THE ROLE OF CLASS IDENTITY IN POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS

By

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Introduction

Theories and analyses of social class form an enduring sociological tradition extending back to 19th century Europe. Social class was, of course, important in the work of Max Weber (1947: 424-29) and especially central to the writings of Karl Marx ([1894] 1967) and a wide array of subsequent neo-Marxists (e.g., Wright 1985; Davis 1986). While class analyses are highly heterogeneous and cut in many different directions, one critical question centers on whether class matters in the contemporary United States political arena. Class could matter through objective or material conditions under which people live, or it might matter in terms of how individuals think about themselves in class terms. Here I am concerned with how individual class identity might influence political orientations of American adults, such as party identification, orientations toward government policies, and voting patterns.

A combination of conditions has emerged over the last several decades to weaken scholarly interest in the role of class in politics in Western capitalist democracies like the United States. First, studies using objective measures of class (e.g., the Alford Index) have been criticized for their inability to appropriately capture modern class positions (more below). Second, postindustrial transformations (e.g., Bell 1973) have led some scholars to proclaim the withering away of the working class (Zolberg 1995; Gorz 1997) and especially the declining significance of class generally for politics (e.g., Hechter 2004). Finally, other authors point to the rise of "identity politics" since the 1960s, which valorize the role of group status—gender, race, ethnicity—over basic

economic concerns historically connected to class as central in shaping modern political positions and activism (e.g., Aronowitz 1992; Calhoun 1994; Wiley 1994; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Dean 1997; Bernstein 2005; Gupta 2007). With the growing diversity and political salience of such non-class identities (Weakliem 2001), some see the previous influence of class in shaping social life as diminished and overshadowed by other identities in contemporary Western societies (Walsh 2004).

One might expect that the rise of identity politics would have spawned an increase in studies of the role of class identity, but with the focus remaining on other such identities as gender, race, and ethnicity, this has not been the case. Research on class identity has been limited, with most of the literature focused on its determinants (e.g., Yamaguchi and Wang 2002; Newman and Tanner-Smith 2008), not its consequences. While there has been some earlier research on the influence of class identity on political orientations in the United States (e.g., Centers 1950; Eulau 1956; Jackman and Jackman 1983), there is much we do not know about the role of class identity in modern American politics.

Demonstrating differences in individuals' political orientations based on their class identities would support the argument that social class has both a subjective reality and relevant *consequences* in modern America through this political influence. By focusing on political orientation outcomes, we are able to better understand "the 'grass roots' impact of class" as opposed to discrete political actions such as voting, which are limited by electoral options (Jackman and Jackman 1983: 192). In addition, political orientations are important

because of the strong influence of public opinion on government policies (Cook, Barabas, and Page 2002) as well as their influence in voting decisions (Beck et al. 2002). If there is empirical variation in political orientations among those who identify with different classes, that would encourage further research on other possible outcomes that may be shaped by class identity. Moreover, evidence on how this relationship may have changed over the last several decades could provide empirical support for or against popular media notions that the white working class is becoming more conservative (e.g., Frank 2004; Lappin 2006). From another angle, it also could provide the basis for future research concerning the understanding of other determinants that may influence political orientations and how they may have changed over time. However, if the data do not indicate a significant class identity effect, then at least in the realm of subaltern identities, more attention could be focused on other possible predictors of political orientations (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, region, religion).

The paper proceeds by first reviewing literature on class and its relationship to politics. Second, I derive a series of hypotheses from this literature. Third, I describe my data and methods. Fourth, I present my findings. Finally, I draw conclusions and implications from the findings.

Research on Class-Based Politics

The term “class” did not appear in the European lexicon until the 18th century (Calhoun 1994). Prior to industrial capitalism, stratification was based primarily on estates—clergy, nobility, and citizens (Marx and Engels [1848]

1959). In its most basic form, class can be seen as involving "a criterion or set of criteria in terms of which individuals may be ranked descriptively along a scale" (Giddens 1973: 106). In Marx's conceptualization, the proletariat consisted of workers who provided labor and were exploited by capitalists (or bourgeoisie) who owned the means of production. For Marx, there were other class categories (e.g., landowners, lumpenproletariat), but in the course of struggle induced by the logic of capitalism, individuals would tend to be divided into two opposing classes (i.e., the proletariat and the bourgeoisie) (Marx and Engels [1848] 1959).

The influence of class in the 19th and early 20th centuries can be seen clearly in the workers' movements that took place around the globe, where confrontations were common between workers and their employers (as well as the authorities). Workers shared a collective interest in fighting for their political and economic rights (Hechter 2004). This social action emanated from individuals who shared social conditions, which influenced their life outlooks. The influence of class on the political viewpoints of individuals is also important for views on specific political issues (e.g., Eulau 1956; Jackman and Jackman 1983) as well as voting (e.g. Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Isaac, Harrison, and Lipold 2008)—in other words, *political orientations*. In short, there is an impressive history and substantial literature that suggests that politics—both institutionalized and movements—in capitalist societies is shaped, at least in part, by various dimensions of social class.

Objective conditions of class

Much of the research concerning the relationship between class and political orientations in the 20th century used objective measures of class as opposed to the subjective understanding of one's class identity. Many of these studies have relied on the Alford Index, which splits classes into those who engage in manual versus nonmanual work and uses those categories to explain left/right party voting (e.g., Pakulsiki and Waters 1996; Evans 1999; Clark 2001; Clark and Lipset 2001; Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001). Research using the Alford Index provides evidence of a decreasing relationship between class and political orientations over the last half of the twentieth century (e.g., Pakulski and Waters 1996; Niewbeerta and DeGraaf 1999; Clark and Lipset 2001; Clark, Lipset and Rempel 2001). But there are serious weaknesses inherent in the Alford Index, including its singular focus on the manual/nonmanual distinction as a proxy for class. Its simplistic strategy of dichotomizing class cannot account for the complexities of class in modern day society, and "major conceptual problems arise over where to place the wide array of intermediary parties" as well (Manza and Brooks 1996: 720). The Alford Index also fails to consider any changes in general popularity of political parties (Heath, Jowell, and Curtice 1985). In addition, it does not take into consideration the relationship between class and voting that might be due to nonvoting (Manza and Brooks 1996). Therefore, how much of the apparent weakening in the relationship between class and political orientations during the second half of the 20th century is real or due to measurement invalidity is unclear.

On balance, the research employing objective measures of class to examine the class-politics relationship in the U.S. finds a mix of empirical evidence. Some analysts find evidence for a declining trend in the salience of class-based politics (e.g., Clark and Lipset 2001; Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001; Hechter 2004) while others point to a persistence of class influence (e.g., Goldthorpe 2001; Hout, Brooks, and Manza 2001; Weakliem 2001). There is also evidence that the conventional methods of analyzing class increasingly underestimate its effects on social and political life (Houtman 2003) (more below).

Class Identity

Another way of looking at class focuses on the subjective, the class with which an individual identifies ("subjective class identity" or "class identity"), as opposed to class defined as objective characteristics (e.g., occupation, ownership—or not—of capital). Using subjective class identification "involves both self-evaluation and self enchantment as in social comparison processes (Gruder 1997[1]), and it reflects not only the person's present class situation but his or her prospects for future class attainment" (Yamaguchi and Wang 2002: 445). Richard Centers (1949) was an early forerunner on this question and found that the two largest classes with which individuals identified in the United States were the working and middle classes (when given options of lower, working, middle, and upper), with working class holding a slight numerical edge at that historical moment (Vanneman and Cannon 1987).

[1] Cited within Yamaguchi and Wang 2002

Research concerning subjective class identity goes beyond the univariate strategy of simply describing the distribution of identity, with a substantial body of research focusing on the determinants of class identity. Mary and Robert Jackman analyzed possible determinants using data collected in the 1970s. In obtaining the respondents' class identity, the question read,

> People talk about social classes such as the poor, the working class, the middle class, the upper middle class, and the upper class. Which of these classes would you say you belong to? (Jackman and Jackman 1983: 14)

The Jackmans' (1983) use of five different classes not only placed the middle class truly in the middle of possible responses, but also allowed respondents to have non-middle class choices that were not polar extremes. As one might expect in United States context (Griffin and Isaac 2001), the middle class was modal, with 43.3 percent self-identifying as such. However, working class was a close second, with 36.6 percent. Poor, upper middle, and upper class accounted for 7.6, 8.2, and 1.0 percent respectively (Jackman and Jackman 1983).

Mary and Robert Jackman (1983) found that occupational prestige, education, skill, income, and job authority all influenced class identity. Each of these variables had a significant positive effect on the class with which respondents identified. However, the distinction between manual and nonmanual jobs did not have a significant effect. Although they found no significant difference in the relationship between socioeconomic status and class identity by sex, there was a difference by race, with this relationship being "weak or nonexistent" for black respondents (Jackman and Jackman 1983: 82). Jackman and Jackman (1983) theorized that this difference was due to a

different set of attitudes concerning social class among blacks. For African-Americans in general, social class identity appears secondary to racial identity.[2]

Central to the present research, however, are possible *consequences of subjective class identity*, especially its effect(s) on political orientations. Research in the 1940s showed that members of working and lower classes were more likely to support the Democratic Party and the New Deal than were individuals in the other classes (Centers 1950). Richard Centers expanded on this line of inquiry with his research on class identity's effect on political orientation, specifically the support for Franklin Roosevelt in the 1944 election. His focus, however, was on the difference between those who identified with the "laboring class" as opposed to the "working class." Centers found more support for Roosevelt among those who identified as part of the laboring class (both classes still supported Roosevelt in higher numbers than the middle class) (Centers 1950).

In the 1950s, Heinz Eulau (1956) analyzed other political orientation consequences of class identity; respondents had the options of identifying only as "middle" or "working class." The first issue dealt with the views on "the amount of government activity desirable in the fields of unemployment, education, housing, and so on" (Eulau 1956: 245-246). Respondents who identified as middle class were more likely to indicate that the government should do less, although the relationship was weak. He also investigated the relationship between class identity and political party affiliation, finding that the

[2] Jackman and Jackman (1983) also discussed possible effects of class identity, which are addressed below.

majority of the working class respondents identified as Democrats while most of the middle class identified as Republicans. Moreover, those who identified as working class saw themselves as better off when Democrats were in office (Eulau 1956).

Two decades later, Mary and Robert Jackman improved on class identity research by expanding the array of class categories and paying particular attention to the determinants of class identity. Like Eulau, they also analyzed the consequences of class identity, including its effect on political orientations. As previously discussed, one of the key areas where Jackman and Jackman differed from Eulau was their use of five classes (poor, working, middle, upper middle, and upper) as opposed to only two. Their analyses, however, did not take upper class into consideration due to the small number of respondents that identified as upper class in their data (Jackman and Jackman 1983).

Jackman and Jackman's (1983) focus was on how respondents viewed the government's role in supporting job guarantees and a minimum income. In each category, the respondents were given the option of Government…"should do a lot more," "do some more," "is doing about right," or "should do less" (Jackman and Jackman 1983: 203). The higher the class identity, the lower the support for job guarantees, and the poor were more than two times as likely as the upper-middle class to feel that government should do more. A similar pattern was found when examining the views on minimum income. Again, the poor were more than twice as likely as the upper middle class (and also more than twice as likely as the middle class in this instance) to support the position that the

government should do more. However, class solidarity mattered. When the Jackmans controlled for the strength of class bonds, they found that there was not a significant effect of class identity alone on these political issues for those who expressed a weak bond to their class. The relationship did remain for those who possessed stronger bonds to their class (Jackman and Jackman 1983).

Jackman and Jackman also analyzed class identity effects on tax policy. As a whole, 53 percent supported a progressive tax while 44 percent supported a flat tax. This pattern held true for all classes except the poor, who were more likely to support a progressive tax policy (62 percent) and less likely to support a flat tax policy (32 percent). Thus, class identity had little effect on preferred tax policy for most of the population (Jackman and Jackman 1983).

However, Jackman and Jackman (1983) considered only whites in this portion of their research because their data suggested that the attachment of black non-poor respondents to their racial identity outweighed their attachment to class identity (the attachment was equal for the black poor). More recent research (e.g., Weakliem 2001; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) has also suggested no relationship between class and political orientations among African Americans. Although he used objective class measures as opposed to the subjective measures utilized by the Jackmans, David Weakliem (2001) argued that there was no relationship between class and voting for blacks, with close to 90 percent of blacks voting Democratic. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2006) also found that when using income, another objective measure, as a proxy for

class, there was no relationship between class and political identity for blacks—again, with an overwhelming percentage of blacks identifying as Democrats.

Changing relationship between class and political orientations

But has the relationship between class identity and political orientations changed over the last half-century? The preponderance of the literature addressing trends in class-politics has relied on objective class measures of social class. It is commonly argued that the relationship between class and politics has been decreasing in the United States over the last 60 years (Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001). As mentioned earlier, studies using the Alford Index have shown a decrease in class-induced political preferences and actions over the last 60 years of the 20th century (Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001), but the index has many weaknesses which also were discussed above. This decrease in class-based voting, however, has also been demonstrated by researchers using the Erikson-Goldthorpe schema, which utilizes seven classes (Nieuwbeerta 1995; Nieuwbeerta and De Graff 1999). This result nevertheless only considers data up to the 1980s.

The proponents of the demise of class politics contend that it is due to such factors as class becoming more complex and less polarized (Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001); an increase in influence of other identities, such as race, religion, and other social divisions on politics (Weakliem 2001); and the creation of two lefts (i.e., economic liberalism vs. social liberalism) (Clark and Lipset 2001). Another reason behind this presumed decrease is an increase in the permeability of classes. In the 20th century, the class within which one is born

has much less effect on one's life chances than it did in the 18th or 19th centuries (Hechter 2004). Similarly, increased educational opportunities and occupational shifts have allowed for more opportunities for individuals to interact with those from different classes (Hechter 2004: 408).

There is certainly no dearth of research countering the arguments of the declining significance of class on political views and voting patterns (e.g., Stonecash 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Isaac, Harrison, and Lipold 2008). When using family income as a proxy, the divide between classes[3] has recently been increasing when examining its effect on voting patterns (Stonecash 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000), and low income has been found to be a reliable predictor of economic liberalism (Houtman 2003). This same pattern has been demonstrated using election data over the last half of the 20th century, with higher income individuals showing an increased propensity to support Republican candidates (Stonecash and Mariani 2000; Stonecash et al. 2000; McCarty, Pool, and Rosenthal 2006) as well as being more likely to identify as Republican (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). In addition, similar trends have been found when analyzing how individuals feel toward each party, with the less affluent feeling increasingly positive about the Democratic Party and negative about the Republican Party. The more affluent have remained mostly positive toward the latter (Stonecash 2000).

[3] Income categories are < $20,000; $20-29,999; $30-49,999; $50,000+

There are many claims about why the relationship between income and political orientations has strengthened, much of it relating to increased income inequalities and a more pronounced conservative/liberal divide in politics and among politicians (Stonecash and Mariani 2000). Moreover, the Democratic Party has increasingly supported more economically liberal positions, including the support for welfare and increased government funding for education and healthcare (Erikson and Wright 1997; Stonecash et al. 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000). The Republican Party, on the other hand, has become increasingly conservative, typically opposing the above mentioned programs supported by Democrats and strengthening their support for free markets (Hout, Manza, and Brooks 1999; Stonecash et al 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000).

What one must keep in mind when reviewing the debate about the increase in class politics is its reliance on income as a proxy for class. Although income and social class are highly correlated (Schooler and Schoenbach 1994) and some use income interchangeably with class (e.g., Stonecash et al 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006), one must keep in mind that it is only one dimension of class. It does not take into account other indicators, such as occupational prestige, workplace dynamics, and education, which are influential in class identity (Jackman and Jackman 1983); nor does it consider factors such as lifestyles, social status, and culture (Clark and Lipset 2001).

The preponderance of research on change in class politics, however, relies on objective class measurements. The most recent research that takes

subjective class identity into account (Jackman and Jackman 1983) relies on data from one point in time and does not consider how the impact of class on political orientation may or may not have changed over time. We simply do not know how, if at all, the class identity-political orientations relationship may be changing over time. This is the void that I seek to fill.

Central Hypotheses

Based on the foregoing discussion, I propose to test the following race-specific and temporal change hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1a: Among whites, I expect respondents who identify with higher classes to also identify with more conservative party tendencies; I also expect the same in aggregate because overall patterns are driven by more numerous white respondents.

Hypothesis1b: Among blacks, I expect class identity and party tendencies to be independent of each other.

Hypothesis 2a: Among whites, I expect class identity to be positively related to economic conservatism; I also expect the same in aggregate because overall patterns are driven by more numerous white respondents.

Hypothesis 2b: Among blacks, I expect class identity and economic conservatism to be independent of each other.

Hypothesis 3a: Over time, if the increasing significance of class argument is correct, I expect the strength of the relationship between class identity and

conservatism among whites to increase and possibly begin to appear among blacks.

Hypothesis 3b: Over time, if the decreasing significance of class argument is correct, I expect the strength of the relationship between class identity and conservatism among whites to decrease.

Hypothesis 3c: Over time, I expect class identity and conservatism among blacks to be independent of each other.

Data and Methods

My analysis builds on and extends Jackman and Jackman (1983) by examining class identity's influence on political orientations of U.S. adults in general, specific to race, and addressing possible historical changes in the relationship over the last several decades. The data come from the General Social Survey (GSS), a nation-wide survey administered by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Surveys began in 1972 and were conducted annually until 1994 (except for 1979, 1981, and 1992). During this time, the sample sizes ranged from 1372 to 1613 (with a target of 1500). Black respondents were oversampled in 1982 and 1987, and I adjust for that in the subsequent results. Since 1994, the GSS has been administered every even numbered year using two samples, each with the target size of 1500. The actual total sample sizes have been between 2756 and 2992.[4] Because of continuity in questions dealing with the key variables in the present study, the GSS repeated

[4] http://gss.norc.org/gss_faqs.asp

cross-sections can be used to gauge social trends. All available years were used for each response variable considered (the exact years used are indicated on the tables).

My key independent variable is class identity (see Table 1 for full details on variables). The response options given in the GSS are “lower class,” “working class,” “middle class,” and “upper class.” Class identity is treated as ordinal and coded 1 to 4 (lower class to upper class). The general dependent variable is political conservatism, measured in two ways. The first is by party identification, in which the respondents are given the options of “strong Democrat,” “not strong Democrat,” “independent/near Democrat,” “independent,” “independent/near Republican,” “not strong Republican,” “strong Republican,” and “other party.” Party identity is also treated as ordinal with coding from 1 to 7 for increasing conservative tendencies (strong Democrat to strong Republican). The “other party” category was not considered in the present analysis.

The second way in which conservatism is measured is in political orientations regarding economic policy issues, which include three separate variables concerning the views of the government’s role: government spending on welfare, government spending on social security, and government responsibility to reduce income differences. The possible responses to the first two questions are “too little,” “about right,” and “too much.” As with party identification, these variables are treated as ordinal and coded 1-3 as levels of conservatism increase (from too little government spending to too much). For the view on income difference, the responses are on a scale from 1 to 7, with one

meaning government should reduce the difference and seven being the government should take no action (the more economically conservative position). As with the other economic conservatism variables, this is treated as ordinal, keeping the original coding which follows the increase in conservatism.

I control for a wide variety of variables that past research has suggested may be important. With prior literature (e.g., Jackman and Jackman 1983; Weakliem 2001; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) demonstrating no relationship between class and political orientations for blacks, it is important to control for race. Sex is controlled due to the gender gap in voting; women are more likely to support Democratic candidates as well as liberal policies in the United States (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Edlund and Pande 2002; Kaufmann 2002; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004). With recent polls suggesting that younger Americans are embracing liberal policies and identifying as liberal at a higher rate than older Americans (Nagourney and Thee 2007; Soltis 2009) as well as literature suggesting a similar relationship from the middle of the century through the early 1970s (e.g., Knoke and Hout 1974), age is an important control variable as well. In addition to an inverse relationship shown between years of education and identification with the Republican Party in this same period (Knoke and Hout 1974), a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center (2005) demonstrated that a higher percentage of college graduates as well as individuals with a postgraduate experience identify as liberal. Earlier literature by Wiener and Eckland (1979) has shown a similar relationship between education and political orientations (also see Houtman 2001), so I also control for

education. Income[5] is controlled to be certain that any significant relationships between class identity and political orientations are not spurious due to an indirect influence of income through class identity. This is especially important since prior literature (e.g., Stonecash et al. 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) demonstrates a significant relationship between income and political orientations. Marital status has also been shown to influence political orientations, with single people being more likely to vote for Democrats than married people (Weakliem 2001); therefore, I control for marital status. The last control is religion, which is based on prior literature demonstrating that Catholics and Jews are more likely to support Democratic candidates than are Protestants (Weakliem 2001). Table 1 reports the measurement details and descriptive statistics for all dependent and independent variables employed below.

Findings

Table 2 presents the unstandardized coefficients from multiple regression models[6] predicting conservative party identification and conservative views on the government's role in reducing the income gap. Table 3 presents the models predicting conservative views on social security and welfare. In both Tables 2

[5] The categories for income used were developed prior to the 1972 survey and are out of date for the later responses, with "$25,000 or more" being the highest income option. Although the income variable has been updated for later years, the original scale is used in my analyses for continuity.

[6] All regressions reported herein are OLS estimates. While the linearity of class category relations was examined and found to hold (Appendix), it might be worthwhile for future research to use an ordered logistic regression estimator rather than OLS.

Table 1: Measurement of Independent, Dependent, and Control Variables and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Description	Metric	Mean[7]	S.D.
Independent Variable				
Class Identity (CLASS)	In which social class would you say you belong?	1 = lower class; 2 = working class; 3 = middle class; 4 = upper class	2.48	0.64
Dependent Variables				
Political Party (PARTYID)	Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?	1 = strong Dem; 2 = mod Dem; 3 = ind, leaning Dem; 4 = independent; 5 = ind, leaning Rep; 6 = mod Rep; 7 = strong Rep	3.70	1.99
Welfare (NATFARE)	Opinion on government's spending on welfare	1 = too little; 2 = about right; 3 = too much	2.29	0.78
Social Security (NATSOC)	Opinion on government's spending of social security	1 = too little; 2 = about right; 3 = too much	1.49	0.61
Reduction on income gap (EQWLTH)	Opinion on government's responsibility to reduce income gap between rich and poor	1 = reduce difference to 7 = no action	3.73	1.96
Control Variables				
White*	Race is white	0=no; 1=yes	0.82	0.39
Black	Race is black	0=no; 1=yes	0.13	0.34
Other Race	Race is other	0=no; 1=yes	0.05	0.22
Male	Sex is male	0=no; 1=yes	0.46	0.50
Female*	Sex is female	0=no; 1=yes	0.54	0.50
Married*	Is married	0=no; 1=yes	0.62	0.49
Widowed	Is widowed	0=no; 1=yes	0.07	0.25
Divorced	Is divorced	0=no; 1=yes	0.09	0.28
Separated	Is separated	0=no; 1=yes	0.03	0.16
Never Married	Has never been married	0=no; 1=yes	0.20	0.40
Protestant*	Protestant religious affiliation	0=no; 1=yes	0.59	0.49
Catholic	Catholic religious affiliation	0=no; 1=yes	0.26	0.44
Jewish	Jewish religious affiliation	0=no; 1=yes	0.02	0.14
None	No religious affiliation	0=no; 1=yes	0.10	0.30
Other[8]	Other religious affiliation	0=no; 1=yes	0.02	0.13
Age	Respondent's Age	18-89+	44.12	16.96
Education	Highest year of school completed	0-20	12.68	3.12
Income	Total Family Income	1: Less than $1000 to 12: $25,000+	10.13	2.73

[7] Mean and SD are from aggregated samples for all available years

[8] Beginning in 1998, Buddhism, Hinduism, Other Eastern, Moslem/Islam, Orthodox-Christian, Christian, Native American, Inter-Nondenominational categories were added. These have been aggregated into "Other"

Table 2: Models of Class Identity Influence on Political Orientations: Political Party and Income Policy

	Dependent Variables							
	Party ID (1973-2006)				Income Gap (1978-2006[9])			
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3[†]	Model 4[††]	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3[†]	Model 4[††]
Class	.283*** (.016)	.344*** (.017)	.308*** (.018)	.077 (.030)	.343*** (.021)	.396*** (.024)	.373*** (.024)	.137** (.051)
Race								
Black	-1.637*** (.030)	-.895*** (.103)	--	--	-.720*** (.042)	-.038 (.141)	--	--
Other	-.522*** (.053)	.162 (.176)	--	--	-.451*** (.050)	-.066 (.225)	--	--
Class*Black	--	-.325*** (.043)	--	--	--	-.298*** (.059)	--	--
Class*Other Race	--	-.291*** (.073)	--	--	--	-.201* (.093)	--	--
Sex								
Male	.208*** (.019)	.209*** (.019)	.211*** (.022)	.199*** (.043)	.343*** (.021)	.311*** (.026)	.364*** (.024)	.091 (.072)
Age	-.007*** (.001)	-.007*** (.001)	-.006*** (.004)	-.017*** (.002)	.004*** (.001)	.004*** (.001)	.004*** (.001)	.002 (.003)
Education	.028*** (.004)	.026*** (.004)	.038*** (.004)	-.036*** (.008)	.070*** (.005)	.069*** (.005)	.077*** (.005)	.042*** (.013)
Income	.004 (.004)	.003 (.004)	.016*** (.005)	-.033*** (.007)	.049*** (.006)	.049*** (.006)	.061*** (.007)	.002 (.012)
Constant	-34.646*** (2.129)	-35.213*** (2.129)	-36.572*** (2.393)	-17.959 (4.656)	1.005 (3.475)	.454 (3.475)	7.140 (3.858)	-31.773*** (9.166)
Adjusted R-squared	.116	.117	.066	.053	.085	.086	.069	.023
N	40,625	40,625	33,490	5,413	21,251	21,251	17, 411	2,813

[9] Question not asked in 1982 and 1985

Notes: Other Variables controlled: Year, Marital Status, and Religion; Reference variables: White, Female, Married, Protestant; "Oversamp" weighting to adjust for oversampling of black respondents in 1982 and 1987; Standard errors in parentheses

[†]White respondents only; [††]Black respondents only
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 3: Models of Class Identity Influence on Political Orientations: Social Security and Welfare Policy

	Dependent Variables							
	Social Security (1984-2006)				Welfare (1973-2006)			
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3†	Model 4††	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3†	Model 4††
Class	.095***	.113***	.099***	.046***	.030***	.042***	.048***	-.036
	(.006)	(.007)	(.007)	(.013)	(.008)	(.009)	(009)	(.021)
Race								
Black	-.182***	.012	--	--	-.426***	-.261***	--	--
	(.011)	(.038)			(.016)	(.052)		
Other	.018	.219***	--	--	-.143***	-.076	--	--
	(.016)	(.060)			(.027)	(.098)		
Class*Black	--	-.084***	--	--	--	-.072***	--	--
		(.016)				(.022)		
Class*Other Race	--	-.086***	--	--	--	-.028	--	--
		(.025)				(.040)		
Sex								
Male	.112***	.113***	.122***	.062***	.025*	.025*	.038***	.006
	(.007)	(.007)	(.008)	(.018)	(.010)	(.010)	(.010)	(.030)
Age	.002***	.002***	.003***	-.001	.000	.001***	.001**	.001
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.001)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.001)
Education	.027***	.026***	.032***	.005	-.005***	-.005**	-.009***	.007
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.005)
Income	-.002	-.002***	.003	-.012***	.049***	.048***	.048***	.046***
	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.005)
Constant	15.196***	15.025***	17.380***	10.459***	18.790***	18.659***	20.511***	2.254
	(1.078)	(1.078)	(1.216)	(2.584)	(1.048)	(1.049)	(1.125)	(3.177)
Adjusted R-squared	.070	.071	.068	.028	.085	.085	.044	.048
N	28,108	28,108	22,738	3,857	24,665	24,665	20,629	3,190

Notes: Other Variables controlled: Year, Marital Status, and Religion; Reference variables: White, Female, Married, Protestant; “Oversamp” weighting to adjust for oversampling of black respondents in 1982 and 1987; Standard errors in parentheses

†White respondents only; ††Black respondents only
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

and 3, model 1 includes all races and treats class identity in an additive fashion; model 2 includes all races and tests for interaction effects between class and race; model 3 and model 4 are similar to model 1, except the former only includes only white respondents, while the latter includes only black respondents.

In support of H1a, there is tendency for whites who identify with higher classes to affiliate toward more conservative Republican Party identification, net of other factors. This relationship holds true both with and without interaction effects between class and race (model 1 and model 2, respectively). With all races combined, this relationship remains and is driven by the large percentage of white respondents in the aggregate. As expected, model 4 demonstrates a non-significant relationship between class identity and party identification for black respondents.

The results in Table 2 and Table 3 also provide support for hypotheses dealing with economic conservatism. White respondents in higher classes express greater conservatism on each of the three policies (views on the government's role in decreasing the income gap, social security, and welfare), in support of H2a. Again, the large number of white respondents relative to other races leads to a similar relationship in the aggregate. When black respondents are analyzed separately, there are mixed results. Counter to H2b, we find similar patterns to white respondents for the income gap and social security variables. However, there is no substantial relationship between class identity and views on welfare for black respondents, which *is* consistent with H2b.

The above findings are consistent with the prior literature including the Jackman and Jackman study (1983), which also demonstrated a positive relationship between class and economic conservatism for white respondents. With whites representing the overwhelming majority of respondents, the results for all races are also in line with previous literature (e.g., Centers 1950; Eulau 1956; Jackman and Jackman 1983). Although it initially appears for black respondents that there is a significant positive relationship between class and views on the government reducing the gap between the rich and poor as well as social security, as addressed below, this relationship does not hold when the variables are broken down by year. Instead, the results become relatively consistent with the prior literature concerning blacks and class identity, which suggests (1) that black racial identity trumps class identity (Jackman and Jackman 1983), (2) a lack of relationship between class identity and voting (Weakliem 2001), and (3) no relationship between income and political identity (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006).

The findings in Tables 4 and 5 address arguments about how class identity's influence on political views might have changed over time. These tables present the unstandardized coefficients from multiple regression models addressing class identity's effect on conservatism separated by race (white and black) for each available year, net of the same control variables applied in Table 2.

Table 4: Class Identity Effects by Race Over Time: Political Party and Income Policy

	Party ID		Income Gap	
Year	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks
1973	.355 (.141)	.038 (.306)	--	--
1974	.347*** (.098)	.023 (.213)	--	--
1975	.302** (.095)	.216 (.196)	--	--
1976	.223* (.094)	.281 (.222)	--	--
1977	.321** (.098)	.233 (.210)	--	--
1978	.230* (.096)	.110 (.194)	.473*** (.142)	-.279 (.295)
1980	.082 (.093)	-.117 (.173)	.291** (.096)	.199 (.253)
1982	.246* (.098)	.132 (.090)	--	--
1983	.251 (.133)	.284 (.274)	.550*** (.137)	.325 (.372)
1984	.278** (.103)	.425* (.204)	.223* (.102)	-.034 (.240)
1985	.422*** (.098)	.203 (.188)	--	--
1986	.499*** (.096)	-.163 (.181)	.599*** (.096)	.461* (.224)
1987	.357*** (.099)	-.076 (.100)	.288** (.093)	-.206 (.128)
1988	.345*** (.108)	-.107 (.192)	.453*** (.125)	-.086 (.258)
1989	.511*** (.102)	-.023 (.176)	.410*** (.111)	.492* (.227)
1990	.277* (.110)	-.542* (.257)	.473*** (.133)	-.117 (.289)
1991	.416*** (.109)	.476** (.183)	.418*** (.122)	.127 (.217)
1993	.214* (.095)	-.046 (.201)	.058 (.112)	.062 (.244)
1994	.336*** (.074)	.347** (.124)	.378*** (.083)	.110 (.192)
1996	.331*** (.071)	.230 (.122)	.279*** (.084)	.383 (.198)
1998	.355*** (.073)	-.087 (.122)	.527*** (.090)	.112 (.187)
2000	.159* (.071)	.355** (.128)	.360*** (.086)	-.045 (.198)
2002	.237** (.075)	-.163 (.114)	.330* (.132)	-.160 (.281)
2004	.283*** (.080)	.204 (.122)	.319* (.131)	-.051 (.363)
2006	.203** (.076)	-.092 (.119)	.478*** (.089)	.420* (.188)

Notes: Variables controlled are the same as Tables 2 and 3; Standard errors in parentheses
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 5: Class Identity Effects by Race Over Time: Social Security and Welfare Policy

	Social Security		Welfare	
Year	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks
1973	--	--	.107*	-.053
			(.053)	(.120)
1974	--	--	.058	-.021
			(.039)	(.099)
1975	--	--	.010	.105
			(.041)	(.092)
1976	--	--	.058	-.121
			(.036)	(.136)
1977	--	--	-.008	-.023
			(.034)	(.110)
1978	--	--	-.003	-.033
			(.034)	(.099)
1980	--	--	.093**	-.195
			(.034)	(.104)
1982	--	--	-.024	.064
			(.039)	(.056)
1983	--	--	.046	-.023
			(.054)	(.174)
1984	.074	.060	-.075	.113
	(.045)	(.100)	(.068)	(.188)
1985	.079**	-.059	.090	-.166
	(.031)	(.070)	(.051)	(.206)
1986	.078*	-.034	.120*	-.175
	(.031)	(.073)	(.056)	(.136)
1987	.089**	.016	.127	-.086
	(.031)	(.040)	(.069)	(.105)
1988	.097**	.092	.021	-.023
	(.033)	(.074)	(.063)	(.136)
1989	.120***	.011	.146**	.119
	(.030)	(.058)	(.055)	(.144)
1990	.111***	.051	.102	-.217
	(.034)	(.076)	(.063)	(.176)
1991	.098**	.015	.090	-.096
	(.032)	(.061)	(.058)	(.141)
1993	.128***	.217**	.125*	-.016
	(.030)	(.074)	(.051)	(.172)
1994	.097***	.029	.061	.076
	(.023)	(.048)	(.035)	(.106)
1996	.129***	.050	.072*	.078
	(.024)	(.049)	(.036)	(.110)
1998	.093***	.058	.011	.010
	(.025)	(.045)	(.039)	(.090)
2000	.081***	.086*	-.019	-.139
	(.023)	(.041)	(.040)	(.100)
2002	.104***	-.009	-.029	-.087
	(.023)	(.039)	(.039)	(.085)
2004	.090***	.100*	.060	-179
	(.023)	(.041)	(.043)	(.107)
2006	.130***	.0	.078	.085
	(.023)	(.041)	(.044)	(.099)

Notes: Variables controlled are the same as Tables 2 and 3; Standard errors in parentheses
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

The results shown in Table 4 and Table 5 do not support H3a, which predicted an increase in the influence of class identity on conservatism over time. However, the declining significance of class hypothesis (H3b) was not supported either. When the year-specific class effects for white party identification, income gap, and social security (the three most class-induced outcomes) are treated as separate time-series and regressed on a time trend variable, time is consistently non-significant, demonstrating a clear lack of trend in the coefficients.[10] There does not appear to be any significant temporal pattern in the relationship between class identity and conservatism for white respondents. Instead, class identity's effect on conservative party identification for white respondents is quite stable over the period between 1973 and 2006. The only years without a significant relationship are 1973, 1980, and 1983. Similarly, there is a consistent positive effect on the income gap and social security variables as well, with those identifying with higher classes being more likely to support more conservative viewpoints, although the effect is smaller than in the case of party ID. Between 1978 and 2006, the only exception for the income gap variable is 1993, and the only exception for the social security variable is 1984 (between 1984 and 2006). Although Table 2 demonstrates an increase in conservative views on welfare as class identity increases for whites, this relationship is non-significant for the vast majority of the years between 1973 and 2006. The years in which a positive relationship remains are in 1973, 1980, 1986, 1989, 1993, and 1996. This lack of

[10] The three time trend coefficients are: -.001, -.003, and -.002 with p-values of .843, .614, and .083 respectively. Note also that these coefficients form an imperfect time-series because coefficients do not exist for all contiguous years, a consequence of survey irregularity in the GSS.

a pattern found in class identity's influence over the respective dependent variables contradicts both those who argue that the class-politics relationship is decreasing (e.g., Nieuwbeerta 1995; Nieuwbeerta and De Graff 1999; Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001; Clark and Lipset 2001; Weakliem 2001) and those who argue that it has been increasing (e.g., Stonecash 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). At least in the case of class identity's influence on political orientations in America, the story is largely one of stability, rather than change in either direction.

The lack of a pattern for black respondents is evident as well. With a few exceptions, this provides support for H3c, which predicted a consistent non-significant relationship between class identity and conservatism for black respondents. For conservative party identity, the exceptions are in 1984, 1990, 1991,1994, and 2000, which all reveal a significant positive effect of class identity. The only exceptions for the income gap variable are 1986,1989, and 2006, each of which has a significant positive net effect. When analyzing class identity's effect on the views of social security, 1993, 2000, and 2004 are the only years in which there is a significant net effect, and it is positive for each. Among black respondents, the views on welfare are not significantly influenced by class identity in any year. Overall, with few exceptions, the analyses indicate a consistent independence between class identity and conservatism for black

respondents over time, with persons in higher classes espousing no more conservative views than those in the classes below.[11]

Limitations and Future Research

The findings reported above should be viewed with several limitations of the GSS in mind, limitations that also point toward lines of future research. The first concerns the inability to control for the strength of class bonds, which had a significant interaction effect with class identity in Jackman and Jackman's (1983)

[11] The General Social Surveys also provides a POLVIEWS variable, which asks respondents to rate their political views on a 7-point scale from "Extremely Liberal" to "Extremely Conservative." Although I am attempting to understand class identity's effect on conservatism, I hesitate to use POLVIEWS as a key response variable due to framing that has been successful to a great extent in turning "liberal" into a pejorative term in recent history (Mark 2007). In some circles, liberal has been equated to a "Communist sympathizer who was soft on crime and favored redistributing income" (Mark 2007: 237). Moreover, it has been common practice for Republican strategists to encourage politicians to lump "liberal" together with negative terms such as, "sick," "pathetic," "incompetent," and "traitor" (Mark 2007:236) as well as used in opposition to "democratic" in some instances (Cepik 2006). An example of the pejorative use of liberal includes the numerous "accusations" of Michael Dukakis being too liberal by George H.W. Bush in the 1988 election (Hayakawa and Hayakawa 1991). And although the use of "liberal" has lost some of its pejorative strength (Mark 2007), as recently as the 2008 campaign for president, Democratic politicians have still shied away from the term. For example, when asked whether she would identify as liberal, Hillary Clinton preferred to use "progressive" to describe herself (Kuhn 2007). This demonstrates how a negative connotation still surrounds "liberal."

Taking the above into consideration, the regressions for POLVIEWS can be found in Appendices 3 and 4. When the data from 1973-2006 are aggregated, there is a significant positive effect of class identity on POLVIEWS for white respondents (as well as all races combined), but not black respondents. However, when broken down by year, class identity and POLVIEWS are independent of each other almost all years for both races. The only exceptions are 1978, 1986, and 1996 for white respondents and 1980 and 1983 for black respondents. All of those years demonstrated a significant positive relationship except for 1980, which had a significant negative relationship.

study. They found that when they controlled for solidarity, there was a significant relationship between class identity and political orientations only for those who had strong bonds to their class. There was not a significant effect of class identity on political orientations for those respondents who had weak class bonds (Jackman and Jackman 1983). Given the lack of data on class bonds,[12] I could not replicate this aspect of the Jackman's research. Because there is reason to believe that salience of class bonds or solidarity with class matters by enhancing the political impact of identity (see also Hechter 2004: 403), results reported here (which cannot assess class bond strength) quite likely understate class identity effects. Thus, my findings should be viewed as conservative tests of the class identity effect. It would be valuable for future survey designs to include a measure of class bonds when studying class identity.

Second, I examined a limited set of measures of economic conservatism. Other issues that might also be shaped by class identity include views on tax policy, free trade, government-run healthcare, government intervention in the free market, and so on. Though not identical, it is reasonable to predict that these variables are highly correlated with the variables used in my analyses.

In addition to the limited number of variables considered, one—views on welfare—might have questionable validity. This is in large part due to the successful campaign briefly discussed above, which has given the term a

[12] In 2004, the General Social Survey included a question asking the respondents about the 3 most important groups to which individuals belongs. The options included class, occupation, race, religion, political party, etc. (10 choices in total). Class was chosen by 2.1, 6.3, and 10.3 percent of the respondents as the most, second most, and third most important group respectively. Of note, no class was more likely than another to identify strongly with its class.

negative connotation. This is not limited to those on the right, such as Ronald Reagan in the late 1970s and the 1980s, but also much of the mass media, which has promoted the negative stereotypes about those who receive welfare. Such examples include the image of "*predatory* (emphasis mine) black folks living high on the hog off the taxpayers' dollars" (hooks 2000: 124). This has helped promote the idea that resources of those whites not on welfare are stolen by blacks receiving welfare[13] (hooks 2000), which has helped to lead to the negative view of welfare in general.

A third limitation is related to the GSS measure of views on social security. Unlike the other variables, which were in the GSS from the 1970s on, the social security question was not placed on the survey until 1984. This still allows for generalizations to be made about the trend, but it would be beneficial to have data going back further in time.[14]

Fourth, the response options the GSS provides for class identity—lower, working, middle and upper—are not optimal. As agued by Jackman and Jackman, "lower class" possesses a negative connotation; therefore, they replaced "lower class" with "poor" in their survey. They also used a fifth category, upper-middle class, which allowed middle class to truly be in the center of possible responses (Jackman and Jackman 1983). With this in mind, I would

[13] There are obviously issues of racism at work in the campaign against welfare as well, which are not addressed in this paper, including the portrayal of welfare recipients as people of color when the overwhelming majority of recipients are white (Quadagno 1994; hooks 2000).

[14] Prior research (i.e., Shapiro and Smith 1985) suggests that there were not reliable and consistent measures of the opinions on social security between 1935 and 1985.

argue that the research would be better served by utilizing the Jackmans' model of class identities. With this strategy, however, it is important to keep in mind the potential for a bias toward the middle response variable.

Fifth, it might be worth examining other dimensions of economic conservatism. Another important avenue for future research would be to determine whether the voting patterns and trends that have been demonstrated in previous research using income as a proxy for class (e.g., Stonecash 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) are similar when using class identity instead.

Sixth, the present analysis examined class-race interactions. But class (and racial) identities are also gendered. Therefore, future work on the impact of class identities should take class-gender interactions seriously as well.

Seventh, the present study assumed that class identity shapes political orientations but the reverse does not occur. This is a potential source of simultaneity bias if political orientations in fact influence class identity. Future research should examine this assumption to rule out the possibility of reciprocal determination.

With the current focus in popular media on the so-called changing political viewpoints of the working class, future research concerning class politics could center on the working class. This might focus on how the working class differs from the other classes in its political orientations as well as the changes or lack of changes in these orientations over recent history and what mediating factors might exist within this relationship.

Finally, another direction that can be taken is to analyze how this relationship between class identity and political orientations might be affected by some upper class individuals attempting to maintain their position while at the same time blocking others from class advancement, as argued by bell hooks (2000) and Diana Kendall (2006). Future analyses could demonstrate whether differing views in policies are or are not related to protecting one's class position. This could be attempted using an ethnographic strategy similar to Kendall's (2006) "Class in the United States" with the added focus on how the attempt of the upper class to create boundaries might influence the political positions they take.

Concluding Discussion

Despite these limitations, this study advances our knowledge of the role of class identity in contemporary America. I began with the question of whether class identity mattered in any significant way in contemporary American society. Specifically, I asked if class identity served to shape political party identification and political orientations toward government policy issues. With the majority of the research on the subject focusing on the impact of objective class on political orientation, class identity has largely been ignored with the exceptions of Heinz Eulau in the 1950s and Mary and Robert Jackman in the 1970s. Building upon the research of Jackman and Jackman (1983), I analyzed the possible influence of class identity on two major fronts—political party identification and economic conservatism surrounding government distributional policies.

In general, my findings suggest that those white respondents who identify with higher classes also tend to hold more economically conservative views, with the exception of welfare. However, I hypothesize that the lack of continuity of economic conservative views with regards to welfare may be attributed to the stigma attached to the term and the negative valence associated with welfare recipients created in a long history of classification struggles (Quadagno 1994; Goldberg 2008), including recent framing by the right wing, perhaps invigorated by Ronald Reagan's use of the pejorative term "welfare queen" in the 1976 election. This is an issue that deserves further investigation.

Although class identity and views on welfare are independent of each other, there still remains support for the effect of class identity on the remaining two economic conservatism variables (views on social security and the government's role in decreasing the gap between the rich and the poor). Hence, class identity does matter, at least for these political orientations, which remain relevant and highly contentious in the current political arena. Moreover, these orientations can have an important impact on the political process. This can be demonstrated in the influence of public opinion polls on government policies, with many politicians spending both time and money to keep track of citizens' views on important issues (Cook, Barabas, and Page 2002). For example, I would argue that George W. Bush's failure to push through his plan to privatize social security was significantly affected by the lack of support in public polls, with a 2005 Gallup Poll showing 56 percent of respondents opposing the privatization.[15]

[15] http://www.pollingreport.com/social.htm

Additionally, orientations play an important role in the electorate's voting decisions (Beck et al. 2002),

In addition, this relationship of class identity with party identification and economic conservatism has remained relatively stable over the past few decades. This appears to conflict with both the literature suggesting a decrease in class politics (e.g., Nieuwbeerta 1995; Nieuwbeerta and De Graff 1999; Clark, Lipset, and Rempel 2001; Clark and Lipset 2001; Weakliem 2001) as well as those who argue its increase (e.g., Stonecash 2000; Stonecash and Mariani 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). However, it is important to keep in mind that prior research analyzing trends has relied on objective class measures as opposed to subjective class measures addressed here. The research (i.e., Eulau 1956; Jackman and Jackman 1983) focusing on class identity and political orientations has only measured specific points in time (most recently using data from the 1970s) and has not addressed trends.

Although this positive relationship between class identity and political conservatism does not hold true for black respondents,[16] the results nonetheless demonstrate that class identity, at least in the realm of politics, still has relevant consequences and has an impact on political orientations of a majority of adult Americans. These findings run contrary to those who argue that class is no longer a relevant concept in today's society (e.g., Pakulski and Waters 1996; Kingston 2000; Pakulski 2001). It also provides empirical evidence to oppose

[16] With blacks, however, not being a homogenous group, there is a chance that class may in fact matter for some subset, which is certainly worthy of further exploration.

views popularized by the media and books—like *What's the Matter with Kansas*, written by Thomas Frank—such as the conservative nature of the white working class as compared to the other classes. At least in terms of their political party affiliation and views on such economic issues as the government's role in decreasing the income gap as well as social security, this is not the case. Appendices 1 and 2 (model 2 for each variable) confirm that although the white working class individuals might be more conservative in their political orientation and opinions on these economic issues than lower class respondents, they still remain less conservative than both the middle and upper classes. The patterns in Appendices 1 and 2 also confirm the linear relationship of class categories implied by Tables 2 and 3 for white respondents for the above-mentioned variables.[17] In other words when the data are aggregated for all available years, there is a positive linear relationship, with white respondents who identify with higher classes holding more conservative political orientations. This pattern holds true for all response variables other than views on welfare. Combining this demonstrated relationship with the consistent class effect shown over time in Tables 4 and 5 leads to further confirmation that when it comes to issues of party identification and economics (at least on those measures presently discussed),

[17] Appendices 2 and 3 show some interesting nonlinear class effects for blacks. For Party ID, while the working and lower classes are no more likely to identify with increasingly conservative party tendencies, the upper class is. However, the working class respondents remain more conservative than the lower class in terms of their views on welfare, while the middle and upper classes are not significantly different from the lower class. This might be worth future exploration.

white working class Americans are not more conservative than the middle or upper classes and in fact, remain politically to the left of those classes.

Class identity has not been given sufficient attention in the current identity politics literature (Aronowitz 1992), which has focused more on other identities, such as race or ethnicity (e.g, di Leonardo 1994; Nelson 2002), gender (e.g., Plutzer and Zipp 1993; Orr 2007), religion (e.g., Gallaher 2002; Miceli 2005), and sexual orientation (e.g., Phelan 1993; Miceli 2005). Although there might be an increased salience of such identities (e.g.,Weakliem 2001; Walsh 2004), I have demonstrated that class identity still holds sway in matters of political party identification and political orientations; hence, class remains an important identity in predicting political outcomes and an area that identity politics literature unnecessarily overlooks. More importantly, my analyses provide limited but nonetheless important evidence that counters the argument that class no longer matters in the contemporary society. Although some may still argue that class remains irrelevant because it does not predict behavior in the aggregate (e.g., Kingston 2000), my results suggest otherwise. I contend that a significant influence in a specific area as consequential as political dispositions (which can in turn, influence such outcomes as voting and public policies) supports the argument that class remains a relevant concept in social science research as well as in modern American society as a whole. More importantly, with the evidence demonstrating a continued significance, there is a need for further exploration of class identity, including a better understanding of both the factors

that influence this identity and its consequences, both in political outcomes not presently addressed as well as other facets of everyday life.

Appendix A: Models of Class Identity Influence on Political Orientation by Class Category: Political Party and Income Policy

	Dependent Variables					
	Party ID (1973-2006)			Income Gap (1978-2006[18])		
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2[†]	Model 3[††]	Model 1	Model 2[†]	Model 3[††]
Class						
Working	.091*	.159**	-.009	.125*	.175*	.067
	(.044)	(.054)	(.069)	(.059)	(.072)	(.115)
Middle	.382***	.465***	-.055	.501***	.570***	.260*
	(.046)	(.056)	(.074)	(.061)	(.073)	(.122)
Upper	.906***	.971***	.460***	.994***	1.083***	.270
	(.069)	(.081)	(.133)	(.093)	(.106)	(.228)
Race						
Black	-1.644***	--	--	-.718***	--	--
	(.030)			(.041)		
Other	-.522***	--	--	-.408***	--	--
	(.047)			(.061)		
Sex						
Male	.207***	.210***	.199***	.310***	.364***	.091
	(.019)	(.022)	(.043)	(.026)	(.029)	(.072)
Age	-.007***	-.006***	-.017***	.004***	.004***	.002
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.001)	(.001)	(.003)
Education	.027***	.038***	-.034***	.069***	.076***	.041**
	(.004)	(.004)	(.008)	(.012)	(.006)	(.013)
Income	.007*	.019***	-.031	.054***	.066***	.003
	(.004)	(.005)	(.007)	(.006)	(.007)	(.012)
Constant	-33.409***	-35.494***	-17.555***	2.210***	8.333*	-31.382***
	(2.134)	(2.400)	(4.669)	(3.478)	(3.863)	(9.181)
Adjusted R-squared	.117	.067	.055	.086	.070	.023
N	40,625	33,490	5,413	21,251	17,411	2,813

[18] Question not asked in 1982 and 1985

Notes: Other Variables controlled: Year, Marital Status, and Religion; Reference variables: White, Female, Married, Protestant; "Oversamp" weighting to adjust for oversampling of black respondents in 1982 and 1987; Standard errors in parentheses

[†]White respondents only; [††]Black respondents only
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Appendix B: Models of Class Identity Influence on Political Orientation by Class Category: Social Security and Welfare Policy

	Dependent Variables					
	Social Security (1984-2006)			Welfare (1973-2006)		
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2[†]	Model 3[††]	Model 1	Model 2[†]	Model 3[††]
Class						
Working	.041*	.041*	.048	.234***	.283***	.161***
	(.017)	(.020)	(.029)	(.023)	(.027)	(.049)
Middle	.151***	.154***	.097**	.217***	.281***	.042
	(.017)	(.021)	(.031)	(.023)	(.027)	(.052)
Upper	.243***	.250***	.122*	.219***	.315***	-.048
	(.026)	(.030)	(.057)	(.035)	(.039)	(.091)
Race						
Black	-.181***	--	--	-.424***	--	--
	(.011)			(.016)		
Other	.018	--	--	-.142***	--	--
	(.016)			(.027)		
Sex						
Male	.113***	.122***	.062***	.024*	.036***	.009
	(.007)	(.008)	(.018)	(.010)	(.010)	(.030)
Age	.002***	.003***	-.001	.002***	.001***	.001
	(.000)	(.000)	(.001)	(.000)	(.000)	(.001)
Education	.026***	.031***	.005	-.003	-.007***	.008
	(.001)	(.002)	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)	(.005)
Income	-.001	.004*	-012***	.046***	.045***	.041***
	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)	(.005)
Constant	15.427***	17.644***	10.481***	18.002***	19.663***	.914
	(1.078)	(1.216)	(2.587)	(1.049)	(1.126)	(3.181)
Adjusted R-squared	.070	.068	.028	.088	.048	.054
N	28,108	22,738	3,857	24,665	20,629	3,190

Notes: Other Variables controlled: Year, Marital Status, and Religion; Reference variables: White, Female, Married, Protestant; "Oversamp" weighting to adjust for oversampling of black respondents in 1982 and 1987; Standard errors in parentheses

[†]White respondents only; [††]Black respondents only
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Appendix C: Models of Class Identity Influence on Political Orientations: POLVIEWS

	POLVIEWS (1973-2006)			
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3[†]	Model 4[††]
Class	.054***	.066***	.056***	.027
	(.012)	(.013)	(.013)	(.032)
Race				
Black	-.319**	-.172*	--	--
	(.120)	(.078)		
Other	-.120***	.034	--	--
	(.036)	(.133)		
Class*Black	--	-.065*	--	--
		(.033)		
Class*Other Race	--	-.065	--	--
		(.055)		
Sex				
Male	.123***	.123***	.158***	-.052
	(.005)	(.014)	(.015)	(.044)
Age	-.005***	..005***	.005***	-.003*
	(.000)	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)
Education	.015***	-.015***	-.012***	-.037***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.008)
Income	.009***	.009**	.013***	-.000
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.008)
Constant	-13.286***	-13.395***	-11.572***	-26.375***
	(1.622)	(1.623)	(1.747)	(4.953)
Adjusted R-squared	.064	.064	.072	.019
N	36,622	36,622	30,458	4,682

Notes: Other Variables controlled: Year, Marital Status, and Religion; Reference variables: White, Female, Married, Protestant; "Oversamp" weighting to adjust for oversampling of black respondents in 1982 and 1987; Standard errors in parentheses

[†]White respondents only; [††]Black respondents only
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Appendix D: Class Identity Effects by Race Over Time: POLVIEWS

	Polviews	
Year	Whites	Blacks
1973	--	--
1974	-.024 (.064)	.063 (.175)
1975	.029 (.067)	-.099 (.196)
1976	.033 (.067)	-.182 (.214)
1977	-.071 (.065)	.221 (.226)
1978	.126* (.063)	-.067 (.185)
1980	-.025 (.063)	-.473* (.188)
1982	.033 (.067)	-.029 (.110)
1983	.128 (.085)	.857* (.354)
1984	-.001 (.068)	.218 (.213)
1985	.073 (.064)	.272 (.237)
1986	.170** (.062)	-.032 (.134)
1987	.074 (.065)	-.195 (.109)
1988	.006 (.072)	.056 (.197)
1989	.160 (.066)	.180 (.191)
1990	.072 (.074)	-.106 (.215)
1991	.093 (.071)	-.082 (.175)
1993	.026 (.063)	-.131 (.196)
1994	.050 (.051)	.292* (.130)
1996	.123* (.050)	.158 (.130)
1998	.092 (.054)	-.148 (.114)
2000	.013 (.053)	.081 (.117)
2002	-.132 (.075)	-.043 (.186)
2004	.144 (.073)	-.104 (.217)
2006	.030 (.053)	-.071 (.119)

Notes: Variables controlled are the same as Appendix 3; Standard errors in parentheses
*p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

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