

## **Appendix: Preface to the First Edition**

THIS BOOK is about government's attempt to commission science. Its starting point was that in 1974 we were invited by the Research Management Division (now called the Office of the Chief Scientist) of the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) to study the research management system which had been installed following the Rothschild Report.

Whilst the invitation was to advise the Department, from the beginning it was agreed that we should eventually move from the role of consultants into the mode of independent researchers making our findings available to the wider scholarly public. We have had every assistance from the DHSS in achieving that end.

One of us, Maurice Kogan, worked on the project part-time throughout, first with Nancy Korman who was, for five years, the full-time researcher for the first part of this study. In the latter part of the study Mary Henkel replaced Nancy Korman when she took up research elsewhere. Many of the judgements in the book, and much of the empirical work, particularly in Part II, are based on field work, analysis and writing by Nancy Korman and we are greatly in her debt for her direct and indirect contributions to our account.

Our methods have responded eclectically to both the requests made by our DHSS 'customers' and the momentum which the research developed of its own accord. In the first period of our study (from 1974 to 1979) a principal product was a series of papers evaluating the working of the research commissioning system. This involved attendance at virtually all of the meetings held under the aegis of the Chief Scientist, that is to say, meetings of the Chief Scientist's Research Committee (CSRC), its three intermediate boards concerned with medical, personal social services and health service research, the Small Grants Committee and Research Liaison Groups. All committee papers were made available to us and they, together with the minutes of meetings, are essential records of the events which we now analyse. This documentation was supplemented in many cases by brief evaluative notes of the most important events and by interviews conducted with some of the main actors.

Many of these were cleared with interviewees, but more systematic verification took place when the series of evaluative papers was submitted for comment to

research management and, where the issues warranted it, to the committees upon which scientific advisers sat. The data from the first part of the study were collated and analysed in our first publication, *Government's Commissioning of Research* (Kogan et al., 1980).

A second phase began in 1980 when we became privileged observers of the Chief Scientist's visitations to five DHSS-funded research units. We interviewed members of the units and of the DHSS staff concerned with them both before and after the visits and attended both the formal parts of the visitations and the Chief Scientist's visiting experts' private meetings. We also engaged in 'light contact' with five further units not being visited. The invitation from the Chief Scientist, Professor Arthur Buller, to undertake this review and his encouragement to publish our findings, although largely inimicable to the view of science and its relationship with policy advanced by him, reflect great credit on him and on the DHSS.

On the basis of this second period of research, Mary Henkel and Maurice Kogan published *The DHSS Funded Research Units: the Process of Review* (1981). But events did not stand still and while this specialist study was being undertaken drastic changes were visited on the research commissioning system. It was therefore necessary to decide an arbitrary end-point for our history of the Rothschild enterprise within the DHSS, and we called a halt to our history in April 1981. We conducted some interviews after that date and held some further meetings in the Department to verify our findings from the study of the units and also to verify some of the data contained in this book.

Between 1974 and 1981 the three researchers conducted a total of 208 interviews with policy-makers and research managers in the DHSS, scientific advisers and researchers, and representatives of health and local authorities. These interviews were mainly, but not always, with individuals alone. During the first period of our research we attended a total of 210 departmental meetings as non-participant observers. These included eleven meetings of the Chief Scientist's Research Committee, six of the Panel on Medical Research, eight of the Intermediate Boards, some 156 of the Research Liaison Groups (almost all the meetings held between 1974 and 1979 of eight of these eleven groups), 21 of the Small Grants Committee, and eight of Research Management. In the second period we observed five internal departmental meetings connected with Chief Scientist's visits to funded research

units, in addition to the visits themselves. A full breakdown of the interviews conducted for this part of the research can be found in the Appendix to Chapter 8.

We have drawn freely on the papers and minutes from meetings of the whole period 1974 to 1981. We were also given liberal access to some internal departmental papers and references to some of them will be found, in suitably coded forms so as to preserve civil service anonymity rules, in the references at the end of this book.

We could not tackle the whole range of DHSS research, illuminating though comparisons between health and social service and social security research would have been. Nor until we examined the unit review process were we able to broach the issue of customer reception and treatment of research. We did not take our study into comparisons between the DHSS's mode of working and those of the MRC although both of these possibilities were raised early in our study. Fortunately the MRC was eloquently represented at the Public Accounts Committee and its attitudes and *modus operandi* are a matter of public record; one of us was a member of the SSRC and chairman of its Health Studies Panel during part of the period of our study and our brief references to these are based on direct observation. In all, we have been opportunistic in securing access to the field and have not tried to break down doors that were not already open to us. On the whole, we have been privileged to see and hear that which we now record. In one area where we did undertake research, the DHSS's commissioning of R & D in computers, Nancy Korman undertook a great deal of field work and produced internal papers. In the interests, however, of thematic unity and economy that fascinating set of issues is excluded from this account.

Some of our omissions sit more comfortably because of the excellent work done by others. Work published by M. D. Gordon and A. J. Meadows of the Primary Communications Research Centre, University of Leicester, (1981) analysed the effects of research commissioning on the researchers whilst pursuing its main purpose of assessing the dissemination of findings of DHSS-funded research. In 1977 Professor Louis Moss undertook a study of the DHSS's use of its research units as a principal research resource and this produced material, which we exploit, on the research perceived to be necessary by DHSS administrators and professionals. Both of these studies were commissioned by the DHSS at the same time as our own, and we commend them as complementary to our own work. Other academic studies have

tackled areas outside our own somewhat esoteric remit. The inner life of research units has been well recounted by Jennifer Platt (1976). Broader issues of the sociology of science have been discussed by Stuart Blume (1974; 1977) and the social organisation of science has been treated in masterly fashion by Michael Mulkey (1977). The Social Science Research Council funded a study of research careers and funding conducted by a team at Goldsmiths' College, University of London, and Patricia Thomas (1982) has examined the relationship between social research and government policy by tracing connections between SSRC and foundation supported projects and the policy-making process. These studies help provide an essential context within which our own work has been conducted. In addition, we benefited from membership of a seminar organised under the aegis of the Goldsmiths' College Project and convened by Matthew Melliar-Smith at which other students of research and science policy presented papers and offered critique of current work, including our own.

We make one bold claim for this study. Our account builds on the literature of the science of science and public administration. The science of science contains important studies of the epistemology, sociology and social organisation of science, But the reader of such key journals as *Minerva or Knowledge* will find it hard to discover empirical studies, as opposed to normative models, of the way in which science is perceived, steered or influenced by public policy-makers or of the relationships between policy systems and the science which they finance. We hope that this account of our work within the DHSS and its associated research enterprises provides such a study and also contributes to developing theory in an exciting field.

In a study that has taken over seven years to research and write we have engendered many debts. We acknowledge the patient help received from many members of the DHSS staff, from scientists and others involved in the Chief Scientist's system, and from researchers who were willing to be interviewed and to contribute in other ways to our study. A particularly heavy burden was carried by friends and colleagues who critically and helpfully read this book in draft and our earlier papers, *Government's Commissioning of Research: A Case Study* (Maurice Kogan, Nancy Korman, and Mary Henkel, 1980) and *The DHSS Funded Research Units: The Process of Review* (Mary Henkel and Maurice Kogan, 1981). The many people within the DHSS who helped in this way cannot be named because of the civil service convention of anonymity. While they did not expect us to conform to departmental views of what we observed, this rule meant that they could be helpful to

us without committing the DHSS to anything that we were likely to say in our published reports. We received helpful advice from Professor Tony Becher, Dr Helen Bolderson, Patricia Broadfoot, Valerie Heyes, Dr Donald Irvine, Daphne Johnson, Tim Packwood, Ellie Scrivens and David Shapiro and, more recently, from Martin Buxton, Eskil Bjorklund, Warren Kinston, Rune Premfors, Stewart Ranson, Olof Ruin, Brian Salter and Bjorn Wittrock. The project and the book were seen through by the expert administrative and secretarial work put into it by Sally Harris.

## Bibliography

Key to DHSS committee papers and to researchers' unpublished papers and notes of interviews and meetings

### *Uncirculated papers and interview notes*

BRMP ( )/	Brunel research management project, project papers
FN ( )/	Field notes
ID ( )/	Interviews with department officers
IE ( )/	Interviews with external advisers
IM ( )/	DHSS internal memoranda We compiled no complete archive of all such memoranda but those to which we have referred are numbered serially in each of their years.
IR ( )/	Interviews with researchers

In addition, there were minuted internal research management and OCS meetings as follows:

DHSS MG ( )/	Management group
RP	Research policy meeting
RP (M)	Research policy meeting Minutes

### *Committee papers*

CSRC ( )/	Papers presented to the Chief Scientist's research committee denoting year and series numbers.
CSRC (M)	CSRC minutes (some are not numbered serially in each year and dates of meetings are given in those cases).
CSRC (HPSS) ( )/	Health and personal social services committee papers.
MRC ( )/	Medical research council papers.
PMR ( )/	Panel on medical research papers.
PMR (M) ( )/	Panel on medical research minutes.
RLG ( )/	Research liaison group papers.
RLG (M)	Research liaison group minutes.

The identity of RLGs is denoted by:

CH	Children
SHB	Elderly
MI	Mental illness
MH	Mental handicap
HA	Homelessness and addictions
SGC	Small Grants Committee papers

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