

# Deindustrialization, Class, and Adolescents: Changing Gender Attitudes in Middletown<sup>\*</sup>

Lisa Winters<sup>1</sup>, Wanda Rushing<sup>2</sup>, Martin Levin<sup>2</sup>, Troy Blanchard<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, USA;

<sup>2</sup>University of Memphis, Memphis, USA.

Email: lwinte2@lsu.edu.

Received April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011; revised May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011; accepted April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Scholars have become increasingly interested in the role that economic change plays in the processes of self and collective identification. Previous studies show that the process of deindustrialization in the United States had specific consequences for individuals with a “working class” labor force identity, particularly in regard to increased financial stability. Using the High School Surveys from Middletown III and IV, collected from local high school students in Muncie, Indiana in 1977, 1989, and 1999, we examine how local adolescents’ expectations regarding school and gender were affected by deindustrialization. In this study, we put forth the following hypotheses: 1) the educational aspirations of adolescents will increase over time, 2) attitudes about gender roles will become less traditional over time, and 3) students will show a greater recognition of the utility of college education over time. Finding support for all hypotheses indicates that adolescent attitudes about education and gender are significantly affected by deindustrialization in the hypothesized direction.

*Keywords:* Adolescents, Gender, Education, Deindustrialization

## Introduction

Scholars have become increasingly interested in the role of structural change, specifically economic change, in processes of self- and collective-identification. One of the most far reaching economic changes in the U.S during the post-World War II era was the dramatic deindustrialization that occurred in the early 1970 s and 1980 s. The shift of employment from higher income jobs in heavy industrial production to lower-income service occupations had notable social consequences (Silvestri & Lukaszewicz, 1989). This historic transformation created a feminization of the labor market and challenged preconceived notions about what it meant to be a member of the industrial labor force. According to Leslie McCall (2001), this type of economic restructuring “lowered the wages and security of most workers even as it created unprecedented concentrations of wealth” (p. 14).

Although there has been much scholarly inquiry into the consequences of economic change on various communities and individual industry workers, very few studies have explored how widespread economic transitions affect adolescent attitudes or high school culture, and even fewer have focused specifically on the effects of deindustrialization. Why is it important to study the identity-formation process of working class adolescents in the context of deindustrialization? The answer to this question lies in the unique position of adolescents in relation to the economy during the 1980s. This generation’s parents grew up during a time when the United States was experiencing unprecedented economic growth. Job opportunities soared in major steel, automotive, and agricultural production industries, providing working class families with financial security and prospects of economic mobility. As these students reached high

school, however, and were preparing to enter the work force, they lived in a time of growing economic instability. The well-paying factory jobs traditionally found in industry-based communities—the jobs that many of their fathers had worked in since they graduated from high school—were quickly disappearing. Young people began to see firsthand the consequences of deindustrialization on their communities and families, and in this way, working-class adolescents in the 1980s became witness to, or “victims” of, one of the most far reaching economic shifts in the history of the United States (Weis, 1990).

The purpose of this investigation is to assess how adolescents negotiate their futures in terms of educational goals and gendered roles in a community that was experiencing marked deindustrialization. In this analysis, we examine data collected from high school students in the city of Muncie, a small community in east-central Indiana that experienced marked deindustrialization during the 1970s and 1980s. Muncie is characterized as having a strong manufacturing history, but in recent decades has altered its economic base in the face of job loss in the industrial sector. Like so many other manufacturing cities in the United States, Muncie experienced a plethora of factory closings during the 1970 s essentially wiping out jobs in the electronic, steel, glass, and automotive industries that had once been the backbone of its economy. As the manufacturing industries were phased out, the economy shifted to being primarily service-oriented, and the community saw an increase in sales, office work, and other service occupations. Using survey data collected from Muncie high school students in 1977, 1989, and 1999, we are able to examine the way local students’ expectations regarding school, work, and gender roles were altered in response to the community’s economic transformation.

<sup>\*</sup>Direct correspondence to Lisa Winters, Louisiana State University, Department of Sociology, 126 Stubbs Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0000

One of the most frequently cited studies concerned with the impact of deindustrialization in the United States was conducted by Bluestone and Harrison (1982). They define this process as “widespread, systematic disinvestment in the nation’s basic productive capacity” (p. 6), or as an economic shift that occurred during the early 1970s, when the manufacturing industries that dominated the U.S market during the 1950s and 1960s began to be replaced with a new, service-based economy (fast food, retail). In *The Deindustrialization of America* (1982), Bluestone and Harrison detail the consequences of this process on American families and communities. They argue that when the booming industrial economy that once promised a higher standard of living for American workers ceased to grow, it sent local communities spiraling into economic crises. As capital shifted from region to region within the United States, or left the country in search of cheaper means of production, many factories were forced to close their doors, leaving behind “a newly emerging group of ghost towns” all across the nation’s industrial regions (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: p.6). Subsequently, this decline manifested itself in terms of diminished purchasing power among American families, and a local economy incapable of “providing people with a simple home mortgage, a stable job, or a secure pension” (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: p. 4).

The financial impact of deindustrialization on communities and families was devastating; however, its effects reached far beyond economic restructuring. According to Lois Weis in *Working Class Without Work* (1990), the dramatic shift in the American economy set in motion a series of social and cultural changes as well, particularly for the working-class, whose identity, she argues, was historically tied to the type of employment that was disappearing. In 1985, Weis interviewed forty working-class, male and female high school students in the community of Freeway<sup>1</sup>—a small manufacturing town experiencing an economic recession, where the effects of deindustrialization were causing once predominate factory jobs to decline rapidly. Attempting to examine the impact of global economic restructuring on the social and educational attitudes of high school students, Weis probed the students with questions about their plans post-high school, and their rationale for making those decisions. She found that many of these working-class students were struggling to envision their future (Weis, 1990: p. 24).

Not unlike the students Weis interviewed, adolescents in the United States who came of age in the 1970 s and 1980 s lived in a world of transition characterized by economic instability. Adolescents, observing the effects of this instability on their own families, became increasingly aware of a sluggish domestic economy as they noted job shortages, low wages, and elusive retirement pensions associated with factory closings in local communities. Weis points out that the high school students she interviewed would live out their entire working lives against the backdrop of transition into a post-industrial society that would ultimately challenge their working class identities. She argues that these students held a much different economic position than their parents and grandparents had at their age, and that “while they [brought] with them a collective identity of the ‘old’ working class, they must forge a new identity as the

old industrial order eroded” (Weis, 1990: p. 12).

Identity formation refers to the relational processes of people as they attempt, either individually or collectively, to position themselves within a social location by creating and maintaining spatial distance (Lamont & Molnar: 2002). According to Weis, working-class identity was constructed around belief in a rigid sexual division of labor, more specifically, the ability of men to earn a family wage while women focused on marriage and motherhood. When the U.S industrialized during the 1950s and 60s, working class men’s identity as breadwinner became increasingly related to their ability to provide financially for the family and their willingness to work long hours at the factory (Collins, 1992). On the other hand, working class women’s identity as homemaker was tied to service within the domestic sphere, including cooking and cleaning for the family, and providing physical, psychological, and emotional care for the husband and children (Collins, 1992). Belief in a gendered division of labor became so engrained within this emerging economic system that if the wife did work outside the household, many husbands felt the need to justify their wife’s employment, suggesting that it was “something she does for her own enjoyment or for ‘extras’ they could otherwise live without” (Epstein, 1981).

The “separate spheres” mentality of the working class would be challenged, however, when the productive work that had offered working men a “cloak of respectability” during the 1950s and 60s began to disappear (Weis, 1990: p. 192). According to Weis, “the jobs that served to order the lives, identities, and political struggles of the working-class no longer exist[ed] to the extent that they [once had]” (p. 194), and were systematically phased out and replaced by various occupations in the service sector. The post-industrial economy challenged gendered notions of the traditional working class identity by changing the type and demographic composition of post-industrial labor. This progression, referred to as a “feminization of the labor market” by Linda McDowell (1991), ultimately led to new gendered interpretation of “women” and “men’s” work, as well as a broader restructuring of the traditional family form (Adkins, 2001). For example, jobs in the service sector often required the worker to interact with people and information, rather than perform “dirty” manual labor traditionally associated with working-class masculinity. In addition, many service jobs did not provide an income sufficient to support a family, shifting the structure of many working class families to two-income households where women also worked, and forcing both men and women to re-conceptualize an identity based on a breadwinner/homemaker mentality.

Exploring these issues of class and gender in a post-industrial context, Weis navigated the collective consciousness of the “sons and daughters of the white industrial proletariat”, noting that these students were, in fact, very aware of the process of deindustrialization, how it affected their families, and how it could possibly affect their own futures. She argues that students at “Freeway High” were seeing the utility of a high school diploma and the value of a college degree more than ever before, expressing a desire to continue their education rather than become employed in the manual-labor sector where many of their fathers had worked since high school. In addition, Weis explores the identity formation of males and females in relation to this movement and examines how their views of “appropriate” gender roles shifted with the changing economic structure. She discovered that, although many male students still envisioned

<sup>1</sup>To preserve anonymity and protect the identities of the individuals she interviewed, Weis created the hypothetical name “Freeway” for the community where her investigation took place; however, she notes that it is located in the Northeast United States (Weis, 1990).

themselves living in patriarchal households, female students were challenging this traditional arrangement by envisioning themselves as financially independent before getting married or rearing children. Noting that ideas about work, school, and family are all tied to the construction of gender, Weis concludes that deindustrialization shaped and molded the gendered identities of these working class adolescents.

In addition to Weis' work, the *Middletown Studies*, arguably one of the best known community studies, and a classic within sociology, examined the effects of economic change for individual and community well-being. Beginning in 1924, the initial investigators, Robert Staughton Lynd, his wife Helen Merrell Lynd, and a team of researchers, conducted an ethnographic study of an entire town to understand the American urban experience of a community "experiencing rapid social change" (Caplow et al., 2004). The Lynds' success with their first major publication concerning this community, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (1929), prompted a follow up study, with the Lynds returning to Muncie in 1935 and subsequently publishing a second work entitled *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts* (1937). These two studies document behavioral and attitudinal changes that occur within communities specifically within the context of industrial development and modernization. Middletown, the comprehensive, longitudinal field study, still fascinates scholars today, more than eighty years later.

Fifty years after the Lynds' initial research, Theodore Caplow, Howard Bahr, and Bruce Chadwick conducted the first major replication of the Lynds' *Middletown* research. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the Middletown III studies began in 1975. Caplow and his team, which included 20-plus doctoral and post-doctoral students, housewives, and various interviewers (Hoover, 1990), used statistical analysis to take the pulse of the community with a total of nine surveys: the Family Roles Survey (1977), the High School Survey (1977, 1989), the Community Survey (1978), the Government Services Survey (1978), the Kinship Survey (1978), the Neighborhood Survey (1978), the Religion Survey (1978), the Women's Occupational Survey (1978), and the Recreation Survey (1982). Twenty years later, Middletown IV replicated the two most important surveys conducted by the Caplow team, the *Community Survey* and the *High School Survey*.

Whereas the Lynds' earlier studies of Muncie allowed them to take a "snapshot" of the community as it experienced industrial growth, Caplow et al. (2004) documents the changes that occurred with Muncie's industrial decline. This comprehensive documentation of the cultural practices and social attitudes of the citizens of Muncie during these economic transitions provides a rich data source for examining the impact of these processes on individuals. Moreover, the *High School Surveys* tap into the social attitudes of students growing up in the midst of this economic transition, allowing for an investigation of how deindustrialization specifically affects adolescents.

Caplow and his team have reported changes in Muncie's adolescent attitudes over time on a range of issues; however, these reports have not exhausted the survey data. For example, Caplow's most comprehensive work using the Middletown III and IV High School Survey's—"The Middletown Replications: 75 Years of Change in Adolescent Attitudes, 1924-1999"—discusses trends in high school student views on issues of religion, patriotism, social justice, civil rights, information source credibil-

ity, and international relations. However, his analysis does not include how students' educational goals, occupational aspirations, or other aspects of high school culture may have evolved over time. Given the changing economic context of Muncie during the time frame that the Middletown III and IV data were collected (1977-1999), and the way processes of deindustrialization have been shown to affect adolescent's attitudes about school, work, and identity (Weis, 1990), we believe an analysis that takes advantage of survey data on these topics is long overdue.

#### *Documenting Deindustrialization in Muncie:*

Muncie is an ideal site for investigation because of its well documented history as a manufacturing community, and its subsequent shift into a post-industrial society where the economy is based on service, rather than production. A review of the city's history reveals that, after the discovery of natural gas in 1886 just 12 miles north of Muncie, the population of this small community grew exponentially as it transitioned from an almost exclusively agricultural area into an aggressive industrial city. Lured by the promise of an endless gas supply, free land, railroad facilities, and cheap wage labor from surrounding farms, factories from further east, such as Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Company, relocated to Muncie and employed thousands of workers (Lynd, 1929). Its population ballooned from 11,345 in 1890 to 73,320 in 1988, an increase of 546.3%, making Muncie the second fastest growing city in the state next to Indianapolis (Morton, 1990).

Indeed, the Industrial Revolution had descended on this small community in East Central Indiana, and for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Muncie was the center for glass and steel manufacturing in the state of Indiana. Despite its early success as an industrial city, however, by the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its manufacturing base had begun to deteriorate, and by the late 1960s, the community's economy began to undergo a major transition. Lavish practices with the city's seemingly "endless" supply of its most valuable resource—natural gas—led to its disappearance, forcing many factories to shut down, reduce their workforce, or relocate (Caccamo, 1992). Heavy industry began to be phased out, starting in 1962, when the Ball Glass plant closed its doors. Other major factories followed suit over the next two decades. Most of Muncie's largest employers, including Indiana Steel and Wire, General Motors, and Delco-Remy, disappeared, signaling that the community's best days of industrialization were over (Caccamo, 1992).

By 1999, the city of Muncie was no longer a manufacturing city. Its population had declined to less than 68,000 and it became one of many rust-belt cities struggling to reinvent itself economically in the face of deindustrialization. With the growth of white-collar and service sector jobs education and healthcare have become the bedrock of the Muncie economy (Caccamo, 1992). Ball State University and Ball Memorial Hospital/ Cardinal Health Systems are the two leading employers in the county, and no manufacturing operation cracks the top five in terms of the number of workers employed. The leading manufacturing company, Borg Warner Automotive, once Muncie's largest employer, closed in April 2009 (Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, 1997; <http://www.bsudailynews.com/features/dn-decade-borgwarner-s-closing-representative-of-changing-economy-1.2125015>).

Examination of census data<sup>2</sup> collected on Delaware County

<sup>2</sup>County Business Patterns [CDROM]. Washington, D.C. U.S Dept of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Data User Services (1986-2001).

(of which Muncie is the county seat) confirms a number of trends reflective of Bluestone and Harrison's (1982) argument discussed earlier, and demonstrates the pattern of deindustrialization, as it began in the 1960s, accelerated throughout the 1970s, and reached devastating levels by the 1980s. For example, occupational data gathered for Delaware County reveals a striking decrease in the percentage of the workforce population employed in non-service industries (Agriculture, Construction, Manufacturing) from 46% in 1977, to 32% in 1996. Data also suggest that, as non-service occupations traditionally coded as "blue-collar work" declined throughout this period, Delaware county experienced a simultaneous increase in the percentage of the workforce employed in service industries (Transportation, Communications, and Utilities, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate, and Services), rising from 54% in 1977, to 69% in 1997. Increased employment in service industries and the relative decline in employment in non-service industries demonstrate a shift toward a post-industrial society, an era that is "characterized by struggle over the symbolic realm of information and the production of culture" (Weis, 2004: p. 9).

The changing occupational structure of Muncie in terms of gender also must be considered, as an increase in female employment is an expected trend in communities undergoing rapid deindustrialization. Census data<sup>3</sup> document this trend in the Muncie Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), later referred to in the census as the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The percent of females in the workforce increased from 34% to 60% from 1960 to 2000, suggesting that the idea of women working outside of the domestic sphere not only was becoming more socially acceptable, but also was becoming an economic necessity under the community's restructured economy. As the employment base of the working class eroded throughout this period, male and female workers, either entering the workforce for the first time or displaced from closing factories, were encouraged to look toward the service sector for employment (McKibben, 1987). These jobs, despite growing at a rapid rate, did not pay as well as the old manufacturing jobs and had a substantially lower potential for salary increase (McKibben, 1987). McKibben (1987) argues that the "downward mobility of a significant sector of workers cause[ed] a polarization of the work force" (p. 6), making it almost impossible for working class families to maintain their standard of living with only one wage earner. Consequentially, it became necessary for women to enter the workforce and earn a supplementary income.

Based on this previous research that examines trends in social attitudes of adolescents in a changing economic context (Bettis, 1996; Davis & Pearce, 2007; Weis, 1990), we test the following hypotheses:

- 1) The educational aspirations of adolescents in Muncie will increase over time, an effect which will be more pronounced for females.
- 2) Student attitudes regarding appropriate gender roles for men and women will become less traditional over time, an effect which will be more pronounced for females.
- 3) Students will show a greater recognition of the importance of having a college education over time, an effect which will be more pronounced for females.

<sup>3</sup>Census of Population: Social and Economic Characteristics, Indiana. Washington, D.C., U.S Dept of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration. Bureau of the Census.

## Data and Methods

This research is a secondary data analysis of the Middletown III and IV High School Surveys. The data were made available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan (<http://www.ICPSR.umich.edu>)<sup>4</sup>. Because it may be possible to identify respondents in such a detailed community-level study, access to this particular data set is restricted by ICPSR and permission to use it was granted only after documenting local Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the proposed project and successfully completing an *Application for Restricted ICPSR Data Files* and an acceptable *Data Protection Plan* (see Appendix). These outline the research project and specifically describe the computing environment where the data will be analyzed, and how the data will be stored, encrypted, transmitted, and eventually destroyed after the completion of the research.

The original questionnaires, each consisting of approximately 60 items on school life, occupational aspirations, family background, and student attitudes on various personal, political, and social issues, were administered to cross-sections of the student population of Muncie's public high schools during 1977, 1987, 1999. The surveys were approximately eight pages in length and consisted of questions either framed on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", or with pre-determined response categories, with no formal "uncertain" option was offered as an alternative. For the 1977 and 1987 studies, school officials and parents were passively notified by mail about what the study entailed. By 1999, however, regulations about parental consent had become more stringent and the surveys could not be administered until written permission for each participant was granted and on file at the school. These new regulations resulted in a decrease in the response rate for the 1999 survey year. All surveys were administered by the students' homeroom teachers and were designed to be completed within a 50 minute time period. The response rates for the 1977, 1987, and 1999 questionnaires were 81%, 82%, and 71%, respectively (Caplow et al., 2004).

The potential study sample is made up from the entire student population of Muncie's public high schools in during 1977, 1989, and 1999 (N = 7443). In keeping with Weis' decision to interview only high school juniors because they represent the class of students most likely to be concerned with the decision of whether or not to attend college (Weis, 1990), the data analyzed in this study include only the responses of upperclassmen.<sup>5</sup> Based on respondent's self-reported class, only juniors

<sup>4</sup>Caplow, Bahr, Chadwick, Call, & Hicks (2007). COMPILATION OF MIDDLETOWN III AND MIDDLETOWN IV DATA, 1977-1999 [MUNCIE, INDIANA] [Computer File]. ICPSR04604-v2. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University [producer]. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2007-10-16.

<sup>5</sup>The decision to exclude high school freshmen and sophomores from the analysis is further supported by an analysis of the data by class in school, which revealed that there was a significant difference in the responses of juniors and seniors from other students in the sample. This finding is in line with Weis' (1990) theory that high school juniors and seniors are at a key point of decision about whether to continue their education after high school. Weis argues that, because college entrance exams (such as the PSATs and SATs) are administered during junior year, these students would have already begun to formulate their plans after high school, while freshmen and sophomore students may not yet feel pressed to make decisions about attending college.

and seniors within each decade are included in the analysis. This results in the elimination of 4,098 lowerclassmen, bringing the total number of eligible respondents to 3,345.

*Dependent Variables.* There are six dependent variables in this analysis; two measuring the student's educational aspirations, two measuring adolescent attitudes about appropriate gender roles for men and women, and two that we interpret both as a measure of the student's attitudes about the importance of a college education. We measure the student's Educational Aspirations with two items. The first item is a response to the question "How far do you want to go in school?" and was coded into two categories: "High school or less" and "some college or college." The second item is a response to the question "What do you plan to do after high school?" and responses were coded into two categories: "Education beyond high school" and "No education beyond high school."

We also measure student attitudes about gender with two items. The first item is a response to the question "What do you feel is the ideal role for a woman today-wife, mother, career woman, or some combination of these?" Responses were coded into two categories: "Includes Career" and "Does not include career". The second item is a response to the question "Agree or Disagree: A woman should give up her job or profession after she marries" and was coded into two categories "Strong Agree or Agree" and "Strongly Disagree and Disagree". We measure student attitudes about the importance of a college education with two items having identical response categories: "How satisfactory do you believe your father's education is?" and "How satisfactory do you believe your mother's education is?" Responses to these items were coded as "Satisfied" or "Not Satisfied".

*Independent and Control Variables.* The key independent variables in this analysis are gender and year in which the survey was taken. Gender was recoded into a dummy variable for females (coded 1), with males (coded 0) as a reference category. Survey year was defined by creating two dummy variables. The first, labeled 1989 was coded 1 for the 1989 survey responses and 0 for all other survey years. The second, labeled 1999 was coded 1 for the 1999 survey responses and 0 for all other survey years. This coding scheme, of course, made 1977 the reference category. Where appropriate, we include control variables for both mother and father's education, measured by the following items: "How far did your father go in school?" and "How far did your mother go in school?" To prepare the data for analysis with binary logistic regression, responses were coded into two categories: "high school or less" and "some college or college".

### Findings

To test hypotheses concerning educational aspirations, attitudes about gender roles, and recognition of the value of higher education, we employ binary logistic regression to determine if there is a significant difference in the probability that students would respond in this manner within each survey year, controlling for gender and parent's education where appropriate. Descriptive statistics for each of the variables in the model appear in Table 1.

Results from the logistic regressions are reported in Table 2 and 3. The first hypothesis, which predicts that the educational aspirations of adolescents in Muncie will increase over time from 1977 to 1999, is strongly supported (see Table 2A). Controlling

Table 1.

*Descriptive statistics for high school juniors and seniors in Muncie, Indiana by survey year (percent).*

Survey Year	1977	1989	1999
<b>Gender</b>			
Males	49	53	51
Females	51	47	49
<b>Mother Went to College</b>	31	39	55
<b>Father Went to College</b>	36	39	51
<b>Aspiring to Attend College</b>	73	89	94
<b>Planning to Pursue Education Beyond HS</b>	57	68	71
<b>Ideal Role for Women Includes Career</b>	70	82	83
<b>Women Should Give Up Job After Marriage</b>	10	8	10
<b>Father's Education Satisfactory</b>	89	82	81
<b>Mother's Education Satisfactory</b>	91	88	86

Table 2.

*Binary logistic regression results for educational aspirations and gender role attitudes of high school juniors and seniors in Muncie, Indiana.*

	A <sup>1</sup> Aspired Education		B <sup>1</sup> Plans after HS		C <sup>2</sup> Ideal Role		D <sup>2</sup> Give up Job	
	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	Odds Ratio
1989 <sup>3</sup>	1.047***	2.850	0.412***	1.510	.729***	2.072	.366*	1.442
1999 <sup>3</sup>	1.429***	4.174	0.421***	1.523	.671***	1.956	.057	1.059
Gender <sup>4</sup>	0.265*	1.303	0.559***	1.748	1.124***	3.076	1.497***	4.470
Father's Education <sup>1</sup>	1.102***	3.011	0.891***	2.437	.243*	1.275	.492**	1.636
Mother's Education <sup>1</sup>	1.165***	3.206	0.765***	2.150	.397***	1.488	.214	1.239

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Note: <sup>1</sup>reference category: high school or less; <sup>2</sup>reference category: traditional gender attitude; <sup>3</sup>reference category: 1977; <sup>4</sup>reference category: males.

Table 3.

*Binary logistic regression for satisfaction with parents' education level for high school juniors and seniors in Muncie, Indiana whose parents have a high school education or less.*

	Father's Education Satisfactory <sup>1</sup>		Mother's Education Satisfactory <sup>1</sup>	
	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	Odds Ratio
1989 <sup>2</sup>	-.536***	.585	-.159**	.853
1999 <sup>2</sup>	-.456***	.634	-.176***	.839
Gender <sup>3</sup>	-.012	.988	-.141	.868

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Note: <sup>1</sup>reference category: not satisfied; <sup>2</sup>reference category: 1977; <sup>3</sup>reference category: males

for gender and parent's education, the odds that students in Muncie aspired to go to college increased by 185% in 1989 over what they were in 1977 ( $p < .001$ ), and increase by over 317% in 1999 compared to 1977 ( $p < .001$ ). Likewise, the odds that students planned to attend college increased 51% in 1989 over what they were in 1977 ( $p < .001$ ), and 52% in 1999 compared to 1977 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table 2B). As predicted, these results were significantly different by gender, with females being 30% more likely than males to aspire to go to college ( $p < .05$ ) and 74% more likely to plan to attend college ( $p < .001$ ) within the 22 year period from 1977 to 1999. These findings are in the expected direction and suggest that there is a significant difference in the educational aspirations of adolescents over time, and that this effect is stronger for females.

The second hypothesis, which predicts that attitudes about gender roles will become less traditional over time from 1977

to 1999, is partially supported. As reported in Table 2C, the odds that adolescents in Muncie believed that a woman's ideal role included career increased by 107% in 1989 over what they were in 1977 ( $p < .001$ ) and the odds that they disagreed that a woman should give up her job or profession after getting married increased by 44% in 1989 from what they were in 1977 ( $p < .05$ ) (Table 2D). These results are in the expected direction and suggest that there is a significant difference in attitudes about gender over time, and that this effect is stronger for females, with the odds of female students being almost 208% higher than their male counterparts to agree that the ideal role of woman includes career, and 347% higher than males to disagree that woman should give up her job within the 22 year period from 1977 and 1999 ( $p < .001$ ).

These findings are also consistent with trends found by Weis (1990) and Davis and Pearce (1992); however, it is important to note a slight decline from 1989 to 1999 (as compared to 1977) in the probability that Muncie adolescents agreed that the ideal role of woman includes career. Although a contingency table analysis revealed a significant increase between the percentages of students agreeing with this ideal across each survey year, the regressions suggest that, from 1989 to 1999, there is a 12% decrease in the odds that students supported women having a career from each decade compared to 1977. Along the same lines, there is also a decrease in the probability that students believe a woman should give up her job after marriage from 1989 to 1999, dropping from 31% to 6%—a result that is not significantly different from 1977.

The third hypothesis, which predicts that students will show greater recognition of the importance of a college education over time, is also supported. As shown in Table 3, which includes only responses from students whose mother and father's education was high school or less, the odds of agreeing that their father's education was satisfactory at high school or less were 42% lower in 1989 than in 1977, and 37% lower in 1999 than in 1977. Likewise, the odds of students agreeing that their mother's education is satisfactory at high school or less were 15% lower in 1989 as compared to 1977, and 16% lower in 1999 than in 1977. The findings suggest that, over time, students are not only aspiring or planning to attend college, but are viewing the prospect of obtaining an education beyond high school as a necessity. These findings do not indicate that gender has an effect on this variable, but show that by 1999, having an education of high school or less is unsatisfactory for men and women alike. Of course, because this analysis was restricted to adolescents whose parents had high school educations of less, parental education was not included as control variables in the equations.

There is, of course, concern that the results reported above could possibly be biased toward students who lived in intact households, as all respondents who did not report *both* the mother's education and father's education were considered "missing" and were not included. Given the greater likelihood that adolescents who come from homes where one parent is not present (as a result of divorce, death, etc.) would not know both parents education level, an additional analysis of the missing and included cases was necessary to assess possible bias. A breakdown of the included cases for mother and father's education by household type reveals that approximately 61% of the cases included in the sample come from intact households, while 39% come from single parent (18%), step-parent (15%) or some other type (5.6%) of household. Given these results, we do not expect

any great bias in regard to household type in the results.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Weis found that many adolescents in a de-industrialized community (Freeway) understood the utility of college training and aspired to continue their education after high school graduation. Findings from the present study indicate that students in Muncie, a community apparently very similar to "Freeway" in terms of its economic evolution, also became increasingly aware of the value of an education, and both aspired and planned to attend college in increasing proportions. In addition, students in Muncie (particularly females) showed similar trends in regard to changing attitudes about traditional gender roles and can arguably be said to have experienced a similar "critical moment of critique" against male dominance and patriarchy associated with white, working class families (Weis, 1990: p. 54). The findings presented in this paper clearly support all three hypotheses, demonstrating that from 1977 to 1999, adolescents in Muncie had increased educational aspirations, showed greater recognition of the importance of obtaining a college education, and became less-traditional in terms of their attitudes about appropriate gender roles for men and women—effects which were more pronounced for female students.

The implications of the findings regarding deindustrialization and adolescent attitudes about education and gender are particularly important for understanding the identity construction processes of working class adolescents. Many cultural sociologists, including Lamont (2000) and Somers (1994), argue that symbolic boundaries, such as the gendered notion that "men's work" is in the public sphere while "women's work" is in the domestic realm, are weighted by the environment in which they are embedded. They insist that groups mobilize to define who they are in relation to broad structural changes that challenge idealized conceptions of individual and collective identity. The findings in this analysis support Weis' conclusions that the process of deindustrialization essentially challenged working class values by wiping out jobs traditionally associated with working class identity. The low-wage service occupations offered in the post-industrial "Freeway" forced many male students to consider continuing their education after high school and to re-define their ideas about the value of women earning a wage in the public work sector. When Weis returned to Freeway 15 years later to re-interview the same students as young adults, she found it was the males who had decided to "cash in" their "hegemonically based masculine persona" who fared better and lived financially stable lives (Weis, 2004: p. 90). She argues this occurred because "settled" jobs offering the most stability tended to be those associated with the most schooling, traditionally thought of as feminine, and also those which are most likely to demand "a partner who earns roughly comparable money" (Weis, 2004: p. 90). This is an important finding, particularly because it demonstrates how symbolic boundaries around class and gender are directly related to working class mobility.

Historically, working class identity also has been related to the construction of racial identity, e.g., "whiteness" (Roediger, 1991). Understandings about race, like those about gender and class are affected by dramatic economic and political shifts. One of the major limitations of this study is not being able to test Weis' conclusions in regard to race and the way working

class identity, particularly for adolescent males, is constructed around a racialized “other”. Weis reported that the identity of male students at “Freeway” High School was entangled with “strident racism”, specifically against the small but growing African American population in that community. Given the similar demographics of Muncie, it would be interesting to see if the same racial tensions would have been expressed. Unfortunately, when Middletown III and IV were conducted, questions that address attitudes about racism and white privilege were deemed insensitive and removed from the High School Surveys; however, if one could identify a data source that would allow for such an analysis, determining the effect of deindustrialization on adolescent attitudes about race would be an interesting new direction for this research.

Another shortcoming of the current study is its inability to conclude with a high degree of certainty that it was actually the process of deindustrialization that produced the aforementioned trends and changes in high school culture, not some other broad structural shift or social movement that determined these outcomes. The nature of these data and the method employed simply does not permit determination of the exact reasoning behind students increased educational aspirations or transformed attitudes about gender to the degree that Weis’ qualitative technique does. However, we can conclude that in the community of Muncie, Indiana, which draws striking similarity to “Freeway” in terms of its manufacturing history and notable deindustrialization, trends in high school student attitudes about education and gender seemingly parallel to what Weis witnessed during the same time frame.

## References

- Adkins, L. (2001). Cultural feminization: “Money, sex and power” for women. *Signs*, 26, 669-695. doi:10.1086/495625
- Bettis, P. (1996). Urban students, liminality, and the postindustrial context. *Sociology of Education*, 69, 105-125. doi:10.2307/2112801
- Bluestone, B., & Harrison, B. (1982). *The de-industrialization of America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Caccamo, R. (2000). *Back to middletown: Three generations of sociological reflections*. Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Caplow, C., Bahr, H. M., & Call, V. R. A. (2004). The middletown replications: 75 years of change in adolescent attitudes, 1924-1999. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68, 287-313. doi:10.1093/poq/nfh016
- Davis, S., & Pearce, L. (2007). Adolescent work-family gender ideologies and educational expectations. *Sociological Perspectives*, 50, 249-271. doi:10.1525/sop.2007.50.2.249
- Epstein, C. F. (1992). Tinkerbells and pinups: The construction and reconstruction of gender boundaries at work. In M. Lamont & M. Fournier (Eds.), *Cultivating differences: Symbolic boundaries and the making of inequality* (pp. 232-256). Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Hoover, D. W. (1990). *Middletown revisited. Ball State monograph number thirty-four*. Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University.
- McKibben, J. N. (1987). Job gains versus wage gains—Indiana’s deindustrialization continues. *Indiana Business Review*, 62, 5-7.
- Morton, M. J. (1990). Indiana a century ago: Comparing 1890 to 1988. *Indiana Business Review*, 65, 1-6.
- Lamont, M. & Fournier, M. (1992). *Cultivating differences: Symbolic boundaries and the making of inequality*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Lamont, M. (2000). *The dignity of working men: Morality and the boundaries of race, class, and immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lamont, M., & Molnar, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 167-95. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107
- Lynd, R. S., & Lynd, H. M. (1937). *Middletown in transition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.
- Lynd, Robert S. & Lynd, Helen M. (1929). *Middletown: A study in American culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company.
- McDowell, L. (1991). Life without father and Ford: The New gender order of Post-Fordism. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 16, 400-419.
- McCall, L. (1988). *Complex inequality: Gender, class, and race in the new economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Roediger, D. R. et al. (1991). *The wages of whiteness: Race and the making of the American working class*. Memphis, TN: Verso.
- Silvestri, G., & Lukasiewicz, J. (1989). Projections of Occupational Employment, 1988-2000. *Monthly Labor Review*, 112, 42-65.
- Somers, M. (1994). Reclaiming the epistemological “Other”: Narrative and the social constitution of identity. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Social theory and the politics of identity* (pp. 37-99). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Weis, L. (1990). *Working class without work: High school students in a de-industrializing economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Weis, L. (2004). *Class reunion: The remaking of the American white working class*. New York: Routledge.