

2008

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Recommended Citation

Dzuback, Mary Ann, "Gender, Professional Knowledge, and Institutional Power: Women Social Scientists and the Research University" (2008). *Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Research*. 41.
<https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/wgss/41>

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Gender, Professional Knowledge, and Institutional Power: Women Social Scientists and
the Research University
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in *The 'Woman Question' and Higher Education: Perspectives on Gender and Knowledge Production in America*, ed. Ann Mari May (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2008)

Although United States universities in the early twentieth century offered the promise of meritocratic entry into the academic profession via the graduate training they provided, they did not fulfill that promise for women. Most women who trained for the PhD in social sciences—the focus of this paper—and who remained in academia could only find positions in colleges. There they pursued scholarship, teaching, and service, the three central activities of the professional scholar, but found themselves restricted by the expectations of large teaching loads, limited resources, and lack of opportunity to train graduate students in these largely teaching institutions. Yet even in these environments, women social scientists created thriving careers, pursued research, located financial support for their research, and in the end transformed the colleges to be more receptive to faculty and student scholarship. In contrast, the few women scholars who were hired by universities as teachers and/or scholars had to negotiate carefully these institutional cultures, which were not by and large hospitable to women researchers, in an effort to obtain the recognition and support their male counterparts routinely received.¹

The focus of this essay is on women who, in the 1920s and 1930s, *did* make a place for themselves as researchers in American universities, how they accomplished this, and what they accomplished. I use four institutional cases to examine women's strategies within particular institutional cultures and historical contexts. The two primary cases are women at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, located in the

Department of Industrial Research, and women at Radcliffe College/Harvard University, located at the Bureau of Industrial Research. The two secondary cases are women in the economics department at the University of California, Berkeley, and women at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. Analyzing across the four cases helps to make clear how institutional culture intersected with available resources and women's tactics for securing some institutional power and support for their work as scholars. It is important to note that when women were on the faculties of universities, they were often located in special institutes like Harvard's Bureau, in schools of social work somewhat like Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, and in child study institutes like those at Columbia Teachers College and the University of Minnesota. Women scholars were also what Geraldine Clifford (1989) calls 'lone voyagers'—isolated within the field of social sciences or within departments populated otherwise by male colleagues. As scholars in ancillary research institutes or as lone woman in a social science department, they were limited in their opportunities to transform institutional culture and to make women's presence appear as anything other than an anomaly.

I focus on the 1920s and 1930s for a number of reasons. First, women had made inroads in social science doctoral programs in US universities for three decades by 1920. Columbia, Chicago, Radcliffe/Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Wisconsin, and Yale were the locations where the majority of men and women social scientists completed doctoral study. Women had had ample time to prove themselves, alongside their male peers, as more than competent scholars in these programs. Still, their mentors most frequently recommended them to positions in the women's colleges rather

than in the research universities. Those who did find positions in research universities did so with support from male colleagues already there and because university administrations wanted them on the faculty in the particular positions they held. By virtue of their training and, in some cases, their social backgrounds, these were women of privileged status. Aside from the obvious gender differences, they 'fit' with the academic intellectual class populating university faculties. Second, the numbers of women and men receiving the PhD continued to grow throughout this period; women reached a high of 15.4 per cent over all and 18.79 per cent in the social sciences in the 1920s. By the 1920s, in other words, a significant pool existed of women candidates for research positions in social sciences. Many of them moved between academia and government, particularly during wars and economic and political crises, because they possessed expertise federal, state, and local governments needed. Others preferred government work because it allowed them to play a more direct role in influencing policy with their research. And still others stayed in government work because it was more stable than academic employment or because it better accommodated their personal lives, including obligations to spouses and family. Nevertheless, had universities tried to create truly meritocratic faculty employment policies, women candidates were available.²

Third, in the 1920s foundations began providing major financing for academic social science research. Although the Russell Sage Foundation earlier offered significant support for research, most projects Sage financed were conducted by Sage staff. But in the 1920s, the Rockefeller-created Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Carnegie Foundation began financing projects by academic scholars. Though women were rarely chosen as principal

investigators, these organizations figured prominently in women's ability to take advantage of such well financed programs that helped to further their own research and careers and legitimated their presence as scholars in research universities (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981; Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews 1947; Lagemann 1983).

Fourth, the 1920s represented in broad cultural ways a period of vast optimism about women's expanded opportunities in professions, in new lines of work, and in social equality. The achievement of suffrage in 1920, coupled with a growing economy and relaxed restrictions on acceptable social behavior for both women and men suggested that all kinds of gendered cultural expectations, structures, and power relations could be successfully challenged, particularly in the work place. It turned out to be, as Patricia Hummer argued, a 'decade of elusive promise.' Nevertheless it was the first sustained period in American history when women began to believe they could 'have it all': meaningful work, marriage and family, and full economic, social, and political equality with men (Hummer 1979; Cott 1987, 213-240; Hutchinson 1929, 52-79).³

The Penn, Harvard, Chicago, and Berkeley cases demonstrate that women were most successful in negotiating their place as scholars in research universities when they had the opportunity to participate in creating research programs, departments, and units, usually distinct from the core departments of most universities, with one exception—the women economists at the University of California, Berkeley, who were squarely in the Department of Economics. In addition, the presence of a strong leader who had earned the PhD in her field and who made alliances with her male peers was critical to women's success in these institutions. These leaders' educational and cultural experiences and familiarity with elite university research culture as undergraduate and graduate students

facilitated their ability to 'read' these institutions, navigate within them, and when necessary, challenge their colleagues' assumptions about women's capabilities. A further factor in their success was the ability to take advantage of the philanthropic foundation funds that were made available to these institutions; again, Berkeley women were an exception—they raised the funds from a private source for their research unit within the department.⁴ By success here, I mean that they held their positions for a long time; they provided spaces for other women to join the department or institute and to conduct research; and they participated in making a mark on the larger institution with their work.

The University of Pennsylvania

Anne Bezanson had a great deal of experience working with industry by the time she enrolled at Radcliffe to complete her bachelor's degree (1915): two years at the Londonderry Iron and Steel Company in her native Nova Scotia and eight years at the Gillette Razor Company in Boston, in personnel and inspections. She started her doctoral work at Radcliffe in the mid-1910s, but took two years' leave to teach in Bryn Mawr College's Graduate Department of Social Research and Social Economy, where she developed a small research program for doctoral and master's students on industrial problems. Impatient with the social economy approach to research and teaching, and wary about whether the program would continue after its initial grant from John D. Rockefeller, she gladly accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School in 1921 at the invitation of her friend Joseph Willits. Willits's doctoral work at Penn on 'worker turnover in the Philadelphia labor market' was very close to her own research on upholsterers' unions in Pennsylvania (de Rouvray, 2). Willits and Bezanson co-founded a new department at the school, the Department of Industrial Research.⁵

The Wharton School of Finance and Commerce had 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 at the university, specifically economics and government, training both graduate and undergraduate students. Social science graduate programs were within Wharton's departments and controlled by the business faculty (Sass 1982). 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, conceived the department as a research-oriented unit that solicited its own funds and controlled its own research program. 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, Bezanson also became a part-time consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation.

The department's independence enabled Willits and Bezanson to run their research program relatively free of institutional interference; Bezanson became an equal partner in developing the program. Conversely, that independence precluded her access to extensive contact with students in the university, except for those in graduate programs at the school. In short, the Wharton School's institutional location apart from the liberal arts center of the university, and the Industrial Research Department's independence within the Wharton School, were critical factors enabling Bezanson, as a woman scholar, to acquire institutional power, but in a limited capacity.

In addition, Bezanson's professional autonomy and mobility were strongly influenced by her relationship with Willits, which could have served as a constraining function in her professional development, but did not. In any case, their similar work experiences with personnel in industry, common scholarly commitments, and shared approaches to methodology made them fitting partners in fostering the department's work and in collaborating on the development of social science research throughout the 1930s and 1940s (Sass 1982, 208-209). 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 teaching, he was employed part-time in industrial research and received half the salary she did in the department.⁶

For Bezanson, initially not having students and being somewhat dependent on Willits for her professional advancement, autonomy, and influence was a small price to pay for the opportunity to develop 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. For both Willits and Bezanson, reaching a 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. Further, 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 (de Rouvray n.d.).

Bezanson and Willits took advantage of the increased philanthropic foundation funding available for social science research in the 1920s. The Carnegie Foundation, the Philadelphia Association for the Discussion of Employment Problems, the Scott Paper Company, and the University of Pennsylvania financed the early work of the department. A few years before Carnegie support ended, Willits and Bezanson approached the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) for funding and were granted a small amount to finance Elton Mayo's investigation into 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. But by 1927, the LSRM's director Beardsley Rummler was so impressed with the department's studies, he granted the department \$150,000 over five years on condition 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.⁷

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 -- a highly unusual practice at the University of Pennsylvania, which employed few if any women faculty before Bezanson. 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.⁸ Her PhD and expertise in monetary policy enabled her to pursue studies of economic depression and recovery before she left to conduct research and to develop policy at the Social Security Administration and then the State Department. Gladys Palmer, who had started PhD 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 Wharton School's Department of Industry. She was promoted to Research Professor of Industry in 1953. 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.⁹

Clearly, Bezanson positioned herself well at Penn. Such positioning was greatly facilitated by her Harvard connections, but was largely a result of her leadership skills and commitment to a particular kind of research. Industrial research gained importance and legitimacy in the 1920s as industrial employment expanded and the United States became a world economic power in the production of goods in the twentieth century. Her relationship with Willits was based on both of these qualities, and provided her an entrée

into a university research and eventually faculty position. Together, they were able to persuade the major social science funding agency of the 1930s and 1940s to support their work, which significantly expanded it. In addition to the funding, Bezanson's long tenure as head of the department ensured a continuity of vision in the research; she turned it over to her student Gladys Palmer, who held the directorship until 1961. Such continuous leadership over 40 years in the Wharton School suggests that Bezanson had a strong impact on the institution. Penn awarded her an honorary doctorate of science in 1951.

As important was the body of research the department produced. Bezanson's work at Penn was unique in both its focus and breadth: no organization was conducting such well-coordinated, 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. During the first decade, studies examined labor turnover, wages, and employment in metal, upholstery, hosiery, and wool and textile industries. 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.' A large-scale study of labor problems in the bituminous coals industry was a key contribution at the national level and was used in the 1930s to advise the Roosevelt administration and the NRA about setting wage codes for that industry.¹⁰

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. 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 more than three 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.

Harvard University and the Bureau of International Research

When Bernice Brown arrived on Radcliffe's campus as an undergraduate in 1912, her options were constrained by the arrangement Harvard had made with Radcliffe for educating women. As an undergraduate, she took her courses with other Radcliffe women, but was taught entirely by Harvard University professors. Not all Harvard professors taught Radcliffe women; some refused to offer separate classes for them or to allow women into their regular Harvard classes. But women students knew they could study with any Harvard professor, even in a class of Harvard men, if the professor's course was marked with a double dagger in the Radcliffe catalogue and if they received special permission. Brown did so well that her major professor, William Bennett Munro, whose specialty was municipal government, urged her to go on for an M.A. and then a PhD. She enrolled part-time in the graduate program because she could not afford full-time study; Munro found her a part-time job in the Bureau of Municipal Research at Harvard. She was among the first women to earn a doctorate in political science or government at

Harvard—no women received the PhD in government or political science before she did in 1920; a total of eighteen completed doctorates between 1920 and 1940.¹¹

World War I influenced the ways Brown chose to pursue political science research in the late 1910s. She shifted her orientation from municipal government to international law, working with Munro and with Harvard's George Grafton Wilson in the Law School. She decided to focus on submarine warfare, and the legal ramifications of Winston Churchill's decision to arm British merchant ships to protect them against submarines, new vessels outside of existing international law. Wilson suggested she apply for a fellowship from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. When she countered that only men had received these, he told her to use her first initial on the application. She won the award. The fellowship required her to study at a different institution for a time, so she chose Yale, but returned to Harvard to complete the dissertation. Her thesis was both timely and groundbreaking.¹²

Ada Comstock, recruited from Smith to serve as the first woman president of Radcliffe, offered the position of Dean of Women to Brown in 1923. Although the majority of her work was with undergraduates, Brown also attended to the needs of graduate students; when Radcliffe created a separate administrative structure for graduate education in 1934, Brown became Dean of the Graduate School. Comstock, like Brown, wanted graduate students to have opportunities to conduct research at Harvard's Graduate School and to work closely with Harvard professors. She and Brown likely conferred extensively on developing a program in international studies with Radcliffe students in mind because in late 1923, she and George Wilson met with Beardsley Rummler of the LSRM to discuss funding for an international studies program at Radcliffe. She argued

that the time was right—in this post-war period, discussions of tariff law, international trade, refugee problems, economic rebuilding in Europe, and debates about the League of Nations were all issues educated women should study. They called it a 'foundation for instruction in international affairs' and envisioned it as consisting of graduate fellowships, a course in international relations, and a public lecture series. Ruml suggested that they come back with a proposal that focused on research; the next plan was for establishing a Bureau of International Affairs, which would develop studies in international relations and international law that would be useful for introducing better science into 'political relationships of the world,' specifically for informing policy. The studies were to be conducted by Harvard and Radcliffe students under supervision of Harvard faculty. Because Comstock was officially involved from the beginning, and in consultation with Brown about the work of graduate students, women were included from the beginning as users of the grant funds. This was a prickly situation because Comstock was working with Harvard's President, A. Lawrence Lowell, who, according to Brown's recollection, was courteous enough, but had little interest in maintaining a close relationship with Radcliffe, and even proposed severing the connection between the two institutions.¹³

Comstock and Brown's involvement in what evolved into the Bureau of International Research meant that lists of women as well as men students who were working on relevant topics in political science and international law were included with the letters requesting funds. It also meant that Lowell's language in these letters was somewhat modified. For example, he suggested that instead of defining a set of problems at the outset, the task of the Bureau was to 'ask men *and women*--both teachers and students in Harvard University and Radcliffe College . . .--to lay before our Bureau

questions' that needed addressing through research in order to develop principles to facilitate international relations (emphasis mine). When he included with the letter a list of Harvard students and faculty whose work illustrated the appropriateness of Harvard for such a Bureau, Comstock followed up with a list of Radcliffe students and their graduate work. To understand how unusual it was to include the phrase 'and women' in connection with a social science research grant in the period before 1940, particularly where the emphasis was on science, one only has to read the countless requests that the Rockefeller Foundation and its granting agencies received. Even Harvard economist Allyn Young, who wholeheartedly supported women's entry into scholarly work as students, suggested to Lowell:

It is not important that we should be able to give assistance to a large number of workers in the field of international economics as that we should be able to make it possible for a relatively small number of men of high ability to undertake substantial investigations in that field.¹⁴

Ruml and the LSRM board granted Harvard \$50,000 per year for five years (1924-29); a second grant followed of \$50,000 per year for ten years (1929-39). The funding supplied crucial support for women social science students and scholars working on problems in international relations. By 1938, nine woman scholars received financing for projects, seven of them for doctoral work, among the 92 scholars receiving support (most of these were male faculty at Harvard). Of these nine, three women received more than one grant; the total disbursed among all nine represented approximately 11 percent of the total granted. They included Caroline B. Day in anthropology; Vera M. Dean and Alice M. Morrissey in foreign policy; Eleanor Lansing Dulles and Elizabeth A.

Schumpeter in international debts, banking, and money problems; Eleanor W. Allen, Louise Holborn, and Sarah Wambaugh in international law; and Margaret S. Gordon in international trade, tariffs, and trade cycles.¹⁵ Two more received grants between 1939 and 1942: Merze Tate and Gwendolyn Carter in international relations; their funding went largely to support publication of their work. For many of these women, the funding not only enabled their doctoral research, but also launched their careers or kept them afloat in the job-scarce period of the depression. There is no doubt that these women were privileged—their educational pedigrees and presence at Radcliffe and Harvard make that clear. But such privilege did not translate into access to faculty status there. The university claimed that the grants provided 'new blood' to the Harvard faculty, but they also facilitated 'new blood' for the women's colleges and other institutions, including Howard University and the federal government.¹⁶

The Bureau of International Research, unlike Penn's Industrial Research Department, offered no faculty positions to women or to men. But it did provide funding to students and faculty at Radcliffe and Harvard for their research in international issues. Although Comstock and Brown had already left research careers for administration by the early 1920s, they both contributed significantly to shaping the Bureau and retained some power over the Bureau and its funding policies. The Bureau's governing committee consisted of six to seven members of the Harvard faculty drawn from international law, history, government, anthropology, and economics, as well as Comstock and Brown representing Radcliffe and women researchers. In fact, of all executive committee members over the years, Comstock and Brown were the only continuous members serving from 1924-1939. Brown and Comstock used their considerable skills and

influence to help create the committee, govern the committee, and use the committee's funding to ensure that women social science researchers could benefit from the institutional prestige and interact with the faculty of Harvard University, a place where no women were appointed to the regular faculty until the middle 1940s.¹⁷

The University of California, Berkeley

The University of California at Berkeley offers a contrasting case. The social economy research program at Berkeley was developed largely by one person: Jessica B. Peixotto, the first woman appointed full-time to the University of California faculty. She had received her PhD (the second awarded to a woman at Berkeley) in political economy in 1900 after completing her study 'The French Revolution and Modern French Socialism' under Bernard Moses. In 1904 she became the Department of Economics's Lecturer in Socialism. Peixotto established a strong reputation as a scholar while at the university. Her position as the daughter of one of San Francisco's wealthy Jewish merchant families enhanced her suitability for the Berkeley position, as did her volunteer social service work and her contacts with other families with longstanding connections to the university. She was an acceptable female candidate at a time when Berkeley's President Benjamin Ide Wheeler was under intense pressure from trustee Phoebe Apperson Hearst to appoint more women faculty, commensurate with the growth of the female undergraduate student body. Promoted to Assistant Professor in Socialism (1907), Associate Professor (1912), and Professor in Social Economy (1918), she built a steady record of research and service at the local and national levels. By the late 1910s, Peixotto, with Dean of Women Lucy Stebbins's help, had established social economy as one of the department's three programs, something of a distinction in a department among the

earliest in the United States to name itself a Department of Economics (Cookingham 1987). Peixotto used the social economy program to bring more women into the department at Berkeley, one of the few in the country to hire women as instructors and, in time, as tenure-track faculty.¹⁸

In the 1920s Peixotto began enlarging her earlier research program on women and children by conducting a study for the California Civil Service Commission that investigated cost of living issues among clerical, wage earning, and executive state employees. Based on this study, Peixotto concluded that annual pricing of family and household budgets could be theoretically interesting if she were to expand the criteria typically used to examine the decision making processes in household spending. Her friend Clara Heller, a generous benefactor of the university, thought the work was important and offered to support Peixotto and other scholars' work in this area.¹⁹ Heller's ongoing grants for Peixotto's work were targeted to help expand the research capabilities of women in social science at Berkeley. They contributed significantly to the development of consumer economics in a critical period. And her faith in the nature and quality of the research moved her to continue supporting the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economy 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 1961.²⁰

Heller expected the committee to conduct 'studies of problems in Social Economics with special reference to conditions in the State of California.'²¹ Peixotto used this broad mandate to become a major influence in developing the theoretical and

empirical sophistication of the field of consumer economics. 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 economic relief. As Daniel Horowitz argues, Peixotto used these studies to capture the expanding spending patterns of both working-class and middle-class families, aligning them to social aspirations and status. Her analyses also reflected reluctance to judge, but some ambivalence about families' increasing expenditures on non-necessities, their patterns of status emulation in the acquisition of goods and in recreation, and their declining concerns about thriftiness, economizing, and saving, in this period of economic expansion and growing consumption (Horowitz 1985, 138-148).

In addition to capitalizing on the benefit of Heller funding, Peixotto had early established strong relationships within the department with her male colleagues (Cookingham 1987). Among these men, she was considered an intellectual equal in her teaching, program development, and scholarship. Peixotto's work was not as much a break with neoclassical economics as it was a claim that social economy research was important in a field in which the emphasis was on public economic activity and productivity (Folbre 1998). Her work on women and children in the early years, her program in social economy, and her later shift to consumer economics represented her efforts to contribute to a research agenda that was largely carried out by women

researchers within the Department of Economics. Further, her social economy program was one of three early twentieth-century programs in the department—the other two were business and railroad economics; by the 1910s labor economics was added.

The growth of the social economy program opened doors to women faculty as well as students, who were appointed as research assistants. This was an unusual opportunity because the male faculty in the department rarely worked with female assistants. Women scholars joined the department for a year or more; others stayed for a few years. But for a small number, longer-term appointments placed women in regular faculty positions in the university. Barbara Nachtrieb Grimes (later Armstrong) was appointed Lecturer in Law and Economics, completed a major comparative study of social insurance programs, and in 1929 became Professor of Law—the first such appointment to a law school in the United States ('Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong' 1979, 11, 13; Traynor, *et al* 1977; Dzuback 1999a). Emily Huntington was another recruit. A former undergraduate student of Peixotto and daughter of a Berkeley physician on the university faculty, she returned after completing her PhD in economics at Harvard/Radcliffe, and remained in the department until the early 1960s, focusing her research on employment economics and on Heller Committee work ('Emily H. Huntington' 1989, 61-64).²²

Peixotto's case is an anomaly among women academic social scientists. Squarely within an academic department, she was able to develop programs focused on a new area of academic economic research, social economics, contribute significantly to the development of a new field, consumer economics, and make a place for women in the department within the social economy program and in the social work program. She

positioned both Armstrong and Huntington in key areas—law and economics and employment economics—and numerous others for both longer and shorter periods of time. Focusing in these two areas, valued by male colleagues but defined and populated by female researchers, Berkeley women faculty and graduate students were not fully integrated into the other research areas of the department. Yet the Heller grant was among the earliest the university obtained in social science research. All of this was possible in part because the University of California was pressured into realizing its obligation to put some women on the faculty and to include women (most more marginally in home economics) in its expansion into a research university in the first half of the twentieth century.

The University of Chicago

In contrast to the situation for women economists at Berkeley, at the University of Chicago Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott waited years to be treated seriously as economics scholars. Breckinridge, who was admitted to the Bar in Kentucky, but as a woman unable to develop a successful law practice, received fellowship support that enabled her to complete a PhD in political science at Chicago in 1901. Her dissertation examined the ways the British and U.S. governments used their federal authority to construct a legal monetary system. Abbott earned her PhD at Chicago in economics in 1905; her thesis was a historical and statistical analysis of wages for unskilled labor from 1830 to 1900. Both daughters of lawyers, Abbott's small-town Nebraska family burdened with financial difficulties, Breckinridge's prominent in Kentucky, they were acutely aware of women's struggles for economic and social independence. They both taught for years in the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, where they carefully

distinguished their work from other schools that focused solely on training social workers by developing research-based programs. Breckinridge also taught in Chicago's Department of Home Economics (Fitzpatrick 1990; Muncy 1991).

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. When the university transformed the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy into the School of Social Service Administration, with Abbott and Breckinridge as principal architects, it 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 (Fitzpatrick 1990; Muncy 1991). At the same time, they were not placed in the Departments of Political Science or of Economics. They could train doctoral students, teach, and develop a research program in the School of Social Service Administration and 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. Yet there were mitigating factors that enabled them to exercise expertise in determining the research program, pursue the research they believed was important, and claim legitimacy as university scholars (Abbott 1942).

Breckinridge and Abbott were able to use their institutional affiliation to finance their work and train others to carry it forward—to exercise institutional power. When they negotiated the incorporation of the new School of Social Service Administration into the University of Chicago in 1920, they were appointed Associate Professors. They brought with them the model of research-based social economy and social work training

they had developed at the Chicago School of Civics, research that focused on social and economic problems in Chicago (Fitzpatrick 1990, 168-192). Within a few years, Abbott became dean and both were eventually appointed to full professorships.

Like the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago received a Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) grant designed to foster the development of academically based social science research. In 1923, Chicago's Departments of Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Economy created the university's Local Community Research Committee (LCRC); it was designed to collect data on particular aspects of local communities (Bulmer 1980; Bulmer and Bulmer 1981; Bulmer 1984). Abbott and Breckinridge were involved almost from the beginning—receiving funds to produce social work texts using documents and cases from Chicago social welfare and immigration records and directing studies of population and housing. Breckinridge and Abbott's research benefited directly from the LSRM grants as did their male and female students' at the School of Social Service Administration. By 1941, they had trained fifteen men and fifteen women for the PhD, most of whom went on to academic, administrative, and research positions. The school and the Department of Sociology 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.²³

Yet their institutional power was limited. As Muncy notes, because of their placement in a school of social service, Abbott and Breckinridge were in the position of always having to prove 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 were increasingly distanced from social problems. At one point, Abbott informed the LSRM's Lawrence Frank that she wished collaborative group work across departments were more fully realized. She noted that social service students found sociology courses 'too much up in the air—theoretical and vague' and 'dogmatic' for a program focused on public welfare administration.²⁴ Conversely, as Fitzpatrick (1990, 200) suggests, some of Chicago's departmental faculty warned students away from Abbott and Breckinridge's courses as too applied and concerned with implications for reform. This distinction illustrates one aspect of the shift in social science research that had begun at the turn of the twentieth century and continued over the next five decades—from problem-based research with 'real world consequences and applications' to theory-dominated, mathematically-based research more closely aligned with the methods of natural and physical sciences (Furner 1975; Haskell 1977; 2000).²⁵

If their location in the School of Social Service Administration kept them effectively out of, but connected to, department-based social science research, it also enabled them to claim research on women and children as a special domain of work financed by the LCRC and LSRM. They provided space, funding, and mentoring support for women graduate students and the occasional researcher or additional faculty who joined the school. And their work offered a clear alternative to the developing approach of the Chicago School of sociology. Alice O'Connor (2001, 49) notes that 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.' In

contrast, Abbott and Breckinridge did not see such 'development' as natural—they saw it as the result of lack of public attention to workers, the organization of work, and relationships among work, home life and families, and municipal and state policy-making. 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' (O'Connor 2001, 50). Breckinridge and Abbott's studies of poverty, women and work, child labor, truancy, and delinquency, articulated in a myriad of ways the need for a welfare state whose policies should rest on solid research and whose programs were designed to cushion the most vulnerable from the shocks of illness, poverty, cyclical unemployment, and poor housing and public services (Fitzpatrick 1990).²⁶

Conclusion

There is no question that women were excluded from and marginalized in the 'meritocratic' modern university in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Given that, what do we learn from these cases of women scholars who were partially accepted into particular university cultures? To find a place in the research university that allowed them to exercise some institutional power, women social scientists developed strategies that were mobilized by a number of factors: their own status as highly educated women, often in the top research training institutions in the country; opportunities for research within particular institutions; the availability of philanthropic funding for research; and connections with powerful male colleagues, all of which increased their institutional power. In the case of women social scientists, epistemological shifts in status alignment in social science research also played a role.

Institutional location is a key to understanding the extent of and limits on their power. In these cases it ranged from the extreme marginal position of the Harvard women to the near integration of the Berkeley women. At Harvard, women were not appointed to the faculty. Instead, administrator-scholars Comstock and Brown used their power to shape the proposal for the Bureau of International Research and negotiate some control of disbursement of funds to women graduate students and post-doctoral researchers. Abbott and Breckinridge, rejected for years as candidates for positions in University of Chicago social science departments, used their credentials established through the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy to create their own school in the university. Bezanson took advantage of the Wharton School's lesser resistance, compared with the arts and sciences center of the University of Pennsylvania, to employing a women scholar-administrator and of the Department of Industrial Research's autonomy under her friend and colleague Joseph Willits. Peixotto at Berkeley, unlike Bezanson at Penn and Abbott and Breckinridge at Chicago, was not located in a separate unit, but in a developing Department of Economics in a striving university. As such, she was able to participate in building the department. In her case, though, the programs she built in social economy and consumer economics were largely staffed by women and became a principal means of access for women students and faculty in the Department of Economics.

Bezanson had a similar role at Penn—that of shaping a department, but her department did not participate in undergraduate or graduate education programs; it largely focused on research. Although she was occasionally invited to teach and could help supervise some doctoral students in industrial research, the Department of Industrial Research was not a central educational program at the Wharton School or in the

university. That in itself likely facilitated Bezanson's appointment and power in shaping the program.

Breckinridge and Abbott had already established the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy before it became the university's School of Social Service Administration. Their mark was all over the educational and research programs of the school. But the kind of research they did—focused on socioeconomic problems with possibility of contributing to policy-making and reform—had already begun to diverge from the kind of research the university's social science faculty were doing in sociology, economics, and political science by the 1920s. At Harvard, Comstock and Brown's innovative ideas about international studies and insistence on including Radcliffe in the new Bureau of International Research was an ingenious strategy. It was also critical to affording Radcliffe women and others research opportunities in a new and growing field in social science.

Philanthropic funds were important in different ways to all of these women and the scholarship they fostered. Peixotto was not able to gain access to big philanthropic funding sources, but Berkeley was not yet on the radar for big funding, aside from agricultural research. Rather, she relied on personal connections that paved the way for increasing her standing in the department, enabling her to bring more women into the program and contribute to developing a new field in economics. In all the other cases, big philanthropy was critical, although because the funds were not entirely under the Radcliffe or Chicago women's purview, they had somewhat less control over the direction of research and choice of recipients than Bezanson did. Bezanson's situation stands in stark contrast to all of the others—both in the amount of money she had

available and the extent of her influence over how it was dispersed. This was evident in the depth and breadth of the research produced by the Department of Industrial Research.

Support from male colleagues was also critical to women's ability to develop institutional power. Bezanson's collaboration with Willits enabled her to penetrate Penn's all-male Wharton School, obtain funding, and build a large body of research that social scientists are now revisiting for its rich data. Brown and Comstock found in George Wilson and key men in Harvard's social science departments strong support for their desire to expand research and teaching in international relations and their collaboration on the executive committee of the bureau. (That Wilson had earlier supervised Brown's doctoral work helped.) This collaboration enabled disbursement of 11 percent of the funds to just over 10 percent of the grantees—who were women. In the case of Peixotto, again her very presence in the midst of her male colleagues, the quality of her work, and her enterprising money-raising created a climate in which she was not only accepted, but also highly respected. Her alliances with those in the department with shared interests, principally the labor economists, increased her standing and that of her program and the Heller Committee. Abbott and Breckinridge probably had the most difficulties in collaborating with their male colleagues. They were in a separate unit of the university and the type of research they were doing did not fit with what Chicago male social scientists believed was most valuable to the field in the 1920s. Still, by persisting with LCRC-related projects and positioning themselves on the governing committee, they were able to further their own and their students' work.

The shifting priorities of research in the social sciences worked in contradictory ways. On one hand, these cases illustrate women who recognized the importance of research grounded in real problems faced by women, men, and families in their struggles with a changing economy. They used this expertise and sensibility to recommend institutional accommodations for this kind of research—from Harvard's examination in international economic and political problems, to Berkeley's investigation of household budget-making, to Chicago's studies of women's employment, to Penn's research into industrial change. On the other, perhaps with the exception of Bezanson and the women working with Harvard faculty, their ways of framing problems did not accord with changes in methodology and theory-making in social science that came with increasing intensity during and after World War One. They persisted in conducting social science research that met the needs of governmental and social service agencies attempting to develop policies and shape social program to meet working people's needs (O'Connor 2001; Muncy 1991; Folbre 1998).²⁷

In the end, all of these women scholars had a long-term impact on their institutions, particularly Peixotto and Bezanson, who positioned other women to follow them, and Abbott and Breckinridge, who shaped the School of Social Service Administration in ways that persisted well into the middle of century. They drew women into the research work of the university. They had a fundamental influence on departments and programs. They pursued research they thought critical to their communities, states, and nation. They demonstrated over and over that, if the research university were to take seriously and act on its meritocratic promises, women scholars were ready to fulfill them.

¹ The research for this essay and my own larger book project of which it is a part was generously supported by a Spencer Foundation large grant and a Rockefeller Archive Center research grant, for which I am most grateful. I appreciate Ann Mari May's thoughtful suggestions for improving the argument and connecting it to other essays in this volume and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz's helpful comments when I first presented the paper at Middlebury. The arguments and conclusions are my own.

² On PhD granting institutions in social sciences, see Lawrence K. Frank, 'The Status of Social Science in the United States', Series III, box 63, file 679, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, Rockefeller Archive Center (LSRM, RAC); Harmon (1978, 127), Appendix E, suggests that the ranking from most to least number of PhDs in behavioral sciences (which includes psychology) granted to women from 1920 to 1959 should read as follows: Columbia (339), Chicago (251), Harvard (190), New York University (137), University of Iowa (131), University of Minnesota (129), University of California at Berkeley and University of Michigan (105), Ohio State University (96), Catholic University (91), Yale University (88), the University of Pennsylvania (76), and University of Wisconsin (69). Additionally, the top seven Ph.D. producers of both sexes in the social sciences (excluding psychology) from the 1920s to the middle 1940s were Columbia (789), Harvard (781), Chicago (599), Wisconsin (557), Penn (429), Berkeley (424); Harmon, *et al.* (1963, 20-26), Table 8. See also Hutchinson (1929, 20), Table 1. For the numbers and percentages of women PhDs by 1900, see Eells (1956, 647-48); Carter (1981, 687); Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973, 84). The high point, according to Carter's figures was the late 1920s when women earned 15.4 percent of the total PhDs granted in the United States. On the social sciences, Harmon, *et al.* (1963, 51), Table 26; see also Carter (1981, 686), Table 6. Using Harmon, I figured the average percentages for each of the three decades included in his tables for social sciences with psychology (*) and without: in the 1920s women earned 18.79 percent* / 17 percent; in the 1930s women earned 17 percent* / 15 percent; from 1940-45 women earned 10.5 percent* / 8.3 percent.

These percentages in the social sciences declined to an all-time low in the early 1950s, and began to climb by the mid-1950s, but did not reach the 1920 levels until the early 1970s. The increase in percentages of all women doctoral degree recipients held throughout the 1920s (at about 15 percent), before it, too, declined to an all-time low in the early 1950s (to about 10 percent), rising again significantly throughout the 1960s, also reaching and exceeding 1920s levels by the early 1970s (over 20 percent in 1974). See Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973, 5, 89, 82), chart 10 and chart 7. Newcomer (1959, 191) found that, by 1956 women comprised 14 percent of the total number of doctorates awarded between 1900 and 1956.

³ Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko (2006), argue that women's college enrollment began declining relative to men's enrollments in the 1930s, until a 'highpoint of gender imbalance in college enrollment was reached in 1947 when undergraduate men

outnumbered women 2.3 to 1' (2). Women's enrollment caught up to men's around 1980. The shift occurred in the 1930s because growth in unemployment spurred men to complete college to enhance career opportunities (7). Academic professionalization contributed to both women's and men's increased interest in pursuing doctorates.

⁴ See Dzuback (2005) and other essays in Walton (2005) on women's efforts to raise, and decisions about allocating, philanthropic funds.

⁵ '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); Bezanson, Anne, *Who's Who in Pennsylvania* 1 (1939), Faculty Files, University of Pennsylvania Archives (FF,UPA). On her dissatisfaction at Bryn Mawr, see Helen Taft to M. Carey Thomas, 19 February 1920, Reel #162, M. Carey Thomas Papers, Bryn Mawr College Archive; see also Dzuback (1993).

⁶ *Moving into the Eighties: The Wharton School's Industrial Research Unit and Labor Relations Council*, 7, University of Pennsylvania Archives (UPA). 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.

⁷ University of Pennsylvania Department of Industrial Research, 1923, box 75, file 790; Beardsley Ruml to J. H. Penniman, 17 June 1927, and Articles and Published Speeches of Members of the Industrial Research Department, 5 July 1928 (on the studies), both in box 75, file 792; all in LSRM series 3, 6, RAC. The Rockefeller Foundation appropriated \$50,000 over two years in 1932 and \$75,000 over five years in 1935; see 'Minutes,' 9 May 1932 and 17 April 1935, box 5, file 78; in 1939, the Foundation gave \$11,000 for two specific projects and in 1940, \$105,000 for three years (Thompson to Williams, 25 October 1939, box 8, file 112, and 'Minutes' 17 May 1940, box 5, file 78); all in Rockefeller Foundation Archives (RFA), RG 1.1, series 241, RAC.

⁸ Dulles, whose father was a minister, came from a long line of diplomats. Her maternal grandfather John Watson Foster was Secretary of State during the presidency of Benjamin Harrison; her uncle by marriage Robert Lansing was Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State; her brother, John Foster Dulles, was Dwight Eisenhower's Secretary of State; and her brother Allen Walsh Dulles was Director of the CIA during both the Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy presidencies. Although Dulles benefited from the privileged status of her family and their connections, and she completed a BA at Bryn Mawr (1917) and a PhD at Radcliffe (1926), she prided herself on her rise through academia and government and her economic independence from this large and stellar family, particularly as a woman achieving this kind of success (Dulles 1980).

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.' *Industrial Progress and Economic Research* (Industrial Research Department, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1946), 14 (non-archived files of the department, University of Pennsylvania).

¹¹ Bernice Brown Cronkhite, Interview with Mary Manson, June 1976, p.10; on the numbers at Radcliffe, see 'Radcliffe College, Doctors of Philosophy,' June 1931, box 3, degrees granted file, in Office of the Graduate Dean Papers; and *Annual Report(s) of Radcliffe College, 1924-25 - 1940-41* (earlier reports also contain numbers, but are not as detailed as those after 1923); all in Radcliffe College Archives, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University (hereinafter RCA, SL, RIAS, HU).

¹² Cronkhite interview with Mary Manson, 11-12.

¹³ Ada Comstock to the Trustees of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, 12 November 1923, box 54, file 573, LSRM, series 3, 6, RAC. Ada Comstock to Beardsley Ruml, n.d. (ca. 1924), file 11, Committee of the Bureau of International Research Papers (CBIR), SL, RIAS, HU. On Lowell's attitude toward Radcliffe, see Bernice Brown Cronkhite, interview with Mary Manson, 23-24. Brown remembered some on the Board of Trustees who defended Radcliffe and many Harvard faculty who supported the college and its graduate school whenever it was threatened.

¹⁴ A. Lawrence Lowell to Dr. Ruml, 5 May 1924, and Allyn Young to Lowell, 30 April 1924, for quotes; Ada Comstock to Dr. Ruml, 6 May 1924, and attached; all in box 54, file 573, LSRM, series 3, 6, RAC. See also George G. Wilson, 16 March 1927, box 54, file 573, LSRM, series 3, 6, RAC. See also 'Report of the Bureau of International Research of Harvard University and Radcliffe College, July 1, 1929 to June 30, 1938,' CBIR, file 11, SL, RIAS, HU.

¹⁵ It is important to note here that some of these women had critical connections that no doubt facilitated their access to Radcliffe and to participation in the Bureau. Elizabeth Schumpeter, for example, was married to Harvard economist Joseph Schumpeter; Sarah Wambaugh's father was a professor at Harvard's law school; and Margaret S. Gordon met and married economist Robert A. Gordon while they both were in graduate study at Harvard.

¹⁶ 'Report of the Bureau of International Research of Harvard University and Radcliffe College, July 1, 1929 to June 30, 1938,' 8; I figured the percentages from this report; see

also 'Harvard University International Relations, Publications List,' and Sidney B. Fay to Sirs, 2 May 1942; all in box 54, file 574, LSRM, series 3, 6, RAC.

¹⁷ 'Report of the Bureau of International Research of Harvard University and Radcliffe College, 1 July, 1929 to 30 June, 1938.'

¹⁸ Most economics study was conducted in economics and sociology departments or political economy departments that included political science programs. The other two programs in the Berkeley department were in business economics and labor economics. On Peixotto: Jessica B. Peixotto Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (hereafter cited BL, UCB); Hatfield (1935); Chambers (1971); 'Jessica Blanche Peixotto,' (1941); Dzuback (1999b); Clark Kerr, interview with author, 14 May 1996, Berkeley, CA.

¹⁹ 'Rites Today for Clara H. Heller,' *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 August 1959, 41; and 'Heller Millions to 3 Grandchildren,' *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 August 1959, 36; copies from BL, UCB.

²⁰ 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 (Sproul). 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.

²¹ Jessica B. Peixotto, 'Annual Report on the Heller Fund for Research in Social Economics,' 1, PP (Campbell), 1924: 1388 (hereafter cited as HC Annual Report). UA, BL, UCB.

²² Emily H. Huntington, 'A Career in Economics and Social Insurance,' 34, UCROH, BL, UCB; Emily H. Huntington, Faculty File, UA, BL, UCB.

²³ See '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 Chicago, 1 February 1927; all in LSRM, series 3, 6, 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.

²⁴ Paraphrased in Lawrence K. Frank memo, 9 March 1925, box 64, file 683, LSRM, series 3, RAC.

²⁵ Quote from conversations with Ann Mari May.

²⁶ See n. 12—the contrast in studies proposed by the School as opposed to those from the social science departments is telling.

²⁷ See also Dimand, *et al* (2000) for examples of a large number of women economists who struggled with these shifts in economics.

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