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# The Private Roots of American Political Development: The Immigrants' Protective League's "Friendly and Sympathetic Touch," 1908–1924<sup>1</sup>

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*This article aims to illuminate how non-state actors participate in forging public institutions and in establishing public agendas. It also sets out to identify novel mechanisms of state building. It does so by examining the historical experience of the Immigrants' Protective League (IPL) from its founding in 1908 through 1924. The history of the IPL highlights the role of organized, networked women in generating new boundary stories and doing boundary work; in conducting research and enhancing legibility; in incubating new policy experiments; and in moving the national, state, and local governments to take up new tasks in the progressive era. Focusing on women's activism in this period, and efforts to link immigrants to categories of the vulnerable, reveals that porous boundaries, hybrid power-sharing arrangements, and public-private collaborations may be more typical in forging new American institutions and public agendas than is generally recognized—and insufficiently captured by a narrative of a weak state borrowing temporary capacity from private actors.*

Private citizens always have to lead the way and then turn the task over to the public.  
—Judge Julian Mack<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

The expansion of the American administrative state during the final decades of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries is well

1. The author would like to thank Swarthmore college student Minh-Duyen Nguyen (2013) for research assistance, and three anonymous reviewers and the editors of *SAPD* for extremely helpful comments on this manuscript. I owe additional debts to Kathleen S. Sullivan, Julie Novkov, Eileen McDonagh, and James Greer for helping me think through this material. I owe special thanks to the librarians at the Special Collections and University Archives Department of the Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Special Collections Research Center, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. The term in quotations comes from "Eleven Years of Community Service: A Summary of the Work of the Immigrants Protective League" (January 1920), 1. IPL Reports—Supplement II, Box 4, Folder 60a, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago [henceforth, UIC].

2. "Judge [Julian] Mack [President of the Immigrants' Protective League] Introducing Hon. Charles Nagel, Former Secretary of Commerce and Labor," at the IPL Annual Meeting on April 25, 1916, at the City Club. Seventh Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League for the Year Ending January 1st, 1916, quote at 19; 5. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Accessed at <http://archive.org/details/annualreportofim1919091917immi>

documented, but mechanisms of state building are less satisfactorily understood. A common assumption in most studies of American political development is that dynamics of state expansion can best be explained from an institutions- or state-centered perspective. This study takes a different perspective, contending that to understand why the national, state, and local governments took up the new tasks they did during the progressive era, it is important to extend the focus beyond state-centered analyses. Public-private collaborations are important components of state building, and the impact of non-state actors is larger than what is commonly claimed. Organizations that began their work in what would generally be termed the private sector played a substantial role in shifting understandings of public work and shifting the public agenda. Some key dimensions of state building are played out through the redefinition of boundaries between public and private by organized activists seeking to convey their public visions into new forms of authoritative public action. This article contends that studies focusing on shifts from state to federal administrative capacity while neglecting the role of organized women in American political development are especially likely to miss the importance of shifting boundaries of public work and how such shifts happened. Closer attention to association work stands to tell us more about how institutions and their agendas were forged.

Offered here is a case study that reveals important means by which one such organization, the Immigrants' Protective League (IPL), launched by women in 1908 at Hull-House in Chicago, persuaded the state to take up new responsibilities such as offering immigrants protection and public services beyond their initial port of entry and, at least briefly, establishing a new government bureau in Illinois. Even though its successes were mixed from the perspective of the most common definition of political development, the IPL case is instructive, revealing ways in which networks, ideas, social science research, policy experiments, and resources bridged private and public boundaries. Although the IPL existed under its own name until 1958,<sup>3</sup> the period of greatest activity with regard to American political development took place before the 1924 passage of the immigration restriction act known as Johnson-Reed. In these early years of the century, informal organizational and institutional networks, often primarily initiated by women, leveraged new social welfare policies. The sharing of information, expertise, ideas, resources, network connections, and personnel between organizations and institutions in this period of institutional ferment was notable but unlikely unique to this period. Understanding the dynamics of these complex political processes reconstitutes the manner in which we conceptualize the enterprise of American state building.

This article begins by considering weaknesses in the predominant narrative of progressive era state building and amendments offered that better incorporate the role of non-state organizations and activists into processes of developing state capacity. The notion of public-private partnerships is not currently sufficient, nor concrete enough, to develop a good understanding of some of the means by which bridges and pathways for expansion of state capacity are forged. The public-private collaboration literature needs to move beyond the assumption that a weak state seeks to borrow capacity until the fledgling becomes strong enough to function without outside assistance. Non-state actors sometimes drive an agenda of state-expansion and may remain involved (or seek to remain involved) in governance once the state takes up new tasks and develops new institutions. Bringing organized women's progressive era activism back into the spotlight helps uncover some of these alternative forms and additional mechanisms of state building. Focusing on reforms taken up by organized women also improves our ability to see

3. It is now part of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights. The IPL was renamed the Immigrants' Service League in 1958, and merged with the Travelers Aid Society of Metropolitan Chicago (1967). This organization became known as Travelers and Immigrants Aid in 1980, and the name was changed to Heartland Alliance in 1995. <http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll/services/rjd/findingaids/IPLf.html#ref3>

the manner in which boundary shifts between public and private authority can occur. By incubating policy initiatives, by nurturing, funding, and staffing model programs, by conducting and disseminating research, and through other means explored below, organized women built bridges to the state.

## BEYOND STATE-CENTERED POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Stephen Skowronek's *Building of a New American State* has been one of the most important books defining the field of American political development. For the creation of a more powerful central state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he argues, power had to be dislodged from preexisting institutions, so that the growth of the modern bureaucratic state resulted from the wresting of power from courts and parties. The political struggles entailed dealt in important allies in civil society, but Skowronek treats the dynamic as centered in government institutions.<sup>4</sup> If alliances were forged, bureaucrats or other governmental officials initiated them for their own purposes.

This approach is insufficient. It fails to consider seriously the role non-state organizations played in progressive era state building—and some of their activities were launched first at the subnational level—a level holding little interest because the movement of power and authority was toward the center. Skowronek's landmark study posits a directionality to development that does not fit all cases, and not even all important cases.

A state-centered focus too easily relegates organizations and voluntary groups to the state's supporting cast. Writing about the British state in the same era, Seth Koven finds that voluntary associations "functioned as a kind of de facto 'state capacity'" and views the state as building, wherever possible, on existing institutions and networks to implement policy.<sup>5</sup> Daniel Carpenter's approach underscores the importance of non-state actors and networks while remaining state-centered. In *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, when bureaucratic entrepreneurs were

4. Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 9 and passim. See also Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), although his emphasis on how bureaucratic entrepreneurs reached out and built networks for policy innovation is closer in spirit to the work undertaken here. For elaboration, see Carol Nackenoff and Kathleen S. Sullivan, "The House that Julia (and Friends) Built: Networking the Chicago Juvenile Court," in *Statebuilding from the Margins: Between Reconstruction to the New Deal*, ed. Carol Nackenoff and Julie Novkov (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 171–202.

5. Seth Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840–1914," in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michael (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 127.

able to cultivate and enlist networks of voluntary associations to help achieve shared policy goals, Carpenter argues that this public-private relationship could be quite potent for forging bureaucratic autonomy and therefore state building.<sup>6</sup> “By nurturing local constituencies and by using their multiple network affiliations to build broad support coalitions among professionals, agrarians, women’s groups, moral crusaders, and congressional and partisan elites, they won for their young programs both political currency and administrative legitimacy.”<sup>7</sup> Collaborations between public and private actors are even more central in Colin Moore’s account of state building, but if public-private collaborations or partnerships are state building by alternative means, these partnerships are nonetheless problematic. In his study of the political development of imperialism, Moore notes that goal-oriented bureaucrats, who faced weak public support and roadblocks established by Congress, strategically turned to bankers to “extend American hegemony ‘on the cheap’ and to avoid congressional scrutiny.” Each side of the partnership benefitted, but for Moore, bureaucrats ultimately borrowed state capacity at significant financial and political costs.<sup>8</sup> In these various cases and accounts, non-state actors lend capacity to a weak state as it develops according to the preferences and plans of goal-oriented bureaucrats—for good or ill.

Andrew S. Kelly finds public-private partnerships to be quite complex, and poorly captured by the notion of a weak state borrowing capacity from a private entity to achieve some responsibility or goal.<sup>9</sup> Kelly’s analysis of the political development of American scientific capacity beginning in the nineteenth-century patronage state reveals that “scientists in the federal government constructed a complex network of public-private partnerships through which money, equipment, personnel, information, and influence flowed in all directions.”<sup>10</sup> The fact that Kelly finds blurred public-private boundaries, lines of authority, and even financial responsibility between the federal government and scientific research institutions in certain instances in the progressive era is not, I contend below, unique to this particular

case.<sup>11</sup> His rich case study both underscores the point that public-private partnerships were not confined to the progressive era and points our attention to important synergies in state building. Blurred boundaries between public and private actors, resources, and authority may be more common in American political development than we generally assume. With institutional layering, blurred boundaries in a particular era could even constitute a legacy of American state building.

Elisabeth Clemens’s image of the “Rube Goldberg state” provides a fruitful way to think about the variety of complex and hybrid public and private power-sharing arrangements that exist in the United States. Although some of the more transitory of these late nineteenth-century arrangements generate support for narratives in which a weak state borrows capacity from private associations until it develops capacity to deliver functions and services itself, other hybrid arrangements appear to be more durable.<sup>12</sup> Casting doubt upon the notion that institutions are functionally and rationally designed, Clemens is devoting increasingly close attention to the role of volunteerism in American political development.<sup>13</sup> Scholars who have been attracted to the Rube Goldberg state image and who have investigated particular cases of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development have found that the kinds of social welfare initiatives developed by women were sometimes maintained as collaborative, hybrid ventures, with public and private funding and complex relations of responsibility.<sup>14</sup> This raises important questions about the place, role, and frequency of these more durable hybrid arrangements in governance in the American polity. Clemens suggests the possibility that collaborative relationships may sometimes reflect the search for power by other means: “within a political culture suspicious of governmental power, action through collaboration might well be less costly than the construction of explicitly public state capacity.”<sup>15</sup>

This contention is underscored, to some extent, by Brian Balogh’s *A Government Out of Sight*. The state was

6. See Carpenter, *Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*.

7. Carpenter, *Forging Bureaucratic Autonomy*, 6.

8. Colin D. Moore, “State Building Through Partnership: Delegation, Public-Private Partnerships, and the Political Development of American Imperialism, 1898–1916,” *Studies in American Political Development* 25 (April 2011): 27–55, quote at 55.

9. See Andrew S. Kelly, “The Political Development of Scientific Capacity in the United States,” *Studies in American Political Development* 28 (April 2014): 1–25. Thanks to Eric Schickler for bringing this article to my attention prior to its publication.

10. Kelly, “Political Development of Scientific Capacity.” Richard R. John argues that scholars of American political development “downplay the stateness of nineteenth-century public life” in “Rethinking the Early American State,” *Polity* 10 (July 2008), 332–39, quote at 333.

11. See, for example, Nackenoff and Sullivan, “The House that Julia (and Friends) Built,” 182–93.

12. Elisabeth S. Clemens, “Lineages of the Rube Goldberg State: Building and Blurring Public Programs, 1900–1940,” in *Rethinking Political Institutions*, ed. Ian Shapiro, Stephen Skowronek, and Daniel Galvin (New York and London: NYU Press, 2006), 187–215.

13. The working title of Clemens’s book in progress is *Civic Nation: Voluntarism in American Political Development*.

14. See chapters by Susan J. Pearson and Kimberly Smith, Carol Nackenoff and Kathleen S. Sullivan, and Ann-Marie Szymanski in *Statebuilding from the Margins*, ed. Carol Nackenoff and Julie Novkov; and Jessica Wang, “Dogs and the Making of the American State: Voluntary Association, State Power, and the Politics of Animal Control in New York City, 1850–1920,” *Journal of American History* 98 (March 2012): 998–1024.

15. Clemens, “Lineages of the Rube Goldberg State,” 194.

not so much absent or weak during most of the nineteenth century as “out of sight”; cooperative arrangements between non-state and state actors had been important to solving new problems of governance throughout the century. Although this work focuses a good deal of its attention on the earlier years of the nineteenth century, it is valuable in recasting thoughts about late nineteenth-century processes of state building and the turn toward a more pronounced national administrative state. Balogh sees the progressive era as opening a new period of “intermingling of state and private means of extending public authority”—an interaction that now often became national in scope.<sup>16</sup> The role that associations played in the American state was not unique to this moment. Late in the century, when groups were proliferating in America, collective and associational solutions to social problems were widely promoted as superior to—and more ethically advanced than—individualistic or laissez-faire approaches.<sup>17</sup> The national state was seen as a special form of associational activity—one with the power to compel, but one that could also wield ethical and educational power.<sup>18</sup> The national administrative state was a more visible state and, following Clemens’s suggestion, one that sat more uneasily with the political culture.

Balogh, Clemens, Kelly, and several other recent scholars (see footnote 14) have noted porous boundaries and hybrid power-sharing arrangements between state and non-state actors in a number of policy development arenas, and the cases are not confined to the progressive era. However, this study will suggest that the progressive era exhibited a great deal of boundary shifting and indeterminacy as the administrative state was forged. In the next section, we will see how political development depended, in ways frequently unnoticed, on boundary work carried on by progressive era associations large and small.

16. Brian Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth Century America* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 354–55, quote at 354.

17. For example, Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), edited and with an introduction by Anne Firor Scott (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1964); Jane Addams, “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 30 (June 1913): 21. Carol Nackenoff, “Gendered Citizenship: Alternative Narratives of Political Incorporation in the United States, 1875–1925,” in *The Liberal Tradition in America: Reassessing the Legacy of American Liberalism*, ed. David Ericson and Louisa Bertsch Green (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 137–69. See also Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight*, ch. 9.

18. Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight*, 352–55. Bentley declined to draw a sharp distinction between government and other forms of social activity. See Arthur F. Bentley, *The Process of Government* (1908), ed. Peter H. Odegard (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 199, 262; accessed at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu.proxy.swarthmore.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb07509>.

## HOW FEMALE REFORMERS PERFORMED EFFECTIVE BOUNDARY WORK

When American political development scholars think of institutions formalistically, they tend to import traditional delineations of public and private activity that deserve to be problematized. What follows is the tendency not only to undervalue the role of associations in processes of political development, but also neglect of the important work contributed by women to state building in the progressive era. Organized women were engaging in “boundary work” through which they sought to redefine public work and their place in the public sphere at the same time. Shifts in the boundary between public and private work were achieved not simply by incursions of public authority into a preexisting private realm, but rather through expansion and “proliferation of political spaces.”<sup>19</sup> Fluid boundaries between public and private activity can be thought of as institutional borderlands; greater attention to these places can uncover important routes, processes, and dimensions of state building at federal, state, and municipal levels.

By focusing on how an effective group of female activists in the progressive era redefined public work by simultaneously redefining the public sphere and their place in it, this study seeks to augment our understanding of the means and mechanisms of political development. Although many scholars have focused on the activities of female reformers, this research connects their activities to the development of state capacity, a perspective too often missing in the literature. Bringing women’s activism into accounts of state development necessarily draws attention to boundary work. Female reformers claimed authority by creating analogies linking municipal housekeeping and skill sets long associated with women to solutions for social problems of the day. Well-educated women involved in some of this reform work further developed their authority by conducting pioneering social science research using standards publically recognized at the time. Building common narratives about women’s work and constructing networks of female reformers and male allies, these women were often able to move from organizational to institutional power.

In the minds of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century female reformers at the heart of the IPL case study presented here, virtually every social problem engaging their efforts was linked to a raft of others. In a frequently repeated pattern that seems improbable to an early twenty-first-century scholar, the same reformers were found heading up civic associations, charitable organizations, and

19. Nackenoff, “Gendered Citizenship,” 141. The phrase “proliferation of political spaces” comes from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (Verso, 2001, 2nd ed.; originally 1985), 181.



public institutions dealing with a wide variety of issues—sometimes at the same time. Not only was the division of labor between issues almost imperceptible and complex, but the lines between private and public activity and responsibility were also especially confounding in a period that has been singled out as one that was central to the formation of the modern American state.<sup>20</sup> Many participants in social reform efforts of the period worked these borderlands; a number of the leagues, associations, and organizations created at this time and that interfaced with public institutions were hard to characterize as either public or private.<sup>21</sup> A chart of groups and organizations involved in Americanization efforts in 1920 used the term “semi-public” to characterize the organizations involved in the kinds of activities undertaken by the settlement movement, the Chicago Woman’s Club, and the IPL.<sup>22</sup>

The IPL, part of a Hull-House network of reform organizations launched by allies of Jane Addams, serves as an example of how non-state actors helped create moments and means of institutional expansion. The IPL, which borrowed strategies from like-minded female reform groups, drew upon women’s leadership, education, reform experience, skills, successes, and networks to establish a visionary agenda for reform. They mobilized the new social scientific currency of the day, incubated and modeled some of the programs they sought to persuade the state to support, offered resources to the state, and built bridges for new state work.

Case studies are important vehicles for studying particular, historical instances of state building and for building theory. This examination of the IPL contributes to that effort, revealing underexplored mechanisms important to the development of American political institutions and to the development of the American welfare state. Unlike many other political development case studies, it does not begin with a specific public institution or set of bureaucrats but begins with an influential group of activists linked to Hull-House and to other organized reformers who had their sights set on institutional change. Looking beyond parties, governmental institutions, and bureaucratic agencies, we find that organizations

with decidedly non-state origins have both led the way and provided considerable means for the expansion of state capacity. One forty-year-old study of the IPL notes that “[w]hen the state finally acted, the minimum requirements of knowledge, personnel, and procedure were already available in the experience of private groups.”<sup>23</sup> Going even further, this study suggested that “voluntary organizations formed the basis not only for the welfare state but for the whole development of modern public bureaucracies” in the United States.<sup>24</sup> The IPL and its ventures demonstrate several different ways of forging state work. And in the process of building bridges for the state to cross over into new arenas, activities often shared public and private elements, and it became harder to characterize the IPL itself as a simply private organization.

### Telling Boundary Stories

If boundary construction is, as Charles Tilly claims, “a fundamental social process,” it also “depends closely on the adoption and modification of shared stories about the boundary.”<sup>25</sup> These stories “often form and operate in the zone of contentious politics, the zone where people make discontinuous, public, collective claims on each other.”<sup>26</sup> Stories about boundaries or borders between private and public were reworked by organized women influenced by Hull-House. Jane Addams herself told such persuasive stories. For Addams, there was “perhaps no one thing in American life at present which is changing so rapidly as the dividing line between private beneficent effort and public governmental effort.”<sup>27</sup> As she and a number of other Chicago reformers saw it, a number of activities originating in philanthropic associations had been absorbed into the public sphere; many tasks that women had traditionally performed in the home had been relocated to various departments of the modern city. Therefore, “if women are to go on doing those things which they have always done they will have to have some share in the government which is now doing them. If not,

23. Robert L. Buroker, “From Voluntary Association to Welfare State: The Illinois Immigrants’ Protective League, 1908–1926,” *Journal of American History* 58 (December 1971): 643–60; quote at 660.

24. *Ibid.*, 660.

25. Charles Tilly, *Stories, Identities, and Political Change* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 11.

26. *Ibid.*, 12.

27. Jane Addams, “Philanthropy and Politics,” 2140, Jane Addams Collection, Papers 1838-date, Series 3: Speeches and Publications by Jane Addams, 1878–1935, Box 5, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College (also published in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* in January, 1913). This boundary-blurring was seen by a number of reformers at the time. See also Louise De Koven Bowen, *Growing Up with a City* (1926), introduction by Maureen A. Flanagan (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 107.

20. See, for example, Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

21. Nackenoff and Sullivan, “The House that Julia (and Friends) Built.” See also the introduction to this volume by the editors, “Statebuilding in the Progressive Era: A Continuing Dilemma in Political Development.”

22. “A Chart Showing the Principal Americanization Agencies and Indicating their Activities,” adapted from a chart originally prepared by Mr. Charles H. Paull, Bureau of Vocational Guidance, Harvard University, accompanying report, “Americanization in Chicago, The Chicago Community Trust, May, 1920, 29–37. Immigrants’ Protective League Records, Series II, Box 16, Folder 8, UIC.

these activities will be turned over altogether to the men.”<sup>28</sup>

With such boundary stories providing the rationale for what would have been seen, not long before, as untenable transgressions into the male public domain, women’s groups generated identities as highly competent municipal housekeepers, bringing brooms to public spaces. For Addams, men embraced ideals of individuality whereas women aspired to social action, a sense of interdependence, and a wider ethic; women could be viewed as real progressives and builders of community whereas men could be cast as retarding progress and engaging in competitive, expensive, and often destructive activities.<sup>29</sup> Men had been unable to solve any number of urban ills, and both the city and the nation needed women’s wisdom and public housekeeping.<sup>30</sup>

### Public Housekeeping, Hull-House Style

Public housekeeping, for its practitioners, included the regulation of industrial conditions. Hull-House and other settlements worked the boundaries that divided middle from working classes.<sup>31</sup> Addressing industrial ills and social maladjustments as they affected the rapidly growing populations of Chicago and other American cities, reform women used their consumer power to affect industrial practices<sup>32</sup> and also argued that women had to leave home in order to continue to be involved with provision of goods and services that had increasingly moved outside the home.

Women who were prominent in reform movements and organizations of the period had a strong consciousness of being engaged in issues that were the special provenance of women.<sup>33</sup> This was part of the

practice and discourse of maternalism, and “maternalism necessarily operated in relation to other discourses—about citizenship, class relations, gender differences, and national identity.”<sup>34</sup> These turn-of-the-century reformers built a public space to talk credibly about child welfare and exploitation of children, and about the health of mothers and of wage-earning women.<sup>35</sup> Hull-House, too, characteristically focused on reaching families in its neighborhood through mothers and children.<sup>36</sup> Maternalism helped women carve out a professional sphere of their own.

Hull-House modeled one way of generating professional skills. Relationships with wealthy women, often forged through the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, helped Hull-House budding professional women perform work in the community. By 1895, Addams had developed a “fellowship system” to link a newly identified community need, a woman worker ready to meet that need, and an individual donor willing to pay that worker’s monthly salary. The fellowship recipient reported both to Addams and to the person giving the money.<sup>37</sup> This fellowship system allowed women to experiment and to define new professions for themselves.<sup>38</sup>

Female reformers needed to construct the boundaries and differences between their approach, values, and expertise from that of men, and they were also wont to emphasize how the work they did outside of the academy differed from the work of emerging academic professionals.<sup>39</sup> A public claim of jurisdiction—developed over a period of time

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obtained the municipal franchise and/or were enfranchised in statewide elections. Selig Perlman’s famous argument that the working classes in Europe became more self-conscious of themselves as a class apart than working men and women in the United States did—because the United States extended the franchise to workers as individuals much earlier than workers obtained the franchise in Europe—may have some parallel here. In the case of women in the United States (a few Western European nations preceded the United States in enfranchising women), the long exclusion from the franchise may have contributed to women’s sense of themselves as having a voice apart—a different voice.

34. Koven, “Borderlands,” 125.

35. Kathryn Kish Sklar, “The Historical Foundations of Women’s Power in the Creation of the American Welfare State, 1830–1930,” in *Mothers of a New World Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 49–50.

36. Erik Schneiderhan, “Pragmatism and Empirical Sociology: The Case of Jane Addams and Hull-House, 1889–1895,” *Theory and Society* 40 (2011), 611, quoting Mary Lynn McCree [Bryan], “The First Year of Hull-House, 1889–1890, in Letters by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr,” *Chicago History* 1 (1970): 101–14.

37. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, 17–18.

38. *Ibid.*, 18.

39. Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), points out that jurisdiction is exclusive and that “[o]f the various exclusive properties of professions, jurisdiction is the most important” (86–87, quote at 87).

28. Jane Addams, “Philanthropy and Politics,” 2137.

29. See Nackenoff, “Gendered Citizenship,” esp. 143–46; Jane Addams, “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise,” 21.

30. See, for example, Jane Addams, “The Modern City and the Municipal Franchise for Women,” (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1910); Addams, “Women and Public Housekeeping” (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1913), both in the Schlesinger Library History of Women microfilm collection; Addams, “Philanthropy and Politics,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 30 (January 1913), 25; and “Why Women Should Vote,” (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1912) and also in *Ladies’ Home Journal* 27 (January 1910): 21–30.

31. Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform 1890–1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 11.

32. The National Consumers League, led by early Hull-House resident Florence Kelley, had as an early slogan: “To live means to buy, to buy means to have power, to have power means to have duties.” National Consumers League, Harvard University Library Open Collections Program; accessed at <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/www/ncl.html>. The NCL website substitutes the word “responsibility” for duties (<http://www.nclnet.org/about-ncl/history>).

33. It may be that their capacity to speak authoritatively on matters concerning women, children, and others needing protection and care was enhanced and amplified by their exclusion from the franchise during these decades. Some of these women

and often contested—usually entails a claim for legitimate control of the work in question, a claim to dominate public definitions of the tasks involved, and perhaps an obligation to perform this work; “[p]ublic jurisdiction, in short, is a claim of both social and cultural authority.”<sup>40</sup>

### Claiming Jurisdiction through Social Science Research

One important means by which organized women—especially middle-class, college-educated women—were many of those associated with Hull-House—asserted their policy expertise and specific jurisdictional claim was by embracing and deploying the language and tools of new social scientific research. Women, prominent in several departments of the American Social Science Association even in the 1880s—Public Health, Education, and Social Economy—found that social science tools permitted them to engage in reform efforts on equal footing with men.<sup>41</sup> Hull-House women had been engaged in data-gathering since at least 1893, when Florence Kelley and other Hull-House residents were joined by staff of the U.S. Bureau of Labor in door-to-door collection of local community data on ethnic origins, number of residents per household, wages, work history, and location of sweat shops for what became the Hull-House Maps and Papers, published in 1895.<sup>42</sup> When, by the 1890s, female reformers had embraced social scientific language and tools, they were able to connect with a wider progressive discourse and a state that was increasingly turning to objective, scientific administration and approaches to social problems. “Social science taught the importance of cooperation, prevention, and expertise.”<sup>43</sup> Professionalizing women sought to convince their fellow citizens—through dissemination of research, publicity, lobbying, and writing—that the problems they were addressing were public problems whose solutions required governmental, and not merely private resources.<sup>44</sup> Organized women in the progressive era served as an example of how “social

movements often identify social problems, which later become potential expert work,” and how lay leaders may gradually turn into professionals.<sup>45</sup>

In the broadest sense, the willingness of government to accept these new responsibilities has to do with the transformation of liberalism in the early twentieth century. Liberalism came to be understood not as individualism and laissez faire but as a sense of social responsibility coupled with a more activist, bureaucratic, and “efficient” government. This understanding of government and politics meshed nicely with that of women’s groups. Both emphasized social science ideas and methods, organization, and collective responsibility for social conditions.<sup>46</sup>

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, “[a]lthough a few governmental bureaus, such as the U.S. Department of Labor, brought together experts and collected data capable of guiding public policy in attacking social problems created by rapid industrialization, explosive urban growth, and massive immigration, for the most part such expertise remained sequestered in universities, private foundations, and voluntary organizations.”<sup>47</sup> Women who engaged in social scientific research to expand public sector social provision helped build state capacity, and they were working not only at the federal but also at the state and municipal levels.<sup>48</sup>

### From Women’s Political Culture to Institutional Power

Scholars who locate organized women at the center of the dynamic expansion of the social welfare state in the United States in municipalities, states, and the nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries frequently explain their role and success because of the development of women’s political culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the growth of autonomous, woman-centered institutions that nevertheless cooperated closely with male reformers.<sup>49</sup> For Paula Baker, women domesticated politics; working with social service and charitable organizations, they took up issues such as care of dependents not fully inscribed in the world of male politics.<sup>50</sup> Robyn Muncy emphasizes the development of a peculiarly female culture forged by middle-class and often college-educated women that emphasized relationships, care, humility and service.<sup>51</sup> Women

40. *Ibid.*, 60–61, quote at 60.

41. Sklar, “Historical Foundations of Women’s Power,” 65.

42. In 1892, Congress had commissioned a national study of the slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia; the *Hull-House Maps and Papers: a Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago* (Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1895) was the Chicago portion of this study. This national commission and mandate was carried out by a combination of state and non-state actors. Data were collected from April to July, 1893, by Florence Kelley, Hull-House residents, and staff from the U.S. Bureau of Labor, who resided at Hull-House during this effort. <http://florencekelley.northwestern.edu/historical/hullhouse/>

43. Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women in American Political Society, 1780–1920,” *American Historical Review* 89 #3 (June 1984), 637. In Baker’s view, these women also embraced “data collection, detached observation, and an emphasis on prevention” (636).

44. See Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, 37.

45. Abbott, *The System of Professions*, 149. Abbott points out that professionals may also lead these movements.

46. Baker, “The Domestication of Politics,” 641.

47. Sklar, “Historical Foundations of Women’s Power,” 54.

48. Following the lead of Skowronek in *Building a New American State*.

49. Baker, “The Domestication of Politics,” 620–47; Sklar, “The Historical Foundations of Women’s Power,” 43–93.

50. Baker, “Domestication of Politics,” 625, 631.

51. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, 4–5.

broke into the public sphere not by frontal assault on male-dominated professions but by creating “within the public realm a new territory they could rule themselves: it was that territory of policy and professional expertise which affected women and children exclusively.”<sup>52</sup> And Mary Jo Deegan points to the ways the feudal female world based on family, home, emotions, and consumer roles became, in this period, an important resource for social change and for “redefining the larger social situation.”<sup>53</sup>

Theda Skocpol's *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* adds an important structural dimension to any explanation of the influence of maternalist organizations in the United States around the turn of the century. Skocpol focuses on the central role of proliferating gender-identified and sometimes cross-class mass-membership organizations with chapters all over the United States, such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs, in forging new welfare state institutions during the progressive era. “Because the women's groups were organized into geographically widespread federated associations, they had much more ability than other groups of the day—such as urban professional associations, or trade unions of male industrial wage earners—simultaneously to influence politics at local, state, and national levels.”<sup>54</sup> These federated groups that included women with higher education, “could spread a policy idea quickly from New York or Chicago or Washington, DC, across the forty-eight states and right down into local communities, the districts that were the homes of representatives to state legislatures and to the U.S. Congress”;<sup>55</sup> they managed to gain “decentralized political leverage on legislatures.”<sup>56</sup> Engendering new welfare state institutions such as the Children's Bureau, these mass-membership organizations were able to bring about policies to protect women and children.<sup>57</sup>

Establishing an institutional beachhead became a means not only of pushing policy ideas but also of mobilizing women's organizations to help achieve and implement policy goals at the local level. As director of the Children's Bureau, Julia Lathrop used the new institution not only to conduct investigations and prepare reports, but also as a base for lobbying for new federal policy initiatives on behalf of

mothers and children, pressing for what would become the Sheppard-Towner Act.<sup>58</sup> Under her handpicked successor, Grace Abbott, extant women's organizations with “boots on the ground,” such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs and League of Women Voters, were enlisted to help the Children's Bureau implement Lathrop's and Abbott's visions, working for passage of required state and local programs so that federal funds could be disbursed, and administering these programs at the local level.<sup>59</sup>

Skocpol's analysis both centers progressive era women's organizations in the narrative of institution building and serves as a reminder to scholars to think more about the directionality of political development. Her analysis takes seriously the role of voluntary organizations in state building. Skocpol also highlights the conditions that she believed permitted nationally organized women pursuing maternalist goals at a particular historical moment to be effective in reshaping key elements of the nation's social welfare policy agenda.

The Sheppard-Towner case seems to suggest something more. It arguably demonstrates that working across, and to some extent blurring, the boundaries between public and private responsibility helped organized women with maternalist agendas build success in the progressive era. The IPL case study pursues that suggestion, drawing from Skocpol and incorporating other insights from recent work on hybrid governing arrangements, public-private partnerships, and boundary work. Although not a nationally organized mass-membership organization modeled along the lines of the General Federation, the IPL effectively networked with other groups to which its development was linked in the field of immigrant protection—also chiefly women's groups, some of which had paved the way—drawing upon accumulated knowledge, skills, and successful practices to build successes, including an impressive institutional beachhead. If the IPL was mixed in its success in institutionalizing programs, it nevertheless demonstrated some success in leveraging the state to take up new public tasks, albeit with varying levels of commitment.

## FITTING THE IPL INTO THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE

Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek offer as a criterion for identifying political development a “durable shift in governing authority.”<sup>60</sup> The IPL case does not neatly fit this criterion. The Orren

52. *Ibid.*, 16–17, quote at 17.

53. Mary Jo Deegan, *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2002), 7.

54. Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 530. Skocpol continues on that page with the observation that publicity, lobbying, and the use of rhetoric that was both moral and emotional helped them secure social policy goals with legislators voting along relatively nonpartisan lines.

55. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 530.

56. *Ibid.*, 46, 47.

57. *Ibid.*, 529.

58. *Ibid.*, 495.

59. *Ibid.*, 486–87, and 506–10 on implementation of Sheppard-Towner.

60. Orren and Skowronek, *Search for American Political Development*, 123, 125–31.



and Skowronek framework focuses chiefly on results of political processes and upon defining moments. Measured in that way—by the degree of shift toward public authority or durable change in the distribution of authority between the polity and counterparts outside it—the IPL case is mixed and might escape notice. But processes and means by which development occurs can be identified, even in cases where successes and failures are mixed. And even policy failures can be instructive in understanding barriers and constraints upon particular developmental trajectories.<sup>61</sup>

If the boundary of what constituted public work could be pushed by organizations dominated by female reformers, there were still limits; even expanding the boundaries of legitimate discourse did not always bring accompanying political victories. The categories of persons over whom these reformers could most readily claim an interest related to the “structured character of moral discourse.”<sup>62</sup> Complex moral distinctions, involving shades, degrees, and kinds of worthiness, were embedded in social understandings about who merited aid and what status identities were to be favored—distinctions vital to understanding the work of relief and social service organizations in the period.<sup>63</sup> But even with warrant to seek protection of the health and welfare of women and children, moving into the realm of work to deal with industrial ills faced by these deserving beneficiaries of social programs brought reformers only partial success. Protection of women workers—at least in terms of maximum hours of work—was enshrined in constitutional law in 1908.<sup>64</sup> Legislative protection of able-bodied males in the workplace was not then generally acceptable in a limited state in which liberty to contract was an important part of a bundle of citizen rights.<sup>65</sup> When

maternalist reformers targeted industrial ills through child labor reform, they had some successes at the state level but did not fare as well at the national level. The Supreme Court overturned both the federal Keating-Owen Child Labor Law and the 1919 Tax on Employment of Child Labor Act.<sup>66</sup> The Federal Child Labor Amendment, passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification in 1924, also failed. The use of discourses about mothers and children only went so far in promoting an agenda for dealing with industrial ills, abuses, and exploitation of labor.

Especially before World War I, the discourse about dependent and vulnerable categories of people who were worthy of public intervention could be extended to immigrant women and girls. The attempt to use immigrant women and girls to press an industrial policy agenda was part and parcel of an effort to legislate an end to exploitive and unhealthy work environments and practices. However, given the structured nature of moral discourse, organizations such as the IPL may have focused on immigrant women in part “because they saw a greater need to guard against the dangerous moral implications of female immigrants.”<sup>67</sup> Immigrant women, arriving in Chicago, faced potential moral corruption that mapped onto urban reformers’ rising concern with white slavery, prostitution, and the dangers of unsupervised and unguided social activities of young women.<sup>68</sup> For female reformers, the economic vulnerability and mind-numbing, exhausting work of children and young women in sweatshops were not simply industrial ills but contributed to a range of urban ills that they had made it their business to address. As Addams wrote, the work of a settlement assumes “that the industrial problem is a social one.”<sup>69</sup>

In the IPL, reformers borrowed from, replicated, experimented, invented, and built upon what they had learned about transforming the state and transforming democracy through their own work in

61. See Richard Valelly, “Partisan Entrepreneurship and Policy Windows: George Frisbie Hoar and the 1890 Federal Election Bill,” in *Formative Acts: American Politics in the Making*, ed. Stephen Skowronek and Matthew Glassman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 126–52.

62. John W. Mohr, “Soldiers, Mothers, Tramps, and Others: Discourse Roles in the 1907 New York City Charity Directory,” *Poetics* 22 (1994): 327–57, quote at 353.

63. *Ibid.*, 327–28, 330.

64. See discussion below (“Protective Labor Legislation and the National Consumers’ League”) of *Muller v. Oregon*, 208 U.S. 412 (1908). Reformers were not as successful in the courts with minimum wages for women in the progressive era.

65. See, for example, Sklar, “Historical Foundations of Women’s Power,” 44; Julie Novkov, *Constituting Workers, Protecting Women: Gender, Law and Labor in the Progressive Era and New Deal Years* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001) on the mixed history of protective labor legislation at the state level and the fact that a substantial portion of this legislation did not survive court challenge; William G. Ross, *A Muted Fury: Populists, Progressives, and Labor Unions Confront the Courts, 1897–1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Howard Gillman, *The Constitution Besieged: The Rise and Demise of Lochner Era Police Power Jurisprudence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); and Robert

C. Post, “Defending the Lifeworld: Substantive Due Process in the Taft Court Era,” 78 *Boston University Law Review* 1489 (1998).

66. The first was overturned in *Hammer v. Dagenhart* 247 U.S. 251 (1918) and the second in *Bailey v. Drexel Furniture Company* 259 U.S. 20 (1922). Taft, writing for the Court in the *Drexel Furniture* case, referenced Dagenhart’s holding on the limits of Congress’s interstate commerce power and insisting that the tax was really a penalty.

67. Mohr, “Soldiers, Mothers, Tramps, and Others,” 354. Using network analysis, Mohr develops a complex set of service combinations used in New York City charities in 1907, identifying moral discourses around some key classifications and finding similarities and differences in patterns of treatment among statuses.

68. See, for example, Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

69. Jane Addams, “A Function of the Social Settlement,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 13 (May 1899), 52.

related efforts to address social ills. They networked with other groups across the country, pooled and shared resources, and learned from initiatives undertaken elsewhere. The IPL and its Hull-House-influenced reformers had a particular vision of an ethical state and the sorts of policies it should promote. Viewing immigrants as a positive force in the city, state, and nation, the IPL wanted to aid immigrant adjustment to urban life and integrate them into a humane workplace. The IPL expanded its sphere of influence through research and writing, lobbying, and advocacy before a broader public. Employing tools of modern social science, it used research as a means of shaping the public narrative; in so doing, it moved boundaries and barriers to effective state action, both in Illinois and in Washington, DC.

We will find below that, at a time when collecting and working with numbers provided an entrée for those who wished to speak authoritatively about policy, the IPL was able to capitalize on this skill.<sup>70</sup> An ability to advocate using the language and recent currents of constitutional law also served as capital. Patterns of investigation, reporting, lobbying, and advocacy were replicated by leaders when they moved from organizations to beachheads in the public sector.<sup>71</sup> These skills and practices were useful in pushing the boundaries of public work in directions envisioned by reformers.

We will also find that the IPL (building on previous successes in which members were involved) designed and nurtured programs, funded them, demonstrated that they worked, and then persuaded the state to fund and sometimes maintain such programs—developing policy through incubation.<sup>72</sup> Incubating policies, working within networks, and constructing bridges were among the important mechanisms that help explain the success of even relatively small organizations, their leaders, and allies in achieving at least some of their policy goals and in pushing the state to expand its operations at the local, state, and national level. Establishment of the Illinois Immigration Commission, drawing the federal government into protection of immigrants beyond their initial point of entry into the United States, and setting up a federal immigration station in Chicago were just some of the effects of the IPL's efforts.

70. On the use of statistics to develop claims of expertise and to remake the world in their image in this period, including at the University of Chicago, see Theodore M. Porter, *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 72 and passim.

71. Edith Abbott, "Grace Abbott and Hull House 1908–1921—Part II," *Social Service Review* 24 (December 1950): 509–16.

72. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the language about incubation.

## BUILDING IMMIGRANT PROTECTION NETWORKS

The IPL did not pioneer all of the approaches and techniques it employed as it sought to leverage the state. It learned from and built upon predecessors' innovations in the field and maintained collaborations with some of these groups. This section traces the IPL's debt to and links with other reform women's groups, including the settlement movement, the Traveler's Aid Committee of the Chicago YWCA, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Women's Trade Union League, Chicago Juvenile Court activists, and even the National Consumers' League. The section also examines the context in which the IPL was formed to deal with a problem the organization helped define—a problem featuring the vulnerable, but especially vulnerable women and girls.

### The IPL: Building on Predecessors

The IPL, begun as the League for Protection of Immigrants in 1907 and formally established in Chicago in 1908, was not first into the field of migrant protection, although it was the organization most prominently engaged in attempting to alter federal and state policies to better secure its aims. The IPL incorporated and built upon projects designed by earlier women's organizations involved in immigrant work and, with the group's close connections to Hull-House, drew upon Hull-House resources and evolving practices. As early as 1888, the Travelers' Aid Committee of the Chicago YWCA had established a model that would be assimilated into the work of the IPL. To protect unwitting women from exploitation, the Travelers' Aid Committee hired matrons to help women newcomers who arrived alone at Chicago railway stations. They sought to run interference with brothel procurers and others seeking to take advantage of new female arrivals, and denounced false newspaper advertisements that misled young female job seekers.<sup>73</sup> After Hull-House was founded in 1889, Edith Abbott recalled that:

The police in those days, when there was no social service available at the railway stations, would bring strange and stranded people to Hull House. We used to go out at all hours and in all kinds of weather to take a forlorn and feeble man to spend the night at the "Workingmen's Palace," a Salvation Army hotel . . . The homeless women who drifted into our reception room we sent to a shelter supported by a women's church organization a few blocks away.<sup>74</sup>

73. Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 49.

74. Edith Abbott, "Grace Abbott and Hull House, 1908–1921—Part I," *Social Service Review* 24 (September 1950): 380–81.

Such was the “protective” network for those arriving at Chicago train stations, whether the new arrival was foreign or native-born, circa 1890.

The timing of the foundation of the IPL seems hardly coincidental. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had been coming to Chicago for a number of years by this time. But importantly, the advent of the IPL coincided with the naming of a new problem. The term “white slavery” appears in certain quarters a few years earlier, but white slavery as a problem began to attract wide interest in 1907, in part as sensational stories and tracts began to circulate.<sup>75</sup> *McClure's Magazine* published George Kibbe Turner's “The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities” in its April 1907 issue and began a series on the white slave trade shortly thereafter. Although a substantial share of white slavery interest focused on the threatened moral purity of young native stock American girls coming to the city, Turner claimed Russian Jews were especially involved in the trade in women and identified young, low-paid factory workers and department store girls as being particularly vulnerable.<sup>76</sup> Clifford Roe, an important Chicago crusader and assistant state's attorney in Chicago, and Illinois District Attorney E. W. Sims were prominent in the white slave crusade. Roe estimated that, on Chicago's West Side, half the prostitutes were Jewish, and additional sources linked Chicago Jews to the white slave trade.<sup>77</sup> The railroad stations in Chicago were the chief point of entry for

new immigrants in Illinois, and immigrant girls crossed state lines to get there. Representative James Robert Mann, who chaired the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, contributed his name to the 1910 Act making it a federal crime to transport a young woman across state lines for immoral purposes—an exercise of the federal government's commerce power. The act was consonant in spirit with the Immigration Act of 1907 that made it a federal crime to import into the United States any alien girl or woman for purposes of prostitution.

A potent narrative about a social and moral evil and the vulnerability of poor immigrant girls in it took root. There were definite anti-immigrant tones to the discourse; however, the appeals for government action meshed with and mapped onto maternalist reformers' focus upon vulnerable, exploitable young women and moral hazards in the swelling population of America's cities.

### Juvenile Court Connections

Female reformers in Illinois and elsewhere were already involved in trying to protect young girls and young working women from moral harms. Julia Lathrop, a number of her Hull-House associates, and supporters from the Chicago Woman's Clubs had succeeded in establishing the nation's first juvenile court in 1899; focused on prevention of delinquency and child protection, the court movement rapidly spread throughout the country.<sup>78</sup> Jane Addams joined other Hull-House reformers and Chicago juvenile court activists to form the Juvenile Protective League, designed to prevent juvenile delinquency.<sup>79</sup> Volunteer and paid probation officers worked with foreign and native-born girls who came before the juvenile court in an attempt to save the young and turn them away from dangerous habits and amusements.<sup>80</sup> Addams expressed concern for the absence of healthy and safe amusements for young working girls, native or immigrant, seeking entertainment after long hours of labor. Unsupervised socializing with men and premarital sexual activity were considered the undoing of young women. Settlements and civic associations attacked the problem on a number of levels, some of which included establishing playgrounds, boys' and girls' clubs, cooperative residences for young working-class women, helping enforce compulsory school attendance and opposing child labor, improving living conditions in tenement housing, providing safe movies and supervised dances, and attempting to prosecute

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On the few occasions no more could be accommodated in this way, “we had the long streetcar ride out to the Home for the Friendless, which took all of an hour” (380–81).

75. Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 114.

76. George Kibbe Turner, “The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities,” *McClure's Magazine* 28 (April 1907): 572–92. In 1909, Turner published another series about white slavery in *McClure's*, playing upon the popular image of the Jewish man luring naïve girls into a life of coerced prostitution. In that series, he focused on New York politics, connecting the evil of white slavery to both Tammany Hall and to organizations of Jewish enslavers. See Turner, “The Daughters of the Poor,” *McClure's* 34 (November 1909): 45–61.

77. Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893–1993*, with foreword by Joan Bronk (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 136. For this, she cites Clifford Roe, *The Great War on White Slavery* (1911; reprint New York: Garland, 1979), 98; and Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight against White Slavery, 1870–1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), 219. See “White Slave War Well Supported,” *Chicago Tribune* (September 29, 1909), 10, accessed at [http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/ChiTribune/CT\\_1909\\_09\\_29.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/ChiTribune/CT_1909_09_29.html); “To Curb White Slavery: Taft Consulted on Plan to Reach Traffic through Interstate Commerce Law,” *New York Times* (November 25, 1909), 7, accessed at [http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/NYT/NYT\\_1909\\_11\\_25.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/NYT/NYT_1909_11_25.html); Edward F. Roberts, “Clifford G. Roe, Active Public Prosecutor, Pushes Fight on the White Slave Traffic,” *Chicago Tribune* (September 27, 1908), D3, accessed at [http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/ChiTribune/CT\\_1908\\_09\\_27.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/ChiTribune/CT_1908_09_27.html). Roe wrote extensively about the white slave trade and pressed for legislation.

78. Nackenoff and Sullivan, “The House that Julia (and Friends) Built.”

79. Merging with the Juvenile Court Committee, by 1909, this had become the Juvenile Protective Association.

80. Nackenoff and Sullivan, “The House that Julia (and Friends) Built.”



bar and pool hall owners for contributing to the delinquency of minors.<sup>81</sup>

Female reformers stressed that the protection and well-being of the young had been women's domain in the home and remained part of women's work in the new and increasingly interdependent urban environment.<sup>82</sup> Women were helping identify and deal with these problems through organized activity, but they insisted that these were, in fact, public problems. Addams, a prolific writer, and other Hull-House associates, wove stories for their contemporaries about new public responsibilities, the role of organized women in beginning to address these important problems, and the necessity for new governmental initiatives.

### The National Council of Jewish Women

Working to assist immigrant women arriving without male family protectors at Ellis Island, or traveling to inland cities after arrival, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) project predated, influenced, and contributed importantly to the work and practices of the IPL.<sup>83</sup> A number of female Jewish social reformers, who mobilized to form the NCJW at the time of the Columbia Exposition in 1893, were middle-class German Jews with concerns that Russian Jewish migration had to be handled in such a way that these new and different working-class Jews were quickly assimilated.<sup>84</sup> The New York branch of the NCJW's immigration committee reacted early to white slavery concerns; during the sensationalist period when some white slavery crusaders were turning the spotlight upon Russian Jews, the organization worked to combat any practices that could fuel anti-Semitism. The Jewish women's organization targeted women traveling alone who were unfamiliar with American customs and the English language, who were in need of work, and who might be befriended by the wrong sorts who lured them into prostitution. By the turn of the century or shortly thereafter, Council Sections in other port cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and San Francisco were actively engaged in protecting

81. Jane Addams pursues these themes in a number of her books of the period, including *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), and *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (New York, Macmillan, 1912).

82. See, for example, Jane Addams, "Why Women Should Vote"; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Home, Its Work and Influence* [1903] (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 330.

83. See Suronda Gonzalez, "Immigrants in Our Midst: Grace Abbott, the Immigrants' Protective League of Chicago, and the New American Citizenship, 1908–1924" (PhD diss., Graduate School of Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2005; UMI Dissertation Services), 13 and ch. 1 generally.

84. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 133–34; Gonzalez, "Immigrants in Our Midst," 24–33; Harry Barnard, *The Forging of an American Jew: The Life and Times of Judge Julian W. Mack*. (New York: Herzl Press, 1974), 45–51.

immigrant women.<sup>85</sup> By 1902, the Philadelphia Section contributed money to the Philadelphia Travelers' Aid Society for "maintaining a matron at principal railroad stations."<sup>86</sup>

The NCJW modeled many of its services for young Jewish immigrants and girls on the work of settlement houses, and the mobilization of sections in a number of port cities made it an excellent ally for some of the IPL's work. Women's immigrant protection groups drew upon the successful innovations and practices of one another. The NCJW focused on women and mothers and emphasized trained volunteer social workers, friendly visitors, and preservation of ethnic customs and identity.<sup>87</sup> The practice of using trained and supervised friendly visitors had been pioneered by the Charity Organization Societies that emerged beginning in the late 1870s; the practice was adopted by Hull-House in 1896.<sup>88</sup> Friendly visitors, as originally envisioned, went about "seeing and knowing people in their homes and trying, by means of personal influence and practical suggestion, to improve their condition."<sup>89</sup> The Ellis Island program developed by the NCJW was a model for the IPL and helped form the backbone of its information network for unaccompanied girls traveling to Chicago.

85. Gonzalez, "Immigrants in Our Midst," 27; according to <http://www.sfgenealogy.com/sf/women/wczf.htm>, the Council of Jewish Women organized a San Francisco Section in 1900, getting involved in immigrant aid and cooperating with other societies doing similar work. They sought to carry on port work when the Immigration Station opened at Angel Island as the National Council was doing at Ellis Island. Angel Island did not open until 1910.

86. Gonzalez, "Immigrants in Our Midst," 27, quoting National Council of Jewish Women, *Proceedings of the 3rd Triennial Convention*, Baltimore, 1902, 98.

87. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 135–42.

88. See Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness, *Supervision in Social Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 2; Mrs. Tenney, "Aids to Friendly Visitors," *The Charities Review* 5 (1895): 202–10; Bruce S. Jansson, *The Reluctant Welfare State: Engaging History to Advance Social Work* (Cengage Learning, 2011), 184; and <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/229.html>.

Friendly visitors deployed by the Charity Organization Society movement "were taught to engage in a careful diagnostic and supervising process," and they "did detailed research on the motivations, history, and living arrangements of families as they decided whether and how to provide instruction to their wards" (Jansson, 184). On the use of friendly visitors in some Chicago settlements, see Mary E. McDowell, "Friendly Visiting," *Social Welfare Forum: Official Proceedings [of the] Annual Forum*, Vol. 23, 1896: 253–56; on the adoption of friendly visitors by Hull-House in 1896, see Erik Schneiderhan, "Jane Addams and the Rise and Fall of Pragmatist Social Provision at Hull-House, 1871–1896," accessed at [http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/2/4/2/3/0/pages242300/p242300-17.php](http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/4/2/3/0/pages242300/p242300-17.php).

89. Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity & Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849–1929* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), quoting Marian C. Putnam, "Friendly Visiting," National Conference of Charities and Correction, Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Session (Boston, 1887), 149.



The NCJW's New York program and infrastructure also attracted the attention of the federal government. In what seems a clear example of government borrowing capacity from the "private" sector, the federal government turned to the NCJW for assistance. NCJW had developed a set of practices and an infrastructure that could be adapted to aid governmental purposes. "By 1903, NCJW had so clearly established itself as the undisputed leader in this unique work that the U.S. government sought its help in preventing immigrant girls from falling into the hands of white slavers."<sup>90</sup> The NCJW responded by establishing a Department of Immigrant Aid, later renamed Service to the Foreign Born, and by 1905, they had created a permanent aid station at Ellis Island to meet Jewish women.<sup>91</sup> Staffed by both paid agents and volunteers, the Department of Immigrant Aid hired employees who could speak Yiddish and brought in volunteers who spoke additional languages. They also obtained names from detention lists and ship manifests and interviewed every young Jewish female entrant who was between twelve and thirty. Translators acted as advocates for immigrants and could often smooth difficulties with customs officials, warding off detention.<sup>92</sup> NCJW printed a leaflet that was distributed abroad—in Russia and in European ports of origin—telling young women how to seek help from NCJW, warning them about strangers offering well-paid work or marriage, explaining that U.S. law barred employment of anyone under fourteen, that there was compulsory school attendance, and that violation of laws could result in deportation.<sup>93</sup> NCJW maintained representatives in about 250 cities and European ports of origin to assist single girls who were entering the United States.<sup>94</sup>

By 1907, the personal interview conducted by NCJW employees or volunteers had become an important data-gathering mechanism that would help link immigrant protection groups in a network of supervision of young females. Through the interview, NCJW Ellis Island agents developed lists with the intended destinations of the young women admitted. Networking with either a NCJW section or, where that was absent, a correspondent in another city, Council agents would try to locate family members the immigrants named. Making sure names were authentic, agents "would instruct the client on how to travel to her destination, frequently escorting her to the door of the train and occasionally paying her fare."<sup>95</sup> At the final destination, volunteers were alerted by cable to expect the immigrant and would meet the train, if

possible accompanied by the named relatives. The volunteer would accompany the immigrant to her new home, asking a series of questions to be assured of the girl's safety, making sure the girl was living with older persons who could exercise supervision. The volunteer—a friendly visitor—would then "adopt" the family, returning to visit on a regular basis, helping the family with employment, health care, educational opportunities, and perhaps entertainment options. The friendly visitor reported back to the Section at port of entry, indicating that the young woman had arrived safely and was appropriately settled. There was attempted supervision not only from dock to door but for several years or until help was no longer needed.<sup>96</sup> This networking of women that provided information about those expected to arrive at an inland destination would also be vital to, and would be further augmented by, the IPL.

### The Women's Trade Union League

The Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), sometimes credited with having been first in the field of outreach to immigrant women, could be considered the mother of the IPL, but it, too, was embedded in networks that shaped its work. According to one historian, the IPL:

grew directly out of a committee of the Women's Trade Union League that had become interested in young immigrant women who had come alone to the United States. The committee found quickly that serious problems existed not only among immigrant women and girls but among men as well, and that the types and extent of exploitation were beyond its ability to handle, thus prompting the creation of a new organization.<sup>97</sup>

Although the Chicago WTUL Immigration Committee was the immediate catalyst for the formation of the IPL, the network connections are richer than this. The Chicago WTUL acknowledged its own debt to the NCJW: "The Immigration Committee was formed last July [1907] by the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago in answer to the request of the Women's Municipal League of New York City and the Council of Jewish Women, to co-operate with them in meeting the needs of immigrant women and girls who come to America via Ellis Island."<sup>98</sup>

96. *Ibid.*, 141–42.

97. The IPL's "Eleven Years of Community Service," 2, traced its history to the Committee of the WTUL that had been organized to visit newly arrived immigrant women and girls. IPL Reports, Supplement II, Box 4, Folder 60a, UIC. The quote is from Lela B. Costin, *Two Sisters for Social Justice: A Biography of Grace and Edith Abbott* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983; first paperback ed. 2003), 69.

98. Report of the Immigration Committee of the WTUL of Chicago from July 15, 1907, to April 1, 1908, 4. The Immigration

90. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 138.

91. *Ibid.*; Priscilla Fishman, ed., *The Jews of the United States* (New York: Quadrangle and New York Times Book Co., 1973), 130.

92. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 140.

93. *Ibid.*, 138–39.

94. Fishman, *Jews of the United States*, 130.

95. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 140.

The WTUL had been founded in Boston in 1903 by working women and middle-class women reformers who had met in the settlement movement; the organization was founded when it became clear the American Federation of Labor was not interested in including women, and by 1904, there were additional branches in New York and Chicago.<sup>99</sup> WTUL membership included both upper-middle-class female reformers and working girls, and its activities were largely financed by its wealthier members. A number of the working women who joined were in the clothing and needle trades and were recent immigrants, including a number of Russian Jewish girls who rose to positions of leadership. Some ideas and activities spread when leaders moved between cities. Margaret Dreier, a wealthy young woman from Brooklyn who joined the work of the WTUL in 1904, took her labor activism with her to Chicago when she married Raymond Robins, then a Chicago social worker and supporter of organized labor.<sup>100</sup> In New York, Dreier began by conducting research on the exploitation of working girls by employment agencies and by those who misrepresented work; she saw links between the exploitation of women's labor and the exploitation of women's sexuality.<sup>101</sup> "Dreier formed committees to meet women traveling from rural areas to the city for work, to create nonprofit employment agencies to aid them in job searches, and to assist them in finding decent housing."<sup>102</sup> By 1907, Dreier had moved to Chicago and was elected president of the Women's National Trade Union League.

The Chicago WTUL joined with kindred organizations for protection of immigrants and as "research organizations to study and improve local conditions for women" in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The four cities began "co-operating under the Inter-Municipal Research Committee of which Miss Frances A. Kellor is secretary."<sup>103</sup> Kellor and Margaret Dreier Robins had worked and investigated together with the Women's Municipal League of New York City, and worked together from 1904 on the new interstate Municipal Committee.<sup>104</sup> What seems to have begun as a networking among women's

organizations in New York—the NCJW Immigration Committee, the Women's Municipal League of New York City,<sup>105</sup> and the New York WTUL—reached out and appealed to create a network of women's organizations concerned both with immigration protection and immigration research that was chiefly focused on problems faced by women and girls. The Chicago-based WTUL joined in. Data collection and its dissemination were part of what was networked.

By 1907, the WTUL of Illinois, meeting at Hull-House, was making public appeals for funds to support its immigrant committee.<sup>106</sup> Some of the major expenses were to pay "a share in the salary of the special agent at Ellis Island and the salaries of the director and two investigators in Chicago."<sup>107</sup> It seems probable that they were sharing expenses with the NCJW and with at least the New York branch of the WTUL. The appeal explained:

The work involves direct communication with Ellis Island, the committee paying a share of the salary of a special agent at that receiving station, from whom names and addresses are secured of immigrant girls whose destination is Chicago. In Chicago a secretary receives the names and distributes them among the investigators who find out the special needs, enlisting the social settlements in the friendly visiting, finding employment, etc."<sup>108</sup>

The Chicago group stated that they were meeting the immigrant trains at the stations and were trying to appoint matrons at these stations. The committee wanted to make close connection with the new

105. In Boston, the Women's Municipal League, founded 1908, was once seen as synonymous with "the highest ideals in municipal housekeeping," and the League seems to have been formed of middle-class reformers. See Dorothy Worrell, *The Woman's Municipal League of Boston: A History of Thirty-Five Years of Civic Endeavor* (Boston: Women's Municipal League of Committees Inc., 1943), 1, accessed at <http://asp6new.alexanderstreet.com.proxy.swarthmore.edu/was2/was2.object.details.aspx?dorpId=S10010044>. Frances Kellor, armed with a law degree from Cornell, studied at the University of Chicago's criminology program ca. 1900–1902, writing on experimental sociology and surely coming to know the Chicago reformers and settlement workers. When she moved to New York in 1902, living at the College Settlement Association's Lower East Side settlement organized by Columbia University, she began her investigations into employment agencies by going undercover as workers and employers, publishing *Out of Work* in 1904. See John Press, "Frances Kellor, Americanization, and the Quest for Participatory Democracy," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2009, UMI Number 3390447, ProQuest, 2010), 31–40.

106. "Immigrant Girls Who Go West," *Charities and the Commons* XIX (December 28, 1907): 1293–94. The WTUL held meetings at Hull-House from 1904–1908, and officers of the immigration committee were connected to the Chicago Commons and to the Neighborhood House. See <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1373.html>.

107. "Immigrant Girls Who Go West," 1294.

108. *Ibid.*

Committee was sometimes referred to as a Department in the records.

99. "Introduction: Papers of the Women's Trade Union League and Its Principal Leaders," accessed at <http://microformguides.gale.com/Data/Introductions/30430FM.htm>.

100. Mary E. Dreier, *Margaret Dreier Robins* (New York: Island Press Cooperative, Inc., 1950), 18–34.

101. *Ibid.*, 18–20; Gonzalez, "Immigrants in Our Midst," 27–29, citing Elizabeth Anne Payne, *Reform, Labor, and Feminism: Margaret Dreier Robins and the Women's Trade Union League* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 26–27.

102. Gonzalez, "Immigrants in Our Midst," 28–29.

103. Report of the Immigration Committee of the WTUL of Chicago, both quotes at 4.

104. Dreier, *Margaret Dreier Robins*, 18–20.

residents; “[t]he importance of this work is readily apparent to all who appreciate the emergencies which arise when women and children travel,”<sup>109</sup> and most of the girls ranged from fifteen to twenty-seven years of age. During ten weeks in the summer of 1907, they had been alerted to 496 cases, had located 280 of these, and were investigating those they could not readily find.<sup>110</sup> The committee also wanted to secure work for the women met at the stations and claimed they were cooperating with the State Free Employment Bureau, several nationality-based associations, a number of unions (clothing unions were especially well represented), and the Relief and Aid Society and the Bureau of Charities.<sup>111</sup>

The WTUL was involved chiefly out of concern that skilled immigrant workers were becoming caught up in sweatshops and were accepting low wage work. “Owing to their ignorance of our language, laws, and customs they are caught in the net-work of the sweat-shops, in every way disastrous alike to the family and the community.”<sup>112</sup> This counteracted the efforts of women who were trying to unionize and improve wages; for WTUL members, unionization was vital to improving the living and working conditions of working girls.<sup>113</sup> Sophonisba Breckinridge, active in the WTUL, perceived that these immigrant girls “were willing to work for very low wages, and it was difficult to bring these non-English-speaking girls into the unions.”<sup>114</sup> The WTUL Immigration Committee sought “to find work for the young immigrant woman under good conditions, and to secure for her the necessary protection.”<sup>115</sup> The WTUL also sought to protect housekeepers and house workers (positions often taken by Scandinavian girls), to “study the social and economic aspects of the Immigration problem, with special reference to women,” and to bring new arrivals “into sympathetic understanding and relationship with American ideals and standards.”<sup>116</sup> They wished to steer women toward less congested and better organized trades, and to offer protection to the vulnerable.<sup>117</sup>

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.* By 1908, it is clear to Grace Abbott that the State Free Employment Bureau was not very helpful to immigrants, who were being steered to private employment agencies that often exploited them. The state bureau did not provide foreign language assistance or financial assistance to travel to jobs.

112. Report of the Immigration Committee of the WTUL of Chicago, 10.

113. Henry B. Leonard, “The Immigrants’ Protective League of Chicago 1908–1921,” *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 66 (1973): 271–84, quote at 272; accessed at <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/ISHS/ishs-1973autumn/ishs-1973autumn-271.pdf>.

114. Edith Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part I,” 384.

115. Report of the Immigration Committee of the WTUL of Chicago, 3.

116. *Ibid.*

117. Leonard, “Immigrants’ Protective League”; see also “Eleven Years of Community Service.”

In keeping with practices of other cities having WTUL organizations, they established a Department of Friendly Visiting to help immigrant women “find fair employment and good living conditions.”<sup>118</sup> Friendly visitors to homes provided information about reliable employment offices and sought to impress upon new arrivals the importance of seeking unionized work.<sup>119</sup> According to the WTUL, the home visitors sought:

to protect the girl from exploitation, to keep in touch with her, to prevent her working in the sweat-shops and under unsanitary conditions, and to be of assistance to her in case of need. The names of the immigrant women and girls with whom it is thought advisable to keep in touch beyond a single visit, are forwarded to volunteer workers and friendly visitors from Settlements.<sup>120</sup>

The WTUL Immigration Committee began collecting data on nationalities, employment, and living conditions of the girls whose names had been sent from Ellis Island.<sup>121</sup> The committee quickly realized that their work of combatting exploitation required greater organization and resources.<sup>122</sup> As soon as the first WTUL Immigration Committee report was issued, a meeting was held to organize the League for the Protection of Immigrants.<sup>123</sup>

The middle-class and often college-educated female leaders in the WTUL, like their successors in the IPL, saw these issues as integrally interlinked, were working with narratives and stories in which women were centrally concerned with the problems faced by immigrant girls, and in which boundaries between issues of sexual and economic exploitation, or between housing arrangements and moral risk, were porous. This work was part of the maternalist reformers’ project of protecting the vulnerable. By the time of the founding of the IPL, concerns over the dangers of prostitution and sexual exploitation linked reformers to the rising and sensationalist discourse of white slavery. The IPL identified factors that contributed to the moral endangerment of young women en route to their final destinations,

118. Report of the Immigration Committee of the WTUL of Chicago, 3 for quote, 13.

119. *Ibid.*, 10–11, 13.

120. *Ibid.*, 13.

121. *Ibid.*, table following report (no page); Sabina Marshall, Margaret Dreier Robins, and Harriet M. Van Der Vaart noted (Report, 14) the work of the Research Department of the Women’s Municipal League of New York City on the soon-to-be-published report on living and economic conditions of five thousand immigrant women with whom they had been in contact, adding: “This investigation indicates the necessity of establishing a more definite system of protection by the nation and states.”

122. “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 2.

123. That meeting took place on April 9, 1908, with Jane Addams in attendance.



and many more once they arrived, including dire economic circumstances and crowded, mixed-gender tenements. These dangers mapped onto maternalist ideas for expanding the mission of the state. In Chicago, it extended to juvenile court probation work, where many of those who came before the court were immigrants or the children of immigrants. It extended to combatting child labor and keeping children in school. To keep poor children with their mothers, efforts extended to the creation of the nation's first mothers' pensions, which were administered by the juvenile court.<sup>124</sup> These same reformers combatted low wages, as well as long hours of work for women, unsafe working and living conditions, and other problems that degraded rather than elevated life. Because the issues were interlinked in the minds of these reformers, women who built skills and reforms in one arena of endeavor would readily apply their skills and perspectives into others.<sup>125</sup>

### Protective Labor Legislation and the National Consumers' League

In Chicago, efforts to protect vulnerable immigrant girls and women dovetailed with other pieces of the progressive era reform agenda, shaped in such large part by settlement women, club women, and their allies. It intersected with the maternalist drive for protective labor legislation. The Illinois Women's Alliance had successfully pressed the Illinois legislature to pass an eight-hour day law for women in factories and workshops in 1893, only to have it struck down by the state Supreme Court in 1895.<sup>126</sup> After the

124. Merritt W. Pinckney, "Public Pensions to Widows; Experiences and Observations Which Lead Me to Favor Such a Law," in Edna D. Bullock, *Selected Articles on Mothers' Pensions* (White Plains and New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1915), 139. Reprinted from *Child* 1 #5 (July 1912): 43–50. Mark H. Leff, "Consensus for Reform: The Mothers'-Pension Movement in the Progressive Era," *Social Service Review* 47 #3 (September 1973): 397–417.

125. The connection between these various activities is clearly demonstrated by Sabina Marshall, director of the WTUL's immigration committee and resident of the Chicago Commons settlement. Marshall, who was graduated from Smith College in 1902, moved to Tewksbury, Massachusetts where, for a number of years, she was in charge of unmarried mothers in the state infirmary. A participant in the Cleveland Conference on Illegitimacy in 1915, Marshall was then appointed probation officer to the Municipal Court in Cleveland [*Survey* 34 (July 31, 1915), 405]. She was a student in the school of civics and philanthropy in Chicago 1905–1906, director and secretary of the league for protection of immigrant girls 1907–1908, a worker at Denison House (Boston) following that and a resident at the South Chicago Settlement until 1910 (Smith College Alumni Association 1911, Catalog of Officers, Graduates, and Non-Graduates of Smith College), 128; accessed at <http://books.google.com/books?id=NVVAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA128&dq=%22chicago+commons%22+sabina+marshall&hl=en&sa=X&ei=LNOST4uPHn06QGz822BA&sqi=2&ved=0CEcQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=%22chicago%20commons%22%20sabina%20marshall&f=false>.

126. *Ritchie v. People* 155 IL 98 (1895). See S. P. Breckinridge, "The Illinois Ten-Hour Law," *Journal of Political Economy* 18 (June 1910): 465–70, for the history of the Illinois legislation and court response. See also William E. Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the*

U.S. Supreme Court upheld Oregon's ten-hour day for working women in 1908, Illinois reformers renewed their efforts and got what was popularly referred to as the "Woman's Ten-Hour Law" passed in 1909; when it was predictably challenged, the *Muller* team of Brandeis and Goldmark came to Illinois to defend the new law, under the auspices of the National Consumers' League. Under the direction of Florence Kelley, the National Consumers' League maintained close connections with its local affiliates as it encouraged, and pressed other states to follow, the Oregon lead.<sup>127</sup> By 1910, the Illinois Supreme Court, citing *Muller* and broad understandings of state police power (being articulated by prominent University of Chicago law professor and friend of the reformers, Ernst Freund) upheld the new law.<sup>128</sup> This illustrates the capacity of large-scale, mass-membership, women's organizations to disseminate agendas and influence legislation, as Skocpol has maintained. Here, the National Consumers League also deployed its forces to win court victories.

### THE IPL'S LEADERSHIP NETWORKS AND EXPANDING VISIONS

At its foundation, the IPL was rich with experienced, well-educated leaders, some of whom had already worked together and who had tasted success as reformers. There were links to philanthropists and many ties to the University of Chicago, including to activist legal scholars. This pedigree was important to the resources, tools, and tactics the reformers brought to bear in devising plans to address the problems faced by immigrants—problems defined as public problems requiring public institutions and funds.

Sophonisba Breckinridge, whose association with the Chicago WTUL dates from her move to Hull-

*American Labor Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 43–45; Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House in the 1890s: A Community of Women Reformers," *Signs* 10 (Summer 1985): 658–77, esp. 665–66; and Meredith Tax, *The Rising of the Women* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1980), ch. 4. According to Tax (68, 89), the Illinois Woman's Alliance (1888–1894) "brought together most of Chicago's women's organizations under the leadership of working-class and socialist women" and included "church groups, professional women's organizations, the labor movement, and the suffragists."

127. Sklar, "Historical Foundations of Women's Power," 74–75.

128. *Muller v. Oregon* 208 U.S. 412 (1908); *Ritchie v. Wayman* (Ritchie II) 244 ILL 509; 91 N.E. 695 (1910); Breckinridge, "The Illinois Ten-Hour Law," 466, 468, 470 mentioning Freund. The National Consumers' League, of which Florence Kelley of Hull-House was serving as director in 1908, brought the *Muller* case and then defended the Illinois ten-hour law. See Clement E. Vose, "The National Consumers' League and the Brandeis Brief," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 1 #3/4 (1957): 267–90. The National Consumers' League, though led by strong national leaders, accorded the views of state and local affiliates great weight, sparking grass-roots initiatives (Sklar, "Historical Foundations of Women's Power," 68).



House in 1907, was a leading force in establishing the IPL. Although Addams tried to interest her in leading the organization, Breckinridge, who provided early guidance, did not want to give up her position at the University of Chicago and persuaded Grace Abbott to head the organization; Breckinridge agreed to serve as secretary.<sup>129</sup> Addams, who had participated in founding the WTUL, was present at the meeting that created the League for the Protection of Immigrants and served for many years as an officer and trustee of the IPL.<sup>130</sup> Julian W. Mack, with a long association with Addams and who, as a circuit court judge, had been recently serving as juvenile court judge, was the first president of the IPL. Sears chairman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, found supporting a number of progressive causes championed by Julian Mack and his friends at Hull-House, was a major funder and sometime member of the Board of Trustees.<sup>131</sup>

Board members included University of Chicago law professor Ernst Freund, an authority on the police power who was a law school colleague of Mack's, and social theorist, pragmatist, and philosopher George H. Mead, both of whom contributed to the formulation of policies endorsed by the IPL.<sup>132</sup> Freund worked with the IPL for a quarter century; he advised Abbott not only on national and state immigration policy, but also on child labor issues when Abbott moved to the Children's Bureau.<sup>133</sup> Samuel N. Harper, son of the president of the University of Chicago, frequently served as a trustee, and the list of Board members included a cast of characters that has grown quite familiar to those studying social and political reform in Chicago: Louise de Koven Bowen, Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, Margaret Dreier Robbins, Mary McDowell, Hannah

Greenbaum Solomon, and Emil G. Hirsch. Led by Grace Abbott, women were prominent in leadership positions.<sup>134</sup> Leaders included Jews and Catholics, businessmen in large-scale enterprises, social workers, lawyers, and wives of members of a profession; the vast majority were native-born. Almost two-thirds were college graduates and over a third had doctorates.<sup>135</sup> They were not merely supplicants but were positioned to exercise influence.

A number of the leaders in the IPL had worked together, some since the early years of Hull-House, to effect change. Together, they had founded other charitable organizations; a number participated in the Chicago Women's Clubs, some were activists in the Reform Sinai Temple, and Greenbaum had helped launch the National Council of Jewish Women; they had achieved a major victory with the Illinois juvenile court law in 1899 and had helped spread its gospel throughout the country. They were in the mainstream of emerging, university-sanctioned, legal and social scientific inquiry and published in professional journals; some of them taught at least part-time at the University of Chicago, and other faculty members at the University of Chicago legitimated and participated in their work.<sup>136</sup> A number participated in newly professionalizing associations, and League leaders "had every reason to feel self-confident since they were riding the crest of those changes."<sup>137</sup> In the founding year, when the organization was known as the League for the Protection of Immigrants, financial contributors included the Council of Jewish Women, the Chicago Woman's Club, the Irving Park Woman's Club, the Auxiliary to the Chicago Hebrew Institute, the Society for Ethical Culture, and various immigrant societies and unions.<sup>138</sup> The IPL leadership had a strong sense of efficacy and many connections to elected and appointed public officials to build upon.

The IPL did a great deal of casework with individuals, worked to locate lost immigrant females, and deployed friendly visitors into homes. In doing so, they worked with many other organizations. The NCJW contributed half the salary of an IPL friendly visitor in Chicago who went among the Jewish girls; the Polish National Alliance and its Women's

129. Costin, *Two Sisters for Social Justice*, 69. Grace had been pursuing graduate work at the University of Chicago in both law and political science. Sister Edith had received her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Chicago in 1905 and became assistant director of the School of Civics and Philanthropy, where Graham Taylor, of the Chicago Commons Settlement, was director and Breckinridge was head of research. See <http://www.ssa.uchicago.edu/edith-abbott>. On Breckinridge's association with the WTUL, see <http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll/services/rjd/findin/gaids/SBreckinridgef.html>. Also see Rivka Shpak Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890–1919* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 32.

130. Leonard, "Immigrants' Protective League," 273.

131. Rosenwald was first elected to serve for 1909–1911, then again for 1912–1914 and 1915–1917, and he was consistently among the top three donors, many years contributing \$1,000 or more per year through at least 1917; sometimes, his contributions represented nearly 10% of all contributions received for the year. League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report 1909–1910, 2; IPL Annual Reports 1909–1917. Internet Archive: <http://archive.org/details/annualreportofim1919091917immi>. See also IPL Records, Series I, Box 5, Folder 53a, UIC.

132. On Freund and Mead's membership on the executive board, see Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives*, 64.

133. Costin, *Two Sisters for Social Justice*, 70.

134. Social worker Marion Schibsky directed the staff and remained with the organization through the early 1920s when funds were scarce. On Schibsky, see Buroker, "From Voluntary Association to Welfare State," 653.

135. Statistics from Buroker, "From Voluntary Association to Welfare State," 648–49 and tables III and IV studying thirty-three League leaders 1908–1917 for whom background information could be found.

136. For some of these connections, see Nackenoff and Sullivan, "The House that Julia (and Friends) Built."

137. Quote from Buroker, "From Voluntary Association to Welfare State," 651.

138. League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report, 1909–1910, 43. Separate contributions were made by the Chicago Woman's Club's Reform Department and its Philanthropy Department.

Auxiliary printed cards and leaflets in Polish and looked after a number of families in need of attention; and the IPL acknowledged additional help from organizations of Bohemians, Germans, Norwegians, Swedes, Austro-Hungarians, and other Jewish organizations.<sup>139</sup> Editors of Yiddish, Bohemian, Croatian, Lithuanian, and Polish newspapers in Chicago helped locate relatives and friends of those the League found in police or railway stations.<sup>140</sup> The 1910–1911 report indicated the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations were getting involved or preparing to get involved in the railway station work.<sup>141</sup> The League continued networking and exchanging services with the New York NCJW and the Inter-Municipal Research League; they cooperated with several New York organizations serving specific ethnic groups, and they also worked with groups in Baltimore (including the NCJW).<sup>142</sup> The IPL inherited and expanded the tracking and train station work and sought to make sure that any young female immigrant on the list of those expected was released only to relatives or friends the IPL had verified as legitimate and even so, that the intended place of residence was not morally dubious.<sup>143</sup>

The purpose of the organization, however, was always envisioned to be more than casework. To begin at the train station meant to attack, on multiple fronts, the ploys used on the newly arrived. Cabbies and baggage handlers, often drawing on foreign phrases, hustled newcomers from railroad stations, charging excessive transportation fares and sometimes directing girls to mixed-gender boarding houses; city police were often complicit in these schemes to steer new arrivals to unscrupulous cabbies. Then private employment agencies often charged immigrants for job placements and might well send them to seasonal labor camps far from the city, with no means of return when jobs ended. Unregulated banks and bankers often took money immigrants intended to send home, only to abscond with it. A number of immigrant girls arrived as “pioneers” in advance of families, having incurred substantial financial debt for their passage, further endangering them.<sup>144</sup> The IPL helped locate and bring other family members at the

139. Report of the Director (Grace Abbott), League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report, 1909–1910, 31.

140. Ibid.

141. Report of Director, Immigrants Protective League, Annual Report, 1910–1911, 24. The YMCA was trying to make connections with young men arriving at railway stations with YMCA cards from European or American ports, and the YWCA was reportedly soon to do similar work.

142. Report of Director, League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report, 1909–1910, 31–32.

143. For example, a male relative should not be younger than the young woman, and the relatives should be deemed capable of supervising the new arrival.

144. Report of the Director (Grace Abbott), Immigrants’ Protective League Annual Report 1910–1911, 14–15. The point was made about Russian Jewish girls.

request of local immigrants. To aid in immigrant adjustment to life in America, they linked the immigrants they aided to night schools for learning English—schools often set up by the settlements.<sup>145</sup> Addressing some of these problems might require decentralized casework, but addressing others could require attempting to work with, and prod, local police; it might require campaigns for municipal reform; and it often required seeking new legislation.

Taking broad aim at a number of problems facing male and female immigrants arriving in Chicago, the IPL looked to leverage a mix of more local, state, and national governmental investments in addressing problems and even preventing them. While dedicating their own efforts on behalf of vulnerable immigrants, they believed that some of the work was properly government work and developed political connections to try to lodge responsibility there. The organization sought and lobbied for a Federal Protection Center for immigrants in Chicago and/or a federal immigration station in the city. They lobbied for public health programs for immigrants and for nurses who could serve immigrants in their own tongue.<sup>146</sup> Having researched the use of and training of midwives, the IPL advocated for better training and for enforcement of existing testing and performance standards, which would, they claimed, greatly improve the health of mothers and children in immigrant communities. They urged an effective public education program for adults, especially English language classes offered both day and evening, and special meetings for women who were less likely to leave the home to attend school.<sup>147</sup> They continued to seek better

145. See IPL Records, Box 3 Folder 37, UIC about “English Classes for Immigrants in Chicago,” (Master’s dissertation, Emil L. Kerchner, University of Chicago, SSA, 1926). The author looked at three kinds of English classes for adults—public, private nonindustrial, and private industrial. In the middle group “are the classes maintained in the settlements and conducted either by settlement workers or by teachers supplied by the Board of Education.” His conclusion, surveying all the Chicago settlements, was that the adult English language courses offered by the settlements were not done particularly seriously or effectively.

146. On the effort to stem the high incidence of disease in immigrant neighborhoods and advocacy of public funding for midwives, and health education programs serving immigrants, see Grace Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community* (New York: The Century Company, 1917), 145–65; and Grace Abbott, “The Midwife in Chicago,” *American Journal of Sociology* 20 (March 1915): 684–99, pointing to the Joint Committee of the Chicago Medical Society and Hull-House study of 1908 and reporting on IPL follow-up investigation beginning in 1913. “Examination and licensing are considered the first steps in a proper control of midwifery,” (“Midwife in Chicago,” 688), but Abbott and the IPL consider training, supervision, and enforcement in Illinois entirely inadequate. Immigrant women wanted to be attended to by females, and infant care nurses attached to neighborhood dispensaries have been successfully displacing midwives only in some Russian Jewish neighborhoods (“Midwife in Chicago,” 694).

147. They named and considered a number of other organizations as their collaborators in securing such classes.

implementation, inspection, and oversight of private labor agents following the passage in 1909 of legislation for which they had pressed requiring the licensing of private employment agencies in Illinois.<sup>148</sup> The best remedy for this problem was, in the view of the IPL, more numerous and more efficient free employment bureaus that could serve immigrants with foreign language interpreters, and Illinois at least ostensibly committed to expanding foreign language assistance at state employment bureaus. The IPL thought the federal government should create a national labor market, serve as a national labor exchange, and control supply and demand of seasonal gang labor.<sup>149</sup>

The IPL was also concerned with treatment of immigrants by police (because of corruption, violence against workers, or prejudice) and in the courts, and the prospect that immigrants would have a poor impression of our system of administration of justice.<sup>150</sup> There often was no interpreter, and the immigrant often did not understand the charges; there was no public defender. Perhaps illustrating a case where an organization provided services as a stopgap until the public provision of legal assistance was won, the IPL offered legal services to its own foreign-born clients.<sup>151</sup> Legal services extended to intervention in deportation actions to protect the right of asylum or to prevent wrongful actions. This last became increasingly important during the post-World War I raids on supposed criminals and radicals.<sup>152</sup> Because immigration law also made it possible to deport non-citizen girls who “went wrong,” Grace Abbott, concerned especially for Russian Jewish girls facing deportation to an inhospitable nation, also advocated for the hiring of trained women immigration inspectors to investigate girls charged with immorality.<sup>153</sup> Working with the Cook

County Bureau of Public Welfare and other social agencies, the IPL had some success in counteracting national efforts to deport immigrants, including those who were deemed to have become public charges.<sup>154</sup> In the face of growing anti-immigration sentiment, the IPL wanted the government—especially the federal government—to combat prejudice against immigrants and supplied data to support claims that immigrants were not bringing crime, disease, and difficult problems to our shores.

### Tools and Tactics

Leaders of the IPL had the academic tools and resources to deploy methods and tools of social science to advance their causes. They deployed legal arguments and legal expertise and spent time and resources spreading their findings in scholarly publications and reports and by “going public.”

### Deploying Social Science

In keeping with patterns that were becoming especially common among maternalist reformers in Chicago, the IPL was quite successful in using methods and tools of social science to advance their causes. Volunteers assisted the small paid staff. Grace Abbott made sure that data-gathering, investigation, newspaper coverage, and publications were deployed in cause after cause. The League’s policy was to take advantage of opportunities presented “to make investigations of those problems which have special significance for any foreign group, so that practical aid may be more intelligently rendered and a more sympathetic understanding developed.”<sup>155</sup> In a somewhat later formulation, the IPL claimed it sought “to make general investigations and studies of the larger problems in group adjustment which are involved in fitting the immigrant to our local and national life.”<sup>156</sup>

These studies, investigations, and reports were designed to leverage policy reform and the timing was strategic. Reformers made sure the investigative reports were widely disseminated, and the reports included policy recommendations. Investigation and publication was often the opening salvo in a major push to draft and introduce legislation. Under Grace Abbott’s name came a number of studies as early as 1908 and were reported in the Annual Report of the League for the Protection of Immigrants for 1909–1910. First was a study of “The Chicago Employment Agency and the Immigrant Worker,” completed and published in 1908. In

148. The Revised Statutes of Illinois 1912, Chapter. 48: Act Relating to Private Employment Agencies (approved June 15, 1909); accessed at [http://books.google.com/books?id=fKJLAQAAIAAJ&dq=1909+illinois+private+employment+agency+act+history&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](http://books.google.com/books?id=fKJLAQAAIAAJ&dq=1909+illinois+private+employment+agency+act+history&source=gbs_navlinks_s).

149. See IPL Annual Reports and also Leonard, “Immigrants’ Protective League,” 279–80. Leonard points out, from IPL Annual reports, that the YMCA and B’Nai Brith cooperated with the League to establish an employment bureau that placed a few hundred applicants each year.

150. Grace Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, 105, 118–19.

151. Leonard, “Immigrants’ Protective League,” 280–81; Grace Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, ch. V particularly.

152. Immigrants’ Protective League Records, Series I, Box 2 Folders 21–25, UIC on deportation raids, especially 1919–20, 1921, 1926. See also Folder 21, bound report entitled “The Deportation Cases of 1919–1920,” A Study by Constantine M. Panunzio, M.A./Commission on the Church and Social Service/Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (NYC), 1921.

153. Edith Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part I,” 390. A number of these girls had grown up in the United States and would be returned to a country where they had no remaining relatives and where they would face possible anti-Semitic violence.

154. Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal*. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 143–44.

155. Report of Director, League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report, 1909–1910, 32.

156. “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 2.



addition to a pamphlet sourced by the IPL, this study also appeared that same year in the *American Journal of Sociology*.<sup>157</sup> In the report, Abbott documented employment experiences and abuses faced by immigrants and compared Illinois law to better employment protective provisions in a number of other state laws.<sup>158</sup> Pointing out inadequacies in the Illinois law of 1903 in protection of both male and female immigrants, the report targeted reforms involving licensing, regulation, and oversight of private employment agencies and expansion of free state employment agencies.<sup>159</sup> With evidence, public exposure, and pressure, the IPL and allies managed to secure a better Illinois law in 1909 that did not provide a complete remedy but gave immigrants' friends a basis from which to litigate employment agency abuses.<sup>160</sup>

The large-scale migrations of single Bulgarian males and of Greek males whose families did not accompany them, had begun in Chicago soon after the turn of the century, and in cooperation with the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, an IPL study appeared in the *Survey* on the "Bulgarians—A New Element in Chicago's Immigration Problem"; drawing on material supplied by Hull-House, another entitled "A Study of the Greeks in Chicago" was published in the *American Journal of Sociology*.<sup>161</sup> Writing of Greek boys, Abbott deplored the prevalence of the exploitive padrone system and concluded that: "What they [the Greek immigrants] become as a result of their American environment should be an American responsibility."<sup>162</sup> Instead of general condemnation for strangers, it would be best to recognize their capacity for good citizenship and to unite with them to "suppress the vice and exploitations from which they suffer."<sup>163</sup> In rather short order followed Abbott's report on "The Immigrant in the Chicago Courts," advocating public translators for non-English speaking immigrants called before the courts. With a

high percentage of immigrants in Chicago (and elsewhere) making use of midwives, "The Midwife in Chicago" investigated and then advocated to improve training and supervision of midwives.<sup>164</sup> Another Abbott study on "Immigration and Municipal Politics" confronted prejudices against immigrants that associated them with corruption and corrupt politics, and their often prejudicial treatment by police.

### **Deploying Legal Argument and Expertise**

It is important to recognize the high-quality and occasionally cutting edge legal argumentation that helped the IPL achieve some of its victories. From the first, the Legislative Committee of the IPL was important to its work, both suggesting draft legislation and helping lobby and testify for legislative passage. Prominent progressive legal scholar Ernst Freund of the University of Chicago sometimes chaired this committee. Cooperating with representatives of the Employment Agents' Association and with a number of state officials, Legislative Committee members drew up a bill that would supersede the 1903 act that had governed employment agencies in Illinois. The IPL president reported that: "As a result of the work done by Miss Abbott and our Legislative Committee, the laws governing Employment Agencies were amended and greatly improved at the last session of the Legislature."<sup>165</sup> "Amendments and compromises were made by the different interests before the bill was introduced, so that it became a law without encountering any opposition."<sup>166</sup> Among other things, the new 1909 law created a full-time, state-salaried chief inspector of employment agencies appointed by the governor, with that inspector having the capacity to appoint deputy inspectors, plus some provisions for regulation of fees, contracts for work outside the city provided in a language the worker could understand, and provisions for the State Board of Labor Commissioners to hear complaints against employment agents.<sup>167</sup> The legislative committee also sought "a better ordinance for the regulation of cab and expressmen,"<sup>168</sup> went to Washington on behalf of the federal Protective Bureau desired by the IPL, and worked "to secure

157. That this was the first is reported in "Eleven Years of Community Service," 2–3. Many of the pamphlet versions of these studies, which are numbered, can be found in the IPL Records, UIC. Grace Abbott, "The Chicago Employment Agency and the Immigrant Worker," *American Journal of Sociology* 14 (November 1908): 289–305.

158. Abbott, "The Chicago Employment Agency," 300–302, comparing to Pennsylvania, New York, Wisconsin, California, Maine, and Colorado.

159. *Ibid.*, 289–305.

160. Edith Abbott, "Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part I," 385. Litigation was not always successful, but the IPL helped bring and fund some of these cases. On IPL's sponsorship of the legislation, see Report of the Legislative Committee (Ernst Freund, Chairman), League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report 1909–1910, 37.

161. Report of Director, League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report, 1909–1910, 32. This study was also published in *Charities XXI* #15 (January 9, 1909).

162. Grace Abbott, "A Study of the Greeks in Chicago," *American Journal of Sociology* 15 (1909): 393.

163. *Ibid.*

164. See Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 23. "In 1910, long after childbirth had been medicalized for middle-class whites, midwives attended at least half of all births in the United States."

165. Julian Mack, Report of the President, League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report 1909–1910, 5–6.

166. Report of the Legislative Committee, League for the Protection of Immigrants, Annual Report 1909–1910, 38.

167. *Ibid.*, 37.

168. Report of the Secretary (Sophonisba P. Breckinridge), Immigrants Protective League (Formerly League for the Protection of Immigrants), Annual Report 1910–1911, 8.



control of private banks and better organization of the Free Employment Agencies.”<sup>169</sup>

### Going Public

Meanwhile, the Committee on Publicity, chaired by Professor George H. Mead of the University of Chicago, helped by “securing the use of the columns of the daily papers” to call attention to the agenda and work of the IPL. Grace Abbott was active in wanting to reach out to publicize the cause, and the Committee on Publicity helped with the placement of a series of weekly articles in the *Chicago Evening Post* (1909–1910) entitled “Within the City Gates,” wherein she built the IPL’s case against exploitation of immigrants.<sup>170</sup> IPL leaders, like many of their peers in progressive social reform causes, believed that by leveraging public opinion they could advance socially beneficial action.<sup>171</sup>

Despite all these activities, it was rare, between 1908 and 1926, for the IPL to have a staff of more than ten to twelve to conduct its research, write reports, generate press releases to publicize their work, network with other organizations, begin and implement initiatives for new arrivals, and press for legislation.<sup>172</sup> Some of the staff members were the foreign language speakers needed for immigrant work, because the League claimed to deploy speakers of Yiddish, Russian, Greek, German, Polish, Slovak, Magyar, Bohemian, Croatian, Lithuanian, Ruthenian, and Lettish.<sup>173</sup> In keeping with similar local initiatives in which many of these same leaders were engaged, the IPL surely relied upon a number of trained volunteers to accomplish some of its casework. With membership of 236 in 1909, the IPL averaged better than 500 members between 1912 and 1917.<sup>174</sup> It was a small organization, but it was well placed to capitalize on and contribute to new stories about the shifting boundaries between private and public activity and about public responsibilities for those who had special vulnerabilities in the industrial workplace and in the truck and barter of the marketplace—the young, females, and perhaps non-English

speaking newcomers. The IPL was able to speak authoritatively with data, expanding female reformers’ agendas at a time when maternalist discourses were familiar and where maternalists had already established a track record of policy victories, especially at the state level.

The IPL shared with a number of other progressive era organizations a sense of confidence that social problems could be solved by application of proper knowledge and the right methods, and that government was a necessary part of the solution of most of these problems involving immigrants. The organization was plugged into important networks that included University of Chicago faculty in the social sciences and the law school—faculty who were, themselves, engaged in not just studying, but also invested in seeking solutions to social problems—and that included settlement houses, commercial elites, some reformers with institutional positions in government (e.g., Julian Mack), and religious and ethnically based organizations. A number of leaders of the IPL had a decade or more of experience working on other reform causes, had developed skills in negotiating and bargaining, ties and access to legislators and members of the executive branch they sought to prod, and a strong sense of efficacy. All these factors contributed to successes in moving new social welfare tasks onto the state’s agenda.

So far, we have seen that the IPL was an organization well positioned and well equipped to launch strategic campaigns for new public policies and reforms. And with a small staff, the organization engaged in a great deal of casework that brought members face-to-face with, and into the homes of, recent immigrants, giving the IPL a sense of immigrant experiences and problems adjusting to life in a new land. We now need to understand how the activities in which the IPL was engaged were linked to institutional development and the expansion of state capacity.

### THE IPL AND THE HYBRID ROOTS OF STATE POWER

To be ruled is to be kept an eye on, inspected, spied on, regulated, indoctrinated, sermonized, listed and checked off, estimated, appraised, censured, ordered about . . . . To be ruled is at every operation, transaction, movement, to be noted, registered, counted, priced, admonished, prevented, reformed, redressed, corrected.

—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, quoted by Daniel Guérin in *Anarchism*<sup>175</sup>

175. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, quoted in Daniel Guérin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, trans. Mary Klopper (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 15–16, and reprinted in James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale

169. Report of the Secretary (S.P. Breckinridge), Fourth Annual Report of the Immigrants’ Protective League for the Year Ending January 1st, 1913, 5–6.

170. Report of the Secretary (Sophonisba P. Breckinridge), Immigrants Protective League (Formerly League for the Protection of Immigrants), Annual Report 1910–1911, quote at 8; Grace Abbott—Britannica online profiles at <http://www.britannica.com/women/article-9003254>.

171. Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight*, 354, writing of new liberals’ support of associative action, including state action, toward the end of the nineteenth century.

172. Buroker, “From Voluntary Association to Welfare State,” 654. Some of the press releases are found in the IPL Records at UIC.

173. Leonard, “The Immigrants’ Protective League,” 271–84; 277. See various Annual Reports.

174. *Ibid.*, 271–84; 273.

What Proudhon bemoaned was, as James C. Scott points out, hard-won, and “in fact the great achievement of modern statecraft.”<sup>176</sup> Although Scott and many political scientists see this achievement as one effected “from above,” I contend that, in the American case during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were processes at work—vital for achieving any such level of modern statecraft—that are not captured by a top-down or state-centered approach. And although the IPL could be categorized as a private philanthropic agency, that would be a mistake. There are far more appropriate ways to think about such a progressive era reform organization’s interface with all levels of the state. Whatever benefits protection, care, and the system of friendly visitors, and sympathetic concern brought to women, children, and workers in newer immigrant neighborhoods, “personal, family-by-family home visiting, conducted mostly by women serving as both salaried professional and voluntary agents” could form the backbone of social welfare state intervention in the lives of citizens, and female voluntary societies were important pioneers of this approach.<sup>177</sup>

The NCJW, Hull-House, WTUL, and the ILP, following the lead of the Charity Organization Society movement, mastered the infrastructure necessary to deal with new immigrants; it was available for deployment when and if states or the federal government were persuaded to take over some of the functions performed by these groups. To the extent that organizations such as the IPL were engaged in developing and providing social welfare services to new immigrants, we could refer to the private provision as a shadow welfare state<sup>178</sup> or a hidden social welfare state.<sup>179</sup> The functions of social provision and a certain sort of infrastructure were being created. The organizations were building certain

kinds of capacity valuable to a developing social welfare state. The organizations were, in this sense, building bridges for states to cross boundaries—to enable populations or to try to control them.

### Building Bridges, Generating Legibility

Importantly, the IPL, the WTUL, and the NCJW were also organizations that noted, counted, tracked, and registered individual immigrants and categories of immigrants. Collecting and then disseminating data from investigations were among the core purposes the IPL leaders envisioned for the organization.<sup>180</sup> In the industrialized West, “quantification has been part of a strategy of intervention, not merely of description.”<sup>181</sup> The IPL (and its predecessor in Chicago’s WTUL) also brought supervision, regulation, admonition, and reformation to immigrants and immigrant communities. The IPL was among the organizations that brought the state from Ellis Island to immigrant communities wherever they were found. The state was led there by the reformers, who were first in the field.

While carefully gathering and assembling data from investigations, constructing narratives, and then disseminating information that was not previously available, Abbott and the IPA were helping generate state capacity that could produce progressive social welfare policies. But they were also helping produce the modern administrative state—a growing administrative state that could only control and order society if administrators could see and read the formerly dark corners.<sup>182</sup> As Scott argues, in the construction of corporate-administrative states, uncategorizable people and activities have to be observed and assimilated onto administrative grids; “[l]egibility is a condition of manipulation.”<sup>183</sup> Visible units have to be invented; “Whatever the units being manipulated, they must be organized in a manner that permits them to be identified, observed, recorded, counted, aggregated, and monitored. The degree of knowledge required would have to be roughly commensurate with the depth of the intervention.”<sup>184</sup> For the state or the federal government, dealing with immigrants and their problems—either to “protect” or to control—required this legibility that the organization helped provide.

To help with employment and adjustment of new immigrant girls in Chicago, IPL workers wanted to be able to devote even more time to “following

University Press, 1998), 183. Scott attributes the quote (although Guérin does not) to Proudhon’s 1840 work, *What Is Property?*; however, it does not appear to be from what is commonly known as the First Memoir, nor the Second Memoir, and most likely derives from a separate and later work.

176. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 183.

177. Koven, “Borderlands,” 127, including quote. Koven, writing about the British case, argues that: “Most major child-welfare measures passed between 1906 and 1920 mandated” home visits of this sort, largely implemented by women’s voluntary organizations.

178. For example, Seth Koven, “Borderlands,” 123.

179. Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Theda Skocpol and co-authors have viewed late nineteenth-century federal pension programs as products of a “precocious social spending state.” See Ann Shola Orloff and Theda Skocpol, “Why Not Equal Protection? Explaining the Politics of Public Social Spending in Britain, 1900–1911 and the United States, 1880s–1920,” *American Sociological Review* 49 #6 (December 1984): 726–50, quote at 729. On the “Precocious Social Spending Regime,” see also Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, Part I.

180. Leonard, “Immigrants’ Protective League,” 275–76.

181. Porter, *Trust in Numbers*, 43.

182. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, Kenneth I. Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties: Discontinuities in the Development of American Constitutional Law* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 30.

183. *Ibid.*, 183; Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties*, 30–31.

184. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 183.

them to their homes.”<sup>185</sup> Because it would have then been highly inappropriate for males to visit female immigrants in their homes, data collection on the experiences of young female immigrants was a woman’s affair. To help women and girls, organized women were needed to make boundaries between public and private permeable and to navigate complex moral coding. There were often multiple visits, with data-gathering along the way. To gather information on the work and practices of private employment agencies, the IPL would often be in more homes, because a number of those—especially those serving females—operated out of private homes. A form found in the records of the IPL demonstrates kinds of data systematically collected in some of its home visits.<sup>186</sup> In addition to name, nationality, address, ages, place of birth, first arrival in the United States of adults, employer, occupation abroad and occupation in the United States, the IPL collected names, ages, and school or occupational status of children, and condition, rent, number of rooms, and number of persons per room of housing occupied; banking and personal property information; and relatives expected, detained, or supported abroad. Entering into relationships with young immigrant women seeking to participate in the labor market helped IPL members understand the difficulties these young women (and male members of the household) faced, and the information derived was used to leverage policy reforms.<sup>187</sup>

By gathering and systematizing new information, naming and narrating social problems within discourses developed by maternalists and Hull-House reformers, and deploying the language of social scientific inquiry, the IPL spoke and wrote authoritatively in their attempts to influence public perceptions and policy makers in favor of immigrant protection. “Scientific determination” of conditions was a source of power.<sup>188</sup> And when researchers spoke in this way, they could transcend boundaries. As Brian Balogh has observed:

185. The phrase appears in Report of the Director (Grace Abbott), Fourth Annual Report of the Immigrants’ Protective League for the Year Ending January 1st, 1913, 11. Note that the IPL also recruited male home visitors.

186. Although a penciled notation indicates this particular form, which seems to have been used to support naturalization requests, dates from 1926, a good deal of these data were already being collected by the IPL. IPL Supplement II, Box 5, Folder 64, blank form (pencil: new form 11-22-26), UIC.

187. See also Schneiderhan, “Pragmatism and Empirical Sociology, 606, making the point that Addams came to realize how hard it was to participate in the labor market through social relations with working-class girls and women, and that these relations changed her understanding of the world—an example of pragmatism at work.

188. The particular phrase is from “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 2.

[R]esearch communities reacted to the increased scope of problems and the distended boundaries they crossed by embracing numbers and statistics as objective measures that could be universally understood by strangers. Quantification provided “a technology of distance” that the social sciences used to gain public trust and internal coherence. Quantification was ideally suited for associations that transcended local and traditional community boundaries.<sup>189</sup>

While Scott sees legibility as a state project, reform organizations with strong, urban, place-based networks of workers and volunteers who saw themselves as practicing scientific data-gathering for purposes that included leveraging the state to act upon their own agendas could almost be viewed as Gramscian organic intellectuals of the high modernist, bourgeois state. If every social class has its own specialized intellectuals, progressive era reforms in organizations such as the IPL could be viewed as directors and organizers of reformism coming largely out of the bourgeoisie, though some of them might have been seen, or have viewed themselves, as socialists or radicals.<sup>190</sup> At a time when tables and statistics allowed their makers to claim objective, scientific knowledge, the IPL and similar reform organizations were masters. The reformers were instrumental in making possible what Scott sees as the great achievement of modern statecraft, deplored by Proudhon in the quote at the beginning of “The IPL and the Hybrid Origins of State Power.”

### Dynamic Learning, Bridging Capital

There was, however, a tension between what Hull-House-inspired pragmatists may have thought they were doing and building with data and this sense of legibility and control that Scott attributes to the modern state. Data-gathering in the home could, for example, become a means either for continual adjustment of practices and knowledge, or it could simply become a means to control categories of people.<sup>191</sup> Maternalist reformers aspired to change public discourse, revision the state, and extend the social ethic, social morality, and the sympathy they felt was essential to democracy to the larger society. “Social action served as a bridge from a self

189. Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight*, 361.

190. See, for example, remarks made at Grace Abbott’s memorial service by Marshall E. Dimock, Assistant Secretary of Labor, “The Inner Substance of a Progressive,” University of Chicago, October 18, 1939, during the Annual Meeting of the Illinois Conference of Social Welfare. IPL Papers, Supplement II, Folder 3, UIC.

191. Gwendolyn Mink believes progressive era women helped produce the particularly invasive form of control of welfare recipients that became manifest in New Deal social policy. See *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917–1942* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 8 and passim.



perceived as individual to a self perceived as interdependent.”<sup>192</sup> Citizens with a sense of interdependence were better democratic citizens. Therefore, for reformers inspired by Dewey, Addams, and William James, knowledge about one’s neighbors was not simply a matter of data-gathering. It required a dynamic understanding of their characteristics, values, and experiences; “identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics.”<sup>193</sup> Data collection was a kind of social scientific inquiry that created a wider experience and broadened the sample of life to which the privileged had been exposed; it was a kind of blurring of class boundaries. Thus, the privileged would learn from their interactions with the poor, and they would all envision goals together.

For pragmatists, knowledge acquisition required experimentation and experience; the object was to discover what improvements worked on the ground, regardless of what scientists and social scientists advised.<sup>194</sup> Like Dewey and James, Addams saw learning as a relational process, where thinking and action were not disjointed and habits of intelligence emerged from action.<sup>195</sup> Consumers of services possessed unique knowledge of their particular and local circumstances that needed to be taken into account if services were to be useful to them, and they should be involved in co-producing these services.<sup>196</sup>

Addams’s sociology of knowledge was critical of the existing order and of hierarchy; she distinguished her approach to knowledge as quite different from the budding social scientist who was seeking specialized knowledge in order to build and defend professionalization within the academy.<sup>197</sup> Addams even suggested that “a settlement finds itself curiously

more companionable with the state and national bureaus in their efforts in collecting information and analyzing the situation, than it does with university efforts: the bureaus seek data for legislation and applicability, and not for knowledge itself.”<sup>198</sup> Given the extent to which the IPL drew upon progressive faculty members from the University of Chicago (Mack, Freund, Mead), and the extent to which some of these women held academic positions at the same university (Breckenridge, the Abbott sisters, and occasionally Addams herself), Addams’s characterization of the university seems rather harsh. It is nevertheless the case that a theory of knowledge that is antihierarchical, relational, and dynamic is at peril in a modern state committed to objectivity, legibility, and control. If Addams and IPL reformers saw themselves as part of a research alliance with state and national bureaus, it is not incorrect that they were sometimes involved in the co-production of knowledge for purposes of its application.<sup>199</sup> To the extent pragmatism inspired organizations such as the IPL to seek to empower community members rather than impose solutions through the acquisition of knowledge,<sup>200</sup> some of these purposes seem to have been eclipsed, at least for a number of decades, as the bureaucratic state developed.<sup>201</sup>

Contemporary scholars who have been revisiting progressive era pragmatic reforms have found much to mine as they seek lessons for possible alternative problem-solving arrangements to those in place in large, inflexible, bureaucratic institutions. A number of practices and governing arrangements developed during the progressive era involved learning by monitoring, democratic experimentalism, and incremental reform.<sup>202</sup> In some, local citizens were given opportunities to participate in practical deliberations concerning matters affecting them. In some cases, research labs, by routinizing knowledge creation, might have offered a means of counteracting the tendency toward organizational rigidity.<sup>203</sup> Through such means, it was at least possible that organizations of the period could learn by monitoring, respond to local diversity, and maintain some accountability of local public officials and service providers to the citizens.

192. Nackenoff, “Gendered Citizenship,” 143.

193. Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* [1902] (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 11.

194. Schneiderhan, “Pragmatism and Empirical Sociology,” 609. He relates the story of offering foods at Hull-House prepared according to the latest thinking of nutritional science, but the local residents did not like the food; a far more successful coffee house was substituted for the Diet Kitchen (608–9).

195. See Schneiderhan, “Pragmatism and Empirical Sociology,” 594–97; the phrase “habits of intelligence” is Dewey’s (597). Michael C. Dorf and Charles F. Sabel examine case studies of democratic experimentalism in terms of pragmatic methods inherited in part from the progressives, examining collaborative learning by monitoring and directly deliberative polyarchy. See Dorf and Sabel, “A Constitution of Democratic Experimentalism,” *Columbia Law Review* 98 #2 (March 1998): 267–473.

196. Dorf and Sabel, “A Constitution of Democratic Experimentalism,” 317.

197. Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892–1918* (New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Books, 1988), 255, citing Ellsworth Fuhrman’s *The Sociology of Knowledge in America, 1883–1915*. In *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2002), Deegan considers Hull-House pragmatism and sociology of knowledge in the context of its application to race relations, noting the persistence of a color line at Hull-House in this period and the fact that

the “Hull-House life and worldview” was “neither particularly comfortable nor welcoming to black Americans” (38).

198. Addams, “A Function of the Social Settlement,” 48.

199. See below (“A Period of Bureaucratic Incorporation”) for the example of Grace Abbott’s (and the IPL’s) involvement with Illinois State Immigrants’ Commission.

200. See Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School*, 255.

201. For one exploration of this tension, see Camilla Stivers, *Bureau Men, Settlement Women: Constructing Public Administration in the Progressive Era* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

202. Dorf and Sabel, “A Constitution of Democratic Experimentalism,” 267–473.

203. *Ibid.*, 296.



Local jurisdictions could and did learn from one another.<sup>204</sup> And because discrete programs were mutually dependent, successes or problems occurring in one arena might well suggest changes warranted in another.<sup>205</sup> The creation of institutions of problem-solving deliberation required long-term, viable collaboration.<sup>206</sup>

Thinking about Hull-House-inspired progressive era reformers' strong commitment to pragmatism, we may be better able to make sense of—and even trace their hand in—the generation of hybrid institutions with both public and private dimensions.<sup>207</sup> As progressive era organizations such as the IPL pressed new agendas and responsibilities on the state, they often sought to remain part of the implementation process of policies and programs they considered “theirs.”<sup>208</sup> They wished to monitor, adjust, and innovate in light of local experience, maintaining a connection to the state and to the programs they had helped launch. In addition, reformers of this period aimed to prevent the emergence of social problems through work in the neighborhoods; not all such work could likely be turned over to the state or to rigid and distant bureaucracies. Service provision and working for the city's needs required local and decentralized efforts.<sup>209</sup>

### Boundaries and Boundary Shifting

Julian Mack's remark to the IPL in 1916 that “[p]rivate citizens always have to lead the way and then turn the task over to the public,” makes it appear as if distinctions between public and private were settled and well understood. However, Judge Julian Mack himself was hardly a private actor. He was an elected judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County and during some of his years with the IPL, a judge on the Illinois Appellate Court. And yet, his work with what became United Jewish Charities, with the Juvenile Court Committee and the Juvenile Protective League, and with the IPL, associations with Hull-House, and more suggests that the boundaries between public and private work were often porous and indeterminate in this period. Mack's remark is also suggestive of a dynamic in which what is begun privately is taken over by the state after the activity has been launched by private actors. This would be consistent with Paula Baker's narrative in which female reformers (or female-dominant

organizations) realized that the scope of the problems required more than municipal housekeeping and local effort, and often required the infusion of more financial resources than charitable organizations could marshal. For Baker, this growing sensibility, plus women's own growing sense of the advantages of professionalization in addressing social problems, helps explain why organized women willingly yielded up their charitable activities to the state.<sup>210</sup> But although some aspects of the IPL case might be read to fit this narrative, it is insufficient and sometimes misleading if we are attempting to trace means and processes of state building, and it does not help us to grasp complexities in delineating public from private in this era.

### Incubation: Demonstration Projects and Political Development

The IPL's railroad station work is a good example of a private initiative launched with an eye to persuading government to take up and even extend the work. It was not so much that the flood of immigrants arriving in Chicago overwhelmed the system of provision run by the IPL, as Baker's trajectory would have it, but rather the IPL leaders seem to have been engaged in strategic action. The IPL seems to have been following a model already adopted successfully by some of these very same Chicago reformers, as in the juvenile court case: develop a prototype, a model, or an experiment, fundraise to implement it, and use a successful model to convince the state to take over funding, operations, and responsibility.

Different railway lines had different stations in Chicago, but in 1910, the IPL persuaded the Chicago and Western Indiana Railroad to donate a small building across the street from its Dearborn station.<sup>211</sup> There the IPL set up offices, reception areas, bedrooms, and baths.<sup>212</sup> From that spot, the IPL workers and volunteers tried to get immigrants away from the cabbies and others trying to hustle them from the station to their conveyances. They aided increasing numbers of immigrants. Still, the police were not at first very helpful in directing immigrants across the street.<sup>213</sup> The first full year the office was in operation (1911), the IPL reported helping about 5,200 people; in 1913, the number had risen to over 41,000.

The IPL wanted the federal government to set up a bureau to protect immigrants in the Chicago railway stations. But the organization wanted government to do more and augmented their case with constitutional argumentation. Grace Abbott and

204. *Ibid.*, 314.

205. *Ibid.*, 315.

206. *Ibid.*, 322.

207. See Nackenoff and Sullivan, “The House that Julia (and Friends) Built.”

208. This argument about a sense of ownership and desire to remain involved is made by Nackenoff and Sullivan, “The House that Julia (and Friends) Built” with regard to the juvenile court.

209. On decentralization and the progressives, see McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige*, 107.

210. Baker, “Domestication of Politics,” 640.

211. Report of Director, Immigrants Protective League, Annual Report 1910–1911, 10.

212. See Fifth Annual Report, 1913, 8–9; Buroker, 654; and Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*.

213. See “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 5–6.

her colleagues contended that because the federal government controlled immigration, its responsibilities did not end with immigrants' entry at Ellis Island or other ports of entry. Rather, because immigrants traveled by ship or train to inland destinations, they should be overseen to their final destination. Agents should be aboard ships and trains to make sure immigrants were not exploited; ships and railroad companies had been splitting up the traffic, often routing immigrants very indirectly to their destinations, when immigrants were not prepared for extra days in transit—often lacking food and money for these unanticipated delays. Grace, who had studied law and who had a longtime advisor in Ernst Freund from the University of Chicago Law School, placed responsibility clearly on the shoulders of the federal government because a key Court decision had taken regulation of immigrants—both in ports and as they moved to cities in the interior—out of the hands of the states. “The decision of the United States Supreme Court holding the state head tax on immigrants unconstitutional ended state regulation and compelled the United States Government to take over this work.”<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, the federal government-levied head tax on immigrants “was much more than enough to pay for really adequate protection and assistance during the first period of adjustment. The need of the Federal Government's undertaking this work was therefore constantly urged.”<sup>215</sup>

Abbott made clear that a very important purpose of the IPL's work was “to demonstrate that official supervision was both necessary and practical.” She saw that:

The limitations upon the work of a private organization were evident from the beginning. We lacked the authority necessary to make the protection as effective as it should be made; the space we had was quite inadequate to prevent serious overcrowding of the waiting room; and it was impossible to secure, through private subscription, funds adequate for doing work which so clearly belonged to the Federal Government.<sup>216</sup>

Note that “to demonstrate” meant more than lobbying and drawing on constitutional arguments; it included making a bricks-and-mortar demonstration

214. Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, 6. The case was *Henderson v. Mayor of City of New York* 92 U.S. 259 (1875). Beneficial legislation in New York enacted prior to the Civil War had, Abbott notes with admiration, regulated boarding houses, runners, passenger and baggage agents, those offering advice to immigrants, and others who practiced ruses on immigrants; transportation companies were compelled to furnish the mayor with statements for conveying immigrants. But Abbott argues (6) that this legislation was wiped out by the Court.

215. Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, 21.

216. *Ibid.*

based on the work of organization and volunteer efforts.

Seeking allies for this crusade, Abbott also enlisted support from the influential Commercial Club of Chicago to pressure Congress to take up this responsibility and establish a federal immigration station in Chicago.<sup>217</sup> The Commercial Club had launched its grand plan for Chicago development and beautification (known as the Burnham Plan) a few years prior and had joined with social reformers on several other initiatives. This underscores Sklar's contention that the linages forged between organized political women and a range of male-dominated political groups advocating various sorts of social welfare legislation between 1900 and 1920 were important because, so joined, “they tipped the balance of the political process heavily in favor of such legislation.”<sup>218</sup> The IPL reported that the Commercial Club of Chicago began cooperating with them in 1910 to secure certain changes in federal immigration policy, including support for a federal protective bureau, provision for inspectors (some women) who would travel on immigrant trains, and reform of the method of sending immigrants from ports of embarkation to the interior so travel would be by the most direct route.<sup>219</sup> In 1913, Illinois Congressman Sabath introduced a bill to establish federal bureaus in train stations. Grace Abbott gave testimony before Secretary of Commerce and Labor Charles Nagel, and with the “most active” support of the Commercial Club, that bill became law in July.<sup>220</sup> Under the new law, the Secretary of Labor was authorized to establish immigrant stations in interior cities, and the law

217. Costin, *Two Sisters*, 74–75. The Commercial Club, founded in 1877, united with the Merchants Club (founded 1896) in 1907. “The purpose of The Commercial Club of Chicago is to promote the social and economic vitality of the metropolitan area of Chicago by co-operative effort, social intercourse, and a free interchange of views.” The Commercial Club underwrote the Plan of Chicago that Daniel Burnham and Edward H. Bennett designed. Overlap between the Commercial Club and the IPL included then-IPL President, Alexander A. McCormick and Julius Rosenwald, serving on the Board for a three-year term (1912, 1913, 1914). Quote and information from <http://www.commercialclubchicago.org/purpose/index.html> and Commercial Club of Chicago Year Book (Vol. 1909), accessed at <http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/commercial-club-of-chicago/year-book-volume-1909-ni9/page-2-year-book-volume-1909-ni9.shtml>.

218. Sklar, “Historical Foundations of Women's Power,” 71.

219. Report of the President (Alexander A. McCormick), Fourth Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League for the Year Ending January 1st, 1913, 8.

220. Adolph J. Sabath, a Bohemian Jew who immigrated as a teenager, began his political career under reform governor Peter Altgeld and became Democratic representative from the 5th District of Illinois, incorporating the west side, in 1907. On Abbott's testimony, see Costin, *Two Sisters*, 75. The “most active” description is from the President's Report, Fourth Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League for the Year Ending January 1st, 1913, 8. The Department of Labor became a separate cabinet department partly through efforts of progressive organizations, signed into law in March 1913.

“authorized the Secretary to detail immigrant inspectors to travel on immigrant trains.” Money was appropriated to maintain an immigrant station in Chicago.<sup>221</sup>

The federal government became a Chicago landlord by renting a building to provide more or less the same services the IPL had been providing. There were reception rooms, beds, baths, and a laundry. However, after the nice appointments were in place by early 1914, the facility was hardly used for the next two years. Government made no provisions to get immigrants to the new building from the train station. Abbott noted that at first, immigrants were required to pay a local transfer agency to take them to the new immigrant station, but by summer of that year, all railroads bearing Chicago-bound immigrants had agreed to transfer immigrants from their Chicago terminals to this station without charge. However, unless an immigrant had asked at Ellis Island for a transfer to the Federal Station in Chicago, the federal government did not make the transfer happen. Abbott concluded sadly, “This illustration of the way in which an administrative department of the Government can refuse to carry out the laws passed by Congress should be interesting to students of political science.”<sup>222</sup>

The IPL acted as a stopgap, offering to perform the terminal-to-center transfer function; however, it ended up having to take over all the work. With the outbreak of World War I, which greatly reduced the volume of immigrants arriving, Congress failed to appropriate enough funds to continue the project.<sup>223</sup> The prototype had been developed; government had been persuaded to assume responsibility, costs, and operations; but ultimately, obtaining ongoing national commitment to make this form of immigrant protection state work failed. If the IPL had envisioned putting itself out of the railroad station aspect of its work, it had only come close.

While the IPL turned to the federal government to accomplish some of its aims, it pressed the state of Illinois to expand its public role to accomplish others, underscoring the point that state building efforts were not simply national. The organization worked for many years to get Illinois to take over a good deal of the non-railway station work of the IPL itself.<sup>224</sup> New ventures and ideas from other states influenced the IPL to move in this direction. Grace

221. Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, 21, including quote.

222. *Ibid.*, 22, including quote. Abbott says that the Report of the Secretary of Labor for 1914 claimed that delay in operating the station was owing to the requirement that immigrants pay a transfer fee once they arrived in Chicago.

223. Buroker, “From Voluntary Association to Welfare State,” 655; Report of the Director (Grace Abbott), Sixth Annual Report of the Immigrants’ Protective League for the Year Ending January 1st, 1915, 6–7; Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*.

224. “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 1.

Abbott’s work had come to the attention of Massachusetts, and the new Massachusetts Commission on Immigration, created by the legislature in 1913, would influence the IPL. Upon invitation, Abbott agreed to come to Boston to serve temporarily as the executive secretary of the Massachusetts Commission. The Commission was to “make a full investigation of the status and general condition of immigrants within the Commonwealth, including the way of living, distribution, occupation, educational opportunities and business opportunities and facilities, and also their relation to the industrial, social and economic condition of all the people of the Commonwealth.”<sup>225</sup> The Commission was to obtain “information for the enactment of such laws as will bring non-English-speaking foreigners, resident or transient, into sympathetic relations with American institutions and customs”—language mirrored in part of the charge of the Illinois Immigrant Commission.<sup>226</sup> Grace completed a comprehensive research project in Massachusetts, making the case for the need for immigrant protection.

### A Period of Bureaucratic Incorporation

In 1918, with the support of Governor Lowden, the Illinois legislature authorized creation of the Immigrants Commission within the State Department of Registration and Education. The budget was not particularly generous; what commission members thought was their annual appropriation was meant instead to cover two years.<sup>227</sup> The legislation directed the new commission to: “Make a survey of the immigrant, alien born and foreign speaking people of the State, and of their distribution, conditions of employment, and standards of housing and living,” and further directed the commission to “examine into their economic, financial and legal customs, their provisions for insurance and other prudential arrangements, their social organization, and their educational needs; keeping in friendly and sympathetic touch with alien groups and co-operating with State and local officials, and with immigrant or related authorities of

225. Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part II,” quoted in note 20a, 496.

226. *Ibid.* The Illinois Immigrant Commission is to keep in “friendly and sympathetic touch” with the foreign-born and it is to conduct investigations and advise the state about how to protect the immigrant against exploitation and better adjust to the new American environment. “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 1.

227. Buroker, “From Voluntary Association to Welfare State,” 656. According to the Meeting minutes, State of Illinois Immigrants’ Commission, March 19, 1920, the Illinois Commission thought its appropriation was \$15,000 per annum, but it seems that the authorization of this amount was to cover two years. Massachusetts, New York, and California had commissions with larger budgets.



other states and of the United States.”<sup>228</sup> The IPL took this step as evidence that “a very large public appreciates for the first time facts which the Immigrants Protective League has been pointing out to its constituency since its organization,” and projected that “the State will eventually be in a position to do for the foreign-born of Illinois what the Immigrants Protective League, under the handicap from which a private agency suffers, has attempted to do for the foreign-born of Chicago.”<sup>229</sup> Illinois had, in the view of the IPL “created machinery which if properly used will enable the state to avoid unnecessary difficulties and will insure a scientific determination of how those who come to make Illinois their home can be most easily adjusted to their new environment.”<sup>230</sup>

It would not be much of an overstatement to say that Grace Abbott, who agreed to return to Chicago to take over as executive secretary of the new state Commission, simply moved the office, the records, the staff, the client service work, and the investigative agenda of the IPL from an ostensibly private organization to a state one. Addams had earlier noted that sometimes, settlements had worked under the direction of the bureaus, and under Abbott’s leadership of the Commission, we appear to have one such example.<sup>231</sup> Edith Abbott recounted that her sister Grace “organized the work of the commission on the basis of her Chicago experience.”<sup>232</sup> The IPL voted “to put at the disposal of the Commission its records and information as to the Chicago immigrants and to assign a number of agents for work under the direction of the Commission”; this included a stenographer and foreign language agents.<sup>233</sup> Abbott envisioned having these agents—who were also working to secure the attendance of immigrant mothers in special classes offered by the Chicago public schools—help with the surveys that were from time to time going to be made and wanted these visitors of the League to be made agents of the Commission with a nominal (perhaps \$1) yearly salary. One member of the Commission

said that “similar arrangements for cooperation between public and private agencies have been successful in the past and he felt it should be done in this instance,” and the appointed chairman said he would inquire into state practice.<sup>234</sup> Still, Abbott apparently did not intend to subsume the IPL completely into the state:

Although she [Grace] had long hoped and planned to have the work that was done by the Immigrants’ Protective League carried on by a public authority, she did not want the Immigrants’ Protective League dissolved, because she wanted something in the way of an outside organization to protect the new public commission from political raids.<sup>235</sup>

“To show the general functions of the Commission as viewed by those who asked for the legislation, a letter from Prof. Freund [University of Chicago Law School; IPL policy adviser] outlining the general place which such a Commission should occupy was read” at an early Commission meeting; Abbott also provided a statement about “the general lines of work which might be undertaken and examples of the agencies the Commission would probably cooperate with.”<sup>236</sup> With the small budget she had, Grace intended to continue the protective casework and also immediately began more investigations, such as of conditions facing immigrants in the coal-mining communities of southern Illinois and on the educational needs of the state.<sup>237</sup> Abbott, of course, wrote of the need for greater public assistance to immigrants. She treated the institutional beachhead as a place from which to expand the immigrant protection agenda.

There was some disagreement on the Commission about the advisability of conducting protective casework lest the Commission “be looked upon as an eleemosynary institution by the immigrant,” with others seeing the value of individual work as the means of discovering conditions and making general investigations; Abbott pointed out that the New York, California, and Massachusetts Commissions all found it necessary because “some agency was needed to make accessible to the immigrant the social agencies both public and private which were able to serve his needs and to give him the information and advice which he needed.” Others were concerned only to the extent the appropriation seemed prohibitively

228. Quoted in Grace Abbott, “The Educational Needs of Immigrants in Illinois,” *Bulletin of the Immigrants Commission No. 1*, State of Illinois, Department of Registration and Education, Springfield, Illinois, 1920, 2. IPL, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, UIC.

229. “Eleven Years of Community Service,” 2, both quotes.

230. *Ibid.*

231. Addams, “A Function of the Social Settlement,” 48. “The settlements from the first have done more or less work under the direction of the bureaus.” Addams continues with an example that indicated a lack of congruence between a federal bureau’s view of dietary information and what the settlement had learned from experience; simply to put information into readable form was insufficient. “It is to confuse a simple statement of knowledge with its application” (48).

232. Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part II,” 518.

233. Meeting minutes, State of Illinois Immigrants’ Commission, March 19, 1920, Grace Abbott, Secretary. IPL Papers, Supplement II, Box 4, Folder 58, UIC.

234. Meeting minutes, State of Illinois Immigrants’ Commission, March 19, 1920.

235. Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part II,” 517.

236. Meeting minutes, State of Illinois Immigrants’ Commission, March 19, 1920.

237. Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part II,” 517; Meeting minutes, State of Illinois Immigrants’ Commission, March 19, 1920.

small.<sup>238</sup> What Abbott envisioned could be viewed as one type of a public-private hybrid and collaborative institutional venture, with public and private funding and complex relations of responsibility.<sup>239</sup> The casework would preserve the benefits of decentralization and of ongoing knowledge building.

The sympathetic governor was succeeded by Governor “Len” Small in 1921, and the “sound public welfare authority” Grace was attempting to build and popularize came to a quick and ignominious end. Her sister’s explanation was that the new governor was a “patronage man” who expected to be able to appoint the Commission’s employees; Grace had organized the staff on a state civil service basis and would not yield up the positions. The governor then vetoed the Commission’s appropriations, and literally overnight, the Commission ceased to exist. Grace, who remained convinced that no private organization or group of such organizations could do this work adequately, “hurriedly reorganized the Immigrants’ Protective League, with headquarters at Hull House, and moved such files and such material as were not state property, and set the old machinery of the League in motion as promptly as possible.”<sup>240</sup> She herself soon left to become successor to Julia Lathrop at the Children’s Bureau, and with the loss of her leadership, increasing national pressure for immigrant restriction that led to legislation in 1921 and 1924, the rise of deportation raids, and a difficult fundraising environment, the energy of the IPL was diminished. In 1926, the organization was still trying to reconstitute itself because the reformers had hoped, for some years, that the state would come to its senses and reauthorize the state commission.

### Other Pathways for State Building and Capacity Building

The launch of a federal immigration station in Chicago and creation of an Illinois Immigrants Commission were, at one level, failures of institutionalization, but the development of capacity by the IPL that either the federal government or state government could have built upon was far more successful. These instances are perhaps the most high-profile means by which the IPL sought to extend public responsibility, authority, and state capacity. But they are hardly the only means by which the IPL and its allies in the field of immigration protection were involved in advancing the development of the modern state. The IPL’s role in the enforcement of compulsory school attendance and in providing draft assistance and income tax assistance to

immigrants is illustrative. If we keep in mind that institutional borderlands—especially during moments of institution building—should be interrogated rather than assumed, we can find work for the public sector being performed outside of bureaucratic agencies, organized groups sometimes working strategically to construct bridges and pathways for the state to use, and resources and information flowing both from and to the state in processes of state building.

Data provided to the IPL from Ellis Island also became the means of accomplishing state work, including for the State of Illinois, and the IPL was eventually able to persuade the federal government to assume part of this same work. “For several years, . . . until it persuaded the Bureau of Immigration to take over the task, IPL compiled a list of all children, aged six through sixteen, who came to Illinois by way of Ellis Island. These lists were furnished to truant officers and school superintendents in Illinois communities.”<sup>241</sup> Lists were used for enforcing the Illinois compulsory school attendance law that maternalist reformers had pressed for and supported—a law seen as a means of combatting child labor, combatting illiteracy, and that would improve the adjustment of immigrants to the society. According to Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge, authors of a study on *Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools*, by the 1870s, the influx of immigrants made it clear that “compulsory school attendance was a grave necessity,” and it was clearly within the legislative powers of the state to prevent children from growing up in illiteracy.<sup>242</sup> “The importance of the compulsory education law as a means of help and protection to the immigrant family cannot be overestimated,” they wrote; compulsory education also safeguarded the state.<sup>243</sup>

Grace Abbott was concerned about the quality of education immigrant children were getting in some of the parochial schools maintained by inadequate financing from working-class parents—especially the quality of the English language instruction. She thought that a good, and perhaps the best, response was for state enforcement of a statute “providing that children shall be regarded as truants if they are attending a private school in which English is not the language of instruction and which does not ‘equal in thoroughness and efficiency and in the

241. Buroker, “From Voluntary Association to Welfare State,” 656; see also Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, 228, where most of this information appears.

242. Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge, *Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917), ch. III, 45–47, quote at 47; accessed at [http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Abbott/Abbott\\_Breckinridge\\_1917/Abbott\\_Breckinridge\\_1917\\_03.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Abbott/Abbott_Breckinridge_1917/Abbott_Breckinridge_1917_03.html).

243. Abbott and Breckinridge, *Truancy and Non-Attendance*, ch. XVIII, “The Special Problem of the Immigrant Child,” 264; accessed at [http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Abbott/Abbott\\_Breckinridge\\_1917/Abbott\\_Breckinridge\\_1917\\_18.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Abbott/Abbott_Breckinridge_1917/Abbott_Breckinridge_1917_18.html).

238. Meeting minutes, State of Illinois Immigrants’ Commission, March 19, 1920.

239. See Clemens, “Lineages of the Rube Goldberg State”; Carol Nackenoff and Julie Novkov, “Statebuilding in the Progressive Era: A Continuing Dilemma in American Political Development,” ch. I in Nackenoff and Novkov, *Statebuilding from the Margins*.

240. Abbott, “Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part II,” 518.

progress made' . . . the public schools in the same city or town."<sup>244</sup>

When she became secretary of the Illinois State Immigrants' Commission from 1919–1921, Grace Abbott began implementing on a statewide basis the enforcement of compulsory school attendance for immigrant children. "She used the method she had worked out earlier for Chicago—having the names of all children arriving at the ports of entry sent to the new state commission with their ages and addresses, and then sent out promptly to the different school superintendents throughout the state."<sup>245</sup> The maternal reformers viewed data use to achieve compulsory school attendance as a legitimate state interest in the well-being of the child, protecting the child from the harm of illiteracy; however, from a different angle and drawing on Scott's understanding, it was a means of controlling categories of people. So this policing function was performed collaboratively, and the system the IPL had worked out was then implemented by Abbott when she headed the Immigrants' Commission. IPL activities increased legibility and control. If the Bureau of Immigration took over collecting the data that Abbott found so valuable, the federal government shared this information with immigrant protection organizations in the field, apparently for the asking. In such a fashion, government also helped organizations build capacities that might be used to serve the state.

Finally, the IPL could be seen as helping do government work by linking immigrant men to draft boards during World War I, by providing interpreters, and by explaining to recent immigrants their obligations and their rights. The IPL saw this as a special demand made upon the organization by the war. The IPL claimed it had handled 2,840 draft cases up to mid-February 1918.<sup>246</sup> The organization also helped newcomers who were nonresident alien employees with the new income tax law, working to clarify ambiguities in the law that sometimes led employers to improperly withhold taxes from the wages of all alien workers. The IPL "co-operated in a successful effort to secure such modifications of the original instructions issued by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue as would clear up certain difficulties." The organization helped immigrants file applications for refunds for improperly collected tax, and spent a good deal of time explaining the law to employers

244. Abbott, *The Immigrant and the City*, 233. The interior quote is from recommendations of the Massachusetts Commission on Immigration. Though she noted considerable opposition from Catholics, she regarded this as "an honest and not unfriendly effort on the part of the State to raise the standard of teaching," much like efforts to improve professional standards in medicine (234).

245. Abbott, "Grace Abbott and Hull House—Part II," 517–518; quote at 517. Edith adds that this approach was even more effective when done by a public commission than it had been under the IPL in Chicago.

246. "Eleven Years of Community Service," 8–9.

and workers alike.<sup>247</sup> It is little wonder that the 1920 chart of Americanization activities mentioned earlier considered a number of organizations, including settlement houses, to be "semi-public agencies."

## CONCLUSION: FRIENDLY OR "NOT UNFRIENDLY" EFFORTS AND STATE BUILDING

The Illinois IPL's experience reminds us that emerging social classes and professional elites pursue their social policy goals with uneven success, confronted as they are with political institutions, oppositional forces, actors, and developments in the political economy that shape and constrain agendas that may seem "emergent."<sup>248</sup> But policy successes shape strategies and subsequent policy initiatives, and this is part of the process of state building. As Skocpol reminds us:

All in all, the kinds of organizational and rhetorical capacities that widespread maternalist associations of women could bring to bear in U.S. social politics in the early twentieth century had a surprisingly good "fit" to the points of legislative and judicial leverage available at the time—as the federal state of courts and parties was undergoing an uneven and fragmentary transformation into a partially bureaucratic, interest-group-oriented system of governance.<sup>249</sup>

From the 1890s to the 1920s, networks of settlement workers and settlement-influenced reform groups—with many female college-educated leaders—large-scale women's organizations, researchers connected to settlement houses, professionalizing social scientists, and legal scholars frequently joined together to achieve social policy goals. Chicago may have been at the forefront, partly owing to connections with the new University of Chicago, but the pattern appears in many other cities during the period. The reformers at the center of attention in this article formed an important core across issue areas, and they brought on board diverse reform organizations depending on the issue at hand. And the networks forged extended across the country, borrowing and helping, and cooperating in pressing for a government that had the warrant and capacity to be more engaged in an array of social problems.

If we think about Grace Abbott's trajectory from the University of Nebraska and the University of Chicago to Hull-House and her IPL research and advocacy work, her temporary removal to the Massachusetts Commission on Immigration, her return to Chicago and the IPL, her move to the Industrial Division of the Children's Bureau to administer (and fight for)

247. *Ibid.*, 9, including quote in previous sentence.

248. See Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 527.

249. *Ibid.*, 531.



the federal child labor law while Lathrop was Director, return to Illinois to become executive secretary of the Illinois Immigrants Commission, and shortly after the collapse of the state commission, back to the Children's Bureau, we see a path by which expertise gained in a "proto-bureaucratic association" was an especially important route through which women, in particular, could lay claim to professional skills.<sup>250</sup> Skills developed in social work, social research, and social reform carried women like Lathrop, Grace Abbott, and even Francis Perkins into positions in the public sector. Although the Children's Bureau was an important beachhead for women, as Skocpol argued, it was not the only one.<sup>251</sup>

Grace Abbott's tenure at the Children's Bureau was not sufficient to counteract the rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment and political forces demanding curtailment of immigration. Counter-stories about immigration produced with data and testimony by the Dillingham Commission, the Immigration Restriction League, and other anti-immigration organizations competed with the IPL narrative. By the early 1920s, conservative forces were likewise working against other initiatives nurtured and advanced by women's groups.<sup>252</sup>

250. Abbott was considered, by a number of women's organizations and organizations of social workers, the best candidate for Secretary of Labor when that position turned over in 1930. [A. L. Bowen, Illinois Department of Public Welfare, remarks at the memorial service for Grace Abbott, University of Chicago, October 18, 1939, during the Annual Meeting of the Illinois Conference of Social Welfare and reprinted February 1940 from the Welfare Bulletin, published by the State Department of Public Welfare; Immigrants' Protective League Records, Supplement II, Folder 3, UIC.] Frances Perkins, who got the job under the Roosevelt Administration in 1933, had followed a rather similar route to that of Abbott. At the time the IPL began working on immigrant aid in Chicago, Perkins was secretary of the Philadelphia Research and Protective Association, formed to help immigrant girls and black female southern migrants in their search for work; Perkins authored a major report on living and working conditions for self-supporting young women in Philadelphia, and she worked to combat exploitation of working girls and to improve conditions of boarding houses; <http://www.ssa.gov/history/fpbiOSSA.html>. The phrase "proto-bureaucratic association" is from Buroker, "From Voluntary Association to Welfare State," 660.

251. On legal training as another route to women's progressive policy goals, see Nackenoff, "Women Lawyers Forging Visions of Political Change and Shaping Public Agendas, 1900–1925," (presented at the Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 12–15, 2007); and Carol Nackenoff and Kathleen Sullivan, "Women Lawyers and Governance in the Progressive Era" (presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, September 3–6, 2009).

252. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (522–23), is careful to point out that Sheppard-Towner was vulnerable to maneuvers in Congress and short-term shifts in support as a result of the annual appropriations process that was triggered after five years of automatically renewed appropriations. Therefore, it never achieved the status of successful cross-class entitlement programs that were differently funded. Despite the vision and intention of women reformers and the organizations supporting Sheppard-Towner, broader plans for a maternal welfare state were thus hobbled by conservative political forces in the 1920s.

In addressing the exploitation of workers and industrial abuses by focusing specifically on females and immigrants, the IPL was working the borderlands between acceptable and unacceptable state interventions in the marketplace. Maternalist discourses made some interventions on behalf of the vulnerable possible, although extending the notion of vulnerability to new immigrants, including able-bodied males who were vulnerable because of language barriers or unfamiliarity with their new environment, was harder to achieve. Within this environment, focusing on women and girls had to be the chief means of reaching into new immigrant neighborhoods and homes and claiming authority to speak for reforms. Attempts to push the boundary of vulnerability met with countervailing forces. It would take the predominantly male-organized labor movement to move the industrial reform agenda further.

The IPL case study lacks the kind of defining moment that many students of American political development seek, but it is nevertheless instructive about state building and where to look for it. The case reveals some shift toward public authority, though not all shifts proved durable. The IPL case underlines the role of organizations in developing the state. Non-state actors, chiefly through female-dominated organizations, led in pressing extension of federal and state authority over immigrants beyond port of entry, forging bridges that the state could traverse, and becoming part of the means of expansion of state capacity and part of a process of governance.

The vision of the IPL leaders was broad and ambitious. "The immigrant does not create new problems that can be solved apart from the general problems of our community life," Abbott argued.<sup>253</sup> It was clearly the goal of the IPL to extend governmental authority and public responsibility, but the organization was not able to achieve anywhere near the full array of publicly funded immigrant social services to which it aspired.<sup>254</sup> But aided by the maternalist framework that encouraged public protection of the vulnerable, and by the strategic deployment of data and studies that both pushed and empowered the high modernist state, the IPL was well placed to accomplish a number of goals. Both states and the federal government were persuaded to extend services and authority, affecting policies, practices, and abuses involving recently arrived immigrants. The marked reduction in number of new immigrants both during World War I and subsequently, with federal immigration quota bills, reduced public interest and resources for some of the institutions, policies, and services generated during the progressive era, revealing how shifting

253. Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community*, 295.

254. On this point and on the scope of the vision, see also Leonard, "Immigrants' Protective League," 282–83.

political forces and agendas could limit the durability of some shifts in authority, especially at the national level, but also between the states and advocacy groups. The IPL, though highly strategic, did not achieve all that it had hoped, but it was remarkably effective in a short period of time.

Ultimately, the IPL offers a fertile and very fine field for deepening our understanding about processes and mechanisms of state building. The organization women created built bridges and pathways that could be used to extend state authority. Defining immigrant vulnerabilities as problems requiring sustained state attention, the members of the IPL worked to shift the boundaries of public work and

sought to include themselves in such public work. They enhanced legibility through research and collaborative data collection, and they developed policy ideas and model programs that were well-advertised, increasing the feasibility and likelihood of state and federal response. This case study suggests the possibility that blurred boundaries between state and non-state actors, roles, resources, and authority may be more common in American political development than is commonly assumed. And devoting more attention to the private roots of moments in American state building such as the progressive era will help scholars understand how public agendas and institutions develop.