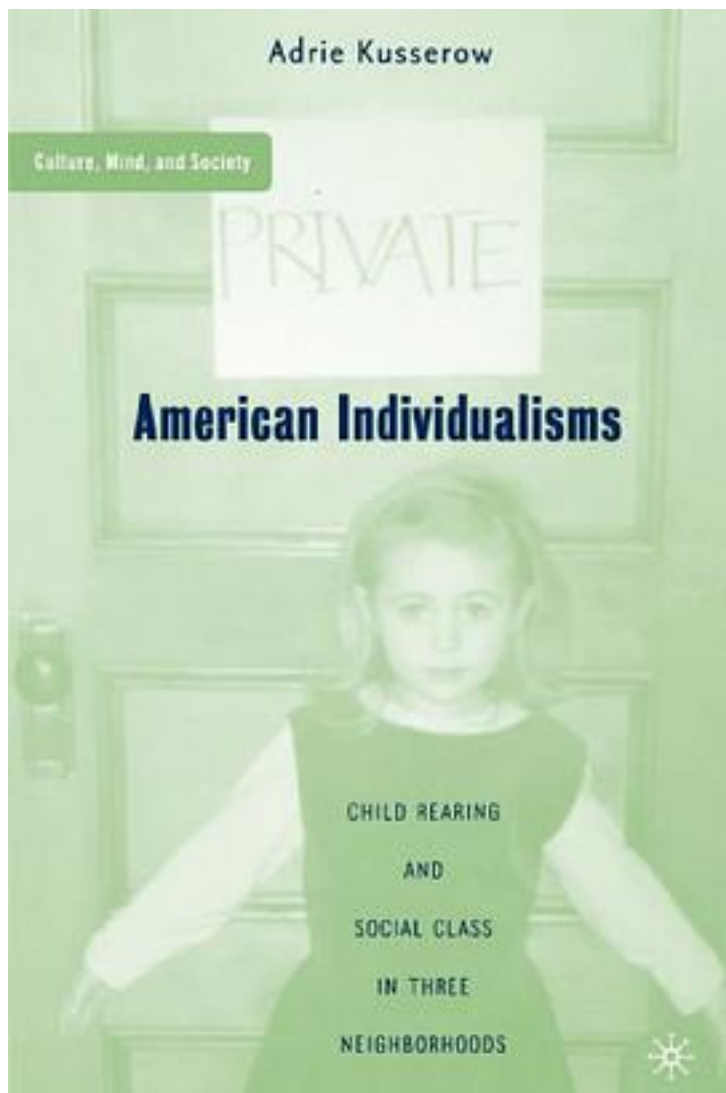


American Individualisms



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What are hard and soft individualisms? In this detailed ethnography of three communities in Manhattan and Queens, Kusserow interviews parents and teachers (from wealthy to those on welfare) on the types of hard and soft individualisms they encourage in their children and students. "American Individualisms" explores the important issue of class differences in the socialization of individualism in America. It presents American individualism not as one single homogeneous, stereotypic life-pattern as often claimed to be, but as variable, class-differentiated models of individualism instilled in young children by their parents and preschool teachers in Manhattan and Queens. By providing rich descriptions of the situational, class-based individualisms that take root in communities with vastly different visions of the future, Kusserow brings social inequality back into previously bland and generic discussions of American individualism.

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