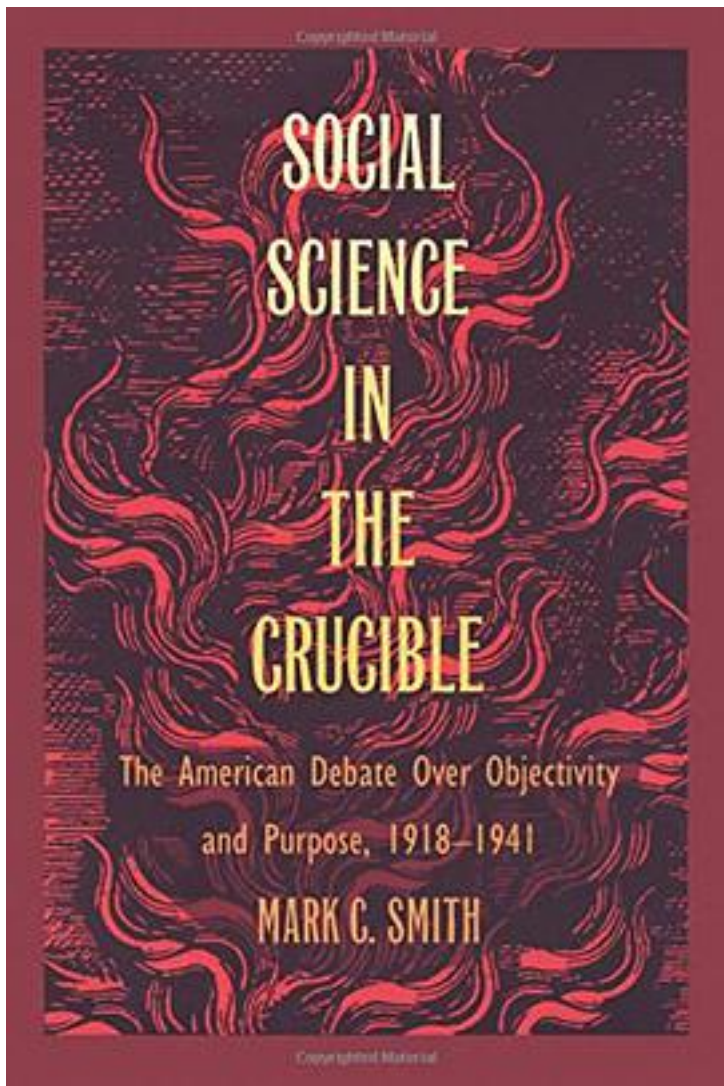


# Social Science in the Crucible



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The 1920s and 30s were key decades for the history of American social science. The success of such quantitative disciplines as economics and psychology during World War I forced social scientists to reexamine their methods and practices and to consider recasting their field as a more objective science separated from its historical foundation in social reform. The debate that ensued, fiercely conducted in books, articles, correspondence, and even presidential addresses, made its way into every aspect of social science thought of the period and is the subject of this book.

Mark C. Smith first provides a historical overview of the controversy over the nature and future of the social sciences in early twentieth-century America and, then through a series of intellectual biographies, offers an intensive study of the work and lives of major figures who participated in this debate. Using an extensive range of materials, from published sources to manuscript collections, Smith examines "objectivists"--economist Wesley Mitchell and political scientist Charles Merriam--and the more "purposive thinkers"--historian Charles Beard, sociologist Robert Lynd, and political scientist and neo-Freudian Harold Lasswell. He shows how the debate over objectivity and social purpose was central to their professional and personal lives as well as to an understanding of American social science between the two world wars. These biographies bring to vivid life a contentious moment in American intellectual history and reveal its significance in the shaping of social science in this country.

作者介绍:

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评论

除了拉斯韦尔，其他四位作为案例的主人公都是老生常谈的人物了。将objectivity和advocacy相互竞争的主线延续到了两战之间是本书最主要的创新点。最后结论升华到对当下社会科学hyperspecialization趋势的反省，并引用韦伯警句——“文化末世”专家没有灵魂“，使整个研究更有批判性和力道。

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