The Commonwealth of Social Science: The American Social Science Association and a Pragmatist Politics of Expertise

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Dedication

In loving memory of Edward A. Hinrichs, who taught me the value of amateur inquiry

Abstract

Historians of the social sciences have noted that for the first generation of social scientists in the United States immediately after the Civil War, there was no distinction between politics and scholarship. While this equation has been understood either as an indication of the immaturity of the early social sciences or as a distinctive moment in time that has been lost to history, this dissertation argues that the political relevance of the social sciences does not rest exclusively in their direct advocacy work but in other activities such as constructing audiences to respond to their research and the manner in which that audience is engaged, terms on which the political relevance of the modern social sciences can be understood as well.

Using the work of the classical pragmatists (Peirce, James, and Dewey) as an interpretive lens to study one early social scientific organization in particular, the American Social Science Association (ASSA), this dissertation urges an understanding of social scientific knowledge in terms of experiences that are worked upon by diverse audiences through a shared set of practices. Drawing on archives of ASSA documents at Yale University and a reading of the *Journal of Social Science*, the central claim of the dissertation is that the social sciences have been a political project from their beginning. Both pragmatism and the social sciences emerged at a moment in American history of great uncertainty as well as social and political change. To the degree that these conditions endure, so too do the underlying politics of the social sciences.

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Introduction: The Commonwealth of Social Science

> "Man has never had such a varied body of knowledge in his possession before, and probably never before has he been so uncertain and so perplexed as to what his knowledge means, what it points to in action and in consequences"[1]
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> -John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*

Political scientists frequently anguish over the politics of their research. A recurrent theme throughout the discipline's history, debate over the public relevance of political science once again rekindled in 2014 around a provocation in the *New York Times* by Nicholas Kristof. Complaining that "some of the smartest thinkers on problems at home and around the world are university professors, but most of them just don't matter in today's great debates," Kristof went on to single out political science for criticism, which was, he said, a discipline "trying, in terms of practical impact, to commit suicide."[2] The reasons for the irrelevance of academics, and political scientists in particular, according to Kristof, were the "arcane unintelligibility" of scholarly publications and a "publish-or-perish" tenure process that places premiums on scholarly publication while dismissing the value of popular writing. Of course, jabs at scholars for having their heads stuck in the clouds are nothing new. By 1989 the alleged irrelevance of political science had become lamented with such regularity that Gary Andres and Janice Beecher were able to imagine a Greek chorus calling out, "Please, not another call for us to come out of our 'ivory towers' and get our hands dirty in real world politics. Not another call for relevance. Not another call to take to the streets, to the wards, or the smoke-filled

[1] John Dewey, *Later Works, 1925-1953*, Vol. 4, *1929, The Quest for Certainty*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 249.
[2] Nicholas Kristof, "Smart Minds, Slim Impact" *New York Times*, February 16, 2014, SR11.

rooms."[3] Something about Kristof jab, however, struck a nerve. A flurry of rejoinders quickly appeared in newspapers and blogs, but both those who were critical of Kristof and those who were sympathetic to him agreed on an ideal where political scientists would be active participants in public debates. Both sides held up the ideal of the "public intellectual" who marries scholarly rigor with broad public relevance. Such a heroic figure, however, as attractive as it may be, leads to confusion about how social scientific expertise works and how it can matter for politics.

Modern liberal democracies do not just ask citizens to weigh competing values and interests (as for example, between butter and guns, or between individualized rights and social cohesion), but to do this in the face of changing factual claims about the world. Citizens are exhorted to inform themselves on a wide array of political issues, typically for the purposes of casting an "informed" vote. They are expected to revise political opinions in the face of conflicting information, and to balance fact and opinion intelligently and judiciously in complicated and ambiguous cases. These same citizens, however, often find themselves ill-equipped to assess expert claims, particularly conflicting expert claims. Since citizens lack the means by which to assess the validity of these claims, no academic discipline can gain political relevance on the back of the public intellectual alone. The capacities of citizens to assess expert claims have to be conceived far more democratically, as emerging out shared practice and lived experiences, and this means the stakes of the social sciences for democratic politics are dramatically misplaced when loaded onto the heroic ideal of the public intellectual.

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[3] Gary J. Andres and Janice A. Beecher, "Applied Political Science: Bridging the Gap or a Bridge Too Far?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 22, no. 3 (1989): 637.

This is why the most common response to Kristof, which was to point to evidence of how political science is more publicly oriented than ever with the emergence of blogs, social media, and new journals trying to bridge scholarly and popular discourses like *Perspectives on Politics*,[4] misses an important point. At *The Monkey Cage* blog (itself frequently pointed to by critics of Kristof as an example of political scientists successfully participating in public debates), James Fearon noted that economists were nearly ten times more likely to be mentioned in *The New York Times* than political scientists.[5] Conceived so, influence follows individual experts who deliver their message to a receptive public in popular news media. Once struck in these terms, the challenge facing political scientists becomes how to conduct their inquiries in ways most likely to attract public interest, how best to pitch research findings such that they are comprehensible to a lay audience, and how to structure professional incentives as to make it all most likely to happen.

This is why these debates quickly slip into the timeworn divisions between theory and practice, between advocacy and objectivity, experts and publics. In science studies the classical formulation appears in Vannevar Bush's distinction between "applied" and "basic" scientific knowledge.[6] Similar divisions reappear in Morris Janowitz's distinction between "engineering" and "enlightenment" models of sociology and in Ian Shapiro's

[4] See for example, Erik Voeten, "Dear Nicholas Kristof: We Are Right Here!" *The Monkey Cage (blog), The Washington Post*, February 15, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/02/15/dear-nicholas-kristof-we-are-right-here/.
[5] James Fearon, "Data on the relevance of political scientists to the NYT," *The Monkey Cage (blog), The Washington Post*, February 23, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/02/23/data-on-the-relevance-of-political-scientists-to-the-nyt/.
[6] Vannevar Bush, *Science, the Endless Frontier: A Report to the President* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1945).

distinction between "problem-driven" and "theory-driven" political science.[7] Lawrence Mead (himself no stranger to public relevance as a leading academic behind work-based welfare reform in the 1990s) finds himself trapped in similar territory, arguing that the discipline of political science is caught between the competing values of "rigor" and "relevance."[8] Each value in turn, according to Mead, is governed by different standards. Rigor requires "proof" and methodological transparency. Relevance requires "realism" and a capacity to speak to or cultivate "audience", and these last two are interrelated, as political scientists lose realism when their explanations are not seen as plausible by audiences outside the discipline. According to Mead, "At its best, political science accepts a tension between rigor and relevance, serving both values to some extent."[9] Tensions between theory and practice appear irresolvable, subject only to balance.

A common response to this tension is to deny its existence, that for example theory is always already practice. In its some formulations, the claim becomes that scientific inquiry always carries ethical obligations with it. The political scientist Thomas E. Mann recently complained that putative commitments to objectivity and "positive political science" had led to a disengaged and therefore irresponsible discipline. "We owe it to ourselves and our country to reconsider our priors," Mann wrote in *The Atlantic*.[10] For Mann, objectivity eventually demands advocacy, and objectivity for its own sake is intellectually dishonest. Other formulations collapse theory into practice completely. In

[7] Morris Janowitz, "Professionalization of Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 1, (1972): 107; Ian Shapiro, "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or: What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It," in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, ed. Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith and Tarek E. Masoud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004).
[8] Lawrence M. Mead, "Scholasticism in Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 2 (2010): 460.
[9] Mead, 460.
[10] Thomas E. Mann, "Admit It, Political Scientists: Politics Really Is More Broken Than Ever," *Atlantic*, May 26, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/05/dysfunction/371544/

Knowledge and Civilization Barry Allen makes the strong claim that knowledge only ever manifests itself in the technologies it produces for practice.[11] This is also the strategy of Donald Stokes in *Pasteur's Quadrant*, where he argues the alleged distinction between basic and applied scientific research is artificial.[12] To slightly different effects it is also the strategy of Bent Flyvbjerg in *Making Social Science Matter*, where Flyvbejrg counsels social scientists to abandon their dreams of a rationalized and complete understanding of society, and return to an Aristotelian conception of practical context-specific inquiry that Flyvbjerg identifies with *phronesis*.[13] The book was received skeptically by some[14] but with enough enthusiasm from others to produce two follow-up treatments: *Making Political Science Matter*, and *Real Social Science*.[15] The turn to Aristotle, however, means that the ideal figure remains that of the "virtuoso social and political actor."[16] In his review of *Real Social Science*, Edward Gimbel criticizes Flyvbjerg and those inspired by him for leaving this figure unexamined. Flyvbjerg's social scientist descends into the world of practice with "a hammer" and a "stick of dynamite", but this sort of social and political power remains unexamined, contrary to the self-examination explicitly demanded of Aristotle's practitioner of *phronesis*.[17] The role of the expert remains assumed and unproblematic. Corey Robin's reply to Kristof is

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[11] Barry Allen, *Knowledge and Civilization* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).
[12] Donald E. Stokes, *Pasteur's Quadrant* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).
[13] Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[14] See for example Dan E. Miller, Review of *Making Social Science Matter* by Bent Flyvbjerg, *Contemporary Sociology* 31, no. 5 (2002): 617.
[15] Sanford Schram and Brian Caterino, eds. *Making Political Science Matter* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Bent Flyvbjerg, Todd Landman, and Sanford Schram, eds. *Real Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[16] Flyvbjerg, 2.
[17] Edward Gimbel, "Making Political Science Matter? Phronetic Social Science in Theory and Practice," Review of *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*, ed. Bent Flyvbjerg, Todd Landman, and Sanford Schram, *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 4 (2013): 1142.

helpful at this point, because Robin is insistent that the public intellectual need not be a professional academic.[18] Taking Robin's point seriously, however, requires abandoning current settlements about the roles of experts and expertise in society, roles with long institutional histories.

Before diving back into that history, one more contemporary example of the tensions of social scientific expertise and democratic politics bears examination. Consider the recent example of Dean Chambers. For years the media have been criticized for "horse-race" journalism that focuses on the latest polling data to the exclusion of substantive analysis of the candidates' policy positions, but the 2012 presidential election was interesting for the way that not just polls, but analysis of the polls dominated election coverage. Emblematic of this increased interest in polling analysis was the decision of the *New York Times* to hire Nate Silver, a statistician whose previous work had been in baseball statistics,[19] but whose blog analyzing and using polls to correctly predict the outcome of the 2008 presidential race had earned him a small measure of celebrity. Silver's rosy predictions of President Obama's reelection chances in 2012 became a sort of comfort blanket for an American Left that was anxious about the outcome of the election, and in its post-election coverage, the *New York Times* declared that the one of the biggest contests to have been decided on election night was the one between those such as Silver who put their faith in the professional pollsters and their critics.[20] One prominent critic was Dean Chambers, whose (delightfully amateurish) website

[18] Corey Robin, "Look Who Nick Kristof's Saving Now," *Corey Robin* (blog), February 16, 2014, http://coreyrobin.com/2014/02/16/look-who-nick-kristofs-saving-now/
[19] Brian, Stelter, "Times to Host Blog on Politics and Polls," *New York Times*, June 4, 2010, B2.
[20] Michael Cooper, "Election Result Proves a Victory for Pollsters and Other Data Devotees," *New York Times*, November 7, 2012, P8.

unskewedpolls.com adjusted the numbers published by leading polling firms in an attempt to "correct" for the fact that different polls registered different levels of self-identified Democrats and Republicans. Chambers re-centered those numbers to reflect the partisan identification established by the Republican-leaning Rasmussen firm, which Chambers thought would best match the makeup of the electorate come the day of the election. What is noteworthy about Chambers is that he had no special accreditation, he was simply an interested layperson. His quick rise to stardom came from analyses that painted a rosier picture of Mitt Romney's chances in the election for conservative audiences. Critics were quick to label Chambers a science-denier or an "amateur poll maven,"[21] but Chambers never questioned the methodology of polling, he simply operated on a different set of (not entirely unreasonable) assumptions about the relationship between the polling population and the population that would turn out to vote. Chambers was re-interpreting social scientific data circulating in the public sphere without any formal license to do so. Writing for *Mother Jones* magazine, Erik Kain sneered that Chambers was "pushing a culture war message, and nothing as trivial as statistics or math will get in his way."[22] Writing in *Communication Law and Policy*, Bruce Johnson decried Chambers's work as "unscientific."[23] At the heart of these concerns was less any specific criticism of his methodology and more a criticism for his lack of institutional certification.

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[21] Cooper, P8.
[22] Erik Kain, "Even Polls Are Part of the Culture War Now," *Mother Jones*, November 5, 2012 http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2012/11/nate-silver-polls-culture-war
[23] Bruce E. Johnson, "Is the New York Times Rule Relevant in a Breitbarted World?" *Communication Law and Policy* 19, no. 2 (2014): 222.

Standards of what sorts of claims count as scientific and which do not are subject to significant debate, among philosophers of science no less than the general public. While Chambers's work turned out to be inaccurate, it revealed the degree of personal judgment exercised by all pollsters. Journalists hailed Nate Silver of the *New York Times* as an oracle, but what separated Chambers and Silver was not any clear delineation between the scientific and unscientific, but rather Silver's better judgment, upon which all scientific practice ultimately rests. Silver enjoyed the certification of the most prestigious media organization in the United States, but he never received any formal training in statistics or polling analysis beyond an undergraduate degree in economics. Determining which of them was the expert and which could claim the mantle of science then was not as simple a task as it might have appeared. At the very least, the episode reveals the degree to which distinctions between expert and amateur, as well as between advocacy and objectivity, are rooted institutionally, not conceptually.

To review, on the one hand we have Kristof's hand-wringing that the discipline of political science has minimal effects on popular political discourse, and on the other we have hand-wringing about an untrained amateur dipping his toes into a field with too little formal training and too explicit a political agenda. A public discourse around social science is longed for, but only for as long as that public does not talk back. The discussion comes to loggerheads once again because the conceptual terms on which it has been struck predetermine the outcome. Advocacy and objectivity are struck as in tension with one another, experts and publics are conceived as distinct from one another, and so

there appears to be no way of resolving these tensions except by way of Mead's call for balance. How might we respond differently to these dilemmas?

In a panel discussion at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs held in response to Kristof's piece, Timothy Brennan criticized what he called the "willed ahistorical emptiness" of Kristof's understanding of expertise and how it operates in the public.[24] Brennan's immediate point was that intellectual breakthroughs are often first dismissed as unintelligible, but his call for a more historically sensitive understanding of expertise warrants further elaboration if, as was suggested above, the distinctions between advocacy and objectivity are rooted not in any timeless philosophical categories, but in a set of institutional arrangements with historical legacies.

Historicizing Expertise

The conceptual territory covered above is neither predetermined nor accidental, but rather a settlement that was the product of a series of confrontations that played themselves out over the past century and a half of American history. At earlier moments in American history, these problems have been understood differently, along different conceptual terms, or not understood at all. Indeed, in their separate studies of the early history of the social sciences in the United States immediately after the Civil War, Thomas Haskell and Mary Furner argue that when the social sciences began to emerge in the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was no conceptual distinction between advocacy and objectivity

[24] Timothy Brennan, "Scholarly Balance: Engagement, Activism, and Rigor," panel discussion, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, February 26, 2014.

or between experts and laypersons.[25] In some very real sense, social science was always already synonymous with political reform. Social science didn't just promote social reform or make it more efficacious, the very practice of social science was social reform. This dissertation attempts to make sense of that bold equation, and to do so for modern social scientists through an exploration of the early history of the social sciences in the United States in the decades following the Civil War.

Both Haskell and Furner ultimately dismiss the idea that advocacy and objectivity could be the same thing. For Haskell, the equation was indicative of the naïve style of the early social sciences, as it rested on assumptions about the simplicity of social reality. With only a little investigation the social terrain would be clear and noncontroversial solutions would make themselves apparent. As Haskell's narrative goes, by the late nineteenth century any simplistic understanding of increasingly interdependent social realities became implausible. Amateur social scientists were replaced by professional social scientists because professionals proved their mettle at better explaining an increasingly complicated world. Old modes of understanding social realities fell to the wayside because they no longer credibly explained problems or offered solutions. Furner offers a less functionalist explanation, where engaged amateur social scientists who attempted efforts at political reform came under scrutiny from entrenched interests. Once attacked, social scientists retreated into the academy where claims to scientific objectivity and disciplinary norms would provide political protection. For Furner, earlier equations

[25] Thomas L. Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 2000), 100; Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2011), xxiii.

of advocacy and objectivity were not so much intellectually naïve as politically untenable in a world where claims about how society operates come into political resistance. The argument here takes a slightly different track, operating from the assumption that the political relevance of the social sciences might not rest exclusively in their direct advocacy but in other activities, such as disseminating research and constructing audiences to respond to that research.

Histories of the social sciences typically begin after this critical period. The most common approaches begin at the founding of the professional associations that exist to this day, such as the American Economics Association, the American Sociological Association, and the American Political Science Association. Consider, for example, Raymond Seidelman's *Disenchanted Realists*. The thesis of the book is that American political thought has since the Founding been characterized by competing institutionalist and radical democratic impulses – an updated version of Herbert Croly's assertion that American history has been a series of battles between the heirs of Jefferson and Hamilton.[26] Seidelman's novel reading of the history of political science is as a series of attempts to wed those two competing traditions into a single disciplinary vision. The founding figures for Seidelman are Lester Ward, the first president of the American Sociological Association, and Woodrow Wilson, one of the first political scientists to earn a doctorate at an American institution (and the patron saint of sorts for scholars who value political engagement). While histories of the discipline painstakingly lay out the "pre-history" (to use the term used by Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus) of the social

[26] Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

sciences in European historicism and liberalism,[27] or less plausibly in Madison's extravagant claims in *The Federalist* about recent "vast improvements" in the "science of politics,"[28] the real stories begin with acts of professionalization. Thus Somit and Tanenhaus begin their story with John Burgess, the founder of the first department of political science at Columbia University,[29] and Bernard Crick begins with Francis Lieber,[30] the first titled professor of political science at Columbia.[31] The problem with this focus is that these acts of organization were all in direct response to the problems of academic advocacy. The professional associations were not just attempts to narrow fields of inquiry to discrete domains of social behavior (economics, politics, and society), but also attempts on the part of new academic experts to exert authority, both over politics and over rival models of analysis they were quick to dismiss as the work of quacks and charlatans.

It bears noting just what sort of precarious position those first generation of academics faced. The late nineteenth century saw radical changes in the way that social authority operated. Changing economic structures pulled small town America into larger webs of interdependence, severing previous relationships of responsibility, and subjecting individuals to what seemed like the capricious decisions of unknown outsiders. In this analysis, social reality in late-nineteenth century America suddenly became incomprehensible, as traditional beliefs that communities could govern their own fate

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[27] Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[28] Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 3.
[29] Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *The Development of American Political Science* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 11.
[30] Crick, 15.
[31] James Farr, "Political Science and the State," in *Discipline and History*, James Farr and Raymond Seidelman, eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 70.

through simple value judgments based in the rhythms of daily interaction were quickly losing traction.[32] In its place developed a bureaucratic order where authority derived not from genteel manners but from professional skills demanded by new bureaucratic structures.[33] Those who were claiming academic authority were newcomers to the scene. Disciplinary historians point to the influence of the German universities for producing this change, and what Americans saw in the German system was a model for organizing complex societies. Otto von Bismark had unified a patchwork of German states under Prussian authority, and the universities trained bureaucrats for work in the new machinery of the German state. The universities and associated bureaucracies were the locus of the connection of knowledge and political power. The state gained its power by its capacity to observe and collect data about complicated social realities that were now physically and culturally distant from administrative centers.[34] Politics now required knowledge on unprecedented scales needed, and doctorates in turn were now expected to produce original research.

American reformers dismayed at the feebleness of the American state often envisioned themselves building something analogous to what was happening across the Atlantic. Expertise took on a different form in the United States, however, and the close connections between the universities and the state that emerged in Germany, France, and Britain never quite took hold in the United States.[35] Patronage and the politics of mass

[32] This analysis has a long pedigree in American history. For examples in the genre see Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), and Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
[33] Furner, xi.
[34] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
[35] Furner, xxii.

mobilization prevented placement in a university from being an automatic springboard to political power. In America, scholars had to settle for what Furner calls "commissioned" expertise, where experts could be called upon by the government to help with problems identified by elected officials.[36] Beginning with the story of the formation of the first professional associations takes the highly contingent settlement of expertise and democratic politics that emerged in the United States for granted. The precarious political position of the social sciences emerged out of changes in the way that political authority operated, shifting from individualized authority based in personal and family character towards institutions with command of facts and technique. This shift in the location of authority was not predetermined, however, and an examination of the history reveals a complicated story that demonstrates paths not taken not taken as actors struggled to find a settlement between expert authority and democratic politics. Moreover, the emergence of this settlement reveals much about the political investments of the social sciences, investments that have been submerged by history or taken as given since.

The dissertation will explore the politics of the development of the social sciences through a close study of an amateur and underappreciated social scientific organization in nineteenth-century America: the American Social Science Association. Founded in 1865 by a group of social reformers who were members of the Boston gentry and formally called the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science, the American Social Science Association was the first organization of its kind in America. As the "mother of associations," as its long-serving secretary Frank B. Sanborn liked to call it, the ASSA spawned the American Historical Association, the American Economic

[36] Furner, xxix.

Association, and the American Political Science Association before dissolving in 1909, irrelevant for some time by that point in comparison to its more fully professionalized offspring.

Though it never realized its ambitions to become the base of operations for social scientific inquiry in America, the ASSA in its early years was made up of many of the most prominent figures in cultural, academic, industrial, and professional circles, and was well respected among American political elites.[37] Prominent early members of the ASSA included Francis A. Walker and Carroll D. Wright, members of the Grant administration as Chief of the Bureau of Statistics and head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, respectively.[38] Contributors to the journal of the ASSA, the *Journal of Social Science*, included such prominent figures as famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass, reformer and newspaper giant Horace Greeley, and Melvil Dewey, of decimal system fame. The ASSA also merits attention for its conscious decision to be as inclusive as possible, to the point of allowing the participation of "cranks" and "charlatans." There were no requirements that members have any special training or university post, nor were there any other formal requirements for membership besides a three-dollar annual fee.[39] Of course, the mere presence of amateurs in the organization is not what made the ASSA unique. Of the founding membership of the American Historical Association, only about a third were professional academics.[40] The American Political Science Association began with a

[37] Furner, 10.
[38] Furner, 46.
[39] ASSA, *Constitution, Address, and List of Members of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1866), 4.
[40] Haskell, 173.

similar membership profile.[41] What made the ASSA unique was that it retained its identity as an amateur body, with those with no formal training such as Sanborn holding positions of real authority, while the AHA and APSA quickly came under the domination of trained academics.

The amateur identity of the ASSA left it well-placed for engagement in practical politics. The stated goals of the ASSA were "to be suggestive, to stimulate observation, excite reflection, deepen sympathy, and thus contribute to the welfare of society."[42] As stated by Haskell, the brand of social science that the ASSA represented was nothing more than a "convenient rubric for a kind of inquiry and reform activity in which scientists had no edge over novelists."[43] The ASSA declared itself "committed to no theory" and open to "different, and even conflicting views, in tolerance of all opinions thoughtfully formed and liberally expressed."[44] Since the authority of ASSA members derived from "individual character and class privilege, not esoteric knowledge or technical skill beyond the reach of laymen," they "conceived problems in practical terms and communicated their findings to ordinary people in everyday language."[45] As the social sciences professionalized in the 1880s, "populizer" quickly became a term of abuse, and efforts by nineteenth-century academics to speak to a wider audience – often labor unions and the working poor – came to be regarded as unscholarly. Early efforts to equate social science with political reform were however so successful that some early

[41] Somit and Tanenhaus, 55.
[42] "Introductory Note," *Journal of Social Science* 1 (1869): 4.
[43] Haskell, 48.
[44] "Introductory Note," 4.
[45] Furner, 5.

professionals felt the need to distance themselves from the term social science, preferring "sociology" instead.[46]

Like the broader social science community of the time, the members of the ASSA were divided about democracy, and some were even hostile to it.[47] Members hailed from all political stripes: from laissez-faire apologists to supporters of Henry George's single-tax, aristocratic Mugwumps to radical democrats. Leading figures included men like Sanborn, a fierce supporter of women's rights and a militant abolitionist among the "Secret Six" who helped finance John Brown's failed raid on Harpers Ferry.[48] The ASSA was also home to genuine conservatives like Francis Lieber, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, and Simeon Baldwin. In many respects the authority of the ASSA derived from the gentry. Members judged one another based on family name and social graces, and less on scholarship.[49] What is most interesting is that in the ASSA we find an example of a group that did not attempt a simple transition from aristocratic to bureaucratic modes, but instead represented something altogether more complicated. Formed at the end of the American Civil War the ASSA anticipated, rather than inaugurated the processes of institutionalization and bureaucratization that would accelerate in the decades that followed. Furner's claim therefore that the ASSA "developed a new, essentially bureaucratic orientation to knowledge creation"[50] misses the strong elements of anti-institutionalism present throughout the history of the ASSA, forces that proved strong

[46] Haskell, 204.
[47] James Farr, "From Modern Republic to Administrative State: American Political Science in the Nineteenth Century," in *Regime and Discipline: Democracy and the Development of Political Science*, ed. David Easton, John G. Gunnell, and Michael B. Stein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1995), 133.
[48] Furner, 20.
[49] Haskell, 177.
[50] Furner, xxiii.

enough to spell the organization's destruction at the hands of its more institutionalized offspring by the turn of the twentieth century. The group merits attention for just this reason, as it represented an alternative institutional location for social scientific expertise in a democratic society.

Today academic disciplines are defined by their specialization, and members of the ASSA were aware of the forces of specialization. Divisions of labor in the production of knowledge creates significant problems of organization, and the members of the ASSA were very nearly obsessed with the idea of organization: the outstanding need for it, and its potential - once achieved in the ASSA - for focusing the nation's intellectual energy and knowledge in a way that would inevitably reform politics for the better. Indeed, the stated purpose of the ASSA was to bring diverse conversations on social problems together in a way that would be more productive than if continued separately. The ASSA constitution states that the organization's purpose to "bring together the various societies and individuals now interested"[51] in diverse areas of social reform such as prison and sanitary reform. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a sense was emerging that knowledge was becoming fragmented in a way that prevented people from learning from one another. As the ASSA's Committee of Arrangements put it in 1865,

> It has long … been shown that the man of science who confines himself to a specialty; who does not, at the very least, conquer the underlying principles of other branches of scientific inquiry, - is necessarily misled, and cannot avoid frequent mistakes. To have any perception of the perspective of his subject, he must see it in its relation to other subjects…if they associate themselves together,

[51] ASSA, 3.

> they have the advantage of each other's knowledge; they do not misunderstand their own relative positions; and they insure an economy of time, labor and money.[52]

Thus the main task of the ASSA was thought to be the "collection and diffusion of useful knowledge."[53] This was a conversation that would not only bring together thinkers and practitioners from diverse fields; it was a conversation with public import as well. As the second sentence of the organization's constitution states, the organization's "objects are, to aid in the development of Social Science, and to guide the public mind."[54] This public conversation was first of all to be effected through the creation of a national journal that would publish papers on a wide variety of social reform topics and therefore disseminate knowledge across cognate fields. This interdisciplinarirty would allow research a wider audience, as one member expected that through the ASSA would gain his research "the attention of the public, instead of first provoking the cavils of my brethren and then of being consigned to oblivion in the pages of strictly a professional journal."[55] In this way the ASSA sought to become a "commonwealth of social science,"[56] to use founder Frank Sanborn's provocative phrase. With that phrase Sanborn meant to evoke an image of the social sciences as a federation of disciplines with shared boundaries and unified purpose, but it also evokes the explicit politics in play for the organization. The kind of "organization" sought by the ASSA was manifold, and it involved not merely the

[52] ASSA, 15.
[53] Henry Villard to Samuel Eliot, October 31, 1868, Folder 31.
[54] ASSA, 3.
[55] Isaac Ray to Frank Sanborn, November 26, 1865, Folder 30.
[56] Frank Sanborn, "The Commonwealth of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 19, (1884): 1.

organization of disparate practitioners into a common discursive forum, but was deeply implicated with the organization of the political community as well.

Pushing back further in the history of the emergence of the social sciences reveals a different set of conceptions about the relationship between knowledge and politics from those in play today, ones that turn out to be useful for political theory. Histories of social science can do at least three different things, though of course the best aim to accomplish all three. First, some track the emergence and decline of different research paradigms and attribute the rise and fall of those paradigms largely to intellectual forces internal to the disciplines. Andrew Abbott's *Chaos of Disciplines*, which follows the fragmentation of social scientific knowledge into ever more narrow fields falls into this category.[57] The most egregiously Whiggish examples tell stories about the triumph of a truly scientific political science over a pre-scientific past, as in David Easton's *The Political System*.[58] Another style of history tells the story of social and political forces on the discipline, understanding academics as existing at the intersection of social developments and political and economic pressures that come to form the discipline. Often the upshot of these stories is to tell the story of dashed aspirations or abandoned responsibilities to a more robustly democratic polity. David Ricci, for example, offers an account of the history of political science as a series of periods of enthusiasm for greater political relevance followed by periods of retreat as those efforts come under attack as improper, partisan, or fraudulent, causing political scientists to double-down on their claims to

[57] Andrew Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
[58] David Easton, *The Political System* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

objectivity.[59] Finally, histories have been told about the discipline as a case study to explore ideas in political theory. If the second type of history seeks to show how politics affects political science, this last type seeks to emphasize how political science affects politics. John Gunnell's *Imagining the American Polity* accomplishes just this by showing how the concept of the state emerged within the discipline of political science to affect how practicing politicians came to understand the American political community. Matthew Hannah's *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory* stands as another example, exploring the early history of the social sciences as a case study in how ideas about governing territory emerged at the intersection of social scientific practice and national politics.[60] This dissertation's aims fall into that third category.

The history of the social sciences reveal important lessons for contemporary political theory. Not enough has been done on this point, a surprise of its own given that most disciplinary historians are political theorists themselves by training. Political theory and disciplinary historians have much to say to one another, about the connections between theory and practice, about the processes of state formation, and about the means of cultivating democratic citizenship. Whereas past authors have studied the history of the social sciences as episodes of conceptual change or the emergence of governmentality, this dissertation explores the early social sciences through the lens of pragmatism. This tack allows for the exploration of the early history of the social sciences in the United States through a distinctively American philosophical frame that

[59] David Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).
[60] Matthew Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

was explicitly oriented to better understanding the relationship between scientific inquiry and democratic politics.

Pragmatist Roots

Pragmatism proves essential to understanding what the first generations of American social scientists hoped to accomplish in their work. This may come as something of a surprise, given that few early social scientists explicitly identified themselves as pragmatists, if for no other reason than most of that pioneering work was finished by the time William James coined the term. They shared much of the same terminology, however, with an emphasis on experience, on solving problems, and understanding scientific inquiry as a collaborative enterprise. An awareness of these sensibilities rescues the early social sciences from the charge of naïve positivism. It also more faithfully illuminates the politics that they understood to be inherent in their work. Indeed, the idea of work itself bears elaboration, as both the first generations of social scientists and the pragmatists understood inquiry as an uncertain and evolving work in progress that was to be oriented to problems as much as any conception of truth. Others have taken note of the connections between the early social sciences and pragmatism. On Haskell's reading, the philosophical justifications for the activities of the ASSA can be found in Peirce's ideas about how unity of opinion is produced by communities of inquiry.[61] This dissertation pushes further to elaborate on these connections and the shared ideas between social science and pragmatism, aiming to demonstrate what each contributes to the understanding of the other. The goal is less to engage directly with pragmatism and the significant body of scholarship that has emerged around it, and more to use pragmatism

[61] Haskell, 68.

as a lens through which features of the early social sciences that would otherwise pass by unseen might appear in greater relief.

Classical pragmatists such as Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey are united by a shared appeal to experience. Indeed, scholars of pragmatism typically draw a distinction of the "experience" pragmatism of Peirce, James, and Dewey with the "linguistic" neopragmatism inaugurated in the work of Richard Rorty. His "linguistic turn" would seem to have rendered classical pragmatism obsolete for its alleged naïve empiricism. Timothy Kaufman-Osborn, however, counsels a reconsideration of classical pragmatist thought given that personal experiences have lost their hold over contemporary democratic citizens, who "witness but cannot quite grasp" the buzz of political events.[62] According to Osborne a gap has opened between individual lived experience and politically significant events, and because this problematic also captured the attention of the classical pragmatists, they were concerned to work up an account of experience that is lived individually but remains meaningful for the shared enterprise of democratic politics. Colin Koopman similarly attempts to resuscitate pragmatism as a philosophy uniquely suited to theorizing moments of uncertainty and transition insofar as pragmatism offers up an account of how ideas change, why they change, and why we ought think change a good thing instead of a threat.[63] These concerns, it will be argued, also animated much work conducted under the auspices of the ASSA. Put differently, there was a shared concern among both early social scientists in the United States and the classical pragmatists and for what common experience might look like at a moment of

[62] Timothy V. Kaufman-Osborn, *Politics/Sense/Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1-2.
[63] Colin Koopman, *Pragmatism as Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

tremendous uncertainty. For all the differences between the classical pragmatists in turn, their thinking is united by a shared valuation of what they called experience, the ethics that come out of the inquiry always bound up with experience, and attention to the political community that inquiry is both conducted within and becomes constitutive of.

As noted above, this appeal to experience as such has become problematic after Rorty, and so further specification will be needed as to what in the classical pragmatist appeal to experience deserves elaboration and what can be safely ignored. Experience is, Peirce says, "our only teacher"[64] and yet what Peirce meant by experience is distinctive and shared by James and Dewey who follow in his footsteps. For Peirce, thought is habitual and matter of course until it is checked by experience, a moment he describes as being "awakened from our pleasing dream by some rough facts."[65] The process of thinking is to engage in inquiry, which is produced when experience interrupts established beliefs and habits of mind. Experience produces doubt, whereas inquiry restores belief. If all of this begins to sound similar to classical empiricism, as when Peirce writes that the mind is "fed with facts of observation,"[66] proof for Peirce lies less in any ontological connection between representation and referent and more in the process of inquiry, which is a communal enterprise. The truth or reality of ideas are not something we can be assured of at any specific moment in time, they are merely where we are headed as a discursive community: "the reality of that which is real does depend

[64] Charles Sanders Peirce, "On Phenomenology," in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 153.
[65] Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1, ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 121.
[66] Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1, ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 126.

on the real fact that investigation is destined to lead, at last, if continued long enough, to a belief in it."[67] While Peirce's writing is seldom political, he does pause to note how "a nation" might "in the course of generations, overcome the disadvantage of an excessive wealth of language and its natural concomitant, a vast, unfathomable deep of ideas."[68] The process that Peirce offers to "make our ideas clear" – a community of inquiry that adjudicates disputes on the basis of commonly shared experience – is a shared undertaking with political consequences.

The consequences of this understanding of experience for political community become more explicit in the thought of James, who argues that not just science, but all of what he calls "common sense" is the accretion of what has proven useful through past generations of inquiry.[69] Problems arise when common sense clashes with or is detached from actual lived experience. But once again how is experience in the pragmatist sense different from sensory experience in the empiricist tradition? For Koopman classical pragmatism becomes mired in a naïve empiricism whereby experiences simply present themselves as given. This need not be the stumbling block Koopman makes it out to be, however, if emphasis is placed on the practical inevitability of experience instead of its purported truth value. The appeal of experience lies in the fact that it offers means by which to be reminded of the means by which social life is shared in common, and the means by which ordinary daily life matters. The givenness of the world for the pragmatists then does not serve to vouchsafe truth claims, but to emphasize an ethic of

[67] Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," 139.
[68] Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," 126-7.
[69] William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 76.

confronting and wrestling with things that upset lived experience. The alternative of simply ignoring such experiences shuts down inquiry.

An example from James will suffice. In an essay James described the experience of being awoken from his bed during the 1906 San Francisco earthquake during a visit to Stanford University. James was taken with the physical experience of being awoken by the ground shaking beneath him, an unsettling and completely novel experience for him. As he processed the feelings, he became aware of the earth as a living entity in a way he hadn't previously. The importance of the experience then is that of the mind becoming aware of things outside itself that are normally distant. Alexander Livingston describes James's move as away from an atomistic vision of the self and toward a relational one.[70] The importance then of the experience for James was not that of an empiricist. What mattered was not that the trembling of the ground beneath his bed gave him sensory data that clued him into the events surrounding him, but that the experience upset an established way of thinking. It forced his mind into a problematic situation, reminding him that his mental map of the world had not accounted for the awesome power of something as lowly and quotidian as the dirt beneath his feet. What the experience of the earthquake provided James was not sensory data of its existence, but a reorientation of how James understood the world around him. It was less about adding a point on his mental map and more about shifting the map altogether. There was nothing predetermined in the sensory experience to cause James to react one way or another. Given a different set of cultural experiences, he might have been called to interpret the

[70] Alexander Livingston, "Excited Subjects: William James and the Politics of Radical Empiricism," *Theory and Event* 15, no. 4 (2012).

event another way. In this way experiences are communicable, they are drawn from and inform shared frames of reference. Inquiry becomes a communal undertaking less in the sense that it is deliberately organized and more in the sense that it takes place any and everywhere.

In a move that hasn't attracted all the attention it deserves, Habermas's democratic theory makes explicit use of Peirce's consensus theory of truth, but as for Peirce, Habermas's idealist inclinations leave his readers with a consensus theory of truth that strips the production of knowledge from its institutional moorings. Koopman helpfully suggests that what pragmatism offers epistemology is an awareness of how knowledge relations and what counts as a knowledge relation are historically and institutionally specific. The naïve empiricist takes knowledge to be a relationship between the outside world an accurate representation in the mind. After Rorty's linguistic turn, knowledge alternatively becomes a relationship between claims and the linguistic community in and against which those claims can be made intelligible. Koopman urges his readers to recognize that each of these of these conceptions is rooted in a historically specific but evolving and "unrolling field of practice."[71] Put baldly, knowledge exists in doings, it exists when it happens in the world. Knowledge does not exist as data for transmission but through a shared set of practices. This is something both the pragmatists and early social scientists understood, but which has been submerged by a century and a half of history. In that time a distinctive set of institutional settlements between producers of knowledge and their publics have functioned so as to make a set of conceptual settlements about the nature of knowledge as such appear natural. An examination of the

[71] Koopman, 109.

early history of the social sciences alongside the largely contemporaneous writings of the classical pragmatists reveals both the contingency of this settlement and relations between expertise and democratic politics that retain their force but have come to be taken for granted.

Pragmatist Expertise

To return to the language that began this introduction, knowledge has come to be conceived to be held by experts who then face a solemn duty to share their knowledge with others, whereas it might more fruitfully be conceived to be located in a shared set of practices. This means that the problems of expertise described by Kristof are less about finding the right language to most efficiently and effectively transmit data from one group of people to another, and more about cultivating the shared practices through which truth is always produced and in which it is always located. For starters this means dropping the language of dissemination, which presupposes a shared set of practices to carry that dissemination. If the goal of scholars is to make their work more publicly vital, it is those practices that need cultivation. The simple search after a clearer language by which experts might inform interested publics is insufficient. In its least charitable formulations, those complaints become ones about how democratic publics must be made to accept the findings of their superiors and recalcitrant publics simply don't know what is good for them.

Pragmatism forces us to think about knowledge and expertise in less positivist terms. Knowledge is not something held by a select elite in ivory towers, but rather is produced everywhere, and by more or less the same methods. For the pragmatists,

scientific methods do not differ dramatically from the methods by which all of us navigate our everyday lives. All of life is trial and error, experiment, revision, and collaboration. Scientific certification then ought not be of such as sort as to be inaccessible to outsiders, and this goes some way to explaining why so much of scientific practice is governed by principles of transparency, if it often does so imperfectly. For the pragmatists everyone is in principle a scientist. Institutional divisions in the production of knowledge are useful only to the degree that they simplify modern life, not because they mark the wise from the ignorant as such.

But what good does expertise anyway? Why does anyone need expert knowledge? As mentioned above, the typical story as it relates to democratic politics has to do with becoming an informed voter, but pragmatism suggests a different answer. The point of experience is not to have a more accurate picture of the world, but rather to have an orientation to it. The difference is subtle, but a complete picture of the world is never possible, and if possible, never useful. The goal is to have a map of the world in one's heads that is useful, and in modern politics, the most useful maps will be those that draw us out of ourselves and remind us that we share the world in common. These are all aspects of expertise that are illuminated by the example of the ASSA, and they allow us to look at Kristof's criticism of public scholarship in entirely different terms, if only because both the work of the ASSA and the classical pragmatists were attempts to arrive at a different settlement between the production of knowledge and democratic politics.

Outline of the Project

Each of the points above is about expertise and its complications in democratic politics. It is about the institutions in which inquiry is located, the set of practices it cultivates, and the orientation to politics it sets out to produce. Writing in the 1970s, the social critic Ivan Illich wrote that "Neither income, long training, delicate tasks nor social standing is the mark of the professional. Rather, it is his authority to define a person as client, to determine that person's need and to hand the person a prescription."[72] With Illich's understanding, the political threats inherent in expertise become clearer, as expertise is inextricably linked to the power to control. Cast only slightly differently, expertise is about a set of social boundaries separating expert from client, about cultivating a specific experience and orientation in the client, and the actions that are expected to follow from the encounter between the expert and the client. Each of these can struck in a more or less authoritarian way. Boundaries between experts and laypeople can be porous, the prescription can enable political participation instead of shutting it down, and the practices can be collaborative instead of exclusive.

The chapters ahead explore each of these ideas in separate detail. First however, the dissertation explores scholarship in the field of democratic theory. Concerned as scholars in this field are with providing avenues for citizen participation, as well as with the institutions and procedures that work public discourses up into political demands, this is a field that ought to be well equipped to answer Kristof's complaints about the disconnect between scholars and democratic publics. This chapter argues that this is not the case due to the positivist understanding of knowledge assumed by this scholarship.

[72] Ivan Illich, *Disabling Professions* (London: Marion Boyars, 1977), 17.

The profound irony of this shortfall is the philosophical origins in pragmatism of much of this scholarship in democratic theory. This chapter counsels a reinvigoration of this pragmatist tradition that would turn us away from the discussion of knowledge and to the discussion of practice. This move turns the problem away from the circulation of knowledge and towards the practices by which people make sense of the problems they encounter in the world. That is, productions of knowledge are taken at face value instead of as a set of practices though which knowledge comes to be shared or not.

To illustrate what those sorts of practices might look like, the second chapter turns to a curious trope within social scientific discourse in the latter half of the nineteenth century. That chapter takes seriously the idea that readers of social scientific articles at this time were expected to make tables of data "speak for themselves." Far from assuming that such data was capable of speaking without interpretation, this chapter explores the way this trope invited readers to share interpretive authority with authors. Social scientists at this time viewed the publication of data as an exciting development that would reveal unseen problems, trends, and laws of society. For this to be the case, there had to be more lurking in the data than the authors themselves could reveal. In publishing a surfeit of data, the belief was that others would make use of it and discover additional features hidden in what would otherwise appear to be an "avalanche of numbers." This sharing of interpretive authority made the practice "pragmatistic" in the sense Habermas describes in his early work *Toward a Rational Society*.

While the second chapter explores the ways in which the encounter between author and audience could be construed democratically in the pages of the *Journal of*

Social Science, the third chapter turns to the novel forms of organization with which the ASSA experimented. The group explicitly understood its work to have political import, and given the country's established democratic culture it sought to organize itself on democratic terms. This was no small feat for a group with national-spanning ambitions in a nation where most political authority derived from local folkways. Thus the ASSA sought institutionalize itself along a number of paths both national (the *Journal of Social Science*) and local (branch chapters) in scope. A proposed merger with Johns Hopkins University proved problematic, due in no small part because it threatened to upset the new claims to authority lodged in the research university. These claims relied on a division of labor in the production of knowledge that were ill suited to the jealously guarded amateurism of the ASSA. Members of the group understood their inquiries to be of political consequence, and for that reason, strove to organize them democratically as well. These organizational questions present persistent problems for mass-scale democratic politics, and they vexed the ASSA as well.

Whereas the third chapter explores the effects of politics on styles of social inquiry, the fourth and final chapter explores how social scientific inquiry could itself be a political project given the demands of scale in modern democracies. This chapter differs in ambition from the second chapter, which explores the politics of social scientific inquiry in terms of the encounter between tables of social scientific data and their audience. The final chapter explores what it would mean for experience to be worked up from the local to the national level, and the frame of mind necessary to produce that sort of politics. The metaphor that appears in the work of the pragmatists is that of a mental

map, and it is a map both local and global in scale, something critics of pragmatism sometimes miss. This mental map serves to locate the user in political space, to alert an individual to the relevant dimensions of the political community under consideration. While work produced under the auspices of the ASSA did not frequently contain maps proper, they did often sound out and list off spaces and their boundaries even when they did not strictly matter for the purposes of the inquiry. They did this for much the same reason that the tables explored in chapter two matter: they were intended for use by their audience. But additionally they were intended to remind their audience of the new scale of American politics. Specifics conditions in every state mattered not just for analytical purposes, but further for political ones. Individual states could not be excluded from analysis without denigrating the idea of a unified nation, the very idea for which the Civil War had just been fought. The social sciences were thus implicated in the project of nation-building historians locate in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The social sciences didn't just seek to investigate and understand the laws of society, they also sought to catalog and map out social spaces, bringing attention to the experiences of others in faraway places, experiences that mattered in and of themselves, not just because they stood in for something more abstract. All this is to seek after new ways by which to understand the political relevance of the social sciences in a democratic nation like the United States.

A conclusion relates the attempts of the ASSA and the pragmatists to forge connections between social scientific inquiry and democratic politics to more recent developments in the field of political science. The so-called Perestroika movement of the

early 2000s was a "raucous rebellion," as one account took it[73], against the institutionalization of the social sciences and the way that institutionalization privileges some kinds of inquiry over others. The Perestroika debates were thus concerned with what manners of social scientific inquiry would be most important and relevant for democratic politics. Future research into the history of the ASSA might explore debates surrounding the boundaries of science, over what was and what was not going to count as science, and the political implications of those debates.

Chapters two, three, and four each follow a similar course, beginning with a problem in contemporary political theory scholarship, and then narrating that problem backward in history so as to reveal how that problem might be differently understood using the early history of the social sciences and using the classical pragmatists as an interpretive frame for understanding the work of the early social sciences. Reading the amateur social scientists who were associated with the ASSA alongside the pragmatists certainly privileges those aspects of their work most easily relatable to the pragmatists. It de-emphasizes voices within the ASSA who spoke the language of truth and certainty, a language that certainly persists within social scientific discourses to this day. The reason for emphasizing those aspects of the work of the ASSA that relate most easily to the classical pragmatists is those aspects also speak most directly to contemporary concerns in political theory. The goal of the dissertation is not to tell the definitive history of the ASSA, were such a thing possible, but to recover from that history and from the

[73] Kristen Renwick Monroe, ed., *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

contemporaneous work of the pragmatists a set of insights into social scientific inquiry relevant for contemporary political theory.

On a few occasions the dissertation turns to the additional historical example of Jane Addams's work as a social scientist and reformer. As a friend of Dewey's, Addams was a well versed participant in pragmatist debates, but more importantly Addams offers an additional example of amateur social science in practice. While she did not associate with the ASSA, which was no longer relevant by the 1890s when she began her own work at Hull-House, her example finds social science being pursued for similar reasons as it had been pursued by the ASSA a generation earlier, and so offers an additional example of amateur social scientific inquiry put into practice.

Studying the ASSA is no simple task because this "prehistory" of the social sciences embodied in the work of the ASSA is often overlooked by historians of the social sciences. Dorothy Ross's superb *Origins of American Social Science*, for example, contains only a few sentences on the ASSA.[74] Other than Kathryn Fuller's 2001 dissertation at Indiana University on the role of women in the ASSA, only a single book-length treatment of the ASSA has ever been produced: Haskell's *The Emergence of Professional Social Science*, published originally in 1977 by the University of Illinois Press and recently rereleased by the Johns Hopkins University Press. Two chapters of Mary Furner's *Advocacy and Objectivity*, published in 1975, cover the ASSA in some detail, but the majority of the book is a study of academic freedom controversies facing the discipline of economics around the turn of the century. Matthew Hannah's *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory*, published in 2000, also discusses the

[74] Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*.

ASSA in some detail, but is more concerned with Francis Amasa Walker and his work with the national census than his work with the ASSA.

Primary literature is scattered. Sanborn's "rambling" two-volume autobiography *Recollections of Seventy Years* makes no mention of his forty years of involvement leading the ASSA, though an uncompleted third volume, whose manuscript is now lost, may have been intended as a reflection on his activities with the organization.[75] Most of Sanborn's other papers were burned by his sons after his death, so no definitive archive of the activities of the ASSA exists. Haskell based his work on primarily on archives associated with individual figures within the ASSA such as Gilman and Peirce, as well as fragmentary collections of Sanborn's papers held by the Concord Free Public Library and the Concord Antiquarian Society. Retracing each of Haskell's steps would be an enormous undertaking, and probably unnecessary given the narrower scope of this project. As stated, the goal here is not to produce a definitive history of the ASSA, but to study specific elements of its history as they relate to political theory.

Since Haskell published his book, a new collection of Sanborn's papers from his time as secretary of the ASSA were discovered at Yale Law School, probably handed down from Sanborn to Simeon E. Baldwin, who was a professor at Yale when he became president of the ASSA in 1898.[76] Haskell did not put this new collection to use when *The Emergence of Professional Social Science* was reissued in 2000, nor did Fuller in her 2001 dissertation. The claims about the work of the ASSA that appear in this dissertation come out of reading the personal letters contained in the Yale archives, which were

[75] Haskell, 48.
[76] Haskell, viii.

digitally photographed during a visit to Yale in January 2009, as well as through a reading of the *Journal of Social Science* and other major publications produced by the ASSA.

The central claim of the dissertation is that the social sciences have been from their beginning a political project through and through. The politics of social scientific inquiry can be understood both in how social scientists communicate with their audiences, in how they organize themselves, and in how their publications serve to produce and reinforce a sense of political community. Each of these moments is in its own way also echoed or given further voice in the writings of the classical pragmatists. Pragmatism has been repeatedly described as a distinctively American philosophy, if for nothing other than its optimism.[77] But we can further note that pragmatism emerged out of an attempt to make sense of rapidly changing social conditions and what those changes meant for understanding politics. Pragmatism then becomes one moment among others in America's attempt to make sense of itself, or as Cornel West put it, pragmatism was "a continuous cultural commentary or set of interpretations that attempt to explain America to itself at a particular historical moment."[78] This is not to blow a nationalistic horn, but rather to call attention to the great degree that America in the late nineteenth century was in particular need of such interpretations. Pragmatism and social science then grew up alongside one another in the United States and informed one another because they both sought to provide ways of thinking through a common set of problems. This dissertation seeks to recover those ways of thinking for contemporary political theory.

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[77] Koopman, 46.
[78] Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 5.

Chapter One: Republican Empiricism: Toward a Pragmatist Theory of Democratic Expertise

> "The problem of a democratically organized pubic is primarily and essentially an intellectual problem"[79]
>
> -John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*

Concerns about disconnects between social scientific inquiry and democratic politics are certainly not new. Writing in 1927, John Dewey worried about the distance separating social scientific expertise and the public when he denounced popular psychology as "a mass of cant, of slush and of superstition worthy of the most flourishing days of the medicine man."[80] Given that these concerns have a long history, it is surprising then that work in contemporary democratic theory offers relatively little guidance for thinking about the meaning, use, and place of social scientific inquiry in contemporary democratic life. Jürgen Habermas's *Between Facts and Norms*, perhaps the most influential work in democratic theory of the past twenty years, is a notable but instructive exception. In it Habermas pays detailed attention to the circulation of knowledge within societies characterized by divisions of labor in knowledge production. Habermas's solution in *Between Facts and Norms* is to appeal to a public sphere where knowledge flows freely through the medium of ordinary language. This solution fails on its own terms, however, because it pays insufficient attention to the importance of shared practices in producing the sort of understanding he assumes. A more useful response to these challenges can be found, this chapter argues, by returning to pragmatism. Ironically this exactly what

[79] John Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, Vol. 2, *1925-1927, Essays, The Public and Its Problems*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 314.
[80] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, 338.

informs Habermas's work, but instead of drawing on the thought of Charles S. Peirce, as Habermas does in his later work, this chapter turns to Dewey as Habermas had in his earlier work. Out of the pragmatists this chapter seeks to recover a version of what Michael Lacey and Mary Furner have called "republican empiricism" whereby social scientific inquiry is a broadly shared practice. While "republican empiricism" on Lacey and Furner's account was practiced widely among amateur social scientists and reformers in the nineteenth century in both Britain and the United States, a fully formed account of its meaning for politics must rely on a turn to Dewey.

Social Science and Democratic Theory

As discussed in the introduction, expertise poses serious problems for democratic politics. As Thomas Haskell notes, "laymen, in the very act of seeking professional help, confess their ignorance of the matter in question and therefore imply their inability to judge."[81] The problems expertise poses for democracy thus are not unique to the social sciences, but they are particularly acute in the case of the social sciences because the social sciences usually speak directly to matters of political concern, and because the techniques of inquiry used in the natural sciences are taught at a far earlier age and to a far broader segment of the population than is typically the case for the social sciences. Thus, citizens in modern democracies find themselves ill-equipped to judge the claims of social scientific experts trained in precisely those modes of knowledge that dominate modern practices of politics and governance.

[81] Thomas L. Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 2000): 28.

Democracy cannot tolerate restrictions on any judgments that have wide-ranging consequences. To be democratic, judgments must remain open to all affected. Habermas's "discourse principle," is representative of this stance. It demands that "just those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourses."[82] For Habermas only appeals to agreement and rational persuasion can avoid a politics of force. Dewey similarly saw potential for "common judgment," which importantly distinguished rule by "thought and conviction" from rule by "externally applied force."[83]

Among contemporary theories of democracy, the "deliberative" or "discourse-theoretic" theory of Habermas worked up in *Between Facts and Norms* appears promising for rescuing social scientific inquiry from accusations of being undemocratic. Habermas's work has been praised for providing a fruitful model for a research program in the empirical social sciences, offering a bridge between theoretical and empirical social science,[84] so Habermas's claim in the opening pages of *Between Facts and Norms* to "a means for the reconstructive appropriation of scientific knowledge,", as well as his promise to "show how the old promise of a self-organizing community of free and equal citizens can be reconceived under the conditions of complex societies," merit careful consideration.[85] Habermas's work also attracts attention here because as a synthesis of a

[82] Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996 [1992]), 107.
[83] John Dewey, *Ethics* in *The Later Works, 1925-1953,* vol. 7, *1932, Ethics, revised edition,* ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 358.
[84] John S. Dryzek, "Critical Theory as a Research Program," in *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, ed. Stephen K. White (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[85] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, xxxix, 7.

wide variety of theoretical perspectives, a successful critique of *Between Facts and Norms* would go far toward a critique of a wide body of democratic theory.

The title of the book itself suggests attention to the interplay of science and democracy, of the "empirical" and the "normative", but this is misleading. The German title *Faktizität und Geltung* best translates as "facticity and validity," and it is this formulation that appears most often in the text of the English translation. Habermas's usage of these terms is distinctive and requires attention at the outset. By "facticity" Habermas by and large means the institutionalization of norms, often in the form of legal statutes, and not "facts" in usual sense. With "validity", Habermas means to capture all judgments – both empirical and normative – that occur between interlocutors, including "claims to propositional truth, personal sincerity, and normative rightness."[86] All are the products of what Habermas calls communicative action, which he distinguishes from administrative and strategic action. Thus, when Habermas argues that law is at once a "system of knowledge and a system of action," he explains that by "system of knowledge" he means "a text that consists of normative propositions and interpretations" and by "system of action" he means an established set of institutional practices.[87]

A brief sketch of Habermas's theory of communicative action will suffice. Drawing heavily on the thought of the pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce, Habermas argues that all communication assumes the form of a debate: "every speech act involves the raising of criticizable validity claims" and ideally, a validity claim "allow[s] its proponent to defend it with reasons against the objections of possible opponents; in the

[86] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 5.
[87] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 114.

end she should be able to gain the rationally motivated agreement of the interpretation community as a whole."[88] This stylized model of communicative action, assuming as it does that "linguistic expressions have *identical meanings* for different users," while useful enough as a standard against which to judge our practices, does not offer a plausible account of modern societies, where "the unavoidable division of labor in the production and diffusion of knowledge results in an unequal distribution of information and expertise."[89] To account for this reality, Habermas has to connect his theory of communicative action to the concept of the public sphere, or rather, public spheres.

There are for Habermas "popular sciences and literary publics, religious and artistic publics, feminist and 'alternative' publics, publics concerned with health-care issues, social welfare, or environmental policy" and so forth.[90] For Habermas's theory of the public sphere to remain a meaningfully democratic account of politics, however, communication between all these groups must remain porous and unproblematic, and Habermas is only able to so this with the help of an additional set of claims about ordinary language. Any break from ordinary language that specialized languages represent, he claims, is never complete, and specialized languages "differentiate themselves only *within the boundaries* of a multifunctional language but remain *intertwined* with one another through this medium."[91] Habermas views these specialized

[88] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 14, 18.
[89] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 11, 325, emphasis in original.
[90] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 373-4.
[91] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 55, emphasis in original.

languages as largely harmless, and indicative of the "plentitude of connotations, the functional richness, and the capacity for variation proper to the use of language."[92]

The problem with the appeal to ordinary language is not just that words sometimes mean different things in different settings – a "paradigm" in the philosophy of science is very different from a "paradigm" in linguistics, to take one example; the problem rather is that words do not mean what they appear to mean because they have taken on euphemistic meanings inaccessible to anyone without years of acculturation. In *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, Pierre Bourdieu reprints a page from a 1962 book of science humor that "translates" phrases typically found in scientific journals into what they "really" mean. Thus, "agreement with the predicted curve is *excellent*" translates as "agreement with the predicted curve is *fair*," and "agreement with the predicted curve is *fair*" translates as "agreement with the predicted curve is *imaginary*."[93] The joke is funny because it contains a grain of truth, but no one outside of the sciences would understand the joke in the first place because only a deep familiarity with scientific practice offers knowledge of how far claims to scientific discovery are from the actual messiness of practice. Translating scientific knowledge into an ordinary language that could circulate widely in a democratic society is no simple task.

Across the body of his work, Habermas provides different solutions to the problem of finding a language that can translate knowledge across segments of society. In *Toward a Rational Society*, Habermas suggests the popular press as a channel by which

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[92] Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 350.
[93] Irving John Good, *The Scientist Speculates* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 52; Pierre Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 24, emphasis added.

knowledge originating in the scientific communities can be worked up into the public sphere.[94] In *The Philosophic Discourse of Modernity* Habermas again suggests popularized forums whereby experts, and especially philosophers and literary critics, can do this sort of work. The value of both philosophy and literary criticism for Habermas is "the special status … each it its own way, assume as mediators between expert cultures and the everyday world."[95] In *Between Facts and Norms*, law operates as an ordinary language: "the language of law, unlike the moral communication restricted to the lifeworld, can function as a transformer in the society-wide communication circulating between system and lifeworld."[96] The search then is after languages and institutions that can glue otherwise irreconcilably fragmented pieces of knowledge together. That Habermas struggled to settle on any one answer to a problem that pervades his writings suggests the difficulty of finding such a language.

A return to *Knowledge and Human Interests*, which contains some of Habermas's earliest formulations of the theory communicative action, reveals the depth of the issue. In that 1968 book, Habermas defines scientific knowledge, in language that mirrors Peirce: "we term information scientific if and only if an uncompelled and permanent consensus can be obtained with regard to its validity."[97] Though clearly indebted to Peirce, Habermas is critical of the process of trial and error recommended by Peirce on the grounds that it reduces all inquiry to the scientific model of experimentation,

[94] Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 77.
[95] Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity*, 207.
[96] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 81.
[97] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 91.

eliminating the concern for meaning.[98] Against Peirce's experimental model, Habermas endorses Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics, which seek understanding in the world as opposed to explanation of it.[99] Habermas is explicit that such understanding relies on a deep knowledge of culture and is only gained through practical experience. It is with this in mind that Habermas writes that "understanding must combine linguistic analysis with experience."[100] Dilthey merits only a single mention in *Between Facts and Norms*, and that Habermas relies on experience for understanding in his earlier work that is absent in his later work suggests a problem.

The appeal to experience suggests a way out of the problem Habermas has created for himself. Language alone is always going to be insufficient, as hearing the words of another is never going to guarantee the ability to understand their meaning, assess their significance, and pick them up and make use of them. Here the typology of relationships between institutions of knowledge and politics that appears in *Toward a Rational Society* is helpful. There according to Habermas, there are "decisionistic", "technocratic", and "pragmatistic" understandings of expertise.[101] The decisionist model sees political actors employ the services of experts to advise them on the implications of policy decisions. In the technocratic model leaders are captured by experts who are able to control the terms of decision. Only in the pragmatistic model, which he associates with Dewey, is there anything like an interaction between the scientific and public spheres. Habermas writes, "the question is … whether a productive body of knowledge is merely transmitted to men

[98] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 140.
[99] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 144.
[100] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 171.
[101] Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*, 63-7.

engaged in technical manipulation for purposes of control or is simultaneously appropriated as the linguistic possession of communicating individuals."[102] The key distinction Habermas is drawing in this passage is between the mere transmission of knowledge from one group to another, and the appropriation of knowledge, between passive reception and active appropriation. Such a turn shifts the focus away from the discursive norms that govern the public sphere in Habermas's thinking and toward the practices to which knowledge adheres, practices that might in themselves carry democratic potential.

Dewey's Pragmatism of Practice

All this is to push Habermas away from Peirce and toward Dewey. Scholars of pragmatism are skeptical of the idealistic urge in Perice's work, which saw him remain committed to the idea that not only was the consensus of community of inquiry the only means by which to assess truth claims, but further what they came to consensus about really did have metaphysical truth value. Critics are also skeptical of the fact that Peirce never wrote on politics.[103] Peirce alone then would seem to offer few resources for a developed account of the relationship between expertise and democratic politics. Dewey, however, does offer significant resources for such account, even as he struggled to offer a consistent vision of that relationship.

In *Between Facts and Norms,* Habermas cites Dewey on a handful of occasions, mostly to praise his attention to public discourse in *The Public and Its Problems* as a

[102] Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*, 79.
[103] Colin Koopman, *Pragmatism as Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 41-2.

remedy to the separation of expert knowledge from democratic sites of judgment.[104] Political theorists have long been impressed with the exchange between Dewey and Walter Lippmann for their shared attention to the degree to which the forces of modernity have given activities in distant corners of the globe far-reaching consequences for individuals who now find themselves increasingly interdependent on one another. Walter Lippmann articulates the problem beautifully in *The Phantom Public*:

> My neighbor in the country who borrowed money to raise potatoes which he cannot sell for cash looks at the bills from the village store asking for immediate cash payments, and does not share the philosophic hopeful view of the interdependence of the world. When unseen commission merchants in New York City refuse his potatoes, the calamity is as dumfounding as a drought or a plague of locusts.[105]

The issue then for Lippmann and for Dewey that modern life has come to place important facts outside of the realm of immediate experience. The events and forces that shape individual lives are no longer the things that encountered over the course of daily lived experience. The world in some sense has grown beyond experience.

In *Public Opinion* Lippmann argues for the creation of "intelligence bureaus" to organize and digest the dizzying amount of knowledge in the world and serve as formal advisor to Congress. These intelligence bureaus would be an "instrument of the man of action" so as to not "burden every citizen with expert opinions on all questions."[106] While Lippmann backs off this specific solution in The *Phantom Public*, it bears mentioning

[104] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 304, 316.
[105] Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1993), 165.
[106] Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 250.

that he still envisions role for social scientists to "devise the methods" by which the public engages in "sampling" of facts and opinions, as well as to "define the criteria of judgment."[107]

Much is made here of Dewey's retort, which grants Lippmann's thesis that social complexity has become so great that democratic publics can no longer recognize themselves as communities bound together by shared fates. Dewey's answer is not that different from Lippmann's, however, to the degree that he also reserves a role for social scientists and other experts. The task of Dewey's expert is to get the public affected by a political issue to recognize itself as a public, to recognize their shared fate in a problem. Dewey sets it upon social scientists to study complex social forces and make their consequences known to a public that would otherwise remain ignorant of them. Dewey's social scientists would make their findings known by publicizing them in the press.[108] Social science matters for Dewey when it matters in public:

> the inquiry which alone can furnish knowledge as a precondition of public judgments must be contemporary and quotidian. Even if social sciences as a specialized apparatus of inquiry were more advanced than they are, they would be comparatively impotent in the office of directing opinion on matters of concern to the public as long as they are remote from application in the daily and unremitting assembly and interpretation of 'news'.[109]

[107] Lippmann, *The Phantom Public*, 135.
[108] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, 348.
[109] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, 348.

In this formulation, however, social science becomes little more than a product for consumption by passive consumers, no different in that regard from newspapers or any other mass media product. Dewey denies his social scientists privileged access to the levers of power, but they retain their status as a special class of inquirers. "Inquiry, indeed, is a work which devolves upon experts," Dewey writes, "but their expertness is not shown in framing and executing policies, but in discovering and making known the facts upon which the former depend."[110] Dewey is of course concerned that privileged classes of experts would quickly lose sight of the interests of common citizens, and his remedy is communication between social scientific experts and the democratic public. Dewey's masses inform the experts of their needs, while the masses are given information about the social forces that affect their lives.[111] Yet at no point in these communications are these communications subjected to mutual examination. Thus Dewey ends up reenacting precisely the same division of labor in the production of knowledge that so bothers him elsewhere, as for example when he denounces the traditional distinction between empirical and "higher rational knowing" for mirroring the division between "the intelligence used by the working classes and that used by a learned class remote from concern with the means of living."[112]

A more satisfying vision of science that is more able to speak to the problems here can nonetheless be recovered from Dewey's other writings. Of particular merit is Dewey's view of science not as a body of knowledge but rather as an "attitude of mind,"

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[110] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, 365.
[111] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, 365.
[112] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* in *The Middle Works of John Dewey, 1899-1924,* Vol. 9, *1916, Democracy and Education*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 344.

or what might also be called a practice. He explains, "science has been taught too much as an accumulation of ready-made material with which students are to be made familiar, not enough as a method of thinking, an attitude of mind, after the pattern of which mental habits are to be transformed."[113] This much would seem to follow from the pragmatist's insistence that ideas have no substance beyond their manifestation in habits. Ideas lack metaphysical value and are merely tools for making do with what is available at hand. But Dewey goes further to insist that scientific inquiry is a lived practice.

For Dewey, as for other pragmatists, experimentation is something practiced by all in almost every aspect of daily life. It is not the preserve of self-identified scientists. Whether noticing that a change in temperature and the gathering of clouds means impending rain or searching after clues as to the right direction when lost on a road, the scientific mindset is something everyday.[114] Dewey even observes experimental behavior in animals and children. Nonetheless, the experimental attitude, though native to humans and other animals, cannot be relied upon alone. This inborn attitude is fragile and in need of cultivation, the purposes of which are "the *transformation* of natural powers into expert, tested powers."[115] This is why education is directed at the young, since without proper training, human beings, as creatures of habit, allow the experimental attitude to fade.[116] Additional attitudes and qualities are needed as well. Open-mindedness, "an active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to facts from whatever source

[113] Dewey, "Science as Subject-Matter and as Method," in *The Middle Works of John Dewey, 1899-1924*, Vol. 6, *1910-1911, Essays, How We Think*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 70.
[114] Dewey, *How We Think* in *The Later Works of John Dewey, 1925-1953*, Vol. 8, *1933, Essays, How We Think, revised edition*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 121.
[115] Dewey, *How We Think*, 181, emphasis in original.
[116] Dewey, *How We Think*, 277.

they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities," is needed, as is a willingness allow ideas to go where they may.[117] The need for these qualities permeates all of scientific practice, given that "no hard and fast rules for this operation of selecting and rejecting, or fixing upon significant evidential facts, can be given."[118] Such an attitude once gained, can be turned to use assessing the validity of all types of scientific information. Thus Dewey proclaims,

> If our schools turn out their pupils in that attitude of mind which is conducive to good judgment in any department of affairs in which the pupils are placed, they have done more than if they sent out their pupils possessed merely of vast stores of information or high degrees of skill in specialized branches.[119]

It is, however, Dewey's point on countless occasions that knowledge divorced from practice and experience is effectively useless.[120]

Dewey's insistence on the importance of practice and experience, however, makes the ending pages of *The Public and Its Problems* are puzzling given the ambition early in the book. Put simply, Dewey's stated goal in the work is to make sense of how democratic publics could become aware of their massive new scope. He counsels his reader, however, to cultivate local attachments, concluding that "in its deepest and richest sense a community must always remain a matter of face-to-face intercourse."[121] This deflationary conclusion bothers Koopman, who takes it as emblematic of Dewey's

[117] Dewey, *How We Think*, 137-8.
[118] Dewey, *How We Think*, 213.
[119] Dewey, *How We Think*, 211.
[120] See for example, Dewey, *How We Think*, 266.
[121] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, 367.

alleged focus on immediate experience to the exclusion of linguistically mediated experience.[122] This conclusion is premature, however, as Dewey explicitly allows for linguistically mediated experiences. In *Experience and Nature* Dewey says that nature consists of "events rather than substances,"[123] and to elaborate on this point he distinguishes between the objects of "primary" and "secondary" experience. Whereas the former are isolated, the latter "get the meaning contained in a whole system of related objects."[124] Experiences then for Dewey can be the product of cultural practices.

The prospects for linguistically mediated experiences for forming the basis of a more authentically democratic engagement between experts and their publics will be developed further in the next chapter. For now, it must be noted that Dewey sees his suggestions in *The Public and Its Problems* as a novel enterprise for the social sciences, which would have to reorient their activities away from the provision of expert advice to legislators, and toward the education of the public. What Dewey misses though is the ways that the social sciences in the nineteenth century had already been engaged in just that sort of work, seeking to elaborate unseen aspects of and interconnections between rapidly changing political communities.

Republican Empiricism

In *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, Michael Lacey and Mary Furner identify a mode of reformist social inquiry in the middle of the nineteenth century that they label "republican empiricism" that "relied less on the claims of science

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[122] Koopman, 188.
[123] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, in *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, Vol. 1, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 6.
[124] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 16.

and disinterested expertise than on the democratic and humanitarian impulses associated with moral reform" and on the "political mobilization of groups directly affected by the problems in question."[125] It was a model of social investigation that followed the following form: "inquire into the dimensions of a problem, petition the local or state authorities, disseminate their findings to arouse public sentiment, recommend philanthropic relief or legislation, and maintain pressure on lawmakers until a satisfactory response was obtained."[126] Couched so, the work of the reform-minded social reformer does not appear that different from the issue advocacy of interest groups today, but this "republican empiricism" was noteworthy for its engagement by amateurs without any appeals to scientific disinterestedness, and for the attention it had to pay to specific details on the ground.

What this "republican empiricism" makes evident is the degree to which social investigators were already engaged in the sort of work Dewey recommends. The point of gathering information through social investigation is not merely one of making apparent to a political community the problems it faces, but of conjuring a political community into existence that can recognize itself as such, and that can connect its fate to the problem under consideration. This is a much more ambitious and challenging task, and it is one that social investigators faced from the beginning.

Consider the example of Jane Addams. Few scenes from Jane Addams's memoir *Twenty Years at Hull-House* shock the senses quite like her reflections on garbage

[125] Michael Lacey and Mary Furner, "Social Investigation, Social Knowledge, and the State: An Introduction," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary Furner (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993), 27
[126] Lacey and Furner, 26.

collection in late-nineteenth century Chicago. Garbage pickup in Chicago at the time was dreadful by her account and the accounts of others. An 1892 article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* declared, "There is more dirt in Chicago today than in London, Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and all the large cities of Europe put together."[127]

Part of the garbage problem was that of political corruption. Through the practice known as "boodling" private contractors would receive contracts from the city in exchange for kickbacks, which further ensured lax oversight of the actual performance of those contracts.[128] The other part of the problem was practical. Garbage was collected in large wooden bins on the streets and so-called "scavengers" hired by the city came along to take the garbage away to the dump. But, as Addams explained to the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "It is impossible to get all the stuff out of them … the shape of the boxes prevents [the garbage man] getting his shovel well into them, and thus he leaves over day after day a part of the refuse, which becomes foul."[129]

What is most surprising in all of this is the intimate relationship Addams describes the residents of the neighborhoods having with the garbage: "the children of our neighborhood … played their games in and around these huge garbage boxes" and "we are obliged to remember that all children eat everything they find."[130] Even more shocking is her claim that the garbage boxes "became the seats upon which absorbed lovers held enchanted converse."[131] Addams points to the unusual set of experiences

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[127] "Clean Streets and Alleys," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar 27, 1892, 4.
[128] Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 244.
[129] "War on Dirty Places," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 3, 1895, 1.
[130] Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Signet, 1961), 185.
[131] Addams, 185.

produced by the garbage, "odors have a curious and intimate power of entwining themselves into our tenderest memories,"[132] she writes, and she recoils at the fact that it took a visit from her "delicate little nephew" to take full note of the odors.[133]

What that visit illustrated was the critical role physical proximity or distance plays in making us aware or unaware of a political problem. As Addams writes, "It is easy for even the most conscientious citizen of Chicago to forget the foul smells of the stockyards and the garbage dumps, when he is living so far from them that he is only occasionally made conscious of their existence."[134] The task then for the residents of Hull-House was to raise these problems to the level of consciousness for those without direct experience of them. The manner in which they went about doing this merits closer attention.

The problem was that of knowledge, people who ought to have known something about the world didn't. Thus the residents of Hull-House, in conjunction with other reformers in the city, undertook a campaign to investigate and publicize sanitation practices in the city. This was more complicated than simply revealing to the privileged "how the other half live." Ada Sweet, one of the leading organizers of the effort, advocated for the creation of "clubs" and "societies" to "personally examine daily, and report upon, weekly" the state of garbage collection in the city's neighborhoods.[135] The solution blended surveillance mechanisms with voluntary organizations. The voluntary basis of the effort, along with the now almost-incomprehensible problem of the state simply not knowing what it was doing make this series of events distinctively American.

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[132] Addams, 185.
[133] Addams, 187.
[134] Addams, 185-6.
[135] "For Clean Streets," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 19, 1892, 9.

The purpose of reform efforts was make officials "well informed as to the actual work of their employees and contractors day by day."[136] The attempt then was not merely to reveal the pitiful conditions in poor neighborhoods, but to put the machinery of the state under scrutiny as well. Those under surveillance in the scheme Sweet proposed were officials of the state ("from inspector and superintendent to laborer, cartman, or scavenger"), and those performing the surveillance were citizens. All in all the effort in the summer of 1892 produced some 1,037 reports, and city hall was put under significant pressure to change, but the victory was short-lived and the system of "boodling" soon returned.[137]

A few years later in 1895 the residents of Hull-House devised a different plan. They would submit their own bid to collect garbage, but part of the problem with the existing system was that the contractors bidding were not seriously offering to deliver on it in full and so were free to submit very low bids. Addams and her associates studied what it would cost to actually deliver on the garbage collection contracts, and in an attempt at public education submitted a bid 40% higher than the contract for the year before.[138] Addams's bid was excluded on a technicality, which was denounced in the press as a "pitiful evasion,"[139] but she reported "I am not much disappointed, for I think my bid was too high to win."[140]

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[136] "For Clean Streets," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 19, 1892, 9.
[137] Knight, 244.
[138] Knight, 338.
[139] "A Pitiful Evasion, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 26, 1895, 6.
[140] "Miss Addams Loses," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 23, 1895, 7

Her efforts were not completely fruitless, however, as they lead to an appointment as garbage inspector.[141] The position put Addams and her associates on rounds following the scavengers by horse and wagon eight hours a day.[142] Once again the goal was the accumulation of factual evidence to spread awareness about conditions in the city and holding government officials to account. A few years later the office of garbage inspector was transferred to the civil service where only men were able to apply.[143] The episode found systematic investigation being used to bring the public's attention to problems that were otherwise invisible, often even to those directly affected, but especially those without physical experience of the problems. The goal was not that dissimilar from a different investigative project Addams describes elsewhere in *Twenty Years at Hull-House* where a men's coat was taken apart piece by piece so that the cost of each bit could be labeled and those costs could be compared to the selling price of the coat as a whole. With such a calculation, a better sense of the profits seized by middlemen could begin to take shape. As Addams writes, "the desire of the manual worker to know the relation of his own labor to the whole is not only legitimate but must form the basis of any intelligent action for his improvement."[144]

This rupture between experience and the knowledge expected for the conduct of human life, which is in principle almost limitless, proves a persistent problem in modern politics. The speed at which experience was revealing itself inadequate to the demands of democratic politics was at the forefront of the thinking of both the pragmatists and

[141] Addams, 188.
[142] "War on Dirty Places," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 3, 1895, 1.
[143] Addams, 190.
[144] Addams, 201.

nineteenth century social scientists alike. Neither group counselled a retreat from experience, however. Instead, both sought means by which to work locally lived experience into something more tenable for the demands of mass democracy. They did this by way of an understanding of social scientific inquiry as a shared practice with the potential to communicate experience.

Concluding Remarks

A conception of the relationship between social scientific inquiry and democratic politics in "pragmatistic" terms can be located in the early work of Habermas, even as that conception disappears for the most part in his more mature writings. The problem of expertise is not restricted to the social sciences – it extends to all forms of expertise – though the problem is especially pressing in the case of the social sciences because only very small numbers have the experience and training in the modes of social scientific inquiry necessary to make these judgments. This poses a problem for democracy. As Dewey reminds his readers, "the effect of [social science] is wider and deeper – I mean it affects more people, affects more directly,"[145] than is the case for the natural sciences. The value of a "pragmatistic" understanding here is the way it locates the connections between social scientific inquiry and democratic politics in a set of practices oriented to experience and the communication of experience. These practices prove ethically demanding, and indeed it is from this that they derive their political force. One particularly powerful way of framing the ethical force of experience is articulated by Max Weber. Writing in 1917, Weber located the value of science in its ability to force

[145] John Dewey, "Comment on Horace Meyer Kallen's 'What Pragmatism Means for the Social Sciences,'" in *The Later* Works of John Dewey, Vol. 11, *1935-1937, Essays, Liberalism and Social Action*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 564.

inquirers to recognize the existence of "inconvenient facts," [146] an experience Weber characterized elsewhere as "allow[ing] realities to impinge on you." [147] These experiences, Weber claimed, would nurture an "ethics of responsibility" and help to balance the all-too-prevalent "ethics of conviction."[148] Scientific inquiry would sober the mind, producing a more sober politics as a result.

It remains to be shown, however, what exactly social scientific inquiry would look as a shared set of practices with ethical consequences. The example described above found Addams and her colleagues collecting information about garbage pickup in Chicago, a problem that had direct sensory effects on the residents in the neighborhood around Hull-House but which was difficult to communicate broadly. As an example of "republican empiricism" Addams's work remains to be shown as an example of a "pragmatistic" engagement between expert and audience in the sense described by Habermas by way of Dewey. This topic will be taken up directly in the next chapter, as it explores what a more authentically democratic engagement between the producers of social science and their audience might look like.

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[146] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 22.
[147] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 77.
[148] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 83.

Chapter Two: Working Knowledge and Circulations of Authority in the Gilded Age

> "He that takes up conclusions on the trust of Authors, and doth not fetch them from the first Items in every Reckoning … loses his labour; and does not know any thing; but onely beleeveth"
>
> -Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter V

The nineteenth century was witness to an "avalanche of numbers," as Ian Hacking has called it. While numbers describing features of the natural and social worlds had been collected and analyzed since antiquity - in censuses and for the purposes of collecting taxes, for instance - in the middle of the nineteenth century the collection, publication and use of numbers grew exponentially,[149] a phenomenon that left almost no realm inquiry untouched, least of all the newly emergent social sciences. These developments also marked out significant new ways in which numbers were put to use in politics. Numbers describing the social world began to be gathered, circulated and deployed for political purposes in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere.[150] Particularly among the reform-minded, there was a faith that the collection, analysis, and circulation of numbers would by themselves cure social and political ills. The "avalanche of numbers" would sweep such problems away.

The place numbers would come to hold in politics, however, proved to be fraught with contradictions. Numbers have an egalitarian quality to them, establishing equalities where none might otherwise exist, but also flattening distinctions between individual

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[149] Ian Hacking, "How Should We Do the History of Statistics?" in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 186.
[150] Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), charts these developments in the case of Egypt, demonstrating a close relationship between the rise of counting and the history of colonialism.

persons and cases. Charles Dickens, for instance, argued that statistical averages obscure the human dignity of individual cases and so countenance their neglect, and nowhere is this clearer than with the poor.[151] In *The Human Condition* Hannah Arendt similarly argued that statistics "signifies nothing less than the willful obliteration of their subject matter," but for Arendt they miss "rare deeds" and instead represent an obsession with "everyday life."[152] The worry behind both critiques is that numbers obscure the significant in politics, and do so with dangerous consequences.

Numbers play role in contemporary life, however, that is difficult to imagine eliminating. They make it possible to communicate large amounts of information quickly and efficiently, but especially after the rise of probabilistic analysis, making sense or use of numbers has come to require specialized training. Numbers were both a motive force for and the consequence of bureaucracy, a political form Max Weber defined as "domination through knowledge."[153] With it, political power came to move alongside the circulation of papers through the working spaces of the official's *bureau*. Even when formally public - and one of the defining characteristics of the "avalanche of numbers" was the remarkable publicity with which numbers circulated - these were spaces that were effectively closed to those without the specialized training now on offer at research universities. Complaints from Progressives such as Joseph Lee at the beginning of the twentieth century that politics in the United States had become closed off to all but

[151] I.B. Cohen, *The Triumph of Numbers* (New York: Norton, 2005), 148.
[152] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 42.
[153] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 1, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 225.

experts, and that "the expert has sinned … deeply against democracy,"[154] come then as little surprise.

Sketched so, the loss of democratic possibilities becomes connected to the specialization of knowledge, with Hacking's "avalanche of numbers" a significant participant in these processes as they render knowledge at once too unwieldy and too fragmented to inform democratic judgment. With it, the circulation - indeed the overcirculation - of knowledge becomes a problem, and in spite of the publicity of the processes by which it circulates between individuals and across segments of society remain closely tied to relationships of authority. Cast in these terms, the terms on which the circulation of knowledge - to say nothing of quantitative knowledge - could operate as more democratic practices and in service of more democratic politics become difficult to make out.

At moments like these where a historical narrative and the consequences of that narrative for political theory have become overdetermined, a reexamination of the history in question often proves useful. Such historical work almost inevitably reveals a set of phenomenon more complicated and fluid than provided by the historical narrative, and it is this fluidity that hints at ways by which things can be arranged differently for us. In the United States, numbers describing features of the social world began entering public circulation in earnest in the Gilded Age, a moment in history when, scarred by the trauma of Civil War, Americans sought purpose in new political possibilities.

Revisiting the circulation of numbers in the exchanges fostered by the American Social Science Association reveals numbers operating in unexpected ways, with those

[154] Joseph Lee, "Democracy and the Expert," *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1908, 613.

staking claim to expertise simultaneously relinquishing significant interpretive authority over the meaning of the information they were publishing. The ambiguity of these moments ends up troubling both an interpretation following Foucault whereby knowledge operates as power, and an interpretation following Habermas whereby the publicity of knowledge sustains a discursive public sphere. Building instead on the interpretation of the diagrams in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* offered by John Bender and Michael Marrinan in *The Culture of Diagram* (2010), this chapter argues for an understanding of the publicity of numerical data in tables in terms of their capacity to operate as "working objects," that is, as objects of knowledge that invite their readers to work and rework them.[155] This novel understanding of the way that knowledge can circulate is here called "working knowledge". Characterized by arithmetic more than probabilistic statistics, by a concern for the particular as opposed to the general, and by objects of inquiry that were undetermined, it offers resources for thinking about how knowledge can inform democratic judgment, and do so even after the "avalanche of numbers."

Excursus: Shipping Records and Charlatans

Two episodes from American history separated by nearly two centuries will serve to introduce this phenomenon, as well as offering signposts for the historical changes that must be grappled with in order to understand the place of "working knowledge" in democratic politics. In the early eighteenth century occasions appear where numbers circulated publicly in ways that demanded sophistication and interpretive activity on the part of their audiences, while around the turn of the twentieth century democratic appeals

[155] John Bender and Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 168.

appear to be displaced the rise of expertise, though not necessarily the "avalanche of numbers."

All modern newspapers have death notices, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth century such notices were an important public concern given widespread anxiety about outbreaks of plague and other communicable diseases. Readers of newspapers wanted to be alerted to sudden spikes in the numbers of deaths, so as to decide if it was safe to remain in town or whether they should flee elsewhere.[156] The December 29, 1730 edition of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, published by a young Benjamin Franklin, was one such instance. It published a small table of the number "Buried in the several Burying Grounds of this city" for the year, broken down by religious denomination or "strangers", a category further divided into "whites" and "blacks".[157] In the edition that followed, Franklin counseled his readers that "by comparing which with the Number of Burials in Boston, Berlin, Colln, Amsterdam and London … a pretty near Judgment may be made of the different Proportions of People in each City."[158] Two things are immediately striking about this claim. First, Franklin assumes that his readers will do the legwork necessary to arrive at the kind of judgment he imagined, as no such data appear in either the December 29 or January 5 editions of the *Gazette*. Such data appear in the May 7, 1730 edition, but Franklin does nothing to lead his readers in that direction. Second, Franklin remained completely silent as to the precise judgment he expected his readers to

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[156] Cohen, 51.
[157] Benjamin Franklin, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 29, 1730, 2. This paragraph and the next follows and expands on the reading of I.B. Cohen, *The Triumph of Numbers* (New York: Norton, 2005), 85; and J.A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin: Journalist, 1706-1730*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 448-9.
[158] Franklin, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January, 5, 1731, 1.

make. If Franklin thought such data would reveal London to be larger than Boston, for instance, he wasn't letting on.

This orientation to the circulation of knowledge repeats itself in the very same January 5 issue of the *Gazette*, where Franklin published an extensive list of the arrivals and departures for Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Amboy, Rhode Island, Salem and New Hampshire.[159] The tables contain figures for the number of ships arriving from and departing for various destinations, making it possible to see that Boston was conducting much more business with London than either New York or Philadelphia, for example. Here Franklin publishes a short excerpt from Joshua Gee's *Trade and Navigation of Great Britain Considered*, which explains that trade between Pennsylvania and England had "made wonderful Improvements," and that the colony had "beat out a very great Trade for their Corn and Provisions to the Spanish West-Indies."[160] Little other interpretive work is done on the tables, but Franklin assures that "the ingenious Reader may make some judgment of the different Share each Colony possesses of the several Branches of Trade."[161] A man fascinated by numbers, Franklin was content in these important cases to simply publish undigested figures that have come across his desk, and with little to no interpretation. His assumption is that his readers would draw their own conclusions from his figures. All this reveals a striking orientation to numbers, as we find them circulating with very little interpretative authority being claimed by those publishing them. The assumption is that the audience will do their own work upon these numbers, drawing their own conclusions as to their significance.

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[159] Benjamin Franklin, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January, 5, 1731, 1.
[160] Joshua Gee, "Extract," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January, 5, 1731, 2.
[161] Franklin, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January, 5, 1731, 1.

By 1908 a remarkably different orientation to knowledge was possible, but from a perspective equally committed to the cultivation of democratic judgment. In an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* titled "Democracy and the Expert," Joseph Lee, founder of the Massachusetts Civic League, declares an "old standing quarrel between democracy and the expert."[162] Representative of so many of the paradoxes of the reform movements of that era, Lee combined a background of privilege with a strong egalitarian streak. In his writings he was convinced of the worth of commoners, yet Lee was a leading voice against the immigration of those of "weaker and less desirable"[163] stock from Southern and Eastern Europe as a founding member of the Immigration Restriction League. For all these tensions and complications, Lee's article deserves notice for the way that he frames the problems that were emerging surrounding the circulation of knowledge.

The problem as Lee saw it was that the masses do not trust experts, but Lee puts the blame for this at the foot of the experts, not the masses. The reason the masses do not trust experts is the frequent appeal of experts to esoteric knowledge when pressed to explain themselves to outsiders.[164] When criticized for appalling safety records and monopolistic behaviors, Lee caricatures the response of the railroads: " 'Seek not to penetrate mysteries too high for you.' "[165] While such claims may have once enjoyed a "childlike faith," [166 they] do no more. That is, the world has changed such that the kinds of claims to esoteric knowledge being made were no longer credible, and had become analogous to the knowledge claims of archaic religious institutions.

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[162] Lee, 612.
[163] Lee, *Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy*, (New York: MacMillan, 1902), 9.
[164] Lee, 613.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Lee, 614.

In making this analogy, Lee marks out the depth to which the authority of knowledge derives from institutions, be they cultural institutions such as language, or physical institutions such as universities or state agencies. These institutions gather, produce, and control the distribution of knowledge, while guaranteeing its veracity. Lee writes out of a concern that the authority of these institutions has weakened, and that claims to knowledge have lost their force on us. Thus the contemporary doctor now appears "something of the Ghost in *Hamlet*," Lee writes, and there "linger about him something of the atmosphere of magic, of necromancy, a flavor of incantation."[167] Magical totems such as "lamen, sigil, talisman, spell, crystal, pentacle, magic mirror, and geomantic figure," [168] used to vouch for the authority of practitioners who made use of them, but they have long since lost their hold. Lee thinks the authority of other kinds of experts has likewise lost its hold.

This is partly a function of the division of labor, the advance of which now discourages, Lee reports, mothers from taking their children's temperature with a thermometer, which Lee sarcastically reports is viewed as "too difficult a task for her mere maternal mind to cope with," even as it trusts her to make the judgment to take her child to a doctor in the first place.[169] This division of labor, with some claiming a monopoly on the use of a knowledge-producing technique and denying access to others, finds large segments of society with no way to engage claims to expertise. When institutions have lost their hold over society, claims to knowledge are subjected to more

[167] Lee, 616.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.

searching inquiries before they are accepted, not unlike the ghost in *Hamlet*, to extend Lee's metaphor.

But in the rubble of these discredited institutions, the political legitimacy of appeals to common sense and common experience remained intact. Like many to this day, Lee lamented the ease with which the American public was deceived by the appeals of "quacks" and "charlatans."[170] Their popularity derived from the ways in which they affirmed "the people's right to judge," and even appeared to "rely upon it,"[171] however fraudulently. The kind of appeals to lay judgment found in Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette* had lost none of their political force, they were simply being put to different ends.

These two episodes merit attention at the outset for the stark contrast in the circulation of knowledge that they illustrate at two points in history separated by a set of radical changes in the way that knowledge was created and deployed. In the late nineteenth century, universities across Europe and America began deemphasizing the humanist curriculum and reorganized themselves around academic disciplines tasked with the production of new knowledge. No longer was it the university's primary duty to transmit genteel manners to an elite student body. Students were to be provided instead with a primarily technical training, which was less designed to produce future leaders and more to produce future bureaucrats. The nineteenth century thus saw both a leveling of access to educational institutions and the fragmentation of the knowledge produced by those institutions, which proves to be more problematic for democracy because it cannot

[170] Lee, 612.
[171] Lee, 619.

be solved merely by expanding access. With the fragmentation of knowledge, even the most highly educated rely on the expertise of others. The "avalanche of numbers" appears to pose less a threat because now broken down into smaller pieces and worked on by specialized communities of experts, but the terms on which the work of those communities could inform democratic judgment remain obscure.

Theorizing the Circulation of Knowledge

As discussed in the previous chapter, problems that the fragmentation poses to democracy have long occupied political theorists. Friedrich Hayek called the fragmentation of knowledge "the central theoretical problem of all social science."[172] For liberals like Hayek, the task is to shore up the boundaries of specialization that produce useful localized knowledge and then find a mechanism by which such knowledge can be exchanged as efficiently as possible. Whereas Habermas had suggested the law and the popular press as mediums of exchange, as discussed in the last chapter, Hayek argues that that the price system provides an efficient and powerful language for communicating complicated information among disparate individuals.[173] Individuals in such a system need not know the reason why the supply and demand of tin, for example, has changed, they only need to know that it has and adjust their behavior accordingly.[174] Prices for Hayek provide a highly efficient language for communicating in a society where knowledge is highly fragmented. More broadly, the economic metaphor undergirds a conception of knowledge as the product of experience or training that is then exchanged

[172] F. A. Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society," *American Economic Review* Vol. 35, No. 4 (1945): 528.
[173] Hayek, 526.
[174] Ibid.

through what are primarily economic transactions. This view of expertise undergirds work in the social sciences following the foundational work of Ronald Coase[175] where information is a commodity and institutions are ways of managing the transaction costs associated with its circulation. The problem with these formulations, as was the case for Habermas, is that they presuppose the processes by which knowledge works on us, holds sway over our thinking, makes claims on our thoughts and actions. As Lee puts it, "even supernatural guidance presupposes a capacity in the believer for recognizing a miracle when he sees one."[176] As explained in the previous chapter, the capacity to recognize knowledge as such emerges out of experience and practice.

We should be careful, however, before accepting such practices uncritically. Indeed a common critique of pragmatism and its orientation to inquiry is that it ends up producing a technocratic politics, or what Colin Koopman calls its "Promethean" instincts.[177] The precise danger of a technocratic orientation to knowledge is given fullest articulation in the work of Michel Foucault. The concern of Foucault in his most influential works is with the development of forms of power in the modern period whereby political power comes to operate primarily not through physical force and extravagant displays of punishment, but in techniques of surveillance and discipline that have the effect of making everyone his or her own personal jailer. Through the accumulation of knowledge about individual persons, the gaze comes to be internalized and behavior normalized.

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[175] Coase, "The Nature of the Firm," *Economica*, 4, no. 16 (1937).
[176] Lee, 615.
[177] Colin Koopman, *Pragmatism as Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 10.

Against a commodified understanding of knowledge, Foucault seeks an understanding of its circulation in "capillary" terms.[178] Foucault's point here is complex, and so bears some elaboration. Foucault is first concerned with the immediate, localized applications of knowledge. While one of his primary concerns remains the centralization and institutionalization of knowledge in scientific discourses, his focus is on the direct applications of that knowledge on individual subjects. For Foucault this is not simply a matter of subjects having knowledge acted on them by way of surveillance. Rather, subjects are active participants in this "circulation" of knowledge and power: "individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application."[179] Individuals are thus complicit in their deployments of and contributions to discourses. Furthermore, developments of knowledge at the local knowledge can participate in these discourses without any unifying logic to the project as a whole. Foucault makes clear that there does not have to be a unifying logic to the development of knowledge for it to take on this capillary shape.[180]

The place of the social sciences in this quick sketch of Foucault's understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power is more complicated than it might otherwise seem. Professions with close ties to the social sciences such as psychiatry, criminology, and medicine, each get singled out for detailed criticism by Foucault for the ways in which they enact disciplinary power. In places Foucault suggests that the social sciences are parasitic upon these disciplinary techniques. "Countless people have sought

[178] Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 96.
[179] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 98.
[180] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 99.

the origins of sociology in Montesquieu or Comte," but Foucault declares that "sociological knowledge is formed rather in practices like those of the doctors."[181] Social science exists then merely as an apparatus of the state or at the very least is complicit in its techniques of surveillance and control.

Wholesale condemnation of the social sciences, however, is not possible on these terms alone. Foucault is quite insistent that the kind of power that occupies his research operates at the individual level. Power works at the level of the body, controlling habits of movement and thought. Surveillance is conducted at the level of the individual subject for control and normalization. Such surveillance certainly took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere, and Foucault provides myriad examples in support of his narrative. But a distinction needs to be drawn between surveillance and statistics, and the difference is related to anonymity. To use Foucault's terminology, the difference to be drawn is between the body and populations.

In "The Birth of Social Medicine" Foucault discusses the practices and techniques that today fall under the rubric of "public health" and developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to improve the health of populations in urban areas across Europe. Earlier practices operated at the level of individuals, with monitors assigned during plagues to go from house to house to make sure that no one moved about without permission.[182] Later, practices shifted to larger scales, with more attention paid to the management of problematic locations such as graveyards, and circulations and

[181] Foucault, "The Eye of Power," *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 151
[182] Foucault, "The Birth of Social Medicine," *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Volume 3: Power*, ed, James D. Faubion. (New York: New Press, 2000), 145.

distributions of water and air.[183] The critical difference here is not that the older practices engaged in the management of people and the newer practices the management of things - but the anonymity of the management. No longer are individuals sought out for normalization, as it proves more efficient to operate at the level of populations. This bears importantly on the question of the complicity of the social sciences in the mechanisms of surveillance and discipline, and it means that distinctions need to be drawn between the surveillance that takes place in the panopticon and the surveillance that takes place in the social survey. The point of surveillance for Foucault is to amass a body of knowledge about individual bodies - individual persons - for the purposes of bringing them into line with norms. Statistics more often has the character of anonymity, and is concerned with large masses of bodies, their conditions, their habits, and so forth.

This does not let statistics and the social sciences off the hook for Foucault. In his lectures on governmentality Foucault highlights the shift underway toward the study of populations. The critical shift occurs as "statistics had previously worked within the administrative frame… it now gradually reveals that population has its own regularities, its own rate of deaths and diseases, its cycles of scarcity, etc."[184] This kind of knowledge, though bearing less directly on bodies than disciplinary knowledge, nonetheless serves to enhance governmentality. This kinder and gentler form of administration is marked by a desire to govern in a way that will not provoke undesired responses from the populations being governed, and this requires knowledge of society and how it works. The purpose of statistics and indeed all of the social sciences in this scheme is to determine those laws of

[183] Foucault, "The Birth of Social Medicine," 146-8.
[184] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 99.

human nature that it would be unwise for governments to push against, where surveillance and discipline would prove too heavy-handed.[185] The purpose of engaging in the scientific study of society is to determine the natural laws by which it operates, and so determine the proper limits of governmental power. For Foucault there exists "particular, local, regional knowledge," but it is a "differential knowledge incapable of unanimity,"[186] which is to say incapable of making more general claims at the level of democratic politics.

The chapter runs now to a set of historical phenomenon that do not fit fully into either theorization of politics, as we find in the history of the deployment of numbers in the social sciences phenomena that do not easily fit into a narratives about the easy transaction of knowledge or into a narrative about the development of governmentality.

The Circulation of Knowledge in the *Journal of Social Science*

Members of the American Social Science Association were by and large members of the upper class. That is to say there were usually men (there were a small but significant group of members who were women) of privilege, even if they were not always personally wealthy. Participants in the ASSA included Boston Brahmins such as A. Lawrence Lowell, and especially in the early days of the ASSA, leading Bostonians figured prominently in the organization. University professors were among the most active participants in the ASSA. They were joined by those in the legal profession and others of high social standing with a general concern for "social reform," a term on the lips of many in the Gilded Age. Though America thought itself an egalitarian society, it is

[185] Matthew G. Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 24
[186] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 82.

clear that social prestige played a significant role in the politics of the era. In 1869 a group of ASSA members prided itself on a letter "signed by a few of our best citizens"[187] that it presented to the Commissioner of the Port of New York, pleading with him to install civil service reforms, an act that would eventually lead to the Civil Service Reform Act a decade later, with the ASSA taking credit for passage. Just a year earlier as efforts were underway in Chicago to create the Western Social Science Association, which was envisioned as an equal partner for the national body, circulars were distributed with list of names of "gentlemen of well-known eminence" such as Robert Ingersoll and Ralph Waldo Emerson who had expressed a "co-operative spirit," if not a full endorsement.[188] In the ASSA itself, efforts continued for some time to attract the endorsements of eminent public figures, such as in 1877 when it sought the endorsement of the prominent New York philanthropist Theodore Roosevelt, Sr.[189]

Those in the ASSA prided themselves on the nobility of their character, but they also recognized that high birth and upstanding character on their own were becoming increasingly problematic standards of political authority in a society that was becoming increasingly democratic and in which old patterns of thought and social organization were breaking down. A warning offered by E.L. Godkin around the time of the Civil Service Reform is most telling. He warned that the proposed letter could do more harm than good to the young and fragile organization. "We ought to make ourselves a little better known I think by meetings and publications, before opening our batteries," he

[187] J.M. Barnard to E.L. Godkin, April 5, 1869, Folder 28.
[188] "A Western Social Science Association," *American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated* 48, no 5 (November 1868): 187.
[189] Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. to F.B. Sanborn, November 28, 1877, Folder 141.

wrote.[190] The obvious concern was that claims to expertise or propriety by members of the ASSA would not be enough to gain them political purchase with legislators or the general public.

The alternative was bureaucratic, rationalized, and specialized. Members of the ASSA recognized at a very early point that specialized knowledge was going to figure importantly in the coming politics. As Louis Agassiz put it, "We ought forever to discard rambling addresses and discourses on topics involving human nature in its totality. The Academy of Sciences, in Paris, assumed its commanding authority from the day they excluded discussions upon the system of the Universe."[191] As a vocal opponent of Darwinism, Agassiz was himself a symbol of a declining idealist model of scholarly inquiry, but his quarrel with Darwin was waged on the merits of the evidence, and even as he attracted large crowds to his public lectures, he understood the importance of specialization and original research.

The ASSA was conceptualized first and foremost then as an institution for gathering disparate knowledge into an organized whole, calling a national social science public into being. The kind of organization seen necessary was conceived in terms of not just knowledge but also experience. Henry Villard in discussing the International Association for the Progress of Social Science, which like the ASSA was inspired by the British association, describes that body as "intended to be a channel of exchange of thought and experience."[192] Dozens of articles appeared in the pages of the *Journal of Social Science* reports on practices and novel political and social experiments. Titles

[190] E.L. Godkin to Darand, April 13, 1869, Folder 28.
[191] Louis Aggasiz, "The Work of the American Association," *Journal of Social Science* 7 (1874): 375.
[192] Henry Villard, "Historical Sketch of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 1 (1869): 9.

were, "Mutual Benefit Societies in Connecticut" and "The Care of Deaf-Mutes in Denmark," and "Outline of a Plan for an Epileptic Colony." Among the leading topics was experimentation with profit-sharing and cooperatives in banking and industry. In the forty years that the *Journal of Social Science* was published, it featured no less than a dozen articles on the topic of cooperatives, not including articles on organized labor. Benjamin Peirce provided the thinking behind this kind of experimentation: "whoever may know of a successful social experiment would do well to study the principle which gave the success … and wherever there may be an unsuccessful experiment, let the causes of failure be investigated."[193]

Mere enlightenment of government was insufficient in a country with so a democratic self-understanding. As Peirce put it, legislators are "too prone to regard themselves, not as the judges of right and the universal good, but as hired advocates of the cause intrusted to them by their constituents. It is then, the constituents to whom the argument must be addressed."[194] The publicity of the ASSA was to go beyond the dialogue promoted by the journal. No less a publicist than Horace Greeley suggested the ASSA engage in the "diffusing and popularizing [of] important truth," by way of "the careful preparation and cheap publication of a series of larger tracts, embodying all that is known beyond dispute in the domain of Natural, Intellectual, and Moral Science," that would then be distributed by mail and branch chapters.[195] Such tracts would be authored

[193] Benjamin Peirce, "The National Importance of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 12, (1880): xiii.
[194] Benjamin Peirce, "The National Importance of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 12, (1880): xvii.
[195] Horace Greeley, "A Method of Diffusing Important Knowledge," *Journal of Social Science* 1, (1869): 88, 90.

by "the most competent and best qualified person," speak with the corporate voice of the ASSA by first being vetted by committee, covering practical concerns such as ventilation, sexual morality, and food safety. The degree to which the ASSA alone achieved this kind of public conversation through the publication of *The Journal of Social Science* is debatable, if for no other reason than it did not reach a broad popular audience. There was something significant, however, in the mode in which technical information was frequently presented in *The Journal of Social Science*.

Reading the *Journal of Social Science*

Opening the pages of the *Journal of Social Science*, one is immediately impressed at the appearance of tables and data, culled from a variety of sources, both official and unofficial. The first volume alone contains tables of the costs of raising a head of cattle (provided by a "Mr. McCoy, the proprietor of a great cattle depot in Kansas," and "confirmed by several very intelligent drovers"[196]); the number and finances of cooperative banks in Germany ("known to the Central Bureau"[197]); the number of freed serfs in Russia and the amount of money lent to them by the government to purchase land (from "officially published" data[198]); the average monthly wages of male and female teachers in New England states (from the report of Warren Johnson, Superintendant of the Common Schools of Maine[199]); and a comparison of birth, marriage, and death rates in six European countries (from a paper read by William Farr at the sixth session of the

[196] John Stanton Gould, "The Texas Cattle Disease," *Journal of Social Science* 1, (1869): 58.
[197] Villard, "People's Banks of Germany," *Journal of Social Science* 1, (1869): 130.
[198] Nicholas Tourgueneff, "Economic Results of the Emancipation of Serfs in Russia," *Journal of Social Science* 1, (1869): 143.
[199] "Notices of Publications," *Journal of Social Science* 1, (1869): 183.

International Statistical Congress[200]). Data like these have been read as paving the way toward the professionalization of the social sciences and the removal of the public from social scientific discourse. I want to open up space for just the opposite interpretation, that such presentations were examples of a highly democratic mode of engagement.

A paper titled "Homes for the People in Washington" from 1881 serves as an example. The author John Hitz includes in his paper a table comparing the "White" and "Colored" populations of Washington and Georgetown alongside the number of homes that were brick, framed, and less than $100 in value [Figure 1]. Instead of stating the conclusions to be drawn from such a statistical comparison, Hitz demurred: "the following statistics ... will enable all interested in the subject to draw their own conclusions."[201] The operations by which such conclusions would have been drawn would have involved nothing more than simple arithmetic. Seeing that there were 99,128 whites and 48,179 blacks in Washington, the reader could, for example, arrive at the conclusion that roughly a third of the city's population was black, a fact that goes completely unremarked upon in the text. Indeed, Hitz performs no interpretive work at all on the differences between the white and black populations of Washington, occupying himself instead with the type of housing in the city and the surrounding countryside. That such a conclusion could nonetheless be drawn out of the figures he supplied his readers goes far to demonstrating that invitation to his readers to "draw their own conclusions" was more than mere rhetoric. Hitz was no swindler attempting to impress his audience by inviting them to test the invented quality of his wares. Like Franklin 150 years earlier, he

[200] "Notices of Publications," 188.
[201] John Hitz, "Homes for the People in Washington," *The Journal of Social Science* 15, (February 1882): 136.

was inviting the readers to participate in the act of judgment. Readers were expected to puzzle over data for themselves and draw their own judgments as to what they said, all with relatively little or no prior training.

What we have then in the tables published in the pages of the *Journal of Social Science* is an overabundance of information, and this overabundance is difficult to square with an interpretation of the tables as exercises sovereignty-claiming or in the operation of power, following Foucault. What we find in the tables in the *Journal of Social Science* is the appearance of abundant numerical data that passes by without any interpretation offered. In the initial volumes, two further articles stand out in their performance of this kind of interaction between author and audience.

The topic of cooperative banks (what we would call credit unions today) appeared frequently in the pages of the *Journal of Social* Science. Pioneered in Germany in the decades prior, interest was growing in the United States in cooperative banks that would that would give the laboring classes access to credit where traditional banks and lenders either refused to offer loans or placed onerous conditions on loans. Articles on the progress of these experimental banks appeared in the very first issue of the *Journal of Social Science* and continued for many years after, often in the form of annual updates. Information about the cooperative banks was made available through the publications of the self-governing association that organized and promoted their activities across Germany, and was established by the man who innovated them Franz Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch. An article based on these publications appears by Henry Villard, the first editor of the *Journal of Social Science*, and it contains three tables: two in the body of the

article and one that serves as an appendix. The first table simply charts the number of cooperative banks yearly between 1859 and 1867, from 163 banks in the first year to 1304 in the last. The function performed here on the audience is simple enough: to impress upon the reader that the phenomenon of cooperative banks is significant, growing, and worthy of attention.

To demonstrate that the cooperative banks are worthy of emulation, Villard recounts the financial statistics published by Schulze-Delitzsch's organization, which represents the figures from roughly half of the cooperative banks that shared information with Schulze-Delitzsch. In the next table, the years again run from 1859 to 1867, but now there appear columns not only for the number of cooperative banks, but also their number of members, their active and reserve capital, deposits received, loans contracted (from other banks), and loans made to members [Figure 2]. Immediately the rhetorical function of the table is to impress with the size of the figures contained within: by 1867, cooperative banks were lending over 100 million German thalers to their membership a year. The table offers up a space for more sophisticated analysis as well. Villard follows the table with four interpretive claims: that membership had increased faster than the number of banks, that the capital reserves of each bank had increased as well, that outside loans made up a smaller percentage of capital reserves over time, and that the average size of the loan made to members increased over time.[202] As each of these claims requires mathematical operations with the data presented in the table, none of them is immediately apparent to the audience without the interpretive aid provided by Villard. These four claims work across all six columns of data, though additional claims might be constructed

[202] Villard, "People's Banks of Germany," 131.

with data provided, and indeed with the presentation of 54 different figures, the table invites this kind of independent analysis on the part of the audience. The table invites the reader's eyes to scan across the data, jumping from figure to figure in comparison.

This is most apparent in the table that serves as the appendix to the article [Figure 3], where the statistics for twenty cooperative banks in "the leading cities of Germany" are listed.[203] For these twenty banks the table lists (where available) number of members, capital, deposits, outside loans, amount of business, number of loans to members, range of loans to members, interest rates, dividends, and losses. Many of these figures find discussion in Villard's article, but others pass in silence, such as the number of loans given. The argument I want to make here is that this kind of performance of data serves as an invitation to the audience to offer their own interpretations.

In *The Culture of Diagram*, Bender and Marrinan offer an interpretation of the diagrams that appeared in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* that puts emphasis on the engagement they demanded of the audience. Among the characteristics of these diagrams was an arrangement of information in graphical format where there are multiple non-obvious connections between the units displayed. Arrayed such, Bender and Marrinan argue that the diagrams draw the eye to pull together the information, and the author behind the diagram lacks full control over this engagement. The diagrams in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* contain a surplus of information and so force the eye into an engagement to make sense of a dizzying array of information.

The tables that appear in the *Journal of Social Science* contain a similar surplus of information, where the reader is invited, whether intentionally or not, to make her own

[203] Villard, "People's Banks of Germany," 134.

sense of the data. One of the most characteristic features of the tables of this time period is their aspiration for comprehensiveness, for descriptions not of illuminating cases, not of the part that illuminates the whole, but for descriptions of everything of relevance to the matter at hand. There is thus an almost audible disappointment at the fact that only half of the cooperative banks in Germany provided information to Schulze-Delitzsch's organization, which has "so far been unable to make complete" its statistical reports.[204] The implicit assumption here is that were complete reports available, their publication would facilitate further revelation. But by what means would these revelations take place? Data can be arranged and interpreted in innumerable ways, so any interpretations offered would by necessity remain incomplete, leaving future work to be done by the audience. In this way, these tables can be read much in the way that Bender and Marrinan read diagrams as "working objects."[205] By this they mean that diagrams operate as objects that invite their audiences into an engagement of work, an engagement of active interpretation. I am here calling this idea "working knowledge" to denote knowledge where the publication does not prefigure the interpretation. This kind of knowledge finds circulation working in an interesting way, however, because it is precisely their lack of interpretative stance that gives the tables their power, and precisely their lack of claims that makes their claim on the reader.

This was an approach to knowledge and its circulation born of a specific set of historical circumstances. After the Civil War, American society was changing dramatically under the forces of modernization. Cities were filled with new and different

[204] Villard, "People's Banks of Germany," 130.
[205] Bender and Marrinan, 168.

kinds of people, the fates of communities became connected in ways that would have been hard to fathom a few decade earlier, and existing values seemed to offer little to help make sense of any of it. Robert Weibe thus attributes the turn to numbers during the middle of the nineteenth century as a product of a democratizing culture. In a society where hierarchies and distinction mattered less and less, quantity mattered more than quality. As Weiebe writes, "for lack of anything that made better sense of their world, people everywhere weighed, counted, and measured it."[206]

Far from betraying a disregard for the relevance of individual experience, the tables produced in this period are remarkable for their particularity. While there are many tables that recount general information such as mortality rates and population figures, there are many more that describe individual cases, individual slices of a neighborhood or hospital, and do so in exhaustive and exquisite detail. One such table appears in a paper titled, "Vital Registration - Public Uses of Vital Statistics." The title alone suggests a complication: vital information is registered by official authorities, but is then put to use in a way that is public. Elisha Harris, the author of the piece and secretary of the New York Board of Health, seems to intend the former meaning, praising the state's capacity to improve sanitation and combat disease, but in publishing the information he additionally performs the latter meaning. As such, it stands as evidence of the kind of complication now called "working knowledge" that I am trying to tease out of these circulations. Read one way, the kind of data that occupies Harris's attention is perfectly illustrative of the development of the state's capacity for surveillance and control, and the enthusiasms that attended those developments. In recounting the prevalence of death and

[206] Robert Weibe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 43.

disease in the tenements of New York, Harris describes the "systematic inspection of tenement buildings"[207] and speaks unironically of the "arithmetic of human life."[208]

Harris is writing at a moment in American history when the gathering of this kind of data had yet to achieve full legitimacy, and so as such he cannot depend on the trust of his readers. Harris provides a table comparing mortality rates in tenements with those of public institutions and private dwellings, gathered by the "special Census of Tenement Houses by the Board of Health."[209] Before he can perform this comparison, he first details the specific conditions at tenement houses on five New York streets [Figure 4]. What makes this graph so unusual is the extraordinary detail it goes into, providing numbers of deaths at specific addresses on these streets, along with a novel method of charting the changes in deaths between 1872 and 1873 . There is thus a specificity to the tabulation of data one would find neither in contemporary journals of social science nor in popular sources of social inquiry. In providing this level of detail for specific places, Harris offers up potential means by which to be verify his claims, signaling his desire to declare his information trustworthy, but it also signals a concern for the relevance of experience. The deaths on those five streets in New York City mattered in and of themselves to Harris, not just because they stood in for something else. Data on deaths in the tenement house were collected because communicating the experience they provided, even as the deaths of human beings were flattened into tallies in the columns of tables, performed important political work.

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[207] Elisha Harris, "Vital Registration - Public Uses of Vital Statistics," *Journal of Social Science* 7, (1874): 225.
[208] Harris, 222.
[209] Harris, 226.

Clues to this alternative understanding appear in Harris's publication of the questionnaires used to gather the data that appear in his tables. The publication of the questionnaire serves at least two purposes. First, it lays bare the methods that were used to collect the numbers Harris uses. Second, as with the detailed information on deaths at specific addresses, the performance of this kind of detail puts on display a set of practices that might be emulated elsewhere and to different ends. Harris's goal is to spread and perfect the methods of gathering data to inform sanitation practices, as his concern is that many states lack public boards of health, and the *Journal of Social Science* served as a forum in which to disseminate these practices and their value. Indeed, *Journal of Social Science* is in this case merely serving as a forum in which to recount the activities of a national conference of board of health, which was the primary forum for this kind of exchange, an exchange based on the sharing of experiences and experiments. This, an article suggesting the utility of organizing banks through the school system ends rhetorically, "The experiment is worth trying. Why not put it at once into practice?"[210] This is something very different from the accumulation of data towards uncovering laws of nature through the study of correlations. It is about the sharing of experiences, and ones not realistically accessible by any other means.

Importantly, the significance and interpretation of these kinds experiences was left open to the journal's readers. One of the most interesting studies appearing in the pages of the *Journal of Social Science* was one concerning a questionnaire for mothers about the physical and mental development of their babies. The questionnaire designed by the ASSA's Department of Education under the direction of Emily Talbott contains

[210] John P. Townsend, "Savings Banks," *Journal of Social Science* 9 (1878): 66.

some twenty or so questions, ranging from the occupation of the child's father, to "at what age did the baby exhibit consciousness?"[211] The question is remarkably open ended, leaving it for the mother (who is explicitly named at the target of the survey) to interpret the meaning of consciousness. Talbott was surrendering to the participants in her study interpretive authority over the meaning of the terms she was studying.

One way of understanding all this is provided by Foucault in the connections he drew between the development of social scientific practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to the exercise and expansion of state power in that same period. It matters little in Foucault's interpretation that significant collection of information was conducted outside of the official machinery of the state. The point for Foucault is that the act of counting, sorting into tables, and classifying things this way and not that, all are acts of sovereignty-claiming. The power to define something in this way and not that way is an intrinsically political power. The construction of tables of numerical data is thus for Foucault a kind of political ordering of the world, legislating that things be viewed in the way ordered by the table. But what we find in the *Journal of Social Science* is numerous authors surrendering interpretive authority over their numbers and categories. While the information published in these tables comes certified in some way or another, the interpretation of it remains open and relatively fluid, and so is less under the control of the person or institution that publishes it.

This kind of interaction operates as a kind of dialogue, but with the overabundance of information in a publication like the *Journal of Social Science* we find a kind of interaction that is hard to fashion as dialogue. Many of the figures contained in

[211] "Appendix," *Journal of Social Science* 13 (1881): 190.

these tables barely attain the status of truth claims, as they go unnoticed and without discussion in the articles in which they appear. It is thus an exchange over which the publisher has less control than we might expect. It is precisely by sharing this kind of interpretive authority, however, that this circulation was understood to muster political power. The "working knowledge" published in the *Journal of Social Science* was expected to work in politics because that work was not being done exclusively by the authors of social scientific studies. We find thus a model of engagement with and circulation of knowledge whereby political authority is structured in a way with dramatically different consequences for democratic politics.

This "working knowledge" is differently characterized from the kind of social scientific knowledge more commonly circulated today in a number of ways. First, it is presented largely in the mathematics of arithmetic as opposed to probabilistic statistics. Numbers often appear undigested, and there is no presumption that their interpretation requires prior knowledge of advanced mathematics. The price paid for in sophistication is won back in accessibility. Second, it is often concerned with the particular, as opposed to the general. Individual cases matter in and of themselves and have intuitive appeal for that reason, but at the same time by being presented numerically a set of political claims are being worked up at a broader level than can be the case with prose. With numbers those with interest in social scientific questions were searching for a language for making claims that would have both general relevance and democratic purchase. Far from devaluing experience, numbers were designed to communicate it. Third, the cases under consideration are characterized by a fluidity of meaning and significance. Readers are left

to draw their own conclusions, and in the case of Talbott's survey, this fluidity extended to survey participants. In the "working knowledge" produced in the pages of the *Journal of Social Science* in the period immediately after the American Civil War, attempts were made to develop a mode of knowledge circulation that had relevance in a political world that was becoming more complex by the day under the forces of modernization.

Concluding Remarks

Following Arendt, political theorists often view the rise of numbers describing features of the social world with tremendous suspicion. Irrelevant at best and totalitarian at worst, quantitative understandings of the world seldom figure in the responses political theorists offer to political problems. However useful Arendt's polemical response to numbers is at awakening us to the dangers of quantification, it is here to stay, and so the question to ask is whether numbers necessarily and unavoidably dehumanize and depoliticize. The suggestion here is they need not be viewed as an unmitigated evil, and that under certain circumstances and modes of presentation they can sustain a kind of engagement in service to democratic judgment.

By emphasizing the capacity of social scientific numbers to operate as "working knowledge" I want to cultivate a less dismissive response to quantitative data from the perspective of political theory. While this sort of response seems difficult to imagine, especially after the "avalanche of numbers" has torn a rift between the interpretation of numbers and the exercise of democratic judgment, it is necessary insomuch as we want that judgment to be informed of political realities. We expect democratic citizens to not only manage and navigate competing interests, values, and strategies, but to do so while

informed of the realities of the political world in which they live. Exploring the history of quantitative social scientific data in the nineteenth century reveals that the barriers to an engagement of democratic judgment and social scientific knowledge is less a question of its quantity, which otherwise might be assumed to authorize the interpretive authority of experts, and more a question of the mode of its presentation. None of this is to deny that knowledge, and quantitative knowledge in particular, can be politically dangerous. The way of responding to this danger, however, is to acknowledge along with Peter Levine that there are features of the political world that are structured by power while also thinking of "structures of power as themselves a result of design, redesign, and human labor."[212] The capacity of numbers to serve as "working knowledge" offers one way of thinking about how this sort of labor could be accomplished.

Were the tables that appeared in the *Journal of Social Science* faithful representations of reality? They are certainly representations of something, but at this point the pragmatist become uninterested in how faithful this or that representation is to reality, since means by which to judge the faithfulness of a representation might be impossible to come by. A table of numbers simply is, and its value comes from what it does, what it allows for, and what it forestalls. The argument of this chapter has been that democratic moments can be pulled from the pages of the *Journal of Social Science*, and particularly the tables contained therein, as readers are invited to share in interpretive authority. Members of the ASSA took the idea of sharing authority seriously, so seriously in fact that they sought, foolishly perhaps, to organize their activities as a body of social

[212] Peter Levine, "Seeing Like a Citizen: The Contributions of Elinor Ostrom to 'Civic Studies'," *The Good Society* 20 (2011): 9.

science as democratically as possible. This is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Three: The American Social Science Association and the Politics of Organization

"This is an age of organization," declared future congressman Dudley Goodall Wooten before a national assembly of railroad laborers in 1892, and the age promised not merely material benefits but political benefits as well, for with "organization, co-operation and intelligent concert of action," workers could oppose being "sacrificed to the greed and strangled by the grasp of those who do employ this great power."[213] Almost 120 years later organization was cast in a different light. In early 2011 protests in Madison, Wisconsin erupted in opposition to a bill stripping public sector unions of their collective bargaining rights. While the *New York Times* initially drew comparisons between the events in Wisconsin and popular uprisings in Tunisia,[214] it would later remark that the "demonstrations have been more organized than organic,"[215] pointing to the work by unions, the Democratic Party, and other groups that helped mobilize the protests. The *Wall Street Journal* similarly editorialized that the protests had "an orchestrated quality."[216] Most telling, however, was the response from the Democratic National Committee to these allegations. "This is a grass-roots story," they responded, "our volunteers in Wisconsin were getting involved and asked us to let others in the state

[213] Dudley G. Wooten, "The Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association," *Locomotive Fireman's Magazine* 16, no. 11 (November 1892): 1012.
[214] Michael Cooper and Katharine Q. Seelye, "Wisconsin Leads Way as Workers Fight State Cuts," *New York Times*, February 19, 2011: A1.
[215] Monica Davey and A. G. Sulzberger, "Dueling Protests in a Capital as Nothing Much Gets Done," *New York Times*, February 20, 2011, A24.
[216] "Athens in Mad Town," *Wall Street Journal*, February 18, 2011, A12.

know what was happening. Our role in this is being exaggerated."[217] The shift in valence was dramatic. While for Wooten the forces of organization were something to be pitted against one another, in Wisconsin organization was a taint. For the protests to have appeared as less than spontaneous was to question their authenticity as a manifestation of the people's will. Something had changed between 1892 and 2011 to turn organization from a rallying cry into a source of political embarrassment. Of course, for Wooten there were dangers in organization. It had been used by the powerful to exert control over the weak, but it also had the potential to be turned back against the powerful. In this chapter I seek to explore that democratic potential by way of a crucial moment in the history of American organizations, for in the emergence of the professional social sciences and the early work of the American Social Science Association we find concerns with the politics - and not just policies – enacted by organization, and how organization might operate in service of a more democratic politics.

Political theorists, however, share the skepticism of organization expressed above. Sheldon Wolin, for example, writes that "institutionalization marks the attenuation of democracy: leaders begin to appear; hierarchies develop; experts of one kind or another cluster around the centers of decision; order, procedure, and precedent displace a more spontaneous politics."[218] A recent exchange between Cristina Beltrán and Harry Boyte in the pages of *Political Theory* over the meaning of immigrant rights protests in 2006 reveals persistent but instructive anxieties surrounding the politics (or rather the anti-

[217] Bill Glauber and Don Walker, "Protests at Capitol Keep Growing," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 18, 2011, http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/116517683.html.
[218] Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 39.

politics) of organization. For her part, Beltrán emphasizes the "extraordinary and unanticipated" character of the immigrant rights demonstrations; they were "exceptional in both their size and intensity" and left "organizers scrambling to keep up."[219] For Boyte, this focus on spontaneity obscures the organizing work that immigrant rights groups did prior to the appearance of the protests.[220] It privileges the extraordinary at the expense of ordinary, the spectacle of performance to the exclusion of the hard work of organizing. While the two positions appear at loggerheads with each other, Beltrán's reply to Boyte is instructive, as she turns to Patchen Markell's unconventional reading of Arendt. Markell argues that for Arendt, action is not about ruptures with established patterns, but about the way all actions might be understood as "occasions for response."[221] Political action is less about the singular deed and more about the context in which deeds make sense, which is to say that they make sense to others in a way that occasions response. It is this capacity for response that gives political activity meaning, and this is a matter of shared practices and institutions, not heroic spontaneity. The exchange between Beltrán and Boyte thus reveals a concern shared with Markell for institutions and practices that enable political action. While Boyte emphasizes the work of organization and Beltrán the capacity for democratic moments to expand beyond that the confines of those organizing efforts, both turn our attention away from how to conceive of political action as such, and toward the question of "how to sustain, intensify, and democratize,"[222] the practices and

[219] Cristina Beltrán, "Going Public: Hannah Arendt, Immigrant Actions, and the Space of Appearance," *Political Theory* 37, no. 5 (2009): 597, 601.
[220] Harry Boyte, "A Commonwealth of Freedom: Response to Beltrán," *Political Theory* 38, no. 6 (2010): 873.
[221] Patchen Markell, "The Rule of the People: Arendt, *Archê*, and Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 1 (2006): 6.
[222] Markell, 12.

institutions that make political action possible, to use Markell's language. It is on these terms that I wish to explore the concept of organization.

For political theorists both the concept of organization and the history of what Wooten (and Wolin[223]) call the "age of organization" have become overdetermined, framed on one side by the march of Max Weber's "iron cage" of rationality[224] and the development of the state-centered bureaucracy on one side, and in Michel Foucault's influential terms of, which reads the period in terms of the refinement of the tools of "governmentality,"[225] on the other. Nineteenth-century thinkers, on the other hand, were enamored of organization and its benefits, and elements of their project merit our attention even if we don't share their millennial cheerfulness.

The complications of this time period are particularly evident in the history of the American Social Science Association (ASSA). As captured in Frank Sanborn's evocative metaphor of the ASSA as a "commonwealth of social science,"[226] the kind of "organization" sought by the ASSA was manifold, and it involved not merely the organization of disparate practitioners into a common discursive forum, but was was deeply implicated with the organization of the political community as well. When Benjamin Peirce declared the goal of social science to be "intellectual grandeur worthy

[223] In what was the final chapter of original edition of *Politics and Vision*, Sheldon Wolin glosses the nineteenth century "the age of organization," pointing to attempts to replace community with organization. See Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 327.
[224] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Routledge, 1992), 123.
[225] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
[226] Frank Sanborn, "The Commonwealth of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 19, (1884): 1.

its continental dimensions … and worthy of the blood of its martyrs"[227] he was articulating a connection between social science and political community. At stake was a new political community of vast scale, yet deeply fractured by the Civil War. Set with this explicitly political task, the social sciences in their formative years sought to organize themselves in ways that were sensitive to democratic norms by distributing interpretive authority broadly across boundaries of geography and boundaries of expertise.

Drawing upon the rhetoric around the founding of the ASSA as found in on the pages of their *Journal of Social Science*, and in their private correspondence, while examining the novel (branch chapters) and not so novel (a published journal) institutional arrangements they attempted, but eventually failed, to enact, I seek to carve out space in which to think about the democratic potential in organization – both political organization and the organization of the social sciences. Most of the organizational experiments undertaken by the ASSA ended in failure, so their history reveals the tremendous frailty of the task of how precisely to "sustain, intensify, and democratize" the practices and institutions that enable political action, even when conducted by people sensitive to the politics at stake. Either way, the reading advanced here stands in contrast to interpretations that would too easily fold the activities of the ASSA into the broad historical narratives gestured at above, as in Thomas Haskell's argument that the ASSA was destroyed by the very forces of rationalization and professionalization it set into

[227] Benjamin Peirce, "The National Importance of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 12, (1880): xii.

motion,[228] or in Matthew Hannah's understanding of the ASSA as an important pivot toward the development of governmentality in the United States.[229] What these interpretations miss is the novelty of the institutional structures attempted by the ASSA, and what these experiments might tell us about what sorts of politics are enabled or disabled as knowledge is organized.

Historicizing the Politics of Institutions

The vignettes at the opening of this paper charted a shift in the valuation of organization between the late nineteenth century and the early twenty-first, demonstrating that institutions have been a more or less pressing problem for politics at different moments in history. Politics presents us with two interdependent questions: those of constituency and those of administration. The first is concerned with questions of who is a member of the political community, the second with actions taken in the name of that community and their consequences. Framed as such, the connections between the two become clear. The immigrant rights protests analyzed by Beltrán mattered not just because they saw people acting politically even though they had no formal right to do so, they mattered because challenges to the borders of constituency have direct political consequences. Conversely, the powers of administration can summon a political community into being or suppress it. This relationship between the exercise of administrative authority and the boundaries of community turns out to have been

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[228] Thomas L. Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 234.
[229] Matthew Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 70.

particularly pressing in the latter half of nineteenth century, and a closer look at the history of this period will help make sense of the ASSA as an experiment in organization.

The late nineteenth century has attracted the attention of social theorists because it was witness to dramatic changes in the operation and organization of society. The period saw "island communities" replaced with a "distended society" marked by new immigrants and wildly unpredictable economic relations.[230] As discussed in previous chapters, changing economic structures pulled small-town America into larger webs of interdependence, severing previous relationships of responsibility and subjecting individuals to what seemed like the capricious decisions of unknown outsiders. Few writings capture the zeitgeist of the period as well as Edward Bellamy's 1888 novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, which finds its hero transported from an industrial society beset by conflict to a utopian future marked by almost perfect organization and efficiency. By transporting its protagonist to a strange society in the blink of an eye, Bellamy's novel captures a sense of shock at how quickly society was changing, and presents organization as the solution to the conflicts and tensions those changes had wrought. Life in late-nineteenth century America had suddenly became incomprehensible, as the traditional belief that communities could govern their own fate through simple value judgments based in the rhythms of daily interaction was quickly losing traction.[231] In its place then developed a bureaucratic order where authority

[230] Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), xiii, 11-43.
[231] Wiebe, xiii.

derived not from genteel manners but from professional skills and bureaucratic structures.[232]

Many of the organizations created during this time period, from the Knights of Labor to the modern research university, stand to this day. As Theda Skocpol and Jocelyn Elise Crowley observe, of the two dozen or so nationwide membership organizations still in operation in the United States, nearly all were founded in the years between the Civil War and World War I.[233] The debate over which forces then produced this "age of organization" proves useful. The traditional interpretation, represented by historians such as Robert Wiebe, argues that organizations were the inevitable product of a complex modernizing society, while an "institutionalist" analysis looks to the importance of existing social and political institutions to explain the rise of organizations and institutions. Representing the latter school of thought, Skocpol and Crowley observe that many late-nineteenth-century membership organizations structured themselves along federal lines with chapters in individual states, a strategy that cannot be explained by appeal to patterns of urbanization and modernization, but because the United States constitutional structure recommended such an approach and because the Civil War had produced a sense of nationhood that had not existed prior.[234] But organizations did not merely follow the contours of established political communities in order to draw upon the political legitimacy inhering in those boundaries, they were additionally involved in shoring up and constituting those boundaries in the first place.

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[232] Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905,* 2nd Edition, (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2011), xi.
[233] Theda Skocpol and Jocelyn Elise Crowley, "The Rush to Organize: Explaining Associational Formation in the United States, 1860s-1920s," *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 4 (2001): 814.
[234] Skocpol and Crowley, 814-5.

We can find evidence of this in the discourse of those involved in the work of the ASSA. "The great problem of man", wrote E.L. Godkin, founder of *The Nation* magazine, quoting the German scholar Theodor Mommsen, is "how to live in conscious harmony with himself, his neighbor, and with the whole to which he belongs."[235] This third term, "the whole to which he belongs" is not something that would have crossed the mind so easily of someone writing a generation or two before Godkin was writing in 1871.

Before considering the role institutions of knowledge play in these processes, we can return to the questions of constituency and administration mentioned above and recognize, along with Skocpol and Crowley, how closely the logic of state-formation binds these questions together. Scholars of American political development have identified the American Civil War as the event that precipitated the first creation of rationalized, centralized state institutions.[236] These institutions were patchwork at best until around the turn of the twentieth century and usually paled in comparison to their European counterparts, but they are important because a new brand of politics was inaugurated alongside them. The creation of a professional civil service (a reform where the ASSA played an advocacy role), was specifically designed to put an end to the politics of logrolling and spoils, and institute a politics of issues.[237] These state-centered institutions were created with the expectation that they would literally change the terms

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[235] E.L. Godkin, "Legislation and Social Science", *Journal of Social Science* 3, (1871): 126.
[236] See, for example, Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).
[237] Skowronek, *Building a New American* State, 54.

and language in which politics was conducted. Existing political institutions like the party machines were incapable of meeting this task because their politics was based on the exchange of material spoils, as opposed to the cultivation of a shared political vision.

Also changing around this time were the byways through which political discourse was conducted. In the "island communities" political discourse was localized. Literary clubs and magazines rarely reached beyond fifty miles of the point of publication.[238] Periodicals with nationwide audiences such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Nation*, and *The North American Review* sprung up in the latter half of the nineteenth century and created the first national political discourse.[239] Of equal or greater significance was the reformation of higher education around the example of the research university offered first by Johns Hopkins University and then by Cornell University, Stanford University, the University of Chicago and the public land-grant schools. Within a few short decades higher education in the United States had been transformed along the lines of the German model, privileging the production of original research and the newly minted experts who produced it. The argument to be elaborated here is that these developments were not merely accidents brought about through technological advance, but were themselves responses to the increased power of the institutions of the American state. As these institutions assumed broader powers, there arose an urgency to reattach those powers to the authority of people, which is to say that problems of administration were interconnected with problems of political community.

[238] Hannah, *Governmentality*, 65.
[239] Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, 44.

The ASSA and the Politics of Organization

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of tremendous social and political change brought about the world of institutions in which we live today. Understood in these terms, the ASSA appears as something of an anomaly, and its place in the historical scholarship reflects as much. What is more interesting about the ASSA is the way it muddled through during a moment of tremendous plasticity and possibility in American history. Many leading figures in the ASSA were members of Boston's leading families who saw the work of the Association in terms of giving organizational voice to the "best men". Representative of these attitudes was an effort that advocated for the introduction of plaster heads of famous men in American schoolrooms and the organization would spend $1,500 to so equip one Boston school.[240] Such efforts marked the ASSA as something of a pivot between the older politics of notables and the newer politics of organization. Or to put things differently, it marked a pivot between the older politics of personal obligation and the newer politics of expertise.

Certainly it was the case that the goal of the ASSA was organization. We would do well, however, to pay specific attention to the rhetoric they deployed in so doing. Without a doubt members of the ASSA were very nearly obsessed with the idea of organization, the outstanding need for it, and its potential - once achieved in the ASSA - for focusing the nation's intellectual energy and knowledge in ways that would reform politics for the better. The reply of future Congressman John A. Kasson to an 1865 circular announcing the formation of the ASSA is instructive. Kasson writes that, "The

[240] John G. Sproat, *'The Best Men': Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 57.

scope of your inquiries is broad as our country, and demands a national organization," while affirming that "no country in the globe can render such an organization so useful as our own."[241] Organization is something desperately needed for Kasson, and due in particular to the scale of the country. The specific form this effort at organization would take become clearer when looking at the declared purposes of the ASSA as established in its published constitution. It declares that the ASSA was designed to bring diverse conversations on social problems together in way that would be more productive than if continued separately. The effort at organization undertaken here is to "bring together the various societies and individuals now interested"[242] in diverse areas of social reform such as prison and sanitary reform. Thus the main task of the ASSA was to be the "collection and diffusion of useful knowledge"[243] under the presumption that no single branch of knowledge, and indeed no group of individuals, held a monopoly on social scientific truths. Bringing together thinkers and practitioners from diverse fields would produce a conversation with public import.

Framed so, the organization undertaken by the ASSA appears far from the organization undertaken by Boyte's immigrant rights groups, but both are about bringing people together into the same space and the same conversation. This public conversation was first of all to be effected through the creation of a national journal that would publish papers on a wide variety of social reform topics and therefore share experience across

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[241] John A. Kasson to ASSA, 26 October 1865, ASSA Archives, Folder 29, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
[242] ASSA, *Constitution, Address, and List of Members of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1866), 3.
[243] Henry Villard to Samuel Eliot, 31 October 1868, Folder 31, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

cognate fields. Interdisciplinarity would allow research a wide audience. As mentioned in the introduction, one member of the ASSA wrote that the benefit of the journal would be to give his research "the attention of the public, instead of first provoking the cavils of my brethren and then of being consigned to oblivion in the pages of strictly a professional journal."[244] The *Journal of Social Science*, published for forty years between 1869 and 1909, represented an assortment of articles on a wide array of topics and written by scholars, practitioners, and interested laypersons. In form, the *Journal* represented an attempt at the centralization and rationalization of knowledge. In content, however, the *Journal* was something far less ordered. As Haskell writes, "anyone who brushes off the dust and opens the yellowed pages of the *Journal of Social Science* today will feel, I think, that he has entered a subtly alien world of thought, a world of the familiar phenomenon of an urban-industrial society, but quaintly out of focus."[245]

Of greater significance is how this undertaking was understood by the members of the ASSA. Here a deeper look at the Godkin article, mentioned briefly above, is warranted. As a liberal, for Godkin the value of self-government was that "under it human faculties are found to have freest play, human energies most force, and human aspirations the widest and loftiest range."[246] But what is of special note in his analysis is that he sees the value of the "science of society" in the compensation it provides for the breakdown of normal patterns of political order. Before, the authority of the king derived from God, and obedience was simply a matter of course, not something that merited

[244] Isaac Ray to Frank Sanborn, 26 November 1865, Folder 30, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
[245] Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social* Science, 234.
[246] E.L. Godkin, "Legislation and Social Science", *Journal of Social Science* 3, (1871): 116-7.

study.[247] In Godkin's analysis, the organization of social science would repair fractures wrought by the "distended society", to use Wiebe's language. Social scientific investigation for Godkin is fundamentally conservative. Its purposes are to shore up against slippages of culture, and thus Godkin writes that "the great aim of sociologists and politicians" is "to preserve the national manners."[248] Note that the social sciences are for Godkin related to questions of the organization of politics. This is "the work of collecting, arranging, comparing, and inferring," alongside "growing complexity and delicacy of social as well as international relations."[249] On first blush, this seems an unapologetic exercise in the imposition of hierarchy and order. Speaking of the British association on which the ASSA was modeled, Henry Villard, another leader of the ASSA, lamented that social science there "had no little weight, indeed, in directing the process of social and political *reorganization*."[250] As the second sentence of the constitution of the ASSA makes clear, this desire for hierarchical reordering seems hardly limited to Godkin and Villard. It declares that the organization's "objects are, to aid in the development of Social Science, and to guide the public mind."[251] Conceived as such, social science becomes the tutor for a childish nation in need of a proper education.

Godkin and others believed that social science was to take an active role in organizing and reconstituting a political community that was deeply fragmented between North and South, between town and country, and between native and immigrant. Social

[247] Godkin, "Legislation and Social Science", 124.
[248] Godkin, "Legislation and Social Science", 127.
[249] Godkin, "Legislation and Social Science", 129.
[250] Henry Villard, "Historical Sketch of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 1 (1869), 6, emphasis added.
[251] ASSA, *Constitution, Address, and List of Members of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1866), 3.

science would repair and suture a fragmented society. The Civil War was responsible for some of these wounds, but it also offered the means by which to mend them, and demanded that such mending be done. Only then could the country be put on a path "worthy of the blood of its martyrs."[252] This martial language appears elsewhere in the correspondence of the ASSA. In a striking letter, Fred N. Knapp of the United States Sanitary Commission argues that the Civil War had fundamentally changed the country's imagination. Veterans, he argues, "have but just discovered amid the exigencies and tumult, or the solemn silences of war how much of life, and how much of strength they had in them,"[253] but they suffer from lack of direction. They require a "rallying point" or "a flag marked 'Head Quarters,' where they are to report for orders."[254] The military's deployment of the powers of organization during the Civil War could be turned to productive ends. Lest we think this activity too closely mirrors military-style command, Knapp explains that the "standard" around which interested persons would rally could only be the product of "patient discussion" and "cannot determined upon in a session of a day, or indeed in a month, or perhaps in a year."[255] It could, in short, only be determined after the ASSA had gathered those who had found new purpose after the war.

That the undertakings of the ASSA were to be collaborative is much more explicitly articulated elsewhere. The *Handbook for Immigrants*, one of the ASSA's early publications, declares a desire to turn immigrants into "contented and useful citizens in

[252] Peirce, "The National Importance of Social Science," xii.
[253] Fred N. Knapp to Samuel Eliot, 5 March 1866, Folder 29, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
[254] Knapp to Eliot.
[255] Knapp to Eliot..

the land of their adoption."[256] As such, it would appear much in line with the discussion above, whereby social science was conceived as a mechanism by which to suture a fragmented political community. The very first paragraph of the *Handbook* declares this problematic, that for the immigrant the challenge was "to break up old and dear habits; to live among strangers in a strange land."[257] The signal then is toward how social intercourse had become stressed by immigration, as established habits and personal familiarity could no longer provide pathways of interaction. The *Handbook* planned to reach its readers through "Emigration Agencies in Europe, steamship lines, Boards of Immigration and State charities, and railroad and land corporations in the United States."[258] Importantly, however, the lessons contained within are not timeless lessons, nor are they natural laws of social order (a term that can be found in other ASSA writings). It declares its intentions "experimental" and sets a its as the "a compilation involving the acquisition and use of varied and confused material."[259] With an experimental – and democratic tone – it declares, "its effect may be tried upon the immigrants into whose hands it may come. Until it has been actually tested by them, neither its strong nor its weak points can be determined."[260] Thus it asks, "all readers - to make corrections, and to suggest any omissions or inadequate statements, which make strike them in examining this volume."[261] The immigrant audience of the book is invited

[256] American Social Science Association, *Handbook for Immigrants* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871), iii.
[257] *Handbook for Immigrants*, 1.
[258] *Handbook for Immigrants*, iii.
[259] *Handbook for Immigrants*, iii.
[260] *Handbook for Immigrants*, iii-iv.
[261] *Handbook for Immigrants*, iii.

to "relate their experiences in using the book."[262] The moves performed here are important, as they show the ASSA in an experimental mood regarding the process of inquiry and practices to which knowledge adheres. Those empowered to make corrections and suggest additions are not presumed to be solely those in leadership positions at the ASSA.

Social Science in the Cities

Nowhere was this desire to distribute interpretive power more apparent than in the attempts by the ASSA to organize itself around branch chapters in major cities across the United States. Each was to be founded on the idea that social science was a local activity bringing together academics, reformers, politicians, and interested laymen. As early as 1865 San Francisco had set out "see what can be done towards forming a branch society or a somewhat similar one" there, at a time when travel between the coasts of the United States was tremendously difficult.[263] As the ASSA had been born out of the Massachusetts Board of Charities, leaders of the ASSA were sensitive to charges of regional bias. Hoyt's account of the creation of the "Western Social Science Association" in Chicago as arising out of the complaint that "the so-called *American* Association is in fact a New England, or at least an Eastern, Society"[264] would have stung deeply. Members of the ASSA such as Emory Washburn nonetheless remained sanguine about a national enterprise that was composed of local chapters, explaining that the power of the ASSA was to be found "in the action of smaller bodies, local associations, into which the

[262] *Handbook for Immigrants*, iv.
[263] C. Cole to ASSA, 19 October 1865, Folder 28, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut..
[264] John Wesley Hoyt, "The Work of the American Association," *Journal of Social Science* 7 (1874): 377.

general one divides itself territorially, - where the members know each other and are content to come together and work without the stimulus and *éclat* of numbers," and such an action would have the effect of "awakening sensible men and women to the claims which Social Science has upon them."[265] To this point, Daniel Coit Gilman concurred that local chapters "exert a more powerful influence" because they gave "time and space to local questions."[266] Gilman, who would later play a pivotal role in the proposed merger of the ASSA with Johns Hopkins University discussed below, was an instrumental figure in the eventual creation of the California chapter. In 1874 he reports "enlisting sensible people over here to form a local society."[267] Gilman's language suggests aristocratic airs, but what made California special was its frontier status. As Gilman put it, what was special was "how curiously California is in the union and out of it," suggesting something about the radically democratic conditions of the frontier, which produced "more intense confidence in 'legislation'"[268] For Gilman, the question was of "time and space," which is to say that in a nationalized discourse, meaningful participation becomes more difficult as the bars to entry become higher and higher. There was then a tensions between bringing into existence for the first time a national political forum, focusing its activities, and keeping them efficacious at the local level, where significant power still lay given the structure of American federalism.

In the end this proved to be an ambitious vision for the institutionalization of social science in American society. Of the chapters, the one in Philadelphia was by far

[265] Emory Washburn, "The Work of the American Association," *Journal of Social Science* 7 (1874): 375-6.
[266] Daniel Coit Gilman, "The Work of the American Association," *Journal of Social Science* 7 (1874): 378.
[267] D.C. Gilman to F.B. Sanborn, 22 March 1874, Folder 78, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut..
[268] Gilman to Sanborn.

the most successful, and lives on in a different guise as the American Academy of Political and Social Science. The New York and Chicago chapters lasted only a few years, while chapters in New Haven, Detroit, and St. Louis only succeeded in establishing discussion clubs. The Western Social Science Association, Hoyt reports, "for a little time, promised to accomplish much good," though only a few years later it was in "abeyance."[269] The Philadelphia chapter was by far the most robust, with a large membership and regular publication in the *Penn Journal*, a level of organization that made the ASSA almost dependent on the Philadelphia chapter at times in its early history, as opposed to the other way around.

In the updated preface to *The Emergence of Professional Social Science*, Haskell writes, "as for the supposed vitality of the branch associations, there could be no frailer reed on which to pin an interpretation."[270] Haskell's intervention is of small consequence to the interpretation being developed here, however, as what is of interest is not the vitality or weakness of the branch chapters, but that they were sought out as an institutional location for a national vision of social science in the first place. Had they been successful, they would have provided novel structures by which individuals would have been able to truck back and forth between particular and general claims, and between local concerns and national ones. What matters is that those involved in the ASSA thought them an appropriate institutional foundation for social science at the time, and this in turns reveals something important about the ways in which it was hoped social science would cultivate political community.

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[269] John Wesley Hoyt, "The Work of the American Association," *Journal of Social Science* 7 (1874): 377.
[270] Haskell, xiv.

What made the local chapter system radically ambitious was the idea that they would be open, as an 1868 announcement for the creation of the Western Association declared, to "all persons of whatever class or profession."[271] Granted Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer's insight that "the problem of generating and protecting knowledge is a problem in politics, and … the problem of political order always involves solutions to the problem of knowledge,"[272] it should come as no shock that debates about the organization of the ASSA were at times fiercely political. One early and persistent question concerned how open membership would be, with Sanborn emerging as the dominant voice in favor of inclusion. He vigorously defended the ASSA as an association where membership was voluntary and open, as opposed to select, writing that "the special place of the American Social Science Association is that of uniting all and communication with all who may wish to do so."[273] Godkin emerged as the leading voice in favor of restricting membership in the ASSA to professionals only. Later in the 1880s Sanborn attempted to steer the ASSA toward higher education instruction and faced stiff resistance from within the organization, particularly from John Eaton, a former Union General and United States Commissioner of Education. Eaton urged that social scientists "couple love of science with love of mankind" and bring social science to the masses. As Eaton put it, "the idea of a republic in which all its citizens shall act patriotically and virtuously, from free choice of the right course and on their own knowledge" demands that social scientific knowledge be shared broadly.

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[271] "A Western Social Science Association," *American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated* 48, no 5 (November 1868): 187.
[272] Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 21.
[273] Sanborn, "The Work of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 6 (1874): 36.

This ideal of including the voices of everyone regardless of class was an ideal achieved in rhetoric far more than in reality. In 1876 the Philadelphia chapter took up the challenge of hosting a social science conference. The conference had international ambitions, with expectations that a British delegation would be in attendance, along with dismay that "delegation of workingmen … from abroad"[274] would not join them. There were, it was noted, "several workingmen's organizations in this city," but they were dismissed as "political rather than social."[275] The equation was that of social problems with neutral politics and political problems with partisanship. While the ASSA sought to inform political practice from its founding, what this actually meant in light of its goal of being "under the control of no sect or party," as the circular for the Western Social Science Association put it,[276] was ambiguous. The rapprochement thus struck between political advocacy and scholarly objectivity, to use Furner's framework, was between "social" questions, on which inquiry and discussion would reveal "the real elements of Truth" and a "common ground … for treating wisely the great social problems of the day,"[277] and "political" questions which were questions that involved power and could not be resolved through patient inquiry and deliberation. The solution looks very much like that struck by social science since.

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[274] Benjamin Hayllar to F.B. Sanborn, 28 April 1876, Folder 132, American Social Science Association Records, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
[275] Ibid.
[276] "A Western Social Science Association," *American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated* 48, no 5 (November 1868): 187.
[277] ASSA, *Constitution, Address, and List of Members of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1866), 3.

The ASSA and Higher Education

Of course, social science since the ASSA has been instituted largely around the modern research university, and in the domain of higher education the ASSA again attempted a novel set of institutional arrangements in the form of a proposed merger with Johns Hopkins University in the late 1870s. The historical record for this episode is relatively sparse, already given an excellent treatment by Haskell, and familiar to historians of the social sciences. What follows then is a rereading of those events along the conceptual lines developed so far.

Higher education in nineteenth-century America was particularly ripe for institutional experimentation. There was competition and diversity among colleges and academies, and by the time of the Civil War, colleges were only beginning to transition away of the classical curricula to adopt the new elective system. With the founding of Johns Hopkins University in 1876, the research university would quickly become the model for all of higher education in the United States. The previous state of higher education, in addition to democratic conditions in the United States, suggested that novel institutional arrangements might be warranted in the United States. Too strict an adoption of British or German models, for example, would bring with it the taint of authoritarianism.

Before the creation of Johns Hopkins, members of the ASSA concerned themselves with institutions of higher education that were "adapted to the needs of the American people" and "capable of taking a practical hold on their minds," and yet remained an "open" question that had even invited "untrained and ignorant

experimentation."[278] Some of the experiments tried were the combination of academic study with manual labor, an "experiment" that promised to "soften away the strict line of demarcation which at present divides the intellectual classes from those who labor with their hands."[279]

As was the case for the social scientific enterprise more generally, the cause of higher education was a matter of national identity. For a leading reformer like Andrew D. White of Cornell, the question of the organization of educational institutions was a matter of concern for the "patriot."[280] For White the problem of American education was that existing institutions had been borrowed largely from England, where "roots" of the educational system had developed in the "soil" of the Church of England.[281] In America, by contrast, colleges sprang out of a multiplicity of religious sects, which led to "the most wretched *scattering of resources*," and the "most wretched caricatures of colleges and universities."[282] The problem, according to White, is that of "petty sectarian schools, each doing its best in the pulpits of its sects or the lobbies of its legislature to prevent the establishment of any system or institution broader or better."[283] This last phrase is of special importance, as it signals that for White the problem is one of narrowness, of the trouble organizing and mustering effort at a "broader" and by extension "better" level. For White the solution is for education to be wrested out of the hands of the petty sects and into the hands of political authority - whereby it can be brought to bear on a larger

[278] Goldwin Smith, "University Education," *Journal of Social Science* 1 (1869): 25.
[279] Smith, "University Education," 53.
[280] Andrew D. White, "The Relation of National and State Governments to Advanced Education," *Journal of Social Science* 7 (1874): 299.
[281] White, 299.
[282] White, 300, emphasis original.
[283] White, 301.

scale. He declares the "proposition" that, "*the main provision for advanced education in the United States must be made by the people at large acting through legislatures*."[284] Higher education, then, was a matter of profound importance for the political community, as the fragmented structure of higher education then in existence lacked the broadness required of the political community. White's ambition was for a "*higher education worthy of our country and time*."[285]

What is important about this history is that it shows how fluid and undetermined the institutional arrangements of higher education were in the years leading up to the founding of Johns Hopkins. Soon after its founding, the Harvard mathematician Benjamin Peirce proposed to Gilman, the new president of Johns Hopkins, to merge the ASSA with the university. The specifics of the proposed arrangement remained vague and undefined, but Perice seemed to envision an arrangement where the university would provide financial resources and facilities for the ASSA, which would then find itself being "regulated by the University."[286] It is unclear what Peirce meant by "regulation", but what was most breathtaking about his proposal is that it saw non-academics being given open access and equality of station in the university.[287] The proposal was to make the non-academic members of the ASSA "pupils of the University," or as Sanborn put it, the hope was that the ASSA would become a "*university for the people*, - combining those who can contribute anything original in social science into a temporary academical senate, to meet for some weeks in a given place and debate questions with each other, as

[284] White, 302, emphasis original.
[285] White, 303, emphasis original.
[286] Benjamin Peirce to D.C. Gilman, 10 June 1878, Gilman Papers, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland; in Haskell, 150.
[287] Haskell, 151.

well as to give out information for the public."[288] As Haskell notes, the arrangement assumed that social scientific inquiry of genuine vitality would take place outside of the academy, and that the academy would suffer without connections to amateur communities of inquiry.[289] The ASSA in turn would operate as something like an extension service of the university, autonomous from and more active in politics than the university, but operating under its expert guidance.

Haskell chalks up the failure of the merger to the inherent controversies that attend political action. Gilman would write back to Peirce,

> A *University* should promote study, research, the accumulation of experience, the publication of results … the Association should endeavor to act upon the public, by meetings, addresses, newspaper-reports, & other modes of awakening attention to possible and necessary reforms.[290]

Gilman's rhetoric does not place the research university as necessarily superior to the more-amateur organization, it only draws a distinction between "investigation" and "agitation", the former being the domain of the university and the latter the domain of the ASSA. The ASSA could not countenance such a distinction, however, as it asserted the mutual interdependence of investigation and agitation. Put simply, for the ASSA, investigation was agitation. Social scientific inquiry by its very nature was expected to produce political goods. The proposed merger between the ASSA and Johns Hopkins was

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[288] Sanborn, "The Late Professor Peirce," xi, emphasis in original.
[289] Haskell, 151.
[290] D.C. Gilman to F.B. Sanborn, 24 October 1878, Gilman Papers, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, italics original; in Haskell, 154.

abandoned. The ASSA fell into almost immediate decline, while Johns Hopkins went on to become the model for research institutions across the country.

Instead of dwelling on the rise of Hopkins and the decline of the ASSA, we might instead consider why a merger with Johns Hopkins came naturally to Peirce, a man not otherwise noted for harboring strong democratic sympathies. An answer might be found in the rhetoric Peirce had used elsewhere, where he claimed that social science was an undertaking demanded by "the blood of its martyrs." Put in less dramatic terms, the social scientific enterprise was an enterprise in state-building, or put in still different terms, it was an effort to summon a "commonwealth" into being where none had existed prior - or at least none on sufficiently common grounds.

Concluding Remarks

The story of the birth of the ASSA is the story of a series of debates around the concept of organization. All involved agreed that organization was desirable, but there was considerably less agreement about the terms on which the group would organize. Bound up in all of their concern for organization were broader concerns about what forms organization might take elsewhere, and how the organization of the social sciences and the organization of a newly enlarged political community might be mutually related. Put simply, at stake in the organization of the social sciences was the organization of the American political community. Social science envisioned itself as engaged in the production of not just a better (in the sense of better managed public services) political community, but in the very production of that political community in the first place. No small task, the project remained largely outside state institutions, and for all their use of

the rhetoric of organization and order, the goals of the ASSA cannot be understood simply in terms of a drive for social control. As discussed above, the construction of political community can be linked to administrative power, but they need not always be closely tied. In fact, the organizational undertakings of the ASSA offer a glimpse of what they might look like relatively divorced from such concerns. If the organization of the social sciences was to inform democratic politics, then that organization had to proceed in a manner acceptable to and worthy of a democratic polity.

As the ambition of the social sciences was to assume new political powers, it envisioned those powers playing out within and alongside existing modes and channels of political authority even as they participated in the formation of the new politics of expertise. The arrival of the new politics of expertise later on in the nineteenth century, however, did not mark a break with prior modes of authority. In a trenchant critique of history and social theory framed around narratives of the loss of community, the decline of *Gemeinschaft* and the rise of a more rationalized *Gesellschaft*, Thomas Bender encourages us to recognize the ways in which the two forms of organization continue to travel alongside one another.[291] As they grasped about for new terms on which to organize social inquiry and bring it to bear in service of democratic politics, the ASSA helps us recognize alternative modes of organization, and how those modes of organization might live on with us.

As demonstrated in the examples of the *Handbook*, by the attempt at establishing branch chapters in major cities, and with the failed merger with Johns Hopkins, the

[291] Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

ASSA operated on the assumption that significant authority would remain with amateur practitioners, and that democratic politics were most properly organized at the local level. In and of itself, organization was not understood to interfere with any of them. We might think these modes of thinking lost to history, especially in the operation of the contemporary social sciences, but that is not the case. We might, for example, consider that many view the deliberative polls suggested by James Fishkin[292] as more authentic expressions of the people's will than alternative methods of polling, and how that authenticity derives from gestures at including the participation of amateur subjects in the formation of political judgments.

These are questions posed to the social sciences because of the work they do to constitute our political community. To return to Markell's framework, democratic politics is about bridging the personal and the impersonal, or as he puts it in his essay, is it about "the public interpretation of particular events" at "a higher level of generality" within "organized political experience."[293] Politics requires a capacity to tack back and forth between the particular and the general, allowing localized experiences to be worked up into claims with broader political significance while allowing the general to inform individual experience in turn. Important here are the practices and institutions "through which events are distinguished, measured, scaled, organized, and presented."[294] But how might one "sustain, intensify, and democratize" social scientific institutions? As the example of the ASSA demonstrates, the task appears nigh impossible after inquiry and

[292] James S. Fishkin, "The Televised Deliberative Poll: An Experiment in Democracy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 546 (July 1996): 132-140.
[293] Markell, "The Rule of the People," 13.
[294] Ibid.

advocacy have been subject to a division of labor. If that is the case, it is because social scientific inquiry has also lost an important part of its capacity to mediate between the particular and the general, and this is a loss for politics.

Part of this is related to the way that organization has lost its hold on our political imaginations. If this is the case, it is not because organization is no longer relevant in our lives. If we no longer recognize the work these organizations do in our political lives, it is not because they no longer matter. It means that how it has to work in politics has fundamentally changed. The next chapter will explore ways of thinking about how democratic citizens may experience organized political communities at even higher levels of generality while still remain tied to lived practice.

Chapter Four: "Common Experience": Hyperfactualist Social Science and the Production of Political Community

Navigational and geographical metaphors abound in politics. Politicians variously promise to "stay the course"[295] or "steer a new course"[296] with their leadership. Take as another example President George W. Bush's "Roadmap for Peace" to resolve the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. The map metaphor aptly captured the sense in which it purported to lay out a political strategy and the sense in which an accounting of territory was central to the two-state solution it proposed. Maps are both descriptions of the world and instruments of action. Frequently the two go hand in hand, as the point of description is to assist action. This dual meaning appeared in President Obama's 2010 commencement address at Hampton University. Obama told his audience that the purpose of a college education was to "prepare you as citizens. With so many voices clamoring for attention on blogs, and on cable, on talk radio, it can be difficult, at times, to sift through it all; to know what to believe; to figure out who's telling the truth and who's not. Let's face it, even some of the craziest claims can quickly gain traction. I've had some experience in that regard. Fortunately, you will be well positioned to navigate this terrain."[297] The formulation is auspicious. Life in the twenty-first century according to Obama is filled with competing, confusing claims, and the task becomes one of

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[295] Gerald Boyd, "Bush, Relaxed and Upbeat, Heads Home for Finale," *New York Times*, November 8, 1988. http://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/08/us/bush-relaxed-and-upbeat-heads-home-for-finale.html
[296] Susan Rice, "Charting a New Course in the World," White House Press Release, August 12, 2009 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Charting-a-new-course-in-the-world
[297] Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President at Hampton University Commencement," White House Press Release, May 9, 2010 http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-hampton-university-commencement

"navigation" across this uncertain "terrain". Put another way, active and intelligent navigation of that terrain first requires accurate assessments of what that terrain actually is, where sure ground lies where pitfalls lurk.

Early social scientists understood their work in much the same way, that is, in terms of charting social terrain that once mapped correctly and more fully would direct right action. As Frank Sanborn put it, the goal of social science must be to "know what our condition is … how little we know in America of the actual circumstances of the people."[298] This would be painstaking endless work, or "woman's work" as Sanborn quotes the rhyme: "Man's work lasts from sun to sun / But woman's work is never done."[299] By this Sanborn meant both that social science was a laborious and endless undertaking, and that more and more social science was being conducted by women, which he took to be a positive development. A decade later John Eaton had a similar assessment, that the problems of politics derived from insufficient knowledge, and accumulating knowledge would immediately benefit politics. Thus in his 1885 presidential address to the American Social Science Association, Eaton concluded that science "could not exclude any data or any truth of service to man."[300] This sort of commitment to data for its own sake would come to be mocked by later generations of social scientists.

In *The Political System*, David Easton's 1953 plea for a post-positivist behavioral political science, Easton denounced the "hyperfactual" research that had dominated the

[298] Frank Sanborn, "The Work of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 6 (1874): 37.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Eaton, xvii.

discipline from the end of the Civil War up to the first half of the twentieth century. "The American political scientist is born free but everywhere he is in chains, tied to a hyperfactual past,"[301] Easton complained. In his analysis, this prioritization of the accumulation of facts over "systematic theory" was a response to the trauma of the Civil War, which along with the industrial revolution upset established approaches to the understanding of society.[302] In such circumstances, the "hyperfactualism" of the social sciences made sense, but the time for such modest ground-level work was passed. Writing a quarter century earlier, Charles Beard similarly sneered at the discipline's "meticulous banality" and mere aspiration to make itself "master of detail and common-sense."[303] In his study of the early social sciences, Thomas Haskell argues that all of this was based on an "exceedingly optimistic and fundamentally superficial understanding of society," where "intelligent men would spontaneously agree upon a course of action once the facts were known."[304] This chapter pushes against such interpretations and argues that the "hyperfactualism" of this era of social science importantly reveals the implications of the social scientific enterprise in the production of democratic political community, both then and now.

While the treatments offered by Easton and Beard are polemical, their recourse to navigational and geographical language suggests the terms on which we might recognize the importance of nineteenth-century social science for politics. Easton dismissed the

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[301] David Easton, *The Political System* (New York: Knopf, 1953), 47.
[302] Easton, 69-70.
[303] Charles Beard, "Time, Technology, and the Creative Spirit in Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 21, (1927): 11, 9.
[304] Thomas Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 104.

work of that era as mere "inventory building," or as "building a political directory."[305] This undertaking would facilitate political action at a later time, yet for Easton it was precisely the restraint of the enterprise that was indicative of a "low position on a scale of maturity" and the discipline's stagnancy in a stage of what he called "discovery."[306] Easton admitted, however, that charting the political terrain might be necessary when political realities remain obscure, as "theory without facts may be a well-piloted ship with an unsound keel."[307] Easton's metaphor understands social scientific inquiry as the navigation of political space. To do so without reference to "facts" then is to move without a keel, or to put it differently, it is to risk running aground on unseen shoals. In the "hyperfactual" past both Easton and Beard deride, the way social scientists did this was through appeals to "common sense" and "experience" in the service of "inventory building" to use the above terminology. Given the influence of pragmatism on late nineteenth-century American thought, the language of experience and common sense are unsurprising, but both nineteenth century social science and pragmatist thought were also suffused with the language of charting, mapping, and navigating. A return to the pragmatists here allows an understanding of maps in terms of their effects on individuals and the mindsets of those individuals.

This approach to the understanding of maps has currency among contemporary scholars of geography. In her study of map-making in nineteenth century America, Susan Schulten distinguishes between an older style of map as a device for navigation and a

[305] Easton, 66-7.
[306] Easton, 44.
[307] Easton, 78.

newer style of thematic map designed to aid in social analysis.[308] Navigational maps emphasize borders, waterways, and topography. Thematic maps focus on less immediately visible features such as rates of crime and disease, and were impossible to construct until the early nineteenth century when governments began collecting data of this kind in sufficient quantity. According to Schulten, thematic maps function less as description and more as arguments, but she also notes that any such distinction is problematic insofar as all maps select what to include and what to omit. All maps are constructed of information that has been selected to best serve the intended audience, and that audience in turn is expected to make its own use of it. Maps are thus exceptional examples of "working objects" as discussed by Bender and Marrinan[309] and previously elaborated in the discussion of tables. While that chapter worked up the importance of a specific type of encounter with knowledge, this chapter further elaborates the kind of knowledge brought to that encounter and its consequences for politics.

A "hyperfactual" social science is content to map out political space, help identify unseen dangers, and plot better courses of action. Derek Gregory takes note, however, of a deep ambivalence among scholars of geography toward the political power wielded through maps, or what he calls the "cartographic anxiety."[310] Maps literally elevate their users above the terrain and offering insight into hidden features of the landscape, and thus become tools used by elites to wield power over those underneath them. As James C. Scott puts it, the central problem of modern statecraft is legibility, and so the modern

[308] Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation: History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 11
[309] John Bender and Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).
[310] Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 6.

state has sought to map its populations in order to render them more visible and easier to control.[311] Ian Hacking makes the same point with greater flair when he writes, "Ireland was completely surveyed for land, buildings, people, and cattle under the directorship of William Petty, in order to facilitate the rape of that nation by the English in 1679."[312] Others, such as Benedict Anderson, are critical of maps for their use as tools of propaganda. Maps function to shore up political boundaries for the purposes of constructing "imagined communities."[313] Along similar lines Schulten argues that maps imply a level of certainty in knowledge held by the state that simply doesn't exist, and Matthew Hannah is critical of the way that nineteenth century maps privileged state boundaries at the expense of urban population centers.[314] The danger implied in all is the ambition to capture everything of potential relevance into a single "synoptic" view. The drive to rise to such a synoptic viewpoint need not, however, be inextricably linked to the politics of control, if for no other reason than maps are not always produced by political authorities.

An example of such work, which will serve as an interpretive key for understanding the earlier work of the American Social Science Association later in the chapter, appears in *Hull House Maps and Papers*. Published in 1895 by residents of Jane Addams's settlement house, *Maps and Papers* brings investigative essays together with an evocative collection of hand-drawn color-coded maps built from data collected in

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[311] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.
[312] Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17.
[313] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006).
[314] Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 182; Matthew Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 148.

collaboration with the Department of Labor. In her preface, Addams lauds its observations as "the result of long acquaintance" and yet "immediate" at the same time.[315] The principle interpretive essay in *Maps and Papers*, authored by Agnes Sinclair Holbrook, similarly argues that it was only after "long acquaintance with the neighborhood" that one could come to see the "frontage" of the tenements as a "mere screen" for the misery within.[316] The *Maps and Papers* then sought to convey experience, but otherwise inaccessible to the casual observer. The maps themselves also produce a distinctive experience, for the experience of looking upon the maps could not have been other than that of being overwhelmed with information [Figure 5]. The political power of the maps lies precisely in this interplay between orientation and disorientation, as they help readers orient themselves in their political communities while offering experiences of those communities that surprise, unsettle, and enlarge political imagination.

The idea for *Maps and Papers* had come from Charles Booth's 1889 *Life and Labour of the People in London*¸ but housing lots were the unit of analysis in *Maps and Papers* whereas it had been streets in *Life and Labour*. Each housing lot is abstracted into a stacked bar graph depicting the percentage of residents of different nationalities and their weekly wages. It is a presentation designed to balance orientation and disorientation, as Holbrook reasons that it the maps would "enable the reader to find any address" but any finer detail would prove too difficult "in so small a map of two dimensions to represent accurately the position of the tenements occupied by members of

[315] Jane Addams, "Prefactory Note," in *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 45.
[316] Agnes Sinclair Holbrook, "Maps Notes and Comments," in *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, 54.

various nationalities when the houses are two, three, and four stories high."[317] While "the basis of representation is geographical,"[318] actual housing units have been abstracted away in an attempt to translate the minutia of daily lived experience and something more visually manageable. The bustle and disorder of the neighborhood remains apparent on the page, however, even as that disorder is pushed into the background by Holbrook, who asserts that "a decided tendency to drift into little colonies is apparent."[319] Indeed, far from depicting the neighborhoods in terms of distinct ethnic "ghettos", the maps depict a complex intermingling of peoples and cultures, and the experience of looking at the maps mirrors the chaotic experience of living in the neighborhoods. The declared audience is "the people of Chicago who desire correct and accurate information,"[320] but *Maps and Papers* confronts that audience not just with information but a sensory impression of a neighborhood in their city. The maps take their readers to a place in their community and transmit an experience of the neighborhood's life. Holbrook evocatively describes the futility of trying to count children in the neighborhood with "little people surging in and out of passage-ways, and up and down outside staircases, like a veritable steam of life."[321] The maps were expected to "[suggest] just how members of various nationalities are grouped and disposed," and the reader was expected to actively interpret their meaning by comparing the nationality and wage maps.[322]

Such a confrontation with experience figures prominently in nineteenth-century

[317] Holbrook, 60.
[318] Holbrook, 55.
[319] Holbrook, 60.
[320] Holbrook, 57.
[321] Holbrook, 54.
[322] Holbrook, 56.

political thought. Timothy Mitchell has argued that the reproduction of chaotic experiences for didactic purposes was in vogue in the late-nineteenth century. The 1889 Paris World Exhibition, for example, painstakingly reproduced the chaotic streets of Cairo for fairgoers.[323] To experience the exhibit was to have an otherwise inaccessible experience and to be shocked by it. Indeed, in his criticism of nineteenth-century social science, Beard gestures to a connection between the motivation behind that sort of work and William James's appeal to "stubborn and irreducible" fact.[324] Like the authors of *Maps and Papers,* pragmatists like Peirce, James, and Dewey[325] were attempting to offer an account of experience that was individually lived while remaining collectively tractable. On its own, however, their appeal to lived experience proves to be elusive, and doubly so in light of the "linguistic turn" that forecloses any appeal to "raw experience" absent prior linguistic mediation. The typical resolution to this problem is to appeal to language itself as a form of experience, but the line of argument to be developed here emphasizes how the classical pragmatists conceived of the individual's encounter with an unexpected experience in navigational and geographic terms. Social scientific efforts at mapping, indexing, and directory-building thus become means of both transmitting and producing experience, all while locating it in political context.

Reading the pragmatist elaborations of experience alongside early social scientific endeavors illuminates a shared set of concerns with bridging the gap between particular lived experience and the demands of political life broadly captured by mappings both

[323] Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (1989): 217-8.
[324] Beard, 1.
[325] Dewey and Addams were associates during Dewey's tenure at the University of Chicago.

literal and figurative. What was dismissed by Easton as mere "inventory building" can be understood as attempts to construct a shared political community. After all, appeals to experience only make sense for those lacking it in some manner. The work of the social sciences can thus be understood in terms of constructing a shared set of ethically and politically significant experiences, as opposed to the ongoing refinement of nomological causal theory or surveillance technique. The purpose of engaging in "hyperfactual" social science was to help a fragmented and fragmenting political community recognize itself as such

Pragmatist Maps of Experience

Nineteenth-century social scientific inquiry was distinctively concerned to reckon with facts and experience, and it is the hyperfactualism of the work conducted by the American Social Science Association that strikes the modern reader, just as it did Easton and Beard. Frank Sanborn captures the outlook of the ASSA when he declares, "the man who causes two facts to be known and put on record where but one was known before" is more valuable than the statesman.[326] Social science was an explicitly Baconian project of indexing and cataloguing for Sanborn, a task that was both especially important and especially difficult in nineteenth-century America, "where everything fluctuates and glides into every other thing" and the task of social science is to "grasp the most elusive of eels by the most tantalizing of tails; it slips from our hold and defies all attempts to classify it."[327] The language members of the ASSA used to talk about such classification was that of experience. For Benjamin Peirce the ASSA was setting out to "search the

[326] Frank B. Sanborn, "The Work of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 6, (1874): 39.
[327] Sanborn, "The Work of Social Science," 36.

secrets of the nation's good in the depths of experience."[328] This was a democratic project, as "common sense and capacity of observation" are "natural to all men"[329] and "it is, then, the constituents to whom the argument must be addressed. We, too, are constituents, and our individual welfare cannot be separated from that of the country."[330] Experts can attempt to educate the public, but the privileged position of experts is both epistemologically and ethically suspect as Peirce frames it. Democratic politics would have to proceed by appeals to experience and common sense.

The appeal to experience as the foundation of political community of course finds similar articulation in the classical pragmatists. The consequences of this understanding of experience for political community become most explicit James, who argues that not just science, but all of what he calls "common sense" is the accretion of what has proven useful through past generations of inquiry.[331] Problems arise when common sense clashes with or is detached from actual lived experience. Importantly, James uses a cartographic metaphor to describe this problem: "On a map I can distinctly see the relation of London, Constantinople, and Pekin to the place where I am; in reality I utterly fail to feel the facts which the map symbolizes."[332] Such maps are "patently artificial", and so for us to reconnect to common experience requires a "straightening of the tangle of our experience's immediate flux,"[333] by which he means the production of "consequences

[328] Benjamin Peirce, "The National Importance of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 7, (1880): xv.
[329] Benjamin Peirce, xviii.
[330] Benjamin Peirce, xv.
[331] William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 76.
[332] James, *Pragmatism*, 79.
[333] James, *Pragmatism*, 80.

verifiable by sense."[334] We need not overemphasize the immediacy of such a consequence, however, as for James what makes an experience is conflict with past habit: "The individual has a stock of old opinions already, but he meets a new experience that puts them to a strain. Somebody contradicts them; or in a reflective moment he discovers that they contradict each other; or he hears of facts with which they are incompatible; or desires arise in him which they cease to satisfy."[335] Critically, problematic situations for James arise through reported knowledge, not just from directly felt experiences. To return to the cartographic metaphor, the problem is less with maps as such, and more with ones that have become so detached from lived experience so as to lose all meaning.

The cartographic metaphor becomes even more explicit in the thought of Dewey. In *How We Think*, Dewey imagines a traveler faced with a fork in the road and puzzled as to how to proceed. As with Peirce and James, such a traveler has been shocked out of unconscious habit, and now is presented with a situation that demands active thought and resolution. Such a traveler "looks for evidence that will support belief in favor of either of the roads—for evidence that will weight down one suggestion. He may climb a tree; he may go first in this direction, then in that, looking, in either case, for signs, clues, indications. He wants something in the nature of a signboard or a map, and his reflection is aimed at the discovery of facts that will serve this purpose."[336] Inquiry resolves the situation and returns the mind to habit. Dewey's use of the map metaphor to do this is significant. Maps chart out the spaces through which movement is possible and orient

[334] James, *Pragmatism*, 83.
[335] James, *Pragmatism*, 31.
[336] John Dewey, *How We Think*, in *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, vol. 8, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 122.

potentially disorienting situations. There is for Dewey a sort of mental map that the mind draws upon to make sense of experiences. When something does not fit on the map, the map must undergo revision such that a new mental map and a new habit of mind are formed.

Dewey elsewhere uses maps as a metaphor for the cultural backdrop against which political judgment operates. In his discussion of WWI, Dewey says that war had "put the world as a whole on the map for the citizen of Little Peddlington and Jay Corners. The kind of knowledge and interest that was once confined to travelers and the cultured has become widely distributed."[337] Of the discovery of America and its addition to maps of the world, Dewey writes that "it was not simply states of consciousness or ideas inside the heads of men that were altered when America was actually discovered; the modification was one in the public meaning of the world in which men publicly act."[338] Dewey says that nature consists of "events rather than substances,"[339] but on this point he distinguishes between the objects of primary and secondary experience, with only the objects of secondary experience subject to reflection.[340] This is because the objects of primary experience for Dewey are isolated, while secondary objects "get the meaning contained in a whole system of related objects."[341] Experience is, at it were, always already a cultural product.

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[337] Dewey, "What Are We Fighting For?" in *The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 11, ed. Jo Ann Boydston Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 100.
[338] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, in *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, vol. 1, ed. Jo Ann Boydston Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 125.
[339] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 6.
[340] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 16.
[341] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 16.

In Dewey we find the stakes laid out most clearly that inquiry not only takes place within political communities, but in an important sense inquiry and community are mutually constitutive. Dewey states this most clearly in *The Public and Its Problems*, where inquiry summons communities into being. There the problem of modern democratic politics is the lack of "shared experience," and for Dewey this is already a problem of the "signs and symbols" that might produce "common meanings."[342] For Dewey and the other pragmatists, knowledge does not exist as such, but always serves a practical purpose. Knowledge exists in its application by those who make use of it. Knowledge is further conceived of as a communal enterprise made up of individually lived but collectively communicated experiences. Knowledge exists in those communicative exchanges, and not in faithfulness to the nature of things. It is always both performative and constitutive, and is along these lines that we might understand the "hyperfactualist" social science undertaken in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Social Science and the Politics of Mapping

Writing in the *Journal of Social Science*, Benjamin Peirce drew a direct analogy between the work of the ASSA and the mapping work of the Coast Survey that had been under his direction. "Just as the coast survey … searches the whole length of our sea-coast, and constructs charts showing where the safe path lies and where the dangerous rock is concealed," Peirce writes, "so the province of this Society is, not to gratify personal ambition, but thoughtfully and conscientiously to survey and mark out the safe channels for society to navigate, and buoy out the dangers which may be hidden from superficial

[342] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, in *The Later* Works, 1925-1953, vol. 2, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 324.

observation."[343] In Peirce's metaphor, social science provides navigational guidance for the "ship of state." Furthermore, this work has increasingly become the task of social scientists as opposed to cartographers, as "there is almost as great a necessity for a social exploration now as there was for a geographical exploration a century ago."[344] William Strong similarly develops geographical metaphors for social scientific inquiry, writing that society offers metaphorical "regions" which are "open for explorers."[345] That which is unknown about society is "terra incognita" though thankfully for Strong "many diligent and successful explorers have entered into it."[346] Social scientists would be trailblazers, surveying the land ahead for those who would follow, but such work was always understood to be in service to the public.

Writers in the *Journal of Social Science* found the map metaphor appealing for the autonomy maps grant their audience. Maps help orient their audience but they don't command this or that course of action. Writing on public hygiene, the clinical innovator Richard Clarke Cabot deploys cartographic metaphors for the social scientific project. Along with his coauthor Phillip King Brown, he claimed that "the hygiene of the future will be not a series of commands, 'thus do or thou shalt die,' but a *map,* showing a number of practicable roads … such a map of passable roads will not bind the individual to walk on any one of them, but, if he wishes to roam in the field or the ditches, he will at least be conscious of what he is doing, and where the ordinary roads are if he cares to

[343] Benjamin Peirce, "The National Importance of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 7, (1880): xiii.
[344] Peirce, xiii.
[345] William Strong, "The Study of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 4 (1871): 1.
[346] Strong, 6.

return."[347] They counsel that "the individual should be urged to find out for himself how to keep well."[348] It is the reservation made for individual political judgment that turns out to be particularly valuable

Following the "cartographic anxiety", political theorists are skeptical of the "official vision" inherent in maps. Maps appear to be written from the perspective of the outsider, the person who doesn't know the local terrain in some way or another. Maps would seem less useful for those with intimate knowledge of a locale, but as the *Hull House Maps and Papers* reveal, they can even be of use for locals who may travel an area regularly and yet fail to experience it in its totality. Maps situate the reader, and do so in a way that few other media do. That is why they so frequently come with "you are here" markers. Maps expect the user to make use of them, perhaps even in ways not intended by the mapmaker. Maps are able to do this because they present the reader with an overabundance of information. They confront the reader, and with an account of geographic space, but often in the service of an account of political space. They are both an experience and the reproduction of reported experience. Maps make the boundaries of political community explicit, and as one author in the *Journal of Social Science* put it, with their aid things can be seen that are "prominent upon the map but invisible to the eye."[349] Maps of course aren't alone in this. Indexes and inventories can also perform that function, even when they don't array information graphically.

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[347] Richard Clarke Cabot and Phillip King Brown, "Individual Factors in Hygiene," *Journal of Social Science* 43 (1905): 70, emphasis original.
[348] Clark and Brown, 69.
[349] Grace Peckham, "The Nervousness of Americans," *Journal of Social Science* 22 (1887): 41

This last distinction is critically important for understanding the social science produced by the ASSA in the latter half of the nineteenth century because relatively little of the work published under the auspices of the ASSA contains any maps in the traditional sense. No maps appear in the published *Journal of Social Science*. That is to say, there are no attempts to visually represent data across a graphic depiction of geographic space, even though such work was being produced elsewhere in the middle of the nineteenth century.[350] This ought not be terribly surprising given the already-high costs of printing for an organization that was in near-constant financial peril. The *JSS* is similarly sparse on other kinds of illustrations for similar reasons. While tables of numbers are relatively commonplace, the first (hand-drawn) line graph (of the price of silver over time) does not appear in the *JSS* until 1894, relatively late in a publication run that only lasted until 1909.

There are, however two maps published in the ASSA's *Handbook for Immigrants* of 1871. The first is a relatively small map depicting a plot of homesteading land with the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad west of Omaha, Nebraska, an unusual advertisement in an otherwise non-commercial text [Figure 6]. The second and more important map is a large fold-out map of the continental United States [Figure 7]. With 21 plates in all, the map folds out to nearly three feet tall and over four feet wide. The map is titled in both English, German, and Swedish, but the actual content of the map is sparse. Towns, cities, and rivers are labeled, as are states. For Hannah, such a privileging would serve to reify states as the relevant political communities, diminishing the political

[350] Schulten, *Mapping the Nation*.

power of urban centers,[351] but the greater privileging is that of a political community that for the first time is making claims to the entirety of the territory all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The map serves another more immediate and mundane function, however. Besides cities, rivers, and states, the other major feature of the map in the *Handbook for Immigrants* is railroads. The East appears as a dense web of rails, while the West is sparse – only a small handful of railroads extend all the way to the Pacific. Given that so much of the rest of the *Handbook* is designed to aid the potential European immigrant in a journey to the United States, the purpose of the map is clear: to serve as a reference for a journey by rail. The map serves to represent political community and aid in the (literal) navigation of that space. It is meant to be used by the reader, and in ways not immediately prescribed by the publisher.

Certainly the maps published in the *Handbook for Immigrants* do not come close to the sophisticated cartographies developed elsewhere around the same time. By way of comparison, Francis A. Walker, a founding member of the ASSA, was producing imaginative and detailed color-coded maps as head of the census at the exact same moment in time. Indeed, Walker's 1874 *Statistical Atlas of the United States* was hailed at the time for its sophisticated use of graphs and charts to display complex information, all using the latest in printing technology.[352] So as one opens the *Statistical Atlas of the United States*, one finds color-coded maps detailing, for example, the percentage of immigrants across the territorial United States [Figure 8]. Importantly, these maps appear alongside other charts and graphs sorted out by state [Figure 9]. Significantly, the charts

[351] Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory*, 147.
[352] Thomas P. Kinnahan, "Charting Progress: Francis Amasa Walker's Statistical Atlas of the United States and Narratives of Western Expansion," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 400.

are not quite geographical, as individual bars and boxes represent individual states and arrayed in grids by alphabetical order. The experience of encountering these charts remains similar to the experience of looking at the maps. They offer an account of the totality of political space. They also invite comparison across states just as color gradients across maps do. And just as all the states appear on a map, all are represented in the array of charts. Each has a place because each matters in and of itself. As Bruno Latour argues, scientific inquiry is perpetually engaged in the construction of these grids of classification.[353] Cases and samples only make visual sense when arrayed on precisely this kind of grid. But what matters here is less that the grid is constructed and more that it is consciously mirroring the boundaries of pre-existing political communities. Information about the different states is offered regardless of any expectation of its utility.

Something analogous is at work when in a *JSS* article concerned with crimes that lead to the disenfranchisement of the offender, even though the article contains numerical tables instead of maps or graphs. What is significant here is that the table [Figure 10] lists all the states and crimes for which they impose the penalty of disenfranchisement (such as treason, felony, bribery, perjury, forgery, murder, robbery, dueling, embezzlement, and election fraud) and lists all the states regardless of whether or not it is one of the states that imposes such a penalty (Massachusetts doesn't).[354] In charts like these, as in the maps discussed above, what matters most of all is that all of political space is charted, as opposed to merely those cases that are most interesting or representative of the whole.

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[353] Bruno Latour, "Circulating Reference: Sampling Soil in the Amazon Forest," in *Pandora's Hope* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 24-79.
[354] James F. Colby, "Disenfranchisement for Crime," *Journal of Social Science* 17 (1882): 75.

Readers are invited, whether implicitly or explicitly, to compare different states and their conditions, with the potential for readers to be surprised by what they find. Where such an operation is invited as a means of comprehending the extent of political community, to have a table that was incomplete would be as disconcerting as having a map with uncharted regions. There is then an overindulgence of information that, while off-putting to the reader of today, actually proves critical for understanding the project of the social sciences at this time. There is a didactic purpose underlying it all, as such complications of information are intended not first and foremost to convince the reader of anything in particular, but to serve as a reference and give a sense of the size and scope of the political community.

I want to emphasize the ways that inquiry situates political actors in political space together with one another. Tucked into an 1887 article in the *Journal of Social Science* on the topic of private property, William Torrey Harris remarks that "human life, as such, signifies the perpetual assimilation, on the part of the individual, of the aggregate experience of the whole community. All that society, as a whole, experience, aggregating the experience of all individuals, becomes by intercommunication the possession of each."[355] This comes back to the task of the social sciences, which is conceived of by Harris in terms of "understand[ing] the laws of the structure of human society with a view to use its knowledge for the increase of human welfare," a task that turns out to be in a perpetual state of failure because it must "comprehend the scope of the whole" and engage in a "general survey" and a "complete inventory" where "we must discover one

[355] William Torrey Harris, "Right of Property and the Ownership of Land," *Journal of Social Science* 22 (1887): 146.

by one, all the elements that condition the problem of society, and learn to keep them in view."[356] For present eyes, the two tasks seem at odds with one another, as the one is nomothetic, and the other more journalistic in character, but we should take special note of the degree to which "human welfare" is bound up with surveys, inventories, and complete knowledge of society. Certainly it was the case that experiences and examples were to be discovered for their representative qualities, as for example when "The experience of Massachusetts … is substantially the experience of every State in the Union."[357] But in other cases experiences were to be discovered and shared simply as such. As Henry Villard wrote, the purpose of the ASSA was to "induce the widest possible interchange of opinion, experience and information."[358] But as the tables discussed above demonstrate, this was not always merely about the transmission of experience as such, and also about the capacity for that transmission itself to form an experience in the sense described by the classical pragmatists, as an experience that challenges and provokes a creative response.

Social scientific work in the late-nineteenth century sought to offer an experience in this manner, but it also sought to offer the sort of imaginative experiences demanded by a massive increase in the scope of political community after the American Civil War. This was a moment in history where the boundaries of political community were exploding in size. Union victory hadn't merely preserved the size of the American polity, it had also created the need to justify the horrifying toll of that victory in life and limb. As a result, for the first time in American history, American citizens began identifying

[356] Harris, "Right of Property and the Ownership of Land," 116.
[357] John D. Philbrick, "Inspection of Country Schools," *Journal of Social Science* 1 (1869): 17.
[358] Henry Villard, "Historical Sketch of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 1 (1869): 6.

themselves as citizens of the United States as opposed to citizens of the individual states. In short, democracy was being pushed to unprecedented scales, with the number of people members of and the physical size of the political community simply boggling the mind.

We find writers working under the auspices of the ASSA grappling with these problems of scale and the imaginative demands of that scale appear almost immediately in their investigations. The inauspiciously titled article, "The Texas Cattle Disease" from the first issue of the *Journal of Social Science* will serve to demonstrate. John Stanton Gould begins by noting that the United States consumes two million tons of beef, and the author notes that such a sum boggles the mind. The scale is beyond reckoning: "very few of us really grasp the idea involved in the word 'one million;' to most it is a noun of multitude and that is all."[359] Gould then tries to connect it to something closer resembling daily lived experience: "If we conceive of a heap of one million pieces of meat each weighing a pound, it would take a man twenty-three days to distribute them, if he worked steadily for twelve hours in the day, and gave out one piece every second of time during the whole period."[360] This however fails to come even close to the actual amount of beef consumed in the nation, as it would actually take "two hundred and fifty-two years to distribute this mass of meat," and if the slaughtered animals were placed "eight abreast" they would extend from New York to Chicago.[361] The conservative estimate of the number of slaughtered cattle is produced first by an estimate of the number of slaughtered in New York, then by remark that similar numbers would be consumed in the Mid-

[359] John Stanton Gould, "The Texas Cattle Disease," *Journal of Social Science* 1, (1869): 56.
[360] Gould, "The Texas Cattle Disease," 56.
[361] Gould, "The Texas Cattle Disease," 56-7.

Atlantic cities, New England, and the "Southern seaboard cities." The reader is taken on a geographical tour of political space, up and down the coast, then west to the Mississippi, all for the purposes of appreciating the scope of the potential threat posed by illness in the food chain.

In a separate article, Robert Porter summons a different imaginative experience in his readers, imploring them to look at a map as if looking down upon a miniaturized version of the country, starting in New England, passing west through Pennsylvania "through a cloud of smoke that rolls up from a hundred blackened valleys."[362] Once into the interior of the country, he invites the reader to draw a mental line enclosing "The West": Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. The challenge is to imagine that cluster of states as a single entity, a "country," for "were it possible to view that territory at one glance" a diversity of "boundless riches" would appear, among them a "corn belt," "fields of ripening wheat," "millions of cattle," "bare mountains of iron coal," "an almost exhaustless supply of timber," and two million human inhabitants and a steady stream of "non-producers" from the eastern states and Europe who finally realize their productive promise.[363] Porter goes on to compare the earnings and savings of residents in eastern and western states, sometimes treating those states in aggregate, sometimes treating states individually but grouping them regionally. Similar charts show the populations, number of factories, and number employed in factories, broken down by state [Figure 11]. Porter claims that because no reliable numbers exist to show the rise of manufacturing in the West, he will look at numbers for

[362] Robert Porter, "Recent Changes in the West," *Journal of Social Science* 11 (1880): 46.
[363] Porter, 47-8.

Chicago individually, which will "give a fair idea of the general growth."[364] Soon after doing this, however, he returns to examining statistics broken down to cover all states.

The moves performed by these two articles then are twofold. The first attempt is to try to translate the scale into terms relatable through everyday lived experience. The second move is to travel across geographical territory to attempt to relate the communities of people that contribute to the greater political communities. The regions in both pieces are abstract. The travels are to regions like New England, the West and the Southern seaboard, and less to specific places.

Elsewhere the indexing of specific places and localities is explicit, and the reader is invited to engage in a different act of imagination. A summary of a report from Justin Winsor, Superintendent of the Boston Public Library details a variety of statistics (e.g. date of founding, source of income, number of volumes, average number of users) for eighty-six libraries in the United States containing more than 5,000 volumes. The list is designed to be exhaustive, as it promises "the omissions are few … and of minor importance."[365] As discussed previously, these sorts of data were expected to be worked upon by readers who encountered them. But moreover, these data served to map out the horizons of possibly relevant knowledge. What was on offer in this article was not an abstract exploration of the state of libraries in various communities, not a random sampling for the production of a detailed case study, but the indexing of all libraries of possible interest in the larger United States. To confront the totality of these cases was to grapple with living in a world in common with others.

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[364] Porter, 55.
[365] "Statistics of Libraries in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 2 (1870): 249.

Such indexing work stretched far and wide. The second issue of the *Journal of Social Science* stands in as an example of this style of presentation. Its 311 pages index a medley of items: the index of libraries mentioned above, the list of "People's Banks" mentioned in the previous chapter, a seventeen-page catalogue of the faculty and course offerings of the Frederick William University in Berlin (which promises to demonstrate that "most of the University Lecturers named are men who have obtained a world-wide reputation by their original investigations"[366]). This indexing work even extended to the membership of the association itself. Up until the end of its run, the *Journal of Social Science* printed a list of its membership, complete with mailing addresses. Listed members are those who have remained current in their annual dues. In the inaugural issue, the list stretches for 6 pages. In 1890 it stretches for 8 pages, and by 1901 it stretched for 15 pages. New members were listed by city or state. The point of publishing such an index over the life of the *Journal* can only be to put these members into potential contact with one another. As Sanborn puts it, "the special place of the American Social Science Association is that of uniting all and communicating with all who may be willing to do so … our methods are simple: the holding of meetings … the publication of a journal, the distribution of our own publications and those of other organizations, and the maintenance of correspondence with all parts of the civilized world."[367] More broadly, the *Journal of Social Science* was designed to be a reference tool. It was to be consulted, but not just for the purposes of conducting original inquiries, as in the manner described

[366] "General Intelligence," *Journal of Social Science* 2 (1870): 271-92.
[367] Sanborn, "The Work of Social Science," 44.

in the previous chapter, but further for the purposes of producing an ethical experience: that of confronting and grappling with life in political community.

Producing Common Experience

All of the above has pushed the mapping metaphor beyond the production of graphical models of space to include all attempts at capturing a synoptic view of political community. Even when contained to a table, the synoptic drive serves to orient subjects in political space. After Foucault political theorists are skeptical of such a drive, but the desire to control everything can also be evidence of a desire to recognize that everything matters. In this sense the synoptic ambitions of the work published in the *JSS* are supremely democratic. Massachusetts appears on a table listing disenfranchisement laws even though it doesn't have any such laws because Massachusetts matters. Sometimes specifics matter for their own sake and not for what they represent.

Maps also confront their reader with arguments about causal relationships between features of society and do so in a highly accessible way. Speaking in 2014 about a recent influx to the United States of immigrant minors from Central America, Vice President Joe Biden remarked, "I presented today a map to all the leaders showing a direct correlation between the number of unaccompanied minors and where they came from. It directly correlates to the most dangerous cities in Central America. You can just map it. It's clear."[368] The claim then was that the map located a political problem in political space, suggested a causal mechanism behind that problem, and did so in a "clear" and accessible manner. But what it means for something to be "clear" on a map is

[368] Office of the Vice President, "Remarks to the Press with Q&A by Vice President Joe Biden in Guatemala," White House Press Release, June 20, 2014 http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/remarks-press-qa-vice-president-joe-biden-guatemala

only possible because maps orient their readers. A map can only serve this purpose if it orients and disorients at the same time.

Here Thomas Bender's criticism of historical scholarship organized around the idea of the decay and decline of "community" is useful again. Bender argues that before the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of an American nation was a mere abstraction, however powerful that idea proved to be in the rhetoric of figures like Abraham Lincoln.[369] In terms of the rhythms of daily life, only the local community had any concrete reality. Bender is interested then in how local experience and ideas about participation in larger abstractions like the nation and the economy came to be layered upon one another. Bender's larger intervention is to go on to ask if there might be a conception of community less tied to the naïve and romantic view of "community" as located in the hamlet. He does this by drawing a distinction between community-as-place and community-as-experience.[370] The shift away from community as something that was lived in specific places gained particular momentum in the late nineteenth century. Importantly, Bender identifies experiences as the means by which community is now constructed. As he explains, Progressive-era thinkers such as Herbert Croly were of the view that "primary social relations provided the context for everyone's first social experience and for the shaping of everyone's social consciousness."[371] What has been explored here is how those experiences were operating in the work of the ASSA in the service of imagining political community.

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[369] Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982). 88.
[370] Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, 62.
[371] Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, 37.

By the turn of the century, the ASSA was dead as an organization. In what would be the final presidential address of the American Social Science Association, John H. Finley remarked that the ASSA was "the mother, an enfeebled mother, I regret to say, grandmother, or aunt of most, if not all, of the associations now existent in the territory where once she dwelt alone in her omniscient interest. She sits in old age, impoverished by the very activity, the highly specialized and splendid activity, of her learned and scientific children."[372] In Sanborn's account, the ASSA was a response to the tremendous challenges facing the country. The Civil War had produced a "grand political and social revolution" as significant as the American Revolution, and attending that revolution came questions of "suffrage, finance, jurisprudence, social economy, and social order."[373] The project of the ASSA is thus declared, then in retrospect at the death of the organization, to have been fully political, as an act of political reconstruction to attend the dramatic upheavals wrought by the Civil War. Similar attention might be paid to the political work social science continues to do to such ends.

[372] John H. Finley, "Opening Address," *Journal of Social Science* 46 (1909): 1.
[373] Frank Sanborn, "History of the American Social Science Association in a Letter to its Present Secretary," *Journal of Social Science* 46 (1909): 3.

Conclusion: Disciplinary History as Political Theory

The title of this dissertation is "The Commonwealth of Social Science," a turn of phrase Frank Sanborn used in 1884 to describe how the social sciences, like a federation of states, were united by a set of common goals and subject matter even as they were quickly dividing themselves into separate and independent academic disciplines. That year would be pivotal for the development of the social sciences in the United States, as it saw the creation of the American Historical Association, the first of many associations to hive off from Sanborn's "mother of associations." The idea that these breakaway groups would remain united in a "commonwealth" represented Sanborn's belief that the (by then-doomed) American Social Science Association would remain a forum to exchange ideas and findings across social scientific disciplines and a leading organization directing that work. The metaphor of a "commonwealth of social science" is apt for the purposes of this project for additional reasons, as it offers a number of possible ways by which to understand the politics implicit in the social sciences.

The emphasis here has been on the efforts of producers of social scientific knowledge to share interpretive authority with their audiences, the decisions they make to institutionalize social scientific inquiry in this way and not that, and the effects of their inquiries to summon political communities of previously unprecedented scale into being, all of which find the social sciences deeply implicated in political work. This variety of political meanings was neither intended by Frank Sanborn when he called the social sciences a commonwealth, nor were any of meanings mentioned above ever explicitly worked up into a systematic account of social scientific inquiry by any single participant

in the work of the ASSA. The point rather has been to reconstruct out of disparate materials a set of understandings for what the politics of the social sciences might be. The early development of the social sciences illuminates submerged political dynamics that remain in operation to this day, even if seldom noticed, as well as forgotten possibilities for the politics of social scientific inquiry.

The additional emphasis throughout this project has been to stress the degree to which the early work of the social sciences shared a set of common concerns, ethics, and language with pragmatists working at about the same time. Even more explicitly than were social scientific pioneers, the pragmatists were working to create a unified understanding of epistemology and democratic politics, an understanding of how knowledge works in human societies that was not merely compatible with democracy but actively nourishing of it. Pragmatism offers a more sustained account of what social inquiry means in the context of democratic politics, but the goal here has not merely been to use pragmatism as an interpretive lens for understanding the early history of the social sciences, but to explore how themes shared between early social scientific discourse and pragmatism illuminate the latter. That work appears especially in the last chapter, which highlighted the use of geographical and navigational metaphors in the work of James and Dewey, but other chapters contribute as well.

As Colin Koopman argues in his recent study *Pragmatism as Transition*, pragmatism proves to be a particularly useful for understanding moments of transition, where political and social forces render the world and the concepts used to describe it unfamiliar. The pragmatists saw social inquiry as a vital task in bringing that world back

into focus, but not for the discovery of truth, which they saw as unattainable and therefore fruitless, but rather the more modest and melioristic task of "reconstructing and reorienting the epistemic, ethical, and political realities in which we find ourselves flowing."[374] We find ourselves in just such a moment today, as political and social forces change the world more quickly than it can be understood, as political boundaries appear increasingly meaningless markers of where political authority begins and ends, and as people organize themselves in novel ways around new technologies. In the face of all this change there is more social scientific inquiry than ever, but its importance for politics remains just as fragile as it was when Dewey wrote that "Man has never had such a varied body of knowledge in his possession before, and probably never before has he been so uncertain and so perplexed as to what his knowledge means."[375] The argument of this dissertation is that some understanding of what our social scientific knowledge means can be gleaned from a study of its history, which reveals how it can work in conditions of political uncertainty. Politics is of course always a matter of uncertainty, but some moments are more uncertain than others. Social scientific inquiry performs the critical function of making sense of a constantly changing world.

Politics, Political Science, and Political Theory

As discussed at length in the introduction, the social sciences have over the course of their history sought for themselves some manner of political relevance, political scientists first among them. This aspiration for political relevance has been the subject of recurring controversy, but at the center of those controversies was less an argument about whether

[374] Colin Koopman, *Pragmatism as Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 17.
[375] John Dewey, *Later Works, 1925-1953*, Vol. 4, *1929, The Quest for Certainty*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 249.

the social sciences ought to matter, but rather an argument about what sort of inquiry, what style of presentation, and what manner of institutional positioning would have the most salutary effects. The debate was not between the advocacy and objectivity, for those who pushed for greater scientific rigor in social sciences thought that this rigor would produce greater political efficacy. The history of political science reveals the instability of these debates. As Rogers Smith notes, many of the most prominent proponents of scientism have consistently advocated a more civically engaged political science at the end of their careers. Political scientists working in the Progressive Era such as Charles Beard and Charles Merriam, as well as those of the postwar era such as David Easton and Gabriel Almond eventually "turned away from emphasizing the pursuit of a truly 'scientific' political science and stressed the vindication and advancement of effective human political agency by means of a more truly democratic politics."[376] Ironically, all went on to be judged "naïve and unscientific by younger proponents of yet another 'new science of politics'."[377] The theme repeats itself because politics and epistemology have become linked, with political claims taking the form of claims to knowledge, and claims to knowledge making explicit or implicit political claims. After Weber, social scientists have become accustomed to the notion that descriptive and normative questions are separate, but the history of the social sciences complicates any simple division of the two.

The distinction nonetheless holds considerable force in the social sciences, and attempts to break free from its confines prove vexing. In the past fifteen years, the "Perestroika" movement in political science has been a rallying point against perceptions

[376] Rogers Smith, "Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science," *Daedalus* 126 (1997): 257.
[377] Smith, 25.

that the discipline was dominated by a handful of individuals in command of highly technical methodologies. In an anonymous email sent to ten political scientists in October of 2000, someone calling themselves "Mr. Perestroika" lambasted a "coterie" of "East Coast Brahmins" who were nothing but "poor game-theorists" and "pseudo-economists," but who dominated the pages of leading political science journals anyway.[378] The letter caused a firestorm, and it was credited with the creation of the new journal *Perspectives on Politics*,[379] though the impetus behind that journal predates the Perestroika letter.[380] That journal was designed to speak to audiences beyond the discipline,[381] but it is noteworthy that the Perestroika movement self-consciously limited itself to methodological questions. Indeed, the specific critique levied by "Mr. Perestroika" were first at the discipline's domination by rational choice and statistical analysis, and second at the leadership of the discipline primarily by white men. While the critique of APSA and the APSR was a proxy for a critique of the direction the discipline as a whole was taking,[382] neither the practical impact of the discipline on politics nor its ability to speak to broader audiences was mentioned. Indeed a recurrent critique of the Perestroika movement is its silence on politics, as when advocacy against the Iraq War and attempts to rally behind the academic freedom of Frances Fox Piven was squelched by

[378] "The Idea," in *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 9-10.
[379] Theodore Lowi, 51.
[380] Robert Jervis, "Perestroika, Politics, and the Profession," in *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 536.
[381] Jennifer Hochschild, "Introduction and Observations," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 1 (2003): 1.
[382] Jervis, 535.

Perestroikans.[383] As well-intentioned as the desire to protect the political science from outside critique by purging it of explicit partisanship, an intervention in favor of greater methodological diversity and demographic representation within the discipline is political on its face. Epistemology matters for politics and it matters because politics is about summoning shared meaning. As Brian Caterino writes, "The point of criticizing the dominance of rational choice and other quantitative models is to acknowledge their failure to help us make sense of the real world we inhabit."[384] The goal of the Perestroika movement to promote methodological diversity is politically valuable to the degree that any single methodological frame eventually fails to make sense of the world. Neither political science nor any other social scientific discipline can claim a monopoly on political knowledge, but political science matters for politics to the degree that it helps or hinders understanding of the world.

As political science is concerned to illuminate and make sense of our shared world, the importance of its empirical inquiries for political theory would seem clear. That is, empirical inquiries can and ought to inform political theory, and not merely vice versa, as is often the case with political theory providing conceptual grist for or critical checks on research conducted in other subfields. By and large the subfield of political theory retains the hostility to quantitative social science imported by German émigré such as Arendt and Adorno. The previous chapters offer reasons to reconsider the condemnation of quantification as such, and the history of the social sciences reveals the

[383] Cecelia Lynch, "The 'R' Word and Perestroika," in *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Brian Caterino, "Perestroika's Last Stand," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43, no. 4 (2010): 753.
[384] Caterino, 753.

hostility between political theory and quantitative political science was not always present. John Gunnell has done well to detail the way American political scientists in the early twentieth century such as Merriam understood political theory and empirical work to be not merely complementary to one another but to be of the same order.[385] By offering these sorts of counterexamples, the history of the discipline offers a check on the taken-for-granted quality of many of these boundaries.

The ambition here has been to explore the early history of the social sciences with an eye toward what of that history could speak to persistent questions in the field of political theory. Each individual chapter has spoken to a distinct problem in contemporary political theory and used the history of the ASSA as a conceptual lens through which to view that problem differently. In closing, I would like to speculate further as to what both the history of the social sciences and the simple empiricism of that era might offer to contemporary political theorists.

In *Worldly Ethics*, Ella Myers offers a critique of the "ethical turn" in political theory, arguing that turns to care for the self (Foucault) or the Other (Levinas) are "ill-equipped to nourish associative democratic politics."[386] The problem as Myers sees it is that each of these ethics remains rooted to individuals and their dyadic interactions with others. As commendable as each conception of ethics is on their own terms, they offer few resources for thinking about politics because they offer no way of thinking about community, as politics is fundamentally about life shared in common. Myers thinks that an appeal to objects and "worldy things" can do this work. She argues that associative

[385] John Gunnell, *The Descent of Political Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 92.
[386] Ella Myers, *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 2.

politics is always going to be about a "common and contested object that is the focus of mutual attention, advocacy, and debate."[387] Worldy things do not have to be agreed upon by all, as she includes a "matter of fact" that has come to be contested.[388] The question for Myers is how to scale up from the ethical encounter with the self or the Other to something more associative. She is skeptical that micro acts of ethics can be scaled up in any meaningful sense into the macro demands of politics save for some shared object of agreement or contestation around which to organize that scaling. This also offers the helpful reminder that the world is not just the site of politics, but the object of politics as well.[389] Politics is not just about producing sites and procedures for managing political disputes, but about the objects over which those disputes take place.

The aspiration of Myers to reconnect the practice of politics to the object of politics is admirable, but requires further elaboration. Most problematically, the positive examples she cites find groups doing little more than making ethical claims for political communities to care for their own members. The groups she cites (the Beacons Project, No Más Muertes, and Right to the City)[390] as exemplary cases of world-oriented political activity are groups seeking to provide services for the needy in innovative ways, but it isn't clear why their activities represent the sort of worldly object-orientation she wishes to work up into a broader account of politics. That is, it isn't clear how their work is object or world-oriented and not precisely the sort of simple Other-oriented charity Myers seeks to move beyond. A better example she offers is a project known as the Iraq Body

[387] Meyers 2.
[388] Meyers, 17.
[389] Meyers, 92.
[390] Myers, 149.

Count, which was an amateur attempt to compile information about individual civilian deaths in the Iraq War.[391] What makes that example more meaningfully object-oriented is that it found interested amateurs seeking out and publishing previously unknown information in the service of a political agenda. By compiling accounts of deaths from a wide variety of sources the project was able to offer narrative glimpses into the individual lives of the dead while at the same time producing an effective image of the scale of the tragedy. The knowledge it produced was both local and global. It honored individually lived experiences while trying to work those experiences up into something greater, something with more political force. That Myers struggles to point to examples of the sort of "worldy" work she envisions is emblematic of precisely how challenging the problem of scale is for political theory.

Bruno Latour offers a more convincing account of what this sort of object-oriented politics would look like. As Latour puts it, political science lacks the resources for thinking about the *res* in the *res publica*, or the things over which the commonwealth is concerned and through which it is constituted. Latour's turn here brings additional texture to the idea expressed by Sanborn that the social sciences are a commonwealth, that for all their disciplinary differences they share a set of common concerns. Latour pushes this further by differentiating between what he calls *Realpolitik* and *Dingpolitik*, the first being the familiar "realism" that rejects idealism and understands the world in terms of competing interests, while the second pushes those claims to "realism" even further to include the things over which politics is contested. As Latour explains, "objects – taken as so many issues – bind all of us in a ways that map out a public space

[391] Myers, 147.

profoundly different from what is usually recognized under the label of 'the political'."[392] A political theory concerned with identifying fair procedures, balancing interests, or locating the mechanisms of power remains neutral as to the specific object of politics, what is under dispute in the first place. Specific disputes over specific issues slot into those procedures or mechanisms in a way that makes the theoretical account abstract enough to work for any manner of political disputes. The problem is that the objects of politics are not neutral, and in some important sense different objects of dispute demand a different politics altogether.

One simple example is climate change. There remains significant political dispute over the reality of climate change. There is considerably less scientific dispute over the reality of climate change, but this matters none for politics. We might note, however, that the object being disputed in this case is the viability of the planet, and this scales politics up beyond the scope of existing political institutions. Latour thinks Lippmann and Dewey identified the central problem of contemporary politics when they agreed that the scope of political problems had outstripped the mechanisms through which those problems were supposed to be controlled democratically. If politics is to catch up, so to speak, it must do so through attention to the objects of concern. But what would this attention look like?

Latour praises pragmatism as something that moves beyond "cheap realism" to "pragmata – the Greek name for Things. Now that's realism!"[393] But what the pragmatists emphasized above all else was that the ways human being think are shared in

[392] Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik," in *Making Things Public*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 5.
[393] Latour, 28.

common, or at least are potentially shared in common. Elitism isn't just problematic politically, it is problematic epistemologically as well. Ongoing disputes over climate change reveal the political futility of appealing to expertise as such. In a recent interview on the topic, Neil deGrasse Tyson responded to enthusiasm over a statement he made in interview with comedian Stephen Colbert that science is "true whether or not you believe in it." The slogan quickly appeared on t-shirts, and it gave the appearance that science was a cudgel to be beaten over the heads of non-believers. Not satisfied with this development, Tyson went on to elaborate on a vision for the place of science in a democratic society that would have pleased Dewey. Tyson said that scientific literacy is not marked by knowledge of facts, but by an attitude of curiosity. He said scientific literacy was about asking questions: "How do you approach someone who makes a statement to you? Do you say 'Oh, that's great, that's gotta be true! Tell me more' or is it 'Well, why is that true? How did you come to arrive at that conclusion? What are the consequences of it?'"[394] Such a culture of inquisitiveness would not require everyone to be a scientist, Tyson emphasized. It would, however, allow for more meaningful communication between experts and their publics. Put simply, science works best when accompanied by an inclusive ethic where audiences are invited in to share in the process of inquiry. Like others, Tyson bemoaned the lack of scientific literacy on the grounds that important political decisions depend on correct assessments as to the meaning of

[394] Lindsay Abrams, "Neil deGrasse Tyson: 'I Don't Know What Kind of Democracy that Is if You're Going to Ceherry-Pick…Science Because it Conflicts with Your Philosophy'," *Salon*, July 23, 2014 http://www.salon.com/2014/07/23/neil_degrasse_tyson_exclusive_i_don%E2%80%99t_know_what_kind_of_democracy_that_is_if_you%E2%80%99re_gonna_cherry_pick_science_because_it_conflicts_with_your_philosophy/

scientific findings. If that is the case, it is doubly so for the social sciences which even more reliably investigate matters of political import.

Directions for Further Research

This dissertation has been relatively limited in its scope, seeking to flesh out a few ways in which the early history of the social sciences can inform contemporary debates within political science and political theory. That formulation itself already preforms an understanding of political science and political theory as somehow methodologically or conceptually separate from one another, which warrants further scrutiny and historical inquiry. What counts as social scientific inquiry anyway? Debates over scientific demarcation were at the heart of Perestroika. In that battle debates over social scientific methodology and what forms of inquiry are to bear the mantle of scientific played out in politically charged terms. Critics of "scientism" in the social sciences accuse it of producing a politics of intolerance within the discipline,[395] and of hollowing politics elsewhere of meaning, leaving only a bare-boned proceduralism behind that corrode political practices.[396]

The overarching premise of this dissertation has been that understandings of these sorts are historically and institutionally specific. Among the most remarkable aspects of the early development of the social sciences is the nearly complete absence of concerns over scientific demarcation. Founders of the ASSA such as Sanborn were reluctant to police the boundaries of social science: "I have never seen or heard of a person who could concisely define … social science … it seems, indeed, to be neither a science or an

[395] Robert Jervis, "Perestroika, Politics, and the Profession," in *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 543.
[396] John Dryzek, "The Mismeasure of Political Man," *The Journal of Politics* 50, no. 3 (1988): 705-725.

art, but a mingling of the two, or of fifty sciences and arts."[397] Haskell notes that much of the social inquiry that took place in the ASSA appears naïve by modern standards, but this naiveté had a political valence for inquiries that were explicitly pitched at an audience that was a mixture of experts and amateurs, as discussed in chapter three.

Further inquiry into the political valence of the distinctive methodological approach of the early social sciences is warranted. Much of the focus in this dissertation has been on matters of presentation and rhetoric, but questions about what is to count as science are questions about what kinds of knowledge are to be admitted into political discourse and bear on political decisions. How did practitioners of the early social sciences understand their methodologies and the political stakes of those methodologies? How did they understand approaches as similar that practitioners now understand as different, as is manifest now in the boundary between political theory and the rest of the discipline's subfields. How might these conceptions be understood on their own terms instead of as evidence of immaturity or naiveté? How do modern settlements over scientific demarcation rest on historical and institutional foundations? Much work remains to be done, as social scientific knowledge remains as important for politics as ever.

[397] Frank B. Sanborn, "The Work of Social Science in the United States," *Journal of Social Science* 6 (1874): 36.

Illustrations

Figure 1: Population of the District of Columbia

Population of the District of Columbia (Census of 1880).

	White.	Colored.	Total.
Washington, ...	99,128	48,179	147,307
Georgetown, ...	8,819	3,759	12,578
County, ...	10,289	7,464	17,753
	118,236	59,402	177,638
Total number of taxpayers (stated), ...			18,000
" " " families (estimated), ...			37,500

Houses in the District of Columbia June 30, 1881.

Brick or stone houses in Washington, . . .	12,765	
" " " " " Georgetown, . . .	1,088	
" " " " " County, ...	201	
		14,054
Frame houses in Washington, ...	9,900	
" " " Georgetown, ...	1,005	
" " " County, ...	755	
		11,660
Houses valued at $100 and less in Washington,	1,424	
" " " " " " " Georgetown,	116	
" " " " " " " County, . .	370	
		1,910
Total, ...		27,624

Figure 2: People's Banks of Germany

Year.	No. of Banks.	Number of Members.	Active and Reserve Capital.	Amount of Deposits received.	Amount of Loans contracted.	Amount of Loans made to Members.
			Thalers.	Thalers.	Thalers.	Thalers.
1859	80	18,676	276,846	512,350	501,795	4,131,436
1860	133	31,603	528,857	1,322,893	1,069,833	8,478,489
1861	188	48,760	907,213	2,649,036	1,983,441	16,876,009
1862	243	69,202	1,332,438	2,747,577	3,441,033	23,674,261
1863	339	99,175	2,021,250	3,416,220	5,641,820	33,917,848
1864	445	135,013	3,252,757	5,355,265	7,401,317	48,147,495
1865	498	169,595	4,852,558	6,502,197	11,154,179	67,569,903
1866	532	193,712	6,329,504	8,726,518	11,169,011	85,010,145
1867	570	219,358	7,507,085	11,378,570	13,311,669	111,252,134

Figure 3: Statement of the Principal People's Banks of Germany

PEOPLE'S BANKS OF GERMANY.

STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL PEOPLE'S BANKS OF GERMANY.—1867.

Societies.	Number of Members.	Capital.	Deposits.	Loans Contracted.	Amount of Business in 1867.	Number of Loans to Members.	Range of Loans to Members.	Interest paid on Loans to Members.	Dividends.	Losses.
People's Bank of Delitzsch	545	Thalers. 14,130	Thalers. 5,980	Thalers. 15,154	Thalers. 114,933	Thalers. 734	Thalers. 3- 2,000	Thalers. 6⅔	Thalers. 8⅓	Thalers. 17
" " Aschersleben	1046	98,984	none	97,419	966,157	4639	2-12,000	7	8	none
" " Breslau	2936	110,274	187,797	1,800	918,135	6605	5- 5,000	5½–10	10	376
" " Berlin	232	13,452	5,721	none	194,008	2097	5- 1,000	10	10	500
" " Dresden	1470	119,984	438,999	26,203	698,570	5548	5-10,000	12	not given	none
" " Freiberg	1472	56,848	275,662	none	1,335,897	5424	5-10,000	7	12	945
" " Colberg	1193	39,681	83,360	2,000	496,603	3750	5- 8,000	6⅔	7⅓	none
" " Gotha	1440	91,334	145,521	138,609	592,239	3372	not given	6⅔	8⅓	10
" " Halle	985	90,508	145,225	22,243	431,376	4598	5- 9,200	6	6⅔–18	1422
" " Hanover	1341	54,515	none	123,877	272,143	3618	5- 500	7	8	2170
" " Frankfort (Oder)	1400	33,001	3,198	47,429	756,187	not given	1-10,000	6 – 8	9⅓	787
" " Rostock	2067	174,430	104,789	325,262	1,950,240	8336	3- 5,500	5½– 7	8	none
" " Eisleben	400	114,302	118,350	224,093	1,378,127	5840	3-14,000	6 – 7	12	597
" " Zwickau	915	53,749	none	360,909	521,011	2889	3-10,000	8	not given	none
" " Wiesbaden	1950	157,996	235,361	365,651	398,613	1773	10-28,000	5½– 7	8	none
" " Leipsic	4224	136,926	133,925	89,889	481,733	4983	3- 6,000	7	10	2367
" " Gera	846	39,002	239,704	9,405	481,411	2520	2- 5,000	6	10	39
" " Coeslin	385	9,686	128,245	none	578,446	2028	5- 4,000	7 – 8	16⅔	none
" " Crefeld	565	29,310	99,979	none	474,470	9872	5- 1,200	6⅔	10	1366
" " Mannheim	190	65,478	none	179,885	549,866	3426	3- 3,429	5 – 6	5	none

Figure 4: A Statistical View of the Deaths in Tenement Houses

TABLE A.

A STATISTICAL VIEW OF THE DEATHS IN TENEMENT HOUSES (WITH A GREAT EXCESS OF MORTALITY) IN FIVE STREETS OF NEW YORK IN 1873, ETC.

[From three to nine deaths occurring in each house. Houses containing from four to thirty families.]

Street.	Houses in which Three Deaths occurred.	Houses in which Four Deaths occurred.	Houses in which Five Deaths occurred.	Houses in which Six or more Deaths occurred. (Numerals in parenthesis showing the actual Number of Deaths in the respective Houses.).
Cherry Street .	3 3 3 28, 36, 56, 146, 148, 158, 3 244, 292, 324, 362, 437.	7 5 6 32, 126, 144, 221.	7 3 18, 22, 38, 174.	3 (8) (6) 26, 187.
Henry " .	27, 45, 298, 302.	238, 296.	4 8 42, 90, 95.	3 (6) 3 (6) 125, 310.
Mott " .	3 6 21, 46, 49, 103, 196, 205, 3 217, 252.	7 3 47, 57, 104, 143, 3 4 157, 159, 204, 229, 232, 282, 297.	....	3 (6) 4 (7) 102, 115.
Mulberry Street	4 3 9 3 20, 33, 39, 44, 45, 53, 54, 3 62, 65, 73, 79, 89, 109, 5 5 110, 113, 118, 119, 140, 5 167, 171, 175, 286.	7 5 3 8, 25, 41, 47, 51, 5 4 96, 115, 116, 120, 5 4 166, 201.	33, 111, 121.	4 (9) 7 (7) 4 (6) 59, 55, 87.
Washington St.	3 3 3 25, 29, 35, 57, 127, 135, 3 429, 715, 759, 781, 808.	3 3 6 5 10, 16, 26, 59, 96, 4 113, 687.	3 6 3 12, 28, 33, 107.	6 (7) (8) 102, 757.

The black numerals over any particular figure (street numbers) show the number of deaths in such house for the year 1872.

Figure 5: Nationalities Map No. 1

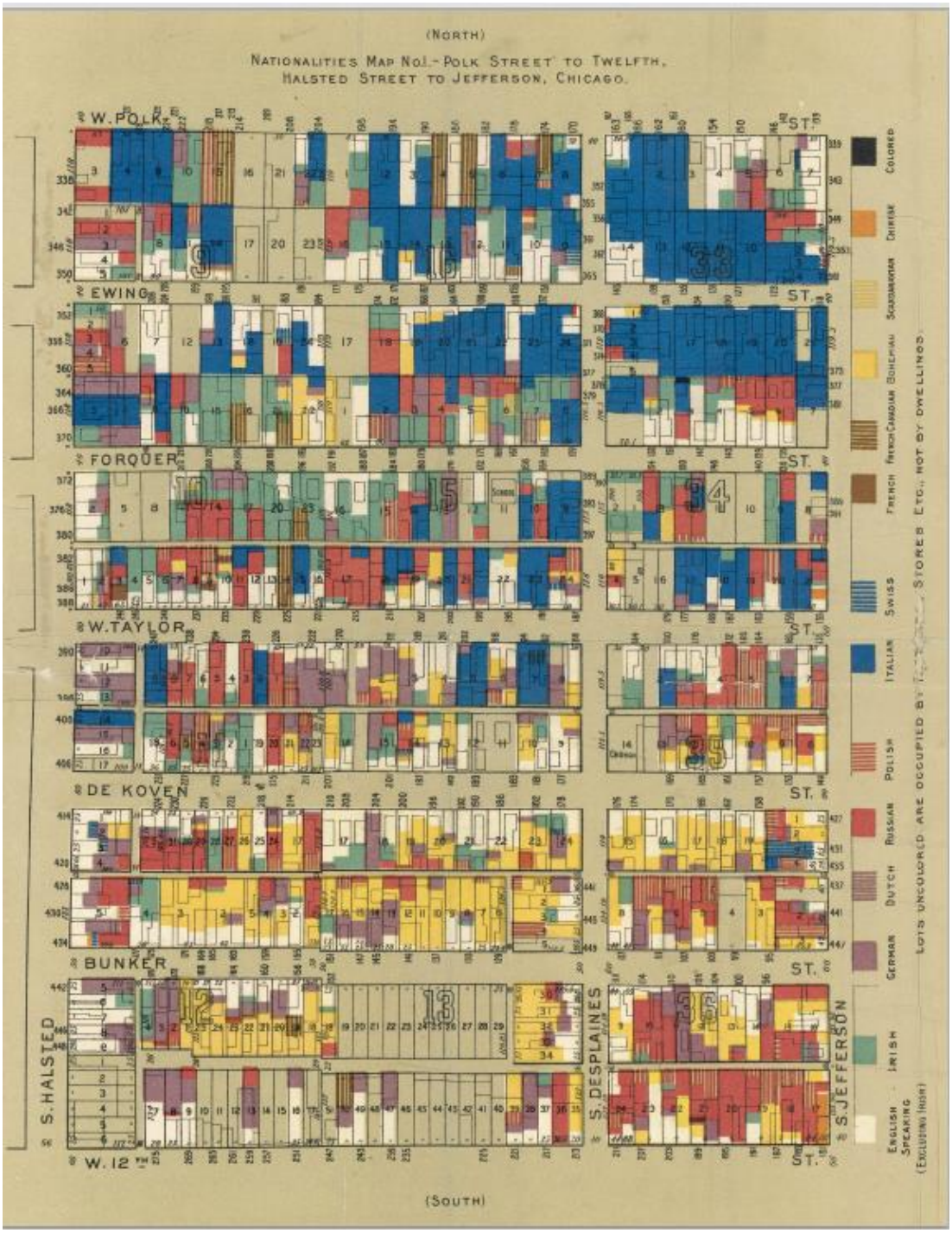

Figure 6: Map of South-East Nebraska

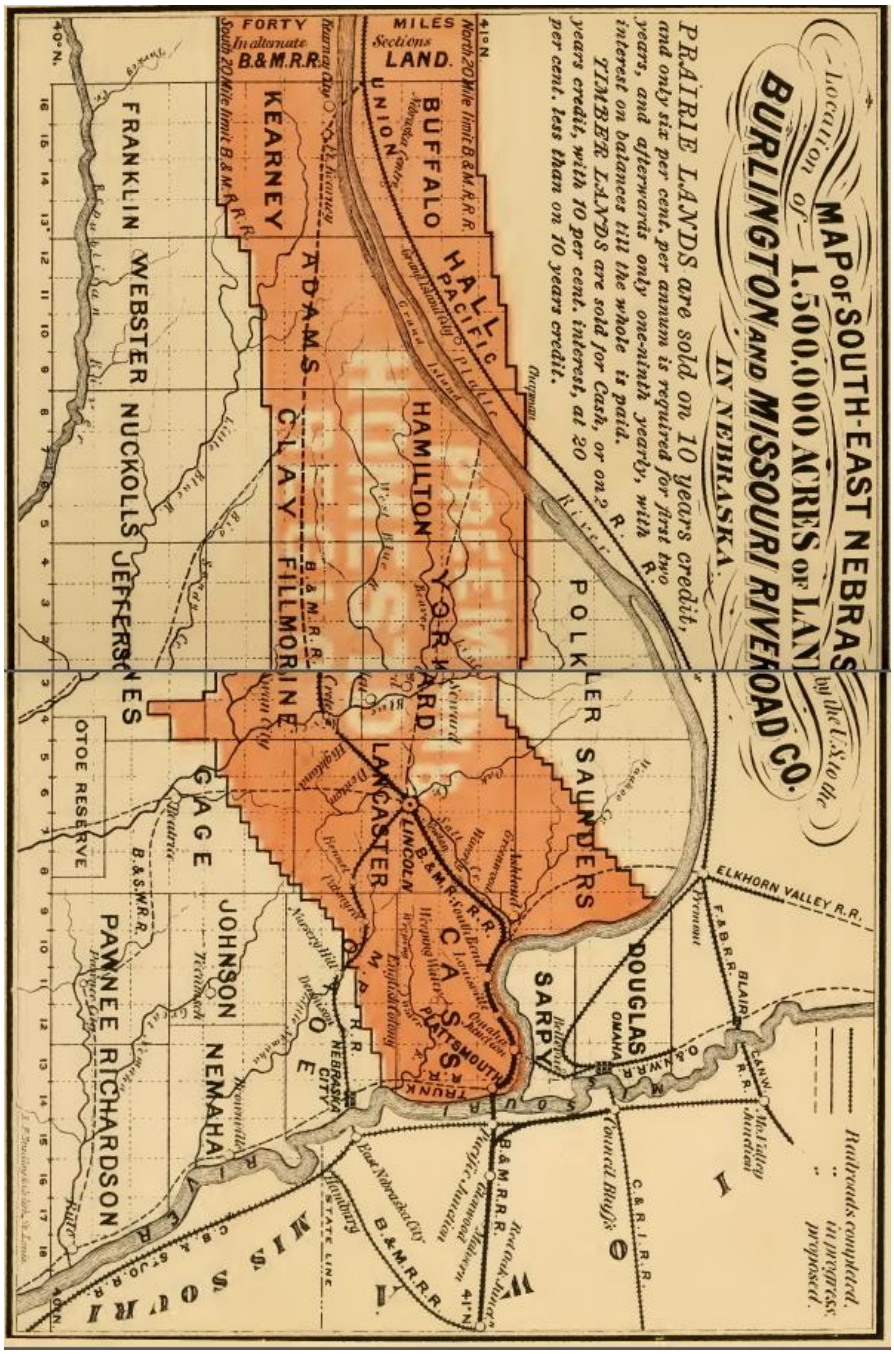

Figure 7: Map of the United States of America

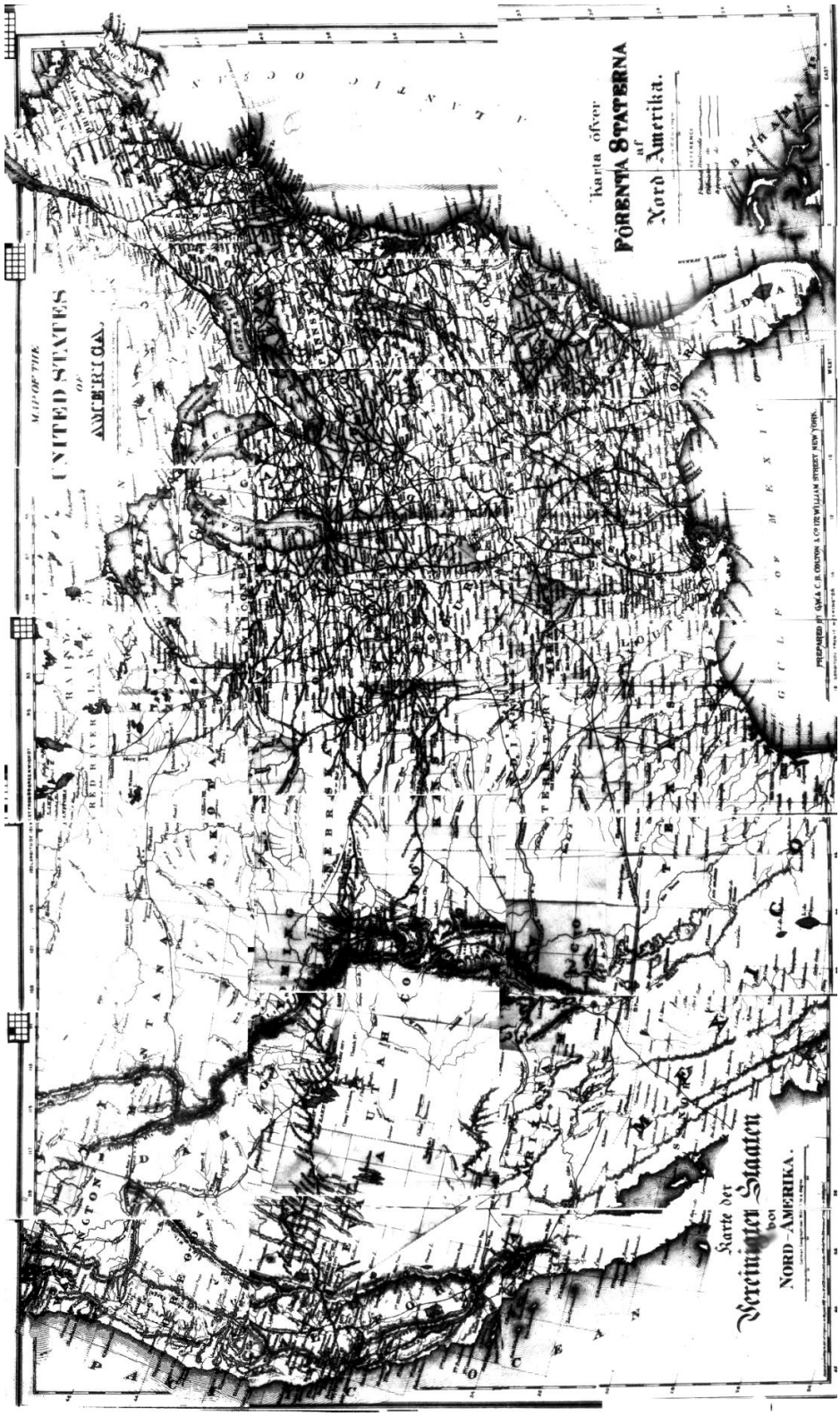

Figure 8: Map of Foreign Parentage

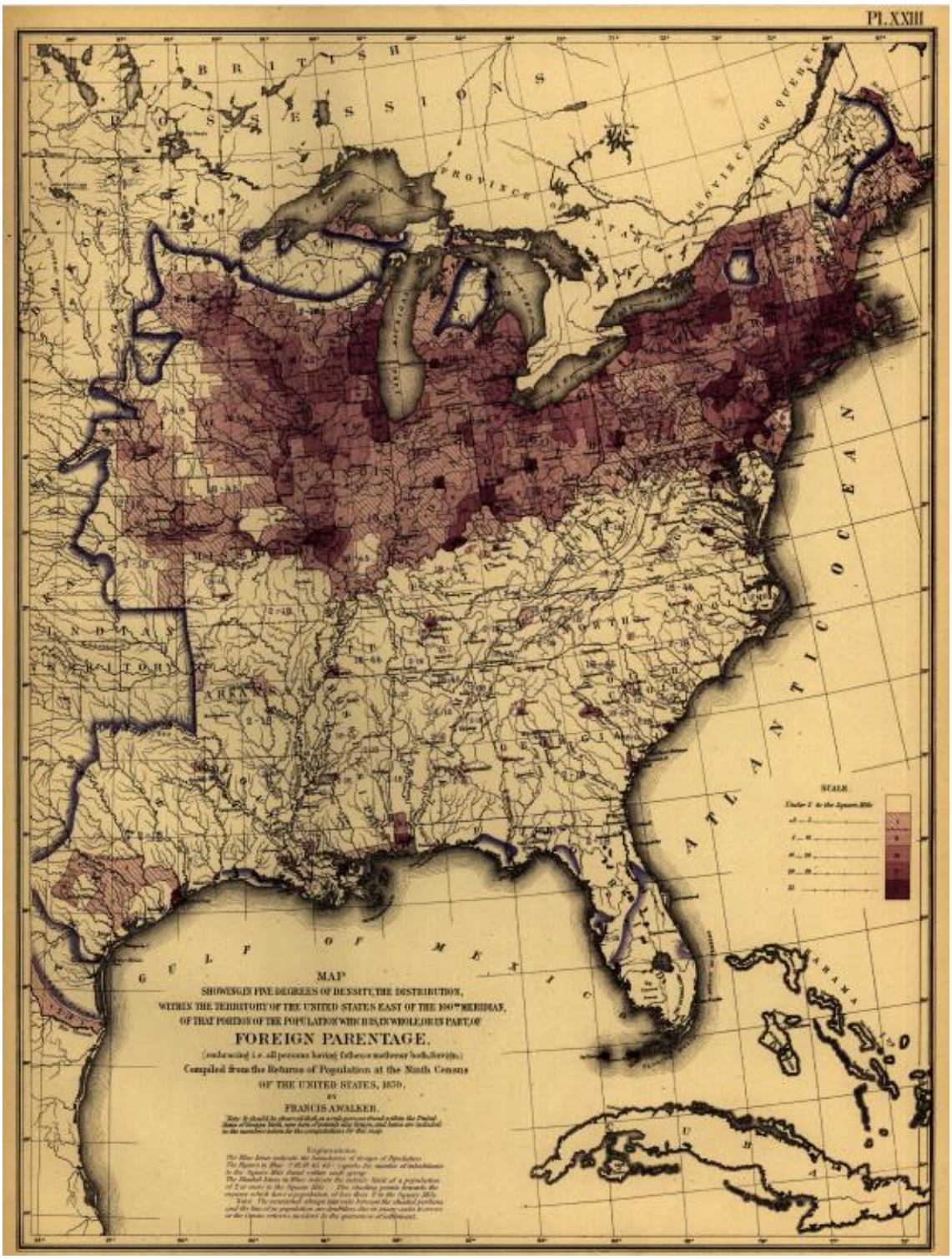

Figure 9: Chart of Deaths

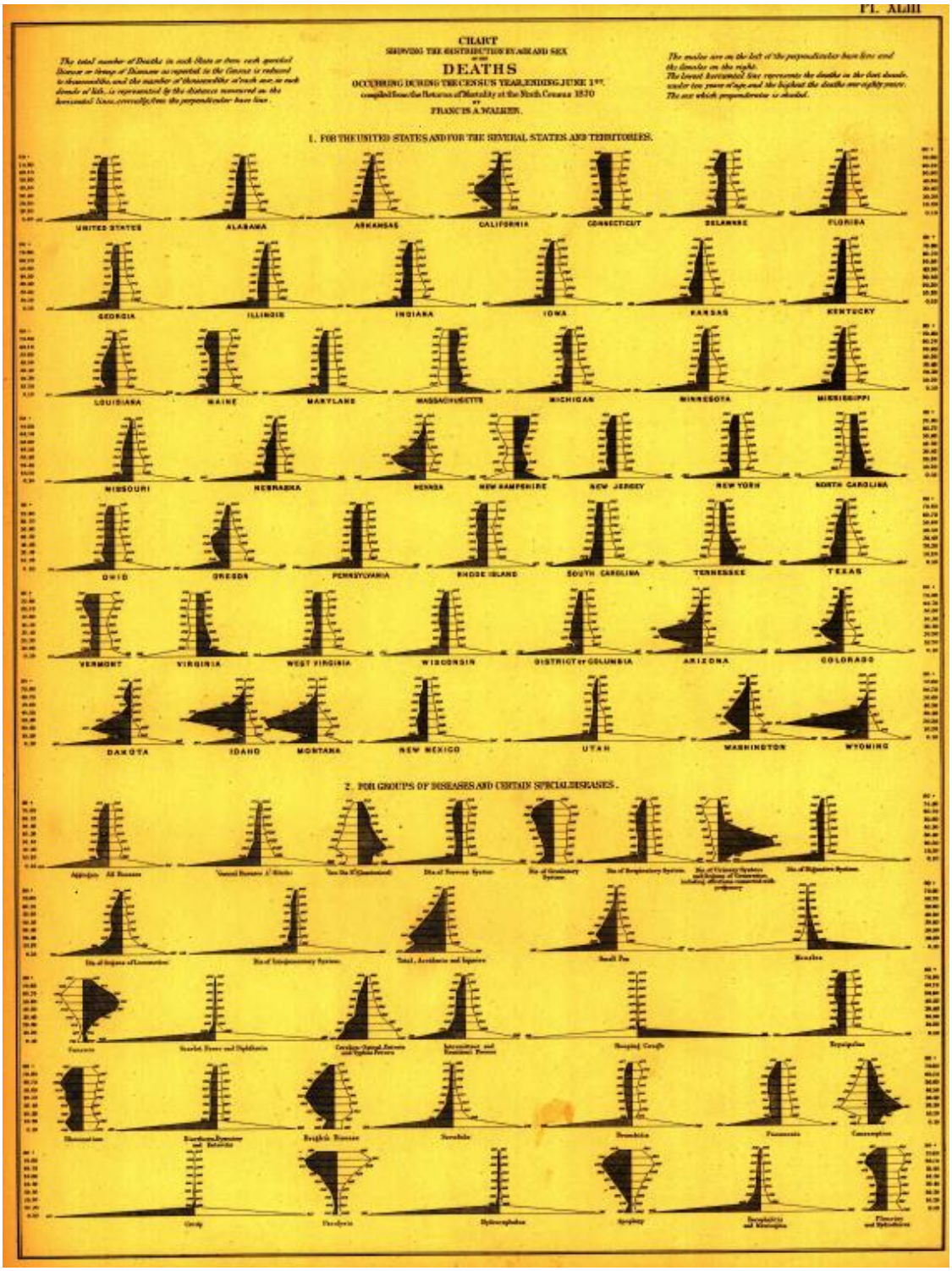

Figure 10: A Table of Offences

A TABLE OF OFFENCES

For which States Disfranchise by the Express Terms of their Constitutions, or for which their Legislatures may make Disfranchisement a Penalty.

STATES.	*Robbery.*	*Duelling.*	*Embezzlement of Public Funds, Defalcation.*	*Election Wager, Misdemeanors connected with Right of Suffrage.*
Alabama,			Embezlem'nt of Public Funds.	
Arkansas,				
California,		Duelling.	Embezlem'nt or Misappropr'n of Public Moneys.[1]	
Colorado,				
Connecticut,		Duelling.	Fraudul't Bankruptcy.	
Delaware,[4]				
Florida,		Duelling.		Election Wager.
Georgia,		Duelling.	Embezlem'nt of Public Funds.	
Illinois,				
Indiana,				
Iowa,				
Kansas,[5]			Defrauding U. S. or any of the States thereof.	
Kentucky,				
Louisiana,[20]				
Maine,				
Maryland,				Illegal Voting.[7]
Massachusetts,				
Michigan,		Duelling.		
Minnesota,				
Mississippi,		Duelling.[7]		
Missouri,				Election Misdemean'rs.
Nebraska,				
Nevada,		Duelling.	Embezlem'nt or Defalcation of Public Funds.[10]	
New Hampshire,				
New Jersey,	Robbery.[13]			
New York,				Election Wager.[12]
North Carolina,				
Ohio,				
Oregon,				
Pennsylvania,				Wilful Violat'n of the Election Laws.[18]
Rhode Island,				
South Carolina,	Robbery.	Duelling.		
Tennessee,				
Texas,		Duelling.		
Vermont,				
Virginia,		Duelling.	Embezlem'nt of Public Funds.	
West Virginia,[12]				
Wisconsin,		Duelling.[7]		Election Wager.[12]

Figure 11: Population of Eastern and Western States

EASTERN.		WESTERN.	
State.	Population.	State.	Population.
Maine	650,000	Michigan	1,500,000
New Hampshire . .	320,000	Indiana	2,040,000
Vermont	330,000	Illinois	3,500,000
Massachusetts . . .	1,821,000	Wisconsin	1,400,000
Rhode Island . . .	300,000	Minnesota	765,000
Connecticut	630,000	Iowa	1,700,000
New York	4,995,000	Missouri	2,400,000
New Jersey	1,132,000	Kansas	850,000
Pennsylvania . . .	4,125,000	Nebraska	500,000
Total	14,303,000	Total	14,655,000

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