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David Brooks on the state of the Republican Party

Tom Gallagher | Sep. 25, 2012 NCR Today

President Ronald Reagan won the 1980 election because he secured the vote of what became known as the Reagan Democrats, "traditionally Democratic voters who were drawn to Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s for his social conservatism and fiscal responsibility," as defined by *The Washington Post*'s Politics Glossary.

In today's New York *Times*, conservative op-ed writer David Brooks offers a penetrating, if dispiriting, analysis of the current state of the Republican Party as a party that no longer believes in, among other principles, Catholic social teaching.

Brooks writes [1]:

> It's not so much that today's Republican politicians reject traditional, one-nation conservatism. They don't even know it exists. There are few people on the conservative side who'd be willing to raise taxes on the affluent to fund mobility programs for the working class. There are very few willing to use government to actively intervene in chaotic neighborhoods, even when 40 percent of American kids are born out of wedlock. There are very few Republicans who protest against a House Republican budget proposal that cuts domestic discretionary spending to absurdly low levels.
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> The results have been unfortunate. Since they no longer speak in the language of social order, Republicans have very little to offer the less educated half of this country. Republicans have very little to say to Hispanic voters, who often come from cultures that place high value on communal solidarity.
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> Republicans repeat formulas -- government support equals dependency -- that make sense according to free-market ideology, but oversimplify the real world. Republicans like Romney often rely on an economic language that seems corporate and alien to people who do not define themselves in economic terms. No wonder Romney has trouble relating.
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> Some people blame bad campaign managers for Romney's underperforming campaign, but the problem is deeper. Conservatism has lost the balance between economic and traditional conservatism. The Republican Party has abandoned half of its intellectual ammunition. It appeals to people as potential business owners, but not as parents, neighbors and citizens.

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Links:
[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/25/opinion/brooks-the-conservative-mind.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120925