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## Rewriting the Scottish Canon: the Contribution of Women's and Gender History to a Redefinition of Social Classes

*La réécriture du canon écossais : la contribution de l'histoire des femmes et du genre à une redéfinition des catégories sociales*

**Katie Barclay and Rosalind Carr**

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## Rewriting the Scottish Canon: the Contribution of Women's and Gender History to a Redefinition of Social Classes

Over the last two decades, research on women and gender in Scotland has flourished and we have an increasingly full picture of women's lives at all social levels across the medieval to modern periods. Yet, women's and gender history has not stopped at filling in the gaps in our knowledge, but has actively shaped the terms in which we engage with the past, altering traditional narratives and requiring new questions and new methodologies. Most recently, women's and gender historians in Scotland have driven forward the new cultural history that is becoming so influential across the field, while the inclusion of women has expanded and complicated constructions of power in a variety of contexts.

Intersectionality, the interaction between different facets of identity including—but not limited to—gender, class and race, has been viewed as one of the most significant theoretical contributions of women's studies (McCall, 2009, p. 49). The intersectional approach emphasises that sociological constructs, such as gender and class, are complexly combined when located onto individual bodies, and that attempts to separate out different facets of identity or experience without acknowledging their relational nature are artificial (Berger and Guidroz, 2009, p. 1). This artificiality has tended to disguise power relationships through homogenising the individual experience within social categories. Moreover, this homogeneity has tended to be at the expense of the least powerful, with the dominant experience of particular social groups being represented by the most vocal and those with the most power. In the context of Scottish history, discussions of rank and class have focused on the experiences of men, and particular types of men, at the expense of others. As a result, the traditional historiography tended to miss the complexity of interactions both between and within social "classes". This has not simply been at the

expense of a broader or more textured account, but has acted to disguise processes of historical change.

This article will explore how the incorporation of women and the implementation of gendered analyses redefined ideas of status/class across from the early modern to the late modern period in Scottish history. It will do this through a series of case studies drawn from across the period, where the inclusion of women has challenged traditional historiographical narratives around rank/class and power. It will begin with an exploration of the role of women in the making of class identity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and their significant role in redefining class identity in the changing economy of the twentieth century. We then consider how a focus on authority and regulation in early modern Scotland has opened up new understandings of the relationship between kirk, state and people, and analyse the different ways and contexts that gender and rank shaped the distribution of power. Whilst working chronologically “backwards”, this structure has been used due to the significance of Marxism in early studies of class, which were initially applied to histories of the modern period, before being employed then rejected for the early modern. As a result, this structure better reflects the history of the historiography and allows a more coherent narrative of how the canon has evolved. Throughout, the article will highlight the ways that “thinking about women” has redefined our understandings of rank and power in those contexts, using this discussion as case study for reflecting on the significance of women’s and gender history to the field of Scottish social and political history over the long durée.

### **Gender and Class: 1780 to 1930**

Historians coming to the history of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries encounter an era where social divisions across society were undergoing considerable debate and reconstruction. The nature of society was at the heart of the Enlightenment project in Scotland and elsewhere; influenced by broader social, political and economic changes, understandings of rank and hierarchy were a matter of debate as an emergent social elite began to question their social position and relationship to others (Dwyer, 1993; Berry, 1997, pp. 99–104; Barclay, 2011, pp. 17 and 55). The role of the economy was central to their discussions as Britain’s economic development and growing Empire became markers of their perceived “civilisation” and “superiority” over other national groups (Wilson, 1996; Wilson, 2005). And, closer to home, the social groups leading developments in industry, trade and in the universities

began to demarcate themselves from those they employed or who did not have the social, cultural and economic capital to participate in “polite society” (Habermas, 1992; Bermingham and Brewer, 1997; Glover, 2011). Increasingly the economy, and particularly property, became central to understandings of social position—an idea that took its most influential form in the writings of Karl Marx in the nineteenth century (writings heavily influenced by the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith). Marx argued that social class was the outcome of a society’s mode of production, where the dominant class was the group that controlled the means of production and subordinate classes those who provided labour or other services. For Marx, relationships between the classes were inherently antagonistic, resulting in social conflict (Gordon, 1991, pp. 1–15; Folbre, 2009).

Perhaps reflecting contemporary anxieties around industrial unrest during the 1970s and 1980s, Marx’s construction of social class was highly influential in shaping the work of early economic and social historians, who began to explore the nature of class relationships across Britain. As has been noted by a number of social critics, the use of Marxist theory to interpret social relationships led to class being defined quite strictly in terms of occupation and wage, with “non-working” family members incorporated into the social class of the male “breadwinner”. Divisions across social class or between different occupations were given less priority of analysis. Simultaneously, definitions of class conflict became defined in terms of occupational or trade conflict, with an emphasis on formal, collective grievances. Industrial occupations that, in Marxist thought, were identified with “modern”, capitalist societies were prioritised over other forms, which were viewed as remnants of an earlier form of society (Gordon, 1991; Folbre, 1991, 2009; Seccombe, 1974; Coulson *et al.*, 1975). This led to a focus on urban, industrial areas at the expense of the rural and forms of work centred on the home or in service industries.

Early histories of social organisation in Scotland, which were attempting to place Scotland into a broader discussion of British and European economic growth, industrialisation, social improvement and labour relationships, tended to follow this pattern. As a result, women in Scotland were very often not only defined by their husband’s and father’s occupations, but were associated with the domestic sphere, or, when part of the workforce, viewed as low-skilled, unengaged and politically apathetic (Hughes, 2010, pp. 9–10; Gordon, 1991, pp. 1–15; Breitenbach, 1997; Folbre, 1991). Building on early works by socialist feminists critiquing the narrowness of Marx and Engels’ conception of productive labour, and notably the exclusion of reproductive labour, Eleanor Gordon’s seminal

*Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland, 1850–1914* (1991) offered a fundamental challenge to understandings of social class in Scotland. Gordon demonstrated that class alone was not a sufficient explanation for women’s social position, but neither was gender. Through an exploration of women’s participation in waged labour and work-related politics, she demonstrated the ways that both patriarchal ideologies and the specificities and demands of the local labour market shaped women’s participation, and responses to that participation, in waged work. Gordon highlighted that definitions both of what constituted work and its level of skill were informed by the gendered bodies that performed such work, determining how nineteenth-century contemporaries classified and remunerated different forms of work, and also the significance given to such labour within narratives of Scottish economic development by twentieth-century historians. Rather than evaluating women for their economic contribution, modern historians continued to draw on nineteenth-century discourses around women’s work, used to support low wages and definitions of low skill, in making their models of economic development, disguising women’s contribution (for the significance of women’s labour to industrialisation see: Berg, 1993).

In the same work, Gordon also noted that women’s seeming political apathy as workers both denied their participation in trade unions, but also and more significantly, relied on a definition of conflict and resistance found within trade unions and formal political party structures which often formally excluded women. Looking at other forms of resistance painted a different picture (also see: Gordon, 1987). This particular point has been developed more recently by Annmarie Hughes in *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919–1939* (2010) where she not only demonstrates the political engagement of Scottish working-class women, but the numerous methods of political activism and resistance, from formal participation in political organisations, strikes, manipulating welfare support networks to theft, slow-downs, and other forms of “bad behaviour” in the workplace.

These histories not only challenged traditional preconceptions around the nature of women’s work and place in the workforce, but also offered a challenge to how class was defined. Understanding class in occupational terms is complicated by the female experience, where women’s participation in make-shift economies, in the service industry, and in reproductive labour (sometimes simultaneously) made occupational definitions difficult to apply. Their inclusion also challenged any sense of a cohesive or unified working-class, as the multiple lines of power in operation were exposed, and working-class men became not only oppressed, but oppressor. This challenge to our understanding of the working-class

has now moved full circle as current histories of working-class Scotland attempt to account for the significance of gender in their understanding of men's work. Arthur McIvor and Ronnie Johnston's work on men's bodies in Scottish industry, for example, highlight that understanding the working-class experience now needs to account for how different ideas around manliness, and particularly the challenges of illness and disability to men whose bodies had been hardened and then weakened by industrial labour, created hierarchies of power between men, even within the same occupations (McIvor and Johnston, 2004). As divisions appear within social classes, class as a unified category breaks down, requiring a rethinking of social relations.

In addition to posing a challenge to defining class by occupation, women's and gender history has provided alternative models for understanding both the making and nature of class relationships. Building on the pioneering work of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall (2002) on the formation of the English middle-class, historians have demonstrated the ways in which gender differences were integral to the ways that social classes defined themselves. Anna Clark's *The Struggle for the Breeches* (1997) explored the ways that the nature of gender relationships was central to how the working-class delineated itself as a collective. For example, Scottish artisans defined themselves through participation within fraternal networks centred on drinking, bawdy songs and stories, misogyny and casual violence. Participation in such fraternal networks was a central marker of both occupation and social class; exclusion from such networks both restricted men's ability to perform their trade and limited their identification with the social group. Class identity, therefore, was by no means a simple function of occupation. At the same time, such men used their "mastery" over their wives and families as a basis for their claims to political rights, drawing on a patriarchal model for social relationships to shore up their place in the social order. In this way, power relationships within the family became central to the working class's presentation of itself as a political category.

Similarly, histories of the social elite focus on the way that gender was central to definitions of social class. Works by Jane Rendall, Mary Catherine Moran and Katherine Glover have all unpicked the ways that gender differentiation was at the heart of the eighteenth century's commercial elite's sense of self (Rendall, 1999; Moran, 2003; Glover, 2011). For this social group, claims to political rights were based upon a stadial model for history, where women's role within society became a central marker of civilisation. Women's participation in civil society became a sign of their civility and politeness, an outward demonstration of the priorities of this social group that acted as a claim to political rights.

At the same time, while women's social role was used to claim political rights, these were rights claimed for men. Patriarchal gender models remained central to ideas of social order. Moreover, in the context of a social grouping made up of disparate occupations, including merchants, professionals, gentry and aristocrats, awareness and utilisation of a code of "polite" behaviour became the marker that distinguished its members from "others". In this context, it was participation in a shared social, more than economic, world that created a cohesive class identity.

In a similar manner, Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair's *Public Lives* (2004) illustrated the social norms, notably around the ideology of domesticity, that tied together the Victorian middle-classes, creating a cohesive identity across a group that incorporated a range of occupations and levels of wealth. Building on this framework, they also highlighted the extent to which consumption became a central marker of social class. What a person purchased, wore and how they decorated their homes became central to class identity, both creating a sense of community and demarcating the middle classes from outsiders. At the same time, consumption could be used to carefully delineate hierarchy within the middle classes, as different levels of wealth allowed access to different types of goods and degrees of purchasing freedoms (see also Gordon and Nair, 2009). Far from class being a product of production then, class becomes a product of consumption, a model that places women, often seen as the main agents of consumption practices, at the heart of class identity (see also Abrams and Fleming, 2009). This in turn disrupts linear models of power, as female purchasers can be constrained by limited income and patriarchal restrictions over personal choice, but can also hold agency in shaping how the family "appears" to the rest of the world and so influencing the level of power held by the family in society. Moreover, such an approach emphasises the usefulness of intersectionality as a theoretical model, as it requires greater attention to the intersection of different facets of identity that shape purchasing choices, including ethnic identity, sexuality, the physical body, but also retains an awareness of the structural constraints in creating cohesive social groupings.

## **Gender and Rank: 1500 to 1780**

The first histories of early modern social relationships in Scotland were also heavily influenced by Marxism, drawing on a historical model that defined this period as a "feudal" society, seeking to define a variety of groups as social "classes", as well as looking for the emergence of a "middle" or "business" class that would herald the shift to a "modern"



society (see for example: Devine, 1982, 1983; Sanderson, 1982; for the continuing significance of this model, see: Davidson, 2010). Yet, very quickly, historians found that a model focused on social classes was unworkable within an early modern context. Instead, the terms of rank, estate or social status became popularised as historians attempted to provide a sense of the variety of layers of hierarchy within early modern society, as well as the distinction of power within them (Leneman, 1999; Dodgshon, 1989). So, for example, certain magnate families such as the Argyll's and Hamilton's wielded greater political influence than other aristocratic families, while distinctions between Dukes, Earls, and Lords were meaningful in determining how much power different people held, even within a fairly small elite group.

As a result, historians developed an interest in the nature of early modern hierarchies and their relationship with economic wealth and political and social power (Wormald, 1981; Whatley, 1987; Finch, 1991). Perhaps reflecting underlying Marxist influences, there was considerable debate about how these hierarchies were maintained or dissolved during times of political and social upheaval, such as during the Scottish Reformation, the British Civil Wars, the Restoration, the Revolution and the Jacobite rebellions (Macinnes, 1991; Brown, 1991). Such studies demonstrated the fluidity of the boundaries between social "classes" during the period, with considerable crossover between the landed elite and professional and merchant groups, a mobility exacerbated by political events (Leneman and Mitchison, 1989). These rethinkings opened up discussion on the nature of power relationships within early modern Scottish society, allowing the conversation to move beyond the movement of power between social groups to an exploration of how people experienced power.

The inclusion of women was absolutely central to this new rethinking of power within social relationships, especially once attention turned away from the social elites to power within local communities, where the church played a determining role in the shaping of power (and left useful records for historians to extrapolate from). New church histories focused on the ways that in early modern Scotland social power, particularly at a local level, was informed by public adherence to a morality determined by post-Reformation religious discourse, as well as the social hierarchies of rank and a patriarchal gender hierarchy, where women were subordinate to their husbands or fathers but not entirely denied autonomy. Women's history, particularly the pioneering work of Leah Leneman and Rosalind Mitchison (1989) on the punishment of deviance by kirk sessions, has made a significant contribution to this debate. Utilising kirk and presbytery session records, such historians created a picture of early modern power relationships at a local and regional level,

warning us against making too sharp a distinction between the male and female experience.

It was not only women who were brought before kirk sessions for crimes of sexual immorality; here rank was as much of a determinant in the experience of power as gender. Ordinary people, especially the poor who were reliant on church support to survive, typically had little choice but to submit to church discipline. In contrast, the social elite had considerably more autonomy, reinforced by their roles as patrons and landlords to the clergy (Todd, 2002; Graham, 1996). Gender also played a significant role in shaping women's relationship with the kirk. Women were more likely to be disciplined for fornication (a central concern of the early modern kirk) due to their capacity to get pregnant, making it difficult to disguise their sin. Because it was morally and financially beneficial to the church to ensure that men were also held responsible for their sins, fathers of illegitimate children could be implicated. Yet, it was possible for men to deny paternity and so escape censure; fathers could be more mobile than pregnant women and choose to leave, rather than face the scrutiny of the kirk session and the local community. Moreover, as it was the female body during pregnancy that displayed the sins of fornicating couples, women were more heavily policed, with watchful eyes noting changes to women's physical shape or to their behaviour. At the same time, women whose sexual partners did not marry them after pregnancy were often left to bear the brunt of both childcare and the consequences, including social exclusion, loss of employment and poverty. The penalties of unwanted pregnancy therefore led a number of women to commit infanticide, a crime where they made up a majority of the accused (Kilday, 2008; Abrams, 2002; on the need to reintegrate the body into gender history see: Roper, 2010). In this way, the structures implemented by the kirk placed greater restrictions over the lives of women than their male counterparts.

The kirk should not however been viewed narrowly as a space serving the patriarchal imperative; as Graham's (1999) research on the sixteenth-century Scottish kirk has shown, ordinary women often employed the local judicial mechanisms of the kirk session to challenge excesses of male patriarchal control, including domestic violence and sexual exploitation by elite men. It was its local character that made the kirk session accessible and these women's voices legitimate. Rather than an imposition of authority, the kirk, in its local context, appears as an institution in which ordinary people held a vested interest, perhaps unsurprising given the level of adherence to the Presbyterian faith in early modern Scotland (Todd, 2002). As a result, lines of power between the kirk and the people,

and between different social ranks, was complicated by people's ability to use the authority of kirk to police behaviour within the community.

The integration of the female experience into Scottish early modern history has not only been limited to opening up power relationships at a local level. It has been central to the development of historiography around the development of the state in early modern Scotland. This is most obvious in histories of the Scottish witch-hunts. Christina Lerner's groundbreaking *Enemies of God* (1981) has long been part of the canon of historiography on the European witch-hunts. This text not only offered an in-depth survey of the Scottish witch-hunts but enhanced our understanding of the relationship between this "event" and the operation of patriarchy in early modern Scotland. Lerner demonstrated the ways that witch-hunts usually followed after central government openly expressed concerns about witches, and she notes the ways that the social elite were deeply implicated in the policing and prosecution of witchcraft. This discussion inspired considerable debate about how effective central government was in shaping social relationships at a local level—an idea that takes its most recent manifestation in the work of Julian Goodare (2002).

Occurring from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century, the witch-hunts in Scotland were, Goodare argues, part of "a campaign of moral reform that aimed to effect a thorough transformation of the behaviour of the common folk" (p. 4). With all witchcraft accusations in Scotland being reviewed by the Privy Council and many originating from the kirk session, the state and Church were involved in the Scottish witch-hunts from the lowest to the highest level. In this context, he argues, the witch-hunts were a manifestation of the power of the post-Reformation social elite, in which male professionals such as lawyers and Protestant ministers were increasingly influential members (pp. 4–6).

Convincingly arguing for the place of kirk and presbytery sessions as "the most distinctive organs of the Scottish Reformation", in a 1998 article in *Social History*, Goodare emphasises the role played by these local institutions in the witch-hunts, accusing and gathering information about women (who made up 85 per cent of people accused of witchcraft) who were typically poor and suffering from downward social mobility. The witch-hunts were, Goodare argues, a means for an increasingly interventionist state to impose authority upon women. This imposition of authority must itself be viewed within an overall context of an increase in the public prosecution of crime during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the inclusion of sexual deviance within the definition of crime. In this context, the common assertion that a female witch had sex with the Devil becomes culturally connected to other far more common female sexual offences, namely fornication and adultery.

Although accusations for witchcraft were fairly rare outside periods of nationwide panic in 1590–1, 1597, 1628–30, 1649 and 1661–2, the threat of the accusation may have encouraged women to conform to patriarchal ideals concerning female behaviour. Moreover, the exploration of this “women’s crime” helped provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between state and community within early modern Scotland, reflecting on the role that people from different ranks played in the operation of social order.

It was also a crime that provided a window into another aspect of power in early modern society: women’s political role. As Louise Yeoman demonstrates, while wealth and influence may have enabled many women to escape accusations or convictions for witchcraft, for a small minority, it led to them being indicted by male relatives. Her 2002 article investigated the cases of seven women accused of witchcraft to illustrate their origins in family rivalries centred upon property disputes and the contestation of female familial power in early modern Scotland. As this suggests, women’s role within elite households during the early modern period was often a place of significant power.

Women’s power in spaces of high politics is perhaps most obvious with regard to the royal court, with Scotland not lacking its share of powerful female monarchs, of whom Mary Queen of Scots is only the most well known (Marshall, 2006; Downie, 2006). By comparison the Scottish Parliament was ostensibly a male space (it was composed of entirely male members); however, despite its institutional maleness, noblewomen could influence parliamentary politics through informal means. Following a political turn in English women’s history (Weil, 1999; Daybell, 2004; Chalus and Montgomery, 2005), the noble household has come to be recognised as an important site of familial power and political agency in Scotland, alongside the royal court (pre-1603) and parliament (pre-1707) (Marshall, 1973; Brown, 2000; Chalus, 2005). This informal influence was effected by the importance of rank in the enactment of power in early modern Scotland; examples include the political power broking of Anne, duchess of Hamilton during the post-Reformation Covenanters’ rebellion and the early eighteenth-century Union debates, and the acquisition of military patronage by Katherine, fourth duchess of Gordon, in the mid-eighteenth century (Carr, 2011; Chalus, 2005). While unable to sit in parliament, the fact that most political decisions were made in private homes, as well as the significant economic and social resources that many elite women had at their disposal, gave women significant political influence and even authority. For women, like Anne, duchess of Hamilton, who held her title in her own right, her entitlement to intervene in her local community as well as national affairs went relatively unchal-

lenged—rank trumping gender. For wives and women who held power through their male relatives, there was an expectation that they would give patronage in their own right, and as importantly were viewed as useful vehicles for accessing the ear of more powerful men (Glover, 2011; Barclay, 2011). As a result, considerable power-brokering went through female channels, belying the formal exclusion of women from politics. The incorporation of women back into Scotland’s political history has allowed for a reformulation of the nature of political culture in Scotland, moving from institutions to networks and relationships—a model, perhaps, more helpful for a period when distinctions in power were more contingent than in the modern period.

Whilst Scottish political history, outwith its cultural manifestations, remains stubbornly focused on the actions of men, women have typically been given a greater hearing in social and economic history. In his seminal study of socio-economic change in Scotland from 1560 to 1830 first published in 1969, T. C. Smout cited women’s labour to illustrate economic change: from the employment of maids in late-seventeenth-century Edinburgh as a display of wealth and status by the city’s elite, to the tendency of textile mill owners to employ women and children during Scotland’s Industrial Revolution. Drawing attention to the ways in which women’s experiences were determined by social status, Smout included a discussion of the changing nature of elite women’s dress styles and quantity of clothing and the impact of the resultant surplus on the appearance of female servants (Smout, 1972 (1969), pp. 164, 268–9, 379–81). Smout did not, however, go as far in differentiating women’s status-based experiences as gender historians would in later decades.

Smout’s study provides a wide-ranging, and impressive, examination of the impact of economic change on men and the various levels of the social hierarchy that they occupied, but women figure mainly as wives, and he writes confidently that part of the appeal in hiring female textile workers was their submissive nature being “used to doing what they were told at home” (p. 381). As explored above, the insights of women’s and gender history makes this a weak assertion in a canonical text. However, what Smout touched upon has remained a key concern of women’s and gender history, namely the interaction of patriarchy and social hierarchy in determining women’s agency and power. As models for intersectionality suggest, this interaction was itself influenced by a myriad of other factors, of which geographical location appears to have been particularly influential.

In a 1989 essay on the social history of women, Rab Houston emphasised the distinctiveness of the urban and rural, and Highland and Lowland contexts which determined women’s position, activity and opportunities

in early modern Scottish society. Following a similar line of enquiry, Stana Nenadic (2001) drew attention to the difference in experience of the Highland female gentry as compared to Lowland gentlewomen, pointing to factors such as literacy in English to illustrate the limited political and social power held by Highland gentlewomen in the urban and national arena.

As Houston (1989) pointed out, an examination of women's participation in the urban economy can illuminate the impact of early modern urbanisation on ordinary people. In Elizabeth Sanderson's study of women's work (1999), eighteenth-century Edinburgh is shown to be a city that offered women across the social spectrum various economic opportunities, and where female retailers and traders operating independently and as members of the Merchants Company were "part of the fabric of burgh life" (p. 40). Scotland was distinctive in this context; the law of coverture which operated in England did not apply in Scottish law. Thus, married women retained the right to trade and could confer the status of burghess onto their husband if he was unfree and conversely wives could gain trading rights through their husband, including when they were engaged in different trades. As with men, women's occupation was a crucial component of their status in the early modern urban community (pp. 74–5 and 130). This female involvement in commercial activity has also been explored by Deborah Simonton (2002) examining eighteenth-century Aberdeen, where middling women, especially widows, were a part of the corporate structure but largely denied power within this structure due to their exclusion from institutions, such as the Guildry Court, and the repudiation of the idea of the female businesswomen within discourses of trade and commerce.

Scholarship concerning women's place in the urban community enables us to better understand the discourse and operation of crucial determinants of status in the early modern urban community, including social credit. Writing about late medieval Edinburgh, Elizabeth Ewan (2000) has emphasised the importance of female gossip for women's economic knowledge and representation, with these informal female networks providing an alternative to the male fraternal networks founded upon guild membership and/or occupation. Women's exclusion from these male networks was not simply institutional but resulted from the specificities of the culturally-determined female lifecycle. Women were rarely apprenticed, and the flexibility required of work that needed to fit around childcare and household responsibilities meant that women's work was typically "flexible, short term and temporary" (p. 133). Rather than staying in one occupation from apprenticeship, urban lower-middling and poor women often worked in domestic service until married, after which they joined

their husband's trade; if they were widowed and remarried their trade could change. The inclusion of women workers in an analysis of the urban economy disrupts neat occupational categories and evidences a complex and fluid socio-economic system.

The conflict between neat categories and actual realities is not only a problem faced by modern day historians; Ewan's study of women and daily life in Scotland illustrates the unwillingness of burgh authorities to recognise the heterogeneity of women's responsibilities or appreciate public female culture. Instead, women whose economic and social lives took them outwith the confines of the household were often seen as deviant and defined as criminal (2002). That women played a crucial role in the town economy was not always acknowledged by fifteenth-century burgesses; to understand urbanity in early modern Scotland it is essential that historians do not implicitly adopt the same judgement. Within a historical narrative that is formulated from the perspective of cultural gender history, and which incorporates a cross-section of ranks, instead of the femininity of elite women signifying Scotland's commercial civility at the end of the early modern period (i.e. the passive role ascribed to them by John Millar in his influential *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, 1777, revised 1779), women appear as active agents in the early stages of Scottish modernisation.

## Conclusion

Through contributing and applying the theoretical model of intersectionality, women's and gender historians have transformed debates around social class and power relationships in Scottish history. The inclusion of women has not only provided a fuller picture of different experiences of class, but within modern history, has challenged traditional definitions of class based on occupation and production. Through detailing the ways that class was defined by consumption practices, gendered behaviour, and other facets of identity, Marxist constructions of class were fundamentally redefined. Such work also questioned the unified nature of class, noting the ways that divisions were created within classes based on sex, the body, and even integration into the local community.

In early modern history, women's and gender history contributed to understandings of power within social relationships. It reinforced the contingent nature of power, reflecting on the ways that hierarchies of rank were created through the interplay of rank, gender, and place, but that within such hierarchies lines of power could be disrupted through the strategic use of institutions, like the kirk. Moreover, through integrating



women into the early modern experience, the complex negotiation of power, where women could be key political actors but have no formal political power, required new models for power relationships that focused on networks and relationships, as much as formal structures. Women's history also brought new insights into the operation of local and state power, through thinking about the way that women's lives were regulated within a patriarchal society. Power relationships between social groups became considerably more messy, but also had considerably more potential to speak to the processes of historical change, and to the operation of power in the present.

As one of the key sociological categories, class provides a useful case study for demonstrating the ways that women's and gender history have both contributed to traditional historiographies and helped rethink the nature of historical change. Yet as a flourishing field, this is not the only area where women's and gender history have left their mark. Rewriting the Scottish canon is ongoing.

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