Revisiting the Politics of Economic Populism:
Class, Faith, and Party Images in the United States

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Abstract

In *What's the Matter with Kansas*, Thomas Frank argues that the Republican Party has redrawn the landscape of contemporary American politics by displacing the Democratic Party as the party of the working class. Although others have tested the electoral implications of Frank's arguments, no one has tested the phenomenon itself—the belief that Republicans are the party of the working class. To test this claim, we created a survey expressly for the purpose of examining the class-based images of the parties. Following Frank's argument, we examine whether the public believes Republicans are the party of the working class and specifically whether the working class and Evangelical Christians are most likely to hold this belief. Contrary to Frank's argument, we find that the Democrats are the party most Americans associate with the working class. Furthermore, we find that the working class and Evangelical Christians are no more likely to hold this belief than respondents in other social classes or faiths.

"Howard Dean should take his tax-hiking, government-expanding, latte-drinking, sushi-eating, Volvo-driving, *New York Times*-reading, Hollywood-loving, left-wing freak show back to Vermont, where it belongs."

-Club for Growth ad against Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean

Which political party in the United States represents the working class? At least since the New Deal, the answer to this question had been relatively straight forward—the Democrats. Yet, as found in the quote above about Howard Dean, the answer may not be so clear anymore. Political trends in recent years provide fodder for the argument that economic based class distinctions are waning. After all, how much could class matter if richer blue states are voting Democratic and poorer red states are voting Republican? In particular, why would a relatively poor state like Kansas vote Republican? How much could class matter given all the talk about values voters? If the meaning of social class hasn't changed to reflect values, how does one explain the exodus of white Evangelical voters from the Democratic Party? Whereas class had been traditionally defined by income, the new class politics, we are told, is about social values and personal tastes (Brooks 2001; Frank 2004; Nunberg 2006).

The "Great Backlash," Thomas Frank's (2004) term for this development in his influential book *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, came about through the efforts of conservatives who displaced public concern over economic issues with culture war issues such as abortion, gay rights, and gun control. In this culture war, the meaning of class has changed. No longer the province of economics, "What makes one a member of the proletariat is not work per se, but unpretentiousness, humility, and the rest of the qualities that our punditry claims to spy in the red states that voted for George W. Bush (Frank 2004, 113-114)." According to Frank (2004), the great backlash recasts the GOP as the

party of ordinary, working class Americans and the Democrats are reborn as a party of snobbish elites with un-American values and tastes. Thus, as the defenders of ordinary, blue-collar workers—to say nothing of good, observant, Christians—the Republican Party is engaged in a culture war against liberal Democrats. In short, the proponents of the backlash and despondent authors lamenting its emergence agree that the GOP is the new party of the working class.

If correct, the displacement of an economics based definition of class with a definition rooted in personal values, tastes and social issues represents a profound transformation of American politics. Recently, scholars have investigated the electoral implications of the great backlash and found it does not withstand empirical scrutiny (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006; Gelman et al. 2007; Stonecash 2005). Specifically, there is little evidence to support the argument that moral issues trump economic issues in voting decisions or partisan identification (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006) or that working class voters have fled the Democratic Party and are now faithful supporters of Republican candidates (Bartels 2006; Gelman et al. 2007; Stonecash 2006).

Although previous research has addressed the electoral implications of the great backlash argument, they have not addressed the phenomenon itself. According to Frank (2004, 8), to deny the great backlash as anything less than a fundamental change in the meaning of class and party politics is to "miss its power as an idea and its broad popular vitality." Here, we examine the phenomenon. Furthermore, we do so on Frank's (2004) own terms. We borrow his language to test his ideas and concepts about the relationship between social class and party images.

If Frank (2004) is correct that the meaning of class has changed—the American public believes the Republican Party is now the party of working the working class—we should find three things. First, a substantial share of voters will identify the GOP as the party of the common person. Second, the working class will be especially likely to hold this opinion. Third, when identifying which party does, in fact, advocate for the common person, religious beliefs and practices will play a substantial role. We believe that neither of the first two claims is the case, and we are skeptical as to whether even the religious argument is correct.

Using a survey designed expressly for the purposes of testing the great backlash hypothesis, we find no evidence to support it. First, a substantial share of the American public does not believe the Republican Party better represents working class people. Our questions, based on Frank's (2004) own terminology, show that most of the public regards the Democratic Party as the party of the working class. Indeed, the view that the GOP is the party of the working class is only held by Republican identifiers and not tenaciously. Second, we find no evidence of a class inversion. Working class individuals are no more likely to believe the GOP represents the working class than individuals at higher income levels. Finally, we find no support for the contention that Evangelical Christians are more likely to hold these views. Surprisingly, we find Evangelicals more likely to identify the Democratic Party as the party of the working class. In tandem with the research refuting the electoral implications of Frank's (2004) argument (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006; Gelman et al. 2007; Stonecash 2005), we conclude that he simply got it wrong. Although we do not doubt Frank's observation that conservative elites have attempted to recast the Republican Party as the

party of working class and the Democratic Party as the party of an out of touch, snobbish, elite, we have strong doubts as to whether the American people, and in particular the working class, have accepted this rhetoric.

Revisiting the Great Backlash

In the aftermath of the 2004 presidential election, Thomas Frank's (2004) *What's the Matter with Kansas?* emerged as a compelling explanation for the Democratic Party's loss. Frank (2004) argues that the meaning of social class has changed in America. Traditional understandings of social class as a matter of income and bread-and-butter economic policies have given way to a new understanding sustained by cultural issues such as abortion, gay marriage, school prayer, and gun control. According to Frank (2004, 20) the great backlash recasts "the Democrats as the party of a wealthy, pampered, arrogant elite that lives far away from real Americans" and "Republicanism as the faith of the hard-working common people of the heartland, an expression of their unpretentious, all-American ways, just like country music and Nascar." Other astute observers of American politics offer comparable accounts.

> They [Republicans] had to unify their appeal to those groups by rewriting the old language of populism in ways that diverted the traditional conflicts between "the people" and "the powerful" into "cultural" resentments over differences in lifestyle and social values. And in the course of things, they managed to redefine the distinction between conservatives and liberals, so as to depict liberals as the enemies of the values of "ordinary Americans" (Nunberg 2006, 51).

Having accepted this new view of the parties, Frank (2004) and other despondent observers of this phenomenon conclude that the working class has helped usher in an era of GOP dominance of American national politics.

This "derangement," according to Frank (2004), shortchanges the working class. Persuaded that the GOP is their advocate against elitist—and largely godless—liberals,

the working class is duped into supporting the GOP only to be rewarded with economic policies that undermine their economic self-interest. What this amounts to is a bait-and-switch, a strategy that allows Republicans to run on one set of issues—gays and abortion— and deliver on another—tax cuts for the wealthy.

Several studies have examined Frank's (2004) argument that social issues have displaced economics and that as a result working class whites have increasingly voted for Republicans (Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006; Gelman et al. 2007; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008; Stonecash 2000, 2005). Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder (2006) and Bartels (2006) both examine the issue displacement argument. Although these studies show that moral issues have grown in importance as predictors of the vote, especially abortion, both provide evidence that economic issues have twice as large an affect as moral issues. Furthermore, neither study finds support for the contention that moral issues have a larger effect on the voting behavior of working class voters—the working class largely behaves as other social classes. In sum, there is little evidence to suggest that moral issues dominate economic issues in the electorate or among the working class.

Scholars have also found no support for Frank's contention that the partisan loyalties and votes of white working class voters have become more Republican over time. Although white working class voters have become significantly less Democratic, Bartels (2006) finds that the trend is largely confined to the South—not the heartland of America. Furthermore, contrary to Frank's (2004) argument, scholars have shown that income differences have become a stronger predictor of voting behavior and that low-income voters have become *more* supportive of Democrats (Ansolabehere, Rodden and

Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006; Gelman et al. 2007; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008; Stonecash 2000, 2005).

Recently, Smith (2007) found that Frank's (2004) bait-and-switch claim is at best oversold, and at worst, just wrong. Smith (2007) uses a variety of types of evidence to argue that GOP economic policy—far from being hidden behind a smokescreen—has been front and center in GOP advertising and rhetoric. Smith (2007) argues that by using careful and persuasive language the Republican Party has convinced working class voters to embrace a variety of economic policies that liberals would argue are against the interests of the working class.

This literature has helped dispel the notion that the great backlash has fundamentally altered electoral politics in the post-New Deal period. The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that white working class voters are not more concerned with social issues than economic issues nor are they are more likely to support Republican candidates.

Nonetheless, Frank (2004) offers a persuasive argument about public perceptions of the parties. Public discourse about social class and the parties does resemble much of what Frank (2004) claims. Conservative pundits such as Ann Coulter, Sean Hannity, and Rush Limbaugh frequently invoke images of out-of-touch, latte-drinking liberal Democratic elites and ordinary, hard-working, Nascar Republican conservatives. Despite the prevalence of these images in conservative media, we doubt that these images have made their way into the public psyche. Undoubtedly, some people do hold these views. Yet, many people are not listening to these talking heads and those that do tune into talk radio and/or consume other types of conservative media are probably a highly receptive

audience. In contrast to Frank (2004), then, we expect economic populism to be alive and well in the America public. Further, we believe the Democrats, not the Republicans, are the party most Americans, including the working class, will associate with the interests of the working class. Thus, our primary hypothesis is that the public will perceive the Democrats as the party of the working class rather than Republicans and we do not expect any differences in this belief across class or religious categories.

We also briefly examine Smith's (2007) criticism of Frank's (2004) bait and switch argument. Although we agree with the basics of Smith's (2007) claims that the GOP has been upfront and clever in marketing their economic policies, in large measure, we expect that economic opinions on specific policy issues still conform, to a substantial degree, to long-held expectations about how economic interests map to policy preferences. Few in the electorate, and even fewer in the working class, we believe have been convinced that many of the specific aspects of GOP economic policy preferences are really in their interest.

Data and Analysis

To test our claims, we use data collected from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study.[1] In addition to the common content (Ansolabehere 2006), we created a question module in the post-election stage of the survey to examine questions about Frank's (2004) argument (Nicholson and Segura 2006). In so doing, we hope to address Frank's (2005) criticisms of the NES survey items from Bartels analyses. Specifically,

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[1] Interviewed respondents were selected from the Polimetrix PollingPoint Panel using sample matching. A random sub sample of size 36,501 was drawn from the 2004 American Community Study (ACS), conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which is a probability sample of size 1,194,354 with a response rate of 93.1% (participation in the ACS is mandatory). For each respondent in the selected ACS sub sample, the closest matching active PollingPoint panelist was selected using the following measure of distance: d(x,y). For more information on sample matching see Rivers (2006).

we asked respondents their views on the political parties from the perspective of the interests and cultural placement of the working class, at least according to Frank (2004).

We developed two questions to measure respondents' perceptions of which party is closer to or more sympathetic to the concerns of the common person, that is, more populist. Both questions are from Frank's (2004, 117-118) discussion of Ann Coulter where he addresses her logic for why the GOP is the party of the working class:

1. Thinking about politicians in the two major political parties, which do you think would feel more comfortable having a beer with a truck driver, construction worker, or waitress?

Democrats

Republicans

Don't Know

2. Which statement comes closest to your way of thinking about politics?

The Democrats are the party of the people and the Republicans are the party of the powerful.

The Republicans are the party of the people and the Democrats are the party of the powerful.

Don't Know.

Figures 1 and 2 present the distributions on both of these variables, alone and with likely covariates. On both variables, there is an overwhelming consensus among nearly all segments of American society that Democrats are more likely to share a beer with a working person, and that Democrats are better associated with the "people" while the GOP is for the "powerful." The patterns are highly consistent. In particular, the consistency of three covariates stand out. First, Democrats and liberals are consistently more likely to identify Democrats with populist sentiments than Republicans and

conservatives are to identify the GOP as the populist party. Similarly, Republicans and conservatives are significantly more likely to answer "don't know" to each question, rather than identify Democrats with the "people." Second, in every instance, Independents and moderates see things as the Democrats do, associating the Democratic Party with both populist sentiments. Finally, the results hold across income groups, lending credence to our doubts about the class basis of the GOP surge, as well as across regions, where even in the South, Democrats enjoy a populist personality.

[Figures 1 & 2 about here]

These two indicators correlate very highly as well (r=.66). In order to diminish any potential measurement issues associated with a single item, we recode the responses from -1 to +1 (with DK's at 0), and combine the two variables into an additive index. The resulting variable, *Democratic Populism*, is coded 2 if the respondent identified the Democratic Party on both questions, -2 if they identified the GOP twice, and so forth.[2] The Cronbach's Alpha for this index is.791, above the threshold of acceptability suggesting that the items are, in fact, measuring the same dimension.

We model *Democratic Populism* as a function of four categories of variables. Three of these are selected to specifically test one of the contentions of the Frank (2004) thesis and the Smith (2007) refutation. First and foremost, we test the effects of traditional SES indicators of social class. We operationalize this through dummy variables created from income and education variables. *Lower Income* and *Upper Income* represent two of three income categories, where respondents with household incomes below $40k and above $80K represent low-income and high-income

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[2] The category zero includes those who answered don't know to both, and those who picked different parties for each question., though respondents with this confusing pattern represent only about 4% of all respondents.

respondents, respectively. In so doing, middle income respondents serve as the unexpressed category capturing household incomes in between the top and bottom income segments.[3] We do the same with education, where *High School or Less* captures respondents with no more than a high school diploma, and *College or Less* captures those with some college, an associates degree, or bachelor's degree, leaving advanced and professional degrees as the unexpressed category.

The second category of variables includes other economic markers of social class that might not be fully captured by income and education. We examine four specifically. First, *Environment vs. Economy* is the respondent's answer to a question about the importance of environmental protection against the importance of jobs and economic growth, identified by Inglehart (1977) and others as a "post-materialist" value and a luxury usually afforded by the well-to-do. Higher values represent a preference for the environment. Second, *Union Membership* captures whether the respondent is or ever has been a unionized worker. Finally, two questions capture support for a *Capital Gains Tax Cut* and a *Minimum Wage Increase*, both signature elements of each party's economic agenda. Each variable is coded such that higher values represent support for the policy. Naturally, we anticipate support for the minimum wage to have a positive effect on the dependent variable and support for a capital gains tax cut to have a negative effect.

A third group of variables represents an effort to identify social markers of class. We have four variables capturing the oft-discussed effect of religion on politics. The *Religiosity Index* captures frequency of prayer and church attendance.[4] *Evangelical* is a dummy variable capturing whether the respondent reports being "born again." *Pro-*

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[3] We use these dummy variables to avoid using an irregularly spaced ordinal marker of income. Using that ordinal marker, and correcting it to equal cell ranges, does not change any of the results presented here.
[4] The religiosity index is additive, and the Cronbach's alpha is .736, above the threshold for acceptability.

choice Abortion is an opinion measure with a four point scale capturing a range of potential legal regimes from a high value for "a woman should always be able" to a low of "abortion should never be permitted." A final variable captures the respondent's belief about whether economic or moral concerns are the appropriate basis for politics.

These variables as a group, and the last one in particular, deserve additional discussion. Among Frank's (2004) claims is that morality has replaced bread and butter issues as the basis of politics for many people, and this change has played a critical role in shaping perceptions of the parties among the working class. We examined this assertion in Figure 3. As is readily apparent, across all income groups, partisan identities, ideological groups, regions, and patterns of church attendance, the majority of respondents see politics as focused on economic concerns and not morality issues. Of course, this is not to say that no one feels this way, and we would expect those who feel that morality is the appropriate measure by which to make political choices to strongly favor the GOP. Nevertheless, this preliminary examination suggests that morality has not served as the basis for a substantial revision of partisan perceptions among the working class and is consistent with studies of voting behavior (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006).

[Figure 3 about here]

Additional social markers include *Gun Owner*ship, personal or a family member's service in the *Military*, and support for *Affirmative Action*. Each of these dummy variables captures dimensions of social experience and contestation that might conceivably reshape how people view the political parties as reflective of their interests.

We expect *Gun Ownership* and *Military* to have a negative effect on *Democratic Populism* and *Affirmative Action* to have a positive effect.

The final category of variables includes the usual measures of partisanship and self-reported ideology. We code dummy variables for *Democrats*, *Republicans*, *Liberals*, and *Conservatives*, leaving moderates and Independents as the unexpressed categories. We will offer two models, one without partisan and ideological controls and one with. Including these variables could conceivably be critiqued as putting the same variable on both sides of the equals sign. Naturally, we would expect partisans to be more likely to portray their party as the populist advocate, but this is far less true for Republican respondents. Table 1 illustrates the distribution on the dependent variable by party.

[Table 1 about here]

It is worth noting that nearly one third of the Republicans answered "don't know" to both questions, indicating an unwillingness to identify the Democrats as the working class party and, we suspect, a recognition that the GOP isn't either. Either way, the *Democratic Populism* index is clearly distinct from partisanship variables. By including these variables, we are able to control for partisan orientations thus leaving the remaining indicators to account for perceptions of Democratic Party populism.

We also add control variables for *Age*, gender (*Male*), racial and ethnic minority groups, and the region control *South*. In particular, the dummy variable for South is informed by Bartel's (2006) refutation of Franks' (2004) claim regarding large working class white mobilization for the GOP.

We model *Democratic Populism* using ordered logit. The results are presented in Table 2, with Model 1 representing results from an estimation excluding partisanship and

ideology, while Model 2 includes these controls to net out the effects of partisanship and ideology in order to hold other predictors to a more stringent test.

[Table 2 about here]

The clearest result in the first model is the failure of conventional SES models of social class to predict perceptions of populist sentiments about the parties. Neither income nor education appears to have a systematic effect, in large measure, we suspect, because of the relatively modest variance across groups on this dependent variable. Simply put, across income and educational lines, most respondents perceive the Democrats as closer to working people.

The presence of four additional economic markers of class could be suspected of playing a role in this null result, especially since three of these four are significant predictors. However, excluding these additional economic measures has no effect on the coefficients for socio-economic status, which remain not statistically different from zero.

Although *Union Membership* is not statistically different from zero, *Capital Gains Tax* and *Minimum Wage* obtain significance. Looking at changes in predicted probabilities, reported in Table 3, support for a *Capital Gains Tax* cut is associated with approximately a .36 decline in the probability of believing the Democrats a populist party (dependent variable =1 or 2). Note however that the increase is greater in the "don't know" category (+.19) than in the two categories identifying the GOP as the party of the working class (depvar=-1 or -2). By contrast, *Minimum Wage Increase* raises the probability of seeing the Democrats as the populist party by .18.

[Table 3 about here]

Though these variables are significantly associated with perceptions of Democratic populism, there is no evidence here that class has somehow inverted. Both of these relationships are highly consistent with conventional understandings of economic interests and class-based politics. If we further examine these relationships, there is evidence to refute both Franks' (2004) belief in class inversion and Smith's (2007) claims that the working class has endorsed the GOP economic agenda. Distributions on both variables are presented in Tables 4 and 5. As can be seen, support for cutting the capital gains tax comes primarily from upper and middle income respondents whereas support for raising the minimum wage is high across the board but highest for low income workers.

[Tables 4 and 5 about here]

Of these alternative measures of economic class, only the assessment of environmental protection against economic concerns shows results consistent with the class inversion claim. Those favoring the environment are far likelier to see the Democrats as the populist party, raising the probability of a pro-Democratic answer by .41. However, responses to this question did not segment by income group (Chi-square probability = .368) but were more or less uniform across class, suggesting that even this post-materialist value, the only indicator of "latte liberalism" appearing in the results, is not really reflective of class inversion.

Moving on to less economically oriented measures, we examine the effects of religion and other social indicators. The *Religiosity Index* is not statistically different from zero whereas the effect of *Evangelical* identity appears to be positive toward identifying Democrats as closer to the people, increasing the probability by .11. This

effect could be assumed to be somewhat confounded by the presence of opinion on *Abortion*, whose effect is significant and in a more conventional direction. Pro-choice respondents have a .36 increased probability of seeing Democrats as populists, whereas those favoring restrictive abortion laws are .21 more likely to see the GOP as close to the people. Importantly, however, multicollinearity is not driving this result, as the two variables correlate at only r=-.36. Moreover, exclusion of the *Abortion* variable has no effect on the direction of the effect on *Evangelicals*, though it does fall to insignificance.

This result, we believe, offers insights to the role religion is playing in partisan identity and behavior. While there is no question that opposition to abortion increases support and affective attachment to the GOP, our results suggest that controlling for the abortion debate, those self-identifying as "born-again" are actually more likely to see the Democrats as the people's party. This result is even further enhanced when we examine Model 2, and once we control for party, the effect of *Evangelicals* remains statistically different from zero and positive even if *Abortion* is removed from the model.

Beliefs about whether politics are about economic issues or moral questions appear to trend as we would expect, but we again caution that the vast majority of all cohorts believe politics are not about morality, and the effects estimated in the predicted probabilities are among the least notable. *Gun Ownership* is marginally significant and positively related to identifying the Democrats as the populist party, increasing the likelihood by .085, a somewhat surprising result but perhaps explained by controls for *South*. Support for *Affirmative Action* is clearly associated with populist views of Democrats, increasing the probability of picking the Democrats by .29, a result that is

robust given our controls for both gender and racial and ethnic sub-populations. *Connections to the Military* have no effect.

African-Americans are .22 more likely to view Democrats as the people's party than whites, and *Southerners* are .094 less likely. Gender and other demographics have no effect. Overall, our model is significant and explains a substantial share of the variation.

As we indicated, we replicated the model controlling for partisanship and ideology. We do so to specifically avoid the claim that what the model is actually predicting is latent partisanship, even though our dependent variable clearly differs from party. By adding in the dummy variables for partisan and ideological identities, we can net these effects out of the dependent variable—to whatever degree they were actually present—and assess the degree to which the remaining predictors are actually associated with populist perceptions of either party.

The second model reported in Table 2 reports the results. Not surprisingly, the party and ideology variables work exactly as we would expect, with the odd exception of *Liberals*, who appear no more likely than moderates to see the Democrats in this light. The most important finding in these results, however, is that only one of our previous variables fell to insignificance—the dummy variable for *African Americans* was no longer statistically different from zero, likely as a consequence of the high partisan skew in this population. Otherwise, all of the predictors that were statistically different from zero in the previous specification remain so. Not surprisingly, some of the magnitudes of the changes in predicted probabilities declined as partisanship absorbed some of the

available variance. Nonetheless, the direction and statistical significance of nearly all the findings remained unaffected.

Conclusion

In this paper, we examined the argument that the Republican Party has replaced the Democratic Party as the political party representative of the American working class. In contrast to previous research, we examined perceptions of the great backlash phenomenon directly using survey items inspired by Thomas Frank's influential book, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*. We found little evidence for the argument that the mass public, the working class, or religious conservatives have followed the lead of conservative leaders in agreeing that Republicans have become champions of the working class. Indeed, the only groups that appear to hold this view of the GOP are Republican Party identifiers and conservatives. But even among these groups, we see that there is a lot of hesitancy. In contrast to Democrats and liberals, Republicans and conservatives are as likely as Independents and ideological moderates to offer a "don't know" response.

We do not disagree with Frank (2004) that conservatives have made strong attempts to alter the meaning of class in America in order to position the Republican Party as the party of the people. Indeed, all one needs to do is listen to conservative talking heads to hear criticisms being made of an effete liberal elite who are trying to impose their secular, un-American values on hard-working, morally upright, ordinary Americans. But perhaps Frank (2004) and many of us that carefully pay attention to all things political are forgetting that most people do not pay attention, either because they are liberals or Democrats (or both) and don't buy what conservative talking heads are

trying to sell them or because they simply don't care about or follow politics. Gelman et al. (2007) argue that reporters and the pundit class, like everyone, are susceptible to biases such as Tversky and Kahneman's (1974) availability heuristic wherein judgments are formed by remembered experiences rather than statistical rules. After witnessing repeated Democratic Party losses, especially in the poorer red states, and hearing an earful of right-wing talk radio, reading right-wing books, talking to right-wing activists, and watching right-wing programming, it is not surprising that an astute observer of American politics such as Frank would conclude that Republicans have fundamentally changed the meaning of class and party politics. Aside from our disagreement with his book, however, we think he would like our conclusions since we show that the Democrats have not been robbed of their working class reputation.

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Table 1:
Index of Democratic Populism by Party ID

INDEX	Republican	Independent	Democrat
-2	81	31	5
-1	55	22	4
0	75	48	18
1	16	52	44
2	19	118	167
Total	246	271	238

Table 2:
Ordered Logit Estimates for Democratic Populism

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	Std. Err.	P>|z|	Coef.	Std. Err.	P>|z|
SES Indicators of Social Class						
Lower Income	0.005	0.213		-0.004	0.216	
Upper Income	-0.041	0.228		0.003	0.231	
High School or Less	-0.117	0.240		-0.255	0.247	
College or Less	0.240	0.237		0.193	0.241	
Partisanship and Ideology						
Democrat				1.000	0.251	***
Republican				-0.605	0.231	**
Liberal				0.304	0.285	
Conservative				-0.560	0.238	*
Economic Markers of Class						
Environment vs Economy	0.445	0.083	***	0.373	0.086	***
Capital Gains Tax Cut Support	-0.777	0.116	***	-0.621	0.120	***
Mininimum Wage Increase Support	0.369	0.116	**	0.269	0.121	*
Union Membership	0.029	0.193		0.091	0.201	
"Values" Markers of Class						
Religiosity Index	0.052	0.047		0.078	0.048	
Evangelical	0.469	0.230	*	0.619	0.236	**
Pro-Choice Abortion	0.509	0.101	***	0.370	0.109	***
Gun Owner	0.348	0.192	†	0.394	0.195	*
Family/Personal Military	-0.219	0.195		-0.153	0.199	
Affirmative Action Support	0.205	0.051	***	0.111	0.054	*
Politics is Economics not Morals	0.259	0.125	*	0.249	0.127	*
Demographics						
Age	-0.006	0.007		-0.004	0.007	
Male	0.288	0.200		0.178	0.208	
African American	0.925	0.391	*	0.386	0.413	
Latino	-0.126	0.274		-0.038	0.281	
Asian American	0.920	0.657		1.142	0.687	†
South	-0.379	0.183	*	-0.372	0.189	*
Neg Log Likelihood	-629.71			-605.41		
LR Chi-square	372.2		***	420.8		***
Pseudo R-Square	0.2281			0.2579		
N	550			550		

Two Tailed Significance Tests: † p<=.10, * p<=.05, ** p<=.01, ***p<=.001
Source: Cooperative Congressional Election Study, 2006

Table 3: Changes in Predicted Probabilities for Democratic Populism

	Model 1					Model 2				
Predicted Value	-2	-1	0	1	2	-2	-1	0	1	2
SES Indicators of Social Class										
Lower Income	0.000	0.000	-0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	-0.001
Upper Income	0.002	0.002	0.006	-0.001	-0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
High School or Less	0.006	0.007	0.016	-0.004	-0.025	0.011	0.015	0.037	-0.010	-0.052
College or Less	-0.012	-0.014	-0.033	0.007	0.052	-0.008	-0.011	-0.028	0.006	0.041
Partisanship and Ideology										
Democrat						-0.036	-0.049	-0.145	0.009	0.222
Republican						0.029	0.037	0.083	-0.029	-0.120
Liberal						-0.012	-0.016	-0.045	0.007	0.066
Conservative						0.026	0.033	0.078	-0.025	-0.112
Economic Markers of Class										
Environment vs Economy	-0.112	-0.118	-0.187	0.076	0.342	-0.078	-0.093	-0.185	0.069	0.286
Capital Gains Tax Cut Support	0.079	0.092	0.193	-0.036	-0.327	0.053	0.068	0.171	-0.034	-0.259
Mininimum Wage Increase Support	-0.043	-0.050	-0.089	0.037	0.145	-0.026	-0.033	-0.074	0.027	0.106
Union Membership	-0.001	-0.002	-0.004	0.001	0.006	-0.004	-0.005	-0.013	0.003	0.019
"Values" Markers of Class										
Religiosity Index	-0.018	-0.022	-0.049	0.011	0.078	-0.023	-0.030	-0.079	0.018	0.114
Evangelical	-0.021	-0.027	-0.065	0.010	0.103	-0.024	-0.032	-0.091	0.011	0.135
Pro-Choice Abortion	-0.100	-0.105	-0.159	0.078	0.286	-0.058	-0.070	-0.142	0.058	0.212
Gun Owner	-0.017	-0.021	-0.048	0.010	0.075	-0.016	-0.021	-0.057	0.012	0.083
Family/Personal Military	0.010	0.013	0.030	-0.006	-0.048	0.006	0.008	0.022	-0.005	-0.032
Affirmative Action Support	-0.057	-0.070	-0.162	0.022	0.268	-0.027	-0.036	-0.097	0.018	0.142
Politics is Economics not Morals	-0.030	-0.035	-0.064	0.026	0.103	-0.025	-0.031	-0.068	0.026	0.097
Demographics										
Age	0.019	0.023	0.051	-0.013	-0.080	0.011	0.014	0.036	-0.009	-0.051
Male	-0.014	-0.017	-0.039	0.009	0.061	-0.008	-0.010	-0.026	0.006	0.037
African American	-0.032	-0.042	-0.130	-0.016	0.219	-0.014	-0.019	-0.058	0.005	0.086
Latino	0.006	0.008	0.017	-0.005	-0.026	0.002	0.002	0.005	-0.001	-0.008
Asian American	-0.031	-0.041	-0.129	-0.018	0.219	-0.030	-0.043	-0.161	-0.038	0.272
South	0.020	0.024	0.050	-0.015	-0.079	0.017	0.022	0.053	-0.015	-0.076

Table 4
Support for Capital Gains Tax Cut by Income Segments

	Lower	Middle	Upper	Total
Oppose	119	143	88	350
	45.08	42.06	33.85	40.51
DK	56	31	24	111
	21.21	9.12	9.23	12.85
Support	89	166	148	403
	33.71	48.82	56.92	46.64
Total	264	340	260	864

Parson chi2(4) = 40.8179   Pr = 0.000

Smaller font numbers are column percentages.

Table 5
Support for Increasing Minimum Wage by Income Segments

	Lower	Middle	Upper	Total
Oppose	42	87	76	205
	15.79	25.59	29.34	23.7
DK	16	9	9	34
	6.02	2.65	3.47	3.93
Support	208	244	174	626
	78.2	71.76	67.18	72.37
Total	266	340	259	865

Parson chi2(4) = 17.7461   Pr = 0.001

Smaller font numbers are column percentages.

Figure 1: Democratic Politicians and the Working Class

Q: Thinking about politicians in the two major political parties, which do you think would feel more comfortable having a beer with a truck driver, construction worker, or waitress?—Democrat, Republican, Don't Know
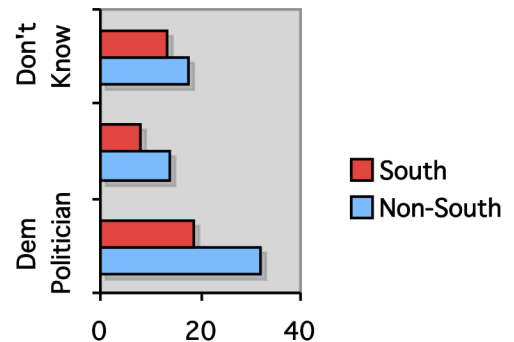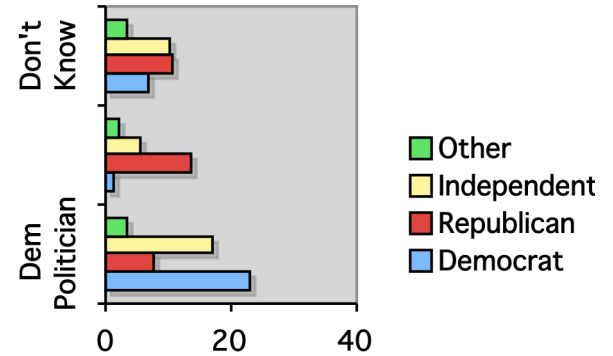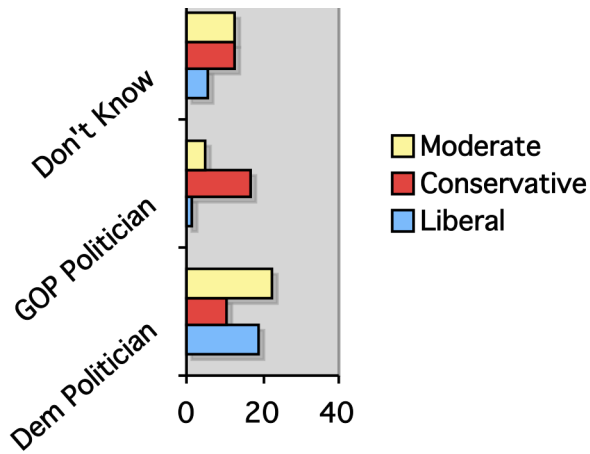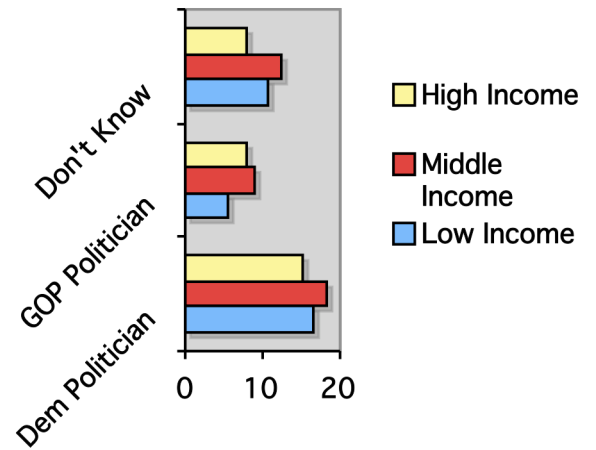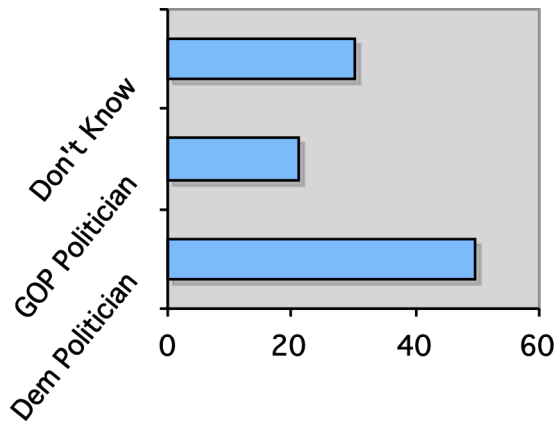
Figure 2: The Public Believes Democrats are the Party of the People

Q: Which statement comes closest to your way of thinking about politics?
1. Democrats are the party of the people and Republicans are the party of the powerful
2. Republicans are the party of the people and Democrats are the party of the powerful
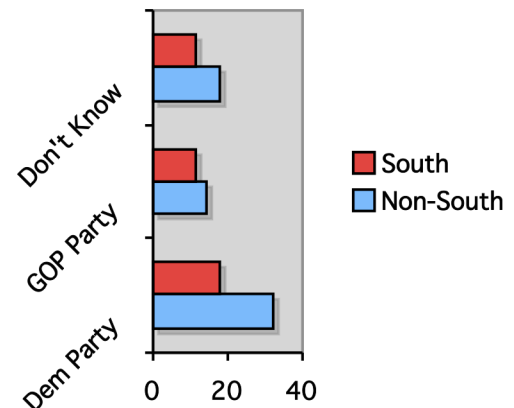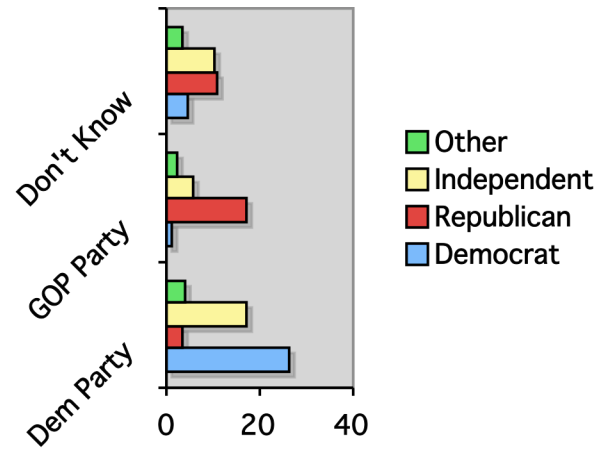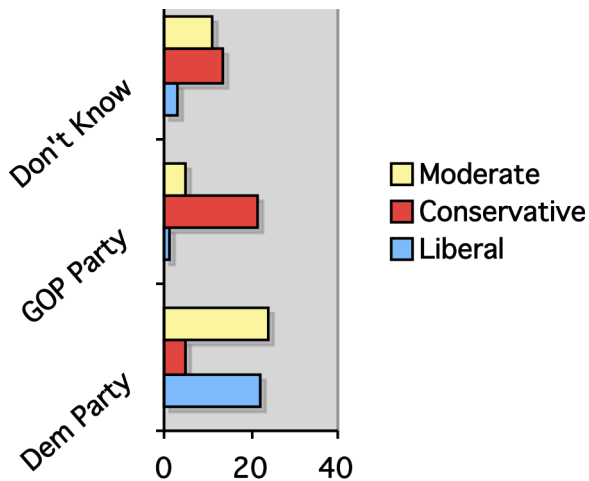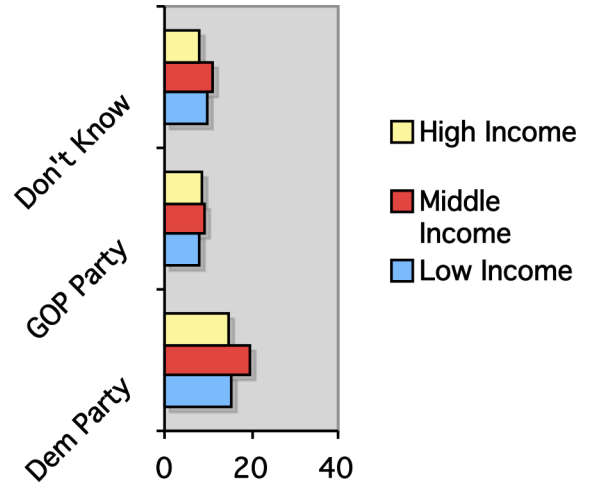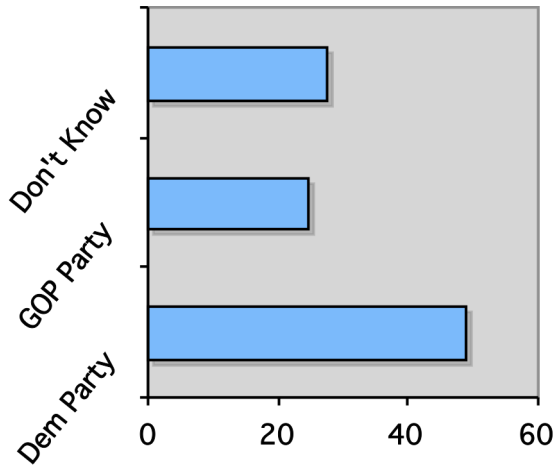
Figure 3: Economic Issues Matter Most in Politics

Q: Which statement comes the closest to your way of thinking about politics?
1. Politics is about economic issues such as jobs, taxes, gas prices, and the minimum wage
2. Politics is about moral issues such as abortion, pornography, and same-sex marriage