ISR Italian Sociological Review
University of Verona, Italy
ISSN 2239-8589 | Editor in Chief Paola Di Nicola
Managing Editor Debora Viviani

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How to cite
Cersosimo, G. (2021). Women, Research and Methods. A Short Reflection on The Chicago Social Reformers. [Italian Sociological Review, 11 (3), 951-966]
Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.13136/isr.v11i3.503]

[DOI: 10.13136/isr.v11i3.503]

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3. Article accepted for publication
Date: July 2021

Women, Research and Methods. A Short Reflection on The Chicago Social Reformers

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Abstract

This paper is a brief reflection on the presence of women such as Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, Alice Hamilton, and other female reformers of Hull-House, an emblem of the growing female presence in social analysis from the year 1889 ahead. It is not our goal to extol the feminist pragmatism of women active in Chicago – outside the University – but rather to consider the activity of those women in terms of the real characteristics of their position in the field of American Sociology; expecially in relation to investigations linked to the rights of individuals, women and children, and for their special contribution to the methods of their research.

Keywords: settlement, social analysis, rights, feminism.

1. Settlement democracy: reality, conditions and assumptions

"The educational activities of the settlement, as well as its philanthropic, civic, and social undertakings, are but different manifestations of the attempt to socialize democracy, as is the very existence of the Settlement itself" (Addams, 1910: 310), Jane Addams stated in the final words of her most famous memoir. Here she remembered the fatal want of a harmony between theory and the lives of individuals, which were part of her initial elaboration on 'subjective necessity' (Addams, 1902) which summarizes the idea and the spirit of the settlement's genesis. She moved from an English inspired to a poverty care structure, as did Toynbee Hall in London, and then to a dynamic institutional design, connected to community organizations, social analysis, individual rights and welfare democracy. The Hull

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House expressed "first the desire to interpret democracy in social terms; second, the impulse beating at the very source of our lives, urging us to aid in the race of progress; and third, the Christian movement toward humanitarianism". At the same time, it was "an experimental effort to aid in the solution of social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city. It insists that these problems are not confined to any one portion of a city" (Addams, 1893: 2-5). In coherence with this, George Herbert Mead, pragmatist, urban intellectual, social and school reformer of his time as well as a frequent visitor at The Hull-House[1] pointed out, "It is the privilege of the social settlement to be a part of its own immediate community, to approach its conditions with no preconceptions, and to be the exponents of no dogma or fixed rules of conduct" (Mead, 1907: 110).

Hull-House was founded on September 18, 1889, realized by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, friends and lovers from the time of their attendance at Rockford Seminary. Their idea was "a higher civic and social life", and from its beginnings it comprised a community of women who shared their living spaces, connected through friendship and love, emancipation and new professions, public recognition and the spirit of civic reform. This was a place of growing feminism and theoretically heterogeneous backgrounds – from pragmatism to socialism – and a new analysis of industrial development. At its apex, a new organization, non restrictionist, founded in solidarity with migrants, their traditions and their cultures, to women and children at work, and to a dramatic awareness of the tragedy of many fragmented dreams, broken apart by the reality of everyday life. Our premise, inspired by Kemp Fish, is that it should be wrong to identify Hull-House and Jane Addams while marginalizing other components of progress. Addams' talents were certainly at the center of the settlement's growth and if we remember the community of Hull-House, we must agree that "friendships that began there endured and were strengthened and reinforced by the same and overlapping interests, organizational memberships, and social reform efforts" (Kemp-Fish, 1986: 189). This idea was plainly expressed by one of the first Hull-House settlers as "an expression of a sense of humanity, not philanthropy nor benevolence but something fuller and wider than either" (Abbott, 1952: 3-4).

The women expressed their autonomy not only in civil society by way of their activities, but contributed in various ways to organizational changes in the public and urban sphere (Kish Sklar, 1995: 205). During this time, investigation and reform were increasingly inseparable. Addams, Kelley, Lathrop, sisters

[1] Mary Jo Deegan remembers a long friendship and collaboration between Mead and Addams, a friendship also with Helen Mead, George's wife, Adams and Mead cooperated especially during the garment strike in Chicago in 1910 (Deegan, 1990: 10).

Edith and Grace Abbott, Gates, Breckenridge, McDowell, Kellor, Stevens, MacLean and others, all intrigued by the settlement idea, manifested the middle-class feminine approach – a new solution to individual, social and industrial problems – at the same time conquering the public sphere and disclosing a new womanhood. A new tradition of investigation was born within their heterogeneous activities, yet all endorsed the promotion of social research as the premise of a deep urban knowledge and public transformation. All were deeply and consistently involved in urban and state affairs previously. This work became part of their everyday life after the constitution of College Settlement Association in the late 1880's, and their interconnectivity was promoted by Vida Scudder and others women of the settlement as an association: a network whose idea was a national coalition for debating national social reforms, with a corresponding power in national politics. These were mainly young residents with a median age of twenty-five (Davis, 1967: 33) but they worked hard to affirm the settlement ideals, especially in the new century when The College Settlement Association "offered free room and board as well as small stipend to college graduates interested in studying the city and living in a settlement" (Cooley, 1900: 1-2). This was a new way to approach urban masses and an analytical approach to poverty. They aimed to reduce class conflict, and define an interactive process of *Americanization* observant to every tradition.

They lived together and acquired together a progressive, renewed and extended approach to the methods of social analysis, each more coherent with their direct relations and individual path. New methods moved from an English journalistic approach like that of Henry Mayhew and his articles in The Morning Chronicle (Mayhew, 1851; Thomson, Yeo, 1971), which described Cholera in London, and from the whole analysis of poverty completed by Charles Booth by way of coloured maps of the city together with a detailed collection of data from streets and families, promoting social research and a long empirical tradition which described class variations in relation to wages and the poverty line (Booth, 1889). For this we can underline that, the previously published and little known books by Campbell should be credited with painting the most comprehensive picture of New York's city poverty, and moreover darkness and daylight (a few years before Riis text). It included 250 photos taken with flashbulls, these unbelievable and unforeseen documents renewed the methods of representation in analysis, and above all, the role of women writers and researchers. In her analysis of women and child workers, she proposed: modern remedies, equal pay and overtime compensation, improvement in health conditions and health care facilities, womens' unions and emancipation through visual descriptions and personal accounts. If social investigation developed in America, as part of its social history, and at the same time in relation to the developing social research and sociology within universities, certainly Jacob Riis

had a substantial role. His photo documentary *Mulberry Bend* was the epitome of descriptions. He portrayed a "residential environment and the ethnic traits of New York immigrant colonies" through stunning images of poor families, street gangs, promiscuity and the dangers they held for women and children. His photographs were a testimony to the humanity of the middle class, whose sense of justice and humanitarianism were in no doubt affected by the results of his research. His journalism, which he called 'muckraking', was his fight against the decay and demoralization of the city, uniting present and future through nostalgia and truth.

In his life and work, Jacob Riis promoted *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), his book title and subject. His original use of photographs represents the anatomy of the slums at their worst, the continuous ambient darkness, the drama of migrants crowded inside their tenements between disease and promiscuity. Riis "understood far better than anyone else the importance of using the press as a weapon in the battle against poverty" (Buk-Swienty, 2008: 5). The women of Hull-House for their part, lead from a "subjective necessity" and this was the basis for the settlement's promotion. Their aim was to become social activists and researchers, social reformers and professional protagonists. Feminist interpretations of their work will call the settlement's sociologists (Lengermann, Niebrugge, 2002).

The pragmatist was a recurrent theme underlying the forms of research that can be traced back throughout the last century to the works of women in the Chicago settlement. Pragmatism prioritizes the relationship between thought and action. The acquisition of knowledge allows an individual to develop a continuous relationship with the surrounding context, and thus, such knowledge is a social product. Meaning is expressed in action that arises from interactions with the environment and with other social actors. Methodologically, pragmatism relates knowledge of the world to experiences and practical exploration. Pragmatism has, over time, influenced the social sciences and research methodology. It refers to questions about the knowledge of realities that the subjects experience, as well as to its definition as a method or criterion for the analysis of the meaning of existence that leads to action. It can be seen that the social provisions at Hull-House can be understood as pragmatist through-and-through. In other words, in general terms, the residents were experimenters who above all needed to be what Addams (1961: 85) calls "flexible" both in practice and in goal setting. As noted pragmatist George Herbert Mead points out, "….to approach its conditions with no preconceptions, to be the exponents of no dogma or fixed rules of conduct, but to find out what the problems of this community are and as a part of it to help toward their solution" (1907: 110).

The theoretical assumptions of social research present in pragmatism refer to fundamental questions on how social science can play a useful and critical role in solving problems. The cognitive process is increasingly linked to experience, and to direct contact with reality. This historically determined relational reality guides individual choices and orientations, and can be grasped only through participatory observation, in the continuity of an action that involves the observer and determines a temporary adaptation. In the breaking of every dualism, the traditional objectivity of the observer's gaze is questioned. Long thought to be separate or outside the considered dynamic, this gaze should succeed in separating orientations from results. The reality of meaning on the other hand, represents an intermediate point of convergence between the pragmatists' survey and the process of observation and interpretation in the face of interaction, in a method found within the Chicago School through the best expression of the relationship between pragmatist philosophy and social sciences. Deegan termed Addams a "critical pragmatist," emphasizing Addams' interest in "empowering the community, the laborer, the poor, the elderly and youth, women and immigrants." (1988: 255). Meanwhile Lengermann and Niebrugge (1998) saw the women of Hull-House as facing a growing distinction between theory and application. These women can best be understood as "practical pragmatists," for they were focused on actions and experience, and only later would attempt to formalize and label what they had been doing in that context.

The pragmatic feminist may be - as inspired by Dewey and other founding mothers of sociology – a center of sociological theory and practices, led by founder Jane Addams (Deegan, 1988), and further promoters of an ethnographic school (Deegan, 2001). They developed social analysis and research, as testified first of all from the accurate representation of the first great analysis of nineteenth ward completed by residents of Hull-House, thoroughly utilizing the experience of Florence Kelley, labor inspector for The Illinois Bureau of Labor, who "more than any other resident transformed Hull-House from a philanthropic organization into an engine of social reform, and her approach to social problems became the model for settlement reformers" (Sklar, 1985: 116). In a similar evaluation, Meredith Tax outlines that Florence Kelley turned the settlement away from purely social service to social action (Tax, 2001: 81). Her research on the garment industry's sweatshop labor system was the premise for a national investigation of the garment industry on behalf of the slums. Here her socialist background encountered the dramatic exploitation of child labor, the premise for a continuity of the analytic approach: "it is my ambition to make the most thoroughly specialized study of the statistics of child labor that has never been made… It has never been shown how far the exploitation of children contributes to the concentration of the

people in cities, and to a number of other phenomena of daily life" (Kelley, 1894, in Kish Sklar, Wilson Palmer, 2009: 194).

2. Hull-House analyses: history and research methods

In the spirit of Riis' appeal to the 'other half', Addams recounted in her memoir, one of the more striking but hidden Chicago contradictions: the distance between Chicago's beautiful modern center, and the migrants' wards and stockyards. This is not only a physical space, but the product of another dramatic and awful modernity. "It is easy for even the most conscientious citizen of Chicago to forget the foul smells of the stockyards and the garbage dumps, when he is living so far from them that he is only occasionally made conscious of their existence, but the residents of a settlement are perforce surrounded by them constantly" (Addams, 1910: 201). So Hull-House, located on Halsted Street, was a center for a higher civic and social life, taking care of the neighborhood, working through the everyday encounters, from breakfast to art classes, nursery and evening schools, craft exhibits and dance classes, all designed to help migrants – mainly women and children – to rediscover and preserve customs and traditions from their culture within the process of their Americanization. The working model of Americanization was that of a melting pot, a description so popular and highly regarded but also feared by a growing number of Americans. Many supported a Congressional restriction on immigration, and this position was deeply criticized by Jane Addams[2]. William Thomas, the only sociologist in those years who supported the whole of ethnic traditions, summarized his ideas in a race-psychology approach: "Without ignoring economic determinism or denying the importance of specific race characters, I have assumed that individual variation is of more importance than racial difference, and that the main factors of social change are attention, interest, stimulation, imitation, occupational differentiation, mental attitude, and accessibility to opportunity. In other words, I have emphasized the social rather than the biological and economic aspects of the problem" (Thomas, 1912: 726).

[2] "The application of a collective judgment with regard to aliens in the United States is particularly stupid. The Twenty-seven million people of foreign birth living among us are not only quite as diversified in their political opinions as those of us forming the remaining millions of the population, but they are in fact more highly differentiated from each other by race, tradition, religion, and European background than the rest of us possibly by even though we are as diverse as 'the cracker' in Georgia and the Yankee in Maine" (Addams, 1919: 207).

To study a particular neighborhood or settlement required a substantial amount of cultural knowledge, and for this settlement, residents became investigators.

Around the same time as Riis survey (1890), Robert Woods termed the settlements "social science laboratories" in part as a response to question raised by Addams to find a "solution to the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life" (Addams, 1892: 125) continuously undergoing research. Hull-House and its settlers had a leading role in research and in research methods: "We continually conduct small but careful investigations at Hull-House, which may guide us in our immediate doings" (Addams, 1910: 213)[3] Our aim here is not to present all methodological approaches to the residents of Hull-House, but to consider a few symbolic research methods, which can testify to the deep innovative contribution offered by Hull-House researchers to enlarge, enrich, popularize and institutionalize social analysis. Our specific awareness is that before qualifying that women as sociologists (the ones who really worked inside the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at The University of Chicago) we must recognize that Annie Marion MacLean, overcoming strong female segregation within the university, taught through correspondence for thirty-two years.

It was only a part of the Hull-House investigations, but for our text what is important is the variety of methods used and the themes which represent a real advancement in social analysis, departing from a majority of traditional approaches founded on statistical data and new methods connected to different life contexts. So also *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (1895) was a statistical study, but the research was completed with the cooperation of many residents such as Florence Kelley and Alzina Stevens (another young worker and resident of Hull-House), and Agnes Sinclair Holbrook (who compiled the maps) because

[3] In their Handbook of Settlements, Robert Woods and Albert Kennedy remember a part of Hull House researches from their origins: 1892, *Investigation of the Sweating System for the State Bureau of Labor Statistics* (Kelley); 1893, *The Slums of Great Cities* (Chicago) for the Department of Labor (Washington); *Dietary Investigations for Department of Agriculture* (Washington) (Kelley); 1895, Publication of *Hull-House Maps and Papers, Studies in Ward and City Conditions* (Addams, Holbrook, Kelley, Stevens; 1896, *Investigation of the Saloons of the Nineteenth Ward for Committee of Fifty*; 1897, *Investigation of the dietary health of the Italian Colony* for the Department of Agriculture (Washington) (Addams); *General Study of 19th Ward* for Ethical Society; 1903, *Study of Casual Labor on the Lakes*; 1905, *An Intensive Study of the Causes of Truancy; Study of Tuberculosis in Chicago*; 1907, *Investigation into the Selling of Cocaine*; 1908, *Study of Midwifery* (Cooperation with Chicago Medical Society), and *Study of the Greeks in Chicago*; 1909, *Study of Infantile Mortality among Selected Immigrant Groups*; 1910, *Investigation of the Home Reading of Public School Children* (Woods and Kennedy, 1911: 54).

"the aim is to present conditions rather than to advance theories" (Holbrook, 1895: 13). Julia Lathrop, Ellen Gates Starr and Isabel Eaton, in a unique study organized not only through statistical data but also through life histories, short biographies, health observations, living humanity and sensibility were persuaded that "wage-earning children are an unmitigated injury to themselves, to the community upon which they will later be burdens, and to the trade which they demoralize" (Kelley, Stevens, 1895: 75); this was also their view on women who were victims of the labor system (Kelley, 1895: 27-28). The Hull-House Maps and Papers (Residents of Hull-House, 1895) was a survey of settlement neighborhoods based on the tracking of ethnic groups, occupations and income, and characterized in the history of sociological methods as an accessible analysis, realized through wonderful coloured maps which represented unique ethnic groups and their wages in that tragic, crowded and unhealthy 19th ward of Chicago. The reminiscence and reproposal of Booth's work is plain in a volume in which "Hull-House offers these facts more with the hope of stimulating inquiry and action, and evolving new thoughts and methods, than with the idea of recommending its own manner of effort" (Holbrook, 1895: 13). At this proposal, as Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley have remembered, "settlement sociology' was "very inventive in their data-gathering strategies … including house-to-house surveys, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, personal budget-keeping, participant observation and the use of key informants; their approaches to secondary data analysis covered using censuses, legislation, memoirs and diaries, wage and cost-of-living records, court and industrial accident reports, tax rolls and nursery rhymes. These early researchers were also inventive with respect to methods of presenting data, from the coloured maps of Hull-House to bar charts, tables, graphs, statistical analyses, photographs, narrative accounts and extended quotation from research participants" (2002: 10), in a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Proof of this will be the different methods derived from Hull-House in its direct activity, as well as those conducted by individuals from Hull-House. Hull-House color-coded maps represented poverty and crowding in the 19th ward, revealing ethnic concentration together with earnings. To some extent, this preceded an endorsement from Florence Kelley: "while the science of man was a science of wealth, rest and self-interest, there was slight inducement for women to touch it. The new social science has humane interest, and can never be complete without help from women" (Kelley, 1882: 517)[4].

[4] Quoted from Sklar, 1998, p.127, Kelley's work was part of her progressive bond and detachment from socialist approach, in a contradictory path increasingly infused from an American Social Science background. Still in 1894, in a letter to Richard Ely, Kelley

The works of Annie Marion MacLean represented the founding of social ethnography in modern times, quite different from the anthropological approach active in modern cities, and in its more contradictory places such as department stores, where new social consumerism reached its peak through the exploitation of sweatshop workers as well as the denial of rights to individual and public health. In her studies of Chicago department stores and sweatshops (Mac Lean, 1899; 1903-4; 1909-10), Mac Lean based her analysis on participant observation and accurate ethnography through in depth interviews and the sharing everyday life experiences with children and female laborers. In this way, she was able to document their point of view through shared common experiences within the womens' social worlds. Her technique, which she employed for more than twenty-five years, was also taken up by male members of the Chicago Sociological Department, as in the case of Cressey's study of dance halls.

The other study, often neglected by social sciences, attention was given to Addams' work on city and youth (Addams, 1909). From child labor in sweatshops to children in tenements, from newsboys to flower shops, those of the Hull-House settlement, Jane Addams, Florence Kelley and Julia Lathrop, reserved a continual attention in their analyses to young people, children, boys, girls, their work, their education, and their delinquency. The book, Allen Davis remembers, was "overshadowed by her autobiography the following year ... but offers a perspective on youth culture...it is also an important book for understanding the emergence of concern for adolescence in the early twentieth century" (Davis, 1972: 9). If we can suppose that in the incipit of Addams' text a constant question arises: "each generation longs for a reassurance as to the value and charms of life" (Addams, 1909: 3), incited from a new and general interest in the youth and their roots. *The Spirit of Youth* was not the first book to address young people in the early 20th century, and Addams did not complete many research studies on the topic, but surely the text was the first to address a connection between young people and the metropolis remembering that "perhaps never before have the pleasures of the young and mature become so definitively separate as in the modern city" (Addams, 1909: 13). In part from Stan Hall's new definitions of adolescence (Hall, 1904), as William Healy was preparing his speculations against young delinquents (Healy, 1910), the Hull-House women (sometimes with Mead's cooperation) analyzed these problems for decades, connecting child labor and youth exploitation with compulsory

wrote: "I personally participate in the work of social reform because part of it develops along Socialist lines, and part is an absolute necessary protest against the brutalizing of us all by capitalism. Not because our Hull-House work alone would satisfy me" (Kelley, 1894: 74).

education. Through new legislation and continuous contact with families as well as Lewis Hine's dramatic and amazing photographs of child labor, Addams was surely stimulated in her approach to the progressive results of juvenile courts, and aware that the legal objectives for state intervention to improve the lives of children was near. The book, written more like a novel than a social analysis, was based on wishful statistics, using observations, interviews and life histories to propose a dramatic choice: "We may listen to the young voices rising clear above the roar of industrialism and the prudent councils of commerce, or we may become hypnotized by the sudden new emphasis placed upon wealth and forget the supremacy of spiritual forces for civic righteousness" (Addams, 1972: 161, ed. orig. 1909). Their work was helped as well by new legislation and continuous contact with families, as well as Lewis Hine's dramatic and honest photographs of child labor. Addams was surely stimulated in her approach to the progressive results of juvenile courts, and aware that the legal objectives for state intervention to improve the lives of children was near.

On April 9, 1912 president Taft aided Congress in creating a Childrens' Bureau, especially charged with investigating infant mortality, birth rate, orphanages, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment and legislation affecting children in the several states and territories (Act establishing the Childrens' Bureau, 1912). Julia Lathrop was appointed as head of the Bureau, an actor for the new future welfare of children and young people and she readily remembered: "The genuine value of a genuine settlement is thus evidenced by the fact that this bureau was first urged by women who have lived long in settlements and who by that experience have learned to know as well as any persons in this country, certain aspects of dumb misery which they desired through some governmental agency to make articulate and intelligible" (Lathrop, 1912: 318). An echo of the American Constitution was no doubt inside that new Bureau and its spirit.

3. The 19th ward: work, health and workers rights

According to the Hull-House group, social research could not always be effective, especially when challenging Victorian values and models of behavior. Hull-House studies drew attention to a multitude of problematic daily conditions for women and children. Among their priorities were: improvement of labor legislation, a compulsory education law and a fundamental improvement in health conditions to fight widespread sanitary risks at home and work, at least for certain segments of the population (women and children) who were exposed to industrial risks. Jane Addams described in a famous and often republished representation, the 19th ward conditions of Chicago as

"inexpressibly dirty" (Addams, 1910: 15). Similar images were proposed from Florence Kelley in a strong condemnation of sweatshop labor, among whose consequences were: "congestion of populations in the tenement districts; the ruin of home life in the dwellings used as workrooms; child labor in the home; endemic diseases (especially tuberculosis) due to the overcrowding and poverty of skilled working people during part of the year which some year in a series of important trades; insanity due to overwork followed by the anxiety of a prolonged period of unemployment; and suicide, a self-inflicted of almost daily recurrence in New York and Chicago" (Kelley, 1905: 253-254). Probably the most concise and effective representation of the whole contradictory metropolis was given in 1903 by Lincoln Steffens: "First in violence, deepest in dirt; loud, lawless, unlovely, ill-smelling, irreverent, new; an overgrown gawk of a village, the 'tough' among cities, a spectacle for the nation. With resources for a magnificent system of public parking, it is too poor to pave and clean the streets" (Steffens, 1992: 163); and as eminent scholar Donald Miller, in his study on Chicago emphasized: "Crowding and filth made their west wide tenements a public health menace to the entire city" (Miller 1996: 457).

The prolonged interest Kelley had in workplace security is attested to in a letter sent in 1930 to Mrs. Wallace Grayston (New York), from the point of view of The Consumer's League, recommending, "that no chemical substances can be used in manufacturing until they have been – by the Federal Bureau of Standard – guaranteed non-injurious to the workers using it or exposed to its poison. This is intended to cover injuries to employes such as the hideous torture and death inflicted on workers by radium in the making of luminous objects (clocks, watches, etc.), or in the manufacture of paints and varnishes. And the third is the requirement that no newly introduced machines may be set up in a factory until they have been deemed safe and certified by the US Department of Labor" (Kelley, December 23, 1930). The Hull-House residents reasserted this urgency for legislation in every study, with an irremissible defence for safety in the workplace.

Addams cooperated with the Board of Health in the fight against childhood diseases and again against sweatshops and the serious health threats they pose. "It has been estimated that in the decade of the 1890s alone, Addams made a thousand speeches on child labor and the need to abolish the sweatshops" (Elshtain, 2002: 140).

But another look at Hull-House research is important because from its attention to sanitary questions, arose and developed inside a long career of analysis and reform, the work of Alice Hamilton. Her longlife attention to the relationship between environment and disease, work and risk, represented a new and unexplored, dramatic and dangerous question.

It was a pioneering question, an exploration of an unknown field. No young doctor today can hope for work as exciting and rewarding. Everything Hamilton discovered was new, and most of it was really valuable. She knew nothing of manufacturing processes, but learned them on the spot, and before long every detail of the *Old Dutch Process* and *The Carter Process* of white-lead production was familiar to me alongside the brazing of red lead and litharge, the smelting of lead ore and the refining of lead scrap. She was the first to be convinced that she was looking for lead dust and lead fumes, and that men were poisoned by breathing poisoned air, not by handling their food with unwashed hands. Today, that fact has been so strongly established by experimental proof that nobody would think of disbelieving it. But in 1910 and for many years after, the firm and comforting belief of foremen and employers was that if a man was poisoned by lead it was because he did not wash his hands and scrub his nails, although a little intelligent observation would have been enough to show the absurdity of this diagnosis (Hamilton, 1943).

If every Hull-House research study had considered sanitary work conditions, and contributed tragic stories of exploited children and their mothers, a more wide improvement of those conditions could have taken place within a progressive campaign. The work of Alice Hamilton however was from its beginnings, a new sanitary point of view and perspective in research, especially with respect to the factories. Hamilton, after achieving her role as professor of pathology at the Woman's Medical School at Northwestern University in Chicago, lived at Hull-House for twenty-two years. Even after this period, she visited the house each subsequent year for several months, until Addams' death: "It was also my experience at Hull-House that aroused my interest in industrial diseases. Living in a working-class quarter, coming in contact with laborers and their wives, I could not fail to hear tales of the dangers that workingmen faced; cases of carbon-monoxide gassing in the great steel mills, painters disabled by lead palsy, pneumonia and rheumatism among the men in the stockyards" (Hamilton, 1943: 113).

Increasingly interested in the problems workers faced, especially in relation to occupational injuries and illnesses, the study of 'industrial medicine' had become increasingly important since the Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century, and had led to new dangers in the workplace. She invested her life and career in the pursuit of problems related to sanitary conditions, and in 1907, Hamilton began exploring the existing literature from abroad; noticing that industrial medicine was not being studied sufficiently in America. She went on from this discovery to serve as a special investigator for the Federal Bureau of Labor in the years between 1911-1912. In 1908 she published her first article on the topic of industrial diseases and industry-related illness in the Journal *Charities and the Commons*. But probably one of her most influential studies

developed around the cultural problem of excessively large families, a tradition for many mediterranean people but also a progressive risk inside new lives in a metropolis. Hamilton "examined infant death among 1600 Chicago families of comparable income and demonstrated a direct correlation between family size and infant death rate". That study centered its attention on the maternal role, because the more children a mother had to care for, the less 'devotion' she could offer to each, and this was a terrible problem especially for babies in the first year of life (Hamilton, 1909).

In 1910, Hamilton was appointed to the newly formed Occupational Diseases Commission of Illinois, the first in this role, and the first woman to investigate dangerous trades in the United States. It was a wonderful, dramatic commitment to front the dangers of industrial poisons, a theme generally treated carelessly by unions and often liquidated through a monetary approach to the problem. Over the next decade she investigated a range of issues for a variety of state and federal health committees. The problem was, here as everywhere, that "American medical authorities had never taken industrial diseases seriously" (Hamilton, 1943: 3), but, Hamilton turned quickly into a world authority on industrial diseases, and a critic of the industrial system for its unsuccessful care and treatment of workers[5].

Despite the attention paid on many occasions, and in many places to this problem during the twentieth century, the reality was that in 1900 the United States was the richest country in the world (Cole and Deane, 1965, table IV), "yet 18 percent of its children were dying before age 5, a figure that would rank in the bottom quarter of contemporary countries" (Preston, Haines, 1991: 208). All of this, brought about a situation bound to living conditions, work, and the lives of individuals for whom the preconditions of a health and sanitation system – at the limits of liveability – had created a precarious existence.

From this arises a question, unrelated to the limits of the Hull-House women or their activities: what would become of their work and their methods over time in the university?

[5] In 1919, Hamilton was hired as assistant professor in a new *Department of Industrial Medicine* at *Harvard Medical School*, making her the first woman appointed to the faculty there. Hamilton was still discriminated against as a woman, excluded from social activities and the all-male graduation processions. Her long career was only a part of her social commitment as vice president of the *National Consumer's League* and a national board member of the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.*

4. Final remarks

Most of the social research conducted by the Hull-House women did not rely exclusively on the collection of data of a single type or by a single method. Their mixed methodology relied on both textual and numerical data, and they were convinced that there are many situations when images can inform those two types of data. This is because much information about a given phenomena can only be obtained through visual methods such as a drawing, map or photograph. It is also because it is good practice to complete and visually verify the information obtained in textual or numerical form.

Even the Chicago School studies conventionally associated with qualitative case study research, were not averse to the use of quantitative data as a complement to the qualitative material. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that for a long time the use of mixed methods has been going on in the background, and wishful being celebrated or heralded as part of a new paradigm.

At the level of theory too, the case for combining quantitative and qualitative research is not unique to a paradigm of mixed methods. The women of Hull-House, although they have made valuable contributions in their own right to a broader notion of a mixed methods strategy in social research, have not tended to feature in the narrative on its intellectual origins provided by the eminent writers on methodology (see, Cersosimo, 2019). It is critical that we remember the value of those methods as they were also recognized by other researchers in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, and it is necessary that we introduce the settlement's women among the scholars of the history of sociology and methodology. Their methods continue to contribute to modern social sciences, especially in the context of qualitative research. In this way, image and photography have multiplied their expressive capacity, becoming part of the methodological tradition of sociology. Today as then, the mixed use of qualitative and quantitative approaches proves to be useful in constructing and presenting action research.

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