THE SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BASES OF MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICAL REALIGNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, 1972 TO 1992

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Research on the nature and bases of the political alignments of the middle class in the United States has produced extensive disagreements but little resolution of fundamental controversies. We address unresolved questions about the political alignments of the middle class through an investigation of change in voting behavior among two of its principal segments: managers and professionals. Among professionals, but not among managers, there has been a long-term shift away from support for Republican presidential candidates to support for Democratic candidates. Competing hypotheses about the sources of these trends are tested using data from the National Election Studies. Increasingly liberal attitudes toward social issues, not changes in economic evaluations or sociodemographic composition, explain the growing tendency of professionals to vote Democratic and their increasing divergence from managers. Party identification and partisan affect substantially mediate the effects of social group membership, views of the welfare state, and attitudes towards social issues. The relevance of these findings to understanding the Democratic realignment of professionals and the stable Republican alignment of managers is discussed.

The political alignments of the middle class have long fascinated and perplexed social scientists and analysts of U.S. politics (Tocqueville [1835] 1969; Mills 1951; Lipset [1960] 1981). Classical sociological theories of middle-class political alignments emphasize their sober conservatism and stable democratic values (Parsons 1954:39–54; Lipset 1960). Since the late 1960s, however, the emergence of pressures for social change from "new" social movements drawing support primarily from members of the educated middle class has brought forth a series of theoretical arguments about the receptiveness of various segments of the middle class to liberal political appeals. Some of these arguments emphasize the role of material interests in an expanded public sector in disposing them to support or participate in struggles for social change (Bruce-Briggs 1979; Gouldner 1979), while others point to changing values (Inglehart 1990; Clark 1994). The resurgence of conservative political and economic trends in the Anglo-American democracies during the 1980s, however, has led to a revival of the classical view (Goldthorpe 1982, 1995; Derber, Schwartz, and Magrass 1990; Reich 1991; Brint 1994). Analyzing the ways in which the economic dependence
of middle-class professionals and managers gives them a material stake in the status quo, these analysts suggest that only a relatively small fraction of the middle class is susceptible to liberal or left political alignments.

In our previous analysis of class voting in the United States since World War II (Hout, Brooks, and Manza 1995), we found evidence of a significant Democratic voting trend since the 1960s among one core middle-class segment—professionals—but not others. Those results raise important but as yet unanswered questions about the thesis of conservative retrenchment among the middle class. The main panel of Figure 1 summarizes these earlier findings. The trend lines presented in this figure are the predicted logits of choosing the Democratic over the Republican presidential candidate, and they are derived from a model of vote choice that has been fitted to data from the National Election Studies. Insofar as this model documents but does not explain those trends, we term it the “initial” model. The solid line in the main panel shows the Democratic turn among professionals; the dashed line illustrates the absence of any such trend among managers during the same period.1 Whereas managers remain a dependable Republican constituency in presidential elections, professionals increasingly support Democratic candidates.

Taking into consideration that the y-axis in Figure 1 represents the log-odds of choosing the Democratic candidate, the trend line for professionals crosses the zero-point on the x-axis (which translates into a probability of .5) in 1972, showing that this election year marks the point after which professionals are predicted as moving decisively away from their historic pattern of support for Republican candidates. The magnitude of the Democratic voting trend among professionals can be gauged by examining the difference between the logits for the first and last elections in the series: Between 1948 and 1992, professionals’ (predicted) tendency to vote Democratic increased by nearly a full logit (an increase from a probability of .35 to .60). In sum, professionals have moved from being the most Republican class in the 1950s to the second most Democratic of the six classes we analyzed by 1992 (see Hout et al. 1995).

These findings have significant implications for the debates about the political alignments of the middle class. Managers’ voting behavior situates them in a stable, conservative alignment with the Republican Party, as the classical view would suggest. Professionals, however, have undergone a realignment with the Democratic Party since the 1960s. The latter development has been missed in scholarly debates over middle-class politics in the United States because class has largely disappeared from analyses of voting, with research instead focusing instead on policy attitudes or participation in social movements.

In this paper, we develop a systematic analysis of the voting patterns summarized in Figure 1. We address two questions: (1) What factor(s) account for political realignment among professionals after 1968? (2) What factor(s) account for the electoral differences between professionals and managers that have emerged during this period? The smaller, embedded chart in Figure 1 summarizes the direction in which our analyses proceed. The angled trend line in this chart shows the Democratic voting trend among professionals for the critical 1972 to 1992 period. As before, this trend line has been derived from our initial model of middle-class voting (which includes no explanatory variables). The two remaining bold lines, by contrast, are derived from the preferred model which includes explanatory variables (discussed later in this paper). The bold line for professionals’ vote choice is now flat and congruent with the bold, dashed line for managers, showing that the additional effects parameterized in our preferred model have explained away both professionals’ voting trend and their electoral differences with managers.

In the remainder of the paper, we present the steps by which we arrive at the preferred model’s estimates and discuss the answers they provide to our two research questions. In the first part of the paper, we review re-
cent debates about middle-class political alignments in the United States, focusing on four accounts that yield competing hypotheses about the causal mechanisms explaining these outcomes. In the second section of the paper, we use data from the National Election Studies to evaluate a series of logistic regression models embodying these competing hypotheses. Once our preferred model has been chosen, we use a regression decomposition to make inferences about the relative contribution of each factor to explaining professionals’ voting trend and their differences in vote choice relative to managers. In the concluding section of the paper, we discuss the relevance of our findings to understanding the nature and evolution of political alignments among the middle class.

THEORIES OF MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS

Explanations of political behavior among social groups or classes typically identify (1) a particular demographic or social structural attribute, (2) an economic attribute relating to calculations of self- or societal-interest, or (3) an ideological attribute relating to political attitudes or policy preferences to account for phenomena observed by analysts (see Dalton and Wattenberg 1993; Manza, Hout, and Brooks 1995). While these explanations are not mutually exclusive, most accounts of middle-class politics do in fact tend to make claims about the causal priority of a particular type of mechanism. Our analysis evaluates four theoretical approaches that yield
competing hypotheses about middle-class political alignments.

**The "New Class" Thesis**

The most controversial interpretation of middle-class politics, and hence a key standpoint in recent scholarly debates, is the "new class" thesis (for historical overviews, see Szelenyi and Martin 1988; Gouldner 1979: 94–100). This theory hypothesizes that growing segments within the middle class are receptive to liberal or left-wing ideas and are disposed to participate in struggles for social change on the basis of their material interests in, or ideological commitment to, protecting and expanding the public and nonprofit sectors of the economy. The new class thesis suggests two complementary explanations of middle-class political behavior: a material interest-based and a symbolic interest-based interpretation. The materialist interpretation implies that support for state-building outcomes, and hence the most consistent support for Democratic candidates, comes from those segments of the middle class that would benefit most from these types of developments: people employed in the public or nonprofit sectors (Bruce-Briggs 1979; Lamont 1987). The symbolic interpretation implies that insofar as Democratic voting among middle-class voters will also be driven by pro-state attitudes, such attitudes might explain recent voting trends among professionals (an argument broadly consistent with Gouldner 1979).

**The Cumulative Trends Thesis**

In a series of studies, Brint (1984, 1985, 1994) examined the political beliefs and behavior of U.S. professionals, comparing them with managers and the rest of the population in the post-World War II period. He argues that liberal political attitudes among professionals in the 1960s and early 1970s were the result of changes in their demographic composition during that period. These changes included: (1) growing opportunities for employment in the public and nonprofit sectors; (2) diversification of the professions with respect to race and gender; and (3) an increased proportion of younger people without family responsibilities entering professional occupations (Brint 1984, 1994). Since the late 1970s, however, Brint (1994:115ff.) argues that these same "multiple cumulative trends" worked in reverse, leading to a renewal of conservatism among most professionals as well as the rest of the population. While noting the persistence of "social issue" liberalism among professionals—both in comparison to managers and to the rest of the population—Brint argues that the rising salience of economic issues in the recent period has made professionals more politically conservative (1994:14, 106–107). The picture of middle-class voting implied by the cumulative trends thesis is thus one in which an initial affinity with Republican candidates is (temporarily) displaced during the 1970s, only to return as a result of compositional shifts and the emergence of conservative economic self-interest during the 1980s.

**The Economic Voting Thesis**

A third account of middle-class politics exemplifies the economic approach to understanding political behavior. Economic models of voting focus on the expected costs and benefits attached to the outcomes of electoral choice and voters’ economic assessments of candidates and parties (Downs 1957; Kiewiet 1981; Hibbs 1987). Some theorists focus on voters’ personal economic situations ("ego-centric voting") or the political consequences of perceptions of the economy as a whole ("sociotropic voting"). Other analysts point to voters’ evaluations of past economic performance. Finally, some analysts emphasize prospective evaluations of the consequences of parties’ and candidates’ beliefs about future economic performance (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Haynes and Jacobs 1994). The partisan effects of economic well-being, especially frustration with the status quo caused by declining personal or occupational group fortunes among segments of the middle class (see Ehrenreich 1989; Phillips 1993; Greenberg 1995) can be expected to hinge on which party is in control of government. Insofar as Republicans controlled the presidency during five of the six election years considered in the current analyses, economic frustrations may explain increases in support for Democratic candidates during these elections.
**The New Political Culture Thesis**

The final approach to middle-class political alignments we consider focuses on changes in attitudes toward "social issues" among the middle class as a source of political cleavage. Social issues relate to civil liberties, tolerance of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity, and gender equality. The increasing prominence of such issues has led a number of analysts to hypothesize the emergence of a "second" left, whose liberal views on social issues draw them to support liberal or left political parties (Lipset [1960] 1981: 503–23; Ladd 1976–77; Edsall 1984:49–64; Zipp 1986; Weakliem 1991). Following Clark and Inglehart (1988) and Clark (1994), we label this interpretation the "new political culture" thesis.

In his elaboration of this argument, Clark (Clark and Inglehart 1988; Clark 1994) hypothesizes that a growing concern with social issues in the United States and other Western polities—especially among segments of the middle class—has led to a new political culture. This culture is distinctive in (1) emphasizing individualism; (2) favoring the relative priority of social over economic issues; and (3) conjoining fiscal moderation with liberalism on social issues (Clark and Ferguson 1983, chap. 7; Inglehart 1990: 302). Increasing support for the Democratic candidate among professionals may be linked to their growing support for social issue liberalism.

**DATA, VARIABLES, AND MODELS**

The new class, cumulative trends, economic voting, and new political culture theses identify a host of causal mechanisms that may potentially explain the Democratic voting trend among professionals and their increasing electoral divergence from managers. Our empirical analyses incorporate competing claims about these mechanisms into statistical models of voting behavior. Throughout these analyses, our dependent variable is vote choice in presidential elections, coded "1" if a respondent votes for the Democratic candidate, and "0" if (s)he votes for the Republican candidate. Votes for independent or third-party candidates during the 1972 to 1988 period have been relatively inconsequential, and we do not consider them in the current analyses.²

In line with our own and others’ recent work on class voting (Heath, Jowell, and Curtice 1985; Heath et al. 1991; Hout et al. 1995; Brooks and Manza forthcoming) we distinguish six class categories:³ (1) professionals (salaried and self-employed); (2) managers and administrators; (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) craft workers and foremen in all industries; and (6) semiskilled and unskilled workers in all industries (including farming and services). Our analyses focus on two key segments of the contemporary U.S. middle class: working professionals (salaried and self-employed) and managers (salaried only).⁴

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² A separate analysis of the bases of the significant (19 percent) Perot vote in 1992 revealed no differences in support for Perot between professionals and managers (these analyses are available from the authors upon request).

³ These categories are a modified version of Erikson and Goldthorpe’s (1992) five-class scheme. The principal occupational titles coded as "professional" include accountants, architects, computer programmers, engineers, statisticians, physical scientists, physicians, dentists, teachers, lawyers and judges, librarians, reporters, writers and editors. Additional details about coding schemes are available from the authors on request.

⁴ We limit our analysis to professionals and managers for several reasons. First, although some employment conditions of routine white-collar workers are similar to those of professionals or managers, there are also many important differences that place them, at best, in a "contradictory class location" (Wright 1978, 1985). Routine white-collar workers typically do not possess the same degree of autonomy and discretion in their work as do professionals and managers.
items makes it an ideal data set for our purposes. The items required for our analysis are available beginning with the 1972 election study, and thus our analysis is limited to the period including the 1972 through the 1992 presidential elections. However, because 1972 marks the point at which professionals’ voting trend matures (with professionals’ expected probability of favoring the Democratic Party candidate crossing the .5 threshold), the available data provide a sufficient basis for making inferences about the phenomena under investigation.

Variables

We have pooled the NES items in our analyses into a single data set in which election year is itself a variable, allowing us to directly analyze trends in vote choice. Our middle-class segment variable is coded “1” for professionals and “2” for managers. The sociodemographic covariates in the analysis are gender (female = 1), race (African American = 1), birth cohort (1960s = 1), education (BA or more = 1), region (South = 1), and employment sector (public/nonprofit = 1). These variables are all coded as dummy variables. Means on several variables (e.g., gender, cohort, and region) show large changes over this period, underscoring the possibility that changes in the composition of the two segments may explain trends and differences in the voting behavior of professionals relative to managers after 1972.

We analyze two variables as indicators of the economic bases of voting behavior. These two variables are dichotomous; they are extracted from a trichotomous item asking respondents to assess their current economic situation in comparison to the past year. The reference category of these dummy variables is the assessment “better than a year ago.” Negative economic assessments can provide individuals with reason to vote against the incumbent president and to test whether those occurring during Republican presidencies explain the Democratic voting trend among professionals, we coded the item measuring dissatisfaction to apply to the five election years in which the incumbent president was a Republican (1972, 1976, 1984, 1988, and 1992).

The next block of variables relates to the ideological bases of politics, and specifically to attitudes towards two types of issues: views of the state and views of social issues. The first state item refers to an ideal–typical attribute of the modern welfare state—the provision of jobs and a guaranteed standard of living. This item allows us to evaluate the “symbolic” version of the new class thesis. If this version of the thesis is supported, the six dummy variables for the 7-point welfare state item should help explain the differences in vote choice between professionals and managers as well as the Democratic realignment among professionals. A second state item asks whether the federal government is—as predicted by the “new political culture” thesis—viewed by citizens as too powerful. We use this dichotomous item to evaluate a claim advanced by the new political culture thesis, that the relationship between social liberalism and views of governmental power is a negative one.

The next block of variables measures attitudes toward three social issues: abortion, the civil rights movement, and gender equality. The abortion item is coded “1” for the pro-choice response and “0” otherwise. The abortion item is the one item in our analyses whose question wording varied between the 1972 to 1992 surveys. Between 1980 and 1984, the NES changed the wording of the item’s four response categories. To minimize any measurement biases introduced by this change we recoded the item as a dichotomous contrast between the most pro-choice position versus all other positions. While the results of the analyses are congruent with results obtained by omitting the abortion item from the analyses, we retained the item because of the substantive relevance of reproductive rights to the idea of a new political culture concerned with individual rights and autonomy.
civil rights item is a three-category item asking whether the civil rights movement is moving too fast, about right, or too slow, while the gender equality item is a seven-point scale asking whether women and men should have equal roles in the family and workplace. We analyze these respectively as a pair and as a set of six dummy variable contrasts. Change in the marginal distributions of responses to these social issue items is large and moves in a liberal direction, highlighting the possibility raised by the new political culture thesis, that attitudes toward social issues explain trends in, and differences between, the voting behavior of professionals and managers.

Two final items in our analyses relate to two separate dimensions of partisanship: partisan affect (the tendency to positively or negatively evaluate each major party), and party identification (the tendency to identify with one [or neither] of the two major parties). Our measure of partisan affect is dichotomous, coded “1” if respondents give any positive evaluations of the Democratic Party in the NES’s open-ended party evaluation items and “0” if they do not (see Wattenberg 1994 for related work). Our second measure is the classic Michigan seven-point scale that taps the strength and direction of party identification. As with our other polytomous items, we treat the party identification item as a set of six non-redundant dummy variable contrasts for the seven categories (these range from strong Republican to strong Democrat).

The two partisanship items provide additional information about the nature and stability of middle-class political (re)alignment. If the Democratic voting trend among professionals has led to a stable partisan realignment, the inclusion of the two items in the model should explain a sizable portion of their voting trend (and their growing differences with managers). This is a critical issue in light of the centrality of partisanship to voting behavior (Campbell et al. [1960] 1980; Miller and Shanks 1996), for if professionals’ voting trend has occurred independently of their partisan attitudes, it suggests a far less durable attachment to (and thus realignment with) the Democratic Party. By contrast, if we find that the effect of the causal factors explaining middle-class vote choice are mediated by a change in partisanship, it suggests a more lasting political realignment.

To this end, we first fit a preferred model of middle-class vote choice that omits the two partisanship items in order to estimate the total (direct + indirect) effects of our explanatory factors. We then refit the preferred model with the partisanship items, deriving estimates of the (direct) contribution of our earlier factors and of the partisanship factors to explaining trends and differences in vote choice among the middle class. This procedure allows us to make inferences about the extent to which the effect of the causal mechanisms of middle-class voting are mediated by (changes or differences in) partisanship among professionals and managers.

**Logistic Regression Models of Vote Choice**

We choose a logistic specification because of our dichotomous dependent variable. By comparing models that incorporate various combinations of independent variables and different parameterizations of their relationship to the dependent variable, we test whether and in what manner the sociodemographic, economic, and ideological attributes of professionals and managers affect their voting behavior.

The dependent variable is the log of the odds of choosing the Democratic over the Republican presidential candidate, which we designate by \( \Phi_{ij} \) for vote choice \( j \) \((j = 1 \text{ for the Democratic candidate and } 0 \text{ for the Republican}) \) for person \( i \). The first model in our analyses is a simple, one-parameter model that hypothesizes a voting trend among professionals but not among managers. Model 1 is summarized in equation 1:

\[
\Phi_{ij} = \alpha + \theta_{kj}C_{ik}Y_{il},
\]

where \( \theta_{kj} \) is the linear trend parameter, \( C_{ik} \) is a dummy variable for the two middle-class segments \((k = 1 \text{ for professionals; } 2 \text{ for managers}) \) and \( Y_{il} \) is a fixed score ranging from 1 to 6 for the six election years \((l = 1 \text{ for } 1972, 2 \text{ for } 1976, \ldots, 6 \text{ for } 1992) \). These election year scores constrain the interaction between middle-class segment and election years to be linear (in their logits). In Model 1, we set \( k \) equal to 1 to restrict the voting trend parameter to professionals only; the \( \theta_{ij} \)
parameter thus represents the assumption that the effect of being a professional ($k = 1$) on choosing the Democratic candidate ($j = 1$) increases at a constant rate (in logits) over the six election years.

Our second model is a nested extension of the first, and it hypothesizes the existence of an additional voting trend pertaining to the managerial segment of the middle class. This model includes a new parameter for a linear trend in managers’ vote choice over the 1972 to 1992 period. The comparison of Models 1 and 2 allows us to corroborate our earlier finding (Hout et al. 1995) that managers’ vote choice reflects a stable Republican alignment (and hence that $\theta_{2j} = 0$).

Using Model 3 we evaluate whether changes in the sociodemographic composition of the middle class explain the Democratic voting trend among professionals and their overall differences with managers. Note that because Model 1 turns out to be superior to Model 2, we use its 1 degree of freedom parameterization of a linear Democratic voting trend among professionals. Model 3 is summarized in equation 2:

$$\Phi_{ij} = \alpha + \theta_{ij} C_{ik} Y_{il} + \sum_{m=1}^{M} \tau_{mj} W_{im},$$

where $\Phi_{ij}$ is the logit for Democratic vote choice, the $W_{im}$ ($m = 1, \ldots, M$) are the six dichotomous sociodemographic variables and the $\tau_{mj}$ are the six new parameters to be estimated.

In addition to changes in composition, a second way in which social structural, economic, or ideological forces can affect voting is by becoming increasingly salient during the time period of interest. Changes in the political salience of an attribute implies that the association between a particular item and vote choice increases (or decreases) over time. Note that this type of change in salience can occur even if the marginal distribution of a particular item does not change during the time period in question (e.g., the association between being female and voting Democratic can increase over time even if the proportion of women is unchanged). We parameterize change in political salience as an interaction effect between election year and the attribute in question.

We investigate the possibility that salience changes in the effect of demographic attributes on political behavior explains the trend among professionals and their overall differences with managers in Model 4. The comparison of Models 3 and 4 tests whether the three-way interaction terms (between segment, election year, and the sociodemographic variables) contained in the latter model result in an improvement in fit, indicating that the political salience of social attributes has increased (or decreased) among professionals (relative to managers). Our remaining models (5 through 8) add terms representing compositional and salience effects for economic, ideological, and partisanship attributes.

The preceding models provide a comprehensive basis for evaluating hypotheses about the mechanisms of middle-class voting. In our analysis, we choose a preferred model using the $-2 \log$ likelihood ($-2LL$) statistic and Raftery’s (1995) Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC). For a pair of nested models, we interpret a complex model resulting in a significant improvement in fit over the simpler model (using the partitioned $-2LL$ statistic) as a necessary but insufficient condition on accepting that model. To accept the more complex model, it must also show significant improvement in fit according to BIC, which is calculated for logistic regression models as $D - \text{(d.f.)} \ln(N)$, where $D$ is the residual deviance (i.e., $-2LL$) for the model under consideration, d.f. is its degrees of freedom, In is the natural logarithm, and $N$ is the sample size. Negative values of BIC indicate a potentially acceptable fit, with models with larger negative values being preferable to those with BIC values closer to 0 (or positive BIC values). Because BIC takes sample size and a model’s degrees of freedom into consideration, it provides the necessary supplement to the practice of minimizing the residual deviance (i.e., sole reliance on the $-2LL$ test), which can result in the choice of unparsimonious models and hence Type I errors for large samples (Wong 1994; Raftery 1995).

Regression Decomposition

After choosing a preferred model, we use the model’s coefficients to make inferences about the relative causal importance of the various factors under examination. With re-
Table 1. Fit Statistics for Logistic Regression Models of Change in Middle-Class Voting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fit Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linear voting trend among professionals (professionals<em>vote choice</em>election year)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 1,246.44}$, Degrees of Freedom: 939, BIC: -5,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Linear voting trend among managers (manager<em>vote choice</em>election year)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 1,246.13}$, Degrees of Freedom: 938, BIC: -5,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sociodemographic variables (gender, race, cohort, education, region, and employment sector)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 1,181.72}$, Degrees of Freedom: 933, BIC: -5,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Change in salience of sociodemographic variables (professional $\times$ election year $\times$ race, gender, and public sector)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 1,160.24}$, Degrees of Freedom: 918, BIC: -5,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ideological and economic attributes (views of the state and social issue items, economic dissatisfaction)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 968.52}$, Degrees of Freedom: 915, BIC: -5,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Restricted change in salience of ideology (professionals*gender equality item [7]*election year [1992])</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 957.59}$, Degrees of Freedom: 914, BIC: -5,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No linear voting trend among professionals (Model 6 minus professionals<em>vote choice</em>election year)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 957.89}$, Degrees of Freedom: 915, BIC: -5,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Partisanship (party identification and partisan affect)</td>
<td>$-2 \text{ Log-Likelihood: 587.96}$, Degrees of Freedom: 908, BIC: -5,629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: BIC for the null model (constant only) is $-5,166; N = 941$.

* Linearly constrained interaction effects are designated by an asterisk (*); unconstrained interaction effects are designated by a times sign ($\times$).

regard to our first question, we want to know to what extent changes in the marginal distribution of a particular variable—or change in its interrelationship with the dependent variable—can explain the 1972 to 1992 Democratic voting trend among professionals. With regard to our second question, we want to know to what extent differences in the distribution of the independent variables among professionals versus managers can explain their overall voting gap during the 1972 to 1992 period.

To answer these questions, we use two regression decompositions (Teixeira 1987; Firebaugh 1997). In the first of these, we decompose the 1972 to 1992 voting trend among professionals into its components. The second decomposes the differences between professionals’ and managers’ vote choice during the entire 1972 to 1992 period. For both decompositions, we multiply the sample mean for the relevant group in the analysis by the appropriate regression coefficient. By converting this product into a percentage of the total predicted logit, we can directly compare the respective contribution of each explanatory factor.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents fit statistics for the eight models. Model 1 posits a linear voting trend for professionals. The comparison with the null model (including only a constant) shows decisive improvement (BIC difference = 17), providing conclusive evidence for a voting trend among professionals. Model 2, however, is not even remotely close to improving on Model 1’s fit, demonstrating the absence of any trend in managers’ vote choice during the 1972 to 1992 period. These results corroborate our earlier findings (Hout et al. 1995) for managers and professionals.6

We compare Models 3 and 4 with Model 1 to evaluate the evidence for changes in the effect of sociodemographic factors on middle-class vote choice. BIC handily se-

6 We also evaluated a second model of voting trends among professionals that imposed no constraints on the segment by year interaction. The comparison with Model 1 (BIC difference = 25) decisively favored Model 1, implying that the evolution of professionals’ voting during the 1972 to 1992 period is best understood as a linear trend.
lects Model 3 over both Models 1 and 4, providing decisive evidence for the main but not the interaction effects of the sociodemographic variables. Model 5’s improvement over Model 3 (BIC difference = –90) demonstrates that economic dissatisfaction and attitudes towards state and social issues have a significant impact on middle-class vote choice. Model 6, which includes an additional parameter for salience change among professionals in the gender item’s most liberal response category, in turn improves the fit of Model 5.7

Model 7 is derived from Model 6 by deleting the interaction term for the linear voting trend among professionals. The strong improvement in fit (BIC difference = –90) shows that the voting trend among professionals (and also their differences from managers) is explained away by the independent variables in the model.8 Model 7 is thus our preferred model that does not control for the effects of partisan attitudes and we use its coefficients to estimate the (total) contribution of each sociodemographic, economic, and ideological variable explaining trends and differences in middle-class vote choice. However, the decisive improvement in fit of Model 8 over Model 7 demonstrates that the partisanship variables also have a significant impact on vote choice. Model 8 is thus our preferred model that controls for partisanship, and we use its coefficients to reestimate the (direct) contribution of each variable explaining trends and differences in middle-class vote choice. By comparing the two sets of estimates obtained under Models 7 and 8, we can answer the causal question of whether the political effects of sociodemographic, economic and ideological factors are mediated by corresponding changes in partisan attitudes. This enables us to derive an informative picture of the issue-based versus partyship-based nature of professionals’ political realignment in the 1972 to 1992 period.

Decomposing the Sources of Trends and Differences in Middle-Class Vote Choice

The factors parameterized in our preferred models fully explain away the trend in professionals’ vote choice and their differences from managers. We now enlarge upon these analyses by decomposing the two sets of regression results. We consider first the decomposition of the regression results for explaining professionals’ Democratic voting trend, using the gender item’s coefficient for Model 7 (.168) to illustrate this procedure.9 The sample mean for the gender item in 1992 for professionals is .377. Multiplying the coefficient by this mean (.168 × .377) yields a product of .063. We then multiply the coefficient by the professionals’ mean in 1972 (.168 × .415) to obtain the second product, .070. Subtracting the second product from the first, we obtain a rounded estimate of -.01, which is the estimated effect (in logits) that change in the gender composition of professionals has on their likelihood of choosing the Democratic candidate. We apply this type of calculation for each of the independent variables to obtain the results presented in column 1 of Table 2.

The total predicted logit change in professionals’ vote choice from 1972 to 1992 is substantial—.51 (in logits). Of this total, (liberal) change in professionals’ gender attitudes explains by far the largest share of any variable (84 percent). The effects of changes in abortion attitudes (.15) and views of the civil rights movement (.19) explain respectively 29 percent and 37 percent of the total change in vote choice. Taken as a whole, liberal changes in professionals’ attitudes toward social issues thus explain 151 percent of the total logit change. This estimate exceeds 100 percent for a simple reason: The combined effect of the sociodemographic variables (and also the welfare state variables) predict a substantial trend away from Democratic candidates during the 1972 to 1992 period. On the basis of

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7 Allowing all state and social issue items to interact with the election years yielded an inferior model relative to Model 6 (BIC difference = 449).

8 This outcome is summarized in the embedded chart in Figure 1, which shows the sharp contrast between the Democratically inclined trend line for professionals in the initial model versus the flat trend lines for both for professionals and managers under the preferred models (Models 7 and 8).

9 Due to space considerations, we do not present the coefficients or sample means for professionals and managers. These are available from authors on request.
sociodemographic changes among professionals alone, we would predict a −.19 logit drop in levels of Democratic Party support (representing −37 percent of the total logit change). Likewise, with regard to their changing views of the welfare state, we would predict a −.15 logit drop in professionals’ support for Democratic candidates. These results establish that if only changes in sociodemographic composition and welfare state attitudes occurred, the Democratic voting trend up to 1972 would have reversed itself, leading to a reconstitutions of professionals as a solidly Republican constituency (as Brint’s cumulative trends argument suggests). However, the combined effects of liberal changes in professionals’ attitudes on social issues were more than sufficient to nullify any such reversal. Indeed, had only these liberal ideological changes occurred, professionals’ Democratic voting trend would have been substantially larger (.77).

Of the remaining independent variables, the economic variables have a modest, positive impact, explaining 6 percent of the overall trend. The corresponding estimate for change in professionals’ views of the power of the federal government is 10 percent. This result establishes that increasingly favorable views of state power led professionals to support the more liberal of the two major parties. By contrast, the −15 logit/−29 percent

### Table 2. Logistic Regression Decomposition for Explaining Trend in Vote Choice among Professionals, 1972 to 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Logit Change in Vote Choice</th>
<th>Percent of Change Explained&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2) Model 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociodemographic Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percent female</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percent African American</td>
<td>−.05</td>
<td>−10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percent in 1960s’ generation</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percent college graduate</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>−6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percent living in South</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percent employed in public/nonprofit sector</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all sociodemographic variables)</td>
<td>−.19</td>
<td>−37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in level of economic satisfaction</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of the State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in attitudes toward government power</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in attitudes toward welfare state</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>−29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all state variables)</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in abortion attitudes</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in civil rights attitudes</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in gender attitudes</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all social issue variables)</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Democratic Party affect</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in party identification</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Change in Vote Choice</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Percentages do not sum precisely to 100 due to rounding.
estimates for the welfare state item reveal a trend away from support for the welfare state. During the same period in which professionals have become more liberal on social issues and less hostile to government in general, they have also become more conservative with respect to social provision.

To this point, our results do not analyze the role that partisanship may play in explaining professionals’ vote choice. In column 3 of Table 2, we use the coefficients from Model 8 to reestimate our decomposition to take into account the effects of professionals’ party identification and their partisan affect toward the Democratic Party. Column 3 presents the percentage of the total logit change that each independent variable explains net of change in partisan attitudes. By comparing columns 2 and 3, we thus measure the extent to which the sources of professionals’ voting trend according to Model 7’s results are mediated by changes in partisanship attitudes.

Most of the effects of economic and sociodemographic change (as well as changing views of the welfare state) are mediated by partisan change. Whereas the sociodemographic variables explain ~37 percent of the total predicted change in vote choice not controlling for partisanship, they explain only ~10 percent when partisanship is taken into account in Model 8. Likewise, the ~29 percent estimate for the welfare state variable declines to ~4 percent when the partisan variables are included in Model 8. Overall, change in partisan attitudes, due in large part to the increased proportion of professionals who identify themselves as “strong Democrats,” explains 55 percent of the total change in vote choice. Because changing attitudes toward social issues account for just over 50 percent of the total predicted logit change in Model 8, a substantial portion of their effect (in Model 7) remains unexplained, having occurred entirely outside the realm of partisanship. These results suggest that the incorporation of social issues into political partisanship has been incomplete, especially when compared to the congruent patterns of change in welfare state and partisan attitudes.

The preceding results imply the following causal picture of professionals’ realignment. Increasingly liberal views on social issues have led to increasing support for Democratic presidential candidates, in part because greater social liberalism has disposed professionals to identify with, and endorse more positive views of the Democratic Party. Social issue liberalism has thus exerted a powerful effect on vote choice, part of which is direct and part indirect (mediated by changes in partisanship). Although it is logically possible to reverse the alternative causal inference (i.e., changing partisanship caused social liberalism to increase among professionals), this would raise the additional question of what force was responsible for professionals’ shift in partisanship in the first place. Notice that this additional factor would have to explain not only the partisan shift, but also the relationship between social liberalism and vote choice among professionals. In light of professionals’ conservative shift in their views of the welfare state (and the modest relationship between their changing voting behavior and personal economic evaluations), it is impossible to construe these factors as capable of explaining any Democratic political trends among professionals. Our inference, by contrast, provides a succinct and compelling answer to the causal question: Professionals’ change in voting behavior is the result of their increasingly liberal views of social issues.

Turning now to our second research question, we present in Table 3 the results of our decomposition of the average differences in the voting behavior of professionals versus managers during the entire 1972 to 1992 period. Differences in demographic composition explain 17 percent of their overall voting differences in Model 7 (again not controlling for partisan attributes). The main factors behind professionals’ greater tendency to vote Democratic over the 1972 to 1992 period are their higher percentages of African Americans and public/nonprofit sector employees (partially counterbalanced by their higher levels of education which lead to support for the GOP). Although sociodemo-

10 Space considerations do not permit us to present or fully discuss our analysis of a related question, the origins of social issue liberalism among professionals. This research shows that sociodemographic and economic factors do not explain professionals’ increasingly liberal attitudes in the 1972 to 1992 period.
Table 3. Logistic Regression Decomposition for Explaining Differences in Vote Choice among Professionals and Managers, 1972 to 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>(1) Logit Difference in Vote Choice</th>
<th>(2) Percent of Difference Explained&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>(3) Percent of Difference Explained&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociodemographic Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in percent female</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in percent African American</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in percent in 1960s' generation</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in percent college graduate</td>
<td>−.11</td>
<td>−16</td>
<td>−7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in percent living in South</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in percent employed in public/nonprofit sector</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all sociodemographic variables)</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Evaluations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in level of economic satisfaction</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in attitudes toward government power</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in attitudes toward welfare state</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all state variables)</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in abortion attitudes</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in civil rights attitudes</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in gender attitudes</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all social issue variables)</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partisanship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in Democratic Party affect</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in party identification</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Difference in Vote Choice</strong></td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Percentages do not sum precisely to 100 due to rounding.

The differences in attitudes toward the welfare state explain a sizable portion of the gap in vote choice. While professionals are far from favoring an egalitarian view of social policy—their attitudes have, in fact, become less egalitarian over time—their comparatively more liberal views explain 38 percent of the predicted difference in vote choice relative to managers. The reason for this is managers have also become less supportive of the welfare state over time. As a result, the relatively higher level of welfare state support among professionals has been left intact. While welfare state attitudes are thus of importance for understanding political differences within the middle class, economic assessments and attitudes toward the power of the federal government have little relevance to understanding the electoral differences between professionals and managers.

The greater prevalence of socially liberal attitudes among professionals explains the largest portion of their voting differences...
from managers (39 percent). In similar fashion to the earlier analyses, the gender equality and civil rights movement items are of greater consequence than the abortion item. The similarity to the decomposition of voting trends becomes even stronger when partisan attitudes are taken into account in Model 8: Attitudes toward the welfare state and sociodemographic attributes are again disproportionately associated with partisanship factors. The percentage explained by the sociodemographic variables and the welfare state variables decline respectively from 17 percent to 5 percent, and from 38 percent to 19 percent. The direct effect of attitudes toward social issues, by contrast, still accounts for 23 percent of the total difference in vote choice, with partisanship factors now explaining the largest share (52 percent).

DISCUSSION

How the middle class votes is of increasing consequence for understanding key sources of change in American politics. Post-industrial trends have enhanced the electoral significance of the professional and managerial segments of the electorate, as they have grown significantly as a proportion of the population over the course of the past several decades (Hout 1988; Reich 1991). Furthermore, they turn out to vote at a higher rate than the rest of the population (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Piven and Cloward 1988; Hout et al. 1995). Whether the middle class is a force for progressive change or a bastion of the status quo is thus a matter of considerable importance for political parties as well as for the future of the “democratic class struggle.” Yet far from being a homogeneous constituency, the contemporary middle class is politically heterogeneous. One major segment (managers) remains a solidly Republican bloc, while another (professionals) is emerging as an important main-spring of support for the Democratic Party.

We have systematically explored a number of competing hypotheses concerning the bases of middle-class political alignments, finding that liberal views on social issues have to this point driven professionals toward the Democratic Party. This novel result is difficult to integrate within existing theories of middle-class politics, for previous studies have largely ignored or downplayed the significance of social issue liberalism. For example, although Brint (1984, 1994) found greater levels of social liberalism among professionals, he placed much greater weight on conservative counter-trends during the 1980s in describing their political behavior. Jackman and Muha (1984) go even further, arguing not only that social liberalism among the middle class is of little political consequence, but also that liberal attitudes toward social issues are only superficially held. In an analysis of the future of the Democratic Party, Kuttner (1987) asserts that “to the extent that liberal positions on social issues have any effect, they push white working-class voters to the Republican column” (p. 112).

In contrast to such accounts, our analyses demonstrate that socially liberal attitudes have critical explanatory value in understanding important trends in middle-class political behavior. Not only does social issue liberalism explain the recent trends and differences in the voting behavior of professionals and managers, it has increased among professionals in both magnitude and to a more limited extent in political salience. We can think of no firmer demonstration of the specifically political importance of socially liberal attitudes than a strong association with vote choice in presidential elections. Moreover, liberal views on social issues such as abortion, women’s roles, and civil rights are the principal reasons behind professionals’ realignment with Democratic candidates and their widening differences vis-à-vis managers. Without this specific ideological base of support, our analyses show that Demo-

\footnote{In related work (see Brooks and Manza 1996), we have investigated further the significance of these developments for understanding change in the nature of class politics. These analyses show that changing views of social issues affect most classes in the same way (with the partial exception of professionals). As a result, the increasingly important political cleavage defined by social issues has not decreased the overall magnitude of the class cleavage.}

\footnote{In related work on religion and politics since the 1950s (see Manza and Brooks forthcoming), we have found that increases in liberal views of social issues have also been of consequence for some religious groups.}
ocratic presidential candidates would have lost considerable ground among both segments of the middle class. Indeed, the net effect of marginal changes on the other independent variables in our analyses would have actually led to a reversal of professionals' Democratic voting trend in the post-1972 period.

Of the four theories of middle-class politics we have examined, only the new political culture thesis provides grounds for anticipating that attitudes toward social issues matter for understanding trends in middle-class political alignments. Our analyses provide general support for this claim. However, an important limitation of this thesis relates to its claims about the relationship between attitudes toward social issues and attitudes toward the state. Inglehart (1990) and Clark (1994) argue not only that Western publics have become more liberal on social issues, but also that the mechanisms producing this shift have led to a growing skepticism about the use of the federal government to solve social problems. In part, what makes the idea of a new political culture theoretically distinctive is the assumption that this "new" kind of liberalism is structurally incompatible and at odds with the "old" sort typified by the governmental activism and modest egalitarianism associated with the New Deal.

If this aspect of the new political culture thesis were true, we would expect the relationship between liberal positions on social issues and left positions on state/economic issues to be zero-sum. In other words, a socially liberal outlook should be associated with a fiscally conservative/individualistic view of the state/economy nexus. We examine whether this assumption is tenable in Table 4, which presents pairwise correlations among the five attitudinal items in the analyses for managers and professionals. These correlations indicate that responses to the governmental power items are positively related to responses to the social issue items among professionals: Endorsing the liberal response on a given social issue item is correlated with rejecting the claim that the state has become too powerful. The same is true of the interrelationship between responses to the welfare state item and responses to the social issue items: Holding a liberal view on social issues is associated with greater support for the welfare state. Although the results for managers show slightly fewer statistically significant correlations, they too cut against the new political culture thesis, for each of the latter is again positively signed.

This is not to deny that the middle class (or professionals in particular) are economically conservative, for inspection of changes on the relevant item shows that since 1972 they have become increasingly likely to oppose the welfare state. Nevertheless professionals' growing social liberalism and their ebbing support for the welfare state do not appear to be aspects of the same ideological trend. Moreover, the positive sum results of our correlational analysis suggest that the "old" left and the "new" liberalism are complementary (or at least not contradictory) in their relationship to one another (Brooks and Manza 1994).

Social Issues and Partisan Realignment

The concept of a realignment (Key 1959; Nardulli 1995) provides a useful means of understanding the long-term shift in voting behavior among professionals, a shift which is particularly remarkable when viewed from the perspective of their solidly

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Table 4. Correlation Matrix of State and Social Issue Items for Professionals and Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class and Attitude Item</th>
<th>Abortion</th>
<th>Civil Rights</th>
<th>Gender Equality</th>
<th>Welfare State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government power</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government power</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Based on pooled data from all six election surveys.

*p < .05 (two-tailed tests)
Republican voting pattern in the 1950s (see Hout et al. 1995). Had professionals’ voting trend occurred independently of change in partisan attitudes, we could view it as a purely cultural phenomenon, perhaps incapable of supporting a more lasting realignment. However, our analysis of the mediating role of partisanship suggests that changing views of social issues have contributed to change in both party identification and partisan affect. The mediation of the impact of social liberalism on professionals’ vote choice implies that attitudes on social issues are distinctive not only for their explanatory impact, but also for the way in which they have been partially absorbed by—and thus have contributed to—new partisan alignments.

Our analyses also demonstrate that professionals are an economically conservative segment of the electorate whose increasingly inequitable views of the welfare state would otherwise have pushed them toward the Republican rather than the Democratic Party. Changes in their sociodemographic composition would also have moved them back to a conservative alignment. These results highlight the importance of social issue liberalism, showing it to be the single mechanism that can effectively counteract the conservative thrust of these previous factors. While professionals report increases in personal economic dissatisfaction, our analyses reveal that their dissatisfaction has had a minimal payoff for Democratic candidates. To date, increased liberalism on social issues has been sufficient to drive a wedge through the middle class and move professionals out of their earlier Republican alignment. However, the political impact of social issues is an ongoing process, and one whose institutionalization within the party system is as yet incomplete.

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Jeff Manza is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Pennsylvania State University. His research interests are political sociology, class analysis, and social policy. In addition to his collaborative work with Brooks, he is conducting research (with Fred Block) on the feasibility and consequences of negative income tax regimes, and a historical study of policy experts and political change in the United States between 1932 and 1950, an earlier version of which won the 1996 American Sociological Association Dissertation Award.

REFERENCES


