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# Women Scholars, Social Science Expertise, and the State

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**Women Scholars, Social Science Expertise, and the State**  
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This essay examines different routes women social scientists took in their efforts to develop the scholarly expertise and professional authority that would enable them to pursue academic careers and contribute to local, municipal, state, and federal policy making. In developing such expertise, they manifested a new kind of intellectual power, different from their counterparts who engaged in social reform activities in earlier periods of U.S. history. This intellectual power was also related to, but distinct from, the kinds of political and organizing power of their contemporaries who worked in social service agencies, state and local government offices, and federal bureaus, in that their base of operations was academia, the professional associations, and "newer" social science methodologies they used. Such differences gave women academics a particular and unique voice in creating and shaping the modern state—a voice that should have been as powerful as their male colleagues' because it was based in similar criteria of expertise. But it created a number of tensions for women academic researchers: institution-based gendered tensions within the academic profession, differential approaches to the gendered dynamic of the relationship between power and knowledge among women academics, and ambiguities in some academics' research on women and other groups.<sup>1</sup>

This essay explores these tensions by examining particular cases. The institution-based gendered tensions were manifest in nearly all coeducational academic institutions,

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this paper were delivered at the 2005 Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. I appreciate the helpful comments of fellow panelists and of the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript. The argument and conclusions are my own. The larger book project of which this is a part received generous support from the Spencer Foundation and a Rockefeller Archive Center grant.

but are particularly evident in a comparative examination of women economists at Berkeley, at the University of Chicago, and at the University of Pennsylvania in light of the research they pursued, their institutional and professional power, and their attempts to influence the state. Different approaches to the ways their knowledge translated into intellectual and institutional power are evident in how these researchers dealt with the particular institutional constraints and opportunities they encountered. And the ambiguities are evident in looking at their research as middle-class professional women on the conditions of industrial labor, the problems of workers and their families, and the processes of economic decision-making within households of different socio-economic classes. They are also evident in how these women situated their work within contemporary scholarship in the social sciences. And though they worked in research universities as full faculty members, they differed from their male colleagues in two principal ways: 1) they experienced some institutional separation within departments and schools; 2) they continued to pursue research in more applied areas, and in two cases in more female dominated areas, even as social scientists were moving from research focused on existing problems to more basic, mathematical, and theoretical work in American research universities.

Women academic social scientists in the United States used their expertise to influence the state in a number of ways between 1900 and 1940. They focused on local and regional studies to track the impacts of larger social and economic change on local and state levels, as well as on particular groups at the national level. As social scientists, they did not operate monolithically—their work ranged from examinations of the impact of industrial transformation on women's work, children, and family income, to working

conditions, labor market changes, and employment among industrial workers, to men's and women's decision making regarding household budgets.

### **Institution-Based Tensions**

#### *The University of California-Berkeley*

Jessica Peixotto joined the University of California economics faculty in 1904, as a lecturer in socialism, the topic of her recently completed doctoral dissertation. Her department chair, Adolph Miller, was representative of the male faculty at Berkeley: he thought women did not belong in paid work outside the home. But by that time in her life—she was thirty-nine—Peixotto had already overcome her own father's resistance to her pursuit of post-secondary education, earning her undergraduate degree in 1894 and Ph.D. in political economy in 1900 at the University of California, Berkeley, after spending a year on research at the Sorbonne. Her dissertation research was supervised by Bernard Moses, who had studied at Heidelberg during early debates of social welfare programs in Germany, and under Carl Plehn, who, later at Gottingen, had seen the programs implemented. Both were part of the parade of American students traveling to German institutions in the 1870s-1890s, attracted to the rigors of German scholarship and drawn into newer theories and debates about socialism, social ideas, and state-centered political economics. Such experiences had influenced men in the department and their receptivity to courses in socialism, social economics, and other topics examining the state's relationship to the economy. Peixotto's interests were very much shaped by conceptual concerns similar to her German and French counterparts: how best to explore state intervention into the economy, although initially in her case, in the interests of women and children. She had honed her social skills and her ethical sensibilities in

settlement work and other forms of voluntary social reform activity. Shortly after her appointment, she developed a research program and expanded her teaching to include a range of courses examining children and the state, the role of the household in the economy, and history of economic thought. By 1907 she was promoted to assistant professor and then in 1918 to professor. Her intellectual rigor and commitment to research and teaching quickly won over her colleagues. Her success was due in part to her personal qualities and background as the daughter of a wealthy and prominent San Francisco family, but also can be attributed to the particular moment she inhabited in the history of the University of California and its department of economics.<sup>1</sup>

Location was critical to Peixotto's ability to deal with institutional tensions around gender at the University of California. She refrained from attending university faculty meetings because she was one of the very few women on the faculty and did not wish to be conspicuous. But by 1910, she had completed major research on relief programs following San Francisco's 1906 earthquake and developed an ambitious social economy program within the economics department, one of three departmental programs; the other two were business economics and railroad economics. Not incidentally, male students and faculty dominated both programs. Peixotto's courses required students to have studied economic theory, and her social economy program had close connection with the development of labor economics in the department in the 1910s. By then, in addition to history of and contemporary socialisms, courses examined poverty, unemployment, minimum wages, crime, and eventually standard of living research and theory. She quickly aligned her research with local and national needs, serving on Berkeley's Commission of Public Charities, California's Board of Charities and Corrections, and the

federal level National Council of Defense as chief of the Child Conservation section and the Committee on Industry. In all of those capacities, her primary focus was on how the development of new knowledge could contribute to effective public policies and policy reform. The public service/research responsibility that changed the course of her work and had a large impact on the economics department was her study for the California State Civil Service Commission in 1921, in which she conducted research on the adequacy of state wages and salaries among clerical, wage earning, and executive employees.<sup>2</sup>

Peixotto's close friend Clara Hellman Heller, intrigued with this research, provided funding for the establishment of a university committee to conduct "studies of problems in Social Economics with special reference to conditions in the State of California." That Peixotto's work was supported by a female patron is significant. As numerous historians of social science have made clear, certain areas of social science in Britain and the United States were considered 'male', business and finance, for example, and others were considered 'female', social economy and, by the 1920s, consumer economics. Labor economics was the province of both male and female researchers, as was industrial economics. Yet, by the time the Heller Committee was formed, the discipline was moving increasingly toward hard statistical data gathering, theory, and later, mathematically based analysis, where Peixotto and her colleagues' work continued to be informed by institutional economic theory and history and other social science disciplines including psychology and sociology.<sup>3</sup>

The Heller Committee was composed of faculty from economics and eventually law and chaired by Peixotto. The grant provided funding for work largely conducted by

women faculty and doctoral students in economics and home economics. In addition, Heller's ongoing annual grants contributed significantly to the development of consumer economics in a critical period—when women increasingly dominated household consumption, particularly in middle-class families just as advertising's influence grew and the production of goods vastly increased consumer choice in American society. Heller's faith in the nature and quality of the research moved her to continue supporting the Heller Committee under the leadership of Emily Huntington, who took over after Peixotto retired in 1935. By 1943, Heller's annual grants totaled \$63,050, and when she died, her son (on the university's board of regents) continued to finance the committee until his death in 1961.<sup>4</sup>

The Heller studies can be divided into three groups: quantity and cost budgets, published annually; income and expenditure studies; and special studies. The first two comprised cost of living studies and bore some relationship to the third, which encompassed investigations into such areas as care for the dependent aged and children, unemployment relief and the unemployed, California's labor market and problems of re-employment, the nutritive value of diets among particular population groups, and standards and methods of relief. The quantity and cost budgets represented innovations in the broad range of household expenditures and enabled Peixotto and her colleagues to analyze how families gauged their expenditures to their actual and hoped-for standard of living. They went beyond the measures used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in their inclusion of typical items—the attention to detail regarding how families spent their incomes, as opposed to how economists thought they probably spent it, expanded the categories examined and made the studies more reliable. For example, the Bureau of

Labor Statistics provided a quarterly index of cost-of-living changes for different regions, which consisted largely of price changes, but by the middle 1930s was still relying on a 1918-1919 study of expenditures. By contrast, the Heller researchers conducted annual cost of living studies that surveyed not only the cost of food, but also the cost of housing, household furnishings, clothing, household operation, insurance, automobile purchases and maintenance, medical care, leisure expenses, union dues, gifts, charitable donations, education, and other items. These were examined in light of the studies of different income groups and both their household budgets and their tastes, as they shaped household purchases. In the end the studies were far more nuanced than those of the Bureau of Labor Statistics or any other such research and reflective of the kinds of budgetary and wage constraints and affordances of different income groups in California and the Bay Area. No other agencies or institutions were pursuing such scholarship on this region of the United States. Peixotto and her colleagues hoped that the studies could be used to expand the research on other regions, influence cost-of-living and household budget studies elsewhere, and compare different regions of the United States. Finally, they were the result of her recognition of the impact of inflation on working and middle-class families in the United States in that period. As Meg Jacobs has argued, "the massive inflation of World War I and the unprecedented decade of productivity that followed made mass purchasing power a pressing political issue . . . as runaway prices threatened to erode living standards of millions of urban Americans," including those workers on whose productive capacity the expanding economy depended.<sup>5</sup>

The Heller funding is a significant measure of Peixotto's successful efforts to deal with the gender-based institutional tensions at Berkeley as it was transforming more fully



into a research university by the 1920s. It also increased her power, by providing funding for research *she* deemed important. Until the 1920s most public funding for research at Berkeley went to projects in the sciences and to studies related to agriculture and food production, major contributors to the state's economy. Consumer economics was not a priority of the state, nor was labor economics until the middle-to-late 1920s. The Heller grant provided seed money, or an opening for the university to help finance the research. Second, the funding and the program transformed the department's activities and faculty representation. The Berkeley Department of Economics was among the very few to appoint not just one woman, but eventually four in positions that led to tenure; three became full professors in economics and the fourth a full professor in the law school. Still other women were appointed to faculty research and assistant positions for varying periods of time. Third, the social economy program was unusual in its extensive integration into the department's teaching and research. The Heller funding raised the profile of Peixotto and the work of her social economy colleagues and students among members of the university community, so much so that the university began offering grants to the committee; when these grants declined in the 1930s under Depression-related budget constraints, Heller increased her donations. The committee served the university well in the 1930s. When President Sproul received inquiries regarding the university's response to the Depression, he could point to the work in the department. The committee was critical to creating and maintaining these distinctive characteristics in Berkeley's economics department for four decades. Fourth, the grant enabled women to direct research into areas that were avoided or overlooked by male academic economists. Because this research focused on households and used women as informants about

budgetary decision making, they were less likely to be funded by foundations seeking to support the more “objective” and “scientific” domains of male economists’ work.<sup>6</sup>

### *The University of Chicago*

In contrast to Peixotto's experience Sophonisba Breckenridge and Edith Abbott waited years to be treated seriously as economics scholars at the University of Chicago. Breckenridge also overcame obstacles to obtain an advanced education; fellowship support enabled her to complete an M.A. and Ph.D. in political science at the University of Chicago. Her dissertation, which earned high honors, examined the ways the British and U.S. governments used their federal authority to construct a legal monetary system; it was completed in 1901. Dean of Women Marion Talbot's efforts to persuade President William Rainey Harper to find her a faculty position, and her completion of a J.D. (juris doctor) at the university's law school, resulted in an appointment in 1904 to an instructorship—in the Department of Household Administration, a department Talbot organized and headed. It was a department organized for women students that served as both a professional location and a means of marginalizing women faculty and students within the university. Abbott earned her Ph.D. at Chicago in 1905; her thesis was a historical and statistical analysis of wages for unskilled labor from 1830 to 1900. Abbott, like Breckenridge, finished with high honors, and was considered brilliant by her advisor J. Laurence Laughlin. Abbott also sought an academic position; with Breckenridge's help she conducted research under Carroll D. Wright of the Carnegie Institution and at the Women's Trade Union League, completing further study at the London School of Economics, and then moving to the Wellesley College economics faculty in 1907. By 1908, anxious to find serious research opportunities and students, she accepted an

invitation to return to Chicago and teach in the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, with Breckinridge.<sup>7</sup>

As Ellen Fitzpatrick and Robin Muncy have richly demonstrated in their research on the Chicago women economists, Breckinridge and Abbott struggled almost constantly with marginalization at the University of Chicago. They were principal architects of the transformation of the independent Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy into the School of Social Service Administration within the university. The school both opened graduate study of social and economic problems to more women and men and provided Breckinridge and Abbott with authority arising from an academic institutional home for their research. At the same time, they were not placed in the department of political science or of economics. And that was the source of the institutional tension in the development and recognition of their expertise as social scientists. They could train doctoral students, teach, and develop a research program in the School of Social Service Administration. They could interact regularly with their colleagues in the departments. But they did not participate in departmental decision-making, and they were not viewed as fully equal colleagues by the faculty in those departments. Such marginalization existed in part because anything associated with social welfare and work was viewed largely as women's work and, increasingly in the 1920s, as distinct from more rigorous, less policy-oriented 'male' social science at Chicago. Yet there were mitigating factors that enabled them to exercise expertise in determining the research program, to pursue the research they believed was important, and to claim legitimacy as university scholars.<sup>8</sup>

The story of the formation of the School of Social Service Administration in 1920 is well told elsewhere. Of interest here are the kinds of institutional tensions put in play

with its establishment at the university and the ways Breckinridge and Abbott were able to use their institutional affiliation to both finance their work and train others to carry it forward. Although the school enabled social science faculty at the university to categorize its women faculty and students, and to characterize the research as social welfare rather than social science, they did not always take advantage of that opportunity. In fact, some University of Chicago social scientists were less affected by gendered categories in the field and worked enthusiastically with Abbott and Breckinridge to train students and enhance the university's social science research program.

While defining the research program at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy in the 1910s, Breckinridge and Abbott had built upon and expanded the domain of their research and expertise in social and political economics. As early as 1905, they had used census statistics to bring women into the study of industrial labor and exposed the division of labor that legitimated unequal pay for women doing work similar to or the same as men's. Working with other women, they lobbied for and obtained congressional support for a large-scale study of women and work, which was also backed by President Roosevelt in 1907. The first volume appeared in 1910: *The Report on Women and Child Wage Earners in the United States*. The survey eventually produced nineteen volumes based on the research of numerous social scientists. Abbott and Breckinridge's individual and co-authored work was published in the *Journal of Political Economy*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and the *Survey*, the major journals in professional social science. Eileen Yeo characterizes such research as growing out of "women's social science" in Britain, for its focus on "poorer women." In Breckinridge and Abbott's case, and that of many academic women social scientists in the United

States, though, the emphasis was less on social work and more on social and economic research, based on the more formal and systematic collection and analysis of data that was shaping university research by the 1910s and 1920s. This collection and analysis may have been focused on specific problems, but it was also somewhat distanced from specific reform agendas or even specific recommendations for policy makers.<sup>9</sup>

As Fitzpatrick points out, though, this early work established the two as researchers in social welfare, not as social scientists in the academic sense. The former was associated with settlement work, social work, and welfare efforts in public and private agencies.<sup>10</sup> It was a similar situation to that of German women social scientists, relegated to social welfare-related areas of social science, according to Marynel Ryan in her essay in this volume. For Abbott and Breckinridge, this was ironic, as both women had avoided any association with social service and, instead, had pursued social and economic policy reform through their many connections across the community of women working in government, philanthropic, and other agencies financing research and policy reform. Muncy notes that Abbott as a graduate student had established herself as a social and political conservative, like her mentor Laughlin. This only changed when she moved back to Chicago and lived at Hull House, while also working at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy with Breckinridge. The Hull House experience made Abbott more aware of the impact of structural and demographic changes on the local economy, issues with which Jane Addams and the Hull House community publicized through popular gatherings and local political organization, as Laura Westhoff argues in her essay in this volume.<sup>11</sup>

In their research at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, Breckinridge and Abbott avoided affiliation with earlier models of social welfare. Such earlier models had emerged out of charity organization societies, the friendly visiting methods of social workers, and the focus on individual behavior seen as shaping social dependency among the poor. Their work was financed by the Russell Sage Foundation, which enhanced their power to define the research agenda and methodologies of the school.<sup>12</sup> They aligned their research with academic methods. They disliked social welfare teaching that relied on personal experience, stories, and the rhetoric of neighborliness, rather than solid research. They used sophisticated (at the time) statistical analysis, rather than simply neighborhood surveys or interviews. They believed that social workers continued to be too little educated in social science methods and theories and too reliant on moralistic judgments when dispensing aid to clients. Like Peixotto and some of their German counterparts who were sequestered in social work, their interests arose from concerns about how poorly the state was responding to downturns in the economy and the exploitation of women's and children's labor. In other words, their questions were grounded in the practical and ethical, but directed toward examining the structural causes of socioeconomic problems. And their methodologies reflected the most recent statistical data collection and analysis. Their research focused on problems in Chicago, and they trained their students to do and rely upon research. They studied housing conditions of the immigrant poor and working class, uncovering the impact of the stockyards on living conditions and the lack of decent housing in black neighborhoods. They investigated juvenile delinquency and home conditions through the juvenile justice system and school truancy at Chicago Public Schools. They brought this model of research-based social

economy and social work training into the School of Social Service Administration where Abbott shortly became dean and both were eventually appointed to full professorships.<sup>13</sup>

Within a few years, the university received one of the new Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) grants provided to universities to foster the development of academically based social science research.<sup>14</sup> By 1923, the university's Local Community Research Committee (LCRC) had emerged from Chicago's departments of political science, sociology, anthropology, and political economy; it was designed to collect data on particular aspects of local communities. Abbott and Breckinridge were involved almost from the beginning—receiving funding to produce social work texts using documents and cases from Chicago social welfare and immigration records and directing studies of population and housing. Although Breckinridge and Abbott's research benefited directly from the LSRM funds for the LCRC, as important, so did their students' at the School of Social Service Administration. Such support was in addition to graduate fellowships provided by the university. The school and the sociology department collaborated on a number of studies: of crime, juvenile delinquency, and reformatories; of child labor; of adoption in Illinois; of standards of living among Chicago industrial workers; of Illinois public welfare administration costs; of immigration; and of women's employment.<sup>15</sup>

Abbott and Breckinridge continued to be involved in the committee's work and (later) governance largely because they had insisted on maintaining the research focus of the school, because they had continued research themselves, and because they centered their research on social welfare problems, administration, and policy reform. Where there had been some institutional tension regarding the extent to which they would be

involved in the development of social science research at the university, they were able to tailor their teaching and research programs to address structural factors contributing to the problems. As Muncy notes, their task had shifted from seeking professional status, authority, and expertise by distinguishing themselves and their work from professional social workers, to proving their worth as social scientists within a university culture in which men dominated social science departments and were largely influential in defining social science research methods that increasingly focused on cultural rather than structural factors contributing to social problems. At one point, Abbott informed the LSRM's Lawrence Frank that she wished collaborative group work across departments were more fully realized and expressed hope that it would be with the immigration studies that she and Breckinridge were directing. One problem, she noted, was that social service students found sociology courses "too much up in the air—theoretical and vague" and in some cases "dogmatic," especially for a program focused on public welfare administration. Conversely, as Fitzpatrick notes, some of Chicago's departmental faculty warned students away from Abbott and Breckinridge's courses as too applied and concerned with implications for reform.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The University of Pennsylvania-Department of Industrial Research*

Anne Bezanson took a different trajectory in her graduate work and early career. Almost a generation later than Peixotto, Abbott, and Breckinridge in completing her scholarly training, Bezanson emigrated from Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1903 at the age of twenty-two, after spending two years at the Londonderry Iron and Steel Company in Acadia Mines. She then worked as a department manager for eight years at the Gillet Razor Company in Boston, the last four in charge of both personnel and inspections. In



1911, she enrolled at Radcliffe to complete her A.B. (1915) and then spent two years doing research in finance with Harvard economist Charles Bullock while pursuing her Ph.D. She chose Harvard for graduate study because, as she later claimed, satisfying her interest in economics "depended on a larger faculty such as *only* Harvard made available." Technically, her degree was granted by Radcliffe College, as Harvard did not grant degrees to women. But all of her classes were taught and research directed by Harvard faculty; Radcliffe had no faculty. She studied with Frank Taussig, who was known for seating women on one side of his classroom apart from men, and Edwin Gay, who supervised her dissertation. Her dissertation was entitled "'Earnings and Working Opportunity in the Upholstery Weavers' Trade in 25 Plants in Philadelphia"; she spent over ten years completing it. While working on her dissertation, she taught for two years at Bryn Mawr College, spent another year at Harvard conducting research on wage earners' savings for the Harvard Committee of Economic Research, and then was hired to help Joseph Willits, economist at the University of Pennsylvania, establish and run the Wharton School's Department of Industrial Research. When her dissertation was completed in 1929, she was appointed Professor of Research in the department, the first woman to be tenured at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>17</sup>

Bezanson's first teaching position at Bryn Mawr College and shift to the University of Pennsylvania were exemplary of how she saw herself in relation to institutional power and the production of knowledge. She wanted to contribute to a large and significant research program specifically focused on industrial labor. Teaching at Bryn Mawr soured her on women's colleges as potential places to work, despite the fact that such colleges were the primary employers of women academic scholars in the 1910s,

1920s, and 1930s, in part because of the difficulties in obtaining funds for social science research in these institutions. After years of supporting herself within the industrial work place, she was deeply interested in industrial labor problems, particularly in developing adequate data to understand the problems of employer-employee relations, employee turnover, and the impact of working conditions on workers' commitment to particular work places. As Cristel de Rouvray notes, Bezanson's concerns were grounded in the belief that science could contribute to solving problems if research could yield enough data to aid in understanding the causes of the problems. She was impatient with the social economy approach in the Graduate Department of Social Economy at Bryn Mawr, particularly its focus on women's labor, delinquency among girls, and its links with social service agencies. Although the doctoral students in that department did broadly quantitative research on local industry, and Bezanson was able to lead in the early development of the program on industrial problems, the work done was piecemeal and went forward under severe budget constraints. She was concerned that the industrial research would not receive enough institutional support to continue. Moreover, she did not appear to respect department chair Susan M. Kingsbury's research priorities, probably because they were more closely aligned with social welfare than industrial work place-based research and policy. In any case, her public comments about Kingsbury's approach to the department's research agenda made for uncomfortable collegial relations. Willits's offer to join him at Penn enabled her to continue work on her dissertation and foster the kinds of research she considered critical to understanding industrial conditions and change and their impact on workers.<sup>18</sup>

The professional trade-off was that Bezanson had little hope of a regular faculty appointment, in the way she might have at Bryn Mawr, because Penn did not appoint women to the regular faculty. But the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce had some independent standing within the university. Although the focus at the school by the 1920s was on its business curriculum, it had also been the locus for programs in the social sciences, specifically economics and government, training both graduate and undergraduate students. Willits had finished his Ph.D. there in 1916. But, as Willits, who was appointed both professor and director of the Industrial Research Department in 1921, and Bezanson, appointed as assistant director in the same year, developed the department, they conceived it as a research-oriented unit. Most graduate programs were within Wharton's departments and controlled by the business faculty. Willits and Bezanson trained some Ph.D. students, all of whom carried on research in the program as research assistants and associates. Bezanson's title remained Assistant Director for two years until she was promoted to Associate Director, and finally, in 1929, Professor of Industry. She held the Associate Director title throughout the 1930s, until Willits left to head the social science division of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1939, when she was appointed Director of the department. At that point, she also became a part-time consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>19</sup>

The department's independence meant that Willits and Bezanson could run their research program relatively free of institutional interference, and that Bezanson could become an equal partner in developing the program. But it also meant that they did not have access to extensive contact with students in the university. In addition, Bezanson's professional autonomy and mobility were strongly influenced by her relationship with

Willits, which could have served a constraining function in her professional development, but it did not. They had met either at Harvard, while both were completing research there in 1920, or in Philadelphia. In any case, their similar work experiences with personnel in industry and their common scholarly commitments and approaches to methodology made them natural partners in fostering the department's work and in collaborating on the development of social science research throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Willits was clear about Bezanson's role in the department; he called her "the real architect of the Industrial Research Department." Because he also had faculty responsibilities, including chairing Wharton's curriculum committee, running the Department of Geography and Industry, and some teaching, he was employed part-time in Industrial Research and received half the salary she did in the department's budget.<sup>20</sup>

For Bezanson, initially not having an appointment to the faculty and being somewhat dependent on Willits for her professional advancement, autonomy, and influence in the development of social science knowledge was a small price to pay for the opportunity to pursue an area of economics research she thought was sorely lacking in American social science and that resonated with her training as an institutional economist: empirical research into the causes of labor instability. It was a concern shared by Willits, whose dissertation had examined "worker turnover in the Philadelphia labor market." For both, reaching better understanding of such causes required extensive investigation into different types of industries; tracking patterns of employment, unemployment, and labor mobility; understanding wage policies within industries; and uncovering working conditions not only within particular industries, but also within different units of industrial work places. In addition, they were equally deeply committed

to doing rigorous empirical research that could generate data leading to solutions to the problems of labor instability. In the 1920s, they focused on developing data on six industries in the Philadelphia area.<sup>21</sup>

During the first decade, studies examined labor turnover, wages, and employment in metal, upholstery, hosiery, and wool and textile industries and a large-scale study of labor problems in the bituminous coals industry. For most of the industries, the effort was to collect detailed data and encourage standardization of employee records and other personnel information to track "industrial changes affecting wages, steadiness of employment, and the demand for, and mobility of, labor." Bezanson's dissertation fit within this area of work, as did other studies of wages, promotion, skill levels of workers, and so on. The coal studies mentioned above compared the effects of fluidity in price and wage regulation in response to business changes to rigidity in wage contracts on the wage structure in one kind of industry. These studies continued into the 1930s, developing ways of comparatively measuring costs across regions, and the impacts of wage and hours changes on costs, profit margins, outputs, annual earnings, accidents, and mechanization. The researchers involved in these studies were able to advise the Roosevelt Administration and the NRA in the process of developing wage codes for the coal industry in the 1930s.<sup>22</sup>

The work was considered important by a number of funding sources. Initially, the Carnegie Foundation, the Philadelphia Association for the Discussion of Employment Problems, the Scott Paper Company, and the University of Pennsylvania financed the department. A few years before Carnegie support ended, Willits and Bezanson approached the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) for support and were

granted a small amount to finance Elton Mayo's work on the impact of working conditions on worker dissatisfaction. They were turned down for a larger grant because the work was seen as "too definitely industrial" for the LSRM program, a result of the foundation's concerns about criticisms of its 1915 effort to sponsor industrial studies that, as Bulmer argues, made officers "wary of any kind of normative tinge to research supported." As a result the LSRM specifically excluded reform as an aim of the foundation's support.<sup>23</sup> But by 1927, the LSRM was so impressed with the department's work, the board granted the department \$150,000 over five years, with the condition that the university match the funds over the same time period. The funding enabled the department to expand the research staff, including university faculty and research associates. Subsequent grants carried the work through the 1930s into the 1940s. Such large scale and ongoing funding attest to the LSRM's faith in Bezanson's administrative and scholarly capabilities and conferred on her a significant measure of institutional power.<sup>24</sup>

Bezanson brought a number of people into the research enterprise of the department. By the 1930s, the staff tended to be one-half University of Pennsylvania faculty, one-half research associates with no faculty standing, and some research assistants and clerical staff. With ongoing funding from both the university and the Rockefeller Foundation, the researchers had stable employment throughout the 1930s. Bezanson did not particularly favor women in her appointment practices, but she did appoint women. Miriam Hussey remained with the program from the 1920s to the 1950s. Eleanor Lansing Dulles spent a number of years as a research associate in the 1930s. Her Ph.D. and expertise in monetary policy, enabled her to contribute to studies in economic

depression and recovery, before she left to conduct research and contribute to policy development at the Social Security Administration and then the State Department. Gladys Palmer, who had started Ph.D. study at Bryn Mawr while Bezanson was there, moved to the University of Pennsylvania to continue working with Bezanson, taught at Hollins College for five years, and then returned as research associate in the department at Penn. She conducted wide-ranging studies of employment and unemployment in Philadelphia in the 1930s and eventually became director of the Industrial Research Unit when it was folded into the Industrial Research Department. She was promoted to research professor in 1953, eight years before she retired. In a period when it was extremely difficult for women social science scholars to find academic positions, particularly those that supported research, Bezanson's accommodation of female colleagues, within a research university, is notable.<sup>25</sup>

### **Local, State and National Policy**

For understanding how knowledge shaped professional and scholarly power in these cases it is important to examine how Peixotto and Abbott and Breckinridge used their institution-based power to influence social policy and social welfare reform and how Bezanson used hers to contribute to policy regarding industrial problems. Bezanson was able to have a significant impact not only on policy, but also on the direction of research, through both the work supported at the Department of Industrial Research and her later position in the Rockefeller Foundation's social science division with Willits. They all had gained some "street" knowledge, which had shaped their decisions to use their intellectual power to shape social policy. Peixotto, Abbott, and Breckinridge had had connections with urban settlement work. Bezanson had actually worked in industry.

They all had struggled to gain the Ph.D., the professional credential that would grant them authority in naming, examining, and interpreting social and economic research. And they had been part of a university-based research enterprise that financed their work—Peixotto as initiator of the Heller Committee's research agenda, Abbott and Breckinridge as university colleagues who received funds from the LCRC, which in turn had benefited from the LSRM grant, and Bezanson as associate and then director of Penn's Industrial Research Department.

Peixotto focused her committee's attention on the city of San Francisco and the state of California, in keeping with the Heller grant. But the research itself had broader reach. Numerous federal, state, and municipal governments and agencies utilized efforts the annual cost of living budgets, which had grown out of the initial work on California public workers, to inform their policymaking and relief precisely because of their unusually nuanced and detailed data. Regular city workers' budgets were used by the city of Berkeley and published quarterly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Special projects, including studies of single women wage earners, families dependent on widows' pensions, Mexican wage earning families in San Diego, and elderly dependents in San Francisco, created comparative data for assessing the extent to which social welfare, employment and income, and labor policies were meeting the needs of different groups in the state. The dependent aged study is an example of how such research influenced public policy. Peixotto and others used it to argue that California needed a pension system and more funding to support the aged. This was not an unusual argument to make in 1935, but Peixotto suggested that the study was particularly appropriate for the Heller Committee to conduct, as its researchers had already examined dependent aged in San



Francisco, and had existing relationships with members of the President's Committee on Economic Security. The findings stated that relief programs in social and health agencies were not sufficient to meet the needs of the elderly. The study just preceded passage of California's first pension law. Although social insurance was well entrenched in many European countries by the 1930s, and research in this area was not unusual, no such studies had been tailored to the state of California; it was still a controversial public policy issue in the United States.<sup>26</sup>

Berkeley economics faculty member Emily Huntington used Heller funds to study unemployment in California in the early years of the Depression and then received Rockefeller funds for examining problems of reemployment. Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong, initially a member of the economics and law faculty and a member of the Heller Committee, had completed a major research project comparing social insurance policies around the world, and contributed to developing the old age provisions in the Social Security Act. During the Depression smaller studies helped cities like Oakland determine teachers' salaries, local hospital and clinics' income standards for free care, and adequacy of charity associations' food allowances for the indigent.<sup>27</sup>

At the University of Chicago Abbott and Breckinridge were in many ways well positioned to exercise knowledge-based authority and expertise. Unlike Peixotto, who was at a university in process of defining itself as a research versus a largely teaching institution, they were faculty at one of the nation's top research universities, with particular strengths in social sciences. That enabled them to obtain university support for their own journal, *Social Service Review*, and to take advantage of private large-scale philanthropic funds for social science research, a new phenomenon in the professional

world of social science scholarship in the 1920s, options not available to Peixotto. In comparison with the Heller Committee's tens of thousands of dollars, the hundreds of thousands provided to the University of Chicago offered opportunities for far more broad ranging research not necessarily limited to the city of Chicago or state of Illinois. Because their work on women and children and labor, immigrant living and working conditions, and social welfare administration was somewhat distinct, but closely connected to, Chicago's academic social scientists, they were able to use that association to extend their influence to national-level policy making.<sup>28</sup>

Muncy provides a compelling argument for how they used their professional expertise. One of the principal strategies was to place their students in federal research bureaus in Washington, D.C. Such students were fully trained in research methods and typically had acquired a commitment to social welfare reform. They were well acquainted with Julia Lathrop, head of the federal Children's Bureau, as she had been director of the Chicago School's research unit when it was expanded with Sage funds in 1907 and she had been at Hull House in the same period. When Edith Abbott's sister Grace was appointed head, their influence increased dramatically. She frequently consulted Abbott and Breckinridge for advice, references, and contacts. And she sponsored research by their students and used it to shape programs and policies coming out of the Bureau. One major result was the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act, which provided federal funds to the states to develop programs to address mothers' and children's health and welfare—with prenatal services, parenting classes, and physical examinations for children.<sup>29</sup>

Bezanson and Willits's belief in the positive possibilities of social science research framed the department's work throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and carried forward into their work at the Rockefeller Foundation. Most institutionalist economists of their generation similarly thought that economic problems could be solved when enough data had been secured to help people understand their sources and their particular contexts. To this end, the department's research was shared with each of the industries studied in the 1920s and 1930s, and faculty and research associates were consulted in the development of various New Deal programs in the 1930s. For example, the upholstery industry approached the department in 1931 to conduct a study that would help clarify a dispute between management and the union about wage data. Department staff completed the research and offered recommendations with regard to "labor policies, production policies," and marketing policies to address something both sides wanted: "to get more work under acceptable standards." In addition to supplying data for setting NRA codes for the coal industry, department staff collected and analyzed data to assist the National Association of Hosiery Manufacturers and the National Association of Woolen and Worsted manufacturers in preparing NRA code; various research staff advised the NRA in this policy-making effort. Bezanson pursued a project on the history of pricing and inflation from the colonial period into the nineteenth century for the International Price History Committee. And the results of employment studies were shared with the Demonstration Employment Office in Philadelphia, a model employment office created to help place workers in times of economic instability.<sup>30</sup>

Asked to defend the work of the department in the effort to secure more funding, Bezanson and Willits argued "that the work of the Department as a whole represents, we

believe, a fundamental approach, from the industrial side" to "the problem of industrial instability. " Its significance rested on "the fact that our research is primarily cooperative in character and that the doing of it involves mutual education and more likely adoption of results." That the data came from cooperation between researchers and industrial and labor groups, and that similar kinds of problems were examined across industries, made the knowledge produced both more powerful and more useful. Bezanson thought that much economic research did not sufficiently attend to local and regional conditions, and was so piecemeal that it could not apply to more general problems: "the work to be undertaken must be kept defined or it will spread all over the map and represent, in the long run, only the interests of the individuals who, for the time being, are concerned with particular pieces of research." In contrast, the Industrial Research Department offered comparative data, long standing series of studies, and tight coordination among studies pursued. These unique aspects of the department's work, they believed, made it more useful for considering employment policies and changes in industrial and employment practices.<sup>31</sup>

### **Ambiguities in Research**

In conducting research on non-middle-class groups Abbott, Breckinridge, and Peixotto were influenced in multiple ways by their own class standing. Abbott and Breckinridge had come from solidly middle-class, but not wealthy families. Peixotto's family was wealthy and influential among San Francisco's merchant elite. Their investigations of women and children's working conditions, family budgets and standards of living, immigrant living and working conditions, put them in an ambiguous position: they were women with an unusual level of both expertise and professional power. Their

Ph.D.s distinguished them from the vast majority of men and women and their professional status and commitments removed them from the kind of neighborliness that had characterized women in social settlements also conducting social research. Unlike social workers who may have made moral judgments about who among the poor or luckless was deserving of aid, these academic women social scientists used the tools of social science research to frame problems worthy of investigation and employed their research findings to contribute to shaping public policies to address them. They were not studying the poor, as Alice O'Connor makes clear, but poverty and the conditions underlying poverty "as a problem of political or social economy," including "low wages, un- and 'under'-employment, long hours, hazardous working conditions" as well as "the policies and practices governing the distribution of income and wealth." In this, they were not distinct from their male counterparts. To achieve authority and legitimacy for their research, some distance from the subjects of study was necessary. At the same time, the question is: to what extent did they attempt to speak for the subjects of their research and to what extent did they depict them as victims of the economic forces and institutions they studied? By focusing on poverty, rather than the poor, though, women professional academic social scientists exhibited fewer of the class assumptions Yeo describes as manifested by their counterparts in Britain.<sup>32</sup>

Peixotto's focus was on penetrating the domestic domain, the "hopelessly private" life in which middle-class women played an increasingly dominant role and shedding light on middle-class family economic decisions, as well as examining those of working-class families. To do this, she distributed questionnaires, sent her researchers into households to interview women as well as men, and examined family accounting books,

checkbooks, and bills. She attempted to frame the families' economic status aspirations in light of the decisions they made about expenditure of income, rather than classifying them and speculating about their class status and assumptions. She examined closely how they spent their money—what was most important to them—and how that differed across class and ethnic groups. And she characterized these families from different classes as active agents in both defining their needs and making choices. At the same time, she used middle-class families' desires and self-definition as a standard for theorizing about other families' consumption-related desires. Introducing psychologically and sociologically informed explanations of consumer choice, she presented a case for "the American standard of living" reflected in professionals' desires and actual decisions, one that represented a kind of ideal annual household income for all "standard" families consisting of a husband, wife, and "two growing children." She developed what she called the "'comfort' standard," of about "\$7,000, the sum needed to satisfy a set of desires for goods and services, desires that at the present time influence widely and profoundly the way men earn their money and the way they spend it."<sup>33</sup>

Breckinridge and Abbott experienced different tensions in their design of the School of Social Service Administration. They decided to limit enrollment to graduate students interested in research as well as social service training, thereby excluding the majority of the kinds of students who had enrolled in the Chicago School of Civics— young women who studied part-time while they worked, who did not necessarily have college degrees, and who had few resources to pursue extended full-time study. As Muncy notes, in the interest of a professional standard and the university model to which they were committed, they abandoned the principal constituency of the Chicago School

of Civics, young working women with limited resources. Another cost of their model was their commitment to the research itself over the future prospects of their students in the School of Social Service; in one case, according to Muncy, Abbott offered the completion of a student's Masters thesis to a Children's Bureau researcher on the assumption that her student would reach the limits of her support and be unable to finish it.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, their investigations into women's labor also presupposed that such labor was a necessity for supporting single women or for contributing to the family wage. They turned their attention to such maternalist policies as protective labor legislation for women and other measures that tended to work against women's full economic citizenship centered on the family wage, according to Alice Kessler-Harris. By seeing women workers not as individuals, but as (potential) members of families and (potential) mothers, they did not grant women the full measure of economic citizenship claimed by the male worker whose primary economic function was as family breadwinner. The assumption was that women were or would become dependents on their spouse's income. Yet where Heller Committee budget research centered largely on male breadwinners in different classes of labor (wage, clerical, and professional) and the impact of economic decisions on family wages, Peixotto also included women workers—nurses and teachers— in the studies. And she situated women as experts in the family economy by relying on their information for the budgets developed by the committee. Breckinridge and Abbott's work also complicates this picture. Their research examined the longstanding nature of women's participation in the industrial work force and the need for equal pay and status for women in the work place. At the same time, they framed their

arguments for protective labor legislation for women, which they saw as a step toward better working conditions for men as well, by pointing to the state's obligation to women as mothers, which in turn treated women as dependents. All three social scientists supported the formation of the Women's Bureau, which, despite its mandate to collect data on and develop policy recommendations for all working women, presented an ambivalent and ambiguous stance on married working women and largely ignored Black working women.<sup>35</sup>

Ambiguities present in Bezanson's research are harder to determine. On one hand, as a middle-class, academic professional examining working conditions, labor practices, labor mobility, and other issues related to labor relations of industries, one could argue that she was providing business managers with the tools to better control their work forces. On the other, Bezanson had worked in factories in Canada and the U.S. managing departments before completing undergraduate studies. Her dissertation research on the upholstery industry relied in part upon union reports of wages instead of just employer payroll records in these plants. It also relied on data collection within factories, interviews of managers as well as workers, foremen, and union representatives. That served two purposes. Although unions in Philadelphia may have collected their own data on wages, as had been the case in Britain from the 1830s, her studies encouraged unions to standardize the means of collecting and studying their memberships' wages across companies and industries. It also encouraged them to use this kind of research themselves—in effect taking the increasingly powerful academic approach—to enhance their arguments for better wages, working conditions, and other issues with carefully researched data. Indeed, Bezanson acknowledged this in her



dissertation. She maintained this interest in workers' (or their representatives') voices whenever possible in the department's work. Her goal here was to provide the power of professional academic social science expertise and access to the methodologies of social science data collection to union leadership, particularly as unions did not possess the kind of social and economic power in the U.S. that they did in Britain and other heavily unionized states. It was, in effect, an effort to share the power of knowledge development with the workers who could then benefit from it in conducting their negotiations over wages and working conditions. And, although Rockefeller Foundation staff used the words "economic planning and control" to describe its interest in the Industrial Research projects, they did so in 1934, in the midst of the depression.<sup>36</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Attention to the ambiguities is important. Equally important, all of these social scientists used their academic positions, the expertise they had developed in doctoral programs and in their subsequent research, to examine social and economic problems that were not widely researched in academic institutions in the U.S. The Heller Committee's close empirical work on family budgets and wages and cost of living among different social and economic classes challenged then current knowledge about economic decision-making. As Peixotto argued, the purpose of the committee's work was to add to the "very small stock of evidence in a part of the field of consumption wherein lie some of the most relevant questions of economic theory and business practice," evidence that came into play for setting wages and prices in times of crisis. Looking at how modern families made these decisions, she believed, would "swing the discussion of the art of spending from the abstract and normative foundations on which it now rests, to a more concrete

and positive [empirical] basis." The studies were to develop understanding of " the consumer's rationality," rather than relying on economists' theories about consumers' reasoning.<sup>37</sup> Peixotto articulated this research agenda within a department of economics. The Heller research program drew on existing faculty resources, and the social economy program increased the presence of women in the department.

Breckinridge and Abbott had set their research agenda before coming to the University of Chicago. But while their location in the School of Social Service kept them effectively out of, but connected to, the major loci of social science research (the departments of political science, economics, anthropology, and sociology), it also enabled them to claim research on women and children as a special domain of work funded by the LCRC and LSRM. This was work that was largely ignored by the university's male social science department faculty. And in that regard, it offered a clear alternative to the developing approach of the Chicago School of sociology. Alice O'Connor notes that where much of the research financed by the LSRM focused on a new way of framing social science study: "an 'ecological model' of social development" that "explained such touchy subjects as ethnic relations and industrial capitalism as part of a natural evolutionary process." Although the men of the Chicago School acknowledged the need for reform, they believed it should "avoid interference with the natural progression of industrial growth and ethnic assimilation."<sup>38</sup> Or, put slightly differently by Martin Bulmer, Chicago sociologist Robert Park saw the kind of survey work done by Abbott and Breckinridge as a "snapshot of existing conditions," while the sociological survey as the Chicago men conceived it "aimed to penetrate beneath the surface to define problems for research and to abstract from the data the processes of social organization and the

processes that had produced those patterns."<sup>39</sup> Breckinridge and Abbott took a stronger position on reform. In their studies of poverty, women and work, child labor, truancy, and delinquency, issues consistently understudied by their male colleagues—not as cultural problems, but as social structural and political economic problems, they articulated in a myriad of ways the need for a welfare state whose policies should rest on solid research and whose programs should be designed to cushion the most vulnerable from the shocks of illness, poverty, cyclical unemployment, poor housing and public services, and lack of policy attention to these issues.<sup>40</sup>

Bezanson's work at Penn was unique in both its focus and breadth: no organization was conducting such well connected, tightly focused economic studies of industry. To counter the potential criticism of narrowness, as much of the work centered on industries in the Philadelphia area, Bezanson persuasively argued that such focus enabled the studies to yield much more authoritative knowledge about industrial labor problems. The researchers she and Willits gathered in the department understood that they were working on carefully coordinated studies designed to yield more general understanding of industrial work places, understanding that could be applied to a wide range of industries in the areas of wage setting, employee turnover and mobility, unemployment, employee-employer relations, and productivity. Depth of study, in other words, could lead to breadth of understanding. They were able to track the impact of unemployment on families, the ways and reasons workers shifted from one work place to another, the impact of union contract negotiations on productivity, costs, and profits, and earning trends—all over two or more decades of research. The data and conclusions were critically important during periods of economic change—the post-World War I

labor market shifts, the depression, and the realignment of the labor market up to and during World War II.<sup>41</sup>

Peixotto, Breckinridge and Abbott, and Bezanson experienced different tensions related to gender in their respective institutions. Peixotto was squarely in an economics department and her social economy program remained a central element of the department's offerings, from the 1910s through the 1930s, even as the social economy aspect of the program remained the domain of women. By the 1940s, most of the women, except Huntington, had been moved into a separate department of social work, and then a separate school, much as business and finance had also been moved out of the department into their own unit to accommodate a more restricted and focused definition of economics teaching and research. Breckinridge and Abbott were located in a school they created, but that was adjacent to the central social science activity of their university and connected to the less prestigious 'women's social science' supporting social administration and social service. Bezanson, in contrast, not only directed her department, but also largely framed the research agenda of the department, both of which she accomplished in partnership with Willits. She was able to do this because the department was a separate unit within the Wharton School, which was also a separate unit from the university proper at a time when the University of Pennsylvania did not appoint women to the college faculty.

All were able to tap into funding to support the research programs they designed and to produce new knowledge about economic problems they considered important. For Peixotto, particularly, female patronage was critical. For all three, including Huntington's work on unemployment in the 1930s, Breckinridge and Abbott's participation in the

LCRC studies, and Bezanson's access to direct funding, large foundation support was necessary. In addition, they all used that new knowledge to inform social and economic policy-making—at the municipal, state, and federal levels. Finally, they all presented some ambiguities in the ways they used the power associated with their professional expertise and knowledge. In Peixotto's case the ambiguities were present in her privileging of the male breadwinner and male occupations in the Heller Committee budget studies, while giving some, but not the same level of, attention to women's work, apart from their place as family members. At the same time, she used her institutional power to position more women as professional researchers in the economics department at Berkeley.

In Breckinridge and Abbott's case, it was present in the ways they marginalized the working-class and lower middle-class women who had used the Chicago School of Civics to leverage themselves into the solid middle class as social workers and contributors to on-the-ground social reform. It was also in the contradictory ways they argued for policy regarding women's work: equal access to the labor force and equal treatment once there, but protective labor legislation for women as current and future mothers. At the same time, they included both men and women in the doctoral program (by 1941 fifteen men and fifteen women had finished Ph.D.s in social welfare and social administration) and placed them in academic institutions and social welfare agencies as researchers, deans, and directors, extending their own influence—and power—into all aspects of social welfare.

For Bezanson, the ambiguities are less evident. She was familiar with and committed to improving the industrial work place long before her graduate training and

the authority that conferred. And she was careful to include union data whenever it was available or unions were willing to cooperate. In fact, the department's researchers found some companies more willing to share personnel and other data than others. She seemed to have great faith that the research results would be used for both workers' and industry's benefit and that unions themselves would develop academically persuasive methods of collecting and analyzing data to inform labor policies in the region.

The work of academic researchers like Peixotto, Breckinridge, and Abbott helped to lay the foundation for the development of many New Deal programs focused on women, children, and elderly dependents. Bezanson's group at Penn facilitated the development of NRA codes and contributed to knowledge about issues critical to the industrial economy during the 1930s—employment, wages, reemployment, work force mobility, pricing, costs, and other issues in both healthy and declining industries, issues that had a direct influence on labor market stability and the welfare of workers.

Examining their work makes clear that they all used the power their knowledge and academic authority conferred to contribute to defining a much larger role for the state in times of economic crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> M. A. Dzuback (1999) Jessica Blanche Peixotto, in John Garraty, ed., *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press). On male faculty opinion, see Lucy Sprague Mitchell *Pioneering in Education*, p. 42, University of California Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (UCROH,BL,UCB), and L. S. Mitchell (1953) *Our Two Lives: The Story of Wesley Claire Mitchell and Myself* (New York: Simon & Schuster), p. 193; and Josephine Smith in S. B. Riess Ed. *The Women's Faculty Club of the University of California, Berkeley, 1979-1982* (UCROH, BL, UCB). See M. E. Cookingham ((1987) *Social Economists and Reform: Berkeley, 1906–1961 History of Political Economy*, 19, pp. 48-49 on Peixotto's mentors. D. T. Rodgers (1998) *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pp. 76-111.

<sup>2</sup> Cookingham ((1987), pp. 47-65. On Peixotto, in addition to sources already noted, see: Jessica B. Peixotto Papers, (JBP), BL, UCB; H. R. Hatfield (1935) *Jessica Blanche Peixotto Essays in Social Economics: In Honor of Jessica Blanche Peixotto* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 5–14; C. A. Chambers (1971) Peixotto, Jessica Blanche in *Notable American Women, 1607-1950*, 3, Ed. E. T. James (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), pp. 42–43; Jessica Blanche Peixotto *In Memoriam* (1941) (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 24–25.

<sup>3</sup> Jessica B. Peixotto, Annual Report on the Heller Fund for Research in Social Economics 1, Presidents Papers (Campbell), 1924: 1388 (hereafter cited as HC Annual Report), for quote; Emily Huntington, University of California Regional Oral History

Collection (UCROH), University Archives, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (PP, UA, BL, UCB). Such female patronage is examined in M.A. Dzuba (2005) *Creative Financing in Social Science: Women Scholars and Early Research*, and other essays in A. Walton Ed., *Women and Philanthropy in Education*, (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press), On gender and social science, see E. J. Yeo (1996) *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London: Rivers Oram Press); R. Rosenberg (1982) *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press); E. Fitzpatrick (1990) *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Social Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press); R. Muncy (1991) *Creating a Female Dominion of Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press); H. Silverberg Ed., (1998) *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

<sup>4</sup> For the reports of the committee, see Heller Committee, Presidents' Papers (PP) (CU-5 series 2) for Campbell and Sproul, University Archives (UA) BL, UCB; and Emily Huntington, The Heller Committee for Research in Social Economy, 20 January 1943, 1943: 471, PP. Heller's annual support varied over three decades, beginning at \$4,000 per year throughout the 1920s, decreasing to \$2,400 per year in the 1930s, when the university began allocating research funds to the committee, and increasing to \$3,600 in 1935 and again to \$4,800 in 1940.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Felix Flugel, *et al.*, Annual Report of the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics (Heller Committee Annual Report), 1927-1928, PP (Campbell), 1928: 113; Emily Huntington, *et al.*, HC Annual Report, 1935, PP(Sproul), 1936: 471; Peixotto to Julius Wangenheim, 7 June 1933, PP (Sproul), 1933: 471; and



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Peixotto, Heller Committee Annual Report (1935), 3, PP (Sproul), 1936: 471; all in UA, UCB). See also E.H. Huntington and M.G. Luck (1937) *Living on a Moderate Income: The Incomes and Expenditures of Street-Car Men's and Clerks' Families in the San Francisco Bay Region* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

<sup>6</sup> M. Jacobs (2005) *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 8. A. O. Leuschner to Dean C. B. Lipman, 29 October 1930, PP (Sproul), Economics/Heller Committee: 1930: 248, UA, BL, UCB. On Peixotto's contributions to economics, see J. Dorfman (1959) *The Economic Mind in American Civilization*, 5 (New York: Viking Press) pp. 570–78; E. Hoyt (1928) *The Consumption of Wealth* (New York: Macmillan). See N. Folbre (1998) 'The 'Sphere of Women' in Early Twentieth-Century Economics' *Gender and American Social Science*, pp. 35–60.

<sup>7</sup> Fitzpatrick (1990) *Endless Crusade*, pp. 66-91, and R. Muncy (1991) *Creating a Female Dominion of Reform*, pp. 66-92.

<sup>8</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*; E. Abbott, *Twenty-One Years of University Education for Social Service, 1920-1941* (A Report to the Alumni with a Register of Alumni Who Received higher Degrees, 1920-1942, and Their Dissertation Subjects, n.p.). Yeo (1996) *The Contest for Social Science*, p. 248, argues that the social work profession was developed "by women, ratified by professional men, and buttressed by the state" in Britain. Although there were similarities in the U.S., women professionals earlier sought university training in social science and participated in specifically university-based social research, as well as in government-sponsored and charity organization research.

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<sup>9</sup> Yeo *The Contest for Social Science*, 249.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzpatrick *Endless Crusade*, pp. 42, 190.

<sup>11</sup> Muncy *Creating a Female Dominion*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>12</sup> This was another instance of female patronage, as the Sage Foundation had been established for this purpose by Margaret Olivia Sage, to contribute to social betterment; see J. M. Glenn, L. Brandt, and F. E. Andrews (1947) *Russell Sage Foundation, 1907–1946* (2 vols., New York: Russell Sage Foundation); D. C. Hammack (1994) A Center of Intelligence for the Charity Organization Movement: The Foundation's Early Years in D. C. Hammack and S. Wheeler Eds. *Social Science in the Making: Essays on the Russell Sage Foundation* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), 1–33.

<sup>13</sup> Fitzpatrick *Endless Crusade*, pp. 168-192.

<sup>14</sup> M. Bulmer and J. Bulmer (1981) Philanthropy and Social Science in the 1920s: Beardsley Ruml and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, 1922-1929 *Minerva*, 19, pp. 347-407; M. Bulmer (1980) The Early Institutional Establishment of Social Science Research: The Local Community Research Committee at the University of Chicago, 1923-1930 *Minerva*, 18, pp. 51-110; and M. Bulmer (1984) *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Material submitted to Dean Tufts, November 1924, Edith Abbott to Agnes Russell, 27 January 1925; box 61, file 13, Presidents' papers, 1889-1925, University of Chicago Special Collections, Regenstein Library (UCSC). See also Local Community Research Committee Annual Report(s), 1923-24, 1925, 1926-27, 1927-28, box 70, file 750: Local Community Research Report to the President of the University of

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Chicago, 1 February 1927; all in Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Papers, series 3, 6, Rockefeller Archive Center (LSRM, RAC) for a sample of research projects. The committee's work broadened within a year of inception to include scholars in commerce and social service; see A Three Year Research Program, The Social Science Group, The University of Chicago, 15 January 1924, box 70, file 749, series 3, 6, LSRM, RAC.

<sup>16</sup> Paraphrased in Lawrence K. Frank memo, 9 March 1925, box 64, file 683, LSRM, series 3, RAC. Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*, p. 200.

<sup>17</sup> Anne Bezanson in 1928 Alumnae Questionnaire, Radcliffe College Archives, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College (RCA, SL, RC); Emily H. Huntington A Career in Economics and Social Insurance, p. 33, UCROH, BL, UCB, on Taussig's gendered practices. "Experience of Anna Bezanson," in "Activities of Professor Emory R. Johnson," n.d. (ca. 1926). box 75, fine 792, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, series 3, 6, Rockefeller Archive Center (LSRM, RAC); C. de Rouvray, Joseph Willits, Anne Bezanson, and Economic History: 1930-1954, <http://www.rockefeller.edu/publications/resrep/rouvray.pdf> (date of access: 17 January 2006); Bezanson, Anne, *Who's Who in Pennsylvania* 1 (1939), Faculty Files, University of Pennsylvania Archives (FF,UPA).

<sup>18</sup> Helen Taft to M. Carey Thomas, 19 February 1920, Reel #162, M. Carey Thomas Papers, Bryn Mawr College Archive; see also M. A. Dzuback (1993) Women and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College, 1915-1940," *History of Education Quarterly*, 33, pp. 579-608.

<sup>19</sup> S. A. Sass (1982) *The Pragmatic Imagination: A History of the Wharton School, 1881-1981* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), chapter 7.

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<sup>20</sup> *Moving into the Eighties: The Wharton School's Industrial Research Unit and Labor Relations Council*, 7, University of Pennsylvania Archives (UPA); Sass, *The Pragmatic Imagination*, pp. 208-209. On salaries: Joseph H. Willits, "Industrial Research Department, Statement of Receipts and Disbursements, 15 April 1929, box 75, file 793, LSRM series 3, 6, RAC.

<sup>21</sup> de Rouvray, Joseph Willits, p. 9, for quote;

<sup>22</sup> *Industrial Progress and Economic Research* (Industrial Research Department, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1946), p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Beardsley Ruml to J. H. Penniman, 17 June 1927, box 75, file 792, LSRM series 3, 6, RAC; M. Bulmer (1991) *The Decline of the Social Survey Movement and the Rise of Empirical Sociology* in M. Bulmer, K. Bales, and K. K. Sklar Eds., *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 309.

<sup>24</sup> University of Pennsylvania Department of Industrial Research, 1923, box 75, file 790; and *Articles and Published Speeches of Members of the Industrial Research Department*, 5 July 1928 (on the studies), box 75, file 792; all in LSRM series 3, 6, RAC.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, *Present and Former members of the industrial Research Department*, 30 December 1943, box 5, file 82, RFA, RG 1.1, series 241, RAC; and *Who's Who and Who Was Who in the Industrial Research Department*, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1921-1946, Willits Papers, box 8, file 76, RAC; Gladys Palmer, Faculty Files, UPA.

<sup>26</sup> J. B. Peixotto (1927) *Getting and Spending at the Professional Standard of Living: A Study of the Costs of Living an Academic Life* (New York: Macmillan Company); J. B. Peixotto (1934) *The Standard of Living of Families Receiving "Widows' Pensions"*

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through the *San Francisco Assisted Charities* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics, 13, 2); C. Panunzio and the Heller Committee (1933) *How Mexicans Earn and Live: A Study of Incomes and Expenditures of One Hundred Mexican Families in San Diego, California* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics, 13, 1); J. B. Peixotto (1931) *Spending Ways of a Semi-Skilled Group: A Study of Income and Expenditures of Ninety-Eight Street-car Men's Families in the San Francisco Bay Region* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics, 5, 5); and J. B. Peixotto (1929) *How Workers Spend a Living Wage: A Study of Incomes and Expenditures of Eighty-Two Typographers' Families in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics, 5, 3); J. B. Peixotto Ed. (1928) *The Dependent Aged in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics 5, 1), p. viii. J. Backman (1947) *The Heller Budget in Wage Negotiations Conference Board Reports* (New York: National Industrial Conference Board Studies in Personnel Policy, No. 82), suggests that the Heller Budgets had to be modified for other regions, as cost of living in California was much higher than other regions of the country and calculations for wage earners, family size, and so on differed.

<sup>27</sup> Peixotto, Heller Committee Annual Report, 1932-33, PP (Sproul, 1933:471; Peixotto, Heller Committee Annual Report, 1934 PP (Sproul), 1934:471; both in UA, BL, UCB.

E. Huntington (1939) *Unemployment Relief and the Unemployed, 1929-1934* (Berkeley: University of California Press). B. N. Armstrong (1932) *Insuring the Essentials: Minimum Wage Plus Social Insurance: A Living Wage Program* (New York: Macmillan).

<sup>28</sup> T. Richardson and D. Fisher (1999) Eds., *The Development of the Social Sciences in the United States and Canada: The Role of Philanthropy* (Stamford, Ct.: Ablex

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Publishing), examines this from a number of perspectives. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, p. 82.

<sup>29</sup> Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, pp. 93-123. Muncy makes clear the tremendous amount of backing generated for the act—extending to politicians, male reformers, and middle-class women connected with women's clubs and reform organizations.

<sup>30</sup> Willits to E. E. Day, 14 October 1932, box 75, file 793, LSRM series 3, 6, RAC; 9 May 1932 minutes, box 5, file 78, RFA, RG 1.1, series 241, RAC; *Industrial Progress and Economic Research*, 27-29.

<sup>31</sup> Willits to Edmund E. Day, 27 April 1932, box 5, file 78, RFA, RG1.1, series 241; Bezanson to Willits, 9 August 1935 and 10 June 1935, box 8, file 75, Joseph H. Willits Papers; both in RAC.

<sup>32</sup> A. O'Connor (2001) *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 27. The focus here is on Peixotto, Abbott, and Breckinridge, as Bezanson did not examine specifically the working conditions of women, and her considerable early experience in management contributed to her concerns about labor relations and working conditions shaping workers' persistence in particular industries. In addition, I have been unable to uncover much about her family and social class background. Yeo *The Contest of Social Science*, pp. 246-278.

<sup>33</sup> Peixotto *Getting and Spending*, pp. viii, vii. See pp. 187-226, providing an analysis of the "miscellaneous" category of household budgets, which included investments, education, leisure activities, social club memberships, and so on—all non-necessities for basic survival; and pp. 227-249, with a collection of family expense histories, in which it

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is clear family members were asked how they developed priorities for spending. See also E. H. Huntington and M. G. Luck (1937) *Living on a Moderate Income: The Incomes and Expenditures of Street-Car Men's and Clerks' Families in the San Francisco Bay Region* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 171-186, on comparing the two occupational groups and the choices they made about expenditures.

<sup>34</sup> Muncy *Creating a Female Dominion*, pp. 79-81, 85.

<sup>35</sup> A. K-Harris (2001) *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 34-43; Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*, pp. 168-70.

<sup>36</sup> Sydnor Walker to J. Steele Gow, 20 September 1934, box 5, file 79, RFA, RG1.1, series 241, RAC; Joseph Willits to Edmund E. Day, 21 February 1929, box 75, file 793, LSRM, series 3, 6, RAC; A. C. Bezanson (1928) *Earnings and Working Opportunity in the Upholstery Weavers' Trade in 25 Plants in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press) (doctoral thesis, Radcliffe College, 1928), dedicated to a former and present secretary of the Upholstery Weavers' Union, Local No. 25, "whose interest and cooperation made this study possible." On Bezanson's dissertation, see Willets to Day 21 February 1929: "her data was dependent upon weekly reports of the workmen instead of payroll records furnished by the employers . . . the study . . . points the way towards which trade unions can study the income of their membership," use their research to bargain with "accurate knowledge of the facts," and assist "other unions" in knowing "more about the economic problems with which they are dealing."

<sup>37</sup> Peixotto *Getting and Spending*, pp. x, xi, x.

<sup>38</sup> O'Connor *Poverty Knowledge*, pp. 49, 50.

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<sup>39</sup> Bulmer *The Decline of the Social Survey Movement*, p. 304

<sup>40</sup> Fitzpatrick *Endless Crusade*; and see n. 12—the contrast in studies proposed by the School as opposed to those from the social science departments is telling.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Walker to Gow, 20 September 1934; and Edmund E. Day to Joseph H. Willits, 20 November 1935, box 5, file 79, RFA, RG 1.1, series 241, RAC: "the work that has gone on at the Wharton School, I believe under the direction of Miss Bezanson, will set high standards for the associated work at other centers."



