Four Theories of Informalization and How to Test Them

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Abstract: *Informalization of demeanor (especially clothing, grooming) and deference (manners) is charted by a chronology of photos from 1900 to the present. Four theories are tested: (1) arbitrary style cycles; (2) democratization; (3) status reversal; (4) antinomian situational dominance. Democratization is prominent in the period before 1960, pushed largely by political movements; thereafter, antinomian style movements drive most changes, including competition over the sexiness elite; the athletic fantasy elite; and the anti-sexy, anti-athletic look. All of the more recent movements hide social class inequalities, although the elaboration of originally upper-class athletic clothing has been the most important pathway in twentieth century changes in self-presentation century changes in self-presentation.*

Keywords: *informalization; demeanor; antinomianism; photo history.*

Informalization has been the dominant trend in interactional styles for more than half a century, and the process continues today. Wouters (2007) has provided the most thorough documentation and theorization, while Mennell (2007) has emphasized its prevalence in American society. I question, however, whether we have the theoretical explanation right. Here I will summarize alternative theories, sketch the kinds of evidence that might be gathered for different aspects of informalization, and propose some analytical strategies for testing theories and finding the mechanisms of change.

To begin, let us compare some photos. The first was taken in 1940 in Washington DC, and depicts a middle-aged lady at a tea party. She sits at the head of the table, and is pouring tea from a large silver tea service, with a silver tray and sugar bowl in front of her. This is the place of honor; she is the hostess, and the other ladies sit around the table and receive their tea cups from her. Her facial expression is proud, serious, and gracious, with a very slight smile on her lips. She is wearing a dark-colored suit, with a flower corsage, a fur stole around her neck, and although it is indoors, a hat with a turned-up veil, with her hair pulled back upon her head. It is a ritual of solidarity among the elite, and she is in the focus of attention, the leader of the elite.

Compare a photo taken in 2006 in California. Four women sit on sofas, with wine glasses on a low table, an open bottle, and colourful hors d'oeuvres, which they are eating with their fingers. The scene looks wealthy; through large plate-glass windows in the background are a patio with a swimming pool and tropical plants. The women, approximately 40 or 50 years old, are wearing tight blue jeans and colourful knitted tops. They are looking towards each other pleasantly as they converse, and there is no one who can be picked out as the center of attention. They wear a moderate amount of rings, bracelets and earrings in various styles, and all have long straight hair down to their shoulders. The women are comparable in social class and social occasion to the lady in 1940, but the difference in unmistakably in the direction of informalization.

Or compare historical photos of professional men carrying on ‘shop talk’ or business gossip. A 1928 photo taken in a Paris cafe shows the prime ministers of England, France, Germany and another official, their chairs pulled together as they huddle in conversation. It is a situation of evening informality, backstage discussion after a day at an international conference. Beside them is a small round table with a decorated white

tablecloth, with small cups and silver dishes holding sweets. They wear dark suits tightly buttoned, waistcoats, white shirts barely visible at the collar, and dark silk neckties. The British PM, who holds the others' attention as he makes a point, is joggling a ornamental cane in his hand.

A comparable occasion is a 2008 photo of a 'networking dinner' in Providence, Rhode Island, including individuals identified as a Microsoft manager and an official of an economic development agency. There are several clusters of people around the room, with soft drinks that they drink out of the can, or bottles of beer; four people are sitting at a bare table, one of them a woman; she wears jeans, a dark sweater and a dark low-cut blouse showing some cleavage. Most of the men wear blue dress shirts with open collar and no necktie; a few wear short-sleeve pullovers; in the background are two middle-aged men (older than the others) wearing unbuttoned suits and white shirts without neckties. There are all talking or listening to each other; there is no center of attention. Everyone has a white plasticized name tag stuck on their chest. They are the high-tech elite, upper-middle class rather than the upper-class of the 1928 Paris scene, but on the whole representative of the self-presentation of the modern business elite.

Decline of Scheduled, Scripted, and Backstage-prepared Interactions?

Formality and informality are folk concepts, hence informalization might simply be taken as whatever departs from the rules of behavior institutionalized in the past. This makes informalization a purely relative concept, equivalent to 'old fashioned' versus 'up to date'. To give it more sociological substance, formality and informality can be stated in terms of the basic processes of interaction ritual (Collins 2004). All interaction rituals involve assembly, mutual focus of attention, and shared mood. In more formal rituals, assembly of persons is scheduled and publicly announced; focus of attention is guided by explicit scripts prescribing what is to be done and what is prohibited; and including scripts for how both personal appearance and the physical setting are to be presented. The emotional mood too is generally prescribed (e.g. for joyous festivals, sad memorials, devoted religious worship, giving honor to honorees, etc.) Formal rituals, in Collins' theory, generate and sustain identities as members of publically recognized social categories. In this sense they are traditionalistic and rigid.

Informal rituals are at the other end of the continuum. Such encounters happen spontaneously, with less scheduling or announcement; scripts are less explicit and moods are whatever is emergent. Formal rituals typically involve a good deal of preparation, hence they have strongly marked backstages where behind the scenes work is done on both physical and behavioral components of the performance (including what Hochschild (1983) calls 'emotion work'); and post-occasion backstages where the success or failure of the staged event is recounted (Goffman 1959). Informal rituals, in Collins' theory, generate ephemeral, situational identities; they dissolve the sense of a larger social structure.

How much formality or informality exists depends on the proportion of these kinds of interaction rituals. Notice the different ways change can come about: Particular kinds of scheduled rituals can disappear, or new ones are created: for instance the custom of calling on people at their homes at regularly announced hours, has disappeared, as have masked carnivals; on the other hand, the practices of waiting in a queue to get past a bouncer, talking on a telephone, making an Internet message, etc. have arisen and changed at particular points in history. Or within the same kinds of encounters, the etiquette or rules can change. Or the emotional tone can change, particularly along the dimension that Durkheim called 'sacredness', to lesser or greater awe, respect, and feelings of obligatory membership in a moral community. And finally the amount of backstage preparation can shift.

We need to assess the evidence both for the kinds of changes that have taken place; and for the causes which we theorize as explanations. It is important not to define informalization in such a way that the evidence for its existence is simultaneously treated as evidence for its explanation. For this reason, I am dubious about the Wouters/Mennell/Elias theory that informalization is explained by a shift in habitus toward interiorization of social controls as self-restraint. This is an interpretation of informalization but it gives no independent evidence of its alleged cause.

Four Testable Theories

(1) *Arbitrary style cycles*. What we take as shifts in formality and informality might be turns of the wheel of fashion (Kroeber 1957; Crane 2000). Just as skirt lengths rise and fall, hair styles change, and beards come in and out of fashion, the styles of wearing jeans, or greetings by hugs or high-fives, may be merely arbitrary fashions that come in every decade or so, then are just as quickly thrown out of style by the next fashion.

(2) *Democratization*. Wouters (2007) and Mennell (2007) argue, using Elias's theory of functional democratization in the later civilizing process, that informal styles and manners express the growth of equality among persons. Traditional manners enacted vertical relationships in class hierarchies, and provided in-group codes by which elites excluded inferiors. Informalization is the leveling of class lines, the triumph of a leftward trend in human history.

(3) *Status reversal*. Popular styles of dressing-down and informal codes of interaction represent the adoption of manners of lower, subordinate groups by the higher. Working-class attire such as blue jeans became adopted by higher classes; then the accoutrements and manners of black lower-class gangs became fads among middle and upper classes. Gang-banger talk, heroin chic, tattoos and other marks of the criminal classes became marks of the hip, the cool, against the denigrated status of the square and the straight, now regarded elitist or racist. Status reversal is also found in the widespread phenomenon known only by a tendentious slang term, 'political correctness'— giving special precedence to groups that had previously been oppressed. Note that status reversal differs from democratization; the latter is egalitarian, whereas the former is a new form of status stratification. Theories (2) and (3) are widely discussed in the literature on fashion and in sociology of culture as 'leveling-up' and 'leveling-down,' respectively. I prefer to label them in ways that bring out more sharply the social processes bringing about these kinds of changes.

(4) *Antinomian situational dominance*. In contrast to status reversal, which follows the principle 'the last shall be first,' antinomian status is a fleeting experience of being more avant-garde than someone else. This follows the process noted in the high arts as 'defamiliarization' (Skhlovsky 1991 [1925]), 'pushing the edge,' negating what has been accepted as familiar aesthetics. The 'guerrilla theatre' of the 1960s and subsequent 'performance are' or 'installation art' are examples of professionalized antinomian performances. Its emphasis is upon shocking those who are not avant-garde, and repeatedly establishing a new fashion edge once the previous one is accepted. It is norm-breaking for the sake of showing off one's aesthetic standing, one's elite insider cultural capital. Whereas status reversal has an element of leftist democratization, claiming to exalt the poor and downtrodden, antinomian dominance is intrinsically elitist. Although it may use class terminology for its foils (traditionally among artists, the 'bourgeois;' today, 'mainstream,' 'commercial'), historically its rejection of conventionality has come sometimes from the Left, sometimes from the Right (Grana 1964; Charle 1990). Most importantly it is a claim for cultural eliteness over any other form of stratification.

Antinomian situational dominance is a subtype of what I have called 'situational stratification' (Collins 2004: chapter 7), where persons dominate the center of attention and compel emotional deference to themselves

through tactics of impression management, divorced from long-term categorical status membership.

Micro-situational Evidence of Demeanor and Deference: Historical Photo Sequences

My strategy is the following: examine patterns of demeanor—presentation of self; and patterns of deference—ritualistic manners towards other persons. In Goffman's (1967) analysis, demeanor constructs what type of person one claims to be, while deference is the interactional acknowledgement that others give to the performance of self. When and where do various kinds of informalization take place in demeanor presentations and in deference rituals? The epicenters of such changes, their timing and spread, give clues to the social location of informalization processes, and may tell for or against one or another of the four theories.

For data, I use historical photos of everyday life. These are scanned into an archive, indexed by date, so they can be examined in historical sequence. Sources include photo histories or retrospectives by decade or by century (e.g. the Getty Archive series the 1910s, the 1920s, etc; the Time-Life Books series This Fabulous Century, consisting of volumes for each decade for 1870 onwards; a photo history of Philadelphia in the twentieth century; a photo history of Ireland; and many others); biographies and other historical books, genres in which including photos with the text has become very common since the 1990s as historical photo archives have become available. I also use histories of fashion, with the limitation that depictions of styles as worn in everyday life give way after about 1950 to depictions of fashion shows and runways, so that these sources are of little use in showing how people actually dressed in the later twentieth century. I have generally excluded photos which are posed – i.e. where subjects are lined up staring at the camera, although such photos have a use in showing clothing styles, and candid photos are hard to find for the years before 1920. Paintings done in naturalistic styles are useful for the period before 1900, when cameras were very clumsy and most photos were done in studios. The scanned archive totals about 7000 images.

The methodological advantage of using photos of everyday life is that we can see people actually interacting: photos are as close to primary data of empirical reality as we can get for the past. By putting them in chronological order, we can search for when a style of clothing, adornment, gesture, or other kind of personal display is first found, and thus find when styles originated and when they spread to other places and social groups. We can see, for instance, whether new styles originated in the upper class or working class, among men or women, etc. Since they show real moments of time and give the time-line, photos are the primary and most important evidence; I also use ethnographies to fill out the meaning and use of various forms of self-presentation in their local context.

Intermittently in what follows, I will describe particular photos that show a particular social pattern at a given date; the examples are typical of a much larger number of photos. The photos themselves are not displayed here, because the cost of permissions to republish photos has risen drastically in recent years, as monopoly capitalists have been centralizing and squeezing the market for historical photos.

Clothing style shifts

Demeanor styles as class markers appear mostly clearly in clothing styles, and here we may trace some of the strongest evidence of informalization during the past century. Before World War I, the upper class had a wide range of situation-appropriate costumes. There were full formal regalia for major ceremonies; dressing for dinner in tuxedo and evening gown; white tie and black tie occasions of sociability; elegant morning clothes;

country clothes in heavy tweeds; hunting and sporting clothing. Even on relatively informal occasions respectable men wore silk top hats, carried decorative walking sticks, gold watch chains, jeweled tie pins, and fancy waistcoats. Women's clothes were a little more uniform across occasions but varied especially by the amount of jewelry worn. The aristocracy had an additional layer of formal attire, including swords, sashes, and medals. A key point is that the higher classes presented themselves on multiple frontstages, each one distinguished by the appropriate costume.

Other classes had a narrower range of clothing, and less ceremonial differentiation among different times of the day and year. On the whole, middle classes imitated upper class styles as best they could. Men wore suits, vests, neckties, white shirts with stiff collars. Hats tended to be specialized by class and occupation: top hats for the elite (including politicians on formal occasions), bowlers and later brimmed soft hats for the respectable middle class; cloth caps for workers and for casual and sporting wear. Workers wore distinctive work clothes, often cheap blue denim overalls (especially in France) or other rough cloth. In their leisure hours workers generally changed into middle-class clothing styles if they could afford it. Workers could be more casual, more undressed in public, especially in warm weather—Impressionist paintings of the 1880s show the French popular classes in summer restaurants wearing undershirts. Upper class summer dress, in contrast, was another elaborate variant of their repertoire—colored striped jackets, straw boaters, white shoes, etc.

It is striking that women's clothing styles on the whole were more uniform across classes than men's. Paintings of American fish-wives (Winslow Homer 1881) and French women in summer cafés (Renoir 1876) show much the same long gowns as worn by upper-class women, minus the jewelry and the fine materials.

A clothing revolution takes place in the 1920s across all the Western countries. Photos show this for England, France, Germany, and the US; less so for Italy and Spain, where the newer styles are seen in urban photos, while rural people still dress traditionally. The shift was most noticeable for women: skirt lengths became shorter, revealing the legs for the first time in several millennia; one-piece dresses gave way to skirt-and-blouse combinations. The look was slender and vertical rather than rounded and voluptuous. In many respects women dressed more like men, sometimes adopting neckties and male shirts; short, bobbed hair was notoriously mannish among young women. (This is the theme of Hemingway's (1986) posthumous novel, about a wealthy young American couple in France in the 1920s; both try to dress alike in beach clothes and French fisherman's costumes, and cut their hair identically short, trying to merge into a unisex identity.) This was a move to break through situational barriers between men and women, and thus a move towards equality. Declining gender segregation was performed in the new partying and carousing scenes, where men and women of the respectable classes drank together (in contrast to the old elite custom of separating at the end of dinner so the men could drink and smoke together), and cigarette smoking became popular among women, with a connotation of sophistication and sexual flirtation. ('Tobacco Ritual and Anti-ritual,' Chapter 8 in Collins 2004; Fitzgerald 1936)

Nevertheless, male/female demeanor differences continued; young women rejected the big wide-brimmed hats of the previous period for head-hugging cloche hats, although these did not resemble the male hat style at all; and shorter skirts had no counterpart in displaying male legs. (The historic peak of male leg display was the fashion of wearing tights and short doublets or codpieces, seen in paintings especially of young men in Italy and northern Europe from about 1450 to 1600.) But a trend was set in motion towards a convergence in gender clothing styles; the next big phase would be in the 1970s, with upper-middle class women turning to pants suits resembling male suits except in brighter colors, while popular classes ubiquitously adopted jeans and sweat shirts.

If women's clothing shifts were a version of gender democratization, men's style shift was more explicitly informalization. In the youth generation, there was a tendency to discard the more elaborate variations of clothing for different daily ritual occasions. This appears to have been led by upper/middle class youth, especially college students and slightly older. Although tuxedos were still worn to dances and fancy dinners, the preferred style became a version of the older upper class country and sporting style: suits in tweed or checks, sweaters although still combined with linen dress shirts and neckties. The so-called 'sport coat' made its appearance—i.e. a jacket like a traditional suit jacket but in rougher materials and brighter colors, not matched to the trousers, giving a more improvised look. Early photos show the sport coat worn (with a necktie) by golfers in 1926; in 1956 one can see it beginning to be worn at work and in formal socializing. Increasingly it became the preferred style to look, not like the working classes, nor the ubiquitous middle-class business suit, but like the old upper classes in their leisure moments, in the country or at sports.

Some of the prestige of the newer style was that it revealed more of the body. For women, shorter skirts revealing legs were supplemented in the 1940s and 50s by lighter, tighter sweaters accentuating breasts. In the same decades, men began to wear shorts more often, along with tight torso-hugging buttonless pull-over shirts that showed off chest, shoulders and biceps. The T-shirt, originally a machine-knit undershirt of light fabric, introduced in the US military in World War II, in the 1950s became a male sex-symbol. A cool teen look (shown in a 1959 photo in a New York City gang clubhouse) was to wear a T-shirt without an outer dress shirt, with the short sleeves further rolled up to the top of the shoulder to reveal the arms, sometimes with a pack of cigarettes rolled into the sleeve. A photo from 1956 shows a slightly earlier phase: a teenage boy dancing to a jukebox; he wears a dress shirt with a collar, with half the buttons open down his midriff to reveal the white T-shirt underneath. Here informalization, if carrying a tone of democratization in opposition to official and upper classes, also carried a tone of sexual eliteness. Youth culture as it became more autonomous from adult controls was not egalitarian, but internally stratified, and its demeanor styles displayed ranking between the cool and uncool, the sexy and the unsexy. (Milner 2004)

This ostentatious youth culture was most famously American, but there were early trends in England and France. Shorts start being seen, on both men and women in England and Germany, in gymnastics teams which in the late 1920s and 30s became popular forms of athletic exercise and public display; in Russia such teams had rather baggy uniforms and a socialist aura. In 1935 England some women hikers wear shorts of mid-thigh length, although the amount of skin shown in limited by wearing knit stockings up to the knees. 1939 photos show English youth dancing ballroom style outdoors in swimming suits at a summer resort. In 1948 we see courting couples together wearing shorts at a Catskills, New York summer camp; but the same camp in 1962 shows ping-pong players, some in pullovers and slacks, but others still wearing a tie with a short-sleeve version of a white dress shirt. The leisure style formed as a combination: removing parts of the full middle-class regalia, plus new styles developed explicitly for sports. Shorts had never been part of working class clothing; they were essentially a middle-class invention. In France in 1946, the two-piece bikini bathing suit was created (named after the island where the atomic bomb was tested, implying its shocking effect on observers). In France and Italy by the 1950s, the longish body-covering bathing suits of the 1920s era had been displaced by very brief beach costume for both men and women; some European women sunbathed topless at the beach, although the custom never spread very widely. A photo from the late 1960s shows a middle-aged English woman, wading at the edge of the water while wearing a long house-dress; her face and body posture boggles at the sight of a slender young woman walking by in bikini bottom and bare breasts.

The informal clothing code first appears as a cult of leisure, but of a sexualized form; it was simultaneously a cult of the beach, the Mediterranean sun – where the French populace now went en masse during the summer months, as the welfare state promoted summer vacations for all. There is egalitarianism here, insofar as the popular classes invaded what had been the exclusive leisure domain of the rich (Fabiani 2010). But it gave rise

to a new form of stratification, sexual sophisticates over non-sophisticates, similar to the new American youth culture but with more of an elitist style tinge.

In America, a key aspect of informalized demeanor was the popularity of blue jeans. These had originally been work clothes for heavy manual labor. But the jeans which became popular, first in the youth culture of the 1950s, and then everywhere in the 1970s and 80s, were cut more tightly, instead of the ample, baggy, and rather stiff denim that farmers and manual laborers had worn; jeans became casual, non-work-oriented, and also sexy. Jeans were perhaps the first item of unisex apparel, with both males and females displaying (and shaping) buttocks, hips, and legs.

The full-scale informalization that triumphed in the 1980s was above all a shift towards wearing athletic clothes on all kinds of occasions. Leather shoes gave way to wearing sneakers/ running shoes; sports manufacturers led by Nike became mass producers of ordinary footwear, with its own series of fashion changes to keep up with (Bergeson 2006).

The sweat shirt began as a knit pullover jersey worn especially by American football players beginning around 1900, also in a heavier version worn by all kinds of athletes to keep themselves warm before and after exercise. Its origins were in the bulky knit sweaters worn by sailors for working in cold outdoor weather. The athletic sweat shirt, slimmed down for action, then became adopted as a uniquitous upper garment, replacing the dress shirt with buttons and collar which continued to be the standard of seriousness, formality and respectability. In this respect, the sweat shirt became similar to the T-shirt, which had been around in the American youth culture since the 1940s. The T-shirt, once an undershirt and then an item of ‘cool’ display, became a bearer of emblems, pictures, political slogans, jokes—the self as differentiated in a mass-consumer era by the consumer’s selection of what message to display on one’s chest. The first photo in my collection of a T-shirt printed with a message is from 1970.

The sweat shirt was also adopted to carry pictures and messages, but it stayed closer to its sports origin; in the 1980s sweat shirts, along with replicas of the actual jerseys worn by American athletes, became widely marketed. Sweat shirts worn by Americans in public now advertised their identities as fans of a particular team; or sometimes of a particular player, since a replica shirt carries the number and name of the star player. You no longer claim to be an athlete yourself (such as by wearing golf clothes), but only to imitate a famous athlete.

One can regard this as a kind of informalization, since it tended to replace traditional business suits and dress shirts, on the one hand, and traditional working-class overalls on the other. But it substituted a new form of social differentiation: a horizontal tribalization, fans of different athletic or entertainment cults; with a touch of elitism, claiming to personify not just an average person but the preeminent stars in the public attention space. Sale of such branded and monopolized items became major sources of income for teams’ business management, both in the professional leagues and in the so-called amateur sports associations among American universities.

Some sports which had been informal shifted towards a more formal style in this period. In America, bicycling had been an entirely informal activity, popular among children and young adults, wearing ordinary casual clothes. With the introduction of professional-style bicycle uniforms and helmets from Europe, sporting attire for bicyclists became much more ostentatious, the reverse of informalization.

The 1980s also saw the introduction of warm-up suits, pants and jacket combinations of synthetic fabric, replacing the baggier fabrics that athletes had previously used for this purpose. These suits became widely adopted in America; especially for vacation, travel, and non-work activities generally, and have become almost a uniform for elderly retired people. In part this may be utilitarian, since these clothes demand very

little care, and little time to put on and take off; it is a simplified clothing style that cuts backstage preparation to a minimum. For a large new segment of the population – retired people – warm-up suits were less form-fitting than the tighter jeans, T-shirts and jerseys worn by younger people still in the sexual display competition, and served somewhat to hide decaying bodies. They also fit the declassed aspect of retirement, in which old people have no identity except the negative one, not being young and not being in an occupation. This may be an aspect of functional democratization, but among a group that has little prestige among the rest of the population.

In America, the strongest pathway to informalization of demeanor presentation has been the adoption of athletic clothing by all social classes and age groups. At the same time, the specialization of clothing for specific ritual occasions, so noticeable in the daily rounds of upper-class persons at the beginning of the twentieth century, gave way to wearing the same clothing on all occasions. By the 1990s, even conservative Christians going to Sunday church service were no longer dressing up in their 'Sunday best,' but were wearing the same casual jeans and sport shirts that they wore anywhere else. The main exception here are black Christians, who continue to dress up for church, in traditional middle-class suits, ladies' dresses and hats. The difference in race suggests that it is the white middle-class who are the epicenter of the casualness style, a point which has implications for the larger causality of informalization.

Why athletic styles? Their trajectory has been imitation of what started as a segment of upper-class culture. In the nineteenth century, when modern games were invented, sports were largely the province of upper-class youth (Dunning 1999; Leifer 1995). Insofar as they were school-based (as in the origins of rugby, cricket, rowing, track, and the American inventions football and basketball – baseball was the exception, an invention of middle-class clubs), secondary and higher education were largely restricted to the upper classes. Two processes simultaneously widened the domain of sports: mass education, which first spread widely in America and reached truly mass proportions in the late twentieth century; and commercialization and professionalization of sports, which greatly increased the number of fans. Thus sports attire simultaneously implied appropriating an elite history, and expressed an orientation to leisure rather than work. Sports became the focus of attention in the situational stratification of everyday life (Collins 2004), the ephemeral dominance which comes and goes by being in the center of action. Here again, widespread egalitarian participation and abandonment of older class demeanor symbols mesh with a new form of status struggle – above all the dominance of conspicuous leisure over work.

Some additional evidence for this point comes by comparing the clothing styles of service workers. In elite and middle-level restaurants, hotels, and other establishments, the servants tend to wear more old-fashioned, formal clothing than the customers. The maitre d' is the one most likely to wear a tuxedo; in very elite European settings, servants still wear the knee breeches and wigs of eighteenth century livery. In a 2011 photo of an airline cabin, it is the flight attendants who wear suits and neckties, while the elite customers in the first-class cabin wear dress shirts without their jackets. In mass-chain restaurants, servers are required to wear uniforms reminiscent of traditional working-class markers; poverty-level minority youth say they dislike such jobs because they are ashamed to appear among the peers wearing such a uniform, since it gives them especially low status in the cool/ hip culture of the street (Anderson 1999). There is a similar pattern in what were once called white-collar jobs; professionals and managers may still be required to wear traditional middle-class formal attire at work, but they change out of it as soon as possible when they leave the office. In the years since 2000, the pattern developed that upper-middle class professional men discard at least one item of the old proper attire: either taking off their jacket and working in dress shirt with tie; or keeping on the jacket and omitting the tie. This is shown in a 2011 photo of President Obama on a podium, in the act of taking off his jacket. The effort is to show role-distance (in the sense given by Goffman 1961) from the traditional work attire. Americans who have jobs still work long hours, but they attempt as much as possible

to look like they are at leisure. As of 2012–2014, pattern is less apparent in England and Germany, for reasons that it will take a sociologist to figure out.

Political and social movement impetus to demeanor changes

One other pathway to changing demeanor styles was from mass political movements. Perhaps surprisingly, the strongest impetus to informalization in the 1920s were the fascist movements. Public ceremonial clothing was simplified down to shirts—the famous brown skirts, black shirts, etc. that were the emblems of particular national movements. The new fascist-style movements (most famously in Italy and Germany) distinguished themselves both from the Left and the traditional Right. As Klusemann (2010) has shown by examining photos and texts, the populist movements wanted to distinguish themselves from traditional conservatives, who typically wore upper-class attire or elite military uniforms; the fascists dressed down, claiming to represent the people as a whole, transcending and obliterating class lines. The Left ideologically claimed to occupy this niche, but in fact leftist demonstrators up through the 1920s typically made a frontstage appearance on public occasions by marching in middle-class suits. This was in keeping with Tilly's (2008) analysis of the techniques of social movements since they were invented around 1770: to show oneself as WUNC (Worthy, Unified, Numerous and Committed), where the social definition of worthiness was upper-class demeanor. In the early 1920s, Klusemann shows, the Nazis too were still wearing middle-class suits; but by 1924, as the movement expanded, they had evolved their own distinctive style, plain brown shirts, simplified jackets and caps, with few overt marks of rank; ideological identity was portrayed chiefly by the swastika armband. The fascists were the epicenter of political informalization; when the Nazis entered the Reichstag as elected delegates in 1930, they shocked the other delegates not only by their disruptive behavior —deliberately impolite violation of parliamentary manners – but by wearing their storm-trooper uniforms, while even the socialist deputies wore middle-class suits. The shift towards plain, informal clothing in Left demonstrations appears to have followed the fascists in time.

Spain was a more traditional clothing regime. At the time of the Civil War (1936–39) clothing styles became political markers: Republicans discarded middle-class styles and wore their shirt sleeves unbuttoned and rolled up; Nationalist regulations required wearing hats, jackets and ties (Beevor 1999: 382; Guerra de la Vega 2005 2006).

The Fascists may be regarded as a structural aberration, a populist movement with authoritarian and conservative policies; nevertheless it shows that anti-traditionalism and informalization can be combined with new forms of stratification. The Nazis were emphatically anti-democratic, openly despising parliamentary politics, which they equated with meaningless talk rather than action. The fascist episode was historically limited to a couple of decades, but analytically it shows that informalization can be combined with other processes which are far from democratic ones.

It could be argued that the major wave of informalization after mid-twentieth century was driven by the turn to the Left in the 1960s and 70s, including the American civil rights movement for black and subsequently other minorities; the waves of decolonization against the European empires; and world-wide, left-wing (especially student-based New Left) uprisings, and eventually the violent revolutionary/terrorist movements. This is not functional democratization in the sense of Elias – people becoming more conscious of their interdependence in a complex division of labor – but it is at any rate explicit ideological democratization, even if largely led by middle-class activists rather than by the masses from below. Do we see a correlation between the demeanor styles of activists and the informalization movement? Photos of 1960s demonstrators in

Western countries show they dress in rather conventional style of students of that period: not yet the extreme informality of jeans, T-shirts, jerseys, and warm-up suits that would come in the late 1970s and 80s; most demonstrators wore dress shirts, the kinds of semi-casual jackets worn by youth—usually not ties, except in demonstrations by Negros (as they called themselves at the time), who adhered more closely to traditional middle-class formal demeanor. Photos show a token presence of demonstrators at the center of action fighting with the police while stripped to the waist—the naked body representing physical/erotic elite which has become a pattern found in photos of demonstrations in the last 40 years (but limited to Western demonstrators) (see photos in Collins 2008: chapter 10). But this stripped-for-action look is not informalization, and is not a mass style; it is a spike of the iceberg of participants in crowd protests, a tiny number who put themselves at the edge of conflict and the center of attention. Photos of 1969 violent anti-British protestors in Northern Ireland show them dressed in cheap suits and white dress shirts or sweaters. Although 1960s Left movements gave ideological support to egalitarianism, in actual demeanor they do not lead the style shifts.

There was also a very conspicuous style rebellion in the mid-1960s, the so-called 'counter-culture', known for its overt use of drugs, its claims for honest, untrammeled sexuality (claims which turned out to be exaggerated), and experiments with living in communes (Yablonsky 1968). The 'hippies' explicitly attacked conventional styles of dress: not only the formal attire of middle-class respectability, but also the informal style of 1950s mainstream American youth, the 'jocks and cheerleaders' style of the popular kids who monopolized the attention center of the teen-age status system (Coleman 1961; the same pattern is found 40 years later by Milner 2004). The hippies were more intellectual, politicized, and religiously experimental. They went through an array of styles: throwbacks to historic robes, Native American Indian beads and headbands, women wearing floor length 'granny dresses'. After the hippies faded with the sixties, there continued to be a period of reaching for exotic styles in the 70s, with Nehru jackets, Hawaiian shell necklaces, one-piece leisure suits, etc. Examining photos of this period shows that only a small minority at hippie gatherings actually dressed in the full hippie style; some had moderately shaggy hair but not full Jesus-style; most of their clothes were versions of youth casual as of the 1950s. As in so many extreme style movements, there are a small number of famous exemplars (the cult-leading murderer Charlie Manson is one of the few in full hippie regalia in the photo collection), while most participants combine then-conventional levels of informalization in clothing and grooming with some accoutrements of counter-culture movement distinctiveness – carrying a guitar, ostentatiously smoking a joint, wearing headbands or beads.

The 1960s was more of a blip than a trend. It tried or at least publicized various extreme practices and ideologies, but these did not last long—most communes were short-lived and full of conflict, and the ones that lasted longest were the ones with the most conventional lifestyles (Zablocki 1980; Yablonsky 1968). Few of its styles actually set the pattern for the demeanor informalization that became so widespread by the 1980s. They were most influential in hair and grooming styles; male haircuts which had been short in the 1950s, now turned to long hair and beards; female hair style which had been puffed-up bouffant shifted to very long and uncurled (or unstraightened, in the case of black militants, who now flaunted the halo-shaped 'Afro'). These changes were quickly assimilated to fashion cycles in the mainstream, and within a few years conferred no special identity.

Let us consider one other possibility: that the demeanor shifts were led by popular entertainers. So-called 'psychedelic rock' bands were extremely popular in the counter-culture generation; rock concerts in mid-1960s San Francisco and elsewhere were epicenters for popularizing LSD, and big outdoor concert venues were the famous occasions where drugs could be consumed in public, and a bit of nudity displayed by the ostentatious erotic elite. But even the biggest stars such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones followed the demeanor shift, rather than started it. Photos of the Beatles in 1968—two years after the hippie movement

began – show them in full-scale Indian-guru regalia, with exemplary long hair and beards, but the Beatles became widely popular in 1964 wearing trim suits, neckties, and moderately shaggy mop-headed hair. The Beatles' early style continued one of the factions of warring British youth cultures of the 1950s; in contrast to the Rockers, leather-jacket-wearing youth emulating the American hoodlum gang style, the Beatles were latter-day Mods, in fancy-elite suits continuing the sophisticated party-action style, an extension of the nineteenth century dandy. Photos from 1966 show the famous Carnaby Street style was a flashy version of upper-middle-class male suits and ties; for young women, it promoted the mini-skirt, a legs-showoff (reaching well above mid-thigh by 1969) that ran directly counter to the long granny dresses and Indian robes of American hippies. Here again, as in the previous era of shorts and tight sweaters, it was mainstream middle class youth culture that was leading the way in styles that would have long influence. The American rock 'n roll musicians of the 1950s, who are sometimes credited with a turn towards black underclass music, were not leaders in informalization; rock n' roll bands wore matching suits, and would have looked distinctly square compared to the styles of the late 60s and thereafter. Pop music entertainers from the 1970s onwards have worn very informal styles on stage; but the timing shows they followed a style that had already been set by others.

If not the pop entertainment stars, could it have been the intellectuals leading the way to informalization? Since the early 1800s, there has been a tradition of Bohemian living, the nearly-starving artist taking cheap lodgings in working class urban neighbourhoods. But these nineteenth century artists and writers did not dress down to the workers style; they wore shabby middle-class clothes, and especially preferred a flamboyant, romanticized style—cloaks, bright scarves, wide-brimmed hats – that came out of poetic traditions rather than the populace around them. The avant-garde, whether or not their ideologies were Leftist, always aimed at an audience of cognoscenti, Bourdieu's (1993) 'production for producers', and have been at odds with working class culture and its traditionalist tastes. Nor has it been the romantic/bohemian demeanor style which led to informalization. Its flamboyance is just the kind of thing that informalization moves away from. Photos and portraits of twentieth century intellectuals tell a surprising story: most of the avant-garde looks remarkably bourgeois. A photo of the group of modernist painters in exile in New York in 1942, includes most of the famous surrealists, Dadaists, and other edge-pushers such as Mondrian, but they all dress in suits, white shirts, and neckties. (The one exception is Fernand Leger, who wears rather a square-looking plaid flannel shirt under a tweed jacket.) They expressed their modernism in their art, not their demeanor. The strongest expression of informalization is found in photos of the 'Beat' poets of the 1950s: they have dropped the middle-class look, and dress in plain working-class clothes – flannel shirts, rough heavy jeans. But this is not the sports-leisure-erotic-display style of informalization that came to predominate since the 1970s.

Finally, as evidence for the bottom-up or status reversal theory, let us look at shifts in gang attire. Criminal gangs in the early twentieth century were mainly adult organizations, sometimes with youth apprentices; they dressed either in normal working class or middle-class clothes, with the more successful gangsters wearing ostentatiously stylish three-piece suits. The 1940s and 50s saw the emergence of a new type of gang: the youth gang made up almost entirely of teenagers, although its adult 'alumni' might keep up a connection. In the early 1940s, Mexican teens in Las Angeles wore 'zoot suits'—exaggerated versions of middle-class suits with very long jacket skirts, watch chains that dragged on the ground, and extremely wide-brimmed hats (Peiss 2011). A more widespread deviant demeanor rebellion came in the 1950s, with black and Hispanic immigrant gangs wearing embroidered and sequined velvet jackets. The jackets were sacred objects for the gang; they would wear them especially to 'socials' (dances and parties), but take them off before a fight so they would not be damaged (Schneider 1999). Other style shifts occurred in following decades: photos of Hispanic and black gangs in the 1990s and 2000s show many of them wearing virtual uniforms of white T-shirts, new athletic sneakers, and warm-up suits; these were adaptations of middle-class styles, distinguished from other people

in the ghetto largely because their clothes were newer, cleaner, and more expensive – a form of conspicuous consumption.

The styles which spread upwards in the class structure from the gang culture were largely the antinomian elements of how the clothes are worn: baseball hats turned around backwards; pants worn very low on the hips, exposing not only the midriff but the butt crack; extremely baggy pants contrasting with the tight jeans of mainstream youth culture; the Mexican 'cholo' gang style, hanging-down plaid shirts worn buttoned at the collar but opened below, upon a white T-shirt worn outside the pants. These style elements are reversals of mainstream style; when they are adopted by the mainstream (i.e. by white middle-class youth) it is a reversal of a reversal, or rather an attempt to keep up with the most sophisticated trend. They may think of it as democratization; but it more closely resembles chasing the antinomian edge.

Deference in manners

This topic is difficult to document by photos, hence the exact date and social location of the first appearance of a style of behavior is hard to pin down. Using etiquette books, Wouters (2007) covers the major changes during the twentieth century as formal introductions, exclusions, 'cutting' and other boundary-maintaining upper class manners declined, for the most part by 1950 or earlier. People demanded less deference and received less. The use of first names had been extremely restricted in the polite classes, to close family members and long-time intimates; around mid-century, first-naming became quickly applied to sociable acquaintances. By the 1980s and 90s, first-naming was penetrating the world of work; subordinates were calling their superiors by their first names. It is not clear that the upper classes started this trend; nor whether it moved upwards or downwards. In written communication, the older formalities of title-plus-last-name, shifted to first-plus-last-name, to first name only, to nickname only. Americans seemed particularly prone to assume that everyone had a nickname, a diminutive or jokey form of their first name. The decline in titles may be partly the result of the embarrassment caused by the feminist movement of the 1970s, which rejected 'Mrs.' and 'Miss' in favor of the neologism 'Ms,' with the result that formal letters generally dropped all such titles entirely. Conflict led to simplification. The further shift towards intimate forms of address needs further explanation.

Ethnographic research is needed on the situations in which people, otherwise casual in omni-nicknaming everyone they encounter, do not do so. Instances include: in the US, medical doctors still are addressed by title; police officers (except when talking among themselves) always demand to be addressed formally; so do courtroom judges. Politicians are generally addressed informally by voters, but receive more formal deference from their own staffs, especially their police or security escorts. Military officers are formally addressed when they are giving an order, and use formal address when they reprimanding someone. The pattern suggests that even in an era of informalization, authority is signaled and recognized by deferential formalities when it is highly coercive and overt; but other kinds of managerial and professional hierarchies tend to hide their authority. Given the prominence of sports in setting the leisure style which has eliminated so much of the demeanor cues for hierarchy, it is notable that within the world of sports teams, athletes generally refer to their boss as 'Coach' or by title and last name. Among those for whom sports is a serious business (not merely an item of audience consumption or fantasy emulation), deference is given to those persons who decide whether to let them play or not. Authority-holders in sports organizations are among the few occupations who are allowed to shout at, insult, and otherwise blatantly show off their power upon their subordinates. This is generally regarded as being a highly committed team manager, once again showing that it is the external stage-setting of sports that becomes an arena for obliterating class hierarchies, although the internal structure

of sports evidences virtually pre-modern styles of blatant authoritarianism. The high prestige of sports allows its managers to extract extreme deference from those subject to their control over career opportunities.

Here again, situational comparisons would be useful: when do persons use the casual forms and when do they revert to formality? If more serious communications are framed more formally, it would reinforce the point that only very blatant encounters with unequal authority are formalized. The world has shifted towards situational stratification—giving deference when it is forced upon one in the immediate encounter, but otherwise denying that any long-term categories of inequality exist.

Summarizing evidence for the four theories

(1) *Fashion cycles* are apparent only in a few areas. When a new hair style comes, it often has the character of attacking conventionality, and thus carries the status of being strange, then hip, then normal; thus the usual style cycle has a certain amount of antinomian shock built into it. Nevertheless it does not take long for the new conventionality to be established. In the 1920s the 'sheik'—the male counterpart to the flapper—wore slicked-back, wavy hair. In 1950s America came the flat-top or buzz cut. The most extreme style of very long male hair was never widespread even among the hippie movement of the 1960s, but shaggy hair with long sideburns predominated everywhere in the US by 1973–1976 except among older men. In the 1990s came the shaved head look – a swing from one extreme to another often found in hair styles.

Women's hair styles were less controversial, perhaps because women traditionally were supposed to be style-conscious and thus expected to follow the familiar pace of female fashion cycles. Skirt lengths (including mini-skirts), platform shoes, and other feminine style shifts may have had a momentary frisson of being au courant, but that is typical of fashion cycles.

Similarly with beards and mustaches; these briefly had a radical connotation when they challenged the clean-shaven early-1960s, but by the 1980s had become widespread and by the 1990s were extremely common among older men, including political conservatives. Historically, beards of various shapes, mustaches ranging from military handle-bars to hyper-genteel narrow pencil moustaches, have alternated with clean-shaven styles for the past three centuries or more; the eighteenth century favored clean-shaven faces with wigs; the seventeenth century, long male hair and goatees. There is little trend here either for or against informalization.

An exception is a style, popular among entertainment celebrities and athletes in the 1990s, to appear in public with an unshaven, grizzled look. But this was not the same as wearing a beard; it must take some careful backstage preparation to appear day after day with a several-days' length of facial hair. Perhaps the demeanor message sent is that one is full of testosterone, the sexy unbridled image; and it may be an explicit twist that enables one to attack simultaneously all grooming styles, whether clean-shaven or bearded. This is similar to a hip clothing style that appeared in the 1980s—wearing deliberately torn or ragged clothes. The pattern is not egalitarian but antinomian.

(2) *Democratization* is best evidenced for the first half of the twentieth century: in the decline in upper class formal clothing styles and their imitation by the classes beneath them on ceremonial occasions; and in the decline in manners of rigid exclusivity in personal access. Decline in use of titles in personal address—spoken and written—continued into the 1980s. The shift towards calling most people by their first name, not only in

sociable situations but in work, shopping, politics, and the entertainment and news media, continued during the same period.

First-naming is not just democratization but pseudo-intimacy. If democratization is indexed by addressing everyone the same, this could be done in a number of different manners: by extending formerly elite titles (Mr./Monsieur, Mrs./Madam; Ladies and Gentlemen) to everyone—a pattern of equalization carried out in the US and France by the mid-nineteenth century; or by calling everyone by their last name—a pattern adopted in the USSR in the 1920s, where everyone was called 'Citizen' or 'Comrade' (sometimes adding the last name). British schools equalized everyone by calling them all by their last name only. The American-originated pattern of making the common denominator the first name, and then a nickname, implies something further. It most resembles a very youthful style, in which everyone has the status of children together.

The American pattern of the late twentieth century became to treat all situations as much as possible as leisure ones. This is expressed in the preferred demeanor style, athletic clothes (including warm-up suits, running shoes, sweatshirts) worn on all occasions; whereas persons who are required to wear formal dress on work occasions—such as airlines attendants or service workers—are marked as lower status because they are not allowed to show role distance from their occupation. Where formal authority is blatant and coercive—police, security guards, bouncers, judges, military officers, athletic coaches—there continue to be both distinctive formal uniforms and the use of titles, not first name address. A counter-democratizing trend appears to be that the formality and coerciveness of such violence-wielding officials has become more extreme rather than less during the course of the twentieth century, at least in the US; perhaps this is because patrolmen walking their beat were replaced by 1960 with patrols in cars, dispatched by radio, and thus interacting with citizens mainly when arresting them.

(3) *Status reversal* is evidenced to a smaller degree. In demeanor, workman's jeans were adopted as a ubiquitous item of leisure clothing by both males and females from the 1950s onwards, but the pants lost their heavy, stiff, and shapeless look in favor of a tight form-fitting sexy look; and then acquired fancy embroidery and decorations in the 1980s, together with an edgy look by being deliberately ragged and torn. Workman's heavy shirts were pioneered by bohemian poets in the 1940s and 50s, but this version of class-reversal was displaced in the 1970s and 80s by the emphasis on outdoor leisure paraphernalia (such as backpacks) and athletic clothes. There was a brief fad in the early 1980s of wearing surgical tunics in everyday life—the emulation of a specialized work uniform, in this case not of a lower but an elite profession.

Men started wearing more jewelry, beginning in the 1970s and becoming a veritable explosion in the 1980s. There were brief fads of wearing 'nature-style' necklaces such as pukka shells, in immediate post-hippie era, the same time when longer hair spread among men. Some men started wearing an earring, sometimes indicating a relationship to the gay movement, depending on which ear one wore it in. In America, athletes (especially blacks and other minorities) began to wear expensive jewel earrings, and there were controversies in the 1990s as to whether they could wear them during games. This was the era when labor agreements for professional athletes began to generate extremely high salaries, and athletes flaunted jewelry as a ready display of available cash. Around the same time, gang members (at least the more successful criminals) started wearing flashy gold chains, earrings, and other jewelry. Male jewelry spread relatively little in other social classes; in this case, the epicenter was first the antinomian counter-culture, then the ephemeral economic elites of the world of minority athletes and criminals. The shift to male jewelry was not informalization or democratization of demeanor, but ostentatious display of high status.

Also around 1980 appeared a new movement of jewelry display in a very different social location: the body-piercing movement. This began in the punk movement, initially in Britain, spreading to America and the Continent. Here the epicenter was white youth, more middle-class than working class; in contrast to the expensive gold and jewels of criminal gangs and minority athletes, body-piercing used cheap materials, and in that sense was more democratic. Body piercing is an extension of earrings to multiple piercings of the ears, nose, lips, tongue; unlike minority male jewelry, this movement was both male and female—possibly the androgyny was part of its appeal. Punk ideology and its spillover into wider youth culture was explicitly oppositional; locally, it opposed other factions of the youth music world; more distantly and macro-structurally, positioning itself as anti-commercial and anti-mainstream. It was leftist against the capitalist entertainment business (in which its musician-idols nevertheless participated at varying degrees of success); it also opposed the segments of youth who consumed more conventional forms of music – foils characterized as plastic, straight, uncool, and other slang insults.

Body-piercing is a deliberate form of self-presentation, involving considerable backstage preparation, and commitment to undergo a certain amount of pain and ongoing discomfort – having a tongue-stud cannot be less of a sacrifice to fashion than Victorian ladies' hoop skirts. Body-piercing is what Durkheim (1965 [1912]) called the negative cult: ascetic practices exemplified by monks and especially by Hindu *fakirs* and *rishis*, who engaged in deliberately-chosen pain (in some cases, including body-piercing) to reach a higher religious status, which is to say, a socially recognized elite status .

In sum, the jewelry movements of the late twentieth century go in several directions: racial minority gang members and athletes display jewelry as straightforward claims for elite status; white middle-class youth display antinomian jewelry styles to rebel against mainstream society, regarding themselves as an oppressed group but simultaneously a bohemian avant-garde.

In general, it has not been the working class, nor the poverty class (such as the homeless), that have been the object of status reversal. The most popular target for emulation has been the most prominent segment of the lower class milieu, street gangs with their flamboyant apparel and manners. Here, in the 1970s through 1990s, originated styles of wearing male jewelry, tattoos, as well as greeting fads such as 'high fives' instead of handshakes, and ephemeral slang expressions. Gang style of trading verbal insults became an entertainment business with considerable middle-class audience in the form of rap recordings. Why did this specific segment of lower-class groups achieve this style-setting position? In the US, it was black rather than Hispanic or white (e.g. Irish) gangs that became the object of status reversal, suggesting that the prestige of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s carried over into the prestige of 'in your face' flaunting of the most distinctive black styles. (The elite Italian gangs – the Mafia – have displayed the conventional clothes and grooming of their era, adopting the newest styles with a lag; this is seen in photos accompanying Mafia histories.)

Gangs are a locally dominant minority within black and Hispanic poverty communities, those who are most aggressive and most ostentatious in their self-presentation; materially, gangs accumulate more wealth (although they tend to keep it only temporarily) and demand more deference through their code of the street self-presentation of violent threat and bluster (Anderson 1999; Katz 1988; Decker and Van Winkle 1996). Within their local context, gangs are not egalitarian; membership is restricted and exclusive, not open to all, encompassing no more than about 10 percent of the local male youth cohort (Collins 2008: 372); they are what Jack Katz (1988) calls 'street elites.' Martin Sanchez Jankowsky (1991) characterizes them as 'defiant individualists.'

Imitation of certain aspects of gang culture by the middle class is not status reversal, in the sense of 'the last shall be first,' and 'the meek shall inherit the earth.' At most, it is endorsing an effort of violent elites to rise to

the top, as in Pareto's vision of history as a circulation of elites. It is not democratization, but another version of antinomian status.

(4) *Antinomian situational dominance*, making oneself the center of attention by shocking others with one's 'edgy' style, has existed since the nineteenth century in bohemian artistic circles. It became a strand in mainstream youth culture in the 1950s and became very widespread by the 1980s. 'Edgy' self-presentation is inherently relative to what has previously been accepted as normal, and thus has an internal dynamic driving towards further changes. Casual clothing styles were established for adults in non-work occasions in the 1970s; it was already standard for children and teenagers by the 1950s. Informality had become routine; it was at this point, in the 1980s, that grooming and self-adornment shifted to male jewelry, body piercing, the torn-clothing look and the male half-shaven look; in the 90s, tattoos. Although some of these elements were borrowed from black gang style (but not the torn and grunge look, which were too anti-elitist for gangs' self-presentation), the pattern appears to be chiefly the repeated steps of antinomianism and normatization. In the same way, the forms of address pioneered by white middle-class youth, chiefly as Internet users from the 1990s through the early 2000s, show a repeated move not merely towards democratizing forms of address, but the edge-pushing progression from 'Dear' to 'Hello' to 'Hi' to 'Hey.' Further evidence of the antinomian dynamic would be if these forms of address continue to change towards still less polite verbal openings as each becomes normalized.

Let us consider a particular technique for pushing the edge during the last 30 years. Traditionally, tattoos were found in occupations that were exotic, adventurous, and removed from settled family life: sailors, circus-performers, and criminals. A 1949 photo shows a Shanghai bar owner, a retired seaman with a glass of whiskey before him; he wears a sleeveless undershirt, and displays tattoos on both arms and chest: a ship, girls in hula skirts, pin-up style women's faces. The next photo in this series shows a London skinhead in 1979, wearing a T-shirt bearing the slogan 'WHITE POWER', sleeves cut off to display swastikas and deaths-heads on his arms. During the 1990s—that is, after the male jewelry and body-piercing movements had become widespread—tattoos began to spread in a sequence that may be reconstructed as follows: Black athletes began to put tattoos on their arms—generally crude home-made drawings. Professional tattoos, in colors and with more elaborate designs, came in the late 1990s, and began to spread in the white youth culture; and simultaneously into black and Hispanic gang culture (Halnon and Cohen 2006). These are three quite different pathways: the growing elaborateness of tattoos among athletes; the development of specialized tattoos among gangs, as particularistic identity markers; and the spread of tattoos among women – especially young white women, more as a marker of erotic sophistication than of group membership.

First to recapitulate the history of tattoos in gangs. Gangs (i.e. criminal street gangs, organized especially by minority youth) in the 1950s and 60s did not initially use tattoos. Their markers were more in their clothing, especially embroidered jackets with their distinctive gang emblems and names – more like aristocratic coats of arms. Gang tattoos became prominent in the 1990s and early 2000s, spreading from arms and calves to neck and face—the teardrop under the eye to represent prison (a mark of status in the gang culture); some gang members appear to have engaged in an escalating competition, covering their necks and even faces with tattoos. (A 2010 photo shows a man with a gang name tattooed on his upper lip, and a fake goatee tattooed on his chin.) Gang tattoos emphasize specific markers—names of girlfriends, gang locations, identity emblems; in contrast, tattoos in the white youth culture are more decorative, pictures rather than words, and often in very conventional motifs. Gang tattoos are particularistic identity-markers within a network of alliances and enemies, asserting tribalistic identities.

Among the white middle-class, tattoos took a different path: at first, largely among young women. The earliest evidence can be seen in pornography magazines around 1998–1999, when a few tattoos began to appear on the bodies of amateurs who sent in nude photos of themselves; at first these tattoos were tiny, and located inside the tan lines of a bikini. Around 2004–2005, tattoos become bigger and more publically displayed, on the pelvis or stomach above the bikini line, or a butterfly in the breast cleavage; they appear in a small minority of photos – a sexual avant-garde. Simultaneously, as porn model fashion shifted to shaved pubic hair, tattoos occasionally appear on the pubis itself. When middle-class women in the early 2000s started appearing in (non-porn) photos with tattoos, they had generic and surprisingly old-fashioned designs – the garland of flowers that young women tattoo around their ankles are far from modernist art but resemble neo-classical wall decorations. Unlike gang tattoos, which express particular group identities, young women's tattoos dramatized not so much what the tattoo itself said, but where it was located. When the tattoo fad among whites took off in the 2000s, a favorite place for women to get a tattoo was in their butt crack (usually a small rose), or in their breast cleavage; thus the tattoo would only be viewed by intimate sexual partners (or by wearing low-cut clothes), and also it would testify to the blasé stance of exposing one's genitals to a tattoo artist. The message was not about one's group membership but about one's ranking in terms of sexual sophistication. A 2012 Harris Interactive Survey found that 26per cent of American age 18–29 had tattoos, but they were most popular in the 30–39 age group at 38per cent; by this time, tattoos were on many parts of the body.

Similarly, the body-piercing movement, which started around 1980 in the antinomian punk scene, with elaborate ear- and nose-piercings, by the early 2000s had moved to genital piercings: reports of sexual sophisticates, as well as some porn photos, indicate women who have studs pierced into labia or clitoris, on in their tongue (to add to the feel of oral sex); men had them pierced into penis or foreskin (chiefly in the gay community). This was reputed to increase sexual excitement, but it also indicates antinomian status competition. Both genitally positioned tattoos and genital piercings are part of the greater sexual openness of the late twentieth century. How do we theorize this in relation to the causes of changing self-presentation? The key point is that the world of sex is not egalitarian, but a competitive marketplace for sexual relationships, and thus producing a ranking of the sexually desirable and the less desirable, of sexual sophisticates and the sexually conventional. This style movement implies not democratization but antinomian status ranking.

Antinomian situation dominance has evolved several competing forms in the last half-century. (A) The *sexiness elite* made its appearance perhaps already in the 1920s, with shorter skirts for women. In the 1940s came the wearing of shorts, by both sexes; tight form-fitting sweaters, and in the 1950s the male version, the T-shirt worn as an outer garment; further styles established by the 1970s were tight jeans, worn by both males and females; male shirts open to reveal more and more of the naked torso; wearing one's pants low on the hips (chiefly by males) to show off one's butt crack. Traditionally the sexiness elite was largely a female specialty, but part of the sexiness display of the 1970s onwards was to flaunt crossing gender lines – not necessary by homosexuals, but by heterosexuals claiming the center of attention. The key analytical point is that sexual attractiveness is stratifying in an autonomous dimension; the beautiful and sexy stand out among the ordinary, the unsexy and the ugly. Sexiness is not necessarily determined by social class or ethnicity (either positively or negatively), but is a distinctive kind of social performance and presentation of self. Thus sexiness is useful for asserting superiority to older elites and their traditionalized criteria of ranking; and it intrinsically favors the young over the old.

But sexiness is competitive in its own realm. The evidence of historical photos shows that techniques of presenting oneself as sexy in public situations have escalated, showing more of the body and framing it to tease the viewer with exposing sexual parts. One of the earliest is a 1945 photo of a young French woman, a

spectator at a cycle race, wearing a light knit sweater that shows off her breasts; she wears the daring shorts of the time, mid-thigh length and loose rather than body-hugging. The 1970 photo I cited above as the first T-shirt in my collection with a message, a young woman with hippie-style long hair and a sly smile displays the message on her chest: 'LICK ME ALL OVER $20.' This is not mere informalization; and it is not democratization, but an effort to establish a new kind of visible eliteness during the time when informalization was also occurring.

(B) The *athletic fantasy elite* is a style that became widespread in the 1980s. It expanded a longer trend from the 1920s onwards, as the upper class gradually discarded much of their repertoire of formal clothing while retaining their sporting clothes (tweed and flannel jackets, sweaters, bathing suits and shorts) and wearing them on more occasions. So-called 'sport coats' etc. had become acceptable or even preferable for non-work sociability by the 1950s. This was informalization but not democratization. The first move in twentieth century informalization, at least for males, was the ostentatious demonstration of leisure by the elite classes. Over the course of the century, this leisure/sports style became imitated by classes lower down, as greater overall wealth and shorter working hours made leisure time more available, at least for being a spectator via the mass media. By the end of the century, this leisure style would permeate work as well. A further shift came in the 1980s, with the marketing of mass-produced athletic warm-up suits and replica uniform shirts of famous stars, making it possible for people to imitate athletes through their clothing on almost all occasions. Since most sports began in the upper classes and spread when elite schools became mass education, sports attire simultaneously implied appropriating an elite history, and a expressed an orientation to leisure rather than work. The most common self-presentation was always to look like you were at leisure, attempting to hide the stratification implied in occupations with vastly different amounts of power and income.

This style should be called the *fantasy athletic leisure elite,* since the vast majority of persons who dress like this are not athletes, but are only pretending to be. In the 1950s in American high schools and colleges, only boys who played regularly on an athletic team were allowed to wear a jacket or sweater (a 'letter sweater') displaying that identity. Since the 1980s this has morphed into a ubiquitous claim, not just to look like an athlete, but even to display the explicit fantasy identification with a particular athletic star, by wearing their team jersey with the player's name on it.

(C) The *anti-sexy, anti-athletic* look. Both the sexiness elite and the leisure athletic look quickly became mainstream styles. The old bohemian artist tradition, with its attempt to evade conventionality, by 1980 developed a self-presentation emphasizing the opposite of beautiful and athletic. Photos of youth culture in the late 1970s show this in the punk movement, and then in a variety of movements, often centered on a particular style of music, including Goths, the grunge look, etc. (Wilkins 2008) This might be called pure antinomianism, since the previous contrast category of 'bourgeois' had been taken apart by movements towards informalization, sexy display, and leisure athletic style; now antinomianism had to escalate to a higher level and dramatize its opposition to all of these.

As Milner (2004) shows in his composite ethnography of American high schools, the status hierarchy among youth themselves has generally been dominated by 'jocks and cheerleaders' – the athletes and the good-looking kids who are popular in attending parties, and are at the top of the sexual marketplace. The studious 'nerds' who conform to adult authority are at best in an ignored middle-status category, at worst the subject of derision for their lack of recognizable collective effervescence and 'social skills.' In this perspective, the antinomian-elite style that emerged in the late 1970s and 80s was not so much a rebellion against adult social

rankings, as against the youth ranking system. They mounted an effective rebellion against the status system by creating their own rituals of collective effervescence around raucous music concerts and activities like the mosh pit – thus becoming a rival center of attention to conventional athletic events and parties. A challenge for sociological explanation is that the 'jocks and cheerleaders' pattern of youth status hierarchy is an American one, and does not appear to exist in continental Europe. The difference needs fuller study, but seems related to the fact that whereas athletic events are the one exciting collective gathering for an American school, in Europe sports are organized outside the school in clubs and thus are a separate identity. At least in France and Germany (and a fortiori in China), the most accomplished of the nerds dominate the school.

Is the Backstage-Frontstage Distinction Disappearing?

If our criterion of informalization is a Goffmanian one—a declining concern for the backstage, with less time, effort, and planning for how one appears on frontstage presentations of self— backstage manipulation of a performed self has not disappeared but only shifted its contents. Young people displaying rebellious status reversal or antinomian styles still spend considerable time in preparing their selves for going out on the town (Grazian 2008), even if what is being performed is an antinomian self. Grazian refers to this fantasy-cool self performed in clubs and entertainment spots as the 'nocturnal self.'

Much of what used to be done on the personal backstage in daily life was devoted to physical self-presentation. Informalization in clothing and grooming, then, should take the form of a declining amount of concern for the backstage—less time, effort, and planning for how one looks. Alternatively, styles of clothing and grooming might simply change, negating earlier styles that were regarded as more proper or formal, but nevertheless a good deal of deliberation might go into working up the newer style. Aside from Grazian's data on night-clubbers and their 'pre-parties', we know too little about this. There are newer arenas for self-presentation, in social media like Facebook. These give the appearance of an intimate backstage, but much of what is presented is the show of the antinomian self that has prestige in youth culture; there is growing evidence that this too is manipulated. The Internet is just another, vaster Goffmanian frontstage.

A clue to the causal dynamics of all these processes is that males and females generally had different positions in them. The formality of pre-World War I upper classes and their imitators in the middle and even working classes was upheld above all by women. Men of the higher classes also upheld exclusivity barriers with formal manners, but men often had more access to a backstage sphere of male carousing where they could be somewhat more informal and cross class lines (we might call this the Jekyll and Hyde pattern). The democratization of manners in the 1920s may be attributed to some extent to young women, joining the male carousing sphere if not the work sphere. It is unclear whether the dropping of titles and the shift to first-naming and then nicknaming, in various stages during the twentieth century, was led by men or women; the pattern needs more careful research. Possibly women led it in the 1920s. Since 1990, shifts towards extremely casual forms of address on the Internet appear to have been led by males.

To the extent that there have been status-reversal patterns, it has been male working class styles (jeans), and gang styles (jewelry, tattoos, greetings) that were emulated. Middle class males were the first to emulate these styles. Men had become style leaders. This is largely true also of antinomian movements: perhaps less so of the sexiness movement, since tight jeans, platform heels, and thong bikinis have been a female specialty; but the first moves in this direction – T-shirts, open-front shirts, low-slung pants – have been worn by males. The athletic leisure style began with males, then spread into a unisex look – here again more careful documentation is needed.

Why should males rather than females lead movements towards democratization, status reversal, or antinomian display? Males have almost always been more aggressive than females, much more active in crime, violence, as well as in political movements struggling for power. Male initiative in pushing new styles of demeanor and manners is consistent with the interpretation that these style shifts have been a contentious seeking for dominance rather than functional equalization and democratization.

Causal Dynamics and the Need for Better Evidence and Analysis

In sum, two of the four causes are most important: democratization through the 1950s; since then, the rise of new forms of situational stratification in self-presentation: the cool-casual-sexy elite; the leisure-athletic fantasy elite; and the sheer antinomian ugliness/shock elite. What are the underlying dynamics of macro-structural conditions that have brought about these changes in the surface of everyday life?

It is not that stratification no longer exists. Economic inequality has been growing for the past fifty years, both across societies and within them. In the US, the epicenter of many of the movements of informalization in demeanor styles and in casual manners, the gulf between the rich and everyone else has been expanding since the 1970s. (Morris and Western 1999; Piketty 2014). Real equality cannot be the cause of informalization in the second half of the twentieth century, although it might be for the first half. Businesses in the era of downsizing and layoffs of employees at all levels show if anything decreasing democratization of power in the world of work (Wallerstein et al 2013) .

A modified version of the democratization hypothesis may still hold: not that societies are actually becoming more functionally democratic, but that the twentieth century was an era of expanding social movements. Not to say that movements are usually successful; the labor movement had moderate success in the early twentieth century and then declined, and even in its era of strongest institutionalization it tended to keep up class distinctions in style and manners rather than diminish them. More ephemeral, identity-politics movements have been successful, not in changing economic inequality but in getting symbolic recognition for their limited goals, at least for brief moments of publicity. The institutionalization of techniques for mobilizing movements has produced a gridlock of movements, and an overcrowded attention space of claimants on public moral sympathy. Thus social movements are more like permanent nuisances in the face of authorities, rather than serious rivals for enacting programs of their own. The main success of movements has been negative: they have embarrassed governments and officials, occasionally brought normal operations to a standstill through disruptions, and thus transmitted the sense that authority is not really powerful and does not have to be respected. Authorities are less self-confident, and make more concessions in the cheapest way possible—playing the public deference and demeanor game by acting like they are just one of the people in the disruptive crowd. This is political frontstage performance; some D-power (deference-power) is given away, but E-power (efficacy-power – the capacity to control hierarchies and careers) is retained; no decline in material inequality comes about. Pseudo-egalitarian status display is used to muddy the hard realities.

This theory is testable: shifts towards informalization in style and manners happens most strongly among elites who are challenged by social movement uprisings. This could be charted by country and by institution. For instance, the extreme shift towards informalization in American universities from 1970 onwards, especially among faculty and administrators, may be due to their having been targets of social movement uprisings; or indeed, because they were members of those movements decades ago when they were students. The informalization style is less evident among staff in primary and secondary schools, because these were not directly challenged.

Another hypothesis is that the rise of long-distance media and the mass entertainment industries have changed self-presentational manners. This needs to be checked in detail for time sequences and specific changes in demeanor and politeness. The introduction of film in the 1920s and 30s, and television in the 1950s, did not change traditional manners; the content of these media presented traditional styles to wider audiences who might not have had much contact with them before. The one clear link that I have seen in historical photo sequences is the enormous spread of the athletic-leisure look in the 1980s, a time when sports audiences (and the salaries of professional athletes) became very large. The Internet starting in the 1990s, and its recent expansion to ubiquitous hand-held devices that fill much of everyday time, has been the site of some of the latest moves towards non-traditional forms of address. But a good deal of the informalization styles of the past 90 years came about with little influence from the mass media—if anything, the causality was the reverse direction.

Wouters and others have argued, following Elias, that what we see in the contemporary world of informalization is the disappearance of any socially preferred style of self presentation; instead there is a proliferation of individualization, with everyone presenting oneself as distinct. This is legitimated by the ideology that everyone expresses their true self, without concern for others' perceptions. But the notion that people can be simply natural individuals is sociologically implausible. Just because people stop deferring to styles set by class hierarchy does not mean there are no other group sources of conformity. My own research now under way is to observe people who are together with others on the street (usually in duos, sometimes in larger groups): the strongest pattern is for persons to resemble those they are with in almost every respect: age, height, size, physical attractiveness, ethnicity, and above all styles of clothing and grooming. (The main exception to this overwhelming social homogamy is gender, since males and females associate with each other in public more than people cross any of the other lines of differentiation; but even in mixed-gender couples, people tend to dress similarly for the occasion.) Far from displaying distinctive individuality, people's situational presentation of self is strongly similar to those they associate with. Sociologically, there is nothing surprising about this pattern; both the principles of interactionist social psychology and of associative market theory explain how it happens. I invite other sociologists to join the empirical project of examining the dimensions of similarity—or indeed dissimilarity—in observable self-presentation of people in small groups in public.

The research reviewed in this paper places considerable weight on interactional styles in the US. But there are enough photos in the collection from other parts of the world (especially Europe) to make a more general judgment. The major style changes and causal processes are visible in England, Germany, and the US for the 1920s; with a much more collective version of informalization in Germany and Russia in the 1920s and 30s; then France in the late 1940s and 1950s temporarily takes a lead in the casual, sexy and sporting styles. Since the 1960s, the lead for most steps in informalization happens in the US (and occasionally England and France). The analysis for that period is necessarily American-centered, because the world has tended to adopt those styles of self-presentation and interaction, if with a lag and occasional resistance to 'Americanization'. It is telling that photos of anti-Western demonstrators in the Arab world since the 1990s show most of them dressed in American-style jeans, running shoes, and baseball caps. In keeping with the traditional male domination in those societies, women are much more strongly required to reject Western informalization and to continue traditional clothes and manners.

My conclusion is to emphasize methodology. Wouters made progress by charting etiquette books. My own surveys of historical photos suggest somewhat different patterns, especially after 1950. There has been a good deal of research on the media, and on popular culture, but on the whole theoretical interpretations are merely asserted, not tested. When exactly did various changes in style and manners happen, who led them, and who were the early and later adopters? Who resisted these changes, and with what success? We need to examine

the specific sequences and social locations, and treat this information as tests bearing on causal mechanisms in our several theories. We want to know, not only whether a particular sequence of style invention is consistent with one or another theory, but when a piece of evidence is negative, telling against a theory. On a crude survey of the evidence, I would say there were 50 years of democratization (mainly pushed by political movements), then 50 years of antinomian status construction (causes in the micro-structure of everyday interaction, with mechanisms still to be specified). We will know we have a good theory when the evidence has been fitted together much more carefully, and when the trends of the future follow our theoretical expectations.

Biography

Randall Collins is Professor of Sociology at University of Pennsylvania, and former President of the American Sociological Association. Among his publications are *Violence: a Micro-Sociological Theory* (2008, Princeton University Press); *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004, Princeton University Press); and *The Sociology of Philosophies: a Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (1998, Harvard University Press); and most recently, *Does Capitalism Have a Future?* (with Immanuel Wallerstein et al 2013, Oxford University Press).

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