

# **Evaluating Social Programs**

**Theory, Practice, and Politics**

edited by PETER H. ROSSI and WALTER WILLIAMS

A Volume in the

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES IN SOCIAL RELATIONS Series

How effective is it? would seem to be an obvious question to ask about any social program, but, as this book illustrates, many large-scale social programs make little provisions for testing and evaluating their results. This collection of essays addresses itself to three basic questions crucial to effective social action and, consequently, to the lives of those who are supposed to benefit from them: Why has so little high quality evaluative research been done? What problems are involved in developing more evaluative research and using its results in policy making? and, What should government and social scientists do to foster soundly conceived and executed evaluative research?

The essays in this book — all of them written by leading social scientists — throw new light on each of these questions, but special attention is devoted to the first: i.e., the conceptual, methodological, bureaucratic, political, and organizational factors that hinder sound evaluation. The essays, of course, deal not only with the complexities associated with each factor, but also with the many ways in which the factors become intertwined in practice. Contents include: An Overview. Evaluative Research: Theory. Evaluative Research: Practice. Organizing for Large-Scale Evaluative Research.

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