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July 17, 2003

Dr. Thomas R. Insel, MD - Chairperson
National Advisory Mental Health Council
National Institute of Mental Health
6001 Executive Blvd.
Bethesda, MD 20892-9669

Dear Dr. Insel:

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the National Advisory Mental Health Council and as Director of NIMH.

Would you and the National Advisory Mental Health Council be willing to look at the overview concerning internalized hierarchical images and the growth of the capacity for rational and independent thought on pp. 20-24 of the enclosed review chapter, "Wisdom in Public Policy"? It will appear next year from Cambridge University Press in a volume edited by Robert Sternberg, current President of the American Psychological Association.

The new measures of vivid hierarchical images and links to brain physiology might open creative and important lines of investigation of irrationality and mental illness, and there may eventually prove to be implications for treatment.

The development and validation of the new measures is beyond anything that any single researcher can do. There probably needs to be an institutional route by which NIMH or another potential supporter of fast discovery science can receive a recommendation.

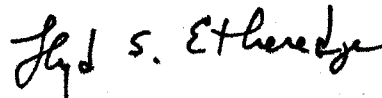
At this point, the initiative has reached an impasse. The schema has created wide interest as a framework to understand recycling ideological passions and agendas. However programs to develop new measures to test and improve the framework, and study its implications, have never been recommended because they arrived in the NAS/NRC social science system fifteen years ago when they

implied a civically-relevant test of the economic policies of President Reagan, and they were headed-off. As you will infer from the enclosed correspondence a further, and frustrating, barrier has been encountered via economists who associate the schema with a threat to their paradigm and a potential endorsement of using psychological/motivational ideas for economic policy.¹

By now my role, too, has been changing. There is a wider problem of last-generation economic models and measures that are (quantifiably) losing touch with a changing reality but without (yet) the creative ferment that is required for fast discovery economics. There has been damage to the country, and the role of the project that I direct is becoming more confrontational in tone - with the result that I am probably not the right person to bring the new ideas and initiative for new measures through the nonmedical scientific advisory system.

I think these ideas are too promising not to be moving along.

Sincerely,



(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
Government Learning Project

¹ There are further background papers about the model and the history of the battles on www.policyscience.net. While the intent of the original proposal was to improve the rationality of public policy, it seems to have reactivated opposition in every direction.