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What is the Public Value of Social Science?

Introduction

Impact is a terrain on which the social sciences can compete with the other academic cultures in Britain, even outperform them, if there were an appropriate understanding of impact and the will among social scientists to do so. While there has been a marked shift in the technical meaning of impact towards a more general approach – although problems of measurement still remain – the attitude towards it among social scientists has not tempered because of its association with the process of marketization. I, therefore, advance four claims in this chapter: (a) British social science is well equipped and easily capable of demonstrating the impact of its research; (b) impact, however, is a deeply flawed way of approaching the public value of social science; (c) it is necessary to shift the terms of the debate away from the public impact of social science to its public value; and (d) value can be deconstructed into several types which show the diverse ways in which the social sciences have value.

I suggest there are four advantages to this change of focus. Public value better constitutes a vocabulary that permits common conversations to develop; it involves rhetoric that is consensual not divisive, thus helping to move social scientists on from the negative tone of the impact debate; it transcends the localized form of the debate about impact, which is perceived to be peculiarly British, to link with an international discourse about public value; and it offers the best prospect of restating for the twenty-first century the principles on which social science can justify itself against the neoliberal push towards using economic impact as their sole measure of effectiveness. I want to begin by showing how feasible the impact agenda is for British social science.

The feasibility of impact in social science research

In the third memorial Gareth Roberts Science Policy Lecture, given at the Royal Society of Medicine on 19 October 2011, David Willetts singled out three subject fields in a domain of over 400 in which he considered Britain ‘exceptionally strong’ in international quality terms, brain research, health science and social science – and this at a public lecture to honour a molecular electronics scientist. The occasion was used to address the widespread fears and suspicions about the impact agenda among the world class researchers in these – and other – fields. With respect to the REF, Willetts said, ‘put simply, academics will be asked to show how, on the basis of excellent research undertaken over a 15-year timeframe, they have made a contribution beyond their institution’ (see <http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-gareth-roberts-science-policy-lecture-2011>).

‘A contribution beyond their institution’ can mean anything and thus in a sense everything. HEFCE’s definition of impact supports a judgement that at least it has undergone a transition from a value-for-money to value-for-society approach in the REF. As we have already noted in the last chapter, sections 140 and 141 of its July 2011 paper *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/02_11.pdf) provide a very broad notion of impact. This has reassured and satisfied some natural scientists. In the view of Stephen Curry (2011: 31), for example, a structural biologist from Imperial College who endorsed this definition – ‘it’s not’ anymore ‘just about money’. And it is worth remembering that the case study approach utilized in the REF means that not all people returned will need to demonstrate impact.

It is eminently feasible with this definition for social science to embrace the impact agenda for its technical meaning has merged with its general one (whether it is desirable is another matter and will be discussed shortly). Nor is it particularly puzzling or difficult to do so. Two dimensions of impact require distinguishing in order to demystify it, the *process* of impact and its *assessment*. By process is meant the method of delivering impact, by assessment its measurement. The process of impact can be simplified by reducing it to three questions which all social scientists can ask themselves about their research, even where it is theoretical in its observation and explanation of aspects of

culture, markets and the state: Who are the users of our research? How do I engage with them? What has been/could be the effects of this engagement? The assessment of impact revolves around one question. What is the evidence of these effects? This is shown diagrammatically in Figure 4.1, which utilizes culture, the market and the state to represent the broad characterization of society deployed in the generic definition of social science outlined in Chapter 1.

Three points are immediately apparent about these twin dimensions of impact. First, there is a very wide selection of possible answers to the questions that define the process of delivering impact. Secondly, however, many are not directly related to the research itself or its quality but reflect researchers' communication and dissemination skills and their closeness to users. Thirdly, answers to the fourth question, which define its assessment, are more difficult to conjure, especially *evidence* of effects which are independent of the effects themselves rather than duplicates of them. It is particularly tricky to accurately connect the research, its effects and the evidence of these effects. This repeats the observation from Chapter 3 that measurement is the most problematic part of impact and is the issue that has driven REF policy, particularly the development of a very inclusive definition in order to assuage anxieties about the bewildering job of assessing it.

This produces one of the major paradoxes of the current impact debate. HEFCE has abandoned the narrowness of a value-for-money approach to impact while having the hardest task in making impact seem feasible. The process of impact and its assessment operate in opposition to one another, with the inclusiveness of its meaning not resolving the complications of its measurement. The social science community – and I suggest this is common to other academic cultures in Britain – is pulled in different directions therefore, understanding the process of impact but incapable of reliably measuring it. A system that *insists* on its assessment, thus, ends up being heavily criticized and practitioners lose sight of the feasibility of dealing with the *process* of impact.

Some social sciences are better than others in answering these questions and doing so in certain sorts of ways because they are more 'applied' and closer to users of research, but even the high-impact policy-oriented social science disciplines, like areas of economics, business, social policy and public law,

The process of impact	
<i>Who are the users of my research?</i>	
Culture	NGOs, civil society (national and global), educated citizenry, cultural consumers, librarians, archivists, schools, media, public bodies, private organizations, charities, individuals, families, etc
The state	Governments (local, devolved, national and regional), political parties, politicians, policy makers, civil servants, national and international strategists, etc
The market	business, industry, trade unions, consumers, workers, etc
<i>How do I engage with them?</i>	
Culture	mailing lists, newsletters, website, social media, public talks, seminars, publications, popular writings and journalism, radio, television, posters, brochures, conferences and presentations, etc
The state	publications, briefing papers and reports, workshops, talks, popular writing, presentations, etc
The market	same as the above
<i>What have been/could be the effects of this engagement?</i>	
Culture	behaviour and pursuits, understanding, civic and humanitarian values, public debate, public benefits, shared beliefs, health and well-being, health promotion, school performance, family relations, etc
The state	evidence-based policy, management and use of public resources, decision-making, strategic thinking, etc
The market	knowledge transfer, spin off companies, product development, evidence-based market behaviour and strategy, decision-making, management of economic and human resources, industrial relations, consumer behaviour and choice, dispute management, etc
The assessment of impact	
<i>What is the evidence of these effects?</i>	
Culture	take-up of research, influence on behaviours, beliefs, values and civic practice, etc
The state	policy, practice, evaluations, improved public scrutiny and accountability, etc
The market	Knowledge transfer, policy and practice in business and industry, strategic thinking, industrial relations, conflict prevention and dispute management, consumer evaluations, etc

Figure 4.1 The twin dimensions of impact.

do not readily lend themselves to spin off companies as a form of knowledge transfer; and the non-policy-oriented social science disciplines are not devoid of opportunities to display impact in some form. Neither 'applied' nor 'pure' social science fields find it easy. Policy impacts are often the hardest to attribute to specific pieces of research, while other forms of impact, such as behaviour, value or belief change, are difficult to find concrete evidence for. There are some social science-based spin off companies, such as the company part-owned by the University of Leicester Perpetuity Research and Consultancy International, developed from criminological work there by Peter Gill (see <http://www.perpetuitygroup.com>), which specializes in security management, risk management and crime prevention, doing evaluation research related to business crime, among other things. Risk analysis in economics, business and management and security studies has spurred similar spin off companies elsewhere. These are, however, minority ventures. It is more common to celebrate impact delivered through more obscure effects.

The professional associations, learned societies and funding agencies have been assertive in developing case studies that demonstrate impactful social science, some of them almost transparent in their eagerness to please. The British Academy's two letters to the Queen, the first signed by Tim Besley (economist) and Peter Hennessy (cultural historian) and dated 22 July 2009, responded to her complaint, voiced at the LSE in November 2008 that economists had not anticipated the credit crunch, by drawing to her attention a workshop on just this topic seven months later held at the British Academy. A small selection of less vulgar examples can be highlighted from the last few years.¹

The 2009 joint report by HEFCE and UUK *Securing World Class Research in UK Universities* (see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/funding/refund/QR.pdf>) reads now slightly ironical given their mutual embrace of tuition fees, for it sought to show what quality impact the old block grant had furnished for British universities. It featured two case studies from social science (most were from natural science and medicine): work at Roehampton University on 'honour killings' that had been widely engaged with by government and civil society

¹ The eagerness to demonstrate impact was not just a British phenomenon, for it spread across the Irish Sea. The Higher Education Authority and the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Science (IRCHSS) published *Foresight in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* in 2009 to display the public relevance of their work. Cost cutting measures in Ireland, however, have seen the abolition of IRCHSS in 2012 through its merger with its natural science equivalent, giving the Irish state only one research council for all subject areas.

groups, and research at the University of Exeter on Islamic radicalization in British-born youth. The 2010 RCUK publication, *Impacts: People and Skills* (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/framework/impactspeopleandskills.pdf>) profiles a number of researchers from different disciplines whose work had 'impacted on the economy and society' in a variety of ways, arising from 'the application of knowledge, skills and experience developed in their research'. The examples were heavily focused on science and medicine, and it included only three from social science: Professor Tim Jackson, Economics Commissioner to the Sustainable Development Commission, Professor Richard Blundell, director of ESRC Centre for Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and Professor Graeme Laurie director of the AHRC Research Centre for Studies in Intellectual Property and Technology Law.

Humanities and social science subjects tend to be neglected in general surveys of this kind because of the ease with which impact can be demonstrated through medical and scientific interventions. The bodies serving the humanities and social sciences, therefore, responded with impact accounts of their own. The British Academy has been particularly active, having established a Policy Centre in 2009 to lead its campaigning. In 2004, it published a report *That Full Complement of Riches* (<http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/full-complement-riches.cfm>) devoted to exposing the contribution of the arts, humanities and social sciences to wealth generation, a theme aptly captured by the use of Adam Smith's phrase as its title. In 2008 it made the same point in *Punching our Weight* (<http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/wilson>), which looked at the role of these subject areas in policy making. The AHRC's 2009 report *Leading the World: The Economic Impact of UK Arts and Humanities Research* (<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/about/policy/documents/leadingtheworld.pdf>) advanced the importance of arts and humanities to UK society, economy and quality of life, suggesting that continued investment was needed to support the many ways in which they contribute to international competitiveness. RAND Europe, in conjunction with AHRC and University of Cambridge, published *Assessing the Impact of Arts and Humanities Research at the University of Cambridge* in 2010 on behalf of the AHRC and the University of Cambridge, using the Payback Framework to make their evaluation (see <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical-report/2010/RAND-TR816.pdf>). Impact was measured, among other things, by changes in knowledge, understanding, attitudes,

beliefs and behaviours and evaluated by peer review interviews, self-reports and interviews with external informants.

Two examples are worth highlighting to reinforce the point that impact is feasible for social science. The British Academy's 2010 report *Past, Present and Future: The Public Value of the Humanities and Social Science* (accessible at <http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/364>) draws attention to contributions in strengthening policy making, generating economic impact, tackling social issues, recognition of cultural values, addressing global challenges and advancing international understanding, using ten case studies across these fields. The case studies ranged from social exclusion, humanities in business, intellectual property and technology law, war crimes, multiculturalism, museums, climate change, and bride price, poverty and domestic violence. The impacts claimed in each case are clearly specified. With respect to social exclusion, taking merely the first example, the report stressed improvements in knowledge about how social exclusion works, links to policy through the Sure Start programme of the Labour government and legislation, and working relationships with the Cabinet Office's own Social Exclusion Unit. Moving, randomly, to the last case study, the anthropological research on bride price practices in Uganda, the impacts demonstrated included a constitutional petition on bride price practices seeking to amend the Uganda constitution, round-table workshops in local communities with councils, police, cultural leaders, religious leaders and other stakeholders, changes in legislation making bride prices non-refundable, media engagement and a variety of meetings with civil society groups.

The British Academy's Report runs to over 50 pages of examples of impact indicators. The ESRC produced a handy pocket-sized card brochure, designed more for government and business to read, entitled *Social Science: Excellence with Impact* (see http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Excellence_with_impact_flyer_tcm8-4599.pdf), with case studies organized around three themes, productive economy, healthy society and the sustainable world. The impact indicators are not specified, but under the productive economy theme, it draws attention to the work of the Centre for Market and Public Organisation on the effect of wages on youth unemployment, studies into the effectiveness of training interventions for long-term unemployed, research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies on tax and benefit models that led to the government to abolish the 10 per cent tax band, and work carried out by the Centre for Economic

Performance that persuaded the government that the introduction of the minimum wage would not lead to job losses. Under the healthy society theme it drew attention to the impact of the British Household Panel Surveys on the increased likelihood of unemployed people to be laid off work again within the next 12 months, the Birth Cohort studies on the effect of having obese parents on the obesity of children, the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, which proved the link between maternal stress and psychological and medical illnesses later in life, and work on crowd control at football matches which has helped the police to deal with fans in a less confrontational manner.

With respect to sustainability, the flyer highlighted ESRC-funded research on waste management that had helped shape legislation, work on the environment that was being applied by the Environment Agency, work by the Sussex Energy Group that assists in the take-up of low carbon technologies, research by the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy which influenced the Treasury's budget policies on the green economy and the Global Uncertainties research programme that focused on global security challenges and cyber crime, among other things. Ian Diamond, then Chief Executive of the ESRC, is quoted thus: 'Social science research is essential to the UK's core needs; economic recovery and skills, security and terrorism, environmental sustainability, helping our children succeed at school and manage our ageing population.'

Before we move on to assessing the desirability of impact, it is worth pointing out how impact has changed practice in another way. Big impact is big business. The attention given to demonstrating impact in these many ways is now matched with research given to demonstrating to practitioners how to do impactful social science. In 2011, RCUK held a conference on user engagement and launched a website (The Research Outcomes System) where recipients of grants have to detail the impact of their funded research (it applies to grants awarded after 1 April 2006), intended as a guide for potential applicants to frame their own impact. I have already referred to the LSE Public Policy Group's handbook on how to be impactful (<http://blog.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialscience/the-handbook>), and journals devoted to similar issues abound. There are training courses and research on knowledge transfer, and consultancy groups, often led by former academics, will show us how if we pay a lot for the privilege. As if to emphasize this point, the Centre for Business Research (<http://www.cbr.cam.ac.uk/>) at the University of Cambridge, to

take one example, has undertaken a series of consultancies and published several reports on impact as a research topic (see http://www.cbr.cam.ac.uk/publications/Special_Reports.htm), some in conjunction with Public and Corporate Economic Consultants, a firm of private economic consultants with offices in Cambridge and London whose core staff have connections with the University of Cambridge (several are its former economics faculty).

Some of this work, for example, has been done for HEFCE, which was eager to understand who it is that engages in knowledge transfer and generates impacts. One such report, *Knowledge Exchange and the Generation of Civic and Community Impacts* (see http://www.pacec.co.uk/publications/Knowledge_Exchange_and_the_Generation_of_Civic_and_Community_Impacts.pdf), published in 2010, disclosed that female academics are twice more likely than males to work with civil society groups, which the most common form of engagement with is consultancy work for charities. Social scientists were, unsurprisingly, the most likely to work with charities, natural scientists the least. Reports have also been published on establishing connections between the arts and humanities with private and public business, on knowledge transfer in the United States, the possible synergies between knowledge transfer and teaching, and on universities as mediums for business knowledge exchange, among other things. An evaluation was even done for HEFCE on its policies for generating economic impact.

In these many ways, I hope I have shown that impact is feasible, demonstrable, and is one of a number of good ways to show that our research has uses beyond itself. It is easy to imagine that with more attention devoted to equipping social scientists with the skills to understand and demonstrate their impact, the greater will be their facility with it. Many parts of social science, after all, are already comfortable with the language and intent of impact.²

It is also the *wrong* way to establish the purposes and principles of social science as a public good. Impact is a deeply flawed way of approaching the public value of the social sciences. I want to proceed in justifying this remark in two stages. In the next section, I explore the reasons why impact is flawed and in the following one begin making the transition from discussing the public impact of social science to its public value.

² There is an interesting set of impact case studies identified on the Royal Geographical Society's website (see <http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Advocacy+and+Policy/making+the+case+for+geography.htm>).

The undesirability of impact in the social sciences

There are many practical difficulties around impact to which I have alluded throughout the discussion so far – its floating meaning, uncertainty about its measurability and its opacity – but these are technical matters that one can imagine excellent minds will resolve eventually, especially given the skills training in impact that is looming.³ There is, however, something wrong with the *principle* of impact. There are four irresolvable problems with impact that impugn its very core: (a) the inherent bias towards economic and policy benefits; (b) its non-linear nature that ensures it does not necessarily involve judgements of quality; (c) it is a circular argument that overlooks negative and disguised impact; and (d) it is inevitably bound up with marketization and the audit culture as an ideological project of neoliberalism. I will address each briefly in turn.

Impact is discriminatory. There is an inevitable – almost inherent – bias towards favouring research whose impact is more readily demonstrable; and this mostly because of its direct policy benefit or user engagement. The examples cited in the previous section illustrate this plainly. These examples are what the learned societies, professional bodies and research councils used to highlight their work – their choosing, not mine. They have spurred a new vocabulary of their own – ‘behavioural change policymaking’ and ‘changes to choice environments’ are among the new patois. This language fits that of the Coalition government, whose newly inaugurated Behavioural Insight Team, also known as the ‘Nudge Unit’, is charged with using behavioural economics to persuade – incentivize – individuals into making better choices in their everyday lives, especially about health, nutrition, wealth and well-being. These examples show the slippage that impact involves, with its unintended but natural tendency to highlight a small range of research with a narrow set of indicators that are incontrovertibly impactful for their policy effects and good links with a limited number of influential users (and a few of the examples keep reappearing and with them, the same named researchers). We know from analysis of research exploitation in the past that this is enhanced whenever

³ Through 2011 and 2012 the ESRC funded a seminar series under the title ‘New Frontiers of Impact’ designed to explore ‘how different types of knowledge creation and application may shape the impact agenda, including examination of how these knowledge processes and outcomes may be appropriated and further shaped and developed by users (and co-producers) of different sorts.’

the findings translate directly into a policy debate, when researchers have close relationships with users, and when status is bestowed by the media on particular researchers as 'experts' (see Bechhofer et al. 2001: 4.3). Sometimes, however, expert status is of the rent-a-quote variety where 'impact' is achieved through insult in order to obtain media notoriety.

Discrimination matters when costs and rewards are attached to impact, for it leaves far too much impactful social science either overlooked or with its impact indicators struggling to command the attention of more obvious markers. The distinction between applied and basic research is not as definite as imagined, for Bechhofer et al. (2001) have shown in their analysis of the exploitation of the findings from 40 ESRC-funded projects at the University of Edinburgh that most research does not fit neatly into these categories. Not all applied research is instrumental, short term and limited; and fundamental research is rarely without some long-term policy implications. One of the negative effects of impact, however, is that it imposes stricter boundaries between these types of research by pushing researchers towards applied projects because of the relative simplicity in demonstrating benefits. In short, it discriminates against fundamental research.

Impact is also non-linear. HEFCE recognizes this but does not accept its consequences. Impact is reducible to activities not directly connected to the quality of the research, for impact is mediated by a large number of processes independent of its findings and their quality, such as the social networks researchers are embedded in for communicating their results and for engaging with users, especially powerful groups, researchers' communication skills and their prior relationships with those who take up the results, like policy makers, the media and other users, the extent to which the field is one where policy debate is settled or still live, and how sensitized users already are to the potential benefit of the research findings. Impact is serendipitous, conditional, involving huge elements of chance and luck. Therefore, impact is not a quality judgement, for high impactful social science depends on these intermediary factors that in themselves are not pointers to quality. It is a poor criterion of quality that the research is impactful merely because it finds favour with powerful groups – or is ignored by them (as MacGregor 2011: 41 argues with respect to UK drugs policy). Good quality research can have little obvious impact and poor quality research high impact. The use of peer review in the REF is supposed to eliminate high impactful but low quality research. It is

perhaps feasible to imagine how poor quality work can be identified despite its impact but the measurement problem makes the reverse more problematic – identifying indicators for high quality research that is not obviously impactful. The answer to this conundrum might be that not everyone submitted is required to display impact in the REF, but excluding high-quality low-impact research from the impact cases challenges the relevance of impact in the first place.

This point leads me imperceptibly to another. Impact is circular. Research has impact when it affects policy and brings demonstrable benefits, these policy effects and demonstrable benefits being evidence of its impact. When systems impose the measurement of impact, impact gets reduced to the effects of the research and there is no independent evidence of impact separate from these effects. Impact *is* its measures. This, as I have said many times, is why the problem of measurement has driven the impact agenda. The REF's view on impact permits as evidence that research consolidates current practice, policy and behaviour, but the circularity of the process prevents such indicators being evidenced. If impact is its measures, evidence that things did *not* change because of the research becomes very hard to find.

Circularity leads to other problems. Where the effects of research are disclosed in less obvious ways than demonstrable change, we encounter the problems of negative and disguised impact, referred to already in Chapter 3. Negative impact can be described as research which is rejected by users, policy makers and government for its counter-intuitiveness or its opposition to current policy objectives and the like, rather than its lack of quality or its harmful effects. There is clearly research that is wrong because of its poor quality and harmful effects, despite the impact accorded it by take up in the press, such as medical research that alleged a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. In social science, one thinks of scientific racism that alleged a link between race and intelligence. Negative impact is more than wrongheaded and harmful. With negative impact, researchers are not in a position to encourage take-up by policy makers and other users despite its good quality and beneficial character, since policy makers and others may want to foreclose the debate or restrict it to a more finite range of policy alternatives. Policy makers may be looking for research that legitimates current practice, while researchers are seeking to challenge current ways of thinking. The potential impact of the research in this case is being suppressed. By definition, such

research is not said to be impactful because there are no indicators of its effects, but this is because its effects are thought to be negative, harmful, damaging or destructive to current policy preferences and practices, to which no challenge is permitted. One of the most high-profile examples in recent years of negative impact is the sacking of Professor David Nutt from his post as Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs for suggesting government policy was wrong (see **Vignette 5**).

Disguised impact arises when research impacts are hidden and unrecognized. This may in part be a failure of researchers to declare or be aware of it but mostly it is the consequence of policy makers, the press, civil society and the rest being ignorant of it. The British Academy's 2008 report *Punching our Weight: The Humanities and Social Sciences in Public Policy Making* (<http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/wilson/>), which otherwise extolled the potential for impact through policy benefits, was nonetheless realistic about the chasm that can exist between researchers and policy makers, which prevents public policy makers from being better informed about humanities and social science research. The short-term horizons of policy makers, for example, make them blind to the longer-term horizons of researchers, the absence of procedures in government to acquaint it with the latest research, and the few opportunities that exist for dialogue all compound the problems of disguised impact. It might only be some time later, when the policy debate has evolved, that the social relevance of earlier research becomes clearer.

None of these concerns are resolvable (for while it is possible to improve dissemination of social science research, in the many ways *Punching our Weight* recommended, dissemination does not guarantee exploitation of the research, see Bechhofer et al. 2001). The next concern, however, is not inherently irresolvable. In practice, though, it alone justifies moving the debate from public impact to public value.

The final objection to impact is its embedding in the audit culture. It does not have to be part of marketization, for as I made clear in Chapter 2, the general rather than the technical meaning of impact pre-existed the emergence of the audit culture and attention to it seems eminently suitable to social science, since considerations of value-for-society go naturally with disciplines whose subject matter is society. Currently, however, impact is not seen as an opportunity for the empowerment of social scientists – an occasion to celebrate

Vignette 5 Impact, negative impact and UK drugs policy

Drug and addiction studies is a subject area where medical, pharmacological and social sciences meet, including among the latter sociology, social policy, psychology, criminology and economics. It has been noted that psychologists and economists are playing an increasing role, diminishing the earlier dominance of sociology and social policy, by offering answers to questions like ‘what works’ and ‘how much does it cost’ (MacGregor 2011: 53 n 1). In a review of the impact of research on UK drugs policy, Susanne MacGregor (2011), drawing on her experience in the discipline of social policy and her own studies in the area, presented a realistic appraisal of the difficulties for researchers to impact government drug policy. On occasions research has legitimized change in policy, while other research which has challenged accepted consensus has been rejected, only to have become influential later in developing alternative policies. Impact varies over time and there can be short ‘windows of opportunity’ when the exploitation of research is possible, only for them to close as political exigencies change, policy debates become settled, or the public and media interest in drugs policy averts and slows the bandwagon mobilizing for a change in policy. Research that finds favour in one period can be overlooked in another. Findings that do not fit with the dominant paradigm, as she puts it (2011: 41), are routinely filtered out and sidelined, although some may prove more useful in the fullness of time. She argued that research that is ‘packaged’ purposely for policymakers increases its chances of having impact and gave the following advice (2011: 42): provide accurate information, identify examples of good practice, write with brevity and clarity, attend to the financial and policy implications of the research and to the potential for scaling up initiatives. The advice of the Chief Social Scientific Advisor to government, Paul Wiles, was repeated: offer a one page abstract, a three page summary and a report of no longer than 25 pages for those who are really interested. ‘The translation of research findings into a form usable to policymakers and practitioners’ (2011: 43) increases the chances of garnering impact. She went on to suggest impact requires a receptive audience which understands the data, communication channels to allow the translation of the evidence, a moment of attention or window of opportunity to focus the issue, and key actors to champion the research (2011: 51). On the other hand, she wisely identified high quality research that had little impact on policy, some of which nonetheless was given public attention in the media. It remains a matter of honest debate as to whether this is impactful or not, given that HEFCE consider dissemination alone not to be an indicator of impact. The *effects* of research on UK drugs policy are what matters, not media attention to the results. On this measure, then, negative impact, a term MacGregor does not employ, is clearly

evident in that some research was deliberately rejected on political not quality grounds. The example she cites for research with little impact on policy is David Nutt's work on the relative harm of certain forms of drugs (what follows is taken from MacGregor 2011: 47–9). The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, set up to advise government on its drugs policy, since 2000 had recommended the reclassification of cannabis to a low-risk category C drug, a move first supported by the Labour government. Political environments change rapidly and when Gordon Brown became prime minister, political pressure mounted to change the reclassification back to the more dangerous categories A and B. In late 2008 Nutt wrote an academic paper and delivered a public lecture pointing to the relative harm of other drugs and activities not banned, which supported the classification of cannabis as a C class drug. He was sacked. The Home Secretary announced in parliament when explaining the sacking that Nutt's role was to advise government not criticize government policy. To have impact in this instance, as measured in effects on policy rather than merely dissemination, Nutt was expected to deliver policy-based evidence not to shape evidence-based policy. Nutt has since formed the Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs.

their contribution to society; it is presented by Martin (2011) as potentially a Frankenstein monster and by Smith et al. (2011) as a constraint and restriction on academic autonomy. Autonomy is a principle proudly protected by practitioners. I have been described in print as 'ambiguous' (Smith et al. 2011), and in the blog sphere much less kindly for encouraging the BSA to engage with the impact debate. To quote the opening to Mrs Beeton's recipe for hare pie, which tells us first to catch the hare, the inhospitable response to impact has to be accepted as the starting point for any discussion of it. Because of this association with marketization, therefore, it is time to move to an intellectual terrain more agreeable to reasoned and polite discourse.

From the public impact to the public value of social science

Impact and public value are different things, despite the British Academy's running together of the two in its otherwise powerful report *Past, Present and Future: The Public Value of the Humanities and Social Science* (British Academy 2010). What is titled a report on their public value reads as an account of their

impact. And impact is used narrowly to refer to the benefits deriving from social science and humanities research primarily for policy and in terms of engagement with a limited number of key users, mostly government. Even though the definition of impact is moving in the REF from the narrow technical meaning to extend towards its general one, value-for-society estimations are still measuring social science in terms of what it adds value to. Public value, however, is about the intrinsic worth of social science, what good it is in its own right. What I will be advocating shortly, therefore, is social science as a public good for its own sake.

As I wrote earlier, there are a number of advantages to this transition. Public value better constitutes a vocabulary that permits common conversations to develop; it involves rhetoric that is consensual not divisive, thus helping to move social scientists on from the gangrenous tone into which the impact debate has sunk; it transcends the localized form of the debate about impact, which is perceived to be peculiarly British, to link with an international discourse about public value; and it offers the best prospect of restating for the twenty-first century the principles on which social science can justify itself against the neoliberal push towards using economic impact as their sole measure of effectiveness.

Before I turn to the question of the public value of the social sciences it is worth reinforcing the importance of one of these advantages. Impact is largely a British concern not an international one. Impact provokes incredulity in academics from abroad who snigger at the use of 'REF-returnability' as a quality control criterion on interview panels; we get pitying sounds of sympathy when they hear of the 'pathways to impact' statements we have to write and the regular surveillance of our REF returns. Marketization, though, is a global phenomenon and even US academics, seemingly working in the least publicly accountable higher education system yet conceived, feel the impulse of the implicit social contract to be publicly engaged. For example, the President of the US Social Science Research Council, Craig Calhoun, in his 'Word from the President' contained in the 2004 President's Report (see http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new_publication_3/%7B0e949a73-f451-de11-afac-001cc477ec70%7D.pdf) stressed the manner in which US social science was publicly responsible. He cited the example of Michael Burawoy, President of the American Sociological Association in 2004, now President of the International

Sociological Association, who has committed both Associations to 'public sociology'. Calhoun noted that the American Anthropological Association had developed a section the same year devoted to 'public anthropology' (in Europe see Eriksen 2006). The American Political Science Association did something parallel in 2004 and there is now even a 'public international relations' (see Lawson 2008). These themes appeared in special issues of several US and British journals given to discussing public engagement, such as *Social Forces*, *American Sociologist*, *Critical Sociology* and the *British Journal of Sociology*. Marketization is, thus, not without its effects elsewhere, but the discourse addresses public value not impact. The EU does not impose impact as an assessment criterion and the European Research Council explicitly rejects it.

The impact debate in Britain detaches UK social science from international discussions about public value. Impact is a Jeremiah Pit as described in the Book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament, a well dug deeper and deeper from which it is impossible to be extricated without external assistance.⁴ Put another way, impact is a hole leading nowhere. And if for no other reason, the transition from debating the public impact of social science to its public value is necessary to allow British social science to climb out of its isolation and marginalization.

In his 'Word from the President', Calhoun (2004) deconstructed the meaning of 'public' by posing a series of questions about who and what the 'public' means, giving no answers since he was laying out the issues rather than coming to conclusions. These are questions to which I will have to return however, for it is critical to the new public social science that it engages with different sorts of publics and identifies the most appropriate ways to engage each of them. However, I first want to deconstruct the meaning of value. This is a precursor to our prolegomenon towards the new social science for it establishes the different types of value and the various ways in which social science can be shown to have value. In the next section I address the matter of value, after which we are in a clear position to state the public value of social science. The next chapter takes up the challenge of outlining the new public social science that follows on from it.

⁴ This is not a metaphor to describe endless tasks – like Sisyphean labour or painting the Forth Road Bridge (which, incidentally, in December 2011 just happens to have been completed after 20 years and is not expected to begin again for another 20) – although impact feels a little like that. It is a metaphor about self-destructive behaviour.

What is value?

Neoliberalism puts a price *on* everything and to neoliberals price *is* everything. There is nothing that is not reduced to its price. It puts a price on religious beliefs (called 'spiritual capital'), universities (which I have seen referred to as 'academic capitalism'), the weather, parenthood and the socialization of children, to name just a few: indeed, whatever you name it has a price, since price, after all, makes markets work.

However, price is a poor measure of value. To know what it costs to raise a much loved child (said to be £200,000 up to the age of 18 in the United Kingdom), to get married to a much loved partner (the average wedding is said to cost £18,500 in the United Kingdom) or to experience a much feared extreme weather event (the disruption caused by the Icelandic ash cloud is said to have cost European business £2.15 billion) does not do justice to the meanings surrounding the 'product' to the people involved. Indeed, price can be an offensive and counterproductive form of value: point out the price of the marriage to one's new partner or of raising the child now with the key-of-the-door, and the meaningless of price as a measure of their value is likely to be made very forcibly.

Price, fortunately, does not represent the only way to assess value. If we deconstruct value there are at least three different meanings to the term: value as usefulness and utility; value as quality and worth; value as judgement and evaluation. The first we might call 'use value', the second 'price value', the third 'normative value'. They prompt further deconstruction. Use value can be *direct* or *indirect*, price value *intrinsic* or *added* and normative value *private* or *public*, as represented in Figure 4.2.

Direct use value describes the level of usefulness of an item unmediated by other things, indirect is the utility accorded when used in combination with other things. Use value does not necessarily diminish when it is indirect. A single chair has direct use value (enabling us to sit down) but its indirect use value can be enhanced when set in relation to other chairs and a table (enabling us to dine): sitting down and sitting down to a meal give the chair on which we sit different use values. Intrinsic price value is the worth of the item inherent unto itself which constitutes its cost, such as the price of the raw materials and labour power to make a single chair or set of chairs and table,

Figure 4.2 Types of value.

added price value describes the worth of things when put to use indirectly, such as the price value of a meal in the restaurant that utilized the chairs and tables, the price of which covers a small proportion of the direct costs involved in the making and partaking of the meal.⁵ Private normative value refers to the evaluation attributed to an item by an individual in terms of the pleasure to them derived from possessing it, such as the normative value that comes from eating that particular meal in that specific place. Public normative value refers

⁵ I have resisted using the popular social science term 'exchange value' instead of price value for two reasons. First, strictly speaking, in Marx's original usage the exchange value of a commodity is not identical to its price, but represents what other commodities it will exchange for if traded, and second, because exchange value does not need to be expressed in money prices. I believe retaining the language of price is important because of neoliberalism's thrust to reduce everything to its price and because this price varies dramatically from one exchange to another according to the whole range of factors affecting that particular exchange. This is precisely how the government construes the prices of university degrees as commodities across the different universities in the sector as a whole. Market differentiation is about price differentiation in order to reduce price. The markedly different things that can be exchanged by the different degrees that are 'purchased' across the sector, in terms of life chances, employment opportunities, medical health and the rest, is referred to here as added price value rather than exchange value in order to retain the conceptual link in lay readers' minds with price.

to the esteem attributed to it more widely, such as its social status and cultural significance, represented by dining at the wedding banquet of a high status couple. Personal sentiment can attach immense normative value to an item which is of little meaning and status to other individuals or collectively, and vice versa. Public normative value, however, is about moral sentiment.

Elements of use, price and normative value are run together in current debates so interlocutors mean quite different things when they refer to public value. Impact, for example, is often narrowly reduced to use-value and within that to economic usefulness. Calculations of the economic contributions universities make to society generally or to their regions address price value. Well-meaning arguments about the defining purposes of particular subjects often refer exclusively to their public normative value, such as their contributions to democratic values and civility, an argument advanced recently with respect to the humanities by Martha Nussbaum (2010). Some of these examples are worth instancing in order to show the confusion over what value means and the narrow way in which it is often employed, invoking, as they mostly do, the currency of marketization by concentrating on price and use value.

Price value is what an item costs, either intrinsically or when added to other items. Estimations of price value are at the heart of policies of market differentiation introduced into universities and are, thus, part of the calculations made by governments. They also feature in the defence strategies of those seeking to protect universities. Among the former, price is calculated in order to drive the costs down through competition; among the latter, price is estimated in order to calculate use value, the value-for-money (really better termed, value-for-price) Britain gets from its investment in universities. Costs, of course, are very difficult to calculate for intangible 'goods' like a university education for individual graduates, but are slightly easier when it comes to estimating the costs of universities as institutions.

It is notable that these estimations move well beyond calculations of direct economic use value through such obvious economic benefits as university spin-off companies. This is often the least of the direct economic use value garnered from the price value of universities. Mathews (2011: 36), for example, reports that Manchester University generated 37 spin-off companies between 2004 and 2008, but this represented only 0.1 per cent of the city's start-up companies in this period. Even Oxford, which had the highest proportion

of university-based spin-offs, mustered only 1.3 per cent of the city's new companies. Only 890 spin-off companies arising from university research were generated between 2000 and 2012. Calculations of use value now extend very broadly indeed, even beyond direct economic use value, to include social and health benefits to local communities through university voluntary work, service care and cultural activities. Students studying medicine, social work and teaching, for example, often working in deprived communities, bring great benefits to the local community while studying, even though they are unlikely to remain the city where they have been trained once they graduate. Some calculations now try to put figures on just this kind of use value.

Referring to public value in the title of its report, the British Academy's 2010 publication *Past, Present and Future: The Public Value of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, for example, gauged that the British taxpayer pays £12 billion of the estimated £23 billion annual cost of universities, the price of the remainder paid by the private sector. But price and use value were run together in order to show the value-for-money in this price. The Report estimated that the 'economic footprint of universities, in jobs, exports, innovation and added value' was £60 billion (British Academy 2010: 3). This indirect use value, as I would refer to it, was estimated to represent 5 per cent of GDP in 2009. Ironically, these calculations were made on the basis of figures given in a speech by Lord Mandelson at the 2010 Dearing Lecture in Nottingham University, at the point when he was about to lose responsibility for policies towards the universities to the Coalition government.

The eagerness with which similar sorts of calculation of price and use value are made, no matter on what basis and with what reliability, highlights how some who seek to defend public universities have responded to marketization by reducing public value to use and price. In the wake of the new government's enhanced marketization, UUK commissioned the New Economics Foundation (NEF), an independent but left-of-centre think tank founded in 1986 specializing in 'economic well-being', as its website describes it (<http://www.neweconomics.org/about>), to measure the 'social return' on investment in UK universities. The Report, published in 2011 and entitled *Degrees of Value: How Universities Benefit Society* (see <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/degrees-of-value>), invoked the idea of public value by calculating what is here called the 'indirect use value' of universities over and above their direct

economic use value. The Report isolated three indirect use benefits: greater political interest, higher interpersonal trust and better health, alongside a number of community outcomes derived from community outreach activities at two universities, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Warwick. The results make interesting reading for the extent to which the HE sector has appropriated price and use values as measures of its worth (for an account of the methodology used in the calculations see **Vignette 6**).

The indirect use value generated from these three social benefits was estimated to be £212 million when set against the cost of the United Kingdom's 1.9 million undergraduates and £1.31 billion for all 11.8 million graduates. For example, Warwick's volunteer programme in primary schools, aimed at improving reading fluency and raising the enjoyment of reading and pupils' reading aspirations brought indirect use value of £290,000. The cultural and community cohesion benefits of the volunteering activities of Warwick's international students realized £48,000. And so it went on. Warwick Art Centre alone was said to contribute £27.7 million through live theatre, music and dance performances. The report concluded on the basis of these two universities: 'it is fair to assume that the university sector as a whole is delivering benefits through facilitating social mobility, community engagement and cultural enrichment to the value of billions of pounds every year'. In the city of Southampton alone, for example, its two universities have been said to generate £500 million in spending power in the city (Mathews 2011), coming from its own workforce as an employer and its students, and £1 million through student volunteering: closure of the two universities would hit the Southampton economy by £610 million per annum.

Another example comes from the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, a body established in 2007 by the higher education funding councils, the UK research councils and the Wellcome Trust and supported by the youth volunteering charity called 'V' (see <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/our-vision>), which is designed to facilitate the 'higher education sector in making a vital, strategic and valued contribution to twenty-first-century society through its public engagement activity'. It is based in Bristol jointly at the city's two universities (University of Bristol and the University of the West of England). Its 2011 Report, *Through a Glass Darkly: Measuring the Social Value of Universities*, by Kelly and McNicoll (2011), sought to

Vignette 6 Calculating the social return on investment

The NEF study *Degrees of Value* drew on the standardized Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology. The Report described the method as follows (http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Degrees_Of_Value.pdf, page 5):

SROI is a method for measuring and reporting on the social, environmental and economic value created by an activity or intervention. Although based on traditional financial and economic tools such as cost-benefit analysis, SROI builds on and challenges these. It includes a formal approach to identifying and measuring the things that matter to stakeholders. These are often outcomes for which no market values exist, for example an improvement in quality of life. As such outcomes can be difficult to quantify, they have tended to be excluded from more traditional analyses, preventing a full understanding of value being created or lost for society.

Carrying out an SROI analysis involves six stages:

Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders. We spoke to university faculty staff, students and representatives of the local community in both Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Warwick.

Mapping outcomes. We used information gathered from the interviews and workshops, alongside academic literature to develop an impact map, or theory of change, which shows the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value. This stage involved finding data to show whether outcomes have happened and then valuing them.

Establishing impact. Having collected evidence on outcomes and monetised them, those aspects of change that would have happened anyway or are a result of other factors are eliminated from consideration.

Calculating the SROI. This stage usually involves deducing a ratio of inputs to value of outcomes. However, as this study was only able to value an isolated number of outcomes for a handful of programmes we focused on the total value of the outcomes alone.

Reporting, using and embedding. Easily forgotten, this vital last step involves sharing findings with stakeholders and responding to them, embedding good outcomes processes and verification of the report.

To illustrate the methodology, we can focus on the example of the Warwick Art Centre (see page 20). The Report described the social return of the Centre as follows:

Warwick Arts Centre offers a high calibre cultural centre to all attracting over 250,000 visitors a year. It is the largest of its kind outside the Barbican Centre in London with an ensemble of live musical performance, theatre productions as well as comedy shows. While the Centre itself leads on a number of community engagement projects, we focus on the value of the cultural enrichment for those who attend performances. In particular, the variety of shows at the Centre extends the cultural offer available in the area. We valued the benefits of the Centre through three outcomes: more cultured society. To account for the value that society places on the shows that WAC hosts, on top of the individual enjoyment, we used the Arts Council grant given to the Centre for a year as a proxy monetary value. More cultured local community: As a value of the cultural enrichment that all visitors receive at the Centre we take the price of an average ticket. This, alongside the travel costs saved for visitors and the Arts Council grant, brings the total value of the cultural benefits to the local community to £8.98 million. Increased local reputation: Finally, there is an additional value added from more highly skilled individuals attracted to the area. Cultural amenities have repeatedly shown to be one factor when highly skilled individuals chose to relocate to a given area. An increase in the highly skilled in an area has a number of benefits to a local community, such as an increase in incomes circulating in the local economy. When including this economic benefit we estimate the total value to the local community from the Arts Centre to be £27.7 million.

quantify the various ways in which universities are socially responsible, in a similar manner to the way businesses put a price on what they call ‘corporate social responsibility’.⁶ They utilized the ‘socially modified economic valuation’ approach (SMEV), which is slightly different from the SROI approach since it quantifies the economic value of all the public services offered by universities, from public lectures to student volunteering, and quality of life to political stability. The authors argue that a price is capable of being attached to all these

⁶ A charity newly established in the summer of 2011, called UKHE (United Kingdom Higher Education) has urged that universities’ corporate social responsibilities in third world countries should be included in league tables in order to encourage competition between them over such matters.

services, although the Report does so only for the more tangible ones. Public lectures, for example, were priced as realizing £356.80 in economic value (based on government calculations of an hour's leisure time being worth £4.46 across an attendance of 80 people at the lecture). It was further suggested that some of these services should have a 'social weight' attached to their price value depending on their use value, referred to as social priority, making a public lecture delivered at university to poorer people realizing between £405 and £442 in economic value.

SMEV owes much to the human capital approach to calculating non-market private and social benefits of higher education when set against total investment costs (see McMahon 2009). This assesses the use of human capital by graduates at home and in the community during leisure-time hours and estimates its use value set against price. As McMahon (2009: 5) explains, time spent at home uses human capital in producing non-market private satisfactions like better health, greater happiness and improved household welfare, while time spent in the community or in helping others uses human capital to generate social benefits for others and future generations, including the benefits accruing to a graduate's children from being raised by someone with a higher education. These include contributions to the operation of civil society, political democracy and even criminal justice. Drawing on long-established formulations in economics, McMahon felt confident enough to assert that the private non-market benefit to the individual graduate in the United States in 2007 was \$8,462 for every year at university, \$38,080 after graduating with the bachelor's degree (2009: 173). The spill over to others, including future generations, from such an education, referred to as its social benefits was calculated to be \$27,726 per year of the post-education life of the graduate (2009: 254). These include the direct benefits to the quality of life from higher education's contributions to democratic values, human rights, political stability, lower crime rates, equality of opportunity, lower inequality and the like.

The purpose of these calculations is to demonstrate that the worth of universities extends much further than contributions to the economy – which is laudable – but the thrust is blunted by the wish to render universities' 'true worth' in financial terms. These calculations honour the variety of ways in which the public value of universities might be established but the price and

use values attributed are for all intents and purposes meaningless because of the questionable assumptions made in their calculation.

These sorts of calculations of public value have proliferated with marketization but they focus on use and price value since this is the currency of marketization, and they do so for universities as institutions, since price value is easier to cost at the institutional level. It is more difficult to calculate price and use value for subject areas because of the difficulties of gauging costs. Nonetheless, the logic of the contemporary conjuncture facing public universities in the United Kingdom has led some defenders of public universities to attempt this calculation, including previous governments. For example, the Labour government's science minister, Lord Sainsbury, published a report in 2007 called *The Race to the Top* (see (http://www.rsc.org/images/sainsbury_review051007_tcm18-103116.pdf), reviewing his government's science policies which made estimations of the price value of the cost of investment in science set against their use value. He claimed there was a net gain in economic terms through the contribution of science to economic growth. The humanities and social sciences have sought to make similar calculations of their own price and use value.

Creative industries, for example, are particularly amenable to calculations of this kind. The government Department of Culture, Media and Sports, keen to establish its own monetary value within Whitehall's bun fight over claims to public value, publishes a *Creative Industries Economic Estimates Statistical Bulletin*. Its January 2009 issue reported the following data for industries 'which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'. Their contribution to the United Kingdom's gross added value (simply the value of the goods and services produced in a sector of the economy minus intermediate consumption) in 2006 was 6.4 per cent; they exported £16 billion in services, roughly 4.3 per cent of the United Kingdom's total export of goods and services in 2006; and in 2007 they provided employment for over 2 million people (see http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/research/creative_industries_economic_estimates_bulletin_jan_09.pdf). Heritage also sells well and its direct and indirect economic use value is calculable. The number of paying visitors to exhibitions, the number of people employed and the economic return from the spending power of both, among

other things, enable the use value of museums, archaeology, history and art to be gauged. The *At Home in Renaissance Italy* exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum during 2006–07, for example, was estimated at contributing £2.85 million to the London economy and £1.33 million to the UK economy (quoted in British Academy 2010: 38). The AHRC's 2009 report *Leading the World: The Economic Impact of UK Arts and Humanities Research* (<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/about/policy/documents/leadingtheworld.pdf>) was replete with examples like this.

The ESRC does less of this, but on occasions it emphasizes the economic use value of its research, stressing, for example, that work carried out at the Centre for Economic Performance on the minimum wage made a contribution to the British economy of £1.2 billion (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/excellence_with_impact_flyer_tcm8-4599.pdf). This is true also of the Academy of Social Sciences' *Making the Case for Social Science* pamphlets, which do not address these monetary benefits. That the ESRC and Academy of Social Sciences are less impressed by calculations of price and use value may reflect the subject matter of social science, in that there are fewer tangible equivalents to museum visitors, art exhibitions and the productive value of the creative industries, although large parts of the humanities are also unsuited, the availability of more obviously demonstrable impact measures for social science, such as policy effects, as well as the cynicism of social scientists in making these sorts of calculations. The difficulties of estimating use and price value in the humanities and social sciences have led some who seek to debate public value to emphasize instead what I am calling normative value.

Normative value is an evaluation of social worth, involving judgements and evaluations of the esteem involved in possessing something, which can be entirely independent of its price and use value. Normative value can be very high despite the 'good' having little to no use value but a high price value (an original Queen Anne chair that is unsafe to sit on) or low price value (a broken old rocking chair but which just happened to be passed down from a much loved granny on whose knee one sat while on the rocker). Private normative value can attach high value for a range of emotional, sentimental and personal reasons not shared by anyone else. Public normative value differs from private normative value in that the esteem is widely recognized

and culturally disseminated and adheres to the collectivity that possesses it. Putting it another way, personal sentiment is replaced by moral sentiment.

Public normative value refers to public acclaim, representing social rather than personal worth (although individuals can attribute great private normative value to possessing something precisely because it has great public normative value, like the pleasure of owning a well-known piece of fine art in one's private collection). Public normative value, in other words, can shape personal norms, increasing the personal motivation to possess a good and thereby extending its public worth. This may appear to suggest it is related to price value, but they are independent.

Public normative value is not about price. Price value can increase the cost of an item to the point where owning it becomes rare and a mark of social status. Price alone can confer esteem. Conspicuous consumption would not work as a social process if this were not so and brand merchandizing as an economic process would not trigger market differentiation without it. Public normative value, however, refers to items that are collectively recognized as worthy regardless of price, even where they have no price, such as the social worth of holding particular sacred beliefs in a religious society, or of participating in public ritual acts of remembrance of the dead. Public normative value, thus, tends to appeal to generalized norms and cultural practices, reproducing grand narratives that are symbolic more than tangible, abstract rather than concrete, evoking themes to which price value cannot be attributed. Many such grand narratives exist to place the normative public value of universities as institutions and whole subject areas. Grand narratives like 'science is civilizing', 'the humanities underwrite democracy', 'knowledge is truth and the truth sets you free', or 'universities educate character and intellect', for example, evoke an entirely different set of moral sentiments than notions like the 'knowledge economy', 'policy based evidence' and 'behavioural change policymaking' (which refer to use value).

Two examples are worth citing, one from the humanities, the other social science, which have addressed public normative value through grand narratives and by invoking broad moral sentiments, eschewing mention of use and price value. The first is Martha Nussbaum's *Not for Profit: Why Democracies Need the Humanities* (2010). The key ideas are twofold: that the humanities create competent democratic citizens, with the sympathies, values, civility and knowledge content to appreciate democracy and practice it; and that

this democratic sentiment (as I refer to it) is threatened whenever university education is evaluated against its contribution to national economic growth. In such a situation, 'delivering' rather than 'educating' becomes the process of transmission within universities, and economically productive citizens the output of a university education not democratic citizens. What matters for democratic sentiment is that students learn to think critically, including developing the intellectual skills of deliberation and communication in order to critique authority, garner an openness of spirit to the marginalized, excluded and dispossessed, and an interest in civic engagement and social activism to deal with complex global problems. When university education is reduced to instrumental themes about economic gain and national productivity democratic sentiment is uncultivated and democracy as a political system undermined. Nussbaum sees the humanities in particular as the least instrumental university subjects, the ones most concerned with cultivating education for life rather than for work, and the best at facilitating people in developing arguments, mounting debates and inspiring curiosity. They are also the best at encouraging students to think from the perspective of another person or group, and at cultivating a sympathetic imagination towards others' plight.

This is not an argument about *decline* in humanities provision. The humanities are increasingly popular as subjects and student numbers in the United Kingdom have risen above the national average, as we saw in Chapter 2, and even though Nussbaum's focus is primarily on the United States, she recognizes that liberal arts education there is expanding. Numbers are not her target. What matters to Nussbaum is the kind of educational experience humanities students are getting as a result of the marketization of higher education. Of course, grand narratives can be annoying as discursive styles, irritatingly obtuse and abstract. One blogger was incensed when reviewing the book for The Monkey Cage, a virtual site for philosophy and political theory (see <http://themonkeycage.org/blog/2011/06/07/roundtable-on-martha-nussbaums-not-for-profit-why-democracy-needs-the-humanities/>). 'The book, too often, bores me. I read certain passages, they sound like buzzwordy boilerplate, they sound like declaimed mini-lectures, they sound like cut-and-paste clip-jobs from longer Nussbaum tomes, they sound like academic blah blah blah (with citations), and my eyes gloss over. I want to be moved. I want to be inflamed. I want to be inspired. I want others to be inspired. I don't think this book will do the trick. That saddens me.' Much of the contempt proves her point however.

Marketization makes understanding grand narratives difficult: use and price value are its currency not public normative value.

Nussbaum might be thought of as being unnecessarily disciplinary in associating democratic sentiment and a sympathetic imagination only with the humanities. Medicine, natural science and social science could claim as much. Indeed Charles Wright Mills's *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), now in print for over half a century, referred to an attitude towards social science – which he referred to as ‘the promise’ – that was similar in its grand narrative and moral sentiments. We know from his letters that the book was to have been entitled ‘The Social Studies’, and in a revealing second footnote to the first chapter, which he called ‘The Promise’, Mills explains that it is a social science imagination that he is describing, and was being referred to only by one discipline as a result of being a sociologist himself (1959: 18–19, n 2). The promise, so termed, was to cultivate an imagination in the social sciences that helped ordinary men and women grasp the intricate patterns of their own lives and to see how these connected with wider structural forces and processes about which they had no understanding and over which no control. This was in order to help them cope with ‘private troubles’. Among practitioners, the social science imagination should persuade us to make public issues out of these troubles and so undertake social science that improved the lives of ordinary people by addressing urgent social problems and persistent human concerns. This involves what I call a moral sentiment towards social science research on the part of practitioners and students that garners the same sort of sympathetic imagination to marginalized others that Nussbaum referred to 60 years later.

This moral sentiment in social science does not start with Mills, nor end with him, and as counterweight to Martha Nussbaum's grand narrative in the humanities to address public normative value, I want to address as my social science example Michael Burawoy's writings on public sociology.⁷

When first advocating public sociology in 2004 Burawoy acknowledged his debt to Mills (while also distancing himself from him, see Burawoy 2008), as

⁷ I could have selected the Commission on the Social Sciences, whose report had a very short section on ‘what the social sciences are for’, in which they summarized the view of the Commission (2003: 30–1). Social science enhances the quality of life and they mentioned three benefits within this: better understanding; garnering a more civilized, globally aware and tolerant populace; and critical commentary in community debates about values. They mentioned also that social science is an end in itself and should be thought valuable despite some social science research having no utilitarian value. They did not develop these points. Some of these arguments presage my own views about the public value of the social sciences and are elaborated in later parts of this chapter.

well as to several others, and since that time he has expanded on his theme and linked it to a thoroughgoing analysis of marketization, commodification and the degradation of the public university (for the earliest statement see Burawoy 2005; for the fullest statement so far, see Burawoy 2011).⁸ Burawoy develops a 'manifesto for the public university', and public sociology's place within it, which in the terminology I have deployed here, constitutes a grand narrative that defines the normative public value of social science. Like Nussbaum, there is an explicit attack on the way university education is being re-envisioned as an instrumental good and in the process destroying the very idea of the public university; and, like Mills, he recognizes that some forms of social science research are technocratic and oriented to meeting national economic and policy goals. He sees a role for this sort of work: it is just not the *whole* purpose of social science.

His manifesto envisages four functions for a public university characterized by types of knowledge and their associated audience. The first is the generation of professional knowledge, which is the knowledge produced in research programmes defined in the academic world evaluated by fellow academics and designed for communication with them. It is knowledge produced for the specialist. This knowledge can be applied in the policy realm, but this is limited by the discursive style and in-jargon used, and its longer-term horizons compared to the short-term demands of policy. Policy knowledge is more meaningful to policy makers and written in a manner suited for them, since it is geared to dialogue with clients and their problems, and involves advocacy. Critical knowledge by contrast is rooted in a community of scholars and maintains the conditions of professional knowledge but it is not incestuously restricted to them and cut off from the outer world. It is not technocratic Type 2 Knowledge geared to policy, but it is world engaging. Public knowledge on the other hand is oriented to conversation between social scientists and wider publics about the broad direction of society and its values.⁹ Public knowledge resists policy definitions of the worth of knowledge and elaborates longer-term horizons and broader sets of interests but is also engaged with publics.

⁸ Burawoy is a prodigious writer on the theme of public sociology and he generously makes available his many contributions to symposia on public sociology on the website dedicated to the idea, See <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS.Webpage/ps.mainpage.htm>.

⁹ He distinguishes between 'traditional' and 'organic' public knowledge, depending upon the kinds of public engaged with (2011: 36ff), and Burawoy has a preference for the latter, since it involves local, community-based, critical publics. This distinction is not relevant to the argument at this point but will be taken up in the next chapter.

Burawoy writes that public knowledge is about building society into the university and placing the university in society (2011: 33), but creating public knowledge is not the sole purpose of the new public university. He envisages that the public university gives weight to each of the four types of knowledge, without privileging one over the other. They are entwined.

Thus, public knowledge requires the value discussions inspired by critical knowledge and the scientific work of professionals, but also draws on the policy context. Professional knowledge shrivels up if it does not enter into dialogue with the policy world, if its foundations are not subject to interrogation from critical knowledge and if it does not translate itself into public debates about the direction of society. Policy knowledge becomes captive of its clients, and thus more ideology than science, if it loses touch with public debate, with the accumulation of knowledge in research programmes, and with the organized scepticism that comes from critical engagement. Critical knowledge, itself, depends on having the professional and policy worlds to interrogate, but also gains much of its energy from the public debates to which it also contributes (2011: 33)

Burawoy argues that the balance among these types of knowledge varies from discipline to discipline. Hard sciences veer in their emphasis on professional as opposed to policy knowledge, although they also engage in discussion of the implications of their science for the wider society through forms of public science. The humanities proffer public and critical knowledge but also explore policy. However, he claims social sciences form the pivot around which the four types of knowledge revolve since their central task is to negotiate academic and extra-academic knowledge. The social sciences play the mediating role within universities by connecting them to the wider society. In my terminology, this becomes Burawoy's grand narrative for the normative public value of social science: social science reshapes the meaning and practice of the public university.¹⁰

¹⁰ In a private communication with the author, dated 15 January 2011 after we appeared together on a platform at the Royal Irish Academy the week before, Michael Burawoy was kind enough to comment on my contribution and reflected on the symmetry between my deconstruction of the meaning of value and his of types of knowledge. He suggested use value and price value (he preferred the term exchange value) would relate to policy knowledge, whereas public value belongs to public knowledge (he preferred the term social value). He noted this left professional knowledge without a corresponding notion of value, suggesting it might be found in the value of science for science's sake. Shortly I will argue that professional knowledge is a form of public value by helping make social science a public good in its own right. In other words, public value is more than public knowledge.

The foregoing deconstruction of the meaning of value has been necessary to supply us with a new conceptual vocabulary with which to describe value. The lexicon means we have to assess the value of the social sciences across different dimensions of value, and that the assessment of their value varies accordingly. Focusing solely on their normative public value is as one-sided and limited as concentrating on their price or use value. This means for critics of marketization, that use and price value cannot be ignored, and for champions of marketization, that normative public value cannot be dismissed.

With respect to government policy makers and education managers, for example, who are driving the marketization, commodification and degradation of public universities, this conceptual deconstruction allows us to argue that the value of the social sciences is not to be found solely in direct use value (say, economic usefulness), as if this can be assessed in isolation from indirect use value (say, their economic usefulness when assessed in relation to other things, such as the economic usefulness of social science graduates across their working lives). And the indirect use value of social science research should be assessed in combination with other scientific research (in the form of medical-social science research, biological and social science research, and climate change science and the sociology of climate change, and so on).

Furthermore, we can argue that the price value of the social sciences (their cost to the public exchequer set against what they realize by their direct use value) is a very poor measure of value. If price value is to be deployed, as marketers insist, price value should properly calculate both the indirect use value of the social sciences and their 'value added' price value – the price value of the social sciences when measured by what they add to the use, price and normative value of other things. The price value of the social sciences, for example, should be set in the context of what they add to the price value derived from, say, student exchanges, intellectual tourism and social and cultural events, or the benefits of social science research on transport policy, housing, the welfare state, 'race' relations, better hospital care for the dying, crime rates and so on, and what added price value accrues from having people educated in the social sciences (in terms of, say, socially informed citizenry, workforces, communities and the like). The social sciences as a rule do not have direct links with industry and the market, and knowledge transfer in the social sciences does not tend to reflect in spin-off companies and the like, but social science research on intercultural and interethnic relations, ageing and

population demographics, sport, heritage and so on can be stressed as part of their added price value.

For supporters of the principle of public university education who criticize marketization and its malcontents (and all the other alliterations they conjure for it like madness, murder and mayhem), while this new conceptual vocabulary helps us identify the normative public value of social science it also forces us to accept that use and price value are appropriate measures against which to defend the social sciences and by means of which we can make a case for their value.

However, stressing their use and price value is not my purpose here. Some of these calculations have been made and discussed above; and more should be encouraged where they can be reliably estimated. I want instead to address the topic of my interpretative essay – the public value of social science: but first, a plea.

A cautionary note

Shakespeare has Prince Hal commenting on Falstaff's bar bill: 'O monstrous! But one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack'. Readers may consider I have delivered them a halfpennyworth of bread for all the time and effort it has taken to bring them to this point: but we can now clearly state what the normative public value of social science is and the moral sentiments underlying it. However, this first requires a reminder of what social science is and I want to complete the circle and refer readers back to the arguments in Chapter 1 where I defined generic social science, for the normative public value of social science is predicated on this definition.

I wrote that the subject matter of social science is the social nature of society and that society needed to be understood in its inclusive sense to mean culture, the market and the state, existing across time and space. I elaborated by going on to state that generic social science is the observation, description and identification of the social nature of society by empirical and theoretical investigation in order to explain what culture, the market and the state mean to people, groups and institutions, how they understand, make sense and reproduce culture, markets and the state across time and space, and what people, groups and institutions believe, how they act and interrelate in culture, the market and

the state, in local, national and global settings. Put more succinctly, I argued that social science is the scientific study of the processes of societal production and reproduction in culture, the market and the state across time and space. It is to the public value of this generic set of activities that I now turn.

So what is the public value of social science?

The succinct description of the public value of social science is as follows:

The normative public value of social science is that it nurtures a moral sentiment in which we produce and reproduce the social nature of society, enabling us to recognize each other as social beings with a shared responsibility for the future of humankind through understanding, explaining, analyzing and ameliorating the fundamental social problems stored up for us. Social science thus becomes a public good for its own sake for cultivating this moral sentiment and sympathetic imagination through its subject matter, teaching, research and civic engagements.

My own grand narrative is, therefore, simple and clear cut: social science has normative public value by making people aware of themselves as comprising a society, helping in the development and dissemination of key social values that make society possible – social sensibilities like trust, empathy, altruism, tolerance, compromise, compassion, social solidarity and senses of belonging – and assisting in society’s ongoing betterment and improvement. The social sciences help us understand the conditions which both promote and undermine these values and identify the sorts of public policies, behaviours and relationships that are needed in culture, the market and the state to ameliorate their absence *and* restore and repair them. In short, social science is a public good in its own right, for nothing else than it is a moral sentiment, a sympathetic imagination, which makes society aware of its social nature.¹¹

I find myself in disagreement once again, therefore, with Collini (2012: 98) who differentiates his privileging of the humanities from Nussbaum’s (2010) by arguing that humanities scholarship proffers primarily cognitive achievements not direct moral ones. The humanities do not necessarily turn practitioners

¹¹ My Presidential Address to the BSA conference in 2011 held at the University of Leeds was on the public value of sociology and someone was overheard to remark that what I had said could apply to other social sciences. How true that was: it is my whole point here.

into 'better people', he argues, and practitioners' personal morality can be abominable and their political views deplorable (2012: 98–9). Tolerance for other people may not always be the outcome of a social science education and training, but this is a measure of the failure of people's personal morality. I am referring instead to the moral sentiment and sympathetic imagination that makes social sensibility possible within society generally, despite the failure of personal morality, without which society could not function effectively. In addressing, therefore, the question of what makes society possible, the social sciences deal with inherently moral questions that privilege their public value beyond their many cognitive and scholarly accomplishments.

The public normative value of the social sciences lies in their direct engagement with the DNA of society – individuals, groups, social relations, social institutions, civil society, culture, the market and the state. Social science is a mode of thinking for understanding – and helping make ordinary men and women understand through the routinization of social science knowledge – the mechanisms through which we live socially. As such the social sciences are essential for producing and reproducing the social nature of society. The medical analogy with DNA is worth emphasizing, especially since an organic analogy was so important to the public understanding of the social sciences at their inception in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. DNA is not only important to helping us understand biological life, knowing how DNA works helps improve the quality of biological life. The mapping of the genome, for example, has revolutionized medical care, both for treatment and prevention, and it is no exaggeration to claim that the discovery of DNA has been as remarkable as the microchip in marking the extent of human progress in late modernity. Similarly, social science dissects the DNA of society (in its inclusive sense) and the information this discloses helps them improve the quality of social life.

As such, the social sciences exist as *sciences* within a normative framework and simultaneously consolidate this framework as the sentiment within which everyone exists as social beings. This is their moral sentiment and sympathetic imagination, sensitizing us to each other as social beings, including the strangers in our midst and the marginalized and dispossessed outsiders across the globe. The anthropologist Marc Augé (1998) captured this wonderfully in his reference to cultivating sensitivities *of* the other and *for* the other (readers wishing to explore the way in which social science analyses these humanitarian sensitivities and is affected by them should see **Vignette 7**).

Vignette 7 Social science and humanitarianism

An interesting issue in this portrayal of the public value of social science is the *social science* evidence to support it. Feelings of responsibility towards others are highly structured by other sets of feelings, particularly about shared belonging and identity. This is why we feel obligated to neighbours, and other close members of our social networks and social groups. It is among these that feelings of reciprocity – of being done to ourselves as we do to others – underwrite and support feelings of shared belonging. The key to this notion of public value, however, is the development of humanitarianism and feelings of responsibility towards strangers and their ‘distant suffering’ (Boltanski 1999). This might be, as moral philosophers argue, because compassion is the basic social emotion (see Nussbaum 1996), but it is embedded also in social processes explicated by social scientists. Globalization has compressed time and space in a way that brings distant others into the daily experience of late modern life. Television brings distant suffering into people’s living rooms and new forms of social networking technology like Twitter and YouTube collapse time and space, giving distant suffering immediacy to the point where images of distant suffering bombard late modernity. Global digital media give visual form to the material conditions of political economy that cause the distant suffering and which provoke the humanitarian response. The link between the moral economy of late modernity and its political economy is a strong theme in Sayer’s work (2000). The ‘global village’ we all live in now reinforces the sensibilities we feel towards distant others. Neighbours, of course, still help neighbours, as was evidenced in the public spiritedness of people during the 2011 English riots, and consanguinity remains a very strong source of social sensibility, but moral awareness has been widened to reflect a much broader humanitarianism. This is in part due to a sense of the shared vulnerability of humankind, which affects our notions of human rights (Turner 2006b) and our understanding of civic responsibilities (Alexander 2006), and is reflected in Misztal’s (2011) attempt to chart the sociology of vulnerability, in Delanty’s outline of late modernity’s ‘cosmopolitan imagination’ (2009) and in notions of justice that prioritize human dignity over socio-economic redistribution (for example, Margalit 2009; Wolterstorff 2010). It is undergirded by forms of humanitarian law (Hirsh 2003) and the development of an international regulatory system of law and institutions to monitor the conduct of harm. People’s ethical commitments to distant others usually transcend the context behind the suffering, which might link it to the policies of pariah states or victims’ own culpabilities for their suffering, to represent a decontextualized humanitarian obligation towards them as ‘innocents’ caught up in material circumstances which evoke empathy. This

ethical universalism tends not to extend to 'perpetrators' of the suffering, since theirs is a plight we mostly find it difficult to identify with. Since identification with suffering is the trigger to ethical universalism, the moral boundaries between perpetrator and victim can be flexibly categorized however, to permit identification with some perpetrators, such as combatants fighting in the Arab spring (for a thoroughgoing analysis of humanitarian obligations towards suffering in late modernity see Wilkinson 2005). Anti-foreigner sentiments and aggressive xenophobia are evident and exist alongside ethical cosmopolitanism, and are the result of the same cause, globalization (on globalization and cosmopolitanism see, for example, Beck 2006). As Beck (2012) argues, the world is in a process of cosmopolitanization, of arriving towards rather than yet having achieved cosmopolitanism. Cross-national comparative research by Pichler (2012) on cosmopolitanism at the interpersonal level (rather than the usual macro-level attention to cosmopolitanism) shows it to be uneven across its various dimensions (also see Norris and Inglehart 2009), such as in politics (global governance), identity (notions of global citizenship) and ethics (empathy and trust towards others). Using World Value Survey data from 49 countries between 2005 and 2008, Pichler (2012: 28–31) shows ethical cosmopolitanism to be more prevalent than political cosmopolitanism, especially in the global First World and among urban dwellers, the highly educated and professionals. People with university degrees are the most likely to have cosmopolitan identities, in the sense of recognizing global citizenship, although he noted young people in failing nation states in Africa and Asia had strong senses of global citizenship as an alternative to identification with weak nation states (2012: 38). The upshot is that the very people social scientists educate in universities, at home or overseas students, are the ones most predisposed to ethical cosmopolitanism.

The appreciation we have of globalization as a result of social science helps with the garnering of humanitarian and cosmopolitan sensibilities and how local – or glocal – factors can promote or undercut these sensibilities. The public value of social science research is, therefore, enhanced by the way the social sciences compress time and space and thus make society aware of both the global dimensions to local issues and the catalogue of dangerous issues stacking up for humankind in the future. Use and price values are located in the immediate here-and-now of current time and space; public normative value is attentive to the humanitarian future. Part of the moral sentiment and sympathetic imagination of social science is, thus, its capacity to alert

humankind to its potentially threatening future. This is what makes the public value of social science relevant to the twenty-first century.

The normative public value of the social sciences comes in part, therefore, from its engagement with the 'big issues' of future industrial, scientific and economic change in the twenty-first century – economic sustainability, labour migration, climate change, organized violence and peace processes, psychological well-being, pollution, the link between demographic shifts and welfare demands and the like. If the traditional standards by which we judged the purpose of social sciences research have been replaced by economic utility as a result of marketization, then the new public value narrative should not ignore this but stress that scientific, economic, political, industrial, climatic and social changes in the future will be mediated by the capacity of the social sciences to enable culture, the market and the state to make sense of these changes.¹²

This new vocabulary for understanding the public value of the social sciences in the twenty-first century proffers a view of their normative public value that is very broad. Public value is more than the social and cultural relevance of social science research, significant as this is; more than its policy engagements, as profound as these can be; and greater than the many cognitive accomplishments and learning skills derived from a social science education. There are two qualities against which the normative public value of the social sciences should be evaluated: they not only generate information about society, they are a medium for society's reproduction. Put another way, they are the way in which society can find out about itself and in so doing generate the idea of society itself.

This does not render social science into theology or turn it into religious eschatology.¹³ It is not 'moralistic' or 'religious', as one friend thought on reading this manuscript, to want to produce socially conscious graduates who seek to

¹² In the companion volume to this in Bloomsbury's portfolio, on the public value of the humanities, which is edited by Jonathan Bate (2011a) and which collates various specialists reflecting on the value of their respective disciplines, an entirely different enterprise than to mine here, Bate makes the point in his Introduction that it is only with a humanities education that it is possible to understand the meaning of the question 'what is the value of research in the humanities?' (2011b: 3). My argument at this point reflects similar sophistry: social science research is necessary if society in the future is to make sense of itself. That is to say, both the humanities and social sciences are subject areas sufficiently sensitizing to permit questions about value to be properly answered.

¹³ However, see Cloke (2002), among others, who invokes Christian notions of *agape* love as the foundation of ethical practice in human geography. The re-enchantment of social science is a modern trend. See Brewer and Hayes (2011) on the Christianization of social science discourse with respect to studies of the management of emotions in post-conflict societies.

make the world a better place. Nor is it anti-science: social science remains scientific in my view of public value. Let me invoke Adam Smith, the favourite of neoliberals, to explain how.

I am aware that in referring to social science as nurturing moral sentiment and sympathetic imagination by making us aware of ourselves as social beings, I am declaring my debt to the Scottish moralists in the eighteenth century, particularly Smith and Ferguson, who portrayed human nature as inherently sociable, with people being both bound up with and interested in the fortune of others, in which feelings of sympathy and broader social morality hang together.¹⁴ Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (written in 1759) and Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (written in 1767) are key texts for they link the origins of social science in Britain with discourse about moral sentiment which their *science* was intended to disclose. Social science *reveals* moral sentiment when studying culture, the market and the state scientifically. For this reason, there is no incompatibility between the 'two Smiths' (also see Cam 2008; Smith 1998), the Smith of *Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*, since studying economics (Smith) or sociology (Ferguson) scientifically – to take just two examples of social science – itself uncovers the social nature of society and thus exposes our shared future as social beings. That is to say, there is no incompatibility between the status of social science *as science* and its normative public value as a moral sentiment through its disclosure that culture, the market and the state – society in its inclusive sense – are social entities that are premised upon our moral nature as social beings. So important is it for lay readers to understand that social science remains science regardless of its cultivation of moral sentiments that I will be returning to this point in the next chapter.

The marketeers and neoliberals will respond to this depiction of the public value of social science with another objection: that it is incalculable. One answer to such a comment is that this notion of public value is no more incalculable as is the *proper* enumeration of the use and price value of the social sciences. However, my second answer is that such a comment fundamentally misunderstands my argument. I have been at pains to stress in the deconstruction of the meaning of value that public value (as distinct from price and use value) is not reducible to monetary calculations and can only

¹⁴ There are many studies on eighteenth-century notions of sympathy and sociability, from a wide number of disciplines. For a selection, see Forget (2003), Frazer (2010) and Mullan (1988).

be construed in terms of grand narratives. I am not saying that social science does not have a use and price value – it clearly does – although distinguishing between price and use value and calculating them fully is more difficult than current calculations suggest and, if done properly, would reveal social science to have even greater price and use value than present calculations enumerate. What I am saying is that normative value is a form that by nature *is* incalculable. This is why SROI, SMEV and the human capital approach, well-meaning as they are, are misguided in believing a monetary calculation can be attached to public value.

It is for this reason that normative public value is problematic as an idea to neoliberalism: it defies price. Hence neoliberalism's currency of price and use value instead. Public value is not, for example, a term in the lexicon of David Willetts when he praises social science; or at least, when he mentions it, it is confused with price value.¹⁵ Normative public value challenges the very principle of marketization that reduces everything to use and price. And it is for this very reason that the transition in debate from the public impact to the public value of social science has been so important. Public value is the language of anti-marketization. Establishing the normative public value of social science has been very important, therefore, for placing the debate back on our terrain, not that of the marketeers, and for using our language not the government's.

Conclusion

Impact is a deeper and deeper hole leading nowhere, a Jeremiah Pit. Public value, on the other hand, leads social science to engagement with our humanitarian future. The multidimensional view of value I have developed here is useful by enabling us to see that the normative value of the social sciences is as important as their use and price value. This is not just meant in the narrow sense of what they add to the quality of life and status of individuals educated in the social sciences or to the lives of people affected by social science research,

¹⁵ In *The Times Higher* on 1 March 2012, David Willetts wrote: '[an allegation] is that we lack any understanding of the public value of the university, as shown by the withdrawal of public funding. Public money will continue to get to the universities in a host of ways: the loans for fees; grants for high-cost subjects; more generous maintenance for students; and research excellence funds. All these payments reflect the public value of what universities do' (Willetts 2012: 31). Of course, these 'payments' refer to use and price value not normative public value. He is essentially denying that public funding is being withdrawn and is not addressing what public value might be.

important as these are a measure of *private* normative value; it is that the *public* normative value of the social sciences can be assessed by their contribution to the social sensibilities they help garner and disseminate in culture, the market and the state deriving from people's awareness of themselves as forming a society, whether local, national and global.

Social science contributes to all forms of value, use, price and normative value, and one way of summarizing the normative public value of the social sciences is through itemizing the following range of contributions which social science makes in order to realize its normative public value:

- Social science engages with the social nature of society itself, in culture, the market and the state.
- Social science generates information about society, the market and the state that informs society, the market and the state about themselves.
- Social science promotes moral sentiments and a sympathetic imagination that realizes a body of citizens educated to social awareness and appreciative of the distant, marginalized and strange other.
- Social science teaching and learning has civilizing, humanizing and cultural effects.
- Social science contributes to social amelioration and improvement in society, the market and the state, that extends well beyond short-term policy effects.

However, it is *not* inevitable that social science can or will fulfil all these imperatives to realizing its normative public value. In order to accomplish this, we need a specific kind of public social science. Therefore, simply establishing the normative public value of the social sciences is not the end point of my interpretative essay. Prince Hal's complaint about the halfpennyworth of bread may have been premature, for there is still substantial fare to come. I contend that this portrayal of the public value of social science requires a new kind of social science itself, publicly oriented, conscious of its responsibilities to inculcating moral sentiments and a sympathetic imagination, geared to social amelioration and directed towards addressing the potentially destructive humanitarian future facing us. I outline the new public social science in the next chapter.