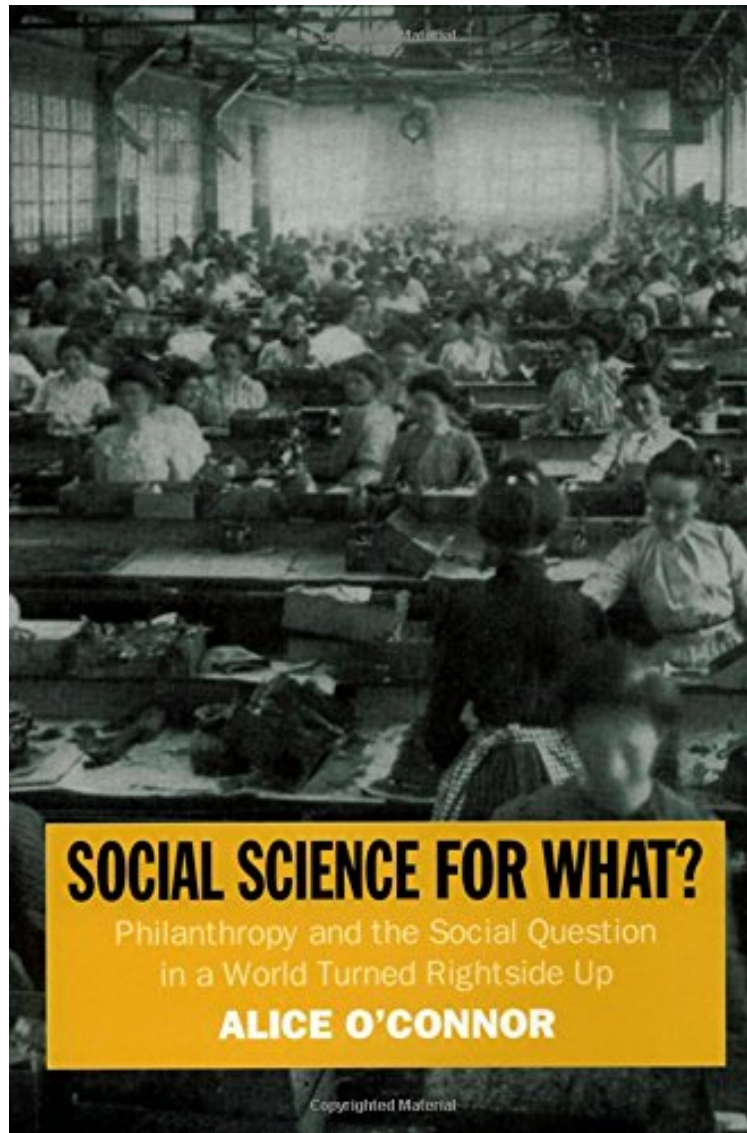


[E-BOOK] Social Science for What?: Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Rightside Up (Russell Sage Foundation Books)

Social Science for What?: Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Rightside Up (Russell Sage Foundation Books)

Alice O'Connor

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Alice O'Connor : Social Science for What?: Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Rightside Up (Russell Sage Foundation Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Social Science for What?: Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Rightside Up (Russell Sage Foundation Books):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Paula ClarkeArrived on time and as described. Thank you!

Much like today, the early twentieth century was a period of rising economic inequality and political polarization in America. But it was also an era of progressive reform a time when the Russell Sage Foundation and other philanthropic organizations were established to promote social science as a way to solve the crises of industrial capitalism. In *Social Science for What?* Alice O'Connor relates the history of philanthropic social science, exploring its successes and challenges over the years, and asking how these foundations might continue to promote progressive social change in our own politically divided era. The philanthropic foundations established in the early 1900s focused on research which, while intended to be objective, was also politically engaged. In addition to funding social science research, in its early years the Russell Sage Foundation also supported social work and advocated reforms on issues from child welfare to predatory lending. This reformist agenda shaped the foundations research priorities and methods. The Foundations landmark Pittsburgh Survey of wage labor, conducted in 1907-1908, involved not only social scientists but leaders of charities, social workers, and progressive activists, and was designed not simply to answer empirical questions, but to reframe the public discourse about industrial labor. After World War II, many philanthropic foundations disengaged from political struggles and shifted their funding toward more value-neutral, academic social inquiry, in the belief that disinterested research would yield more effective public policies. Consequently, these foundations were caught off guard in the 1970s and 1980s by the emergence of a network of right-wing foundations, which was successful in promoting an openly ideological agenda. In order to counter the political inroads made by conservative organizations, O'Connor argues that progressive philanthropic research foundations should look to the example of their founders. While continuing to support the social science research that has contributed so much to American society over the past 100 years, they should be more direct about the values that motivate their research. In this way, they will help foster a more democratic dialogue on important social issues by using empirical knowledge to engage fundamentally ethical concerns about rising inequality. O'Connors message is timely: public-interest social science faces unprecedented challenges in this era of cultural warfare, as both liberalism and science itself have come under assault. *Social Science for What?* is a thought-provoking critique of the role of social science in improving society and an indispensable guide to how progressives can reassert their voice in the national political debate. A Volume in the Russell Sage Foundation's Centennial Series

About the AuthorALICE OCONNOR is associate professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara.