Class Polarization in Partisanship among Native Southern Whites, 1952–90*

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Multivariate analyses of National Elections Studies data reveal that class-based parti-
sanship of native southern whites, absent or inverted in the past, has surfaced in the past
15 years. In the 1950s, the higher the status of a native southern white, the more likely the
individual was to identify as a Democrat. No clear class basis for partisanship prevailed in
the 1960s and early 1970s. Since the mid-1970s, class polarization typical of the rest of the
nation has characterized native southern whites, with higher status individuals favoring
Republican identification.

Scholars have contrasted the decline of class voting with the stability
of the relationship between class and party identification among white
Americans. Abramson noted: "While class voting and status polarization
varied from election to election [along a downward trend], the relation-
ship of social class to direction of party identification remained relatively
stable, and weak, in all postwar surveys" (1978, 1069; see also Abramson
1975, 51–52). Yet the link between social status and partisanship has
undergone change: this paper examines the emergence since midcentury
of class polarization in partisanship in the South.

In the 1950s, the class alignment of voting and partisanship differed
among native southern whites. Mild class voting contrasted with inverse
class polarization in partisanship—the higher the status, the more likely
native southern whites were to vote Republican but to identify as Demo-
crats.[1] Since the mid-1970s, both voting and partisanship have been polar-
ized along class lines.

    [1]Until recently, greater class polarization in partisanship in the South offset an oppo-
site trend in the nonsouth (Petrocik 1987; Edsall 1984). But greater class voting by southern
whites (Books and Reynolds 1975; Glenn 1973; Abramson 1978; Black and Black 1987;
Lamis 1988) did not offset the nonsouthern decline in such voting (Abramson, Aldrich, and
Rohde 1990; Dalton 1988). An explanation for these regional differences goes beyond the
scope of this paper. On the inverse class polarization in partisanship in the South in
the 1950s, see Converse (1972). On the discernible signs of class voting in the South in the
1950s, see Strong (1955, 1960), Bartley and Graham (1975), and Sundquist (1983).

This move toward class polarization in partisanship, one among many sweeping partisan changes experienced by the South in recent decades (Beck 1977; Black and Black 1987, 1992; Petrocik 1987) takes on significance when viewed in historical context: the politics of race has long distracted southern whites from a politics focused more on economic issues and class divisions (Key 1949; Woodward 1966; Matthews and Prothro 1966; Havard 1972; Degler 1972; Grantham 1988).

Various explanations can account for the change toward class polarization in partisanship. Converse, for instance, argued that the "*normalization* of the class-party correlation in the South is a product of growing industrialization" (1966, 222). The evolution of the race issue is at the core of other explanations. One explanation stresses the shift in party image on civil rights (Wolfinger and Arsenau 1978, 202; Trilling 1976) that would have made southern whites freer to become Republicans: "When the Democratic party ceased to be the champion of white supremacy, southern whites began to act like other Americans and vote in harmony with what they perceived to be their economic interest" (Strong 1963, 174–75). Other scholars put more emphasis on the abatement of racial issues, visible both at the elite (Black 1976) and the mass public level (Black and Black 1987, 202), as such abatement would have created a climate more conducive to class polarization, particularly in the internal politics of the southern states (Bass and DeVries 1976; Lamis 1988). This paper is based on the idea that a better understanding of the patterns of the growing class polarization can be a useful first step in disentangling the contributions of these perhaps complementary, perhaps competing explanations.

This study of the greater class polarization in the South addresses four concerns. First, this change should be studied with a more dynamic perspective than has been previously employed. Typically, scholars have resorted to "endpoint analysis," contrasting findings from the 1950s with those from the most recently available presidential survey. By analyzing four decades of surveys, midterm and presidential, the patterns and the exceptions can be more fully highlighted. A more dynamic context can permit a reassessment of the literature. For instance, the negligible level of class polarization in southern partisanship in the late 1960s and early 1970s found by Gatlin (1975, 49) and Cassel (1978, 706–07) tells a different and richer story when contrasted with the inverse class polarization in the 1950s (Converse 1972) and the suggestions of a more vivid class polarization since the mid-1970s (Wolfinger and Arsenau 1978, 204–05; Petrocik 1987, 357–58; Wattenberg 1991).

Second, in examining class polarization in the South, a focus restricted to native southern whites follows previous literature (Beck 1977;

Petrocik 1981, 60–62; Stanley and Niemi 1991) and has much to recommend it. Native southern whites make up two-thirds or more of the South's population and "still fundamentally shape the South's most important partisan tendencies" (Black and Black 1987, 242). Due to the recent partisan patterns of southern blacks and nonnative southern whites, a focus on *all* southerners would favor finding sharp class polarization since the 1960s. Blacks, relatively lower in socioeconomic status, mobilized into politics and solid Democratic ties in the 1960s. Thus, "correlations between party and status for the South [could be] spuriously due to the almost homogeneous partisanship and occupational characteristics of blacks in the region" (Gatlin 1975, 48–49). The same is true from the opposite direction for migrant whites: they have added a more Republican component (Wolfinger and Hagen 1985). The higher socioeconomic status combined with the apparently higher degree of class polarization among this group (Cassel 1978, 706) means their inclusion would also strengthen a finding of class polarization. A tougher test for the emergence of class polarization in recent years, the path followed here, restricts the analysis to native southern whites.

Third, the need for a multivariate model of the relationship between class and partisanship seems simple and unobjectionable, but bivariate analyses have typified the study of southern partisanship (e.g., Gatlin 1975; Cassel 1978; Petrocik 1987; Stanley 1988; Wattenberg 1991).

Fourth, the preceding ideas place excessive demands on survey sample size. Single-year survey estimates from multivariate analyses of native southern white partisanship and class polarization would show considerable fluctuation due to small samples. Rather than resort to estimates for each survey year, we estimate the relationship for periods, pooled samples of similar years. Why we did this should be clear; how we did this, we discuss now.

Periods in Southern Partisanship

Small sample sizes have hampered previous studies of the partisanship of native southern whites. We supplement the commonly used presidential-year surveys with midterm surveys, an approach too few have previously undertaken. Surveys spanning four decades since 1952 offer a long retrospective on partisan change and its timing. But even 18 surveys, 10 in presidential and 8 in midterm years, do not remedy the small sample problem if we treat each year's sample as distinct. Pooling similar years into periods yields sizable samples of native southern whites, thus facilitating a more extensive multivariate analysis than the bivariate endpoint analyses that have characterized the previous literature on southern partisanship.

Of course, the periods are not self-labeling. Often, analysts combine survey years with little overt fretting over whether doing so is justifiable. One can find the 1960s or the 1970s pooled despite the surge in independents during the mid-1960s and the differing class polarization during the 1970s (Petrocik 1987). Rather than combine sample surveys at the convenience or whim of the researcher, perhaps masking changes by pooling heterogeneous years, one should analyze the patterns of partisanship for the 1952–1990 period, trying to discern which years go together, which belong to different clusters.

To establish similar periods, we have first examined for each survey year the relationship between the party balance (percentage Democratic minus percentage Republican) and an index of status polarization built from four social status variables: subjective social class, education, family income, and head of household's occupation. Three periods stand out from the visual inspection of Figure 1: 1952–60, 1966–72, and 1976–90.[2] The first period exhibited inverse class polarization; the second displayed little or no class polarization; and the most recent period marked the emergence of class polarization among native southern whites. Two exceptional years, 1964 and 1974, fell outside these clusters: the Johnson-Goldwater contest of 1964 triggered a level of class polarization in partisanship that faded quickly and did not return for 14 years; and in the Watergate election of 1974, native southern whites reverted briefly to the inverse class polarization reminiscent of the 1952–60 period.

The Model

Modeling the relationship of status to partisanship requires the inclusion of other important determinants of partisan attachments. Among the determinants of partisanship of native southern whites, the greatest attention has been paid to age. Since the seminal work of Paul Allen Beck (1977), scholars have debated the relative contributions of younger and older generations to partisan change in the South.[3] Here we follow Beck and others (Beck and Lopatto 1982; Black and Black 1987, 20) by defining three political generations: Solid South (born prior to 1924), postwar (born 1924–43), and post–Civil Rights Act (born after 1943).

Geographical residence has also helped to shape southern partisanship. Republican growth in identification has been widespread, but some

[2]The steps employed to check the appropriateness of the periods are discussed in an appendix.

[3]For the view that younger generations have changed the most in partisanship, see Beck (1977), Wolfinger and Hagen (1985, 11), and Wolfinger and Arsenau (1978, 197–98). For evidence that partisan changes among older native southern whites have also been notable, see Campbell (1977b, 755), Petrocik (1987, 362–63), and Stanley (1988, 72, 85).

Figure 1. Periods of Native Southern White Partisanship and Status Polarization, Strong, Weak, and Leaning Partisans, 1952–90

Party
Balance
$(D\% - R\%)$
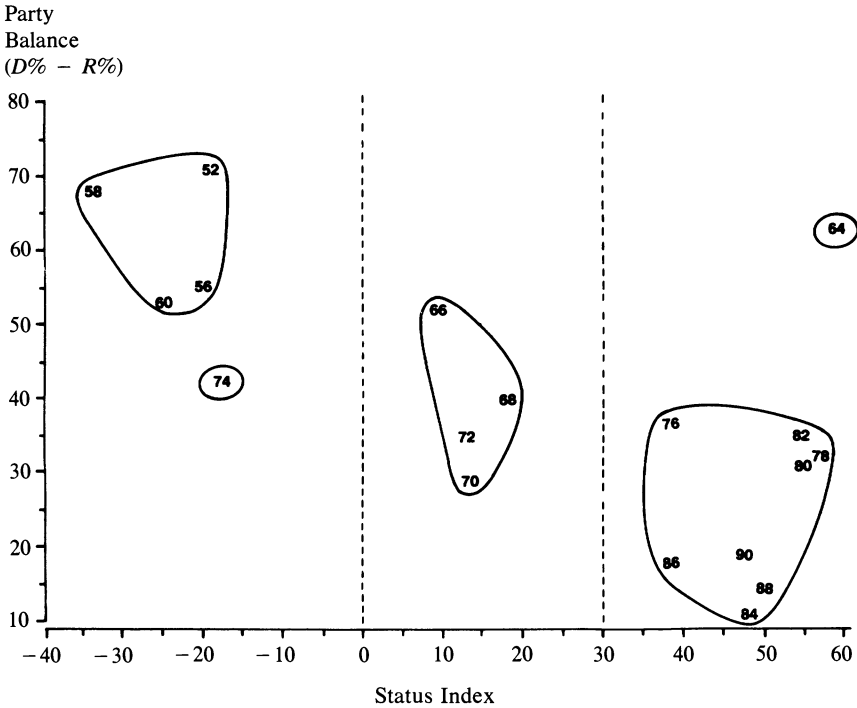
Status Index

Note: The index of status polarization was built from four social status variables: subjective social class, education, family income, and head of household's occupation. The index combines the party balance calculated for each of these variables between the category presumably more Democratic minus the party balance of the category presumably less Democratic. For example, in the case of the subjective class variable, it corresponds to the party balance of the working class (Democrat–Republican) minus the party balance of the middle class (Democrat–Republican). Each variable was weighted equally.

Source: Authors' analyses of National Election Studies data.

areas have been more receptive than others. Urban areas have proven more susceptible to Republican advances than have rural areas (Strong 1960, 63). Whites in the Deep South have been more resistant to Republican advances than have whites in the Rim South (Ladd with Hadley 1978, 152–53; Sundquist 1983, 277–84). Urban-rural and Rim-Deep characteristics have been combined into three variables denoting urban Rim, urban Deep, and rural Deep (with rural Rim in the intercept term).

Key called attention to the powerful, shaping influence of a county's

black population percentage (1949, 5–10, 317–44). The impact of the black population percentage has been studied in various contexts—black voter registration (Matthews and Prothro 1966, 115–20), the 1968 Wallace vote (Wright 1977), white racial attitudes (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989), and presidential voting (Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1988; Black and Black 1992, 296–97)—but has not been explored systematically in the estimation of southern partisanship. Since the southern Democratic party stood for white supremacy and the national Democratic party became increasingly more liberal on racial issues (Trilling 1976), the inclusion of county black population percentage seems appropriate to explain the earlier Democratic loyalty of whites in predominantly black areas and their defection after 1964.

Under the assumption that forces shaping partisanship in the rest of the nation also have an impact among native southern whites, variables designating Roman Catholics, respondents in union member households, and females have been included (Stanley and Niemi 1991).

We emphasize party identification as a more durable indicator of partisan loyalties, less subject than presidential voting to wobbling due to short-term forces. Party identification can undergo change but constitutes a lagging rather than a leading indicator of shifting party loyalties (Price 1968; Campbell 1977a). In this analysis of four decades of southern partisan loyalty, the capturing of each short-term force is not the objective: the objective is a firmer grasp of the dynamics and the patterns in class polarization since midcentury.

The definition of partisanship that we employ counts independents who lean toward a party as partisans. Recent work on partisanship has shown the appropriateness of this definition (Keith et al. 1986, 1992) and research on the South has adopted this definition (Black and Black 1987, 239; Wattenberg 1991, 425).[4]

The analysis is conducted with logistic regression, which is generally preferred over ordinary least squares when the dependent variable is dichotomous. We initially exclude pure independents, contrasting Democrats and Republicans. Limiting the analysis to partisans sharpens the contrasting characteristics of party support. Subsequent analyses include the nonleaning independents to gain perspectives on the differential partisan imprints to class polarization.

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[4]For the suitability of this definition in the southern context, see Wolfinger and Arsenau (1978, 191–92). Definitions of "partisan" can differ, but our conclusions do not turn on a definition: we also ran the analyses limiting partisans to those who claimed strong or weak identification with a party (excluding leaners from partisans), and this alternative definition did not alter the conclusions.

The Results

Table 1 reports logistic regression results for Democratic versus Republican identifiers among native southern whites, excluding independents who lean toward neither party. Table 1 reveals that the years 1964 and 1974 were indeed exceptional: 1964, definitely a watershed, provided marked evidence of emerging class polarization along party lines; 1974 turned back the clock to inverse class polarization, although milder than in 1952–60.[5] Neither 1964 nor 1974 set the pattern for the immediately subsequent years.

Results for 1976–90 reveal strong class polarization in partisanship. The coefficients for all six social status variables are in the expected direction (pro-Republican) and five of the six are statistically significant. These results contrast clearly with the inverse or weak polarization of the earlier multiyear periods. In 1952–60 two of the six coefficients were significant: having some college education and being in a household headed by a clerical-sales white-collar worker strongly propelled individuals toward Democratic identification, indicative of inverse class polarization. In 1966–72 only family income achieved statistical significance, a discernible but relatively mild class polarization.

Logit coefficients lack the ready interpretability of ordinary least squares coefficients.[6] To better appreciate the substantive interpretation of these coefficients, we have used the coefficients to calculate expected changes in probabilities, as shown in Table 2 (Hanushek and Jackson 1977; Petersen 1985; Maddala 1988).

Consider first the statistically significant social status coefficients for the 1952–60 and 1976–90 periods. In the still Solid South of the 1950s, being college-educated or in a household headed by a clerical-sales

[5]In 1964 three cleavages among native southern whites appear to have changed permanently. The pro-Republican gender gap disappeared and did not reappear; the massively pro-Democratic Deep South departed from the Democratic fold and seldom returned; and party polarization along class lines surfaced. Yet the age cleavage showed its strength for the first time in 1964 and has not faded since. A possible explanation for the resurgence of inverse class polarization in 1974 may be found in the spectacular rise of independents that year. Since these new independents were mainly high-status individuals, one may hypothesize that these voters were Republicans escaping cross-pressures related to Watergate by thinking of themselves as independents.

[6]A further complication lies in the collinearity among the status variables (particularly between the college and professional variables). The construction of a status index variable (Petrocik 1981) or the use of a technical solution such as the principal components regression (Maddala 1988, 237–43) are remedial steps that can be taken. Since either of these would have made the coefficients difficult to interpret in substantive terms, we have employed four distinct status variables. Omitting the college or professional variables makes the remaining variable significant at the 99% level for the 1976–90 period (one-tailed *t*-test).

worker boosted Democratic identification by nine and 14 percentage points, respectively. This pattern of inverse class polarization, which made the South distinctive in the 1950s, was completely reversed in the more competitive environment after the mid-1970s and the 1980s. Several status coefficients of the 1976–90 period are linked to more sizable groups (middle class, college educated, and professional-managerial) than they were in the 1950s. Of course, the growth in the size of these groups does not single-handedly explain Republican growth since the 1950s. The switch in the partisan meaning of group membership, from the inverse class polarization of the 1950s to class polarization after the mid-1970s, played a prominent role. For instance, after the mid-1970s, being college educated and in a household headed by a clerical-sales worker lowered the probability of Democratic identification by five and 11 percentage points, respectively. Possessing other high-status characteristics also inclined individuals away from Democratic identification: being middle class or in the top third of family income each by eight percentage points, being in a household headed by a professional or managerial worker by five percentage points. After the mid-1970s, these characteristics combined to exert a strong downward drag on Democratic identification.

Which party's identifiers have been characterized more by the emerging class polarization? To answer this, we estimate Democratic and Republican identification in Table 3. Having criticized endpoint analysis for its reliance on two points in time, we now, for clarity, resort to it— except that we contrast periods, not single surveys. The ebb and flow of partisan change over the years has already been discussed and would not differ in crucial ways if we considered the intervening years in Table 3.

Tables 3 and 4 reveal that class polarization is marginally more vivid among Republican than Democratic identifiers. College education, head of household occupation, and middle-class status boost Republican identification more than they reduce Democratic identification. The demographic characteristics of nonleaning independents resemble those of Democratic identifiers more than those of Republicans in the 1976–90 period. Hence, estimating Republican identification yields stronger and more significant coefficients for the status variables. Interestingly, if Republicans make greater inroads among these nonleaning independents, further Republican growth could be accompanied by reduced class polarization.

Tables 1 through 4 furnish more than a reading of class polarization and the impact of social status measures. While the motivations for including most of these variables in the model hinged on the need for controls, we can reasonably ask how great an impact each made on partisanship and how the effects of these other variables changed over the periods

Table 1. Native Southern White Partisanship, Partisans Only, 1952–90

	1952–60		1964		1966–72		1974		1976–90	
Intercept	.25	(.33)	1.67***	(.64)	-.06	(.28)	-1.46**	(.65)	.37***	(.15)
Middle class	-.06	(.24)	-1.66***	(.58)	-.01	(.18)	1.01**	(.49)	-.32***	(.11)
High school graduate	.04	(.30)	.46	(.69)	.17	(.22)	.64	(.51)	-.15	(.14)
Some college (or more)	.91***	(.37)	1.46**	(.84)	-.15	(.23)	-.12	(.57)	-.23*	(.16)
Top third family income	.09	(.28)	-1.29**	(.63)	-.27*	(.19)	-.32	(.47)	-.33***	(.12)
Household head in clerical–sales position	1.90***	(.58)	-.92*	(.67)	-.03	(.26)	-.57	(.66)	-.44***	(.15)
Household head in prof. or management position	.06	(.28)	.28	(.68)	-.03	(.20)	-.21	(.48)	-.23**	(.14)
Solid South generation (born before 1924)	.74***	(.27)	1.26***	(.54)	.77***	(.25)	.98**	(.53)	.60***	(.14)
Post–World War II generation (born 1924–43)	—		—		.26	(.24)	.99**	(.53)	.42***	(.12)
Female	-.78***	(.22)	.02	(.51)	.17	(.16)	.47	(.41)	.13	(.10)
Catholic	.19	(.82)	—		.72**	(.41)	-.52	(.70)	.57***	(.17)
Union member in household	1.36***	(.45)	.74	(.87)	.78***	(.28)	.30	(.64)	.51***	(.17)

	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
County population over 15% black	.92***	(.24)	2.34***	(.85)	.85***	(.17)	.69*	(.44)	.80***	(.17)
County population over 15% black, 1984–90	—		—		—		—		-.62***	(.21)
Rural Deep	2.13***	(.42)	-3.07***	(1.2)	-.15	(.23)	1.31***	(.54)	.42*	(.26)
Rural Deep, 1984–90	—		—		—		—		-.55*	(.35)
Urban Deep	1.09*	(.77)	-3.01***	(1.1)	-.99***	(.29)	1.66***	(.64)	-.04	(.22)
Urban Deep, 1984–90	—		—		—		—		-.45*	(.31)
Urban Rim	.52**	(.28)	-.69	(.62)	.56**	(.24)	1.92***	(.61)	.37**	(.18)
Urban Rim, 1984–90	—		—		—		—		-.46**	(.20)
N	841		184		866		191		1,897	
Corrected pseudo-R^2	.29		.39		.17		.31		.18	

Note: — indicates variable not in model. The dependent variable is partisan identification (strong, weak, or leaning; Democratic = 1, Republican = 0). Nonleaning independents are excluded from these analyses. Table entries are logit coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses). Asterisks indicate one-tailed significance test: * .10, ** .05, *** .01. For discussion of the corrected pseudo-R^2, see Hagle and Mitchell (1992).

In 1964 Catholics composed fewer than 2% of the native southern whites. Consequently, no convergence occurred if the model contained Catholics. In other years Catholics composed somewhat under 10% of the sample.

Source: Authors' analyses of National Election Studies data.

Table 2. Native Southern White Partisanship, Partisans Only, 1952–90, Changes in Democratic Probabilites

	1952–60	1964	1966–72	1974	1976–90	
Middle class	− .01	− .34	− .00	.14	− .08	
High school graduate	.01	.05	.03	.10	− .04	
Some college (or more)	.09	.12	− .03	− .02	− .05	
Top third family income	.01	− .25	− .06	− .06	− .08	
Household head in clerical-sales position	.14	− .16	− .01	− .12	− .11	
Household head in prof. or management position	.01	.03	− .01	− .04	− .05	
Solid South generation (born before 1924)	.08	.11	.13	.14	.12	
Post–World War II generation (born 1924–43)	—	—	.05	.14	.09	
Female	− .14	.00	.03	.08	.03	
Catholic	.03	—	.12	− .11	.12	
Union member in household	.12	.08	.13	.05	.11	
County population over 15% black	.09	.14	.14	.11	.16	.04*
Rural Deep	.15	− .64	− .03	.16	.09	− .03*
Urban Deep	.11	− .63	− .23	.19	− .01	− .12*
Urban Rim	.06	− .11	.10	.20	.08	− .02*
Mean, dependent variable	.83	.84	.73	.76	.64	

Note: — indicates variable not in model. *indicates the change in probability for 1976–82 1and 1984–90, respectively, calculated from the relevant coefficients from Table 1. We have evaluated the changes in probabilities at the sample mean of the dependent variable in the period. The formula used for calculating the change in the probability resulting from a unit change in an independent variable is

$$\Delta P = P(D = 1 \mid L_1) - P(D = 1 \mid L_0) = \exp(L_1)/[1 + \exp(L_1)] - \exp(L_0)/[1 + \exp(L_0)],$$

where D is our dichotomous dependent variable; L_0 is the logit before the unit change in independent variable x_j; and L_1 is the logit after the unit change in x_j (calculated by $L_i = L_0 + B_j$). For the rationale behind this formula, see Petersen (1985). To calculate the cumulative impact of changing several variables, we added the additional coefficients to the previous expression for L_1 (DeMaris 1992, 40, 50).

Partisanship is defined as indicated in Table 1.

Source: Authors' analyses of National Election Studies data.

analyzed. Results show that two pillars of the New Deal Democratic coalition—Roman Catholics and union members—also appear among native southern whites. The strength and the stability of the impact of both variables are the key features here. Table 2 shows that the impact of the union variable is .12 for the 1950s and still .11 in the 1976–90 period; the impact of the Roman Catholic variable gains in strength in the 1966–72

period and maintains its impact (.12) later. The impact of the gender variable shifted over time, the pro-Republican gender gap of the 1950s contrasting with a modest female inclination toward the Democrats thereafter.

Patterns of change, though in opposite direction, have also characterized the age and regional variables. Whereas both coefficients for the Solid South and the post–World War II generations have gained in strength across time (.08 to .12 for the former, from .05 to .09 for the latter), the sharp geographic pattern of partisanship of the 1950s almost totally disappeared by the mid-1980s. Another aspect of this regional equalization is the virtual disappearance of the Democratic advantage in the counties with larger black population percentages in the 1984–90 period.[7] This elimination may seem to have happened late in light of the literature on white flight from the Democratic party caused by the growing visibility of blacks among the Democratic coalition (see, in particular, Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1988). But the regional patterns of partisan change among native southern whites across time is unmistakable: in the 1950s the incremental probability of Democratic identification associated with living in the rural Deep South, urban Deep South, or in high black population counties was 15, 11, and 9 percentage points, respectively; in the 1984–90 period, the corresponding effects drop to −3, −12, and +4 percentage points.[8]

The message conveyed by the results is clear: the partisan landscape of the native southern white has changed radically over the past four decades. As a product of this evolution, partisan ties in this group appear now as a blend of the long-term forces of socialization and the short-term pressures of status polarization. The former has produced discernable political generations while the latter has reshaped partisanship around status characteristics.

The link between generational replacement and the decline of class voting in the nation (Abramson 1989, 271) calls for consideration of the level of class polarization among generations of native southern whites. Status polarization among native southern whites and what the future holds for such polarization can be addressed by cohort analysis. Such

[7]We adopted the 15% cutting point for black population percentage on empirical grounds, having tested various other possibilities including actual percentage black (linear and curvilinear) (Blalock 1967).

[8]The regional patterns of partisan change are more readily traceable with multiyear periods. Individual year surveys combine the small sample problem with the presence of a significant level of collinearity among the black county and the regional variables. Results for 1964 and 1974 are thus less indicative, although the impact of the Goldwater candidacy seems aptly captured in the model.

Table 3. Native Southern White Partisanship, Partisans, and Nonleaning Independents

	Democrats		Republicans	
	1952–60	1976–90	1952–60	1976–90
Intercept	.13 (.29)	.12 (.13)	−.40 (.32)	−.73*** (.14)
Middle class	−.15 (.21)	−.21** (.10)	.07 (.24)	.34*** (.10)
High school graduate	.08 (.26)	−.11 (.12)	−.06 (.30)	.15 (.13)
Some college (or more)	1.02*** (.33)	−.04 (.14)	−.81** (.37)	.33** (.15)
Top third family income	.11 (.24)	−.29*** (.11)	−.04 (.28)	.32*** (.11)
Household head in clerical–sales position	1.09*** (.39)	−.30** (.14)	−1.93*** (.57)	.44*** (.14)
Household head in prof. or management position	.11 (.25)	−.16 (.13)	−.14 (.28)	.23** (.13)
Solid South generation (born before 1924)	.61*** (.23)	.71*** (.13)	−.68*** (.26)	−.43*** (.14)
Post–World War II generation (born 1924–43)	—	.41*** (.11)	—	−.35*** (.12)
Female	−.62*** (.19)	.07 (.09)	.79*** (.22)	−.13* (.10)

Catholic	−.61	(.80)	.58***	(.14)	−.08	(.81)	−.46***	(.16)
Union member in household	.87***	(.33)	.50***	(.15)	−1.43***	(.45)	−.39***	(.16)
County population over 15% black	.76***	(.20)	.68***	(.15)	−.91***	(.23)	−.74***	(.17)
County population over 15% black, 1984–90	—		−.52***	(.18)	—		.61***	(.20)
Rural Deep	1.95***	(.34)	.34*	(.22)	−2.06***	(.41)	−.43*	(.26)
Rural Deep, 1984–90	—		−.43*	(.31)	—		.51**	(.34)
Urban Deep	1.53**	(.75)	−.09	(.20)	−.98*	(.76)	−.02	(.22)
Urban Deep, 1984–90	—		−.19	(.28)	—		.59***	(.30)
Urban Rim	.41*	(.24)	.16	(.16)	−.48**	(.28)	−.42**	(.18)
Urban Rim, 1984–90	—		−.24*	(.18)	—		.47***	(.19)
N	887		2,182		887		2,182	
Corrected pseudo-R^2	.25		.12		.30		.14	

Note: — indicates variable not in model. The dependent variables are partisan identification (strong, weak, or leaning = 1; nonleaning independents and opposite party identifiers = 0). Table entries are logit coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses). Asterisks indicate one-tailed significance test: *.10, **.05, ***.01. For discussion of the corrected pseudo-R^2, see Hagle and Mitchell (1992).

Source: Authors' analyses of National Election Studies data.

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Table 4. Native Southern White Partisanship, Partisans, and Nonleaning Independents, 1952–60 and 1976–90, Changes in Probabilities

	Democrats			Republicans		
	1952–60	1976–90		1952–60	1976–90	
Middle class	− .03	− .05		.01	.08	
High school graduate	.01	− .03		− .01	.03	
Some college (or more)	.13	− .01		− .08	.07	
Top third family income	.02	− .07		− .01	.07	
Household head in clerical-sales position	.13	− .08		− .13	.10	
Household head in prof. or management position	.02	− .04		− .02	.05	
Solid South generation (born before 1924)	.09	.16		− .07	− .08	
Post–World War II generation (born 1924–43)	—	.10		—	− .07	
Female	− .12	.02		.14	− .03	
Catholic	− .12	.14		− .01	− .09	
Union member in household	.11	.12		− .12	− .08	
County population over 15% black	.10	.16	.04*	− .09	− .13	− .03*
Rural Deep	.18	.08	− .02*	− .14	− .08	.02*
Urban Deep	.16	.02	− .07*	− .09	− .00	.14*
Urban Rim	.06	.04	− .02*	− .05	− .08	.01*
Mean, dependent variable	.78	.54		.16	.33	

Note: See the note to Table 2. Partisanship is defined as indicated in Table 3.

analysis discloses that class alignment has been evident among each of the generations considered in this paper.[9]

Since voting is often viewed as a leading indicator of partisan inclination, and party identification as a lagging indicator, the level of class voting can furnish insights into future levels of class partisanship. And, in this regard, the behavior of those who defect from party loyalty to support the opposition party's presidential candidate seems crucial, since they exemplify the case of individuals torn between their past partisan affiliation and their current political preferences. Native southern white

[9]Refining the definition of the cohorts shows a low level of class polarization among the voters who entered the electorate during the 1984–90 period. But since "there are several reasons to suspect that class-based voting [and partisanship] patterns do not crystallize until people are in their late twenties or older" (Glenn 1973, 3) and since the other cohorts belonging to the post–Civil Rights Act generation have demonstrated increasing status polarization over the years, conclusions about the future class alignment of voters entering the electorate in 1984 and later must remain tentative for now.

Republicans seldom defect (Wolfinger and Arsenau 1978). Among Democrats, past research (Prothro, Campbell, and Grigg 1958; and our own analysis, Nadeau and Stanley 1992) strongly demonstrates that defections have always had a strong class-based orientation. This pattern of defections persisted in the 1980s and suggests the continuation of class-based partisanship among native southern whites.

Conclusion

These analyses demonstrate the distance native southern whites as a group have traveled in reconfiguring partisan ties. Native southern whites, remarkable in the 1950s for class inversion and overwhelming Democratic loyalty, now reveal far more Republican ties and class polarization typical of nonsouthern politics.

Native southern white movement away from Democratic party identification has been dramatic (and Republican presidential voting reveals even greater partisan change). Native southern whites leaving the Democratic fold since the 1950s have attracted the most attention, but a plurality have remained. The 1976–90 period, unlike the earlier periods, indicates that those who remain Democrats have tendencies similar to whites in the rest of the nation: older, Catholic, union members, blue-collar, working class, less educated, and less affluent. This analysis has confirmed the strength and relevance in recent years of national partisan cleavages for native southern whites.

Growth in the number of higher-status individuals has not produced this result. Demographic change alone, imposed on the class inversion of the 1950s, would leave native southern whites solidly Democratic. The partisan meaning of the characteristics of native southern whites changed, and the partisan significance of these characteristics converged on patterns common in the rest of the nation.

The perspective of a two-party politics in the South that would divide the population along class lines has been discussed since the end of World War II (Black and Black 1987, 245–47). Key, Heard, Strong, and others anticipated this change. Writing in the mid-1960s, Matthews and Prothro called for "a rational and desirable party system for the South, one in which class-based issues are more important than racial ones." How could this be achieved?—"the upper-middle class, economically conservative, racially moderate whites . . . need to be driven from the Democratic party" (Matthews and Prothro 1966, 475). This change has happened as a two-step process. After the mid-1960s, inverse class polarization was largely a thing of the past. By the mid-1970s, class-based partisanship was an emerging reality for native southern whites. The permanency of this reality is still an open question whose answer depends

on the future behavior of independents, entering voters, and Democratic defectors.

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APPENDIX A
Data Sources

The data analyzed in this paper are from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The *American National Election Studies Cumulative Data File, 1952–1990* (Miller 1991) forms the core of the data for this paper. Variables were added to this set from the individual election surveys, primarily head of household occupation and black population percentage of county. National Election Study surveys for 1954 and 1962 lacked critical variables for the determination of native southern whites and consequently were omitted. The definition of the South used in this study includes the 11 states of the old Confederacy. The original collectors of the data, ICPSR, and the relevant funding agency bear no responsibility for this use of the collection or the interpretations or inferences based upon this use.

APPENDIX B
Periodization

Several analyses confirmed the appropriateness of the periodization. As a first step, we conducted a formal cluster analysis (Everitt 1980). To perform this analysis, we used a hierarchical agglomeration algorithm (SAS 1989, 519–614). Since different clustering methods present various known drawbacks, we used two clustering methods: average and centroid. These two methods produced rather similar results using unstandardized and standardized variables (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984, 20–21). We used standard criteria (semipartial R^2, pseudo-F, and normalized minimum distance) to determine the number of clusters. We checked the validity of our analyses by running the cluster procedure for a subset of our sample, the presidential years, and found the same clusters. We have also performed significance tests on variables used to create clusters. These considerations confirmed that the clusters were "well-separated" ones.

Second, a year-by-year examination of the party balance among the categories of all independent variables in the model led us to the following conclusions: (1) three variables (generation, religion, and union) showed highly consistent patterns across the years and did not suffer from pooling; (2) one variable (female) exhibited a different pattern in the 1950s than later—fortunately our periods catch this shift; and (3) one set of variables (regional and black population concentration) exhibited differences within the 1976–90 period. The reactivation of the Democratic loyalties in the Deep South in 1976–82 was followed by a substantial Republican advance there after 1982. Also, the strong impact of the black concentration variable appears to have vanished during the 1984–90 period. By adding interaction terms for the region and black population variables in the 1976–90 period, the periods 1952–60, 1966–72, and 1976–90 (with 1964 and 1974 separated as special cases) thus offer a sound basis for pooling surveys.

Further checks on the appropriateness of pooling surveys were carried out. We included variables for each year in our different equations to check for differences in the intercept. Differences appeared for certain years, primarily when similar levels of class

polarization coincided with markedly different levels of party balance (the 1976–82, 1984–90 contrast discussed above). But since the inclusion of these year variables leaves the results essentially unchanged, we have chosen to present our logit results without the year indicator variables. We also checked the common slope condition for the status variables by introducing interactive terms for the variables and the different years in each period (Johnston 1984, 397). Fewer than 5% of these interactive terms were significant, and only two coefficients (out of 80) were not in the expected direction and statistically significant.

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