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Research for Policy's Sake:
The Enlightenment Function
of Social Research

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Data from three recent studies suggest that the major use of social research is not the application of specific data to specific decisions. Rather, government decision makers tend to use research indirectly, as a source of ideas, information, and orientations to the world. Although the process is not easily discernible, over time it may have profound effects on policy. Even research that challenges current values and political feasibilities is judged useful by decision makers.

Policymaking is a big pot which many stir," and policy analysts like the heady sense of power that comes from being among the stirrers.[1] Academic policy researchers, at a somewhat further remove from the councils of power, also enjoy the sense that what they do influences the making of policy. They do not want to be mere technicians, docilely serving the powers that be within analytic frameworks set by government officials. They want to choose their own problems and devise their own assumptions and methodological approaches. At the same time, they want their work to be so cogent and intellectually compelling that it cannot fail to affect the outcome of policy. Herein lies much of the lure of the policy research enterprise. But here too arise many of its frustrations.

The federal government provides considerable research support.

1. Arnold J. Meltsner, "Bureaucratic Policy Analysts," *Policy Analysis* 1 (1975): 116.

under both grant and contract, to researchers on social science faculties and in research institutes. The National Science Foundation's estimate for 1976 shows federal expenditures of $355 million for *applied* research in the social sciences and psychology.[2] Yet there is a pervasive sense that government officials do not pay much attention to the research their money is buying. The consensus seems to be that most research studies bounce off the policy process without making much of a dent on the course of events. Support for this notion surfaces in many quarters—among social scientists, executive branch officials, and members of Congress.[3]

The reasons for the limited attention paid to social research are not hard to find: weaknesses in the research itself, conflicting demands on policy, and disjunctions between the knowledge needs of policymakers and the research outputs of social scientists.[4] On the research side, much of what goes by the name of social science knowledge is flawed, inconclusive, ambiguous, and contradicted by

2. National Science Foundation, *Federal Funds for Research, Development, and Other Specific Activities,* Fiscal Years 1974, 1975, and 1976, vol. 24 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 60. The 1976 estimate for total federal expenditures on social science and psychological research was $493 million. The Study Project on Social Research and Development of the National Academy of Sciences made its own survey and came to significantly higher estimates of research spending. Its report is planned for release in 1977.

3. See, for example, U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, Research and Technical Programs Subcommittee, *The Use of Social Research in Federal Domestic Programs,* 4 vols., 90th Cong., 1st sess., 1967; National Science Foundation, *Knowledge into Action: Improving the Nation's Use of the Social Sciences* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968); Leonard Goodwin, *Can Social Science Help Resolve National Problems?* (New York: Free Press, 1975); Seymour Deitchman, *The Best-Laid Schemes: A Tale of Social Research and Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976); I. L. Horowitz, ed., *The Use and Abuse of Social Science* (New Brunswick: Transactionbooks, 1971); Mirra Komarovsky, ed., *Sociology and Public Policy: The Case of Presidential Commissions* (New York: Elsevier, 1975); N. J. Demerath III, Otto Larsen, and K. F. Schuessler, eds., *Social Policy and Sociology* (New York: Academic Press, 1975); Harold Orlans, *Contracting for Knowledge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973). A "classic" case study is Bayla F. White, "The Atlanta Project: How One Large School System Responded to Performance Information," *Policy Analysis* 1 (1975): 659–92.
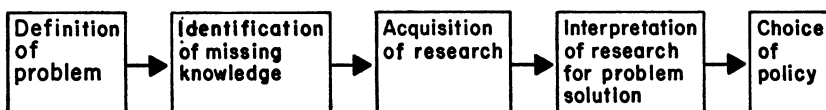
4. An expanded discussion of these issues appears in Carol H. Weiss, "Improving the Linkage between Social Research and Public Policy," in *Knowledge and Policy: The Uncertain Connection,* ed. Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., a forthcoming book sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences.

evidence from other studies. Many research conclusions are limited in scope or out of date. Ignoring such data may be a responsible stance for a decision maker to take. On the policy side, there are a host of competing claims for attention. The policymaking process is a political process, with the basic aim of reconciling interests in order to negotiate a consensus, not of implementing logic and truth. The value issues in policymaking cannot be settled by referring to research findings. As for the lack of fit between what decision makers want to know and what researchers can tell them—this is a chronic lament. The problematic factors are concreteness, specificity, representativeness, timeliness, and prediction of future conditions.

But along with these well-catalogued problems in the application of social science research, it begins to look as if another factor is at work. Perhaps one of the reasons so little research utilization comes to notice is that people tend to look for it in the wrong places.

WHAT IS RESEARCH UTILIZATION?

The whole notion of what research utilization means is complex and fuzzy. Attempted definitions encompass a wide range of activities, ranging from direct and immediate implementation of the recommendations emanating from a study to a generalized sensitivity to concepts highlighted by social science research. The prevailing concept of research utilization stresses application of specific research conclusions to specific decisional choices. A problem exists; information or understanding is needed to generate a solution to the problem or to select among alternative solutions; research provides the missing knowledge; the decision makers then reach a solution. The model has often been diagrammed:

Definition of problem	→	Identification of missing knowledge	→	Acquisition of research	→	Interpretation of research for problem solution	→	Choice of policy

This typical series of linkages, from definition of problem to choice of policy traces the "use" of research: research helps to *solve problems*.

The major use of social research in public policymaking may not be problem solving, however. Research use appears to be a much

more diffuse and circuitous process. Evidence suggests that govern-
ment officials use research less to arrive at solutions than to orient
themselves to problems. They use research to help them think about
issues and define the problematics of a situation, to gain new ideas
and new perspectives. They use research to help *formulate* problems
and to set the agenda for future policy actions. And much of this
use is not deliberate, direct, and targeted, but a result of long-term
percolation of social science concepts, theories, and findings into
the climate of informed opinion.

   Because the process is so indirect, it is not easily discernible.
Outsiders cannot often trace the effect of a particular finding or a
specific study on a public decision. Even the social scientists who
do policy research are often unaware of the consequences of their
studies for policy. In fact, if they come into the game expecting
that research will have obvious and immediate impact and nothing
happens—nothing obvious to the naked eye—they may prematurely
give up on the whole business. They have even been known to go
home and write scathing diatribes for professional journals criticiz-
ing bureaucrats and politicians for their neglect of important re-
search evidence.[5]

   To confound the complications, the policymaker himself is often
unaware of the source of his ideas. He "keeps up with the literature,"
or is briefed by aides, or reads state-of-the-art reviews of research
in intellectual magazines or social science stories in the *New York
Times, Washington Post,* or *Wall Street Journal.* Bits of information
seep into his mind, uncatalogued, without citation. He finds it very
difficult to retrieve the reference to any single bit of knowledge. If
we ask him about the effect of social research on his decisions, he
usually will not be able to give an accurate account—or even be
aware that he derived his ideas fom the social sciences.

   This kind of diffuse, undirected seepage of social research into
the policy sphere can gradually change the whole focus of debate

   5. A reasoned critique based on personal experience is Thomas F. Petti-
grew, "Sociological Consulting in Race Relations," *American Sociologist* 6
(June 1971): 44–47. See also Otto N. Larsen, "The Commission on Obscenity
and Pornography: Form, Function, and Failure," in *Sociology and Public
Policy,* ed. Komarovsky, pp. 9–41; J. R. Gusfield, "The (F)Utility of Knowl-
edege?: The Relation of Social Science to Public Policy toward Drugs," *The
Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 417 (1975): 1–15;
Margaret E. Boekmann, "Policy Impacts of the New Jersey Income Mainten-
ance Experiment," *Policy Sciences* 7 (1976): 53–76.

over policy issues. The process is difficult to document, but it appears likely that social research has helped shift the agenda and change the formulation of issues in a wide array of fields: compensatory education, punishment for alcohol and drug offenses, large-scale public housing, institutionalization of the mentally retarded, welfare reform, prepaid health care, child abuse, job training, court reform, and legislative reapportionment.

Basic shifts in the climate of opinion are certainly not due to social research alone. In fact, incipient shifts in public opinion usually trigger the funding of research. Nevertheless, coupled with other changes, social research can play a role in clarifying, accelerating, and legitimating changes in opinion. In fact, this process—bringing new perspectives to attention and formulating issues for resolution—may be the most important contribution that social research makes to government policy.

A RECONCEPTUALIZATION EMERGES: THREE QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

It has been difficult to study the consequences of research in other than problem-solving terms. Social scientists cannot find systematic techniques or measures to track such inchoate processes. Three recent quantitative studies of government use of social science research that approached the subject in traditional terms and looked for specific uses of specific studies nevertheless do suggest that some other process is at work. All three seem to suggest that, to a large (but unknown) degree, research actually affects policy less through problem solving or social engineering than through what Morris Janowitz has called "enlightenment."[6] The studies by Nathan Caplan at Michigan and Karin Knorr in Vienna, as well as our research at Columbia, suggest that the major effect of research on policy may be the gradual sedimentation of insights, theories, concepts, and ways of looking at the world.

The University of Michigan Study

Caplan and a group of researchers at the University of Michigan conducted an interview study with 204 high-level federal decision makers across executive-branch departments. The interview concentrated on the respondents' use of specific research studies on their

6. Morris Janowitz, "Sociological Models and Social Policy," in *Political Conflict: Essays in Political Sociology* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), pp. 243–59.

jobs. Interviewers from the Institute for Social Research probed relentlessly to find out which research was used, under what circumstances, and in which ways. Caplan's earliest report on the study appeared in the Spring 1974 *ISR Newsletter*. It was headlined "Science Is Seldom Put to Good Use by U.S. Officials." The story was not as negative as the headline, but it quoted Caplan as saying that "officials often lack the skills and proper orientation to put scientific knowledge to good use." It also cited Caplan's division of government officials into types of users and his conclusion that five out of ten federal officials fall into the "low usage" types.[7]

By 1975, however, Caplan and his staff had listened to the tapes of the interviews and reconceptualized what constituted a "use of knowledge." The reconceptualization, and subsequent recoding, included within "social science knowledge" not only specific data or research conclusions, but also concepts, perspectives, and generalizations which they had found to be the forms in which social science often penetrates the policymaking system. Given this broader orientation, the report on the study indicated that only 9 percent of respondents could not name a single use of social science knowledge on the job. The rest of the respondents gave 575 instances of use, or an average of about 3 per person.[8] Moreover, "soft" conceptual knowledge was most likely to be reported as affecting policy. When federal officials were asked for instances of the effect of the social sciences on major programs or policies, their illustrations more often involved social science concepts and sensitivities than "hard," quantitative, research-specific knowledge.[9]

Government officials gave high endorsement to social research: 85 percent agreed that "the social sciences can contribute a great deal to the formation of intelligent policy," and 87 percent that "government should make the fullest possible use of social science." This may sound like extreme, perhaps barely credible, endorsement, but our own study found very similar opinions among 155 mental

7. Nathan Caplan, "Science Is Seldom Put to Good Use by U. S. Officials," *ISR Newsletter* 2 (Spring 1974): 2.

8. Nathan Caplan, Andrea Morrison, and R. J. Stambaugh, *The Use of Social Science Knowledge in Policy Decisions at the National Level* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, 1975).

9. Nathan Caplan, "A Minimal Set of Conditions Necessary for the Utilization of Social Science Knowledge in Policy Formulation at the National Level," in *Using Social Research in Public Policy-Making,* ed. Carol H. Weiss (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington-Heath, 1977), pp. 183–97.

health decision makers in federal, state, and local positions. Of our respondents, 83 percent agreed that "good research *should* be used whether or not its conclusions are politically acceptable to high policymakers," and 85 percent that "an agency should implement the conclusions of good, relevant research even when this would reduce its budget or influence." These respondents may have been exaggerating, but they certainly seem to have learned the social science norms. Note that they did *not* say government decision makers generally *use* social science research—75 percent of our respondents agreed that "many decision makers tend to ignore social science information that is not consistent with their own beliefs," and 67 percent that "government agencies tend to ignore research findings that are not in line with agency assumptions and philosophies."[10]—but they know the norms and give allegiance to them.

The Viennese Study

Knorr interviewed seventy government officials of the federal, provincial, and city governments in Vienna. She also sent questionnaires to over 600 Austrian social researchers. Whereas Caplan originally expected direct and instrumental application of research findings to decision making, Knorr had expected research to be used symbolically. She believed that government officials would employ research to legitimate bureaucratic activities decided upon before the research was undertaken—activities necessary to maintain the postindustrial welfare state—and to manipulate the consent of the citizens.

However, Knorr too came to recognize that research sometimes permeates decision-making processes in subtle ways and brings about changes in bureaucratic thinking. Much of her data has not yet been translated from the German, but one report available in English is supportive of this interpretation. Of fifty-eight government officials who had sponsored social research, 65 percent said it had changed their opinions to some extent, and 43 percent said the change of opinion was moderate or strong. The use of research by these respondents was oriented not to the making of decisions but to the "preparation" of decisions. Knorr concludes that

10. Laurie J. Bauman and Carol H. Weiss, "The Acceptance of Social Research by Decision-Makers: A Comparison of Decision-Makers' and Researchers' Views" (Paper presented at the Thirty-first Annual Meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Asheville, N.C., 14 May 1976).

utilization does *not* follow the pattern of technical implementation of results established in the natural or technological sciences. Rather, the main area of utilization consists of an *indirect* (bound to undergo further decision processes), *diffuse* (taken into account to various degrees and at different positions), *difficult to localize* utilization responsibility (distributed over various decision levels) and possibly *delayed discursive processing* of the results in the stage of program development and decision preparation. The low visibility of this kind of utilization and the far too high expectations contribute to the popularity of the thesis that little utilization takes place. Its plausibility should be re-examined in the light of the present data and arguments.[11]

Thus both Caplan and Knorr—while looking for different types of research utilization—came upon the enlightenment function of social science research. We also have been impressed with it.

The Columbia University Study

Our study began with yet another focus. We were interested in which characteristics of research studies were associated with usefulness. Our strategy was to interview decision makers on the basis of their reading of actual research reports. We wrote abstracts of fifty recently completed studies funded through grant and contract by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the National Institute of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA). In the course of an interview we asked the decision maker to read two abstracts and answer a number of questions about the potential usefulness of each study for his own work. We also asked who the most appropriate user of each study was and how useful the study would be for persons in that position. Finally, we asked the decision maker to describe the characteristics of each study on twenty-six dimensions.

The sample was composed of 255 respondents, approximately 50 in each of five categories: 51 officials with policymaking responsibilities in ADAMHA (Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration), NIMH, NIDA, and NIAAA; 52 top-level officials in ten state departments of mental health; 52 directors and chiefs-of-service in care-giving mental health facilities; 50 social scientists who conducted research under ADAMHA funding; and

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11. Karin Knorr, "Policy-Makers' Use of Social Science Knowledge: Symbolic or Instrumental?" in *Using Social Research,* ed. Weiss, p. 180.

50 members of ADAMHA research review committees. Respondents in the first three categories were the decision makers; this paper considers only their responses.

We used a number of indicators to measure the usefulness of the studies. Two measures that indicated not actual use but the respondents' judgments of the potential for use were derived from the following questions: "Assuming that your office had to consider the issues discussed in the study, how likely is it that you would take the study results into account?"; and "Focusing for a moment just on the study's findings, and not considering external constraints, to what extent does the study contain *ideas or information* that can contribute to the work of your agency?" Answers to the first question give us a measure of *likelihood of use,* to the second, a measure of *conceptual usefulness.*

As noted, we also asked each respondent to rate the degree to which a particular study evidenced each of twenty-six characteristics. Some characteristics were intrinsic to the research, such as technical quality, statistical sophistication, and focus on a narrow set of outcome variables. Other characteristics referred to the relationship of the research to the policy world, such as challenge to existing assumptions and institutional arrangements, direct implications for a course of action, and political acceptability of such implications.

The ratings on the research characteristics and the measures of the usability of the research give us a body of data for analysis. Without having asked the respondents for their *opinions* about what makes some research studies more useful than others, we can derive, through statistical analysis, descriptions of research studies that are judged more or less useful.

Our first step was a factor analysis of the research characteristics. The items cling together in very similar clusters, whether we look at what decision makers say, what researchers and review committee members say, or what the total sample says. From the factor analysis we located four factors which the respondents used to describe research studies: Research Quality, Conformity to User Expectations, Action Orientation ,and Challenge to the Status Quo. From other data in the interview, we know these factors remain relatively stable, even when respondents are talking in general terms about the kinds of research they would *like* to have for their work. Thus, the factors

are not limited to the specific studies that formed the basis of the ratings. They represent an interesting summary of the dimensions on which potential users describe and evaluate research.

Research Quality—Ten research characteristics have high loadings on this factor. They include such items as "technical quality of the research is high," "objective, unbiased," and "findings are internally consistent and unambiguous."[12]

Conformity to User Expectations—Research characteristics in this factor include such items as "supports a position already held by the user," "consistent with a body of previous knowledge," "compatible with the ideas and values of the potential user," and "agrees with respondent's sense of the situation." This factor has a strong sense of "Sure, that's how we expected the research to come out." It has some political overtones, but is not as overtly political a factor as we had expected to find. For example, the item "implications of the findings are politically acceptable" does not load on the Conformity factor. The user's ideas are supported here, not necessarily those of the political system. And the respondents make a distinction between the expectations of the user and the political receptivity of the system.

Each of these factors, Research Quality and Conformity to User Expectations, provides a basis for trust in the research. In the first case, trust is based on the *process* of adherence to the canons of science. In the second case, trust is based on the *outcomes* of the research and their congruence with the user's experience, judgment, and prior knowledge.

Action Orientation—Characteristics within this factor involve a direct connection between the research and some decision or action. They include such items as "contains explicit recommendations," "analyzes the effects of factors that decision makers can do something about," "has direct implications for a course of action," and "findings can be applied within existing agencies and programs." Research that rates high on this factor has practical implications and is feasible to implement.

12. Most of the items in the Research Quality factor are within the researcher's control (e.g., statistical sophistication, objectivity), but some are the luck-of-the-draw, particularly the internal consistency of the findings. However elegant the design and responsible the analysis, some studies come out with "two-handed" results—"on the one hand ... but then on the other."

Challenge to the Status Quo—Items here include "challenges existing assumptions and institutional arrangements," "implies the need for major change in philosophy, organization, or services," and "raises new issues or offers new perspectives." This factor looks toward change. Like the Action Orientation factor, it is directed toward doing something about "things out there," but, unlike Action Orientation, the changes it advocates tend to be major and fundamental. The item about political acceptability of findings has a negative loading on this factor. Research that is rated high on Challenge would, if implemented, disturb political and institutional arrangements.

Challenge and Conformity are not opposite ends of a continuum. The data show that the two factors are essentially uncorrelated. This suggests that respondents are as likely to find challenging research confirmatory of their own knowledge and compatible with their own expectations as they are to find it unsettling. The research may represent a challenge to the assumptions and arrangements of current policy and practice, but it is not necessarily out of line with the respondents' own beliefs. These respondents have effectively separated their beliefs from those of the political and administrative system. Their responses suggest that to some extent their beliefs are out ahead of the system.

How do the factors relate to judgments about the usability of a research study? To answer this question, we used multiple regression analysis, regressing the usability ratings on the factors. Looking at the decision makers' responses alone, we find first of all that the characteristics of research are important determinants of usability. The factors account for 23 to 42 percent of the total variance in usability, depending on which of the usability measures we consider. Research characteristics do make a difference. For the decision maker himself, the factors account for 38 percent of the variance in conceptual usefulness and 42 percent of the variance in likelihood of use.

Second, all the factors have a *positive* impact on usability. As noted, Research Quality and Conformity to User Expectations each provide a basis for trust in the research; the other two factors offer direction. Research that is high on Action Orientation or on Challenge to the Status Quo gives the user a sense of what to do. The Action Orientation characteristics point the way to direct and feas-

ible steps that decision makers can take. Action Orientation is, in a sense, the problem-solving factor. Challenge to the Status Quo offers innovative ways of thinking about issues and identifying problems and possible responses. In addition to the four factors, the relevance of a study to the decision maker's work affects its usability. This is an obvious requirement, and the data support it. Research that directly addresses questions with which the decision maker deals has more utility to him.

The most striking finding is that Challenge to the Status Quo is a positive element for all measures of usability. When decision makers discuss the *likelihood* that they themselves, or other decision makers, will take research into account in dealing with an issue, the challenging nature of the research is a positive input. Some of the other factors are more important with respect to likelihood of use, but Challenge plays a clear role (standardized regression coefficients: likely to use the study in own office, $\beta = 0.19$; most appropriate user is likely to use, $\beta = 0.18$). When we examine the usefulness of the ideas and information, the *conceptual* usefulness of the research, Challenge is even more important. In fact, analysis of decision makers' reports shows that, overall, the Challenge factor is the most important single factor contributing to the judged usefulness of research.[13]

We asked decision makers about the *kinds* of uses that could be made of the studies. Their responses indicate that research scoring high on Challenge to the Status Quo is particularly useful for such purposes as changing ways of thinking about an issue, raising an issue to the attention of government decision makers, and formulating new policies and programs. For these kinds of uses, it is more vital to have research that challenges existing arrangements than to have research with any other constellation of characteristics. (Standardized regression coefficients in these regressions range from 0.34 to 0.40.)

Therefore, although it examined the effects of specific studies with highly specific sets of findings, our study contributes to the growing awareness of the undirected filtration of research into the policy process. Our respondents' ratings highlight the salience of research

13. When respondents talk about their own use of ideas and information, Research Quality ranks first in importance ($\beta = .24$) and Challenge second ($\beta = .22$). When they talk about use by the person they name as most appropriate user, Challenge ranks first ($\beta = .32$).

that challenges existing assumptions and arrangements, that implies
the need for major change in philosophy, organization, or services,
and that raises new issues or perspectives—even when the findings
imply actions that are not currently acceptable in the political sys-
tem. Such research clearly will not affect today's decisions, and yet
decision makers say that it is useful—and likely to be used. This
unexpected finding clearly suggests that decision makers often con-
sider enlightenment to be a mode of research utilization. They make
a distinction between information and recommendations that can
help to solve problems and research that opens new avenues for
perceiving and thinking and mapping the decision-making terrain.

   Decision makers do not denigrate problem-solving studies. Our
respondents' ratings indicate receptivity to problem-oriented re-
search that has the characteristics captured in the Action Orienta-
tion factor: research that deals with the kinds of manipulable vari-
ables which decision makers can affect; research that has direct im-
plications for action, results that can be applied within existing
agencies and programs; research that contains explicit recommenda-
tions. The importance of these characteristics is clearly visible in
our data. (Standardized regression coefficients range from 0.16 to
0.34 on different measures of usability. The beta of 0.34 appears
in the regression for usefulness in improving existing programs.)

   But decision makers give even greater weight to research with
innovative implications. Federal, state, and local decision makers
in the mental health system report their willingness to consider re-
search that points toward major change. They make a distinction
between research acceptable within the political decision-making
system and research they themselves will listen to and support. Their
responses show that challenging research—research that shakes
things up and is not yet politically feasible—is welcome.[14]

CONCLUSION: THE ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL

   One of the reasons alleged for decision makers' neglect of social
research is that there are often fundamental cleavages in values be-
tween social scientists who do research and policymakers who are
expected to use it. Value dissensus, it is said, precludes use. In the
problem-solving or social-engineering model of research utilization,

   14. For further details, see Carol H. Weiss and Michael J. Bucuvalas,
"The Challenge of Social Research to Decision-Making," in *Using Social
Research,* ed. Weiss, pp. 213–33.

social researchers are expected to operate with the policymakers' frame of values. For practical purposes, this means that researchers are obliged to take off from policymakers' specifications of what the problem is, what the goals are, and what alternative means are feasible for moving toward the goals. If the social scientist wishes to change the definition of the problem or broaden the scope of options, he is enjoined to win the policymakers' assent to the new formulation before he begins his research. To the extent that he departs from the goals and assumptions adhered to by policymakers, his research will be irrelevant to the "real world" and will go un-heeded.

This is the conventional wisdom: the social researcher whose work is to enter the policy sphere should reach consensus with some important segment of policy actors on the basic value-orientation of his work. For maximum research utility, the researcher should ac-cept the fundamental goals, priorities, and political constraints of the key decision-making group. He should be sensitive to feasibil-ities and stay within the narrow range of low-cost, low-change policy alternatives.

The enlightenment model of research use does not make such assumptions. It does not consider value consensus a prerequisite for useful research. It sees a role for research as social criticism. It finds a place for research based on variant theoretical premises. It implies that research need not necessarily be geared to the operating feasibilities of today, but that research provides the intellectual background of concepts, orientations, and empirical generalizations that inform policy. As new concepts and data emege, their gradual cumulative effect can be to change the conventions policymakers abide by and to reorder the goals and priorities of the practical policy world.

Our study provides some support for the enlightenment model of research use. It suggests that decision makers believe it is a good thing to have controversial research, challenging research, research that makes them rethink comfortable assumptions. This is impor-tant for policy-oriented researchers to know.

For policy analysts outside government, these findings give sup-port to the familiar dicta to "think big" and broaden the range of policy options. For analysts inside government, the lesson is per-haps more muted. To be an "enlightener" is probably possible only

in the more elevated reaches of the bureaucracy.[15] Staff in most analytic offices work under such pressures of time, client demand, and limited access that opportunities for wide-ranging analysis are restricted.[16] Nevertheless it is fruitful to know that "challenging" analysis is neither unwanted nor unappreciated. Unless officials in mental health are completely atypical, there are decision makers at every level of government who are receptive to widened horizons and untraditional angles of vision.

15. Cf. Joseph L. Falkson, "Minor Skirmish in a Monumental Struggle: HEW's Analysis of Mental Health Services," *Policy Analysis* 2 (1976): 93–119.
16. Meltsner, "Bureaucratic Policy Analysts," pp. 130–131.