Interwar Studies of Mass Communications: Envisioning the Conduct of Social Science and a National Political Life in the United States

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INTRODUCTION

When social scientists studied mass communications in the interwar period (1918-1938), they also played a role in creating it. That U.S. broadcast and print consumers constituted a national public was a reality that discursive work and collective agreement engendered. In this sense, 'mass media' was as much the product of social science as it was of natural scientific innovation. I have found that social scientists' discussions of mass communications were intertwined with their work to explicate publics and political life. In varied ways, social scientists tied the production and consumption of mass communications to accounts of democratic process and stability. Operating within these accounts were claims regarding the professions of social science, policymaking, and journalism. At the Social Science Research Council – an institution founded in 1923 to promote the social sciences – sociologists, political scientists, economists, and others rallied under the banner of social science in pursuit of a collaborative relationship with policymakers; they were suspicious of journalists as unscientific and populist, and they were confident that social science and federal policy could unify the U.S. public – a recipe for stable democracy. Similarly, at the University of Chicago – a central institution for the relatively new discipline of sociology – sociologist Robert Park and many of his colleagues were writing about democracy in terms of a public, often with reference to international warfare or immigration;

in this case the idea was that social scientists and journalists could synthesize facts about the social world, then via the press, enable local and national publics to participate effectively in democracy.

In other words, this thesis makes the following argument. Social scientists' studies of mass communications transformed existing meanings of politics. I argue that the particular forms and forces that these meanings assumed can be accounted for by considering the existing and desired relationships between actors in the fields of social science, journalism, and politics. These relationships were structured by strategy—directed by the pursuit of professional advancement and legitimacy—and morality oriented toward preservation of democracy in the United States. Mass communications altered politics in that it produced a new political actor through its concentration of the previously divided attentions of the people of the United States into a public. As such, mass communications was the concern and creation of actors in the fields of social science, journalism, and politics.

The democratic politics that the social scientists who are the focus of this thesis espoused appears in two forms. In each of these forms, the agency to be exercised by 'the public' must be safeguarded in some way by social scientists in order to assure the maintenance of democracy. The characteristics of 'the public' and the social scientist vary across these forms. In the democratic politics pursued by the Social Science Research Council (form 1), 'the public' is an impressionable actor that needs the protection and management of social scientists

and policymakers. According to social scientists at the University of Chicago (form 2), democracy could be assured by the presentation of social scientific knowledge to 'the public' through mass communications; this knowledge would serve as common ground for democratic discourse among members of 'the public.' Again, I contend that through the successful spread of these conceptual forms for democratic politics, social scientists at the University of Chicago and the SSRC not only asserted a prominent role for social science in political and academic arenas, but in the process, reshaped (or challenged) those arenas to include a new relation to 'the public.'

In my examination of the SSRC and University of Chicago forms of democratic politics, I am concerned primarily with their relationships to the concurrent development of social science. To approach these relationships, I narrate and offer an analysis of four projects in which interwar social scientists engaged. These projects are: [1] the 1933 Chicago World's Fair Hall of Social Science plans, [2] the 1938 Rockefeller sponsored *Conference on the Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for the General Public*, [3] the *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (1933) survey, and [4] the 'Americanization' study of Robert Park, a University of Chicago sociologist.

The social scientists I consider were anchored by two institutions, among others: the University of Chicago (UC) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC).[1] My work explores printed products of individual social scientists and

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[1] Again, this is not to suggest these were the only locations at which such concerns existed. I take

their institutions, in which (often ostensibly separate) scholarly and moral

concerns regarding the communication of knowledge to 'the public', particularly

via mass communications, were expressed. Of course, these sites are far from

bounded—their overlap, interpenetration, and exchange are significant both for

those social scientists' accounts and mine. For instance, William Ogburn, a major

player at the SSRC, also moved to the sociology department at the University of

Chicago in 1927.

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Projects 1-3 had ties to the Social Science Research Council. This

organization collected as members individual scholars from the major social

science disciplinary associations, and one of its main goals was the promotion of

the status of social science in 'the public' and governmental eye.[2] SSRC's

foremost activity was the identification of what it considered to be social

problems which could be better understood and perhaps eliminated as a result of

social science research. Once identified, funding would be provided and scholars

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these two locations as both exemplary and significant due to their contemporaneously influential positions in sociology. Also of note is that Rockefeller philanthropy extensively funded many institutions that contained a social science component, including the University of Chicago and SSRC.

[2] The SSRC was founded in 1923 with the support of funding from Rockefeller philanthropy and later minor assistance from Carnegie and Russell Sage philanthropy. Though I do not discuss it here, Rockefeller philanthropy also supported the formation under Paul Lazarsfeld of the Office of Radio Research, later to become the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University. In addition, Rockefeller supported the development of social science resources and programming at many major universities, including the University of Chicago. The relation of philanthropy to the development of the sciences is considered in detail in many locations, including Fisher 1993, Kleinman 1995, and Buxton and Turner 1992.

solicited to attack these problem areas or topics that encompassed problems. For instance, in the 1920s, two prominent areas of focus were international relations and industrial relations; these areas correlated with salient anxieties in the broader context of the United States—in this case, the socialist/communist scares, economic decline, and union fears. Historian of social science Donald Fisher (1993) and others argue that research was of course oriented toward specific social conditions generating broader concerns in the U.S.

Project 1

The Chicago Fair in 1933 planned exhibits for millions of projected visitors around the theme 'A Century of Progress.' The SSRC was asked to prepare a Hall of Social Science to complement a Hall of Science (read Natural Science), and SSRC members eagerly discussed the possibility of raising public awareness and appreciation for social science by way of the exhibits for the building. SSRC members certainly seemed to scale their particular presentation of social science according to the natural science model in pursuit of increased status. However, I also find that underlying notions of 'the public,' the consequences of communicating knowledge to it, and the application of social scientific knowledge informed the SSRC's plans.

Project 2

In the late 1930s, communication of knowledge to 'the public' remained a

concern of the SSRC and others in the U.S. academy. The *Conference on the Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for the General Public* (1938) brought together Ogburn, natural scientists, and members of the press. The participants rehashed earlier debates about pure and applied knowledge, linked them to visions of society, and again presumed a public that their decisions and knowledge would affect. Indeed, Ogburn argued as he had earlier in the interwar period that mass communications and other inventions "have a tremendous effect in reorganizing society and in changing the nature of things" (1938: 47). In this he references the sense of a newly centralizing nation which was becoming apparent in the 1920s and 1930s.

Project 3

The years of preparation leading up to the World's Fair coincided with another lofty project jumpstarted by the SSRC. In agreement with President Hoover, the SSRC constituted a Research Committee on Social Trends that went on to employ thousands of social scientists in a massive survey of the United States. The final report, *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (1933), included a chapter and separate monograph regarding trends in mass communications—*Communication Agencies and Social Life* (Willey and Rice: 1933). William Ogburn and Howard Odum, also World's Fair planners, as well as other top SSRC members viewed this survey as an opportunity to produce social scientific knowledge that would aid government policy makers. Although

debates abounded among these social scientists regarding the appropriate form of knowledge to be produced, the finished products of the survey conveyed the perspective that prevailed. I suggest that here, too, the projects of defining 'the public' as an audience and as a crucial component of democratic society enabled SSRC members to introduce claims about the appropriate relationship between social science and the state.

Project 4

Unlike most at the SSRC, Robert Ezra Park located the active potential to sustain democracy in 'the public' itself. Mass communications, rather than molding the mind of 'the public' according to a singular, unreflective perspective, would empower individuals of diverse backgrounds to engage with one another and establish community. Park, a prominent member of the University of Chicago's Sociology Department, devoted a great deal of scholarship to the study of newspapers as a part of U.S. life. For instance, he conducted an *Americanization* study (1922) that examined the role of the presses in immigrant life and national integration. In addition, he produced much scholarship in the area of race relations. A student of the famed pragmatist philosopher John Dewey, the two shared a concern with democracy and 'the public'. Park and Dewey located 'the public' as a rational agent of positive social change; they argued that the communication of social scientific knowledge to an educated public would result in the generation of intelligent and applicable changes in

social structure. Park frequently pushed the claim that his work was to gather facts to which others would ascribe value. Following Lindner (1996), I find that Park's sociological work also contains the marks of an earlier career in journalism, such as his emphasis on empirical, observational methodology.

The Interwar Period

Many scholars have produced literature regarding the late 19th and early 20th century development of the social sciences, a time when disciplinary roots and boundaries were established in U.S. universities. This literature has demonstrated the importance of the natural science model as well as the distinctions between pure/applied and qualitative/quantitative research in informing the social science project in the United States.[3] Previous research has focused also on the World War Two period and the post-war establishment of the landmark National Science Foundation.[4] This thesis focuses on the interwar period that falls between the early period of disciplinary initiation and the later moment of academic consolidation which resulted in the NSF legislation. My analysis relies on this earlier work in the history of social science but also seeks to highlight the significance of mass communications studies which began in the interwar period. By social science, I mean [1] understandings (both within and

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[3] In Chapter 1, I note findings in Projects 1 and 2 that corroborate the findings of this literature.
[4] These relationships continued to change in the reorganizations of knowledge and power that attended World War Two. When debates regarding the formation of the National Science Foundation (Klausner and Lidz 1986) resurfaced after the war, the dominant interwar SSRC model for relations between social science, other professions, and the public that I discuss in this thesis was circulated to some degree of success among Congress.

beyond U.S. social science communities) of social scientific obligations and methodologies and [2] lasting, actual professional relationships between social scientists and others.

SSRC and UC social scientists in the interwar period produced social knowledges for new publics, real and imagined (Bell 1976; Bulmer 1992; Schudson 1978), in the context of interwar corporate consolidation of the communications industry and varied economic, political, and social instabilities. These instabilities included a wave of immigration in the 1920s, increased crime rates, the fallout of World War I, and the economic devastation of the Great Depression (1929-arguably 1941). The political landscape included the fairly new institution of the nation-state and fear of the spread of fascist governments following the First World War. Communications expanded dramatically.[5] Though it was not inevitable, social scientific and political actors framed the emergence of an American public/nation in conjunction with these changes.[6] As early as 1922, Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover spoke of changes in government policy with regard to radio as aimed to promote the "spread of certain predetermined matters of public interest from central stations" (Quoted in Schwarzlose 1984: 100). Perhaps an indication of a pervasive shift in thinking about 'the public' and social science, the *New York Times*'s use of the term

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[5] In radio, for instance, the end of World War I opened the way for industry to develop centralized radio stations and to sell receivers to would be radio audience members. While in 1921, only one radio station was to be found, by 1923, there were 556. This number jumped to 955 by 1941. At the same time, the percentage of households with receivers jumped from .02 per cent in 1922, to 55.2 in 1932, to 81.5 by the eve of the Second World War (Schwarzlose 1984)

[6] The availability of information like the above figures probably serves as a further indicator of the concerns of those who were trying to define mass communications and its significance.

'public' in the interwar period doubled in comparison to the previous eighteen years. Across the same time frames, the coincidence of 'social science' and 'public' increased nearly six-fold.[7]

My arguments regarding the rising association between social science and 'the public' are informed by theory and scholarship in the history of social science, and sociologies of knowledge, intellectuals, science, and ideas. Previous scholarship in these areas has addressed intellectuals' debates about basic and applied knowledge and the ways in which science could or should be incorporated into politics (e.g. Fisher 1993). However, the co-constitutive relationship between interwar social scientific study of mass communications, contemporaneous understandings of basic and applied knowledge, as well as fact and value has received little attention. The following chapters attend to this relationship. In addition to raising these connections, my narratives about how social scientists recast notions of publics in their research, as well as different claims about the appropriate roles of social science and politics in the United States, challenge the argument that social scientific activity is primarily entrepreneurial. Previous scholarship concerning the development of social science in particular contexts often looks to indicators such as the distribution of capital, political support, adherence to norms, and locations in networks, and entrepreneurial drive to explain what transpired (e.g. Bourdieu 1991, Fisher 1993; Latour 1987). I

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[7] This cursory observation is made comes from a search of *New York Times* in the ProQuest database. From January 1, 1900 to December 1917, the term public appeared in 933,694 documents. From January 1, 1918 to December 31, 1938, the term public appeared in 1,874,980 documents. From 1900 to 1917, "public" and "social science" appeared together in 175 documents, while from 1918 to 1938 the terms appeared together in 1036 documents.

demonstrate that in addition to a strategy of professional empowerment, social scientists at the University of Chicago and the Social Science Research Council were oriented by a moral concern for the welfare of 'the public'.

Theoretical Orientation

Certainly, historical sociological and anthropological work has considered the development of the nation, 'the public,' and related forms. For instance, Jurgen Habermas (1989) has explored the development of a bourgeois public sphere in western societies—a public in which private citizens publicly exercise reason. Daniel Bell has observed a correlation between "revolutions in transportation and communication" and the "creation of national societies" (1976: 209). In this thesis I seek to focus attention on the importance of discursive work and professional relationships that coincided with the changes noted by Habermas, Bell, and others, such as Benedict Anderson (1983). While 'the public' as a group of people that acquired their knowledge or opinions through mass communications may have become empirical realities, exchange among the fields of social science, journalism, and politics generated conceptual forms that made the expression of these realities possible. Furthermore, actors in those fields engaged with these realities in those terms.

In Chapter 1, which follows, I outline the broader ideological terrains from which social scientific study of mass communications grew. Conflict often centered on the distinction between basic and applied, and quantitative and

qualitative research. Tied to these divisions were concerns regarding objectivity

and issues of fact and value, issues that were also debated hotly within journalism.

I use material from Projects 1 and 2, the World's Fair and 1938 Conference, to

demonstrate the particular deployments of concepts in relation to notions of 'the

public' and mass communications. These projects were not direct studies of the

mass communication, yet social scientists relied upon a model of 'the public' as

constituted by mass communications audiences. Thus, 'the public' as a *boundary*

object (Star and Griesemer 1989), created by work involving actors from different

fields, significantly oriented social scientific practice and concerns.

I emphasize the usefulness of Bourdieuian *field* theory for the

consideration of definitions and distinctions, such as fact and value, as forces in

the development of social science (e.g. Bourdieu 1985, 2005; Bensen and Neveu

2005). However, I note its limitations, as suggested by critics Boyer (2005),

Alexander (2003), and Garnham (1993) who point to Bourdieu's reduction or

subordination of all else, including culture, to the concerns of political struggle. I

also consider Lamont and Molnár's concepts (2002) *social boundaries* and

symbolic boundaries in order to think about the scale at and degree to which

distinctions may guide actions and outcomes. I argue that 'the public,' as a

conceptual entity gathered by mass communications, was a *boundary object* (Star

and Griesemer 1989; see Chapter 1) that emerged from the engagement of the

fields of social science, politics, and journalism. As such, 'the public' could be

invoked to support the formation of institutionalized relationships or identities for social scientists and policymakers.

In Chapter 2, I address the *Recent Social Trends* study conducted by social scientists from the SSRC. I demonstrate how the model of 'the public,' as developed in relationship to research regarding mass communications, contributed to a form of democratic politics in which social scientists collaborated with federal policymakers to ensure the protection of 'the public' and the stability of democracy. In this project, exchange between actors in politics and social science shaped the model of 'the public' as associated with mass communications, and I argue that 'the public' represented a *boundary object* for this constellation of relationships.

In Chapter 3, I turn to the 'Americanization' study of Robert Park. Park, a co-founder of the Chicago School of sociology, joined his understanding of the formation of 'the public' to his study of newspapers in the United States. For him, the social scientist was to produce knowledge that would be disseminated to 'the public' through mass communications with the aim of fostering democratic engagement between individuals who both possessed varied experiences as well as a common base of knowledge. In this case, I argue that Park drew on his past engagements with other fields; however, the form of democratic politics, which included concepts of 'the public' and the newspaper, asserted in his scholarship remained consequential primarily within the field of social science itself. The reach of Park's form of democratic politics likely owes its dimensions to the

model of the social scientist as working independently of other professions. Here,

'the public' was a social scientific, symbolic object, which organized the

professional identity and moral concerns of a group of empirical sociologists.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PUBLIC AS A PROFESSIONAL COMPASS: THE MASS-MEDIATED CONCERNS OF INTERWAR SOCIAL SCIENCE

Social scientific activity contributed to a redefinition of the terms of political life in the United States in the interwar period (1918-1938). The activities of debate and planning produced accounts of 'mass communications,' which served as a locus for the discussion of democratic politics.[8] Of course, existing social concepts structured/informed these accounts; in this chapter, I argue that 'the public' was one of the central specific concepts employed by social scientists. Consideration of this concept complements previous scholarship that has documented the way academia, politics, and journalism were organized around distinctions of basic and applied science, democracy and fascism, natural science and social science, and fact and value (Fisher 1993; Schudson 1978; Bourdieu 2005). I consider these distinctions as dimensions of an interwar social scientific *field* that were manipulated in relation to 'the public' as a concept; in other words, I consider these distinctions as public-oriented. I wish to convey the seemingly contradictory objectives in one major strand of interwar social science

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[8] In later chapters, and to a smaller extent in this one, I show that the meanings negotiated in debates and planning internal to academic communities were also used in discourse and professional negotiations with members of government and the news media.

– the production of fact undirected by value, and the provision of facts with an eye to the maintenance of democracy and the protection of the malleable public from the falsehoods of propaganda. Social scientists' simultaneous, contradictory claims often blurred and reorganized the distinctions of basic and applied science, fact and value, and democracy and fascism; throughout, 'the public' remained a focal point for discussions of professional identity and democratic politics. SSRC members displayed aspirations to increased professional status for social science aside as well as a wish to protect the American public from the likes of the fascist media controllers abroad. 'The public' anchored both of these aims.

This chapter introduces the form of democratic politics and 'the public' through a discussion of two projects with which social scientists at the Social Science Research Council were involved: the 1933 Chicago World's Fair and the 1938 *Conference on the Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for the General Public*. With two narratives, I highlight the operation/presence of 'the public' and distinctions oriented toward it in structuring the actions of social scientists affiliated with the Social Science Research Council as well as the broader academic field. First, I describe the plans of SSRC social scientists to represent social science at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. Second, I discuss the recorded conversation from a 1938 conference of scientists and journalists regarding communication of science to 'the public.' More specifically, these narratives introduce [1] a group of social scientists that was engaged in the development of

self-representations with which to impress World's Fair attendees and [2] a direct

debate between natural scientists, social scientists, and journalists about the

appropriate jurisdiction (Abbott 1988/2001) of their respective professions. In

each narrative I suggest that social scientists operated with a notion of 'the public'

as a group constituted by its common, passive consumption of identical material.[9]

These projects are exemplary of one of two major strands of social scientific

engagement with the term 'the public'; the other stems from the work of Robert

Park, who joined some of his mentors' work on 'the public' to his sociological

understanding of the newspaper.[10] While 'the public' as understood by Park was

an active force in democracy, 'the public' of social scientists (e.g. William

Ogburn and Howard Odum) in this chapter and the following one is passive.

To understand parts of what was happening with the World's Fair and

Conference projects with regard to the development of the social sciences, I

consider these models of 'the public' as elements in a *field* of social science in the

United States in the interwar period. The social scientific *field*, as an analytic, and

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[9] While the idea of 'the public' was not new to the social scientific lexicon, its change in use by social scientists in the interwar period coincided with federal and corporate restructuring, consolidation, and expansion of mass communications networks and technology. For a discussion of changes in mass communications, see, for example, Starr (2004), Schudson (1978), and Sklar (1994). For a more explicit analysis of the use of *public* in relation to social scientific understandings of mass communications and the professions associated with it, see Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

[10] The second formulation of the *public*, which uses the work of Robert Ezra Park at the University of Chicago as an exemplar, is addressed in a later chapter. This *public* relates more to the enlightenment model of research as described by Janowitz (1970). I relate Park's formulation of the public to his experiences in a variety of settings, including his education with John Dewey (for a nice overview of his views as related to the public and democracy, see Whipple 2005), his past career as a journalist (Matthews 1977; Schudson 1978; Lindner 1996), and his graduate education in Germany, where he encountered European literatures on the crowd (Matthews 1977). This discussion will also pick up the distinction between qualitative and quantitative work in the social sciences (e.g. Abbott 1999).

to some extent, concrete object, consisted of actors and institutions that operated

using a cultural, symbolic logic that engaged the above distinctions.[11]

Importantly, a range of 'viewpoints' *within* and *beyond* the social scientific field

both defined and accounted for variance (actions, conceptual frames, outcomes) in

the social scientific field across time and place. Again, the fields that interacted in

some capacity with social science included journalism, politics, and (natural)

science.[12]

The field model as advanced by Bourdieu and subsequent scholars is

concerned primarily with understanding variance in relation to, and as motivated

by, struggles to reproduce or achieve symbolic dominance.[13] I have found that

the social scientific projects under study in this thesis were in part motivated

explicitly by a desire to increase the status of social science in the academy and in

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[11] Of course, other forces, such as financial capital, were at work in this field; however, the focus of thesis this is the actors, institutions, and logics mentioned above. Bourdieu (1985) outlined the field as a multidimensional space in which symbolic struggles are waged. The stakes involve representation of the social world as well as of the field and the hierarchy within and among fields. The social world is a space constituted by active principles of differentiation or distribution. The space is a field of forces/objective power relations imposed on all agents who enter the field (the field is irreducible to agents' intentions or interactions). The constitutive principles of the field/space *are* the different kinds of power/capital in the field, and different logics may be found in different fields. Agents may be assembled really or nominally, possibly through a delegate. In this way, national identity may be mobilized as a principle of division. There is a relationship between social scientifically produced classifications and those that agents are producing. For the field of social science under consideration here, it is important to note that the natural sciences were also engaged in relations with the fields of politics, journalism, and commerce. This interaction doubtless shaped those fields into the forms that the social sciences encountered. See sociologist Daniel Lee Kleinman's (1995) historical work on the scientific field, or sphere, during the interwar to the post-World War Two periods, for an account of overlap and interaction with scientific institutions and other institutional spheres, including the state.
[12] Another field that I will not discuss here is philanthropy, which other scholars of this period have considered (see, e.g. Fisher 1993).
[13] Similarly, the majority of previous scholarship concerning the development of social science in particular contexts often looks to indicators such as the distribution of capital, political support, adherence to norms, and locations in networks to explain what transpired with an emphasis on status projects (e.g. Bourdieu 1991, Fisher 1993, Solovey 2004).

US political life (to include representation in news media, recognition of politicians, and recognition of 'the public').[14] However, additional concerns, such as the stability of democracy and the protection of 'the public' from malevolent influence, drove and structured these projects. This resists complete relegation to one of the above status-oriented rubrics. The field model is helpful but incomplete. As another critic of field theory has written, Bourdieu's field model inappropriately reduces culture to a 'dependent variable'—"a gearbox, not an engine," a set of "circumstantial homologies" (Alexander 2003: 18). In fact, I join a chorus of voices critical of Bourdieu's relegation of all else, including culture, to the stakes of [self-interested] political struggle (Boyer 2005, Alexander 2003, and Garnham 1993).

Instead, through reference to a field I intend to hold in consideration the relation of the institutional and social spaces that the individuals and organizations have inhabited to their activities in the particular projects under discussion here. I argue that in addition to status projects, social scientists' moral concerns and an engagement with the fields of journalism, natural science, and politics need to be taken into account for the development of social science. Thus, I use the field concept to map actors, concepts, and some dynamics, but not as an overarching analytic.[15] In this spirit, I note the value in considering the

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[14] It is widely argued that early twentieth century social scientists improved their status in the United States by emulating the existing, prestigious model of natural science (e.g. Ross 2003; Smelser 1992; Fisher 1993; Bulmer 1992; Solovey 2004).

[15] In a discussion of overlapping or interacting fields, it is worth noting Bourdieu's concept of the field of power (although his analysis relates more directly to a later period in French history, and it is more formal than I feel is appropriate for the state of relationships between fields I consider

unequal stature, resources, and power among the fields under discussion. These

disparities likely contributed to the availability, adoption, and pursuit of particular

relationships and concepts over others.[16]

My overall argument that is specific to the four social scientific projects—

of which the World's Fair and 1938 Conference are two—considered in this thesis

is that the object of 'the public' laid out here in this chapter assumed greater force

when it was attached to another object, mass communications. Together the

assertion of the prevailing models of the objects of mass communications and 'the

public' as components of US political life contributed to the transformation of

symbolic boundaries drawn by social scientific actors into the *social boundaries*

defining the relationship between federal policymakers and social scientists.[17]

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here). He argues that the journalistic field and transformations of it are central to the field of power, "an ensemble of centrally located fields…including social sciences and politics (both state and parties or associations)…that compete to impose" the legitimate view of the social world (6). The fields of journalism, politics, and social science are social universes that are "relatively autonomous and independent, but each exerts effects on the others" (Bourdieu 2005[1994]: 29-30).

[16] For instance, during the interwar period, the natural sciences (partnered with industry and government) enjoyed more prestige than the social sciences, while the ordering of journalism and social science remained unclear. Following Bourdieu and Kleinman, I consider the social scientific field as one that changed over time and possessed greater and lesser degrees of autonomy from other fields. For a version of Bourdieu's discussion of the autonomy/heteronomy of fields that addresses social science, politics, and journalism (oriented to the French context), see Bourdieu 2005. For a brief historical argument regarding the increasing heteronomy and institutionalization of U.S. science beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, see Kleinman 1995.

[17] Through this social construction, I find that social scientists drew upon public-oriented distinctions and their notion of the *public* to conjure an association of moral concerns and professional relationships with mass communications. Once these concerns and relations were attached to media technology, social scientists had the moral leverage to enter and animate debates surrounding the establishment of the National Science Foundation, a landmark institution for the development of the sciences in the United States. There are also instances of involvement of social scientists in government around which similar concerns and relationships were evoked by social scientists. One case of this, *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (1933), is the subject of Chapter 2.

In thinking about the shifting force of conceptual distinctions, I have chosen to employ a distinction made by Lamont and Molnár (2002) between *symbolic boundaries*, "conceptual distinctions made by social actors," and *social boundaries*, "objectified forms of social differences" (2002: 168).[18] This distinction well suits an analysis of "the role of symbolic resources (e.g., conceptual distinctions, interpretive strategies, cultural traditions) in creating, maintaining, contesting, or even dissolving institutionalized social differences" (2002: 168); this distinction enables me to move away from a completely status-oriented frame of analysis, to sustain attention to moral and cultural structures (Alexander 2003), and to attend to the shifting force and scope of concepts. To restate my earlier argument using another new term: the roles social scientists claimed for themselves and others, such as journalists and policymakers, marked symbolic boundaries that would, I argue, with the *boundary object*[19] of mass communications/public become social boundaries. Boundaries may act "as important interfaces enabling communication across communities" from which *boundary objects*—"material objects, organizational forms, conceptual spaces or

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[18] Lamont and Molnar's work is an outgrowth of sociologist Thomas Gieryn's (1999) scholarship on *boundary-work*., which involves the attribution of qualities and the production of differentiated spaces or groups. For him, the conferral of legitimacy to a particular way of knowing or of doing science depends upon the presence of a pragmatic demand or outlet for such knowledge.

[19] As Lamont and Molnár note, boundary-object is a concept initially developed by Susan Leigh Starr and her collaborators. See, in particular, Star and Griesemer 1989. Star and Griesemer draw on the Callon-Latour-Law model of translations and *interessement* ("the translation of the concerns of the non-scientists into those of the scientist"), sharing a concern with "the *flow* of objects and concepts through the *network* of participating allies and social worlds" (1989: 389). Star and Griesemer diverge from this model in several ways, such as in their insistence that the perspectives of multiple allies ('managers'/professionals and 'amateurs' alike) be considered in accounts of the flow of objects and concepts through networks.

procedures"— emerge (2002: 180).[20] *Boundary objects*, created by work

involving groups from different fields,[21] "both inhabit several intersecting social

worlds…*and* satisfy the informational requirements of each of them" (Star and

Griesemer 1989: 393); they are "plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the

constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a

common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and

become strongly structured in individual use" (1989: 393). The "boundary

nature" of these objects "is reflected by the fact that they are simultaneously

concrete and abstract, specific and general, conventionalized and customized,"

and they are "often internally heterogeneous" (1989: 408). For instance, in Star

and Griesemer's study (1989) of a zoology museum in Berkeley, California, they

find that California itself was a boundary object for a variety of actors who shared

the goal of the preservation of land in the western United States.

Beginning with the World's Fair and the 1938 Conference, I consider the

interplay of journalistic, natural scientific, social scientific, and political fields,

concepts (fact and value, pure and applied science, qualitative and quantitative

research, democracy and fascism, etc.), and concerns (the protection of 'the

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[20] Somewhat similar to Bourdieu and Alexander (2003), Lamont and Molnár note the assumption of a "universalistic stance" (while maintaining other particularities) by social actors in processes of group identification (2002: 188). Bourdieu has written of the self-interest of intellectuals in "universal interests" or "the defense of universal causes" (Kurzman and Owens 2002: 79) (presumably including democracy in the case of my research) that stems from symbolic profit such a defense yields.

[21] Star and Griesemer do not rely on the field concept, they instead refer to groups from different "worlds" (1989: 408). In this collective work, "people coming together form different social worlds frequently have the experience of addressing an object that has a different meaning for each of them. Each social world has partial jurisdiction over the resources represented by that object, and mismatches caused by the overlap become problems for negotiation" 1989:412).

public' and professional boundaries as well as the preservation of democracy) in the production of 'the public.'

A Fair Representation of Social Science

In the years before the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, the Board of Trustees for the Fair approached social scientists at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Seeking "the advice of men of wide outlook, sound judgment, and accurate scholarship,"[22] the planners wanted the Council to design an exhibition of social science in accordance with the Fair's theme, 'A Century of Progress.' Council members were ecstatic; a Committee report to the broader Council predicted that the Fair would serve as "the opportunity of a century to help promote the ultimate objectives of the Social Science Research Council in the developing and strengthening of social science everywhere."[23]

Through the World's Fair, the Council could define social science through a narration of its development – a century of social scientific progress. The Council's Advisory Committee was guided in part by sociologists Howard Odum and William Ogburn. They planned to illustrate this progress through exhibits such as a Hall of Public Welfare that would display "the field of public social

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[22] Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), Sleepy Hollow, NY. SSRC Collection, Accession 1, Series 1 Committee Projects, Sub-Series xix Misc. Projects, Box 125, Folder 686, Chicago World's Fair 1930-1933, Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, p. 45.

[23] RAC, SSRC Collection, Accession 1, Series 1 Committee Projects, Sub-Series xix Misc. Projects, Box 125, Folder 686, Chicago World's Fair 1930-1933, General Progress Report: Social Science Division, p.43. Indeed, one of the Council's main goals was the promotion of the status of social science in 'the public' and governmental eye.

work and much of applied government as it relates to ameliorative efforts."[24] The

plan was to represent social science as those developing the exhibits seemed to

view it, as "the working of science through and upon social organizations and

human institutions."[25] At the World's Fair, the Committee claimed, the Hall of

Social Science would not be primarily engaging with the "academic question of

whether the new social sciences are 'scientific.'"[26] Instead, the application of

social scientific work to "the effort to make a better society"[27] would be the

focus. However, I suggest that the decision to appeal to a model of applied

science was actually associated with the natural or physical sciences by social

scientists and this served implicitly as a way to address questions about the

"scientific-ness" of the social sciences. Explicitly, the Committee planned to

follow "the analogy of the basic sciences and applied sciences" – "the social

science group would find its greatest feature in the applications of the social

sciences to social life and institutions just as the physical sciences show their

major feature in the application of science to industry." [28] As noted earlier, many

historians of social science have argued that social scientists have long sought to

emulate the natural scientific model in their pursuit of cultural or scientific

[24] Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, pp. 22-25.

[25] Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, p. 5.

[26] They do consciously borrow the basic and applied research categories from what they call the physical sciences. Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, p.8 especially.

[27] Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, p. 5.

[28] Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, p. 8.

legitimacy (Fisher 1993; Solovey 2004). According to Bulmer (1992), interwar social scientific formulations of 'applied science'—or, for our purposes, symbolic boundaries demarcating applied science—employed the criterion of 'use.' Indeed, the application of social sciences for society was emphasized, even including social science 'laboratories' in which Fair attendees could participate. The Committee wrote that it aimed to "appeal to a large number of people in interesting ways; to meet the demands of this large public for instructive as well as interesting exhibits."[29] This is indicated in a description of the image of the social sciences the Council hoped to present:

> The social science exhibits should be done well…[so] they may be pictured as the new reach and grasp of science, and they have attained scientific proportions in their methods, results, and in the rating which they hold in the world of education and practical affairs (Odum 1933: 478).

In sharp contrast to these public claims about social science, the Council remained divided internally about the appropriateness of presenting the social sciences in this problem solving, applied fashion. Regardless of how the SSRC framed its research programs, research was oriented, of course, toward specific social conditions generating broader concerns in the U.S. As an example, in the 1920s, the dominant areas of focus for Council sponsored research were international relations, industrial relations, criminology, and interracial relations. These areas correlated with salient anxieties in the broader context of the United States: the socialist/communist scares, economic decline, union fears, increased

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[29] Work Plans for the Social Science Division, A Century of Progress, International Exposition, Chicago, 1933, dated September 15, 1931, pp. 4

crime rates, and racial tension (Fisher 1993). More important, SSRC projects that favored basic (self-purportedly apolitical) research referenced service to government and a (democratic) public in ways parallel to the organization and rhetoric of applied (problem solving, useful, sometimes in the realm of politics) research projects. This may indicate a slippage in the terms distinguishing research according to purpose, with moral concerns (that themselves employed a division between democracy and fascism) overriding discursive or symbolic boundary distinctions.

Claims regarding social scientific progress promised relief to a social world perceived to be wracked with economic devastation and political turmoil. Journalists and politicians lamented the rise of fascism, the fall of economic markets, and the influx of immigration in the United States as constitutive of crisis for liberal, capitalist democracy. Donald Fisher (1993), historian of social science, argues that the economic devastation of the Depression resulted in a national interest that 'allowed' the government to discard its *laissez-faire* policies and act to intervene and 'control.' According to Fisher, SSRC social scientists and the government acted in conjunction to deploy a discourse of social 'planning.'[30] Through planning founded on social scientific knowledge of social processes and institutions, social scientists and politicians implied, the collapse of liberal, democratic capitalism could be averted. The World's Fair represents one

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[30] This discourse differed from the one of engineering as documented by historians of science Ross (2003), Bannister (2003), Bauman (1987), and Wagner (2003). For a discussion of another form of 1920s intellectual, the technocrat, that was recognized in the journalistic and political fields, see Alchon 1982, 1985.

venue in which this claim was broadcast to people in the United States. The claim

also enabled social scientists to assert a valued space and profession for their

field. From the perspectives of many in the academic and political fields, the

collaboration of natural scientists with government during the First World War

had been successful (Kleinman 1995).[31] Tying notions of basic and applied

science to the zone of protection of the nation likely established for the scientific

field a specific form of cultural capital, or a consequential principle of

differentiation; by associating specific types of research with the (highly valued

across fields) achievement of national security, further claims or actors associated

with that type of research would likely be more successful or recognized than

others. SSRC social scientists, in drawing on these powerful notions and relating

them to 'the public,' negotiated self-presentations at the 1933 World's Fair,

successfully established relations with political institutions and actors, including

Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt, and effectively strengthened and informed

social scientists' claims by virtue of the links between the fields of politics and

social science (Fisher 1993).

The Fair Trustees' solicitation of the Council, and more generally, their

inclination to represent social science, also indicate that both the Council and 'the

social sciences' had made some progress in terms of achieving a place of value

beyond their own social circles—perhaps in the commercial/industrial and

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[31] An even earlier precedent of government support of science that referenced the basic and
applied science distinction, though in a different way, was the federal Morrill Act of 1862, as a
reifying force asserting even more strongly the already dominant model of knowledge in the
United States that valued "scientific and applied impulses (mechanical and agricultural) in
American higher education" (Smelser 1992: 53).

scientific fields. As suggested above, Council members perceived the Fair as a great professional opportunity for social science. Odum, appointed Chief of the Social Sciences Division, described the value of the exhibition as a venue (that was expected to draw forty million visitors) in which a calculated appeal constructed in "'new and vivid ways to a very large national…audience'" (Odum 1933: 478) could be deployed. Between 1930 and 1932, the Committee's reports to the Council are rife with additional glimpses of the explicit moves of the SSRC as a knowledge institution to construct the identity, role, and purpose of social science in society to be presented for national dissemination and scrutiny. Again and again, the representation of social science referenced the anticipated national public audience, the basic and applied science distinction, and the natural sciences. The moral concerns with protection of democracy and 'the public' found here are even more salient in the discussion that follows of the 1938 conference.

Making a Case for Public-Oriented Professions

William F. Ogburn, a prominent sociologist at both the SSRC and the University of Chicago, was a major participant in the World's Fair's planning discussed above. Like many at the Council,[32] Ogburn often claimed that social scientific knowledge could provide a foundation from which the agencies of

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[32] Also in connection with the SSRC, Ogburn was director of research for a major social scientific survey of the United States commissioned by President Hoover in 1929 (President's Research Committee on Social Trends: 1933). Of the survey, he wrote that the 'facts' they were gathering on social trends, including the social effects of the "great development of communication" (Ogburn 1931: 12). This survey is the subject of a later chapter.

government could better approach social policy. For years after his involvement in Fair preparations and similar projects, Ogburn maintained his interest in claiming such a role for social science. The following analysis draws on the archival record of a conference Ogburn attended in which he expressed his views. Organized by the Rockefeller Foundation, the 'Conference on The Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for a General Public' (1938) included participants primarily from the natural sciences, but also two members of the press, and Ogburn. Ogburn's comments were oriented primarily toward distinctions between democracy/fascism and natural/social science and demonstrate a sustained orientation to the idea of 'the public' as it developed in SSRC discourse over the previous ten years. At the conference, Ogburn suggested a multi-faceted role for social scientists. As it did in earlier years, his vision included social scientists as protectors of 'the public.' Here he included propaganda as a public danger, asking, "During these next few years, isn't there really an obligation on the part of scientists to see what they can do in the way of setting forth those phases of science which will act as a sort of preventive, as a sort of sales resistance, so to speak, to these waves of propaganda that will be booming in…over the air or through the wires, by pictures, and what not?" (*Conference* 1938: 216) Here 'the public' is an impressionable group for whom scientific knowledge may serve as a defense against ill intentioned powerful forces. With this, Ogburn concluded with a touch of paternalism, "it seems to me that there is a real objective here that we ought to think about with regard to the obligation of

science in the future" (1938: 216).

Referencing the instability of the international political situation, unsettled following World War I, Ogburn addressed the alleged attempts made in Germany and Italy at thought control via propaganda. Ogburn presented science as a means through which one could learn "to think correctly and to think clearly, to maintain freedom of thought" (1938: 216). In doing so, I suggest that Ogburn, whether intentionally or not, linked science to the stability of U.S. democracy,[33] thus demarcating a valued space for the work that he often simultaneously claimed his science would do. Indeed, the role of science as method was increasingly invoked as an antidote to the "anxieties of democracy" that marked the period and its concerns with propaganda, thought control, populism, and massification.

The concern with methods and facts versus values and opinions also informed journalistic attitudes in the 1920s in ways that intersected and overlapped social science attitudes.[34] We might usefully understand these distinctions as a *boundary object*, a conceptual space or organizational form (Star and Griesemer 1989) that connects the fields of journalism and social science at this historical moment. These debates and events, I suggest, are important in considerations of conceptual frameworks of national life and science deployed by social scientists of the interwar period.

In his study of interwar sociology, Bannister (1987) argues that an

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[33] This echoes aspects of John Dewey's and Walter Lippmann's views just prior to this period regarding science and the democratic public. I return to this in later chapters.

[34] This is especially so in the case of Robert Park, who spent many years as a journalist. See Chapter 3. See p.15 in particular for a discussion of Schudson (1978) on fact, value, and objectivity in 1920s journalism.

objectivist movement existed in this period. One of the three primary characteristics of the movement was impartiality with regard to ethics and public policy. Bannister locates Ogburn as one of these objectivists who claimed a concern with a scientific sociology—statistical, trend-seeking, and advisory—that addressed "the *how* rather than the *why* of public policy" (1987: 6). Although objectivity can be traced back to Comte and professional normativity in the 1880s in the beginnings of sociology as an academic discipline, Bannister claims that a distinct episode of objectivism existed in the interwar period, arising from such external sources as European thought (e.g., the German Cameralists), the rise of objective over personal journalism in many U.S. newspapers, and "the late-Progressive Era craze for scientific management and I.Q. testing" (1987: 8). Within sociology, he isolates Albion Small and Franklin Giddings as important early sources of objectivism by virtue of their organizational positions and groups of graduate students.

Natural scientists at the Conference uniformly professed a view of 'the public' as vulnerable, even unintelligent. With more confidence than Ogburn, they advocated dissemination of the scientific method itself to 'the public.' In contrast, Ogburn was quite cautious in a discussion regarding the inclusion of scientific values and methods in the aspects of science to be conveyed to 'the public.' He suggested that these aspects of science might be classed separately from information regarding particular scientific discoveries. In particular, he suggested that 'the public' might benefit from social scientific knowledge

regarding the effects of technology on both the individual and society. For instance, Ogburn claimed that it would behoove 'the public' to apprehend social scientific knowledge—the facts it contained—regarding the effects of the new technologies of mass communication on education. Armed with (but not critical of) the facts, 'the public' and those in government could make better informed decisions, or value judgments. Without challenge, Ogburn suggested that the products of science, rather than its scientific method, *folkway*,[35] or attitude was what should be communicated to 'the public.'

Why did Ogburn hesitate to advocate for the use of the scientific method by nonscientists? I think Ogburn made his argument with reference to professional distinctions, or a 'cultural argument.' One major example he offered was the figure of the executive politician: he argued that in wartime, quick decisiveness (rather than the suspended judgment of the scientific method) was needed. While he clearly wished to preserve democracy, he joked with one of his challengers from the press that "fascism is a very good thing in a leader during wartime" (1938: 34). Ogburn's repeated suggestions that exercise of the scientific attitude might not be wise (or possible) for members of nonscientific professions, such as the executive, the teacher of literature, the preacher, or the artist, might be (in a Bourdieuian analysis (1985)) considered an attempt to restrict the scientific approach to maintenance by scientists, and thus grant it some authority and autonomy.

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[35] See, for example, Ogburn's 1929 presidential address to the American Sociological Association (ASA), "The Folkways of a Scientific Sociology," available through ASA.

Ogburn's moves to construct boundaries for modes of thought and action between different professional groups also asserted different subfields of science accompanied by appropriate practitioners. For example, Ogburn took the position that it was inappropriate for the participants in the conference to discuss the topic of democracy – instead, he claimed that social scientists, who have amassed knowledge on the matter, should hold such conversations.

As discussed in the World's Fair narrative, interwar SSRC social scientists and politicians engaged in a discourse of social planning with reference to the preservation of democracy. Social scientists defined and offered as a primary area of their expertise knowledge about the social effects of technology. References to the effects of mass communications technology above highlight these claims. At the Conference, Ogburn reiterated these claims, contending that new technologies were engendering a "transformation of American life" (1938: 197), including a shift toward the centralization of the nation. New inventions and discoveries, he argued, "have tremendous effect in reorganizing society and in changing the nature of things" (1938: 47). His statements regarding "the tremendous pressure on the social world to keep up with the new inventions and the new discoveries" (1938: 47) in science signal his continued belief in his *social lag* theory. This theory proposed that social problems were the result of the uneven development of social institutions and technological discoveries; this formulation figured prominently into earlier arguments related to a policy-oriented role for social science in society and the reasons underlying social and

economic instability (e.g. Ogburn 1964).

In direct reference to technological change and its social effects, Ogburn repeatedly voiced his view of the role of social science in conjunction with government at the conference. He opined, "we [should] get in a position to do something about [these technological discoveries]: that is…keep up with them and to anticipate their effects and make the social adjustments that are necessary" (*Conference* 1938: 48). When Karl Compton, a prominent natural scientist at the conference, asked Ogburn about his experiences with prompting scientists to ponder the social effects of their discoveries, Ogburn claimed that the scientists tended to be ill equipped to do so effectively. He added, "I should think the scientist might very well say, that is not our business; that is the business of the sociologist" (1938: 49).

The sentiments expressed at the Conference echoed and engaged the array of salient political and epistemological distinctions in the fields of the sciences, journalism, and politics. The basic work of the social sciences would produce facts that would be applied through nonscientists' actions and value judgments. Basic knowledge about the social effects of (natural scientifically produced) technology would ensure democratic stability and progress in the face of fascism and challenges to the capitalist market. This was a world in which social scientists had a role, one constituted in part by social scientists' discursive work of structuring political anxieties and professional relations. In connection with 'the public' and the distinctions upon which the current chapter has focused, the

interwar construction of mass communications was pivotal in the organization of both professional and national political life for years to come.

The Invisible Hand of Mass Communications?

Martin Bulmer identifies the expansion of a 'national consciousness' in the United States, particularly through popular journalism and radio, as major institutional infrastructures that supported the growth of social science. His narrative of the growth of social science suggests that he too subscribes to the views of mass communications and 'the public' put forth by the social scientists I discuss in this thesis. Bulmer observes that prior to the expansion of mass communications, social science research had begun to enter the national consciousness by way of its involvement in regional studies. One instance of this is the criminological research conducted in Illinois that researchers directed toward the reform of the penal and judicial system, particularly in Cook County. Bulmer argues that this type of research and the audiences it found with regional policy making elites presented the social sciences as a source of technical expertise to aid in policy formation.

According to Bulmer, in the 1920s and 1930s, as popular radio and journalism spread, regionalism gave way to a national consciousness. This development resulted not only in a new area of research for social science, but also a means for circulating the results of social science. Though an 'educated public' for social science did not really crystallize until after 1945, it was during

the 1920s and 1930s, with the development of mass media, that a national venue

for works of psychiatry and anthropology as well as a few sociological studies

first emerged. Bulmer suggests that the development of tools of inquiry, such as

the sample survey, "was in part a response to the growing national (rather than

local or regional) consciousness, a means of holding up a mirror to American

society so that it could regard itself" (1992: 337).[36]

However, I argue in the following chapters, the development of an

understanding of mass media, as Bulmer conceives it, was itself the work of

social science. While social science's use of the object of media to imagine

national life was not always explicit in the narratives presented here, the

following chapters address the explicit development of an understanding of mass

communications technological networks as mass media by social scientists. In

conjunction with other actors of the period, social scientists socially constructed

the meaning of mass media as it expanded beyond the wartime use of government

to become a means for making a national public.

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[36] Of course, the survey had other roots in social science, such as in the work of Jane Addams and other so-called social reformers (see for example, Deegan 1988).

CHAPTER TWO

RECENT SOCIAL TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE
PUBLICATION OF SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AS SOCIAL PLANNING
COMPANIONS

This chapter analyzes the *Recent Social Trends* survey (1933) conducted

under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the

Hoover administration. More specifically, the chapter considers the way in which

mass communications was discussed and defined in private and published settings

by *Recent Social Trends* (RST) social scientists, many of whom were introduced

in the previous chapter. More than simply a new object of study for social

science, I argue that mass communications became a locus of professional and

political renegotiation that directed a project to forge an institutionalized

relationship between federal policymakers and social scientists. Joined to and

used by social scientists to account for the *boundary object* of 'the public' (see

Chapter 1), mass communications also became central to a redefinition of the

terms of democratic politics. Indeed, central to the RST understanding of mass

communications was the object of the new, potentially conflict-ridden but

fundamentally impressionable national public that could be managed or

controlled. *Recent Social Trends* social scientists made an implicit claim: because

they had knowledge of 'the public'—as manageable, important to stable

democracy, and possible through mass communications—their expertise was

valuable. Meanwhile, these social scientists positioned themselves as against and

superior to journalists, and pursued an expanded role for themselves in an

increasingly receptive and professionalized political environment.

In the following sections, I draw on [1] the published *Recent Social*

Trends in the United States report, [2] archival records of communications among

and between SSRC social scientists and US government officials, and [3] news

publications to describe the particular understanding of 'mass communications'

that was formulated by RST-related publications and those social scientists and

government policy makers associated with it. Further, I demonstrate how this

RST formulation of 'mass communications' was an important element in other

important, changing understandings of the period, importantly, concurrent

formulations of [1] the US 'public' and [2] the appropriate professional and/or

institutional relationship between social scientists and government officials.[37]

First, I outline the actors in and origins of the *Recent Social Trends* project.

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[37] It is important to note that the formulations most salient in the *Recent Social Trends* case did not constitute the only model for a relationship between the social scientific and government policy making professions. However, the model espoused by RST social scientists exemplifies and predates the one deployed during the debates of the 1940s to include the social sciences in the new National Science Foundation, a landmark institution for the future of the social science professions. See Klausner and Lidz (1986).

Origins and Dimensions of the Recent Social Trends Project

President Herbert Hoover was known for his support of natural scientists and engineers, but he had also taken the position that national social planning was an activity engaged in by fascist and communist governments. In his memoirs, he referred to national economic planning, as a "left wing cure for all business evil." At the same time, however, Hoover had in fact supported increased commercial control over radio as Secretary of Commerce, often consulting with large radio companies, despite his initial public anticommercial statements. And although he preferred self-regulation by the business community, he did emphasize government "regulation," "where necessary" as a "cure of our marginal evils" (Hoover 1952: 167). Hoover also acted to prosecute businesses when he felt they had veered too close to monopoly.[38] In his use and creation of mixed 'pools' of advisors, or "techno-corporatism," Hoover consistently included scientific experts in addition to members of the commercial community.[39]

In 1929 President Hoover extended a request to SSRC social scientists to provide him with knowledge about the social dimensions of the United States. An SSRC Committee created a proposal that eventually gained the approval of both the Rockefeller Foundation, the SSRC's primary source of financial support,[40]

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[38] Hoover 1952, 246;.Starr, 2004, 338-339. See also Czitrom 1982, pp. 76-77.

[39] Alchon 1982, especially pp. 254-258. See also Rosen 1980, pp 47-59. And Alchon 1985, especially pp. 76-85.

[40] In late 1929, the Rockefeller Foundation granted $560,000 to the Committee (to be managed by SSRC). See "Minutes of Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Saturday, December 14, 1929, Chicago, Illinois." Howard Washington Odum Papers, #3167, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hereafter abbreviated as HWOP.

and President Hoover. The study was to "supply a basis for the formulation of large national policies looking to the next phase of the national development" (Fisher 1993: 100-101).

Convening its first meeting in the White House itself in late 1929, the resultant President's Committee on Recent Social Trends undertook a survey of the United States.[41] Upon Hoover's suggestion, the Committee's Board was composed of Director William F. Ogburn and Assistant Director Howard Odum, sociologists; Charles E. Merriam, a political scientist; Alice Hamilton, a medical doctor[42]; Wesley C. Mitchell, an economist who had directed the Bureau of Economic Research for the U.S. Department of Commerce when Hoover was its secretary; Edward Eyre Hunt of the Department of Commerce; and Shelby M. Harrison, who had an interest in the reform survey (for instance, with regard to child and labor welfare; Bannister 1987), of the Russell Sage Foundation.

Over the next three years, the Board and thousands of additional social scientists worked to produce research that culminated in the publication of a large, two volume report supplemented by over a dozen monographs. From late 1929 until 1933, the Board met dozens of times annually and discussed issues such as publicity for the RST project, funding for subdivisions of the project, and the content and organization of the project. Importantly, the Board meetings also

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[41] See "Minutes of the First Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Friday, December 6, 1929, Washington D.C." HWOP.

[42] Hamilton was not added to the Board until 1930. She did not speak often during Board meetings; when she did, it was often with regard to women's health and children. Notably, Hamilton was involved with Jane Addams's Hull House until approximately 1920 (Hamilton 1985[1943]).

sometimes included additional representatives from the government and the Rockefeller Foundation. I draw on the minutes from these meetings to characterize the intentions and concerns of the leading social scientists in the RST project.

Research was divided into teams, each assigned to a topical chapter to be included in the final report. Certain chapters would be abridged forms of monograph publications to accompany the RST report. In all records I have reviewed, Communications and Invention were the topics most emphasized during Board meetings and in press material. Other topics to which both chapters and monographs were devoted included: health and the environment, the arts in American life, women in the 20th century, and races and ethnic groups in American life.

An important precursor to the *Recent Social Trends* project was *Recent Economic Trends in the United States* (1929), produced by the National Bureau of Economic Research, an exemplar of the aforementioned techno-corporate 'pools' of advisors sought by Hoover, which involved both Wesley Mitchell and E.E. Hunt.[43] When asked if *Recent Economic Changes* should be "more or less a guide both as to size and as to treatment" of the *Recent Social Trends* project,

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[43] *Recent Economic Changes in the United States* (1929), directed by Gay and Mitchell, focused on 'economic balance,' a grasp of processes of "acceleration rather than structural change" (REC quoted in Fisher 97), and the fact that the period under study (1922-29) "was one in which the people of the United States had been welded 'into a new solidarity of thought and action'" (97). The published report discusses the need for control following from knowledge to achieve economic stability – Fisher claims this study remained in the vein of the 'technocratic bargain' as discussed by Alchon 1982, 1985. Following the publication of this report, the US stock market experienced the massive crash associated with the Great Depression; this no doubt shook the authority of this report to predict and assess the economic situation in the US.

Hunt replied affirmatively, "with this qualification: the study of Social Trends

must be better."[44] As distinct from the outcome and approach of *Recent*

Economic Changes, *Recent Social Trends* suggested a collaborative professional

relationship between government officials and social scientists.[45]

The *Recent Social Trends* board members defined the profession of social science

and directed their actions as against or with reference to 'the public' (existing

through mass communications consumption), policymakers, journalists, a

conceptual distinction between fact and value, and the social 'problems' or

'crises' of the day.[46] In the following sections, I outline and analyze

representations of these referents. I consider primarily social scientists'

representations, but I include some from journalists and members of government

in order to demonstrate the presence of shared or parallel discourses that may

have translated into the legitimacy and professional renegotiations for social

science that were part of the *Recent Social Trends* project. My primary concerns

are two. I seek to show the significance of mass communications in

understandings of political life (this sometimes appears only through reference to

'the public,' an object and group demonstrably linked to mass communications),

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[44] "The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 20, 1930" p.5 of minutes. HWOP.

[45] Hunt told those at the meeting that the Committee on Recent Economic Changes (CREC) had "conceived of its task as one of exploration and not of execution. It had been conceived to explore the possibilities of a technique of balance but not itself to undertake to set up the agency or agencies." "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; September 20, 1932" p.5. HWOP. In other words, the CREC had not proposed a continuing or direct relationship with policymakers.

[46] Natural science served as another important referent, but for purposes of length, and because it has been considered at length by other scholars of the development of the social sciences, I exclude it here.

and within this model of political life, the proposed professional role of social science in relation to policymaking and 'the public.' However, my discussion also contains implications for the potentially lessened prestige of journalists and for scholarly literature that considers professional projects as driven solely by entrepreneurial motives.

First, I describe the mass communications portion of the project and its ties to the Social Science Research Council's broader goal of social control. Then I discuss RST social scientist's understandings of 'the public,' journalists, and social science by recounting the board's plans and concerns regarding news media publicity for the *Recent Social Trends* project.

Defining Mass Communications

The *Recent Social Trends* final report presented and defined the object of mass communications. As part of the final report, Malcolm Willey and Stuart Rice, supported by a large research staff, authored the monograph *Communication Agencies and Social Life* (Willey and Rice 1933).[47] This text included a statistical description of the number of individuals consuming mass communications content and the number of bodies producing this content. These figures were featured alongside claims that through mass communications one could now reach the entire nation. In fact, a major focus of the text was a

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[47] Ogburn appears to have been involved in preparing the chapter form of this material for the final report, as he sometimes presented writing and drafts on the topic during Board meetings. See, for example, "Meeting of the President's Resarch Committee on Social Trends; June 21, 1932" p.1-2; "Meeting of the President's Resarch Committee on Social Trends; June 22, 1932" p.1-2. HWOP.

consideration of the newspaper, radio, and motion pictures as 'agencies of mass

[national] impression.' Working with these premises, the authors offered an

analysis of the situation and function of mass communications. Willey and Rice

claimed that mass communications brought "an ever more complex world to the

minds of its readers; the motion picture and the radio permit a direct

comprehension of distant events that was unimaginable a generation ago" (1933:

208-209). Claiming that the national dimension of radio, newspaper, and motion

picture audiences was new, Willey and Rice speculated about how to proceed.

Most salient within Willey and Rice's rendering of mass communications

were the arguments that these media had the power to influence 'the public' and

that individuals or institutions could control or regulate media content, and in

turn, 'the public.' These notions of potential influence and control were founded

on the view of "the media of mass impression, like the newspaper and radio" as a

means through which "many separate individuals" could be "stimulated

simultaneously" (1933: 2). Willey and Rice also raised the related notion that a

monopoly of these agencies of mass impression would "open the way to

deliberate and conscious control looking toward the promotion of given economic

or political ends" (1933: 164).[48] They regarded this prospect as potentially

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[48] In 1940, Willey continued to work on questions concerning mass communications. At this time, he discussed the role of media in society in terms of the flow and dissemination of knowledge, ideas, and attitudes. Perhaps influenced by cultural diffusion theory, he referred to the family, the church, and the school as "channels" of dissemination and communication. It seems that he expected individuals not confronted with conflicting information or presentations of reality to accept it without question. In light of the growth of media channels, however, he envisioned the individual, particularly the child, facing the problem of reconciliation of inconsistent presentations. In this he found a new problem for social science to tackle. RAC, SSRC Collection,

terrifying but also inspiring. In the latter view, they ended the text with a discussion of the "potentialities of social self-control," particularly through the use of government for a "public purpose" (1933: 210, 212).[49] Indeed, while suspicious of mass impression directed by certain actors and governments, Willey and Rice suggested that in some contexts, mass impression, for instance by U.S. policymakers, was desirable. Social scientists implicitly asserted an intermediary position for themselves in such a hypothetical relationship, perhaps one of brokerage, between a power (policymaker) and mass communications and its public.

Control and Mass Communications

These arguments echoed a dominant aspiration or belief among US social scientists of this period—social life and institutions could be controlled, social problems could be remedied through correction/adjustments. In this model, social scientific knowledge served as the foundation for action to control or adjust successfully. This is not surprising as 'social control' was an overarching goal of the SSRC, which had guided the RST project during its proposal phase. As sociologists Buxton and Turner (1992) characterize the SSRC of the interwar

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Accession 2, Series 1 Committee Projects, Sub-Series 82 Social Adjustment, Box 498, Folder 6127, letter dated February 7, 1940 from Malcolm Willey to Dr. Donald Young. This attention to children as sites of social change and/or particularly easily influenced or controlled appeared in plans for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair as well. Incidentally, I would note that Science Service, a pioneering science journalism organization began in the 1920s, demonstrated high levels of concern with reaching children with scientific knowledge (See Smithsonian Institution Archives, Science Service Collections, Record Unit 7091).

[49] The authors also entered a discussion of political effects, speaking of "consequences in social leveling" they believed radio could/would achieve—they felt that the usual racial and class distinctions were absent in this medium (1933: 204).

period, its major goal was to provide "'direct support of specific research projects and programs' relevant to problems of social control" (Buxton and Turner 1992: 385; see also Fisher 1993). Similarly, Fisher locates the RST as part of a larger trend in the work of the Council over the 1930s aimed at "reorganization of the political and social orders" (1993: 112) through public administration and economic/social security.

The underlying drive or motivation for this reorganization, according to Fisher, was the desire to prevent "the collapse of liberal, democratic capitalism in the United States" (1993: 112). In this context, Fisher argues, the *Recent Social Trends* endeavor "was the strongest possible statement about the utility of the social sciences for helping to maintain the democratic social order" (1993: 113). This concern with order and the assertion of a homogeneous public made possible by mass communications is interesting in light of historian/American studies scholar Robert Bannister's claim that *objectivism* in the social sciences, particularly sociology, emerged in part as "a response to a fear of social fragmentation and disintegration that deepened in the years immediately before the war" (1987: 2). Bannister characterizes one strand of objectivism in this period, epitomized in Ogburn's views of social science, as *nominalist*; under nominalist objectivism, scientific sociology was statistical, trend-seeking, and

advisory, concerned with "the *how* rather than the *why* of public policy" (1987: 6).[50]

Indeed, as we will see in greater detail below, RST/SSRC social scientists did not wish themselves to control social life but to advise those who would— again, social scientists would serve as intermediaries. Fisher quotes founder of the SSRC and RST board member Charles Merriam's vision for the SSRC as a body that would attain "'such a position of leadership that governments would automatically consult the Council or local councils before starting on a problem such as city planning, housing planning, etc., where social science was involved'" (Fisher 1993: 98). A variant of this goal appeared in the RST Board's discussion of desirable outcomes of the RST final report, the most popular of which was an ongoing, SSRC organized advisory committee to the federal government that would address social issues of concern to national 'well being.'

The social world that Willey, Rice, Merriam, Ogburn, Odum and others claimed to be equipped to know particularly well by virtue of the rigor and expertise of their social scientific backgrounds included 'the public.' Nearly always considered a unitary entity, 'the public' was referenced by social scientists, politicians, and journalists alike. Nestled in the RST's work on mass communications, and so in its claims about the proper relationship between social science and government was a set of claims about the needs, qualities, and

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[50] See also Chapter 1. Anecdotally, though it never materialized in the final report, Ogburn at one point in 1932 planned to have someone "plot on log paper" a summation of all trends found for the final report. "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 20, 1932" p.1.

significance of 'the public' for national political well being. To approach the proposed government-social science relationship, the following section considers 'the public' as it was formulated in various locations by actors tied to the RST endeavor. I consider these formulations of 'the public' as instances, or registers, that referenced or named *symbolic boundaries* being drawn by RST social scientists that defined relationships of power, obligation, and expertise between politicians/policymakers, journalists, social scientists, natural scientists, and 'the public.'

'The Public' and the Political Field

The only form according to which RST social scientists imagined engagement with 'the public' was through mass communications. For instance, the RST Board spoke at length about the presentation of the RST project in the news media, always with an aim to manage the 'public' reaction to it. As with other aspects of social life, public understanding and reaction often arose as something that could be managed by social scientific planning. The manner in which publicity for the report was to be managed also reveals the perspectives of RST Board members regarding the relatedness, characteristics, and power of various professions or political actors. A further indication of the importance of publicity to the RST Committee is its decision to require that all publicity decisions that might have been made at the level of local investigations by RST

staff be approved by the Board.[51] Statements recorded in the Board's minutes

reflect understandings of the current logic of the political field, as well as hopes

regarding the future logic of the field and their place within it.

    With regard to 'the public's' reaction to the RST report, the Board

expected that Hoover's endorsement, as head of the federal government, would

garner acceptance and legitimacy for the publication.[52] Strother, a representative

of the president, indicated similar concerns. He told the Board that the president

"feared that unless something of the kind was published there would be a

tendency on the part of newspaper men to find something to attack."[53] Similarly,

Merriam "thought the report would not get fair treatment from half the

newspapers from now on, and that its reception by the public would be better"

closer to the date of the *RST* report's publication and Hoover's public

endorsement.[54] In light of this fear, Hoover was willing to make a public

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[51] See "The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 20, 1930." p.1 of minutes. HWOP.

[52] See "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 30, 1932." Minutes, especially p.8. HWOP. While there was agreement about the value and effect of presidential endorsement, Hoover's affiliation with or responsibility for the project was another matter. Strother informed the RST social scientists that when their committee was incorporated, the president was not to be included. But again, it was considered unproblematic, and in fact desirable, that the name of the president be associated with Recent Social Trends work in public settings: "Mr. Strother reminded the Committee that the President's name could not be used in the articles of incorporation, but that presumably one name could be used in this connection and another in the public announcements and on the letterhead. It seems very desirable that the Committee should be known as the President's Committee." See "Minutes of Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Saturday, December 14, 1929; Chicago, Illinois" p.2. HWOP.

[53] See "Minutes of Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Saturday, December 17, 1932; 230 Park Avenue; New York" p.4. HWOP.

[54] See "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.; Thursday, December 31, 1931" p.6. A cursory observation: although in the course of another research project about women science journalists I encountered the Cosmos Club as an establishment that did not permit the presence of

statement in support of the RST report on the day of its publication. This exchange suggests the belief on the part of RST social scientists and Hoover that journalists would defer to the views/endorsement of the president when reporting on a particular issue, such as the RST endeavor. Further, without President Hoover's endorsement, both Hoover and his staff and the RST social scientists believed that the RST endeavor might not receive favorable coverage by journalists.

The Board's uncertain expectations regarding journalistic coverage indicates not only their view that social scientific work did not carry enough authority without Hoover's support but also judgments about the character of journalistic work. Journalistic reports were understood to be often inaccurate especially with regard to scientific matters;[55] however, journalists might be guided by publicity material—just as 'the public' could be influenced by the material it consumed, the journalists presenting that material could be managed. While one might argue that journalists and social scientists could be viewed as

women, Dr. Alice Hamilton was present at this meeting of the President's Research Committee. This raises questions about the conditions of the enforcement of gender-based admissions policies. Jane Stafford, a successful, award winning science journalist, was not admitted to the Cosmos Club and others like it in Washington, D.C., and New York in the 1930s, while Alice Hamilton, a doctor affiliated with a committee associated with the US president was. Are these isolated cases, or might there have been a hierarchy of professions or relationships that enabled certain women to bypass these "men only" restrictions? See Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7091 (Science Service), Box 192, Folder 14, a series of letters dated 1938 between Clifton Read, C.C. Little, Watson Davis, Jane Stafford, and Susan M. Wood in which Watson Davis expressed his frustration at Stafford's exclusion from a journalism award luncheon at a New York club, declaring that this "sex discrimination" was far from one isolated case.

[55] This view also appeared in the 1938 Conference on the Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for a General Public as seen in the previous chapter. Further, the rise of science journalism as a specialty in the 1920s appears to reflect the demand on the part of natural scientists for more accurate, less sensational news coverage of their work.

competitors, it seems that from the perspective of social scientists, journalists

were merely incompetent—perhaps even as manipulable as 'the public.'

Moreover, RST social scientists suggested that journalists were not trustworthy;

once given information, journalists might not keep it unpublished if asked (while

policymakers could), as seen in this caveat by Ogburn: "We might try to [show

the] committee report on policy making [to] people related to the government,

such as governors. A second group might be an editorial group, the New Republic

crowd, etc., but here we should have to take great precaution that there should be

no leaks."[56]

Following the discussion of Hoover's plan to make a statement about the

RST project, the Board members reflected on their experiences with the press and

the possible complications that had arisen in the past. Ogburn, for example, cited

"instances in his own experience where a reviewer of books had entirely missed

the point of the author."[57] In case of the RST report, he expressed worry that the

fact that this report dealt with "long-time issues and a series of fundamental

problems that will be with us a long while" would be missed.[58] To guard against

such a possibility, the board considered composing 'catch phrases' that would

summarize the 'point' of the RST survey for the news media and public. With

suggestions for catch phrases such as "Snapshot of These Changing Times" and

"Scientific News Reel of Present-Day American Civilization", these social

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[56] "Meeting of the President's Research Comitteee on Social Trends" p.3. HWOP.
[57] "Minutes of Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Saturday, December 17, 1932; 230 Park Avenue; New York" p.4. HWOP.
[58] See "Minutes of Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Saturday, December 17, 1932; 230 Park Avenue; New York" p.4. HWOP.

scientists almost seem to locate themselves in the role of the journalist. The report's work was transparent, thus reducing journalists' work to passive reporting.[59]

These exchanges suggest that journalists might be prone to attack or misunderstanding of the subject matter of their reports. At the same time, the RST Board expected that the use of 'catch phrases' would be effective in shaping both journalists' coverage and the view of the listening and reading public. The Board seemed to believe that their words would reach 'the public' unfiltered—as long as journalists were provided with publicity materials, they were unlikely to bother to form their own account of the RST endeavor.

The sense that the reception of this report was important for the future of social science recurred in Board meetings. This speaks to the RST/SSRC social scientists' continuing view[60] that the legitimacy of social science as profession or field of knowledge remained uncertain. During another conversation, Edmund E. Day, Director for the Social Sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation, characterized social science as "on trial."[61] Day opined that there was "skepticism in many

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[59] Some additional examples include: Mitchell: "Social Diagnosis" Ogburn: "a. Bird's-eye view of the Panorama of Civilization b. Legacy for Future Policy-makers" Venneman: "Basis for social planning" Strother: "a. Scientific News Reel of Present-Day American Civilization b. Changing Status of a Nation" Merriam: "Filming American Civilization" Hunt: "a. Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow of American Civilization b. Snapshot of These Changing Times." See "Minutes of Meeting; The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Saturday, December 17, 1932; 230 Park Avenue; New York" p.4-5. HWOP. Note that the use of visual and photographic idioms parallels journalistic conventions.

[60] See discussion in Chapter 1 regarding the SSRC's goal to establish legitimacy and renown for the social sciences.

[61] "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.8. HWOP.

quarters as to the ability of the social scientists" to undertake a project like *Recent Social Trends*, concluding that "no step should be taken which increases the hazards of the operation."[62]

Day also claimed that it was important to depict a link between public policy making and social scientific work, remarking that "the undertaking would not be a success if it simply imposes information without bringing into the open its relationship to public policy."[63] In fact, he regarded the prospect of the report becoming a "purely academic document" as a "danger"—though difficult, the report had to be made "clear to the public."[64] Similarly, Ogburn argued that "the [RST] Committee has some responsibility not only for making a scientific document, but for making it effective," and he favored "preliminary reports and announcements," as they "would tend to build up the public interest in what is to come."[65] The success of the RST endeavor was understood by those on the Board to hinge to some extent on the response of 'the public' to journalistic coverage as well as the published report. A positive response was believed to require clear

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[62] "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.8, 9. HWOP.

[63] "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.9. HWOP.

[64] "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.9. See also "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 24, 1932" p.2. HWOP.

[65] "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.12. HWOP.

(less complex) presentation of research and frankness regarding the ties to public policy that the RST work might have.

The Board also characterized the US public as one that valued practical knowledge and outcomes rather than knowledge produced that lacked application. Nonetheless, some of the Board members expressed their reservations about concerning themselves with the public's view on the matter. The members invoked their understanding of the current professional division of expertise as one in which scientists were avoid interpretation and matters of practicality in the course of the production of knowledge.[66] However, the concern of Ogburn, Hunt, Merriam, and Mitchell that social scientific knowledge produced without any interpretation would be neglected entirely prevailed.

The following views, as expressed by RST board members during their meetings, reflect the presence of 'the public' as a consideration in formulating a desirable, successful model for the RST report and relations between social science and policymaking. According to the RST Board, 'the public,' valued practicality, as did (if from a professional distance) the social scientists; this became an arguing point for the inclusion of practically oriented commentary in

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[66] Deference to experts in particular social scientific fields was maintained by the Board, often ensuring that authors of particular segments of material be allowed to review any changes made to their material (e.g. "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 23, 1932" p.3. HWOP); it may also reflect value linking ownership, authorship, and responsibility. Another example: "I think it is possible in some particular field which covers a wide range of topics on which you are not an authority, to get someone to write a page or paragraph to incorporate in your section". "The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 20, 1930" p.12. HWOP.

the RST report. However, Board members also warned that 'the public's' views

could become a negative pressure on knowledge and policymaking processes.

While Ogburn wished 'the public's' opinions to be excluded from policy

and research work,[67] he felt it important that 'the public' have access to the results

of such work. Odum "remarked that a public which is now impatient might

appreciate a report if held in abeyance for a more opportune time."[68] Hunt, as a

representative of the government/Department of Commerce, also supported an

approach to the report that included contact with 'the public':

> there has been more interest in the past two years in long-time speculation
> and plans than ever before, and if there were a clear indication of a central
> purpose dealing with the future as well as the past and that the purpose of
> the undertaking was to throw light on possibilities of future change, it
> could have a keynote that would appeal to the natural curiosity which
> people have about what is going to happen next or what might happen or
> could be brought to happen.[69]

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[67] Merriam agreed: "You cannot go along with the public thinking on a thing of this kind."
"Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 29, 1932" p.6. HWOP.
At times, RST social scientists indicated that elected members of government would also not be
ideal members of their desired advisory committee, as these politicians "followed public opinion."
"Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends
Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.13.
HWOP. The Board hoped that Hoover might be re-elected, as he would then not be in this public-
oriented position. See "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 30,
1932" p.4. HWOP.
Public opinion polls began in the 19th century as an attempt to predict presidential election
outcomes. In the World War Two period, their use increased sharply. Gallup published his work
Public Opinion in a Democracy in 1939. For the 1936 election of President Roosevelt, he used a
'demographic' method to organize a polling sample; this differed from the previous polls
conducted by periodicals that did not consider sample composition. For a sense of the polling
done during the WW2 period, see Hadley Cantril and Mildred Strunk's edited volume, *Public
Opinion, 1935-1946* (1951). Cantril was a psychologist at Princeton University, where Paul
Lazarsfeld's Rockefeller funded Office of Radio Research began in 1937 (it later moved to
Columbia University, where it became the Bureau of Applied Research). Theodor Adorno also
joined the Rockefeller radio project as a music consultant at Princeton briefly; he joined in 1938
but left by 1941. Lazarsfeld's research involved statistical and quantitative methods to conduct
and analyze mass market survey data; he also conducted focus group work.
[68] See "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social
Trends Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.; Thursday, December 31, 1931" p.6. HWOP.
[69] See "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social

In short, Hunt thought that the idea of the possibility of future changes should be kept in publicity surrounding the report from the very beginning. Hunt was also concerned, however, that if the report was "dumped on the public all at once," "it would be impossible to create any impression."[70] Continuing the discussion in relation to public reaction and understanding, Odum suggested that the report "may be misunderstood [by the public] if put out piece by piece."[71] Harrison felt that 'the public' would need time to "absorb" the material in the report.[72] While these views are not identical, they share the premise that 'the public' is docile, and perhaps unable to handle complexity.

Nonetheless, the Board held to their view that 'the public,' perhaps appropriately so, valued practicality. Mitchell and Merriam expressed these concerns with reference to their identities as citizens and the success of social scientific work. Merriam proposed:

> We might continue the task of directing public attention to points and on levels not now touched, as President Hoover suggested….If I were President of the United States I would like to have the advice of a board like this. I might not follow this for immediate measures but in looking ahead…[to deal] with problems in more effective measures.[73]

Similarly, Mitchell suggested:

Trends Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.; Thursday, December 31, 1931" p.4-5.

[70] See "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.; Thursday, December 31, 1931" p.5. HWOP.

[71] See "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.; Thursday, December 31, 1931" p.6. HWOP.

[72] "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.5. See also "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 24, 1932" p.2. HWOP.

[73] "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 29, 1932" p.5. HWOP.

We might emphasize that we share as American citizens the feeling of dissatisfaction with the mere accumulation of fact finding. It seems very difficult to get an organization which will combine these two elements because there is a real line of cleavage between the capacity for fact finding and research and the capacity for formulating practical conclusions and putting them into effect. These call for two sets of abilities which are usually present in two sets of people.[74]

In response, Merriam said:

What I am afraid of is that the public will say this is just one more commission. We have not made a single practical suggestion, it might be said. One definite thing we could recommend is to continue this research.[75]

Ogburn seemed least concerned about the combination of fact finding and advisory roles, arguing that a close, informal connection between the group of researchers created and government would be needed. His concern rested with the potential influence that might be introduced by pressures from public reactions to research and policy. Ideally, he thought, an executive, non-elected person/group would be best as collaborators, as they would not be concerned about public reaction to published reports. It was this idea that prevailed in the published report and in internal SSRC plans for future projects, in particular, an Advisory Committee.

Recent Social Trends 'Goes Public'

[*Recent Social Trends* is to be] a scientific report of facts got up for the purpose of policy making. Now this making of policy, as I conceive of it—and I think this is the correct idea—does not call for us to make recommendations as to policy specifically as such, but rather calls for the marshalling of facts and data in such a way that they point toward a policy or the instituting of a policy, or to some

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[74] "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 30, 1932" p.2. HWOP.
[75] "Meeting of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends; June 30, 1932" p.3. HWOP.

problem that needs solution, and there is no reason why in the report you should not point to these particular problems of questions of policy, but it seems to me it is not within our province to state what that policy is. I see no reason why the facts in evidence should not be very definitely grouped around the particular problem, or made to show that here is a crisis, or something on which there should be a policy.[76]

"In some cases speculation, opinion, projections [sic] into the future may be necessary, but in all these cases where departures are made from science,[77] there should be a flag stuck up as a guide or warning to the reader. One reason for making this study of modern social problems a study of trends was the idea that a series of changes recorded in facts would prove a sort of solid rock against which the waves of bias, everywhere present in social problems, would beat in vain."[78] –William Ogburn, at meeting of the Board of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends, June 20, 1930

We have seen above how mass communications and 'the public' were presented in the *Recent Social Trends* publications, and how informal understandings of mass communications, 'the public,' and journalists guided RST social scientists' approach to the claims they prepared for the RST report. The focus of this section is the proposed relationship between social scientists and policymaking as it crosscut discussions of fact and value, the danger posed to democracy by economic depression and fascist regimes, and social planning. I outline this relationship as it is discussed in settings where members of different professional fields engaged: news coverage of the *Recent Social Trends* project as well as the post-publication exchanges between RST/SSRC social scientists and

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[76] "The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 20, 1930" p.9. HWOP.

[77] By science, Ogburn explained that he meant "What I mean to emphasize by being scientific is the answer to a very simple question, 'How do you know it?' If you can answer that question to every statement you make you will be on pretty safe ground. [This will be] …a very good safeguard against prejudice, bias, values, and opinion, the great dangers which this report must avoid." "The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 20, 1930" p.13. HWOP.

[78] "The President's Research Committee on Social Trends; Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 20, 1930" p.14. HWOP.

President Hoover. The discursive, cross-professional adoption of a model of

policymaking that included planning and social scientific knowledge likely

structured and contributed to the continued collaboration of social scientists and

federal policymakers during the subsequent Roosevelt administration.

As the above quotes indicate, the delicate, not quite separable issues of

fact and value were integral to the form of relationship proposed by *Recent Social*

Trends social scientists. Ogburn discussed the RST study in the *Chicago Daily*

Tribune, with explicit reference to the relations between social scientists and

government in the policy process. He argued, "[i]t would seem almost axiomatic

that the best planning cannot be done without good factual records of situations

and trends." Turning to a description of the study, he wrote, "[t]he President's

research committee on social trends has for its purpose the presentation to the

public of facts regarding the changes occurring in many of the most significant

parts of American civilization." Consistent with formulations of 'the public'

made during private Board meetings, Ogburn represented 'the public' *to the*

public as a receptor of already established facts. Of the twenty-five to thirty

pieces of research underway, the "great development of communication" and its

social effects was one of the three Ogburn chose to name in the article. He again

emphasized that the 'facts' that the RST research teams were gathering on social

trends were intended by social scientists to provide material upon which the

agencies of government could make better plans—research-informed planning

was "[t]he keynote of most social and governmental action" (Ogburn 1931).

Ogburn's mention of communications research likely grew out of Board meeting

discussions in which the work on communications was cited frequently as a topic

that should be emphasized for 'the public.'[79]

RST social scientists, journalists, and Hoover cited economic instability

and the threat of international fascist powers to US democracy as problems that

social planning could subdue gradually.[80] Without fail, these statements also

pointed to suggested roles for social scientists and federal policymakers. Fisher

argues that the economic devastation of the Depression, and in a wider sense, the

threat of the collapse of liberal, democratic capitalism, resulted in a national

interest that 'allowed' the government to discard its laissez-faire policies and act

to intervene and 'control' (Fisher 1993: 120-130). These events and perceived

threats may also be considered as impetus for creating a set of professional

opportunities—with which ongoing professional projects like those directed and

supported by the Social Science Research Council and Rockefeller Foundation

were compatible—in the political field.

The publication and contents of the *RST* report made leading headlines in

at least two major newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Daily

Tribune*. The *Tribune* referenced the existence of perceived problems in the US:

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[79] See, for example "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.; Thursday, December 31, 1931" p.3, 8; "Summary of Minutes of the Meeting of The President's Research Committee on Social Trends Held at the Social Science Research Council, New York City, Saturday, February 13, 1932" p.8. HWOP.
[80] In the following chapter I consider discussions related to the rise of immigration during this period and demonstrate again how the frames of public and mass communications were hooked back to claims regarding social science and policy professions.

"HERE'S WHAT AILS THE U.S.A.!" Unlike technocrats, another group of intellectuals familiar to the press, the journalist noted, RST scientists found that the problems facing the United States were not signs of imminent collapse, but instead remediable with the narrowing of the social-technological gap. However, one of the major findings reported in the article is that without the narrowing of that gap, without "a policy…to bring together all the disjointed factors in social life so that labor, industry, government, education, religion, and science may travel along the same path at equal speed," "grave maladjustments are bound to occur" (Evans 1933).[81] The article also emphasized the potential positive social effects of communications development identified by the *RST* report—a unified public: mass communications would herald the breakdown of regional isolation and the democratization of recreation and education as more people gained access or the ability to the same information and entertainment. The closing passage emphasized the role that increased control of social forces adapted to contemporaneous social 'tensions' could play in the "continuance of the democratic regime" (Evans 1933).

Similarly, the leading *New York Times* article located the need for "integrated national planning" as RST's central finding. The article also highlighted the study's suggestion for a National Advisory Council, which would include social scientists as well as members of government, agriculture, industry, and labor. The threat of alternative forms of government, fascism, communism,

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[81] This echoed Ogburn's *social lag* theory (see Chapter 1).

loomed—the article included a quote from the *Recent Social Trends* report in

support of the claim for the need for planning:

> More definite alternatives, however, are urged by dictatorial systems in which the factors of force and violence may loom large. In such cases the basic decisions are frankly, imposed by power groups and violence may subordinate technical intelligence in social guidance. Unless there can be a more impressive integration in social skills and fusing of social purposes than is revealed by present trends, there can be no assurance that these alternatives with their accompaniments of violent revolution, dark periods of serious repression of libertarian and democratic forms…can be averted.[82]

In my reading, the article implies that RST and similar 'technical intelligence'

could provide 'social guidance' needed to guard public interests in the context of

'basic decisions' made by democratic governments. This type of reference to

anxieties about the stability of democracy in the United States appeared in various

locations related to RST and general discussion of social science and social

planning. More specifically, this reference suggests the need for the intermediary

role social scientists under discussion here sought.

For example, a hint of 'democracy under threat' appeared in a letter

Ogburn wrote for the press. Prior to publication of the survey, the *Chicago Daily

Tribune* published an editorial skeptical of the survey's worth. In response to its

criticisms, Ogburn responded and defended the usefulness and success of most

'surveys and fact finding bodies.' He cited a few earlier successes and also

pointed to the reliance of other governments on planning and surveying—notably,

he singled out Russia's five year plan. Indeed, the activities of other international

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[82] New York Times, 1933, Survey Took Three Years: Sociologists Seek to Lay the Basis for Sound National Progress. New York Times, January 2: 1-2.

actors, especially nondemocratic ones, at this time of unsteady peace were of concern when assessing choices made in the United States.[83]

As another example, Walter Lippmann, remembered as one of the earliest and most popular political commentators in journalism in the U.S., used his column, 'Today and Tomorrow,' to discuss and scrutinize technocracy for several days. He sought to cast doubt on the "technocrats," particularly their doomsday claims about technology-related plummeting unemployment rates. Lippmann did not indicate to whom "technocrats" referred; however, he drew a distinction between them and the *Recent Social Trends* social scientists. Noting that technocratic claims did not rely upon disclosed data, Lippmann used results published in *Recent Social Trends* to contradict technocratic assertions. He held the President's Research Committee on Social Trends in high esteem by comparison, naming it among the "thoroughly responsible bodies of scholars" (Lippmann 1933b). These comments likely reflected Lippmann's support of the RST (and SSRC) intellectual program. In addition, recall that the RST board was concerned with making their research accessible—in terms of clarity and availability—to 'the public'; Lippmann's positive emphasis on the availability of RST data to 'the public' suggests a parallel or shared view among the fields of journalism and social science. At the least, the comments of Lippmann and the RST board tell us that not all intellectuals were in the practice of making their

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[83] Ogburn, William F., 1931, Voice of the People; The Survey of Recent Social Changes. Chicago Daily Tribune, May 16: 12.

research available to 'the public,' and that the act of disclosure connoted

trustworthiness, reliability, and responsible engagement with 'the public.'[84]

Of note with regard to international political anxiety, however, were the

issues he addressed soon afterward. Within days of his February 1933 pieces on

technocracy, Lippmann's focus was Hitler's rise in power and attempts to ally

with Mussolini. He identified growing fascist power and the question of whether

"European order [was] to be revised gradually or overthrown in a convulsion" as

paramount for statesmen (Lippmann 1933a). Doubtless Lippmann and his readers

were not the only ones wary of these events, among others, which would

eventually lead to World War II.[85]

While not necessarily fully embraced by government, other scholars, or

'the public,' Fisher argues that the program set forth by the Social Science

Research Council and *Recent Social Trends* had found some acceptance and

status as a thinkable and reasonable approach to social problems and policy.[86]

RST statements strongly favored lasting collaboration between policymakers in

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[84] One could make the argument, though I will not here, that the RST board and Lippmann, among others, drew on a democratic code of civil society as outlined by Alexander (2003).

[85] Lippmann also authored *Public Opinion* (1922), in which he responded to the inaccurate, misleading coverage of the first world war, by emphasizing not only a dedication in journalism to accuracy, but the creation of 'political observatories,' or research institutes, both inside and outside of government, to monitor and evaluate the performance of government agencies. This book was considered "the founding book in American media studies" by media scholar Paul Starr. It encouraged a greater role for experts, to "overcome the stereotyped 'pictures in our heads' that most people have of the public world." This supervision would aid in the protection of the American public from misleading news, unlike the scenario faced by fascist and communist publics (Starr 2004:.396-397). Again, notice the notion of a malleable public.

[86] Suspicion of American media would appear a bit later, in 1944, in the work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkeheimer. As historian of the media Paul Starr notes, they "equated American radio with fascism: 'In American [radio] collects no fees from the public, and so has acquired the illusory forms of disinterested, unbiased authority which suits Fascism admirably. The radio becomes the universal mouthpiece of the Fuhrer…The inherent tendency of radio is to make the speaker's world, the false commandment, absolute.'" Starr 2004, especially pp. 399-403.

government and social scientists (preferably affiliated with the SSRC). By all available accounts, Hoover was content with the completed product and the efforts of all involved (Hoover 1952; Starr 2004). Among his words of praise were assertions of the ideological and political import of the project. He suggested that the determination of 'social trends' in various categories of industry and social life offered by the study would enable political actors to approach the betterment of U.S. society with a more informed lens. In correspondence with Wesley Mitchell, chairman of the RST project, Hoover commented that he felt that those involved had met the call "for a very high sense of social responsibility."[87] Hoover included in his comments a request to share with the rest of the RST team his view that RST research would constitute "an immediately valuable resource."[88] Along similar lines, Hoover's Foreword to the RST publication (1933) characterized the study as the most comprehensive of its type to date and as offering a vantage point for understanding and addressing social problems.

This response from the president encouraged an affiliate of the SSRC, Robert T. Crane, to pursue more directly a long desired permanent relationship between executive government and social scientists. Crane corresponded with Hoover, providing updates on the future of the RST group. Hoover in turn

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[87] RAC, SSRC Collection, Accession 2, Series 1 Committee Projects, Sub-Series 74 Miscellaneous Files, Box 427, Folder 5146, letter dated January 3, 1933 from Herbert Hoover to Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell.
[88] Letter dated January 3, 1933 from Herbert Hoover to Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell.

encouraged these updates and indicated that he would try to be of assistance, if needed.[89]

Meanwhile, Crane urged RST Director of Research William F. Ogburn to attempt to initiate deliberation within the SSRC to actively pursue the establishment of an extended program that would prepare social scientists for a more broadly defined role of a policy advisor. Further, with a strategic tone, Crane advised Ogburn that the specifics of the proposal did not "make any difference," "except that in one [set of specifics] you might get further than in another." The specifics that might be varied would be the extent of social planning pursued as well as the source of the plan used. The chief goal in the resultant proposal, one familiar and dear to the hearts of many in the SSRC, was to put social scientists in a position to advocate effectively for social planning or control.[90]

Ogburn's proposal reminded the Council of its stated interests in the promotion of social planning and of increased status for social science. Speaking on behalf of the Recent Social Trends Committee, Ogburn encouraged the Council to develop a more definitive stance from which it could advance social science's status and participation in social planning. Ogburn's suggestion was to create an advisory committee that would develop and maintain informally a view of the "social, political, and economic situation" with an eye on "problems and issues of major significance" which would periodically be brought to the attention

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[89] Folder 5146, letters from late 1932 and early 1933 between Robert Crane and Herbert Hoover.
[90] Folder 5146, letter dated March 1, 1933 from Crane to Ogburn.

of the Council's decision making body. As a sample issue he raised the question of whether national economic self-sufficiency or increased international trade would be more beneficial to the U.S. The three problems suggested echoed earlier plans: "(1) the place of a controlled national economy in an international system, (2) population and distribution, and (3) public service personnel" (Fisher 1993: 132). These commissions of inquiry would "contribute to the present emergency by collecting facts and helping to clarify public opinion on these questions of broad social policy" (1993: 132).

To answer such questions, Ogburn suggested a process of meetings and hearings in various locations, literature reviews, the appointment of specialists, and a period of assessment, followed by the publication of findings. As had been the case with the Recent Social Trends project, the SSRC would not be involved beyond the initial stages, but the Council would have the responsibility for the selection of the problems and the personnel for the Commission. Additional involvement would likely drain the resources of the Council.

The proposal further suggested that the published findings could draw prestige and "high official cognizance and approval" by drawing a connection to the RST report in "the public mind." And prestige, the proposal argued, would "contribute to the success of the undertaking."[91] As in earlier Council affiliated efforts, SSRC members discussed and planned social scientific work and presentation with social science's status in mind. While these social scientists

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[91] Folder 5146, Memorandum to P.&P., Social Science Research Council, March 2, 1933.

believed that 'the public' could be managed, they also attributed great power to its responses, unmanaged or not, by linking public reactions to an understanding of the process of attaining prestige.

In late 1933, Crane included in his updates to Hoover a report on the Council's consideration of Ogburn's proposal. Regretfully, Crane told Hoover, the finances were not available at that time for such an undertaking. However, the Council had outlined a plan to address at least two problems in the foreseeable future. One of these was to be the economic example described above; the other would be an assessment of public service personnel. In telling Hoover of this development, Crane included an entreaty for continued government-social science collaboration. Crane positioned himself and his colleagues as devoted to service to the Government rather than to a particular Administration by offering this view: "There is a role for the scientist, however modest, in connection with the Government—a role as scientist, not as statesman or politician." He claimed that social scientists would provide means for reaching goals determined by others. He expressed the fear that ties to Government might be severed in times of political transition following a misunderstanding regarding the loyalty of his colleagues to an administration rather than government.[92]

Although Hoover was not re-elected, a relationship between social science and government did continue under the Roosevelt administration. The most prominent of these ventures was the research that influenced the formulation of

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[92] Folder 5146, letters between Hoover and Crane, various dates in 1933.

Roosevelt's New Deal policies. Two prominent members of the SSRC, Merriam

and Mitchell, who had been tied to RST, were brought on to the National

Planning Board, as part of the Public Works Administration, also signaling

continued governmental support of the SSRC program under the Roosevelt

administration. In the meantime, the SSRC continued to solicit widespread

government support by selectively inviting government officials to numerous

academic conferences, supported as usual by Rockefeller and other philanthropic

foundations.[93]

Into the late 1930s, Council scientists continued to mark the media as a

"mirror of social life" as well as an influence on public opinion.[94] However, I

turn now to another major interwar model of mass communications, 'the public,'

and political life in the United States; in contrast to the RST model, Chicago

School sociologist Robert Park saw social scientists as enablers of an already

active public.

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[93] Reuss, Martin, 1992, Coping with Uncertainty: Social Scientists, Engineers, and Federal Water Resources Planning. Natural Resources Journal, 32: 101-135, especially pp. 107-110.
[94] Rockefeller Archive Center, 1937 Committee on Local History.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST AS A RIGOROUS REPORTER

The newspaper. That was sociologist Robert Park's answer to the question of how "the man who speaks English imperfectly, or not at all, who never will and never can express himself adequately in anything but his mother tongue—how is this man to know America? How is America to know him?" (1922: 463). The newspaper was also his answer to a slew of other fears, such as the ability to maintain public morale in the face of economic depression and possible war, which were circulating in the United States in the interwar period. Before Robert Park became a sociologist—one of the first to study the news media—he passed through a number of careers. This chapter sketches his earlier academic and professional encounters, and then it turns to Park's sociological scholarship regarding the newspaper. In the process I cover Park's exposure to and engagement with a variety of fields that contained ideas about society, groups, and the press. It was with this background that this extremely influential sociologist understood and practiced social science. Put another way, I trace how Park understood the newspaper, 'the public,' the social scientist, and national

political life in a sociological way, while considering how his experiences outside the social scientific field related to his sociological formulations.

Unlike the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) members considered in the previous chapters, Park asserted an idea of an active public, one that could make use of the press. Park's conceptions of the social scientist also differed from the dominant faction of SSRC. In contrast to the predominant SSRC vision of the social scientist as a broker for 'the public' or a consultant for policymakers, Park and his followers considered the social scientist an unbiased observer nonetheless driven by a moral desire to galvanize community, or 'the public.' What Park and SSRC members did share was a professional concern, as social scientists, with the U.S. national public. Finally, both Park and SSRC members shared journalism as a reference point when they made claims about the role of social science in the United States. The SSRC and Park positioned social science as superior to journalism; however, Park's claim of superiority was founded on different grounds than the SSRC's claim. The SSRC doubted the actual disinterestedness and agency of journalists, whereas Park, sympathetic to journalistic methods, simply argued that social scientists were more highly skilled.

Aside from the conceptual differences between the publics and social sciences that the SSRC and Park espoused, there is the issue of the status and origin of Park's concepts. Whereas social scientists at the SSRC engaged in relationships with actors in other fields in the process of formulating (the

boundary object of) 'the public,' Park's direct relationships with other fields

preceded his work as a professional sociologist on 'the public' and the press.

'The public' and vision of social science that Park asserted guided the

development of a portion of the field of social science, but the nature and extent

of Park's engagement with actors beyond the field of the social science remains a

matter for future exploration. In this chapter, I highlight Park's involvement in

earlier historical moments of the fields discussed in previous chapters. I would

characterize the concepts of 'the public' and press as developed by Park as ones

that organized *symbolic boundaries* with regard to a range of professions and

fields and *social boundaries* within the field of sociology with regard to

methodology. 'The public' and the press were objects at the margins of *symbolic*

boundaries, but they were not *boundary objects* in the same sense as they were

for a group of SSRC social scientists, because Park was not collaborating with

actors in other fields. In contrast, as for the SSRC, 'the public' and the press were

objects conceptually organized in ways that resonated with distinctions in the

fields of journalism, politics, and natural science as well as with widely held

moral concerns about democracy (see Chapter 1 and 2).

In what follows, I introduce Park's perspective on groups, society,

communication, and the press beginning with an overview of his early

professional and academic experiences. This includes Park's study of philosophy

and psychology at the undergraduate and graduate levels, his years as a journalist

in the Midwestern U.S. and New York City, and his work as a press agent for

Booker T. Washington. Then I turn to an analysis of his role in the Department of

Sociology at the University of Chicago as well as his sociological work on the

question of the 'Americanization' of immigrants, for which the press is central.

Park and Philosophy

One of Park's earliest mentors was the pragmatist philosopher John

Dewey, [95] who demonstrated in his written work a concern with 'the public', such

as in his classic work *The Public and its Problems* (1927).[96] Dewey was one of

Park's favored professors during his undergraduate years at the University of

Michigan (1883-1887), where he studied primarily philosophy and German.

Dewey imparted to Park the notion of society as an organism, many

interdependent parts—individuals and institutions—composing a functional

whole. This notion stemmed from Dewey's teaching of Darwinian and

Spencerian theory. Historian Fred Matthews argues that one permutation of the

organicism of post-Darwinian science[97] "led to an exaltation of the superior

wisdom of this impersonal process which maintained the equilibrium of nature"

(1977: 27). This permutation supported the argument in favor of *laissez-faire*

politics, which included the claim that society should be allowed to progress

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[95] Dewey received his Ph.D. in philosophy at Johns Hopkins University, taught at the University of Michigan from 1884-1894 (excepting a year at the University of Minnesota) and at the University of Chicago from 1894-1904, moving finally to Columbia University.
[96] Dewey 1927.
[97] Matthews characterizes this as follows: a "model of nature as an elaborate structure of functionally interrelated parts with competition as its mechanism" (1977: 26-27).

naturally, and that conscious attempts to alter this would be highly dangerous and presumptuous. Dewey and Park, among others, disagreed with this vision of politics in an organicist society. Although Matthews does not indicate whether this *laissez-faire* argument informed by evolutionary theory was dominant at the time, he observes that it provoked Park and others to write against it.

Accepting the organicist model of society but rejecting the corollary *laissez-faire* argument, Park and others sought to find a place for social action within societal development. Park believed that some elements and institutions could be improved without alteration of the logic of societal structure. He argued that the *communication* of the organicist awareness of structure and functional interrelatedness to an educated public would result in the generation of intelligent and applicable changes in structure. This idea, according to Matthews, was founded on "John Dewey's passion to relate abstract thought to the daily life of concrete human beings in order to validate the former and perfect the latter: 'popularization,' in the sense of communicating knowledge in a palatable form to an active public, was the *raison d'etre* of the scholar" (1977: 29). Sociologist Mark Whipple's account of Dewey's theories also suggests to me that Dewey's and Park's understandings of social processes overlapped significantly. Whipple documents Dewey's formulations of the scientific attitude as inclusive of the desire to "democratize the ability to think scientifically" (2005: 162).

Even after Park moved on to journalism and graduate study in psychology at Harvard University and in Germany, Dewey and Park remained in contact.

Park presented the press as a tool of and for community-building and eventually

of nation building. Not surprisingly, in the early 1890s both Dewey and Park

were attracted to a project called *Thought News*, proposed by Franklin Ford, a

journalist. *Thought News* was to be a newspaper that would interpret current

events using the insights of social science. The philosophy behind the project was

exactly this idea of the communication of an understanding of the natural laws of

society which, in Dewey's words, would "'change opinion to intelligence and

gives a scientific axis to social action'" (Matthews 1977: 28). Dewey concluded,

"'A proper daily newspaper would be the only possible social science'" (1977:

28). When the project was abandoned just before the first issue's copy was

published, Dewey remarked that the project had been too advanced for the current

abilities of its progenitors (and perhaps of social science).[98]

Park, 'the Public,' and the Crowd

Park's understanding of group dynamics and properties was important for

his understanding of journalism, social science, and the press. His encounters

with various scholars and scholarship during his graduate school years were

formative for his notions of groups. Coming to Harvard and Germany with

Dewey's understanding of the public, Park encountered other notions of social

groups in the work of sociologists Georg Simmel and Auguste Comte. He also

read the literature prevalent in Europe about crowds (e.g. Le Bon 1903). Further,

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[98] Interestingly, Park later remarked that he believed *Time* magazine had fulfilled the goals of *Thought News*. See Matthews 1977.

Park was oriented by his intent to study print news and public opinion as a graduate student. [99]

Park initially intended to study philosophy at Harvard. Matthews attributes Park's choice of philosophy to three factors: a wish to continue in the discipline of Dewey; sociology's lack of an appeal as an alternative due to its relative lack of prestige at this time; and Park's regard for philosophy as a way to approach his subject broadly and abstractly (as against the sociology of the time, which was marked as an applied project to address social problems[100]). However, during his stay at Harvard, William James's pragmatist ideas turned Park away from philosophy. Park, who would frequently quote James to his students later in life, took from James the notion that individual, subjective perspective was an essential element in understanding a situation. Further, to understand these perspectives (and larger processes), empathy and imaginative participation was needed in addition to observation.

Park received his only formal education in sociology in Germany, from Georg Simmel. Simmel's concerns with the relativity of truth and with the conditions for individual freedom were to profoundly inform Park's thinking. During this period Park also undertook a detailed study of the work of one of the first self-professed sociologists, Auguste Comte. Comte believed societal order

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[99] Quoted in Matthews is also Park's account: "'I studied philosophy because I hoped to gain insight into the nature and function of that kind of knowledge we call news. Besides I wanted to gain a fundamental point of view from which I could describe the behavior of society, under the influence of news, in the precise and universal language of science'" (1977: 31).

[100] Matthews writes of the focus of sociology in 1898: "The new subject embraced applied betterment courses like sanitary engineering and a hodgepodge of Protestant uplift and reform" (1977: 31).

and unity depended on the moral consensus of all involved. This emphasis on uniformity of belief, or opinion, Matthews argues, appealed to Park in his concern with 'news' and communication. Retaining his Spencerian sense of societal cohesion through mutual utility and symbiosis, Park incorporated into his theoretical perspective Comte's concept of the relation between order and ideological consensus. Yet another element of Park's understanding of social cohesion comes from a combination of the ideas of sociologist Gabriel Tarde and American psychologist James Mark Baldwin: socialization and imitation held the key to keeping individuals linked to society by simultaneously creating within individuals a similar sense of self and others.

In one of Park's earliest scholarly writings, his Ph.D. dissertation, *The Crowd and the Public: A Methodological and Sociological Examination* (title translated from German, 1904) (see Park 1972), Matthews notes the influence of the European psychology of crowds and American social psychology on sociology prior to its more marked separation from other disciplines in the first decades of the 20th century.[101] The central concept in Park's work is his adoption of the distinction between the social groups of crowd and public, the former displaying irrational, unpredictable, yet potentially creative behavior (leading to new social orders), and the latter a rational and critical assembly. He attempted to demonstrate the limitations of the contemporaneously dominant rational and utilitarian account of human behavior. Matthews argues that the distinctions in

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[101] For additional detail, see Matthews 1977.

this work advance a concern more pressing than social cohesion for Park: individual freedom. Park's concepts of public (confined by reason, but able to address perceived problems) and crowd (anarchistic and free from control) presented individuals as agents, rather than merely subjugated and melded by external tradition. This notion of an enlightened public again echoed the presumptions of the progressive projects Park and Dewey shared, such as *Thought News.* These views have important implications for my consideration of Park's location in broader U.S. discussions during the interwar years about democracy as well as his role in social scientific discussions about mass media and the communication of knowledge to 'the public.'

Schudson notes that in the late nineteenth century, a surge in literature regarding 'crowds' and the behavior of crowds appeared. According to him, the character of the crowd in this literature varied: in the U.S., particularly in sociology, writers often depicted the crowd as "a seedbed of new institutions serving the needs an earlier social order had not met"; in Europe, antiliberal assaults on the lower orders and middle class tended to cast the crowd (including electoral crowds, juries, and parliaments) as "instances of mass subjection to prejudice and primitive instinct" (1978: 127).[102] Importantly, Schudson finds that the early twentieth century of U.S. and European definitions of *public* and *public opinion* converged pursuant to two general changes in society. Schudson argues that a new concentration of heterogeneous groups of people in both urban and

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[102] Schudson notes that these visions often appeared in both the U.S. and Europe, contrary to the claims of earlier scholars of the history of the concept of the crowd.

political life prompted the formulation of the concept of *attitudes* (a mix of passion and reason), applied for instance to children, women, and immigrant groups, in place of the attribution of reason to groups other than native white males. In addition, a growing "public of investors" and "public of consumers" sparked not only the businesses' recognition of a public through its implementation of public relations, but accompanying notions of 'the public' as "irrational, not reasoning; consuming, not productive" (1978: 133, 134). The resultant definitions of *public* and *public opinion* in turn, he asserts, touched the ideology and daily social relations of journalism. While these views resonate with the dominant SSRC model of 'the public,' perhaps in Park's case they served as an analytic foil.

Park's Encounters with Journalism

Park's support of *Thought News* and his choice of dissertation topic likely grew also from his professional experiences as a journalist. In the mid 1880s, following his undergraduate years at the University of Minnesota, Park began to work for newspapers.[103] He worked his way through a few cities before securing a job with the prominent *New York Journal* in 1892. Simultaneously, Park wrote articles for the Sunday *New York World*. For the Sunday paper, his pieces focused primarily on issues related to the local community. Sometimes this would involve "describing urban color" (1977: 9)–one such was his report that

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[103] I draw primarily on the research of one of Park's biographers, Fred Matthews, for an account of this period. Interspersed are the insights from other scholars of Park.

addressed the inside life of opium dens. For the *Journal,* he worked the police

beat at a court house. Other topics of investigation included epidemics,

alcoholism, the drug trade, and crime rings (Czitrom 1982).

According to Matthews, Park found the experiences of wandering the city

one which confirmed the Deweyian notion of society as an organism. Park's stint

in journalism, Matthews notes, occurred at a time when the city beat reporter

enjoyed high prestige. The reporter, Matthews argues, was a reputable occupation

during this period, in part because of the claim of the reporter as disinterested, as

one who provided "the facts without fear or favor" (1977: 10), one who acted as

the eyes and ears of the audience. Notably, Park was a reporter during a time

when papers had begun to recruit college educated people, often with

backgrounds in, and an appreciation for, science. Sociologist Michael Schudson

(1978) observes that the dominant understanding of science at this time valued a

fixed set of knowledge that was publicly available. This idea was present in the

approach of journalism and radio broadcasting to reporting the news. While I

argue later that journalistic methods influenced Park's approach to social science,

it is important to note, as Schudson's account indicates, that the academic and

journalistic fields were not isolated from one another in earlier periods.

Schudson (1978) characterizes Park's workplaces—the *New York World*

and the *New York Journal* of the mid-1890s—as situated within an ideological

divide between news as story-telling entertainment versus news as the provision

of factual information by journalists. While some newspapers and journalists

tended to value both approaches, others tended more strongly toward one or the other style. The *World* and *Journal* news was most frequently story-telling entertainment. In addition to these influences on Park's perspective on reporting, Park likely obtained a focus on police, court, society, and street as 'news.' Schudson notes that Pulitzer, as the head of the *World*, was guided by a topical model of news that emphasized police, court, society, and street 'news.'[104]

The model of news instituted by the *World* also included a dramatic shift in relations between newspaper and advertiser. With prices for advertising space set by newspaper circulation, the public, according to Schudson, became an even stronger measure of a newspaper's worth. Moreover, the changing nature of and "growth of intracity transportation" (1978: 103) engendered new approaches to and views of journalism and the news. Travelers had become spectators and observers during their journeys on trains and buses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Schudson claims, "the cities of the late nineteenth century were spectacles" (1978: 104), as was social life. Newspapers, then, came to provide readers with "a running account of the marvels and mysteries of urban life" (1978: 105). Incidentally, Schudson draws on a quote from Robert Park, who was effusive in his description of the pleasures of observing the spectacles of city life, to support this argument. At the same time, the profession itself became

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[104] Pulitzer acquired this topical model of news during his time in St. Louis where J.G. Bennett had earlier implemented such a model (Schudson 1978).

a marvel, as the journalist engaged in 'action journalism' (1978: 105), doing such

things as writing exposes and raising money for public causes.[105]

Schudson marks the year after Park joined the *Journal* as the moment of

the rise of the *New York Times*'s approach to journalism; the *Times* identified

itself as a provider of accurate information, of a truthful picture of life (107).[106]

Echoes of these approaches to journalism resonate in Park's later sociological

work, as the latter half of this chapter documents. Matthews's account (1977)

identifies *antimoralism* as a salient journalistic attitude of the late 19th century; so

while other journalists of the period routinely made intentional value judgments in

their stories regarding drug use or homosexuality, for example, Park and others

rejected the imposition of such judgments. Park claimed to be merely intrigued

by the variety he encountered in the city. He valued the push for an

indiscriminate, realistic, almost photographic description of life in news stories.

However, Park eventually left journalism in 1898, finding it limiting to his

intellectual growth—while as a reporter he could describe what he saw, he could

not attempt to explain what he saw, as his educational background in philosophy

urged him to do (Matthews 1977).

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[105] This mode of journalism is not unlike the so-called social science reformers of the late 19th and early 20th century in the United States.

[106] The expected readers of the *Times* were rational individuals for whom life might be anticipated, ordered, and controlled by presenting knowledge as useful. Schudson suggests that this approach may have attained its status as the 'higher journalism' (1978: 119) because it modeled the life experiences of "persons whose position in the social structure gave them the most control over their own lives" (1978: 119). In contrast, story journalism presented its knowledge with the "sense that everything was new, unusual, and unpredictable" (1978: 119)—much like, Schudson argues, the life experiences of the newly urban and literate members of the working and middle class.

However, Park never left journalism completely behind. After he completed graduate study at Harvard and in Germany, Park spent additional time as a press agent following his completion of graduate study but prior to his recruitment to sociology. Moreover, during his graduate work and later as a sociologist at the University of Chicago, journalism remained a profession with methodologies and character that were a point of reference for broader political and professional claims. With this in mind, I discuss briefly Park's work as a press agent with Booker T. Washington as well as salient attitudes about journalism in Germany in the late 19th century and in the United States in the 1920s. In a later section about Park at the University of Chicago and his prevailing model of empirical sociology, I demonstrate the continued presence of journalistic conventions in Park's work.

Park at CRA and Tuskegee

As a press agent for Booker T. Washington, Robert Park worked for the Congo Reform Association and the Tuskegee Institute.[107] These experiences reinforced and expanded Park's confidence in the news media, an historical materialist perspective, and an orientation toward integration of groups developed during his undergraduate and graduate education.

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[107] Matthews describes the Institute as at "the crest of its fame as the center of Southern Negro life" when Park joined it; Tuskegee was "the leader in the task of assimilating Negroes to the American ethic of self-discipline, through a program of 'industrial' or vocational education" (1977: 62).

At the Congo Reform Association (CRA), as Matthews notes, Park was forced to confront the significance of the historical context of race relations in the Congo. This contradicted earlier ideas to which he had been exposed, which explained "the established pattern of inequality" as "a reflection of innate racial traits" (1977: 60). Instead, Park came to perceive the situation in the Congo as tied to human migration and economies and European political control and commercial exploitation. At CRA, he also developed the view that material practices could alter one's identity and that cultural assimilation was possible and desirable. Park encountered educational programs aimed to impart European trade and other work skills to students; these programs carried the expectation that "absorption into white civilization" (1977: 61) would be inevitable. This view emerged later in Park's discussion of the 'Americanizing' influence of a trade or job on immigrants.

At Tuskegee, Park observed and advocated a similar educational scheme of instruction in trades and other 'practical' knowledge for 'Negros.' Matthews locates Park as "the leader in the task of assimilating Negroes to the American ethic of self-discipline, through a program of 'industrial' or vocational education" (1977: 62). Again, Park supported the news media as institutions beneficial to groups. He opined that publicity regarding the activities of Tuskegee would work to dispel southern white stereotypes of blacks as lazy. Influenced by Harvard's William James and his breed of pragmatism, Park believed strongly that the development of a particular morality and understanding of theory, ideas, even

geography, should be accompanied by learning a skill and maintaining connections with 'real life things.'[108]

According to Matthews (1977), Park's theory of assimilation was deeply grounded in his historical materialist perspective, i.e., that economic life was the most powerful force in determining social life and conditions. Booker T. Washington's espousal of this position with regard to race relations—advancement and equality between blacks and whites through 'solid [economic] achievement' rather than activism—appears to have deeply influenced Park, some say to the detriment of social theory into the 1940s.[109] However, Park's historical materialism was not absolute; he believed that social change could and should occur through political agitation, as long as it arose 'properly,' 'naturally,' within groups facing discrimination, much as group self-consciousness and national movements had emerged in Europe. He remained skeptical of outside reformers or the minority of a group. Here Park's view of America as a plurality of ethnic groups, at least initially separate and self-conscious, headed for assimilation was no doubt impacted by Washington's vision of blacks as a 'nation among nations.'

Park also seemed to embrace Booker T. Washington's view of rural life and people, particularly blacks, as strong in moral virtue—probably in part because of its resonance with the German and American theory of his earlier education. Park's unpublished writings on rural blacks and his letters to

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[108] See also Bulmer 1984: 58-61.
[109] Washington's position has been argued by some to be only a tactic, as he often worked behind the scenes to block disfranchisement.

Washington, as identified and argued by biographer Matthews, reflect his personal

experience as arbitrated by his exposure to '*Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*' theory

(roughly community, shared beliefs, interest in association vs. self-interested

organization, civil society)[110] and a dominant Protestant moral paradigm which

idealized and valued peasant or folk life as innocent, pure, natural, and simplistic,

characterized by tradition and sentiment, in contrast to the corruption of urban

life.[111] Park and Washington both spoke of the moral challenge—the possibility

of temptation, confusion, and corruption—rural blacks faced when entering urban

situations. Of rural black life, Park believed that face to face interaction kept

traditions alive and local morality intact. However, despite Park's tendency to

romanticize and primitivize rural blacks,[112] he remained of the opinion that

assimilation and 'self-discipline,' which could be bolstered by Tuskegee, were

necessary, and that entrance into western, 'modern' life was historically

inevitable. The level of integration for which Park aimed was national. This

concern reappears in his sociological study of 'Americanization' of immigrants

that I discuss in a later section.

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[110] These terms characterize two types of groups introduced by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies.

[111] Matthews notes, for example, Park's citation of Herder in his 1921 sociology textbook. Herder linked notions of peasant life as simplistic and innocent to the notion that groups of humans were rooted in particular geographies and possessed particular traditions. Park encountered philanthropist George Foster Peabody and many others who advocated or advanced similar ideas.

[112] Park, as quoted in Matthews: "No-one can know much about the Negro race…until he has become acquainted with the masses of the people as they are in the black belt counties of the South. They are strong, vigorous, kindly and industrious people; simple minded, wholesome and good as God made them. They are very different from the people of the cities. As yet they have been very little affected with either disease or vice. The boys and girls that come from the country are usually earnest and ambitious. The young folk from the cities on the other hand are very likely to be indifferent and frivolous (76)."

Attitudes toward U.S. and German Journalism

Beyond Park's immediate surroundings—at his undergraduate and

graduate institutions in the U.S. and Germany, the *New York World*, the *New York*

Journal, the Congo Reform Association, the Tuskegee Institute, and the

University of Chicago—scholars have identified overarching characteristics in the

journalistic attitudes of regions and time periods in which he lived.

Anthropologist Dominic Boyer characterizes the dominant mode of journalism in

late 19th century Germany as oriented toward "the cultivation and formation of

"public" knowledge of social life, especially knowledge of political culture and its

effects upon other spheres of social life" (2005: 94). Editors were understood to

bring with care "a harmony of hermeneutic order" to ostensibly unrelated pieces

of news and information (the *Nachrichten*); editors "revealed the broader

significance of otherwise particularistic events" (2005: 95). Importantly, German

editors viewed journalism as involving not only professional writing but the

practice of the ethic of *Wissenschaft*, "a disciplined attention to the cultivation of

knowledge that seeks the universal in the particular" (2005: 286),[113] a concept

that was salient in the discourse of German universities. Journalism could

contribute to the "formation of an educated 'public,' who could, as Fichte had

envisaged for his *Volkslehrer*,[114] guide the masses to nationhood" (2005: 94).[115]

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[113] For a more complex elaboration of this term, see Boyer 2005: 54-55.

[114] Educators of the people (See Boyer 2005: 285 for more detail).

[115] Boyer also finds Jewishness, or the trope of the Jew, to have been integral to understandings of journalistic practice in Germany. I recount this argument during my discussion of Park's study of the immigrant presses in the United States.

In contrast, Schudson finds that in the U.S. journalism of the 1920s, *objectivity* was a primary concern for both journalists and their critics. Prior to the 1920s, Schudson characterizes the two models of journalism discussed above—informational journalism and story-telling journalism—and the discussions surrounding them as lacking anxiety about either the subjectivity of personal perspective or the context in which information[116] was produced. After World War I, however, the "vanity of neutrality" that asserted the understandability of "facts in themselves" shared by the educated middle class of the Progressive Era dropped away (Schudson 1978: 120). Schudson argues that following the war, the "worth of the democratic market society was radically questioned and its internal logic laid bare" (1978: 122). This led journalists as well as social scientists to conjure the ideal, or method, of objectivity as a reaction against skepticism and the increasingly shaky status of *facts*. In this context, objectivity, according to Schudson, meant "consensually validated statements about the world, predicated on a radical separation of facts and values" (1978: 122). All these debates and distinctions about journalism are important to consider when exploring social scientific history at this time in light of Park's knowledge of and participation in U.S. and German journalism.

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[116] Of course, this is another concept with shifting histories and meanings. For example, see Benjamin (1968).

The Character and Contributions of Park's Sociology

By accepting a position for which he was recruited in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, Park became a sociologist in 1913. Park was to become a major figure in the discipline, and he is often cited as a co-founder of the Chicago School of sociology. In 1921, Park coauthored what some claim to be the most influential text in sociology between the world wars (Park and Burgess 1921).

Sociologist Andrew Abbott's volume on the history of the American Journal of Sociology (1999) provides a nice review of the existing literature on 'the Chicago School' of sociology. Although Abbott contends that the School was not constructed as a cultural object until decades after it was said to have existed, he argues nonetheless that "something real" (1999: 30) did exist during the interwar years (roughly 1915-1935) as a social structure with notable effects. For instance, the School played a role in the separation of reformism and sociology, the transformation in attitude toward survey methods from advocacy to dispassion, the use of ethnographic methods on 'ourselves' and not only 'others,' the protection of pragmatism from the onslaught of European analytic philosophy, and the creation of a "new academic model for critical politics 'within the system'" (1999: 31). Abbott suggests that through a complex process of mutual reinforcement the School emerged as a 'freestanding' social structure or thing.[117]

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[117] Abbott describes this emergence as follows: "As in any social situation, each individual lineage entering the Chicago world in the interwar period had its own effects on the others. So the ideas of Thomas or Park contributed to the methodological thinking of students and colleagues, the problems selected for investigation by the reform traditions shaped the kinds of concepts

Distinct from the nominal cultural recognition of the School in later years, he argues that a cultural structure – a "symbolic system loosely implicit in the theoretical writing" of Park and others in the department – existed during the interwar years. If Abbott is right, Park's sociological claims should be taken as more than the views of one sociologist but as formal guides for the development of a major branch of sociology.

As most scholars would agree, Park was a formative influence on 'the Chicago School.' There is much of the Park we have seen above in the character Abbott lends to the work of the Chicago School. For instance, Abbott notes, the School's work contained an "observational flavor" (1999: 6). Further, the work engaged with three primary conceptual foci: social psychology, social ecology, and social organization. This reveals concerns with the connection between individual and group 'minds,' the location of social events in space and social structure, [118] and the location of social events in time and process.[119]

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employed, and the substantive focus on the city helped force an interaction of different methodological styles. The school emerged as a social entity when these various forces began to reflect around on one another in a circular manner, when they began to resonate systematically. This mutual reinforcement then magnified the effects of the individual relations. The whole structure gained a force that enabled it, for a time, to reproduce itself and to confer a new authority on its external effects. This account of 'emergence' follows that for physical systems like lasers" (1999: 32-33).

[118] Park "puts forward a substructure (the physiological conditions, so to speak), on the basis of which the structure, which we can denote as society in the real sense, the social *sui generis*, is erected" (Lindner 1996: 108-9). This is reminiscent of Park's approach to the project of assimilating rural African American students and workers (see section in this chapter about Park's time at Congo Reform Association and Tuskegee Institute).

"Park's draft theory of society repeatedly focuses on the distinction between two different kinds of order, while constantly endeavouring to give a precise sociological definition of the relationship between them. Drawing an analogy with animal and plant ecology – the work of Eugenius Warming was the model here – Park labels the social substructure 'community', a community being an entity which gradually takes spatial shape and is thus geographically definable, providing all those conditions which are necessary for societies to put down roots" (Lindner 1996: 109).

Communication served as a social scientific object/concept through which Park could address the aforementioned concerns. Similarly, European ethnologist Rolf Lindner argues that communication and understanding are key concepts for Park's understanding of sociology; "Sociology, as Park understands it, is meant to uncover the conditions which cause individuals to lead a cooperative existence" (1996: 108). In the seminal sociology textbook mentioned above, Park contended that communication is the most basic form of interaction. He also argued that the press had particular significance in complex, modern societies—namely an assimilative function. Park described this as part of the 'assimilation phase' of communication. For him, this phase consisted of "a complex interpenetration and fusion in which 'persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life'" (Park cited in Matthews 1977: 116). In his studies of immigration, Park considered issues such as public opinion and political action as integral to cultural assimilation.

Beginning with his dissertation, Park had identified the press as making "possible the extension and refinement of public opinion" (Czitrom 1982: 115). At the time of his dissertation, however, Park opined that, thus far, the press had only managed to control opinion, causing the judgments of readers to be formed

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[119] Of these foci, the social ecological frame drew the most critical attention from the school's contemporaries, such as Bernard and Halbwachs. Despite this, Abbott notes that the existing mass of historical work has not attended to the school's social ecological and quantitative work, instead focusing on topics such as Park as a charismatic leader (Raushenbush 1979, Matthews 1977), the department's formal study of society as part of a larger turn (Deegan 2005, Platt), the connection between Park's scholarship and ongoing debates about race (Lal 1987), and Park's ties to the "habitus of journalism" (Lindner 1996).

unreflectively and immediately. Park claimed at the end of this work that he made no value judgment regarding unreflective versus refined public opinion he had described; however, Czitrom argues that Park did implicitly value the unachieved extension and refinement of opinion among the public over opinion processes in other forms of collective behavior (e.g., the crowd).

Park's 'Americanization' Study

Consideration of Park's 'Americanization' study provides us with insights on Park's understanding of the press and the role of social science in the United States. Park did not condone scientific work directed by values; however, his values seem remarkably salient (at least from our vantage point) in this project (recall Park's question at the opening of this chapter). In his book, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*, written as part of a series of books on Americanization, Park wrote of immigration in the United States:

> Intrinsically it is a struggle of peoples, culturally isolated, to preserve their own cultural inheritances and at the same time, through the medium of the language that they know best, to gain access to the cosmopolitan culture of Europe and the world. It is, to state it generally, a struggle to get into the great society, to enter into and participate in the conscious life of the race. The most important instrument of this movement is the press (1922: 467).

Ever concerned with communication, Park's proposition that the press would be important to the 'success' of immigrant communities in the U.S. is not surprising. In treating the press as a cultural and social institution, he examined its relation to immigration and 'Americanization,' or assimilation. In this way,

too, Park linked group integration to the idea of authentic/genuine/newly

emerging American community, and to the success and stability of democracy.

It was not until the early 1920s that Park identified the newspaper as the

institution of primary concern. In the years leading up to the final publication for

the Americanization study, before the end of World War I, Park had identified a

number of institutions as important for the integration of groups. These

institutions included the newspaper, the theater, the library, and education. In a

memorandum regarding the Americanization study, Park reflected that in

"modern life," "peoples of different races and cultures are now coming into

intimate contact." In this contact, "divergences in the meanings and values which

individuals and groups attach to objects and forms of behavior" became apparent.

With the goal of integration in mind, Park emphasized participation. It was

through participation in the above mentioned institutions, Park believed, that a

social group found a "systematic…means of defining the situation for its

members." Among the definitions of situations that may be "transmitted" through

institutions are those regarding cultural groups.[120]

> Park argued:
>
> It is evidently important that the people who compose a community and
> share in the common life should have a sufficient body of common
> memories to understand one another. This is particularly true in a
> democracy, where it is intended that the public institutions should be
> responsive to public opinion. There can be no public opinion except in so
> far as the persons who compose the public are able to live in the same

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[120] "Americanization as Participation. Memorandum on Participation prepared by the
Americanization Study." p.2 From the University of Chicago Library Special Collections
Research Center, Robert E. Park Papers.

world and speak and think in the same universe of discourse. For that reason, it seems desirable that the immigrants should not only speak the language of the country but should know something of the history of the people among whom they have chosen to dwell. For the same reason, it is important that native Americans should know the history and social life of the countries from which the immigrants came.

It is important also that every individual should share as fully as possible a fund of knowledge, experiences, sentiments and ideals common to the whole community, and himself contribute to this fund. It is for this reason that we maintain and seek to maintain freedom of speech and free schools. The function of literature including poetry, romance and the newspaper, is to enable all to share victoriously and imaginatively in the inner life of each. [121]

Unlike the *Recent Social Trends* vision of the passive, receptive public seen in the previous chapter, Park's depiction of 'the public' presents a group of active, dynamic individuals. People participate within "the same universe of discourse." Importantly, like the *Recent Social Trends* social scientists, Park is concerned with a democratic public.

Though it is unclear why, Park's focus in the published volume (1922) turned entirely to the newspaper. Park identified the newspaper as a 'racial institution' and cultural center for language groups. He asserted that by tracing the distribution of various immigrant presses, one would be able to distinguish an "outline of cultural areas in which the influences of certain immigrant groups have been more pronounced than elsewhere" (1925: 152). He further argued that an examination of a particular group's press allows for the detection of the characteristic interests, ambitions, and social attitudes of its readers. He added,

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[121] "Americanization as Participation. Memorandum on Participation prepared by the Americanization Study." p.3 From the University of Chicago Library Special Collections Research Center, Robert E. Park Papers.

one might even "sketch moral, psychological, and political complexions" (1925: 153) of these groups through their presses.

Park drew a distinction between rural and urban immigrant presses. He claimed that immigrants who settled in isolated, rural areas retained a certain 'provincialism,' originally developed in their home villages and countries. He wrote of rural, provincial life, "Life was, and is still, relatively fixed and settled. Custom and tradition provided for all the exigencies of daily life" (1922: 10). Park's quotations from various rural presses are accompanied by his brief introductory commentary, such as the following: "A picture of the simplicity and beauty of the lives of these readers is often revealed" (1922: 147). The readership and writers associated with rural presses "lead quiet and simple lives" (1922: 144), he claimed. Rural presses emphasized local differences and the preservation of memories, he found, which engendered an "interest in the local home community," which he claimed "no longer exists except in the memories of the editors and readers of these papers" (1925: 157).

According to Park, immigrants who settled in urban areas of the United States, Park believed, found themselves in need of status and recognition that were unattainable by individuals in possession of unfamiliar customs and language. In fact, in industrial America, Park found "vast distances and no tradition" (1922: 10). This, Park believed, led to the organization of presses and other institutions, replacing tradition with 'ideas' as the organizational locus, as a

means to assert a place in city life. Park further claimed that the more organized a particular immigrant community is, the easier assimilation would be.

According to Park, these urban institutions relied upon national rather than provincial identifications in order to create a larger base. Shared language in urban scenarios often came to supersede regional differences. It was there, Park believed, that many immigrants experienced a sense of national identification, or nationality, which was nonexistent prior to leaving their home nations. He argued, "[t]he revival of the national consciousness in the subject peoples has invariably been connected with the struggle to maintain a press in the native language" (1922: 41). This familiarity or experience with national identification was also, for Park, the first step toward assimilation, or Americanization of immigrants.[122]

While Park argued that national movements often originate and find support abroad, he also found that nationality building was occurring and being fostered cross-continentally. For example, Park observed national literary revival movements of folk language in Europe. Suppressed races or nationalities in Europe, he argued, had for some time opted to value the language of their oppressors over 'their own.' Park noted with interest a link between loss of language and loss of national identity in the writings of those involved in the revival movements. Thus, Park argued, starting in the nineteenth century, those

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[122] Park also discussed the role of advertisements in immigrant papers as another Americanizing influence, as it instructed them in the ways of American consumerism. See below, and Park 1925: 158, 165.

intellectuals involved in literary revival had contributed also to national revivals: "The literary revival of the folk speech in Europe has invariably been a prelude to the revival of the national spirit in subject peoples" (1922: 40). Park wrote, for example, of the "awakening of the Jewish racial and national consciousness" (1922: 63). He explicitly linked the revival of the Yiddish vernacular in the press to the ability of 'regular' Jewish people to find again "a natural and spontaneous expression" of their "native sentiments and character" (1922: 63). In this discussion he reveals a more specific understanding of nationality: "The sentiment of nationality has its roots in memories that attach to the common possessions of the people, the land, the religion, and the language, but particularly the language" (1922: 40).

As noted earlier, Park opined that back in the U.S., "[n]ational consciousness is inevitably accentuated by immigration" (1922: 49). Political exiles contributed to this phenomenon, he suggested, because they had more freedom to work for their causes and "naturally encourage their fellow immigrants to help them" (1922: 49). The press aided not only in the birth but in the maintenance of the nationality phenomenon: "The immigrant press serves at once to preserve the foreign languages from disintegrating into mere immigrant dialects, hyphenated English, and to maintain contact and understanding between the home countries and their scattered members in every part of the United States and America" (1922: 55).

Concurrently, the necessary treatment by urban immigrant presses of events occurring in the United States also 'aided' in the Americanization of immigrants, as it familiarized them with the same set of events or news as English speaking, American readers. Park wrote, "[t]he foreign-language press, if it preserves old memories, is at the same time the gateway to new experiences. For this reason foreign-language papers are frequently agencies of Americanization in spite of themselves" (1922: 449). News, he argued, "is a new kind of urgent information that men use in making adjustments to a new environment, in changing old habits, and in forming new opinions" (1922: 9). The treatment of events in the U.S. could also, Park noted, encourage or reinforce a negative view of the country. This would be achieved by incorporating particular negative stereotypes about gender roles, for example, of the U.S. into stories about divorce scandals (1922: 162-163).

The nature of the content in the immigrant presses, aside from major news events, also aided in assimilation. He wrote, for example, of the Yiddish press: "all the intimate, human, and practical problems of life found a place in its columns" (1922: 109). In this example, writers for the press had begun to use the vernacular and even phonetic spelling to reach as many 'common' people as possible. Though he noted that this practice disrupted recent movements to preserve the 'folk language,' Park called this kind of press a 'vehicle for enlightenment' (1922: 104). Another reason Park found the press significant for

the Americanization of immigrants was the 'Help Wanted' sections in these

papers. Park claimed:

> What the immigrant wants most in getting adjusted to America is a job
> (1922: 132).
> In examining the advertisements in the foreign-language press, we usually
> discover that the immigrant, in his own world, is behaving very much as
> we do in ours. He eats and drinks; looks for a job; goes to the theater;
> indulges in some highly prized luxury when his purse permits;
> occasionally buys a book; and forgathers with his friends for sociability
> (1922: 134).

Park saw the press as connecting immigrants to employers, consumer goods, and

consumer desires alike.[123]

Scientific Reporters

In studying the press and other subjects, Park retained the methods he had

learned as a reporter and in fact wrote in 1939, "One might fairly say that a

sociologist is merely a more accurate, responsible, and scientific reporter" (Cited

in Lindner 1996: 100). He expressed appreciation for theory that was reached

through "broad and intimate acquaintance with people and their actions" rather

than through methodically structured investigations (Lindner 1996). Lindner,

following Platt (1983), argues that Park's methodological orientation

corresponded more to "the techniques of observation and research used by a

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[123] Park's interpretation of the role of the Yiddish press in Americanization is particularly interesting when one considers the negative attributions to Jewish journalists that Park likely encountered during his time in Germany. Dominic Boyer notes that while within the journalism community in Germany, journalistic practice was viewed as a nation building activity, politicians often cast a suspicious eye upon the majority of the presses and reporters. To the contrary, politicians suggested that journalists, especially ones identified (properly or improperly) as Jews, contributed to a deterioration of German nationality. This set of claims might be considered an analytic foil for Park's approach to the Yiddish press.

reporter or detective" than to "a reflective methodology of participant

observation" (1996: 83).[124]

By the late 1930s, Park had become a highly influential member of the

discipline. Scholars consider Park as among the founders or the founder of

empirical sociology and urban ethnography, encouraging his students to do

research by walking around the city, the laboratory of the sociologist, and

reporting back to him on what they found (Matthews 1977; Lindner 1996; Lal

1987).

Park's class notes and project proposal material illustrate his commitment

to the fact/value divide that was also found in the journalistic field. Park often

claimed that his work would involve only the assemblage of facts. The value,

political import, or problem to be addressed, he asserted, was not the concern of

study. At the same time, Park wished to promote cross-cultural understanding—

he began statements about this with phrases like 'what we want.' For instance, in

his proposal for the study of Chinese and Japanese culture, he argued firmly that

his plan of research would engender an understanding of "the mystery of the

Japanese mind." Moreover, he argued, his type of research was the only way in

which this understanding could be achieved. His was "a study in contemporary

history; material such as a historian would collect in making up biographies:-

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[124] Lindner argues that Park is "willy-nilly the catalyst or indirect founder of a type of ethnology devoted to research in local communities and big cities" (1996: 102). Lindner attributes this legacy to Park in part because of his role in strongly encouraging his son-in law, Robert Redfield, an anthropologist at the University of Chicago, as well as intellectuals in China, to pursue ethnological research in cities and areas local to the scholar (1996: 102, 105-6).

Anecdotes, stories, budgets, battles, out of which he would reconstruct that life."

Opposing other salient approaches, he added, "We can't do this with statistics."[125]

Of course, the quantitative, statistical mode of sociology, often cited as in

tension with the type of work advocated by Park, existed within the department of

sociology at Chicago too. William F. Ogburn, a quantitative sociologist from

Columbia, and a primary figure in previous chapters, joined the Chicago

department in 1927 from Columbia University.[126] Ogburn proved to be something

of a misfit at Chicago. However, Abbott argues that Ogburn's assertiveness as

well as position of power as chair of the department enabled him to strike a

balance in the department with the work championed by Park and others (Abbott

1999).

Ogburn vied with his colleagues in the department for the best graduate

students. This in combination with methodological differences, as sociologist

Robert Bannister notes, likely led Ogburn to face great opposition at Chicago.

Bannister offers the following quote from Ogburn: "On coming to the U. of C., I

found a more hostile attitude toward statistics than I ever had at Columbia" (1987:

174). As seen above, Park was indeed among those hostile to statistics. Bannister

argues that Ogburn and Park represented "two sides of the Progressive legacy:

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[125] "Human beings are for us <u>human</u> only to the extent with which we can enter imaginatively into their lives. All the solidarities, brotherhoods, friendships that are permanent, are based up on the fact that people can enter imaginatively into other people's lives. Anything that tends to promote understanding will be material that enables us to enter into another's life. We don't know what is going on in other men's minds. We can't do this with <u>statistics</u>." From "general principles" pg2, Box18, Folder 3, UChi Spec. Coll.s

[126] Ogburn and Howard Odum (another social scientist with ties to SSRC) were both Columbia Ph.D.s and students of Franklin Giddings. Abbott (1999) identifies Giddings as the first major exponent of formal statistical methods in sociology.

Ogburn, the technocrat's love for efficiency and planning-without-politics; Park, the journalist's thirst for 'real life' combined with a moral commitment to the reestablishment of genuine community" (1987: 175; see also 2003). In their definitions of science, Ogburn tended toward rigorous, complex procedure and statistics, while Park preferred observation and classification.

Park remained active on Chicago faculty through the late thirties (retiring in 1934), at which time sociology had become a large and powerful academic discipline with a permanent program of research aimed at "concrete description of society" and "development of a theory explaining social relations" (Matthews 1977: 2). Although it is at odds with his own practice (e.g. *Thought News*, CFA and Tuskegee, the *Americanization* study; see also Deegan 2005), Park is also remembered by most for his public rejection of applied and reform-oriented science. His rejection of these strands of sociology, scholars argue, impacted the course of the field in the U.S., particularly in the continued exclusion of feminist pragmatist, reformers, and settlement sociologists (who were predominantly women) from sociology (see Deegan 2005; Matthews 1977).

While Park did not always make it explicit, his view of the social scientist in the context of Americanization and the press does not diverge much from his view of the journalist. He wrote:

> The function of science is to gather up, classify, digest and preserve, in a form in which they may become available to the community as a whole, the ideas, inventions and technical experience of the individual composing it. Thus not merely the possession of a common language but the wide

extension of the opportunities for education become a conditions [sic] of Americanization.[127]

Park held these views into the mid-1930s. His remarks about communication and societal cohesion underscore his view of 'the public':

> The condition for successful communication is not the identical nature of members of society, but rather their diversity. It is precisely this diversity which makes communication in the sense of reaching understanding not only necessary, but also possible, because only subjects with individual experiences have anything to say to each other. (Park 1936: 15, cited in Matthews 1977: 112)

This concept of 'the public' sharply contrasts with the boundary object of the unified, unreflective 'public' constructed in part by SSRC social scientists. And Park's orientation to the production of knowledge references an engaged, dynamic public, rather than mindful policymakers: "The demand for knowledge arises from the very necessity of checking up and funding these divergent individual experiences, and of reducing them to terms which make them intelligible to all of us (Park 1936, p.15, cited in Matthews 1977: 112).

As in the vision of social science seen in a previous section about *Thought News*, Park appears to view the social scientist or sociologist as one who will 'report' on or provide 'the community' with the means to participate in the universal discourse that is so crucial to democracy. Though in a different arrangement, Park and SSRC members located social science as an intermediary sphere in

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[127] "Americanization as Participation. Memorandum on Participation prepared by the Americanization Study." p.3, from the University of Chicago Library Special Collections Research Center, Robert E. Park Papers.

which empirical analysis (accomplished through varying means) could empower

action and foster democracy.

CONCLUSION

Whatever their forms—either as a *boundary object* aligning social

scientists at the SSRC with natural scientists, journalists, and the federal

government, or as a social scientific object that organized the methodological and

professional orientations of Park's and the Chicago School's strand of empirical

sociology—'the public' and mass communications recur as referent for

professional and moral concerns. Interwar social scientific studies of mass

communications organized inquiry with relation to the ties between social

science, technology, public, and politics. The traditions of thought at the

University of Chicago and the Social Science Research Council marked the

debates that touched the related legislative action and reform in the Roosevelt

administration and beyond. At Chicago and the SSRC in the interwar period, I

have argued that social scientists laced existing debates about the meaning of

democracy, basic and applied science, fact and value, through its engagements

with journalism and mass media as, on the one hand, enablers of either social

science or 'the public,' and on the other, objects to be studied—thus as implicit

competitors. At a time when social scientists had not attained widespread cultural

authority, their choice to include mass communications in their report on the

social world could be viewed as a means to position themselves as a higher

authority on matters of society—their fellow social commentators, unlike themselves, were now an object of inquiry and concern. Similarly, by casting 'the public' as an object knowable by social science through its study of mass communications, *Recent Social Trends* and SSRC social scientists asserted an authoritative space for itself in the political field where 'the public' had already been established as an object of concern.

I contend that social scientists at the University of Chicago and the SSRC not only asserted a prominent role for social science in political and academic arenas, but in so doing, reshaped (or challenged) those arenas to include a new relation to 'the public.' The SSRC sought a role that would mark them as experts with knowledge about sociopolitical processes and as important collaborators in the policymaking process; SSRC members also assumed a protective position with regard to the well-being of 'the public.' 'The public' had a right to receive truthful and complete information about the world; SSRC members as intermediaries would ensure that the democratic government, a beneficent power, would supervise the media content available. Park and many of his Chicago colleagues saw the social scientist as one who enabled 'the public' through a provision of knowledge through the media that would permit different individuals to come together under common terms in the democratic process. This social scientific concern with communication with 'the public' extended beyond strategic positioning in pursuit of cultural legitimacy to a moral/cultural structure concerning US political life. In exchanges between the fields of journalism,

natural science, politics, and social science, 'the public' and mass communications had emerged as a 'compound' *boundary object* that organized understandings of political actors, process, and stability.

Here I will briefly speculate about the consequences of the *boundary object* of 'the public' for the development of the social sciences at a moment frequently considered by scholars of the history of the social sciences—the establishment of the National Science Foundation. I also suggest areas for future research that might complicate usefully our understanding of the development of the social scientific concepts of 'the public' and mass communications.

Many of the arguments regarding the role of social science in the United States appeared just after the Second World War in the context of debates about the establishment of a National Science Foundation. Importantly, Vannevar Bush's well known contributions to the NSF debates engaged with the basic and applied science distinction (Kleinman 1995; Solovey 2004). One of the most successful claims regarding the role of social science, I note, is one long promoted by William Ogburn. Many scientists and politicians, reluctant to assent to the inclusion of social science in NSF legislation, indicated that they were persuaded by the need to attend to the social implications of scientific innovation (Wolfle 1986). The 'need' echoed Ogburn's *social lag* thesis—the view that unparalleled social and technological development led to social problems (Ogburn 1964).

While many in the natural science community were convinced of the need for social science research to understand the impact of new technology on 'the

public,' in 1946 one sect of natural scientists prevented a bill that supported the

inclusion of the social sciences in the new science foundation. This oppositional

sect also referred to 'the public.'

In May 1946 before a House subcommittee, Congressman Clarence

Brown of Ohio and Isaiah Bowman, President of Johns Hopkins University and

leader of the Committee in Support of the Bush Report expressed their

disagreement with the inclusion of the social sciences (quoted in Wolfle 1986:

190-191):

MR. BROWN: There is a sort of an antipathy against social science, if I can sense
the thought of my colleagues properly…I think we had better stick to
fundamentals. There are all kinds of social scientists, and there is some question
as to just how valuable some of their contributions to the public welfare might be.
DR. BOWMAN: Your remarks, Congressman, are in effect a summary of the
views of most of the scientists who testified before the Senate subcommittee.
…
DR. BOWMAN: It seems to me essentially unsound to put into a National
Science Foundation a wide range of social questions upon which the people of
America have not yet made up their minds.

The conversation also enters a discussion of the privacy of members of 'the

public.' Privacy and communication is a dimension of the significance of 'the

public' as an object that moved debate that I hope to consider in future work.[128]

Although the oppositional sect managed to exclude the social sciences

from the bill under consideration, the reaction to these changes caused Congress

to withhold a decision on the matter. While the legislation process was halted,

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[128] Schwarzlose (1984) and Susman (1984) address concerns about privacy and communications in
the interwar period.

representatives of seventy-five science societies formed the Inter-Society

Committee in order to provide another means to bring scientists together in the

absence of a national foundation. When surveyed, 98 percent (of the 73 percent

of members who responded) favored mandatory or permissive inclusion of a

Division of Social Sciences in the national science foundation still under question.

With this information reported to actors involved in the legislation debates, the

next Congress passed a bill that included the social sciences; however, Truman

vetoed it for an unrelated reason (governing structure). In 1950, a bill was passed

that Truman approved; it provided for permissive inclusion of the social sciences

(Wolfle 1986).

The concern of Brown, Bowman, and all of the actors considered

throughout this thesis with 'the public' and the public welfare became an

important referent in arguments for and against the inclusion of the social sciences

in the National Science Foundation. What would be the contribution of social

science to public welfare? Would it be appropriate for social science to invade

the privacy of members of 'the public' (politicians, scientists)? Social science

must study the public impact of scientific discovery and technology (Ogburn,

SSRC). Mitchell of the SSRC testified before Congress:

> the hazards to national and world interest created by new inventions
> cannot be evaded by checking the powers of invention….Dependence for
> security and order must rather be on the improvement in the foundations
> of human relations….the federal government, for purposes of national
> interest, should aid in promoting scientific research in both the natural and
> social fields, in the application of science to practical affairs (Klausner
> 1986: 9, 10).

Or should social science concern itself primarily with the moral community and social organization; insights produced by this type of analysis would enable social life to "match the new technology" (the Chicago tradition) (Klausner 1986: 14). These were questions and positions raised by actors identified (by Wolfe and Klausner) in the NSF debate that eventually determined the initial fate of the social sciences in the NSF, likely reflecting the continued significance of and negotiation about 'the public' as a political/moral actor and the relation of social science to it. And prior to these postwar debates, Merriam, Ogburn, and Mitchell of the SSRC and the *Recent Social Trends* project became part of the National Resources Planning Board for which the RST report was a "foundational piece" (Klausner 1986: 4).

However, in these National Science Foundation debates, it was technology more broadly speaking, rather than mass communications specifically, that scientists and politicians invoked in relation to moral concerns about 'the public.' Could this reflect the post-war political context in which these debates occurred? Finally, fields of religion and philanthropy—particularly as they existed during the Progressive Era of social reformers and at the early twentieth century Rockefeller Foundation—require further exploration with regard to the professional/moral claims that this thesis has discussed.

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