

THE MEANING OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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The Meaning of Social Science by Albion W. Small

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SOCIAL SCIENCE**

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These lectures were heard by a company of graduate students drawn from all the social science departments. In variety of viewpoints a group so made up fairly represents the larger public to which appeal is now taken. The argument is addressed to all thinkers who are mature enough, both mentally and morally, to recognize the complexity of social problems.

The lectures are printed just as they were delivered. If transitions from technicality to colloquialism are occasionally rather abrupt, they are merely cases of academic freedom in sacrificing elegance to force.

A. W. S.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
JUNE 15, 1910

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LECTURE I

THE UNITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Several years ago it occurred to me that more ought to be done in the way of defining the things which the students of social science have in common. I was impressed by items of evidence which came to me with monotonous rhythm, that students in our own social science departments were not turning the opportunities afforded by our rather minute division of labor to their best advantage. Instead of using the means available for getting a wide survey of the field and of the methodology of social science in general, the typical graduate student in social science is satisfied to confine himself rather closely within the bounds of two departments. The consequence is that he is unfortunately provincial about social science as a whole.

It seemed to me that the work of our social science group would be much more intelligent if every candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in social science should survey the whole field of social science some time during his graduate years, from the standpoint of each grand division of social science, and under the guidance of a representative of each division.