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A Review of "Carnes, Nicholas. *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making*"

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internal factional differences within parties and shape the choices of party leaders as strategic actors. Perhaps Noel's methodology somehow misses earlier ideological substance. Second, I'm not sure how to square the argument presented here with the model of conflict extension presented by Geoffrey Layman and Thomas Carsey in a number of articles (2002, 2006, 2010). In some instances the two mesh nicely, but in others, they seem to differ significantly. These, however, are questions for future researchers to address.

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Carnes, Nicholas. *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013. 200 pages. \$50.00 (hardcover); \$16.00 (softcover).

In politics, class matters, and it matters immensely. This is the lesson of *White-Collar Government*. In this book, Nicholas Carnes offers striking evidence that the class background of legislators profoundly influences the U.S. political system.

Even casual political observers know that candidates can be quick to reference their professional backgrounds. During campaigns, we often learn details about candidates, such as who was the son of a mill worker, who started a business, and who was in the military. Professor Carnes shows that these characteristics—specifically, the occupations politicians held prior to obtaining office—relate to what policies they propose, fight for, and vote [on]. Because the majority of politicians come from white-collar backgrounds, policy in the United States reflects white-collar interests. As he explains, "Policy makers from the working class bring a unique voice to the . . . legislative process, but in our white-collar government, they must shout to accomplish what other politicians can do with a whisper" (60–61).

Early on, Professor Carnes shows that there are good reasons to suspect that previous occupations matter when candidates take office. For example, different types of jobs lead to different material self-interests. It would not be surprising if

a working-class mechanic preferred different policies than a white-collar attorney. In addition, different jobs tend to coincide with different social networks and thus different types of political socialization. Although the exact mechanisms are difficult to untangle, there are many reasons to expect a politician like Edward Beard, who was a painter before (and while) he held office in the Rhode Island legislature (1), would tend to support different policy outcomes than the 97% of state and federal legislators who do not come from working-class backgrounds. Consistent with these expectations, the evidence that class matters is overwhelming.

To examine his arguments, Professor Carnes combines an impressive original dataset with all relevant existing data. These data collection efforts allow him to identify the occupational backgrounds of members of the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, and city councils throughout an extensive period of time (in some cases back to the 1940s). The analysis maximizes the data, combining descriptive statistics, cross tabulations, and rigorous statistical analysis. The author also employs clever analytic strategies, such as examining only the districts where the class of the legislator changed following an election. By holding the district (and thus constituent preferences) and the politicians' political party constant, Professor Carnes is better able to isolate the unique effect of occupational class. In addition to documenting broad class effects (i.e., working-class versus white-collar), more detailed analyses also yield fascinating results. Farm owners and farm managers, for example, typically emerge as the most conservative group in the U.S. Congress. This result holds for economic issues as well as issues prioritized by the American Civil Liberties Union, such as immigration, abortion, and same-sex marriage. Equally interesting, members of Congress with a working-class background are typically the most liberal on these social issues.

White-Collar Government demonstrates that the working class is radically underrepresented in all levels of U.S. government and the consequences are substantial. I hope (and suspect) that Professor Carnes' findings will ignite a wave of research that builds on these conclusions. One question that future research might tackle is how the class composition of legislative bodies relates to changes in legislative behavior. For example, we learn that the occupational class backgrounds in Congress have been relatively consistent throughout the last century. Yet, key characteristics of Congress vary over time in important ways. The policy outputs of Congress were much more liberal in the 1960s than in the 1980s. And the votes of members of Congress have become increasingly polarized in recent decades. Future research could consider why the voting behavior of members of Congress changes in substantial ways even though the class composition of Congress has remained relatively stable.

White-Collar Government also raises normative questions. On one hand, the author convincingly shows that the near absence of working-class legislators leads to much more conservative economic policies than would occur if policy makers' class backgrounds looked more like their constituents' backgrounds. On the other hand, we learn that "lawmakers from the working class tended to perceive their

constituents as more liberal [than they were], and law makers from white-collar professions tended to see them as more conservative [than they were]" (102). That is, both groups were equally out of touch with their constituents. These findings suggest that diversifying the class composition of Congress would shift policy, but not because the working-class are more responsive to their constituents. Rather, policy would change simply because politicians from working-class backgrounds tend to prefer different policies than their white-collar counterparts. In other words, changing the class composition of legislatures could change policy without changing who gets represented or the quality of representation. Such a result would seem to fall short of the ideal that "everyone's views should be represented" (139).

Important books raise important questions, and the previous questions are meant to serve as a testament to the significance of this book. The numerous anecdotes and candidate narratives offer an entertaining read, while the many figures present important findings in a clear and accessible way. The analysis also includes rigorous and appropriate statistical models, and the online appendix presents even more results. Nicholas Carnes has written a marvelous book that will appeal to academic researchers as well as to politically interested members of the broader public.

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