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From housewife's expertise to the women's movement: Empowerment through Scientific Management during the Progressive Era.

What people often mean by getting rid of conflict is getting rid of diversity, and it is of the utmost importance that these should not be considered the same. (Follett 1924)

Scientific Management is usually studied for what it brought to factories, production and the organization of work: yet, it did much more. Our contribution focuses on how Taylor's ideas were adapted to domestic occupation by overlapping with another forgotten movement promoting household efficiency and primarily led by women: Home Economics and its sanitary science. Drawing on the methodology of intellectual history, we examine the pioneering writings of Ellen Richards, Mary Talbot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Christine Frederick and see how they promoted female vindications and emancipation. If Scientific Management is criticized for its alienating effects, its spillovers were also partially positive during the Progressive Era. Indeed, Scientific Management was envisioned as a normative guide to a new model of society and, surprisingly, as a tool for emancipation and empowerment, meant to provide women with a mean of social liberation and legitimization. Furthermore, the social movements that characterized the Progressive Era became crucial to tackling democratic issues through an empirical lens. Engaging in some of Critical Management Studies major themes, this contribution to management history aims to produce novel insight on Scientific Management and its contribution to domestic work and women' identity in the early 20th century.

Keywords: empowerment – feminism – history - Home Economics – Scientific Management – women.

Introduction: What we remember and what we have forgotten

Today's critical management studies (CMS) are self-critical, drawing on history to reveal what might have been within organizations and what has been forgotten (Chanlat 2013). According to Spicer and Alvesson (2024), CMS are a wide and scattered field, often focusing on overarching themes. The main critiques of these authors are that CMS novel insights are decreasing due to institutionalized practices that limits creativity, establishing one-dimensional characters and avoiding deep engagement with empirical sites or archives.

As an attempt to develop new CMS insights while limiting circularity biases, this article examines a particular variation of Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management and shows how Taylorist ideas were exploited and bent to other ends, particularly in the service of a feminist agenda. This scholarly effort is part of a broader program of analysis and study of the lesser-known variations and nuances of Scientific Management (Agulhon and Mueller 2023a; 2023b; Cummings and Bridgman 2014; Cummings et al. 2017), and in particular of how it was used and exploited far beyond the limits of the organization of wage labor and business management. It deeply impregnated the social and intellectual fabric of the time, but also acquired an intellectual dimension and varied and complex purposes that went well beyond the simple realm of organizing the firm. Scientific Management was intended as a tool of societal organization, fostering efficiency, in the home, in government, in business, and indeed also in the firm. Better organization was meant to impact all sectors of society.

This kind of research in management addresses a call from Critical Management Studies to expose "the 'un-naturalness' (Fournier and Grey 2000) of phenomena and situations by presenting alternatives that, historically, have been effaced by conventional (mainstream) management practice" (Durepos, Shaffner, and Taylor 2021, 456). These authors suggest appealing to historicization and re-engaging with the Conventional Foundations of the discipline. Whereas existing literature is framed around Scientific Management versus Human

Relations (Maclean, Shaw, and Harvey 2022; Petriglieri 2020), two theories searching to increase the productivity of the workplace but differing on workers' representation, the latter advocating that workers should be considered as human beings instead of being compared to machines, we aim to reshape this narrative. This contribution enhances it by providing a different representation of what Scientific Management has been and might have been, and a better understanding of the great figures of management in the Progressive Era.

Our current theme concerns housewives' emancipation that spread through U.S. society. We analyze how housewives harnessed Scientific Management to gain scientific credit, but also how Scientific Management was used to imagine a different society, one in which the organization of labor might further the rights, needs, and emancipation of women. During the Progressive Era, Scientific Management thinking took the triple form of (i) a gospel for efficiency (Hays 1959), (ii) a call for fairness, and (iii) an attempt at social emancipation outside factories. In this sense, Scientific Management was embedded in a context that produced multiple interpretations and meanings of its content, purpose, and ambitions. Their success or abandonment depended on numerous factors that were often contextual to that period of history. Their historical reconstruction thus allows for different, forgotten interpretations of Scientific Management (Eco 2002), and thus a different theorization of a given body of knowledge : Home Economics and its sanitary science. Here we take the term "theory" in a rather broad sense, that refers to "the scholarly work that researchers do in pursuit of making informed knowledge claims. The informed nature of these claims refers to the fact that researchers make a qualified assertion regarding how something can generally be understood or explained, [here] by offering a compelling point of critique that counters past thinking on a topic" (Cornelissen, Höllerer, and Seidl 2021). As highlighted by Cunliffe (2022) or alternatively Weick (1989), theory is an interesting narrative that makes sense to others.

In line with Watt's (2021) interest for this period, we challenge normative understandings of phenomena that are taken for granted and associated with "traditional" management and organization textbooks (Fineman and Gabriel 1994; Jacques 2006). We return to original writings on Home Economics in the 1910s to rethink the foundations of key managerial ideas and concepts (Cummings, Stephen, Bridgman, Todd, and Brown, Kenneth G 2016; Hassard 2012) such as Scientific Management (Paris 2019), efficiency, social issues, and expertise, thus highlighting the emancipatory potential of managerial ideas that has long been forgotten. Indeed, the supposed opposition between Scientific Management and the Hawthorne experiments (Dahl 1947), in line with future Human Relations and motivation role in the workplace, has caricatured Scientific Management, overlooking the ideological role of efficiency at large in U.S. society (White 1999).

This study aims to construct a theoretical framework around Scientific Management shaping in the arena of progressive demands and struggles (Cefai and Huebner 2019) while crossing paths with the Home Economics movement and its sanitary science. Examining the role of Scientific Management in driving social change (Reinecke, Boxenbaum, and Gehman 2022), we analyze its impact on the organization of the domestic sphere and on women's work during the Progressive Era, particularly between the 1890s and the 1910s. This was also a time when women economists were advocating various gender and income distribution arrangements or social contracts, opening up the way for the women's movement (Kuiper 2022).

Philippy (2021) identifies three separate trends in the history of domestic advice in the United States: (1) the pioneering works written between 1820 and 1880, associated, for example, with Lydia Maria Child's *American Frugal Housewife* (1828) and Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home* (1841); (2) the first generation of Home Economists (1890s–1910s), beginning with Ellen Richards and the Home Economics movement; and (3) the second generation of Home Economists (1920s–1940s) initiated by

Hazel Kyrk (1886–1957) with their focus on consumption (Beller and Kiss 1999; Van Velzen 2001; Philippy 2021). Gregg (2018) argues that a growing volume of research describes the “substantial contribution made by writers such as Lilian Gilbreth, Ellen Richards, and Christine Frederick in the longer story of Scientific Management” (Gregg 2018: 11). So, although the movement was denied recognition by social attitudes of the time and then by feminist critiques of the 1970s and 1980s (Ehrenreich and English 1979; Matthews 1987; Wright 1980), it is now attracting scholarly interest.

The present contribution provides a narrative of how Scientific Management combined with Home Economics and the consequences thereof for women’s social condition and for feminist ideas. More specifically, we highlight the extent to which this momentum generated efficiency and evolution-based calls for empowerment and emancipation, while the managerial approach was spreading through U.S. society and renewing the scientific underpinnings of economics (Agulhon and Mueller 2023a). In discussing Ellen Richards, Mary Talbot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Christine Frederick, we attempt to show that the development of managerial tools was specifically thought of as an alternative to the market system and to free competition. Instead, they were proposing both the famous “visible hand” discussed by Chandler (1987) and a moral and political alternative capable of producing models of individual behavior that stood clearly apart from the selfish and rational *homo œconomicus*.

Our article unfolds as follows. First, we describe the concepts and historical context of Scientific Management and Home Economics and explain why the traditional household came in for criticism during the Progressive Era. As a major element of this introductory session, we explain our methodology, based on intellectual history and complementary science, and how it provides a valuable interpretation of theoretical contents. Second, we illustrate with a narrative how domestic organization, conceived and organized following the dictates of Scientific Management, was understood as an effective method for improving the individual’s condition.

Third, we demonstrate through this same narrative how this new domestic organization became a normative goal for social improvement and transformation, particularly through the switch from production to consumption and through enhanced standardization and household expertise. Finally, we expand on the benefits of this journey for housewives, women, and society at large through early feminist emancipatory projects and its connections with social work and science.

Context and method

Scientific Management and the human being

Let us first briefly summarize Scientific Management as it is often thought of and remembered in scholarly manuals and texts. Taylor's approach is based on several propositions for the factory floor. First, Taylor's one best way is a search for the best method to carry out a task, based on the scientific determination of times and operating modes and their prescription by management (work planning, complete written instructions, formal codification). To do so, the recruitment of the individual best suited to the task, through a careful study of each worker's character, temperament, and performance is necessary. An ongoing training, monitoring, and control of personnel allows to maintain performance through time. Meanwhile, a wage system proportional to performance maintains workers' motivation, as rational agents consciously seeking to maximize their monetary gains. So, each task is assigned an execution time with a piece-rate wage system. Finally, the rigorous separation of tasks between those who design (in planning and organization offices) and those who execute (in workshops), or vertical division of tasks, is designed to strictly distinguish between those who perform and those who define efficient operating processes (Meier 2017).

Taylor emphasized social harmony and welfare as the desired outcomes of his approach, especially in the closing chapter of *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Taylor 1911). He firmly believed that the interests of managers and workers could align when it came to organizing production. He suggested a shift in mindset whereby managers and workers would collaborate to enhance the added value rather than fight over its distribution. Taylor's primary goal in his work was to identify the conditions enabling managers and workers to work together effectively, leading to increased prosperity and long-term social harmony. Taylor felt it was feasible to establish mutual trust between employers and employees (Plane 2019).

Despite its social-related intentions, Scientific Management faced criticism for its dehumanizing and alienating impact, as well as for the perceived ridiculousness of its pursuit of a single ideal method called "the one best way" (Braverman 1998). Indeed, there were long-standing accusations of a negative image of human nature being portrayed by Taylor's key works. The main accusation is that Taylor fell for an overly mechanistic, overly inhumane image of human nature at work. Such criticism has been persistently voiced ever since Taylor published his works on Scientific Management: see for instance Casey (2002), Clawson (1980), Morgan (1989), Jones (2000), and Warner (1994). It is worth noting that the latter two were associated with the Tavistock Institute which has developed the Human Relations perspective in Management. At that time, Human Relations tempered instrumentality with a subjugated humanism, suiting the stately aspirations of elite, paving the way for the slow rise of normative control (Petriglieri, 2020). Moreover, Taylor's portrayal of human nature has recently come in for fresh criticism of its economic origins and methodological confusion (Wagner-Tsukamoto 2008).

Following Wren and Bedeian's lead (2020), a more in-depth analysis based on management theory reveals that Scientific Management involved more than Taylor's work. Besides, Taylor's principles evolved into a widespread movement that extended beyond his individual influence

(Agulhon and Mueller 2023b). Among Taylor's advocates, "Franck and Lillian Gilbreth actively participated in Scientific Management spreading with books and by responding individually to all the letters Taylor had received after the serialized publication of *The principles of Scientific Management* in the *American Magazine*" (Wren and Bedeian 2020: 136). Yet, Lillian Gilbreth's personal agenda also differed greatly from Taylor's. She combined marriage and even a growing family with assisting her husband and submitted a first thesis on "The Psychology of Management" in 1912 to the University of California. As academic conditions prevented her from graduating, she wrote a new dissertation on Waste Elimination in Teaching to complete her PhD at Brown in 1915. Her early bridging work between applied psychology and management as an academic discipline led her to study leadership, its different styles and its apprenticeship (*ibid.*).

Scientific Management simply did not stop at the factory gates, and was indeed regarded by many of its creators as a tool for social reform and optimization, understood in a broader sense than labor performed in a firm : a Gospel for Efficiency (Hays 1959). This general call was including the organization of the labor market, of non-wage labor, the regulation of optimal resource utilization and of competition and even urban development. While optimal organization certainly is involved in each of those subcases, the term "optimal" should be understood both in a positive sense of increasing production and decreasing waste, and in a normative sense of building a better society through better organization. This movement aimed to revive the American Dream in response to the exploitative management practices of influential figures such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, Jim Fisk, John D. Rockefeller, and Andrew Carnegie, the so-called "robber barons", who were widely perceived by public opinion as traitors to the spirit of the American dream (despite more nuances historical portraits, see for instance (Harvey et al. 2011)).

Scientific Management is frequently contrasted with the Human Relations approaches (Nyland, Bruce, and Burns 2014; Bruce 2006), mostly by suggesting that Scientific Management depicted human nature as fundamentally egoistic, whereas the Human Relations approach added psychological depth through motivation lever. While this may be a relevant criticism for Taylor's application of Scientific Management to the firm, we aim to show that it does not apply to the entire movement. Although the alienating aspect of repetitive and mechanical work promulgated by Taylor is the main criticism of his approach, it is important to notice that Scientific Management was conceived, in the context of Home Economics, as an escape route and precisely as a solution to the alienation of repetitive work. In this sense, this particular variation of Scientific Management can itself be seen as a first step in taking social and psychological aspects into account in the organization of work.

The context and ideas of Home Economics

Scientific Management as developed in the United States was a new approach to management at the time, advocating the most rational possible use of the resources allocated to production. The scientific dimension of this approach lay in the fact that it considered a systematic and analytical study of work and production processes to be necessary. The efficiency part of Scientific Management sought to implement best practices and to identify and eliminate waste in all areas of society, bringing about mechanical, economic, social, and personal improvement. As a result, enhanced Scientific Management promised effective and dynamic management that would be rewarded by economic growth.

Meanwhile, the idea promulgated by many figures in the Home Economics movement was that the application of specific organizational standards, grounded in Scientific Management for the most part, would make it possible to reduce both the physical and time burdens shouldered by housewives—women's household drudgery (E. H. Richards 1900; Goldstein 2012). This lighter burden would free up time for alternative tasks, ranging from better care of the family, with the

raising of and caring for (healthy) children, to women being available to join the labor market, not to mention the moral issues involved. But both the pragmatic and the moral aspects were somehow double-edged (Patten 1912). Greater investment in the management of the family (and not just in task-execution) might have emancipatory effects for housewives. Nevertheless, there was doubt about whether the typical Taylorist optimization of tasks and motions would have any effect at the small scale of the household, and whether managerial methods were not a strategy to keep women at home by lending their tasks an aura of prestige (Mitchell 1912; Walker 2003).

The projected effects of Scientific Management of the household were largely expected by many sponsors of Home Economics to be in the interests of the individual housewife, promoting housewifery as a noble calling for middle-class women and so proving beneficial from an individual point of view. Yet Scientific Management of the household was also expected to have positive spillover effects on society as a whole, making the individual organization of the house a social affair yielding a collective benefit (Abel 1890). However, some advocates of Home Economics also promoted racist and eugenic ideas through their quest for hygiene, nutrition, and cleanliness (Egan 2011; Williams 2019).

Ironically, while many of Richards's early reform initiatives sought to improve the standard of living of her socioeconomic peers, that is to say middle-class families, by the late 1890s, her work mostly improved lower conditions (Shapiro 1986; Goldstein 2012). For instance, the death of Mary Schenck Woolman's father (1882) and the illness of her mother and husband led her to sell her family's property and move to New York in 1891. Mary Schenck Woolman took work as a copy editor, then being gifted as a seamstress, she found a job as a sewing teacher in a college (1892) despite having no official qualifications. Between 1895 and 1897 she obtained a BS degree and, in 1902, opened the Manhattan Trade School for Girls. Subsequently, she became a lecturer in many colleges and universities and took an interest in Richards's work and

Home Economics Movement. While she is known for her handbook—*Textiles: A Handbook for the Student and the Consumer* (Woolman and McGowan 1913)—highlighting the progressive switch from production to consumption in Home Economics through the art of spending money (Cohen 2003), she was also in favor of women’s suffrage and called for it at the 1914 Home Economics conference (Goldstein 2012).

The stereotypical image of Home Economics belies the reality that it was a diverse movement. Its members had ambitious goals for themselves, not only as teachers, but also as reformers and professionals (*ibid.*). But, beyond this revisionist posture shared by many feminists since the 1990s (Stage and Vincenti 1997; L. A. Jones 1989; Levitt 2002), we would like to highlight a complementary potential that has been overlooked: the now forgotten time of great promise felt by these women and men at the Home Economics annual conferences during the Progressive Era, and its emancipating historical traces (Rowlinson 2004; Mills, Weatherbee, and Durepos 2014).

This paper focuses on four different figures who contributed to the interweaving of Home Economics and Scientific Management: Ellen Richards, Mary Talbot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Christine Frederick. These four women applied Scientific Management to the domestic sphere, by building on the general Gospel for Efficiency (Hays 1959), and departed from Taylor’s, and later Lilian Gilbreth’s, views on some aspects. They particularly broke away from Taylor concerning the role of the expert, but also with regard to the planning and personalization of work, and by suggesting educational and class-awareness to be achieved through a modern organization. Those differences with Taylor show that Scientific Management could not be reduced to an instrument aimed at incrementing productivity, attached to a single father figure, but that it was instead a source of empowerment for women at a specific time in the history of Scientific Management.

Methodology: Intellectual history as a form of complementary science

With the historical turn on Management and Organization Studies, history has been shaped into a reflexive approach fueled by Critical Management Studies (Cooke 1999). “The historic turn in organization studies (Booth and Rowlinson 2006; Maclean, Harvey, and Clegg 2016; Maclean et al. 2021) enables the study of the past and its histories from the perspectives of different ontologies” (Tureta, Américo, and Clegg 2021, 1020). This trend has not concerned management studies alone. The history of physics, chemistry or economics also recognize that historical knowledge allows us to consider forgotten methodological difficulties, theories, and or models that have been abandoned and that appear to be relevant again.

This historical turn connects directly with the practices of intellectual history that we adopt in this paper. Intellectual history considers that texts should not be interpreted solely according to their veracity, that is, with respect to what an author states, but also according to what an author accomplishes because of that text (Skinner 2002). In this sense, the context in which a given text is produced is constituent of its interpretation, and the meaning accorded to it depends on an author’s intended use of that text. Scientific Management is in this sense usually studied and understood as Taylor’s work. It is often read in a decontextualized way and its meaning is thus transferred into the present, or at least into a supposedly view from nowhere and “no-when.” This kind of interpretive effort, that we may call exegetical, considers the veracity and meaning of texts to be related to their meaning and semantic content. Intellectual history clearly disentangles itself from such a view: the analysis of some of Taylor’s contemporaries—here we are interested in particular in the reappropriation of his ideas by some paradigmatic feminine figures—is to be understood by means of what those women said, but also by means of what they did (or attempted to do) through these texts. This interpretation departs radically from exegetical work, and constitutes an approach in terms of intellectual history (Brisset 2023). It

requires that their texts be studied in conjunction with their political, social, and human activities.

Some further historiographical aspects characterize our approach: first of all, knowledge is not necessarily the prerogative of any one individual (Kuukkanen 2012), but is often held by a group; this seems to us to be the case with Scientific Management, which is all too often reduced to Taylor's contribution alone, but was actually developed by and was a constituent part of a complex social context, that of American progressivism (Leonard 2017), and included contributions from a wide array of authors.

Second, our approach, although they share several points in common, differs from actor-network inspired theories such as ANTihistory (Alcadipani and Hassard 2010; Tureta, Américo, and Clegg 2021) that attempt to transport the past into the present. We search instead for ways of interpreting the meaning of theories and models, in this specific case the rational organization of work theorized by Scientific Management, through the analysis of what ideas did at the time of their invention. Ideas, in intellectual history, are not pure intellectual products, but are very much entangled in the social context in which they spread; their meaning at the moment of their invention is partly related to how ideas are mobilized and used for specific social and political purposes. By reconstructing ideas in context, we reinterpret models and theories in light of their intellectual history. This reflection has the vocation of suggesting areas of application and ways of accompanying the institutions and needs of contemporary society, due to the alternative interpretations thus found, which remains in line with ANTihistory goals in the end. Scientific Management was a theory that acted and performed in the surrounding world and society; reciprocally the surrounding society was influenced by the ideas embedded in the theory of Scientific Management: that theory certainly impacted on the organization of the firm, but its influence was much more widespread (Cummings *et al.*, 2017; Wren and Bedeian, 2020). Considering Scientific Management's influence outside the firm frees it from the most

commonplace criticisms with which it is usually associated. This does not mean that Scientific Management is therefore exempt from criticism, but rather that the critical analysis that needs to be done is radically different from a contemporary point of view.

In this particular work, we have based our arguments on first and second-hand published texts, which we read through the contextual elements of the actions called for and the sociopolitical positions defended by their authors. Even if the intellectual history of the sciences does not necessarily have the sole vocation of being in the service of those sciences, we believe, with Chang (H. Chang 2004; 2008; 2016), that it is possible to constitute a laboratory of counterfactuals through historical analysis, capable of illustrating ways in which science has been thought of in the past, and therefore to understand forgotten models whose validity is contextual to a set of practices and intentions. Such a study, by showcasing past practices and interpreting theories and models in light of those practices, produces what we might call a *complementary science*, that is, a set of scientific interpretations that were relevant in the past (Mueller 2020) and enhance our scientific understanding in the present. We do not think that just any interpretation of a theory is valid, thus eschewing the most radical forms of relativism; but neither do we think that a given theory or model is trivially true or false independently of its historical context. Certain interpretations and certain theories explain some phenomena better than others; yet other theories may be preferable for explaining other sets of phenomena. Complementary science takes a pluralist approach; it does not consider theories and their interpretations as true or false (i.e., as ontologies), but it simply evaluates their worth pragmatically, enabling us either to use several theories or to use several interpretations of the same theory, depending on the applications we wish to make. Through a complementary science approach, analysis in terms of intellectual history provides a richer set of alternatives for reading and understanding the present. In this sense, enhancing Scientific Management theory with new interpretations means that the theory must be used in a more relevant way.

A complementary science approach usually results in the construction of narratives, making it highly compatible with qualitative data coding methodologies. In order to build a narrative consistent with the ideas of the time, we have drawn on Gioia's methodology (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). For example, the aggregated dimension Household as a workplace is based on several concepts from Home Economics figures dealing with domestic work, that can be retraced in two manuals for housekeepers of the Sanitary science club: Home Sanitation (Richards, 1904) and House Sanitation (Talbot, 1912). Both share concerns about the situation of the house with untrained and exhausted housewives (1st-order concept: household burden) starting to live in cities, the necessary care of the cellar (1st-order concept: resource wastage), plumbing and ventilation (1st-order concepts: cleanliness and house sanitation). However, the latter starts by empowering the housewife and by promoting sanitary science with euthenics (2nd-order concept), that is to say the study of the improvement of human functioning and well-being through his living conditions and efficiency at large (2nd-order concept), legitimizing the study of the home.

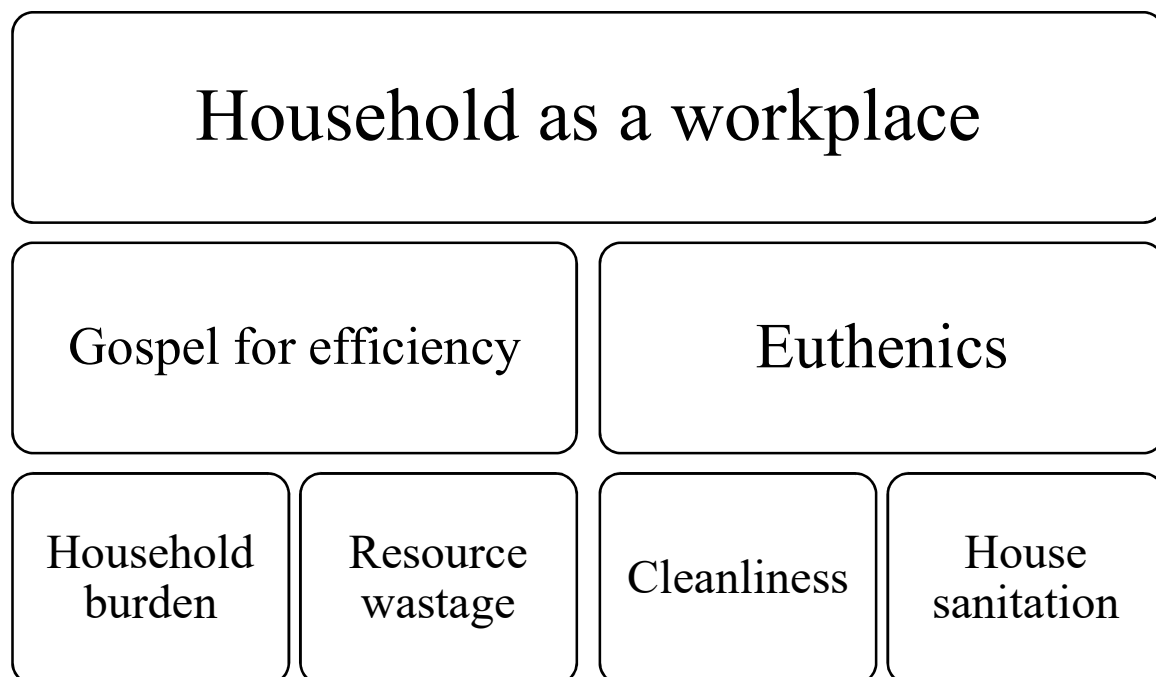


Figure 1: sample of Gioia's coding on the aggregated dimension Household as a workplace

Our first-order concepts were provided by first-hand Home Economics literature such as Richard's "household drudgery," "rational resource allocation," or Gilman's "typical female care" (dull, repetitive, self-destroying) or "unfair distribution of the burden of work." All first-order concepts were attached to three second-order themes linked to Scientific Management presented in the introduction: (i) a gospel for efficiency (Hays 1959), (ii) a call for fairness, and (iii) social emancipation outside the home. The aggregate dimensions obtained structured the following narrative: women's labor and consumption, the household as a workplace and domestic expertise enhancement, and women as public actors.

Scientific Management's journey in the household

Why change? An inefficient organization

The productive system of household economics proved highly inefficient—this was the argument often advanced by proponents of the rational organization of labor—to the point of portraying women as excessively preoccupied with spending and as economic parasites (Goldstein 2012). This perception of inefficiency was generally expressed in terms of productivity at work, the quantity but also the quality of work done, and it was seen both as a waste of individual time and effort and as a waste of the moral and material resources of society as a whole. For instance, Charlotte Perkins Gilman made this argument in her *Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (Gilman 1898). Gilman was a well-known writer, social reformer, prominent feminist figure (Allen 2009; Hill 1980) and pragmatist pioneer (Cefai 2023). She affirmed that men and women were substantially equal both cognitively and emotionally. She then denounced the unfair distribution of the burden of work, emphasizing the dull, repetitive, and soul-destroying aspects of typical female chores. Although the issue of monotony in the everyday lives of women, and mothers in particular, was already central to *The Yellow Wallpaper* and was further explored in

other later works of fiction, Gilman here set about a more properly sociological and psychological analysis of the problem, that she would later fictionalize in the novel *Herland* (L.-W. Chang 2010). The inefficient behavior of women was not, Gilman pointed out, a consequence of some natural or biological condition, but of the absence of intellectual stimulation and therefore of motivation with respect to tedious tasks and occupations, of an oppressive form of domestic confinement, and of the enormous difficulty in escaping from a condition of economic and psychological subjugation to men. The analogy between slavery/servile labor, and the female condition was clearly present in Gilman's work:

Women became, practically, property. They were sold, exchanged, given and bequeathed like horses, hides, or weapons. They belonged to the man, as did the house.
(Gilman 1910, 13)

The analogy between slaves and women has a long history (Stevenson 2012), and Gilman's argument is in many ways reminiscent of the way anti-slavery economists—Smith (1976), Condorcet (2009), Sismondi (Sismondi 2012, 522–34)—described the condition of servile labor and the inefficiency of slavery economically, particularly with regard to work incentives and the ability to pursue one's own interest, in what is in essence a classic liberal argument (see also Steiner and Oudin-Bastide 2015). Women, like slaves, were neither intrinsically motivated, lacking freedom to choose, nor encouraged by market competition. And yet Gilman did not endorse competition as a value to be pursued: rather she believed in collaboration and the organization of labor, as she clearly stated in *Herland* in which she also lambasted the consequences of unbridled competition (L.-W. Chang 2010). While antislavery economists relied on the market mechanism to organize and synchronize the division of labor, Gilman, who was skeptical about the benefits of free trade and competition, looked to the new tools of management.

However, women were not slaves and their economic wealth depended on their marital status. Gilman thus answered the argument that considered wealth as an indirect wage for motherhood: she pointed out that rich women worked less than poor women. Therefore, wealth-through-marriage was inversely proportional to the amount of work done, and made for an inefficient wage system. Moreover, women were not given the opportunity to choose a job that suited their talents and they thus simultaneously suffered from an inefficient division of labor and were denied the motivation to be had from pursuing an occupation congruent with their talents. Not every woman, Gilman asserted, was a gifted cook, maid, or mother. Nothing in the female condition implied a natural propensity for all these callings simultaneously.

Not until "The woman" in "the home" can everywhere manifest a high degree of skill as a doctor, as an architect, as a barber, as anything, can she manifest that high degree as a cook (Gilman 1910, 65).

Moreover, Gilman pointed out that greater female emancipation, a substantial enfranchisement from their subservient condition, "the restoration of economic freedom to the female" (Gilman 1898, 173), would also make them better companions, "improve motherhood" (ibid.) and ultimately prove an optimal choice from the male perspective as well, not just economically but also morally.

What should change? Organizing women's labor

In the late 1890s, Ellen Richards realized that the professionalization of household knowledge was pervading the National Household Economics Association created in 1893 during the World's Fair in Chicago. Going further with the improvement of the work done by domestic servants, Richards had in mind the establishment of a nationwide network for the development of research into and the teaching of Home Economics to women (Philippy 2021). Then, "Richards was invited by Annie G. Dewey (1850–1922) and Melvil Dewey (1851–1931) to the

Lake Placid Club, a resort they had founded in upstate New York, just across Lake Mirror. The Deweys organized this resort as a ‘cooperative summer and winter home’ for its members [...] This conference was the beginning of a series of annual conferences that became known as the ‘Lake Placid Conferences Cycle’ (1899–1908), which proved foundational for the Home Economics movement” (ibid.: 387–88).

What uniquely and originally characterized Gilman’s and her fellows’ views of the intertwining of Scientific Management and Home Economics was the question of organization that was proposed for traditionally female work. The organizational proposal was structured according to the dictates of Scientific Management, the optimal organization of the work space, the elimination of unnecessary motion, the division of tasks into several stages, and the rationalization of work, but with aspects that broke away from factory organization, and did so in ways that enabled particular forms of empowerment. Christine Frederick as well had her views on labor organization

I believe that that woman’s liberation from drudgery lies not so much in tools as in her own improved methods of work. (Frederick 1914, 41)

The organization of work was the area in which the different ideas put forward by proponents of rational work organization diverged most from one another, usually highlighting the different normative intentions they pursued, yet a need for better organizing domestic work was widely shared.

Gilman suggested that the division of labor according to the individual’s specific talents led not only to increased productivity but also to improved product quality. Specifically, properly trained cooks who would centralize production and cook for several families would be able to prepare healthy and balanced meals suited to people’s dietary needs. Gilman pointed out that tastes were fundamentally based on culture and socialization, while factors such as nutritional intake could be defined independently of individual tastes, and it was in this respect that the

rationalization and division of labor would be most advantageous. In a similar vein, Ellen Richards's *The New England Kitchen* struggled considerably with the issue of individual tastes and how they influenced consumption (see Soudan, Philippy, and Maas 2023). If women's dependence on their husbands drove them to favor food that met men's specific tastes, trained cooks with sound nutritional knowledge could instead opt for healthier choices based on scientific knowledge rather than on contingent tastes. Gilman suggested in sum that where the organization of work was to some extent planned, it became possible to regulate individual behavior and pursue public health goals: Gilman's guidelines were scientifically informed, and the scientific organization of work provided a form of societal control where paternalistically planned rational decisions (such as desirable-because-healthier) would replace individual culturally-driven choices (such as desirable-because-tasty).

The organization of work also had economic repercussions that Gilman was able to appropriate as potential sources of empowerment. In particular, she underlined how isolated housewives were simply subject to the law of the market, with very little bargaining power over prices, whereas cooks who prepared huge quantities of food in organized structures would also have greater negotiating power over prices at the time of purchase.

« Only organization can oppose such evils as the wholesale adulteration of food; and woman, the house-servant, belongs to the lowest grade of unorganized labor » (Gilman 1898, 230)

Thus, organized female labor would entail a certain market power that individual women simply did not wield. The issue of contractual power and the importance of adopting optimal behaviors capable of dealing with large corporations, monopolies, and cartels was an important argument for the scientific organization of work.

[Educating consumers](#)

Gilman was not alone in pursuing this line of argument. For example, in her *New Housekeeping: Efficiency Studies in Home Management* (1914), Christine Frederick underlined the attitude of responsibility that was required of consumers with respect to the new market characterized by ruthless competition and the emergence of advertising and branded goods. Frederick insisted on the importance of educating consumers: for instance, consumers should not always buy at the lowest price. Extremely low prices were symptomatic of selling at a loss, an economic practice that ultimately damaged consumers and promoted unfair competition. Frederick believed that well-informed and economically shrewd women should be aware of those practices and would boycott products sold unfairly. Brands were another important topic of “market awareness.” Brands, Frederick argued, were a “signature” that proved the quality of goods. Only merchants confident in the quality of their products would “sign” them, and therefore a brand was also a quality label. Women had to recognize and understand the role of brands, and of commercially “fair” practices more generally. Consumers who were responsible and aware should also encourage local retail businesses, possibly favoring quality and convenience over low costs.

The whole aim of the woman consumer, as was pointed out before, is to insist and maintain standards in her purchasing. She can do this by insisting on one price; by understanding her position in the price maintenance situation, by patronizing the local dealer, and by thoroughly understanding the point of trademarks and brands and the evil of substitution. (Frederick 1914, 220)

Managing consumption therefore made it possible to manage consumers and, using tools of rational organization, it was possible to educate and direct consumers toward specific political goals (see also Philippp (2021)). In Frederick’s case, access to the market share represented by women proved to be functional in transforming that market share into an instrument of political action, similar to a workers’ union, through educational tools and awareness of the power that

women exercised as consumers. Like the trade unions, this political and cultural power did not belong to the individual woman, but to women as a socio-occupational category. Although on her own the housewife could do little against the market, housewives collectively wielded substantial bargaining power. This, however, could only be expressed through joint action, which needed managerial tools for it to be properly coordinated.

Scientific Management applied to the household political implications

Organizing women's work places

Ellen Richards's *Euthenics* (1910) was probably the most structured set of pragmatic proposals which, drawing on ideas of managerial organization, advocated a radical revision of domestic work. The main objective of euthenics was to improve the sanitary conditions in which U.S. citizens worked and lived, through cleaner domestic spaces, optimal ventilation, improved quality of food, and education. Richards imagined the creation of ideal housing units, structured to be healthy but also to allow a division of tasks, especially domestic ones.

There is a virgin field for the capitalist who wishes to use some millions for the prosperity of the country to build a short trolley line to a district of sanitary houses with gardens, playgrounds, entertainment halls, etc.; such a village to contain, not long blocks, but both separate houses and tenements from two rooms up, possibly several stories high, where the elders may have light and air without the confusion of the street. Dust and noise will be eliminated. There should be a central bakery and laundry, and, most important of all, an office where both men and women skilled in sanitary and economic practical affairs may be found ready to go to any home and advise on any subject. (1910: 85)

Although the question of women's emancipation was not the central subject of Richards's work, she did not fail to observe how a different organization of domestic life implied an improvement in the condition of women and required their active participation.

Probably no one movement has been so powerful as this in convincing educators of the efficiency of trained women as factors in sanitary progress. In no other direction is the outlook for social service greater. The woman must, however, be more than a willing worker; she must be educated in science as a foundation for sanitary work. (1910: 151)

This type of social change, accompanied by other types of organized planning such as urban schemes for healthy housing, was indispensable for Richards and was to be implemented in the name of collective well-being, with a dose of paternalism of which she seemed fully aware.

The protection of the man against himself, and of his wife and child against his ignorance or greed of him, is one of the twentieth century tasks yet hardly begun. (1910: 184)

Yet, rather than compulsion, Richards's preferred tools of social intervention were persuasion and education mediated by the role of the expert and by the rhetorical force of the new science of efficiency. The role of experts seemed to be a compromise between the need to persuade and the need to abide by the will of the majority, by purchasing power, and by democratic principles, as developed extensively in her posthumous work *The Cost of Cleanness* (1914).

Whereas Richards placed the emphasis on macroscopic organizational aspects such as the housing unit, urban planning, or group work planning, Christine Frederick introduced managerial techniques explicitly inspired by Taylor's work into the structuring of individual domestic tasks. Two epistemic values dominated Frederick's thinking: reliability and standardization. These were properties of the practice adopted (therefore embodied in the final product of domestic work), of the place where the practice was adopted, and of the body of the person who chose to adopt that practice. Put otherwise: it was not only the end product that had

to be standardized and reliable, but also the work place and the workers themselves. Yet, although reliability and standardization were epistemic values, when they related to an object or a place, they also had a moral counterpart when they related to a person. In their embodiment in concrete individuals, therefore, standardization and reliability had a double value that was both objective and material and subjective and moral.

In addition to the typical Taylorist work organization tools such as arranging objects in an optimal way or reducing unnecessary motion, Frederick insisted on work planning. The work had to be planned in advance and divided into clearly defined tasks to be performed in a pre-established order. Planning had to take place with a mind refreshed and in calm circumstances to avoid errors and inefficiency, whereas the physical work could be carried out even when fatigue set in. These attitudes—planning, optimizing, organizing—were physical but also mental attitudes, requiring a specific kind of psychological self-discipline. Frederick insisted on the importance of accepting and endorsing the new kind of organization as a different way of thinking and not only of acting. Yet, there was a clear component of self-awareness and empowerment in this endorsement:

Efficiency would be a sorry thing if it simply meant a prisonlike, compulsory routine of duties. But it doesn't, please believe me. Its very purpose is more liberty, more leisure, a shrewder sense of values, and the elimination of wasted energy. (Frederick 1914: 195)

Scientifically managing a house might of course include scientifically managing house servants. Frederick suggested that maids could be directed and their work improved using Scientific Management techniques. She insisted that the optimal management of domestic work made it possible to increase its efficiency in quantitative terms and perhaps above all in qualitative terms. This not only allowed for a better outcome from the employer's perspective but also for less tiring work for the employee. Frederick underlined how the employee should be rewarded for the physical work done but also for the switch in psychological attitude both in

economic terms (wages) and with rewards such as additional holidays, more free time, and possibly a partial collaboration in planning and optimizing the work which would make the maid into a partner and enhance her self-esteem. The self-discipline of scientific organization of Home Economics should be rewarded at every level of implementation.

Experts and executors

The role of the expert and planner was sharply separated from that of the material executor in Scientific Management as Taylor envisioned it. This was only partially true in its application to domestic work and the role of the expert in work planning and preparation was one of the most original aspects of the interrelationship between Scientific Management and Home Economics. Gilman pointed out, for instance, how the productive structure of the house, the way in which it was organized, had always escaped the dynamics of the market, and that whereas the way of organizing production outside the domestic sphere had evolved and was structured through the division of labor into numerous tasks that enabled each individual to become an “expert” in their field, this had not happened at all with regard to domestic work. It was still carried out following a “primitive” structure (Gilman used and sometimes overused evolutionary concepts), from which the division of labor and therefore the figure of the expert was absent. Being “experts” went hand in hand, according to Gilman, with having a social role and prestige, and was therefore indispensable for women’s emancipation.

Not until “The woman” in “the home” can everywhere manifest a high degree of skill as a doctor, as an architect, as a barber, as anything, can she manifest that high degree as a cook. (Gilman 1910: 65)

This was also the line followed by Richards, who emphasized how becoming an expert necessarily implied intellectual stimulation and social recognition.

She [the woman trained in eutherics] is encouraged in the using of all mechanical and scientific appliances, is introduced to the means of mental growth; but, best of all, she is given the stimulus of social recognition. (Richards 1910: 201)

It also required specific education, as well as the right to escape the house and the limitations traditionally imposed on women, and to have access the labor market. Gilman made this point more than any.

Frederick, who was the one to draw most on Taylor's ideas, was also the one who presented an original vision of the role of the expert. Unlike Taylor, Frederick did not separate the person who executed the tasks and the person who planned them. Planning and execution were the responsibility of the same person, the woman, even if at clearly separate times. This was no small matter, since the role of the expert in Taylor's thinking was specific to educated people and carried prestige which was not accorded to the worker, a mere executor who was often portrayed as not very intelligent and interested in earnings alone. Frederick instead described the role of the woman-expert as a harbinger of emancipation and prestige. However, the difference did not stop there: Frederick suggested that the standardized work space had to be customized. Every woman, in carrying out domestic tasks, needed different arrangements and benefitted from personalized planning. In short, for every mind and body, standardization should give way to customization, with a personalized planning task that required a unique and individual analysis.

The efficient tool surrounds the housekeeper on every hand, but it depends largely on the housewife herself whether she needs it or not; whether she understands on what principles it is made; whether it is of suitable shape, design, and material for the particular purpose; whether it is comfortable to use, easy to clean, and a paying investment for her particular family; whether she takes care of it and uses it intelligently (ibid.: 82).

Women were therefore decision-makers, planners, and responsible for wise and efficient budget management. Frederick suggested that it was not only for the woman-of-the-house but also for the service women to contribute to the planning and management of domestic work, and therefore to take on the role of experts.

Under Scientific Management there is no arbitrary commanding officer there is “team work” of equals. (ibid.: 159)

Indeed, Frederick suggested that men, too, could make valuable contributions although exclusively in the role of experts. This implied, at least in part, men’s co-responsibility for successfully applying Scientific Management to domestic work (ibid.: 203).

However, the advocates of Home Economics and their promotion of the housewife’s expertise, came in for much criticism. This was one of the reasons for the disenchantment with Lilian Gilbreth, Frank Gilbreth’s young widow (Graham 1999). Like Frederick, Gilbreth encouraged middle class women “being tempted by new kinds of market-based employment [...] to remain in charge of the home front [by addressing them] as expert managers” (Gregg 2018, 36:23), mixing progressivist principles, professional ambition, and patriotic duty, while she herself had a cadre of support staff to raise her large family and to perform secretarial duties to keep selling her scientific method (ibid.).

What does the housewife gain? And women? And society?

As usual in liberal arguments, the gains in applying managerial techniques to domestic work were both individual and collective. However, while there was a relative uniformity of views regarding the presumed individual gains, there was a relative diversity with respect to what the collective advantages were supposed to be. Furthermore, the collective advantages that concerned women and their specific social condition had to be distinguished from those that benefitted the whole of society.

There was a rough uniformity of views regarding the empowerment that came from taking possession of one's domestic space and freeing oneself at least in part from the burden of monotonous and psychologically demeaning work, considerably reducing its duration and hardship. Gilman saw in the progressive reduction of *per capita* domestic work hours a possibility for women to access the labor market and therefore to obtain equal social status with men. But she also saw in it an opportunity to escape monotony and intellectual debasement, as well as the social isolation which women were subject to when housebound.

Both Richards and Frederick embraced a less radical thesis: emancipation did not involve getting rid of domestic work, but appropriating it and making it a legitimate occupation to be proud of, in short, a profession in its own right. Above all, Scientific Management reduced fatigue and allowed for a qualitative improvement both in the domestic habitat and in the daily conditions of women, who nevertheless remained bound to traditional tasks. In Frederick's thinking, as already mentioned, there was an additional dimension: the formation of a sort of class consciousness, entirely analogous to that of the working class, but which Frederick imagined as countering the monopolistic dynamics of the market rather than constituting an organized movement of revolt. A similar "class-consciousness may be seen in Gilman's pledge for organized female work

Only organization can oppose such evils as the wholesale adulteration of food; and woman, the house-servant, belongs to the lowest grade of unorganized labor (Gilman 1898, 230)

Power, especially bargaining power, belonged not so much to the individual woman as to women as a group of workers jointly engaged in the same occupation. In this sense, belonging to a unitary occupational category was precluded in Gilman's imagination, as she envisioned a progressive conquest of the labor market and therefore a dispersion of women through multiple occupations. Frederick, by confining women to traditional female jobs, equated the gender

category with the occupational one, and therefore claimed a role and economic power for women as a specific category of workers.

All the supporters of the scientific organization of work affirmed the existence of shared social advantages for society as a whole. For example, Gilman claimed—in line with the classic anti-slavery arguments—that women who were satisfied with their role and were emancipated would work better and produce more. She also said that a more efficient organization of household chores would lead to better living conditions and that the division of tasks, especially educational ones, would lead to better education and the well-being of children. Finally, Gilman claimed that free and emancipated women, and more cultured women, enjoying equal status with men, would also be more attractive and seductive.

The great singer, dancer, actress—immediately she has lovers without number. The best-loved women of all time have not been the little brown birds at home, by any means. Of course, when a man marries the queen of song, he expects her to settle at once to the nest and remain there. But does he thereafter maintain the same degree of devotion that he bestowed before? It is not easy, after all, to maintain the height of romantic devotion for one's house-servant—or even one's housekeeper. (Gilman 1910: 144)

As for Richards, the positive social effects of her euthenics project (that she considered as equivalent to eugenics for the environment) were quite apparent and were the main motivation behind the project. Richards actually aimed to improve sanitary and health conditions, and although in doing so she was mainly targeting women, the consequences of the project were to benefit society as a whole.

For Frederick, the positive effects of scientifically managing the home were an overall improvement in the social conditions of women and therefore of those who shared their spaces and their lives, even if the emphasis was clearly placed in her case on the individual rather than the social dimension.

For the younger members of the Sanitary Science Club, actualizing Richards's *Home Sanitation* (1904), "endeavoring to replace out-worn theories and useless practices [to] best help the progressive housekeeper" (Talbot, Marion 1912, vii–viii), another perspective opened up, involving direct competition with Public Health science and even fighting for influence over public policies and Health Department funding (ibid.: 5).

Finally, this second generation even forged ties with the U.S. suffragette movement. Like Lake Placid hostess Annie Dewey, who was a vocal proponent of votes for women, Alice Stone Blackwell was also part of Talbot's Sanitary Science Club (Talbot 1912: i). Moreover, as reported by Goldstein (2012), although Ellen Richards opposed women's suffrage in the 1870s, during the 1914 Home Economics conference, out of 51 conference participants, 27 claimed to favor votes for women in 1914, like Caroline Hunt, Mary Schenck Woolman, Marion Talbot, Alice Peloubet Norton, Flora Rose, Martha Van Rensselaer, and Louise Stanley when she was a graduate student. These women were largely in touch with the University of Chicago as well as the Cornell University of Home Economics and some of them even enlisted in the Equal Suffrage League.

Little by little, the ideas of the Home Economics movement (progressive values, women's expertise, etc.) combined with the growing use of household appliances in the U.S. were to spread and, paradoxically, lead to clear calls for domestic independence in the 1920s. As claimed by suffragette Mary Pattison, former president of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs:

Giant Power is ours! We need but connect the wire of progress and touch the button of independence to prove to ourselves and each other that education and culture lie in mastering the technique of the *common task*. All the helps in the world are of no use to those who will not help themselves. The surprise of the feminine life will be when it is

discovered collectively and personally that you can get out of housework all you have the brains to put into it. (Pattison 1925, 127)

So, advocating the abolition of household slavery to change women's lives, this new generation opened the way to feminist resistance. Nevertheless, the rooted emancipating power of management as a science remained forgotten for decades.

When the maids go marching in

One possible contributory factor to the decline of the Home Economics legacy could be the perceived conflict between the movements for Women's Suffrage and Civil Rights. Whereas some Home Economics proponents like Charlotte Perkins Gilman opposed the convergence and used parallels with slavery to intensify outrage over the condition of women, other feminist pragmatists like Jane Addams actively worked to unite these causes (Cefai 2023). Jane Addams was a significant figure in the development of social work and the women's suffrage movement in the United States. She was a co-founder of Hull House in Chicago, a renowned settlement house that offered comprehensive social assistance to impoverished, often immigrant families. In 1910, she received an honorary Master of Arts degree from Yale University, making her the first woman to be awarded an honorary degree from that institution (Bouquet 2012). In 1920, she was a co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). So, during the Progressive Era, Addams was recognized as a symbol of women's involvement in politics and attracted famous pragmatist intellectuals such as John Dewey to her social settlement projects, beginning with Hull House (Côté 2015).¹ Hull House was among the earliest social

¹ A social settlement is a community-based social welfare organization. Social settlements aim to enhance and advance a certain neighborhood or group of neighborhoods. It differs from other social agencies by focusing on the entirety of neighborhood life rather than offering specific social services. Staff in a social settlement assist individuals, families, and groups. They provide informal therapy and conduct home visits. They support social organizations, classes, sporting teams, and interest or hobby groups. When problems require specialist skills, caseworkers, psychologists, psychiatrists, home economists, and vocational counselors may be hired.

communities in North America. Founded in Chicago in 1889, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr rented an abandoned mansion at 800 South Halsted Street, originally built by Charles G. Hull in 1856. Over the years, twelve sizable structures were gradually incorporated into Hull House, expanding its footprint to encompass half a city block. The complex also featured a neighboring playground and a substantial camp in Wisconsin.

Jane Addams's ideas contributed to the establishment of a feminist pragmatism centered on concepts like women's *self-government* to make the legal system an adequate expression of the common good and to counter the evils of rapid industrial development with *care*, which she elevated from the private realm to the public sphere. Yet Addams shared with Richards and Frederick the idea that a woman's workplace should remain the home. Her main argument, starting from that premise, was that, in order to properly manage the home, women should get the right to vote, and to justify that logical implication, she consistently drew on ideas promulgated by the Home Economics movement.

First of all, Addams insisted on the difference between traditional housekeeping and modern housekeeping: where women in the past had exercised full control over the management of their home, modern women had to buy goods on a market with little control over the quality of goods (Addams 1910). While women in the past had simply to clean their own houses, now women also had to face the danger of unclean environments, due to overpopulation and inadequate building standards (Addams 1907). While women in the past had had to take care of children personally, modern cities implied new ways of propagating sickness over which they had no control. There was a simple way to gain such control: through voting rights.

In line with some of the proponents of the Home Economics movement, Addams presented women as experts of their own occupation, and therefore primary sources of proper and informed choices for optimal social issues. Again, there was a simple solution for society to gain such expertise: to let women vote.

In the 1910s, the denial of voting rights to women elicited more than just a vague emotional and moral disturbance. It became a public issue and several arguments demonstrated its untenable nature. The feeling of injustice became overwhelming for housewives, mothers, teachers, businesswomen, and female taxpayers who felt deprived of political power despite their significant contributions to social life (Cefai 2023). At the same time, housewives were unable to effectively manage their domestic tasks due to the quick and sometimes badly planned urbanization that lacked proper sanitary measures to avoid the spread of illness:

Many women today are failing to discharge their duties to their own households properly simply because they do not perceive that as society grows more complicated it is necessary that a woman shall extend her sense of responsibility to many things outside of her own home if she would continue to preserve the home in its entirety. (Addams 1910, 21)

Addams and Theodore Roosevelt's first met in the early 1900s, while Roosevelt was president (1901–1909). Roosevelt visited Hull House and wrote to Addams. When Roosevelt launched his second campaign for the presidency in 1912, Addams seconded his nomination at the First National Progressive Convention of the Progressive Party Convention. The Progressive Party platform included female suffrage, eight-hour work days, and several other policies that were influenced by reformers. While Addams supported Roosevelt in the election and made campaign speeches for him, she disagreed with him on issues like the validity of the African-American delegation at the Progressive Party Convention. So, in this official and historical speech of 1912, Addams politicized the status of women (First National Convention of the Progressive Party 1912).

Finally, on March 3, 1913, an inaugural suffragist procession took place in Washington, D.C., the Woman Suffrage Procession arranged by Alice Paul on behalf of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). A large group of suffragists paraded down

Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. The rally was planned for the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, in protest against the current political structure that excluded women, as mentioned in the official program. The march and the attention it garnered were crucial for the progress of women's suffrage in the United States in 1920.

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FIVE CENTS

PARADE STRUGGLES TO VICTORY DESPITE DISGRACEFUL SCENES

Nation Aroused by Open Insults to Women—Cause Wins Popular Sympathy—Congress Orders Investigation—Striking Object Lesson

Washington has been disgraced. Equal suffrage has scored a great victory. Thousands of indifferent women have been aroused. Influential men are incensed and the United States Senate demands an investigation of the treatment given the suffragists at the National Capital on Monday.

Ten thousand women from all over the country had planned a magnificent parade and march to take place in Washington on March 3. Artists, stage leaders, designers, women of influence and renown were ready to give a wonderful and beautiful piece of suffrage work to the public that would bring the National Capital for the inauguration festivities. The suffragists were ready; the whole procession started down Pennsylvania avenue, when the police protection, that had been promised, failed them, and a disgraceful scene followed. The crowd surged into the space which had been marked off for the parade, and the leaders of the suffrage movement were compelled to push their way through a mob of the worst element in Washington and vicinity. Women were spit upon, slapped in the face, tripped up, pelted with burning cigar stubs, and insulted by jeers and obscene language too vile to print or repeat.

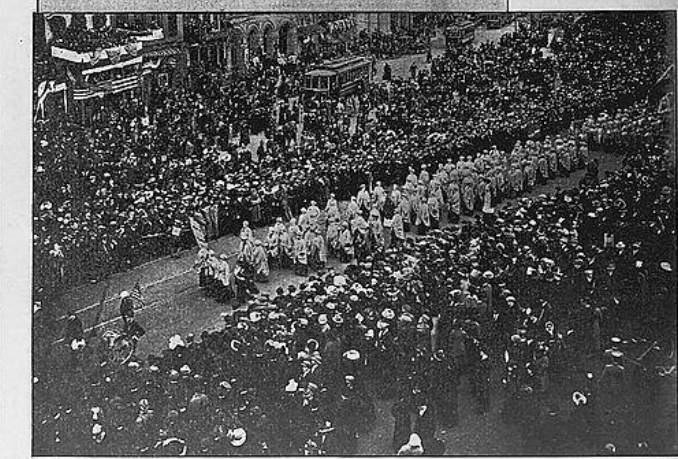
The cause of all the trouble is apparent when the facts are known. The police authorities in Washington opposed every attempt to have a suffrage parade at all. Having been forbidden a place in the inaugural procession, the suffragists asked to have a procession of their own on March 3. They were finally told that they could have a procession but that it could not be on Pennsylvania avenue, but must be on a side street. At last they got permission to have the suffrage parade on the avenue, and asked that traffic be excluded from the street during the parade. For a long time this was denied, and only on Saturday were they successful.

Everything was at last arranged; it was a glorious day; ten thousand women were ready to do their part to make the parade beautiful to behold, to make it a credit to womanhood and to demonstrate the strength of the movement for their enfranchisement. The police were determined, however, and they had their way. Their attempt to avoid the marchers by keeping the space of the avenue free for the suffrage procession was the simplest sham. Police officers stood by with fixed arms and gazed while the piked women of the land were trampled and roughly abused by an ignorant and unscrupulous mob.

Mrs. Allen Paul and other suffragists were compelled to drive their automobiles down the avenue to separate the crowds so the suffragists with the banners and flags could pass. The police officials say their force was inadequate to handle the crowds, but it is noted that there was no disorder on the avenue during the inaugural procession. It is stated that federal troops were offered to the chief of police for the suffrage procession, but that he refused their aid. At any rate, assistance was finally called from Fort Myer and mounted soldiers drove back the crowd so that a straggling line of marchers could pass through.

Not only were the suffragists bitterly disappointed in having the effect

(Continued on Page 15)



General Rosalie Jones in Pilgrim Costume; Miss Inez Milholland on White Steed Leading the Parade; One of the Scores of Imposing Floats; One View of the Procession

AMENDMENT WINS IN NEW JERSEY

Easy Victory in Assembly 46 to 5—Equal Suffrage Enthusiasm Runs High

The New Jersey Legislature passed the woman suffrage amendment in the Assembly last week by a vote of 46 to 5. The Senate had already voted favorably 14 to 8. A large delegation of suffragists crowded the galleries, and when the overwhelming vote was announced there was a scene of great enthusiasm. Women stood in their seats and waved handkerchiefs and "votes for women" flags and cheered their sisters hoarse.

Dr. Jekyll Becomes Mr. Hyde—Opposition was confined exclusively to the old sentimental arguments. (Continued on Page 79)



MICHIGAN AGAIN CAMPAIGN STATE

Senate Passes Suffrage Amendment 46 to 5 and Battle is Now On

Michigan is again a campaign State after a short lapse of four months. The amendment will go to the voters on April 7. The State-wide feeling that the women were defeated of victory last fall will help the suffragists.

The final action of the Legislature was taken last week, when the Senate, by a vote of 16 to 8, passed the suffrage amendment, with a slight amendment to make the requirements for foreign-born women the same as those for male immigrants.

Governor Watches Debate—The debate in the Senate lasted an hour and a quarter, and was characterized by the persistent efforts of Senator Woodcock and a few others to tack on crippling amendments. Several suggestions, including the disabling of women for holding office or serving on juries, were voted down in quick succession.

Gov. Ferris was among the visitors who crowded the chamber and gallery. Mrs. Clara B. Arthur, Mrs. Thomas E. Henderson and Mrs. Wilbur Brotherton, of Detroit; Mrs. Jennie Law Hardy, of Tecumseh, and other State leaders were present, supported by a large delegation of Lansing suffragists.

The final stand of the opposition was made by Senator Mercha in the hope of putting off the submission till November, 1914, and this also failed. Of the five who opposed the measure on the final roll-call, three were from Detroit.

A complete campaign of organization and education has been mapped out by the State Association. The (Continued on Page 74.)



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Woman%27s_Journal_of_March_8,_1913.jpg?usel

ang=fr

While Addams never developed or even discussed Home Economics or Scientific Management herself, she clearly relied on the ideas and sensitivities that had developed within the domestic economy, and which owed much to Scientific Management. The transformation of simple housewives into experts in the management of domestic functions, the transformation of mothers, cooks, and maids into experts in nutrition, Home Economics and education, were the tools Addams exploited in justifying the extension of universal suffrage. However, the emancipatory power of Scientific Management wielded by Home Economics was not exploited to its full potential outside the home or beyond the ballot box.

Discussion

Our contribution to critical management studies is twofold. First, we have shown that the history of management is also linked to emancipation projects right from its origins, contributing to CMS. Secondly, our methodology of intellectual history enables us to take another look at the writings of the time in the light of historical facts, making it possible to correlate actions and discourse.

This work contributes to link several CMS themes such as academia, alternative organizations, control and resistance, gender, identity and post-colonialism (Spicer and Alvesson, 2024) by renewing our perception of Scientific Management instrumental rationality during the Progressive Era. By focusing on figures who can be seen as both socially integrated and dissident, we are paving the way for research that questions our most entrenched representations and traces management in a broader societal context (Chanlat 2013). Thus, our methodology could well shed new light on the work on leadership and conflict of another great figure for both pragmatism and management, Mary Parker Follett (1918a; 1918b; O'Connor, 2017). Indeed, as a contemporary of Taylor's, Follett is generally portrayed as a pioneer of the Human Relations school. However, Follet was also a woman who grew up in a family that was not

well-off, who cared for her disabled mother when she was young, frequented pragmatist circles, and might not have been completely opposed to Scientific Management trend *per se*.

Second, Scientific management is generally described as a method of optimizing work in factories (Meier 2017), and is often heavily criticized for its conception of social roles and working conditions. However, in the course of this article we have been able to show how the methodology of scientific management has been applied in areas far more varied than the factory, particularly by examining its use in the domestic economy. In this context, the set of management rules that enable the optimal use of labor resources in the factory are reinterpreted to optimize domestic work. However, unlike in the case of the factory, where the aim of optimization is to increase and maximize the profits generated in monetary terms, the benefits sought in the case of domestic work have repercussions in terms of emancipation, of improved well-being within the home and the city, somewhere in contrast to the critique of Taylorism linked to alienation. This reinterpretation of the same body of ideas involves some substantial variations on Taylor's original ideas, particularly as expert and executor's separation fades. There was also the idea that negotiating power and decision-making capacity were amplified by collective action and the collective organization of work: this aspect, decidedly absent in Taylor's work, was of prime importance in the application of scientific management to the domestic sphere, where it allowed the emergence of class consciousness.

The reinterpretation of scientific management in the service of the domestic economy is not, however, limited to what this methodology affirms, but to what it does. The application of scientific management in the sphere of the domestic economy is a performative discourse (Muniesa and Callon 2009): by changing the discourse and the words with which domestic work is described and structured, it changes the very nature of this work. The prestige associated with such practices, in particular, is considerably enhanced by the fact that they are given a layer of theorization and abstraction that makes them a profession in their own right rather than

simply a traditional practice. In particular, thanks to the tools of intellectual history analysis, we have been able to see how a different discourse on domestic work implies a gradual change in its social status, but also a gradual awareness of the possibility of changing and improving the way in which this work is carried out. Ultimately, the changes thus brought about also lead to a gradual adjustment in the needs expressed by those who traditionally perform this work: the awareness of the inefficiency of traditional domestic work, but also of the impossibility of implementing the necessary changes, gives rise to the need and the demand for a social space and rights that allow for greater efficiency. These rights and spaces can be rethought not only in the name of equality, freedom or the desire for emancipation, but also as a necessary step towards more efficient social organization, capable of benefiting society as a whole. While there is a normative dimension - rights and freedom are, after all, desirable in themselves - there is also a link between rights, freedom and efficiency: a fairer and freer society is also a better organized and more productive society. Scientific management is the link between these two dimensions, the instrument that makes it possible to organize, but also to legitimize, optimize and liberate, to merge efficiency and social justice.

Finally, it would be interesting to add to this research on the history of management in the progressive era to understand the extent to which management has supported the myth of the American dream. Scientific management was part of a project for society that included a drive for excellence and individual success, but also egalitarian ambitions and emancipation. In the end, tensions and conflicts emerged behind the dream of unity represented by the woman suffrage procession, particularly around the constitution of women as a political group (with or without other minorities). Similarly, the academic and institutional rejection to which the health sciences were subjected deserves to be addressed in later work.

Conclusion

This contribution has highlighted the spread of ideas from the theoretical approach to Scientific Management into Home Economics and vice-versa. Many Home Economics reformers believed that organizing feminine labor would lead to greater productivity and efficiency but also to women's empowerment through expertise, to higher social status, and freedom from drudgery. The professionalization of domestic work and its recognition within society has given women a voice in the public arena and on the political stage. For example, in her *Economic Problems of the Family*, Hazel Kyrk analyzed household production, women's work and their social status, living standards, and the direct consequences of these economic factors such as the bargaining and market power of housewives, their slow but progressive emancipation through their control and understanding of the main economic aspects of life, and the consequences of legislation designed to protect consumers, or the benefits derived from women's wages (Kyrk 1933).

These seemingly very different subjects were all related in some way to the progressive political agenda. However, they also had a second common denominator: they were problems relating to organization and management and thus to extrapolations from and further developments of Scientific Management. Although Taylor's vision was primarily directed toward productive organization in industry, his was a philosophy of the organization of work and production that was soon appropriated by jurists (Agulhon and Mueller 2023a), politicians (Agulhon and Mueller 2023b), environmentalists (Balogh 2002), and women's rights activists. Robert Caro argues that scientific management principles were used by New York's public administration under Robert Moses rule: many women accessed jobs as secretaries or typist under this new organization (Caro 1975, 115–37).

During the Progressive Era, managerial organization of the household proposed itself both as a positive model of rational organization of labor and as a normative model for structuring society. So, from the perspective of the Home Economics movement, the prevailing economic

theory was an instrument to be used to gain access to and achieve status in the power-wielding discipline of economics and in the realm of Progressive policymaking.

A number of criticisms were levelled at the feasibility and applicability of Scientific Management both at the time and more recently (Mitchell 1912; Walker 2003). Rather than asking whether managerial techniques have proved empirically adequate for improving household management, we have shown that these techniques were designed and developed as an emancipatory alternative. In contrast to the invisible hand of the market, Scientific Management applied a visible feminine hand to the domestic economy, wielding work organization tools designed to make it into the proverbial iron fist in a velvet glove. Scientific Management would thus suggest that a different organization of market and society was both possible and to be wished for, with far-reaching moral and factual consequences. Home Economists, who were also social reformers and feminists, dreamed of a different social organization and had a different moral vision: they thus turned scientific management from a tool of labor planning into an instrument of political struggle and emancipation.

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