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Class Politics and Political Change in the United States, 1952-1992*

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Abstract

Recent debates over the relationship between class and voting in democratic capitalist societies have focused primarily on the question of whether levels of class voting have declined. As a result, few studies have distinguished between "class voting" as an outcome versus class factors as causal mechanisms of vote choice. This distinction is critical to understanding what role class-related factors play in explaining vote choice — and thus to advancing debates over the changing relationship between class and political behavior in the U.S. and elsewhere. We use National Election Studies data to first investigate class-specific changes in voting behavior in presidential elections and then analyze the causal mechanisms explaining the three most significant class-specific trends. We find that while the realignment of the self-employed with the Republican Party is largely explained by class-related factors, professionals' realignment with the Democratic Party is a product of their increasingly liberal views of social issues. Also, prompted by higher levels of economic satisfaction and declining support for the welfare state, unskilled workers' historically high levels of support for Democratic candidates have eroded since the 1980 Presidential election. Our analyses also show that while class politics increasingly competes with other salient bases of voting behavior, the political impact of social issue attitudes has not displaced the class cleavage in recent presidential elections.

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The study of class and political behavior has experienced an intellectual renaissance in recent years (see Manza, Hout & Brooks 1995 for an overview). However, despite an outpouring of research on the changing relationship between class and vote choice¹, analysts have paid relatively little attention to the causal mechanisms explaining class-based trends in political behavior (Weakliem & Heath 1994a). Researchers have largely neglected the question of whether the changing behaviors of classes at the ballot box are in fact the product of class-related mechanisms such as material interests, or instead the outcome of *non*-class factors. To develop systematic answers to questions of this type, it is necessary to know not only whether the relationship between class and voting behavior has changed, but what causal forces account for those changes in the first place.

In our previous research on class voting in presidential elections in the United States since World War II (Hout, Brooks & Manza 1995), we found that while the overall class cleavage has not experienced a decline, there is nonetheless evidence of change in the political alignments of several classes. Professionals, once the most Republican of the six class categories in the analyses, have become the second most Democratic class in recent elections, while the self-employed have moved from a neutral posture to strong support for Republican candidates. Skilled and unskilled workers, for their part, have moved away from their previously high levels of Democratic voting. Given that the goal of that study was to describe class-based trends in vote choice, it underscores the need for a causal analysis that *explains* the basis of these trends.

In this study, we investigate the mechanisms governing the changing relationship between class and vote choice in presidential elections in the U.S. between 1952 and 1992. In the first section, we discuss the concepts of class-related mechanisms and political change used in our analyses. These concepts allow us to distinguish *electoral shifts* from *political realignments* and to analyze whether they are a product of class-related or nonclass factors. In the second section, we discuss the models used to measure our theoretical concepts. These models are particularly useful in the study of political behavior, enabling researchers to measure voting trends that occur in specific historical periods and that pertain to particular classes or groups within the electorate. Moreover, in their multivariate form, these models yield estimates of the extent to which change in a particular explanatory factor accounts for behavioral changes in the class or group in question. In the third section, we analyze class-specific trends in vote choice since 1972, presenting the results of our causal analyses. These analyses focus on three important class-specific trends in voting behavior (among professionals, the self-employed, and unskilled workers), and they allow us to infer not only whether class-related factors have any explanatory relevance, but which *specific* type of class-related (or nonclass) factor accounts for voting changes. In the final section of the article, we reestimate change in the class cleavage to take into account the increasing political importance of attitudes toward social issues. These final analyses show that the class cleavage has not (contrary to

most scholars' expectations) been eroded by voters' attitudes toward social issues (including race), but is instead largely unrelated to these concerns.

Conceptualizing Class Politics and Political Realignment

Much of the recent research on class and politics has used multicategory class schemes and multivariate statistical models to improve upon earlier dichotomous conceptualizations and measures of classes and class voting (Manza, Hout & Brooks 1995). This research has demonstrated that while the marginal popularity of left parties varies considerably over time and in different countries, there is little evidence for a universal decline in the effect of class on political behavior (see Evans 1998; Heath, Jowell & Curtice 1985; Heath et al., 1991; Hout, Brooks & Manza 1995; but see also Nieuwebeerta 1995). However, because the focus of most of this research has been on class-based differences in vote choice per se, relatively few researchers have analyzed the causal forces generating stability or change in the relationship between class and vote choice. The few studies (e.g., Weakliem 1991, 1995b) that do address causal questions of this sort tend, moreover, to assume that the same forces explain political changes among *all* classes, an assumption that is appropriate to evaluate as an hypothesis in the course of research. Developing a more systematic understanding of the causal mechanisms that govern change and comparative differences in the relationship between class and political behavior means that we must directly address these two limitations in the existing research literature.²

We introduce two theoretical concepts as a means of addressing these problems. First, we use the concept of *class voting* to refer to divergent patterns of vote choice among classes (whatever their source). When class-based differences at the ballot box are large, class voting is high; conversely, when class-based differences are small, class voting is low. While these differences have traditionally involved working-class citizens supporting left parties and members of the middle class supporting right parties (see Alford 1963), the possibility of other class-based political alignments should not be ruled out (Brooks & Manza 1997a; Manza, Hout & Brooks 1995).

Whereas *class voting* refers to electoral outcomes, we use the concept of *class politics* to refer to instances when class-related factors are the causal mechanism explaining (class-specific) differences or trends in vote choice (cf. Mair 1993). The most common class-related causal mechanism posited to explain political outcomes is material interests (see Lipset et al. 1954; cf. Evans 1993). Here, the claim is that political divisions are likely to arise out of the different material interests generated by voters' class locations. We also consider two other class-related mechanisms: class identification (e.g., Jackman & Jackman 1983; Vannemann & Cannon 1987; Wright 1985) and preferences for policy alternatives relating to class inequalities (e.g., Mann 1973). Class identification can be an important political

force, insofar as viewing oneself as “working class” or “middle class” enables the class incumbent to identify potential allies as well as antagonists, thereby making it possible to judge which political party is more likely to advance one’s class interests.³

With regard to class-related policy attitudes, the main historical alternative to laissez-faire capitalism has been the forms of social provision made available to citizens by modern welfare states. As a result, support for (as well as opposition to) redistributive policies or progressive taxation tends to have a class character, given that the latter represent interventions in the marketplace that alter the distribution of income in favor of poorer households (Esping-Andersen 1990). We expect that a key source of resistance to U.S. social welfare programs stems from the interests some classes tend to have in safeguarding their income (itself a product of the unequal distribution of assets) from redistributive public policies (Piven & Cloward 1985).

Providing there is sufficient evidence, we may infer that one of the preceding class-related factors explains trends in class voting. However, nonclass forces — e.g. other types of policy attitudes or demographic factors — can also be related to both class location and vote choice. In such cases, class differences or trends in voting may only be contingently related to political outcomes. In the absence of additional information, inferring *class politics* from *class voting* per se can thus result in serious errors of causal interpretation. In particular, if class-specific trends in vote choice are actually the product of nonclass forces, then it is misleading to construe these trends as reflecting class politics.⁴ As a result, observations of the voting patterns among classes provide insufficient information for answering questions about the role of class factors in generating political outcomes. Using a multivariate model, we must instead test hypotheses about the causal roles played by class-related versus nonclass mechanisms.

SECULAR REALIGNMENTS AND POLITICAL SHIFTS

In addition to our distinction between class voting and class politics, it is also necessary to specify the nature of the class-specific political changes under investigation. We use three theoretical concepts of change in voting behavior: *realignments* (“secular” and “critical”) and *electoral shifts*. Realignment theory — which emphasizes the importance of decisive changes in partisan allegiances and voting behavior — has been a central tool in the analysis of political behavior since influential research by Key (1955, 1959). In recent years, however, the realignment concept has come under criticism as being too specific to capture other types of political change while also providing a poor description of voting patterns since the 1960s (e.g., Carmines & Stimson 1989; Ladd 1991; Shafer 1991a). A number of statements offer defensible reformulations that clarify and extend the realignment concept (e.g., Petrocik 1981; Strong 1977; Trilling & Campbell 1980). At the center of these reformulations are the following two assumptions:

Realignments typically involve groups (rather than the entire electorate); and realignments need not only be sudden and abrupt ("critical" realignments in Key's [1955] work), but can also involve changes that cumulate over a period of several elections (what Key termed *secular* realignments in his [1959] formulation).

Given that political changes involving electorate-wide switches of allegiance and originating in the span of a single election are rare, the two preceding assumptions allow realignment theory to have greater generality. In the twentieth century, "critical" realignments involving a majority of voters are limited to Roosevelt's victories in 1932 and 1936 (as critics of realignment theory such as Ladd 1991 have noted). But *group*-specific realignments in which a segment of the electorate switches allegiance from one to the other major party are a good deal more common (Nexon 1980; Petrocik 1981). Likewise, while group-specific *critical* realignments can occur in a single election, *secular* realignments that emerge over the course of several elections are much more common (Seagull 1980). For instance, while Carmines and Stimson's landmark (1989) study of U.S. racial politics is prefaced by a vigorous critique of the (critical) realignment concept, their own research on the partisan evolution of racial issues is consistent with the emergence of a secular, group-specific realignment of white southerners from the Democratic to the Republican Party.⁵

In the current study, we use the concepts of secular and critical realignments to identify class-specific patterns of political change.⁶ Both types of realignments are typically accompanied by a new issue or conflict with respect to which the major parties take divergent policy positions (see Sundquist 1983). The new conflict enables groups within the electorate to align themselves with a preferred party, often creating a new political cleavage or transforming older cleavages. In the current research, social issues relating to civil rights and gender equality are the issue at the heart of professionals' realignment with the Democratic Party, whereas ideological opposition to the welfare state is a central issue in the realignment of the self-employed with the Republican Party. Whether these issues have emerged in the course of a single election or evolve more slowly is a question that we also address in the course of our analyses. More specifically, we build from our earlier work (Brooks & Manza 1997a; Hout, Brooks & Manza 1995), showing that professionals' realignment has been unfolding since 1964 and is thus a case of secular realignment. The self-employed, by contrast, realigned during a single (critical) election, in 1980.

Whereas a realignment involves a fundamental change in political alignment from consistent support for one party's candidates to support for the other party's, political *shifts* involve a simple (i.e., nonrealigning) increase or decrease in support for a given party's candidates. While not nearly as dramatic as realignments, the concept of a shift captures trends that involve changes in the magnitude of support that a group of voters give to their preferred party. In the current study, unskilled workers' recent voting trends exemplify a shift, for while they remain largely

Democratic, their level of support has eroded considerably over the course of the past four elections with important consequences for the Democrats' class coalition.

CONTEXTUALIZING CLASS-SPECIFIC VOTING TRENDS

The preceding concepts of political change have implications for analyzing changes in the relationship between class and vote choice. Given the contrasting *structure* of critical versus secular realignments — as well as the contrasting *magnitude* of realignments versus shifts — we may reasonably expect that not all class-specific trends in vote choice can be subsumed under the same concept. Hence, we model voting changes by parameterizing class-specific trends as applying to specific historical periods and having different structures (i.e., occurring rapidly during a single election versus cumulatively over the course of multiple elections). As a result, our approach goes beyond our earlier analyses (see Hout, Brooks & Manza 1995), which implicitly assumed that voting trends among all classes occur during the same period of time, while also having the same linear structure. The approach developed here delivers more precise information about the extent and nature of class-specific trends in vote choice. Our alternative model (discussed in detail in the statistical models section of the article) finds strong evidence for a *secular realignment* among professionals, a *critical realignment* relating to the self-employed in the 1980 election, and a *voting shift* among unskilled workers in recent elections.

Data and Measures

DATA

For the analyses presented in this study, we use National Election Study (NES) data from presidential election year surveys for 1952 through 1992 (Center for Political Studies 1995). The NES is the premier source of U.S. voting data, with a rich battery of political, attitudinal, and demographic items and lengthy time-series data. Our dependent variable is presidential vote choice, which is coded “1” for choice of the Democratic and “0” for the choice of the Republican candidate. In the first stage of the analyses we establish the class-specific trends in vote choice to subsequently be explained. We then use a series of regression decompositions to analyze the sources of voting trends among professionals, the self-employed, and unskilled workers. These trends are particularly noteworthy in that they exemplify the three concepts of political change discussed in the previous section of the article; all three trends have also occurred during the 1972-92 period. The two remaining class-specific trends — pertaining to managers and skilled workers — occurred prior to 1972. To keep the scope of the current study manageable, we postpone presentation of our analyses of these two trends for another context.

CLASS CATEGORIES

Multicategory class schemata are preferable to dichotomous measures of class contrasting “blue” versus “white”-collar workers (see Manza, Hout & Brooks 1995; Weakliem 1995b). By providing information on class-based political differences existing *within* each of these two groups, multicategory schemata enable researchers to avoid the serious biases that follow from analyses that estimate the political effects of class using dichotomous measures. We thus distinguish at the outset between six class categories and one residual category for those without an occupational class location. This scheme is based on information about the respondents’ occupation and employment situation available in each year of the NES series. We code the data as follows:⁷

- (1) Professionals (both salaried and self-employed, including lawyers, physicians, engineers, teachers, scientists, writers, editors, and social workers);⁸
- (2) Managers and administrators (including all nonretail sales managers);
- (3) Owners, proprietors and other nonprofessional self-employed persons (including farm owners);
- (4) Routine white-collar workers (retail sales, clerical, and white-collar service workers);
- (5) Skilled workers and foremen in all industries;⁹
- (6) Unskilled and semiskilled workers in all industries (including farming and services); and
- (7) Non-full-time labor force participants (homemakers, retirees, students, and the disabled working less than twenty hours a week; treated as the reference category in regression models.)

This scheme is similar to the class typologies employed by Heath and his colleagues in their studies of British class politics (see Heath, Jowell & Curtice 1985; Heath et al. 1991; see also Goldthorpe 1994), except that we distinguish between professionals and managers.¹⁰ We also include in the analyses respondents who are not working full time in the labor force. This is a substantial segment of the electorate who, on grounds of empirical completeness, should be included in the analyses.¹¹

EXPLANATORY VARIABLES

Once we have established the class-specific trends in vote choice to be explained, we model the causal factors responsible for voting changes among professionals, proprietors, and unskilled workers. For these analyses, we use a set of items that can be grouped into four subsets depending upon whether they relate to class, other sociodemographic forces, social issue attitudes, or political alienation (see Table 1). The independent variables relating to class allow us to test the hypothesis that it is class-related forces that explain (class-specific) shifts or realignments in voting

behavior. If class-related factors do not account for these patterns of change, the other three sets of independent variables (discussed below) allow us to test alternative hypotheses about other causal mechanisms that have been found to be related to political change.

Given the complexity of class forces, we use a series of items to measure its separate dimensions. We use two measures of class-related material interests: objective (household income) and subjective (respondents' evaluation of their current economic situation). The first of these measures is a continuous variable scaled to constant, 1992 dollars. The second is a trichotomous item asking respondents to assess their current economic situation in comparison to the past year. We analyze this item as two dummy variables for "same as" and "worse off than a year ago" (with the reference category being the assessment "better than a year ago"). Given that the actual degree to which people identify with a class location tends not to reduce to purely objective factors, we also consider the role of class identification. The identification item we use is a dichotomy, coded "1" if respondents identify themselves as working class and "0" otherwise.

Our measure of class-related policy preferences is provided by responses to an item asking whether the federal government "should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living." As discussed earlier, endorsements of — as well as opposition to — the welfare state tend to have significant class content. Members of the working class, so long as they vote on the basis of their interests in policies that minimize the disruptive effects of the unregulated market, should prefer to expand (or at least to maintain) egalitarian governmental policies. By contrast, people whose incomes are disproportionately high by virtue of their advantageous class location (such as managers) have an interest in keeping the largest possible share of these incomes, and hence in opposing social policies that require redistribution. The National Election Study (NES) guaranteed jobs item provides a useful measure of the degree to which people support the most prominent social policy designed to protect the interests of the working class in the postwar United States (Weir 1992). In the analyses that follow, we analyze this 7-category welfare state item as a continuous variable.

Our final indicator of class-related factors is union membership. As a measure of working-class networks, union membership exposes people to working class organizations, thereby raising the likelihood that they will view their life chances as depending on the collective welfare of other workers. As shown in Table 1, union membership is a dichotomy, coded "1" if a respondent is a member and "0" otherwise.

We analyze six variables representing other (nonclass) sociodemographic attributes: region, gender, race, public sector employment, age, and education. Given their relation to social networks that can shape political preferences, the compositional changes measured by these variables may help to explain changes in vote choice. The first four of these we analyze as a series of dummy variables,

TABLE 1: Class-Specific Sample Means for Independent Variables in the Analyses

Independent Variable (measurement)	<i>Professionals</i>		<i>Self-Employed</i>		<i>Unskilled Workers</i>	
	1972	1992	1972	1980-92	1972	1980-92
Household Income (1992 dollars)	51,412	50,949	47,974	49,843	34,255	32,649
Union (ref. = not a member)	.12	.15	.00	.04	.34	.30
Economic Satisfaction (ref. = better off)						
Same as year ago	.41	.36	.46	.29	.44	.25
Worse off than year ago	.13	.19	.25	.28	.30	.29
Class Consciousness (ref. = other class)						
Working class identification	.26	.28	.46	.47	.73	.72
Welfare State Attitudes (continuous)	3.00	2.70	2.46	1.88	3.56	2.90
higher scores → more support						
Age (years)	38.10	40.66	48.96	46.36	42.69	41.04
Race (ref. = white/other)						
African-American	.10	.09	.14	.04	.25	.17
Gender (ref. = male)						
Female	.39	.48	.36	.29	.47	.38
Region (ref. = non-South)						
South	.22	.24	.39	.30	.34	.26
Employment Sector (ref. = private)						
Public/Nonprofit	.64	.31	.04	.00	.09	.11
Education (years)	15.38	15.82	11.50	13.23	11.22	12.24
Racial Attitudes (continuous)	.78	1.04	.46	.72	.66	.84
higher scores → support for civil rights						
Gender Attitudes (continuous)	4.12	5.28	3.64	4.44	3.17	4.30
higher scores → more egalitarianism						
Political Alienation (ref. = don't care)	.67	.86	.79	.79	.67	.78
care about outcome of election						

treating non-Southern residence, male, white, and private sector as the reference categories. We analyze years of age and education as continuous variables (both measured in years).

In addition to class and sociodemographic forces, we also consider factors relating to peoples' degree of alienation from electoral politics. Some earlier studies have found high levels of disenchantment with party politics among the U.S. working class (e.g., Burnham 1982; Weakliem 1995b), and such findings may help to explain declining levels of support for Democratic candidates among the skilled and unskilled workers in our analyses. We analyze responses to a dichotomous NES item as our measure of political alienation. This item asks respondents whether they are concerned with the outcome of the current elections. Lower levels of concern with a national election's outcomes are indicative of high levels of alienation from electoral politics and thus may be potentially relevant to understanding the shift in unskilled workers' voting behavior analyzed in this study.

Finally, we analyze attitudes towards issues relating to civil rights and gender equality. Some recent scholarship has suggested that social issues of this sort are becoming increasingly important for understanding political change (e.g., Clark 1994; Edsall 1984; Lipset 1981; Zipp 1986). Racial attitudes can be expected to be of relevance given the long-standing political importance of race in the U.S. (e.g., Carmines & Stanley 1989), but we also found evidence for the political importance of gender attitudes in our earlier research on professionals' changing voting behavior (Brooks & Manza 1997a). The civil rights item asks whether the civil rights movement is moving too fast, about right, or too slow, and the gender equality item is a 7-point scale asking whether women and men should have equal roles in the family and workplace. We analyze both items as continuous variables.¹²

STATISTICAL MODELS

The dependent variable in our analysis is a dichotomy, coded "1" for Democratic and "0" for Republican vote choice.¹³ We accordingly choose a logistic regression model to analyze this variable. The logistic or multinomial logit specification for binary and polytomous dependent variables has become a standard of American political behavior research, and its statistical advantages over the linear probability model for binary and ordinary least-squares regression for multicategory variables are well known (e.g., King 1989).

In the first stage of our analyses, we evaluate two competing models of trends in class-specific vote choice.¹⁴ The first of these is summarized in equation 1, and it is the model used by Hout et al. (1995):

$$\Phi_{ij} = \alpha + \sum_{k=1}^k \beta_{kj} X_{ik} + \sum_{t=1}^T \beta_{ij} Y_{it} + \sum_{k=1}^K \theta_{kj} X_{ik} A_{i0} \quad (1)$$

In this model, Φ_{ij} is the log-odds of vote choice j ($j = 1$ for the Democratic or 0 for the Republican candidate) for the i th NES respondent in sample size N ($i = 1, \dots, N$). Vote choice is predicted as a function of the main and interaction effects of class and election year. The main effects of class are the β_{kj} and the main effects of election year are the β_{ij} . Given that there are seven classes categories ($k = 7$) and eleven election years ($t = 11$) in the analyses, model 1 requires some restrictions. For purposes of identification, we delete the highest level of k and the lowest level of t , setting $\beta_{7j} = \beta_{1j} = 0$.¹⁵ The additional parameters of model 1 are the θ_{kj} for the interaction between class location and election year (θ_{7j} is also set equal to 0). Given that A_{i0} is a constant for election year (coded "1" for 1952, "2" for 1956, . . . "11" for 1992), it imposes a linear constraint on the structure of the class by year interaction. This means that the θ_{kj} measure the tendency (in logits) for the k th class to increasingly (or decreasingly, if the coefficient is negatively signed) favor the Democratic over the Republican candidate during the 1952 to 1992 period. Model 1's implied hypotheses thus relate to the specific trends in vote choice experienced by each class.

The alternative model of class voting we introduce in this article is summarized in equation 2. We derived this model by testing various substantively meaningful constraints on model 1. These constraints relate to the structure (e.g., linear or abrupt) or timing (e.g., developing over the entire series versus emerging only since 1980) of class-specific voting trends. While our preferred constraints are somewhat cumbersome to express in formal notation, their reference to specific periods and the implied structure of trends is relatively straightforward. They also result in a more parsimonious model that restricts class-specific trends to particular classes and specific elections (or blocks of elections). Comparison of the fit of models 1 versus 2 thus enables us to test hypotheses about the structure, duration, and scope of class-specific trends in vote choice during the 1952 to 1992 period.

Our alternative model hypothesizes trends relating to five of the seven classes: professionals, managers, the self-employed, skilled workers, and unskilled workers. The vote choices of the remaining classes (routine-white collar and nonfull-time labor force participants) vary together over time (according to the main effects of election year), but without necessarily implying class-specific trends. In contrast to model 1, our alternative model (see equation 2) parameterizes trends in vote choice among professionals as spanning the 1964-92 period, rather than the entire 1952-92 period. This parameterization reflects the hypothesis that professionals' tendency to favor Democrats increased at a constant rate since the 1964 "right turn" on civil rights represented by Republican candidate Barry Goldwater's opposition to federal civil rights programs and laws.¹⁶ We model voting trends among the self-employed and unskilled workers as occurring during the 1980 election and continuing through the 1992 elections.¹⁷ Political commentators have searched for the social bases of the "Reagan Democrats" (see Schneider 1982), viewing the 1980 election as indicating the successful emergence of the fiscally and socially conservative wing of the postwar Republican Party. Our parameterization of post-1980 vote trends locates the class bases of this phenomenon among unskilled workers and the self-employed. We also impose substantively meaningful restrictions on the two remaining class-specific trends. Both skilled workers' and managers voting trends are constrained as occurring during the 1952 through 1972 elections. The resultant model is presented in equation 2:

$$\Phi_{ij} = \alpha + \sum_{k=1}^k \beta_{kj} X_{ik} + \sum_{t=1}^T \beta_{ij} Y_{it} + \theta_{1j} X_{i1} C_{i0} + \theta_{2j} X_{i2} D_{i0} + \theta_{4j} X_{i4} E_{i0} + \theta_{5j} X_{i5} D_{i0} + \theta_{6j} X_{i6} E_{i0} \quad (2)$$

In model 2, there are now five θ_{kj} parameters for class-specific trends among professionals ($k = 1$), managers ($k = 2$), self-employed ($k = 4$), skilled workers ($k = 5$), and unskilled workers ($k = 6$). C_{i0} , D_{i0} , and E_{i0} constrain each of these class-specific trends to refer to a particular historical period. For professionals, C_{i0} is coded "0" for elections years 1952 through 1960, "1" for 1964, "2" for 1968, . . . , and "8" for 1992), and multiplying it by the trend parameter introduces the linear constraint on change in their vote choice during the 1964 through 1992 elections.

As a result, professionals' increasing tendency to favor the Democratic candidate is estimated as changing by the same increment (measured in logits) during each election since 1960.

For managers and skilled workers, D_{i0} is coded "1" for 1952, "2" for 1956, . . . , "6" for 1972-92, thereby constraining their voting trends to the 1952 to 1972 elections. While voting trends among these two classes are thus linear, they apply only to the 1952-72 period. Change in the voting behavior of managers and skilled workers from the 1972 baseline is thus a function of the election year main effects (that apply equally to all classes).

For the self-employed and unskilled workers, E_{i0} is coded "0" for all elections before 1980, and "1" for the 1980 through 1992 elections, constraining their voting trends to be a single-step change taking place during (and continuing after) the 1980 election. In contrast to the cumulative voting trends implied by the linear change parameters, these two "single-step" constraints result in a dramatic pattern of change that occurs during a single election. Given that there are a total of five trend parameters in the model (one for each of the five preceding classes), model 2 thus consumes one less degree of freedom than model 1.

MEASURING THE CLASS CLEAVAGE IN VOTE CHOICE

Once we have established our preferred model of class-specific voting trends, we graph our results as a means of presenting and summarizing the trends. These estimates are derived using the same normalizing strategy discussed in detail by Hout et al. (1995) and by Manza et al. (1995), in which the logistic coefficients for the class categories sum to zero at each election for purposes of identification. Each data point thus reflects a class-specific deviation from the overall mean (of zero) for a particular election. As a result, this measure allows the researcher to determine whether a particular class supports a given party relative to the average support received by that party (among all classes).

While some identifying constraint is necessary to derive voting scores for each class, the zero-sum constraint has important substantive advantages. When a class-specific score is positively signed, it indicates a greater tendency to favor Democratic candidates (relative to the mean of zero); conversely, negative scores indicate support for Republican candidates (again relative to the mean). By examining changes over time in the voting scores for each class, we can infer whether and to what extent a given class has experienced a political trend.

Turning to explanatory questions, we analyze the causal factors that account for class-specific trends in vote choice. For these analyses, we use the model's coefficients and the relevant sample means in a regression decomposition (Firebaugh 1997; Jones and Kelley 1984; see Teixeira [1987] for an application to the analysis of voter turnout). These decompositions enable us to gauge the effect of each of the causal factors measured in the model to explaining class-specific trends (we discuss these in Appendix A). In this way, we can gauge the relative

importance of class versus nonclass causal factors in explaining the voting trends under investigation.

Results

CLASS-SPECIFIC TRENDS IN VOTE CHOICE, 1952-1992

In Table 2, we present the results of the analysis of trends in vote choice among the seven class categories during the 1952-92 period. Model 1 parameterizes the main effects of class and election year. Given that it thus hypothesizes no class-by-year interactions, model 1 provides us with an instructive baseline for comparing our earlier model (model 2) with our alternative model of change in the class-vote choice relationship (model 3). Model 2 readily improves the fit of model 1 according to both $-2 \log$ likelihood and *BIC*, corroborating our earlier work. However, using *BIC*, model 3's improvement (*BIC* difference = -9) in fit provides strong evidence for preferring model 3 over model 2. Because model 2 is not nested within model 3, the $-2 \log$ likelihood statistic cannot be used in the usual way to directly compare models. However, we note that while the two models' $-2 \log$ likelihood statistics are virtually identical (15,789.23 vs. 15,789.83), model 3 consumes 1 less degree of freedom than model 2. While both models thus have nearly the same residual deviance, our alternative model is preferred on grounds of parsimony (as can be observed in the direct comparison using the *BIC* index).

Taken in sum, these results demonstrate the utility of our restrictions on the structure and timing of class-specific voting trends. We use the graphical displays in Figure 1 to summarize class-specific voting trends under model 3. The lines in Figure 1's panels represent the class-specific trends (or nontrends) for each of the classes. Our primary interest is with the dark, solid trend lines, representing the estimates derived from the coefficients of model 3. Note that by virtue of the zero-sum normalization we employ, the class-specific voting scores sum to zero for each election. As discussed in the previous section, this normalization is useful not only for identification purposes, it also summarizes the information contained in our model's coefficients in an informative way: A voting score tells us how a particular class votes at a given point in time relative to how all classes voted, thereby distinguishing voting trends affecting *all* classes versus those affecting only *specific* classes.

The solid trend lines in Figure 1 reveal the following class-specific trends: (1) a dramatic turn from Republican to Democratic vote choice among professionals; (2) an even steeper Republican trend among the self-employed, but applying to the more recent period beginning with the 1980 election; (3) an equally sharp drop in support for Democratic candidates among unskilled workers in the 1980 to 1992 period; (4) a decay in Democratic Party support among skilled workers from 1952 through 1972, with a partial recovery since 1972; (5) a similar pair of trends among

TABLE 2: Fit Statistics for Logistic Regression Models^a of Change in Class and Presidential Vote Choice^b, 1952-1992

Models	Fit Statistics	
	-2 Log Likelihood (df)	BIC
1. Null Trend:		
Class and Election Year Main Effects	15,877.90 (11,844)	-95,231
2. Total Class Realignment:		
All Classes * Year ₁₉₅₂₋₉₂	15,789.23 (11,838)	-95,263
3. Class-specific Changes in Vote Choice:		
Professionals * Year ₁₉₆₄₋₉₂ , Managers * Year ₁₉₅₂₋₇₂ , Skilled Workers * Year ₁₉₅₂₋₇₂ , Self-Employed x Year _{≥1980} , Unskilled Workers x Year _{≥1980}	15,789.83 (11,839)	-95,272

(N = 11,861)

^a Linearly constrained interaction effects designated by “*”; nonlinearly constrained interaction effects designated by “x.” BIC for null model (including only a constant) is - 94,834.

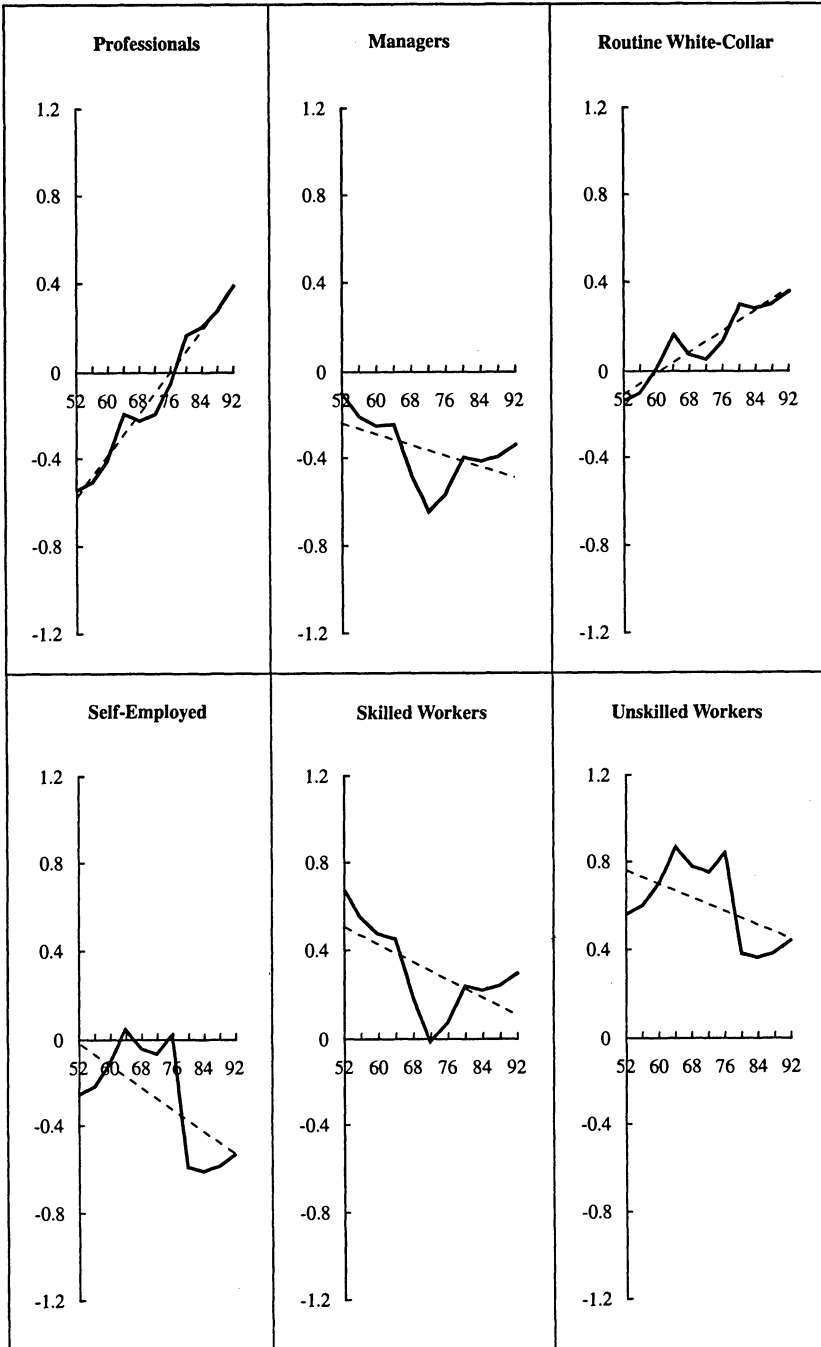
^b Dependent variable is coded “0” for the Republican, and “1” for the Democratic Presidential candidate.

managers, whose level of Republican candidate support increased between 1952 and 1972, while moving back towards earlier levels since 1972; and (6) a trend towards Democratic candidates among routine white-collar employees since 1972.

Of these six voting trends, the changes experienced by professionals and the self-employed are the largest and exemplify class-specific *realignments*. Professionals have moved from being the most Republican of any class to one of the most Democratic in recent elections. The approximately linear trend (relative to the overall mean) for professionals in Figure 1 conforms to the secular pattern of realignment, suggesting a developmental process that has worked cumulatively to dislodge professionals from their earlier political alignment. The self-employed, by contrast, have moved from a position mid-way between the two parties to being the most consistently Republican class since 1980. Their dramatic one-step change is suggestive of the *critical* pattern of realignment, implying that a causal force originating in 1980 (and continuing through 1992) acted to decisively move them into a new political alignment.¹⁸

Voting trends among the two working-class categories show significant declines in support for Democratic candidates relative to the mean. The structure and timing of unskilled workers' trend are identical to the trend among the self-employed. But given that unskilled workers remain the most Democratic of any of the seven classes, their abrupt decline in support since 1980 constitutes an electoral *shift* rather than a realignment. Likewise, skilled workers' voting trends do not constitute a realignment, for in no election have they favored the Republican over the Democratic candidate at a higher rate in comparison to the electorate as a whole. During the 1952 to 1972 period, however, skilled workers support for Democratic candidates declined precipitously, although partially rebounding since that time.

FIGURE 1: Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Trends in Class-Specific Vote Choice, 1952-1992; Preferred (—) and Smoothed Trend (---)



Because managers have tended to favor Republican candidates throughout the entire 1952 to 1992 period, it would be misleading to construe their 1952-72 voting trend as representing a change in their political alignment. What happened during this period was instead a deepening of their support for Republican presidential candidates — a shift that has, however, partially reversed itself since 1972 (in similar fashion to the post-1972 trend affecting skilled workers).¹⁹

The preceding results of the trend analysis show why it is preferable to distinguish between types of political change while also parameterizing the (variable) context of voting trends among specific classes. The current results reveal much more clearly than our earlier analyses the precise historical contours of these class-specific political changes. The two most salient differences are for unskilled workers and the self-employed: The trends for these two classes (see Figure 1) follow a distinctive and very abrupt change during the 1980 election that was not discovered in the earlier analyses.

To highlight the findings delivered by our model of class voting, we also present in Figure 1 a second set of “smoothed trend” estimates that are graphed as light, dashed lines to distinguish them from the first set of estimates. The smoothed trend estimates are derived by using the data points (representing the normed coefficient for a specific class category under our preferred model) to estimate an ordinary least-squares model of trends in each of the seven panels. By virtue of being least-squares regression lines, these estimates reveal what information is *lost* by eliminating all context-specific variation. While professionals’ and (to a lesser extent) routine white-collar employees’ trends are comparable under both sets of estimates, the remaining four class-specific trends show significant departures from linearity over the 1952-92 series as a whole. This result demonstrates the importance of models of class-specific voting trends that take advantage of nonlinear constraints.

EXPLAINING CLASS-SPECIFIC POLITICAL CHANGES SINCE 1972

Turning to questions about the causal bases of these trends, we now analyze the factors responsible for voting trends among professionals, unskilled workers, and the self-employed. All these trends occurred during the 1972-92 period. Given that professionals’ voting trend is approximately linear, we choose the 1972 and 1992 elections as the end-points of our comparison. The self-employed and unskilled workers, however, experienced a sharp right-turn during the 1980 election that has continued to affect their voting patterns. For these two classes we thus treat the entire 1980 through 1992 elections as the period with which to compare to the 1972 election.

We present the results of our explanatory analyses in Table 3 (a table with the coefficients of the preferred model is available from the authors). The estimates in the table’s columns represent the predicted effect (in logits) that change in a row-

specific factor has on vote choice for a particular class between the elections in question. The last row's estimates are the sum of the row-specific effects on vote choice for each factor. By dividing each estimate by its appropriate column total, we thus arrive at a summary measure of the relative causal importance of a given factor (presented in parentheses). Using gender among professionals as our example, the .01 estimate indicates that the increasing proportion of women in the professions has raised the log-odds of professionals favoring the Democratic candidate by .01. The .02 figure in parentheses (calculated by dividing .01 by the total predicted logit change, .48) summarizes the contribution of this change to explaining professionals' overall shift during the 1972 to 1992 period. The 2% figure tells us that the changing gender distribution of professions has had a very small impact on change in their voting behavior.

Table 3's estimates show that the key to professionals' realignment is their increasingly liberal views of social issues relating to race and gender. The .49 estimate for the combined effect of change in professionals' attitudes towards social issues represents 102% of the total predicted change in vote choice. The latter proportion exceeds 100% because had *only* these attitudinal changes occurred, professionals' shift would in fact have been somewhat larger. As it was, however, the negative effects of sociodemographic changes (see Table 1) pushed professionals' in the direction of support for Republican candidates, slightly muting the Democratic effects of changing attitudes toward social issues. Both class-related and political alienation factors, it should be noted, have a positive, but minimal (2% and 4% respectively) bearing on explaining professionals' changing voting behavior.

Like professionals, the self-employed have become more liberal in their views of social issues (see Table 1, column 2). In fact, had only these changes occurred, the self-employed would have experienced a .19 logit shift towards *support* for Democratic presidential candidates (the estimates for the effects of social issue attitudes are thus negatively signed, indicating their divergence from the overall trend). Both class and sociodemographic factors have, however, pushed the self-employed into a Republican alignment (with political alienation factors having no impact whatsoever). Of the two, class-related factors have greater causal importance. Higher levels of economic dissatisfaction under Democratic President Carter's administration, and higher levels of economic *satisfaction* during the administrations of Republican Presidents Reagan and Bush account for over half of the voting trend; emerging resistance to the welfare state accounts for just over 35% of this trend. The declining proportion of African American owned businesses is the most important of the sociodemographic factors (accounting for 31% of the trend).

The conservative voting shift among unskilled workers is noteworthy as a sign of electoral volatility among the most traditionally Democratic of social classes. The historical context and causal bases of this trend is similar to the trend for the self-employed. Higher levels of economic dissatisfaction under a Democratic presidential administration coupled with higher rates of economic satisfaction

TABLE 3: Logistic Regression Decomposition^a for Explaining Change in Vote Choice among Professionals, Self-Employed, and Unskilled Workers

Independent Variables	Professionals (1972 v. 1992)	Self-Employed (1972 v. 1980-92)	Unskilled Workers (1972 v. 1980-92)
Δ <i>Class-Related Factors</i>	.01 (.02)	-.51 (.86)	-.53 (1.00)
Δ Household Income	.05 (.10)	-.02 (.03)	.02 (-.04)
Δ Union Membership	.02 (.04)	.03 (-.05)	-.03 (.06)
Δ Economic Satisfaction	.04 (.08)	-.31 (.53)	-.29 (.55)
Δ Class Consciousness	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Δ Welfare State Attitudes	-.10 (-.21)	-.21 (.36)	-.23 (.43)
Δ <i>Other Sociodemographic Factors</i>	-.04 (-.08)	-.27 (.46)	-.20 (.38)
Δ Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Δ Race	-.02 (-.04)	-.18 (.31)	-.14 (.26)
Δ Gender	.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Δ Region	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Δ Employment Sector	-.01 (-.02)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Δ Education	-.02 (-.04)	-.08 (.14)	-.05 (.09)
Δ <i>Social Issue Attitudes</i>	.49 (1.02)	.19 (-.32)	.19 (-.36)
Δ Racial Attitudes	.21 (.44)	.10 (-.17)	.07 (-.13)
Δ Gender Attitudes	.28 (.58)	.09 (-.15)	.12 (-.23)
Δ <i>Political Alienation</i>	.02 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.01 (-.02)
Σ Total Logit Change in Vote Choice	.48 (1.00)	-.59 (1.00)	-.53 (1.00)

^a Entries in columns are the predicted change in the log-odds of Democratic vote choice attributable to a row-specific factor (entries in parentheses are the proportion of the total predicted change in vote choice attributable to the row-specific factor).

during Republican administrations are predicted as lowering the log-odds of favoring Democratic candidates by -.29. Our analyses also reveal the existence of a separate, ideological basis for Republican Party support, insofar as declining support for the welfare state among unskilled workers explains over 40% of their post-1980 voting shift.²⁰ While both these latter factors relate to class politics, it is also worth noting that social issue attitudes have been of consequence here as well (predicting a .19 Democratic shift during the period in question), thereby limiting what would have otherwise been a *larger* shift among unskilled workers towards the Republican Party. Finally, factors relating to political alienation have little bearing on unskilled workers' voting trends, given that *increasing* interest in the outcome of elections would have actually raised unskilled workers' log-odds of voting Democratic by .01.

Discussion

The results of our analyses suggest that the divergent voting trends of professionals and the self-employed should be considered respectively as cases of Democratic and Republican realignment. Professionals, once the most Republican of classes, have become the second most Democratic in recent elections, crossing over the critical $p = .5$ threshold of split party support according to both the raw NES data and our model's estimates (cf. Brooks & Manza 1997a). The self-employed have also moved from a point near this equivocal threshold to much deeper levels of GOP support, and they have done so in a fashion that conforms to the critical realignment concept. Unlike professionals, however, political realignment among the self-employed is largely a product of class forces relating to changing economic experiences under Democratic versus Republican administrations and a growing ideological opposition to the welfare state. The conjunction of economic calculations and conservative policy-related attitudes thus suggest the emergence of a conservative (and comprehensive) form of class politics among the self-employed.

Unskilled workers have not experienced any — much less a specifically Republican — realignment. While their class-specific voting patterns in the past four elections reflect a decline in traditionally high levels of support for Democratic candidates, they remain the most Democratic of the seven categories in the analyses. Voting trends among unskilled workers are not, moreover, the product of greater feelings of political alienation, for since 1980 workers actually report caring more about the outcome of presidential elections than previously. Instead, this political shift among unskilled workers is the outgrowth of higher levels of economic satisfaction under Republican administrations (and particularly high levels of *dissatisfaction* in 1980 under a Democratic President) coupled with declining support for the welfare state. This form of conservative class politics is very similar to the forces realigning the self-employed. Moreover, its presence among the working class cuts against an expectation common among class analysts and political commentators alike, that the growing immiseration of the working class in postindustrial societies will by itself eventually compel them to support liberal or left political alternatives.

Taken as a whole, we thus find that class-related factors are central to explaining many of the class-specific trends in vote choice. In fact, without grasping the critical roles played by these class factors, we cannot properly understand the sources of two of the three trends analyzed in this article.²¹ The results of the current study thus find no support for the comprehensive decline in the salience of U.S. class politics that some analysts have hypothesized (Clark, Lipset & Rempel 1993; Dalton & Wattenberg 1993; Weakliem 1997).

It is also noteworthy that in cases where class-related factors do *not* explain voting changes, they tend to nevertheless have relevance as *constraints* on what would otherwise have been larger trends. The case of professionals is particularly

instructive, for as shown by the item means presented in Table 1, professionals' class-related and sociodemographic characteristics do *not* dispose them towards Democratic Party support. Moreover, had *only* changes in social issue attitudes occurred (but no change in sociodemographic or class-related variables), the voting trend among professionals since 1972 would have moved even more sharply towards the Democrats.²² Taken in sum, these results show that far from exiting the historical stage, class politics remain a powerful set of forces in the U.S., although they oftentimes manifest themselves in ways revealing the politically *conservative* dimensions of material interests.

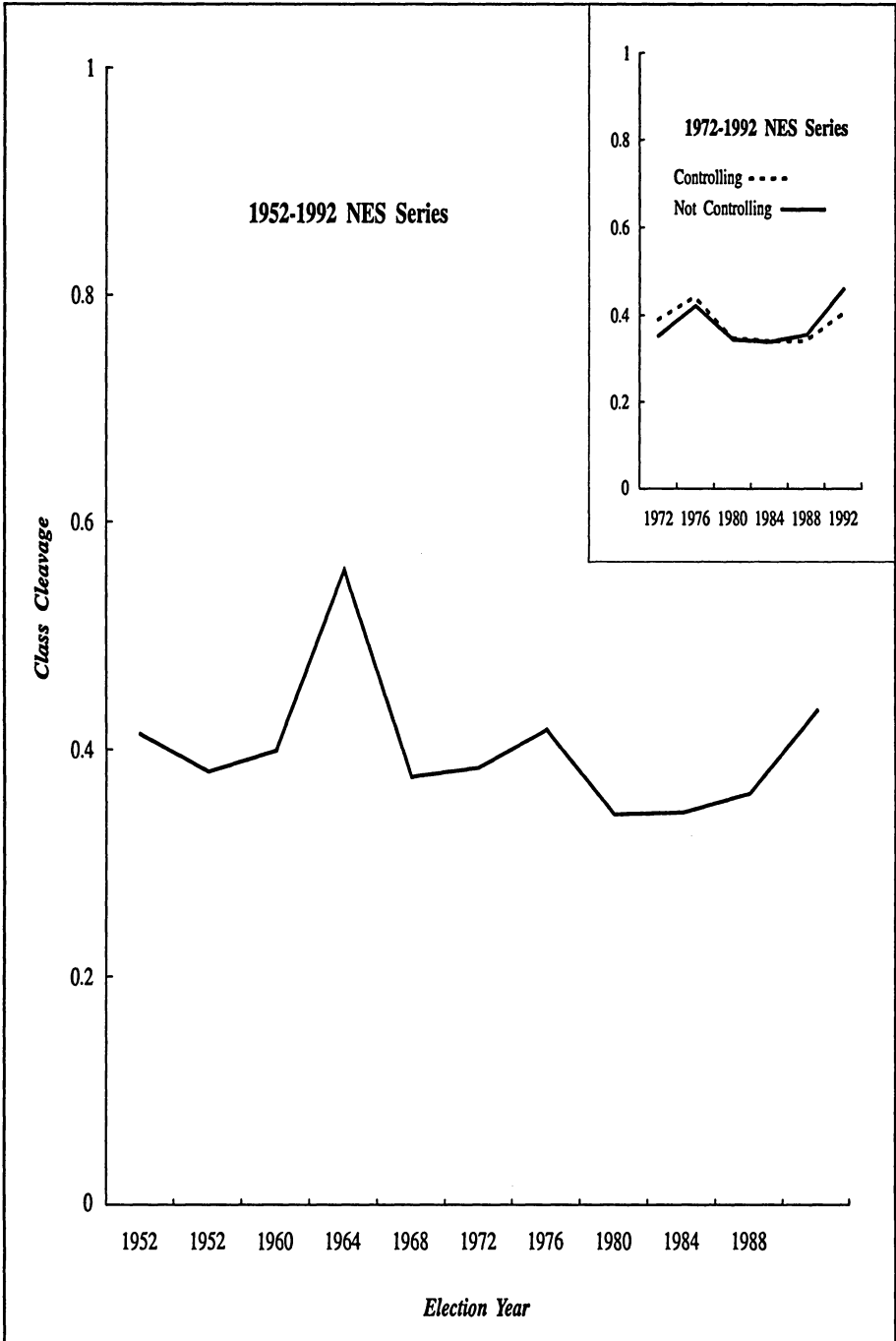
REESTIMATING THE TOTAL CLASS CLEAVAGE IN VOTE CHOICE

When juxtaposed with our findings about the persistence of class politics, the substantial effects of attitudes towards social issues among all three classes raise a final question: Given our findings of the causal importance of social issues, have changing attitudes toward such issues affected the class cleavage, possibly by reducing its magnitude? Much of the growing literature on racial politics (e.g., Edsall 1991; Huckfeldt & Kohfeld 1989) and postmaterialism (e.g., Inglehart 1990) has advanced arguments to this effect, hypothesizing that the rising political salience of social issues has displaced class-related concerns, thereby reducing the political importance of the class cleavage. If true, this hypothesis would mean that the class cleavage should show a decline in magnitude once the effect of social issues are taken into account.

We can readily extend the current analyses to answer this question. The key theoretical concept is the total class cleavage, which we measure as the standard deviation of the coefficients for each class at a given election.²³ Since we want to know what effect changing attitudes toward social issues has had on the class cleavage once social issue attitudes have been taken into account, we must rely on the 1972-92 NES data. Limiting the analyses to this period is a function of the relevant NES items being unavailable before 1972. This limitation should not, however, influence our analyses of the effect of social issues, since it is after 1972 that many of the class-specific trends occur. As an additional check on the choice of the six most recent elections, we also present below our estimates of change in the total class cleavage (not controlling for social issues) for the *entire* 1952-92 period. These twin sets of estimates allow us to evaluate whether the estimate of the total class cleavage obtained using *only* the data from the 1972-92 election studies leads to a biased portrait of the 1972-92 period (compared to the portrait derived from our analyses of the entire 1952-92 dataset).

We present in Figure 2 the results of these analyses. Each of the figure's three trend lines represents a different measure of the class cleavage in vote choice. The solid line for the entire 1952 through 1992 series is the total class cleavage *not* controlling for attitudes toward social issues, and it serves as the baseline for our comparisons (note that this line shows variation, but no net change in the class

FIGURE 2: Trends in the Class Cleavage: Controlling (----) vs. Not Controlling (—) for Attitudes Toward Social Issues



cleavage between 1952 and 1992). In the smaller, embedded chart, we present the twin estimates of the class cleavage for the more recent, 1972-92 period. As before, the solid line represents the class cleavage *not* controlling for the social issue cleavage. The second, dotted line in the embedded chart represents the trend estimates for the class cleavage when social issues have been taken into account.

The two trend lines in the embedded chart are very similar, with the single difference being that when social issues are parameterized in the model, the class cleavage is estimated as being slightly larger in 1972 and 1976 and slightly smaller in 1992. Adding social issues to the model thus has the effect of slightly flattening out the class cleavage during the 1972-92 period, but the overall magnitude of the class cleavage during this period remains largely unchanged.²⁴ The comparison between the pair of 1972-92 period estimates (i.e., the two solid trend lines) shows considerable similarity. The results for the 1952-92 series also reveal the slight upward trend that characterized the class cleavage (not controlling for the social issue cleavage) between 1988 and 1992. Most importantly, the twin class cleavage scores are virtually indistinguishable, showing that the estimates for the class cleavage obtained from the 1972-92 series are nearly identical to those obtained using the entire series. As a result, limiting the analyses of the class and social issue cleavages to the six 1972-92 election studies does not introduce any bias into our estimates of the trend and magnitude of the class cleavage during this period.

Taken in sum, these analyses reveal that differences in voting behavior based on class location versus attitudes towards social issues represent distinct and largely unrelated cleavages. To be sure, change in the social issue cleavage has had a slight effect on the class cleavage since 1972, but only by flattening out what would have otherwise been a slight, net increase in the class cleavage during this period. This latter effect is due to the slightly greater political salience social issues have among professionals (i.e., there is an interaction effect between social-issue attitudes and being a professional on vote choice). However, with the exception of professionals, social issues affect all classes in the same way. By virtue of this relationship, controlling for the social issue cleavage does *not* decrease the magnitude of the class cleavage. The rising importance of social issues and the growth of socially liberal attitudes are, as we have shown, important and politically relevant phenomena in their own right. However, these processes have little relationship to class politics and cannot be used to explain either the magnitude or the stability of the class cleavage as a whole. Contrary to theories that assume class politics and social issue politics exist in a zero-sum relationship to one another, we find them to have little relationship to one another (and thus to be positive-sum). The final message of this study is that while class politics increasingly competes with other salient bases of electoral alignments, the class cleavage in presidential vote choice exhibits a robustness that appears likely to persist into the future.

Notes

1. See, for example, Clark 1995; Clark, Lipset & Rempel 1993; Evans 1998; Franklin 1985; Franklin et al 1992; Goldthorpe 1998; Heath, Jowell & Curtice 1985; Heath et al. 1991; Hout, Brooks & Manza 1995; Manza, Hout & Brooks 1995; Nieuwebeerta 1995; Piven 1992; Ringdal & Hines 1995; Rose & McAllister 1986; Weakliem & Heath 1994a; Weakliem 1995a, 1997.

2. We deliberately restrict the scope of the current study to the relationship between class and voting. In a separate study (Brooks & Manza 1997b) we have examined the interrelationship between social cleavages in presidential voting. These analyses show that changes in the class cleavage are largely unrelated to changes in the religious, gender, and racial cleavages, thus establishing that we can analyze political change in the class cleavage separately from trends in these other cleavages.

3. Class identification can be interpreted as a political *heuristic*, a cognitive short-cut that enables voters to make choices under conditions of limited information (see e.g. Sniderman, Brody & Tetlock 1991). Research on heuristics (e.g. Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky 1982) can be used to help explain why voters rely on short-cuts such as those involved in party or social group identification (i.e. because it is more convenient to rely on heuristics than undergo a search for additional information about the past performance or prospective policies of specific political candidates or parties).

4. Conversely, the *absence* of class politics cannot always be inferred from the absence of class (differences in) voting. While somewhat less common, this situation occurs when class forces have significant effects on voting even though these effects are canceled out by the operation of other mechanisms. As discussed in the concluding section of the paper, our research on professionals illustrates this scenario (see also Brooks and Manza 1997a), showing that professionals' conservative class interests *constrained* what would otherwise have been the much larger effects of non-class factors.

5. Black and Black's (1992) work on the new Southern electorate can be similarly interpreted as providing a secular realignment model of white Southern voters, though they do not characterize their work in this way (emphasizing the notion of regional realignment).

6. As with much of the realignment literature, we focus our attention on Presidential elections, acknowledging that realignment dynamics in Congressional or state elections may differ.

7. Full details about the coding scheme are available from the authors upon request.

8. While the self-employed are sometimes considered part of the American middle class (e.g. the "old middle class" in Mills' [1951] scheme), self-employed professionals are often very difficult to distinguish in practice from employed professionals and have accordingly been placed in the same class. In our earlier analyses (Hout et al. 1995), we checked the validity of this assumption using Goodman's (1981) collapsibility test.

9. Distinguishing between the class location of skilled vs. semi/unskilled workers is necessary not only because of empirical differences in their voting behavior, but also by

APPENDIX A: Logistic Regression Decomposition

The starting point for the decompositions used in our causal analyses of the factors explaining class-specific trends in vote choice is the following equation:

$$\bar{y} = a + \sum_{i=1}^I b_i \bar{x}_i \quad (3)$$

Equation 3 summarizes the relationship between the average, predicted logit for Democratic vote choice (\bar{y}), the constant (a), the I logistic regression coefficients (b_i) and the sample means of the I independent variables (\bar{x}). This equation provides a logical starting point for our application, insofar as it illustrates the general principle behind regression decompositions: that the expected value of the dependent variable is a function of the regression coefficient multiplied by the independent variable's sample mean. The main difference between logistic and linear regression decompositions is that in the logistic case, the expected value of y and the regression coefficient are both measured in logits. Using maximum-likelihood methods, we can thus estimate both a and b_i .

From equation 3 we derive the following three equations: 4a, 4b, and 4c. In equation 4a, the average predicted logit for Democratic vote choice (in 1972) is expressed as a function of the a and b parameter estimates and the sample means for the independent variables in 1972 (\bar{x}_{72}):

$$\bar{y}_{72} = a_{72} + \sum_{i=1}^I b_i (\bar{x}_{72})_i \quad (4a)$$

In the preceding equation, we use the 72 subscript to indicate that the equation applies to the 1972 election. Note that by giving each term an additional subscript relating to class (e.g., $k = 1$ for professionals, 2 for managers, . . . , 7 for nonlabor force), we can rewrite 4a to refer to the specific class whose changing voting behavior is being analyzed. In the current example, we assume that equations 4a-c refer to professionals only, but we do not insert the second subscripts to avoid cumbersome notation. In equation 4b the average (predicted) logit for Democratic vote choice in 1992 (for professionals) is a function of the a and b parameter estimates and the sample means (for professionals) in 1992 (\bar{x}_{92}):

virtue of the class-related differences in skill and organizational power that characterize their contrasting life-chances (see Form 1995; Hout, Brooks & Manza 1993).

10. Our class distinction between managers and professionals is based on our interpretation of their different sources of income, with professionals drawing their incomes from applications of specialized knowledge within occupational monopolies while managers being embedded in less sheltered corporate sectors. Mobility studies have consistently found different patterns of mobility between the two groups (Blau & Duncan 1967; Hout & Hauser 1992). Moreover, as will become clearer in the courses of our analyses, changes in voting behavior among professionals and managers situate them in widely divergent political alignments by the end of the 1952 to 1992 period, providing indirect support for this conceptual distinction.

APPENDIX A: Logistic Regression Decomposition (Continued)

$$\bar{y}_{92} = a_{92} + \sum_{i=1}^I b_i (\bar{x}_{92})_i \quad (4b)$$

As before, we use the 92 subscript to indicate that the equation applies to the 1992 election only. Note also that equations 4a-c can be generalized so that the model's *b* coefficients are class- or time-specific (as for our preferred model, which parameterizes interaction effects between professionals and racial/gender attitudes).

Subtracting equation 4a from equation 4b yields the following equation:

$$\bar{y}_{92} - \bar{y}_{72} = (a_{92} - a_{72}) + \sum_{i=1}^I b_i ((\bar{x}_{92})_i - (\bar{x}_{72})_i) \quad (4c)$$

The right-hand side of equation 4c allocates the total predicted logit difference in vote choice among professionals between 1972 and 1992 into the effects of individual factors measured in the model. Once maximum-likelihood methods have been used to obtain the *a* and *b_i* parameter estimates for the preferred model, the decomposition in equation 4c can be used to derive estimates of the contribution of individual variables to the total change (in logits) for professionals' vote choice from 1972 to 1992. For this procedure, we first multiply the means of the independent variables in 1992 by the coefficients of the preferred model (i.e. the *b_i*); we then multiply the means of the independent variables in 1972 by the same coefficients; finally, we subtract the second set of products from the first. The estimated effect of each independent variable can then be converted into a percentage to obtain the proportion of the total predicted logit change in professionals' voting that is explained by a given variable.

11. In addition to the statistical power gained by not discarding a sizable portion of the data, including the non-full labor force participants is also necessary to conduct comparisons between the class cleavage and other politically relevant cleavages (see Brooks & Manza 1997b).

12. With regard to the inter-relationships between the independent variables, we note that the correlations between these variables are generally modest, with the largest among the class and sociodemographic variables being for household income and years of education ($r = .39$). Even responses to the two social issue items are only slightly correlated ($r = .19$), and collinearity is thus not a concern in the regression analyses.

13. We do not accordingly analyze third party presidential candidates in these analyses, treating the choice of these candidates as irrelevant to understanding the class bases of major party vote choice (see Hout et al. 1995). Additional analyses corroborated this assumption (cf. Alvarez & Nagler 1995 for the effect of Ross Perot's independent candidacy in the 1992 elections).

14. For our model comparisons, we use both the -2 log likelihood (-266) statistic as well as Raftery's (1995) BIC index of fit, calculated as $D - (df)\log(N)$, where *D* is the residual deviance (i.e., -2 log likelihood) for the model under consideration, *df* is its degrees of freedom, log is the natural logarithm, and *N* is the sample size. Negative values of BIC

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indicate a potentially acceptable model fit, with models with more negative values being preferable to those with BIC values closer to or greater than 0. Insofar as BIC takes sample size and a model's degrees of freedom into consideration, it provides a useful supplement to the -2 log-likelihood test and it also enables comparisons between nonnested models.

15. The reference category in model 1 is thus non-full-time labor force participants in 1952.

16. This hypothesis emerges from our earlier research that found professionals' voting trends to be linked to their changing attitudes towards social issues (see Brooks & Manza 1997a).

17. This constraint is consistent with our concept of a "critical realignment," but we must gauge the actual magnitude of change in the vote choice of these two classes to determine whether they do, in fact, qualify as realignments.

18. While the voting patterns of routine white-collar workers have moved them towards the Democratic Party (relative to the mean), we believe it is appropriate to postpone interpreting their shift as a realignment until evidence from additional elections can be gathered, given that our model does not include a trend parameter pertaining specifically to this class.

19. To conserve space, we do not present the additional figure graphing the trend estimates for non-full-time labor force participants (this figure is available upon request). These results are, however, easily summarized: The voting behavior of non-full-time labor force participants has generally been more Republican than Democratic, but shows considerable election-to-election volatility with no net shift in alignment.

20. We note that evidence that unskilled workers are becoming less Democratic since 1976 flies in the face of much conventional wisdom about the consequences of postindustrial economic change. Unskilled workers saw their average household incomes erode by approximately 5% during this period in the NES data, yet nonetheless report higher levels of economic satisfaction. Taken in tandem with our findings about unskilled workers' declining support for the welfare state, this result suggests that unskilled workers have become less resistant to an important ideological legacy of the two Reagan administrations, which spread an optimistic message of economic prosperity while urging a view of economic well-being as linked to tax cuts and a reduction in government social services.

21. These results also demonstrate the importance of conceptualizing and measuring the multiple dimensions of class politics. Insofar as there are multiple class-related forces that can affect political behavior (e.g. material interests, identification, or economic policy attitudes), it is appropriate for research not to reduce them to a single causal factor.

22. We discuss additional details of professionals' realignment (including the role of partisanship) at greater length in Brooks and Manza (1997a).

23. Note that the coefficients used for the calculation of the standard deviation measure are derived using the same zero-sum normalization discussed earlier in the text. See Brooks and Manza (1997b), Hout et al. (1995), or Manza et al. (1995) for additional theoretical and methodological discussion of measuring the class cleavage.

24. To state this point another way, if the magnitude of the class cleavage had declined when social issue attitudes were parameterized in the model, we would expect that the dotted trend lines representing these estimates would approach the x-axis, indicating a class cleavage near zero.

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