

# DISCUSSION PAPER DISCUSSION PAPER DISCUSSION

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## **MAKING THE LINK BETWEEN POLICY AND RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF AGING: SOME LESSONS FROM ISRAEL**

**Jack Habib**

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JOINT (JDC) ISRAEL  
BROOKDALE INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY  
AND ADULT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

JDC HILL, P.O.B. 13087  
JERUSALEM 91130, ISRAEL

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is a national center devoted to research, experimentation and education in gerontology and adult human development. It was founded and is funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC) with the assistance of the Brookdale Foundation and the support of the Government of the State of Israel. Its research is policy- and program-oriented, multidisciplinary and, primarily, of an applied nature.

The Institute tries to identify socially relevant problems and to recommend alternative solutions to problems of the health and social services. It attempts to bring together academic and governmental experts and other public officials and citizens in order to link research findings with their implementation.

## **DISCUSSION PAPERS**

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# **MAKING THE LINK BETWEEN POLICY AND RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF AGING: SOME LESSONS FROM ISRAEL**

**Jack Habib**

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JDC-Brookdale Institute of Gerontology  
and Adult Human Development in Israel  
P.O.B. 13087  
Jerusalem 91130, Israel  
Tel. (02) 618251  
Fax (02) 661244

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## Abstract

The rapid aging of the Israeli population during the last 10-15 years has spurred the development of policy-related research in gerontology. Researchers have found it increasingly necessary to devote their attention to developing a strong knowledge base that will help policy makers respond effectively to this demographic change. Legislative initiatives focused on expanding entitlements for services to the elderly, together with the growth of new organizational frameworks geared toward serving the elderly, encouraged the development of the link between policy and research.

Two of the organizations that were most significant in cementing the bond between policy and research were ESHEL - The Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel, established in 1969 by the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee (AJJDC) as a consortium of government ministries; and the Brookdale Institute, established by the AJJDC and the Government of Israel in 1974 as an expression of the belief that research could constructively contribute to policymaking and professional practice.

This Discussion Paper analyzes some of the factors that have influenced the development of the link between policy and research in Israel, with particular emphasis on the development of the Brookdale Institute. The analysis examines the differing supply (research) and demand (policy) factors that influence the policy-research link. It also evaluates the structural and operational components of the Institute that have proved important in developing this link.

The aspects of establishing the research-policy link discussed in this paper include finding stable sources of financing to support the in-depth, long-term, and comprehensive research studies that can positively affect policy decisions; involving policymakers in the research process and fostering trust and confidence between researchers and policymakers; devoting adequate resources to dissemination; and creating a range of opportunities to link research, policy, and practice.

Professionals, researchers and policymakers committed to investing the hard work needed to foster and further develop the link between policy and research will find the experience summarized in this report valuable reading.

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been a significant development of policy-related research on aging in Israel over the last 10-15 years. Indeed, in many respects the field of aging has become a leading sector pioneering in the development of policy-relevant research and in linking that research with the development of policy and practice. These developments have begun to serve as a stimulus in other areas of social policy.

There have been a number of contributing factors. As the Israeli population rapidly aged and the interest in aging increased, it was only natural that more attention should be devoted to expanding the knowledge base required to help develop an effective response. Legislative initiatives focused on expanding entitlements for services to the elderly played an important role in spurring research of a policy-relevant nature that could assist in developing this legislation. An additional factor was the growth of new organizational frameworks for both policy and research.

In 1969, the Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel (ESHEL) was established as a partnership of a consortium of government ministries and the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee (AJJDC). The AJJDC is a voluntary organization based in the United States that plays a major role in the finance and development of social and health services in Israel. ESHEL became a major framework for coordinating the service development decisions among the participating organizations and indeed a large percentage of the total service development budget in Israel is channeled through ESHEL. As ESHEL served to rationalize and integrate the decisionmaking processes as well as to formalize and structure those processes, it became a very convenient partner and link with research and researchers.

A second development was the creation of a strong research division within the National Insurance Institute which is Israel's Social Security Administration. This unit pioneered in developing approaches to monitoring social service developments

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and evaluating policy options and also became an important source of funding for more basic research of a policy-relevant nature. It contributed to the development of a tradition of linking research and policy.

Finally, the establishment of the Brookdale Institute in 1974 was a direct expression of the belief that research could contribute to the development of public policy and professional practice. The Institute was established in partnership by the Government of Israel and the AJJDC with the assistance of a grant from the Brookdale Foundation of New York. From the beginning it was hoped that it would be a resource for the development of policy and practice.

In this paper we shall analyze some of the factors that have influenced the development of the link between policy and research in Israel. We shall distinguish between factors emerging on the supply (research) and demand (policy) sides and point to the interaction between these two sets of factors. The analysis relates particularly to the development of the Brookdale Institute as a factor whose objective was to strengthen the link between policy and research. We evaluate the structural and operational components of the Institute that proved important in developing this link and attempt to draw some general conclusions that may be relevant in other contexts as well.

There are three general points that we wish to emphasize at the outset:

- a) The nature of the structures governing the production of research and of policy play a critical role in establishing the link between the two, but all too often these structures are self-defeating.
- b) How we use these structures also plays a critical role. Thus the attitudes and operating principles of both parties to the process are important elements in determining its success.
- c) Making the link between policy and research is hard work and requires a serious commitment from both sides.

# THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BROOKDALE INSTITUTE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN POLICY AND RESEARCH

The structural factors and operating principles that influence the ability of the Institute to make the link between policy and research are set out in Chart 1.

## Chart 1

### RESEARCH PRODUCTION FACTORS

1. Block allocations and secure long-term finance
2. Commitment to public disclosure and no political interference
3. Critical mass and common infrastructure
4. Relevant and significant agenda
5. Sensitivity to demands of the field but independent role in agenda setting
6. Full-time core staff
7. Flexible team approach
8. Development of trust and credibility
9. Long-term commitment to issues
  - a. Follow through and continuity
  - b. Comprehensive and strategic planning
  - c. Flexibility
10. Systematic progression from need assessment to demonstration and to system-wide change
11. Investment in dissemination and implementation
12. Input of field into research design and interpretation
13. Functions of dissemination and implementation
14. Strategies of dissemination and implementation
15. Respect for differential roles of researcher and policymaker

## **Supply Side Factors**

Three approaches were built into the initial structure of the Institute:

### **1. Block allocations and secure long-term finance**

The availability of internal care finance is a critical enabling factor that has multiple ramifications for the links between policy and research. These ramifications will emerge at various points in our discussion of the operating principles of the Institute.

### **2. Critical mass and infrastructure**

The level of funding was designed to maintain a critical mass of research and support staff that could operate independent of external funding and that would enjoy the benefits of an infrastructure of shared support services. At the same time this infrastructure could support a broader level of activities as external finance became available.

### **3. Commitment to public disclosure and freedom from political interference**

The organizational independence of the Institute from government bureaucracy and the partnership between the AJJDC and the Israeli Government in the governing board, was designed to assure the intellectual integrity and independence of the Institute. Its findings were to be available to all interested parties as part of a general commitment to inform the public debate.

While these basic structural elements may be necessary, they are by no means sufficient conditions for success. Despite these structural features, which should have been very favorable to making the link between research and policy, very little interface and impact with the policymaking process emerged during the early years of the Institute. What was missing was a concept of how to effectively use the structure to make the link with policy. As a result there emerged, over time, increasing criticism of the Institute within policymaking circles for not having fulfilled its mandate. Moreover, there was a sharp decline in the purchasing power of the core budget of the Institute due to inflation that generated an accelerating budgetary crisis. There thus emerged a crisis of both substance and finance.

In light of these difficulties and consistent with its general practice, the AJJDC set up a blue-ribbon international review committee.<sup>1</sup> The committee conducted extensive interviews in Israel of all agencies and individuals that related to the Institute's mandate. Its particular concern was with strengthening the links between policy and research and this was the major focus of the recommendations issued in 1982 which became the basis for a reorganization of the Institute (Recommendations of the Committee, 1982). The Institute subsequently began a process to implement the committee's recommendations and elaborate a set of operating principles.

We shall elaborate on each of the principles that are listed in Chart 1, in items 4-13.

#### 4. Relevant and significant agenda

A prerequisite for any policy impact is that there be an agenda that is relevant to major immediate or potential future concerns of the service system. This perhaps seems trivial but yet the failure to adopt such an agenda was an important factor limiting the Institute's effectiveness for a number of years. The development of such an agenda was related to a more general shift from a program that was motivated primarily by the interests of individual researchers to a program that was motivated by the major issues of concern to the service system. The shift required that the Institute invest a great deal of time identifying those concerns and conducting a dialogue with the service system about its agenda. This effort was crystallized around the decision to develop a five-year plan.

The first five-year plan was adopted in 1983 and was preceded by a process of agenda-setting involving researchers, policymakers and service professionals. Within the framework of the five-year plan there is an annual process of priority setting that also involves a dialogue between researchers and policymakers. This dialogue is in part an outgrowth of the various contacts between the Institute and the field. These contacts include participation of Institute staff on a broad range of

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<sup>1</sup> The members were Robert Morris (Chairman), Henning Friis, Victor Halberstadt, Robert Kane, Shlomo Kugelmass, and Moshe Sicron.

ongoing committees and special commissions in which critical issues are defined. However, the Institute also initiated several more formalized opportunities to generate ongoing input into its program. There is an informal meeting of the Board of Directors each June, at which time the Israeli members are asked to make suggestions for annual priorities that are finalized in December. In addition, a series of luncheon meetings with the major partners of the Institute is held with the express purpose of reviewing the Institute's proposed program and priorities. The senior staff of organizations such as the Ministry of Health, or the Treasury participate in these luncheons. These meetings also play a very important general role in mobilizing cooperation and disseminating information about the Institute's program.

The general point is that you have to have something of relevance to say before you can expect anyone to listen.

#### **5. Sensitivity to demands of the field but independent role in agenda setting**

Given the need for a relevant and significant agenda how does it get established? We have found that if there are close working relationships with policymakers, the process of agenda setting almost happens automatically and it is difficult to untangle who initiated a particular proposal.

The development of the agenda's program is heavily influenced by the findings of the earlier research which not infrequently get translated into demands for further research from the field. Developments in the field and in the policy agenda are a further source of influence.

However, the Institute's program always includes some elements that do not necessarily reflect the priorities of policymakers or field personnel. These elements foresee issues that eventually prove to be of prime importance or develop methodologies that facilitate conceptual and empirical breakthroughs that have major impacts. The independent financial base of the Institute makes it possible to maintain an independent component of the program. The Institute's program thus avoids the biases inherent in the perspectives of both researchers and policymakers by allowing for the influence of both in defining the agenda.

## **6. Full-time core staff**

A major recommendation of the Review Commission was that the staffing of the Institute should be based on a full-time core staff. This core was to serve as the backbone of the Institute in that its members would have a primary allegiance to the development of the Institute, would view their own careers as tied to that development, and would therefore be willing to devote their time to the goals and priorities of the Institute. The Institute was seen as offering a career option that was alternative to that offered by the universities: applied researcher and policy analyst. This represented a significant shift from the reliance of the Institute on part-time people with full-time academic affiliations. While university-affiliated academicians continue to play an important role in the Institute's program, they no longer define the agenda, command most of the resources, or coordinate the projects that are of the most interest for policymakers. There are several elements of the structure of academics in Israel that may have lent particular significance to this shift. One is that Israeli universities do not permit academics to buy their time and reduce their teaching loads. A second factor is that as a small country, there is very little in the way of academically recognized domestic publication forums. As a result, Israeli academicians publish primarily in the international literature, which means they publish in languages other than Hebrew and have little incentive to pursue themes of more purely local interest. By contrast the Institute provides a very different incentive structure for its full-time staff, focused on publication in Hebrew with international publication as a secondary concern.

An additional consequence of the shift was to facilitate the development of a strong emphasis on dissemination and implementation-related activities. Whereas full-time academicians have little direct incentive to engage in such activities, an internal incentive structure could be created for the full-time staff placing a high value on such activities. Moreover, their time was available to the Institute on a much more flexible basis.

## **7. Flexible team approach**

The ability of the Institute to make the link between policy and research is also facilitated by the team approach that characterizes the Institute's work. The boundaries between projects and responsibilities are not rigid so that specific skills can be brought to bear and points of overlap can be exploited. Moreover, it is possible to reinforce projects at short notice when they run into difficulties. This provides

further backing to the researcher and enables him to more flexibly exploit opportunities for linking policy and research.

## 8. Development of trust and credibility

For research to have an impact, it has to be viewed as reliable. Reliability itself is a complex concept. It involves the soundness of the data collection and data-processing procedures. However, it also involves the process by which conclusions are drawn on the basis of the data analysis. It is not infrequent that very sophisticated methodological work is, in essence, abused by a rather careless process of drawing conclusions, influenced, in part, by the biases of the researcher. In the absence of the knowledge required to fully evaluate research, policymakers must often rely on the reputation of the individuals conducting the research. Thus it is obviously important that the Institute as an organization and the individual researchers develop a reputation of reliability.

There are additional elements of reliability that play a critical role in developing a constructive partnership with policymakers. Researchers need to demonstrate that they are capable of, and willing to address the complexities of the real world as experienced by field personnel and policymakers. In other words, to step out of the ivory tower and see things "as they are". Research efforts are often dismissed by policymakers when they fail to meet this criterion. Beyond the question of how reality is seen, there is a question of how it is presented. It is important for researchers to present the field in a balanced and fair manner.

All policy-relevant research is, in some sense, an "expose", that obviously entails the willingness of those involved to be the subject of public disclosure. In order to ensure policymakers' cooperation and interest in research, researchers must approach the field with seriousness and respect. Policymakers are very often turned off by a tendency of researchers to overdramatize their criticism or to assume a self-righteous and condescending stance: "Well, what do you expect from field people" or "how could you let such a situation emerge" or "things are the way they are because field professionals put their own interests above that of their clients". Such statements are particularly damaging when they are made without any attention to the constraints faced by people in the field.

There are times at which findings need to be dramatized. However, it can be done in a way which will be viewed as fair and that will consider the legitimate sensi-

tivities of people in the field. The development of trust in the capacity and willingness of researchers to be fair, has proved, from our experience, to be a critical element in the development of a link between policy and research. This is particularly true if there is an interest in an ongoing relationship as opposed to a one-shot, hit-and-run impact on the policy process.

#### **9. Long-term commitment to issues**

We have attempted to implement a long-term commitment to issues as opposed to a focus on individual projects that address only a limited aspect. This has had a number of implications for the organization of work in the Institute:

- a) Follow-through and continuity. The time period that is devoted to an issue is dictated by the imperatives of the situation rather than by artificially imposed time schedules. We attempt to follow through on important questions that arise during the course of a project up to the point at which the marginal product of investing additional time and resources does not warrant further pursuit.
- b) Comprehensive and strategic planning. The approach to issues can be comprehensive and strategically planned. When there is a long-range perspective, it is possible to address the overall components of the problem, to develop a plan to pursue each of them and a strategy for the sequence. The way in which individual projects feed into a broader attempt to address an issue is an ongoing and critical focus.
- c) Flexibility. It is possible to make strategic deviations that take advantage of opportunities that arise to apply the findings to developments in the field. In other words to diverge from the planned sequence and not necessarily leave implementation-related activity to the end. At the same time, there is the knowledge that one will be able to return to the original plan at a later date.

#### **10. Systematic progression from need assessment to demonstration and to system-wide change**

A comprehensive approach to issues requires attention to the various potential phases involved in bringing research to bear on an issue. We distinguish four phases:

- a) Assessing the nature of the problem: projects that review the status of a particular population group, service system, or problem area;
- b) Clarifying possible solutions: projects that focus on specific issues that have been identified in order to understand the sources of problems and ways of addressing them;
- c) Demonstrating the effectiveness of solutions: projects that translate the lessons learned from previous research into the formulation of demonstration programs designed to test possible approaches to improving the present situation;
- d) Promoting and abetting system-wide diffusion: projects that assist in the process of diffusion of best practice models on a national basis. The design of effective approaches to diffusion and the monitoring and evaluation of the process of diffusion are examples of activities of this nature.

A research effort can be initiated at any of these phases. Yet, at the same time, they represent a continuum with an inherent logic. The adoption of a long-range commitment to issues makes it possible to plan developments along such a continuum when this is viewed as necessary and strategic. Indeed, the Institute has proceeded along this continuum with respect to several major issues. In some cases we have been able to build on existing work to enter the process at some later phase of the continuum.

#### **11,12. Investment in dissemination and implementation; and input of field into research design and interpretation**

The investment in dissemination - and implementation - related activities is a critical factor in linking research and policy and has to become a major preoccupation rather than an afterthought or stepchild of the research process. Yet, ironically, there is generally little willingness on the part of funding sources to finance the time or resources required to enable researchers to take this seriously. Thus, one of the major justifications for block non-project-related funding is to assure the resources required for dissemination. The Institute has, over the years, received considerable funding from a range of sources that has supplemented the core funding of the Institute. Indeed, most of its projects benefit from external funding. However, in almost every case, the Institute has used its core funds to finance additional time and inputs required to assure an aggressive effort to disseminate and help promote the utilization of its results.

Dissemination is a catchall term for a range of activities that have a number of functions and take a variety of forms. We shall attempt to elaborate on some of these elements.

### **13. Functions of dissemination and implementation**

Dissemination and implementation obviously serve the purpose of informing potential users of the results of research; however, they serve additional functions of equal importance. Rather than being viewed exclusively as a process by which researchers inform others, they need to be viewed as a process by which researchers are also informed. Thus, they can perform the important function of helping to identify sources of resistance to the acceptance of research findings or sources of misunderstandings about the findings or their implications. There are a surprising number of interpretations of findings which need to be clarified in order to prevent misuse of results.

Another major role of DI is that of a component of critical review and quality control of research findings and, even more so, of their proper interpretation and clarification of policy implications. This reflects the recognition that any study is a partial snapshot of reality and sometimes a distorted one. While methodological review can be received from academic peers and can be abetted by efforts to publish in professional journals, there is a need to create forums to obtain the critical review of field personnel.

We believe this to be one of the most important lessons we have learned over the years and we now include dissemination-related activities as part of the process of finalizing research reports. This is sometimes provided by project steering committees which, from the outset, include a wide range of the potential users, and sometimes by bringing together groups of field and policy personnel for a pre-publication presentation of results. The interest of researchers in this kind of input and exposure to the field also plays a very important role in establishing the kind of trust in the reliability and fairness of the research process.

### **14. Strategies of dissemination and implementation**

a) **Publication.** An effective publication strategy is the obvious cornerstone of dissemination and has two major facets: the type of publication and the effectiveness of publicity. There are some rather mundane factors that often impede dis-

semination, such as the failure to print a sufficient number of copies and the price charged. The Institute typically produces between 200 and 400 copies of any publication with provision for reprinting when required. All publications are automatically distributed to a small minimum list of key persons within the policy establishment or centers of general dissemination, such as libraries. Over the years we have developed a strategy for more widely publicizing our publications and also for meeting the needs of those who have relatively little time or perhaps even the need to read the complete publication. One component is the preparation of executive summaries of some of our more important and lengthy reports. A second component is the preparation of a publication announcement that is sent to over 1200 addresses in Israel and 300 addresses abroad. It provides a description of the report, highlights some of the findings and their significance, and includes an order form. At times, the full report is sent to selected audiences beyond the minimum list. To facilitate this process a computerized and key-worded address system has been developed so that general or targeted mailings require a minimum of staff time.

It has proved difficult to routinize the preparation of these summary materials. Researchers do not like and have difficulty in writing the publication announcement and to get them done we have made a rule that no publication is released until the publication announcement is ready. This reluctance arises from the ongoing pressures to progress in their research, the inherent difficulties in writing effective synopses, and the fact that we attempt to gear them to a wider audience so that a style of writing somewhat foreign to researchers is required. This difficulty is heightened by the fact that all our publication abstracts are issued in both Hebrew and English creating additional demands on the researcher's time. One response to this difficulty has been the investment in the development of an effective publications unit that can provide maximum support to the research staff in these efforts.

b) Oral presentation. We encourage our staff to explore a wide range of forums for direct oral presentation of results. This includes seminars that we initiate at the Institute, national conferences, appearances before standing committees, such as those of ESHEL, and participation in *ad hoc* committees.

Dissemination is not necessarily a process that begins after the research has been completed. For example, most of our major studies have advisory committees that are involved in all phases of the research process. These are comprised primarily of

policymakers, field personnel and selected academicians. As noted, these forums provide important input into the study design and interpretation of results. They also provide an opportunity to maintain an ongoing dialogue with key potential users with respect to both the definition of the issues and the findings of the study. Thus important elements of dissemination take place well before publication.

There are several forms of dissemination that have proved particularly effective and that are gaining in importance:

- a) We have begun to make focused efforts to translate our research findings into special programs of education and training or to have them included in existing programs.
- b) A second vehicle is the use of our findings by national commissions. It has now become common practice for Brookdale staff to participate on such committees, or to serve as resource persons or for the Institute to be asked to provide background material, and a number of our studies have been undertaken at the request of such commissions. The Institute's input often includes a synthesis of research findings relevant to the work of the commission. These syntheses serve an internal Institute function in that they are opportunities for consolidation and evaluation as to what we have learned. They are also made available for much wider distribution and often prove particularly valuable to policymakers.
- c) More and more frequently our research projects lead to the establishment of working groups in cooperation with policy and field personnel that jointly explore the translation of the results into new programs or changes in policy that will be either tested in demonstration programs or implemented nationally. These working groups obviously provide the most direct opportunities for relating research to policy. They require a considerable input of time by the staff of the Institute, however when successful they have very high payoffs.

Creating an atmosphere conducive to DI activities has required a focused effort. It implies the input of a great deal of time on the part of the research staff. It is necessary to create an atmosphere that will serve to facilitate this effort. This involves an incentive structure that organizationally rewards such efforts by making them part of the criteria for advancement. It also requires a policy that recognizes the implications that the time devoted to these ends will have for other obligations. This is particularly the case if opportunities for effective dissemination are taken advantage of. Therefore the whole approach to project time-schedules

and deadlines must be tolerant of these strategic deviations. This can most easily be accomplished when projects are internally financed and deadlines are internally established. However, even when externally financed, the funding sources may themselves be directly interested in these DI efforts and be willing to extend deadlines, particularly when the funding source is a service agency. However, they will rarely extend the finance to cover the cost of maintaining the project staff over a longer period so that the Institute's ability to supplement the finance from its own resources again plays a crucial role.

Finally, one needs to provide concrete assistance to the researchers in their DI efforts in order to make sure that their research functions are not unduly affected, as well as to pool experience and make these efforts less painstaking. We do this by creating an infrastructure that helps in the writing of publications abstracts and summary reports, handles distribution, organizes seminars, and even helps with presentations and lectures. This may also involve providing them with additional research assistance. This assistance has symbolic as well as practical significance in conveying the message as to where priorities lie.

#### **15. Respect for differential roles of researcher and policymaker**

Given a commitment to actively pursuing DI-related activities, the question arises as to the appropriate role of the researcher in the policymaking process, and to what extent he should take a stance and recommend specific policies and directions.

We have adopted for the most part a neutral position, reflected in the care we take to distinguish between what unambiguously emerges from the findings and what is a matter of subjective evaluation or value judgement. An example would be the distinction between identifying gaps between needs and services and recommending that these gaps be closed. This issue has posed one of the most serious dilemmas for the Institute. We have been subject to conflicting pressures from the field in this regard. The question of the role of the researcher has come to the fore in municipal planning projects where the Institute has been pressured to provide a bottom line, i.e. to make specific recommendations that can be used to influence the political process. The Institute has by contrast insisted that there be a clear separation in such cases between its role in evaluating needs and defining options and the role of the decisionmaker. There is a tendency to measure the degree of applicability of a research project by the length of the list of recommendations.

The approach suggested here would focus more on the number of policy-relevant findings and the quality of the analysis of options.

The Institute has adopted a much more extreme and purist approach to this distinction than is often the case among researchers. The reluctance to become involved in this ultimate implementation phase has ironically strengthened, in our opinion, the Institute's influence on the decisionmaking process. It has served to develop the Institute's reputation as an honest broker and a neutral meeting ground and thus promote the willingness of all groups to work with the Institute. It has enabled the Institute to play a mediating role between the conflicting interests that emerge among those involved in service development.

### **Demand Side Factors**

We now turn to an analysis of factors that characterize the nature of the demand for research on the part of policymakers and field personnel. These are outlined in Chart 2.

### **Chart 2**

#### **POLICYMAKING FACTORS**

1. Commitment to knowing and willingness to bear possible costs
2. Willingness to accept researchers as partners in services development
3. Identification of the mediators with the research establishment
4. Willingness to invest time
5. Familiarity with research and its uses
6. Structure of policymaking process

#### **1. Commitment to knowing and willingness to bear possible cost**

Decisions can be made without information and plans can be made without real planning. It is not possible to know all that it might be useful to know. Thus, the

policy maker is faced with the constant dilemma – what to try to know and what to do without. In addressing this dilemma, it is necessary to come to terms with the question: How much is one willing to pay for more or better information? The costs of the information are not only monetary. They also find expression in the degree of control over events. Additional information may either confirm or challenge the decision maker's own views. He has to be willing to take that risk in the interest of more informed decisions and a more open debate. The commitment of policy makers in Israel to a more informed decision making process has grown considerably.

## **2. Willingness to accept researchers as partners in service development**

A related issue is the role that policy makers are willing to assign to researchers in the policy making process. One role of a more passive nature is the provision of information that is then used in the policy making process. A second, more active role, is to be viewed as a partner in policy or service design. This implies a much more active process of interaction between researchers and policy makers. Over this period, there was a gradual shift in the kind of cooperation sought by policy makers with a growing interest in the involvement of researchers in the design process.

## **3. Identification of the mediators with the research establishment**

Another feature affecting the dynamic between policy makers and researchers is the way in which this liaison role is built into the policy making structure. A major feature of the Israeli scene is that very often this liaison role is not assigned to specialized personnel but is carried out by persons directly involved in the policy making process. This is in part due to the small size of the country. In general, the bureaucracy is smaller and there tends to be less specialization of function. It is in part due to the absence in some of the ministries of strong research departments that can perform this mediating function. This arrangement obviously has advantages and disadvantages. The time available for such liaison activities is more limited and the persons involved may have a weaker background in the research skills that can facilitate the dialogue. On the other hand, it means that there is a direct flow of information between researchers and policy makers, and policy makers are very actively involved in defining the questions and reviewing the answers that are generated in the research process.

A further dimension is the degree of continuity or turnover among the policymakers making the links with research. A very low turnover rate in the Israeli civil service contributes to the process of developing stable relationships and contributes to the development of multi-year programs with sufficient time for initiation, completion and utilization of the research program.

#### **4. Willingness to invest time**

In order to make links between research and policy there needs to be a commitment to investing time in this effort on the part of researchers as well as on the part of policymakers. This willingness is in turn affected by both the time available to policymakers and the degree of importance they attach to these links. The input of time is required at all phases of the research process in helping to define the research agenda, in reviewing the findings and in engaging in a mutual process of drawing out the practical implications. Over the years there has been a marked increase in the time that policymakers invest in such links with the Institute and this has been a critical element in our ability to bridge the gap between research and policy.

#### **5. Familiarity with research and its uses**

Familiarity may breed contempt, as Oscar Wilde put it, but it can also contribute positively to strengthening the links between policy and research. This familiarity with research methodology and with the uses of research can overcome "fears of the unknown", can promote a more meaningful dialogue and can encourage policymakers to take the initiative in fostering the link. Over time there has been an increasing level of sophistication among policymakers with respect to research. This has in part been related to the enhanced training of civil servants in key positions. It is also an outgrowth, however, of a learning process based on an ongoing involvement with Institute projects over a number of years. This process has been facilitated by the fact that, as mentioned, turnover in the key positions within the civil service is quite low so that there is considerable continuity of experience. An additional element that has contributed a great deal to the learning process, is the Sabbatical Scholar Program for Civil Servants. This program enables senior civil servants to spend a year at the Institute involved in a specific project and participating in the full range of Institute activities. A number of key policymakers in the field of services for the elderly are graduates of this program.

## 6. Structure of policymaking process

The structure of the policymaking process can influence the ability of research to be integrated into that process and to make contact at critical points of influence. The more ordered and organized the process, the easier it is to build in research input. There were several structural developments in Israel that facilitated the links between research and policy.

Of primary importance was the establishment of ESHEL. As noted in the introduction, ESHEL is a consortium of the major ministries and organizations involved in developing services for the elderly. As an interorganizational body, it had to develop a very structured decisionmaking process based on a committee system and clearly defined rules. This served to promote the links between research and policy in several ways. Just as ESHEL served to coordinate service planning and generate consensus about service needs, it also served to coordinate efforts to integrate research into the decisionmaking process and generated consensus around the areas of required research. Such research could then become the common possession of all the participating organizations rather than serving more fragmented needs or becoming the possession of selected players in the decisionmaking process. The pooling of resources also meant that more significant funds were available to finance research and that by avoiding duplication those funds could yield a higher return.

The avoidance of duplication relates to an additional obstacle that can sometimes limit the links between policy and research. Policymakers are sometimes discouraged when confronted with numerous research reports providing conflicting findings. Very often too little attention is paid by researchers themselves to the clarification of these differences and to integrating findings across the various studies. Because of Israel's size it is seldom that there are numerous studies of any one issue, so that this problem arises less frequently; nevertheless, the pooling of resources by ESHEL has served to further reduce the likelihood of conflicting findings. It also has meant that any given research project receives much more attention, as it often represents the only major statement on the issue. The lack of competing estimates obviously has its disadvantages in that errors can be very costly. Yet this enhances the motivation of both researchers and policymakers to invest in quality control and to ensure the relevance of the research to the needs of policymakers.

A second advantage offered by ESHEL is that the formal and structured decision-making frameworks provide natural forums at which research findings can be presented and integrated into the decisionmaking process. This was further enhanced by the direct participation of researchers in ESHEL's various committees.

Another structural element of the policymaking process was the frequent use made during this period of national committees or commissions established to review major policy issues. The establishment of such bodies implies a decision to structure the policymaking process and broaden the range of inputs. These bodies offer opportunities to mobilize research input and to focus the attention of policymakers on these inputs. Of particular significance was the commission established to design national legislation for the finance of home-care services in Israel (Report of the Committee, 1983). The National Insurance Institute (NII), which had responsibility for staffing the commission, promoted a broad program of research as input into its deliberations. Also of importance were commissions established to define five-year plans at the national municipal levels (Jerusalem Municipality, 1985; Tel Aviv-Jaffo Municipality, 1986).

On a somewhat less formal basis, joint working groups were established between Institute staff and policymakers to develop models for the more effective organization of public services. As mentioned above, these working groups provided a particularly fruitful context in which to mobilize research inputs and review their implications. Several such groups led to the emergence of major new systems for regulating the quality of institutional care and for coordinating health and social services in the community (Report of Inter-Agency Committee, 1986; and Brodsky et al., 1987).

### Research in Long-term Care

The focus of this paper has been the factors that facilitate and encourage a link between policy and research. We shall provide a brief substantive overview of the kind of research that has been carried out in one area in long-term care. This will serve to illustrate how the policy and research agendas have overlapped, as well as how the infrastructure created in Israel has made it possible to pursue a comprehensive approach to long-term care research.

In 1983 long-term care was included as one of the major areas to be addressed in the Institute's new five-year plan. From the outset the objective was to address the issue from a comprehensive perspective. Thus the following four major sub-areas were defined and initiatives undertaken in each: Estimating and Projecting Needs; the Organization of Care; Quality Assurance; and Resource Allocation and Appropriate Channelling.

During this same period the NII began to gear up for the development of new legislation to finance long-term care services and for a supporting program of research. These two independent yet mutually reinforcing and mutually related initiatives were to yield a broad spectrum of research outputs.

One major outcome was the extensive documentation of the existing network of long-term care provision (Factor et al., 1982) and of how effectively the delivery of care was organized (Brodsky et al., 1987).

A second set of studies addressed the complex issue of needs and unmet needs. These studies (Morginstin, 1984; Habib et al., 1986; Factor et al., 1986; Habib and Factor, 1987) were based on community surveys that had the unique feature of including a professional assessment of care needs and of the appropriate division between formal and informal care for each and every case in the samples.

On the basis of these unique data it was possible to provide national estimates of unmet needs for a range of long-term care services and to cost out various approaches to financing long-term care. In addition, these studies were used to develop multivariate projection models that were used to project the implications of demographic change for the growth in needs or to estimate needs for different areas of the country.

A very different thrust was the evaluation of the quality of care. Such evaluations were carried out for a number of selective services. These evaluation efforts included extensive study of the quality of institutional care, an evaluation of day-hospital programs, and the evaluation of the adequacy of the relative costs of institutional and community care (Cohen and Schwartz, 1985; Fleishman and Tomer, 1986; Habib et al., 1986).

Finally, the approaches used in the national studies were also applied in microcosm to the more integrated evaluation of long-term care needs and their translation into an overall long-term plan for service development at the municipal level (Jerusalem Municipality, 1985; Tel Aviv-Jaffo Municipality, 1986).

All of this research was fed directly into the policymaking process. In addition to having an impact on the Nursing Law and on service planning in ESHEL, they directly led to the adoption of major new national systems to bring about more effective coordination of care between the health and social services and to establish a national case management system. Moreover, the cumulative effect of these research efforts was not only to help in service planning but also to help create a consensus with respect to the need for change and provide the impetus for introducing change.

## CONCLUSION

There is much that is fortuitous in the process of linking policy and research. It is never possible to predict in advance what piece of research will actually have the greatest impact. There is no one set of conditions that will be sufficient to ensure success or that can be viewed as a necessary prerequisite for success. The more relevant question is whether it is possible to maximize the probability of a successful link.

Neither policymakers nor researchers are fully satisfied with the existing links. Yet there is a broad consensus that the basic conditions for a productive relationship between research and policy have been established. As the system continues to learn how to most effectively exploit these conditions, we can look forward to a growing contribution of research to policy in the years ahead.

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Making the link between policy and resea

Habib, Jack



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### המכון

הוא מכון ארצי למחקר, לניסוי ולחינוך בגרונטולוגיה והתפתחות אדם וחברה. הוא נוסד ב־1974 ופועל במסגרת הג'וינט האמריקאי (ועד הסיוע המאוחד של יהודי אמריקה), בעזרתן של קרן ברוקדייל בניו־יורק וממשלת ישראל.

בפעולתו מנסה המכון לזהות בעיות חברתיות ולהציב להן פתרונות חילופיים בשירותי הבריאות והשירותים הסוציאליים בכללם. אחד מיעדיו הוא להגביר שיתוף הפעולה של מומחים מהאקדמיות והממשלה, עובדי ציבור ופעילים בקהילה כדי לגשר בין מחקר לבין מימוש מסקנות מחקר הלכה למעשה.

### דפי דיון

נכתבים על־ידי חברים מצוות המכון ומתפרסמים להתייחסותם של אנשי מקצוע ומתמחים במדעי החברה וההתנהגות, עובדי ציבור ונבחרי ציבור, המשתתפים בעיצובם של המדיניות והשירותים החברתיים.

הכוונה היא להפנות תשומת לב לסוגיות חברתיות בעלות חשיבות לאומית לשם העשרת הדיון הציבורי לקידום של המדיניות, ההסדרים והשירותים החברתיים.

המימצאים והמסקנות המוצגים בדפים הם של המחבר או המחברים וללא כוונה ליצג את אלה של המכון או של פרטים יוגופים אחרים הקשורים למכון.

**יצירת זיקה בין מדיניות לבין מחקר בתחום ההזדקנות:  
לקחים מישראל**

**ג'ק חביב**

**גירסא מעודכנת של מאמר שפורסם ב- Approaches to Linking Policy and  
Research in Aging: Israel and Florida, Report of a Conference. 1988.  
Milan Dluhy, Jack Habib, Martha Pelaez, and Max Rothman (eds.).  
In Cooperation with the International Exchange Center on Aging  
and the Southeast Florida Center on Aging, Brookdale Monograph Series.**

יולי, 1991

ירושלים

אב תשנ"א

ג'וינט - מכון ברוקדייל לגרונטולוגיה  
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ת.ד. 13087  
ירושלים 91130, ישראל  
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## תקציר

החזקנות המהירה של אוכלוסיית ישראל במהלך 10-15 השנים האחרונות הביאה לפיתוח מואץ של המחקר הגרונטולוגי. חוקרים רואים הכרח גובר והולך בהקדשת מאמצים לפיתוח בסיס ידע מוצק, אשר יסייע לקובעי המדיניות להתמודד בצורה מועילה עם השינוי הדמוגרפי. יוזמות חקיקה שונות, שהתמקדו בהרחבת הזכאויות, כמו גם בהקמת במסגרות ארגוניות חדשות שנועדו לקשישים, הביאו ליצירת קשר בין מדיניות למחקר.

שניים מן הארגונים שמלאו תפקיד מרכזי בחיזוק הקשר בין מדיניות למחקר היו אשל-האגודה לתכנון ולפיתוח שירותים למען הזקן בישראל, שהוקם ב-1969 על-ידי ארגון הג'וינט האמריקני (AJJDC), בשיתוף משרדי ממשלה שונים; ומכון ברוקדייל, שנוסד על-ידי ארגון הג'וינט האמריקני וממשלת ישראל ב-1974, ומשקף את התפיסה שמחקר עשוי לתרום באופן פורה לקביעת מדיניות ולעבודה המקצועית בשדה.

מאמר זה מנתח כמה מן הגורמים שהשפיעו על יצירת הקשר בין מדיניות למחקר בישראל, תוך שימת דגש מיוחד על התפתחותו של מכון ברוקדייל. במסגרת הניתוח, נבחנים מרכיבי ההיצע (מחקר) ומרכיבי הביקוש (מדיניות), המשפיעים על קשרי מדיניות-מחקר. המאמר גם מעריך את המרכיבים המבניים והתפעוליים של המכון שנמצאו חשובים בפיתוח קשר זה.

ההיבטים השונים של יצירת הקשר בין מחקר למדיניות הנדונים בעבודה, כוללים איתור מקורות מימון קבועים לביצוע מחקרי עומק מתמשכים ומקיפים, אשר עשויים להשפיע באורח חיובי על החלטות המדיניות; שילוב קובעי המדיניות בתהליך המחקר והגברת האמון בין חוקרים לקובעי המדיניות; הפניית משאבים הולמים להפצת הממצאים; וכן יצירת מגוון הזדמנויות לחיזוק הקשר בין מחקר, מדיניות וביצוע.

חוקרים, קובעי מדיניות ואנשי מקצוע בשדה, המחויבים לקידומו ולפיתוחו של הקשר בין מדיניות למחקר, ימצאו עניין בניסיון שנרכש עד עתה, המסוכם במאמר זה.

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