated funds or resources to sites and you would find one site would get from health and social development and education and that’s the duplication” (GO2, Government official).

The study found that the words, which kept on being used to describe the state of ECD under the apartheid government, were “fragmented” and “uncoordinated”. The apartheid-era ECD structures and systems, even though intended to supply discriminatory ECD provisioning, were not supported by clear and distinct ECD policies. In other words, even though some discriminatory services were being provided, there were no policies to organise

and support these services so as to ensure that even the privileged white children for whom they were meant derived the maximum benefit from a well-planned and coordinated ECD policy process.

5.3 Exclusion of ECE from the pre-democracy policy agenda

The apartheid government's failure to recognise and appreciate ECD as a crucial component of government and nation building was also demonstrated in the pre-democracy policy development processes within the education sector. When, between 1991 and 1992 there were ANC policy dialogues about education, early childhood was not on the agenda. Even at the first ANC Conference on Education Planning in March 1992, ECD did not feature on its programme. One very important role player in the ECD movement during the early 1990s revealed in an interview how shocked the sector was when it realized that the ANC education policy processes had excluded ECD from their dialogues. He stated:

“We found it necessary to link up with the education structure NECC. It was a movement for the schooling system; we sought links with NECC and forced for a special desk on ECD. I was the most senior ANC cadre who had the political connection in the movement and in tune with the political discussions on education reconstruction so I then was responsible for moving the policy decision at the ANC conference that the reconstruction for Education for ten years must have a compulsory year of preschool education and that decision which I successfully motivated and won at the ANC conference it was a policy conference looking at ‘Ready to govern’, was looking at what to do we have policy for when we are in government .So when the discussion came on the question of education reconstruction ECD was not there.” (SP1, ECD specialist).

It is clear from the findings of this study that ECD was not on the political agenda of the initial ANC education policy processes; however, through the vigilance of some activists in the sector, this anomaly was detected in good time and ECE became a component of the “Ready to Govern” political agenda. The agenda setting of the ECE policy development process therefore began with ECE being included on the ANC’s policy dialogue, so that by 2000, when the then Minister of Education, Mr. Kadar Asmal, referred to the ANC education framework in one of his many speeches at the Centre for Education Policy Development AGM meeting, and ECE was mentioned, he said:

The "Yellow Book", the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training, listed the major policy initiatives the new ANC government would pursue over five years i.e. 1995 to 1999. These were:

- Reconstructing the Bureaucracy, Governance and Management.
- The integration of education and training.
- Restructuring School Education.
- Changing the Curriculum
- Early Childhood Education
- Adult Basic Education
- Special Education
- Development of Teachers
- Higher Education
- Buildings and Physical Resources.

Each of the above "problems" was addressed with varying degrees of success and within varying time frames. At this juncture, Early Childhood Development, Adult Basic Education and Special Education are at a stage where White Papers and Legislation are on the brink of release (CEPD AGM minutes, Johannesburg, 2000:2).

It was a huge milestone for the ECD activists to have ensured that ECE was part of the planning for the future of the anticipated new democratic South Africa and from that time on it was possible to hope for an ECE policy on the education of the youngest citizens in the country. Prior to this major achievement the sector had engaged in crucial restructuring and reconstruction

of its representative national organisations that would draw up various plans, policies, frameworks and decisions for the whole of the ECD sector.

5.4 Establishment of a national ECD voice

With the acceleration of the policy reform processes in the early 1990s throughout the country in all spheres of government, the ECD sector needed a united and collective public voice. The ECD sector had to join up with some legitimate policy process structure. Since 1985 there had been a National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), which was established to mobilize and organize the many mass-based education structures that were demonstrating and struggling against inferior education. The NECC strengthened the mass movement against the apartheid form of education and by the 1990s; The NECC was ready to start putting in place specific policy and research processes to inform the restructuring of the new education system in the post-apartheid era.

“NECC commissioned the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). The objective of the investigation was to inquire into the policy options for a future education dispensation in South Africa. One of the sectoral areas researched was Early Childhood Education”(World Bank Study, 1994, p10).

The ECD sector was ready for this task – it had constituted the National Interim Working Committee (NIWC) in 1990, and it was the temporary ECD forum designing and deliberating the new national ECD organisation. The ECD NEPI research was conducted in collaboration with and by some members of NIWC. One respondent, in discussing this period, said:

“I remember attending a particular meeting in 1990 that the NECC called and largely that meeting was attended by the so-called progressive groupings. And also I think that one needs to identify that the black people that were involved and I qualify black people as Africans coloureds and so called Indian people ... at the stage were very much progress and part of the liberation movement and so forth at that stage and so therefore when the NECC called the meeting quite a few people at that level attended the meeting and one of the issues that was put on the table I think it was that guy Ransburg, if I remember he was like the leader at that stage in the grouping and ECD was put on the table and at that time I remember the scenario was there was that SAAECE South African Association for ECE was then like ruling early Childhood education at that point in time, so there was a feeling that really this grouping was not addressing the needs of the majority of the people in the country and the decision was taken at this meeting to set up an organisation that best represents the ECD constituency and that's how the concept of the NIWC National Interim Working Committee came . NIWC was developed from there if I remember correctly. So you got SAAECE on line and then you got NIWK. It was newly established for the new mandate to unite the field”. (NGO2, ECD organisation representative).

At that time, 1990, the South African Association for Early Childhood Education (SAAECE) was the main national ECD organisation that advocated for and represented early childhood education interests in the country. However, it was an organisation with a strong affiliation to the white ECD stakeholder groups. NIWC, which came to be considered as the protagonist of the new non-racial ECD movement, approached SAAECE for a dialogue on the establishment of a new representative national ECD organisation. At this time SAACE was perceived as an organisation that represented white interests only. Since SAACEE was an existing organisation and its work in the sector was acknowledged, it was decided that it should be used as a springboard for the creation of the new united national ECD organisation that would lobby and advocate for all children's' needs and rights in the new democratic South Africa.

The new ECD organisational structure would therefore be founded on what can be referred to as the new democratic, social and political principles.

5.5 ECD in transition

After the process of creating the new ECD organisational structure various stages followed which historically marked the transition of ECD in South Africa. In the 1990s, the country as a whole was experiencing various forms of transition, both before and after the 1994 elections. The ECD experienced two types of transition. First there was internal transition between 1992 and 1993 and then external transition throughout the 1990s.

The internal transition happened within the ECD sector at a time when it was undergoing organisational restructuring and reconstruction. At the start of this period, in 1991, there were several organisations in the ECD sector of which the most prominent, as stated earlier was SAAECE. This internal transition period entailed several major milestones in terms of organisational restructuring activities. According to this study these milestones were, firstly, the merger of SAAECE and NIWC. In the SAACHE national council meeting on 30 September 1993 it was stated:

“National Council endorses the decision taken by the Executive Committee to merge the Association’s structures with those of the National Interim Working Committee on Early Childhood Educare (and possibly the National Educare Forum). The National Council mandates its Executive Committee to act on SAAECE’s behalf, in terms of the proposals contained in the report of the Joint Working Committee (created by the SA Association for ECE and the National Interim Working Committee for ECE) accepted at the joint EXCO meeting on 18 May 1993, in the negotiations aimed at bringing into

being a new organization incorporating the strengths of the existing Educare structures (SACECD Launch Report, 1994)".

SAAECE had to play a crucial role in the negotiation process with NIWC, partly because of the varied sentiments among its membership, which was dominated by whites. It was clearly stated that a merger was necessary because SAAECE was not in a position organisationally to meet the needs of all the role players in the Educare field, and it had limited geographical reach. Discussions with NIWK provided opportunities for reaching out into distant geographical areas and bringing on board additional role players; a new organisation that would incorporate SAAECE's strengths and would be more representative with wider support, and be in a better position than the old ones to lobby the state and international and national funders.

A transitional executive council comprising members of NIWK and SAAECE monitored the work of the Joint Working Committee (JWC). One of the crucial tasks of the JWC was to manage the dissolution process of SAAECE and launch the new organisation. Another major task to be performed by the Joint Working Committee was to draw up a constitution for the new national organisation. A National Constitution Committee (NCC) was established through the JWC to do so. The NCC consisted of representatives from the different regions and a lawyer from University of the Western Cape (UWC). The Constitution was eventually drawn up after a massive consultative process. Discussions were held in many parts of the country with reference to the NIWC and SAAECE structures. The NCC ratified and reviewed the Constitution. It was

then finalised and presented to the Transitional Council on Early Childhood Educare, which approved it.

It was apparent in the study that the establishment of a new national voice for ECD was not welcomed by all in the sector. Some people in the sector believe that the leadership of SAAECE accepted the whole concept of a new national ECD movement to such an extent that they were willing to give up all of SAAECE's assets and liabilities. At one of its National Council meetings in March 1994 it was agreed that:

“The SAAECE Executive Committee has satisfied itself with regard to the Constitution and structure of the new organization and has reached agreement with NIWC in terms of which all assets transferred to the organization will be utilized for the purposes and in the geographical region and /or sub-region where they are originally acquired” (SACECD Launch Report, 1994).

However, there was a large group of ordinary SAAECE members who disappeared or were not in agreement with this new way of organizing ECD in the country, highly embedded as it was in the political climate of the time. Certainly, some members were lost during the transition.

5.6 The Birth of the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development

The Constitution of the new National United Democratic organisation in Educare settled on the name South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (its nickname became the ECD Congress). As would be expected, the use of the word congress in the new name precipitated strong emotions. There were

those who likened it to the African National Congress and the study showed clearly that those members who were pro-ANC supported the new name and defended it. About three interviewees in the study mentioned that some SAAECE members might have been lost as members of the new national united organisation over differences about the new name and the allegiances to ANC, which they believed, motivated the name. The overall aim and objective of the SA Congress for ECD was stated as to create and promote opportunities for education, care and development of the highest quality for the young child.

The new ECD organization was headed by two main structures, the National Congress, National Council and the Executive Committee. These structures held meetings and made decisions relevant to their roles and functions. Most of the powers and authority of the organisation were vested in the National Congress. It was the governing body determining the policies of the organization. The National Council was the operating component of the organization with most of the administrative functions being their responsibility. The Executive committee was the driving force behind the organization. It played a critical role in determining the activities, events and made decisions on the various aspects on the running of the organization”.

The South African Congress for Early Childhood Development was launched in March 1994 at a two-day ceremony in Port Elizabeth. This was deemed to be a great achievement, because it was considered to be a landmark in the history of ECD in the country. For the first time in South Africa an organisation existed

which would formally bridge racial and cultural barriers in ECD under the banner of putting young children first in the reconstruction of the nation.

There was great enthusiasm and excitement at this stage in ECD, as people looked forward to a new South Africa and a new dispensation in ECD. In order to provide a concrete foundation upon which to build the changes in the ECD sector, the organisation created five areas to focus on for policy, programmes, strategy development, planning and implementation of ECD in the country. These focus areas were:

- The concept of Rebuilding the Nation Putting Children First
- Governance/Educational Reconstruction towards an implementation plan for ECE within a democratic education system.
- Reconstruction and development in Early Childhood Educare. Reviewing approaches and planning the future.
- The National Unity process in Educare: Evaluation, Consolidation and Advance.
- Educare Workers' Rights and Responsibilities towards Improved Working Conditions.

These focus areas were discussed and deliberated on in commissions at the launch of the SA Congress in Port Elizabeth.

Of great interest to this study was the focus on ECE development. The organisation had envisaged the development of a new ECE provisioning in the context of a new democracy. It is clear that the organisation was being guided by the political context in which it was planning for the future of young children. The organisation was being driven by the beliefs of the political movements about the new democratic dispensation in South Africa. The organisation and in particular the leaders were very aware of what was happening in the planning of

a new Education system. They knew by that time that, in the education policy being developed, there was provision for a ten-year period of compulsory schooling and that one of those years would be a pre-school reception year.

The organisation was fully aware of the challenge faced by the new Education Ministry, namely to provide education services to millions of children. A proposal for the establishment of a Department for Early Childhood in the new Ministry of Education had also been made in education circles. The organisation viewed itself as a strong ECD partner of the anticipated new government. As stated by one respondent:

“A lot of organisations thought that when the ANC government was going to take over this country that organisations would then become arms of government SA Congress would become an arm of government that would deal with ECD.” (GO4, Government official).

There was great optimism and enthusiasm among stakeholders in the ECD sector during the early 1990s, which as will be seen in chapter six seemed to stem from a genuine concern for children. However, it was later marred by various elements and dissension arose and, to some extent, the original vision of unity for children in the organisation was diluted.

5.7 South African ECD Congress and the Development of the ECE Policy

The development of the ECE policy process needed a stakeholder structure and base in the ECD sector. The establishment of the SA Congress seemed timely for the ECE policy development process. It served as a legitimate

stakeholder base at the time, and functioned at both national and provincial levels. Despite the political and social tensions outside and inside the new ECD organisation, the climate was ideal for the birth of a new ECE policy to direct the new government's education provisioning for young children.

The SA Congress therefore, as an ECD stakeholder machinery, played a crucial role in the development process of ECE policy, especially in the agenda and adoption phase of the policy process.

The organisation had members from different cultural backgrounds with varied experiences and interests in the ECD field. In this organisation interests and expectations in the ECE policy were expressed through provincial and national meetings, and reports. The study heard from several members and some former members that SACECD led the stakeholder component in the development of the ECE policy document. Through this organisation, decisions were made about the nature and type of ECE policy needed by the country, and inputs were subsequently provided to the Department of Education through a government ECD structure, the Coordinating Committee for Early Childhood Development (CCECD). The CCECD was established by the Department of Education as a sub-committee of the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM), which was and still is a critical component of the decision-making systems in the education department. The CCECD comprised representatives from national ECD organisations, teaching institutions, unions and key ECD government departments.

The specific role that SACECD played was in technical support, using its pool of experienced members in the organisation. Information was gathered through

meetings and fed into the ECE policy process. The organisation's tactic of mass mobilization was also used to ensure that the sector participated in the ECE policy process at all levels of its structures. At meetings in provinces and districts, discussions were held on the ECE policy. The effectiveness of this process was affected by the unequal commitment of the provinces to ensuring that stakeholders gave inputs. As a result, stakeholder involvement in the ECE policy process was greater in certain provinces; the study showed that these provinces were Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape. This is also evidenced by the fact that most leaders of the organisation came from those provinces. This was because there were certain individuals in those provinces who were very passionate about ECD for various social or personal reasons. So it can be seen that this provincial commitment stemmed from the roles of individuals who had the necessary drive and the desire for the recognition of ECD in the country.

Side-by-side with SACECD were also other stakeholder groups that contributed to the ECE policy process. Through some provincial education departments, inter-sectoral committees were set up which met regularly for discussion, as well as documented provincial inputs into the policy processes. These were then shared at the national level through the Coordinated Committee for Early Childhood Development (CCECD), a structure to be discussed later in the chapter. SACECD was represented in these education-department driven committees and one described these collaborative initiatives as follows:

“In the province we set up an Inter-sectoral committee so we had welfare represented, health represented, a good constituency of NGOs we had at various levels because the development of that policy was actually a process it wasn't just an event so I remember us consulting with Amakhosi (tribal elders) and what we did in this province was we set up consulting committees in each of what were then regions and we really genuinely made them as representative as possible and I think that what happened was the ECD Pilot project was used as a vehicle through which policy development could take place .Unions were involved and informed .We particularly tried very hard to work with NGOs” (GO1, Government official).

The ECD NGO structure that was represented in these inter-sectoral activities was SACECD. The establishment of the ECD directorate in the Department of Education was another achievement that was hailed in the ECD sector.

5.8 The establishment of the ECE directorate -1998

The post-apartheid vision for the ECE system was based on information from various research initiatives conducted and organized through the political structures that were planning for the post-apartheid education system led by the ANC. The ECD stakeholders, as stated above, visualized themselves as core partners of the Department of Education that would be created by the new government. Stakeholders believed, therefore, that they would play the important role of equal partners in all ECE policy development and implementation processes. Stakeholders believed, for example, that the SA ECD Congress would have extensive influence over government's undertakings in all ECD matters across all the different departments that dealt with ECD issues. The organisation and the ECD sector as a whole were looking forward to the establishment of an ECE department or section in what later became the

Department of Education. The vision that the sector had of an ECE section or Department in the new Education department was a grandiose one. The sector's vision of the department is clearly articulated and illustrated in the World Bank report on ECE in South Africa. In this report the sector called for a Department of Early Childhood in the new Ministry of Education it states:

“It is being recommended that a Department of Early Childhood Development be created within the Ministry of Education and Training. The Department would be responsible for the structuring and establishment of early childhood provision, issuing the White Paper on national ECD policy and for developing principles and guideline in the areas of curriculum and training. It would address issues of inter-sectoral coordination and finance mobilization and establish guidelines for setting standards to be used in registering programmes. The Department would also ensure that ECD is integrated into the strategy that emerges for the national reconstruction and development and is consistent with the priorities and objectives for national development” (World Bank Report, 1994, p 32).

The vision of the new Department of ECD in the Ministry of Education was therefore portraying a fully equipped and self-contained department with the following subsections: Training, Curriculum, Provision and Standards, Finance, Inter-sectoral coordination, Research, Development and Planning and Administration.

By the time this World Bank report was released, ECE was already on the overall education policy agenda of the new ruling party, as mentioned above. However, the establishment of the ECD department in the new Department of Education could not be envisaged and planned in isolation from the overall establishment of the new Department of Education. Firstly the ECD structure in the Department of Education could not be known as a department because the

government applied the concept of 'department' to key organs of government only. Each department consisted of directorates at different levels for the various components of service delivery that were identified. But, firstly, the old apartheid education structure had to be dismantled before the new structure was introduced. This was a long and difficult process. As always, the priority during restructuring was given to other education components, such as Higher Education and Primary education which became the Schooling Directorate.

The biggest puzzle in this restructuring, which still remains, is that during the restructuring ECD was at one time part of the Schooling directorate; this meant that it was in line with the definition of ECD in South Africa which looks at ECD as programming for children from birth to nine. However, in 1998 a separate ECD Directorate was created with a new director. This was an exciting outcome for the ECD sector's reconstruction process. Nevertheless there still remains the problem of defining clearly what the functions of the ECD Directorate are in relation to Grade R, which is also partially the responsibility of the Schooling Directorate. The establishment of the national ECD office raised expectations in various quarters of the ECD sector. One important expectation was that the ECD structure in the national Department of Education would be replicated in all the provinces. However, this did not happen as provinces made their own decisions and arrangements about the nature and structure of the ECD provisioning structures in their provincial education departments. Nevertheless at different times during the last ten years, provinces have established ECD directorates.

The establishment of these ECD directorates from the national to provincial levels was a great achievement for the ECD stakeholders, because it is through their advocating and lobbying efforts in the early 1990s that ECD gained recognition in the political forums. There was a need for ECD to be recognized politically first before it could be established as a structure and system for young children's provisioning. It was the politics of the apartheid era that prevented the establishment of ECD in the education system, and the politics of the new dispensation that brought ECD into existence in education.

5.9 The impact of reconstructing ECE in South Africa

The agenda-setting period in policy making processes does not seem to involve a focus on forward planning for the impact of the outcomes of the earlier process on the other stages, such as adoption or implementation. In this study the agenda-setting stage was seen as a very exciting and productive one in terms of achievements for the ECD sector in the context of education. It was characterized by collaboration and a sense of unity in the quest for the reconstruction of the ECD sector.

However, the study revealed that the stakeholders found both advantages and challenges in the reconstruction process of the ECD sector. For example, the establishment of the ECD directorate in the national Educational Department had advantages and challenges for the sector, one of the advantages being the indication that the reconstruction of ECD was being taken seriously by the new government and the new political dispensation. The establishment of the

directorate meant that resources were going to be put into the ECD sector for the development and implementation of ECD policy. The stakeholders also anticipated that more structures and systems would be put in place for effective and efficient ECE provisioning in the sector.

The challenge that the establishment of the ECD Directorate presented to stakeholders was that there was now in government an organ that would take over some of the responsibilities for which the stakeholders were previously responsible. This had not been anticipated by any of the major role players in the struggle for the recognition of ECD in the country, especially the NGOs. In a sense the reconstruction of ECD within the new system of government reduced the stakeholders' responsibilities extensively. In some cases it deprived stakeholders of their jobs when NGOS closed down, partly because government was becoming one of the main service agents in the field. This was a very challenging outcome for ECD, which no one had anticipated or planned for. Everybody, including the leadership of the ECD movement in the country, was astounded when the new ECD Directorate in education, however good and necessary its creation was, presented a challenge to stakeholders by taking over some of the responsibilities which had been under their control. One interviewee mentioned that her organisation's involvement in government-initiated ECD policymaking and implementation had been decreasing since government had become involved in ECD:

“I do remember that we were involved and it was a good involvement, and I think that a sweeping statement which I hear very often is, ‘in the beginning the NGOs were very involved in policy making and in the implementation’. As the years have gone by in the Department of Education both nationally and provincially have accepted their responsibility for ECD, they have begun to develop policy with a far less reliance on the NGOs. So, I sort of see the NGOs a little bit like a pyramid, in 1992 we were at the bottom of the pyramid, up to now we reaching the point where the input of the NGOS is less. You probably get one or two people whose opinions will be asked, things like the norms and standards for grade R, come out nobody is asked, but the public is asked to comment and we make our business to comment. I think there is from the NGO perspective marginalization, from the department’s perspective they are doing what they see as their job to provide education at all levels in the state” (NGO2, ECD organisation representative).

Some effects of change and reconstruction in ECD can almost be viewed as negative, because during the process of planning for the reconstruction of ECD the focus was on the benefits that the reconstruction would bring to the sector. There was no planning for the counter-effects of reconstruction because they were not anticipated, at least not in the formal processes. In essence the counter effects of ECD reconstruction were not an issue during the agenda-setting period of the ECE policy process.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter describes the process of agenda setting in education policy during early transition (1990-1999), with specific reference to ECD. It traces the crucial historical process of the transformation of ECD from obscurity as a non-recognized and highly fragmented sector into one that became a political factor in the struggle for democracy. There is a description of the arguments that took

place on the need for ECE, especially in the country's new dispensation. The chapter gives a brief account of how ECD stakeholders became a national grouping through the processes of inter-organisational collaboration and negotiation. It describes the establishment of the new organisation SACECD, and how it became the new government's partner on ECD policy issues and programming in the late 1990s. Issues of the impact of change in government systems, particularly in education, on the ECD stakeholder community are discussed. The flow of discussion in this chapter indicates that the reconstruction of the ECD sector had varied consequences, some very positive and some less so.

Whereas this chapter examines how ECD came onto the policy agenda in the first place, the next chapter explains how the ECE policy was shaped by ECD stakeholders as critical agents in the education policy development process.

CHAPTER SIX

STAKEHOLDERS' IDENTITIES, INFLUENCES, INTERESTS AND ROLES IN THE SHAPING OF ECE POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

6.1 Introduction

It is a common claim in policy literature that the policy process is very complex (Sabatier 1999). Each element that one focuses on in studying policy process, poses its own complexities. The study of the involvement of interest groups or stakeholders in policy processes is one such element receiving attention in policy analysis. This element therefore has aspects which make it difficult fully and clearly to understand the whole phenomenon of stakeholders in policy processes. However, what seems to emerge from the literature is the need to understand which stakeholders are included in the policy process, and those who are excluded (Sutton, 1999).

This study examined ECD stakeholder identities, interests, influences and their roles in the ECE policy process in order to gain insight into the nature, extent and consequences of stakeholder participation in the ECE policy process. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to discuss and assess the ways in which different stakeholders influenced the development trajectory of ECD policy in South Africa in the period 1990-2000. In the discussion, reference is made to extensive interview data with a range of key stakeholders involved in the policy development process, as well as to analyses of selected government documents that describe the roles of such stakeholders in this process.

I begin this chapter by briefly examining the socio-political contexts in which the ECE policy process was born; and the different conceptions and definitions of “stakeholders” and other terms used for participants in policy processes outside government. I then identify those stakeholders that were involved in the ECD development process in South Africa. I describe the various interests represented by these stakeholders within the policy processes; and continue by outlining the specific influences and roles of each stakeholder grouping on the unfolding of this policy; and I conclude the chapter with a brief synthesis of the differential impact of these stakeholders on policy development.

At every stage of any policy process a range of factors together determine the policy outcomes. The nature and politics of the state play a critical role in the conceptualisation of a policy process and in decisions about the nature and form of stakeholder participation in the policy process. The question of who to include in a policy process is always crucial in policy development and is determined by many factors, including the political environment in which the policy is being conceived.

In a democratic political environment, the rules of participation imply a process in which all participants are considered equal. Most states that claim to be democratic have in their policy-making processes a declaration and acknowledgement of the need to have stakeholder participation in policy development processes. Opinions differ on the nature and extent to which stakeholder involvement occurs in policy processes and how effective their participation is, especially in relation to their envisaged outcomes.

In reality, most government education departments, being in a powerful position both administratively and politically, have much at stake in the policy process. For example, the process through which education policy is formed in Britain is relatively closed and dominated by professional interests. In a very real sense, British educational policy has been determined by the interplay of different groups, including the Department of Education and Science, (which has own interests to pursue) within the education industry (Richardson & Jordan, 1979:173).

Even though the situation may be different in Britain today, in a sense it is still true in many countries that certain groups and individuals determine and control the education policy process and decide which interests to favour. To establish which groups are involved and how much influence they exert requires rigorous empirical research. With reference to a policy process there is a need to obtain a deep understanding of who the stakeholders are in order to have better lenses through which to analyse a policy outcome and gain insight into the nature of the policy product and perceptions about it within the sector.

In South Africa, the post-apartheid democratic government embraced the concepts of equity and redress to explain how education would be provided in the country, and also how stakeholders would become part of the policy-making processes to ensure that the needs of all communities were represented in all policy making endeavours.

In unravelling the identities of the stakeholders who were involved in the Early Childhood Education policy process, this chapter aims to understand the

stakeholder landscape in this sector and outline the sector's perspectives on their roles, interests and influence in the ECE policy process.

6.2 Defining stakeholders in education policy processes

The literature's concept of groups, individuals or people who participate or have vested interests in policy processes and outcome varies across the different social sciences fields that focus on policy studies. The concepts often used to describe or define people outside government in the policy analysis processes are civil society, stakeholders, networks, interest groups, role players, actors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Sehoole states that:

“Stakeholders are defined as persons or groups with a common interest in a particular action, its consequences and those who are affected by it. In education they include groups such as parents, students, education faculties, professional organisations and others. All these groups have an interest in setting the education agenda and shaping the organisations that are established to participate in the process of education provision. Their inclusion in the decision-making process is now widely accepted as an important method for increasing information and once decisions are made commitment” (Sehoole, 2002:58).

Sehoole's definition relates to the education sector and is therefore applicable to this study. The term 'stakeholders' as exemplified above is used worldwide in different contexts of research and other forms of knowledge analysis in policy studies. There is a belief that these terms and concepts have become public knowledge so that most authors do not seem to feel the need to dwell on their definitions.

However, when one examines some of the different research contexts in which these concepts are studied, it becomes critical to clarify the different conceptions of stakeholders. This study has attempted to analyse the meaning of these terms in order to contextualise the study's focus on the use of the term 'stakeholder'.

An example of how terms for organisations outside government are used is to be found in Pollard and Court (2005), who conducted a review of the use of evidence by civil society to influence policy processes. Pollard and Court do not define their concept of 'civil society', but assume that the reader of their research document will know what the term means in the context of their study. This makes it difficult to follow the rest of their analysis of the influence of civil society on policy processes. When mentioning the statistics on the growth of civil society Pollard and Court just switch to the term 'NGOs'. This unexplained change in terms for non-government organisations is very common in policy analysis literature. More and more 'civil society' or 'stakeholder' are also being used as umbrella terms for all organisations in policy processes that are outside government systems.

There have been various definitions of stakeholders as a concept in policy development literature according to the people, groups and institutions represented who would fall under the category of participants or role players in policy processes. Haav (2004) states that:

“In education the main stakeholders or partners are material resource providers (the state and local authorities in public education) administrators, teachers (as service providers) and students and their parents. In production terms, the students are at the same time both consumers of education services and co producers. In the learning process, students develop and produce themselves” (Haav, 2004:1).

Haav's (2004) definition of stakeholders in education is problematic in that it limits stakeholders to those who have a service to offer. This may be the case to some extent; however, not all stakeholders in education have a service to offer. There are stakeholders who have an interest in the need for a sound education policy but do not offer any service at all, such as retired educationalists, or individuals in sectors other than education. There are also people who will support the morality of an education policy process for political or even religious reasons.

“In recent times business and parents have become important in the policy processes. However, as parents are generally not politically organised, especially beyond the individual schools their children attend, finding a serious role for parents in the policy process has proved difficult” (Levin 2001).

Another term used synonymously with 'stakeholders' is 'interest groups'.

Interest groups consist of clients, interest representatives and government officials. Policy domains vary in their constellation of interest groups (Lauman, Heinz, Nelson & Salisbury, 1991). Song and Miskel (2002) have their own definition of 'interest group'. They state that:

The category of “interest groups” is defined for our study as including membership organisations, advocacy organisations not excepting members, businesses, other organisations or institutions, or any association of individuals, policy actors or groups, whether formally organised or not that tries to influence public policy (Song & Miskel, 2002,p2).

Another category identified in literature is that of a policy network or coalition, “a group of individuals and organisations who share similar belief systems, codes of conduct and established patterns of behaviour” (Sutton 1999:7). These groups seem to focus on watching and scrutinising policy developments in a particular education field and advocating for what should be in place or what a particular policy should be advocating. Policy networks often work in collaboration with other groups or stakeholders in a particular policy development process mainly to increase their power base in influencing a policy process through advocacy. The term policy actors is also used in the same way as stakeholders or interest groups. (Mooiji & De Vos, (2003) are of the view that ‘actors’ can be individuals pursuing their own material interest or collective interest groups.

A perusal of the policy development literature reveals a certain vagueness in the way that the definition and understanding of “stakeholders’ and all other terms have been applied in the various analyses of policy processes. There is a-free-for all type of approach among policy researchers; no one has attempted to tidy up this problem of the definition of ‘stakeholders’ in policy studies. Perhaps this explains why there are few studies that directly focus on the question of who stakeholders are in the policy process, and on delving into the finest detail of their characteristics and what they are really about in specific

policy process. Most studies focus on their interests and roles in the policy process.

This study views stakeholders and Interest groups as one and the same thing. They are groups, institutions, or individuals that participate, and those who should participate, directly or indirectly, in a policy process for specific reasons and interests. They may be experts in a particular field of specialisation in which a policy is being developed. These individuals or groups may be from the research community, international organisations, community-based organisations, political parties or interest groups with a specific interest in a particular aspect of the policy process. It is not worthwhile to try and differentiate the two terms as this study discovered that 'stakeholders' was the term most people used during the interview process, perhaps more by way of a preference, not because it is very different from the other terms.

6.3 Stakeholders in South Africa's early childhood education policy process

This study established that the stakeholders who participated directly or indirectly in the ECE policy were individuals and groups who had an interest in most of the country's early childhood development policy reform processes. They also had a special interest in the outcome of these ECD policy initiatives, which in this case was White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education 2001. Most stakeholders who were approached and were available for interviews for the study, were those who had been working or were involved in the ECD in South

Africa field for a number of years. Since the case study was dealing with the ECE policy in South Africa, some of these interviewees were employees or past employees of the Department of Education. The interviewees therefore included individuals from the NGO and the Government sector.

At some stage in the research process I grappled with the problem of defining government and non-government officials in relation to the term 'stakeholders'. Most of the literature includes government in its understanding and definition of stakeholders. However, this study discovered that when interviewees from the NGO sector spoke about the ECE policy process, they spoke of government as being a separate structure from 'the stakeholder constituency' the NGOs. This distinction is largely used to distinguish the roles of those involved in the policy process and of the developers of the policy. To distinguish between stakeholders and policy makers, this study identified national government officials and the policy maker's provincial government officials as the implementers and stakeholders in the policy processes, and other participants in the policy process as stakeholders. It should be pointed out that the Department of Education officials also spoke of stakeholders as individuals and groups outside government.

6.4 Identity of government as the policy maker

Government in policy analysis literature is often classified as a stakeholder or policy maker. Identities in the form of titles or positions are attached to the terms "government policy makers" or "officials". Some policy analysts have asked for

example who the authority figure in policy making is. I believe this question is asked with the aim of attempting to understand fully who the policy makers are in order to provide a framework within which to understand a policy process and its outcome. Colebatch (1998) states that:

“One of the most seductive terms in the study of policy is the ‘policy makers’. It has a clear ring to it and conveys an impression of a known group of evident and purposeful decision makers determining the course of action ... The people who are identified as policy makers often report that they do not seem to be out on their own making something rather they find themselves presiding over an array of people with varying levels of interest in a policy question and quite distinct perspective on it. They might find that their own ability to determine the outcome is limited and they might want to include some of these other people as policy makers “(p15).

The new South African policy development environment embraced the policy of consultation and inclusion of non-government individuals or groups especially in the early years of policy reforms. Extensive use was made of individuals and organisations as consultants, policy makers and developers at the agenda stages of policy processes. This was partly to obviate the lack of capacity and in some cases expertise in the various fields of specialisation among government officials. However, it is known within government that the final decision and authority on a specific policy are the minister responsible and the cabinet with the help and support of other management figures within a department’s system and structures.

In education there was a process of increasing its human resource capacity and expertise in the various areas of education specialisation and policy development processes, and at certain stages policies were completed in house

by government officials, sometimes with minimal participation from non-government officials. This had repercussions on how for example in ECD the final product was perceived by the stakeholders who in the main were also the implementers.

In this study it was found that the ECD sector identified government policy makers as the Minister of Education and the Director of Early Childhood Development. Therefore everything that happened in the ECE policy process, whether negative or positive, was associated with these identities. There was, for instance, a reference to the Agenda stage in the policy process, when the diminished extent of ECD Stakeholder involvement was associated with the change of ECD directorships in the department.

The specific identities of government policy makers therefore help stakeholders to clarify not only the policy process but also the perspectives and beliefs expounded in a policy product. Stakeholders believe that they need to know who they are dealing with or working with on policy in government, since this makes the policy process less of an abstract phenomenon and gives some meaning to the policy direction and final outcome of the policy product.

6.5 Individual's participation in the ECE policy process

This study discovered that even though policy processes are usually endeavours conducted collectively by interested stakeholder groups or teams, there are often individuals among the stakeholders who play a pivotal role in the policy process. Within the ECD sector there is the view that when the education

policy reform movement was at its most intense during the early to mid 1990s, a few prominent advocates for ECD emerged from ECD non-government organisational structures and institutions as champions of the policy cause for ECD. These individuals were pivotal in contributing to the advocacy for ECD recognition in government and inclusion in the various policy reform processes across all the key ECD government departments.

During the research interviews a perspective emerged that certain individuals played a critical role as the voices of NGOs. Certain names were repeatedly mentioned by both NGO and GO interviewees as prominent individuals during the ECE policy. Some people were named more often than others as the people that put ECD on the political agenda of the ANC. All of the names mentioned, including some not listed here, were from the NGO sector of the time. At that time ECD was not part of the then apartheid government education policy planning. There were therefore, no links or collaboration between the government and the ECD NGO sector.

In the pre-democracy period the individuals who came to dominate the ECD sector played a critical role in the agenda-setting process of the ECE policy. According to the study there were one or two individuals in the sector who were enormously instrumental in deciding who should be involved in the ECD agenda-setting process. The individuals were politically well connected, especially within the ANC party political structures. They influenced the overall education agenda-setting process to the benefit of the ECD sector. These individuals managed to achieve ECD recognition and attention during these

crucial preparatory stages of policy formulation for the new government of South Africa.

During the early period of the policy development process, the sector needed politically astute individuals, workers, hands-on people, researchers, strategists, thinkers and planners. The sector through its NGO structures was endowed with all the above, and some people who had more than one of the above-mentioned skills and abilities. However, the biggest weakness discovered during the study was that there were few people who had the ability to ensure sustainable unity in the sector. The ECD NGO structure and system lacked individuals with the ability and skills to keep the focus of the struggle for the ECD policy process on the needs and rights of South Africa's young children. What emerged after the agenda-setting process in the ECD sector was competition for individual and organisational turf, leaving the sector weak and vulnerable to dissension over the course of the ECE process in the country.

This issue of fragmentation in the ECD sector is covered in detail in chapter six. What this study further observed with regard to the contributions of individuals to the ECD policy process was that after the elections of 1994, with the advent of post-apartheid government departments, new structures and systems were being put in place for the new government machinery. The new employment equity policies and regulations and other structural considerations of the new government system created a huge capacity for human resource expansion within government departments. The ECD NGO sector lost a number of its ECD advocates to government jobs both within the ECD government sector and otherwise. A new relationship emerged between the ex-ECD NGO people in

government and those that remained in the ECD NGO structures; the effect of this relationship was largely negative and did not result in the strengthening of the ECD sector.

The findings of this study indicated that the individual roles of ECD government officials in the various provincial and national ECE policy activities varied from province to province. Some individual government officials were very proactive and played a leading role in organising the provincial structures that gave inputs to the national policy initiatives. In some provinces, government champions for ECE were very passionate and active and showed their commitment by including other government stakeholders in their policy development processes. Provincial government officials, therefore, demonstrated different levels of dedication and zeal to the ECE policy development process. There was also in some provinces more collaboration and interaction between government and non-government organisations than in others, mainly because of the work and effort of the few government individuals who were driven by the passion and desire to see the establishment of an ECE policy system in the country.

As the sector gained more recognition in the government system, this opened up various opportunities for individuals with ECD expertise to obtain more lucrative and secure jobs. The sector therefore began losing most of its talented individuals, especially from the NGO environment to government. Several opportunities also arose in the consultancy field. Some prominent individuals in the sector were enticed into consultancy, working for national government and international agencies that were interested in various aspects of ECD. This became one of the catalysts for a shift in the sector from a situation where

individuals had worked for a common good to a situation where individuals worked for themselves and their own personal interest.

In addition, some prominent individuals in the NGO ECD sector who moved into government either turned from ECD to other professional interests and ventures, or their thinking shifted into a bureaucratic mode, where government priorities became the goal and purpose of policy. In some cases, therefore, there were rifts and personality clashes between ex-NGO individuals who had become government officials and those who were still in the NGO sector. This had an impact on the direction that the ECD policy processes took with regard to the consultation process.

6.6 ECD practitioners and caregivers as stakeholder

This study acknowledges that practitioners and caregivers are important stakeholders in the policy process. However, it discovered that the treatment of practitioners and caregivers in the policy process was unsatisfactory in that no proper mechanisms were put in place to ensure that most practitioners were directly involved in the policy process. The findings of this study indicate that members of this group are not included as stakeholders in the ECD policy process in this country. They have no role in policy and yet they are very important, especially as implementers of ECE policy. From interviews with practitioners from some of the most prominent ECD organisation in the country it emerged that some of them had never even seen the White Paper but had only heard of it. The practitioners expressed concern about the language of

policy documents and the fact that they were not involved in any policy information gathering or dissemination processes.

6.7 Organisational stakeholders in the ECE policy process

Policy processes work effectively if within a particular sector there is what Sutton (1999) refers to as a strong 'dominant epistemic community', a group that has influence, force, political clout and possibly close links to the policy makers and forces, so that it is able to place an issue on a policy agenda. Organisations in a policy process come in different forms, shapes and sizes.

In this study it became apparent that organisations also operate at different levels in society according to the systems and resources that they have. It also emerged that it matters where one is located geographically. This is related to one's economic status and perceptions about one's ability to manage organisational systems and mechanisms. Therefore the value of an organisation in a policy processes is sometimes determined by the place from which it operates and its organisational capabilities greatly influence the extent of its ability to participate in policy processes. It is evident in this study that there are two main categories of organisation that participate in a policy processes, namely those that are economically, politically and socially advantaged and the ones that are economically, politically and socially disadvantaged.

The advantaged organisations are endowed with specific, broad knowledge of different aspects of their sector, technical and communication systems, easily identifiable financial systems, fund-raising skills and the ability to network at

local, national and sometimes international levels. The advantaged organisations are also often housed in secure and easily accessible geographical locations. This works well for contact and network purposes.

The position of the disadvantaged organisations is the exact opposite. They are often small and community- or township-based. They have precarious management and financial systems with no effective accountable systems. Their communication systems are often very limited or non-existent. Most of their networks are limited to the local level. This study found that the few disadvantaged organisations that had any national level recognition were linked to the bigger advantaged organisations as satellite organisations located in the communities. On their own, the disadvantaged organisations had little or no national recognition.

The study found organisational characteristics that determine an organisation's ability, sustainability and readiness to participate in certain aspects of the policy process stages. For example, certain advantaged organisations were able to be involved in more of the policy stages, namely the agenda setting, the adoption stage, the formulation stage and even the implementation stage than the disadvantaged organisations. The disadvantaged organisations were able to be involved in the implementation stages only. In the ECE process some of the smaller disadvantaged organisations in policy processes have been involved in the implementation stage, and then only through being co-opted into a consortium delivering certain services through tender processes put in place by the Department of Education.

6.8 Stakeholders by gender, race and leadership

Posts in the early childhood development sector are predominantly occupied by women. The South African ECD landscape has roughly the following job opportunities: caregiver, practitioner, teacher, researcher, curriculum and programme developers and trainers. All these fields across the country are dominated by women. Apart from job opportunities there are also a few positions of authority in the ECD sector that are linked to organisational leadership and confer power on their holders. At the time of the study men dominated these powerful positions.

These men also had a background of participation in the struggle against apartheid. Some had more political clout and stronger connections than others. At least one or two of them are said to have been so powerful and influential as to ensure that ECD was placed on the Education political agenda, thus setting off the formal process of development of the ECE policy

The ECD field is dominated by women but, as stated above, at the time of the study the most influential individual stakeholders were men. Several explanations were given for the interest men displayed in the ECD field, one being that as an emerging field of interest in the new political dispensation, it offered possibilities of financial gain through consultation, and also funding opportunities for NGO ECD services and initiatives. One participant in the interviews puts it this way:

“Well, I think that if you look at the sector it’s predominantly women there are very few men, and the fact that most of the people who were involved were men I think that the woman’s voice and the women who had been involved for many years and who played such a critical role were marginalized. Men are far more political animals than women are and they are far more interested in the politicking and the power plays and so on and so forth. Maybe its a very biased opinion whereas my take on the women in the ECD sector is that they very passionate about doing something for children and they want to get on with the job and they get frustrated by the power play. I know that that certainly is my case its one of the reasons why I am not really interested in playing a major role in either provincial or national representative bodies because I want to get the job done I want to see a difference in the lives of children, I cant bear to be where people are jostling for power play and politics” (NGO1, ECD organisation representative).

The leadership of the ECE policy included some women, noted for their expertise in the field of ECD, particularly through their involvement in the NGO sector as service providers of care and education to the young. They were involved in providing training to parents and caregivers and they also assisted in sourcing physical and material resources. These women were predominantly white. Together they played a crucial role in contributing to the ECE policy process and also participated as individuals at various stages of the policy process.

The dominance of white women as experts in the sector during the early stages of the policy development process became a contentious issue as others involved in policy development realised that non-white women were absent from the ECD leadership and thus not involved directly in policy development processes. Most of the black women were practitioners and the highest level most of them could attain was that of a trainer. Very few black women had at that stage attained sufficient knowledge and experience to justify a legitimate

place in the policy development process. This study came across the names of only four black women who were involved in the agenda-setting stage of the ECD policy in education.

In the later stages of the policy process, such as the implementation stage, some of the pioneers of the ECE policy process, considered experts in the earlier stages of the ECE policy process, felt and seemed marginalized in the later stages of the policy development as well as in other ECE policy-related activities. They did not even know who for example was involved in the development of the final policy product for ECE, White Paper number five.

Thus the issue of gender and race in the sector led to direct and indirect individual clashes. Some individuals simply withdrew into their own ECD world, sometimes in a niche area where they felt that they were still contributing to the wellbeing of children and their caregivers and also making a living, particularly through external international funding opportunities for their programmes and projects.

6.9 Stakeholders in the policy processes.

Stakeholder interests in policy processes take on different shapes and forms depending on what is at stake for them and their constituencies. Several studies have been done on stakeholder interest in policy development processes. Tsujinaka, Pekkanen and Ohtomo (2005), discussing the results of their study of civil society interest issues, say:

“We also were able to investigate the intersection of group type with interest in particular public policy issue areas. .One fairly predictable result of this analysis is that organisations are particularly interested in the public policy close to their predominant activity. So, 97% of agricultural organisations are interested in agricultural policies and nearly all labour organisations, 95%, are interested in labour policies and welfare organisations, 91% are interested in welfare policies” (p12).

It can be extrapolated, therefore, that the interest of stakeholders in policy processes is closely related to their occupations, professional or non-professional. Their functions and perhaps their perceived role in society also determine their interest in policy processes. In this study the Early Childhood Development stakeholders’ interest in the ECE policy process was found to be based on the fact that they had been working in the ECD field for many years, some of them on a voluntary basis while others were receiving minimal financial benefits and remuneration. The stakeholders’ interest in the South African Education Reform process was specifically in the ECE policy and its links to the new education policies as a whole.

This study came across a number of perspectives on the issue of stakeholder interest in the ECE policy process. Though they were expressed differently, they were very similar in nature. We should bear in mind, though, that these stakeholders came from the same sector where there were differences between them, which also affected their interest in the ECE policy development process in particular. One interviewee summarised stakeholder interest in the ECD policy as follows:

“I think that the NGO sector came with a very clear agenda, a very justifiable agenda that they had been providing training in the past and that they needed to be consulted and that they were the best experts in the field at that stage. I think they came with the agenda of sustainability, because in the pre-election era a lot of money was channelled into NGOs sector so it was part of that whole process. Whereas now government was sitting with the funding so that it was a two-way thing, wanting to share their expertise wanting to do their training and wanting to reclaim their niche in the market and also wanting to access the funding. I think different stakeholders had really different interest from different aspects” (GO4, ECD NGO representative).

An analysis of the records of the interviews with the stakeholders and document analysis confirmed these impressions, and revealed a variety of reasons for stakeholder interest in the ECE policy process. These reasons were extrapolated and grouped into the following categories:

6.9.1 To ensure the development of a South African ECD policy

The ECD stakeholders had a great interest in the development of ECD policy in the country. They realised that policy creation was one tool that would give the sector not only legitimacy but also much-needed government support in the form of services and programmes. This was the reason for their enthusiastic participation in the ECE policy processes from 1990 to 2000.

6.9.2 To inform the ECD policy process using their experiences in ECD

Experience was by far the most frequently mentioned reason for stakeholder interest in the ECE policy process. The participants stated that they brought to the policy process years of experience in dealing with children and of the relevant challenges and problems. They claimed to have practical experience of working in the communities. This experience could inform the policy process

and help ensure that the policy developed could be implemented since it had been informed by realities. On the question of experience one participant said

“I go back to what I was saying earlier about that HSRC study that was realised in 2003, looking at the contribution that the NGO sector has made. It has made an incredible contribution to ECD in south Africa and its demonstrated in that study that over the last 30 years more than 80% of the work done in ECD has been done by the NGOs and I think that over those years there has been a wealth of knowledge, research and programmes towards meeting young children’s rights so we have got a very rich heritage in this country we’re not tapping into” (NGO1, ECD organisation representative).

There were strong sentiments that the NGOs had a justifiable agenda. They had, for example, been providing training in the past, and ought to be consulted because they were the top experts in the field of ECE policy

As far as the NGO sector is concerned, therefore, their interest in the ECE policy processes arose from the desire to share their experience and expertise in the ECD field and so to inform the ECE policy. One participant put it this way: “NGOs were the ones acting like government in those years, doing work that government should have been doing whilst we were fighting.”

6.9.3 To have an equal and increased access to ECD programmes

Some participants in this study indicated that their interest in the policy process was to lobby for a policy that would create an equal system to benefit all children across all race groups, regardless of economic status. They wanted increased access to ECD services for at least 90% of the young children and a system that would allow for the specifications and standards of ECD site requirements to be culturally, economic, and socially contextualised according to the diverse situations and backgrounds of the young children in the country.

6.9.4 Recognition of and support for community-based centres

ECD government services in apartheid times were minimal and they largely benefited white young children and their families only. The apartheid system model of ECD services was centre-based. The majority of children in the black townships, for instance, were serviced by the NGO sectors, community-based organisations using the community-based centres. Some participants in the study stated that their interest in the ECE policy was to preserve and ensure government support for the community-based ECD centre model because they met the needs of the children in their communities by providing relevant services.

6.9.5 Recognition of ECD practitioners

The study also shows that some people's interest in the ECE policy was to see to it that the policy protected practitioners and offered them career opportunities to progress professionally. They also wanted to see recognition of practitioners as educators so that they could be paid as professionals by the departments of education.

6.9.6 To create sustainability in the sector

In the years immediately prior to the first democratic elections of 1994, substantial donor funding was channelled into the ECD sector through the NGOs. After these elections, NGOs became concerned about their own sustainability because certain government regulations decreed that funding was now to be controlled by government. They needed to collaborate with government on the issue of providing services to it because of their expertise,

and receiving remuneration for doing so. Participation in the policy process would ensure that the policy protected this interest.

NGO interests in the ECD sector are sometimes perceived by those outside the NGO structures as being motivated by the organisations' desire to make money. This study found that no stakeholder was willing to mention the need for financial resources as a reason for their interest in ECE and its policy processes. Funding was mentioned only to highlight the need for in relation to the need to meet the practitioners' training and salary requirements. In other words, their interest in the ECE process was increased to get funded posts for practitioners. Some participants emphasised that their interest in the field and the policy processes stemmed from a sincere interest and love for children and that if they had been interested in money they would have engaged in other viable business ventures or have pursued other career paths.

6.9.8 To lobby and advocate for ECD

Stakeholders viewed themselves as lobbyists for the needs of young children and those who care for them. Some provincial structures were more vociferous in their lobbying activities than others. In KwaZulu Natal, for example, an ECD Stakeholders once conducted a march to the Provincial Department of Education in Pietermaritzburg in order to hand over documents demanding among other things, that ECD practitioners be recognised as educators and provided with job positions and salaries.

Even at national level, the major role that the NGO played in the early policy processes was that of advocacy and lobbying for the sector's needs to be met

in the context of children's rights and needs and the wellbeing of their caregivers, in particular, practitioners. The study discovered that according to both government and NGO interview participants, NGOs brought to the policy process rich experience and knowledge based on years of working the communities with children, parents and caregivers from diverse backgrounds and historical settings. The ECD organisations were usually the only structures and systems through which ECD services and programmes were being planned and delivered in the sector.

The study revealed that in the early stages of the policy processes there was a high level of consensus amongst stakeholders in the sector about what was required as far as ECE policy was concerned, and the choice of people to develop the agenda-setting documents was based on skills and experience in the sector. The individuals were from the strong ECD NGOs group. These individuals were involved in formulating and contributing to the formulation of the initial ECE policy documents.

6.9.9 To create a system and structure for parental involvement in ECD

In the study, mention was made of the need of acknowledgement in the ECE policy of parental involvement as a critical aspect of ECD. Certain organisations from both the disadvantaged and advantaged groups have no particular interest in participating in policy processes. One of the reasons for this, according to the findings of this study was that most stakeholders are very involved in the day-to-day running of their organisations' programmes, and more concerned about what they consider to be more pertinent issues, such as fund raising and activities.

6.9.10 The influence of stakeholders on the ECE policy process

Some researchers believe that because in stakeholder studies much emphasis has been placed on the nature of the stakeholder organisations, this approach makes it difficult to accurately and adequately assess their influence (Pollard & Court, 2005). This study is, however, of the view that the nature of stakeholder organisations is critical to an understanding of the influence they have on policy. Song and Miskel (2002) state that:

“Interest groups share the fundamental goal of swaying policymakers to incorporate the group’s beliefs into public policy. The extent of their success depends largely on their relative influence. By definition then, the beliefs of groups who are perceived by policymakers as more influential carry more weight in the policy making process than the beliefs of those groups perceived as less influential”(p4).

It is apparent from the findings of the study that the extent to which stakeholders influence policy depends on who they are. The identities and recognition of stakeholders in the policy landscape significantly affects their role and influence in the policy development process. In the South African context for example, the advantaged ECD stakeholders are better able and better placed to express their interest in the policy development forums and are therefore able to influence the nature of the policy being designed. There is a close relationship between an organisation’s profile and its influence.

Individuals and groups who may be considered experts in a particular field often wield recognisable influence in a policy process even over government, because of the respect they seem to command through their knowledge of and

experience in the field. They therefore use knowledge gained through experience to influence policy.

Organisations in a sector are able to carry on a particular discourse that can be used to influence policy towards a particular policy outcome. They play an important role in getting issues onto or keeping them off the agenda. They also play a critical role in preventing the removal of issues and policies from the political agenda (Richardson & Jordan 1979).

Different approaches are adopted to analyse stakeholder influence on policy process. This study focused on the factors that affect stakeholder influence in a policy process and how their influence plays out in the different stages of the policy process.

The study found that one of the critical aspects that affects stakeholder influence over policy processes is the power and control a factor itself has over the policy process and how the stakeholders utilise it in the stages of the policy process. The factors noted in this study can be described as internal factors, such as stakeholder access to information relating to the specific policy process, their relationships with government officials and other stakeholders within the sector, interests in the policy outcome, access to people with the political power to influence the policy in question, and the sector's stakeholders' own internal relationships and the extent to which they are united, especially with regard to policy views.

There are also external factors that affect stakeholder influence on policy processes, such as the government's philosophical approach to a policy issue,

the stage of development in the policy process and what is at stake socially, economically and politically.

All the above-mentioned factors affect the level of stakeholders' roles and influence in the policy process. Generally the intention of stakeholders in a policy process is to influence and exert power so as to ensure that particular policy beliefs and opinions are included as part of the over-all policy outcome.

Influence in a policy process is related to power, which itself is related to position Sutton (1999). Stakeholder influence and position are therefore critical in a policy process. Stakeholders can have different influences in a policy process that can be played out at all its different stages.

This study found that, during the agenda stage of the ECE policy process, the ECD stakeholders had to use their internal networks to influence the process. They mobilised themselves from local and provincial to national levels. Using prominent spokespersons from the different ECD organisations, they engaged with national education policy structures and processes and ensured that ECD became part of the national education policy agenda. The agenda stage was characterised by political lobbying for ECD recognition. Stakeholders already in the sector mobilised and united, and put pressure on the pre-democratic political structures to include ECD as a component of the education system, especially because in the Apartheid system there was no racially equal ECD policy in place.

At this stage the sector also largely relied on the political atmosphere of the time to place ECD on the education agenda. They used their organisational abilities

and experience in the field to advocate the inclusion of ECD in the development of education policy. The extent to which stakeholders have influence at a particular stage also depends on how much power they have at that stage. At the agenda stage, the ECD sector seems to have been very influential in its lobbying strategies because of the prevailing spirit of unity in the quest to advocate for ECD recognition, not only in education but also in other departments dealing with young children's rights and needs.

The formulation stage of the ECE policy processes was unfortunately characterised by the struggle in the sector to be recognised by government as the individual or organisation whose skills, information, experience and structures made it best able to formulate and implement the ECE policy. This new spirit of competition emerged in the sector because this stage of the ECE policy process required specific stakeholders with particular skills to formulate the ECE policy. The formulation process therefore created competition and power play among the stakeholders, and the strongest stakeholders with the ability to convince government of their worth gained entry into forums for the ECE policy formulation. It was at this stage that fragmentation appeared among stakeholders in the ECD sector. They started to compete for the resources available to participants in the different stages of the ECE policy processes through tenders for organisational and consultant participation. The sector's influence at this stage was based on the ability of individuals or organisations to show government that they had the skills and knowledge needed to participate in the formulation of the ECE policy.

Most stakeholders in education found that they had more influence in the implementation stage of a policy process. It is at this stage that the nature of a policy outcome is determined and sometimes changed to fit into the stakeholder's specific needs and interests. Stakeholders therefore find that they do have a voice at this stage. They can influence the policy by making it suit their needs and available resources.

The implementation of the ECE processes was also problematic because it was linked to limited resources being made available for the participation of a few ECD stakeholders. Stakeholders had once again to demonstrate that their organisational abilities could assist government to implement the ECE policy. Various factors affected stakeholders' influence at this stage, such as their ability to produce evidence of their skills and experience. Another critical factor also surfaced at this stage in the ECE policy process, namely Government's power to decide on which organisation it wanted to participate. Government perceptions of the organisations that should be involved in the implementation stage became the deciding factor in who participated in the implementation stage of the ECE process.

By the implementation stage of the ECE policy process, fragmentation had begun to surface, and the apparent unity of the agenda stage started crumbling. Unity among stakeholders in a policy process determines the extent to which they can exert their intended influence on a policy process. Education is seen by Lewis (2005) as having narrow stakeholder constituencies. In his view, the size of the group counts as well

This study found that the ECD stakeholders did not have formal stakeholder links with other stakeholders in the broader Education sector. They also became more and more fragmented around the time of the adoption stage of the ECE policy process; this provided an opportunity for the government to have more influence on the policy process and product, especially since it had public mandates to fulfil in the sector. The sector seems to have lost the mechanisms for influencing government that had been in place, particularly during the agenda-setting stage of the ECD policy development process.

6.10 Stakeholders' perspectives on the ECE policy process

There is a close relationship between the role and influence of stakeholders in a policy process in that the factors that determine the role they play are similar to the factors that determine their influence in the policy process. However, different approaches can be used to analyse the role and influence of stakeholders in a policy process. This study's analysed stakeholder roles by focussing on the extent to which they took part in the ECE policy process. Questions of their representation in the different stages of the ECE policy development processes will be examined from the stakeholders' perspective.

Stakeholders' role in policy development can also be looked at from the point of view of 'participation'. Recently there has been a tendency in policy studies for researchers to focus on participatory policy analysis. According to this argument ordinary citizens need to have greater and more effective say in their government through participatory policy processes de Leone and Longobardi

(2002). This is argued with the recognition that citizens are best able to express their situations and needs. It is therefore critical for stakeholders to have an opportunity to play a significant role in a policy process that affects their constituency or sector.

With regard to the ECE policy process, this study found that most stakeholders claim that they did not participate or play a role in the development of White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education. Various reasons were given by participants in the study to explain why they had not participated in the development of the first ever ECE policy in the country.

6.11 Conclusion

Stakeholder identities, influences, interest and roles are elements in education policy studies that require much more understanding, as they have an impact on how policy is developed. Within the context of Early Childhood Development, especially where stakeholder research is not a well-developed area of knowledge, it is important to dissect these elements to obtain a better perspective of the ECD stakeholder landscape and its strengths and weaknesses in relation to its participation in the ECD policy processes in this country.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE ECD STAKEHOLDERS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD

7.1 Introduction

The relationship between the Government Department of Education and the ECD stakeholders has evolved and changed over the last ten years (1996-2006), taking on different characteristics during the different stages of ECE policy development process. It can be stated that in the early 1990s stakeholders owned the ECD sector. During this period when the whole country was in transition from apartheid to democracy, changes were taking place in the sector and the country as a whole this situation impacted greatly on the composition and relations dynamics in the ECD sector, both among the ECD organisations and structures that were involved in the struggle for democracy in South Africa and also with the new democratic state.

This chapter will revisit the decisive moments in the development of the ECE policy process in South Africa and provide an analysis of some of the critical findings. The chapter will also evaluate the theoretical implications of stakeholder participation in policy processes with the aim of providing some theoretical suggestions based on the study's experience.

There are a number of issues relating to the findings of this study on stakeholder involvement in policy processes that will be linked to suggestions for further research in this chapter.

Changes during transition were complex, with different effects on the Government system. The complex nature of transition in South Africa meant that many of the specifics of the changes were also complex. Van de Brugge and de Haan (2004) analyse complex theory as an aspect of transition theory. In their opinion complexity theory is a body of concepts that describe the behaviour of systems that are far from equilibrium.

One of the changes government was experiencing was in the relationship of government and stakeholders to each other, and not only in ECD. This was a complex process, especially in the context of the change from the apartheid period when consultation was limited to only certain people in the government system. The new government emphasised stakeholder consultation in various processes relating to the building of the new nation. The ECD sector was part of the changes and stakeholder participation in the process of building and developing the sector was one of the new features, particularly in relation to policy development.

This chapter will rely mostly on the results of the information gathered from the interviews to analyse the varied interactions that took place between government and stakeholders, and how they related to the ECE policy process in the country. The chapter will therefore explore the following; government interactions with stakeholders in apartheid times; the post-apartheid government and stakeholders in the ECE development process and the development of White Paper 5 on ECE. In the conclusion I shall summarise and evaluate the ECD stakeholder relationship with government during the transition era in South Africa, especially in connection with the development of ECE policy

7.2 Apartheid government interactions with ECD stakeholders

The ECD Stakeholder movement in South Africa has its roots in the 1980s, during which time it became evident to many child advocates in the country that young children, especially non-white children, were suffering the adverse effects of lack of access to quality ECD care and education services. Various individuals collaboratively or individually set up ECD NGOs services to care for and educate young children, particularly in Black, Coloured and Indian communities. To a large extent these services were of poor quality and lacked standards guidance and support from government. The services that were well organised and had some good quality elements were those that had some external donor funding. The apartheid government did not support or recognise NGO ECD stakeholders in any way.

The NGOs worked independently and developed the sector on their own. There was no relationship or any formal dealings between the apartheid government and the ECD NGO stakeholders. ECD resources that went into service provision for the young were creatively sourced from local and a few international donors. Because of the international political sanctions against South Africa that were having their greatest impact in the 1980s, very few child-friendly funders had easy access to ECD NGOs in South Africa. This situation placed the ECD NGO sector in the precarious situation of not being able to cope with the high demand for ECD services among the non-white communities, especially amongst the black people. The state of access to ECD provisioning with some state support was 6% for African children, 11% Coloured, 13% Indian and 33% White of the total population of approximately

5,8367000 children aged 0 to 6. (World Bank Report on ECD in South Africa, 1994). It was such statistical information and realities that encouraged the NGO sector to keep seeking ways of ensuring that young children, especially those from the most deprived communities, had basic care and education experiences although lacking government support. It should be pointed out that even though a couple of formal NGO structures increasingly became the most prominent and powerful ones in the 1980s and 1990s, most of the ECD provisioning comprised initiatives of the non-formal community organisations and individuals. These community ECD initiatives provided the base on which most of the formal NGO organisations entered the communities.

7.3 The post-apartheid government relationship with ECD stakeholders

This study found that at the advent of the new democratic South Africa about 80% of ECD services were being provided by the NGO sector. The post-apartheid government system was therefore in a situation of having a predetermined partner on ECD issues in the country, namely the ECD NGO structures. After the Department of Education established the ECD directorate in 1998, other structures such as the Coordinated Committee for Early Childhood Development were formed as part of the department's initiative to bring on board all the relevant ECD stakeholders. Through this structure the department was able to engage with stakeholders on various matters regarding the services and programmes that were being envisaged. One of the processes

that had not yet been completed at the time was the development of White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development.

This study was able to trace the development of White Paper 5 and stakeholder involvement from the early 1990s onwards. According to the findings of this study, the research conducted in 1994 by the World Bank on ECD in South Africa was one factor that led to the ECE policy development process in the country. The study conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) was a critical milestone in the process of introducing an understanding of Early Childhood Development in South Africa from both the pre-democracy and the post-democracy perspective. The study focused on analysing interventions in early childhood development from birth to nine years in South Africa, and came up with recommendations for ECD provisioning, with a focus on the Department of Education's programmes and services. Throughout the World Bank Report a strong emphasis is placed on the need for government to work with NGO stakeholders. It states for example:

“In this report it is recommended that the government, in partnership with NGOs, the private sector, trade unions, the community and families, invest in the provision of early childhood services for children from birth through the early primary years” (World Bank Report, 1994:iv).

The study and the development of the World Bank report received support and were made possible largely because of the availability and capability of the NGO ECD sector, which had already established networks across the country. It was willing to share its knowledge, experience and programmes for children in the areas where it was working. The development process of the report to a

large extent illustrated and modelled the type of collaborations and interactions between government and the ECD stakeholders that were possible.

This study was not able to establish the extent to which the recommendations by the World Bank report on government and stakeholder relationship influenced the development of ECE policy. However, it was revealed during the analysis of the ECE policy development process that some of the World Bank recommendations regarding stakeholder and government collaboration were evident in the way government and ECD stakeholders interacted. In some areas of the ECE development process there was extensive collaboration and partnership.

The agenda-setting stage for the ECE policy was a process that involved many other processes relating to the recognition and acceptance of ECD as a critical aspect of nation building and transformation in the early 80s and 90s. This was the stage when the ECD stakeholders were identifying and providing the future government with guidance and support on the ECE policy to be adopted. This was not a tidy and straightforward process, as the study indicated in Chapters Four and Five. However, in order to delineate some kind of structure and clarity in the ECE policy process, this section will attempt to compartmentalise it and provide an analysis of the nature of stakeholder involvement and participation in it.

This study adheres to the principle finding that White Paper 5 on ECE was informed by many other education policy processes, namely the NEPI, The ANC policy on Education and Training (Yellow Book), The World Bank Study on ECD in South Africa and White Paper I on Education and Training. These policy

documents formed the basis of other more direct ECE policy processes, namely the Interim Policy for ECE, The Pilot study and the ECD Audit. All these policy processes evolved through many different ways and models of consultation across the ECD sector, from national to provincial levels. The next section will deal with the unfolding of the ECE policy process and will focus on stakeholder and government relationships in these processes.

7.4 The interim ECD policy-adoption stage

The Interim ECD Policy, which was managed by the CCECD, marked the adoption stage of the ECE policy process in the country. This structure as mentioned earlier was an inter-sectoral organ. It can therefore be deduced that ECD stakeholders, being then members of the CCECD through representation by the SACECD executive, participated in the development of the ECD Interim Policy. Various individuals recall participating in the development of the ECD Interim Policy at different levels. The main focus of the Interim ECE Policy at this time was the provisioning of programmes and services for the five-year-olds. This was in line with the new government's commitment to provide a ten-year basic education for all from Grade R to Grade 9.

The initial stage of the ECD Interim Policy development process involved provinces developing their draft policies for ECE from a framework provided by the national department through the CCECD. Provinces varied in their commitment and the quality of their ECD policy submissions to the national process. Once provinces submitted their policy draft policies it was expected

that the CCECD would draft the national policy using the provincial inputs. The study found, however, that the sector is not sure whether the provincial submissions were utilised to draft the Interim ECD Policy. What did happen was that a draft Interim ECD emerged from the national education department and provinces were asked to provide feedback. The draft Interim ECE policy document was then interrogated by provinces through the provincial Inter sectoral structures coordinated by the Education ECD managers and also in some provinces through the provincial SACECD. One interviewee recollects:

“My memory around the interim policy was one of getting this thing from Pretoria having to develop a programme with the different districts and so on, because congress was organised in regions ... and then it was us as office bearers going around to each these groups to brief people around what is in this document from Pretoria and what do they say about it. Now, anybody that knows the dynamics around Western Cape, knows that it was so stressful it was stressful because, one, you had to ensure that you had dealt with 3 languages the document was given to you in English but, there were communities that insisted that there was translation into either Xhosa or Afrikaans and so at the end of the day if you ask me what was the feed back that you got. I don't think the people gave feedback on the document itself they just had someone to listen to them and they just gave all the grips which is what we still get in these process when we go to stakeholders, is that they are not able to deal with the policy they deal with implementation issues your job then is to try and translate some of these implementation issue into the policy” (GO4, Government official).

It is clear from this very informative comment that the consultation process for the Interim Policy became a major challenge in some sections of the ECD sector. At this time, 1995, the elections had already taken place and the masses were in 'expectation mode'. Their major interest was in the delivery of programmes and services from government as promised during the pre-election processes. They were not interested in interrogating policies, especially with the

added challenge of translation, but wanted to be told how government would provide them with, for example, training and jobs in the ECD sector and the provision of educare resources, infrastructure and equipment.

The study found that there were different layers of groups in the interim policy consultation process. There were those who were ready to engage with the interim policy and even challenge government, and there were those described above who just wanted to hear about delivery and the implementation of promises. The agenda-setting stage had created expectations such as these during the mass movement process of developing the ECD national and provincial structures. A group of mainly community ECD workers and families emerged whose expectations were focused on implementation. They could not at that stage grasp the fact that government delivered and implemented through policy mechanisms. There was therefore a difference between what this group expected from government and the policy processes on which government was embarking, which resulted in dissatisfaction.

During the consultation process, GO1 had a similar experience to that of GO4, namely that stakeholders were more interested in the realities of their lives than the actual policy issues of the interim policy. She states:

“I think a big thing in our province is that the people were being actually consulted because they had just come out of apartheid where people were not consulted so I think just even the sense that there were structures whereby you could come and talk was also meaningful and I was very deeply moved with the Ulundi committee and I mean all sorts of issues came out of that, more social issues the poverty issues” (GO1, Government official).

Those who were particularly interested in the policy processes were mainly the government officials, researchers, trainers, managers of NGO institutions, child rights advocates, policy makers and others. This group interrogated the interim policy and provided feedback either as groups or individuals. Provincial government ECD officials also provided feedback gathered from their consultation processes.

This process of stakeholder policy consultation appears to have faced several challenges, one of the major ones being the lack of a consultative framework or guide from the national department. Provinces therefore conducted their own consultative processes that resulted in varied approaches and content of feedback. The consultative process ought to have been informed by specific guidelines on how to comment on the policy, but also on organising and managing stakeholder consultative workshops and programmes. Some participants in the study also mentioned that financial constraints affected the consultation process in their province. Organising the interim policy consultation process required funding for which the ECD community, particularly the NGO sector, had not planned. It was therefore difficult to organise extensive and effective consultation processes in the ECD field. This was in many ways a test of the democratic consultative process during the transition period in the country.

There was at this time, 1995, in the ECD sector a belief in democracy and the need to be inclusive in all processes. However, there were no systems in place to establish democratic models of consultation and participation in the policy process. The transition period in the ECD context was therefore characterised

by the absence of government systems and infrastructure to support the new democratic way of disseminating information and gathering it from stakeholders. The government itself was not ready at this time to deal with the specific challenges that the democratic consultation processes created.

In spite of the abovementioned challenges the sector, through the ad hoc CCECD, managed to produce the Interim ECD Policy in 1996. It was then a Green Paper. The production of the Interim ECD Policy was a great achievement for the sector, and an indication that the government was indeed committed to the reconstruction and transformation of the ECD sector. The Interim Policy was designed to be a temporary policy tool to enable government to deal with some of the immediate concerns regarding the state and situation of ECD that had been inherited by the new government. These largely related to early childhood services that were:

“Inadequate, fragmented, uncoordinated, unequal and generally lacking in educational value. It is further characterised by a long history of discriminatory provision with regard to race, geographic location, gender, special needs and funding” (Department of Education, 1996, p7).

The report in many ways reflected the issues that concerned most ECD stakeholders regarding the needs and rights of children, their communities and families and those who worked with them. The interim report focused on an approach of service provisioning for ECD that started with 5 to 6 year olds in grade R, and adopted the principle of continuity up to grade 3 when the children were nine years old. The policy also articulated the need for government to work with stakeholders in the provisioning of ECD services.

In conclusion, the process of producing the Interim ECD Policy was a collaborative effort between government and the ECD stakeholders. Many of the interviewees in this study attested to the fact that they did participate in the policy process at this time. Stakeholder participation is reflected by their presence in the ad hoc CCECD and the consultation process even with its flaws stemming from lack of preparedness.

7.5 The national ECD Pilot Project and the ECD Audit

Interim Policy ushered into the ECD sector some policy-related programmes that introduced a new dimension to the government-stakeholder partnership. Among these policy programmes were the National ECD pilot project and ECD Audit. This project, even though it was an implementation of the initial ECE policy, was in reality a research initiative that would inform the real ECE Policy for the country. It was therefore an information-gathering process for the final development of the ECE policy.

The pilot project was also an introduction to the implementation stage of the ECE policy in the country. This implementation stage was crucial, as it ushered in a different kind of government-stakeholder partnership. The partnership, according to this study, evolved into a formalised mode of interaction guided by a bureaucratic set of rules and regulations on how to conduct business. The stakeholders welcomed this development as it introduced into the sector a degree of professionalism and legitimacy that would be expected if it were to become a recognised component of the government system. The regulated way

of partnering with government conferred a sense of security. The national ECD pilot project was the first programme conducted by government using ECD stakeholders as service providers in the implementation of ECD policy. This could be interpreted as government's recognition of the experience and expertise of the ECD stakeholders.

The process of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the Interim policy process was well conceptualised by government, and stakeholder participation at this stage was through the CCECD. A six-month information campaign about the audit was conducted. This was mainly managed by the national and provincial ECD offices with the support of structures such as the SACECD. This partnership in the advocacy process between government and the then recognised ECD stakeholder structure, SACECD, was indicative of the close partnership between them at that time.

The question of who would participate in the pilot was determined by the following objectives:

- making and testing innovations in the ECD field related to interim accreditation, interim policy and subsidy systems.
- promoting outcomes-based education and assessment in ECD in line with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- building capacity, particularly at provincial departmental level, in conjunction with Research and Training Organisations (RTOs).
- assuring quality community-based efforts in ECD through subsidies and training.
- ensuring children received quality reception-year education.
- researching the most effective means of delivering the reception year. (Department of Education, 2001c, p1).

7.6 Stakeholder expertise in the ECD Pilot

From the above objectives one can deduce the areas of expertise of ECD stakeholders who participated in the pilot. They had experience in developing programmes for five-year-olds that would be used as models to be tested in the pilot for ensuring quality reception-year education. The ECD stakeholders who were involved in training brought to the pilot process their experience in training models. Through the tender process instituted by the Department of Education, Resource Training Organisation's (RTO) were appointed to provide the training for the ECD practitioners. Some RTOs engaged in the tender process as consortiums to strengthen the profile of their ability to undertake the tasks of training and assessing the practitioners selected to be in the ECD pilot practitioners' training programme. Criteria were set for the selection process of the appropriate training RTO's. According to the report on the pilot NGOs had to:

- provide their curriculum and demonstrate its relevance to the level of training and the context of sites;
- show that the organisation was capable and had expertise in the field of ECD;
- demonstrate a commitment to building community based-ECD sites.
- demonstrate an understanding of the NQF and the Interim Accreditation Guidelines for ECD practitioners;
- submit quarterly reports on expenditure to the Pilot Project manager;
- have a well-established financial operational system through at least two years of recorded financial reports (Department of Education, 2001).

These criteria presented a challenge to some of the RTOs, which is why they entered the process in collaboration with other RTOs. This process therefore

encouraged collaboration and partnerships between RTOs, and the sharing of skills and expertise to meet the different requirements set by the tender process and the criteria for selection. This can be classified as crosscutting stakeholder collaboration in the policy-development process. This crosscutting engagement between stakeholders was a new and dynamic growth point for the ECD sector, because the coming together of the RTOs was happening at national level and was a new phenomenon that arose out of the ECE policy development process.

Other stakeholders, some of whom were not necessarily in the ECD sector, also came on board with their research expertise. Khulisa Management Services was contracted by the department to provide the research and monitoring services. It should be noted that this was a great achievement in the ECE policy process, because for the first time a research outfit was being utilised to provide an expert, critical and independent perspective on what they defined as the ECD pilot inputs, outputs and outcomes. One of Khulisa's tasks was to provide, as an outcome, an outline of the policy implications of the pilot for the department's final ECE policy.

There were aspects of the ECD pilot objectives that all the role players from both government and outside government worked on together through the implementation process of testing models and systems of ECD provisioning in South Africa. The whole pilot process was therefore a major ECE policy implementation undertaking, in which role players had to work together in various innovative ways with the goal of producing a policy-information product. Thus the government and stakeholder partnership created a first opportunity of developing effective South African ECD models of programmes and systems.

The basis of the partnership was a combination of stakeholders with rich experience and a sound socio-political ECD policy foundation.

This study found that even though the stakeholders were a very critical factor in the successful implementation of the pilot, the research report did not indicate the development of an instrument or norms and standards for government and stakeholder partnership as one of the outcomes of the pilot. This was a big oversight, which created a gap in this policy-testing process. As a result, government and stakeholder partnership in ECD still remains a challenge. The ECD sector is one social area that has always depended highly on the involvement of stakeholders. It is therefore regrettable that, at a critical time in the ECE policy process, the important issue of setting standards or regulations for government and stakeholder relations in ECD was not dealt with as part of ECE policy.

7.7 The National ECD Audit

One of the indirect outcomes of the ECD pilot was the identification of the need for a national ECD survey, which would be a countrywide stocktaking exercise of the state of ECD provisioning countrywide. This was going to be the first of its kind in the history of the nation. Government partnered with the European Union as funders on the project. This partnership introduced a new dimension in government-stakeholder relations regarding ECD. Most international funders were targeting specific programmes and projects around the country with ECD

NGOs and individuals, but for the first time an international funder would be working directly with government. The Audit was conducted in 2000.

“The aim of the Audit was to provide accurate information on the nature and extent of ECD provisioning, services and resources across the country in order to inform and support ongoing policy and planning initiatives in this crucial and expanding sector” (Department of Education, 2001c, p1).

The audit investigated various aspects of ECD provisioning such as the number of children with access to ECD services, the condition of the services, the programmes offered to children, the number and level of qualifications of the educators, practitioners and caregivers working at sites, the number and conditions of sites in schools or attached to schools, the number of community sites, the numbers and situations of training providers and their training programmes, and the state and number of young children with disabilities. The report produced extensive qualitative and quantitative information about ECD in the country on a scale never seen before. The report states;

“In May/June 2000, the National Department of Education undertook the Nation wide Audit of ECD Provisioning. In a period of seven weeks, 23,482 sites employing 54,503 educators and providing services to 1,030,473 learners were audited. This study is noteworthy not only for its scale and depth but also for generating, for the first time, empirically grounded and rigorous information and insights with respect to the state of ECD provisioning in South Africa. The Audit has yielded previously unavailable and invaluable data concerning a range of aspects of ECD provisioning, including profiles of sites, learners, educators and programmes. An additional outcome of the Audit is an excellent database of ECD sites. For the first time within the sector, rigorous and verified data is now available on which to base the formation of policy and the implementation of provisioning priorities” (Department of Education 2001c, p.21).

The audit information had great potential for use in many possible ECE policy initiatives and products. However, this study is of the opinion that the massive amount of information and data provided by the audit has not been utilised to its maximum in informing ECD policy development and programmatic initiatives. The audit revealed deficiencies in many aspects of the country's ECD provisioning. Government commitment to analyse and address the deficiencies in the programmes or projects did not materialise, and no concrete improvement in ECD provisioning evolved from the audit. The audit was a massive task for government that required the support of stakeholders not only through funding but also through input in various areas of specialised skills.

7.8 Stakeholders and the National ECD Audit

The ECD pilot created models of partnerships between government and the stakeholders. For example, government provided the NGO training-service providers with financial resources to train the ECD practitioners. The training providers used the financial resources to plan training programmes, prepare training materials and pay trainers and for administrative costs. This was one aspect of the pilot's government and stakeholder partnership. Some of the systems utilised during the pilot for government and stakeholder partnerships were also adopted for the audit. The audit required stakeholder input for it to succeed in attaining its aims. The stakeholders were needed at national and provincial levels. There was mass stakeholder consultation both before and during the process of conducting the Audit. The main thrust of the Audit was the enumeration exercise, which needed to be done both physically and through

questionnaires. There were many challenging implications for the stakeholders involved. The stakeholders were selected through a rigorous tender process. National and provincial consortia were selected.

The selected consortia comprised mainly different ECD stakeholders. The Audit was also a capacity-building exercise that exposed most of the stakeholders involved to new skills, especially in relation to organisational abilities, areas of collaboration and setting up systems to deliver on the requirements of the Audit. The Audit required precision and commitment to delivering quality and authentic information on time. Stakeholders could not do this without a coordination system and mechanism. Training for everyone involved in the Audit was therefore conducted with a specific focus on the enumerators who had the major responsibility of gathering the information on the ECD sites, using a specially designed questionnaire. The enumerators were selected mainly from ECD organisations. They included trainers, field workers, and some unemployed people from communities. People with relevant skills were co-opted as enumerators. All the required research instruments and tools, such as the questionnaires, data collecting documents and letters of introduction were supplied by the national department. The Audit exercise, like the pilot, was another achievement in interaction, collaboration and consultation between government and stakeholders. During this period government and the ECD stakeholder community were close to each other.

Events from 1995 to 2000 indicated that ECD was developing in the country and that stakeholders were involved and taking part in the new developments. The developments were ECD policy implementation- and ECD policy development-

oriented. Interviewees in this research attested to the fact that there was much collaboration between themselves and government during this period.

7.9 The development of White Paper 5, 2001

The development process of White Paper 5 has been controversial in the ECD sector. This study found that, from government's perspective, there were clear policy development processes that had preceded White Paper 5. These processes were the groundbreaking processes: The NEPI, World Bank Study, The Yellow Book and White Paper 1. These were followed by the more direct processes, the Interim Policy, the ECD Pilot and the ECD Audit.

The process of producing White Paper 5 was initiated in 2000 by the then Minister of Education, Professor Kadar Asmal, who gave instructions for the development of White Paper 5 and gave a time frame of three months for its production.

The first step in the development of White Paper 5 was a study of the pilot project to see which systems and models had worked in the pilot that could be adopted for the Grade R class and which approaches could be adopted for pre-Grade R, in the new ECD White Paper 5. The interim policy was also crucial to the development of the ECE policy, because it set out what was tested in the pilot in terms of provisioning systems and strategies for Grade R.

The approach taken in producing White Paper 5 was not the same as in the other processes such as the interim policy, the pilot and the audit, where there was extensive participation by different stakeholders. Instead, the department

focused on internal consultation with cabinet and the National Treasury Department. There was much engagement with Treasury on the implementation of White Paper 5. Because the savings from the department were used to fund the paper, new funding allocations from Treasury were not sought. The department had to persuade Treasury that the White Paper 5 did not provide for an additional cohort of ECD educators that would inflate Treasury's personnel costs. The model of funding the ECD practitioners' posts through a preliminary Conditional Grant over three years was adopted with the intention that the system would, after the three years, include Grade R in its normal budget systems. The intention to introduce Grade R provisioning into the education system gradually was articulated at departmental level but was not communicated to the sector.

This study heard from some interviewees that initially a few individuals from the ECD NGO sector were appointed to draft the frame-work, but that after that the process was internal. The department used internal staff plus one international consultant to develop and write the paper. The reason why the process became internal is that the department felt that it was ready and had enough information about the state of ECD in the country and possible systems and approaches. By this time there was in the department an ECD directorate and an ECD director who could take on the responsibility of writing the paper. Another reason why the writing of White Paper 5 had to be an internal process was because the department was beginning to look critically at policies in relation to available financial resources and systemic realities across both the national department and the provinces. The department had to shape ECD provisioning in relation to

what it felt capable of providing and not necessarily to what the ECD wanted or wished to have.

According to the findings of this study the department's decision to develop the paper internally was directly informed by the preceding policy processes; for example the findings of the pilot study implied that the department needed urgently to put in place ECD policy to ensure continuity of the ECD provisioning that had been initiated by the pilot. A hiatus in the ECD delivery that had flowed from the pilot would have jeopardised the new government's political standing in the ECD sector.

Another reason for the in-house approach to the production of White Paper 1 was that the education system was under political pressure to put something concrete in place for Grade R, since there was already a policy in place stating that the ten years of compulsory schooling would start with Grade R. The pressure on the department to produce White Paper 5 was so great, that there was no time for other normal policy paper processes, such as a green paper that could have been used as a consultation document. So the production of the White Paper as an internal project involved various versions that were drafted, revised and discussed several times by a consultant, the ECD directorate, senior officials and the minister himself. White Paper 5 was finalised and launched as the country's first ECE policy in May 2001.

7.10 Stakeholder participation in the development of White Paper 5

The fact that they were not consulted during the development of the White Paper 5. evoked a strong reaction from the ECD stakeholder community. From this study it became evident that White Paper 5 was in many ways a product of the ECD stakeholder community. A close analysis of the ECD policy events, including the World Bank report on ECD in South Africa, the Interim Policy, the Pilot and the Audit indicate that all these intense ECD policy processes culminated in White Paper 5 on ECE. Stakeholder participation in these ECE policy processes, as indicated above and in Chapter Four, are an indication that stakeholders were involved in the development of White Paper 5 on ECE. This policy was informed by their participation in the preceding policy processes. About stakeholder participation in the previous policy processes one interviewee stated:

“It was a very great opportunity for us we played a central role in policy making up until the sort of White Paper came out ... We all had had a chance to input on stuff extensively in those interim processes. So, I think it was a good opportunity for NGOs to bring their views as until then there was minimal state interest in young children and every one was very optimistic” (SP2, Independent ECD specialist).

This study discovered ample evidence to support the notion that ECD stakeholders played an indirect role in the development of White Paper 5. From this study it appears that several ECD stakeholders have difficulty in perceiving that the ECE policy process was a long one that started prior to 2001 with their involvement and participation. Stakeholders do not for instance associate their roles in the Interim Policy with the production of White Paper 5.

This study's understanding of the manner in which White Paper 5 was produced without direct stakeholder involvement is that, at a certain stage in the ECE policy development process, someone amongst the role players in the ECD sector, ought to have taken the lead and brought the process to an end by consolidating all the ECE policy information into an instrument that the department could have used in delivering ECE services. Government's perspective on consultation is that it has its limitations; consultations sometimes tend to prolong the policy process over issues where there is disagreement with government and to which government is unlikely to commit. Government has to adhere to urgent time frames. There comes a time when political mandates have to be met and the responsible departments have to initiate the necessary policy measures to ensure that the mandates regarding a specific sector, in this case the ECD sector, are fulfilled.

The study also discovered that a reason why the ECD sector contends that it did not participate in the ECE policy is that the policy does not reflect or mirror the ECE provisioning the sector expected in the country, and they contend that this is because they did not participate in the writing of White Paper 5. One of the most contested areas of the ECE policy is that the majority of Grade R classes were established in schools instead of community sites. White Paper 5 states:

"The main ECD policy addressed in this White Paper is the establishment of a national system of provision of the Reception Year for children aged five turning six years that combines a large public and smaller independent component. In this regard our medium-term goal (2010) is for all children entering Grade 1 to have participated in an accredited Reception Year Programme" (Department of Education, 2001,p8).

The sector believes that this was a miscalculation on the part of government, and that had it participated in writing White Paper 5, it would have argued for Grade R to be left in community sites where the appropriate teaching and learning approaches for five-year-olds are applied more effectively than in the school setting.

The current school environment is seen by ECD stakeholders (and revealed by the Pilot) as not being ready for reception-year children. There is a tendency to use formal teaching and learning approaches in the grade R class because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of non-formal and play-oriented approaches for the grade R children. As critical and important as this argument is, it is also evident from this study that the stakeholders wanted the majority of Grade R classes to be in the community ECD sites so as to boost and encourage the development of these community centres, not only because of their ECD experience but also because of their many years of commitment to the sector. The communities had held the sector together when ECD was not recognised and there were many difficulties and challenges in providing services; and the new ECD policy was an opportunity to reward these pioneers in the care and education of the young. The sector feels let down by the minimalist approach taken by the White Paper 5, especially with regard to government partnership with community ECD centres.

The other complaint stakeholders made about White Paper 5 was that government did not commit itself to training and employing the Grade R practitioners, most of whom were not qualified educators and therefore, not

recognised. The stakeholders had hoped that the new policy would address these issues and provide the practitioners with employment and steady remuneration. The White Paper does not focus on providing employment for practitioners but rather mentions the provision of training and access to accredited ECD qualifications for practitioners. The stakeholders' perspective is that, had they been consulted on White Paper 5, they would have ensured that the policy addressed this issue more directly. Because of these and other issues the ECD stakeholders have become very apathetic about the contents and process of White Paper 5.

7.11 Power and politics in the ECE policy process — The communication gap

White Paper 5 policy process was not a unique policy phenomenon. Several policy analysts have indicated that changes in education are accompanied and influenced by changes in political processes (Levin, 2001, Jordan & Robertson, 1979). As governments become interventionist and education becomes a political priority the relatively slow processes of negotiation and accommodation disappear. Groups within the system are sometimes seen as part of the problem of the Education policy process. They are thus excluded. Political agendas rather than consultative processes become more important to government (Levin, 2001). The White Paper 5 policy process is, therefore, a good example of how in a democratic government system a policy issue can gain high priority during the agenda-setting and a consultation process can be built around it, but how eventually during the formulation and decision-making

stage, political power and political priorities take over. At this stage government examines certain realities about recommended policy options derived from the consultation process and makes its own concrete policy decisions based on its ability to deliver and act on them.

It emerged clearly from this study that the White Paper 5 process was, at the formulation stage, dominated by internal government consultation that in government's view was an imperative. However, government had a responsibility to inform the ECD stakeholder community what was happening to the ECE policy product they had initiated in the early 1990s. There was a need for the critical process of finalising the ECE Policy, but a clear communication strategy for the sector was required to ensure that those who had participated intensely in the other processes were aware of what was going to happen to the ECE process within the department and why. The ECE policy process was an important ideological undertaking for the Department of Education, which had been presented throughout the struggle days at the dawn of the new democratic dispensation as an important policy issue, and the stakeholders were at the centre of constructing and shaping it as a policy agenda issue. It was difficult for most of the stakeholders interviewed to accept and understand their exclusion from the formulation of White Paper 5.

Government's explanation is that there was no need for stakeholder consultation since it had already taken place, and that political pressure to finalise the policy did not allow time for sector-wide consultation. Government also justified the absence of consultation by indicating that the CCECD was government's consultation structure and the White Paper 5 formulation process

was explained in the CCECD meetings conducted during that time. This meant that the sector should have been informed and consulted by its CCECD representatives about White Paper 5.

The government felt that the CCECD sector representatives were not effective in transmitting information on the ECE policy process to their forums and organisations. This study has concluded that one of the biggest problems in the formulation of White Paper 5 was the lack of a formal communication strategy. Government had what it considered to be legitimate reasons for its stance on consultation and the policy decisions in White Paper 5. However, there was a need for further discussion with the ECD sector on both the new consultation approach and the policy decisions taken for ECE. The ECD sector, as historically the leading force in the organisation of ECD, had the right to know.

The lack of guidelines and policy on communication and interaction in the ECD sector has been one of the causes of misunderstanding and tension around ECD policy issues in the country. The study discovered that information about government's policy development was not freely and easily available. Especially within the tensed socio-political contexts such as the one South Africa had known, any or lack of information or incorrect information led to suspicion and misinterpretation of situations, as happened in regard to White Paper 5. Some policy analysts suggest that there ought to be interactive communication among stakeholder organisations and with government to ensure constant feedback to all role players on policy-related developments in their sector. Constant flow of information also prevents the monopoly of

knowledge by a few individuals (Perkin & Court, 2005) who may use it for undesirable purposes or even for personal gain.

7.12 White Paper 5 and the preceding ECE policy products

The processes preceding White Paper 5 produced several recommendations produced by ECD stakeholder community representatives. Some of these recommendations were considered and interrogated by government in the formulation of White Paper 5. Examples of recommendations from the World Bank Report that produced some of the principle decisions made in White Paper 5 were:

- A reception class for five-year-olds should be created. This is to be phased in over a period of five years. By the end of the fifth year 100% of five-year olds should have access to a Reception Class.
- A Reception Year for five-year-olds should not be implemented in isolation, but linked to reform within Junior Primary.
- Support for the development, expansion, management and funding of early childhood provision is the joint responsibility of the state, provincial and local governments, the private sector, the community and parents.
- An inter-ministerial ECD Committee should be created to promote integration across sectors of services in support of young children and their families.
- Responsibility for the development of policies and guidelines for the implementation of early childhood development programmes should be the responsibility of central government (World Bank Report, 1994: v).

The above recommendations were often repeated in subsequent ECE policy documents, and government used them to formulate the key policy approach for White Paper Five, based on what government could afford. These recommendations also represent some issues in policy delivery that the ECD stakeholder community considered crucial, so that they ought to have

collaborated with government in shaping their final articulation in White Paper 5. Government had, however, to sift through the above and many other recommendations in order to come up with practical suggestions, particularly in relation to financial implications. Research shows that stakeholder participation in the final stages of the policy process is riddled with controversy but an intense scrutiny of the final ECE development process makes one agree with Ball (1994) who says that:

Given constraints, circumstances and practicalities, the translation of the crude abstract simplicities of policy texts into interactive and sustainable practices of some sort involves productive thought, invention and adaptation. Policies do not commonly tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed or particular goods or outcomes are set (p16).

The year 2000 was the time when the department had to examine its range of options for ECE policy, considering all the information produced by the various ECD policy processes and initiatives and then make the final decision and formulate the ECE policy. This left the ECD stakeholders dissatisfied, as they felt that they had been left out of the most critical aspect of the policy process, namely the final development of White Paper 5.

Many policy studies show that policy formulation and decision-making is often the prerogative of the ministerial bureaucracy and top civil servants. Jann and Wegrich (2005) also state that:

“Whereas the final decision on a specific policy remains in the realm of the responsible institutions (mainly cabinet, ministers, parliament), this decision is preceded by a more or less informal process of negotiated policy formation with ministerial departments (and the units within the departments) and organised interest groups as major role players. Numerous policy studies have convincingly argued that the process in the preliminary stages of decision strongly influences the final outcome and very often shape the policy to a larger extent than the processes within the parliamentary arena. Moreover these studies make a strong case against the rationale model of decision-making. Instead of rationale selection among alternatives, policies, decision-making determine by the constellation of (substantial and institutional) interest of the involved actors” (Jann & Wegrich (2005, p14).

This study discovered that the White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development was informed by various stakeholders in the ECD sector and that it was also contextualised in the broader education policy of the country. However, the observation of Jann and Wegrich (2005) that most studies disagree with the rational approach to formulating and deciding on policy was not true of the ECE final policy. The rational model is exactly what was applied to the ECE White Paper. The Department of Education rationalised on many of the ECE policy recommendations that had been agreed upon in the preliminary stages, the agenda-setting period. One of the areas that was rationalised was the recommendation that jobs should be created for ECD practitioners after they had obtained their qualifications. Government’s rationale for offering training only in the White Paper was that this would be in conflict with the policy on educator qualifications. However, the hidden reason was that government was not financially ready to increase its financial commitment to teacher’s salaries by including Grade R practitioners on their pay rolls. This has raised questions

in many ECD quarters about government's total commitment to improving and developing the ECD sector.

7.13 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the relationship between government and the ECD stakeholders. It has verified the explanation given that transitions in society are riddled with complexities. In ECD stakeholder and government relationships, complexities arose that were rooted mainly in the process that led to the finalisation of the ECE policy in South Africa. During transition the government had to meet certain expectations, and changes in other policy domains impacted on the ECE policy process. The ECE policy process was not developed in isolation from other policies in the department. Political mandates were also putting pressure on the government to have a Grade R policy in place. The ECE policy process had by then taken about five years since the Interim ECD policy process had been launched in 1995. Government was required to act and finally produce an ECE policy document; the policy process could not be prolonged any longer. These were complex situations that impacted on government's relationship with ECD stakeholders. The ECD stakeholders felt left out when government decided to develop White Paper 5 internally. The Final Paper also made the stakeholders feel that their participation, involvement and inputs in the preceding policy processes, namely the Interim Policy, the ECD Pilot, and the ECD Audit had not been recognised. It was as though the government was hiding something from them and had produced White Paper 5 as if out of the blue.

The chapter has attempted to show that the White Paper was a product of ECD Stakeholder participation, even though stakeholders and government disagree about certain aspects of its content. It was a product of the preceding policies. Government rationalised the policy into a product it could deliver in terms of its financial and systemic capabilities. However, there was an absence of stakeholder consultation during the finalisation stage of White Paper 5. Government should have initiated a different form of consultation process with the stakeholders. The purpose of such a consultation would have been to make the ECD sector aware of government's intentions in shaping the final ECE policy. Government failed to meet the sector halfway in this regard so that it felt frustrated. Many in the sector view government with suspicion because of this incident in which they felt their role was overlooked and undermined.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY STUDIES

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to track the development trajectory of ECD policy in South Africa's transition, as exemplified in the evolution of White Paper 5 for Early Childhood Education. Specifically, the study sought to uncover the identities of key stakeholders and their interests and influences in relation to ECE policy; and how and with what consequences they have interacted with each other and with government during and since the development of ECE policy. The study found that the development of ECE policy was a long and convoluted process that commenced in the late 1980s and early 1990s as part of the overall pre-democracy struggles and policy development initiatives with an emphasis on the politics of consultation and partnerships.

8.2 A narrative synthesis of the main findings of this research

An analysis of stakeholder involvement in ECE policy processes indicates that participants in the ECE policy development process, though ideologically diverse, comprised groups and individuals who had a common interest in ensuring that ECD was recognized as an important aspect of life in the new democratic South African society. Putting ECD on the policy map of the new South Africa was therefore the main catalyst for the first stakeholder partnership

associations prior to 1994. This group congregated around the issue of “putting children first” in a democratic South Africa.

At the time there were no policy specialists among the ECE stakeholders, partly because there was no ECD policy under apartheid and consequently no provision for people to specialize in such an area. However the stakeholders participating in lobbying and advocating for ECD in the early 1990s knew and understood the needs in the field that ought to be reflected in policy. Even though prior to the 1990s they had worked separately in delivering services in ECD, the struggle for transformation in South Africa gave diverse stakeholders an opportunity to come together and participate as a collective. The struggle against apartheid became a uniting force for ECD stakeholders. The study noted that the realization that children had rights and needs, which had to be reflected in government policy, became a uniting force among various stakeholder groupings.

It is evident from this study that stakeholder partnerships concerned with agenda setting for the ECE development process initially arose in the political arena, mostly at national level. As there was no legitimate government in place, the ECD stakeholders interacted and participated in discussions about future policy at different levels in political movements and other political arenas.

There was interaction through discussion and document sharing between those who had emerged as leaders of the ECD sector and the structures established by the mass democratic movement in preparation for a new education system. The interrogation at this level usually entailed the production of policy documents, with the main concern of the ECD sector representatives being to

ensure that early childhood education was placed on the policy development agenda.

A review of the stakeholders in the study indicates that there were politically well-connected individuals within the ranks of ECD. These leaders interacted with the relevant political leaders in the period 1990 to 1994, and showed that they were in tune with politically correct language in the way they went about articulating policy concerns. A particular approach to political discourse had to be taken during interaction over policy issues. It related to the use of concepts such as the struggle, democracy, freedom, reconstruction and liberation. The ECD policy discourse had to be linked to this terminology directly or indirectly if the stakeholder arguments for policy were to be heard in the forums where there was interactive discussion over future education policies that would override the apartheid system.

In this research it became evident that the apartheid government had not shown any serious commitment to developing ECD policies. The apartheid state vacillated in its interest in ECD, and favoured the white minority. Since the late 1980s, the government had provided support to white children through teacher training and employment and the provision of resources. Coloured and Indian children had minimal benefits through their ethnically constituted departments of education. African children suffered the most discrimination when it came to the provisioning of ECE under apartheid. The Department of Education and Training for urban and homeland Africans had the least resources allocated for ECE, and it was perhaps not surprising that the highest dropout rates in primary school were among African children.

This raised concern among ECD activists of the time, given that most ECD sites were community-driven, with the majority based in African townships where they had been established by small organisations and individuals struggling to address the pressing problems of early child care and education. In other words, ECD workers had identified a problem concerning childcare and had attempted to intervene through community initiatives. In sum, ECE under apartheid was characterised by a lack of policy, fragmentation, inequalities, and poor quality especially among African children. There was an unformulated policy in government that young children were the sole responsibility of their communities and families.

In order to understand the sudden upsurge of policy interest in ECD, it is important to recognize that the socio-political environment of South Africa in the immediate pre-democracy period was strongly influenced by a growing mass democratic movement. It was through such movements that the National Education Consultative Committee (NECC) was created to conduct investigations and establish structures and systems for the development of policy frameworks for the new education system in the post-apartheid government. The NECC had the major task of ensuring that everything required for the building of the new education system was on the agenda, and this led to NECC's establishment of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). This was a huge process that revealed the new democratic government's intention of introducing new systems into government, using consultation processes. Early Childhood Educare featured in NEPI as requiring consideration as a policy option for a democratic government.

NEPI introduced consultative processes into the ECD sector at national level, which brought together various ECD stakeholders in a collaborative effort to discuss, debate and make decisions on what would be the best *educare* policy for children in South Africa. The NEPI process for ECD was dominated by the NGO sector that was at the time the main role players in the field. NEPI provided policy options for ECD, including a year of pre-school programmes for all five-year-olds within or linked to a schooling system and to state-subsidised community-based *educare* services. These recommendations became both crucial and contentious aspects of ECE policy development in subsequent years. The NEPI process provoked great excitement and interest within the ECD community, as activists and workers in this long-neglected sector looked forward to the first-ever ECE policy in the country. In short, the agenda-setting process for the ECE policy in the country was born through NEPI.

As the NEPI processes unfolded, other developments were taking place within the ECD sector, which could be interpreted as part of the agenda-setting stages of the ECE policy process. A new era had emerged in the sector, one characterised throughout by various forms of collaboration including inter-organisational, inter-departmental and inter-sectoral cooperation at national and provincial levels. The mass mobilisation ethos and organisation that had gripped the pre-democracy education policy processes were also embraced by the ECD sector.

The ANC's structures and education policy formulation processes were closely aligned to, informed by, and given direction by the policy development drive under the banner of the NECC. The ANC education policy processes were

those of the dominant organisation within the mass democratic movement and the party most likely to lead the new democratic government that by this time was widely expected. The ANC declared its policy and political intentions in a publication called “Ready to Govern”—which conveyed the spirit and substance of the party’s policy process encapsulated in their policy framework for education and training, popularly known as the ‘Yellow Book’.

As the ‘Yellow Book’ was being developed through a massive consultative process under the auspices of the Centre for Education Policy (CEPD), the ECD sector movement was also in the throes of reconstructing itself. The biggest national ECD organisation, the white-dominated South African Association for Early Childhood Development (SAAECE), had its roots in the apartheid period and was being transformed into a new national ECD organisation that would serve the interests of all South Africans in the entire early childhood sector throughout the country. Structures were created to assist in this process. There was the National Interim Working Committee (NIWC), consisting of members from different national and provincial ECD structures. It was through the NIWC that some form of democracy was exercised and, through negotiation and consultation with different members of SAAECE, the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development (SACECD) finally came into existence.

This process was not without controversy, disagreement and dissatisfaction, as one of the major areas of contention was that the ECD movement was being politicised, and some did not agree with the use of the word *Congress* as it signalled too much affinity with the African National Congress, or ANC. It was

indeed true that ECD leaders emerged at the time who had very strong allegiances to the ANC as a movement, and who exerted a strong influence on the new directions and policies for ECD as South Africa moved towards democracy. As a result of these tensions, the new national organisation lost key members, particularly those associated with the former SAAECE.

Despite allegations that the SACECD was too politically aligned with the ANC, the organisation grew and gained strength after its inception and launch in March 1994. After the first non-racial, democratic elections in 1994, SACECD became government's ECD representative for the sector. Most of government's ECD initiatives and concerns started within the SACECD; it was to become government's preferred ECD stakeholder representative.

With the establishment of the new state, ECD immediately assumed prominence within new government policies such as the first White Paper on Education and Training. It further became apparent that the Department of Education would create an overarching ECD structure to manage ECD-related policies, planning and programmes. This structure was established in 1998, first as a component of the new Schools Directorate responsible for Grade R to 9, and later (2000) as a separate ECD Directorate with a new directorship post attached to this unit.

A Coordinating Committee for Early Childhood Development was also established within government, initially as an *ad hoc* committee and later as a permanent body. The members of the CCECD were drawn mainly from various ECD stakeholders including representatives of the NGO training organisations, universities, trade unions, research bodies, and other key ECD-linked

government organisations and departments. These new structures made it possible for the formal ECE policy development process to commence under the aegis of a democratic government.

The initial policy development process focused on the development of **the Interim ECD Policy**. This policy was created through the CCECD, with use being made of a national consultative process. Several meetings and workshops were held through government initiatives and the SACECD. These meetings and workshops served as awareness forums and gave the sector an opportunity to provide feedback and inputs on the content of the Interim ECE Policy. Several interviewees in this study remember participating actively in this initial ECE policy process.

The process was riddled with problems and challenges, mainly relating to logistical issues of getting participants together, as well as processes to be followed in engaging with the contents of the draft Interim ECE Policy. Very few facilitators of the consultation process had the skills to workshop the policy document Effectively. Instead, according to some interviewees, these workshops ended up being forums at which stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the sector was still in disarray after the elections. Some participants in this process also questioned whether their inputs were or would be included in the final interim policy document.

The second major ECE policy development process was **the ECD Pilot study**. The task of the pilot study was to test the Interim Policy. This process introduced one of the biggest government and ECD stakeholder collaborations ever seen in the country. Government, through the Reconstruction and

Development Programme (RDP), funded the implementation of the ECD Pilot countrywide with the aim of identifying the best ECD models and programmes, especially for Grade R provisioning. The stakeholders, selected through a tender process, provided the training as well as administrative and logistical support to the Pilot, and also made available research expertise to the process.

There was close collaboration between government and the stakeholders both at national and provincial levels. One of the outcomes of the Pilot Study was the identification of the need for a countrywide statistical baseline study on ECD status and provisioning in the country. This could not be done without the participation of stakeholders. The pilot model of working with ECD stakeholders was again utilised. With the support of financial donations from the European Union, the ECD Audit was conducted. It produced useful statistical data on the ECD sites, practitioners and learners across the country. The ECD stakeholders were pivotal to the successful implementation of this study. They worked as organisers of the whole audit implementation process; trained the enumerators and conducted the Audit with technical and financial support from the new government.

The Interim ECD policy, the Pilot and the Audit were the building blocks for the development of ECE policy during the South African transition.

These interconnected policy development processes were conducted with the overall aim of informing or directing the finalisation of ECE policy in South Africa.

At this critical stage, with the foundations laid, the Department of Education finalised the policy development process without stakeholder participation. This was an inside job, which, this researcher was told, had to be conducted within a short period viz., three months. The Department's explanation of the inward turning, in-house development of ECE policy (that is, **White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education**), was that the entire process had been informed by stakeholder participation throughout. The task then, from government's point of view, was to design an ECE policy that was possible to implement from a financial and systems-ready perspective.

It is of course the case that the ECE policy development process was shaped and informed by ECD stakeholders. This was clearly traced, in the substance of this thesis, from the early days of the country's pre-democracy turmoil when the mass-based anti-apartheid movement was preparing for a new government. The role of stakeholders was that of advocates and watchdogs for children's rights as they ensured that young children's interests were addressed in such policy processes as the NEPI and the ANC's Education and Training Framework (the Yellow Book). The stakeholders ensured that research such as the World Bank Study on ECD in South Africa was conducted as a baseline for possible future ECE policy. And the stakeholders were certainly there when the new government followed the various ECE policy processes.

This study has found that the absence of ECD stakeholders in the finalisation of the ECE policy was not an isolated case in policy development processes. Governments often do take positions after certain foundational policy processes have been completed, in order to bring closure to lengthy policy development

processes in the public domain. Policy ideals are now tempered by the hard realities of management and finance capacities, the responsibility of government bureaucracies. Nevertheless, the way in which White Paper 5, government's premier document on early childhood education, was finalised was problematic.

Firstly, the processes did not take into account the benefits of working with stakeholders in the ECD field that the preceding policy processes had demonstrated. Several models of government and ECD stakeholder collaboration were created during the pre-White Paper 5 policy process. The White Paper 5 formulation process, apart from recommending birth-to-four inter-sectoral structures for collaboration on services and delivery, overlooked the opportunity of delving into the stakeholder policy development models for future and continued government and stakeholder collaboration. This final ECE policy process needed to conceptualise a government-stakeholder partnership strategy, especially in relation to ECE policy reviews and implementation processes that followed policy products such as White Paper 5.

It is also evident from the study that government overlooked the importance of involving stakeholders at the critical time of producing White Paper 5. The method used by government to finalise the ECE was in many ways an anticlimax for the sector, which felt left out of a most important phase of policy decision-making as government achieved what the stakeholders had been waiting for years. ECD sector hopes had been raised throughout the earlier policy processes in which they had participated prior to White Paper 5. Those processes had created the impression that the stakeholders would be consulted

throughout government's ECE policy endeavours. Many key stakeholders, including provincial government officials, made the startling revelation in this study that they had first seen White Paper 5 at its launch in May 2001.

There was a perceived need for government to include the ECD stakeholder representatives in the writing processes of White Paper Five and to inform them about the circumstances that made the production of White Paper 5 so urgent. The stakeholders also needed to know the reasons for some of the deviations from the policy goals contained in the Interim Policy, such as establishing the majority of Grade R classes at public schools and a few in community sites.

Government's decision to keep the sector uninformed about the development of White Paper 5 until it had been produced created unnecessary tensions and animosity between the sector and government, some of which still exist today. This study found that even after the sector had expressed its disappointment at the way in which White Paper 5 was produced, there was no move to hold a government and stakeholder exchange to defuse the situation and create the basis for more positive interactions in the future. The stakeholders felt ignored and the entire democratic process that had preceded the production of White Paper 5 was dubbed a farce by some key voices in the ECD sector.

The study also established that problems in the ECD stakeholder organisations, which had already started by the time White Paper 5 was produced, made the sector too weak to challenge government's finalising of White Paper 5 without stakeholder participation. The ECD stakeholder capacity to collaborate with, engage and challenge the government was further compromised by its own internal disunity. The strength of earlier ECD stakeholder participation in the

policy process was in its unity that had been evident in the agenda- setting and adoption stages of the ECE policy process. The subsequent disunity among the ECD stakeholders resulted in an inability to initiate engagements with government on policy processes and issues in a creative way. Some interviewees acknowledged this state of affairs in the sector and blamed the sector itself for the lack of fruitful collaboration with government.

The fragmentation started within the SACECD, the national stakeholder body. This research found that at the crucial time that ECE policy was being finalised, personality clashes and disagreements about the roles and functions of SACECD were creating internal strife in the body.

The end result of these internal clashes within SACECD has been disunity in the sector. This was confirmed by the recent creation, by one of the founding members of SACECD, of a new ECD organisation in the country. The new organisation is the National Early Childhood Development Alliance. The Alliance, as it is called, attracted many members from SACECD and has to a certain extent become the rival ECD organisation. The two organisations now exist parallel to each other, have no links, and do not collaborate at all. Many observers regard this division as a serious dilemma for ECD. Many ECD stakeholders who are members of both organisations express sadness and frustration at the divided state of the sector.

The fragmentation of the ECD sector was exacerbated by the fact that in the period when the sector was mobilising its members, there was too much focus on aligning it with the ANC as a political movement. This resulted in the ECD movement losing many members who were not pro-ANC, but were interested in

a national organisation that would focus seriously on ECD development issues by lobbying for policy and programmes to protect children's rights and needs, regardless of their backgrounds and culture. This characteristic feature of the early struggle days eventually resulted in the loss of expertise of people who could have been members of a national movement such as the SAAECD.

Many ECD advocates, mostly whites, who had been very active and supportive of a national movement, eventually moved out and created their own ECD associations such as the Montessori Association of South Africa, and carried on with the task of providing programmes to children and caregivers. A number of individuals also found their niche areas in research and other ECD-related occupations. This situation contributed greatly to the fragmentation in the ECD sector, as eventually there was no strong umbrella body that could bring about unity and cooperation in the sector.

It is also apparent from this study that gender issues played a role in the fragmentation of the sector. Strong sentiments were expressed by interviewees that some men who were prominent in the sector appeared to have been more interested in power games and in future careers within government, than in the core ECD issues of programming and service provisioning in the country. This was seen to have been a major factor in some of the divisions in the sector. Some women even stated that it was because of these tensions that they were not interested in taking up leadership or influential roles in the ECD sector, whether at national or provincial levels. They preferred to continue concentrating on the programmes in their organisations.

This study has shed light on some of the complex and messy issues that constrained the development of government policy for ECE (White Paper 5), and has teased out issues in a debate that was dormant in the sector for a long time.

The future development and growth of ECD depends on bringing to an end the current fragmentation of the sector. This is so especially because the ECE policy is the first of its kind in South Africa's history, and what has been achieved so far requires review and evaluation. Clearly government needs the ECD stakeholder community to achieve this goal. Even though some in the stakeholder community have decided that government does not require their support, there is evidence to suggest that policy processes in most democratic government systems are best conducted in collaboration with stakeholders (Lewis, 2005; Perkin & Court, 2005; Webler *et al*, 2001). At any time in the history of a country, governments are not completely able to deliver everything that is required in the ECD sector, without the support of stakeholders.

Currently, government is struggling to establish and forge stakeholder links with the ECD sector because of the abovementioned division and fragmentation. A question I encountered in this study was how government could in future select an organisation with which to work, without being seen to be taking sides, given the fragility of the sector. As mentioned above, in the earlier days of the ECE policy process, government worked with an ECD stakeholder body. Government still needs such collaboration to advance ECD programmes and services, but appears to be holding back for fear of being criticised for bias by the sector.

8.3 The theoretical meaning and value of this study.

Through the application of the stage theory, the study has demonstrated that in the process of developing policy in a democratic context there is a place for stakeholder participation and involvement. The study used Levin's (2001) and Jann and Wegrich's (2005) versions of stage theory, identifying agenda setting as the crucible within which policy direction was formed and contested.

It was during this phase that the ECD sector was developing the agenda and ensuring that the democratic movement remained aware of the need for an ECE policy in the country. The NEPI and World Bank Reports and the ANC's Education and Training Policy Framework invoked processes that enabled the sector to place ECD on the policy agenda.

The adoption phase captured those processes involving the Interim Policy, the Pilot and the Audit. What this study found was that even though it would have been possible to include the stakeholders in the decision-making stage of the ECE policy, government opted not to do so. The democratic and participatory ethos built up through earlier phases of policy development was severely tested at that juncture.

The Conditional Grant for Grade R could be defined as the implementation process of White Paper 5. It was implemented in 4500 ECD sites, both in community sites and in school-based Grade R classes. Some stakeholders were involved in training the selected practitioners. This was a controversial process in the ECD sector, as some NGO training organisations felt disappointed that they had not been selected to provide training. This research

has not gone into much detail about this process as it falls outside the main period of inquiry, namely 1990 to 2001.

Several theoretical implications emerge from this study. Firstly, it has shown that stage theory as a tool for analysing stakeholder participation in the policy processes remains valid. It provides space in the policy analysis process through which to examine stakeholder interactions progressively and intensely. The ECD policy process in South Africa was complex, contested and convoluted; stage theory allowed for a sustained focus on a particular stage of the policy process without the intrusion of other complex issues that were affecting the policy development trajectory, such as political instability before the elections in 1994.

Stage theory was also helpful in distilling the heart of the study; it created parameters within which to analyse the policy products without drifting aimlessly into other aspects of the policy process. Each stage category had specific stakeholder issues, and the study focused on those issues. Stage theory also made it possible to measure progression in the degree and nature of stakeholder participation from 1990 to 2001.

This study also observed that stage theory allows for the application of other theoretical frameworks without sight being lost of the main issues being studied. The study was therefore able to apply an interactive approach to discussing the importance of stakeholder interaction in policy processes from agenda setting to the formulation and decision-making stage.

In terms of theoretical implications for further research on stakeholder participation in policy processes, my conclusion is that stage theory provides an appropriate theoretical framework because it offers a broad base for studying other aspects of stakeholder issues. For example it would be possible to make a detailed study of stakeholder interactions during the agenda- setting stage of ECD policy in South Africa.

8.4 Potential areas for further inquiry.

This study suggested several potentially fruitful areas for further investigation. Three such research lines are suggested below, and each one is closely linked to a deeper analysis of stakeholder participation in policy development processes. Such research would contribute to a better understanding of the nature of ECD stakeholder dynamics and their inter-organisational relationships, including the relationship between stakeholders and their governments.

FIRSTLY, the most worthwhile line of inquiry would relate to the underlying reasons for policy choices made during the course of a policy development process. This study has focused more on political influences on the policy process, and the relative weight of stakeholders in determining policy outcomes. What is not clear is what exactly motivated dominant actors within the broader political process governing a transition like the one that unfolded in South Africa during the 1990s.

SECONDLY, there is need for further research into the nature of policy interactions between government and ECD stakeholder bodies since 2001, and

what the dynamics of participation were in the pre-election and the post-election periods. While government's role was clearly more decisive in the post-1994 period, in particular, the question remains how stakeholders exerted influence or withdrew once a mandate to govern was assumed by the democratic state.

THIRDLY, the causes of fragmentation of the ECD stakeholder community require further research, especially in relation to the effect of the fragmentation on their interaction with each other and with government. In other words, what impact did stakeholder fragmentation have on government relations and on ECD policy development in South Africa?

8.5 New Knowledge

The contribution of this study to new knowledge in policy studies generally and policy implementation in particular may be summarised as follows:

The policy development process in a political transition is highly contested but nevertheless follows standard pathways as set out in stage theories of policy;

the desire for a common agenda for policy development and a common vision for policy inclusion may unite divided groups temporarily but cannot sustain them when there are key underlying differences in the political values of the segregated stakeholder groups;

dominant political forces tend to hold decisive sway in determining policy direction in the absence of legitimate government, but such external influences decline in authority as democratic governments and their new bureaucracies 'take over' such functions;

the politics of participation therefore take on different forms outside and inside government, and this remains a subject of ongoing contestation amongst democratic forces;

the failure to hold the centre amongst stakeholder bodies invariably limits their capacity to further influence national policy as democratic governments establish routines and institutionalise policy functions within their own bureaucracies.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- African National Congress. (1994). *A policy framework for education and training*. Johannesburg.
- Anderson, J.E. (2000). *Public policy-making*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston
- Aubrey, C. et al. (2000). *Early childhood education research*. Routledge, London
- Australian Education Union. (2000). *Policy on early childhood education*. Southbank:
- Australian Education Union. (2003). *Early childhood policy and action plan*. Southbank:
- Ball J.S. (1990). *Policy and policy making in education*. Routledge New York.
- Ball J.S (1994). *Education Reform*. Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Barnete, S & Shipp, C. (2002). *Quality Preschool Education Pays off*. National Institute for Early Education Research.
- Becker, G. (1983). A theory of competition among pressure groups for political influence. *Journal of Economics*, Vol.XCVIII, no.3, pp.371-400.
- Centre for Education Policy Development. (2000) *AGM minutes*, Johannesburg.
- Cohen, L. & Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education*. Routledge, New York
- Colebatch. H. L. (1998). *Policy*, Open University Press, Buckingham
- Constadine, P. (1993). *Policy, Power and the State*, Harvester Wheat Sheaf. New York.
- Covaleski, J.F. (1994). The education system and resistance to reform: The limits of policy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, Vol.2, no.4, ISSN 1068-2341.

Curtain, R. (2000). Good public policy making: How Australia fares. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform*. Vol.8, no.1, pp.33-46.

Daniel, C.L. (2004). *Public opinion and interest group influence: An analysis of Policy Variation in The American States*. Paper prepared for presentation at the State Politics and Policy Conference, East Lansing, Michigan, USA.

de Leon. P. (1990). Policy formulation: Where ignorant armies clash by night. *Asian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol.12, no.2, pp.214-231.

de Leon, P. (1999). The stages approach to the policy process. In Sabatier, P.A. *Theories of the policy process*. Westview Press Oxford.

De Leon, P. & Longobardi, R.C (2002). Policy Analysis in the Good Society. In *The Good Society*-Volume 11, Number 1, 2002, pp.37-41. Penn State University Press.

Department of Education (1997). *Act 108 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers

Department of Education. (1994). Draft White Paper on Education and Training, *Government Gazette*, Vol.351, no.15974.

Department of Education. (2001a). *A report on National ECD policies and programmes*. Government Printers, Pretoria

Department of Education. (2001b). *Report on the national ECD pilot project*.

Department of Education. (2001c). *The national audit of ECD provisioning in South Africa*. Government Printers, Pretoria

Department of Education. (2001d). White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education. *Government Gazette*, Vol.436, no.22756.

Department of Education. (1995). *Interim policy on early childhood development*. Government Printers, Pretoria.

Eming, Y.M. (2002). Early childhood development, human development network. World Bank, Washington.

Evans, G. & Manning, N. (2003). *Helping governments keep their promises*. Report, no.IDP-187. World Bank, Washington.

Evans, J.L. (1994). *International early childhood care and development: Where we stand and the challenges we face*. Paper presented to the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development. Manila.

Farazmand, A. (1997). *Modern system of government: Exploring the Role of bureaucrats and politicians*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Farrel, A. (2001). Policy research. In Naughton, G.M. (Ed.) *Doing early childhood research*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Finkelstein, N.D.(1999).Transparency in Education Policy. In Finkelstein, N.D.(Ed.) *Transparency in Public Policy*, St Martins Press Inc. New York.

Fitzsimons, P. (1999).*Human Capital Theory Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education*.

Garlickov, R. (2000). The use of logic in educational research and policy making. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. Vol.8, no.53, ISSN 1068-2341.

Grant W. (1999). *Pressure groups and British Politics contemporary political studies*, Macmillan Press, London.

Greenstein, R. (1995). Education policy discourse and the new South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol.16, no.1.

Groak,C.J. (2002). From Science to Policy Research. Unpublished

Haav, K. (2004). *The Estonian Educational Forum: Main stake-holders and models of decision-making*. Paper presented at NISPA Annual Conference, Vilnius

Haddad, W.D. (1995) *Education policy-planning process: Applied framework*. UNESCO, Paris.

Ham. C. & Hill. M. (1997). *The public process in the modern state*. Prentice Hall, Hempstead.

Hammond, L.D. (2001). Policy and change: Getting beyond bureaucracy. In Hagreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M. & Hopkins, D. (Eds.). *International Handbook of Educational Change*. (pp.642-670). Kluwer Academic Publishers, London

Heinemann, R.A., William, T. & Bluhn, S.A. (1997). *The world of the policy analyst*. Chatham House Publishers, New Jersey.

Hewlett, M. & Ramesh, M. (2003). *Studying public policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems*. Oxford University Press, Oxford

Hodgson, A & Spours, K. (2004). Education and training: politics, policy and the role of research. University of London, Institute of Education, London

Huebner, G. & Dickson, A.T. (1989). Educating Interest groups for political action. *Journal of Extension*. Vol 27, no.4.

Hughes, P. (2001). Paradigms methods and knowledge. In Naughton, G.M. (Ed.). *Doing early childhood research*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

James, E.A. (2000). *Public policy making: An Introduction*, (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Jann, W. & Wegrich, J. (2005). Theories of the policy cycle. In Miller, F.F. & Mara G.S. (Eds.). *Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory Politics and Methods*. Routledge, New York.

Jordan, A.G & Richardson, J.J. (1979). *Governing under pressure*. Martin Roberson Press .Oxford

Joseph, J. & Monobe, R.J. (1997). *Educational Research for quality of life – reality or Utopia*. A paper presented at the 7th Boleswa Symposium, Gaborone.

Kallaway, P. (1984). *Apartheid and education*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Kamerman, S.B. (2002). Early childhood care and education and family policies and programmes in South East Asia. Paris: UNESCO.

King E.M. and Guerra, S.C (2005). Education Reforms in East Asia: Policy Process and Impact of Education,, Human Development Department, World Bank. Paris

Kingdom, J.W. (1995). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*. Harper Collins, New York.

Kroneman, M. (2002). *Early childhood education developments in Tasmania*. Australian Education Union, South Bank.

Lalendle, L. (1997). *Need for an educational research revolution in Southern Africa*. A paper presented at the 7th Boleswa Symposium, Gaborone.

Lane, J.E. (2000). *The public sector: Concepts, models and approaches*. London: Sage Publishers.

Lauman, E. Heinz, J., Nelson, R. & Salisbury, R. Organisations in political action: Representing interests in national policy making. In Marin, B. & Maynz, R. *Policy Networks*. Colorado: Westview Press.

Lee, R. (1988). *Creating problems that can be solved: Policy studies in the USA and South Africa*. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies.

Lester, J.P. & Stewart, J. (2000). *Public policy: An evolutionary approach*. Wadsworth: Thomson Learning,

Levin, B. (2001). Conceptualising the process of education reform from an international perspective. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, Vol.9, no.14.

Levin, B. (2001). Governments and Schooling. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, Vol.5, no.9, ISSN 1206-9620.

Levin, B. (2003). Improving research-policy relationships: Lessons from the case of literacy. Paper prepared for the OIST /UT International Conference, Toronto.

Levin,B &Young,J (199) The origins of Educational Reform A comparative Perspective. *Canadian Journal of Education and Administration Policy*, Issue 12.

Levison, B.A.U & Sutton, M.. (2001). *Policy as practice*. Westport: Ablex Publishing

Lewis, D.C. (2005). Public Opinion and interest group influence: An analysis of policy variations in the American State. Paper prepared for presentation at the State Politics and Policy Conference, East Lansing, Michigan.

Lubeck, S. (1995). Policy issues in the development of child care and early education systems. In Hatch, J.A. *The need for cross national comparisons in qualitative research in early childhood settings*. Prager, New York.

MacKenzie P. (2003). *Relationships between government and NGOs in a multilingual education project in Andra Pradesh*. London: International Network for Development.

McCain, M.N. & Mustard, J.F. (2002). *The early years study-three years later*. New York: The Founders Network.

McFarlane, T. Interest groups and the policy making process: A source of countervailing power in America. In Petracca, M. (Ed.). *The politics of interest*. Colorado: Westview Press.

Mead, A. & Podmore, N. (2002). *Early childhood education policy co-ordination under the auspices of the Department of Education/Ministry of Education*. Paris: UNESCO.

Minaar, B & Forste, L. (1999). *The Impilo Project-Gauteng Department of Education*. Johannesburg: Gauteng Government.

Mooiji, J. & De Vos, V. (2003). *Policy Processes*. Overseas Dev Institute: London

Molathegi, T.S. (2002). *The process of policy development in higher education in post-apartheid South Africa, the case of the higher education act*. Doctoral thesis. Johannesburg: University of The Witwatersrand.

Muchena, T. (2004). NGOs have a critical role to play in development: *Financial Gazzete*. Harare: Global Policy Forum.

Muller, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Perspectives on public choice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mustard, J.F. (2000). *Changing beliefs to change policy: The early years study*. New York:

National Education Policy Investigation. (1992). *Early childhood educare*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Naughton, G.M. (2001). *Doing early childhood research*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Neal, D.F. (1999). *Transparency in public policy*. St. Martins Press Inc. New York.

Perkin, E. & Court, J. (2005). Networks and policy processes in international development: A literature review. Overseas Development Institute, London

Peter. J. (1998). *Analysing public policy*. Pinter, London

Pollard, A. & Court, J. (2005). *How civil society organisations use evidence to influence policy processes: A literature review*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Porter, W.P. & Hicks, I. (2002) Knowledge Utilization and the process of Policy Formation - Toward a framework for Africa. (Sara Project).
http://sara.aed.org/publications/cross_cutting/knowledge_utilization/htm/utilization.htm

Putt, A.D. & Fred, Y. (1984). *Policy research. concrete methods and applications*. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey.

Richardson. J. (1993). *Pressure groups. (A Reader)*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Robert, K.Y. (1988). Case Study Research: *Applied Social Research Series*, Vol. 5.

King.J. Robert.N. (1996). *Transforming Public Policy*. Jossey Bass Publishers San Francisco

Sabatier, P.A. (1999). *Theories of the Policy Process*. Oxford: .Westview Press.

Sabatier, P. & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1993). *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*. Colorado: Westview Press.

Sabatier, P.A. & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1999). The advocacy coalition framework: An assessment. (p117-167). In Sabatier, P.A. *Theories of the policy process*. Oxford: Westview Press.

Scharp, F.W. (1994). *Games real actors play*. Boulder CO: Westview Press.

Schreiner G. (1994). *Forums and public policy making in a post-apartheid South Africa*. Durban: Creda Press.

Schultz, T., Lopez, E. & Hochberg, M. (1996). *Early childhood reform in seven communities*. Washington DC: US Department of Education.

Seddon, T., Clemans, A. & Billet, S. (2005). Social partnerships: Practices, paradoxes and prospects of local learning networks. *The Australian Educational Research*, Vol.32, no.1.

Sehoole, T.M. (2001). Key moments in the Policy Formulation Process between 1994 and 2001, Commissioned paper for a book, *Transformation in Higher Education*.

Sehoole, T.M. (2002). *The process of policy development in higher education in post-apartheid South Africa. The case of the Higher Education Act*. Doctoral thesis. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

Sen, S. (2001). *Involving stake-holders in aquaculture policy making, planning and management*. Paper presented at a conference on Aquaculture in the Third Millennium. Bangkok.

Sharan, B.M. (2003). Case study research in education: Dealing with validity in educational policy research, doctoral readings. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Shepard, L.A. (1996). *Trends in early childhood education policies and practices. office of education research and improvement*. Washington: US Department of Education.

Simpson, G., Hamber, B. & Scott, N. (2001). *Future challenges to policy-making in countries in transition*. Workshop on Comparative Experiences of Policy Making and Implementation in Countries in Transition. Londonderry

Sliwka, A. & Istance, D. (2006). Parental and Stakeholder voice in schools and systems. *European Journal of Education*, Vol.41, no.1.

Smith, M. (1993). *Pressure power and policy*. Hemel Hempsted: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Song, M. & Miskel, C. (2002). Interest groups in national reading policy: perceived influence and belief on teaching reading. Michigan: Centre for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, University of Michigan.

South Africa Congress for ECD Launch Report. (1994). *Launch congress of the South African congress for early childhood development*. SACECD Johannesburg.

Steiner Kvale, S. (1989). *Issues of validity in qualitative research*. Lund: Stuentlitteratur.

Stewart, J. (2001). *Networks and the new public policy*. Canberra Bulletin Administration, no 102. Canberra.

Stone, D. (2002). *Policy paradox: The art of political decision-making*.

Street, S. (2001). When politics become pedagogy: Oppositional discourse as policy in Mexican teachers struggles for union democracy. In Sutton, M. & Levison, B.A.U. *Policy as practice*. Westport: Ablex Publishing.

.

Sutton, R. (1999). *The policy process: An overview*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Sutter, R. (2004) Democratic Transition and Consolidation in South Africa: The Advice of Experts. *Current Sociology* Vol.52 (5) :755-773. Sage Publications, London

Swartland, & Hartwell, (1994). Education Policy in Botswana in *The Journal on Education Policy Formation in Africa*,

Tellis, W. (1997). Introduction to case study. *The Qualitative Report*, Vol.3, no.2,

The National Academic. (2001). *Early childhood development and learning: New knowledge for policy*. New York: The National Academic Press.

Thomas, C.S. (1993). *First world interest groups, a comparative perspective* Westport: Greenwood Press.

Thomas, R.D. (2004). *Understanding public policy*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Truman, D.B. (1993). *The government process, political interests and public opinion*. Berkeley: Berkeley Institute of Government Studies University of California.

Tsushinak, Y., Pekkanen, R. & Ohtomo, T. (2005). *Civil society groups and policy-making in contemporary Japan*. Paper presented for Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago.

UNESCO. (1998). *Early childhood development: Laying the foundation*. Paris: Unesco.

Van de Gaag, J. (1999). *From child development to human development*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

Van der Gaag, G. Tan, J.P. (1997). The benefits of early childhood development programmes: An economic analysis. Human Development Network. Washington.

Van der Brugge, J. & De Haan, J. (2004). Complexity in Transition Theory, *Conference Paper Lof der Verwarring, Rotterdam May 19*

Van Niekerk, P. Van der Walt, I. & Jonker, T. (2001). *Theories of Policy Analysis*. Open University Press. London.

Wallat, C. & Piazza C. 1997 Early childhood evaluation and policy analysis. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, Vol.5, no.15. ISSN 1068-2341.

Walsh, D.J. Tobin, J.J. & Graue, E.M. (1993). The interpretive voice: Qualitative research in early childhood education: In Spodek, B. (Ed.). *Handbook of research on the education of young children*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Webler, T. Tuler. S. Krueger, R. (2001). What is a good public participation process? Five perspectives from the public. *Environmental Management*, Vol.27, no.3, pp435-450.

Whitty, G. (2000). *Education research and education policy making: Is conflict inevitable*. London: Institute of Education.

Winter, G. (2000). Comparative discussion of the notion of validity in qualitative and quantitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, Vol.4, pp.3&4.

Woodhead, M. (1997). Towards a global paradigm for research into early childhood education. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*,

World Bank. (1994). Report of the South Africa Study on Early Childhood Development: CEPD. Johannesburg.

Young, J. (1999). The origins of education reform: A comparative perspective. *Canadian Journal of Education Administration*.

LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Ms Marie Louise Samuels, Director for ECD, Department of Education National, Pretoria

Ms Jill Sachs, ECD Manger Department of Education, KwaZulu Natal

Ms Genevieve Koopman, ECD official, Department of Education, Gauteng

Ms Francesca Johnson, retired ECD official, Department of Education, Western Cape

Ms Lucy Thornton, ECD Specialist Wozobona ECD NGO, Johannesburg

Mr Eric Atmore, Director, Centre for Early Childhood Development Cape Town (CECD)

Ms. Linda Biersteker, Research Specialist in ECD, Cape Town

Mr. Leonard Saul, Executive Director South Africa Congress for Early Childhood Development, (SACECD), Pretoria

Ms. Carol Block, Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU), Cape Town

Ms. Jane Evans, Director Ntataise ECD NGO, Vijoenskroon

Ms. Patsy Pillay Director New Beginnings ECD NGO, Durban

Ms Pam Pickens Director Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE), Durban

Ms. Lydia Motsoeng, Trainer, Ntataise

Ms. Nonhlanhla Maduna, Trainer, (TREE)

Ms. Duduzile Majola, Trainer, (TREE)

Ms. Ntombi Msimanga, Trainer, (TREE)

Ms. Thobekile Zulu, Trainer, (TREE)

]

Ms. Princess Zulu, Trainer, (TREE)

Ms. Snoeks Desmond, ECD Specialist Durban

Mr. Roy Padayachee, Deputy Minister of Communications.

ADDENDUM

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE A - D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE A	
The purpose of this schedule was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of the ECE policy process from independent ECD specialists and education policy experts.	
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
The Department of Education embarked on an ECE policy process as early as 1992 in your view why was this necessary?	
What process was put in place for the development of the policy?	
Who were the role players?	
What in your opinion were their interests?	
Did the policy process meet the role player's expectations?	
Who were the critical role players?	
Are there any role players who were excluded that should have been included? Why?	
Did you play any role in the ECE policy	

process?	
What were your interests?	
What challenges did you encounter?	
How were the challenges resolved?	
In your opinion does White Paper 5 represent the ECD sectors interests?	

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE B	
The purpose of this schedule is to gain an understanding on the perspectives of the Non-government Organisations on the ECE policy process in South Africa?	
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
The Department of Education embarked on an ECE policy process as early as 1992 in your view why was this necessary?	
How do you feel about the role that the NGO's played in this process?	
Who in your opinion was the biggest NGO voice in the process?	
Did the NGO's participate as a collective?	
Is there anything you would have changed about the NGO participation?	
How did you interact with government in this process?	
What were your expectations of the policy process?	
What interests do you think the NGO's brought to the process?	
What do you feel you contributed to the final product?	

How did you interact at national level?	
Do you feel that your interests where met in this policy process?	
Where there any tensions or conflicts that occurred during the policy development process?	
How were conflicts and disagreements resolved?	
Who in your opinion were the most critical and relevant role players during this policy process?	
Do you feel satisfied with the process that took place resulting in White Paper Five?	
From an NGO perspective what do you think are the four most important lesson learnt from the ECE policy process which should inform future processes?	

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE C

The purpose of this schedule is to gain an understanding of the opinions of the provincial early Childhood Development management on the ECE policy process.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
The Department of Education embarked on an ECE policy process as early as 1992 in your view why was this necessary?	
In what way did your department participate?	
What Was your specific role?	
Who were the other participants in the ECE policy process in your province?	
What interests do you feel each of the other role players came with to the ECE policy process?	
How did you all interact?	

What were your expectations of the policy process?	
What did each of these participants contribute to the policy process?	
What did you contribute to the final product?	
How did you interact at national level?	
Do you feel that your interests were met in this policy process?	
Where there any tensions or conflicts that occurred during the policy development process?	
How were conflicts and disagreements resolved?	
Who in your opinion were the most critical and relevant role players during this policy process?	
Do you feel satisfied with the process that took place resulting in White Paper Five for ECE?	
From your perspective what do you think are the four most important lesson learnt from the ECE policy process which should inform future processes	
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE D	
FOR THE DIRECTOR OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
The purpose of this schedule is to gain an understanding of the national Early Childhood Development Directorates perspectives and role In the ECE policy process.	
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
The Department of Education embarked on an ECE policy process as early as 1992. In your view why was this necessary?	
What steps were involved in this process and which ones	

were the most important in your opinion?	
What was the role of the directorate?	
What was your specific role?	
Who were the other participants in the ECE policy process?	
What interests do you feel each of the other role players came with to the ECE policy process?	
How did they interact?	
What did each of these participants contribute to the policy process?	
What did they contribute to the final product?	
Where there any tensions or conflicts that occurred during the policy development process?	
How were conflicts and disagreements resolved?	
Who in your opinion were the most critical and relevant role players during this policy process?	
Do you think that the ECE policy satisfied the entire role [player's expectations?	
Do you feel satisfied with the process that took place resulting in White Paper Five?	
From your perspective what do you think are the two most important lesson learnt from the ECE policy process which should inform future processes	