

# The Sociology of Social Class: Recovering the Contributions of the Women Founders

By

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## Abstract

This paper examines primary writings and a smaller number of secondary sources to assess the early contributions of women to the sociology of social class and social inequality. Using the analytical framework of the politics of erasure, the authors examine the works of Jane Addams, Charlotte P. Gilman, and Florence Kelley as they formed a distinctive approach to research and action during the Progressive Era (approximately 1890-1920). These decades were also the developmental period of sociology in the United States. Addams, Gilman, and Kelley were members of the American Sociological Society, published in professional journals, including the *American Journal of Sociology*, and were recognized in their day as sociologists. These women worked outside of academia and in social settlements to develop a distinctive approach to sociology grounded in the standpoint of women and of the working poor. We consider the literature purporting to provide a history of the treatment of the concept of social class in American sociology as incomplete because there is no discussion or reference to the work of any female sociologist despite the availability of their publications. Charles Page focuses on the developmental history of sociology in the United States. Page's work examines the treatment of class in the works of six "founding fathers" and serves as a canonical reference for examining the treatment of social class in the works of Addams, Gilman, and Kelley.

**Keywords:** Social Class, Stratification, Inequality, History of Sociology, Women and Sociology, Forgotten Sociologists

## Introduction

Few concepts are more strategic to the study and practice of sociology than that of social class. Whether used as an analytical tool or as a social location, we often forego a definition of social class and assume a kind of native understanding. Typically, class is operationalized by indicators of access to resources such as income, occupation, and education. Entire courses are taught on the overlapping topics of social class, inequality, or stratification, and no sociology courses are taught without some reference to social class. Introductory textbooks typically devote at least one chapter to the topic and course materials on subjects such as family, deviance, criminology, aging, or racial-ethnic groups break out differences by social class. In fact, the importance of the concept of social class is more self-evident than its definition, and the history of sociology suggests that class as a concept has been with us from the beginning although that history, as written, is incomplete because it is a history void of the

contributions of women. The present work attempts to fill an important gap in the diverse history of sociology by restoring some of women's contributions to the sociology of social class.

## A Politics of Erasure

In a pioneering work, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998) used the phrase "politics of erasure" to describe a process of canonization that excluded, minimized, or distorted women's early contributions to the discipline of sociology. This process begins with how one person is present to or known in consciousness to another as in face-to-face interactions. Drawing on the work of Schutz (1967, 1973), this knowledge is labeled as the "thou orientation" and once a person is no longer physically present, it becomes a "contemporary relation." When a person dies, he or she becomes a predecessor, and when all who knew that person die, only the artifacts of the predecessor remain. In the case of sociologists these artifacts exist in the form of writings, lectures,

or speeches that are publicly accessible. Such artifacts continue for posterity to the degree that they are deemed important enough to be preserved and passed on in a disciplinary canon. Works are canonized as they are reprinted, cited in publications, and are assigned for student readings.

Some early women sociologists were known and respected by male contemporaries some of whom were collaborators. This was especially true of the women associated with Hull House in Chicago and their male contemporaries at the University of Chicago (Deegan 1988). However, as male sociologists who knew the women in face-to-face interactions or as scholarly collaborators died, they were replaced by a new generation dedicated to making sociology a neutral, value-free science dissociated from social reform and religion that characterized its early history (Williams and MacLean 2012). Without regard to quality, a politics of gender came to dismiss women's work as reformism or social work rather than as scientific scholarship. The fact that much of the work done by women was in settings outside of academia also contributed to another dimension of the politics of erasure—a lack of academic professionalization (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007).

This paper examines primary writings and a smaller number of secondary sources to assess the early contributions of women to the sociology of social class and social inequality. We examine the works of Jane Addams, Charlotte P. Gilman, and Florence Kelley as they formed a distinctive approach to research and action during the Progressive Era (approximately 1890-1920). Addams, Kelley, and Gilman were members of the American Sociological Society (now the American Sociological Association), published in professional journals, including the *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS), and were recognized publicly in their day as sociologists. All three were prolific writers and have been established as sociologists in the recovery works of Deegan (1988, 1991), Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998, 2007), and Williams and MacLean (2015) among others. The works of Addams, Kelley, and Gilman, however, have been excluded or erased from sociology's canon despite the availability, quality and quantity of their publications, including those dealing with social class. These women worked in social settlements rather than in academia and developed a distinctive approach to sociology grounded in the standpoint of women and of the working poor.

## The History of Social Class as Recorded for Posterity

Three authors (Page [1940] 1969; Gordon 1950; and Grimes 1991), covering different time periods, purport to provide a history of the treatment of the concept of social class in American sociology. None of the three authors discusses or references any female sociologist despite the availability of their works. Page (1940) focused on the development of sociology in the United States by examining the treatment of class in the works of six male founders: William Sumner, Lester Ward, Albion Small, Franklin Giddings, Charles Cooley, and Edward Ross. Page concluded that social class was not given high priority in the works of these founders; rather, they gave voice to the "classlessness" of American society (p. 250). Page, nevertheless, serves as a canonical reference as the three women whose work we examine were contemporaries of the "founding fathers" included in his history. Gordon (1950) and Grimes (1991) build on Page's work, thus compounding the incomplete history. Gordon takes up where Page left off. Focusing on the period from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties, Gordon ([1950]1963: 8) asserts that American sociology entered its "second generation." At that time, class was established as a necessary sociological concept but one with little research in progress, a minimum of theoretical consideration, and "practically no recognition of the class framework as a major area of investigation within the discipline." Drawing from Weber's multidimensional treatment of social class, Gordon focuses on conceptual clarification and efforts to measure social class. He recognized what have become the canonized works of Chicago ecologists, the Lynds' Middletown studies, the works of W. Lloyd Warner, and the functionalists, particularly Davis and Moore. In the latest history, Grimes concludes that, while sociologists in the first two generations did give some attention to social class, this concept was not a dominant subject matter (1991:40). He identified the "classics" of Page and Gordon as our "collective knowledge" (1991:19) of social class that he purposed to update to the 1990s with extensive treatment of conflict theory (missing in Page and Gordon) and the work of neo-Weberians and neo-Marxists.

Calvert (1982) gave no recognition to the contributions of women scholars in his chronicle of the concept of class beginning with its "prehistory" and going beyond discipline and geography. Scholarship more recent or limited in scope has added to the history of social class but not to its inclusivity (Gurney 1981, Mouser, 2012, Pease, Form and Rytina 1970). These works also fail to mention any contributions of women sociologists, and

the only black sociologist discussed is W.E.B. DuBois (Mouser 2012). A work by historian Mark Pittenger (2012) focuses on studies of the poor by “down and outer” social scientists, journalists, and novelists who went undercover to investigate and understand the lives of the poor. Such works were similarly labeled “underdog” sociologists by Becker (1967). Pittenger (2012:16-17) did cite works by women, crediting, for example, Jane Addams with early study of the poor and for devising a method for such study.

In sum, the disciplinary history of the strategic concept of social class is largely that told by, and about, male sociologists and reflects agreement that early sociologists in the United States gave little attention to social class before the Lynds’ *Middletown* studies (1929, 1937) where class was treated largely as an occupational division. Late recognition of social class as a real phenomenon is attributed primarily to the belief that the United States was a “classless society” or, if not classless, so open that classes were fluid with upward mobility or evolutionary progress possible for those who earned it. Page ([1940]1969: xi), for example, concluded “the person who speaks of ‘class’ is moving outside the boundaries of American culture, or indicating an allegiance to the ‘foreign’ doctrine of Marxism,” a conclusion Gurney (1981) reinforced. By contrast, some of the women who practiced sociology during its developmental period demonstrated awareness of class differences as well as the systemic structure of inequality that was becoming noticeably solidified in this “classless society.” Their writings reveal not only an awareness of class inequality and potential class conflict but also faith in democracy accompanied by a pragmatic understanding that ideals like free competition and equal opportunity will not close the gap between classes. Their working paradigms combined theory and action aimed at structural interventions such as labor organizing, worker cooperatives, legislative regulation, use of the boycott and consumer buying power.

### **Social Class as Known and Told by Women Founders**

#### ***Jane Addams* (1860-1935)**

Jane Addams is best known as the founder of Chicago’s Hull House, one of the earliest social settlements in the United States. Addams envisioned social settlements as bridging the gap between the classes as residents, largely college-educated and middle class, and the working poor developed common interests and learned from one another. However, Addams quickly came to realize that neighborliness through visitation, cultural exchanges,

and Hull House programs was not enough to change the structure of inequality. As a sociologist, Addams developed an approach to neighborhood research in which she observed the lives of the poor first hand through a method of study combining sympathy and fact, embryonic of what is known today as participant observation and “feminist standpoint theory” (Harding 1987; Hartsock 1983). Addams’ (1895[2004]: 3-23) *Hull-House Maps and Papers* was an early product of this methodology.

It is clear that the Hull House residents who gathered, analyzed, and reported data, drawn from nationality, wage, and density surveys, were aware that they were doing sociology and that their work would be of interest to “the constantly increasing body of sociological students more widely scattered” (Holbrook [1895]2004:11). DuBois’ *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) was modeled after *Maps and Papers* in method and paradigm for change through community action research. Both works preceded *Middletown* (1929) by more than three decades. Yet Gordon ([1950]1963:63-65) credits the *Middletown* studies with turning sociologists’ attention toward social class, thus ignoring the Hull House research and other settlement ethnographies’ (e.g., Woods 1898). Gordon’s omission is particularly obvious given that methodology was a focus of his work and the methodology of *Maps and Papers* is a first and important part of the overall presentation.

Addams and other Hull House residents were early advocates of labor unions and were known for organizing unions and for arbitrating strikes and labor disputes. One of Addams’ earliest references to social class was about “sweaters working in the home sewing industry”<sup>1</sup> because Hull House was located in the midst of “a neighborhood largely given over to the sewing trades.” Women represented a significant portion of these workers, a reason Addams became an early advocate of women’s labor organizing. Addams argued that industrial organization must be part of the general reorganization of society and that “individuals” representing banks and railroads, arguing for “equal opportunity” and “free competition” offered no real solution to urban problems. Addams wrote and spoke

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1 The sweating system was used by a number of industries but especially the clothing industry. The system eliminated the cost of rental space by hiring workers to cut and sew in tenement rooms where they and their children lived. These spaces were crowded, poorly lighted and inadequately ventilated. Sometimes the entire family worked at this trade in the one or two rooms of their dwellings. Diseases were often present in such conditions and were spread in the garments cut and stitched by the sweaters.

of class in Marxian terms, referring to capitalists such as railroad baron George Pullman as “the power holding class.”<sup>2</sup> Unlike Marx, however, Addams believed that settlements and unions could play a role in peaceful arbitration between capitalists and workers. Neither naïve nor a sentimentalist, Addams took a positive, pragmatic view of the future, expecting that labor and capital would ultimately act on “behalf of universal kinship.” She declared class warfare to be a threat when workers and capitalists divide into two camps of “right” and “wrong” (Addams [1895]2004:200).

More than a decade after *Maps and Papers*, at an annual meeting of the American Sociological Society, Addams served as a discussant for a paper by John Commons of the University of Wisconsin. Responding to the question of whether class conflict was increasing and was inevitable in the United States, Addams began with an admission that she could argue both sides. In support of class conflict, and providing evidence from her own experience, she pointed out that during a strike the “fair-minded public” disappears as they take sides, thus increasing the likelihood of polarized class conflict. On the other hand, Addams viewed class conflict as temporary and not likely to increase in the United States. Drawing again on Hull House experience, she pointed to the mixing and integration of immigrants coming to this country to join the labor force where they found commonality due to forced proximity and experience. Addams argued that immigration was a deterrent to class conflict, “bringing in its own education,” as workers with diverse nationalities, religions, and languages find mutuality and brotherhood in the United States. Addams (1908:771) concluded that “It requires less effort to be friends with your employer than . . . with your alien fellow employee. . . .”

Another reason for a lack of class conflict, according to Addams, was the growing role of managers in industry. Neither capitalists nor proletarians, workers saw managers as “in the same box with us” because someone is driving managers. They are held accountable “for the actual condition. . . until it reaches the stockholders” (Addams 1908:772). Here Addams offered an early version of what Erik Wright (1997:254-255) later theorized and labeled as “contradictory class locations,” workers who fill the gap between classes and perhaps prevent a Marxian class polarization. Further, Addams seemed to anticipate the organization of industries that would make the employer subordinate to the corporate trust of

stockholders. Ultimately, Addams (2002) advocated for an inclusive social democracy where the class division between capitalists and proletarians would evolve into a democratic whole as laborers and capitalists came to know and understand each other’s interests. Addams wrote and spoke in an effort to bring sociological facts to bear on solutions to social problems. She was recognized as a sociologist at the time of the publication of *Maps and Papers* in 1895 (Williams and MacLean 2015:96-97) but obituaries and eulogies at the time of her death in 1935 reveal a transitory identity with some referencing her as a sociologist and some as a social worker-humanitarian (Williams and MacLean 2015:87-88). Today, Addams is more likely to be known as a social worker or peace activist than as a sociologist.

Included in the discussion of Commons’ paper at the 1908 ASA meeting, was an addendum provided by Charlotte P. Gilman. Gilman, apparently a member of the audience, but recognized as a sociologist by her peers, made a spontaneous comment deemed important enough to publish. In retrospect, she provided an early gender-defined conceptualization of class by reminding those present that Commons and the discussants had overlooked an important class: “one which I consider to outnumber or at least to equal any of these classes mentioned, that is the women” (Commons 1908:781).

#### **Charlotte P. Gilman (1860-1935)**

Gilman’s many writings are filled with facts, particularly those drawn from history. She was, however, a theorist who believed in the ameliorative power of theory to change the status of women in a gender-stratified society. While today contemporary sociologists take for granted the importance of gender as a social construct and have expanded its significance to intersections of race/ethnicity and class, it was Gilman who first introduced the concept of a gender-defined social class. Author of *Women and Economics* (1898), Gillman was a founding member of the ASA, participated in its meetings and published in the *American Journal of Sociology*. She was a friend of Jane Addams and lived at Hull House for almost a year. Because of works such as that of Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998) and Hill and Deegan (2004), Gilman’s work has been restored to sociology and is beginning to appear in some textbooks on early social thought. However, Gilman (1892) is still best remembered for her short story “The Yellow Wall Paper” in which she describes the plight of a woman losing her mind when confined to bed rest and constrained from enjoying creative activity, ostensibly in the interest of her health.

2 Addams clashed with Pullman during the 1894 railroad workers strike that erupted in violence and left 30 workers dead as Pullman refused to negotiate or accept Addams’ offer of arbitration.

Gilman saw the gender division of labor as being to social structure what the labor-capital division was to Marx. However, Gilman and Marx saw the primary stratification agent differently: for Gilman it was women's lack of paid work and consequent marginalization whereas for Marx it was worker exploitation and alienation from the products of their labor. According to Gilman, "labor is human life" and "the worker is society." Women's unpaid household work was seen as a functional duty without the defining importance of men's paid work, thus relegating women to a class of dependents or parasites (1904:354). Gilman rejected the unidimensional economic concept of social class, contending that the underlying division of labor was based on both sex and economics, what she referred to as the "sexuo-economic relation" ([1898] 1998:30-42). In this relation, women were defined as dependent on men (e.g., fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons) for economic support but were denied, caste-like, economic independence in their own right. Exaggerated sex distinctions were a consequence of women having to rely on their sexuality and gender to survive in an economy that paid men directly and women indirectly or through underpaid sex-segregated work. Women who toiled the longest and hardest were paid the least, an inverse relation between work and pay embedded in the gendered division of labor. Women were "the only species in which the female depends on the male for food, the only species in which the sex relation is an economic relation" ([1898] 1998:3).

For Gilman, the key to social change and equality for women was first and foremost removing barriers to women's paid employment, thus giving women economic independence. She united theory and practice in a plan for the redefinition of home, making it a place for equal empowerment between men and women. Gilman championed women's emancipation giving them the freedom to pursue work of their choice. She was also an advocate of co-parenting and spousal sharing of household responsibilities which she pointed out would require "structural and functional changes that shall eliminate the last of our domestic industries and leave a home that is no one's workshop" (Gilman 1909:605). Gilman believed that the reorganization of household management would come through cooperative organizations like the scientific care for children in professional childcare facilities, cooperative kitchens, and socialized planning in the shared distribution of resources. A Fabian Socialist, she advocated gradual, peaceful social reform over revolutionary changes and favored universal health care and a minimum wage.

### **Florence Kelley (1859-1932)**

Having spent most of her adult life either as a resident of Hull House or of the Henry Street settlement in New York, Florence Kelley was committed to disseminating a theoretical, Marxian understanding of class inequality along with empirical data as an impetus for change. Her contributions to labor reform, the modernization of industry, feminist jurisprudence, and to mainstream sociology have been documented (Timings 2004). Her contributions to social class have not, although Clark and Foster (2006:255) note that "a class analysis ran throughout her work, as she linked the existing conditions of life to the operation of a particular historical socioeconomic system."

Kelley was trained in the social sciences and in law and was as much a sociologist as the men to whom Page devoted his book. Like many of her male peers she studied in both the US and Europe. At the University of Zurich, Kelley studied Marx and other socialist thinkers and came to understand that poverty and misery coexist with affluence when the exploitation of workers is endemic to the economic system.<sup>3</sup> While she was studying in Zurich, Frederick Engels suggested that Kelley write a series of pamphlets for public education focusing on the contents of Marx's *Das Kapital*.<sup>4</sup> According to one of her biographers, the essay "The Need of Theoretical Preparation for Philanthropic Work" ([1887] 1986:91-104) was likely intended as the first of a series of such pamphlets although she subsequently turned her writing from theory and more toward research and reform (Sklar 1986). Before releasing this essay in pamphlet form, in 1887 she gave it a test run in a speech before the New York chapter of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA)<sup>5</sup>. In addition to an elementary lesson in Marxism, she argued that philanthropy would soon be overwhelmed by the growing needs of individuals and families generated by the stratified organization of urban-industrial society. She described the structure of US society as composed of two diametrically opposed classes, "the smaller owning all the necessaries of life, all the means of production...the larger class owning nothing but (its) labor power" ([1887] 1986:91). She

3 In 1885, Kelley wrote the first English translation of Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, first published in 1845 in German.

4 In the late 1800s pamphlets were an inexpensive and expeditious way to get information to the public for education, advertisement, or propaganda.

5 The ACA later became the National Association of University Women.

contended that capitalism creates poverty, disease, and crime as well as philanthropic organizations that treat the symptoms but not the cause of problems. She asked her audience's patience as she explained the concept of surplus value to a group of women likely hearing it for the first time. She explained "labor power" as having the unique quality of creating "surplus value" or profit, that is, the market value of a product beyond the cost of raw material and a worker's labor. Kelley identified this profit as the product of worker exploitation and "this appropriation of surplus-value, this exploitation of the workers, is the source of the poverty of the working class, of its supplying wreckage to need philanthropic attention" ([1887]1986:97). Finally, Kelley admonished her audience that acceptance of the status quo meant ignoring the real problem of an unjust underlying system while focusing on methods of treating the poor.

Kelley's first contribution to the sociology of social class was her theoretical exposition of Marx's doctrine of surplus value. A few years later, as a resident of Hull House, she set about researching the daily lives of the working poor beginning with the sweating system. She worked as a part of the team collecting data from Chicago to be included in a study funded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia* (Wright, Hugo, and Houghton 1894). Subsequently she, along with Jane Addams, oversaw data collection for *Hull House Maps and Papers* (1895). Also of sociological significance were Kelley's reports as Factory Inspector for the State of Illinois, a position held from 1893 to 1897). One of Kelley's biographers treated her factory inspector reports as an extension of her sociological-demographic work for *Maps and Papers* and the *Slums of great cities* collection (Bienen 2014:227-229). Known for her mantra of "investigate, educate, legislate, enforce," she advocated for the collection and use of scientific data to secure legislation that would have lasting impact (Goldmark 1976, Sklar 1995: 252).

Another of Kelley's contributions to social class is evident in *Some Ethical Gains through Legislation* (1905) where she expanded the concept of social class by defining what were typically assumed to be constitutionally insured *individual rights* as constitutionally insured *social rights*. This pivotal use of class as a social category broadens the meaning of rights and civil liberties in a social democracy: the right to childhood, the right to leisure, the right of every citizen to vote, and the right of consumers to purchase goods produced under safe, sanitary, and non-exploitive conditions. Further, she made these social rights integral to the needs and

requirements of a functional, safe, and just society. For example, she made society's stake in the future citizenship of its young contingent on the right to childhood—the right of *all* children to grow and develop free of the exploitive practices of child labor resulting in illiteracy, sickness, malformed bodies, delinquency, and early deaths. She argued that the right to childhood was a social right because "childhood must be sacred to preparation for citizenship" (1905:10). Kelley (1905:111) linked the right to leisure with legislation restricting work hours and regulating work conditions, thus contributing "to the health, intelligence, morality, lengthened trade life, freer choice of home surroundings, thrift, self-help and family life of working people." In writings and speeches, she detailed the destructive effects of industrial labor on workers and families. "Marriages fail to occur, and families fail to be founded, because of fear of poverty...children are not born or come into life cruelly handicapped, because of the effects of industry upon the health of the mothers..." (1914:14). As a correlate of the malpractices of some industries, Kelley cited statistics such as infant mortality (1914:16).

Like Addams and Gilman, Kelley promoted systemic changes to solve social problems but also recognized the importance of incremental changes. For example, she turned attention to child labor as a means of raising awareness about the exploitations of capitalism. She began a campaign for universal healthcare by starting with children, thus opening the door to wider demands for improvements in health care for all. Kelley also mobilized consumers, especially women, to use their buying power by boycotting industries that exploited workers and children for profits. Kelley's writings and speeches were likely why the Federal Bureau of Investigation kept a file on her in which it was noted that she "has been a radical all of . . . her life" (Sklar 1986:14). However, it was also said of her, "Everyone was brave from the moment she walked into the room" (Sklar 1992:19).<sup>6</sup>

### Lessons for Sociologists Today

The works of Addams, Kelley, and Gilman reveal systemic conceptualizations and descriptions of social class as well as methodologies producing empirical correlates documenting the effects of class differences under industrial capitalism. These women's explanations of the socio-economic class system, or the sexuo-economic system, sound more familiar today than their contemporaneous male founders' treatments of social

6 A complete collection of Kelley's papers is now available on line at Northwestern University, [florencekelley.northwestern.edu](http://florencekelley.northwestern.edu)

class as described by Page (1940, 1969). The women observed, researched, recorded, and publicized the plight of women, of child laborers, and of their hard-working neighbors in industries such as sewing, glass making, and meat processing. Of special concern was the plight of working women or, as Gilman pointed out, women's lack of work options and pay parity.

Kelley and Addams believed that unions, legislative action, and statute enforcement would lead to a safe, fair, non-exploitative work environment where laborers would thrive, rise, and share in the American dream. Kelley's use of class as a social category broadened the meaning of rights and civil liberties in a social democracy and blurred private-public boundaries. In speeches and writings, Kelley challenged audiences to organize and to mobilize against the exploits of capitalism as she drew attention to child labor and the absence of living wages for families. Much like Howard Becker's (1967) question, "whose side are we on," Kelley insisted college educated women ask "where do I belong?" and that they abandon the class that was "propping up a system of society which is based upon the exploitation of the working class." Further, she insisted that women, the main providers of philanthropy, decide, "Shall I cast my lot with the oppressors, content to patch and darn, to piece and cobble at the worn and rotten fabric of a perishing society?" ([1887]1986:94).

Kelley envisioned a unique brand of American socialism anchored in social rights; Addams believed in an inclusive and egalitarian social democracy incorporating elements of feminist pragmatism and of today's social interactionism, thus pushing beyond the popular concept of a democracy of individual freedoms. She believed that in every interaction with public officials, with employers and employees, with friends, and with neighbors we are participating in and creating social democracy, ideally a linking of the personal with the public good.

Predating Mills (1959), Addams connected the private troubles of daily life, such as those revolving around family, work, and housing with public issues requiring governmental action. For example, she did not follow the inclination of many to admonish her tenement neighbors to keep cleaner homes. Instead, she followed a more public course by involving her neighbors in garbage collection. By treating public garbage collection as an extension of good housekeeping, Addams demonstrated the need for combined individual and public efforts to insure healthy families and neighborhoods. Similarly, good political representation was associated with better housing and healthier, happier families. Viewing an

injury to one as an injury to all, she believed it necessary that we "turn out for one another" and understand the burdens of others as well as our own (2002:7).

Addams' approach reflects feminist standpoint epistemology that seeks to understand meaning based on the social and material contexts in which people live. Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998:1) referred to Addams and the network of social settlement women who worked with her, often in collaboration with male sociologists at the University of Chicago, as the Chicago Women's School of Sociology. This group occupied a gendered space, outside of academia, producing social science aimed at reforms influenced by feminist values (Deegan 1988; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 1998). Their collective works emphasized the social structural origins of problems. Their emphasis on using jurisprudence, or the science of law, as a medium for social reform was a reflection of their use of praxis combining theory and action. Their approach made class and social inequality a central analytic and research variable, predating by decades the sociology practiced by feminists and critical scholars of class stratification. This approach also contrasted with the early works of scholars such as Ward, Giddings, and Small whose scientific quest for a "value neutral" approach to social phenomena, including social class, was still informed by an evolutionary paradigm (Page [1940]1969). Although the contributions of these women founders to social class was known to their contemporaries, they did not achieve recognition in the field of sociology. Instead, they are found today in the annals of social work or feminist activism.

Gilman's work paved the way for intersectionality research by conceptualizing class as a multidimensional construct and by making gender a central analytic variable of social inequality. She placed all women in a shared class relative to the sexuo-economic relation in the gender division of labor. This view offered greater awareness that workers included women as well as men. Gilman's (1909, 1911) work brought to the forefront women's "invisible labor" and the direct impact of women's unpaid household and family labor on the economy because they freed men to labor for pay ([1898]1998). Gilman conceptualized a restructuring of the major social institutions through cooperative organizations and legal changes going beyond women's enfranchisement. Unlike Marx, Gilman did not advocate for revolutionary or violent resistance. Rather, she saw social change as coming from women's cooperative resistance as they created alternative organizations and promoted the feminist cultural values

of nurturing and growth. Such values, she believed, could potentially correct the course of social evolution based on masculinist tendencies such as aggression, war, and destruction. For Gilman (1911:243), women shared a common core of values capable of altering the course of societal development. However, Gilman believed that, until the fundamental economic (class) system of sex-stratification was altered, women could neither reach their full humanity nor could they realize their power to change the evolutionary course of history.

In contrast to most of their male colleagues, the three women founders used Marx in their conceptualization of social class while also providing a nuanced standpoint treatment. For example, Addams' recognized that managers were located between classes. Gilman insisted on gender as a determinant of class. Kelley, the most Marxian of the three women founders, worked to remove the barriers of inequality through her use of theory, research, and policy legislation—hardly Marxian revolutionary tactics. By working to restructure society, Addams, Gilman and Kelley offered an early form of public sociology (Burawoy, 2005) and their use of social class as an explanatory and analytical variable paved the way for its use in both quantitative and qualitative sociology.

### Omission, Erasure and the Road to Recovery

Women founders such as Addams, Gilman, and Kelley are absent in today's histories of the treatment of social class in American sociology, although during their lifetimes their work received some recognition. For example, Robert Park ([1925]1967:5) often denounced the settlement women as "do-gooders." However, Park also wrote that settlement houses "became outposts for observation and for intimate studies of social conditions in regions of the city that up to that point remained *terra incognita*." Early writers on the development of sociology, House (1936:252-253) and Lundberg, Bain and Anderson (1929:268-269) did recognize women and the settlement movement as leading sociology to "pay some attention to questions relating to social classes." However, by the time Page, Gordon, and Grimes wrote their histories of social class vis-à-vis sociology the women were deceased, their works viewed as advocacy more than value free science, and their professional lives as more suitable for inclusion in social work or philanthropy than sociology. Consequently women's contributions are missing from the histories of the concept of social class and from current text books on stratification or social class. (See, for example, Beeghly 2016; Gilbert 2015; Kerbo 2012; Marger 2014). As

Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007) suggest, women such as Addams, Gilman, and Kelley likely fell victims to a politics of gender, a politics of knowledge, and a politics of professionalization: gender because women lacked power or authority to be taken seriously as scholars; knowledge because their work was defined as reform or activism rather than as part of sociology's history as a science; and professionalization because these women were not working in academic settings.

Jessie Bernard's (1973) sociological autobiography, "My Four Revolutions," offers insight into the erasure of women's contributions to sociology and into their now tentative recovery of that history. The first revolution Bernard discusses began in the 1920s. This revolution was identified as sociology's turn toward quantification and empiricism, the beginning of a journey toward scientific legitimization leaving behind reformers and "do-gooders." In the 1930s a second revolution followed, propelling sociology away from its identification with the University of Chicago, thus opening it to a wider audience and different, but still largely male, stakeholders. Bernard's third revolution (late 1950s to early sixties) marked a turn toward inclusion of sociologists who were not strict value-free scientists, even some who were activists and reformers. The fourth, feminist, revolution surfaced in the late 1960s. This revolution was the most significant for Bernard and for the recent recognition of the contributions of women like Addams, Gilman, and Kelley. What Bernard saw as most significant in the feminist revolution was its potential for expanding sociology "into a genuine science of society by including women as well as men" (1973:777). This feminist revolution paved the way for women's full participation in sociology and for reclaiming their contributions to the discipline.

This process of bringing women back in began with scholarship such as that by Deegan (1988) establishing Addams and the residents of Hull House as early sociologists, and the work of Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998), documenting women's early contributions to social theory. However, to the extent that women founders are recognized for significant contributions to the discipline today, it is likely as add-ons (e.g., tokens) to the history of sociology in introductory texts or theory. Their recognition in specialized areas such as stratification is even more limited. Seltzer and Haldar (2015:37) are among the few recent scholars to recognize Addams and her colleagues for their substantial contributions to the study of social class in their early "empirical descriptions of conditions of human suffering" and in identifying "the sources



of this misery in the structural arrangements of class society. . . .”

The work of Addams, Kelley, and Gilman challenged the status quo and drew attention to the existence of class inequalities. There is ample evidence, however, that their use of socialist and Marxist conceptualizations coupled with their insistence on social reform were barriers to the professionalization of sociology, making them vulnerable to the politics of erasure. The analysis of class, poverty, and social inequality was fundamental to their critical feminist pragmatism and standpoint orientations as was reflected in their written works emphasizing situated knowledge grounded in the experiences of women, children, and the working poor. Their collective works emphasized the social structural origins of problems. Their emphasis on jurisprudence as a medium for social reform was a reflection of their use of praxis, combining theory and action, predating the sociology practiced today by feminist and critical scholars who seek social justice and promote a reform agenda. The loss of these works to the sociological canon and to the diverse histories of sociology should not be minimized. Not only does acknowledging the contributions of these women scholars create a less distorted history of sociology and better defines who sociologists are, but also, by returning to the early roots of sociological practice, we learn from them invaluable lessons and insights regarding the creation of meaningful social change (MacLean and Williams 2012). More than 100 years ago, Florence Kelley ([1887]1986:98) asked the question that should reverberate through academia today: “Where are the teachers, men or women, who have placed themselves outspokenly on the side of the oppressed class?”

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