Social Class, Social Action, and Education

The Failure of Progressive Democracy

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Contents

Introduction

The term "progressive" returned with a vengeance during the first decade of the twenty-first century.* With "liberal" under attack, the left turned back to a name that had rallied champions of social transformation throughout the first half of the prior century. Of course, most of those who call themselves "progressives" today are not referring to anything particularly specific—it has largely become a vague collective reference for a wide range of left-leaning groups. But the increasing use of the term has increased interest in progressivism as a more substantive concept and social vision.

This volume focuses on a fairly narrow aspect of progressivism: its conceptions of democracy. I trace how two understandings of progressive democratic practice emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century that I call "collaborative" and "personalist." And I show how these visions of "authentic" democracy still deeply influence our ideas about social justice and education in America.

"Collaborative" progressivism developed as a coherent perspective at the end of the nineteenth century among a loosely connected group of middle-class progressives—religious leaders, scholars, and activists. Together, this group imagined a world in which bureaucracy and elite control would slowly dissolve into a flat, truly collaborative, and egalitarian society. If people would only work together, they believed, they could solve the growing problems of poverty and inequality in an increasingly industrial society. The collaborative progressives understood that America was far from their ideal, and most were realistic enough to understand that their full utopian vision was probably unachievable. Nonetheless, they threw themselves into a wide range of efforts to bring about the conditions necessary to achieve as much as they could. The most sophisticated theorist of this democratic ideal, as I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3, was John Dewey. In its general outlines, however, the collaborative vision differed little across the broad range of progressive intellectuals.

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*Except where they add something to the arguments made later in this volume, I leave citations to the more substantive chapters that follow.

Some decades after the emergence of collaborative progressivism, during the "gay" twenties and later in the 1960s, as I describe in Chapters 4 and 5, another vision of holistic democracy coalesced among a different group of progressives that I call the personalists. This group has largely been forgotten in the academic literature, especially in education. Unlike the collaborative progressives, who sought pragmatic strategies for fixing a society rife with inequality and social conflict, the personalists came of age during times of relative prosperity, when it seemed likely (to them, at least) that poverty and discrimination could simply disappear by themselves. At these moments it seemed reasonable, for the relatively privileged in society at least, to leave many of collaborative progressives' social concerns behind. Instead of developing practices for communal problem solving, they envisioned egalitarian communities in which authentic relationships would nuture each member's distinctive personality. The personalists sought to release the capacities of unique individuals, looking to romantic ideals of creative, fully embodied, and emotionally free people. As I explain in more detail later, the term "personalist" seems to fit this group best because of their combination of communal *and* individual aims.

On first glance, the personalist ideal of democracy can seem quite different from the apparently more sober vision of the collaborative democrats. In fact, however, the overall social aims of both groups were quite similar. As I show in Chapter 5, the core assumptions about human nature that informed both were much the same. The collaborative progressives focused on the challenges of effective joint action. The personalist progressives focused on the release of the capacities of unique individuals. And each side criticized the other for its excesses—the collaboratives attacking personalists for their lack of a concrete vision of joint action and the personalists attacking the collaboratives for their failure to fully appreciate the importance of creating spaces for individual freedom and authentic human relationships. But both nonetheless acknowledged and emphasized the importance of both aims. More generally, both camps sought to foster a new, more freely dialogic, and less hierarchical society. The collaboratives and the personalists, therefore, lie on a common continuum of "democratic" progressive thought.

These democratic ideals have remained compelling for a broad range of progressive intellectuals into the twenty-first century, even though they have proved extremely difficult to enact in actual practice. Why? The answer, I argue, lies largely among progressives themselves, among whom I count myself as a member (albeit a critical one). Scholars, especially in education, find collaborative and personalist visions of democracy compelling because they reflect advanced versions of the cultural practices most familiar to the vast majority of us in our families, schools, business dealings, and

associations. The dreams of progressive democracy are literally embodied within the selves and social institutions of intellectuals in America. In other words, we like Dewey at least in part because Dewey was like us.

The central influence on our long romance with progressivism, I argue, has been middle-class culture. The book begins in Chapter 1, therefore, with an analysis of the emergence of the middle and working classes in the United States. I show how the middle class slowly split as a group from the working class over the last half of the nineteenth century and how progressivism emerged in parallel with an increasingly distinct middle-class professional culture. That chapter lays out key characteristics of each class's cultural lifeways, drawing together research describing relationships between class cultures and social action practices in America.

Progressives of all stripes have always shied away from models of democracy drawn from the experiences of other classes. This has been especially true of models emerging out of the working class, which, from a progressive perspective, have often seemed brutish and primitive. Progressives rejected working-class tendencies to emphasize the inevitability of aggressive social conflict. And progressives were uninterested in the practical demands of mass solidarity reflected in the strategies of labor unions and, more recently, community organizing groups.

In fact, the "backwardness" of working-class culture was perceived from the beginning by progressives as a core social barrier to the achievement of authentic democracy. Many progressive intellectuals struggled in their writings with how to "uplift" the working class. They sought to develop pedagogies, for example, that might initiate these "others" into adequate capacities for democratic citizenship. Even the personalists—who often looked to more "primitive" cultures for alternatives to the banality of modern middle-class life—were repelled by the lack of focus on individual actualization and aesthetic expression among the lower classes. In fact, a third major group of progressives, "administrative" progressives, argued that broad-based democracy was an impossibility in the modern world in no small part because of the seemingly unredeemable ignorance of the working classes.

Of course, social class was not the only source of progressive discrimination. Racism was an ongoing factor as well. In this volume, however, I limit my focus to the ways that progressive racism emerged out of concerns about social class.[1] The racism of many early progressives emerged in large part out of their broader arguments about the backwardness of less "advanced" cultures, leading to judgments, for example, about what they saw as the especially deficient nature of African American culture.[2]

The collaborative progressives of the first half of the twentieth century were interested in more than democracy. They also sought to combat

corruption and address key social inequalities. They attempted to "rationalize" a chaotic society, looking to science as a savior. And, with the administrative progressives, they accomplished many important social goals, including the creation of unemployment insurance, child labor laws, new voting regulations, the Food and Drug Administration, and social security, among many others.

The larger hopes of collaborative and personalist progressives for a more democratic society, however, met almost complete failure.[3] It was instead the antidemocratic vision of administrative progressives that ultimately had the most impact on the social structure of American society, creating the public and private bureaucracies that still manage much of our lives today. The efforts of the collaboratives and personalists to foster their vision of democracy remained mostly limited to voluminous writings, experiments in a few schools and other contexts, and largely ineffective political interventions. In contrast, while they may not have achieved the kind of benevolent society they desired, the administrative progressives, were nonetheless extremely successful in intensifying the centralization of many government and other institutions' functions under the control of a professionally guided bureaucracy.

This book focuses on the educational component of progressivism, in part because collaborative and personalist conceptions of democracy have remained more influential in education than elsewhere. With respect to collaborative democracy, this is largely the result of the continuing dominance in the field of John Dewey's extensive writings on pedagogy and learning. In the academic literature in education, it is nearly impossible to find writings on democratic education that do not embody key aspects of his vision, even when Dewey himself is not explicitly mentioned. The personalist ideal is, if anything, even more influential, albeit in more diffuse ways, among educators and educational scholars, even though the key writers and pedagogues that best formulated this vision—Margaret Naumburg, Caroline Pratt, Paul Goodman, and others—are largely forgotten. Core aspects of the personalist vision live on, for example, in the popularity of Nel Noddings's formulation of "caring" schools.[4]

This book is not only written for educational scholars, however. As a case study, the arena of education provides a useful example of patterns visible in discussions about democracy across the social sciences and humanities. In these other fields, as well, one will find among those who cherish democracy a deep preference for aspects of progressive thought, whether they acknowledge this influence or not. Further, tendencies to downplay or even denigrate working-class culture are not merely artifacts of the past. As scholars in other fields have begun to point out, within the middle-class dominated environments of universities progressive ideas about democratic

and deliberative practice still broadly pervade thinking about democracy across academic disciplines.[5]

The field of education also provides a useful case study for other fields because education has always been seen by progressives as one of the most critical arenas (perhaps *the* most critical) for interventions to foster a more democratic society. It was no accident that Dewey started a school, even if he later lost faith in schooling as an independent avenue for social change. And his vision of social change remained "educational" to the end. As recent scholars like Fred Rose and Paul Lichterman have shown, middle-class progressive activists still hold tight to a deep faith in education and individual change as the key fulcrum of social change today.[6]

As a counterweight to progressive visions of democracy, in Chapter 6 I lay out a working-class alternative that I call "democratic solidarity." Versions of this model have long been prevalent in a range of working-class-dominated settings, especially labor unions. I look in particular to what is generally called the field of "community organizing" in the tradition of Saul Alinsky as a key example of how "solidarity" can be made "democratic" in ways classic progressives have seemed unable to recognize. Organizers like Alinsky have sought to confront inequality directly with mass mobilizations instead of trying to slowly shift the broader culture toward what they have generally seen as progressives' unreachable, utopian models of collaboration, egalitarian exchange, and reasoned negotiation. Proponents of democratic solidarity seek to make the empowerment of those at the bottom rungs of our material and social world a realistic possibility in the here and now. Alinsky's writings provide an example of the ways working-class organic intellectuals have reacted against middle-class efforts to enforce what they see as progressives' privileged fantasies. From the perspectives of Alinsky and others, progressive exhortations to "wait" embody a reprehensible paternalism on the part of those who do not really understand what it is like to *suffer*.

I am deeply sympathetic to the working-class vision of empowerment and disturbed by its absence in the educational literature and elsewhere. But I do not argue that working-class forms of democratic solidarity should simply *replace* visions of progressive democracy. Instead, I examine the contrasting strengths and weaknesses of each conception. In the best of all possible worlds, efforts to foster democratic empowerment would draw from aspects of both progressive and working-class strategies.

Such a synthesis has proved extremely difficult to achieve, however. In part this is because cultural groups on both sides have generally failed to see what is worthy in the action practices of others. This volume is meant as a contribution to a broader effort to challenge these cultural blindnesses. Efforts to integrate different approaches, however, are also complicated by

inevitable inequalities of power (the very inequalities that progressives have often downplayed). When middle-class professionals come into settings previously controlled by members of the working-class, for example, they often end up dominating, unconsciously enforcing their own cultural ways of speaking and acting, leading to the departure of those less equipped to participate in this manner.[7] This volume does not attempt to solve this problem, although I have begun to explore this issue in other related writings.

The penultimate chapter of this book provides a case study of how different approaches to democracy and empowerment played out in the real world during the civil rights movement in the South. The case study also shows how the clarity of the relatively abstract visions discussed in previous chapters becomes complicated and often interweaves with each other in unexpected ways in the contingency of actual social contexts. And it contests the (usually implicit) tendency of education scholars to justify their use of progressive pedagogies for student empowerment by pointing to the civil rights movement as a clear example of progressive democratic organizing.

This volume concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for schools and scholarship on democratic empowerment more broadly. At the same time, I speculate on the kinds of useful roles middle-class academics may play in bringing non-middle-class visions more centrally into the academy.

Some of the chapters that follow incorporate versions of articles published previously elsewhere. Chapter 1 is based on "Social Class and Social Action: The Middle-Class Bias of Democratic Theory in Education" and Chapter 2 on "John Dewey's Conundrum: Can Democratic Schools Empower?" published in 2008 and 2001, respectively, in *Teachers College Record*. Chapter 3 is based on "John Dewey and 'a Paradox of Size': Faith at the Limits of Experience," published in 2001 in *American Journal of Education*.[8] Those who want a somewhat more detailed discussion of the issues addressed in Chapters 2 and 3 might benefit from a look at the original articles. Sections of some of these articles also appear in other chapters where relevant. These articles were written at different times, and I did not attempt to bring them fully up-to-date with the most recent literature except where this seemed critical. I have also changed some of the terms I use here from those used in the articles. For example, in "Social Class and Social Action" I referred to what I now call the "collaborative" progressives as the "democratic" progressives. Since the personalist group is also democratic in its own way, I increasingly saw that the earlier phraseology would have been confusing here.

Part I

Overview

Social Class and Social Action

Progressives . . . intended nothing less than to transform other Americans, to remake the nation's feuding, polyglot population in their own middle-class image.

—Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*

From the beginning the American intellectual . . . [chose] a paradoxical vocation: a social critic committed at once to identification with the whole of the people, and an elitist whose own mores and life situation proved somewhat alienating from the very public he or she had chosen to serve.

—Leon Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment*

Introduction

At the end of the 1800s, American intellectuals began a long if occasionally interrupted romance with progressive visions of democracy. For more than a century since then, scholars across the social sciences and humanities have found different aspects of progressive democratic practice extremely compelling, even though few if any of their hopes for social transformation have ever come to fruition.

Why?

A core motivating factor, I argue, has been social class. From its earliest beginnings, progressivism, writ broadly, reflected the desires and beliefs of middle-class professionals in America. As a result, the democratic models embraced by progressives embodied, in different ways, the cultural patterns and preferences of the middle-class intellectuals who developed them.

This chapter provides an overview of the broad argument of this book. It begins by tracing the emergence of distinct middle and working classes

in America at the end of the nineteenth century, showing how progressivism emerged as an integral part of this process. I describe how three distinct branches of progressivism emerged, which I call "administrative," "collaborative," and "personalist," developing out of a shared set of social concerns and cultural practices. Together, these conceptual perspectives provided the middle class with ways to explain each branch's distinctive "truths." Progressives used these social frameworks to map out borders between themselves and "others," distinguishing between cultural groups that were more and less prepared to adequately perform the duties of modern citizens. Those not from mainstream middle-class backgrounds, not surprisingly, did not fare well in this analysis.

At the same time, the middle and working classes became increasingly distinct; their ability to understand and relate to each other diminished. Contrasting forms of what I call "democratic solidarity" predominated in working-class settings. This was especially evident in labor struggles. I focus, here, on the model of "community organizing" developed by Saul Alinsky and organizers who came after him. I show how community organizing maintained a deep commitment to democracy even though it gave less emphasis to the individual creativity and expressiveness prized by progressives. Community organizers pragmatically stressed the importance of enforcing a collective "voice" in public to gain power in the here and now.

My point in this book is not to deny the sophisticated insights of progressive thought. In fact, I explore many of these in the chapters that follow. Instead, I seek to place progressive ideas within a larger spectrum of possible ways of being "democratic," balancing middle-class commitments and concerns with those of a working class facing very different material and social challenges. Regardless of their sophistication, progressive democratic dreams will not serve us well until we acknowledge the implicit, and too often explicit, classism (and associated racism) that has come with these dreams.[1]

This book focuses on the context of education. The educational visions of the progressives provide an especially useful case study of the development of democratic practice in part because progressives themselves always focused on education as a key site for social action and change. In fact, as we will see, it was in John Dewey's Laboratory School, in the progressive schools of the 1920s, and in the free schools movement of the 1960s that progressive activists and intellectuals created some of their most fully fleshed-out examples of the forms they hoped a broader progressive society might embody.

Democracy and Education

Over the past few decades in American schools, progressive visions of democratic education have largely fallen away. Especially in the last ten years or so, in the wake of No Child Left Behind, conversations about education have increasingly focused on narrow conceptions of learning. Visions of a better society and of more fulfilled human beings have given way to a stress on efforts to improve students' job prospects and the larger economy.

Of course, more idealistic visions of education have always been honored more in the breach than in reality. Schools have always been places where children mostly learn to replicate the class positions of their parents.[2] Nonetheless, there have been moments in the past where groups of progressive educators and scholars not only embraced more expansive visions of education but also found ways to insert these ideas, however marginally, into classrooms, new schools, and the curriculum. In fact, until quite recently educating children for democratic citizenship was a core value in Americans' views of the goals of schooling. As late as the 1960s, Americans still saw schools as key pillars of a democratic society—regardless of how vaguely or problematically this may have been framed.[3]

While scholarship in education reflects to some extent the narrowing of the curriculum we see in actual schools, broad holistic visions of education have remained compelling to many "progressive" educators and scholars. The popularity of Nel Noddings's vision of caring classrooms that nurture the unique individuality of students, as well as the dominance of John Dewey's vision of democratic education—even when Dewey himself is not explicitly referred to—are both good indicators of this.[4]

At its core, then, the field of education is still driven by dreams of an egalitarian society. Progressive scholars still hope that teachers might, at least sometimes, reach beyond the façade of formal schooling to fan the flames of the unique capacities of individual students. In fact, in contemporary schools of education, where the vast majority of educators are trained, David Labaree has found "a rhetorical commitment to progressivism that is so wide that, within these institutions, it is largely beyond challenge." Educational scholars, then, remain intellectually and emotionally committed to a conception of "the school as a model democratic community" and to "making the reform of education a means for the reform of society as a whole around principles of social justice and democratic equality."[5]

Theorizing about Social Class

From the quartet of theorists who have most influenced our views of class in the Western intellectual tradition—Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Pierre Bourdieu[6]—my analysis is informed primarily by Bourdieu. The first three tend to focus on interrelationships between class and the economic structures of capitalist society. While many of their basic assumptions form the background of my story, my central interest is in the sociocultural effects of these economic developments. For these purposes, Bourdieu's work seems most relevant.

Most important, for my analysis, is Bourdieu's conception of "cultural capital." Bourdieu argued that social practices in society represent a form of capital different from, and yet in some cases as important as, economic capital.[7] Capitalist society is stratified, then, not only in terms of the "material" resources of different groups but also in the relative value of the different cultural practices that these groups tend to embody.

His conception of the relationship between what he called "habitus" and "field" provides the foundation for his vision of cultural capital. A habitus is the set of social practices and dispositions associated with a particular social position. One way to think of a habitus is as a bundle of interrelated strategies for responding to a group's "conditions of existence."[8] And every habitus is designed to respond to a particular social "field." For example, a person with a middle-class habitus at the turn of the twentieth century would have had little understanding of how to act appropriately in a working-class saloon, whereas a manual worker would feel just as lost in a lawyer's office.[9]

Informed by Bourdieu's general ideas about culture, this chapter maps out key characteristics of middle- and working-class culture as they emerged in the United States. In contrast with Bourdieu's rich, multifaceted models of class structures,[10] and unlike many other scholars working on the structure of class in postmodern or postindustrial societies, I focus on two positions—the middle and working classes.[11]

Because middle- and working-class cultures exist nowhere in the world in any "pure" form, I employ these terms as what Weber called "ideal types."[12] As Alvin Gouldner argued, "clarity" in social analysis "is always dependent not on good, but on *poor* vision; on blurring complex details in order to sight the main structure."[13] Scholars synthesize different ideal types in response to particular questions. If one is interested in the distribution of different kinds of "occupations" in a society, for example, one may end up with a large number of "classes."[14] For the purposes of this analysis, the binary formulation has seemed most productive, reflecting what emerged through my examination of the evidence as two relatively

coherent historical strands of practices (habituses) and social contexts (fields).[15] I refer only in vague terms to a third group, the upper class of society that owns and in some cases directs the institutions in which the middle and working classes labor and live. This vagueness is, in part, a product of an increasing complex system of capitalist control that makes it difficult to identify "who" is in control.[16]

Today, only a limited segment of society seems to embody middle- and working-class traditions in any substantial sense. What I am calling middle-class cultural patterns remain most prominent among members of the "upper" middle class: managers, analysts, and professionals who retain significant independent power within and outside the corporate entities that rule much of our economic life.[17] Working-class traditions, in contrast, seem most evident today in the daily practices of labor unions and among workers who remain deeply rooted in long-term relationships with local communities and extended families.[18]

Social Class in the United States: A Brief History

To understand the traditions of social class in America, it is important to have a sense of the historical trends and social and material conditions that helped produce them. I begin with a brief summary of the history of the emergence of the middle and working classes in America and then discuss how these early cultural trends in some cases intensified and in other cases fragmented and blurred during the twentieth century.

The Emergence of the Middle Class

A substantial middle class did not emerge in America until the middle decades of the nineteenth century.[19] Before that time, there were what Stuart Blumin called "middling" folk: small farmers, skilled workers or artisans, shopkeepers, and the like. These "middling" folks were of modest means compared to the elite citizens of their day, their relatively low social status deriving not only from their limited income but also from the fact that they generally engaged in manual labor. By the middle of the nine-teenth century, however, pressures of industrialization had begun, slowly, to dissolve this "middling" group. As firms grew larger and more complex, local manufactories and home-based businesses were replaced by compa-nies and corporations.[20]

Firms began to separate manual laborers from "clerks" and other non-manual workers who handled paperwork and sales, among other duties. First, in small concerns, they simply worked in separate rooms. But as cities

became more spatially specialized they increasingly worked in completely separate locations. Over time, this distinction between manual and non-manual labor became the key indicator of nineteenth-century class status. By the 1890s, manual and nonmanual workers increasingly inhabited "separate social world[s]" as cities became segregated by class.[21]

The increasing complexity of the world created by industrialization that accompanied the transition from "middling" to middle class was very confusing for the members of this evolving group. They had to develop new ways to keep their footing in the shifting sands of modernity. Rapid urbanization fragmented personal networks, as the ability to transfer "status from one place to another . . . eroded." In an increasingly anonymous world, the old systems of patronage and letters of introduction lost their controlling force. In response to the loss of tightly woven networks of personal relationships, the middle class developed more objective standards and qualifications for particular jobs that allowed people to act as relatively autonomous individuals. "Diplomas and degrees, accreditation boards, registrars, government identification papers, licenses, and later more standardized impersonal testing helped individuals and groups navigate through and deal with anonymity." At the same time, the middle class developed a diversity of associations that "evolved a range of organizational procedures to deal with their increasing size and impersonality."[22]

These changes required the development of a broad new set of social practices and self-understandings that could allow the members of the middle class to successfully orient themselves in this new "impersonal" world. "One had to forge a self-reliant, confident, and independent sense of identity cut free from reliance on the approbation, support, or referencing of friends, for such contacts were short-lived and less reliable through time." There was increasing criticism of "cronyism," although this did not, of course, disappear. "Privacy, confidentiality, and nonjudgmental impartiality, rather than acting for one's 'friends' . . . gradually emerged as the new ethical ethos of the middle-class life." Through these efforts to forge a more independent, objectively defined identity "would emerge the more modern sense of self that defined the new middle class."[23]

The increasing wealth of the middle class allowed them to purchase larger residences separated from the homes of the "masses," with multiple rooms for different activities. In these new contexts a middle-class "domestic" ideal began to emerge, altering gender roles and "strategies of child nurturance and education." The new middle class "'initiated methods of socialization designed to inculcate values and traits of character deemed essential to middle-class achievement and respectability,' values and traits not of the aggressive entrepreneur but of the 'cautious, prudent small-business man.'"[24]

At the same time, partly in order to concentrate their resources, middle-class families began to limit their size. Within the frame of the new domestic ideal, the experience of children in these homes was transformed. Perhaps most important, "children were given greater amounts of formal schooling, a crucial tactic intended to help them secure positions in the expanding nonmanual work force."[25] In fact, for a range of reasons, as we will see, a college degree quickly became a key indicator of middle-class status. [26]

As a result of interactions between the changing conditions of their lives and the social strategies they developed in response, members of the middle class increasingly defined themselves by their abstract "qualifications" and by their separation from the dirty experience of manual work. Their world increasingly became dominated by numbers and file cards and identifiable formal knowledge. Because "no abstract representation on paper . . . conferred the knowledge that sight and touch did," middle-class workers became "lost" in "numbers, forms, charts and rules," becoming relatively "bodyless" in contrast with the emphatically embodied existence of the working class.[27] At the same time, a sober, "Victorian" vision of life and duty began to emerge among the middle class.

During these decades the middle class became an odd kind of "class" that maintained a coherent collective identity through a kind of studied independence. As Blumin noted, this "brings us face-to-face with a central paradox in the concept of middle-class formation, the building of a class that binds itself together as a social group in part through the common embrace of an ideology of social atomism." A "new character ideal" emerged in this impersonal world: "the team player" able to continually shift relational ties and work closely with relative strangers.[28]

The Emergence of the Working Class

> Woe unto the man who stood alone in this pitiless struggle for existence.
>
> —David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*

Similar processes of industrialization also molded a new working class. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, an enormous class of wage laborers had been almost unthinkable. But by the end of the century, "wage labor emerged . . . as the definitive working-class experience."[29]

The conditions of industrial work, which by 1900 had captured "more than one third of the population," differed in fundamental ways from those of "white-collar workers." Middle-class, nonmanual workers maintained significant independence, increasingly depending on individual expertise for their continued success. In contrast, in factories the holistic

skills of artisans were systematically broken down into separate operations, allowing the hiring of much less skilled workers, holding wages down, and threatening workers' independence on the worksite. By 1886, 65 to 75 percent of the labor force was semi- or unskilled. Furthermore, in contrast with the clean offices of the nonmanual class, working-class labor "was often dirty, backbreaking, and frustrating."[30] Factory workers at the end of the nineteenth century increasingly worked under the "clock," laboring in settings ruled by "compulsion, force, and fear."[31]

The uncertain existence of manual workers was made even more difficult by the fragility and unpredictability of the nineteenth-century economy. The nation stumbled from depression to depression. In 1875, for example, only one-fifth of the population could find regular work.[32] During the 1880s and 1890s, business failures rose as high as 95 percent.[33] As has always been the case, those on the bottom suffered the most through these tumultuous times, as wages in real terms for manual workers fell.[34] By the end of the 1880s, "about 45 percent of the industrial workers barely held on above the $500-per-year poverty line" and "about 40 percent lived below the line of tolerable existence."[35] In fact, "inter-class mobility disappeared" for most as early as the 1850s, as "the membership of the classes became" increasingly "fixed."[36]

As wage labor became an increasingly central part of modern life, workers responded with expressions of solidarity, seeking to contest the predations of the industrial age. Workers fought in the industrial realm for wages and other concessions, as well as in the political realm for legislation mandating reduced work hours among many other issues, focusing at different times on one or the other avenue. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the labor organizations that formed during prosperous times were repeatedly destroyed in the myriad depressions. By the Civil War new organizations increasingly realized they needed to create structures and develop resources that would allow at least some groups to survive through the bad times. But despite some important successes—especially in legislation— and thousands of strikes, peaking and falling with the waxing and waning of prosperous times, labor still mainly faced defeat.

At different moments, an incipient working-class consciousness seemed to be emerging. Although the great railroad strike of 1877, like many others, was brutally put down by state and federal forces, for example, sympathy strikes spread through many communities, and a broad mass of working-class citizens supported the strikers. In fact, some militias sent to suppress the strikers ended up joining them instead.[37] But a sense of common cause did not ultimately coalesce in America. Manual workers remained fractured by racism, sexism, and a range of ethnic, religious, urban and rural, immigrant and "native," and skilled craftsmen and unskilled laborer conflicts. In

fact, one of the most common strategies for self-defense involved attempts to exclude "others" from employment. What McGerr called the "mutualism" of working-class life could just as easily feed group division as collective solidarity.[38]

Despite these internal differences, class distinctions between workers and the more privileged classes became increasingly evident, especially in the burgeoning cities. Members of different classes easily recognized each other as what they were—by the way they walked, the way they talked, the clothes they wore, and so on. "Some workers, by no means all," since these developments were always uneven, came "to occupy a separate social world within the antebellum [post–Civil War] city—their social networks can be reasonably described as consisting almost entirely of other workers."[39]

As the middle class developed its culture of domesticity, individualism, and restrained association, the working class necessarily depended upon very different forms of collective solidarity—of families, of communities, of trades, and more. In crowded neighborhoods, "the constraints and uncertainties of working-class life—low wages, lay-offs, accidents, limited opportunity, early death—made individualism at best a wasteful indulgence and at worst a mortal threat." Under these conditions, workers developed "a culture of mutualism and reciprocity," teaching "at home and work . . . sometimes harsh lessons about the necessity of self-denial and collective action." In fact, "daily experiences and visible social distinctions taught many workers that although others might wield social influence as individuals, workers' only hope of securing what they wanted in life was through concerted action."[40] While the middle class increasingly lived in a world of acquaintances and strangers, then, the working class depended on how embedded they were in long-term ties.

In the "cramped living spaces" of the working class, "in slum tenements or abandoned middle-class housing in older districts," the domestic ideal aspired to by the middle class was largely unreachable.[41] Lacking substantial opportunities for individual or family privacy, working-class residents participated in "shifting communities of cooperation [that] had none," or at least substantially fewer, "of the counterbalancing elements of the female domestic sphere of calm and affection that bourgeois men and women prized."[42] Poverty meant that everyone generally had to work. And these facts of life had important implications for childhood in these settings. The "conditions" of working-class life "made it that much harder" for working-class children "to develop a sense of individuality and autonomy"[43] that was so celebrated by middle-class families. In fact, efforts to assert middle-class forms of autonomy were often seen as threatening to the survival of the family unit as well as at work and in the extended relational ties of working-class communities.

Shifting Forms of Social Class in the Twentieth Century

i sit here all day and type
the same type of things all day long . . .
day after day/adrift in the river of forms . . .
i am a medical billing clerk
i am a clerk.
i clerk.

—Wanda Coleman, "Drone"

The twentieth century brought vast changes in the structure of the national and global economy and increasingly complex, overlapping layers of social diversity. For the working class, the most important shift, as Harry Braverman noted, was probably the growth of a broad range of non-middle-class service jobs whose work embodied many characteristics of working-class labor but looked very different from manual labor in factories and elsewhere.[44] Initially most visible as a vast increase in low-level office workers (mostly women), an enormous army of low-pay positions emerged in sales, food service, hospitals, janitorial services, and more recently, call centers.[45] Braverman argued that these new positions were clearly working class, subjected to the process of "deskilling" familiar to earlier manual workers.[46] Nonetheless, the recent explosion of new kinds of positions with a range of different job requirements (e.g., technicians and a complex proliferation of health care jobs) has clearly complicated and blurred any simple binary distinction between middle and working classes.

Throughout the twentieth century, fairly strict hierarchical control has remained much more evident at the lower levels of firms than at the top, and capacities for control have been magnified by new systems of "scientific management" instituted after the turn of the century, intensified recently by sophisticated information technologies. In recent years there have been some efforts around (or at least rhetoric about) providing opportunities for more individual discretion and encouraging more collaboration among nonmanagement workers. While some scholars question whether these efforts have substantially altered the work environment of low-level employees,[47] this new focus on encouraging teamwork at all levels of a firm may also contribute to a progressive blurring of clear distinctions between middle- and working-class jobs and discursive practices.

While the experience of work among lower-level employees has fragmented to some extent, evidence indicates that the importance of middle-class practices of teamwork for managers and professionals has only increased. As David Brown argues, because these workers are relatively autonomous,

organizations cannot set strict guidelines and are forced to depend on social "norms . . . that facilitate control from a distance . . . together with structural policing mechanisms such as committee work (where 'colleagues' police one another)."[48] As the "postmodern" workplace advances, then, it seems likely that these pressures for self-guided collaboration at the higher levels will continue to intensify.[49]

Outside the realm of work, a range of social and material changes in our increasingly postindustrial world has also complicated the structure of social class in America. For example, the strong local working-class communities that provided an important grounding for earlier working-class cultures have largely disappeared in many areas. This loss of community is especially evident in the impoverished, segregated areas of our cities.[50]

For managers and professionals, in contrast, the growing fluidity of postmodern life and their progressive loss of connections to particular places and communities seem, for most, to have largely magnified cultural trends already visible at the end of the nineteenth century.

Key Characteristics of Middle- and Working-Class Cultures in America

Patterns of Middle-Class Life

A wide range of studies have shown that the standard parenting practices of the middle class today are significantly different from those of working-class families. Middle-class children learn at an early age to monitor themselves and make their own judgments about the world. In fact, these children are often encouraged to participate in adult life as if they were "mini" adults themselves. They are frequently asked for their opinions and are allowed (and even encouraged) to express disagreements about adult directives.[51] Middle-class parents celebrate children's unique characteristics and capabilities, helping them develop a sense of themselves as discrete and unique individuals. As a result, their children often begin to feel an "emerging sense of entitlement."[52]

Even as middle-class families promote independent thought, however, their discourse patterns tend to make "the insides of [family] . . . members . . . public,"[53] providing a powerful tool for closely monitoring individuals' thoughts and ideas. This continual monitoring makes it possible for middle-class parents to nurture the development of "internal standards of control" and allows them to downplay the need for strict rules and guidelines for children.[54] The spatial privacy often made possible by the size of middle-class residences, then, is joined with an often extreme lack of psychic privacy.

In their discursive interactions with children and each other, middle-class parents tend to prefer forms of relatively abstract reasoning. Echoing other studies, Betty Hart and Todd Risley found, for example, that professional parents "seemed to be preparing their children to participate in a culture concerned with symbols and analytic problem solving."[55] And many have noted that these discourse patterns fit well with the kind of institutional and employment situations that these children will participate in throughout their lives.[56] In our increasingly information-driven world, middle-class managers, symbolic analysts, and other professionals increasingly focus on the manipulation of relatively abstract data. Even when middle-class workers engage more directly with the contingencies of the real world—think of surgeons or engineers—their work is generally deeply embedded in a broad milieu of abstract data and symbolic relations.

The lives of middle-class children are also highly structured and scheduled, leading them to spend much less time than less privileged children on informal activities and child-directed play. In fact, middle-class parents focus so intently on their efforts to "cultivate" their children that their "lives" can have "a hectic, at times frenetic, pace of life."[57]

The frenetic existence of middle-class childhood, with its shifting cast of characters, fosters mainly "weak" social ties. Children learn to interact with a wide variety of relative strangers and are less likely to be embedded in tight networks of extended family relationships.[58] This tendency is magnified by the isolation of nuclear families and the relatively high mobility of middle-class people, who frequently leave home for college or employment and never return.[59] Despite the weakness of their ties and their lack of rootedness in local communities, the connections made by the middle class generally give them access to more resources than the less privileged. Because they share the discursive and cultural practices of other privileged people, they can interact with them as relative equals.[60]

Finally, collaboration and teamwork have become increasingly central characteristics of middle-class life over the twentieth century. Group success often requires managers and professionals to work closely with people with whom they have no long-term relationship. Each individual in these contexts is expected to independently contribute his or her own particular knowledge and skills to an often weakly defined common project. Collaboration in these groups is facilitated by the relatively abstract, elaborated discourse predominant in middle-class settings.[61] I refer to this particularly middle-class form of joint action as *collaborative association*.

In fact, a broad range of research has indicated that the key characteristic of middle-class employees is not any specific knowledge they may hold but their internalization of the general practices of middle-class discourse and interaction. Because these workers are relatively autonomous,

organizations must be able to trust that they will independently support the goals of the firm. Under conditions where they must engage with a broad and unpredictable number of relative strangers, white-collar workers focus their energies on maintaining "standardized and routinely sanctioned patterns of behavior."[62] In her interviews with upper-middle-class men, for example, Michele Lamont found that "for American professionals and managers, the legitimate personality type rewarded by large organizations presents the following traits: conflict avoidance, team orientation, flexibility, and being humble and not self-assuming."[63] Because professionals face situations that generally lack clear guidelines, involve the manipulation of data, and require frequent interaction with relative strangers, they focus their energies on maintaining the "standardized and routinely sanctioned patterns of behavior" that mark them as middle class in multiple contexts. [64]

Lamont also found that, given the shifting goals and guidelines they encounter, for upper-middle-class men "living up to one's moral standards is often constrained by situational factors . . . often conflict[ing] with pressure for conflict avoidance and team orientation." In fact, "to a certain extent the cultural imperative for flexibility prevents . . . [them] from putting personal integrity . . . at the forefront. Indeed, some might end up adopting a pragmatic approach to morality as they adapt their beliefs to the situation at hand."[65]

As Brown noted, these tendencies help explain the requirement of most middle-class jobs for a college degree of some kind, often with little attention paid to the content of what was studied. Because middle-class people are more likely to operate within settings with less stringent controls over their action, organizations are forced to depend on "norms . . . that facilitate control from a distance ('responsible' behavior and 'disinterestedness') together with structural policing mechanisms such as committee work (where 'colleagues' police one another)"—in other words, on how *middle class* these employees are. In college, students learn a "fairly standardized type of language or 'code'" that will serve them well in these settings. As a result, college produces "a relatively uniform character type" that can be "expected to get along with other employees, especially fellow graduates."[66] In fact, there is a reciprocal relationship between higher education and middle-class status, then. Arriving at college fluent in middle-class practices makes success more likely, and success progressively strengthens one's cultural identification with the middle class.[67]

Higher educational institutions are central places for nurturing middle-class dispositions. This is part of the reason that the paradigmatic experience of upper-middle-class late adolescents is leaving home to attend a residential college with an established reputation. The structures of the laboratory, the seminar, and even the didactic lecture embody the abstract,

dialogic practices of middle-class managers and professionals.[68] It is in part for this reason that a college degree is a core requirement for most middle-class jobs, regardless of major. Professors and students at four-year institutions live in a social world dominated by middle-class values and practices, a world that actively excludes and marginalizes manifestations of working-class ways of being but that rarely acknowledges this exclusion. And as students move through higher and higher levels of education, success requires ever more fluency in middle-class forms of discourse and interaction. At the highest levels, in doctoral programs, only middle-class ways of framing problems and issues or of presenting the results of research are generally legitimate.[69]

For the middle class, there is a clear continuity between these different aspects of their lives. Children and their parents move relatively easily between home and school and work. They encounter others who they interact with on a relatively equal level and who think and act much like they do. In all these contexts their facility with abstract knowledge, their sense of individual entitlement, and their skills at discursive social interaction serve them well. It should not be surprising, then, that the work of many middle-class adults is often tightly integrated into their private lives. They tend to have "careers" rather than just "jobs." As Lamont noted, "in contrast to blue-collar workers," the upper-middle-class men she interviewed "rarely live for 'after work.'"[70]

Patterns of Working-Class Life

Overtime is a delicacy gobbled
by family men who wipe their mouths
and say Baby needs new shoes.

—Todd Jailer, "Chester Gleason"

Annette Lareau found that "in working-class and poor homes, most parents did not focus on developing their children's opinions, judgments, and observations."[71] Instead, their families were structured to a much greater extent around an established hierarchy between children and adults. Some have argued that these patterns are partly a result of the hierarchical conditions of working-class labor.[72] More pragmatically, because working-class parents lack time to constantly monitor children, hierarchies and limited tolerance for "back talk" make more sense than constant negotiation.

Although working-class parents seem less focused on encouraging individual expression, working-class children often have more frequent opportunities for child-initiated play than children in middle-class families. In

contrast with what she termed the "concerted cultivation" approach of the middle class, then, Lareau argued that working-class parents are more likely to "engage in the *accomplishment of natural growth*, providing the conditions under which the children can grow but leaving leisure activities to children themselves."[73] These relatively open contexts for play provide alternate avenues for individual expression, including forms of dramatic storytelling that express both individuality and the ways that individuals are embedded in long-term relational ties with others.[74] Access to an audience is not simply given to children in working-class settings, however. In such contexts, Peggy Miller, Grace Cho, and Jenna Bracey found, "working-class children had to work hard to get their views across; . . . [they] had to earn and defend the right to express their own views."[75] There is little entitlement here.

"Working-class people" in the United States "are more likely to live where they grew up, or to have moved as a family and not solo. They are more likely to live near extended family and [are] . . . likely to have been raised and socialized by traditionally rooted people."[76] Even though the old ethnic enclaves of the nineteenth and early twentieth century have largely disappeared, Alfred Lubrano found that a "core value of the working class" still involves "being part of a like-minded group—a family, a union, or a community."[77] As at the end of the nineteenth century, today this tendency to value deep connections with families and communities is partly driven by the material conditions of working-class life. Many workers have no choice but to depend on a web of links with others to get them through hard times, and, as I have noted, the impoverished, especially in the central cities, suffer greatly to the extent that these relationships have fractured or lack significant resources. In a world of globally increasing inequality, Zygmunt Bauman has stressed, those on the bottom "are 'doomed to stay local,'" where "their battle for survival and a decent place in the world" must be "launched, waged, won, or lost."[78]

Some have argued that working-class labor is relatively simple compared with that of the middle class,[79] but the evidence indicates that this issue is more complex. Although employers have sought for more than a century to reduce workers' discretion and skill, a range of studies have shown that many seemingly basic fast food, data entry, industrial, and other working-class jobs actually require extensive learned capacities.[80] In fact, Trutz von Trotha and Richard Brown argued that the strict guidelines characteristic of many working-class jobs, which cannot hope to capture the subtlety of actual work, actually end up forcing workers to "incessantly focus on the cues and clues of specific situations to discern, or invent ad hoc, the meanings and actions that might be appropriate." "Generally speaking," they concluded, "the lower class person considers a

wider range of imponderables, and can take less for granted, than does the middle-class actor."[81] In other words, while managers and professionals may face a higher cognitive load in realms of relative abstraction, workers are more likely to face more (but equally complex) concrete challenges in their local environment. A key tendency of working-class labor, therefore, is not its relative simplicity but instead its relatively embodied and tacit nature.[82] Even when extensive abstract thought is required (for a carpenter, for example), this is likely to be deeply embedded in material requirements of a specific job.

To middle-class managers, different devices have "parameters," but for workers, individual machines can actually have different "personalities." This tacit and embodied character of working-class experience partly explains why one can usefully include highly skilled craft workers and low-skill line workers, who can be trained in twenty minutes, in the same "class." As Fred Rose noted, "the working-class experience of physical labor teaches people to trust the practical knowledge gained from personal experiences" over the generalized knowledge of research.[83] Basil Bernstein similarly distinguished between a working-class tendency to "draw upon metaphor," and a middle-class focus on abstract "rationality."[84]

The truth is that employers are at least as dependent upon the innovations of working-class people as they are on those of middle-class employees. But while the innovation of the middle class is often explicitly and actively encouraged and rewarded, the ongoing innovation of the working-class tends to progress invisibly below the level of employer dictates. In fact, working-class innovation actually operates counterintuitively as a kind of *resistance* to the strictures of the system, even though this "resistance" is actually what allows the system that oversees them to continue.[85] The same thing can be said of middle- and working-class processes of learning. While the middle class is often rewarded for acquiring knowledge, the "informal learning" on the job and in families and communities that "has been heavily relied upon to actually run paid workplaces" and that dominates working-class community life remains largely "unrecognized" by both employers and educators. Thus, firms "appropriate . . . the production knowledge of workers without valorizing or compensating it."[86]

One result of the different forms of knowledge celebrated by the middle and working classes is that each, for different reasons, often sees members of the other class as relatively "stupid." Thomas Gorman found, for example, that "members of the working class hold an image of the middle class as being incompetent in negotiating everyday events and having knowledge that is not practical."[87] In the extreme, as Lubrano noted, the middle class can be seen as the kind of people who have to hire someone to change a light bulb. And this ignorance of the middle class sometimes

empowers workers. Susan Benson, for example, described how working-class saleswomen in early department stores maintained control over their work in part because their managers found it distasteful and challenging to descend into the messy complexity of the actual selling process from the familiar abstractions of their office paperwork.[88] At the same time, through countless "injuries" experienced in their interactions with the middle class, members of the working class are very conscious of the fact that the middle class tends to look down on them.[89] And in Gorman's study "one half of the middle- . . . class respondents" did, in fact, make "blatantly negative comments towards members of the other social class."[90]

Given the contrasting conditions of their lives, the working class has developed different practices of interpersonal engagement and strategies for orienting group activity. On the most basic level, workers tend to prefer a different set of values in their co-workers and friends than members of the middle class. Relatively flexible middle-class attitudes about morality and reverence for unique individuality contrast strongly with working-class tendencies to stress the importance of tradition, personal integrity, personal responsibility, sincerity above flexibility, and the quality of interpersonal relationships.[91] They are more likely to prefer "straight talk" and "resolving conflicts head on," as opposed to placation and long discussions.[92]

Operating in situations where embodied knowledge dominates and where coordination requires mutual adjustment amid an ongoing flow of work, the working class depends less on collaborative association than on what I will call *organic solidarity*.[93] In contrast with the focus on individuality characteristic of middle-class settings, working-class groups are more likely to operate as a collective unit.

It is important to emphasize, however, that these rich "communalized roles" are "strikingly inconsistent with a picture of lower-class" groups' work as relatively simplistic forms of "mechanical solidarity."[94] In important ways, organic solidarity is itself a form of collaboration that can be as responsive to individual capacities and interests as the more explicit forms of collaborative association preferred by the middle class. Lacking time for extensive negotiation and dialogue, it should not be surprising that this approach to joint action is generally grounded in established, if sometimes informal, hierarchies.

Although lower-level workers often seem invisible to the relatively privileged, the working class continually deals with the power of managers and professionals to affect their lives in profound ways.[95] In fact, in their interactions with middle-class institutions beyond their private spheres—especially in schools and work sites—working-class people often feel relatively powerless.[96] They often resent "middle-class language . . . and

middle-class attitudes."[97] Yet those on the lower rungs of America's economic ladder often also feel extremely dependent on the middle class, especially for the advancement of their children.

While middle-class parents know, instinctively, how to prepare their children to succeed in middle-class settings, working-class parents often do not. With respect to schooling, for example, they often "believe that they can be most helpful by turning over responsibility for education to educators." At the same time, however, Lareau and Wesley Shumar found "in interviews and observations, [that] working-class and lower-class mothers repeatedly expressed fear that the school would turn them in to welfare agencies and 'take their kids away.'"[98]

Making the situation even more difficult, we know that working-class children tend to get a "working-class" education in schools. The experiences of many of these children in classrooms, then, are unlikely to provide opportunities to learn middle-class practices and forms of discourse.[99] Ironically, middle-class children are more likely to succeed even in school settings framed by working-class culture. They are much better equipped to adjust to the forms of abstract knowledge and discourse demanded by even the most didactic classroom. And because middle-class children are initiated into middle-class practices before they get to school,[100] it matters much less for them whether teachers provide them with more engaged and interactive middle-class experiences. In other words, those who may "need" initiation into middle-class practices not only don't get them but also couldn't easily appropriate them even if they did get them, while those who get these practices in schools often don't really need them.[101]

The tensions between middle-class and working-class ways of being can become especially intense when working-class people go to college. College can involve "a massive shift . . . requiring an internal and external 'makeover.'"[102] In fact, Peter Kaufman's study found that the most successful working-class college students were those who were most able to disassociate themselves from their old friends and their old community.[103] Helen Lucey, June Melody, and Valerie Walkerdine similarly found in their interviews with working-class women that "wanting something different, something more than your parents, not only implies that there is something wrong with your parents' life, but that there is something wrong with *them*." Successfully entering the middle class often requires working-class people to embody a "split and fragmented subjectivity" that can allow them "to cross the divide."[104] Such bicultural fluency is difficult to achieve and sustain, however.[105] Completing a residential four-year college degree away from home, then, is both the best way to become middle class and one of the most powerful ways to alienate oneself from one's home community.

And working-class parents can be less than supportive or understanding of college dreams. In fact, given the "hidden injuries of class" they often experience, it turns out that "having middle-class contacts . . . not only does not guarantee that the working class will raise their educational aspirations," it can have the reverse effect, increasing "working-class contempt for both the middle class and higher education."[106] There is, for many, a fear that "an educated kid could morph into Them, the boss-type people many working-class folk have learned to despise throughout their clock-punching lives." As a result, Lubrano found in more than one hundred interviews that "straddlers"—people from working-class backgrounds who have made the move into the middle class—were "liable to feel hopelessly alienated from those who raised [them]."[107]

In contrast with the middle-class tendency to focus on "careers," members of the working class are more likely to have "jobs" that are starkly distinguished from their family lives. Lamont found, for example, that the working-class men she interviewed held an "overriding commitment to private life."[108] In fact, a range of research indicates that working-class men and women generally put family above work and find greater satisfaction in family than some members of the middle class, in part because family is the realm of life in which they can be safe and in charge. As Gorman noted, "working-class parents think there is a higher calling for being a parent that those with a socioeconomic advantage do not appreciate."[109]

Middle- versus Working-Class Practices of Democracy

Divergent approaches to democratic social action are associated with each of these class cultures. Arising from the penchant of the middle class for extended rational dialogue and its veneration of individuality are overlapping visions of what I call *collaborative* and *personalist democracy*. In contrast, a preference for what I term *democratic solidarity* emerges out of working-class commitments to mutuality and tradition, the embodied nature of work, and limited resources of time. In important ways, these democratic practices represent transformative versions of the daily practices of each group: what I described previously as the collaborative association of the former and the organic solidarity of the latter.

In this section, I turn back to history, summarizing the ways these different practices emerged in each class. The chapters that follow flesh out this sketchy discussion. With respect to the middle class, I focus on turn-of-the-century collaborative progressives, especially Dewey, and on personalist intellectuals and educators in the 1920s and 1960s. For the working class, I look to Saul Alinsky, the dominant conceptualizer of community-based

democratic solidarity whose organizing work began in the late 1930s and to the writings of organizers who came after him.

Progressivism as Middle-Class Utopianism

As the nineteenth century ended, the middle class suffered from a discomforting sense of uncertainty in a world that seemed increasingly morally and materially adrift. Old cultural commitments, old understandings of the economy—everything seemed unmoored. These general fears were magnified by titanic struggles between labor and capital that waxed and waned throughout the last three decades of the 1800s and, at times, seemed to threaten the very fabric of social stability in America. At moments, it could seem like "the United States faced a mass rebellion."[110] At first the wrath of the nation and of the middle class fell mostly on workers. Although violence in the labor struggles of these years was often initiated by employers, it was workers who suffered the most profound loss of credibility. Years of conflict led to "the impression that the nation's labor elements were inherently criminal in character: inclined to riot, arson, pillage, assault, and murder."[111] In response came decades of brutal antilabor campaigns by employers, the courts, and the state.

Over time, however, large sections of the middle class, along with much of the rest of the country, became almost equally uncomfortable with the enormous wealth and dominating power of the captains of industry and their expanding corporations. They were repelled by the tendency of the "upper 10" to treat their workers like machines and especially roused to anger by child labor and the apparent disorder and incredible poverty of growing slums in the cities.[112]

Together, these conflicts and concerns produced revulsion on the part of many middle-class people for both owners *and* workers. Both sides seemed like children: unable to get along, to cooperate as rational people should—as the middle class did. A central goal of progressive reforms in the early decades of the twentieth century, then, was finding a resolution to what they perceived as an unnecessary and destructive war between labor and capital.[113]

Three relatively distinct approaches to social reform emerged among middle-class intellectuals and policy makers at the turn of the century: what I call *administrative*, *collaborative*, and *personalist* progressivism. These visions reflect, in part, divisions between managers embedded in the hierarchical structure of social institutions, more independent professionals who often found their strength in association, and artists and independent intellectuals searching for cultural reconstruction and opportunities

for self-expression during the machine age.[114] The differences between these three (loosely defined) groups did not constitute a fundamental fracture of the middle class, however. Managers, professionals, and artists, for example, were often raised together in the same families, imbibing the same middle-class practices. In fact, I will argue, ironically, that key goals of the administrative vision are actually well served by personalist and collaborative pedagogies, even though these pedagogies were overtly constructed in resistance to bureaucracy.

In the simplest sense, bureaucrats sought methods for managing recalcitrant workers, while relatively independent professionals were more inclined to envision a social democracy that embodied either the more collaborative practices of their associations and daily work or the intimate relationships and expressive individualism nurtured in middle-class families. In Wiebe's terms, bureaucrats "construed [social] process in terms of economy," seeking to "regulate society's movements to produce maximum returns for a minimum outlay of time and effort; to get, in other words, the most for your money." Collaborative progressives, in contrast, tended to explain social "process through human consent and human welfare" and spoke of "economic justice, human opportunities, and rehabilitated democracy."[115] The personalists, for their part, simply weren't that interested in the details of politics or social transformation. Society would naturally improve if most individuals were able to authentically develop in egalitarian communities.

Bureaucrats

The aims of expanding bureaucracies in an emerging corporate America were best described in Frederick Winslow Taylor's influential writings on "scientific management."[116] In Taylor's vision, management and technical experts would lay out exactly how a job was to be done, so that the only task of the worker would be to do what he or she was told. In its most basic form, scientific management involved little "science"; workers were simply pushed as hard as possible to determine the minimum time in which a particular task could be completed, and then others were pressured to achieve that speed.[117] This model appealed to capitalists, who wished to eliminate worker discretion and reduce the cost of employment, and to middle-class managers and technicians because of the respect it gave to their formal knowledge.

Sophisticated administrative progressives understood, however, that bureaucracy in a complex world could not simply consist of a static system of rules. Instead, it would necessarily embody continually "fluctuating

harmonies" in response to "fluid social process[es]." This, of course, required the continual intervention of experts. Thus, bureaucrats resisted strict guidelines and rules when these restricted the scope of *their* judgment. "The fewer laws the better if those few properly empowered the experts."[118] From this perspective, the key characteristic of managerial life was the *discretion* that the middle class increasingly gained over the systems that they supervised.

On the surface, this seems like a recipe for oppressive domination of the working class, and it often took that form both on the job and in society. However, to key progressive bureaucrats like Walter Lippmann, it also provided the foundation for an increasingly popular, middle-class utopian ideal.[119] Lippmann and others hoped that through benevolent planning and management, disinterested experts could make the world better for everyone. For progressive bureaucrats, then, the new science of administration was not simply a tool for social control; it could potentially enhance the freedom and satisfaction of all. In fact, Lippmann was one of a number of former collaboratives who became proponents of such a bureaucratic, expert society, especially after World War I, as they confronted the apparently unredeemable ignorance and gullibility of the mass of humanity.[120] None of these writers ever figured out, however, how one was to identify an elite who could be depended upon to be truly objective and benevolent. Furthermore, they exaggerated the extent to which technocrats could effectively control from a distance the rich contexts and embodied experiences that dominated the working lives of the working class.[121]

Collaborative Progressives

A separate group of progressives, overlapping in complex ways with the first, sought a model for a harmonious society informed by the collaborative characteristics of middle-class culture. The collaborative form of the emerging professions which professionals used to control access to knowledge and jobs provided a crucial example of this ideal, as did increasingly more "democratic" forms of child rearing in middle-class families. If the administratives' solution to the crisis of social order was to benevolently control those from the "less civilized" upper *and* lower classes, the goal of the collaborative democrats was essentially to make everyone in society middle class.

It is important to emphasize that what the collaboratives sought was not middle-class culture as it currently existed. In fact, many were unhappy with the increasing atomization of middle-class communities and with what some perceived as their own culture's "enervating" banality.[122] They

also began to associate uncontrolled individualism with the rapacious greed of the "upper 10."

Although a small number dallied with socialism, most rejected its revolutionary implications. The fact was that the current social structure of society served members of their class quite well, despite its limitations. Thus "the great majority of the middle class wanted something in between" liberal individualism and socialism. In response, prominent intellectuals developed a vision of a society grounded in what I am calling collaborative democracy. And starting in the 1890s, in scattered examples across the nation, "middle-class men and women began to create real versions of their utopia in the controlled, contained environment of small communities."[123]

Dewey, the preeminent theorist of his age, developed the most sophisticated conceptualization of this democratic ideal, but in its general outlines his vision closely resembled models developed by many other progressive intellectuals, activists, and religious leaders.[124] For Dewey, authentic democratic practices encouraged individual distinctiveness amid joint action.[125] Participation in group action should nurture individual perspectives, not suppress them, as long as they served the shared aims of society. In Dewey's famous Laboratory School, described in more detail in Chapter 2, for example, middle-class students were given many opportunities "to get from and exchange with others his store of information," and "conversation was the means of developing and directing experiences and enterprises in all the classrooms."[126] In good middle-class fashion, the children learned to collaborate by engaging in dialogue with each other and consciously planning their activities, drawing from the unique capacities of each participant. Similarly, in his writings Dewey consistently emphasized the importance of allowing individuality to express itself within collaborative action with others. This, then, was the utopian vision of middle-class champions of collaboration: a society in which citizens might maintain their unique individuality and yet escape social isolation, overcoming the banality of their lives by working together to solve common problems and create a better world for all.

Like other progressive democrats, Dewey saw "the emerging and professional elements of the middle class as the preferable historical agent" of social change.[127] Although the practices of everyone in society needed to be improved, it was the middle class that was closest to the ideal. Even the "radical" writings of pre–World War II "social reconstructionists" like George Counts, which went the furthest in acknowledging the problematic positioning of middle-class intellectuals vis-à-vis the working class—promoting socialist solutions to economic inequality and accepting the necessity of conflict in wresting resources away from

the privileged—contained only hints of a coherent critique of Dewey's fundamentally middle-class vision of democratic engagement.[128]

While the bureaucrats at least implicitly accepted divisions between classes, the democrats rejected social classes as products of faulty practices and misunderstandings.[129] More generally, underlying the collaboratives' vision was a firm conviction that aggressive social conflict (as opposed to restrained discursive disagreement) was unnecessary. Although many supported the right of collective action on the part of aggrieved workers, then, they generally envisioned this on the model of rational cooperation, not, as unions often did, as a zero-sum war over limited power and resources. And unlike bureaucrats, who relied on new systems of control as sources of order, the collaboratives looked often uncritically to education as the key force for transforming "others" into discursive democrats.[130]

Like most progressive intellectuals of his time, Dewey had little extended contact with working-class people throughout his long life. However, this aversion to aggressive social conflict was visible even in the work of Jane Addams, an enormously prominent upper-middle-class collaborative progressive who lived for decades in close contact with the poor who frequented her famous settlement house, Hull House. She was very supportive of the value of workers' traditional culture and actually allowed unionists to operate out of Hull House. Yet she rejected the necessity for conflict between labor and capital. For example, in one essay, "Addams concluded with a characteristic tinge of middle-class condescension" that "'it is clearly the duty of the settlement . . . to keep [the union movement] to its best ideal.'" At the same time as she "praised the 'ring of altruism' in the union movement," she "chided its pursuit of 'negative action,'" emphasizing that "'a moral revolution cannot be accomplished by men who are held together *merely* because they are all smarting under a sense of injury and injustice.'"[131] They would not be engaging with each other as whole beings in collaborative dialogue. She appealed to capitalists to see their workers as human beings and not just the raw material of labor. In the wake of the national strike against the Pullman company, distressed by her inability to arbitrate a solution, she critiqued both Pullman and his workers for not engaging with each other as rational human beings, for not accommodating each other's needs and perspectives.[132] Despite her great familiarity with the poverty and struggles of the poor, then, like other collaborative progressives she objected "to that word *class*," emphasizing at one point that "there are no classes in this country. The people are all Americans with no dividing line drawn."[133] Of course, she understood that these lines *were* currently drawn; her point was that they were unnecessary. Similar perspectives were expressed across the spectrum of democratic progressive writings.[134]

Democratic progressives supported labor initiatives that fit with their core commitments. With the National Civic Federation, for example, they attempted to bring businesses and workers together in dialogue. They also promoted arbitration laws in many different states. In each case, a core blindness of these reformers was to the existence of inequality that made rational collaboration impossible. They projected their experiences as professionals and managers onto the very different realities of working- and upper-class life. As a result, their efforts to democratize American labor relations were largely ineffectual and often counterproductive.[135] (The famous union organizer, Mother Jones, described the National Civic Federation, for example, as "the biggest, grandest, most diabolical game ever played on labor."[136])

Progressive support for business-controlled company unions perhaps best illuminates the fundamental limitations of their vision of collaborative democracy. While many progressives saw company unions as a first step toward democratic worker participation, businesses accurately saw them as tools for undermining worker control and resistance. In nearly every case where company-controlled unions were instituted, the rules governing participation made worker influence quite limited. Union representatives were often actively isolated away from their fellows in an effort to reduce solidarity. In fact, the limited participation allowed by such schemes often served as tools for degrading pay and employment conditions,[137] a tendency that continues today.[138] While sophisticated progressives like Dewey and others rejected the antidemocratic aspects of systems like these, the inequities that they produced were nonetheless a natural result of a social vision that, on a fundamental level, believed that something approximating social dialogue uncontaminated by power *could actually occur* in the context of industrial capitalism. Workers had learned, in contrast, that *whenever* one bracketed issues of unequal power, those with less power suffered. An equal place at the table of dialogue, their leaders understood, was only possible when workers collectively constituted a real threat.

Personalist Progressives

In the 1910s and 1920s and in the 1960s and 1970s, a second strand of progressive, middle-class thinking showed itself.[139] Drawing deeply from the European romantics, their most important precursors in America were the eighteenth-century transcendentalists, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau, as well as the related work of poet and essayist Walt Whitman.[140] Central thinkers of the personalist camp included

mostly forgotten writers like Waldo Frank and Van Wyck Brooks in the 1920s and Paul Goodman in the 1960s.[141]

As I explain in more detail in Chapter 4, I use the term "personalist" in an effort to capture this group's dual focus on the importance of authentic personal relationships within egalitarian communities *and* on the importance of nurturing unique individual expression. Personalists were just as concerned about fostering better communities as they were about nurturing unique individuality. Like Dewey, they understood that individuality and community were two sides of the same coin, that only through social interaction can people develop their distinctive capacities, even though the *kinds* of communities they sought to create looked very different from Dewey's.

Personalist progressivism emerged most strongly in the twentieth century during eras when the economic productivity of society seemed almost unlimited. Collaborative progressives had been responding to the conflict, inequality, and social instability they saw around them: the "social question" of poverty and the failure of members of the lower class, especially, to adapt to the new conditions of industrial society. This "social question" was much less important to the personalists, in part because it seemed likely to pass away by itself as a result of the seemingly inexhaustible surpluses of modern society. Instead, the personalists focused on the challenges presented by an increasingly shallow consumerism and the all-encompassing, bureaucratic nature of modern society. While personalists acknowledged the plight of the less privileged in their society, they often also romanticized the extent to which marginalized groups were more free of the strictures of modern society than themselves.

The personalists believed that bureaucracy had systematically infected modern society, slowly eliminating coherent avenues for individuality and creativity. In the 1920s, they expressed a "pervasive concern with whether man was being transmogrified into a machine."[142] In the 1960s Paul Goodman echoed these worries, complaining that it was becoming increasingly hard to find "some open space, some open economy, some open mores, some activity free from regulation cartes d'identitie." Increasingly, society, he feared, seemed to have "decided all possibilities beforehand and [to] have structured them," becoming "too tightly integrated" and preempting "all the available space, materials, and methods" for self-expression.[143]

Personalists frequently criticized collaborative progressives for their failure to perceive this danger. Goodman, for example, argued that Dewey and other collaborative progressives of the early twentieth century had "failed to predict that precisely with the success of managers, technicians, and organized labor, the 'achieved' values of efficient abundant production, social harmony, and one popular culture would produce even more

devastatingly the things they did not want: an abstract and inhuman physical environment, a useless economy, a caste system, a dangerous conformity, a trivial and sensational leisure."[144] In modern society, Goodman and others argued, people encounter each other wearing the social masks that have been provided for them. Personalists sought to transform this culture, to dissolve these masks.

Collaborative progressives had looked to the emerging practices of their own class as their key model for a better society, denigrating the "primitive" nature of working-class culture. Especially in the 1960s, however, the personalists saw the middle class itself as a central problem. An increasingly debauched middle-class culture was leaching capacities for "authentic" self-expression and interpersonal communication from society. Personalists tended to look, instead, to the very "primitive" societies that collaborative progressives had earlier denigrated for more authentic modes of interpersonal interaction and expression. While collaborative progressives reached *forward* toward a democracy that had not yet been achieved, personalist progressives reached nostalgically *backward* toward an idealized premodern past in which the strictures of daily life were much looser and in which individuals had more room for individuality.

Despite their emphasis on the past, however, the personalists were themselves drawing from key aspects of contemporary middle-class culture in their celebration of authentic personal relationships and on unique individuality—especially the middle class's focus on aesthetics, individualism, and intimate relationships nurtured in the nuclear family. The "past" they imagined was in many ways more a reflection of their present than any actual earlier historical time. In truth, then, collaborative and personalist progressives *both* sought to perfect aspects of contemporary middle-class life. They simply focused on different and in many ways opposed characteristics of their own culture. Thus the personalists were as "progressive" as the collaboratives, despite their tendency to look backward for key insights about human improvement.

The personalist progressive schools of the 1920s—which Dewey attacked for their lack of focus on collaborative practice, among other issues—and the free schools of the 1960s were almost completely populated by the children of middle-class professionals. In these schools, the personalist progressives developed often quite sophisticated pedagogical strategies for nurturing egalitarian communities of free dialogue and individual self-expression. Personalist pedagogues like Margaret Naumburg and Caroline Pratt in the 1920s and Goodman and A. S. Neill (a British educator who became popular in America during the 1960s) frequently criticized collaborative progressive educators like Dewey for their failure to fully actualize the unique individuality that collaboratives also said they valued. And they rejected the ways

collaborative progressives "manipulated" children into communal practices that restricted fully free, unfettered dialogue and interaction.[145]

It is important not to overemphasize the differences between the collaborative and personalist progressives, however. In fact, the personalists were deeply indebted to the work of the collaborative progressives, especially Dewey, in many cases explicitly acknowledging this. Both groups sought to support the growth of a more truly egalitarian, democratic society. And both were deeply interested in nurturing the creativity of individuals. In many ways, then, they represented two poles of a broad continuum of democratic progressive thought.

One critical area where collaborative and personalist progressives differed quite significantly, however, was in their vision of democratic social transformation and politics. The collaborative progressives struggled mightily with the details of how a democratic society might operate and with the specific practices by which democratic governance could be made most effective. The personalists, in contrast, tended to assume that if they could solve the "individuality" problem, the challenges of a democratic society would just take care of themselves. In any case, politics and governance simply were not core interests for them.

The Triumph of Bureaucracy

It should come as no surprise that the bureaucrats largely won the battle over social structure and social reform in the twentieth century. Much ink was spilled pondering the possibilities of progressive democracy, but these speculations had only a limited effect on American society. These visions have maintained a strong influence in academia, however—especially in education—and among middle-class activists.

Democratic Solidarity: A Pragmatic Response to Oppression

In their unions and in struggles to gain community power in cities, workers developed approaches to social action and social change that diverged radically from those of the collaborative and personalist progressives. Visceral experiences of oppression and poverty as well as traditions of mutualism made it clear to workers that their only strength lay in solidarity. Not surprisingly, many found socialism and other attempts to fundamentally change the structure of the capitalist economy enormously appealing, although these ideas have mostly lost their grip on workers over the last half-century.

It is true that unions, especially, have long struggled with issues of democracy. Workers' preferences for clear leadership and group loyalty, grounded partly in a chronic lack of time and resources, have frequently short circuited broad participation. Dependent on leaders to make key decisions and to negotiate for them, the working class has often found that their leaders became detached from the interests of the collective, pursuing their own interests or the interests of a particular faction in opposition to the whole.[146] Nonetheless, distinct and sophisticated models of what I am calling democratic solidarity have been developed. Here, I look not to unions but to the approach to organizing local communities developed by Saul Alinsky and evolved by his followers. I chose this focus not only because my own experience has been with organizing groups but also because organizing groups seem to evidence a stronger tradition of democratic governance.[147]

Alinsky developed his model of organizing in the 1930s in direct response to the limits of middle-class, "liberal" approaches. For example, he attacked the preoccupation of academic sociology with "the development of consensus" and its avoidance of conflict.[148] And he explicitly rejected progressive visions of discursive democracy, complaining about "liberals who have the time to engage in leisurely democratic discussions" and "to quibble about the semantics of a limited resolution," who didn't understand that "a war is not an intellectual debate."[149]

Instead of seeking a calm, rational consensus, Alinsky pursued essentially the opposite approach. He aimed, to "rub raw the resentments of the people of the community; [to] fan the latent hostilities of many of the people to the point of overt expression."[150] He instructed organizers to "pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it,"[151] to dramatically illuminate the underlying struggle between "us" and "them." He sought to use anger at external oppression as a tool for breaking up fractures between different groups in the community and for showing people that they had more to gain by working together.

Despite his talk of war and conflict, Alinsky was not a defender of violence, however, envisioning social action as a kind of aggressive non-violence. Anger was never an end in itself. Instead, he sought to channel resentment about oppression into a "cold anger" that linked strategy and intelligence to emotions that could sustain action.[152]

Within his organizations, Alinsky was strongly committed to democratic governance, and those who came after him deepened this. His central tool for ensuring that organizations actually represented the interests of the people was to seek out what he called "native leaders." These leaders were not those generally chosen by middle-class progressives, the professional managers who increasingly dominated institutions in the slums.

Instead, he sought out people who were actually respected and looked to by local people. And he tried to ensure that leaders actually followed and were seen by people as following the actual interests of the community.[153]

More recently, organizing has faced the dissolution of community ties of ethnic, racial, and religious mutualism that had characterized poor urban communities up through the middle of the twentieth century when Alinsky did his most important work. In response, protégés of Alinsky, like Ed Chambers,[154] have developed new practices for recreating this web of connections. I discuss these approaches in Chapter 6.

The most important education in organizing groups takes place amid action. Leaders learn both from the modeling of skilled organizers and from the real events that they encounter in the world. The focus is on the kind of "embodied" knowledge so important to working-class culture. Established organizing groups do usually provide some formal training to their leaders as well, however, teaching a common language and core concepts of organizing.[155]

This community organizing model represents a fairly sophisticated instantiation of what I call democratic solidarity. At least in the ideal, it is a thoroughly democratic form of organization designed to foster mass action under the guidance of a relatively small number of leaders who are deeply connected to the desires of their constituencies and have the time to participate deeply in decision making. It is explicitly designed around core aspects of working-class culture in its approach to action, to power, to social ties, to tradition, and to learning. Most fundamentally, this model responds to the limited resources available to working-class and impoverished people.

Putting It All Together: Cultural Capital, Material Capital, and Social-Action Practices

Figure 1.1 loosely maps the different models discussed previously on a space defined by social capital on the vertical axis and material capital on the horizontal axis. The bounded areas represent different social classes, and the descriptive text within describes the key intellectuals and social practices relevant to each, with three different and interrelated sets of practices within the middle-class "space." While in the real world the different classes would overlap more, for the sake of clarity I have left them relatively distinct. Of course, a diagram of this kind only lays out tendencies; individuals from any of these groups could be found at points in their lives across this space.
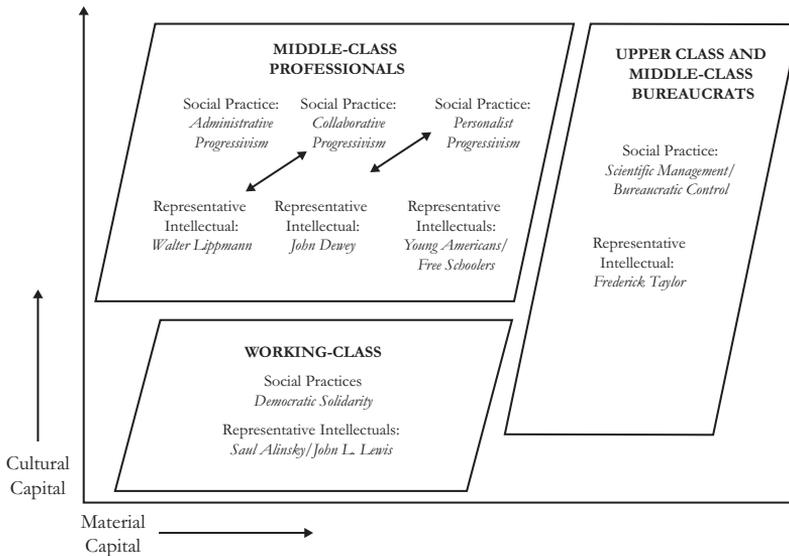
Figure 1.1.   Class action practices mapped onto cultural and material capital.

Empirical Studies of Intersections between Social Class and Social-Action Practices

In Chapter 7 I provide a case study that exemplifies the class tensions discussed previously. Here, I discuss more briefly the small number of recent studies that have examined in more general terms how differences between middle- and working-class practices often play out in actual examples of collective action. The two most important analyses were conducted by Paul Lichterman and Rose.[156] In both cases, the researchers spent extensive time in groups dominated by both middle- and working-class participants.

Middle-Class Groups

Both Lichterman and Rose found that middle-class social-action organizations tend to embody the "values, ideas, expectations, and assumptions" of "successful professionals."[157] Participants are expected to conform to middle-class discourse expectations: avoiding excessive expression of emotion, depending on reasoned analysis, and making reference to "data" and expert knowledge. To participate equally, speakers need to be "comfortable with theoretical, impersonal discussion." Because they generally lack formal rules for participation, these groups generally expect people

to be able to "just jump in when they want to speak," following a for-mat resembling "college classroom[s] . . . familiar to those who are college educated."[158]

In part because the issues addressed by middle-class activists are usually only weakly linked to their specific needs, Rose found that "even the most pragmatic middle-class organizations frame their issues in broad ethical terms, . . . never in terms of advancing the interests of a particular group."[159] He speculated that this tendency toward abstraction may indicate how little the "struggles faced by low-income people" actually impinge on the "reality" of middle-class people. Middle-class groups also generally believe that they advance universally valid goals, not "the interests of their class."[160]

Participants in middle-class, professional organizations are encouraged to "continue to act very much as individuals." All participants are expected to "express their own ideas and evaluate arguments for themselves."[161] Groups often allot extensive time for individual self-expression and see it as problematic if everyone doesn't contribute. Like Dewey, then, they agree that a good community is one that can "allow individual identities and political wills to resonate loudly within collective accomplishments."[162] And like the personalists their focus on individual expression sometimes overwhelms efforts to actually engage concretely in collective action.

A range of other characteristics of these organizations also seem driven by middle-class life conditions and culture. Reflecting the often fluid nature of professional lives, for example, participation is generally understood as an individual choice, and engagement with a particular issue "may ebb and flow depending on shifts in personal priorities and interests." Because professionals are relatively free of predetermined social ties, they are con-tinually creating "their own communities." In fact, "joining an issue orga-nization" is one of the best ways "to meet other people who share similar concerns." Individual choice, not group history, "identifies who they are" and "establishes a community to which they belong." "Middle class politics is therefore an extension of personal development."[163]

Not surprisingly, Rose found that middle-class groups have difficulty understanding the hierarchy and suspicion about outsiders common to labor organizations. He noted that "middle-class organizations . . . find the hierarchy and formality of the union structure foreign and distaste-ful. Unions demand levels of privacy that are alien to peace and environ-mental organizations. [In contrast] these middle-class groups not only welcome but actively recruit all comers to their deliberations. Peace and environmental organizations have few if any formal rules about member-ship or participation. New arrivals are often asked and expected to take part in the discussion and decision-making along with people who have

worked with the program for some time. Participation and equality are fundamental values."[164]

Because middle-class professionals assume that other people operate (or should operate) in the same individualistic, rational manner that they prefer themselves, they generally view "social change . . . as the product of changes in consciousness, that is, a product of education." In fact, middle-class activists often believe that people would likely act if they "'only knew about the problems being raised.'"[165] The point is not that these groups do not often seek structural changes, especially in laws, but that the mechanism for this change is often envisioned on a model of reasoned, discursive democratic education.

Working-Class Groups

The approach of most working-class groups to social action is fundamentally different. In contrast with the comparably formless character of middle-class organizations, workers' groups tend to follow established formal rules for participation and are generally organized around clearly defined hierarchies. In fact, "labor activists frequently find the meeting styles of middle-class organizations difficult and tedious." Rejecting wide-ranging dialogue about the personal opinions of individuals, they focus on pragmatic questions of action and on rituals that sustain group solidarity. As one union leader stated, the middle-class peace activists he was working with didn't "understand that it's a war out here. . . . The contrast between giving people hell at a bar over the union vote and then going to a conversion meeting where people sit around and eat cheese and sip herb tea is really frustrating. These people seem like they're from a different solar system."[166]

Those who are most respected in working-class contexts are those who most embody the core values of the working class: speaking their minds, contending, often loudly, over their commitments, and expressing the emotions behind their commitments. Eschewing abstractions, they speak from experience, often telling stories that may embody their particular perspectives but that also demonstrate loyalty and connectedness.

Membership in these groups is not simply chosen but is usually the result of a long-term embeddedness in community and family networks. Identity is something that one has, not something that needs to be found; it "comes from being accepted and known." Thus, Rose notes, "being a member of a . . . community with a good reputation defines who one is." These "close community ties" make "a clear division between members and outsiders." Trust is built over time, and newcomers are not easily allowed entry.[167]

Finally, the issues tackled by groups like unions and local community groups in impoverished areas are usually closely tied to particular community needs. Instead of focusing on universal values (although they may often refer to these), they tend to define their battles in terms of "competing interests," experiencing "their own interests . . . in opposition to the interests of others."[168] A problem is rarely seen as the result of a simple misunderstanding that can be rationally dealt with. Instead, power must be wrested from others who will generally not give it up without a fight. Win-win solutions may sometimes be possible, but experience has taught them that conflict generally involves a zero-sum game. In these and other ways, then, these organizations often embody something resembling the model of democratic solidarity outlined previously.[169]

Class Tensions

Lichterman and Rose focused on groups that especially exemplify the class characteristics I have been discussing. Even in less distinct circumstances, however, differences in approaches to social action frequently create conflicts and tensions between middle-class and working-class groups. In fact, I have frequently watched these dynamics play themselves out in the context of community organizing efforts I have worked in over the past few years.[170] Because they have different ways of speaking, when people from different classes meet together, they often find that they can't communicate very well, misreading discursive and social cues that seem so natural to one group and so alien to the other. Furthermore, the structure of each context tends to alienate and suppress the participation of people from the other class. For example, the quick repartee of middle-class meetings can make it difficult for working-class people to get a word in edgewise, whereas the formalistic and hierarchical structure of working-class settings can seem, to middle-class members, like a tool for suppressing their individual voices.[171]

Rose summarized the differences between middle-class professional and working-class organizations:

> The middle class is prone to seeing the working class as rigid, self-interested, narrow, uninformed, parochial, and conflict oriented. The working class tends to perceive the middle class as moralistic, intellectual, more talk than action, lacking common sense, and naïve about power. Each side has a different standard for evaluating information, with the working class trusting experience and the middle class believing in research and systematic study. The result is a wide gulf in understandings of nature, sustainability, economics, and human conduct. Worse yet, working-class unions and middle-class environmentalists seek change differently. The working class seeks to build

power to confront external threats, while the middle class hopes to change people's motivations, ideas, and morality.

And he emphasized that these differences arise, in part, out of very different experiences with power:

> Different degrees of power and vulnerability are also divisive. Middle-class movements tend to have greater access to the bureaucracy because it is staffed by their professional peers. Bureaucratic processes also function through expertise and abstract rules that reflect middle-class values. The middle class tends, therefore, to have greater faith in the ability of these institutions to accomplish its goals. The working class, by contrast, is often the weakest party in conflicts and tends to pay the costs of many political and economic decisions. Its strategies reflect both this vulnerability and the interpretation of politics as a conflict about interests.[172]

Despite these gulfs, Rose argued that when they operate in isolation, class-based movements often end up "reinforcing and reproducing [problematic] aspects of society even as they work to change other aspects." For example, as we have seen, middle-class reforms have often "inadvertently served to reproduce the subordinate role of the working class in society and the economy" by placing decision-making power in the hands of experts or by downplaying the effects of inequality on democratic engagement. Working-class approaches bring their own problems, however. A tendency to focus on local interests has sometimes led working-class organizations to downplay more universalistic visions of social transformation.[173] In unions and elsewhere, a dependence on hierarchy often threatens democratic engagement. And because working-class efforts have often depended on exclusion of other, less-privileged persons from gaining access to limited resources, they can reinforce social divisions of race, ethnicity, gender, and the like.

Overall, the practices of these different groups reflect contrasting strengths and weaknesses. Lichterman found, for example, that because of their loose structures, focus on process over product, and stress on individual expression, middle-class Greens often found it difficult to act collectively or even to decide on shared goals or tactics. In contrast, the focus on solidarity in working-class groups often limits broad-based democratic participation. Both sides have much to learn from each other, if they can find a way to listen.

Social Class and Educational Scholarship

At this point I turn to a discussion of the ways these differences affect academic scholarship—focusing on the field of education. As I noted earlier, despite unique aspects, the case of education reflects progressive tendencies visible across the academic literature in the social sciences and humanities. To understand how these issues of social class have affected educational scholars and schools of education in particular, it seems helpful to look back, again, to the history of the emergence of these positions and institutions.

How Schools of Education Became Middle Class

For leading American institutions of higher education, the nineteenth century was a time of transition from finishing schools for the gentry to training grounds for children of the upper middle class. They began to shift from a focus on reproducing the classical culture of the upper class toward efforts focused on increasing knowledge, furthering social and material progress, and teaching more practical professional skills. Especially in the research institutions that became dominant forces, laboratories for natural and social-scientific investigation were founded at the same time as the dialogic practice of the seminar began to replace the didactic recitation, especially in more advanced courses.[174] Increasingly, universities took on a role as the guardians, developers, and teachers of the expert knowledge that the growing professions depended on as a warrant for their monopolies in particular areas like medicine and law. Not surprisingly, these new social-science disciplines were "imbedded in the classical," now middle-class, "ideology of liberal individualism" as well as in a strong sense of American "exceptionalism."[175]

Despite their deep embeddedness in middle-class culture, like other privileged professionals, academics tended to see themselves as floating somehow *above* any class-based interests or preferences, representing their perspectives as "objective," or "scientific." Some of the few scholars who did not subscribe to this vision made important contributions to social policy,[176] but nearly all were marginalized in the larger academic culture. And while more recent "postmodern" writings have generally rejected the exceptionalism and value "objectivism" that pervaded earlier social science movements in America, the actual discourse used in their writing has generally, if anything, been *more* "middle class" than that of their predecessors. As has been widely noted, postmodern thought has also downplayed the importance of social class.[177]

The trajectory of schools of education was somewhat more complex, deeply intertwined with the evolving structure of public schools and conflicts over the social position of teachers. After the Civil War, social class became an increasingly salient issue in the education of educators. Growing pressure to provide at least minimal schooling for all children in American society created an enormous demand for teachers. In response to a growing teacher shortage, a range of options for gaining teaching "credentials" was developed, including teaching tracks in high schools, independent teachers' institutes, and "normal" schools. Though more sophisticated than the former approaches, the normal schools that became the dominant educators of teachers around the turn of the twentieth century were more like today's community colleges than four-year institutions. The students who attended these schools "shared rather low economic status; they were, for the most part, the daughters and sons of working people," and most were women.[178] The predominance of other working-class students and the fact that normal school instructors were usually only graduates of normal schools themselves meant that these schools had limited capacity for transmitting middle-class practices.

Public schools at the turn of the century often took on many of the characteristics of factories. A broad mass of working-class women teachers taught working-class children, overseen by middle-class male supervisors. Especially in urban areas, forms of "scientific management" became extremely popular. At all levels administrators and educational scholars fought to centralize the system of schooling and to reduce, as much as possible, the discretion of "uneducated" teachers. This process was also driven by a vision of social efficiency that fit with the broader bureaucratic line of progressive thinking during this time. Students, they believed, should be trained for the kinds of jobs they would take when they left school, and for working-class children this meant learning to conform to the conditions of these jobs. Fears about working-class immigrants, especially, led progressives to "create institutions which could bring order into the lives of deviant persons and, perchance, heal the society itself by the force of example."[179]

Within more prestigious universities, however, this social efficiency approach to schooling was contested by a loosely linked group of professors promoting more "democratic," interactive, and individually responsive forms of teaching—among whom Dewey was the most important. As David Tyack and Herbert Kliebard have shown, neither collaborative nor personalist democrats had much actual impact on the structure of public schools and classrooms. Inside schools of education, however, democratic forms of progressivism became increasingly dominant.[180]

Labaree has argued that the increasing dominance of child-centered, democratic progressivism in schools of education resulted from the desire of education professors to increase their status and to see themselves as more than simply functionaries, cogs "in the new social-efficiency machine." Progressivism, he argued, provides education professors with a sense that they might contribute to the democratic transformation of the larger society, ultimately "making the reform of education a means for the reform of society as a whole around principles of social justice and democratic equality."[181]

Although Labaree was on the right path, I think he missed the most important contributor to this shift in the focus of educational scholarship: the pervasively middle-class and increasingly professional character of academic life in schools of education. And while professors were embracing democratic progressivism, their students were also becoming ever more middle class. Over the middle decades of the twentieth century, the middle class even moved to claim teaching for itself as a kind of "profession." A college degree became a standard requirement for teachers as normal schools, unable to provide middle-class credentials, either disappeared or transformed themselves into colleges and universities.[182]

Within the continuing bureaucratic structure of schooling, teachers have faced and probably will continue to face tensions and contradictions in their efforts to see themselves and act as professionals. Schools of education, however, do not have to deal with the same level of bureaucratic challenges. As their students became increasingly middle class, then, education professors increasingly structured their pedagogy around the practices most familiar to them: the practices of middle-class professionals.

The Dominance of Progressive Democracy in Educational Thought

All these developments led to the dominance in schools of education of progressivism.[183] Although most contemporary progressive rhetoric focuses on the education of individuals, the (often implicit) goal of a more democratic and equitable society is rarely far beneath the surface. And it should be no surprise that when educational scholars do speak more specifically about education for democratic citizenship, with few exceptions they look to the general model of collaborative democracy that is so indebted to Dewey, or to personalist models that focus on nurturing intimate egalitarian communities.[184] What I have described as a working-class democratic solidarity model is almost entirely missing from the field's dialogues about democratic education and empowerment.[185]

Even those few in education today who write out of at least a somewhat Marxian perspective generally look, in the end, to Deweyan democracy.[186] As Michael Apple and James Beane rightly noted, "most of the impulse toward democratic schooling" in educational scholarship today "rests on Dewey's prolific work." And although, like many other scholars, Apple and Beane acknowledged that "exercising democracy involves tensions and contradictions," they were convinced that the problem with Dewey's democratic vision is not its "idealized values" but instead our failure to fully live up to these ideals. Like nearly all contemporary progressive scholars of education, they admitted "to having what Dewey and others have called the 'democratic faith,' the fundamental belief that [Deweyan collaborative] democracy can work, and that it is necessary if we are to maintain freedom and human dignity in social affairs."[187]

There are exceptions to this pattern, of course. A few educational scholars have begun to acknowledge the limitations of discursive democracy. Critical race theory, for example, provides a very promising source of critique because of its focus on the importance of narratives and personal experience, as opposed to abstract reason, as a key source of argument and discursive engagement.[188] And a growing collection of writers outside education (especially in political theory) have been chipping away at and reconstructing the core assumptions of discursive democracy theorists.[189] Like critical race theory, this work often examines how discursive practices and strategies of social engagement differ across cultures and the ways in which a focus on "privileged" forms of discourse tends to silence those from cultures with less power. So far, however, this work remains marginal to the dominant dialogues in the educational literature, especially around student empowerment and democratic citizenship.

It seems difficult to deny that the pervasiveness of a rhetoric of discursive democracy in educational scholarship and in the classrooms of schools of education today is largely produced by the dominance of middle-class professionals. And because this cultural bias is largely unacknowledged, professional educators and educational scholars have generally seemed unable even to perceive the existence of alternative forms of democratic engagement. Thus, we have generally been unable to really critique Dewey's democratic vision or the personalist celebration of individual expression even when we acknowledge their limitations. Even in those rare moments when educators and educational scholars actually do actively promote democratic forms of education, then, we almost invariably end up embracing practices that have limited relevance, *by themselves*, to the lives of working-class students and their families.

Notes

Acknowledgments

1. In many ways, Arendt and the collaborative progressives were fellow travelers, with respect to their vision of collective action. For those who are interested, my earlier essays on Arendt include Aaron Schutz, "Is Political Education an Oxymoron? Hannah Arendt's Resistance to Public Spaces in Schools," in *Philosophy of Education 2001* (Urbana: Philosophy of Education Society, 2002), 373–93; Aaron Schutz, "Theory as Performative Pedagogy: Three Masks of Hannah Arendt," *Educational Theory* 51 no. 2 (2001): 127–50; Aaron Schutz, "Teaching Freedom? Postmodern Perspectives," *Review of Educational Research* 70 no. 2 (2000): 215–51; Aaron Schutz, "Caring in Schools Is Not Enough: Community, Narrative, and the Limits of Alterity," *Educational Theory* 48, no. 3 (1998): 373–93.

Introduction

1. See Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); David W. Southern, *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform, 1900–1917* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2005).
2. Gender is also an important complicating factor in this case. As Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker, among others have pointed out, democratic solidarity tends to be associated with male-dominated contexts, while collaborative and personalist democracy draws more from women's traditions of collective engagement in America. This intersection between gender and class ways of being is a fascinating issue that I will not examine in detail. See Stall and Stoecker, "Community Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment," *Gender and Society* 12, no. 6 (1998): 729–56.
3. The referendum and initiative process available in some states for the direct passage of legislation by a vote of the people is the most important exception, although recent research has shown that this process is often not very democratic in the sense the collaborative progressives meant this, especially, in part because of the influence of special interest dollars.
4. Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992).

5. Lynn M. Sanders, "Against Deliberation," *Political theory* 25, no. 3 (1997): 347–76; Iris Marion Young, *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

6. Paul Lichterman, *The Search for Political Community: American Activists Reinventing Commitment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Fred Rose, *Coalitions Across the Class Divide: Lessons from the Labor, Peace, and Environmental Movements* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

7. James Paul Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (New York: Falmer Press, 1990); Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 1993).

8. Aaron Schutz, "Social Class and Social Action: The Middle-Class Bias of Democratic Theory in Education," *Teachers College Record* 110, no. 2 (2008): 405–48; Aaron Schutz, "John Dewey's Conundrum: Can Democratic Schools Empower?" *Teachers College Record* 103, no. 2 (2001): 267–302; Aaron Schutz, "John Dewey and 'A Paradox of Size': Democratic Faith at the Limits of Experience," *American Journal of Education* 109, no. 3 (2001): 287–319.

Chapter 1

1. This book contributes to an emerging line of work among historians of progressivism. See, for example, Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), and Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

2. Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," *Journal of Education* 162, no. 1 (1980): 67–92.

3. Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer, "Teaching Democracy: What Schools Need To Do," *Phi Delta Kappan* 85, no. 1 (2003): 34–40, 57–67.

4. Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992).

5. David F. Labaree, *The Trouble with Ed Schools* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

6. Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Erik Olin Wright, *Approaches to Class Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

7. Actually, he argued that cultural capital can be transformed, in some cases, into material capital and that in most cases, material capital is dominant. And, of course, Marx and others also influenced Bourdieu.

8. David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 109. Swartz argued that a key limitation of Bourdieu's work was that he had "little to say about what *collective* forms of class struggle look like" (187). And his vision of working-class culture often seems

quite limited, focusing less on its creativity and more on how it is "highly constrained by primary necessities" (176).

9. Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 434.

10. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

11. In fact, Bourdieu was uncomfortable with "single-dimensional scales and cumulative indices that locate individuals and groups by position in social structure," preferring "multidimensional analysis." Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 129.

12. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. Edward Schils (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949); Martin Albrow, *Max Weber's Construction of Social Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Susan J. Hekman, *Weber, the Ideal Type, and Contemporary Social Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

13. Alvin Ward Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 8. Note that Gouldner, at the end of his career, made an argument about the relationship between Marx's theory and class background very similar to the one I am making about Dewey and the progressives in this volume, although I did not realize this until late in my writing process. Gouldner's admittedly idiosyncratic writings will likely become more important if, as seems likely to me, Marxian theory returns to prominence in academic thought in the humanities and social sciences.

14. See Andrew Milner, *Class* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999).

15. I have selected here a fairly narrow understanding of the rich complexity of Bourdieu's concept of the "field," a choice that he often made in his own work as well (see Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 117–42).

16. See Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

17. Michèle Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

18. Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Alfred Lubrano, *Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2004); Betsy Leondar-Wright, *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists* (New York: New Society Publishers, 2005). My analysis is indebted to prior writings on education and social class. Classic works by Michael Apple, Jean Anyon, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintes, Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin, and Henry Giroux, for example, informed my general thinking. It is important to acknowledge, however, that in the past few decades a focus on social class in the education literature largely disappeared in favor of a broad range of discussions of postmodernism. A few education scholars, including Apple and Richard Brosio, fought with limited success to maintain

and extend our understandings of social class during this fallow period. More recently, however, questions of social class seem to be returning to prominence, as evidenced by a range of attacks on postmodernism from a Marxian perspective. Contemporary scholars like Ellen Brantlinger and Annette Lareau have also conducted powerful empirical analyses of the effects of class culture on schools and family life. All this work influenced my efforts to understand how class-based practices might inform educational scholars. See Anyon, "Hidden Curriculum," 67–92; Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1979); Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Ellen A. Brantlinger, *Dividing Classes: How the Middle Class Negotiates and Rationalizes School Advantage* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2003); Richard A. Brosio, *A Radical Democratic Critique of Capitalist Education* (New York: P. Lang, 1994); Mike Cole et al., *Red Chalk: On Schooling, Capitalism and Politics: Mike Cole, Dave Hill and Glenn Rikowski in Discussion with Peter McLaren* (Brighton: The Institute for Education Policy Studies, 2001); Martin Carnoy and Henry M. Levin, *Schooling and Work in the Democratic State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985); Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1983); Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Cameron McCarthy and Michael Apple, "Race, Class, and Gender in American Educational Research: Toward a Nonsynchronous, Parallelist Position," in *Race, Class, and Gender in American Education*, ed. Lois Weis (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 9–25.

19. Blumin, *Emergence of the Middle Class*; Thomas R. Mahoney, "Middle-Class Experience in the United States in the Gilded Age, 1865–1900," *Journal of Urban History* 31 (2005): 356–66.

20. See Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*.

21. Blumin, *Emergence of the Middle Class*, 233.

22. Mahoney, "Middle-Class Experience," 361, 360.

23. Ibid., 363, 361, 363. See Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

24. Blumin, *Emergence of the Middle Class*, 187.

25. Ibid.

26. "Surveys show that two out of three middle- and upper-class high school graduates attended a four-year college, as compared to just one of five from the working and lower classes." Lubrano, *Limbo*, 11. This statistic would certainly become even more stark if the relative quality and reputation of the colleges attended were taken into account.

27. Robert Kanigel, *The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency* (New York: Viking, 1997), 538.

28. Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 24.

29. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 87.

30. Ibid., 87, 88.

31. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 66.

32. Joseph George Rayback, *A History of American Labor* (New York: Free Press, 1966).

33. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*.

34. Rayback, *American Labor*.

35. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 90.

36. Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (London: Verso, 1986), 19.

37. See ibid.; Rayback, *American Labor*.

38. See McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*; David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

39. Blumin, *Emergence of the Middle Class*, 233.

40. Montgomery, *House of Labor*, 2.

41. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 88.

42. Stansell, cited in Blumin, *Emergence of the Middle Class*, 189.

43. McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*, 18.

44. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*.

45. Benson, *Counter Cultures*; Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*; Robin Leidner, *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

46. Despite critiques of Braverman's thesis, there seems to be a general agreement that deskilling remains at least a "major tendential presence within the development of the capitalist labor process" that disproportionately affects those on the bottom. Peter Meiksins, "Labor and Monopoly Capital for the 1990s: A Review and Critique of the Labor Process Debate," *Monthly Review* 46, no. 6 (1994), 5; see James Paul Gee, Glynda A. Hull, and Colin Lankshear, *The New Work Order: Behind the Language of the New Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996); Montgomery, *House of Labor*.

47. Ken Estey, *A New Protestant Labor Ethic at Work* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2002); Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, *New Work Order*.

48. David K. Brown, *Degrees of Control: A Sociology of Educational Expansion and Occupational Credentialism* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1995), 56.

49. Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, *New Work Order*.

50. Aaron Schutz, "Home Is a Prison in the Global City: The Tragic Failure of School-Based Community Engagement Strategies," *Review of Educational Research* 76, no. 4 (2006): 691–743.

51. For recent examples, see Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children* (Baltimore, MD: Brooks, 1995); Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*; J. R. H. Tudge et al., "Parent's

Child-Rearing Values and Beliefs in the United States and Russia: The Impact of Culture and Social Class," *Infant and Child Development* 9 (2000): 105–22.

52. Annette Lareau, "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families," *American Sociological Review* 67 (2002): 747.

53. Basil B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control* (London: Routledge, 1971), 171.

54. Tudge et al., "Parent's Child-Rearing Values," 107.

55. Hart and Risley, *Meaningful Differences*, 133.

56. See Anyon, "Hidden Curriculum"; Hart and Risley, Melvin L. Kohn, and Carmi Schooler, *Work and Personality: An Inquiry into the Impact of Social Stratification* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1983).

57. Lareau, "Social Class and the Daily Lives of Children," *Childhood* 7, no. 2 (2000): 161.

58. Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*.

59. Leondar-Wright, *Class Matters*.

60. Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*.

61. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*; Brown, *Degrees of Control*; Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, *New Work Order*; Trutz von Trotha and Richard Harvey Brown, "Sociolinguistics and the Politics of Helping," *Acta Sociologica* 25, no. 4 (1982): 373–87. Bernstein famously argued that the conditions of working-class life have produced a "restricted" discursive "code" that assumes "that speaker and hearer share a common frame of reference." Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*, 119. He claimed that because the restricted code is less explicit about the assumptions that lie behind particular statements, it is less conducive to the kind of abstract discourse and thought prominent in middle-class settings. This argument has frequently been attacked by those who perceived an implicit denigration of working-class thought, even though that is not what he had intended. I think Von Trotha and Brown's analysis of the different (but equally demanding) cognitive demands in working-class and middle-class settings is a better way to frame Bernstein's ideas.

62. Von Trotha and Brown, "Politics of Helping," 383.

63. Michèle Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 36.

64. Von Trotha and Brown, "Politics of Helping," 383.

65. Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners*, 39.

66. Brown, *Degrees of Control*, 56, 61, 62.

67. Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini, *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

68. Brown, *Degrees of Control*; Pascarella and Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*.

69. Lubrano, *Limbo*; Michelle M. Tokarczyk and Elizabeth A. Fay, *Working Class Women in the Academy: Laborers in the Knowledge Factory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

70. Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners*, 33.

71. Lareau, "Invisible Inequality," 763.

72. Godfrey J. Ellis and Larry R. Peterson, "Socialization Values and Parental Control Techniques: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Child-Rearing," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 23 (1992): 39–45; Kohn and Schooler, *Work and Personality*.

73. Lareau, "Invisible Inequality," 747.

74. James Paul Gee, "Teenagers in New Times: A New Literacy Studies Perspective," *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 43, no. 5 (2000): 412–20; Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

75. P. J. Miller, G. E. Cho, and J. R. Bracey, "Working-Class Children's Experience through the Prism of Personal Storytelling," *Human Development* 48, no. 3 (2005): 131.

76. Leondar-Wright, *Class Matters*, 22.

77. Lubrano, *Limbo*, 20.

78. Zygmunt Bauman, *City of Fears, City of Hopes* (London: Goldsmiths College, 2003), 16–17; also see Schutz, "Home Is a Prison."

79. For example, Kohn and Schooler, *Work and Personality*.

80. Glynda Hull, "Critical Literacy and Beyond: Lessons Learned from Students and Workers in a Vocational Program and on the Job," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1993): 373–96; Leidner, *Fast Food, Fast Talk*; Katherine S. Newman, *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

81. Von Trotha and Brown, "Politics of Helping," 380–82.

82. In fact, most of the technological advancements of the industrial revolution— the invention of the steam engine, and so forth—resulted from the experimentation and pragmatic adjustments of those who, today, would be classified as working-class mechanics. See Celeste Connor, *Democratic Visions: Art and Theory of the Stieglitz Circle, 1924–1934* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Peter T. Manicas, *A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1988).

83. Fred Rose, *Coalitions Across the Class Divide: Lessons from the Labor, Peace, and Environmental Movements* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 24.

84. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*, 9, 176; see also Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Allen and Unwin, 1990).

85. Aaron Schutz, "Rethinking Domination and Resistance: Challenging Postmodernism," *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 1 (2004): 15–23.

86. David W. Livingstone and Peter H. Sawchuk, "Hidden Knowledge: Working-Class Capacity in the 'Knowledge-Based Economy,'" *Studies in the Education of Adults* 37, no. 2 (2005): 112.

87. Thomas J. Gorman, "Social Class and Parental Attitudes toward Education," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 27, no. 1 (1998): 115.

88. Benson, *Counter Cultures*; also see Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working-Class Kids Get Working-Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

89. Thomas J. Gorman, "Social Class and Parental Attitudes Toward Education," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 27, no. 1 (1998): 10–44; Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Knopf, 1972); Bernice Lott, "Cognitive and Behavioral Distancing from the Poor," *American Psychologist* 57, no. 2 (2002): 100–110.

90. Gorman, "Parental Attitudes," 101. See Brantlinger, *Dividing Classes*; Lott, "Distancing from the Poor"; Sennett and Cobb, *Hidden Injuries*.

91. Lamont, *Dignity of Working Men*.

92. Lubrano, *Limbo*, 10. See Rose, *Class Divide*.

93. I use this phrase differently than Durkheim, who, in a simple sense, was referring more broadly to the distinction between premodern and modern societies, using *organic* to describe the individualism, division of labor, and complex interdependence of modern society.

94. Von Trotha and Brown, "Politics of Helping," 381.

95. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

96. Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*.

97. Gorman, "Parental Attitudes," 106; see also Sennett and Cobb, *Hidden Injuries*.

98. Annette Lareau and Wesley Shumar, The Problem of Individualism in Family-School Policies. *Sociology of Education* 69 (1996): 30.

99. Anyon, "Hidden Curriculum."

100. James Paul Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies* (New York: Falmer, 1990).

101. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*; Lisa Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (New York: New Press, 1995); Heath, *Ways With Words*.

102. Helen Lucey, June Melody, and Valerie Walkerdine, "Uneasy Hybrids: Psychosocial Aspects of Becoming Educationally Successful for Working-Class Young Women," *Gender and Education* 15, no. 3 (2003): 285.

103. Peter Kaufman, "Learning to Not Labor: How Working-Class Individuals Construct Middle-Class Identities," *Sociological Quarterly* 44 (2003): 481–504.

104. Lucey, Melody, and Walkerdine, "Uneasy Hybrids," 296.

105. Lubrano, *Limbo*.

106. Gorman, "Parental Attitudes," 25.

107. Lubrano, *Limbo*, 32, 2.

108. Lamont, *Dignity of Working Men*, 30; see also Lubrano, *Limbo*.

109. Thomas J. Gorman, "Cross-Class Perceptions," *Sociological Spectrum* 20, no. 1 (2000): 104.

110. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 40.

111. Rayback, *A History of American Labor*, 168.

112. See Curtis, *A Consuming Faith*; McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*.

113. McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*; Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People."*

114. See, for example, B. Eherenreich and J. Erenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class," in *Between Labor and Capital*, ed. Pat Walker (Boston: South End Press, 1979), 5–45. Lamont, in *Money, Morals, and Manners*, referred to a related contrast between "for-profit" and "nonprofit" employees.

115. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), 154, 153, 176.

116. See, for example, Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Norton, 1967).

117. See Kanigel, *The One Best Way*, for an overview.

118. Wiebe, *Search for Order*, 152, 169.

119. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922).

120. Ibid.; Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

121. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

122. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*.

123. McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*, 65, 69.

124. Curtis, *Social Gospel*; James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*; Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People."*

125. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

126. Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, 1896–1903* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1936), 79, 339.

127. Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 76; see also Walter Feinberg, *Reason and Rhetoric: The Intellectual Foundations of 20th-Century Liberal Educational Policy* (New York: Wiley, 1975).

128. See C. A. Bowers, *The Progressive Educator and the Depression: The Radical Years* (New York: Random House, 1969); George S. Counts, *Dare the School to Build a New Social Order?* (New York: John Day, 1967); Feinberg, *Reason and Rhetoric*; Peter S. Hlebowitsh and William G. Wraga, "Social Class Analysis in the Early Progressive Tradition," *Curriculum Inquiry* 25, no. 1 (1995): 7–22. In fact, one might argue that there was a veiled paternalism in the writings of Counts and later social reconstructionists when they assumed that the traditions of the working class needed to be altered by middle-class educators.

129. Curtis, *Social Gospel*; Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory*; McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*.

130. Wiebe, *Search for Order*. Dewey became increasingly unconvinced about this position in his later years.

131. McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*, 135, 134, italics added.

132. Jane Addams, *The Jane Addams Reader*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 488.

133. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 124.

134. Feinberg, *Reason and Rhetoric*; Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory*; McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*.

135. Montgomery, *House of Labor*.

136. Mother Jones, *Mother Jones Speaks*, ed. Phillip Foner (New York: Monad Press, 1983), 147.

137. See Stuart D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*; Montgomery, *House of Labor*.

138. Estey, *Protestant Labor Ethic at Work*; J. Reinhart, "Transcending Taylorism and Fordism?" in *The Critical Study of Work*, ed. Rick Baldoz, Charles Kroeber, and Philip Kraft (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001), 179–93.

139. For the sake of brevity and simplicity, going forward I will refer to these two eras as the 1920s and the 1960s except in cases where this might be confusing.

140. As other scholars have noted, the transcendentalists deeply influenced collaborative democrats like Dewey as well. See David A. Granger, *John Dewey, Robert Pirsig, and the Art of Living: Revisioning Aesthetic Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Naoko Saito, *The Gleam of Light: Moral Perfectionism and Education in Dewey and Emerson* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

141. The most important work on the 1920s personalists is Casey N. Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank and Lewis Mumford* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); the best book for understanding the personalist perspective of the 1960s is Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Vintage, 1962); and the best book on the free schools movement is Ron Miller, *Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy After the 1960s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

142. William E. Leuchtenberg, *Perils of Prosperity, 1914–1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 151.

143. Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd*, 129.

144. Ibid., 80.

145. See Margaret Naumburg, *The Child and the World: Dialogues in Modern Education* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928); Caroline Pratt and Jessie Stanton, *Before Books* (New York: Adelphi, 1926); A. S. Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* (New York: Hart, 1960).

146. Linda Jill Markowitz, *Worker Activism After Successful Union Organizing* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000); Judith Stepan-Norris, "The Making of Union Democracy," *Social Forces* 76, no. 2 (1997): 475–510.

147. Much of my understanding of community organizing is drawn not from books but from my dialogues with organizers and work with congregational organizing groups.

148. Donald C. Reitzes and Dietrich C. Reitzes, *The Alinsky Legacy: Alive and Kicking* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1987), 36.

149. Saul Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* (New York: Vintage, 1969), 133–34.

150. Reitzes and Reitzes, *Alinsky Legacy*, 35.

151. Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 130.

152. Mark R. Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 336.

153. Ibid., 64.

154. Edward T. D. Chambers and Michael A. Cowan, *Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action, and Justice* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

155. See Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling*.

156. Lichterman, *The Search for Political Community: American Activists Reinventing Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Rose, *Coalitions*. Also see David Croteau, *Politics and the Class Divide: Working People and the Middle-Class Left* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Linda Stout, *Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing* (Boston: Beacon, 1996); Leondar-Wright, *Class Matters*; Stephen Hart, *Cultural Dilemmas of Progressive Politics: Styles of Engagement Among Grassroots Activists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (Atlanta: Chalice, 1993).

157. Rose, *Coalitions*, 65.

158. Stout, *Class Divide*, 135.

159. Rose, *Coalitions*, 20.

160. Stout, *Class Divide*, 128, 20.

161. Rose, *Coalitions*, 66–67.

162. Lichterman, *Political Community*, 24.

163. Rose, *Coalitions*, 65–67.

164. Ibid., 59.

165. Ibid., 57.

166. Ibid., 58–59.

167. Ibid., 73, 63.

168. Ibid., 18.

169. Also see Dennis Shirley, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); and Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling*.

170. See my series on "Core Dilemmas of Community Organizing," which appears on the Open Left blog at http://www.educationaction.org/core-dilemmas-of-community-organizing.html.

171. Law, *Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*.

172. Rose, *Coalitions*, 73, 209.

173. Ibid., 26, 27. Of course, this has not always been the case, especially in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century.

174. Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

175. Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xiii.

176. John R. Commons, "Discussion of the President's Address," *Publications of the American Economic Association* 3, no. 1 (1890), 62–88, 287–88; in education see Counts, *Dare the Schools*.