

Both *The Open Mind* and *Shaky Foundations* offer interesting insights into scholarship in Cold War North America, documenting a variety of political, institutional and social influences upon the social sciences. However, these books also provide examples of innovative approaches to the history of science, traversing institutional and disciplinary boundaries to follow ideas and arguments. Both accounts situate some of the methods and technologies produced by the social sciences in the Cold War period within the contexts in which they were produced, but also show how they were later co-opted, criticised and adapted.

In *Shaky Foundations*, Mark Solovey goes beyond an examination of the funding of a single discipline, or a history of a single funding body, instead comparing and contrasting three large American social-science patrons: the National Science Foundation, the Research and Development Board (RDB) of the Defense Department and the Ford Foundation. The similarities and differences of each group's approach to the question of what social science should be and what they should fund are highlighted through this approach. Ideological pressures, the composition of decision-making boards and historical interpretations of New Deal social science all contributed, Solovey argues, to the direction of post-war social science. He also weaves in accounts of other institutions such as the Rockefeller Foundation in order to demonstrate that, though there was a general trend toward ‘scientism’, the trajectory of post-war social science was far from inevitable or straightforward.

Likewise, Jamie Cohen-Cole examines the concept of the open mind commonly associated
with cognitive science, but rather than charting a disciplinary history of this field, he analyses a variety of interlinked manifestations of the concept in different realms. Cohen-Cole highlights the hitherto overlooked complexities behind the concept of the open mind which he argues was deployed both as a normative ‘universal model of human nature’ (p.4), and as an ideal presented in the political idea of the ideal citizen and the intellectual role of the model researcher. He goes on to address how the idea of the open mind took on a new dimension in the late 1960s, when its identifiable features were co-opted by the New Left and by feminism, and at the same time the Right began to challenge whether the open mind was a true model of American thinking.

Though military concerns are part of the picture in each book (particularly in *Shaky Foundations* where the RDB is the focus of a chapter), both Solovey and Cohen-Cole move beyond military imperatives as a sole explanation of changes in Cold War social science. Each account addresses the political influences upon science and how social scientists interacted with political arguments about what their work was. Yet they each also complicate this picture by providing a closer examination of the informal conversations taking place. The authors reflect upon the co-construction of social science and society, though where *Shaky Foundations* examines boundary work conducted by ‘a wide range of participants acting in various contexts’ (p.9) *The Open Mind* instead considers the work done to make boundaries permeable and to foster interdisciplinarity.

Solovey notes that the social sciences were absolutely not isolated in an ivory tower, but depended upon outsiders for financial support. Furthermore, social scientists in positions of influence with relation to funding bodies inhabited overlapping professional networks; they criss-crossed the professional, political and academic realms. He argues that they shared concerns and values about their work and society more broadly, which resulted in the scientistic and social engineering approaches that dominated Cold War social science. A central strand of Solovey’s study is the emphasis on social engineering, and how the utility of social science was a constant problem for its practitioners and patrons. Whilst it was seen as politically expedient to distance social science from social activism, there was also a demand for useful and effective results; this outlook ‘also
came under serious attack from various viewpoints within scholarly, philanthropic, and political circles’ (p.12). Solovey’s narrative could have been titled between a rock and a hard place.

The starting point for Cohen-Cole’s study is the way in which social thinkers and policy makers looked to the concept of the open mind as a remedy for the fracturing of American society due to modern trends. Like Solovey, he highlights informal connections. Cohen-Cole suggests that the modern day ‘salons’ where academics gathered and exchanged ideas at cocktail parties, common rooms and dinner parties were both the model for this type of thought, and the albumen which nourished the development of the shared values characterised by the open mind that went beyond academia. He emphasises how these informal gatherings provided the idea of the open mind with a sense of authority, and by highlighting subjectivity and life outside of the workplace he provides an unusual contrast to other histories of cognitive science and social science more generally. However, The Open Mind also examines the parallel exchange of ideas in more formal settings through an exploration of how interdisciplinarity was presented as an ‘epistemic virtue’ (p. 256), which was expressed as a democratic contrast to disciplinarity (an argument used to further political aims and those of the cognitive scientists attempting to challenge the hegemony of behavioural science).

Though Cohen-Cole argues that The Open Mind ‘is not a political history, a cultural history, an intellectual history, or a disciplinary history’ (p.254), it is in fact all of these things – as is Shaky Foundations. The authors also both address the continued debates over the issues that they touch upon within the social sciences and more broadly, meaning that the books both have the potential to appeal to broad audiences, including scientists.

There are minor criticisms that can be made of each book. For example, there are times when the variety of opinions within political groups could be explored in greater depth, and though each book considers the subjective lives of social scientists, gender and race are categories which receive little attention although objectivity and rationality have historically been linked with white masculinity. Moreover, though the studies obviously had to have their limits, both Solovey and
Cohen-Cole focus on the USA in their histories. It would be fascinating to compare the epistemological, ideological and institutional shifts that they note in Cold War America with those in other nations, particularly since patrons such as the Ford Foundation and ideas such as that of an open mind or model researcher or citizen crossed national boundaries.