

# The Sociologist

May 2015



On the Cover: Photo by Ricky Johnson at the Woodshed Orlando for Morpheous Bondage Extravaganza '14

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Founding Members of DCSS 1934



# Annual Banquet & Award Ceremony

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*Bringing Social Science Research into the Policy Process*

*Panelists*

Patricia White  
Roberta Spalter-Roth  
Amy Best  
Kelly Joyce

Thursday, May 28, 2015



Langston Room, 2021 14th St, NW,  
Washington, DC 20009



# Class Inequalities among Women

Ruth Milkman

City University of New York Graduate Center

The United States made substantial progress toward reducing gender inequality in the late twentieth century, not only thanks to the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s but also as an unintended consequence of the shift to a post-industrial economy. The gender gap in pay rates, for example, narrowed not only because unprecedented numbers of women gained entry to the elite professions and upper-level management starting in the 1970s, but also because real wages for male workers, especially those without a college education, fell sharply in that same period with de-industrialization and union decline.

As manufacturing withered, the traditionally female-employing service sector expanded; surging demand for female labor, in turn, drew more and more married women and mothers into the workforce. By the twentieth century's end, women typically were employed outside the home throughout their adult lives, apart from brief interludes of full-time caregiving. They were far less likely to be economically dependent on men than their mothers and grandmothers had been. Their legal and social status had dramatically improved as well, and the idea that women and men should have equal opportunities in the labor market won wide acceptance.

Women workers continued to face serious problems, including sex discrimination in pay and promotions, sexual harassment, and the formidable challenges of balancing work and family commitments in a nation that famously lags behind its competitors in public provision for paid family leave and child care. Still, by

any standard, the situation has improved greatly since the 1970s. This improvement has not been evenly distributed across the female population, however.

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In precisely the same historical period during which gender inequalities declined dramatically, class inequalities rapidly widened, with profound implications for women as well as men.

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On the contrary, in precisely the same historical period during which gender inequalities declined dramatically — the 1970s through the early twenty-first century — class inequalities rapidly widened, with profound implications for women as well as men. Class inequalities *among women* are greater than ever before.

Highly educated, upper middle class women — a group that is vastly overrepresented in both media depictions of women at work and in the wider political discourse about gender inequality — have far better opportunities than their counterparts in earlier generations did. Yet their experience is a world apart from that of the much larger numbers of women workers who struggle to make ends meet in poorly-paid clerical, retail, restaurant, and hotel jobs; in hospitals and nursing homes; or as housekeepers, nannies, and home care workers.

Many of those working women are paid at or just above the legal minimum wage; and some — especially women of color and immigrants — earn even less because their employers routinely violate minimum wage, overtime, and other workplace laws. Although female managers

and professionals typically work full time (or more than full-time), many women in lower-level jobs are offered fewer hours than they would prefer, a problem compounded by unpredictable work schedules that play havoc with their family responsibilities. Millions of women are trapped in female-dominated clerical and service jobs that offer few if any opportunities for advancement, and in which employment itself is increasingly precarious. For them, best-selling books like Sheryl Sandberg's 2013 *Lean In*, which encourages women to be more assertive in the workplace, are of little relevance. Indeed if women in lower-level jobs are foolhardy enough to follow such advice, they are more likely to be fired than to win a promotion or pay raise.<sup>1</sup>

The widening inequalities between women in managerial and professional jobs and those employed at lower levels of the labor market are further exacerbated by class-differentiated marriage and family arrangements. Most people marry or partner with those of a similar class status, a longstanding phenomenon that anthropologists call class endogamy. This multiplies the effects of rising class inequality: at one end of the spectrum are households with two well-paid professionals or managers, while at the other end households depend on one (in the case of one-parent families) or two far lower incomes.

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Affluent, highly educated women are more likely to be married or in marriage-like relationships than are working-class women.

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In addition, affluent, highly educated women are more likely to be married or in marriage-like relationships than are working-class women, and such relationships are typically more stable among the privileged. Women in managerial and professional jobs not only can more easily afford paid domestic help, but also are more likely to have access to paid sick days and paid parental leave than women in lower-level jobs. And families routinely reproduce class inequalities over the generations: affluent parents go to great lengths to ensure that their children — now daughters as well as sons — acquire the educational credentials that will secure them a privileged place in the labor market, similar to that of their parents, when they are grown.

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Women of color are disproportionately likely to have been shut out of the gender revolution that transformed the United States during the late twentieth century.

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But class divisions have widened over recent decades within communities of color as well as among women. Although to a much lesser extent than among white women, unprecedented numbers of women of color have joined the privileged strata that benefitted most from the reduction in gender inequality over recent decades. There is a literature on "the declining significance of race," starting with William Julius Wilson's 1980 book of that title.<sup>2</sup> More recently, public concern about growing class inequality has surged. Yet the rapid rise in "within-group" class inequalities among women has attracted much less attention.

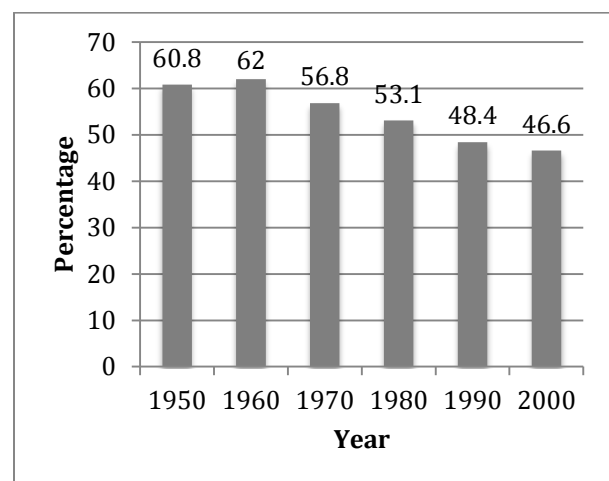
One dimension of this problem involves the recent emergence of class disparities in regard to the longstanding phenomenon of occupational segregation by gender, a longstanding linchpin of gender inequality and also the most important driver of gender disparities in earnings. (That is so because unequal pay for equal work, although still all too often present, is a smaller component of the overall gender gap in earnings than the fact that female-dominated jobs typically pay less than male-dominated jobs with comparable skill requirements.)

Whereas between 1900 and 1960, the extent of occupational segregation by sex was notoriously impervious to change,<sup>3</sup> it began to decline substantially in the United States since 1960. The standard measure of segregation, "the index of dissimilarity," which specifies the proportion of men or women who would have to change jobs to have both genders evenly distributed through the occupational structure, declined sharply between 1960 and 1990, and in later years continued to fall at a less rapid pace, as Figure 1 shows.<sup>4</sup> This also led to a steady decline in the gender gap in earnings. Among full-time workers, women's annual earnings were, on average, 59.94 percent of men's in 1970; by 2010 the ratio had grown to 77.4 percent.<sup>5</sup>

The narrowing of the gender gap in earnings and the associated reduction in the extent of occupational segregation reflect real progress toward gender equality.

However, that progress has been limited and sharply skewed by the rapid growth in class inequality over the late twentieth century.

**Figure 1. Occupational Segregation by Gender, United States, 1950-2000**

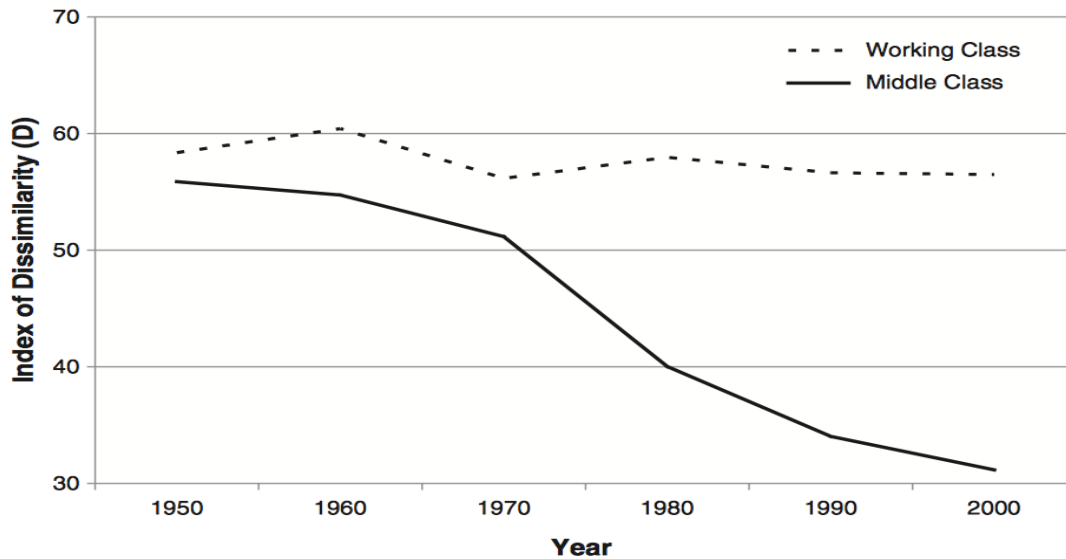


Note: Index of dissimilarity computed from U.S. decennial census data (IPUMS) Source: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/soc/vanneman/endofgr/ipumsocseg.html>.

More specifically, occupational segregation by sex has declined sharply in professional and managerial jobs, but has hardly declined at all in lower-level occupations, as Figure 2 shows.

High-wage "male" jobs in industries like construction and durable goods manufacturing remain extremely sex-segregated, as do low-wage "female" jobs like child care, domestic service, and clerical work.

**Figure 2. Class Differences in Occupational Segregation by Gender, 1950-2000**



Source: David A. Cotter, Joan M. Hermesen, and Reeve Vanneman, "Gender Inequality at Work," *The American People: U.S. Census 2000* (New York: Russell Sate Foundation and Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2004)

College-educated women have disproportionately benefited from occupational integration, while less educated women are much more likely to be in traditionally sex-stereotyped jobs with low pay and status.<sup>7</sup>

As one would expect, college-educated and professional-managerial women also tend to earn substantially higher salaries than those women who remain ghettoized in poorly paid, highly segregated jobs at lower levels of the labor market. This is one of the reasons that income inequality among women has grown, even as the overall gender gap in pay has declined.

A similar pattern of inequality applies to benefits: women in professional and managerial positions are far more likely to have access to employer-provided health insurance, as well as paid sick days, and paid parental leave than women in lower-level jobs.<sup>8</sup> And women in elite fields are also disproportionately likely to be able to purchase paid domestic help and other

services to replace their own unpaid labor inside the home.

But the class pattern of gender disparities in earnings in the late twentieth century is complicated. In *absolute* terms, highly educated women in elite occupations have been able to advance economically to a much greater extent than women in lower-level jobs.

However, the *relative* decline in earnings inequality by gender was actually smaller for women at the upper levels – simply because the earnings of men in elite jobs rose far more rapidly than the earnings of any other group.

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Indeed non-college-educated men have experienced a steady and steep decline in real earnings since the 1970s...

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Indeed non-college-educated men have experienced a steady and steep decline in real earnings since the 1970s, a key factor contributing to the narrowing of the overall gender gap in pay.<sup>9</sup> Further complicating the picture is that women in high-level managerial and professional jobs are required to work longer hours than women in most lower-level jobs; and if they are parents, they also face the time demands of "intensive mothering," aimed at ensuring that their children obtain elite educational credentials and reproduce their class status.<sup>10</sup>

The surge in economic inequality since the 1970s has been greatly amplified by endogamous marriage and "assortative mating" – that is, the longstanding tendency for people to choose partners and spouses from class (and racial) backgrounds similar to their own. This pattern disproportionately benefits highly educated women in elite occupations who share a household with a male spouse or partner at a similar occupational level. Those women, even if they earn substantially less than their spouses or partners, indirectly benefit from the soaring incomes of those men — as well as from their wealth, which is distributed far more unequally than income. Indeed, income homogamy has increased for married couples since the 1970s, alongside the growth in overall income inequality.

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Affluent professional-managerial women who choose to marry or cohabit with a partner (not all of them but a large majority do so) typically have lower separation and divorce rates than those of less privileged women.

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The result is a stark class contrast, even in an age of soaring inequality...

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The result is a stark class contrast, even in an age of soaring inequality: highly educated married or cohabiting employed women supplement their own high (relative to those of less educated women) earnings with their spouses' or partners' high incomes, and the poorest households are disproportionately headed by single mothers subsisting on extremely low wages.<sup>11</sup>

Class inequality is hardly a new phenomenon, but prior to the 1970s, when married women's labor force participation rate far lower than it is today, the multiplicative effects of homogamy were relatively small. Considered in that light, class inequality among women in the United States has never been greater than in the twenty-first century. That seems unlikely to change in the absence of any significant policy interventions to address the problem of soaring inequality, whose victims include millions of women struggling to survive in the low-wage labor market.

Notes

1. Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* (New York: Knopf, 2013).
2. William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
3. Edward Gross, "Plus Ça Change. . . The Sexual Structure of Occupations over Time," *Social Problems* 16, no. 2 (1968): 198-208; Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).
4. The data for 1990 to 2000 are not strictly comparable to one another due to changes in the methodology used by the U.S. Census, but all available data suggest that the decline in segregation gradually leveled off, and was essentially flat after 2000. See Francine D. Blau, Peter Brummund, and Albert Yung-Hsu Liu, "Trends in Occupational Segregation by Gender 1970-2009: Adjusting for the



Impact of Changes in the Occupational Coding System," *Demography* 50, no. 2 (2013): 471-492.

5. Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Gender Wage Gap: 2013," Fact Sheet C413 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, March 2014).

6. The data shown in Figure 1 are decennial U.S. Census data (IPUMS) for workers aged 25-54. "Middle-class occupations" are defined as professional and managerial (including non-retail sales) occupations; all other occupations are considered "working class" in this analysis.

7. David A. Cotter, Joan M. Hermesen, and Reeve Vanneman, "Gender Inequality at Work," *The American People: Census 2000* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2004); see also Paula England, "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled," *Gender & Society* 24, no. 2 (2010): 149-166; Ariane Hegewisch, Hannah Liepmann, Jeffrey Hayes, and Heidi Hartmann, "Separate and Not Equal? Gender Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap," Briefing Paper C377 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2010).

8. Ruth Milkman and Eileen Appelbaum, *Unfinished Business: Paid Family Leave in California and the Future of U.S. Work-Family Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

9. Leslie McCall, "What Does Class Inequality among Women Look Like? A Comparison with Men and Families, 1970 to 2000," in *Social Class: How Does it Work?* edited by Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008).

10. On the contrast in working hours between women of different classes, see Jerry A. Jacobs and Kathleen Gerson, *The Time Divide: Work, Family and Gender Inequality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). On intensive mothering and its relationship to social class reproduction, see Sharon Hays, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and "An hereditary meritocracy," *The Economist*, Jan. 24-30, 2015, pp. 17-20.

11. Gary Burtless, "Effects of Growing Wage Disparities and Changing Family Composition on the U.S. Income Distribution," *European Economic Review* 43 (1999): 853-865; June Carbone and Naomi Chan, *Marriage Markets: How Inequality is Remaking the American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); McCall, "Class Inequality"; Sarah Damaske, *For the Family? How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

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## 2015 DCSS Awardees



### ***Irene B. Taeuber Graduate Student Paper Awards***

MA Student: Carmen Navarro  
George Washington University

PhD Student: Zach Richer  
University of Maryland,  
College Park



### ***The Stuart A. Rice Merit Award***

Robert Groves  
Provost at  
Georgetown University  
Former Director of  
the U.S. Census Bureau



### ***The Morris Rosenberg Award***

William V. D'Antonio  
Steven A. Tuch  
Josiah R. Baker

# The Slippery Search for Kinky Sex

Julie Fennell  
Gallaudet University

Despite the extraordinary popularity of the BDSM erotic novel and film *50 Shades of Grey*, many people remain uncertain about what BDSM (Bondage & Discipline/Dominance & submission/Sadism & Masochism) is. Classically, the term “BDSM” is intended to broadly encompass activities such as tying people with rope, beating them with floggers, or whipping them. Regardless of the specific activity, the defining features are usually assumed to be that (1) the activity is unusual for two people to engage in, (2) it is intended to emphasize power imbalances and/or pain, and (3) both people have negotiated and consented to the activity, and either person can make the activity stop whenever they want.

The last characteristic—*consent*—is the key feature that is generally assumed to separate “BDSM” from “abuse.” In the popular imagination, BDSM is generally assumed to include a fourth characteristic of being for erotic, sensual, or sexual gratification.

BDSM in popular culture looks both similar to and very different from BDSM or, more emically, “kink” practices within the kink subculture. The BDSM subculture, often known simply as “the Scene,” occupies a complex social position. It is a center for kinky pleasure and fun, as well as a center for norms and education about BDSM. In general, the Scene operates as the public-private face of “safe, sane, and consensual” BDSM practices.

Although the BDSM subculture thrives in many parts of the world, sociologists are reasonably certain that the vast majority of people who engage in kink

do so privately. Consequently, we might reasonably expect that the subculture would cultivate very particular beliefs and values about kink. My research and experience with the BDSM subculture in the mid-Atlantic U.S. suggests that one of the most interesting and perhaps unexpected of these beliefs and values within the kink subculture is a persistent idea that kink can (and many say *should*) be separated from sex. Thus I set out to learn how a subculture that is usually assumed to be a “deviant sexual subculture” could attempt to re-define its focus as non-sexual.

I have been personally involved in the “pansexual” BDSM scene (that is, the BDSM scene that is not geared almost exclusively towards gay men) in the Washington, DC/Baltimore area since early 2010, and I started officially researching the Scene in 2012.

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The BDSM subculture is not a monolithic entity: rather, it is a collection of micro-cultures that are loosely held together through the internet and a few large regional and national kink conventions or “events.”

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It is important to note that the BDSM subculture is not a monolithic entity: rather, it is a collection of micro-cultures that are loosely held together through the internet and a few large regional and national kink conventions or “events.” Throughout the summer of 2012, I interviewed 70 people in the mid-Atlantic BDSM scene about their identities as kinksters, how they became involved in the Scene, their relationship dynamics, and what it is that they enjoy and dislike about this subculture.

As I functionally immersed myself in the subculture that summer, I constantly attended kink parties, kinky happy hours, several days-long kink events, and observed online discussions; most of all, I looked for the largely unwritten social norms in this deviant subculture. I have remained deeply involved in the Scene since completing my official fieldwork, and at this point, I regularly teach at kink events and am a well-known blogger. This paper draws primarily from my ethnographic work, but also generalizes from my interviews, as I analyze the ways that the BDSM subculture has worked to re-define itself as non-sexual.



Bondage as performance art at Toronto's Morpheous Bondage Extravaganza '14. Rigger: Leon Monkey Fetish Model: Julie Fennell Photo: Patrik

### *A Slippery Definition of Sex*

Most sociological observations (including my own) of the BDSM scene have noted that remarkably little “sex” happens at BDSM parties. Although popular imagination usually assumes that kinksters and swingers occupy the same social space, that idea is only literally true (many BDSM clubs are swingers’ clubs on alternating nights). In reality, social relations between the two adjacent subcultures are so hostile

that the main group for swingers on the primary kinky social networking website FetLife is called “‘Swingers’ is not a dirty word.”

Although the subcultural antagonism between swingers and kinksters is fairly pervasive, there is considerable geographical diversity in the sexuality of various individual kink scenes.

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The Washington, DC/Baltimore kink clubs and parties are extremely “sex-positive” (a phrase that in the community means “they allow sex at their parties”), and the Washington, DC/Baltimore scene remains the primary hub for kink east of the Mississippi.

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A large Maryland event posted an official rule that summarized the typical attitude in this part of the world which was: “If you are having unprotected sex, we will assume that you are fluid bonded with your partner(s) and not an idiot with a death wish. Please don’t prove us wrong.”

However, it is normal for BDSM clubs and parties elsewhere to forbid “sex” (and notably, those clubs do not label themselves “sex-negative” although the people who are annoyed by them sometimes do). The strictest anti-sex rules I have ever seen were posted in a New England dungeon which says that, “There is no sex allowed on the premises. This includes vaginal, oral, or anal,” and then adds, “If more than one people [sic] are in the bathroom, the door must remain open.” One large kink event I attended in New Jersey declared that “nothing organic may penetrate anything

else that is organic” (which had the odd consequence of technically forbidding French kissing), and another in the same area declared that all sex was permissible, but “barriers” (condoms, gloves, dental dams, etc.) must be used for all forms of sex, even between people who were married.

Three things stand out about the social norms around these rules. The first is that “sex” is a very flexible idea in this context. Strap-on sex, any form of penetration with dildos or other objects, play with vibrators, and all sorts of manual sex like fisting are basically always permitted and fairly common—even in the dungeons that specifically forbid sex. Virtually all public dungeons will permit someone to be kicked or whipped in the genitalia, but many of them will forbid lips to touch those bruised genitalia.

The second is that many kinksters think that activities like whipping someone in the genitalia is obviously neither sexual nor erotic, while many others think that attitude is just plain funny. This controversy is ongoing and mostly very friendly within the subculture.

The third is that both formal and informal sexual norms in dungeons emphasize women’s sexual pleasure and largely ignore men’s.

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...women’s (loud) orgasms are celebrated, and the focus of considerable interest, attention, and desire. Meanwhile men’s orgasms are largely ignored or sometimes even reviled.

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Whether from whipping or vibrators or fisting or more conventional sexual activities when allowed, women’s (loud)

orgasms are celebrated, and the focus of considerable interest, attention, and desire. Meanwhile men’s orgasms are largely ignored or sometimes even reviled.

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I believe this odd sexism stems partly from the fact that very few male bodies can orgasm without penile or prostate stimulation, while many female bodies can orgasm with literally no physical touch.

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Consequently it is much easier for women to orgasm within the (anti-)sex regulations of many kink dungeons than for men.

Even as parts of the BDSM subculture have attempted to define the focus of the subculture as non-sexual in part by utilizing a narrow definition of sex, both individuals and whole groups within the subculture have often strongly resisted these attempts. Events that do not allow sex usually are subject to anger, irritation, and sometimes flat-out boycotts by many kinksters. By contrast, I have never seen an internet war erupt saying that an event that allowed sex should stop doing so. The majority of people that I interviewed said that BDSM was always or mostly sexual for them, but the subculture as a whole is still wrestling with the relationship between kink and sex.

***Anything Can be Kinky if You Try Hard Enough!***

Although many BDSM microcultures narrowly define “sex,” the BDSM subculture as a whole tends to adopt a very generous conceptualization of “kink.” Many people in the BDSM subculture refer to “what it is that we do” (a common phrase in the subculture used to describe kink) as

“the Lifestyle,” suggesting that it goes far beyond bedrooms and becomes an integral part of who they are.

In addition to all of the traditional things most people would usually think of as “kinky,” such as flogging, whipping, or bondage, I have also seen people at kink events regularly engage in and teach classes on: fire cupping (the same tools used by acupuncturists), “sadistic massage” (often taught by actual massage therapists), wrestling, waterboarding, and once even fire walking (walking over hot coals). “Pervertables” are also a popular concept, which consists of taking regular everyday objects (especially kitchen utensils) and repurposing them for sadism. I attended a class on “sacred body modification” held by a local kink group, where it was taken for granted that (professional) tattooing, piercing, branding, and scarring for spiritual reasons were obviously “kinky” (people were confused when I eventually asked how this related to BDSM). The community overall cultivates a spirit of, “anything can be kinky if you try hard enough!”

Most importantly, the kink subculture typically frames “service submission” as an obviously important part of BDSM, but rarely frames it as sexual. Service submission traditionally primarily consists of tasks that “submissives” do for their “dominants,” doing the sorts of tasks that might traditionally be done by cooks, maids, or valets. In general, the subculture regards obedience (or the “discipline” part of BDSM) as very important, but this obedience can encompass everything from submissives wearing what their dominants tell them to, eating what they are told to, or cleaning the toilet and going to bed at a particular time. It may also include (or sometimes solely consists of) sexual obedience or submission, so that the submissive is expected to provide sexual pleasure for the dominant. But on the whole,

the kink subculture in general envisions “service submission” and “discipline” as much broader than just sex.

### ***BDSM Turns into Art and Religion***

Although many activities that most people would probably not think of as “kinky” are often adopted as kinky in the BDSM subculture, the converse is also true for other activities: there have been movements among some groups to effectively de-kinkify certain traditional BDSM activities in specific contexts. Most notably, there is an incipient movement to create bondage as a performance art. Some “riggers” or “rope tops” have begun labeling themselves “bondage artists,” and work in both dungeons, mainstream clubs, and public art spaces.

For example, the British pop star FKA twigs recently employed the bondage artist Wykd Dave to tie her up for one of her music videos. Attempts have been made to launch a Bondage Circus for a mainstream adult audience, and an incredibly popular art bondage event called Morpheous Bondage Extravaganza occurs annually in multiple locations and is broadcast on the internet. “Rope bombing” is also a popular activity, and consists of people quickly tying (usually clothed) people up in (usually deserted) public places, taking photos, and leaving.

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There are also movements within the kink subculture to use BDSM as mystical techniques for transcendence.

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Many people talk about using BDSM for catharsis, meditation, spiritual connection, transformation, transcendence, and even “nirvana.” There is a complex crossover between the BDSM subculture and the Neo-

pagan subculture such that many large BDSM events often host Neo-pagan style rituals, and some Neo-pagan events set up “sacred spaces” specifically for BDSM play.

In interviews, several people noted the spiritual history of BDSM, and its use in Catholicism, Native American shamanic ordeals, and other world religions as well. Although BDSM rituals do not always separate BDSM from eroticism and sexuality, they often do. The collective mystical experiences sought from people in those rituals are hard to characterize as “kinky” in any conventional sense of the word.

### ***Social Legitimacy or Legitimate Personal Experience?***

My research strongly suggests to me that outside of the BDSM subculture, people almost entirely engage in kink for sexual or erotic reasons. Respondents (matching my own personal experience) often told stories of arriving in the BDSM subculture believing that kink was entirely sexual and then discovering that there were more non-sexual possibilities and associations as they became more heavily involved.

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This process of discovery is undoubtedly partly the result of the way that the BDSM subculture tends to encourage people to separate kink from sex.

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My own personal experiences as well as my research observations suggest to me that people engage in BDSM for a wide variety of reasons, only some of which are sexual or erotic. By sometimes narrowly defining sex, usually broadly defining kink, and cultivating both artistic and spiritual uses for BDSM, the kink subculture is often

successful at persuading members that BDSM is much more than “deviant sex.”

However, I believe that the subculture tends to deliberately emphasize the separation of BDSM from sex in an ongoing project of mainstream legitimation. Despite its gleeful celebration of deviance, the BDSM subculture as a whole remains conscious of and affected by mainstream heteronormative attitudes about the meaning of sex, including a sense that BDSM may be more socially acceptable when separated from sex. As long as that perception remains, it will be very hard to determine if people who say “kink isn’t about sex” mean that sincerely, or if they are trying to create an awkward compromise between a kink-positive subculture that exists in a larger sex-negative culture.



**DCSS President's**

**Invitational Panel**

**Thursday, September 24, 2015**

**6–9pm**

**Location: TBA**



# Inequality in the District

Johanna Bockman  
George Mason University

Last October, Mike DeBonis of the *Washington Post* reported that “D.C. has a higher level of income inequality than at least 66 countries.” Over the past 10 years, the Gini Coefficient for DC has gone from .595 to a high of .656 and now to .627.<sup>1</sup> DeBonis noted that the Gini Coefficient moves in a similar pattern to the S&P 500 index, but nothing more was explained. Here I seek to encourage sociologists in the greater Washington, DC area to talk loudly and publicly about the mechanisms behind inequality and the possible ways to reduce inequality.

The U.S. Census Bureau provides the data necessary to demonstrate inequality. However, while Census data demonstrate rising inequality, as I understand, the U.S. Census staff cannot publicly provide explanations for why inequality happens. For these explanations, the U.S. Census Bureau directs the media to academics and other experts. What are these experts telling the media? Are these experts not talking loud enough?

Here are three ways that sociologists have explained inequality and ways out of it. First, sociologists have found that political leaders have a dramatic effect on poverty and wealth. In his comparison of rich democracies, David Brady (2009) found that governments greatly determine one's risk of poverty and shape the experience of poverty.

Political actors in the formal political arena determine the nature of the welfare state and thus the nature of poverty in each country. In his book, he found, “Poverty is lower and equality is more likely to be established where welfare states are generous, Leftist collective political actors are in power, and latent coalitions for

egalitarianism exert influence, and all of this is institutionalized in the formal political arena” (ibid.: 6).<sup>2</sup>

Political actors can have a big impact on poverty and inequality not only across wealthy democratic countries but also within countries like the United States.

In the table below, we can see that the percentage of people living in poverty decreased both in the United States and Washington, DC during the 1960s. This large decline can be explained by the federal War on Poverty and the myriad of policies that helped low-income people escape poverty. However, while poverty continued to decline in the U.S., poverty in the District increased in the 1970s.

Then, after Marion Barry become Mayor in 1979, poverty in District decreased -- from 18.6 percent to 16.9 percent through the 1980s, while poverty increased in the U.S. from 12.4 percent to 13.1 percent (see table). The unique decline of poverty in District suggests that policies aimed at helping low-income residents made a difference.

**Table 1: Poverty Rate D.C. vs U.S.**

Year	DC % Poverty	US % Poverty
1959	22.2	22.1
1969	17	13.7
1979	18.6	12.4
1989	16.9	13.1
1999	20.2	12.4
2009	18.4	14.3

Source: Persons by Poverty Status in 1959, 1969, 1979, 1989, 1999 by State; Poverty: 2000 to 2012; the U.S. Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov>.



In the 1990s, however, poverty rate in the District increased to 20.2 percent, even while poverty decreased in the U.S. as a whole. From 1995 to 1999, Marion Barry had his fourth term as Mayor. Within months of his inauguration, the Congress imposed the Control Board. The five-person Control Board could override decisions by the Mayor and the City Council and implemented a broad reorganization of the District government.<sup>3</sup> The Control Board implemented significant budget cuts and undermined Home Rule. During the period of the Control Board, poverty increased in Washington, DC.

Second, Charles Tilly, Douglas Massey, and others have argued that opportunity hoarding and exploitation based on cognitive categories cause inequality. In the words of Douglas Massey: “Exploitation is the expropriation of resources from an out-group by members of an in-group, such that out-group members receive less than full value for the resources they give up. Opportunity hoarding is the monopolization of access to a resource by in-group members, allowing them to keep it for themselves or charge rents to out-group members in return for access.

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“In contemporary American society, the most common form of exploitation is discrimination within markets....”

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In contemporary American society, the most common form of exploitation is discrimination within markets and the most common form of opportunity hoarding is exclusion from markets and resource-rich social settings. Once established, and in the absence of any countervailing social force, mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion

will tend to persist over time to generate and reproduce inequality.”<sup>4</sup>

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In Washington, DC, many forms of gentrification are based on these mechanisms. The District government, federal government, and real estate developers have destroyed public housing and built mixed income developments and have converted affordable housing into market-rate condominiums.

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Both of these processes allow those who can pay market rates to monopolize access to these new developments. How might we stop exploitation and opportunity hoarding?

Third, sociologists, like Erik Olin Wright, have called for real utopias like cooperatives and the sharing economy as ways to create a more equal society. Juliet Schor reminds us, however, that not all of the sharing economy is liberatory. Uber and ZipCar are important examples of the sharing economy in District, which are not so liberatory. According to Schor, we must look for other ways of organizing such elements of the sharing economy:

1. “An alternative to the co-optation path is one in which sharing entities become part of a larger movement that seeks to redistribute wealth and foster participation, ecological protection, and social connection. This will only happen via organization, even unionization, of users.”
2. “Existing platforms could also potentially become user-governed or cooperatively owned, an outcome some voices within the community are advocating.”

3. “Alternately, organizations that are part of the solidarity sector, such as unions, churches, civil society groups, and cooperatives, could create platforms for their members. They could build alternatives to the for-profits, particularly if the software to operate these exchanges is not too expensive. These platforms could be user governed and/or owned.”<sup>5</sup>

The lively cooperative and sharing life in Washington, DC can be a model for other cities across the country, and could also learn from sociologists like Schor. What do you think the media should hear from sociologists about inequality and poverty? What should every journalist know?

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## How can we sociologists talk more *loudly* in Washington, DC?

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### Notes

1. DeBonis, Mike. “D.C. has a higher level of income inequality than at least 66 countries,” *Washington Post* blog District of DeBonis,” October 29, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/mike-debonis/wp/2014/10/29/d-c-has-a-higher-level-of-income-inequality-than-at-least-66-countries/>.
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## The Founding of DCSS Part Two: Organizing

Patricia Lengermann  
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*This article is part of a larger work in progress on the history of sociology in Washington, DC, a history shaped not by the presence of a major University Department of Sociology, as in Chicago, but by location, the center of government in the United States.*

*Other topics we hope to share with The Sociologist readership include*

- ◇ *Visits of Harriet Martineau and Alexis De Tocqueville in the 1830s*
- ◇ *Life and work of Anna Julia Cooper, after whom a circle in Le Droit Park is named*
- ◇ *Lester Ward’s work and time at the U.S. Geologic Survey*
- ◇ *E. Franklin Frazier’s DCSS presidency*
- ◇ *C. Wright Mills’ years at the University of Maryland*
- ◇ *Talley’s corner then and now*
- ◇ *Jessie Bernard’s years in retirement in Washington, DC*

This report on the founding of the DCSS is being published in installments, of which this is the second. The first installment (*The Sociologist* February 2015), which we reprise briefly here, dealt with the social context framing that founding in 1934. That context we saw in terms of three major events: the Great Depression, F.D.R.’s “New Deal,” and the growing division in the sociological community over its organization, orientation to society, and methodology.

While most readers have a general familiarity with the first two, the divisions in

sociology, complex and less well-known, may need some re-statement. These divisions were partly fueled by assertions of the University of Chicago Sociology Department's long-standing organizational dominance of the profession, on the one hand, versus challenges to that dominance, on the other.

By 1934 sociology was being practiced out of several other significant universities, most notably Columbia University. In the stress of shrinking resources and intensified competitiveness resulting from the Depression, University of Chicago became the object of calls for organizational decentralization, increasingly expressed in the formation of semi-autonomous regional and local associations. DCSS was both a part of this trend and an anomaly within it.

Suspicion and resentment of Chicago grew dramatically after 1927 when William Ogburn became Chair of the Department and rejected that program's long-standing tolerance of multiple orientations and methods, insisting instead on a radical scientism which scorned reformist policy engagements by sociologists in favor of a rigidly objective pursuit of "pure science."

The Ogburn faction seized upon the growing sophistication of large-scale quantitative methods, claiming it as part of the practice of pure, value neutral social science. One mark of the extent of the resentment this created is a reflection by L.L. Bernard on the founding of the *American Sociological Review*, "I . . . appointed the committee which recommended the substitution of the *American Sociological Review* for the *American Journal of Sociology* and pushed the resolution through . . . . I took these steps because the department of sociology at the University of Chicago under its leader at the time [Ogburn] had become arrogant and was suspected of making the interests of the

American Sociological Society subsidiary to those of the Chicago department" (Odum 1951: 410). Part I of this article ended with the claim that DCSS was created as a challenge to the Ogburn position, an attempt to rescue quantitative method from its coupling with the "pure science" rejection of reform and policy activity by sociologists.

### ***Part II: Organizing DCSS***

Charles Camic, the leading scholar on sociology's role during the Depression has claimed (2007) that the profession remained curiously (and all but fatally) disengaged from any intellectual curiosity about the social causes and consequences of the Depression and failed to mount a full-fledged pursuit of the career and professional possibilities opened up by the voracious demand for social science expertise created by the New Deal bureaucracy. In so doing, he laments, sociology ceded the world of public policy to economists, in particular, but also to political scientists and lawyers, an outcome that would have long term negative effects on the profession.

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The question of whether Camic's portrait is true of all parts of the sociological community calls for further study. (We believe that at least a part of the issue here is a narrowing of the definition of what constitutes that community to the members,

and even more to the elites of the American Sociological Society.)

In the case of DCSS, locating sociology as a significant player in New Deal policy work was a central project. Moreover the initiative for such a project came from major Chicago players, especially Ernest Burgess, an eminent presence at Chicago and in 1934 the President of the American Sociological Society (ASS) and Stuart Rice, then Assistant Director of the Census Bureau, who had taught at Chicago, worked closely with Burgess on the ASS Special Committee on the Scope of Research (Rhoades, 1981) and would be the so-called "Chicago candidate" for ASS President in 1936 (an election he withdrew from rather than face what seemed certain defeat by the highly mobilized anti-Chicago forces who were advancing the candidacy of Henry Pratt Fairchild of New York University (Lengermann, 1979). Burgess and Rice were joined in the DCSS initiative by local academics, community leaders, and sociologists working in the New Deal agencies.

Collectively this group of about 50 players created DCSS in five months, May to September 1934, not, like so many of the new regional and local associations in a quest for autonomy from ASS, but as an accredited chapter of the national association. The creation of DCSS was monitored by the local press, the then-dominant *Evening Star* (1934a, 1934b, 1934c) and *The Post* (Baker, 1934; *Post*, 1934). The reporting on the three meetings that formed the Society (all held at the Admiral Inn 1640 Rhode Island Street), reveal much about its membership and purpose.



*May 1, 1934*—Plans were announced to form a sociological society in Washington, DC and to seek chapter status from ASS. Only a few names are given in the reports—D.W. Willard of the George Washington University, Earl Bellman of the University of Maryland, and Elwood Street, director of the Washington Community Chest had drawn up an organizational plan and preliminary constitution. Ernest Burgess spoke on "The National Opportunity for Sociologists" and Stuart Rice called for the creation of a coordinating committee for sociologists in the various government agencies in a talk titled "The Opportunity for National Service by Washington Sociologists." Both talks show clearly that the driving motive behind the formation of DCSS was a desire to again link sociology to the solution of contemporary social problems.

*May 27, 1934*—Much had been accomplished in a few weeks under the guidance of a planning committee consisting of Rice, Willard, E.D. Tetreau of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Theodore Manny of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Paul Furfey (see photo) of Catholic University, Earl Bellman of the University of Maryland, Dorothy Thomas of FERA, and Carl Taylor of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads at the Department of Agriculture. A preliminary executive had been formed with Willard as President pro tem, and Conrad Taeuber of FERA as vice-president; a constitution and

bylaws were adopted by those attending, and plans made for further activities. A petition for chapter status was forwarded to ASS, (an unusual action for a regional association, the news report (*Star* 1934b) states) and a Nomination Committee was formed to seek candidates for election to a permanent executive. The attendees heard talks by Howard R. Tolley of the Department of Agriculture, Leon Truesdell of the Census Bureau, Lawrence Westbrook of FERA., and Gutzon Borglum, a well-known sculptor who throughout the 1930s worked on creating the Mount Rushmore portraits of U.S. Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt.



Paul Furfey, second from left, at Fides Settlement House with Eleanor Roosevelt, 1941.

Source:<http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/people/furfey-monsignor-paul-hanly/>.

**September 27, 1934**— DCSS was formally inducted as a chapter of ASS by Burgess. Elected officers were Rice, President; Willard, vice-president; Frederick Stephan of FERA, secretary-treasurer, and a board made up of Elwood Street, Emma Winslow of the Children's Bureau, E.D. Tetreau of FERA and Joseph Mayer, Library of Congress. The full membership of the

Society on this date is given in Table 1, which also includes a few names of people who had participated earlier but are not named in the September listing of "charter members."

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*The Evening Star*, reflecting no doubt spokespersons' euphoria, claimed that the newly-minted society was "expected to be the most important group of professional sociologists in the United States."

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3. Lengermann, Patricia. 1979. "The Founding of the *American Sociological Review*: The Anatomy of a Rebellion." *American Sociological Review* 44:185-198.
4. Odum, Howard. 1951. *American Sociology: The Story of Sociology in the United States Through 1950*. New York: Longman and Green.
5. Rhoades, Lawrence J. 1981. *A History of the American Sociological Association, 1905-1980*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association. Retrieved Dec. 24, 2013 [http://www.asanet.org/about/Rhoades\\_History.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/about/Rhoades_History.cfm)
6. *The Evening Star*. 1934a. "Sociology Chapter to Be Formed Here." May 1, p. 23.
7. *The Evening Star*. 1934b. "Professor D.W. Willard Heads Sociologists." May 27, p. 38.
8. *The Evening Star*. 1934c. "DC Sociologists Organize Chapter." October 6 p. 13.
9. *The Washington Post* 1934. "Willard Elected by Sociological Chapter Here." May 28, p.2.

**Table 1. Founding Members of the District of Columbia Sociological Society 1934\***

<b>Name, date, reason for being in D.C. in 1934</b>	<b>Brief Bio</b>
<b>Arner, George Byron Louis</b> c. 1880-19 Census Bureau	Columbia University PhD 1908 "Consanguineous Marriages In The American Population." Taught at Princeton 1908-09; Dartmouth 1901-1911. Statistician at Ohio State Board of Health. Co-author with John Spargo, <i>Elements of Socialism</i> 1912
<b>Bellman, Earl S.</b> 1903-2001 University of Maryland	University of Kansas MA 1929 "Attitudes of college men towards careers for wives." Did Rural Research for the Christian Rural Social Justice Fund; <i>A Study of the Care of the Needy Aged in Maryland Counties</i> 1933
<b>Burgess, Ernest</b> 1886-1966 President of ASA	University of Chicago PhD 1913 "The Function of Socialization in Social Evolution" President of National Council on Family Relations 1942. Chaired University of Chicago Sociology Department 1946
<b>Clague, Ewan</b> 1897-1987 Department of Labor	University of Wisconsin PhD 1929 "Productivity Of Labor In Merchant Blast Furnaces." Author of <i>After the Shut Down</i> 1934. Director of the Bureau of Employment Security 1940. Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics 1946
<b>Dedrick, Calvert L.</b> 1901-1984 Central Statistical Board	University of Wisconsin PhD 1934 "Incomes And Occupations In Madison, Wisconsin" Born San Diego. Co-author with Kimball Young, John Lewis Gillin, <i>The Madison Community</i> 1934
<b>Dreis, Thelma A.</b> ?-1995 FERA	American University PhD 1951. Author of A Handbook of Social Statistics 1936. Contributed to U.S. Department Of Agriculture's <i>Sample Interview Survey As A Tool Of Administration</i>
<b>Edwards, Alan D.</b>	Worked for the FERA
<b>Edwards, Esther</b>	Worked for the FERA
<b>Forster, Milton</b> Works Progress Administration	Yale University PhD 1934 "Temporal Relations Of Behavior In Chimpanzee And Man As Measured By Reaction Time." WPA Coordinator of research and surveys
<b>Frazier, E. Franklin</b> 1894-1962 Howard University	University of Chicago PhD 1932 "The Negro Family in Chicago." Taught at Morehouse. Organized Atlanta University School of Social Work. Would be President of DCSS, ESS, and ASA

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<b>Name, date, reason for being in D.C. in 1934</b>	<b>Brief Bio</b>
<b>Furfey, Paul H.</b> 1896-1992 Catholic University	Catholic University of America PhD 1926 "The Gang Age; A Study Of The Preadolescent Boy And His Recreational Needs." Ordained priest 1934. Involved with Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker Movement
<b>Gerlach, Edgar M. C.</b> 1897-? Bureau of Prisons	University of Michigan BS 1922. Worked on WPA project <i>Social Service Resource Directory</i> published 1937. Warden at Danbury Federal Prison
<b>Givens, Meredith</b> 1899-1976 Committee on Government Statistics	University of Wisconsin PhD 1929 "Productivity Of Labor In Merchant Blast Furnaces." Member of Ogburn's team for 1930s, <i>Social Trends</i>
<b>Halbert, Leroy Alan</b> 1875-1958 D.C. Unemployment Relief	Chicago Theological Seminary, later Doctor of Law Washburn University. Superintendent for Welfare in Kansas City, then Rhode Island. Organized consumer cooperatives
<b>Hauser, Philip Morris</b> 1909-1994 FERA	University of Chicago PhD 1938 "Differential Fertility, Mortality, And Net Reproduction In Chicago." Demographer. Director of Population Research Center University of Chicago. Worked for Census Bureau
<b>Hirschstein, Bertha T.</b> FERA	New York University PhD 1933 "A Sociological study of the Public Library." Worked for FERA
<b>Leahy, Margaret</b> Children's Bureau	Published study on role of social workers in Japanese American internment (1946). Worked for Bureau of Public Assistance
<b>Lorimer, Frank</b> 1895-1985 American University	Columbia University PhD Taught at Wells College. President of Society for the Scientific Study of Population
<b>Magnus, A.R.</b> FERA	Studied farmers on relief
<b>Manny, Theodore B.</b> 1897-1938 Department of Agriculture	University of Wisconsin PhD 1928 "Rural Municipalities; A Sociological Study Of Local Government In The United States." Professor and later head of sociology department at University of Maryland
<b>Mayer, Joseph</b> 1887-? Library of Congress	Sociology consultant to the Library of Congress. Reviewer for ASR. Coordinator for "Projects for collecting, listing and preserving materials of scholarship"
<b>McCormick, Thomas Carter</b> FERA	University of Chicago PhD 1929 "Rural Unrest: A Sociological Investigation of the Rural Movement in the United States"

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<b>Name, date, reason for being in D.C. in 1934</b>	<b>Brief Bio</b>
<b>Mueller, John H.</b> 1935-1965 FERA	University of Chicago PhD 1928 "The automobile: A sociological study." Taught University of Oregon. Research analyst for FERA
<b>Rice, Sarah A.</b>	Married to Stuart A.
<b>Rice, Stuart A.</b> 1889-1969 Census Bureau	Columbia University PhD 1924 "Farmers And Workers In American Politics." Worked as political organizer Farm-Labor Party. President of American Statistical Society
<b>Robert, Percy A.</b> Catholic University	New York University PhD. Became DCSS President
<b>Spicer, Hazel I.</b>	Co-author of <i>Study of Student Health Services for Committee on Cost of Health Care</i> 1932; monograph becomes the example used by Johns Hopkins library website to illustrate different citation styles
<b>Stouffer, Samuel A.</b> 1900-1960 Central Statistical Board	University of Chicago PhD 1930 "An Experimental Comparison of Statistical and Case-History Methods of Attitude Research." Author of <i>Studies in Social Psychology in World War II: The American Soldier</i> 1949
<b>Stephan, Frederick F.</b> 1903-1971 FERA	Taught at University of Pittsburgh. Professor at Princeton University. Co-author of <i>Sampling Opinions</i> 1958
<b>Street, Elwood</b> 1891-? D.C. Community Chest	As reporter for a Cleveland paper, was assigned to do a story on organized charity and changed careers. Director of D.C. Public Welfare
<b>Taeuber, Conrad</b> 1906-1999 FERA	University of Minnesota PhD 1931 "Migration To And From German Cities, 1902-1929." Worked for U.S. Department of Agriculture; head of farm population and rural welfare, later Kennedy Institute, Georgetown University. Married to Irene Barnes Taeubner 1929; they did demographic research together. DCSS Student Paper Award named for her
<b>Tattershall, Louise M.</b> Children's Bureau	Barnard University BA 1908. Statistician for the National Organization for Public Health Nursing
<b>Taylor, Carl</b> 1884-1975 Department of Agriculture	University of Missouri PhD 1918 "The Social Survey, Its History and Methods." Wrote first textbook on rural sociology 1926. President of ASA 1946

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<b>Name, date, reason for being in D.C. in 1934</b>	<b>Brief Bio</b>
<b>Tetreau, E.D.</b> c. 1900-1945 FERA	University of Wisconsin PhD 1930 "Farm Family Participation in Lodges, Grange, Farm Bureau, Four-H Clubs, School And Church." 1934 <i>Social Forces</i> article, "How to Study the Sociology of Direct Action Farmers' Movement"
<b>Thomas, Dorothy Swaine</b> 1899-1977 FERA	London School of Economics PhD 1925 "Social Aspects of the Business Cycle." Worked for FERA. First woman President of ASA
<b>Tolley, Howard R.</b> 1889-1958 Agricultural Adjustment Administration	Director of the Giannini Foundation at University of California--Berkeley. Author of <i>The Farmer Citizen at War</i> 1943
<b>Truesdell, Leon E.</b> 1882-1973 Census Bureau	Robert Brookings Graduate School PhD 1924. Published <i>Analysis of the Farm Population</i> 1920
<b>Willard, D.W.</b> c. 1880-1934 George Washington University	University of Washington PhD "A Social Critique Of Current Tendencies In Health Education." Died in October 1934 home accident when furnace explodes; Bellman and Rice are pallbearers at his funeral
<b>Willard, Ella</b>	Married to D.W. Willard
<b>Williams, Faith M.</b> c. 1900-1958 Bureau of Labor Statistics	Columbia University PhD 1924 "The Food Manufacturing Industries in New York and Its Environs; Present Trends and Probable Future Developments." Chief, Office of Labor Economics, Bureau of Labor Statistics 1958; married to Frank Lorimer (see above)
<b>Winslow, Emma A.</b> c. 1880-1941 Children's Bureau	University of London PhD 1923 "Budget Studies and the Measurement Of Living Costs And Standards." Worked for USO in World War II
<b>Wood, Martha</b> 1891 -1948 Children's Bureau	University of Pennsylvania MA
<b>Woodbury, Robert M.</b> Children's Bureau	Cornell University PhD 1915 "Social Insurance: An Economic Analysis." Involved in statistical studies of infant mortality 1930s
<b>Woolbert, Helen Griffin</b> FERA	University of Chicago PhD 1930 "Type of Social Philosophy as a Function of Father-Son Relationship"

*\*This Table is a work-in-progress and we would appreciate additional information or corrections to the information we present here.*

