The Survey and the State: Governments and Early Social Research in New Zealand and Australia, 1930s–40s

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This article tells the story of two pioneering social surveys designed to extend international developments in quantitative social research into the Antipodes: the 1937–38 survey of living standards in rural New Zealand and the University of Melbourne's 1941–43 urban survey of 7609 households. Archival material associated with these surveys illuminates the influence of governments on the topics, methods and publication of survey results and the tensions their involvement caused for academic researchers. Caught between the strategic interests of funders and the higher ideals of social science, social researchers struggled to deliver significant findings about local populations.

From the 1890s until today, social survey researchers have strived to simultaneously achieve objectivity in their projects and exert influence over public policy.[1] To this end, late nineteenth-century researchers began collecting comprehensive data directly from populations for the first time. Historians writing on pioneering figures in the development of social survey methods have identified the optimistic 'credo' that drove their efforts.[2] British researchers argued that while social action was 'necessary' and 'desirable', the first step towards achieving it was the production of 'informative data' about social life. In the United States, Progressive Era researchers pursued 'advocacy through objectivity' by conducting 'rigorously empirical', 'rigorously objective' social surveys that aimed to 'serve the interests of reform'.[3] In making these arguments, influential social reformers and social investigators including Charles Booth, Seebohm Rowntree, and W.E.B. Du Bois heightened expectations about the positive changes governments could achieve using their data. By the middle decades of the twentieth century, in both countries, the concept of objectivity provided social

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[2] David Englander and Rosemary O'Day, *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain 1840–1914* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995), 18.

[3] Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 26.

survey researchers with legitimacy at research institutions and emboldened governments to fund large social surveys of their populations.[4]

As this article demonstrates, this approach spread throughout the world, including to New Zealand and Australia, where a stated commitment to objectivity and scientism was central to the small number (by US and British standards) of social research projects taking place within universities in the 1930s and 40s.[5] Researchers from these countries contributed to international efforts to establish the reputation of social science based on their 'disinterested expertise'.[6] However, unlike their counterparts in the United States and Britain, Australian and New Zealand researchers relied heavily on state financial support because of the relative dearth of scholarly societies, research institutes, philanthropic funds and independent income streams for universities.[7] How objectivity, and the intellectual independence that is necessary to it, was rearticulated in social science projects during this period of pronounced dependence on state resources remains under examined.[8] This article investigates the value placed on objectivity and the success with which it was achieved in major pioneering social surveys conducted in each country: the 1937–38 New Zealand survey of rural living standards and the 1941–43 University of Melbourne social survey of that city.[9]

To date, accounts of the University of Melbourne social survey have emphasised the commitment of its researchers to the production of comprehensive and objective social knowledge but have not given much consideration to how this commitment might have been challenged by the funding the project received from a wartime Commonwealth government.

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[4] Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy & Objectivity a Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865–1905* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975).

[5] Charlotte Greenhalgh, 'The Travelling Social Survey: Social Research and its Subjects in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, 1930s–1970s', *History Australia* 13, no. 1 (2016): 124–38; Douglas Copland, *Studies in Economics and Social Science* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1927).

[6] Yves Rees, 'From Socialists to Technocrats: The Depoliticisation of Australian Economics', *Australian Historical Studies* 50, no. 4 (2019): 465.

[7] Neil T. Lunt, 'Contested Inheritance: the Emergence of Social Science Research in New Zealand' (PhD thesis, Massey University, 2004); Stuart Macintyre, 'The Poor Relation: Establishing the Social Sciences in Australia, 1940–1970', *Australian Historical Studies* 40, no 1. (2009): 47–62.

[8] Historians have paid greater attention to political influences on Australian anthropologists, who aimed to complete 'neutral, value-free science' but were required to keep their criticisms of the conditions and treatment of Indigenous people private in order to obtain funding and government permission to conduct research in state and commonwealth territories. See Geoffrey Gray, *A Cautious Silence: The Politics of Australian Anthropology* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007), 21–6.

[9] Both surveys were given multiple titles. We use 'rural survey' and 'The University of Melbourne social survey'.

The major historian of the survey, Graeme Davison, underlined the 'rigour of its statistical methods' and its 'austerely economic approach', inferring that the major goal of researchers was 'to bring the cold reality of fact to the airy theorizing of the planners' in Canberra.[10] Meanwhile, James Harding Robb's account of the rural New Zealand survey drew attention to government interference, and the 'academic blackmail' that secured the study's publication, but it did not consider parallel developments in Australia or investigate similarities in the trans-Tasman research environment.[11]

This article contends that significant funding provided by governments for these projects, as well as the enthusiasm for them of particular government figures, constrained the intellectual rigour and influence of both surveys. This played out in compromises made to the survey scope, topic, method, timing and publication of results. Such compromises were made both at the direct behest of government figures and as an indirect result of the parameters they placed on projects. Researchers in New Zealand and Australia walked a tightrope, seeking both financial viability and the authority generated by the application of scientific method. Ultimately, in both cases, government intervention hindered the production and publication of significant new knowledge. This article highlights the advantages of bringing together the intellectual histories of New Zealand and Australia. In taking a trans-Tasman view, we aim to move beyond observations that social scientists in these nations had scant resources and produced few influential publications.[12] We ask instead how sparse research environments shaped the ethics, methods, findings, and publication of early social science in New Zealand and Australia.

The article builds its case by examining collaborations and tensions between social scientists and government figures at each stage of the social survey research process. First, we identify the original (and sometimes intersecting) intellectual and political goals of each survey. Second, we describe the conflicts that emerged as a result of government intervention as researchers trained fieldworkers, recruited participants, finalised their questionnaires, selected

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[10] Graeme Davison, 'The Social Survey and the Puzzle of Australian Sociology', *Australian Historical Studies* 34, no. 121 (2003): 139–62.

[11] J. H. Robb, *The Life and Death of Official Social Research in New Zealand, 1936–1940* (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 1987); Ian Carter, 'A Failed Graft: Rural Sociology in New Zealand', *Journal of Rural Studies* 4, no. 3 (1998): 216.

[12] See Charles Crothers, 'Reproducing the Centre at the Periphery: Antipodean Traditions of Sociology', in *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, ed. Sujata Patel (London: SAGE, 2010); Stuart Macintyre, *The Poor Relation: A History of Social Sciences in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2010), 2; Davison.

survey populations and set timelines. We note the strong claims to intellectual independence that both researchers and government figures made at the same time as these conflicts played out. Third, we show how the reshaping of these projects aligned with the political and wartime objectives of New Zealand and Australian policymakers. Finally, we trace the rocky and thwarted attempts of leading researchers William Terrance Doig and Wilfred Prest to publish the significant findings of their studies. We argue that a series of government interventions limited the intellectual and wider impact of these ambitious and pioneering social surveys.

Social research in the Tasman world

The Great Depression and World War II drew governments to social research as they sought to coordinate and mobilise populations. This fundamentally transformed the nature and reach of social research across the Anglosphere, which had previously been driven by individuals and networks of scholars, reformers, research institutes and philanthropists, rather than by governments. In Britain, the government established a nation-wide social survey in 1941 and funded an existing and independent ethnographic social research project in Mass Observation to investigate civilian attitudes and morale.[13] In the United States, multiple grants from the Rockefeller Foundation's Laura Spelman Memorial Fund (LSMF) helped establish national bodies to coordinate social research and encourage collaborations with public administration. During the War, the United States Army's Division of Morale and the Surveys Division of the Office of War Information conducted large-scale social surveys. The increasing involvement of state, philanthropic and (therefore) industrial power in social research during this formative period sparked debate about the capacity of the field to remain objective.[14]

Governments in New Zealand and Australian called on social research expertise to meet the major international challenges of economic depression and war, but this did not reverse a pattern of government underinvestment and subsequent underperformance in social

[13] Mike Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 193–6; James Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937–1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[14] Savage; Martin Bulmer, 'Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences', review, *Science* 262, no. 5131 (1993): 259–61; Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: the American Debate over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918–1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Bjorn Wittrock, Peter Wagner and Heinrick Wollmann, *Social Science and the Modern State: Knowledge, Institutions and Societal Transformations* (Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrium, 1987).

research.[15] Compared to Britain and the United States, homes to the most famous social surveys, New Zealand and Australia had fewer universities (in Australia there were six universities before 1940 and New Zealand housed only one degree-granting university before 1962); were more focussed on education than research; established national research and science bodies much later; and were, in their policy and research outlooks, more orientated towards state welfare than private philanthropy. This presented researchers with challenges that were compounded by the constant exodus of talented researchers for more established research environments.[16] Nonetheless, in Australia, the rapid expansion of a commonwealth administrative apparatus during World War II prompted significant social research advances. By 1943, the Social Science Research Council secured government funding and commenced its role as a crucial body for coordinating social science in Australia. Partly as a result of this, a number of social surveys, large and small, were instigated during and immediately after the war.[17] Though New Zealand governments – most notably the 1935 Labour Government – sporadically drew on social science expertise to ease the country through such tumults, New Zealand scholars date the field's 'founding years' to the 1950s and 1960s, and argue that its 'golden age' dawned as late as the 1970s.[18]

Yet the New Zealand and Australian interwar research landscapes bore strong resemblance to one another, especially in their reliance on American philanthropy. The Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation supported numerous economic, anthropological, educational, and rural research projects in these countries, believing that they would in the future become important strategic partners for the United States. The Carnegie Corporation Dominion and Colonies Fund, established in 1926, aimed to make such societies 'more efficient, more professional and more scientific in their approaches to social

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[15] Lunt, 199–217; Alex Millmow, 'Douglas Copland and the Aftershocks of the Premiers' Plan, 1931–1938', *History of Economics Review* 53, no.1 (2011): 25–43.

[16] Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 22; Hannah Forsyth, *A History of the Modern Australian University* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2014); Macintyre, *The Poor Relation*, 2; Helen Bourke, 'Social Scientists as Intellectuals: From the First World War to the Depression', in *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, eds Brian Head and James Walter (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), 60; Crothers, 349.

[17] Macintyre, *The Poor Relation*; Davison, 146.

[18] Lunt, 229; Crothers, 351; Chris Brickell, 'Those "Other Sociologists": Social Analysis before Sociology', *New Zealand Sociology* 22, no. 2 (2007): 4–27.

and economic problems'.[19] Carnegie endowed the Australian Research Council in 1927, established the Australian Council for Educational Research in 1930, funded an influential survey of Australian libraries in 1932, and financed the New Zealand Council of Educational Research in 1934.[20] The Rockefeller Foundation, through its funding of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) and the Laura Spelman Memorial Fund, understood, similarly, that American political and trade interests could be furthered by the spread of social science, and in 1926 invited the University of Melbourne's Douglas Copland to be regional representative of an expanding fellowship program.[21] That same year, the Rockefeller Foundation helped establish a Chair in Anthropology at the University of Sydney. By 1940 it had provided £50,000 to support thirty researchers in forty-two field investigations.

Taken together, these activities virtually defined the world of social science research in Australia and New Zealand during these years and underline its dependence on external funding. When, from the mid-1930s, economic and wartime pressures on New Zealand and Australian governments combined with strengthening calls, overseas and domestically, for the value of social research, social researchers in those countries were the beneficiaries of a new source of external funding in the form of government support. Acknowledging this funding source, and its potential influence, would prove less straightforward.

The study that 'had nothing to do with politics': The New Zealand rural survey

The New Zealand rural survey was originally conceived of at two international philanthropic gatherings in the late 1920s and early 1930s as part of an ambitious plan to record social life across the Pacific. The Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), which held these gatherings, drew a distinction between the collection and interpretation of facts about societies, which it would provide funding for, and the offering of solutions and the writing of government policy,

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[19] Jenny Collins, 'Creating Women's Work in the Academy and Beyond: Carnegie Connections, 1923–1942', *History of Education* 38, no. 6 (2009): 792.

[20] Marjorie Harper, *Douglas Copland: Scholar, Economist, Diplomat* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2013), 79–92, 200; Bourke, 58; Macintyre, *The Poor Relation*, 17; Collins, 797; Stuart Macintyre, 'The Same under Different Skies: the University in the United States and Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies* 33, no. 3 (2009): 361.

[21] Martin Bulmer and Joan Bulmer, 'Philanthropy and Social Science in the 1920s: Beardsley Ruml and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, 1922–29', *Minerva* 19, no. 3 (1981): 347–407; Richard Glotzer, 'A Long Shadow: Frederick P. Keppel, the Carnegie Corporation and the Dominions and Colonies Fund Area Experts 1923–1943', *History of Education* 38, no. 5 (2009): 621–48.

which it would not.[22] Early conversations about the rural survey took place at the 1927 and 1933 IPR conferences, which were attended by around a dozen New Zealanders, including future Finance Minister (1935–38) and Prime Minister (1957–60) Walter Nash.[23] The IPR proposed building on existing studies of agriculture in the region by initiating inquiries into the 'human aspect' of life in the Pacific. Encouraged by the IPR's stated objective of bridging local imperatives with its own, New Zealand attendees came away with a plan to survey the living conditions of the nation's workers.[24] In time, the IPR would contribute £300 to this survey, which would end up focussing on rural workers alone.[25] The allied Carnegie Corporation would fund a visit to New Zealand by renowned American sociologists John Kolb (University of Wisconsin) and Edmund Brunner (Columbia University), who would provide advice to the survey team.[26]

New Zealand politicians and civil servants quickly understood that their interests could also be served by the proposed survey. Minister for Scientific and Industrial Research, Daniel Giles Sullivan, who had championed the establishment of a social science unit within government to provide policy advice, used momentum around the proposed survey in 1936 to establish and secure government finance for the Social Science Research Bureau. Its first task would be to undertake the IPR's proposed survey. The Bureau employed a lead researcher, William Terrance Doig, statistician Dorothy Prebble and three clerks, who all worked on the survey. The government directly employed six fieldworkers, who completed 462 interviews and 300 detailed household budgets with farmers. The Dominion Observatory, another government body, lent researchers Facit calculating and Burroughs adding machines.

As well as giving the Bureau an immediate purpose and international connections, the survey functioned to advance a more obviously partisan political objective. During 1936, the

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[22] Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1919–1945* (London: Routledge, 2001), 119, 123, 134.
[23] J.H. Robb, 4; Akami, 4–5.
[24] Minutes, survey committee, 9 November 1937, 1, Social Science Research Bureau (SSRB), AAVW, W3432, Box 10, 5/13, Archives New Zealand, Wellington (hereafter ANZ).
[25] In November 1937, researchers on the rural survey also initiated a survey of tramway and boot-and-shoe workers.
[26] Ian Carter, 'Most Important Industry: How the New Zealand State Got Interested in Rural Women, 1930–1944', *New Zealand Journal of History* 20, no. 1 (1986): 33; Ian Carter, 'A Failed Graft: Rural Sociology in New Zealand', *Journal of Rural Studies* 4, no. 3 (1988): 216; Minutes, rural survey committee, 1 March and 16 March 1938; Bureau general committee, 25 March 1938; Bureau executive committee, 28 February and 22 March 1938, SSRB, Box 17, 9/59; Kolb correspondence, March-November 1938, SSRB, Box 19, 11/3, ANZ.

government passed the Primary Products Marketing Act requiring a fixed price for butter and cheese from July 1937, which they promised would guarantee a decent standard of living for dairy farmers.[27] At the same time, the survey was refocused to address standards of living among dairy farmers alone, rather than those of all workers as conceived at the IPR conference. Many farmers were suspicious of the Labour government and worried that lawmakers would set a low price for their products in the new price-setting legislation. In April 1937, the Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, the physicist Ernest Marsden, explained that results from the survey of dairy farmers would inform the Primary Products of Marketing Act.[28] Marsden's experiences coordinating research in the hard sciences convinced him that governments and researchers could work hand-in-hand, but he failed to predict the scope for political interpretations of social research.

Researchers shared some of these farmers' concerns about government involvement in social research. At the inaugural meeting of the Social Science Research Bureau in April 1937, an unnamed member of the Bureau responded to Marsden's admission by stating that social research should be kept separate from government because, when both were put together, neither 'function adequately'.[29] He argued that the Bureau's research must be independently devised because even the appearance of government influence would 'damn' its projects. Responses to the government's involvement were divided between the 'practical reformers', led by the personal secretary of Minister Sullivan E.H. Langford, and academics. Clarence Beeby, director of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, set an early test of the survey researchers' independence when he inquired whether the Bureau would be free to publish its results. [30] Sullivan's response that he would need to approve any publications made Beeby and others uncomfortable. Such tensions resurfaced at every stage of the survey and contributed to Sullivan's decision to cancel all Bureau meetings from February 1939, ahead of its formal dissolution in 1940.[31]

The suspicions of farmers towards the true aims of the rural survey caused problems for researchers in the field. Interviewees' fears about the research were enhanced when

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[27] Minutes, survey committee, 1 March 1938, 3, SSRB, Box 17, 9/59, ANZ.
[28] Robb, 11–12.
[29] Unsigned submission to the Social Science Research Bureau committee, 20 April 1937, cited in Robb, 13–14.
[30] Robb, 16–17.
[31] Ibid., 58, 88–89.

fieldworkers arrived at farms in government cars, with license plates such as 'Govt. 167'.[32] A number of participants maintained that the study had been 'cooked up' by the government in order to prove the value of their Primary Products Marketing Act. Many farmers and their families were reluctant to answer questions designed to assess their living standards, earnings, and labour. Men and women bristled when asked to disclose their children's names or for details about their leisure time.[33] One man refused to account for fourteen years of his life.[34] Even when answers were forthcoming, fieldworkers suspected that farmers exaggerated their working hours in an attempt to increase the government's dairy price.[35]

In response to farmers' doubts, a separate committee overseeing the survey instructed the six fieldworkers to emphasise the scientific basis of the research in their interviews. This committee was made up of a combination of government and university men, with some having had experience across both fields, and its members agreed that the public should be educated about the objectivity of survey work.[36] Committee chairman F.B. Stephens told fieldworkers 'one important point' that they should convey to people was that 'the study had nothing to do with politics' and was a 'scientific fact-finding investigation'.[37] Economist David Owen Williams, who had been appointed to the Royal Commission on the Dairy Industry in 1933, agreed; participants must be made to understand that the study was 'purely objective' and had 'no ulterior purpose'. Another committee member, Finance Minister Nash's private secretary Bill Sutch, instructed fieldworkers to emphasise that the survey was 'non-political' and 'scientific'. Fieldworkers learned technical details that underlined the intellectual and professional status of the project and were encouraged to recite the social-science qualifications of committee members (who were 'not Government people at all, unless by accident'), researchers at the Social Science Research Bureau, and the IPR. Thus, designers of the rural survey embarked on a parallel project to educate New Zealanders –

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[32] Minutes, survey committee, 9 November 1937, SSRB, Box 10, 5/13; W.T. Doig, test survey report, 23 September-2 October 1937, Awahuri District, 3, SSRB, Box 10, 4/13, ANZ.
[33] Completed interview schedules, 18 and 23 November 1937, 20 and 21 January 1938, Southland, SSRB, Box 8, 4/2, ANZ.
[34] Completed interview schedules 16 and 28 December 1937, Southland, SSRB, Box 8, 4/2, ANZ.
[35] Minutes, survey committee, 7 February 1938; 10 February 1938, SSRB, Box 17, 9/59, ANZ.
[36] For example, Bill Sutch, worked as a private secretary to Finance Minister Walter Nash and had completed a PhD at Columbia University on price fixing in his home country. On the committee he was appointed to represent the IPR, becoming a vocal defender of its intellectual and financial interests – sometimes going against the interests of his employer. Robb, 17.
[37] Minutes, standards of life committee, 9 November 1937, 2–3, SSRB, Box 10, 5/13, ANZ.

whether fieldworker or dairy farmer – about the professional standards and institutional credentials of social scientific research.

Fieldworkers worked hard to convince farmers that the survey research was valuable and impartial. To this end, they learned to avoid using the terms 'investigation' and 'investigator', which put people on edge, and instead use 'survey', 'field-worker', and 'co-operating'. Fieldworkers were told to memorise a lengthy answer to the question, 'what good will this [survey] do me?' explaining that farmers' political 'position' on dairy prices would be strengthened by 'scientific investigation which has no connection with any propaganda on either side'. The committee concluded that fieldworkers should exhibit 'great tact and perfect tolerance' when interviewing.[38] Arriving in a farming area, fieldworkers first obtained referrals and letters of introduction from community leaders, farmers unions, dairy companies and agricultural instructors before approaching local farmers. Fieldworker Donald McElwin reported that these tactics were successful in Hawera and New Plymouth, where he imagined that a full forty per cent of people would have refused interviews 'had they known the Government was connected with the enquiry'.[39]

'The modification of all schemes in a distinctly Reconstruction direction': The University of Melbourne Social Survey

University economists who designed the University of Melbourne social survey believed, at least at its outset, that they could retain intellectual independence and aid government planning. Early plans show they aimed to undertake a comprehensive and scientific survey of rural and metropolitan Victoria. Faculty of Commerce researchers claimed that the facts revealed by their survey would provide the basis for future economic theory and policy in Australia. Developments in the United States during the 1920s, led by Charles Merriam at the University of Chicago and Beardsley Ruml at the Rockefeller Foundation's Laura Spelman Memorial Fund, helped convince faculty dean Douglas Copland that social research could produce public policy solutions that were met with political consensus.[40] The University of

[38] Information and instructions for fieldworkers, SSRB, Box 10, 5/13, ANZ.
[39] Instead, there had been an acceptable fifteen per cent refusal rate due to 'personal hostility', illness, or absence. Minutes, survey committee, 10 February 1938, SSRB, Box 17, 9/59, ANZ.
[40] Georgina Arnott and Charlotte Greenhalgh, 'Between Empire, Periphery, and the United States of America: The Local and International Origins of the Melbourne Social Survey (1941–1943)', forthcoming in *History Australia*.

Liverpool's Merseyside social survey, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and published in 1934, provided Melbourne researchers with a rigorous empirical model for this bold vision.[41] Yet the Australian survey of 7,609 households that was eventually carried out between 1941 and 1943 did not deliver any clear research or policy benefits, such as might have arisen from a publication outlining housing, transport, income, nutritional and occupational shortfalls. The involvement and requirements of a wartime government effectively clipped the survey's wings.[42]

The seamless coupling of research and policy ambition was characteristic of Copland, who, from the late 1920s, promoted quantitative and statistical inquiry into Australian society.[43] Copland's instrumental role in advising state governments during the Great Depression and his colleague Lyndhurst Giblin's time as Tasmanian and then Acting Commonwealth Statistician, helped give the Commerce Faculty this public policy outlook.[44] Former pupil Richard Downing recalled that its research hub, the Honours School of Economics, was built on 'solid, sustained work to collect and improve statistics, to analyse and understand current problems, to find solutions that people could be led to accept, and to develop administrative procedures that would carry out their policies'.[45] In 1939, the Faculty's commitment to public administration was formalised when Copland and Giblin were seconded to Canberra. In July 1941, Copland requested Downing's knowledge of 'Australian statistics', and he too was brought to Canberra.[46]

A detailed proposal, produced some time between September 1939 and March 1941 and subsequently filed in the Commerce Faculty archives, reveals expansive plans for a

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[41] D.C. Jones, ed., *The Social Survey of Merseyside* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1934).
[42] For other perspectives on the Melbourne social survey, see Graeme Davison and John Lack, 'Planning the New Social Order: the Melbourne University Social Survey, 1941–3', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 17, no.1 (1981): 36–45; Ellen Warne, Shurlee Swain, Patricia Grimshaw and John Lack, 'Women in Conversation: a War-time Social Survey in Melbourne, Australia 1941–43', *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 527–45.
[43] Copland, *Studies*.
[44] William Coleman, Selwyn Cornish and Alf Hagger, *Giblin's Platoon: the Trials and Triumph of the Economist in Australian Public Life* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2006); Alex Millmow, 'John Maynard Keynes and the Keynes of the Commonwealth, Douglas Copland', *Australian Economic History Review* 55, no.1 (2015): 1–19.
[45] Richard Downing, 'Giblin as Ritchie Professor', in *Giblin, the Scholar and the Man*, ed. Douglas Copland (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1960), 40.
[46] 'Social Conditions in Melbourne', internal research committee meeting minutes, 7 April 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, Papers of Faculty of Economics and Commerce (hereafter FEC), University of Melbourne Archives (hereafter UMA); Nicholas Brown, *Richard Downing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 84–85, 91.

three-year social survey of both regional and metropolitan Victoria that would make Victorian social life comparable to London, York, Liverpool, Chicago and Philadelphia, where large social surveys had already been conducted.[47] Although these overseas studies had been confined to cities, University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor John Medley requested that researchers include rural areas in their survey. In the wake of Copland's departure to Canberra, the faculty's Acting Dean Gordon Wood coordinated planning and, in March 1941, told Medley that the survey would be 'largely modelled' on the University of Liverpool's Merseyside survey.[48] In their proposal, Melbourne researchers planned to investigate the following topics in selected rural and metropolitan areas: geography, history, immigration, marriage, malnutrition, industrial conditions, crime, drink, gambling, hospitals, infant welfare, and more.[49] Like the Merseyside survey, this would be a comprehensive, even exhaustive, social survey.

The Melbourne proposal committed researchers to establishing facts about social life first and foremost, leaving interpretation to others. The survey, they claimed, would actually be a 'sustained effort to discover the facts', facts that would become the 'raw material of the economic theory of the future'. The publication of such information would in itself be 'a most useful national service', the proposal claimed.[50] Melbourne researchers were well placed to do this given the extensive research they had undertaken into statistical and surveying tools, refining these for local conditions.[51] In March 1941, Wood asked new faculty member Wilfred Prest to direct the survey with Downing's assistance.[52]

Although survey planning had been underway since 1936, the war gave it new urgency – or so the Melbourne proposal claimed in seeking (and securing) £350 from the Commonwealth for groundwork. Results, it was argued, would aid postwar reconstruction.[53] As Australia prepared for the possibility of war, the Faculty of Commerce (probably facilitated by Copland and Giblin) assisted the Commonwealth by drawing up a strategic map of Australia, providing lecture halls for army rifle instruction, and by Prest and Downing's execution of 'continuous confidential inquiries' into the collection of industrial and

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[47] 'Social Survey of Melbourne', Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[48] Gordon Wood to John Medley, 18 March 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[49] 'Social Survey of Melbourne', Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Marjorie Harper, 'Economics Before the Department: 1855–1944', in *Balanced Growth*, ed. Ross Williams (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009), 38; Copland, *Giblin,* 4.
[52] Gordon Wood to John Medley, 18 March 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[53] 'Social Survey of Melbourne', Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.

commercial data for the Commonwealth.[54] The proposal pitched the survey as a continuation of this 'war work' and harnessed the language of drama, fear, conflict, and heroism.[55] In making these entreaties to government, Melbourne researchers must have known of the potential for government interference to redirect their plans, having received a visit in 1938 from the Carnegie-funded American sociologist John Kolb, who had been advising New Zealand researchers on their rural survey.[56] And yet, faced with few other funding options and the prospect of constructively aiding Australia's postwar recovery, Melbourne researchers embraced the collaboration.

Links between the Commonwealth Government and one of Australia's first major social surveys, and the impacts of this on that survey, are barely visible in accounts to date. These links were strengthened and formalised through a new commonwealth social science funding scheme introduced in 1941. The Reconstruction Division of the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service was tasked with putting together and funding a 'unified programme' of social research relating 'directly to war or post-war problems' from across Australian universities. It would be referred to as the University Reconstruction Research scheme and be overseen by Department Secretary Roland Wilson. Wilson had been a protégée of Giblin and Copland in Tasmania and was now one of Giblin's closest friends.[57] A process of project selection commenced in April 1941 when Wilson wrote to vice-chancellors, including Melbourne's John Medley, to introduce the scheme and request research proposals. Wilson explained that funded projects would need to remain in the 'closest contact' with the Department, but that 'research work will, of course, be conducted independently of Government policy'.[58] There is little reason to doubt that everyone shared this intention.

In reality, conversations between Canberra and Melbourne about the scheme, and the survey's role within it, had already taken place before this April 1941 correspondence. An un-authored document in the Faculty of Commerce archives entitled 'Suggested Reconstruction Study, Melbourne, February 1941' set out seven social research topics of interest to the Commonwealth. 'Evidently', it was noted in the document, the first topic,

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[54] Gordon Wood to John Medley, 17 September 1940, Box 67, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[55] 'Social Survey of Melbourne', Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[56] Davison, 154.
[57] Patricia Clarke, *Eilean Giblin: A Feminist Between the Wars* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2013), 56, 77–78.
[58] Roland Wilson to John Medley, 3 April 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.

which was standards of living, 'will be a big feature of the Commerce Department's Survey'.[59]

Between April 1941 and the commencement of surveying in September 1941, the survey underwent a process of transformation that enabled it to receive funding through the Reconstruction scheme. The willingness of Melbourne researchers to adapt their research was flagged in April when Wood briefed the survey's consultative committee on their new objective to aid postwar reconstruction.[60] In June 1941, university representatives from around the country, including Wood, were invited to Canberra to help allocate the new £9000 University Reconstruction Research grant, which would represent the first dedicated funding of social science research by an Australian government.[61] The Reconstruction Division presented the conference with a programme of research, including the survey, and asked attendees to suggest alterations. A conference record shows that a new conception of the survey was adopted through this process. It would now be a study of family budgets and changes to living standards. On the plus side, Wilson informed the gathering that 'pamphlets and books on Reconstruction topics will probably be published', to which the 'Conference expressed its accord'.[62] Back in Melbourne, researchers retained their ambition to complete a study along the 'lines of the investigation carried out in Liverpool', declaring that the 'household survey' was just a start, and that it might be completed in just three months.[63] After Wood and Vice-Chancellor John Medley discussed the terms on which the conference resolved to fund the survey, Wood told Wilson that 'we are prepared to accept the recommendations'.[64]

With substantial commonwealth funding almost assured, Wood and Prest remodelled the survey design, questionnaire, and schedule to better address the government's wartime concerns and meet departmental guidelines. A month after the Canberra meeting, Wilson requested a detailed progress report, reminding Wood and Prest that the Division wanted them to move quickly. In turn, the University of Melbourne 'expedited' the project, deploying all available research assistants. Wood announced a new plan to break the survey

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[59] 'Suggested Reconstruction Study, Melbourne, February 1941', Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[60] Consultative Committee minutes, 28 April 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[61] Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2015), 69.
[62] 'Brief record of conference of representatives of Australian universities on reconstruction research', 6 and 7 June 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[63] John Medley letter for kindergartens and baby health sisters, no date, June or July 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.
[64] Gordon Wood to Roland Wilson, 30 July 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.

into two stages, with the bulk of resources devoted to the later. The first stage, he told Wilson, would involve a survey of 6,000 households, with an emphasis on household budgets, and take less than six months. The second stage would involve the re-surveying of 500 of the original 6,000 households in just two suburbs. Comparable household data would be collected as well as views on war and postwar society. To collect and 'interpret' this data, Wood told Wilson, would take all of 1942.[65]

Historical accounts have paid little attention to the second stage of the survey and its focus on Footscray and Williamstown. Working class Footscray, home to one of the country's largest munitions factories, had just undergone enormous demographic changes when it was chosen for the survey, resulting in severe housing shortages and inadequate public transportation. These problems, which together risked undermining social cohesion and the country's ammunition production, had been recently laid out in a report on the suburb commissioned by Wilson's department. Coastal Williamstown, around five kilometres away and populated by residents on similar incomes, housed a defence barracks, a rifle range, an army-training site and was the engine of the state's shipping and rail production. Iron cannons, which still lace the suburb's waterline today, register its vulnerability as a first line of attack. Ascertaining the wartime morale of citizens in these suburbs held clear strategic benefits at a time of national crisis.[66]

Overall, the plan that Wood took to Wilson in the wake of the June reconstruction conference differed from the original survey proposal in four significant ways. The singularly metropolitan nature of the survey was new. The narrowing of the focus to household budgets, income and transport to and from work, at the expense of a range of more comprehensive measures of social life, was also new. The establishment of a second stage, which would re-interview households, had never been touted. And finally, the decision to conduct and interpret opinion polling was not only entirely new but had almost no precedent in earlier studies conducted within the Faculty. Opinion polling was, however, becoming a dominant feature of wartime social research in Britain, under the auspice of Mass Observation, and the

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[65] 'University of Melbourne Programme of Reconstruction Research', Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA; Ibid.

[66] 'Land Idle While Need Homes: official report on munitions area', 5 May 1941, *The Herald*; 'Urgent Need for Housing Scheme', 1 May 1941, Box 91, 1986.0024, Wilfred Prest Archive (hereafter WP), UMA; see also an assessment of these suburbs undertaken by Melbourne survey researcher and Rockefeller-funding recipient, G. Bruns: 'Footscray and Williamstown, a survey of curtain social and demographic factors from census and vital statistics, 1880–1940', 28 November 1943, Box 30, 1986.0024, WP, UMA.

United States, through the Army's Division of Morale. It appears the Commonwealth sought to replicate these efforts on a smaller scale through the Melbourne survey and their funding of a separate civilian morale project directed by anthropologist A.P. Elkin at Sydney University.[67]

These changes did not go far enough for the government. In August 1941, with funding for the survey still not guaranteed, Wilson requested that printing of the questionnaire be paused. He wrote to Prest asking that he 'be allowed' to comment on the questionnaire 'without prejudice to the question of financial assistance raised by Dr. Wood'. It appears that Wood had asked whether the Commonwealth's financial backing of the project was dependent on their adopting Wilson's suggestions. Over three pages Wilson outlined his suggested revisions.[68] It should be noted that Wilson, who held two economic doctorates from the universities of Oxford and Chicago, and had become Australia's chief statistician in 1936, had considerable expertise in surveying technique. Prest implemented 16 of the 27 pieces of separate advice that can be identified in Wilson's letter. These changes included adding questions which ascertained whether people would prefer to live nearer their work, planned to return to their prewar jobs, and had rooms in their households that were not in daily use – all considerations for the Commonwealth in their civilian war effort and postwar projects. A supplementary set of investigator instructions, taking account of Wilson's concerns, was also produced. Prest thanked Wilson for his 'helpful advice'.[69]

Almost all the modifications further concentrated the research on short-term situations and public opinions produced by war, and squarely reflected the Commonwealth's concerns with civilian morale, housing shortages, and wartime and postwar employment.[70] Wilson, himself a scholar and supporter of independent research, insisted that his advice amounted to nothing more than 'personal comments, arising out of my own interest in the project'. Yet in the absence of assured government funding for the project, and in the context of Wilson's

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[67] 'Minutes of Conference on University Reconstruction Research', 31 October and 1 November 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA; A.P. Elkin, *Our Opinions and the National Effort* (Sydney: Australasian Medical Publishing, 1941).

[68] Gordon Wood to Roland Wilson, 30 July 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA; Roland Wilson to Wilfred Prest, 14 August 1941 and 4 September 1941, Box 26, 1986.0024, WP, UMA.

[69] Instructions to investigators and supplementary instructions, Box 27, 1986.0024, WP, UMA; Wilfred Prest to Roland Wilson, 27 August 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.

[70] 'Brief record of conference of representatives of Australian universities on reconstruction research', 6 and 7 June 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.

close personal relationship with Faculty elder Giblin, Wilson's claim seemed to disavow the enormous influence he held over the survey.[71]

The elevation of Labor's John Curtin to the Prime Ministership in October 1941 only strengthened the Commonwealth's commitment to postwar reconstruction and increased government intervention in the Melbourne survey.[72] At the second University Reconstruction Research meeting, held in late October and early November 1941, Wilson told grant recipients that they must 'focus more on Reconstruction' and stressed that 'the time factor and the usefulness of results' was of 'paramount importance'. The Commonwealth required that 'the modification of all schemes in a distinctly Reconstruction direction should be given effect to within a week'.[73] It announced that researchers would be judged on the speed as well as the quality of their work, and that this would inform the following year's funding allocation. The urgency compelled Prest to employ investigators without much relevant experience and may have contributed to the lack of training they received.[74] By December 1941 Wood was finally able to confirm that the survey had received another allotment of £400 from the Commonwealth.[75]

As investigators began to arrive on randomly selected doorsteps across the city in September 1941, Prest wrote to householders to inform them of the survey's scholarly credentials, rigor and independence.[76] Information about housing, earnings and family relationships would be converted into anonymous statistics and used for research purposes only, he told them. The closest Prest came to acknowledging the Commonwealth's funding and intervention was when he noted that the survey had attracted the 'interest and support [of] government departments, municipal authorities, Trade Union leaders and many well-known citizens'. Prest did not explain that the Commonwealth offered far more financial

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[71] Roland Wilson to Wilfred Prest, 14 August 1941, Wilfred Prest to Bruce Williams, 29 September 1941, Box 26, 1986.0024, WP, UMA.

[72] Macintyre, *Boldest Experiment*, 59–60.

[73] 'Minutes of Conference on University Reconstruction Research', 31 October and 1 November 1941, Box 70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA

[74] Wilfred Prest to Roland Wilson, 13 February and 18 September 1942, Box 26, 1986.0024, WP, UMA. Most Melbourne investigators had no surveying or community welfare experience. The only training the thirty-six investigators reported receiving was rushed conversations with one another during which they shared techniques for convincing people to take part. Pat Counihan in Graeme Davison, notes on roundtable discussion at University of Melbourne, 20 March 1979, provided by Davison; Laurie O'Brien, author interview, 22 June 2016.

[75] Gordon Wood to University of Melbourne Registrar, 22 December 1941, Box 67–70, 1963.0028, FEC, UMA.

[76] Wilfred Prest to householders, Box 20, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.

support than any other funding body, or that it had actually determined the survey's scope and even specific questions. Instead, he directed attention to the civic spirit that would facilitate data collection. Prest wrote that the project 'depends for its success on the information you are willing to give us'.[77]

The researchers who captured the project's data (referred to as 'investigators' in the survey literature) also helped to disassociate the project from its government backer. Notes made by investigators on the back of survey sheets after their door-step interviews strongly suggest that they truly believed that the survey was independent of government; that they knew very little, if anything, of its funding basis; and that they were moved, at times, to reassure participants of the project's independence. Many years later, one investigator recalled needing to reassure householders that their information would be kept confidential. Since she was instructed to do this, she found it 'pretty poor' when a publication based on the survey's data printed householders' addresses shortly afterwards, making their answers public and identifiable.[78]

Melburnians displayed a variety of responses to the survey's claims of intellectual independence. In some instances, it actually made people reluctant to participate. One Northcote householder insisted that investigators need a governmental 'badge of authority' to ask such questions. In nearby Collingwood, a woman approached the municipal authorities for information about the survey and was dismayed to find that they knew nothing of it.[79] Others were like many New Zealand farmers and questioned whether the survey really was free of political intent and backing. One woman in middle class Glen Iris was 'most antagonistic to the survey', believing it 'communistic'. Despite this setback, the investigator managed to complete the questionnaire and secure her fee, adding one word ('whacko!') in the margin.[80] Collectively, such marginalia convey the faith investigators placed in the survey's independence and objectivity. The vast majority of householders seem to have shared this faith, willingly forgoing their information with very little notion of the role it would play in the Commonwealth's postwar reconstruction plans.[81]

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Laurie O'Brien, author interview, 22 June 2016.

[79] Interview 282, 5 August 1942, interview 178, April 1942, Box 22, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.

[80] Interview 16, 10 December 1942, Box 11, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.

[81] Only 214 households refused to give any information. Summary of preliminary results, 18 October 1943, Box 27, 1986.0024, WP, UMA.

‘The printing is to stop’: Publication challenges

Researchers on both sides of the Tasman Sea successfully compiled, coded and analysed enormous sets of data in the final months of each project, but governments intervened to delay or divert the publication of results. Ultimately, neither New Zealand nor Australian researchers produced a definitive account of rural or urban life in the mode of landmark surveys by Booth, Rowntree or Du Bois, or even that of D.C. Jones’ Merseyside social survey. For each day of fieldwork in New Zealand, an average of thirty twenty-two-page schedules were produced. To successfully code hundreds of items of expenditure within the 300 household budgets, researchers undertook around 25,000 statistical operations. Working at a furious rate, survey director Doig delivered a report of the survey’s results to the government printer in March 1939.[82] In July, he took the report to Minister Sullivan, who asked that Doig read aloud the entire document. Doig recalled that he did so while Sullivan ‘sat chain-smoking, very interested’.[83]

Deputy Prime Minister Peter Fraser, who read the report overnight, viewed things differently. He considered its ‘information on children working, farmers working 100 hours a week and houses in North Auckland with dirt floors’ to be ‘ammunition’ for Labour’s political opponents. The next morning Fraser told Sullivan: ‘the printing is to stop’. Doig, who had personally guaranteed farmers that the survey would be published independently of government, was devastated. With the survey still unpublished in February 1940, he resigned.[84]

It was the IPR and its networks that torpedoed Fraser’s censorious move and secured publication of the survey. Kolb wrote to civil servants reminding them that the study was intended to contribute to international knowledge of living standards across the Pacific. [85] A local representative of the IPR warned Fraser that the organisation had a copy of the manuscript in its offices in New York and could publish the study itself – possibly with an explanation of the government’s attempt to suppress results. One of these arguments worked and the survey was published without alteration in mid 1940. It attracted no political attacks and just one local review, in the Christchurch *Press*. The Social Science Research Bureau, which had carried out the survey, was quietly disbanded.

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[82] Minutes, general committee, 8 February 1938, SSRB, Box 17, 9/59, ANZ; Robb, 55–61, 77.
[83] Robb, 58–72.
[84] Ibid., 63, 80.
[85] Ibid., 82–88.

After more than 7,600 household interviews and thousands of pounds in funding, the circulation of results from the Melbourne survey was surprisingly limited. Prest calculated that six per cent of households earned less money than they needed to live on, a figure that rose to ten per cent in the central city.[86] Such findings were not published in a landmark book – unlike the famous surveys of London, Philadelphia, and Mersyside – but three scholarly articles addressed rents, travel to work and the number of dwellings in Melbourne.[87] Prest circulated these articles to people who he thought might be interested.[88] Wilson's proposal to publish the survey's findings, made at the June 1941 University Reconstruction conference, was partially implemented when the Commonwealth agreed in 1946 to provide £200 towards the cost of publishing 'two reports on the Metropolitan Social Survey'.[89] But it was a book, not a report that Prest longed to write about the survey. One month after receiving the publishing subvention for the reports, Prest asked for a list of all Sydney University projects that had received publishing support from the Commonwealth through its Social Sciences Research Grant.[90] The Commonwealth agreed to stencil copies of a document that Prest entitled the Social Survey Report, and promised its 'fairly wide circulation to people who may be interested, including various Departments'.[91]

Prest remained determined to publish at least some of the survey's findings in a monograph. He submitted a proposal to publishers Angus and Robertson for a book about Footscray and Williamstown, the two suburbs that his team had twice surveyed, but in 1948 they replied that the topic was 'too narrow in its appeal'. Publisher Colin Roderick said that they would be more interested in a comprehensive account, such as that which Prest proposed calling 'The Condition of the Australian People', but he never wrote it.[92]

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[86] Summary of preliminary results, 18 October 1943, Box 27, 1986.0024, WP, UMA.
[87] Wilfred Prest, 'The Present Number of Dwellings in Melbourne', *Economic Record* 19 (1943): 230–37; 'Rents in Melbourne', *Economic Record* 21 (1945): 37–54; Donald Cochrane, 'Travelling to Work', *Economic Record* 22 (1946): 199–21.
[88] Oswald Barnett to Wildfred Prest, 8 August 1944; Gerald Firth to Wilfred Prest, 11 July 1944; Wilfred Prest to Firth, 21 August 1944; John Crawford to Wilfred Prest, telegram, 25 September 1944; R.M. Edmunds to Wilfred Prest, 22 June 1945; Florence Harding to Wilfred Prest, 23 July 1945, Box 26 1986.0024 WP, UMA.
[89] J.F. Foster to Wilfred Prest, 14 May 1945, Box 20, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.
[90] J.F. Foster to Wilfred Prest, 21 June 1946, Box 20, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.
[91] T.W. Swan to Wilfred Prest, 18 October 1946, Wilfred Prest to T.W. Swan, 22 October 1946, Box 20, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.
[92] Colin Roderick to Wilfred Prest, 14 February 1948, Box 20, 1973.0002, WP, UMA.

The piecemeal publication of the Melbourne results reflected government pressure to narrow the survey's focus and its consequent failure to provide a complete and authoritative picture of the city. Only a few months into the survey, researchers realised that they would not be able to complete stage one of the project – surveying one in thirty households across Melbourne – due to a lack of time and funds. Their sample size shrank to one-in-sixty for the wealthier parts of the city, a ratio which Prest knew was too small to be considered authoritative by the terms of social surveying internationally.[93] Investigators were directed to commence stage two of the project, re-surveying residents in Footscray and Williamstown. The Melbourne survey, originally conceived of as a comprehensive survey of social life in town and country Victoria, had become a study of family budgets and attitudes to war in two suburbs that were being reshaped by industrial war work. Appropriately, the most substantial publication arising from the survey was Prest's *Housing, Income and Saving in Wartime* (1952), examining a few hundred western suburb households and published by the economics department that by then Prest headed.[94] It was a far cry from the early social science aspirations of Copland, Wood and others in the Commerce Faculty who had imagined a comprehensive and authoritative account that would prompt a unified public policy response.

Conclusions

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s researchers in New Zealand and Australia were inspired by the claim that social surveys could generate complete, accurate and objective social data. They believed that this data would enhance government infrastructure, regulatory and legislative planning, and ultimately promote better social outcomes. This ambition was earnestly conveyed to thousands of householders in Melbourne and hundreds of farmers and their families from Kaitāia to Southland in New Zealand throughout the course of the University of Melbourne social survey and the rural survey of New Zealand.

Yet, a lack of independent funding for social research in Australian and New Zealand necessitated substantial government investment in these two pioneering social surveys. This led to considerable intervention by government figures, which undermined the completeness

[93] Summary of preliminary results, 18 October 1943, Box 27, 1986.0024, WP, UMA; report on the reduction in fieldworkers and funds, Chris Clark to Wilfred Prest, 25 August 1942, Roland Wilson to Wilfred Prest, 4 September 1942, Box 26, 1986.0024, WP, UMA.
[94] Wilfred Prest, *Housing, Income and Savings in Wartime: A Local Survey* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, Department of Economics, 1952).

and objectivity of survey data, discouraged public participation in research, and hindered the dissemination of results. Where they could, New Zealand and Australian researchers drew on the resources of an international network of university researchers, policy organisations, and philanthropic funds. Where they could not, government influence became more pronounced. Researchers, like many of the government figures involved, nonetheless placed great store in the independence of their research and chose to emphasise the objectivity of their methods and gloss over the influence of governments. As a result, the way these surveys changed in response to the interests and timeframes of their government funders was obscured in published studies and has since been largely overlooked by historians. Our archival research has illuminated both the nature of researchers' ambitions, as well as the precise ways in which these ambitions were stymied by a dependence on government funding.

Together, these social surveys of New Zealand and Australia highlight features common to their early social science research landscapes. That New Zealand and Melbourne researchers appear not to have shared expertise across the Tasman underscores the inimical effects of their dependence on institutions, scholarship and funders in the Global North.[95] Though historians are sometimes reluctant to look for patterns across social research from these countries, researchers at the time recognised the similarities in their research and economic environments. The Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand, which Copland helped found in 1925, and its journal, *Economic Record*, were inspired by their 'singularity of condition'.[96] New Zealand and Australian researchers might have learned valuable lessons by discussing the potential dangers of deep government involvement in social science research. Yet, restricted funding opportunities and limited institutional support in both countries made it easier to collaborate with wealthier US organisations than with each other. Taken together, the New Zealand rural survey and the University of Melbourne social survey demonstrate that the limited number and scope of social surveys in the Tasman world during the 1930s and 1940s was a result of scarce resources, rather than a lack of local imagination or drive.

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[95] R.W. Connell, 'Australia and World Sociology', in *Histories of Australian Sociology*, eds. John Germov and Tara Renae McGee (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005).
[96] Harper, *Douglas Copland*, 137.

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