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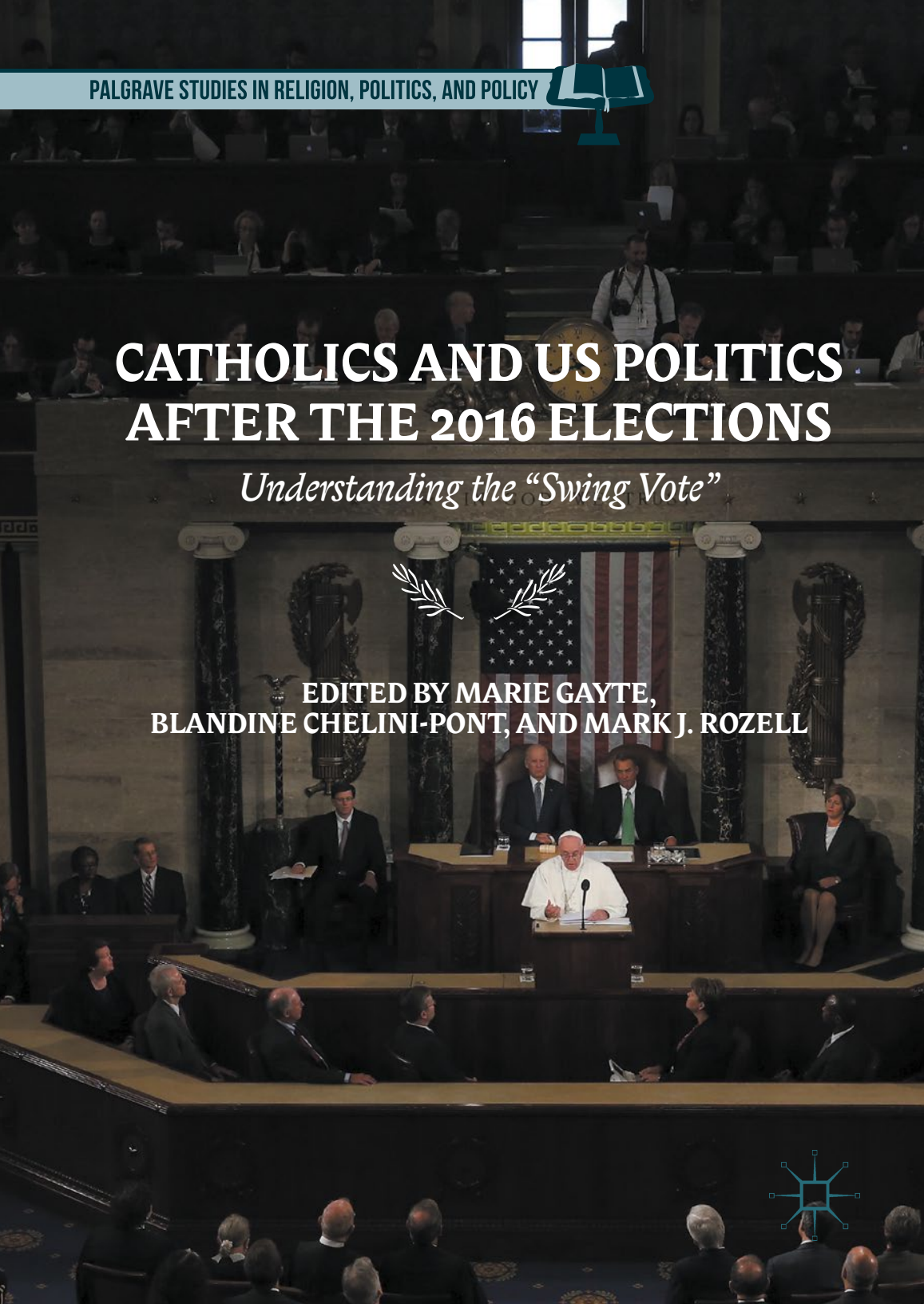
CATHOLICS AND US POLITICS AFTER THE 2016 ELECTIONS

Understanding the "Swing Vote"



EDITED BY MARIE GAYTE,
BLANDINE CHELINI-PONT, AND MARK J. ROZELL

Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy

A generation ago, many social scientists regarded religion as an anachronism, whose social, economic, and political importance would inevitably wane and disappear in the face of the inexorable forces of modernity. Of course, nothing of the sort has occurred; indeed, the public role of religion is resurgent in US domestic politics, in other nations, and in the international arena. Today, religion is widely acknowledged to be a key variable in candidate nominations, platforms, and elections; it is recognized as a major influence on domestic and foreign policies. National religious movements as diverse as the Christian Right in the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan are important factors in the internal politics of particular nations. Moreover, such transnational religious actors as Al-Qaida, Falun Gong, and the Vatican have had important effects on the politics and policies of nations around the world.

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Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy
ISBN 978-3-319-62261-3 ISBN 978-3-319-62262-0 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017944710

Cover image: © Chip Somodevilla/Staff

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The "Catholic Vote" in the USA

Mark J. Rozell

I used quotation marks in my title to signify that there really is no unified Catholic vote in US politics. That is, Catholics comprise a large segment of the population, about 21% of the USA, and usually about one-fourth of the adult voting population.[1] Many political observers create a misleading portrait when they refer to the phenomenon of "the Catholic vote" as though it is a united force waiting to be mobilized by one political party or the other.

The Catholic electorate in the USA is diverse and varied. White Catholics vote differently than Latino Catholics (which is the fastest growing population). Frequent church-going Catholics vote very differently than Catholics who occasionally or rarely attend services.

The most substantial concentrations of Catholics are in the Midwest, northeast, mid-Atlantic regions, and somewhat the west coast. In presidential elections, it is in many of the usually competitive states in the Electoral College, such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin, that Catholics have their most significant numbers.

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_1

The self-identified Catholic vote in the USA actually is remarkably similar to the overall national vote totals in modern elections. In 2012, President Obama won 50% and Mitt Romney 48% of the Catholic vote, the same percentages by which each won the national vote. In 2008, Barack Obama won 54% of the Catholic vote, while his overall national vote total was 53%. In 2004, George W. Bush won similar sized majorities both of the national vote and among Catholics. In 2000, Al Gore barely won the popular vote and the Catholic vote as well. In 1996, Bill Clinton won a comfortable national majority and an even better turnout among Catholics. The notable exception to this trend is the 2016 election in which Democrat Hillary Clinton won the national popular vote and Republican Donald J. Trump won the Catholic vote by an impressive 52–45%.

It is hard to imagine the Catholic vote as a monolithic force given these varied results. The Catholic vote is deeply divided between the major parties. It is important to understand the diversity of that group and the challenges any candidate faces when trying to make special appeals to Catholics.

The Catholic Voter in the USA

It was not always this way. The Catholic vote in the USA was once nearly monolithic. Catholics were once a key constituency of the New Deal Coalition that anchored the Democratic Party. From the 1930s to about the 1970s, the Democratic Party's coalition of voters formed during the New Deal comprised Catholics, blacks, Jews, many immigrant groups, and labor union members.

Many Catholics of that era were from immigrant families, lived in the inner-cities, and they identified with labor union sentiments. Thus, low economic status and ethnicity largely explained Catholic support for the Democrats during that era.

The splintering of the Catholic vote began in the 1970s when Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern in 1972 appealed to abortion rights advocates and the Supreme Court in 1973 issued the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. The Republican Party began to directly appeal to anti-abortion rights voters and many religious Catholics began to shift their political allegiances. President Richard M. Nixon rejected the proposals of his own appointed "Commission on Population Growth and the American Future" that there be public

financing of abortion and of family planning services and contraceptive devices for minors.[2] The GOP picked up other issues as well to appeal to religious Catholics. Government aid to parochial schools became a staple of Republican appeals to Catholics. Conservative political strategists of that era believed that if Catholics in the northeast and Midwest aligned on social and moral issues with evangelical Protestants throughout the South, this alliance would fundamentally change US politics for years. There is evidence that the splintering of the once solid Catholic vote for the Democratic Party has had a big impact on elections and policy.

Indeed, from 1980 to 2004 only one Democratic presidential candidate secured a majority of the Catholic vote: Bill Clinton in his 1996 landslide reelection. Al Gore won more Catholic votes than George W. Bush in 2000, but less than 50% nonetheless due to votes for third-party candidate Ralph Nader. Bush improved on Bob Dole's showing among Catholics by an impressive 12%, according to National Election Studies data.

Nonetheless, religious beliefs are not the dominant influence on the voting behavior of many Catholics. Unlike conservative evangelical Protestants who had the Moral Majority and now the Christian Coalition, there is no single political-based organization that mobilizes Catholics as a voting bloc. The Church hierarchy is sometimes reluctant to offer signals of voting preferences. And even when certain US Catholic Bishops offer such signals, most Catholic voters ignore these appeals.

The loosening of the Democratic Party identity and voting among Catholics occurred in part due to economic trends and population shifts. Although their parents or grandparents were of the immigrant underclass and loyal Democrats, many Catholics today have achieved economic success, moved to the suburbs, and become Independents or even Republicans. One scholar of Catholic voting trends, the late William Prendergast, stated that the Catholic community has experienced the same "homogenization" of other immigrant groups in the USA. "Catholics went through the melting pot and came out very much like other Americans", he wrote.[3]

In brief, Catholics are now more educated, wealthy, suburban, and employed in the higher professions than ever before. Many Catholic professionals are business owners who care about economic growth, trade, and taxes, whereas their parents and grandparents focused more on economic fairness, the minimum wage, and welfare. The Republican Party's

strong embrace of conservative social issue positions also has appealed to the very traditional, regular church-going Catholics who care more about such issues as abortion and contraception than the economy or foreign policy. Some of them maintain that most policy issues are negotiable, but some moral issues are "non-negotiable" and thus central to their voting decisions.

Nonetheless, the shift away from the once Democratic Party dominance of the Catholic vote has not meant a full embrace of the Republican Party by Catholics. Thus, the existence of what is called the Catholic swing vote in US elections. Democrats experienced substantial losses in party identification among Catholics, but Republicans experienced only moderate gains. Rising incomes among Catholics, as with many previous marginalized groups, was good for Republicans for many years, given that in the past higher incomes and higher education tracked with Republican support in the electorate. Today high-income earners are splitting their votes between the parties and the more highly educated Americans are strongly voting Democratic. In the past 2 decades, the Democratic Party share of Catholic identifiers has dropped about ten percentage points, whereas the Republican gain is less than half of that amount. Unless the current trend reverses, Republicans can no longer count on increased educational and economic achievement as a vehicle for improving their standing with Catholics.

Like the rest of the electorate, Catholics have become increasingly independent of the political parties. The trend among partisan identifiers is increased Republicanism among white Catholics (who are about 60% of all Catholics, but declining) and increased support for Democrats among new immigrant, non-white Catholics, especially the fast-growing Latino population which is about one-third of all Catholics. In 2016, about 60% of white Catholics voted for Republican Donald J. Trump and about two-thirds of Latino Catholics voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton. Significantly, given the closeness of the 2016 election in key battleground states, Trump received about 10% more Latino votes than did Mitt Romney in 2012 and the widely predicted Latino voting surge against Trump never materialized. In the 2012 election, a majority of white Catholics voted for Mitt Romney and about three-quarters of Latino Catholics voted for President Obama. In 2008, a majority of white Catholics voted for John McCain; two-thirds of Latino Catholics supported Barack Obama. As the white component of the Catholic vote declines, and the Latino component increases, the political fortunes of

Democrats nationally should improve. Today about half of US Catholics under 40 years of age are Hispanic.

Republicans have strong support among those Catholics who attend religious services often. Democrats have strong support among the so-called nominal or cultural Catholics. Indeed, in 2016, GOP presidential nominee Trump won a comfortable majority of the votes of weekly (or more often) church-attending Catholics (56–40%). Given the substantial numbers of Catholic voters in the key upper Midwest states that determined the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, this showing by Trump was clearly a key to his victory. Trump and Clinton split the occasional church-attending Catholic vote and Clinton commanded a 31% margin over Trump among Catholics who do not attend religious services. In 2012, GOP nominee Romney won a majority of weekly (or more often church-attending Catholics) and Obama's Catholic majority was anchored by his strong support from occasional and non-church-attending Catholics.

The Catholic identity of politicians does not appear to mean much to most Catholic voters today. For my parents' generation—my grandparents on my mother's side of the family were Italian immigrants and devout Catholics—identity mattered a lot. When John F. Kennedy ran for president in 1960 he commanded huge majorities of Catholic voters, who took enormous pride that one of their own could become president.[4] The only other Catholic previously nominated for president, New York Governor Alfred E. Smith in 1928, lost his campaign in part due to anti-Catholic bigotry in the country at that time. Nonetheless, the Gallup polling organization has estimated that likely 85–90% of Catholics voted for Smith that year.[5]

Even by 1960, many Americans wondered if it was possible for a Catholic to be elected in a heavily Protestant country. Much of that doubt centered on the outright hostility to his candidacy among many prominent evangelicals who had warned their supporters of the dangers of putting a Catholic in the White House. The president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) wrote to pastors that "public opinion is changing in favor of the church of Rome. We dare not sit idly by – voiceless and voteless". *Christianity Today* editorialized that the Vatican "does all in its power to control the governments of nations".[6] To overcome fears among some Americans of a Catholic as president, Kennedy gave a speech in Houston before a group of Protestant ministers in which he pledged that if elected he would exercise independent governing judgment and not take direction from the Vatican.

Today, no one can imagine such a speech by a Catholic candidate for the presidency. We have had Catholics as nominees for president and vice president. The immediate past vice president Joe Biden is Catholic, as are four of the current nine members of the US Supreme Court. The 2016 Democratic vice presidential nominee for President Senator Tim Kaine (Va.) is Catholic and a former missionary, and even Vice President Mike Pence calls himself "an evangelical Catholic". In 2012 as well, both vice presidential nominees were Catholic. It is considered quite ordinary now.

After 1960 and the breaking of the Catholic barrier to the presidency, there is little evidence that having a Catholic on the national ticket improves a party's chances with Catholic voters. Barry Goldwater (R), George McGovern (D), and Walter Mondale (D) all lost massive landslides with Catholic vice presidential nominees (William E. Miller, Sargent Shriver, and Geraldine Ferraro, respectively) and Hillary Clinton (D) lost the presidency with a Catholic vice presidential nominee.

And Catholic voters similarly will vote against one of their own, if the candidate's policies do not align with their preferences. In 2004, John Kerry, a Catholic and former seminary student, lost the overall Catholic vote to a Methodist, George W. Bush.[7] White Catholics backed a Mormon, Mitt Romney in 2012, largely because they agreed with his more socially conservative views and many of those voters were offended by President Obama's policies on contraception, US aid for international family planning organizations, and his eventual support for gay marriage.

One way to understand the political differences of US Catholics is to identify them into two groupings: those who focus on what they call *life issues* and those who focus on what they call *social justice* issues.

The former group is the Republican Party voting one: these Catholics are the ones who care most deeply about ending abortion, preventing the use of stem cells for scientific and medical research, and they are also the Catholics who have the strongest views against gay marriage, or in favor of what they call "traditional marriage". Most easily this group is called the conservative Catholics. Although they call themselves "pro-life", many of them have been highly supportive of the US wars in the Middle East as what they believe to be morally "just" wars. This group tends to be highly respectful of the authority of the Church hierarchy and it tends to support the Church's positions against ordination of women priests, or of allowing priests to marry and have families.

The social justice Catholics are the Democratic Party voters mostly and, by contrast, they focus more on supporting social welfare programs

for the poor, humanitarian aid abroad, and also accepting and aiding new immigrants to the country. They have been highly critical of the US wars in the Middle East and they tend to have a critical view generally of the use of the US military abroad. They are among the most outspoken opponents of the death penalty. Social justice Catholics are more likely to say that although they have a personal opposition to abortion, they accept that the USA is a pluralistic society with many different moral frameworks and therefore they do not believe that a uniquely Catholic view on that issue should be made national policy. These are most easily understood as the liberal Catholics and they are less accepting of the Church hierarchy's positions on a number of issues including ordination of women and allowing priests to marry and have families.

The political leanings of Catholics therefore come down to how they prioritize issues. The difficulty is that prioritizing an issue may lead some to miss the inherent interrelatedness of many issues. Those who focus on anti-abortion activities, for example, may ignore the socioeconomic problems in society that lead many women in the first place to seek abortions.

Here, the political leanings of Catholics actually somewhat conflict with the message of their Church, which is that there should be a consistent ethic of human life. That is, the Church teaches that Catholics should care both about life issues and social justice, not just one or the other. The Church teaches both opposition to abortion (aligned with the Republican Party) and opposition to the death penalty (aligned with the Democratic Party). In national surveys, the percentage of American Catholics who both oppose abortion rights and the death penalty is very small.

In this respect, the Catholic Church in the USA is neither Republican nor Democratic leaning. The US Catholic Bishops have issued calls to combat abortion and also poverty. They have opposed stem cell research and some US military engagements abroad. They have taken a strong stand against homosexual conduct and gay marriage while also urging compassion and caring for victims of AIDS. In the past, they have issued calls to reduce nuclear weapons and have even been critical of "American style capitalism" for fostering substantial economic inequalities. The Church leadership has supported open borders and it has been very active in pushing for a compassionate policy to welcome to the country with citizenship rights the many people who are living there currently without legal documentation.

In short, the US Catholic Church leadership adopts issue positions that overall do not fit comfortably within one political party or

the other. Church doctrine generally does not dovetail more with one political party than the other. And in elections, most voters make prudential judgments that cannot be dictated by the Church leadership or doctrine. We are thus left with the conclusion that although religious identity is a strong component of the makeup of American Catholics, most of them are more susceptible to partisan leanings in politics than to religion. Time and again, for example, US Catholic Bishops have signaled to Catholics that they should withhold political support for candidates who do not oppose abortion, and then most Catholic voters ignored these instructions. Scholar Gregory A. Smith ventured into numerous dioceses to study political messaging from the pulpit and what he found is that Catholic parishioners are exposed to a variety of moral and social issues messages, depending upon where they happen to be attending services.[8]

The growing Latino component of the Catholic population is very instructive. Latinos tend to be more socially conservative than white Catholics in the USA. Latino Catholics are more likely than white Catholics to oppose abortion, but these Latinos still vote heavily for Democratic Party candidates. The Democratic Party positions on immigration reform and on policies that affect the poor are especially important to Latinos and these issues trump the social issues agenda for them in voting.[9] That was very much the case in the 2016 election cycle. Whereas Trump defeated Clinton among white Catholics 60–37%, Clinton bettered her opponent among Latino Catholics 67–26%.

To conclude, the scholar William Prendergast was right when he said that Catholics in the USA, once immigrant outsiders and a minority subject to deep prejudices, now are thoroughly integrated into the mainstream. He described US Catholics as blended into the "melting pot" and no longer a distinctive voting block and political force. Nonetheless, as long as a significant sized and activated minority of Catholics is persuadable in elections based on religious beliefs, then the Catholic swing vote phenomenon remains a potent force.

The Evangelical–Catholic Alliance and the 2016 Election

We may draw two key conclusions to this point: first, the Catholic vote is not monolithic, and second, a significant percentage of Catholic voters is highly independent and can swing from one political party to

the other, depending on the political context. That political independence raises the question of whether Catholics can ever be more than a potential swing vote and become a reliable partner in alliance with other religious-based voting groups.

In 1995, the Rev. Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, then the nation's leading religious conservative political organization, announced it was launching a new affiliate group called the Catholic Alliance. Christian Coalition political director Ralph Reed said that the purpose of the new group was to forge a stronger bond between conservative evangelicals and Catholics who, though perhaps unable to agree on theology, could work together in politics to promote common issues. Reed boasted that the goal of the Catholic Alliance was to recruit a million conservative Catholics into the Christian Coalition by year 2000 and thus build a powerful pro-life force that would change the landscape of American politics.

At the same time, I was working with several colleagues on a survey research project examining the religious orientations and political attitudes of delegates to Republican Party conventions in several states.[10] Although that project initially came out of our interest in better understanding the role of the largely conservative Protestant-led religious right movement in the GOP, our surveys revealed a very significant percentage of Catholic delegates at these conventions, many of whom self-identified as being a part of the religious right.

The survey findings revealed two realities about the effort to align Catholics and evangelicals politically: first, there was little likelihood for the success of the Catholic Alliance in the Christian Coalition because, even among a population of very religiously conservative activists in the GOP, the Catholics in this group were distinctive on certain issues and many were not comfortable with becoming a part of conservative Protestant-led interest group organization. Second, despite the fact that many of these Catholic Republicans were not eager to join the Christian Coalition, they were nonetheless very happy to work together with conservative evangelicals to support the candidates and issues positions where these groups agreed with one another. This convergence of interests was actually not easily achieved and emerged only after many years of antipathy between these two religious groups that had kept them from working together in politics.

The Catholic Alliance did not come close to the stated goal of recruiting a million Catholics by year 2000, and by that time the Catholic

Alliance had splintered away from the Christian Coalition to become an independent unit and it was being run by a Democrat. The conservative *National Review* called the hopes of recruiting Catholics into the Christian Coalition "hopelessly naïve" and continued: "Catholics weren't about to answer to Pat Robertson".[11]

Nonetheless, there were many reasons to believe that the Christian Coalition and other Christian Right organizations could potentially attract conservative Catholics. First, there are several issues where the official positions of the Catholic Church resemble those of the Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, and other religious right organizations—most notably abortion and eventually school vouchers. Second, there are significant numbers of Catholics who are in substantial agreement with certain other issue positions of the Christian Right. Third, Catholics have historically comprised a significant part of earlier right-wing movements and groups. Fourth, there had already been political cooperation in some dioceses between the Catholic Church and the Christian Coalition, particularly on school board races in some communities. Finally, some Catholics have adopted evangelical styles of religiosity, and research suggests that these Catholics are more likely to share evangelical political attitudes on issues where the Catholic Church has not staked a position.[12]

Yet, Catholic teachings and tradition, particularly as articulated by the American Catholic Bishops, often depart from Christian Right organization positions. The Catholic Church has supported social welfare programs and expanded opportunities for women, and has opposed the death penalty and nuclear weapons. The Bishops have issued a critique of income inequality that is the inevitable result of unregulated capitalism. A statement by a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops called for acceptance, love, and pastoral care of homosexuals. Although the Church did not abandon its traditional prohibition against homosexual activity, it recognized that a homosexual orientation is a deep-seated dimension of personality that is not in itself sinful. The statement also reiterated traditional Catholic teaching about respecting the inherent dignity of every person and insisted that nothing in the Bible or in Catholic teaching could be used to justify prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. The Pope's widely reported comment about gays and lesbians, "who am I to judge?", summarized quite well the feelings of most American Catholics.

In the research project with my colleagues, we conducted a survey of Republican Party convention delegates in several state-level nominating

conventions.[13] We gathered delegates' lists from conventions in the mid-1990s in Washington, Florida, Texas, and Minnesota. For a separate project, we also conducted a survey of GOP delegates in Virginia.[14] In the mid-1990s, each of these states had held nominating conventions that featured contests between moderates and religious conservative candidates. There were heavy contingents of religious conservative identifying delegates at each convention and within this group as well there were large numbers of Catholics.

The survey respondents constituted an ideal group for measuring the potential for a political alliance between evangelicals and Catholics. The Catholic GOP delegates were largely conservative-leaning or conservative, politically aware and active, and they had high levels of familiarity with conservative Christian organizations and leaders. They constituted the most favorable potential target group among Catholics for recruitment into Christian Right organizations. The survey data thus provide some telling insights regarding the relationship between conservative evangelicals and Catholics. In brief, the surveys revealed that the Catholic Republicans tended to have softer positions than the evangelicals on a variety of policy issues and even though the differences were degrees of conservatism, the differences were significant enough to evidence the fragility of this political alliance.

Consider as well Catholic beliefs about respecting the inherent dignity of every person and that nothing in the Bible or in Catholic teaching justifies prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. In the 2016 presidential campaign, Donald J. Trump's controversial statements about certain groups and mocking of a man with a disability stood in sharp contrast to this culture and led many political observers to conclude that he would lose substantial support among Catholic voters. Indeed, some polls in late summer suggested that Trump's support among Catholics was falling far behind the margins attained even by losing GOP nominees Romney and McCain.

Despite his objectionable behavior as a candidate and the earlier polls showing slippage among his Catholic support, Trump won the Catholic vote comfortably, far outpacing the results of the previous two GOP presidential nominees. Given the closeness of the election in the Electoral College, it would be easy to argue that the Catholic vote delivered the presidency to Trump. But of course, in an election so close and with the support of a coalition of many groups, it would be easy to argue that any one of them was the key to his victory. The big surprise of the

election perhaps was not the Catholic vote for Trump, but actually that the GOP nominee fared even better than Romney, McCain, and even George W. Bush among evangelical voters.

The evangelical component certainly was as much a key to Trump winning, perhaps even more so, than the Catholic vote. Trump won Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin—states with significant Catholic populations—by about 107,000 votes combined. There are substantial numbers of evangelicals as well in those states. If Trump merely did as well as Romney and McCain among evangelicals in those states, he likely would have lost two or three of them and the presidency and the Catholic vote would have been irrelevant to the outcome.

Still, there is no denying the fact that although the Catholic vote for several consecutive presidential election cycles tracked very consistently with the overall national vote percentages, that did not happen in 2016. Clinton won the popular vote handily, but Trump won the Catholic vote and that was important in the Electoral College given the heavy concentration of Catholics in the key battleground states. The US Catholic Bishops were vocal in the election on the immigration issue and especially opposition to Trump's promise to build a wall along the USA–Mexico border. Yet again, Catholic voters demonstrated their independence from the political signaling of the Church leadership.

Conclusion

The Catholic vote was once distinctive, a reliable component of the New Deal Democratic Party coalition. As social issues came to the fore in the 1970s, and Catholics began to move from the immigrant underclass to the middle class and above, many of them became either politically independent or Republicans. In the latest several presidential election cycles—excepting 2016—the self-identified Catholic vote has closely mirrored the national vote. In that regard, the Catholic vote generally is no longer distinctive, although a minority of religiously devout and politically active Catholics is persuadable on religious grounds and numerous enough to make a difference in close elections, as happened in 2016.

In the 2016 election something different happened as the Catholic share of the electorate declined and whereas the popular vote went comfortably Democratic, the Catholic vote went solidly Republican. The Catholic majority for Trump mattered most in the key upper Midwest states that delivered him the Electoral College majority.

Polling data late in summer 2016 showed Trump handily losing the Catholic vote. So what happened? In post-election analyses, most observers proclaimed that the polls had failed to project the likely outcome of the presidential contest. So the short and convenient answer, "the polls were wrong".

In fact, most of the national polls had the numbers extremely close to the actual outcome of the popular vote. The national polls generally were more accurate in 2016 than in 2012, but no one complained in 2012 because the polls, the popular vote, and the Electoral College outcome all aligned. The polling data in 2016 likely were flawed in some key battleground states in which state-level polls repeatedly projected numbers in Clinton's favor and did not capture a possible late surge for Trump. Poor polling in the states where it mattered most to the Electoral College outcome magnified the story of polling error in 2016.

Importantly though is the fact that after polling data projecting a big slide in Catholic support for Trump, the GOP nominee softened much of his usually strident rhetoric on such issues as immigration and deportations, as well as some of his policy positions. It is highly likely that given the power of the Catholic vote in several of the very critical states in the Electoral College, Trump tamped down some of his strident appeals and he also made specific outreach to Catholic voters that did not capture much media attention but delivered the message for its intended audience. Ralph Reed notes that the Trump campaign micro-targeted Catholic voters "deliberately and extensively", particularly in the key upper Midwest states with large Catholic populations and there were a "number of outside efforts" ongoing to support these Trump campaign efforts.[15] Among those efforts outside the campaign apparatus was The Faith and Freedom Coalition, a successor to the Christian Coalition, which targeted about 15 million faith-based voters in battleground states. Reed estimates that about one-third of those contacted were Roman Catholic.[16] Additionally, according to F.H. Buckley, was a Catholic Advisory Committee organized by Deal Hudson that pushed the importance of Catholic outreach and got the candidate to appear on EWTN (the global Catholic television network) and to put out a video on the occasion of the canonization of Mother Terese, among other efforts.[17] Furthermore, the Clinton campaign had no comparable effort of targeted outreach to Catholic voters. There was no "Catholics for Clinton" VIP group or other such entity to rival the dedicated efforts on the GOP side.

Furthermore, for the religiously devout Catholic it mattered that Trump was unwavering on his pro-life stand on abortion. Among those Catholics for whom the life issue is predominant, was it more important that Trump married three times and had extra-marital affairs or that he would appoint pro-life judges to the Supreme Court if elected? The question obviously answers itself. Most voters do not preference personal character considerations over the potential impact on millions of lives from the policies likely to be promoted by the successful candidate for office.

Another key factor in the election was that the widely hyped Latino surge in voting did not materialize. Political observers repeatedly stated that Trump's rhetoric on immigration, while mobilizing some voters, would cause a substantial counter-mobilization among Latinos who had not voted in large numbers in past elections. Surprisingly to these analysts, Latino voting dropped from 2012 to 2016, and although Clinton won a commanding majority of their votes, she achieved a substantially lower percentage of Latino votes than did Obama in 2012 and 2008. The drop-off in Latino voting was a big factor in the Catholic component of the electorate dropping by 3% from 2012 to 2016. In brief, Trump both did better than Clinton at mobilizing his Catholic base, and he held down his losses among normally Democratic-voting Latinos.

In sum, although US Catholics generally are not a distinctive voting bloc, the 2016 presidential election proves that the swing vote component of that group matters in close elections. What Trump gained from his impressive showing among Catholics, he could certainly lose in 2020 (should he seek reelection), just as Hillary Clinton lost the clear advantage among Catholics achieved by Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. How he governs on issues that drive the swing voters potentially could determine if he achieves a second term in office.

Chapter Plan

The chapters that follow build on many of the themes identified in this introduction and develop additional insights about Catholics and US politics. The first section of the volume is comprised of papers that focus on ideological patterns in the politics of US Catholics as well as key alliances.

Amandine Barb opens with an analysis of the rise of the Catholic Left since the mid-2000s. As she correctly points out, since the legalization

of abortion in 1973, most of the attention on the evolution of Catholic political engagement in the USA has been on increased conservative activism and Republican voting. Barb makes clear that there has been an active counter-mobilization among progressive Catholics who focus on such issues as social welfare, the environment, immigration, and health care, among others. Among religious progressives, Catholics are actually the largest and perhaps most politically active.

Blandine Chelini-Pont presents an overview of the rise and evolution of the modern, post-World War II, Catholic Right. She traces the conservative Catholic movement to the emergence of a largely Catholic-led intellectual conservative movement in the 1950s centered in such scholarly publications as *Modern Age* and the magazine *National Review*. Led by such influential thinkers as Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley, and Richard Weaver, among others, a group of Catholic conservative intellectuals effectively moved the center of conservative thought away from the Old Right that had been overtly hostile to the faith. Chelini-Pont traces the development of the Catholic Right through the decades, including its fusion with neo-conservatism beginning in the 1970s, and its eventual alliance with the evangelical Protestant-led Right to create a powerful force in US politics.

The conservative Catholic–evangelical alliance is the topic of Neil J. Young's chapter. Donald J. Trump surprised many observers not only by heavily winning the evangelical vote, but by taking a majority (52%) of the Catholic vote. As Young points out, in 2016, many observers took the Republican presidential nominee's bellicose rhetoric and reports of his unsavory personal conduct as evidence that he would lose some substantial evangelical and especially Catholic support in the election. Reports of the eventual political demise of the Religious Right—many of which came to the fore in 2016—have missed its endurance as a grassroots movement or theological development and not merely as an ordinary interest group. Nonetheless, the Religious Right is a potentially fragile alliance of mostly evangelicals, Catholics, and some Mormons and in 2016, a combination of potent social issues and a Supreme Court vacancy powered the alliance to support an admittedly flawed GOP nominee as a necessary compromise.

The second section of the volume is comprised of two contributions on the political influences of the US Catholic Bishops and the Holy See. Marie Gayte traces the origins of the active political engagement of the US Catholic Bishops who, until the mid-1970s, had largely refrained

from involvement in electoral politics. But in the 1970s, just as the Catholic vote was beginning to shift away from the Democratic monolith, the US Bishops became more politically vocal than before and their pronouncements since have both comforted and alienated Catholic voters at times. Gayte traces the political engagement of the Bishops beginning with the 1976 presidential campaign and through the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016. This overview reveals that the actual effect of the Bishops' political involvement is very limited, though still controversial, and at times within the Catholic community very divisive.

Gerald P. Fogarty provides a broad history of the role of the Holy See in the USA, from the period of independence through the 2016 presidential election, as well as the changing status of US Catholics over time. His analysis addresses in particular the changing attitudes over time of Catholics toward Church authority. Fogarty concludes his analysis with how the Catholic community engaged in the 2016 election and the issues of concern to Catholics being addressed in the early days of the Trump Administration.

The third section is comprised of four chapters on Catholics and US elections. It begins with former ambassador Douglas Kmiec's overview of the factors that explain the surprising Catholic vote victory for Donald J. Trump in 2016. Although in past modern elections going back to the 1980s, the Catholic vote tracked closely with the overall popular vote in the nation, Trump won 52% of Catholics while only 46% of the national vote. The salience of social issues and a pending appointment to the Supreme Court weighed heavily on many religious Catholics and the Hillary Clinton campaign failed to shed much of the baggage surrounding her candidacy, making special appeals to Catholics much more difficult for her. Close contests in several upper Midwestern states with heavy Catholic populations ultimately decided the outcome of the presidential election in the Electoral College, and Trump's successes with evangelical and Catholic voters played a huge role.

Olivier Richomme's chapter examines the fastest growing segment of the Catholic vote: Latinos. Although Latinos now are the largest Catholic ethnic group, their political influence is limited by such factors as low rates of citizenship, registration, and voting, as well as their geographic concentrations that dilute their Electoral College impact. Further, there is evidence of trending away from Catholicism among Latinos, especially among the young. Many are becoming non-religious and evangelical Protestant churches have made significant inroads with

attracting Latinos adherents. So although the Latino population is growing fast in the USA, the political influence of the Catholic component is uncertain.

Does having a Catholic on the national ticket as vice presidential nominee affect the outcome of the Catholic vote? Ted G. Jelen examines the historical record and finds little evidence that a Catholic on the ticket delivers enough Catholic votes to make any difference. Indeed, the latest example is 2016 with vice presidential nominee Tim Kaine (VA) apparently unable to help the Democratic national ticket with Catholic voters. Indeed, Catholic vice presidential nominees on losing tickets also occurred in 1964, 1968, 1972, and 1984. The counter-example is 2008, with the Catholic Joe Biden as the successful Democratic vice presidential nominee. In 2012, both major party vice presidential nominees (Biden and Paul Ryan) were Catholic. Little evidence exists that Catholic identity had much or anything to do with these vice presidential selections, or that it had any major impact on voting by Catholics. At most, the data show that having a Catholic on the Democratic ticket somewhat reduces the propensity of Catholics to vote Republican.

Mark Gray concludes with an analysis of Catholic voting patterns in 2016. He notes the difference in voting patterns of the major subgroups—non-Hispanic white Catholics and Hispanic Catholics. Whereas some have suggested that shifting demographics change the composition of the Catholic vote, Gray demonstrates that in recent election cycles, especially in 2016, turnout rates among the subgroups are more important determinants. He takes us through the Catholic vote in both the primaries and in the general election and finds some perhaps surprising results regarding the key issues for Catholic voters—particularly homeland security, immigration, and the economy.

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11. Kathryn Jean Lopez. 1998. "Religious Fight". *National Review* (May 18): 42–43. On this point, Deal W. Hudson, who served on the board of the Catholic Alliance, observes that the organization collapsed from a combination of poor leadership and a lack of funding after Ralph Reed departed the Christian Coalition in 1997 and then open opposition from US Catholic bishops to a political arm of an evangelical-run entity using the name "Catholic" in its title. See Deal W. Hudson. 2008. *Onward, Christian Soldiers: The Growing Political Power of Catholics and Evangelicals in the United States*. New York: Threshold Editions: 146–147. This book is a nice comprehensive history and analysis of the Catholic and evangelical political alliance from a Republican insider (Hudson is also the former Chairman of Catholic Outreach of the Republican National Committee).
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PART I

Political Parties and Ideologies

CHAPTER 2

Catholic Patterns in the American Left

Amandine Barb

Introduction

"In American politics, being a Catholic liberal or a Catholic conservative inevitably mean[s] having a bad conscience about some issue".[1] This statement from *Washington Post* columnist and self-declared Catholic E.J. Dionne sums up the ideological dilemma of many of his co-religionists in the USA, where the Church's core teachings correspond as well to the agenda of the political "Left"—its advocacy for economic and social justice, and against the death penalty, for example—as to the values of the political "Right"—its conservative position on reproductive rights and sexual politics.

Throughout American history, liberal and conservative Catholics have been active in the public sphere, relying on the Church's theology to legitimize their respective mobilizations. Since the early 1970s and the legalization of abortion by the Supreme Court,[2] however, conservative Catholics have overshadowed liberals in national politics, partnering with conservative Protestant Evangelicals in the so-called "Christian Right", one of the key electoral allies of the Republican Party.[3] Yet, since the mid-2000s, there appears to have been a resurgence of a religious—and

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_2

more particularly Catholic—Left in the USA. In reaction to the prominence gained by conservative Christians under George W. Bush's presidency, progressive religious Americans, who combine less traditional views of faith and religious authority, with a liberal approach to many social issues, such as immigration, the environment, gay marriage, and health care, have indeed felt the need to gain greater visibility and political influence. At the same time, Democrats, assuming that their image as the party of "secularists" had become a serious electoral liability, tried to reach out at these religious liberals, in an attempt to build a coalition similar to what the Christian Right had been for Republicans since the 1980s. In that respect, Catholics have been strategically very important, as they constitute today about 22% of the electorate, are often considered a key "swing voting group",[4] and also represent the largest group (29%) among Americans who identify as "religious progressives".[5]

This contribution aims therefore at analyzing the roots and the impact of the mobilization of progressive Catholics in contemporary American politics, against the broader backdrop of the emergence of a "Religious Left" on the national public scene since the mid-2000s. The chapter first provides a historical perspective on the Catholic Left in the USA, before focusing on its "revival" over the past decade and, more particularly, on the role it played under Barack Obama's presidency. The final part assesses the weaknesses, but also the future prospects of progressive Catholics—and religious liberals, more generally—at the beginning of Donald Trump's tenure in the White House.

A Forgotten Catholic Left?

A Long History of Progressive Activism Among American Catholics

The rise, over the past decade, of what journalists and scholars have labeled a "Religious Left", in reference to the well-known "Religious Right", should not hide the fact that religious liberals have always been politically active in the USA. Indeed, as Laura Olson puts it, "during much of the twentieth century, the dominant faith-based voice in American politics came from the Left".[6] Among American Catholics more particularly, there is a long tradition of advocacy for causes that are traditionally defended by the political Left, such as immigration and support to refugees, as well as a more egalitarian health care system, and poverty relief. At the beginning of the twentieth century, for instance,

Catholics, alongside Protestants and Jews, were part of the *Social Gospel* movement that sought to fight poverty and foster education and social justice within American society. Founded in 1933 in the midst of the Great Depression by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the *Catholic Workers Movement* also targeted economic inequalities, while promoting pacifism in international relations.[7] In the 1960s, Catholic organizations took part in the civil rights protests across the country, and voiced their opposition to the USA in Vietnam. In the 1980s, the "sanctuary movement" saw American Catholics offer shelter as well as material and legal support to refugees fleeing the civil wars in Central America. In doing so, Catholic churches defied the restrictive Federal immigration policies of the Reagan Administration, which made it difficult for Central Americans coming to the USA to receive asylum status.[8] These mobilizations have not always received the support of the Church's hierarchy in the USA, represented by the *US Conference of Catholic Bishops* (USCCB). But the commitment of many American Catholics to these progressive issues directly follows Catholic theology, and notably the Church's so-called social teaching doctrine, which emphasizes the need to promote the values of solidarity, human dignity, and social justice.[9] This activism is also in line with the recommendations set forth by the *Second Vatican Council* (Vatican II, 1962–1965), which called for Catholics to engage in worldly affairs.

Aside from the *Catholic Workers Movement*, several other organizations have long represented and served the interests of progressive Catholics in the USA. This is the case, for example, of the US branch of the anti-war group *Pax Christi International*, established by lay American Catholics in 1952, but also of the female-led *Network*, which describes itself as a "Lobby for Catholic Social Justice".[10] Founded in 1971 by a group of Catholic nuns who had been previously involved in the civil rights movements and the anti-war protests, *Network* has advocated for many progressive causes over the years, including economic equality, immigration, and health care reform.

The Christian Right and the Sidelining of Religious Liberals in US Politics

Yet, after abortion was made legal across the USA by the Supreme Court in 1973, conservative pro-life Catholics started to mobilize and gain visibility on the national public scene, partnering with conservative

Protestant Evangelicals in what would later be known as the "Christian Right", i.e., a loose coalition of religious groups who argue that American society has been perverted by the ideologies of liberalism and secularism, and who thus defend the restoration of what they consider traditional family and moral values. As a result, their activism has mainly focused on reproductive rights, the place of religion in public schools, or the defense of traditional marriage.

Some prominent conservative Catholic leaders, such as the priest Richard Neuhaus, editor of the magazine *First Things,* and author of *The Naked Public Square,* have established themselves as influential figures within the Religious Right.[11] Following the emergence of Christian conservatism as a "public religion" under Ronald Reagan's first presidency, however, religious Americans advocating for social justice and other progressive issues—Catholics, but also Evangelicals and other Christians—were overshadowed by the conservative discourse on moral and family values that seemed to dominate the political sphere. The year *Roe v. Wade* was decided by the Supreme Court, for example, a group of lay members of the Church founded the organization *Catholics for Choice* in order to defend a pro-choice position compatible with Catholic theology. Their mobilization was however quickly disavowed by the USCCB, and the group's visibility has since been limited on the national public scene.

With the alliance of the Christian Right and the GOP (or "Grand Old Party", the nickname of the Republican Party) in the 1980s, a binary divide between what have commonly been described as a "faith-friendly" Right and a "secular" Left emerged in the American political landscape. Over the years, this religious polarization has led, in electoral politics, to what Robert Putnam and David Campbell have called a "God Gap", i.e., the more often someone attends religious services, the more likely he or she is to vote for the Republican candidate.[12] In US politics, religion has thus become closely associated with the Republican Party, and with the defense of a conservative agenda, notably on reproductive and gay rights, or on the separation between church and state, while Democrats, and the Left more generally, have often been presented as the party of "secularists".

But overall, the academic literature on religion and politics in the USA has itself reflected this schematic divide: while there is a vast, interdisciplinary, and international scholarship on Christian conservatism, religious progressives have been comparatively neglected by researchers, thus reinforcing the impression that they have not been as important and

relevant for the country's history and politics. As Olson noted in 2011, "there has been almost no scholarly research on the Religious Left in the past several decades".[13] Although a few studies have actually been published in recent years,[14] most of those who had previously written about a Religious Left in the USA, including several faith leaders, were themselves strong advocates of such a movement.[15] More particularly, the literature on progressive Catholicism has mainly focused on individual figures (Dorothy Day) or on specific mobilizations (the Sanctuary Movement), but lacks a comprehensive and global study of the history and contemporary politics of the Catholic Left, similar to those that exist for the Christian Right.

From George W. Bush to Barack Obama: The "Renewal" of Progressive Catholics

The 2004 Presidential Elections: A "Wake-up Call" for Liberal Religious Americans

Although, therefore, there had already been calls, since the 1990s, for the joint political mobilization of liberal religious Americans, it is the first term of Republican President George W. Bush, as well as its reelection against the Catholic Democrat John Kerry in 2004, that really marked a turnaround, if not a "wake-up call", for many religious progressives—and many Catholics, more particularly. The latter started to mobilize and better organize during that period, in reaction to what they considered to be the overwhelming, and detrimental, moral supremacy of Christian conservatism on American society and politics.

Bush's presidency was indeed perceived by many as a victory for the Christian Right—as the climax of its decade-long rise into American politics. The Republican president spoke openly about the influence of his faith on his life and on his work in the White House. Several of his administration's policies also reflected the traditional agenda advanced by religious conservatives since Reagan's first presidency: his opposition to the legalization of same-sex marriage, the funding limitations set on stem cell research, or the creation in 2001, the first year of his presidency, of the *White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives*, which allowed charitable religious organizations to compete for federal grants to provide social services, but overwhelmingly favored Evangelical groups.[16]

The values of Christian conservatism thus appeared to dominate American politics and society during that period. This was all the more problematic for religious progressives—but also for Democrats—that in November 2004, Bush's reelection over the Democratic candidate Kerry was thought to have been made possible by the so-called values voters, i.e., Americans who cast their ballot based primarily on a candidate's position on moral and family values, such as abortion, homosexuality, and the place of religion in public life.[17] Although some studies challenged this interpretation of the 2004 election results,[18] it was highly commented at the time, and made a strong impact on progressive religious Americans, as well as on the Democratic Party. All the more so that Kerry, the third Catholic presidential nominee in US history,[19] also only received 47% of the Catholic vote (vs. 50% for Gore in 2000).

More particularly, many liberal Catholics were frustrated by the support that members of the Church institutional hierarchy, including some prominent Archbishops, had given to Bush during the presidential campaign. The leadership's insistence on abortion and on the defense of traditional marriage, as well as its silence on the environment, the Iraq war, and on issues of social justice—against the backdrop of a looming financial crisis—left progressive Catholics with the feeling that the complexity of their beliefs and values was not properly represented. The *Catholic Voting Project*, for example, was launched in the midst of the 2004 presidential campaign by lay members of the Church, with the explicit purpose to counter-attack the attempts by conservative Catholics and Republicans to discredit Kerry's candidacy because of his pro-choice position. The *Catholic Voting Project* condemned discourses that "isolate issues without taking into consideration the full richness and breadth of Catholic social teaching", and thus "risk putting a partisan agenda before Catholic principles".[20] Members of the USCCB, aligned on the position of Catholic Republicans in Congress, had indeed repeatedly argued in the media that abortion was a "foundational issue" in their faith,[21] and a "litmust test" for politicians,[22] and that it was therefore highly problematic for Catholic voters to choose a pro-choice candidate such as Kerry. In recent years, however, American Catholics, especially among the "millennial" generation, have become less conservative, and more flexible than the Church's institutional hierarchy on family and moral values: although abortion remains a polarizing issue,[23] a large majority of Catholics (76%), agrees, for example, that the Church should allow the use of contraceptives, while two-thirds (66%)

find it "acceptable for a child to be raised by a gay or lesbian couple" (27% find it "unacceptable").[24]

A New Religious (Catholic) Left

As a result, while Democrats felt the urgency to narrow the "God Gap" and to reach out at religious voters, liberal religious Americans realized that they had to get more deeply involved into politics in order to finally give a voice to those Americans whose vote was also motivated, in part, by their religious beliefs, but who disagreed with the conservative politics of the Christian Right, and did not feel represented by its organizations. In the aftermath of the 2004 presidential elections, several newspaper articles and books were published that called for a "Great Awakening" of religious liberals in the USA.[25] The authors, such as the Catholic E.J. Dionne, quoted earlier, or the Evangelical founder of the organization *Sojourners* and long advocate of a Religious Left, Jim Wallis, and the rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of the interfaith magazine *Tikkun*,[26] claimed that it was time for the many, but often too invisible progressive religious Americans to come together and reinvest the public sphere. They did not all agree on every topic, notably abortion, but rather sought to emphasize the compatibility of their respective theology with the defense of issues long neglected by conservatives, such as the environment, the reform of the health care system, gay rights, anti-discrimination policies, and a pro-immigration platform. They attacked the discourse of the Christian Right for sidelining the core teachings of their faith on poverty and social justice, and for ignoring or neglecting the complex concerns of many religious Americans, besides family and moral values. In what Wallis already described as a "post-Religious Right" USA, they argued that a growing number of Americans, especially among the younger generations, were frustrated with the "reactionary" rhetoric of Republicans, as well as with the conservative preaching of their pastors, and were thus actually willing to embrace a more liberal approach to religion and politics.[27]

Among Democrats as well, in the aftermath of Kerry's defeat, many lawmakers were seeking new ways to reach out at religious voters. Democrats started to mount specific strategies to attract them—by hiring individuals in charge of the outreach to the Evangelical and Catholic electorate, for example, or by starting to talk in greater depths about their personal faith, and the connection between their agenda and

Christian values. Catholic Democrats, in particular, felt the need to be more vocal and visible in order to counter-balance the influence of their Republican counterparts. They wanted to avoid leaving the monopoly of the discourse on faith and values to the GOP, but also aimed at appealing to the many white Catholic voters who live in some of the crucial "swing states", such as Ohio and Wisconsin.[28] In that respect, in February 2006, 6 months before the first mid-term elections of Bush's second presidency, a group of Democratic lawmakers released a text titled "Statement of Principles by Fifty-Five Catholic Democrats in the US House of Representatives". In it, they acknowledged that there can be "disagreements with the Church in some areas", but also asserted that they were "proud to be part of the living Catholic tradition", which, through its "social teaching", "highlights the need to provide a collective safety net to those individuals in society who are most in need"—the "poor and disadvantaged". This statement showed that Catholic politicians on the Left—as other religious liberals—were now willing to talk more openly about their personal beliefs and the teachings of their faith, and how they impact their political agenda and their decisions as lawmakers. Rejecting the Church leadership's focalization on the issue of abortion, these Catholic Democrats—some of whom were themselves "pro-life"—embraced the rhetoric and ideological platform of the emerging Religious Left, insisting on the importance of achieving social justice over the defense of moral and family values.

As a result of these calls for mobilization from religious leaders and Democratic lawmakers alike, several new Catholic advocacy organizations were founded in the USA, among which are *Catholic Democrats* (2004), *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good* (2005), and *Catholics United* (2005), the latter group being directly born out of the *Catholic Voting Project*. These organizations aimed at promoting a more progressive approach to the Church's theology, and at giving a new place and relevance to its social teaching in American public life. *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good*'s official goal, for example, is to "promote the social justice of…the Catholic Church in American politics, media and culture".[29] But, as Bush was beginning his second term in the *White House*, these organizations also sought to give a more concrete influence to liberal Catholics in national politics, by creating a bridge between members of the Church and progressive lawmakers. In that respect, and unlike the two other groups, which are officially non-partisan, *Catholic Democrats* was explicitly founded to "bring the rich tradition

of Catholic social teaching" to the Democratic Party, while at the same time "present[ing] [to the Catholic community] the Democratic way of working for justice and peace in the political world".[30]

More generally, these organizations, which are often led by young Catholics, have adopted the mobilization strategies of the Christian Right in order to gain visibility and influence in national politics: they lobby politicians in Congress as well as members of the presidential administration, endorse candidates for elections, keep "scorecards" on Senators' and Representatives' legislative action on some of the key issues they advocate, frequently intervene in the media, and draft amici curiae in support of court cases. In contrast to Christian conservatives, however, progressive Catholics—as religious liberals more generally—tend to be more opened to diversity, as they often take part in interfaith coalitions alongside Protestants and non-Christian minorities, for example via *PICO National Network*, *Faithful America,* or *Faith in Public Life*.

Progressive Catholics and Barack Obama's Presidency

Progressive Catholics, as well as religious liberals more generally, actively took part in the 2008 presidential campaign that opposed the Republican John McCain to the Democrat Barack Obama, often voicing their support for the latter, a former member of the *United Church of Christ* who had worked alongside religious groups as a community organizer in the Chicago suburbs. At the same time, the choice of the Catholic Joe Biden as Obama's vice presidential running mate concretely testified to the Democrats' willingness to reach out at Catholic voters. In that respect, Joe Biden appeared to perfectly embody the values and ideals of the Catholic Left, as he acknowledged the crucial role played by his faith and by the Church's teachings on his commitment to social justice, yet downplayed the importance of abortion as a campaign issue. This strategy proved ultimately successful, as a majority of Catholics (54%) chose the Democratic candidate for president. The former Senator from Illinois even managed to somewhat narrow the "God Gap", receiving 43% of the vote of those who said they attended "worship services weekly or more" (vs. 39% for Kerry and Gore in 2004 and 2000, respectively).

While for many observers the end of Bush's presidency coincided with a decline of the Christian Right in American politics,[31] Obama's election,

on the other hand, thus seemed to signal a return of religious liberals to the national public scene, and a first victory for the nascent Religious Left. Once in the White House, Obama's "faith-friendly secularism"—exemplified by his reform of the *Faith-Based Initiatives*, which he made decidedly more ecumenical[32]—further appeared to fulfill what religious progressives had advocated for over the past years: the positive and pluralistic acknowledgment of the importance of faith and religious values in public life, in service of social and economic justice.

"Obamacare" as a Rallying Opportunity for the Religious (Catholic) Left

After Obama's election, the reform of the health care system—the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (*Affordable Care Act*) or "Obamacare"—and the campaign launched across the country in 2009 to support its adoption represented a first opportunity for religious progressives to actually showcase their agenda, as well as their unity and political influence. Describing "Obamacare" as not only a political and social necessity, but also as an ethical obligation, Democrats themselves actively sought the support and collaboration of religious groups, as a way to give a moral, and even "spiritual", dimension to the law, but also to help foster the mobilization of Americans at the local level.

A universal, affordable health care had been for decades one of the main priorities of many liberal religious organizations in the USA. Yet, Catholics appeared divided over "Obamacare", between the many groups that emphasized its compatibility with the Church's social teaching on the one hand, and the leadership, who mainly focused on the controversial status of abortion within the law, on the other. The USCCB feared that the *Affordable Care Act* would lead to taxpayer-funded abortions and therefore opposed certain portions of the bill. Yet, several Catholic groups—alongside Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish organizations—were among the strongest and most vocal supporters of the reform. They appeared in the media, mobilized church members, and closely worked with the Obama administration in its efforts to convince Americans of the urgency and merits of its plan for a new health care system. *Catholics United*, for example, sponsored TV ads in favor of the law, while *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good* partnered with about 30 other liberal religious groups, such as *Sojourners*, *Evangelicals for Social Action*, the *Islamic Society of North America*, the *Buddhist Peace Fellowship,* and the *Jewish Council for Public Affairs*,

to create the coalition "Faith for Health". In June 2009, the coalition launched the movement "40 Days for Health Care", which, via a combination of political lobbying, church sermons, "Health Care Bible Studies", "Health Care Cafés", media interventions, and the distribution of "Health Care Tool Kits" in churches, sought to energize congregants and emphasize the compatibility of "Obamacare" with biblical and other religious teachings.[33] As a result, the campaign for "Obamacare" in the spring and summer of 2009 allowed these religious organizations to display their message of social justice and to gain greater visibility across the country. As the opposition to abortion and gay marriage among conservative Christians, the reform of the health care system, finally adopted in March 2010, thus functioned as a rallying opportunity for Catholics and other religious liberals, which testified to their efficiency at grassroots activism, as well as to their usefulness and relevance for the political Left.

The Key Role of Women in the Catholic Left

In that context, it is also interesting to note the important role played by Catholic women in the mobilization for "Obamacare", which reflects, more generally, their historical key position within the Catholic Left in the USA, as they have regularly attempted to challenge the male-dominated institutional hierarchy of the Church and its strong focus on family and moral values. In 2015, for example, Obama declared that without the support of Carol Keehan, CEO of the *Catholic Hospital Association*, which represents more than 600 Catholic hospitals in the USA, "we would not have gotten the *Affordable Care Act*".[34] In 2010, Keehan, who is herself a nun, had publicly defied the USCCB, debunking their arguments about the risk of taxpayer-funded abortions, and thus granting a crucial moral and religious legitimacy to the controversial reform.[35] As exemplified by Dorothy Day or the organization *Network*, mentioned earlier, Catholic women's activism—whether carried out by nuns or lay members of the Church—is of course far from being a recent development. The nuns who have run *Network* since the beginning of the 1970s have often challenged the conservative teachings of the Church, notably on reproductive rights and sexual politics, although they do not officially disagree with the leadership's position on these topics, but rather aim at *shifting* the interest of American Catholics toward issues of social justice—to "change the conversation to mending the vast economic and social divides in our country".[36] Since 2012, *Network* has organized the

movement "Nuns on the Bus", which involves members of the organization travelling across the country to bring awareness to problems such as immigration, poverty relief, and health care. In that respect, *Network* also actively contributed to the campaign for the *Affordable Care Act*, sending a letter to Congress in favor of the bill,[37] and voicing their support to Keehan in her fight against the Church's hierarchy.[38]

The Catholic Left after Obama and Under Trump: Assessments and Prospects

The Religious (Catholic) Left's Weakness as a Political Actor

In collaboration with these progressive organizations, Democrats have pursued their faith outreach strategies toward religious voters—and Catholics in particular. Following Obama's example, for instance, Hillary Clinton chose the Catholic Tim Kaine to be her running mate in the 2016 presidential elections. If the Evangelical Mike Pence (who is now vice president), embodied the agenda and interests of the Christian Right,[39] Tim Kaine, a US Senator from Virginia who received a Jesuit education, seemed, as Joe Biden before him, to represent the values of the Catholic Left: during the presidential campaign, he regularly talked about the influence of his faith on his private life and on his work as a politician who supports immigration, economic justice, and a more egalitarian health care system. Yet, in November 2016, this strategy proved to be ineffective, as 52% of voters who identified as Catholic chose Donald Trump for president versus only 45% who cast their ballot for Clinton. This was especially true of white Catholics, who overwhelmingly favored Donald Trump (60% vs. 37% for Clinton). The Democrats´ appeal among this key segment of the electorate does not seem, therefore, to have been significantly and durably improved over the past decade, despite the party's outreach to Catholic voters.

The 2016 presidential election has been all the more difficult for Catholic progressives, as the credibility of some of their key organizations has also been questioned following controversial revelations on the nature of their relationship with the Democratic Party. In the months leading up to the election, emails from Clinton's campaign manager John Podesta, himself a Catholic, were leaked to the public. They were released by *Wikileaks* after presumably being "stolen" by Russian government-backed hackers. Within a discussion between

Podesta and Sandy Newman, President of the interest group *Voice of Progress*, about the need for a "Catholic Spring" that would encourage American Catholics to challenge the authority of the Church—which Newman called a "middle ages dictatorship"—and some of its most conservative teachings, notably on "gender equality", Podesta wrote that "we created *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good* to organize for a moment like this (…). Likewise *Catholics United*". The formulation of his email thus seemed to imply that the launch of these two groups had been directly engineered by the Democrats themselves in order to transform the Church from the inside, in a way that would ultimately serve their political interests. These allegations were subsequently denied by the current leaders of *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good* and *Catholics United*, but conservatives vehemently criticized the Democrats' "interventionism" into the Church's internal affairs, accusing them of politicizing and instrumentalizing the faith, and of trying to bend Catholic theology for electoral purposes.

More generally, despite the visibility gained since the mid-2000s and their effective mobilization in support of "Obamacare", religious progressives as a whole have not yet achieved the same status as their conservative counterparts in national politics, failing to assert themselves as the equivalent of the Christian Right for the Left. The actual impact of their lobbying efforts on lawmakers is difficult to assess, as is their ability to consistently mobilize voters at the grassroots level, especially compared to the well-documented outreach strategies of conservative Evangelical churches, for example. Despite the gains made by Obama among religious Americans in 2008, the "God Gap" still remains an undeniable electoral reality in the USA: in the 2016 election, those who attended religious services more often than weekly were much more likely to support Trump than Clinton.

Several internal, systemic, challenges can explain the Religious Left's weakness as a political actor in the USA. The strong theological diversity, which is a characteristic of religious liberals, first undermines their efforts to appear as ideologically united as the groups that comprise the Christian Right. Hence the difficulty, given the fractured nature of the Religious Left, to build the same type of coalition in support of the Democratic Party. This is also true for Catholics, whose Church, as mentioned before, is itself internally divided between liberalism and conservatism on many issues at the center of American politics, which can sometimes blur the message of progressive Catholic organizations, who

often have a difficult, if not openly hostile, relationship with the institutional hierarchy. Moreover, apart from Jim Wallis or Carol Keehan, there also seems to be a lack of charismatic leaders, who could be the equivalent for the Left of such conservative figures as Rev. Jerry Falwell, Rev. Pat Robertson, or former Christian Coalition director Ralph Reed.

Trump's Presidency: A Rallying Opportunity for Catholic Progressives?

Progressive religious organizations, including Catholic ones, have been recently re-mobilized by the election of Donald J. Trump as president. As far as religion and church/state relations are concerned, Trump has espoused the traditional agenda of conservative Christians. He supports most of their claims, such as broad exemptions for individuals and groups opposed to same-sex marriage because of their "religious belief or moral convictions", or the repeal of the *Johnson Amendment*, adopted in 1954, and which prohibits churches and other tax-exempt religious institutions from engaging in political advocacy.

Beyond the fear of a return of conservative Christians in the White House, however, religious liberals have voiced their concern that Trump's administration, backed by a Republican-dominated Congress, may repeal "Obamacare", without immediately providing a satisfactory replacement, causing tens of millions of Americans to lose their health insurance. The dismantlement of Obama's signature reform had been one of Trump's main campaign promises, and one of his first Executive Orders as president was to allow federal agencies to "unwind" some of the requirements of the *Affordable Care Act*.[40] These developments prompted a strong mobilization of progressive religious groups. Simone Campbell, Executive Director of *Network*, declared, for instance, that "faith communities know [that the repeal of "Obamacare"] is a bad idea, and we will continue to advocate and pray for Congress to stop and listen to the voice of reason".[41]

But if the uncertain future of "Obamacare" has been of course a major concern among those very religious groups that had enthusiastically campaigned for its adoption, this has also been the case of Trump's first decisions regarding immigration. Only one week into his presidency, the Republican president signed an Executive Order that indefinitely barred the arrival of refugees from Syria, temporarily suspended the US refugee program as a whole for at least 120 days, and effectively banned immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries for a duration of

3 months.[42] Although the Executive Order has been halted by a federal Court in February 2017, it drew outrage and condemnations across the USA and the world, and triggered strong criticisms from religious organizations, especially those that traditionally defend progressive values in American society and politics. *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good* called the Executive Order an "immoral and dangerous act",[43] while *Network* declared it was "antithetical to the faith". Many Catholic leaders also rejected Trump's arguments about the need to favor Christians within the refugee program.

Even if it is of course too early to assess the scope and impact of these mobilizations, the united front displayed by progressive religious groups against the repeal of "Obamacare", as well as against the ban on refugees and immigration from certain Muslim countries, suggests that the Religious Left may have found, with Donald Trump, a new cause around which to rally, and a new urgency to work closely with Democrats in order to fight conservative legislations in Washington. At a time of uncertainty and disarray for many liberals in the USA, religious progressives may have a crucial opportunity to provide a moral leadership to the Left and, more generally, to assert their relevance as political actors.

Conclusion

In February 2016, a group of young Catholics launched the movement *The Tradinistas*, which officially advocates "Christian Socialism", and is "devoted to a *ressourcement* of Catholic social teaching, (…), Marxist economic analysis, and their integration into a new kind of politics".[44] Although certainly destined to remain marginal, this group testifies to the vitality of Catholic political thought and activism within the whole spectrum of the American Left, notably as a result of the recent mobilization of the "millennial" generation of Church members. More generally, and despite their sometimes limited political impact, the many groups, old and new, that comprise the Catholic Left, remain today—as throughout American history—a constant and strong presence within the religio-political landscape.

The election in 2013 of Pope Francis, who strongly emphasizes the social teaching of the Church, and appears to be less theologically conservative than his predecessor Benedict XVI, has also contributed to further legitimize the American Catholic Left's focus on social justice,

as progressive advocacy groups have been able to claim the Pope's support, explicitly referring to his positions on the economy or immigration. But against the backdrop of a conservative Trump's presidency, the influence of Francis could even perhaps lead, in the short or medium term, to issues of social and economic justice being brought back to the forefront of the Church's advocacy in the USA. Already in 2017, for instance, the USCCB has, in the span of a few days, voiced its "strong" opposition to Trump's Executive Order on immigration,[45] but also, more significantly, reversed its previous position on "Obamacare", officially praising a law that "brought about important gains in coverage", and warning against a precipitated repeal that "would prove particularly devastating".[46]

Notes

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3. Williams, Daniel K. 2010. *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*. New York: Oxford University Press; Wilcox, Clyde and Carin Larson. 2006. *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press.
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5. *Public Religion Research Institute*. 18 July 2013. "1-in-5 Americans are 'Religious Progressives'".
6. Olson, Laura R. 2011. "The Religious Left in Contemporary American Politics", *Politics, Religion and Ideology*, vol. 12, no. 3, p. 272.
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9. The Catholic social teaching stems from the encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum*, written by Pope Leo XIII in 1891.
10. www.networklobby.org.
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13. Olson 2011: 271.

14. Clarkson, Frederick, ed. 2009. *Dispatches From the Religious Left: the Future of Faith and Politics in America*. New York: Ig. Publishing; Green, John C., Guth, James L., Kellstedt Lyman A., Smidt E. Corwin. 2007. "A Gentle Creek or a 'River Glorious'? The Religious Left in the 2004 Election". In Campbell, David E., ed. *A Matter of Faith? Religion in the 2004 Presidential Elections*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution; Olson, Laura R. 2007. "Whither the Religious Left? Religiopolitical Progressivism in Twenty-First-Century America". In Wilson, Matthew J., ed. *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press; Sullivan, Amy. 2008. *The Party Faithful: How and Why Democrats are Closing the God Gap*. New York: Scribner.
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19. The first Catholic presidential nominee was the Democrat Al Smith in 1928 (he lost against Herbert Hoover). The second was John F. Kennedy in 1960.
20. *Catholic Online*. 6 October 2004. "The Catholic Voting Project Responds to Archbishop Burke´s Pastoral Letter".
21. Goodstein, Laurie, Kirkpatrick, David D. 12 October 2004. "Group of Bishops Using Influence to Oppose Kerry", *The New York Times*.
22. Dionne, p. 170.
23. Abortion is "morally wrong" for 51% of American Catholics, while 47% say that it is "morally acceptable" or "nor a moral issue" (Pew Research Center 2017).
24. More precisely, 43% say that it is "acceptable and as good as any other arrangement for raising children", and 23% find it "acceptable but not as good as some other arrangements" (*Pew Research Center* 2015).
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38. Boorstein 2015.
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40. Goldstein, Amy, Parker, Ashley. 20 January 2017. "Trump Signs Executive Order that Could Effectively Gut Affordable Care Act's Individual Mandate", *The Washington Post*.
41. Jenkins, Jack. 12 January 2017. "These Faith Groups are Demanding Republicans Stop Repealing Obamacare", Thinkprogress.org.
42. The countries targeted by the Executive Order are Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.
43. "Catholic Letter to Speaker Paul Ryan", *Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good*.
44. tradinista.com/about/ (last access: 29 January 2017).
45. Pezzulo, Mary. 28 January 2017. "USCCB Speaks Out Against Trump's Immigration Orders", *Patheos*.
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CHAPTER 3

Catholic Colonization of the American Right

Blandine Chelini-Pont

Catholic intellectual influence in the ideological building of the contemporary American right seems to be a blind spot in the history of the conservative movement. However, after very fine studies in recent years on the right-wing tendencies of some of the Catholic population, and on the long-lasting relationship between Catholics and political life,[1] this peculiar aspect of the American right's history was recognized by George Nash[2]; it gave rise to some enlightened analyses from John Diggins, Michael Miles, John Judis, and Melvin Thorne[3]; and resulted in a thorough critique by Patrick Allitt.[4] Catholic conservative influence greatly contributed to the new era of the Republican Party since the 1980s, which has received increased Catholic support and embraced some Catholic-rooted conservative ideas as its own. Catholic voting patterns have changed significantly since the 1960s era, when the Democratic Party largely supported social and labor Catholic ideas, brought by pre-war thinkers. This chapter explores how this historical ideological shift could have occurred and why it is no exaggeration to describe conservatism in the Republican Party as having undergone a partial "catholization".

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_3

Ideological Contribution of Catholics to the Nascent Conservative Wing in the 1950s

The 1950s saw the beginning of the rise of a vibrant conservative intellectual movement in the United States. For purposes of simplification, we can label the different strains of mid-century conservatism in four groupings. These four formed a recognizable block: their common and avowed objective was to break American liberalism, as it was thought by American intellectuals and practiced by Democratic Administrations since Franklin D. Roosevelt, under the name of liberal Progressive. Those four groups were also fiercely anti-communists. They had no connection with the upholders of the *Old Right*, the isolationist and nativist vestige of the 1920s in the Republican Party. For the rest, the four groups compounded two different sensibilities, one resolutely philosophical, with two sub-components, libertarian and new Democrat, and the other openly Christian. The philosophical branches did not consider themselves as conservative. They did not use the term, and some authors constantly refused to claim it. Instead, they thought themselves as the restorers of original liberal ideals, that had been distorted in their times.

Tradition in New Conservatism

The two latter groups were more singular. They defined themselves for the first time in American history as real "conservatives". They even claimed this name as their own, but in order to distinguish themselves from the bad reputation of the term—negatively referring to the agrarian Southern society or to the old Europe and its privileges—they represented themselves as *New conservatives.* These so-called conservatives wanted to restore a political ideal of the past that sat forth its Christian nature. The first one of the two groups was referred to as *Traditionalist.* It intended to restore the true American *tradition,* as proposed by the scholar Russell Kirk, in his 1953 bestseller *The Conservative Mind*. In doing so, Russell, a Catholic convert, disputed the definition of American democracy, as trivialized by the liberal authors of his time. He preferred a subtle genealogical reading which traced the origin of the said Tradition to natural Christian law, defended—according to him—by Edmund Burke. The group that surrounded Kirk went back up the thread of genealogy to St. Thomas and his Aristotelian predecessors.

Ultimately, the *Traditionalists* asserted that America was not a regime of modern rupture, but quite the reverse: it was the sum (and the summit) of the highest wisdom produced by European thought. It represented the legacy of its most successful political model, that one of an accomplished Christian Republic. The *Traditionalists* constituted the hard core of *New conservatism*.[5]

Civilization in the New Radical Right

The second group of conservatives had a more radical imagination. It could be categorized as *McCarthyist* because two of its principal theorists, William Buckley and Leo Brent Bozell, had justified and supported the US Senator's methods, in their book *McCarthy and His Enemies* (1954). The *radical conservatives* also thought their country as the most complete conservatory of the West, but a conservatory on the edge of abyss, then struggling with evil, the USSR, in an apocalyptic battle. Defenders of Christendom and of Greco-Roman civilization, which carried Christian Revelation, these Manichean conservatives constituted the heart of the *New (radical) Right*.

For these described groups, Christian reference was different from traditional religious and political referents in American history. The new providential world of the conservatives was not charged by God to succeed, where mad Europe had succumbed to its sinful errors—according to the Puritan version. It was in the New World, given to men of goodwill to build a regenerated political society—in its Deistic version. The America of the new and radical Conservatives was a surprising heiress. The most faithful heiress of a political tradition dating back to the peak of the scholastic period in Europe. For these radical right-wing conservatives, it was a precious depository of an unequaled and unmatched civilization, Christianity, carried by the truth of Revelation. The two conservative groups were literally rebuilding the foundations of American exceptionalism. The advent of America was now the fruit of a holy chain. It was a perfect accomplishment, although threatened, with an inestimable heritage.[6]

This approach introduced a profound reversal in American political thought and imagination, which did not escape the wrath of progressive commentators. But yet, Kirk formulated a thought of inheritance that existed before him in Europe, but that he had had, with others, the genius to affirm as American as well. This affirmation was anticipated,

shared, and surpassed by an enthusiastic and small network, a restricted audience of intellectuals and media men, with one unlikely peculiarity: those who proclaimed themselves traditional conservatives or new right-wing radicals were overwhelmingly Catholic. Their Traditionalist or Westernist sentiments betrayed this Catholic particularism, as a source of New Conservatism and New Right thinking, which appeared together in the 1950s.

Ideas of the first Catholic intellectuals of conservatism, armed with different conceptual frameworks, helped attack the quiet front of the liberal vulgate and its history, represented then by such authors as Arthur Schlesinger and Lionel Trilling. The Traditionalist and Westernist groups brought different imagination of the American Experiment and strong opposition to liberalism, as it deviated too much from the natural or Christian morality that these groups professed. They were among the first to formulate hostility to American political liberalism, anticipating the future stand of Evangelicals and Protestant Fundamentalists, who penetrated the conservative arena some 20 years later.

Where did these intellectuals come from and how did they even emerge? According to what French scholar Gérard Deledalle wrote in 1954 in his *History of American Philosophy*, there was indeed no Catholic (political) philosophy in the USA that could have explained it. There were, of course, Catholic men of letters, famous writers, renowned for their contribution to American literature, during the interwar period and immediate aftermath of the war. There was also the Thomist network, but it had no audience.[7] There was no philosopher or political thinker who could stand as a great man of public authority. So, this emergence of unknown Catholic political thinkers, who displayed and reflected themselves as Catholic, was therefore a double revolution.

Quite nonexistent until then in the political debates, American Catholics were also completely absent from the networks of the Old Right, still deeply hostile to the Jewish and Catholic minorities in the country. New Catholic Republican militants emerged in an apparently artificial political space, with ideals that did not correspond to their expected universe, the one of the Democratic Left, for which they massively voted with the blessing of their episcopate. Thanks to the Cold War which excited their nationalism, thanks to economic growth which facilitated their social advancement, thanks to religious openness and secularization of the time in Protestant ranks that enshrined their mainline integration, Catholics emancipated themselves from their closed universe

and, among them, this conservative political minority hatched, self-outing from protective conformism. This group was accompanied by a small noria of center-European intellectuals, having fled from war and communism, and for whom liberal progressives were the dangerous cousin of socialism. The double equipage contributed to the birth of a vibrant intellectual conservatism, but whose legitimacy was challenged by critics.

Among them, Eric Von Kuehnel-Leddhin (exiled), Ross Hoffman, Francis Graham Wilson, Richard Weaver, John Luckas (exiled), Peter Viereck (exiled), Frederick Wilhelmsen, Thomas Molnar (exiled), and above all, Russell Kirk (convert). *American Review*, *Burke Newsletter*, and *Modern Age*, founded by Kirk and his friends in Chicago, give us today an overview of the Traditionalist conservative corpus. Similarly, William F. Buckley, Leo Brent Bozell (convert), Whittaker Chambers (convert), Willmore Kendall (convert), Frederic Wilhelmsen, Frank Meyer (convert) or Gary Wills in his younger years, as well as the original contents of the *National Review,* built together the ideological corpus of radical Conservatives.[8]

Fusionism in the 1960s

Due to its dual origin, between traditionalists and radicals, the Catholic vein that irrigated conservatism, first negotiated its own unity and sought in the same movement for timely alliances. In the 1950s, conservative Catholics were pioneering with Libertarians and New Democrats.[9] This friendship did not succeed. Libertarians and New Democrats could not bear the famous tradition of new Conservatives. At the beginning of the 1960s, the group pretended to play solo by monopolizing the conservative label, with a synthesis of both traditionalist and radical movements, still embellished with a zest of libertarianism: *Fusionism* was born,[10] as elaborated by Frank Meyer, former philosopher of The American Communist Party. This synthesis was applied to Barry Goldwater, the Republican nominee for president in 1964, a real political coup for this small family.[11]

Alas, the failure of Goldwater's campaign, which telescoped with the libertarian turn of the 1960s and the ecclesial reforms of the Second Vatican Council, shook fusionism and broke the rallying of Catholic conservative tendencies to form ideological unity. During the second part of the 1960s, the small network exploded. Reactions to the Council and the remarkable success of Leftism in American Catholicism

as well as in the political and cultural life of the country marginalized its ideas and divided its members. Vatican II, initiated at the time of Kennedy's presidency, the first ever gained by a Catholic, caused an unprecedented earthquake in the American Church. For Catholics, this period was one of internal fragmentation that still characterizes them, between advocates of progress in the Church, liberals from Americanist sensitivity, Feminists, pre-conciliar nostalgics, or defenders of ecclesial Tradition. Fusionist Conservatives were torn between those who wanted to stay in the normal political game, such as William Buckley, Franck Meyer, and Jeffrey Hart, and those who wanted to dissent and to conspire against what America had become, including Brent Bozell, Neil McCaffrey, Frederick Wilhelmsen, Garry Potter, John Wisner, and Michael Lawrence. A winning movement in the early 1960s, Fusionists seemed out of breath in the early 1970s and weighed down by a new radical fringe, *Catholic ultras*. This fringe used, on the politically new issues of sexual ethics, contraception and abortion, the same apocalyptic vocabulary of yesteryear McCarthyism and introduced these themes into the political debate. The main arguments of the *ultras* were formulated in reviews such as *Ramparts*, *Triumph*, *The Wanderer*, *Remnant*, and *Rough Beast*.

Catholic Influence on Conservative Republicanism in the 1970s

Neo-Conservative Catholics

In the early 1970s, the Fusionist right had lost its focus. Its followers were not in agreement on many cultural issues as well as affirmative action. It was not very solid in its South Vietnamese cause, while all members—except Gary Wills—thought the USA should not withdraw or leave the upper hand to the Soviets or their minions, as Henry Kissinger and Nixon allegedly were doing. This Fusionist movement was unable to stop a more radical-militant wing from emerging to rail against abortion rights and casual sex. Some certainties remained between them: (1) The providential character of the USA commands it to save the world from the deadly danger of Communism. The détente politics followed by Presidents Nixon, then Ford and Carter was considered a fatal error. (2) The deleterious character of the American Left

would ruin American civilization. Despite the basis of these strong common beliefs, the Fusionist movement split up. It restarted with two new but antagonistic components.

So close to debacle, Catholic conservatives succeeded to share with others the alleys of power, ten years later. Their story in the 1970s is that of a resurrection. The ex-Fusionist core, loyal to the spirit of the *National Review*, sealed a reasonable alliance with the *neo-conservative wing*, coming from the Democratic side and composed by secular Jewish scholars and journalists such as Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, and Nathan Glazer.[12] These dissenters strongly disagreed with the Leftist atmosphere of their maternal party. The same academic references were found (Tocqueville, Burke, Smith, Voegelin, Friedman), the same slogans were built, like faith versus secularism, moral capitalism, fight against adversary culture, white ethnic conscience, powerful foreign policy (meaning interventionism). These themes became the converging and long-lasting ingredients between Left dissenter Democrats and Catholic Conservatives. They formed the second generation of American neo-conservatism.[13] Specific contributions of Catholic thinkers to this family can be found in the writings of Michael Novak on social subsidiarity and on the "catholicity" of capitalism.[14]

Radical Catholics of the Religious Right

The radical part of Catholic conservatives found itself close to Evangelicals and fundamentalist Protestants. They created the Religious right, the other great conservative ideology that emerged in the 1970s, quite different from the one we have just described. The founders of this movement undertook to distinguish themselves as clearly as possible from neo-conservatives and succeeded in a disputing alliance among all those who supported restoration of divine authority as the source of politics. We could call them *theo-conservatives* and advance the idea that their ideological unity was realized in a creative way, in which recourse to intransigent Catholic tradition was quite clearly articulated.

Before becoming an official Christian conservative alliance under the name *Moral Majority*? Catholic radicals ignited the *Stop ERA* battle (1972–1975), led by Phillys Schlafly, sponsored by the past Dixicreat Richard Viguerie, known at the time as an exceptional fundraiser for the Republican party, Paul Weyrich, a very pious tycoon, founder of the

Heritage Foundation and other conservative think tanks, John Terrence Dolan, anti-gay rights militant and founder of the *Christian Voice* and the *National Conservative Political Action Committee*. All these people shared religious rejection of abortion and sexual liberation, religious rejection of homosexuality, and a religious defense of traditional family and marriage. They also built a narrative around the theme of endangered (Christian) religion and liberal attacks on religious freedom. Another theme—one which clearly had a Catholic flavor, and was already present in Bozell's writings in the 1960s—was to obtain constitutional recognition that the American political order and American society were based on Christian principles. Catholics brought their juridico-political arguments and their idea of the God-ordained political order. Protestants brought their prophetic emphasis, their sensitivity for the Holy city, and their fidelity to the Divine Law. Fusion of these universes is one of the most interesting aspects of *theo-conservatism* because it brought from the Catholic womb a political authoritarian thought that can be shared with nonliberal Protestants.

Theo-conservative Catholics launched the recurrent theme of the constitutional amendment as political solution, to affirm the subordination of all American legal and political order to the God of Christians, as wanted, according to them, by the Founding Fathers. They demanded not only a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion as a criminal offense against the sacred principle of life, gift of God (abortion amendment), but also a more general amendment that recalled the divine source of the American Constitution (God amendment), defended over the years by distinguished and eminent scholars such as Charles Rice. The latter amendment would have made impossible to legally accept societal changes, whether they were the result of jurisprudence or law. The debate on new amendments led to a feverish search for a constructed and simple thought of a divinely ordained society.

Catholic Influence in the GOP Since Reagan's Era

Ronald Reagan or the Conservative Shift of the Catholic Vote

The alleged decline of family values is one of the recognized factors—apart from the hostage crisis in Iran and economic stagnation—which contributed to detaching Evangelicals from supporting President Jimmy Carter. Democratic disaffection among Catholics was older, but the

Family values debate had also played a major role transferring some of the Catholic electorate to the Republicans, who were seduced by the alarming rhetoric of the religious right. For members of the New Christian Right, the *Moral Majority*, founded by Rev. Jerry Falwell, Howard Phillips, Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich, was created to move conservative evangelicals into the Republican Party and to support Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign. The decisive shift of the Evangelicals toward the Republican vote, like that of many Catholics, would lead to decades of polarization, between a Republican Party that became that of most intense or assumed piety, facing a Democratic Party even more religiously tempered or even more indifferent vis-a-vis religion in general.

Reagan became popular with conservative Catholics and this popularity continued to grow as he seemed so close to Pope John Paul II, like him a victim of a gun attack and a committed adversary of Communism. Reagan denounced moral degradation in American society and succeeded in making himself the mouthpiece of the middle classes. Many trade unionists, blue-collar workers, and practicing Catholics moved toward him because of his positions on busing, crime, drugs, communism, school prayer, and abortion. The pro-life agenda of the Republican Party won traditional Catholic voters more than any other issues. In 1988, Vice President George H. W. Bush benefited from the movement of many Catholics to the GOP as he won a landslide presidential election victory with strong Catholic support.

Religious Conservatism in the Reagan Era

What was the evolution of religious conservatism under Reagan? Its radical trend, or tendency was heightened, as the initial enemy appeared more powerful than ever. The supporters of this pessimistic fringe judged American elites responsible for the nation's misfortunes. Richard John Neuhaus used reference to the most classical Catholic tradition to offer it as a platform for Evangelical and Fundamentalist troops in order to force, through legislative changes and federal appointments, the advent of a true Christian public policy. Neuhaus, a Lutheran minister and radical left-wing protester in the 1960s, was called to conservative revolution during the 1970s. He invented the concept of the "naked public square," the title of a book now considered as Theocon Manifesto.[15] He offered to restore the American Experiment in its "communal covenant under God", thanks to the Catholic Church recalling Caesar his

obedience to God's purpose.[16] Becoming a Catholic priest at the beginning of the 1990s and the founder of *First Things* magazine, Neuhaus became one of the tutelary figures of integral Catholic conservatism.[17] Neuhaus' synthesis contributed to marginalize remnants of Catholic *paleo-conservatism*, represented since the 1970s by such figures as Pat Buchanan.[18]

For his part, George Weigel, a leading Catholic neoconservative, seized the critique of the modern world developed by Pope John Paul II. Weigel's writings gave force to the view that a true Catholicism is rooted in certain fundamentals that naturally lead to conservative policy positions on a variety of issues.[19] The rapid transformation of the American episcopate in the 1980s convinced conservative Catholics in the United States that they were on the right path, both spiritually and politically. Conservative Catholics vigorously challenged the views of the more liberal American bishops at every turn. Take for example the 1983 *Letter of the Bishops* on the perpetual illegality of the use of nuclear weapons, which elicited strong opposition from leading conservative Catholic thinkers. The American bishops eventually presented signs of convergence with the conservative movement, in part through episcopal replacements. Pope John Paul II finally transformed a largely pacifist, third-wordlist episcopal body, sensitive to the theology of liberation, into a more firmly orthodox conservative one.

The Holy Alliance in the 1990s

In the 1990s, radical conservatives continued their ecumenical alliance between Catholic *ultras*, some Evangelicals and Fundamentalist movements, particularly in the Christian Coalition. A famous platform, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission,* was written in 1994 by Richard John Neuhaus and Charles Colson. They were labeled *Evangelical Catholics*, or *Taliban Catholics* by some of their opponents. The conservative evangelical and Catholic alliance in the 1990s focused its energies on attacking a number of key controversies: extension of equal rights to homosexuals, same-sex marriage, research on embryos or stem cells, adolescent sexuality, secularization of American society, among others. Their aims were to defend "traditional" marriage, to rebuild a Christian-based education system, and to create a compassionate civic commitment, which could replace the state's assumption of responsibility for social improvement. On the other hand, Catholic

neo-conservatives asserted their interpretation of Catholic Magisterium and succeeded, while proving their orthodoxy, to defend the philosophy of a capitalist system without regulation, to reject welfare state programs and high taxes.[20] For all Catholics who did not share the rigorousness of orthodox habits, George Weigel invented the formula *Catholicism Lite* in 2002, especially aimed against American Jesuits, their journals, and their universities, which were now suspected of secular drifting, in contrast to new authentically Catholic colleges, which then multiplied, such as Christendom College in Virginia, Thomas Aquinas College in California, Magdalen College, or the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in New Hampshire. The 1990s were a time of incredible inflation of "religious" proposals, before the Republican Congress, which passed a number of federal laws and tried to pass others connected with the religious freedom and the protection of religion.

Catholic Neo-Conservatism in the 2000s

In the 2000s, under the presidencies of George W. Bush, Catholic thinkers formed an intellectual backbone at the service of the conservative movement and their ideas were strongly represented in the White House. Bush was a parishioner of the Episcopalian Church in Washington and a member of the Methodist Church in Texas, but he was surrounded by intellectuals, counselors, pens, and politicians from the Catholic faith. On the day of his 2001 inauguration, he received the archbishop of Washington to dinner. President Bush traveled with his father to the funeral of Pope John Paul II, offering to the world a stunning picture of the two American presidents, father and son, gathering at the remains of a Roman pontiff.

Throughout his two terms in office President Bush made outreach to conservative Catholics a key component of his strategy to appeal to faith-based voters. His welcoming of Pope Benedict XVI, who visited the USA in April 2008, was memorable for the magnificent birthday reception of the pontiff at the White House, with 250 guests, including George Weigel, Michael Novak, and Richard John Neuhaus. According to journalist Daniel Burke, these Catholics had for 8 years a major influence on George Bush's speeches, politics, and legacy, "to an unprecedented extent in the history of the United States".[21] President Bush was then labeled by Pennsylvania senator Rick Santorum (1995–2007), "the first Catholic president of the United States". As William McGurn

humorously quoted, there was in the team of presidential pens "more Catholics than all the Notre Dame University gatherings since the last half-century".[22]

Indeed, the White House Adviser, Leonard Leo, representing Catholic outreach on the National Committee of the Republican Party during those years, said that Bush shared perspectives of the conservative Catholics in a unique way in American history. The three "figures" of Catholic conservatism and its neo-conservative and intransigent tendencies, Weigel, Novak, and Neuhaus, were very close to the administration. Their writings provided intellectual and moral-based rationales for some leading policies of the Bush administration. Among these were the theory of a "just war" and even preemptive military action, despite a very cautious American episcopate and all attempts of the Holy See to avoid the war in Iraq.[23]

The two Catholic branches of conservatism, united around the president, strengthened their legitimacy by doubling their political position with orthodox ecclesial fidelity. The most radical branch "petrinized" its intellectual influence on the Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, giving a philosophical background to the evoking of Divine Law. In concrete terms, the American state has never been so ready to collaborate, including financially and at heights never reached, with religious denominations. "Compassionate conservatism" was thus a unique rationale for a series of legislative attempts to finance faith-based charities or schools,[24] rather than public social services or education, with no religious orientation. In these battles, the Catholic episcopate was predominantly in favor of the president's initiatives.

Catholic Conservatives in the GOP in the New Decade

Here we are, at the end of a sometimes Byzantine path, in the midst of this still-unrecognized family, the American Catholic right. From the distinction between *Traditionalists* and *Westernists* in the 1950s, we arrived in the 2000s to a sometimes evanescent distinction between *Neo-conservatives,* disciples of the Judeo-Christian moral law, and *Theo-conservatives,* adepts of Christian public order. Between these two epochs, there were many events and quarrels. Catholic conservative ideas gave rise to publications, websites, lobbying activities carried out by dedicated associations, or specialized think tanks. They are not marginal. They are studied and taught at renowned Catholic universities or new

radical Catholic universities. They have a great influence on the political debate; at this point their arguments, more or less connected by their users to a system of thought which animates them, have become arguments of current conversation. They are now exporting themselves outside the Republican Party, to Europe and with the hope to create a large Western and under God conservatism.

Unthinkable, nonexistent 50 years ago, Catholic ideas and people moved to the core of the GOP. In the run-up to the Republican primaries in the 2012 elections, three candidates personified the new Catholic profile of Republican politicians: Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich in a more unexpected way, if one does not know that this iconic figure of the Conservative right converted to Catholicism in 2009, and Paul Ryan, the vice presidential candidate, chosen by Mitt Romney to join the GOP national ticket.

The conversion of Newt Gingrich can be read as an additional episode in the life of this colorful politician. But it could be seen as symptomatic of the Catholic taste that has seized the Republican elites since the 2000s, and which shows at the same time success of Catholic theses and networks in the construction of conservative ideology. Gingrich is a remarkable example of the Republican elites' rapprochement to Catholic habitus, to the point that conversions to this religion became frequent. These conversions are explained as much by a great social tolerance for the phenomenon of spiritual choice in the country of religious freedom, as by an "elitist" fit of the conservative environment with the dignity and antiquity of the Catholic institution. Of course, more right-wingers have moved to evangelical Protestantism than to Catholicism during this decade, but the move to Catholicism is significant enough among Republican politicians, that it even questions a direct influence of the Catholic pious society of Opus Dei, whose priest Father John McCloskey, then Director of the Washington Diocesan *Catholic Information Center* and reputed columnist, was credited not only with Gingrich's conversion, but also with other Republican politicians, journalists, and activists.[25]

Becoming a Catholic is almost fashionable in the circles of the Republican nebula. Before its politicians, there were right-wing intellectuals who set examples of conversion. Among the authors we quoted here, Russell Kirk, Willmore Kendall, Ross Hoffman, Brent Bozell, Frank Meyer, Richard John Neuhaus, and Francis Graham Wilson were converted and their conversions helped them to rethink their ideas. Gingrich's Catholic shift was

reflected in the very Neuhausian and Weigelian character of his writings in the 2000s. In 2007, he published a book, *Rediscovering God in America*, in which he stated that the Founding Fathers' clear intention was not only to authorize but also to encourage religious expression in the public square. Gingrich produced with his wife and the company *Citizens United* a documentary on Poland freed by John Paul II, *Nine Days That Changed the World*. Similarly, in a speech at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington in Spring 2011, he recommended George Weigel's book, *The Cube and the Cathedral*, capturing—according to him—"the crisis of European civilization as militant, government-imposed secularism (which) undermines and weakens Christianity". The same phenomenon was occurring in the USA, he warned, because "American elites are guided by their desire to emulate the European elites, and as a result, anti-religious values and principles are coming to dominate the academic, news media and judicial class in America".[26]

Richard Santorum was the other "Catholic" candidate in the 2012 GOP primaries. As a Senator, he took firmly conservative stands on social issues, denounced the social mismanagement of the state and the misery of the American working classes. He offered as a solution his doctrinal inspiration in economics, like local subsidiarity, for replacing government social programs. In a 2003 article, for the conservative Catholic magazine *Crisis*, Santorum declared himself critical of the scientific theory of evolution, and later he considered climate change as scientifically unproven. He received the *Pro Dei and Patria for Distinguished Service to God and Country Award*, delivered by the new Catholic conservative Christendom College of Virginia. Like most Republicans, Santorum was against abortion, but he displayed an extreme position on the subject. He opposed it, in all cases, except when the mother's life is in danger. He would have not made other exceptions, either in cases of rape or incest, and said he would be in favor of laws which would allow prosecuting doctors who perform illegal abortions.

Surviving Trump, the Future of Catholic Conservatives in the Republican Party

Gingrich and Santorum could be said to be typical of the current Republican Catholic profile. This influence on the Republican Party is now strong and deep, with long-lasting ideological roots, two distinct conservative tendencies, an extended network, and direct access to the highest ranks

of power. Nevertheless, in the last presidential campaign, Donald Trump seemed to have been the worst candidate for these groups.

Indeed, in March 2016, George Weigel and Robert P. George wrote in the *National Review*, "An Appeal to Our Fellow Catholics",[27] signed by more than 30 outstanding Catholic conservative intellectuals and lobbyists, including Mary Rice Hasson, director of the Catholic Women's Forum at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and Thomas Farr, director of the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown University. The letter denounced Trump as a man "manifestly unfit to be President of the US", who has driven "American politics down to new levels of vulgarity". Citing Trump's ethnic prejudices, promises to punish the families of terrorists, and his sudden about-face on pro-life issues, the signatories pleaded with Catholics not to vote for Trump in the primaries. Robert George wrote another statement on Ted Cruz's website some days later, in which he called on voters to support Cruz, a call relayed by 50 conservative Catholic activists and political leaders.[28]

The website *Breitbart News*, directed by Steve Bannon, Trump's 2016 campaign chief executive officer, and formerly the special adviser of the president, considered Paul Ryan at that time as the Number One enemy. Described by the media as a radical Catholic, Ryan, ex-candidate for the vice presidency, disowned Trump's inflammatory statements during 2016 and did not hide his disagreement on different topics until then.[29]

Despite this apparent disaffection, the rightist part of the Catholic conservatives finally declared its support. Philly Schlafly, before she passed, made the case for Trump and encouraged Christians to get behind him in her final book, *The Conservative Case for Trump*. She said Donald Trump was "an old-fashioned man who prioritizes family".[30] Her website published, in September 2016, a counter-list of 33 prominent conservative Catholics, who accepted to "advise" Trump. The September list of Trump's Catholic advisers included Joseph Cella, founder of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast. Cella became, during the summer 2016, the chief liaison to the Trump campaign for "Catholic Affairs", despite signing the earlier Appeal against Trump's candidacy. Other prominent figures joined the counter-list, like Jim Nicholson, former GOP national Chairman, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and former ambassador to the Vatican. Without surprise, Richard Viguerie was in.[31]

However, the half-reluctance of the Republican Catholic politicians and intellectuals to support Trump's program and current policy could

signal that their ideas, apparently shared by the new president—as restoring moral and Christian America, Christianizing the public square and judicial rulings, dismantling gay marriage, suspending Obamacare, protecting religious freedom and persecuted Christians oversee, eradicating Islamist terrorism—were in fact distorted in a populist, nativist, and isolationist way the Catholic conservatives never supported.

So, the influence of Catholic conservatives could disappear in the current ideological turmoil of the GOP, under strong pressure of the new *Alt Right*, the tea party network, and other movements. They could also break again into opposing groups, thus minimizing their impact. The Trump era is posing a special challenge for conservative Catholics, as some are contented with his presidency as long as he delivers social conservative policies, whereas others cannot accept the president's personal character and leadership style. This division was widely evident in the 2016 campaign, with some conservative Catholics issuing appeals to oppose Trump whereas others joined his cause. The long march toward a hoped-for unified conservative Catholic movement in US politics has stumbled many times since mid-twentieth century, but it may be facing its toughest challenge in the early stages of a floundering Trump presidency.

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CHAPTER 4

Catholics and Evangelicals: Does Donald Trump Mean the End of the Religious Right?

Neil J. Young

No sooner had Donald Trump announced his run for the Republican nomination for president in the summer of 2015 than political pundits began to argue that Trump's success would mean the end of the Religious Right. A latecomer to the Republican Party with little conservative credentials, Trump also had a spotty personal life and an intemperate personality that seemed to make him an unacceptable candidate for religious conservatives. That Mormon and Catholic voters largely rejected Trump through the Republican primaries while evangelicals gradually, if somewhat begrudgingly, grew to support him only seemed to strengthen the arguments that the Religious Right was cracking apart. For 40 years, conservative evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons had largely voted en masse for Republican presidential candidates, but the splintering brought about by Trump's rise suggested the political trend had come to an end. Trump's eventual victory, ensured in part by his winning a majority of Catholic,

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_4

evangelical, and Mormon voters, repudiated this notion, even as it still raised questions about the nature of the Religious Right today. In the end, Trump's unexpected rise to the Republican nomination and his surprising win of the presidency raise real questions about the interfaith political strategies of the Religious Right—what they look like today and how we have understood them historically. Rather than signaling the end of the Religious Right, Donald Trump's campaign and victory highlight the Religious Right's history of division and disunity even in moments of political victory. That history has been overshadowed by a scholarly narrative that emphasizes the Religious Right as a monolithic power operating in relative harmony. But as Donald Trump upends many prevailing notions about American politics and society, perhaps one of his most significant contributions has been how he has disrupted some of the most persistent myths about the Religious Right.

Since almost as soon as the Religious Right emerged on the national scene as a potent political force for the Republican Party, both insider activists and outsider political pundits have predicted its demise, though for different reasons. As early as the 1984 election, just 4 years after Ronald Reagan's historic 1980 win that served to announce the Religious Right's entry into national politics, Christian conservative leaders warned that the movement could fall apart if the president continued to ignore it. "If those concerns of the coalition…are met with symbolic gestures alone," the grassroots organization Christian Action Council wrote following Reagan's reelection win, "the diverse movement that brought him to power will dissolve."[1] Moments of political defeat only fueled ideas among movement activists that the Religious Right had reached its final days. "Twenty years of fighting has brought us nothing," two Moral Majority leaders lamented near the end of Bill Clinton's second term. Christian conservatives, they argued, should abandon politics and focus their efforts on saving the lost rather than trying to win elections.[2]

The talk of the Religious Right's end in 2016, therefore, represented nothing new, but its connection to the rise of Donald Trump exposed some of the faulty assumptions that underlay both political and historical interpretations of the Religious Right since the 1980s. With Trump, the conversation centered on a disbelief that evangelicals—the only conservative religious group to show Trump consistent support throughout the campaign—could support such a man. "By conventional standards,"

The Atlantic observed in 2015, "evangelical Christians should despise him."[3] Although evangelicals' backing of Trump, a thrice-married casino magnate who showed little familiarity with or interest in the most basic aspects of Christian faith, did seem an unusual development, it hardly suggested the end of evangelical political power. Yet, political coverage throughout the primary season contended that if evangelicals did not act as commentators expected—that is, by rallying behind a socially conservative candidate of deep religious faith, like Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum—then this meant that evangelicals no longer enjoyed the political influence within the GOP they once had.

No doubt, those evangelical figures who led the #NeverTrump movement contributed to such conclusions. "If Donald Trump has done anything, he has snuffed out the Religious Right," ran the headline of a *Washington Post* editorial by the Southern Baptist Convention's Russell Moore, one of Trump's most consistent evangelical critics.[4] But all of this commentary from both insiders and outsiders rested on the faulty presumption that evangelicals had to act a certain way politically in order to still be understood as the Religious Right. The results from the primaries, however, indicated just the opposite. Indeed, Trump's winning of the nomination depended on evangelicals' increasing support for his candidacy through the primaries. As evangelicals consolidated behind Trump, they ensured him the Republican nomination, a certain sign that evangelicals remained the kingmakers of the GOP rather than insignificant sideliners.

As evangelicals gathered behind the candidacy of Trump through the spring of 2016, attention shifted to the continued resistance to Trump from conservative Mormons and Catholics, the other two pillars of the Religious Right. Trump fared particularly poorly with LDS voters. In Utah's Republican caucus, Trump suffered his worst loss in the state races, earning only 14% of the vote to Ted Cruz's 70% landslide win.[5] Mormons offered numerous reasons for opposing Trump, including his lewd and profane manner and outlandish lifestyle. Aside from those character objections, Mormons also rejected several of Trump's policy recommendations, including his anti-immigration position and his proposed ban on Muslim entry to the USA.[6] After Trump announced the latter initiative, the LDS Church made the rare decision to respond directly to a political candidate by issuing a statement that defended religious freedom and highlighted the collaborative humanitarian work of Mormons and Muslims.[7] The entry of Evan McMullin, a former CIA operative,

and devout Mormon, into the presidential race as an independent candidate further weakened Trump's standing among Mormons. Polls soon showed McMullin leading Trump in Utah, a state that had reliably voted for the Republican presidential candidate since Lyndon B. Johnson's landslide win in 1964.[8] After a leaked audiotape from the entertainment news show Access Hollywood from 2005 revealed Trump bragging about sexually assaulting women, the LDS Church's Deseret News called for Trump to withdraw from the presidential race just a month before Election Day. "What oozes from this audio is evil," the editorial lamented. "We ask him to step aside."[9]

Like Mormons, conservative Catholics also bristled at Trump's unsavory character and demeanor. In a particularly surprising move for an American politician, Trump deemed Pope Francis' visit to Mexico "very political." After the pontiff suggested that Trump was "not Christian," Trump lashed back, calling the Pope's comments "disgraceful."[10] Aside from his poor treatment of their spiritual leader, Trump further hurt his standing among American Catholics with his aggressive anti-immigration stance. Trump's call for mass deportation and the construction of a border wall between the USA and Mexico alarmed Hispanic-American Catholics, a growing segment of the church, but they also angered many white Catholics who had long watched their bishops advocate for comprehensive immigration reform and preach for compassionate responses to the immigration issue in their sermons. Strangely, Trump's campaign team further provoked such sentiments when Steve Bannon, the campaign's chief executive, scoffed that "Catholics want as many Hispanics in this country as possible because their church is dying."[11] For many Catholic voters, Trump's bellicose and aggressive nativism had dark undertones of a not-too-distant anti-Catholic American past, and his campaign seemed unwilling to change those perceptions. Writing in the *National Review*, the conservative scholars Robert P. George and George Weigel issued "An Appeal to Our Fellow Catholics." "We urge our fellow Catholics…," the two wrote as the state primaries began, "to reject his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination by supporting a genuinely reformist candidate."[12]

Even after Trump had secured the Republican nomination, a poll conducted in the summer of 2016 by the Public Religion Research Institute showed him trailing Clinton by 23%.[13] In modern elections, winning, or at least splitting, the Catholic vote has been critical for Republican candidates to gain the White House, so Trump's enormous

deficit with Catholic voters portended disastrous results for November. As the *Washington Post* soon concluded, Donald Trump had a "massive Catholic problem."[14] Yet, a closer analysis of Catholic polling numbers revealed a more complicated picture, suggested a possible path forward for Trump, and underscored how shifting demographic trends among Catholics might unsettle traditional political patterns. Trump's most "massive Catholic problem" owed to Hispanic Catholics who another poll showed favored Clinton by a whopping 77–16% margin. Among white Catholics, the same July poll showed Trump leading by a closer 50–46% advantage over Clinton.[15] A month later, those numbers had flipped, with Clinton grabbing a 44–41% edge over Trump.[16] But the back and forth polling numbers among white Catholics demonstrated how Catholic moderates—thought to be as much as one-third of Catholic voters—would ultimately determine the Catholic vote as much as it indicated some insurmountable deficit for Trump.[17] If Trump could swing Catholic moderates back to his side and gain even a few more percentage points among Hispanic Catholics by Election Day, he stood to win among Catholics overall.

Trump's uneven standing among evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons stood out as a unique problem for a Republican presidential candidate. Since the Religious Right's rise in the late 1970s, all three religious groups had united, often quite easily, behind the GOP's ticket. Ronald Reagan's historic win in 1980 had depended, in part, on capturing a majority of Catholic voters—only the third time that a Republican presidential nominee had done so—along with winning 61% of white evangelicals and 80% of Mormon voters.[18] Ensuring a similar coalition of voters became a priority for every Republican candidate, and the party dedicated substantial efforts to appealing to and mobilizing religious conservatives through the years.[19]

That evangelicals now stood divided from Catholics and Mormons over the candidacy of Trump represented a significant divergence from this recent past and inspired frequent commentary. Writing in the *Washington Post*, the political scientist Mark Rozell rightly pointed out that Trump's candidacy was "splitting apart" the coalition of evangelicals and conservative Catholics who had supported the Republican Party for almost 4 decades.[20] Yet, others were tempted to make the far grander pronouncement that what was being witnessed was the end of the Religious Right.[21] While academics like Rozell merely noted the potential fraying of a decades-long political order, media figures, political

pundits, and even Christian activists and news outlets rushed to conclude that the separate voting patterns of its different constituent members meant nothing short of the death of the Religious Right.[22]

Such prognostications reveal certain assumptions, prevalent both in political commentary and historical scholarship, about the Religious Right and how it is understood politically. First, the prediction of the Religious Right's end demonstrates an over-attention to elections as a way of understanding the Religious Right. Significant historical trends contributed to this understanding, for certain. In many ways, it was landmark presidential elections that made the Religious Right visible, from its breakthrough moment in Reagan's important 1980 win to its impressive "reemergence" with George W. Bush's two victories in 2000 and 2004. And that visibility was underscored by the virtual unanimity of conservative evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons at the ballot box, a noteworthy development considering the longer history of Catholic and white southern evangelical alignment with the Democratic Party. But the common electoral support by conservative Catholic, Mormon, and evangelical voters for the Republican Party since at least 1980 has distorted our thinking about what the Religious Right means politically and all the ways we understand how it acts politically and organizationally. Politics is much more than what happens on Election Day, and the Religious Right's activism and influence must be understood far beyond the results of the first Tuesday in November every 4 years.

Recent historical scholarship on the Religious Right has begun to move away from a focus on election-centered politics for a broader understanding of the Religious Right as a grassroots movement or a theological development.[23] In my own book, *We Gather Together: The Religious Right and the Problem of Interfaith Politics*, I ask what we might see differently by approaching the Religious Right as a religious history with political consequences rather than framing it as a political history of religious actors, as typically done. In doing so, my work foregrounds the historic divisions, theological differences, and ongoing tensions among the interfaith members of the Religious Right and places its political organizing and election results in that context. This interpretive framework more clearly illuminates all that the Religious Right had to overcome and also continues to struggle with in order for it to align and work strategically. As I argue, the history of the Religious Right demonstrates it was always a fragile coalition that navigated long-standing historic animosities and religious disagreements and divided on political

issues and tactics as much as it united. By situating Trump's candidacy and victory in this history, we can understand his polarizing campaign and controversial win not as the end of the Religious Right but rather as yet another moment that reveals the challenges and complications inherent to the coalitional nature of the Religious Right.

A few examples from the history of the Religious Right might make this clearer. Although historians of the Religious Right have tended to look to the political events of the 1960s and 1970s, including the Supreme Court's banning of prayers and Bible reading in public schools, the legalization of abortion, and the Equal Rights Amendment, as the context in which evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons first united, these conservative religious groups had actually begun to align in the 1950s as a religious response to the ecumenical movement coming out of mainline Protestantism. Concerned that mainline and liberal Protestants were abandoning historic interpretations of Scripture and long-standing Christian convictions for the purposes of unity, conservative Catholics, evangelicals, and Mormons opposed the ecumenical movement as an un-Christian and even anti-Christian social agenda and religious heresy. Mormons and evangelicals, especially, criticized the ecumenical movement for advocating Christians all unify in "one church," thus obliterating the denominational divisions that marked Protestantism. In opposing ecumenism, these conservative religious faiths recognized one another as defenders of traditionalism and conservatism, even as they maintained their theological critiques of each other. Their common position as opponents of liberal Christianity drew evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons together in religious sympathy and cultural affinity, but their shared role as religious outsiders of the mainline Protestant culture that dominated mid-century American society and politics meant they also sought to distinguish themselves from each other as the only "true" Christian faith.

While conservative Catholics, evangelicals, and Mormons appreciated each other's opposition to the nation's secularizing trends, especially in regard to issues of sexuality and gender which grew more visible by the 1960s, this appreciation did not forestall their own theological disputes and religious competition. Mormons and evangelicals, for example, responded critically to the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), arguing that the Catholic Church's plans for internal reform could never fully address the doctrinal errors of Catholicism. Evangelicals particularly worried that Vatican II ultimately sought to bring all Christians back under

the control of Rome, much as they had argued the Protestant ecumenical movement desired to create a "one church" organization that would abandon Christian truth for a false harmony. Catholics and especially evangelicals, in another example, pushed back on the LDS Church's expansive growth in these decades—the LDS Church tripled its membership between 1950 and 1970—by developing anti-Mormon publications and materials to use among their own members. "Those Mystifying Mormons," read an article from a Catholic magazine in 1967 that outlined LDS theology it described as "unheard of in other Christian religions."[24] Evangelical publications routinely defined Mormonism as a "cult" and "menace," an unbiblical heresy that threatened to lure well-meaning Americans into its trap—and away from the truth of evangelicalism—by pretending to be just another branch of historic Christianity.[25]

For America's conservative faiths, this religious context of competition and disagreement continued to develop through the 1960s and 1970s, ultimately shaping the political alliance that emerged among evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons. In the early years of the pro-life movement, even after the Supreme Court's surprising *Roe v. Wade* decision granting the federal legalization of abortion in 1973, evangelicals and Mormons largely resisted joining the anti-abortion cause because of its close association with the Catholic Church. When W.A. Criswell, pastor of the nation's largest Southern Baptist congregation and a staunch conservative, was asked about the Catholic Church's pro-life efforts shortly after the *Roe* decision, Criswell saw only sinister motives. "I think the Catholics have it in their heads…that they're going to outbreed the rest of us," he told the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*.[26] By the end of the 1970s, Southern Baptists and other evangelicals had wholeheartedly endorsed the pro-life cause, but they still resisted close partnership with Catholics. The National Right to Life Committee, the nation's largest and most important anti-abortion organization, struggled to attract non-Catholic members to the group that had been created by the Catholic Church in the late 1960s. Instead, evangelicals and Mormons created their own pro-life organizations or worked against abortion through their own churches or denominational channels rather than uniting in an interfaith organization. By Reagan's election in 1980, the pro-life movement appeared to have a broad and diverse base of support, but its decentralized nature spelled political disaster. While Mormons, evangelicals, and Catholics stood united in opposing abortion rights and

electing pro-life politicians, most notably Ronald Reagan to the White House, it proved far more difficult to agree on legislation or political strategy once their candidates were in office.

During the Reagan administration, battles broke out within the pro-life movement with divisions opening up largely along sectarian lines. Some of this owed to different theological views on abortion. Catholic teaching, for example, opposed abortion in all circumstances, so the church and Catholic organizations were unwilling to back anti-abortion legislation that allowed for exceptions such as in the case of rape or to protect the health of the mother. "Protestants are dismayed by the United States Catholic Conference," an important evangelical pro-life leader lamented in 1981 after the Catholic Church and the National Right to Life Committee refused to endorse the anti-abortion legislation backed by most evangelical groups, choosing instead a different bill that only drew Catholic support. Other disagreements reflected the persistent prejudices and long-standing distrust that had shaped the longer history of interfaith relations among conservative Christian faiths. In the end, the pro-life movement accomplished none of its political goals during Reagan's presidency. "We are a movement in disarray," a prominent Catholic activist mournfully concluded at a particularly divisive moment in the 1980s.

Similar divisions emerged over other issues the Religious Right held dear in the 1980s and beyond. Advocates for the return of school prayer, for example, found they could not agree on legislation once they had a president who endorsed their cause. Calling for the return of school prayer turned out to be an effective way to stir the base to support conservative candidates, but the school prayer cause stalled when Mormons, Catholics, and evangelicals realized they did not want each other drafting a prayer that might subject them to others' beliefs.[27]

More broadly, the Religious Right's divisions manifested at the organizational level even as conservative Christian activists touted the movement's broad ecumenical nature. Moral Majority's very name suggested the group's wide base of support, but the reality was far different. Fundamentalist Christians made up 90% of Moral Majority in the 1980s, as Catholics and Mormons stayed away from the group they saw as antagonistic to their faith traditions, even if they supported Moral Majority's political agenda.[28] Christian Coalition, a Moral Majority for the 1990s, repeated many of its predecessor's habits, boasting of its ecumenical makeup while building up the organization through a network

that only tapped into evangelical churches. When its leaders realized that Catholics did not want to belong to a group they perceived as strictly evangelical, the Christian Coalition created a sister organization, the Catholic Alliance, they could join. But it soon failed as the Catholic bishops attacked the new organization and cautioned Catholics from joining.[29]

These select examples demonstrate a persistent theme of the Religious Right: that it has operated not as a monolith, but as a diverse and often divided political movement characterized as often by its own internal disagreements, divisions, and defeats as by its common causes, united purposes, and political victories. In seeing this bigger, boisterous history, Donald Trump's rise appears less as an aberration or an "end," but rather a moment that fits in the history of the Religious Right as a fractious, contested, and never inevitable interreligious political movement. That Donald Trump's candidacy was interpreted by many scholars and journalists as unsettling and destabilizing for the Religious Right suggests we need a deeper and more historically attuned understanding of what the Religious Right has meant in American politics and society for the last 50 years, especially given what ultimately transpired on Election Day in 2016.

While I have argued here that we should not exaggerate the meaning of election results, we ought not to ignore them either. In his victory, Donald Trump won among evangelical, Catholic, and Mormon voters—the three pillars of the Religious Right. White evangelicals provided Trump with his greatest demographic triumph, as he earned 81% of their vote, even more than George W. Bush achieved in his two races.[30] Among Catholics, Trump garnered a 52% majority, reversing the trend of the previous two elections where Catholics had supported the Democratic ticket.[31] A solid majority of Mormons—61%—voted for Trump, but this represented a significant decline from recent elections where LDS support for GOP presidential candidates approached closer to 80%.[32] Even within these wins, the voting breakdown of each group underscores the divergences within the Religious Right and suggests some of the challenges Trump may face with this constituency moving forward.

Still, understanding how Trump won among evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons, particularly given his struggle with the latter two groups throughout the campaign season, provides insight into both the changing nature of the Religious Right and its persistent characteristics.

In terms of character and personal demeanor, Donald Trump did not run as a typical Religious Right candidate. But the issues Trump advocated and the political strategies his campaign deployed drew from the traditional playbook for winning conservative religious voters. Trump's hard-line stance on abortion, an about-face from his previous support of abortion rights, aligned with religious conservatives' position on the issue. His aggressive comments on abortion—at one point Trump told an interviewer that women who had abortions should be criminally punished—showed him to be out of touch with the pro-life movement's typical approach, but they also tapped into the nearly 40 years of frustration grassroots religious conservatives felt toward Republican candidates who made bold promises but little effort to overturn abortion rights.[33] For religious conservatives, Trump's pledge to appoint Supreme Court judges in the vein of Antonin Scalia, a beloved figure of the Religious Right, drew one of the starkest contrasts to the liberal court they imagined a Hillary Clinton presidency would yield. Among evangelicals, maintaining (and even increasing) the Supreme Court's conservative majority became the most common justification for supporting Trump, especially to fellow evangelicals who resisted his candidacy.[34] In his frequent appearances on conservative shows, Franklin Graham repeatedly reminded evangelicals that "the most important issue of this election is the Supreme Court."[35] Jerry Falwell, Jr., Trump's most ardent evangelical backer drew a finer point. "We have an election between someone who promises he will support issues important to us as Christians, including appointing justices to the Supreme Court who would make us all proud. That's Donald Trump. And someone who promises she will do just the opposite. That's Hillary Clinton," Falwell told a gathering in New York of several hundred evangelical ministers over the summer.[36]

Other issues, particularly immigration and terrorism, figured prominently in Trump's appeal to religious conservatives, even as they confounded some political observers. Commentators suggested this attention to matters other than the typical causes of abortion, school prayer, and gay marriage demonstrated the undoing of the Religious Right as a political force, but such observations only revealed how "social" issues had been allowed to over-dominate political analysis of the Religious Right. While there's no denying the importance of social issues, particularly on matters of gender and sexuality, in the history of the Religious Right, the movement's political agenda had always incorporated a far broader set of issues, including support for free-market

capitalism, a strong national defense, tighter immigration restrictions and border control, and a healthy aversion to environmental regulations. In just one example, Jerry Falwell's 1980 book, *Listen, America!*, seen by many as a blueprint for the Religious Right, advocated for increased military spending and a larger nuclear arsenal, attacked the welfare system, and warned that the nation had "drifted from the concepts of free enterprise and limited government."[37] The support for Trump's full policy proposals represented the Religious Right's endorsement of a broad conservative agenda far beyond the realm of social issues, much as it had in the support of other figures like Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

Beyond particular issues, Trump's bold defense, both explicit and implicit, of an unabashed white Christian nationalism attracted support, especially from rural evangelicals. The campaign slogan to "Make America Great Again" stoked a nostalgia for a pre-1960s nation that had not yet succumbed to liberal secularism. On the campaign trail, Trump repeatedly promised to return Christians to their rightful place of power. "The government has weeded it [power] away from you pretty strongly," Trump told the group of evangelical ministers in New York. "But you're going to get it back."[38] His attacks on political correctness, such as his pledge that Christians would be able to say "Merry Christmas" again rather than "Happy Holidays" when he became president, resonated with conservative evangelicals who felt their values and beliefs were under attack from Washington and Hollywood. What Trump offered was an unapologetic defense of conservative Christians' cultural and political dominance, a hope to those Christians who worried they were being displaced by forces beyond their control, including the nation's rapidly changing racial demographics and the culture's increasing support for women's rights and gay rights. As Robert P. Jones of the Public Religion Research Institute explained, "Trump's line—'let's make America great again'—and his last minute saying—'look folks, I'm your last chance'—was really powerful for white evangelicals who see their numbers in the general population slipping."[39]

This political expediency along with other ideas about what a Trump presidency would mean for them also overshadowed many concerns Christian conservatives had about Trump's own religious faith or history of personal indiscretions. While a few of his evangelical advocates vouched for the authenticity of Trump's Christian conversion, far more argued that Trump was God's choice of an imperfect man to restore Christian values to the nation.[40] Franklin Graham took to comparing

Trump to Moses and King David, reminding evangelicals that God had often chosen flawed and sinful men to accomplish His will. "God picks the imperfect and turns them into leaders for us," Graham contended.[41] That argument spread widely through evangelical circles in the months leading up to the election, seemingly empowered all the more by Trump's continual demonstrations of his profane manner, including what was revealed by the Access Hollywood tape. Rather than disqualifying Trump from consideration, these moments instead became the evidence of how Trump, in spite of his shortcomings, had been selected by God to save the nation.

These political tactics and strategies worked most successfully with evangelical voters as they were the Religious Right demographic that rallied behind Trump during the Republican primaries and that gave him the strongest level of support on Election Day. How Trump ultimately won Catholic and Mormon voters—two groups he struggled with right up until the election—remains less clear at this point, but there are clues to possible causes. With Catholics, Trump's campaign team pulled from the traditional political playback to reach potential voters, courting key Catholic activists and the Catholic bishops. A month before the election, Trump issued a letter to those Catholic leaders, promising his steadfast commitment to the pro-life cause and defending religious liberty. "I have a message for Catholics," Trump wrote. "I will be there for you. I will stand with you. I will fight for you."[42] One prominent Catholic leader likened Trump's letter to "a desperate Hail Mary pass," but far more seemed convinced by Trump's words or at least determined to stop his opponent. Almost singlehandedly, Trump's supposed pro-life commitment validated him among these Catholic leaders, helping them overlook his personal flaws and his inconsistent conservatism. "I think his comments are utterly disgusting," the prominent conservative Catholic activist Gail Buckley said shortly after the Access Hollywood scandal, "but I have no other choice than to vote for him."[43]

That calculus seemed heightened by Hillary Clinton's poor reputation among religious conservatives, dating back to her time as First Lady. Religious conservatives had long viewed Clinton as a radical feminist who threatened the traditional family and advocated big government liberalism. Clinton's strong defense of abortion rights, including the controversial procedure known as "partial birth abortion," in the final presidential debate, less than a month before the election, may have also hurt her with Catholics, even those who identify as pro-choice but

who would not be comfortable with what seemed like an unrestrained endorsement from Clinton.[44] Clinton's prospects with Catholics suffered an additional blow when WikiLeaks published a set of Clinton campaign staff members' emails that seemed to mock conservative Catholics.[45] Groups like Catholic Vote and Catholic League quickly denounced the Clinton campaign.[46] Finally, the future of the Supreme Court seemed to loom large in Catholic decisions about the election, much as it did for evangelicals. "With the makeup of the Supreme Court on the line," the Catholic news website Crux concluded after the election, "believers felt they had much to fear from Clinton appointments."[47]

Early reports on LDS voters indicate that these same factors played heavily in Mormons' decisions to vote for Trump in the end. Although they had shown steady resistance to Trump's candidacy throughout the year, a majority of Mormon voters ultimately came home to the GOP and its candidate in the end, just as Republicans of every stripe did.[48] Still, at this short date after the 2016 election, much of this remains largely speculative. As more research is conducted in the months and years ahead, we'll better understand the factors at work for religious conservatives in 2016, including why Mormon and Catholic voters broke at the last minute for Trump. Some initial polling results seem to indicate that those voters who attended religious services most often may have tended to give Trump less support. For example, Trump did better with "somewhat active" and "less active" Mormons than he did with the "very active" LDS Saints, more of whom supported Evan McMullin.[49] Additional evidence may indicate this was true for Catholic and evangelical voters as well. Parsing this and other election data should provide deeper insight into the motivations behind religious conservatives' support for Donald Trump. Certainly, the limited enthusiasm most Trump voters, including religious conservatives, showed for their candidate requires developing a complicated understanding of 2016's results.

It also suggests real challenges for the Trump administration in the next 4 years. George W. Bush had wholehearted support from the Religious Right in his two campaign bids, but religious conservatives still soured on his presidency during his second administration and expressed deep disappointment with his leadership overall.[50] Trump enjoys far less enthusiasm from the Religious Right. Although they were critical to his election win, their support for his presidency is far from guaranteed. How the Religious Right responds to the Trump presidency remains an open question. Whether they resist, accommodate, or become Trump's

staunchest champions will depend on a variety of factors, not least how Trump pursues relations with them. Especially likely given the circumstances of the 2016 election and the potential controversies of a Trump presidency, including his indelicate manner, the Religious Right will disagree and divide over whether to work with or against the Trump White House. The temptation to interpret such a scenario as the death of the Religious Right will emerge once again, just as it did throughout the 2016 campaign. But history reminds us that a fractured, disunited Religious Right is nothing new. Rather, it has been a near-constant feature of this powerful political movement, both its strength and weakness at different historical moments. In analyzing the Religious Right during the Trump years, historians and other scholars should not seek to pronounce its demise, but rather think deeply about how its changing nature stands in and departs from longer historical patterns. The Religious Right will endure the Trump presidency, but it will not be the same. What it looks like and how it acts as we move forward remains unknown. But however it develops, history will provide our surest guide for making sense of its present form and its future actions.

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PART II

The Bishops and the Holy See

CHAPTER 5

The US Catholic Bishops: From Separationism to Public Intervention

Marie Gayte

The year 2016 marked 40 years of US Catholic bishops' involvement in presidential races. It is remarkable that this anniversary should come to pass in an election cycle in which the bishops were so uncomfortable with either major-party candidate that they took an unusually low-key approach by recent standards, leading some to wonder whether the leaders of the Catholic Church in the USA were moving to a new stage in their political implication. This celebration of sorts provides an opportunity for a closer look at the bishops' involvement in presidential campaigns in order to highlight a number of recurring trends and see where this leads us from here.

The story of the bishops' reluctance to engage in US electoral politics is one that has been told many times.[1] It is that of the leaders of a church considered as foreign, and whose members were regarded with suspicion by the rest of the population. This hostility—the legacy of hundreds of years of tensions among various branches of Christianity—focuses on the fact that with as their head a man who is not only a spiritual leader but the ruler of a temporal state, Catholics

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_5

in the USA were considered potentially disloyal to the Republic. In addition, Church teachings about democracy being an error, rejection of other denominations as false religions and subsequent condemnations of religious pluralism, and support for a union of church and state raised suspicions that Catholics in the USA may try to subvert the political system and impose their beliefs, both religious and political, to the rest of the country. Faced with this situation, US Catholic bishops took it upon themselves to defend the patriotic and democratic *bona fide* of their parishioners.

In this context, any public intervention on the part of the bishops in an election cycle would have been seen as confirmation that Catholics were trying to violate the separation of church and state. As a result, Catholic bishops generally refrained from political involvement unless the interests of the church were in danger, their involvement in politics remaining limited to the local level.[2] When they did become involved at the national level, it was to show unconditional support for any foreign policy venture the USA engaged in and to support wars, including those frowned upon by the Vatican, such as the war with Spain over Cuba.

Changes occurring almost simultaneously in Washington and Rome in the 1950s and 1960s made it eventually possible for US bishops to get a say in national politics without the laity suffering from adverse consequences as a result. On the American side, Catholics experienced a much-improved economic and social position, and shed their immigrant status to join the ranks of the middle class. Their unconditional support for the cold war crusade against communism burnished their patriotic credentials. John F. Kennedy's election in 1960 signified to many the mainstreaming of Catholics and their coming of age. In the meantime, in Rome, seismic changes were afoot. The Council opened by John XXIII and concluded under the aegis of Paul VI relaxed the Vatican's hard-line stance on church/state relations and religious freedom, contributing to greater acceptance for Catholics in the USA. Council document *Gaudium et Spes* also called on Catholics in general and bishops in particular to encourage the government to make changes they thought right. "The church," it claimed, "should have true freedom […] to pass moral judgments even in matters relating to politics wherever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls demands it."[3] The council also strengthened the importance of bishops' conferences, which were made mandatory.[4] Although there had been some form of national council in the USA since 1917,[5] it was now to be much better

organized, and it could choose the political issues on which its members would speak out, as well as the form of their political involvement.[6] The new body, called the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), was established in 1966 and now spoke on behalf of all the bishops.[7]

While the NCCB started to stake out political positions in the second half of the 1960s, focusing on civil rights and the war in Vietnam, the event that drew it in the political fray was the 1973 Supreme Court landmark ruling legalizing abortion, a decision on which it was able to broadcast its opposition to a nationwide audience speaking with one voice as a conference, among other times during electoral campaigns. These interventions are particularly worthy of notice because the bishops started to make their voices heard in presidential campaigns just when a major shift was occurring as Catholic voters, a hitherto solid Democratic constituency, started moving away from the party and casting their ballot for Republican candidates, at least among the white, church-attending segment of this constituency. This shift is partly the result of a Republican strategy to enlarge its voting base through the wooing of "value voters" uncomfortable with what they felt as a secularizing drift of society.

The bishops' pronouncements and Catholic Church doctrine more generally tend to pull Catholic voters in opposite directions of the political spectrum. Opposition to abortion and gay marriage, and defense of "religious freedom" against the contraception mandate of the Obama years' health care reform for instance point toward the Republican Party's agenda, while support for immigration reform, social justice, and opposition to the death penalty clearly lean Democratic. This is something the bishops have acknowledged on repeated occasions, noting that "a Catholic moral framework does not easily fit the ideology of 'right' or 'left' nor the platforms of any party."[8] The apparent choice made by the bishops to lay extra emphasis on "life issues" around presidential election times thereby gives the impression of favoring Republican candidates. Catholics were now the ultimate swing constituency and one that became the target of aggressive courting by both major parties, given that they represented around 25% of the electorate and they were geographically concentrated in contested states with large numbers of electoral votes, such as Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.[9] They were also unique in that no other Christian denomination had a single ecclesiastical body speaking authoritatively on its behalf on a large spectrum of issues intersecting with the political sphere.[10]

Whether the bishops exerted any actual influence on the laity was far from certain, but politicians from both parties have long believed that the bishops' access to Catholic voters—along with their significant resources—is tantamount to influence over Catholic votes, which has made candidates sensitive to the bishops and anxious to identify areas of agreement with them.[11] Depending on which party they belong to, they have used different lines in their courtship: Republicans have tried to show how much they agreed on abortion, at least initially (they have since added gay marriage, euthanasia, federal funding for stem cell research, etc.), while Democrats have attempted to prove that they agreed on just about everything else.[12] This started even before the Supreme Court ruling, as several state legislatures contemplated the liberalization of their anti-abortion laws. In 1972, as he was running for a second term, Richard Nixon wrote to New York's Cardinal Cooke, one of the leaders of the anti-liberalization movement, and said "I would personally like to associate myself with the convictions you deeply feel and eloquently express." He also appeared alongside Cardinal John Krol to declare his support for federal aid to denominational schools.[13]

The 1976 contest marked a real turning point, as the bishops as a collegial body publicly engaged the two major-party candidates, who were both very keen to appear with the leaders of the US Church. They had been very active since 1973 and had launched a political plan to fight abortion through passage of a constitutional amendment. They, therefore, demanded of the candidates that they support such an amendment. When the Democratic Party convention passed a pro-abortion plank, NCCB president and then archbishop of Cincinnati Joseph Bernardin received national coverage for criticizing it for "opposing protection of the life of the unborn and endorsing permissive abortion"[14] and lamenting the fact that "despite [Jimmy Carter's] personal opposition to abortion, […] he continues to be unsupportive of a constitutional amendment to protect the life of the unborn," thus revealing "an inconsistency that is deeply disturbing to those who hold the right to life to be sacred and unalienable."[15] Jimmy Carter desperately tried to show alignment with the bishops' position on the issue of abortion; he tried to distance himself from the plank in his party's platform opposing a constitutional amendment. To do that, he sought a face-to-face meeting with the executive committee of the NCCB in late August to create an "intimate personal relationship."[16] The meeting did not yield the expected outcome however as Bishop Bernardin told the press on their way out

that they were "disappointed" with Carter's position on abortion.[17] Incumbent Gerald Ford also needed their support, as he was hoping to repeat Richard Nixon's 1972 performance with Catholic voters (he had won almost 60% of the Catholic vote[18]), all the more so as he took it for granted that he was going to lose the South to the Georgia governor. He, therefore, appeared alongside Cardinal-Archbishop John Krol of Philadelphia at a Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia and attended mass in Buffalo in which the local bishop, Edward Head, preached a sermon against abortion.[19] In September 1976, Ford invited the NCCB's executive committee to the White House. The Republican candidate did support an amendment to the Constitution on abortion, although not one as far-reaching as that advocated by the Catholic hierarchy. Nevertheless, Joseph Bernardin judged Ford's position to be "encouraging."[20] This statement—and the one judging Carter's position to be "disappointing"—gave the impression that the bishops were positioning themselves on the Republican side of the contest.[21] To dispel suspicion, the NCCB released a statement indicating that the church leadership was "absolutely neutral" and that its recent statements on abortion indicated no preference for either candidate or party.[22] Suspicion of an alignment with the Republican Party led the bishops' conference to adopt a low profile in the 1980 presidential contest and to warn against single-issue voting, at a time when the Christian Right was mobilizing its troops for the first time to bring Ronald Reagan to the Oval Office.[23] Subsequently, in 1983, Archbishop Bernardin developed the concept of a "consistent ethic of life," arguing that the pro-life position of the church must be comprehensive and include every stage of its development, a stance which has been seen as a way to avoid being co-opted by any one party.[24]

While the 1976 contest did not involve any Catholic candidate, subsequent presidential campaigns have shown that bringing a Catholic on the Democratic ticket is a sure way to incur the bishops' wrath. Catholic Democrats have consistently used the same position—that of distinguishing between their privately held pro-life stance and their reluctance to impose their faith onto others. Throughout their voting guides, however, the bishops have made it clear that this position was not acceptable coming from a Catholic. In its 1998 *Living the Gospel of Life*, the NCCB insisted on the fact that "Catholics who are privileged to serve in public leadership positions have an obligation to place their faith at the heart of their public service, particularly on issues regarding the sanctity and dignity of human life," and that it was the bishops' mission

"[a]s chief teachers in the Church, [to] therefore explain, persuade, correct and admonish those in leadership positions who contradict the Gospel of life through their actions and policies."[25]

This attitude—correcting and admonishing—was on full display when some bishops singled out Democratic Catholics in the 1984 and 2004 presidential contests. In 1984, Democratic candidate Walter Mondale, aware of a decline in Catholic votes for his party, chose New Yorker Geraldine Ferraro, a pro-choice Catholic, to be his running mate. This came soon after the appointment in January 1984 as archbishop of New York of John O'Connor, one of the members of the new generation of "John Paul II bishops," social conservatives for whom abortion was the ultimate moral issue.[26] On September 8, 1984, at a pro-life convention during which a taped message by incumbent President Ronald Reagan was broadcast—after which O'Connor quipped: "I didn't tell you to vote for Ronald Reagan, did I?"—the archbishop attacked Geraldine Ferraro by exhuming a letter she had signed in 1982, in which she asserted that "the Catholic position on abortion is not monolithic and there can be a range of personal and political responses to the issue." He accused her of misrepresenting the Church's views on abortion and declared that as an "officially appointed teacher of the Catholic Church, […] what has been said about Catholic teachings is wrong - it's wrong."[27] September was also the month chosen by Archbishop Law of Boston—another member of the John Paul II's "new generation"—to release a statement by the 18 bishops of New England that mentioned abortion as the "critical issue" in the campaign, indicating it should be "voters' central concern."[28] It was also the month Geraldine Ferraro had to pull out of the annual Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade when Cardinal Krol threatened to withdraw all the marching bands and children from Catholic schools from the celebration.[29] In October, Bishop of Scranton James Timlin called a press conference as Geraldine Ferraro was holding a campaign rally there, and he condemned her position on abortions as "absurd and dangerous."[30] In the meantime, several bishops, including Krol and Buffalo's Edward Head, appeared at rallies alongside Ronald Reagan.[31]

The candidacy of another Catholic, this time at the head of the Democratic ticket, elicited similar reactions on the part of the leaders of the US Catholic Church. In January 2004, Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis said he would deny John Kerry communion should the Democratic candidate present himself in one of his diocese's churches,

and that voting for him would be a sin.[32] Kerry's own archbishop, Sean O'Malley from Boston, while not explicitly saying the Democrat could not take communion, suggested that Catholic politicians whose political views contradict Catholic teaching "shouldn't dare come to communion."[33] This resulted in a "wafer watch," with journalists following the candidate to mass to see whether he would be denied communion.[34] Denver's archbishop Charles Chaput declared that voting for Kerry was a sin that must be confessed before receiving communion and organized a voter registration drive in his archdiocese, Cardinal Archbishop of Philadelphia Justin Rigali, who had preached that Catholics had an obligation to vote for pro-life candidates, made an appearance with incumbent George Bush in the critical swing state of Pennsylvania, at a time when the Republican was courting religious voters in an unprecedented fashion.[35]

The bishops have tended to voice their disapproval of pro-choice presidential candidates individually, but they've also made their voices heard collectively through official NCCB statements. Since 1975, the bishops' conference has developed the habit of releasing a document ahead of election years to inform Catholics' choice,[36] not telling them who to vote for in so many words, but strongly hinting at what a truly Catholic vote should be. These documents identify several issues that should receive special consideration when choosing which candidate to vote for, but they often single out abortion and other life issues as worthy of particular attention. Thus, the 1998 edition, *Living the Gospel of Life*, said that "opposition to abortion and euthanasia was foundational for Catholics and that Catholics should weigh candidates' positions on abortion above other social justice issues such as poverty and war." It urged bishops to confront pro-choice Catholic politicians, privately at first and then publicly if necessary.[37] Their 2003 installment, *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*, stated that abortion is never "morally acceptable."[38] In its 2007 *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the NCCB identified as priorities racism, abortion, and global social injustice but insisted that the taking of innocent life is not "just one issue among many," and placed abortion and racism both in the "intrinsic evils" category.[39]

The centrality of abortion and other "life issues" to the bishops means that no matter what disagreement they may have had with an incumbent Republican president,[40] when election times come, these disagreements are quietly shelved to give way to an almost exclusive focus on life

issues, leading almost inevitably to the impression that the bishops side with the Republican candidate. This impression is partly due however to the pronouncements of individual bishops critical of Democratic candidates, and who, although not in a majority, receive a disproportionate amount of attention in the media. Some of the most heated campaigns of recent years—those in which Democratic presidential candidates took the most flack for their position on life issues—are evidence of such a phenomenon. While the 2004 campaign is remembered for the virulent attacks against pro-choice Catholic John Kerry, it is worth noting that almost as many bishops stated their opposition to the use of communion as a sanction as did those who advocated such a measure. Key Church figures, such as Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington DC, voiced their reluctance to see communion turned into a political weapon,[41] the capital's archbishop meeting with John Kerry and going on the record as opposing the withholding of communion as a political weapon.[42] One week later in his diocesan paper, the *Catholic Standard*, he said that "people who are with us on one issue" may be "against us on many other issues."[43] Baltimore Cardinal-Archbishop William Keeler said that sentiment against the denial of communion was 3–1 at the NCCB.[44] Nonetheless, the "headline war" was won by those opposing the Democrat.[45]

This seems to indicate that regardless of the NCCB's official statements on voting, the NCCB is conflicted on whether it should intervene in presidential campaigns. Joseph Bernardin had put forward in 1983 his seamless garment and consistent ethic of life approach to keep the bishops from being seen as overly partisan. But in the following election cycle, the media resonated with attacks on Walter Mondale's running mate from Archbishops Law and O'Connor. Voices protesting their approach were almost inaudible. Yet, on October 14, NCCB President Bishop James Malone had cautioned the clergy against expressing support for candidates, and a few days later, 23 bishops led by Detroit's Thomas Gumbleton criticized their fellow conservative bishops for elevating the issue of abortion over nuclear war; a few days later, Bishop Bernardin reaffirmed his consistent ethic of life and criticized the single-issue focus on abortion.[46] Political scientist Timothy Byrnes argued as early as 1991 that "there are essentially two camps within the NCCB when it comes to public policy and political priorities." He distinguished between one camp made up of bishops "who emphasize a whole series of modern threats to human life," including abortion, nuclear weapons,

poverty, and capital punishment, "in a more or less even-handed way." These bishops argue that "an exclusive emphasis on abortion inappropriately places the NCCB in political alliance with right-to-life forces whose views conflict with the church's official position on virtually every other issue." They are opposed by a group of bishops who believe that "abortion should be the American church's first political priority" and that it is "fatuous and dangerous to equate merely potential threats to human life, such as nuclear war, with the actual destruction of millions of fetuses every year." They argue that the consistent ethic of life approach "dilutes the bishops' commitment to the protection of the unborn and undercuts the potential effectiveness of the bishops' antiabortion activities." They also minimize the costs of an alliance with political forces who disagree with the bishops on other issues, pointing out that "these disagreements tend to be over the most appropriate means to agreed-upon ends."[47]

This should not hide the fact that all bishops support their church's condemnation of abortion, but they do disagree on how their agenda should be pursued "in circumstances where its major components (pro-arms control, pro-social spending, and anti-abortion) cut across the prevailing cleavage of American national politics." The way the bishops have chosen to frame their public presentation of church teaching—whether through the anti-abortion lens exclusively or through that of the consistent ethic—lends support to candidates and parties who agree with the bishops on that one issue.[48]

The bishops' polarization was again visible at the 2015 USCCB annual conference, where they discussed the updated version of their voting guidance, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. Some bishops said the guidance had not been updated to include Pope Francis's recommendations. Chicago Archbishop Blase Cupich lamented that the voting guide did not address immigration reform, and the fact that the document's goals were too inward-facing in general, while San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy deplored that "it tilts in favor of abortion and euthanasia and excludes poverty and the environment," and "provid[ed] a warrant for those who will misuse this document outside this room to exclude poverty and exclude the environment as key issues and say they are secondary, and cite this document as they have done for the last two election cycles." Indeed, the document continued to put great emphasis on abortion and same-sex marriage, which it claims must remain an issue of particular concern to Catholic voters.[49]

The bishops' involvement in presidential politics also leads to investigating their potential influence on Catholic voters and their ability to "deliver" the Catholic vote, especially in the context of the partisan realignment of religious voters that has been underway for the past 40 years. While a perceived influence has led politicians to try to woo the bishops around election time, the reality of the influence of the bishops' pronouncement is far from obvious. While Geraldine Ferraro's and John Kerry's tickets were both defeated in 1984 and 2004, the religious factor is generally not the one to which their defeat is attributed.[50] As the Catholic Church was coming of age in the USA and the bishops were becoming more outspoken on elections, they were also in the process of losing whatever influence they had been exerting on the laity. Catholics were moving away from the communities which had nurtured a Catholic subculture, at the same time becoming exposed to secular aspects of American culture and more inclined to form their own opinion, irrespective of the bishops' messages.[51] In addition, research has shown that there is no such thing as a Catholic vote. Not only is the "Catholic vote" now indistinguishable from that of the rest of the electorate, but Catholics' political behavior is explained by a variety of forces in which religiosity is but one feature.[52] For many American Catholics, Church teachings are only advisory.[53] Thus, a majority of Catholics agree with the use of the death penalty for those convicted of premeditated murder, and with a woman's right to abort, contrary to the bishops' pronouncements, which tends to show that the Church has rather weak influence on American Catholics' political decisions.[54] Besides, the Catholic vote in not the monolith once described, and one needs to distinguish between a Latino and a white vote.

Although the voting patterns of American Catholics have been given much attention, and the influence of Roman Catholic priests on the political attitudes of Catholic parishioners has given rise to some studies,[55] the same cannot be said however of the bishops' influence on Catholic voting orientations. As noted by Gray, Perl, and Bendyna, "the extent to which the advocacy of Church leaders can successfully influence the political opinion of lay Catholics within this context remains an issue of great debate."[56] Gray and Bendina note that direct influence is rarely documented and only then for a few issues.[57] One study did show some evidence of a bishops' influence on political attitudes among the laity. After publication of the NCCB's pastoral letter on nuclear deterrence, the percentage of Catholics who felt the USA spent too much on the military rose sharply; however, this rise was short-lived.[58] Gray,

Perl, and Bendyna note that in 2004, in states where bishops had issued communion denial statements, 44% of Catholics had voted for Catholic John Kerry, versus 55% for George W. Bush (the national result for the Catholic vote was 47/52[59]), whereas in states without denial statements, 50% of Catholics voted for Kerry, versus 49% for Bush.[60] Yet, the authors refuse to deduce causality from that result, arguing that it could be coincidental or indicate rather "reverse causality."[61] Some authors have also pointed to a loss of influence of the bishops in the wake of the sex abuse scandal that hit the Catholic Church starting in 2002.[62]

Recent polling data reveal the laity's lack of knowledge of bishops' voting statements. A poll conducted with US Catholics after the 2008 election shows that just 16% had ever heard of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, and only 3% had read it. Three-quarters of those who were even aware of the document said it had "no influence at all" on the way they voted in 2008; 71% said it would have made no difference even if they had known about it. Overall, just 4% of adult US Catholics say the statement from the US hierarchy either was a major influence or would have been if they'd known about it.[63] Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate surveys of Catholic adults indicates that fewer than one in five can recall reading the voting guide after an election, with only about one in 20 considering it a major influence on their political choices.[64]

The 2016 presidential election cycle was unprecedented in that it has defied all of the patterns that had seemed to be solidifying for the past 40 years. For the first time in a long time, those bishops who single out abortion as the essential issue when deciding who to cast one's vote for were faced with a Republican candidate whose personality and record on the issue were far from satisfactory. In addition, the Vatican has had at its helm since 2013 a pontiff who has clearly called on US bishops to rebalance their concerns. This became manifest when, 6 months into his papacy, he declared in an interview that the Church had grown "obsessed" with abortion, gay marriage, and contraception, and announced that it had to "find a new balance."[65] These new orientations were later confirmed in the USA by the appointment as bishops of men known for their advocacy of issues such as immigration reform, refugee resettlement, gun control, and the fight against global poverty, not just abortion and gay marriage.[66] The choice of new US cardinals—elevating some surprising names, and leaving behind the heads of notorious sees, which are usually a fast lane to the cardinalate—was further evidence of this shift.[67] This led Vaticanist John Allen to conclude that "with Pope's

cardinal picks, Bernardin's 'seamless garment is back'".[68] The appointment in July 2016 of new Cardinal-Archbishop of Chicago Blase Cupich to the Vatican Congregation of Bishops, whose task it is to select bishops and thus shape the episcopate in individual countries, could herald a new generation of "Francis bishops," slowly replacing the "John Paul II bishops" whose focus on life issues has for the past 30 years resulted in a de facto alignment with the Republican Party.[69]

The bishops were clearly uncomfortable with the choice of presidential candidates in the 2016 presidential election cycle. Hillary Clinton's stances on abortion were far from compensated by the choice of a Catholic running mate in the person of Virginia's Tim Kaine. The Virginia senator told a homosexual rights group he believed the Catholic Church would one day change its teachings to embrace same-sex marriage, unleashing the anger of his bishop, Francis DiLorenzo, who made it clear that the Catholic Church's teaching about "what constitutes marriage remains unchanged and resolute."[70] The heads of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' committees on doctrine and on marriage and family life published a statement entitled "God's Plan Doesn't Change," reminding people of the permanent nature of marriage as the union of a man and a woman.[71] Kaine had been previously attacked by Archbishop Chaput of Philadelphia for "publicly ignor[ing] or invent[ing] the content of [his] Catholic faith as [he] go[es] along"[72] and by Bishops Thomas Tobin of Providence who had questioned his Catholic credentials in a Facebook post entitled "VP Pick, Tim Kaine, a Catholic?" in which he listed his support for abortion, same-sex marriage, gay adoptions, and the ordination of women as priests as reasons to doubt his Catholic *bona fide*.[73]

These responses were however inevitable and did not fit into a wider campaign to target the Democratic ticket and promote the Republican one. Such a campaign was all the more unthinkable considering the fact that the Republican champion, Donald Trump, was far from being an ideal candidate for the USCCB, with his flip-flopping on abortion, his opposition to immigration, and his clashes with Pope Francis. The bishops were indeed remarkably discreet in this campaign, a silence which reflected their embarrassment with this unusual situation. This remarkable set up had, for instance, Archbishop Charles Chaput, who had been very critical of Barack Obama in the 2012 campaign, calling "[b]oth major candidates […] so *problematic* that neither is clearly better than the other" and denouncing their "astonishing flaws."[74] In the fall of 2016, Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, IL, far from issuing as he

had done in 2012 a letter informing members of his diocese that "a vote for a candidate who promotes actions or behaviors that are intrinsically evil and gravely sinful makes you morally complicit and places the eternal salvation of your own soul in serious jeopardy,"[75] concluded that the best option for Catholics may be to abstain from voting altogether.[76]

On the whole, the bishops have pulled their punches on Trump, but a critical tone was to be heard in some circles. After the New York real estate mogul entered the fray for the Republican nomination, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, who had been extremely critical of Barack Obama in the 2012 campaign, published a column entitled "Nativism rears its big-haired head: Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric is a sad return to a terrible American tradition," in which he lambasted Trump's xenophobic rhetoric.[77] Yet, the bishops' attacks were somehow muted once the campaign finally started. Santa Fe Archbishop John Wester, a Francis appointee, condemned Trump's rhetoric as "scapegoating and targeting people like the immigrant, the refugee and the poor," and Chicago's Blase Cupich said he'd keep a close eye on how the campaigns proceed on issues that are "important to him," such as immigration and life issues.[78] Yet, both the primary and general election campaigns were marked by statements of bishops who, while critical of Trump, insisted on their reluctance to intervene in the political process, a caution that seemed odd in light of their interventions in 2004 and 2012, but which might reflect Francis' calls for restraint. Thus, Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, while denouncing Trump's vitriol on immigration as "not right," declared his reluctance to wade into political waters; Dolan wrote in his op-ed that he's "not in the business of telling people what candidates they should support."[79]

Though some bishops did insist that the central issue in the campaign was life, no episcopal star rose to the attention of the public the way they had in 2012 against Obama and in favor of the pro-life Republican Mitt Romney. Appeals not to vote for pro-choice candidates could be heard from the bishop of Rockville Centre, NY, and the archbishop of Kansas City, KS—who reminded the faithful of the importance of judicial appointments when choosing a president—[80] but nothing much came from New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Los Angeles.[81]

The bishops' relative lack of activism against the presidential pro-choice candidate and her Catholic running mate in the 2016 campaign—relative to those in 2004 and 2012—did not appear to make much of a difference on the Catholic vote. Like in recent cycles, Catholics went with the majority and voted for the winner.[82] The relative lack of

interventionism against the pro-choice candidate may well be limited to the last election cycle because of the deeply unsatisfactory nature of the Republican candidate in the eyes of Roman Catholic bishops, and this might change if the Republican Party chooses a more palatable option for 2020. On the other hand, even though Pope Francis is unlikely to have 36 years ahead of him like John Paul II had to almost completely overhaul the American Catholic episcopate, given the new impetus signaled by his appointments and his statements calling for a less "obsessive" focus on life issues, the USCCB may very well be headed toward a rebalancing bound to have an impact on the nature—or even the existence—of bishops' statements around presidential election time.

Notes

1. See for instance Timothy A. Byrnes, *Catholic Bishops in American Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, first edition 1991), Thomas J. Reese, *A Flock of Shepherds: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1992), Richard Gelm, *Politics and Religious Authority: American Catholics since the Second Vatican Council* (Wesport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), Mary T. Hannah, *Catholics and American Politics*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979) and Mary T. Hannah, "Bishops as Political Leaders", in *Religion in American Politics*, ed. Charles W. Dunn (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1989).
2. Margaret Ross Sammon, "The Politics of the US Catholic Bishops: The Centrality of Abortion," in *Catholics and Politics. The Dynamic Tension between Faith and Power*, ed. Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell and Michael A. Genovese (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press), 12.
3. Amy Sullivan, *The Party Faithful: How and Why Democrats are Closing the God Gap* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 55.
4. Ross Sammon, "The Politics of US Catholic Bishops," 12–13.
5. For more on this, see Reese, *A Flock of Shepherds*, 23–32.
6. Sullivan, *The Party Faithful*, 57.
7. It became the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2001.
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9. Stephen T. Mockabee, "The Political Behavior of American Catholics: Change and Continuity," in *From Pews to Polling Places*, ed J. Matthew Wilson (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 81.

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12. George McKenna, "Criss-Cross: Democrats, Republicans, and Abortion", *Human Life Review*, vol. 32, n. 3/4 (summer-fall 2006), 70.
13. Marlin, *The American Catholic Voter*, 282; 289.
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15. Byrnes, *Catholic Bishops in American Politics*, 72.
16. Ross Sammon, "The Politics of US Catholic Bishops", 18.
17. William B. Prendergast, *The Catholic Voter in American Politics: The Passing of the Democratic Monolith* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999), 170.
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CHAPTER 6

The Holy See and the Catholic Community in the 2016 Presidential Election

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The relation between religion, particularly Catholicism, and politics in the USA has always been somewhat of an enigma to outsiders. First of all, unlike in Europe and Latin America, there has never been a union of the Catholic Church and the State. Most British colonies in North America had an established church, but the English Catholics who founded Maryland practiced religious liberty from the beginning in 1634. They had a very practical approach to keeping Church and State separate by having the English Jesuits who served the colony come as settlers and take up property on the same basis as other settlers, Catholic or not. This practice enabled Catholics to continue practicing their religion, even when the Church of England was later established and they were disenfranchised but were allowed to have Mass in private homes. After American independence, however, prejudice against Catholicism continued, exacerbated by the influx of immigrants, initially from Ireland and Germany, and, later, from Italy and Poland. There was even at one point in the 1850s, an anti-Catholic party, the Native American Party,

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_6

more popularly known as "The Know Nothings." The Virginia branch claimed it had nothing against any religious beliefs, but only against any religion that followed a leader from abroad. Loyalty to the pope would actually be a recurring theme against Catholics. To give a broad overview of the role of Catholicism in American politics, this paper will address: first, the role of the Holy See in American life; second, the change in class and status of American Catholics; and, finally, the changing attitudes of Catholics toward Church authority.

The Holy See and the USA

In 1797, after American independence, the new government did establish consular relations with the Papal State. In 1846, under the false perception that Pius IX was moving in a liberal direction, the nation established diplomatic relations and appointed a minister to the Papal States—the USA had no ambassadors anywhere until the 1890s. In 1867, the Congress of the USA, during the period of Reconstruction after the Civil War, cut off funding for the mission beginning in the fiscal year 1868. The basis for the bill was that Pius IX had addressed Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederate States, as "Mr. President," and thus recognized the legitimacy of the seceded states. Technically, however, diplomatic relations remained unbroken but unfunded. This was the situation until 1984.

There were, however, some unofficial contacts. President Woodrow Wilson was no friend to Catholics or "hyphenated Americans," but he did at least respectfully respond to a letter from Benedict XV. As he was on the way to Versailles, moreover, he was persuaded that he should pay a courtesy call on the Pope. This first audience of a sitting president with a pope occurred on 4 January 1919, but it did not signal any continuing contact. There were, however, hints of a change in the 1930s. During his campaign for president in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt cited Pius XI's encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, in which the pontiff condemned the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of the few.[1] Roosevelt used the reference to argue that if he was "radical," as his opponents charged, so was the pope. He was, of course, also appealing to Catholic citizens, so many of whom belonged to his Democratic Party. A few months after his inauguration in March 1933, he received the new apostolic delegate, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, in his office. He remarked as the archbishop reported to Cardinal

Eugenio Pacelli, the secretary of state that he hoped soon to address him as "ambassador."[2] Again, this may have been a sop to the Vatican, although he did discuss formal relations with Pacelli who visited the USA in October and early November 1936.

Pacelli came to the USA, nominally as the houseguest of Genevieve Garvan Brady, a papal duchess and widow of Nicholas, CEO of the Chrysler Corporation. His arrival in October occurred in the midst of Roosevelt's campaign for a second term and of Father Charles Coughlin's strident radio broadcasts against him. But immediately the Cardinal's tour was taken over by Bishop Francis J. Spellman, auxiliary bishop of Boston, who had formerly worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State. Pacelli carefully removed himself from any discussion of the presidential campaign and of Coughlin. Some prominent bishops chartered a plane to fly the cardinal out to the west coast with stops along the way to show him the strength and influence of the Catholics in the USA. At the end of the cardinal's journey, Roosevelt had won his second term in office. Pacelli had wanted to have a personal visit with whoever won the election. Cicognani was working with the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the bishops' conference at that time, to arrange a meeting with Roosevelt. All was almost set when the delegate received a phone call from the cardinal that Spellman had arranged a private meeting through Joseph P. Kennedy. On 5 November 1936, the meeting between the cardinal and president took place at the home of Roosevelt's mother at Hyde Park, NY, not an official government venue. Present, besides Pacelli and Roosevelt, were Spellman and Kennedy. No one took notes and the press was barred. From Spellman's diary, however, it is clear that some form of diplomatic relations was discussed.[3]

Any form of diplomatic relations, however, would have to wait. In the meantime, Europe was moving toward war. In February 1939, Pius XI died. While Secretary of State Cordell Hull expressed his nation's condolences at the loss of a leader working for peace, the USA send no representatives to the funeral. Much different was the coronation of Pius XII. Elected on the first day of balloting, Pacelli was the first pope ever to have known the US president. Roosevelt showered his grace upon the occasion by appointing, for the first time, an American representative for the ceremony inaugurating a new pontificate. He designated Joseph P. Kennedy, then the ambassador to Great Britain, to represent the nation at the coronation. At the ceremony on 12 March, however, Kennedy created a diplomatic crisis. Usually, only the spouse would

accompany the representative to such an event, but Kennedy brought not only his wife but his entire family, except for his oldest son, Joseph, Jr., who was traveling elsewhere in Europe. The party of 10 made it necessary to rearrange the seating. The result was that when Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, and Italian foreign minister, arrived to take his place as Italy's representative to the ceremony, he found a young Kennedy in his seat. Giovanni Battista Montini, later Paul VI, recalled that Ciano loudly protested and threatened to leave St. Peter's. Two days later, incidentally, Pius XII said Mass for the Kennedy family and gave Teddy, later a US Senator, his First Communion.[4]

The election of Pius XII had repercussions in the American Church. Roosevelt's favorite among the bishops was Cardinal George Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago. Of German ancestry, Mundelein told his clergy in May 1937, that he was embarrassed that the German people had accepted "an Austrian paper-hanger" as their leader. The term "paper-hanger" was used for a person who claimed to be an artist, but who simply reproduced common scenes—Hitler had been refused admission to the Viennese academy of art. Despite protests from the German government, the Vatican stood by the cardinal's right to freedom of speech in his own diocese. Pius XI further showed his respect for the cardinal by naming him the delegate to preside over the Eucharist Congress held in New Orleans in the fall of 1938 and, shortly later, had him preside in Rome over the beatification of Frances Cabrini, foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who worked in Chicago and died there. The cardinal obviously enjoyed the pope's favor, but this trip to Rome was also the occasion for him to receive a public display of Roosevelt's favor. The president ordered the flagship of the Mediterranean fleet to dock in Naples to meet the ship conveying the cardinal. At the same time, the US Ambassador to Italy went to Naples personally to escort Mundelein to a dinner aboard the navy ship and then accompany him by train to turn him over to his Vatican escort.[5] A year later, Mundelein died suddenly at his home at the seminary he had established outside Chicago. Roosevelt would now have to look for a new favorite among the bishops.

The Archdiocese of New York had been vacant since the death of Cardinal Patrick Hayes in September 1938. In April 1939, Francis Spellman was named to succeed him. To some, the appointment was a surprise, but not to those who realized that he had worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State for 7 years before becoming auxiliary bishop of

Boston in 1932. Although Roosevelt had discussed Vatican relations at some length with Mundelein, he would now have to deal with Spellman.

The State Department was in favor of diplomatic relations with the Vatican on the pragmatic grounds of having as many listening posts in Europe as possible as the world moved closer to war. But Roosevelt still had to be cautious about the opposition of the American people. In October, he met Spellman at the White House and discussed sending some kind of "special mission" to the Holy See. Such an arrangement would not require congressional approval of funding. With the Vatican's agreement, Roosevelt announced on 24 December 1939, that he was sending a "Personal Representative" to the pope and had chosen Myron C. Taylor for the post. Taylor was the former chairman of US Steel and an Episcopalian. He owned a villa in Florence, from which he could travel to Rome from time to time to consult the pope. Despite Roosevelt's cautious approach to contact with the Vatican, there were public protests against his action, for, although he had sent letters to the American leaders of the Jewish and Protestant communities, he had sent an emissary only to the pope.

Although Taylor had no official diplomatic status, the State Department assigned a professional Foreign Service officer, Harold H. Tittmann, as his assistant. When the USA entered the war in December 1941, Tittmann, with Roosevelt's approval, received the title charge d'affaires. This enabled him to move into Vatican City with other Allied diplomats. From there, he kept up regular correspondence with the State Department through a circuitous and often time-consuming route through the American legation in Bern. This arrangement lasted until 4 June 1944, when the Allies entered the city. Tittmann was given another diplomatic post and his two successors were designated simply as "assistants" to the "personal representative." Taylor remained in office but alienated Vatican officials by visiting other religious leaders, implying that the pope was only one among them. Early in 1951, he submitted his resignation to President Harry S. Truman. The State Department then shut down the Rome office without notifying the Vatican.

Spellmann, named a cardinal in 1946 at Pius XII's first consistory, then attempted to mobilize support for establishing full diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Among those whose assistance he enlisted was Joseph Kennedy, who forwarded to the cardinal a letter he had received from Truman. To the best of my knowledge, the president here made the only allusion to the legislation of 1867. As he wrote Kennedy, the

State department was then studying the question, "because of certain legislation which followed the discontinuance of or representation to the old Papal States, it may be necessary to seek authority from the Congress."[6] In October 1951, Truman submitted to the Senate for confirmation as the first "Ambassador to Vatican City" the name of General Mark Clark, commander of the Allied forces in Italy. Immediately, there was an outcry from a vast spectrum of Protestant leaders and some Jewish ones arguing that such an appointment was a violation of the American separation of Church and State, and illustrated the political designs of the Catholic Church. Opposition within the Senate came from another source. As commander of the Allied forces invading Italy in 1944, Clark had been responsible for the massive losses of the Thirty-Sixth Texas Infantry Division in the Battle of the Rapido River. The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was Senator Thomas Connolly, who, with his fellow Texans, blamed Clark for the slaughter. Clark had no chance of having his name confirmed. He withdrew his name in January 1951, and Truman made no effort to nominate anyone else.

For more than 30 years, there was no further discussion of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. But the controversy surrounding the Clark nomination provided the context for John Kennedy having to address the question when he ran for president. In both a magazine interview and an address to a group of Protestant ministers, he stated his opposition to diplomatic relations on the grounds that the controversy surrounding the confirmation hearings of an ambassador would undermine any effectiveness the appointee would have. He also stated that, if there were ever any conflict between his "conscience" and his office, he would resign. Under questioning by one of the ministers during his campaign, he made it clear that he was speaking of his "conscience," not his "Church." This may have been an adequate answer for "political" questions, such as diplomatic relations, about which even some bishops disagreed. But Kennedy's answer set a tone for subsequent Catholic candidates for office who applied it to "moral" questions like abortion. I will return to this in the second part of my presentation.

Although there were no official contacts between the USA and the Vatican, there were unofficial ones or signs of respect. After the death of Pius XII, there were nine Masses on consecutive days. On the one after which the pope's body was interred, James Zellerbach, US Ambassador to Italy, was invited to sit with diplomats accredited to the Holy See.

At the final Mass on 19 October, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was injured on the flight from Washington and could not attend the ceremony, but President Eisenhower's other two representatives, John McCone, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Claire Booth Luce, former US Ambassador to Italy, were both in attendance. At the coronation of John XXIII, on 5 November, the USA was represented by James P. Mitchell, a Catholic and Secretary of Labor, Robert Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary of State, and Mrs. Luce. The climate surrounding American participation in such ceremonies of respect had now changed. At each subsequent funeral of a pope and installation of his successor, the USA was represented.

Visits to popes by American dignitaries were also becoming routine, made more possible by air travel. In 1962, Vice President Lyndon Johnson visited John XXIII as did Jacqueline Kennedy, the president's wife. These visits were partly to test the political waters. A visit was planned for Kennedy in the summer of 1963, but the pope died before it took place. In July 1963, however, a few days after the election of Paul VI, the president did visit him. The American public now accepted such visits, but were still leery over certain aspects. Kennedy stewed over what the reaction would be to his greeting the pope as Catholics like his wife customarily did—by genuflecting before the pontiff and then kissing his ring. Paul VI solved the dilemma by extending his hand for a heartfelt handshake. The pope praised Kennedy's work for racial equality, and the president applauded Paul's promotion of peace.[7]

On 4 October 1965, Paul VI became the first pope to visit the USA when he came to New York to address the United Nations (UN) in a speech pleading for peace. President Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy who was assassinated in November 1963, wished to meet the visiting pontiff. But there remained a protocol problem of how the president could meet the pope on American soil when there were still no diplomatic relations. The solution was found by Johnson coming to New York the night before the pope addressed the UN, having dinner with Arthur Goldberg, US Ambassador to the UN, and then meeting the pope there for over 40 min.[8]

The Vietnam War created the situation where there were closer contacts between the Holy See and the USA, Johnson paid an impromptu visit to Paul VI just before Christmas in 1967 when he was returning from a whirlwind tour of Southeast Asia and a visit to American troops in Vietnam. This created a new protocol problem, since the president's

plane would have to land on Italian soil, so a visit to the president of the Republic of Italy was obligatory. From the meeting with Italian government officials, John then flew by helicopter to the Vatican and a meeting of more than an hour with the pope. He discussed the possibility of the pope intervening with the North Vietnamese about the treatment of American prisoners,[9] but also on his agenda was to persuade the pope not to condemn American policy in his New Year's address. In March 1968, Johnson shocked his nation, torn apart by the Vietnam War, by announcing that he would not run for another term so that the office of the presidency would not be diminished by partisan politics. At the same time, he enlisted Vatican diplomatic channels to arrange the Paris talks that ultimately ended the war.[10]

Vietnam provided the context for the next American initiative toward closer diplomatic ties with the Holy See. In February 1970, President Richard M. Nixon was in Rome to visit Italian leaders. He then announced he would like to see Paul VI, only to be told that told the pope was on retreat. Nixon had to visit other European leaders and then return to Rome on 2 March 1970, to meet the pope. Rumors circulated that the president was about to establish some type of formal relations with the Holy See, a position that mainline Protestant groups still opposed. While the White House denied these rumors, on 4 July 1970, Nixon reinstituted the office of personal representative to the pope, created by Roosevelt. He appointed to the office, Henry Cabot Lodge, his former running mate against Kennedy and Johnson in 1960, and ambassador to South Vietnam.[11] The protests against this appointment were mainly pro forma. The selection of Lodge as former ambassador to South Vietnam is indicative that the USA still feared that pope might publicly oppose American policy in Vietnam. In September 1970, Nixon paid another visit to the pope and met for over an hour to discuss increased efforts for peace, not only in Vietnam but in the Middle East.[12]

With Vietnam as the primary backdrop, both Super Powers sought the support of the Holy See. In November, Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, had an 80-minute audience with the pope, the exact same length as Nixon's audience. But the conservative Italian paper *Il Tempo* chided the pope for showing more warmth to Gromyko than the "chilly" reception he gave to Nixon in September. It was in fact, Gromyko's second visit to the pope.[13] The position of the Holy See in world affairs had obviously changed dramatically over the previous three decades. Gradually, the USA would accord it greater recognition.

Presidents Gerald Ford, who succeeded to the White House after Nixon resigned, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan continued the office of personal representative to the pope. Carter even hosted Pope John Paul II at the White House in the fall of 1979, when the pope offered Mass on the National Mall—Popes Benedict and Francis also visited Washington, but chose other venues for Mass. What brought about the establishment of diplomatic relations was probably more a domestic issue that had international repercussions.

By the 1980s, more than a decade after Vatican II, the American bishops then in office had, for the most part, not participated in the council, but had been influenced by it. At their annual meeting in 1980, they appointed committees to draft pastoral letters on "The Challenge of Peace," chaired by Cardinal Joseph Bernard in of Chicago and issued in 1983, and "Economic Justice for All," chaired by Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., of Milwaukee, published in 1986. The process for these pastorals was analogous to that of a council with public hearings held on the various drafts before the final version, approved by the majority of bishops, was promulgated. Such activism on the part of the American bishops in regard to atomic weapons and the arms race in general alarmed President Reagan.

By the late fall of 1982, the bishops were completing their pastoral in which they challenged the first use of nuclear weapons and were developing their position that deterrence was tolerable only if it led to negotiations for disarmament. In October, General Vernon Walters, ambassador-at-large, visited John Paul II, at Reagan's request. Journalists reported that he was trying to have the pope squelch the American bishops' "nuclear heresy." They reported that the pope made a positive response to Reagan's emissary when he summoned Cardinal Bernardin to Rome to discuss the pastoral that his committee was developing.[14] Closer ties between the US Government and the Holy See seemed to be a viable option to Episcopal activism.

But there were other motivations for establishing diplomatic relations. In June 1981, Representative Clement Zablocki of Wisconsin and William Wilson, Reagan's personal representative to the pope represented the president at the funeral of Cardinal Wyszinski of Warsaw. Later, at a Mass in St. Peter's in Rome, Zablocki was chagrined that Wilson was not seated with other ambassadors.[15] Zablocki's Catholic piety and patriotism were insulted by this slight to his government. As chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, on 30 June 1983,

Zablocki introduced an amendment to the Department of State's appropriation bill, with the support of the majority of his committee. He called for the repeal of the legislation of 1867 cutting off funding to the mission to the Papal State—the legislation to which Truman had alluded in 1951—and the restoration of "diplomatic relations with the Vatican," because "the USA is virtually alone in not having full and formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See." Even some Communist nations, he continued, had formal relations.[16]

In the meantime, President Reagan informed Protestant evangelicals, who opposed such recognition, that he himself desired diplomatic relations.[17] While the administration was controlling possible opposition to the ties with the Vatican, the House of Representatives adopted Zablocki's amendment by a voice vote. The Senate soon passed the amended bill for fiscal 1984. The secular press, such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* took no notice of this action, but, on 24 September 1983, it was reported in the *International Herald-Tribune*, and then owned by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post,* and *Los Angeles Times.* The House and Senate versions of the bill passed in 1 November 1983. While the bill was awaiting Reagan's signature, the secular press also ignored the visit to the While House on 22 November of Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the papal Secretary of State. By December, the journalists were starting to take notice of these diplomatic maneuvers. On 10 January, 1984, the Holy See announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USA. The USA did the same 6 hours later and Reagan made the formal nomination of Wilson to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The usual procedure had been for the nation to announce the establishment of diplomatic relations and then the Holy See would consider its response. In this case, Secretary of State George Schultz had twice delayed the nomination of Wilson as ambassador, much to the annoyance of Archbishop Pio Laghi, the apostolic delegate. The Vatican took no chances on a further postponement after almost 50 years of negotiation.

In the meantime, the pastoral on the economy was published in 1986. This time, however, there was a counter-pastoral from a group of prominent lay people, who drafted their document over a short period. It challenged the bishops' right to teach on such matters including the right of the government to intervene to guarantee a more equitable distribution of wealth. The pastoral on peace was a new development for the bishops and stemmed from the teaching of Vatican II. The document on the economy

reflected a tradition, as will be seen, that began among the bishops in the 1880s. A third pastoral, incidentally, had been planned for 1989, but was never finished—its topic was the role of women. The pastoral on the economy, moreover, was the last one issued by the American hierarchy, although there had been ten national pastoral letters in the nineteenth century and an annual one from 1919 to the 1960s. Part of what contributed to the end of this practice was the 1998 motu proprio, *Apostolos Suos*, that forbade conferences to issue pastoral letters unless they received the unanimous consent of the bishops or the prior approval of the Holy See, analogous to the legislation of a local council. But the people to whom the bishops expressed their concerns were in a state of flux.

The Changing Status of American Catholics

At the time of American independence, Catholics comprised roughly 2% of the American population, centered principally in Maryland. By 1850, they were the single largest religious body in the nation, due principally to immigration. At present, they number approximately 68 million or roughly 24% of the country. Again, this number results from earlier immigrants and their descendants, with contemporary immigration continuing, especially from Latin America.

The rapid increase in the Catholic population due to immigration created an intensification of anti-Catholicism. Catholics were not only foreign in their countries of origin but in their allegiance to a religious leader in Rome. For the most part, they were poor and virtually drove out the existing Protestant populations from their neighborhoods in cities in the northeast part of the nation—it was not uncommon for a Catholic parish to take over an abandoned Protestant church. What attracted immigrants in the nineteenth century was the industrialization of the new world. This meant the American Church had to adapt to dealing with the laboring class and educate its children. In response, the church created a vast educational apostolate, ranging from parochial schools to universities. In 1884, under pressure from the Holy See, the bishops at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, the last legislative assembly of the American hierarchy, passed a decree that every quasi-canonical parish should have a parochial school within 2 years of the council. But the American Church also invested in secondary and university education. After the mid-nineteenth century, the system was designed to protect the children of immigrants from the hostile environment of public education,

for "public" in the nineteenth century meant Protestant and that meant anti-Catholic. Yet, it should be noted that even in the present age, the American Church has over 200 institutions of higher education or universities. These institutions, as will be seen, enabled immigrants to be assimilated to American culture and, by the end of World War II, enter the middle class. But there was another, equally important movement that kept the American Catholic working class in the Church and led to the development of Catholic social thought.

The emergence of labor unions in the USA was controversial because most of them imitated Masonic structures and used the "strike" as an ordinary tool of protest. One of the first labor unions in the USA was the Knights of Labor, originally founded in 1869. By the 1880s, its membership was heavily Catholic as was its leadership. Thomas Powderly, a Catholic, was the Grand Master Worker, the head of the union, and the Mayor of Scranton, PA. The Third Plenary Council passed legislation that, if a "secret society" was held suspect of falling under the universal condemnation of Free Masonry, the case should be submitted to the full body of archbishops. If they failed to reach a unanimous vote for toleration, however, the case then had to be sent to Rome. In the fall of 1886, the archbishops examined the case of the Knights of Labor but failed to gain unanimous approval for the organization. The case of the labor union, however, became enmeshed with that of Henry George, a semi-socialist thinker in New York City, who developed a theory that a single tax on the unearned increase in the value of land would solve the problem of poverty. This had great appeal both to the Irish Land League and to some Catholic supporters of reform. In 1886, George ran for mayor of New York, where he had the support of a prominent priest, Edward McGlynn, and the Knights of Labor. The Archbishop of New York, Michael A. Corrigan, then requested that the Holy See condemn the writings of George. In the spring of 1887, Archbishop James Gibbons, who had presided over the plenary council, went to Rome to receive the red hat as the nation's second cardinal. He took with him two papers, one defending the Knights of Labor and the other recommending that, instead of a condemnation of Henry George, the pope should issue an encyclical on the mutual rights of capital and labor. This led to Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. The language of the document, of course, was not American, but Thomistic, but the American impetus in obtaining the encyclical illustrated the American Church's support for the labor movement.[18]

The American Church's support of labor rights continued for several more generations. John A. Ryan, professor of economics at the Catholic University of America continued the work, first through his pamphlet, A Program for Social Reconstruction, adopted by the National Catholic War Council, at the end of World War I. It called for a number of progressive issues, such as a graded income tax, competition of the government with the private sector in utilities and commodities, and a graded income tax. After the war, he became the director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, a national conference of the American bishops, established in 1919. This progressive social thought not only continued the marriage of the working class with the Church but also caused negative reaction from the business class and some bishops. Still, Catholics were regarded with suspicion. In 1928, Al Smith, four-time governor of New York, was the Democratic and first Catholic nominee for president. Yet, he lost his own state of New York but carried the Deep South, Catholics were convinced they would always be second-class citizens. But, for the most part, they were solidly in the Democratic ranks. The Great Depression solidified the alliance with workers, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt appealed to this with his citation from *Quadragessimo Anno*, during his campaign for president in 1932. His "New Deal" further increased the relationship between the Democratic Party and American Catholics. Within a decade, they would again prove they were American by fighting in World War II, whether they were of Irish, German, or Italian ancestry. There were few Catholics of any ethnic origin who would be "conscious objectors." This expression of patriotism had mixed results for the future of the American Church.

The GI Bill of Rights guaranteed that the government would pay the tuition of every veteran to receive a university education. What this meant on the practical level was that a whole generation of Catholics was catapulted from the urban working class to the suburban middle class. The bill affected both men and women, because, although most veterans were young men, the bill allowed families also to free up money to send their daughters to universities. By the 1950s, the American Church was changing from urban to suburban. The urban parish was characterized by a large church and parochial school to which most of the parishioners walked on Sundays—it was a neighborhood. The suburban parish was characterized by a large parking lot to which families drove every Sunday with little knowledge of the beliefs of their neighbors. It was the

beginning of the privatization of religion, much more of an expression of Protestantism than of the ethnically supported public display of urban Catholicism.

One of the best examples of this transformation was the response to the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961), which took account of changes since the war and called for the obligations of richer nations toward poorer ones. The response of a group of well-educated middle-class Catholics was "*Mater si, Magistra no.*" Dissent from papal encyclicals became a hallmark of the post-Conciliar Church in the USA and elsewhere. Although the protests against *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 gained greater publicity, the one against *Mater et Magistra* was significant because that encyclical reflected a tradition of the universal Church that had its beginning in the USA. American Catholics had undergone a significant change in regard to their political affiliation and were no longer solidly in the Democratic camp for reasons to be seen. They also altered their stance toward Church authority.

Changing Attitudes of American Catholics Toward Church Authority

In many ways, the election of Kennedy and Vatican II initially brought a sense of achievement to American Catholics. With a Catholic president, they were no longer second-class citizens. Because of the ecumenical outreach of the council, they could take a more active role in shaping American society. But that euphoria was short-lived. There were, first, political changes. Catholics were prominent either in seeking the presidency or in being nominated for vice president in the campaigns of 1964, 1968, and 1972. In 1973, however, the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that abortion was legal. On other issues, Catholics were already shifting to the Republican Party, a shift that became more dramatic when the Republicans put an anti-abortion plank in their party platform, as the Democrats put a "pro-choice" platform in theirs. In 1984, the Democrats nominated Walter Mondale, former vice president under Jimmy Carter, as their presidential candidate. He chose as his running mate Geraldine Ferraro, a Catholic member of the House of Representatives. At the time of her nomination, she stated in a press conference in regard to her Catholic faith that, if there were a conflict between her conscience and her office, she would resign her office. In other words, she gave the same answer Kennedy had given in 1960, but

now the question was a moral one and not merely a political one. During her televised debate with George H. W. Bush, the Republican vice presidential candidate, she altered her answer to say that, if there was a conflict between her religion and her office, she would resign her office.[19]

Reagan and Bush won the 1984 election, and there was strong opposition to the Mondale-Ferraro ticket from prominent members of the hierarchy, such as Archbishops John O'Connor of New York and Bernard Law of Boston. But there were also strong voices urging Catholics not to become single issue, such as Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago. In a speech at Fordham University in 1983 and, in a later version, at St. Louis University in March 1984, he called for a "consistent ethnic of life," a position tying together the nuclear arms race, care for the poor, as well as abortion.[20]

Other bishops held a similar view to Bernardin. Archbishop W. Donald Borders of Baltimore wrote to his people that many times Catholics might agree on some issues with those who favored abortion. He recommended dialog on those areas of agreement in terms of the political agenda and perhaps win them to see the Catholic position.[21] As the 2004 presidential campaign began, the bishops held their annual meeting in Denver. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington reported consultation with then Cardinal Josef Ratzinger who wrote him about Catholics voting for a pro-abortion candidate. In McCarrick's summary of Ratzinger's position, he stated: "when a Catholic does not share in a candidate's stand in favor or abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted if there are proportionate reasons."[22] In regard to pro-choice candidates for office, however, a small minority of bishops said they would refuse communion to pro-choice candidates. The situation came to the fore when John Kerry, a pro-choice senator, became the first Catholic since Kennedy to be the presidential nominee of a major party.[23] The bishops, however, carefully avoided endorsing George W. Bush, but just addressed the issue of abortion.[24] In the 2012 campaign, moreover, both parties were conscious of trying to woo the Catholic vote and invited Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York to offer a prayer at their respective conventions.

Since 2012, the bishops have officially supported a campaign, expressed in their conference statement "Our First, Most Cherished Liberty," to argue that even the provision in President Obama's heath care plan that Catholic organizations can opt out of providing birth

control or abortion is a violation of religious liberty, for it meant that the process of "opting out" of paying for birth control or abortion still meant they were allowing other agencies to pay for the procedures. In other words, they are still trying to repeal the legalization of abortion. Some scholars, Catholics and others, saw the danger of imposing Catholic teaching on others. *Commonweal* magazine, a Catholic lay-edited journal, presented a series of articles by a wide range of authors on this question in June 2012.[25] The controversy is indicative that perhaps both parties should remove the issue from their official platforms and thus enable a pro-choice Republican or pro-life Democrat to discuss other issues.

As the USA entered another election campaign in 2016, a new situation emerged. Abortion was hardly mentioned as an issue. For one thing, even when Republicans controlled the three branches of government, abortion remained legal. Other issues surfaced in what was shaping up to be one of the most contentious elections in American history. But abortion aside, there were other issues that made conservative Catholics see the Republican Party as the guardian of Catholic values until Donald Trump began to emerge as the party's prime contender. In March 2016, two prominent conservative Catholics, Robert George, professor at Princeton University, and George Weigel, director of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, wrote in the conservative journal, *National Review*, that Trump was "unfit" to be president. Trump further seemed to have alienated Catholics by his attacks on immigrants. As noted above, Catholics were once regarded as unwelcome in this country. Condemning immigrants was condemning the ancestors of most American Catholics.[26]

In the meantime, Catholics continued to be candidates for high office in both parties. Joseph Biden was Obama's vice president since 2008. Hilary Clinton chose Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia, a practicing Catholic, as her running mate. Trump chose Governor Mike Pence of Indiana, who was raised a Catholic but had become an evangelical Protestant. In the past, being a former Catholic would have been a liability.

But there are other significant changes among Catholics. On his way back from his visit to Mexico in February 2016, Pope Francis was asked about Trump's proposal to build a wall between the USA and Mexico. He replied that "a person who thinks only of building walls … and not building bridges is not Christian." He was careful not to accuse Trump

of actually saying he wanted to build a wall, even though it was true.[27] Trump, in turn, thought it was "disgraceful" for a religious leader to challenge the religion of someone else.[28] But some Catholics accused the pope of entering politics.[29] Mentioned above were the occasions when Catholics dissented publicly from social teaching. But there is another dimension to this. Some Catholics have adopted the concept of "Church" of American Protestants, for whom the church is strictly spiritual and religion is private. This conflicts with the Catholic belief that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, visibly inserted in human affairs. Another factor of this problem is a movement among some Catholics that popes should restrict their proclamations to religious topics, which cannot extend to issues like climate change. In short, their recent assimilation into American society has meant the acceptance of individualism. There is great irony in this new development. As some Catholics now criticize Francis for being too political, others condemn Pius XII for not being political enough and for not more openly condemning Hitler.

After Thought to the Election of 2016

In preparing my text for publication, I realized that, like many commentators and pollsters, I presumed, wrongly, that Clinton would win. Nevertheless, I do not deny some of the insights I had before the election. First of all, an explanation is owed to international readers of how Clinton could receive almost 3 million votes more than Trump and lose the election. This is due to the peculiarity of the US Constitution and its provision that the president be elected, not by direct votes, but by states, hence keeping the balance between the central government and the individual states that comprise it. According to this system, each state has as many electors as it has total representatives in Congress—the total of the number in the House of Representatives plus two senators. States with smaller populations, therefore, have greater representation among the electors. In 2016, Trump won 306 electoral votes and Clinton won 232, with 270 needed for victory.

Part of what tainted the popular view of Clinton was the suspicion that, as Secretary of State, she had not followed security protocol and used a private e-mail server for her official correspondence. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated these allegations in the summer of 2016, but director James Comey announced on 5 July that Clinton may have been "careless" in her handling of confidential e-mails,

but her actions did not warrant any criminal actions.[30] Then on 28 October, less than 10 days before the election and at a time that some states were already accepting absentee ballots, Comey wrote a letter to congress stating that, in view of another investigation, he was reopening the Clinton case. On 6 November, he then announced that he was standing by his decision in July that there was no basis for criminal charges.[31] By that time, of course, the harm had been done.

The polls, nevertheless, predicted that Clinton would win and would gain the majority of Catholic voters. They were, of course, wrong. Crux, a Catholic information service that works closely with the Knights of Columbus, reported that 52% of self-reporting Catholics voted for Trump, in contrast to the 81% of Evangelicals who voted for him. Trump's opposition to abortion seems to have been the overriding motive for the Catholic support he gained.[32] Other issues, such as social justice, that had played such a major part in shaping American Catholicism were now pushed aside. Was this because the issue of abortion concerned the direct taking of an innocent life or because issues not directly related to life, even if, in fact, they concerned justice and quality of life, were cast aside or were even considered outside the competence of the Church. This was the point I made in my original address in noting some American Catholic opposition to John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* in 1961. In 2015, other American Catholics would challenge Pope Francis' right to address climate change in *Laudato si.*

Since taking office, President Trump has taken action on other issues that have brought out a broader range of Catholic concern beyond abortion. Within a week of taking office, he announced that he would build the wall that he proposed in his campaign between the USA and Mexico, and would have Mexico bear the expense. This led Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto to cancel his planned meeting with President Trump and the creation of strained relations between the two nations that had not existed for many years. President Trump then issued an executive order banning immigration for 120 days from seven predominantly Muslim countries and even the return to the USA of those with "green card" work permits. This led to a formal protest from Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the Committee on Migration of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.[33] Shortly later, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the conference, issued a strong statement against the presidential order. Other prominent bishops issued their own

statements against the order. These included Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, and Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, who, as Archbishop of Indianapolis, challenged Michael Pence, then governor of Indiana, on his policy of excluding Syrian immigration. A Federal district court in Seattle, Washington, challenged the constitutionality of Trump's executive order and suspended its implementation. A panel of three judges of the ninth circuit, the appellate branch of the Federal system, upheld the lower court's decision. But then, in a unimous decision late in June 2017, the Supreme Court over rode the lower courts to allow the ban on immigration, but promised to decide on the question of the religious basis for the ban in the fall. In the meantime, Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego penned a provocative article for *America*, the weekly magazine published by the Jesuits of the USA and Canada. He drew a sharp distinction between patriotism, a virtue praised by several popes, and chauvinism, a disordered position that always places one's nation first, contrary to papal teaching.[34]

In some ways, what happened in the American presidential election of 2016 has parallels in other nations. Both France and Italy have undergone similar changes. Great Britain's withdrawal from the European Union is illustrative of a widespread desire of many in Britain to withdraw from European affairs and be subject to no foreign restrictions. Isolationism had also been a characteristic of the USA for much of its history. Although President Woodrow Wilson had proposed the League of Nations, his own government rejected membership. But the world has now changed dramatically. It is difficult to conceive of the USA withdrawing from world affairs, but it is also difficult to imagine how the nation can continue to influence those affairs if it always places itself and its interests before those of other nations. Few, if any, periods of American history have been so chaotic. What role American Catholicism will play in leading the nation out of that chaos is impossible to predict.

Notes

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PART III

Catholics and US Elections

CHAPTER 7

The Catholic Vote in the Election of Donald J. Trump

Douglas W. Kmiec

On 7 November 2016—the day before the 2016 national election—the general supposition was that Hillary Clinton would be the next, historically first, female president of the USA. It was not to be. The reasons for that shortcoming are disputed. Causation in matters of politics is complex, if not impossible. The former Secretary of State has articulated the view that a late in the campaign pronouncement by the Federal Bureau of Investigation seriously damaged her prospects in a number of closely divided states that might have given her an Electoral College majority. Perhaps. Following the election, Americans received the startling news from their outgoing President, Barack Hussein Obama, that the entire election had been tampered with by Russian nationals who, by means of computer espionage, stole and distributed materials that were strategically released to damage the Clinton campaign. The Russians obtained materials from the Democratic National Committee and its leadership. At first, the assumption was that the Russian objective was one of high generality—that is, discrediting the democratic process—an aim in itself

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_7

widely perceived as a hostile act by foreign nationals upon the integrity of our Republic.

But it gets worse. It is alleged that the Russian interlopers were in regular contact with individuals associated with the Trump campaign. Because of such contact, and an effort to cover it up which included lying to the new vice president, Michael Richard Pence, President Trump's national security advisor, former General Michael Flynn, resigned and is now the subject of several congressional inquiries, and possibly, criminal prosecution. Because it is believed that the Russians were deliberately targeting and timing the release of the illicitly gathered materials for maximum harmful effect upon the Clinton candidacy, there is an ever-louder call to ascertain the extent of involvement, if any, of Trump campaign advisors or Mr. Trump himself. In other words, what is yet to be determined is whether Mr. Trump betrayed the democratic integrity of his nation and its electoral process in order to secure the presidency.

In June 2017, Robert Mueller was appointed a special counsel to inquire whether or not the president or any of those answering to him in the context of the campaign, or since in his administration, were knowing participants in this betrayal of trust and country. Should the evidence indicate that they were, it is regrettable but reasonable to suppose, that the process of constitutional impeachment, conviction, and removal from office would be justified.

This essay is not a detailed retracing of the unusual path that Donald J. Trump took to secure the presidential nomination of the Republican Party or the unorthodox ways in which he is choosing to govern without observing conflict of interest limitations with regard to his own real estate empire; appointing a Billionaires' club to his cabinet, leaving large numbers of presidential appointments unmade, or how exactly he plans on addressing the needs of the constituency that he championed in the campaign—working-class families.

The presidential election of 2016 represents a tectonic shift away from business as usual; so too, the resulting presidency of Donald Trump. For better or for worse, President Trump has been dominating most every news cycle, with a whirlwind of activity *seemingly* getting down to business. The president has been particularly attentive to those matters that he asserts can be addressed by executive action alone. As it happened, much of this unilateral executive initiative focused on issues of importance to social, and often religious, conservatives, including especially defunding foreign organizations that incorporate abortion in their practice, and authorizing state and local governments to likewise withhold

funds from Planned Parenthood. The president's most notable achievement was the nomination and confirmation of a highly conservative federal appellate judge to fill the vacancy created on the US Supreme Court by the death of Associate Justice Antonin Scalia. Again, the president was successful not by persuasion but by power: by virtue of the Republican Party's slight majority in the Senate, the president was able to have the Senate filibuster rules modified and his nominee, Judge Neil Gorsuch, narrowly confirmed. Justice Gorsuch ascended to the High Court just as the Court's term was ending, but in enough time to participate in, and perhaps supply the deciding vote for, what was likely the Court's most contentious and prominent case from that term; the issue: whether it was an unconstitutional prohibition of the free exercise of religion to categorically deny religious institutions the ability to participate in public benefit programs?

While President Trump was attempting to meet the expectations of the religious right, leftward-leaning Catholic concern grew with decisions affecting the human environment. Many progressive Catholics were distressed by President Trump's almost gloating reversal of the environmental commitment of President Obama to address climate change as well as his overriding of the previous administration's disapproval of the Keystone pipeline.

The second hundred days look to be focused on economic questions, ranging from tax reform to the elimination of regulatory disclosure standards that President Obama initiated in the aftermath of the 2008 financial recession. While President Trump is criticized for being too willing to change his position on almost anything at a moment's notice, Mr. Trump is consistent in one respect: preferring policy choices that are the exact opposite of Barack Obama. These pro-business measures coincide with President Trump's proposal of a national budget that transfers billions of dollars into military preparedness away from diplomacy, housing, education, the arts, and humanities.

President Trump does have one common presidential trait with Barack Obama and that is a willingness to assert a maximum scope of executive authority. While President Obama used executive initiative to try and mitigate the occasions for separating family members in the enforcement of immigration laws, President Trump has been focused on suspending the admission of refugees as well as nonimmigrant visa applicants from six predominantly Muslim countries. At this writing, the so-called Trump travel ban is legally enjoined, but further proceedings are expected in the Supreme Court in October 2017.

While the success or failure of the early Trump administration from the perspective of executive action is debatable, there is little in the way of legislative accomplishment. In cooperation with Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, President Trump attempted an early repeal and replacement of Obama care. Candidly admitting the complexity of retaining the benefits of President Obama's initiative while incorporating greater flexibility and choice, President Trump was unsuccessful in round one of the health care battle, but he emerged relatively unscathed and certainly anxious to fight again—even telling naysaying Republicans that they better get on board or he will make a better deal with the Democrats. The House Republicans heeded the warning and in a second round effort passed a purported "repeal" of Obamacare. The so-called repeal proposes however to give a substantial tax cut to the wealthiest Americans, while leaving an estimated 20 million Americans without health insurance.

Because each of the topics touched upon by President Trump has been the subject of frequent discussion, teaching, and debate within the Catholic Church and evangelical Christian communities, that fact is perhaps enough in itself to explain the special focus of this chapter on the intersection of religion and politics in the 2016 presidential outcome. Moreover, as interesting as other aspects of Mr. Trump's unlikely ascendancy to the presidency may be, it was the support of evangelical Christians and Catholics in particular that secured Mr. Trump's electoral victory.

Three months before the election, an international conference convened in France[1] examining in detail Catholic and evangelical Christian influence found both to be substantial. A cursory examination of Mr. Trump's early presidential efforts confirms that thus far he has not forgotten the importance of fulfilling his obligations to these faith-based constituencies. Yet, Donald Trump is a product of many influences, and he has surrounded himself by those who seemingly place money and power, and not religious belief bolstering the rights of all humanity, in the center of decision-making. The religious leaders who pledged and delivered their support to a man with that inverted sense of priority did so in disregard of some rather fundamental aspects of religious belief.

One of the most succinct summaries of Catholic instruction was given by St. Thomas Aquinas. Famous for his treatise on law, Aquinas opined that it was in the proper nature of man "to seek good and avoid evil." This chapter explores how religious leaders and believers came to see support for the prideful and materially focused Donald Trump as consistent with the admonition not to cooperate with evil in the pursuit of

good. Were these faith-based souls seeking the good by expedient association with traits that might be described, in religious vocabulary at least, as evil? And if it turns out that religious and materialistic policy objectives cannot be reconciled, can religious believers realistically anticipate that President Trump will favor God over Mammon?

Or are these religious souls who delivered the keys to the Republic destined to be disappointed, and if so, what might President Trump do to avoid the consequences of such disaffection? What will it take for the new president to be successful in the eyes of his faith-based voters? Whatever Mr. Trump's personal shortcomings may be, the willingness of some religious to look the other way and attempt to do good by means of Mr. Trump's doubtful, or at least highly unorthodox, pedigree is extraordinary. Nevertheless, it was the religiously motivated vote that made the Trump presidency possible.

The election of 2016 took place against the backdrop of divisive politics. Gridlock, paralysis, whatever term one wishes to employ, Congress and the executive during the preceding Obama years were in a perpetual state of noncooperation. Because some of that division is attributed to cultural change that in other countries has led to the violence associated with the "clash of civilizations," examining the predominant role of evangelical Christians and Catholics in the election of Donald Trump affords an opportunity to consider the sensitivities of religious liberty. The nineteenth-century French observer of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, cautioned religion not to associate itself too greatly with political figures since their popularity is not likely to be long term and because of that, a religion must be careful to not unthinkingly associate the more important eternal with the less significant transient.

Are evangelical Christians and Catholics in danger of disregarding that prudent admonition? This chapter grapples with these questions and concludes with a reflection on political civility and its relationship to principles that are important in the American constitutional experience, and particularly to calibrating the relationship between religion and politics. Because those principles recognize that religious belief transcends the profane and the prosaic as well as the partisan, the reader is entitled to know that your author has worked for Republican and Democratic presidents—as head constitutional legal counsel to President Ronald Reagan and as a US ambassador and chief of mission for President Obama, with a special presidential directive at time of appointment to pursuing an interfaith dialog among the Abrahamic traditions that

populate the Mediterranean, from the Middle East to North Africa to southern Europe. While working for presidents of different parties and very different perspectives does not ensure objectivity, it doesn't hurt, and in the assessment of a closely divided election like 2016, it is offered as a measure of objectivity as well as credibility.

The Unexpected Victory of Donald J. Trump

Donald J. Trump's presence within a field of close to 20 competitors was perceived initially as a humorous distraction. A real estate billionaire and sometime reality TV celebrity, Mr. Trump lacked governing experience and in debate engaged a rough, name-calling manner that was unlike anything in memory. Trump's unpredictability, as well as inconsistency with his own prior positions, was being regularly documented by fact-checkers. His speaking style was leagues short of eloquent, indulging far more high conceit than wise or inspiring policy prescription. Ostensibly, one or more of these personal shortcomings was expected to usher his exit from the national stage. It never happened. Media companies were luxuriating in increased advertising revenue and media pundits were being fed ever new and abundant reasons to express "shock and awe," to borrow a military label from the troubled Iraq occupation which Mr. Trump insisted he opposed even as there was evidence to the contrary. Primary after primary, Mr. Trump prevailed, and in the spring leading up to the national conventions, he was perceived as unstoppable at least in terms of the nomination.

When the general campaign got underway in the fall, the prevailing sentiment among media analysts was that Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Democrat former Secretary of State, would emerge victorious. Nevertheless, the Clinton–Trump debates were awaited with an excitement that did not foreshadow assumed result. Yet, in the view of the mainstream media, each debate supplied greater reason to smugly assume a Trump defeat.

There were a small number of exceptionally gifted voices positing Trump's rise,[2] but it was not until late in the campaign that election-scholars began to note the dichotomy between what was being told to pollsters and the expression of voter sentiment among like-minded friend and family. There was a stubborn undercurrent of secret or covert Trump support. Not even a late October release of an 11-year-old snippet of a private video conversation in which Mr. Trump described

his aggressive womanizing in unbecoming and base terms was capable of changing the public mind.

On 8 November 2016, Donald J. Trump became the President-elect of the USA. He amassed 62,985,106 votes (45.9% of the vote cast several million votes *less* than his opponent, Mrs. Clinton, who garnered 65,853,625 or 48%). In the USA, it is the candidate receiving the majority of Electoral College[3] votes that wins the presidency, and there Trump prevailed handily 306–232, with a 270 majority needed to win.

From the Clinton perspective, her Electoral College loss was a product of overblown and overstated charges that she mishandled classified email and other documents during her service as Secretary of State. In the summer prior to the election, the FBI director indicated that he was not bringing charges against Mrs. Clinton for reasons of lack of criminal intent. He nevertheless went on to say that the former secretary of state was careless in her handling of classified information. If there was wisdom in the FBI director's Congressional testimony, it was that it allowed the e-mail issue to be reasonably concluded well before the general election in November. A few days before the election, however, the director of the FBI reported the discovery of what appeared to be another batch of Mrs. Clinton's governmental e-mails on the computing equipment of an assistant, whose husband was being investigated in an unrelated matter. Having made a highly controversial effort to publicly conclude the investigation of Mrs. Clinton, the director of the FBI presumably felt an obligation to notify Congress of this additional find. He did, and given the howls of protest from the Clinton side about the timing of the second announcement, the director rather promptly reviewed the newly found materials and dismissed them as duplicative or of no consequence.

It is impossible to say what streams of information coming into a campaign at any time, let alone in the 72 hours before the national voting, could flip undecided voters away from Mrs. Clinton's direction. It is fair to say that many voters perceived Mrs. Clinton to be a personality who put herself above others. This perception of self-favoritism troubled her campaign throughout. In particular, there were persistent allegations that she and her husband, former President William J. Clinton, had not always faithfully applied the general laws to their personal behavior. In this regard, whether or not the FBI director was correct that Mrs. Clinton's use of a personal computer network during her service as Secretary of States was not criminal for lack of bad intent, that usage was certainly contrary to the general practice of using encrypted equipment

to protect classified information. So too, Mrs. Clinton was seen as flouting generally applicable conflict of interest limitations when she did not recuse herself from State Department matters dealing with donors to the nonprofit Clinton Foundation. Here as well there was difficulty insofar as the Foundation also generated astronomical speaking fees that became a principal source of personal wealth for the Clinton family.

Trump Evangelizes the Evangelicals (and Catholics, too) Through the Eyes of the Working Family

Analysts tend to subscribe to the theory that Mrs. Clinton lost the 2016 election, but from the standpoint of a religious voter, it is more accurate to say that Donald Trump won the contest. One of the most explanatory aspects of the result favoring Mr. Trump was his surprising appeal to the—neglected, forgotten, overlooked (Trump used all these descriptors)—working-class voter. The jobs available, and wages paid, to these working-class families have been stagnant and declining for close to 3 decades. Many lost homes to the great recession of 2008 traced to market manipulation and imprudent lending practice, unfair trade practice, or more generally to the globalization of the economy. Globalizing has meant an accompanying closure of factories in the USA in favor of nations without comparable labor protections or environmental safeguards or taxes that reduce corporate profitability.

Mr. Trump hammered on these inequities, and to the astonishment (and not inconsiderable ridicule) of the media, he took his message directly into the poorest urban and rural areas that had been traditionally within the so-called, blue firewall of states historically aligned with the Democratic Party. Trump disregarded the claim that these states could not be weaned away from the Democratic column. In blunt engagements in these "rust-belt" states, candidate Trump would highlight the lack of success of the past Democratic administrations to answer the economic distress felt by working-class families. Since many working-class families are white, there was growing frustration with race-based job preferences. White working-class families also tend to be of traditional composition and therefore less likely to utilize or applaud incentives for employers to hire women into jobs once the province of the "male head of household." Finally, the decades of economic dislocation and hardship were aggravated by anecdotal accounts of the remaining lowest income jobs going to migrant workers who entered without legal approval.

It would be inaccurate to say Donald Trump stoked racial, gender, or national origin hatred, but to some degree, he was the beneficiary of these festering suspicions. The Trump campaign actually transcended race[4] and other so-called protected categories. His slogan of "Making America Great Again" was not based on dividing the disaffected as much as uniting them to rise up against economic policies, in particular trade, tax and environmental policies that Trump claimed were driving economic opportunity away from America. Even though consciously unspecific how each of these economic failings would be answered, Trump looked these economically marginal workers in the eye and queried "What have you got to lose?"

President Obama, campaigning for Hillary Clinton, would answer "Obama care for one thing," but the outgoing President's signature achievement was having its own difficulty with states refusing to participate and insurance companies incapable of meeting the coverage demands without dramatic increases in premium. To Mrs. Clinton's disadvantage, insurance companies attempting to fulfill disclosure requirements during the open enrollment period sent out notices that there would be in some places 100% or greater premium increase in the coming year; these were costs that would again fall hardest on the working-class family. Meanwhile, Mrs. Clinton did not appreciate the confluence of circumstances and how they might be precipitating doubt and anger toward her perceived privileged position, or her claim to it. The traditional Midwestern state blue wall began to tumble. Mrs. Clinton worsened matters when she chose to mock Trump voters as racist, misogynistic, homophobic or worse, "deplorable" and "irredeemable."

The Obama–Trump Voter

Even as Mrs. Clinton kept what appeared to be an unmovable lead over Trump in the standard opinion polls, Trump was attracting huge rallies in traditional Democratic states. Many who came to evaluate Mr. Trump had voted for Barack Obama. Yet, these Obama–Trump voters kept to themselves, especially in the historically blue or Democratic states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In each, Mr. Trump's support was far greater than the public punditry allowed. No part of the blue wall would remain untouched and the bulk of it would become scarlet Republican red. How could it be? In a word, religion. As will be seen, Donald Trump—who was indirectly characterized as acting in

a non-Christian manner even by the generally forgiving and generous teaching voice of Pope Francis—would receive faith-based support of the same magnitude as that given Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. In other words, Mr. Trump's candidacy yielded a new hybrid, cross-party voter. Just as there were once Reagan Democrats who voted for Obama, even over some strong religiously-based objections, there was now a Trump Democrat capable of piercing old partisan categories based upon a type of prodigal son mentality. The religious voter in 2016, like the prodigal returning home after dissipating his inheritance, found comfort and cultural stability in Donald Trump's call to revive the America of the past. The Orthodox religious voter could not overlook the moral shortcomings of the celebrity Donald Trump, but the religious voter could be tempted by a promised political agenda that would be pro-life and that would address the economic needs of the working family. Recognizing that work is for man, man is not for work, Catholic theology disregarded liberal and conservative label borrowing instead from social teaching on living wages and fairness in economic matters. Mr. Trump implied, if not outright stated, that he understood that what was at stake was not merely dollars, but dignity.

A Newly Nonjudgmental, Inclusionary Catholic Faith Puts its Faith in a Highly Judgmental Exclusionary Candidate?

Any attempt to explicate the attraction or revulsion by evangelical Christians and Catholics[5] in the presidential contests from 2008 to 2016 is to undertake a puzzle worthy of the Rubik's cube. In particular, the candidacies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump presented believers with contrasting political ideologies that also tested and brought out profoundly different responses from the Catholic hierarchy and evangelical leadership in America. Mitt Romney's run for the presidency in 2012 was more middling in nature perhaps because of an undertow of hush, hush whispers about the teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints and how it is to be viewed within the Christian universe of belief. The particularities of Mr. Romney's faith deserve separate and sensitive evaluation that cannot be taken up here, but it should not be seen as entirely different either.

Returning to the main script, what was the primary question in 2008 and 2016: can a Catholic Support Him?

The formal Catholic guidance published by the American bishops expressly excludes endorsement or condemnation of any political candidate by name. By the same token, the most conservative members of the Catholic hierarchy in America emphasized papal teaching that it was always wrong for a Catholic to become morally complicit with a candidate who articulates positions contrary to the intrinsic worth of human life at every stage of life from conception to death. Moral complicity need not mean an active role in the campaign, these right-leaning bishops taught, as it was enough to merit condemnation to merely be a voter or a passive supporter of a candidate whose policies did not honor the acceptable line on abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, embryonic stem cell research, same-sex marriage, and contraception. And obviously, the list coincided with the political conservative agenda.

Conservative belief is not the sum and substance, however, of Catholic belief. Conservative, as well as progressive Catholic, would concede, as the guidance from the American bishops confirms, that Catholic belief is not confined to a single set of issues. In this regard, social justice toward the poor and the disaffected was and is a preferential option. So too, the church articulates considerable concern about matters of war and peace and the imposition of the death penalty. Nevertheless, the conservative prelates in America insist that matters of social justice are necessarily considered subordinate to that which was intrinsically wrong—namely, taking of unborn innocent life. Once abortion got added to the list there was explicit or implied compulsion to shun any candidate who did not explicitly reject intrinsic wrongs absolutely.

Accepting these boundaries for the sake of analysis, the application of these general principles to specific candidates remained: could a Catholic support—as a moral or ethical matter—either Mr. Obama in 2008 or Mr. Trump in 2016? In 2008, the most conservative members of the Catholic hierarchy in America answered unequivocally in the negative as to then Sen. Obama. Candidate Obama had good things to say about meeting the needs of the poor, the unemployed and disaffected, about the need for adequate healthcare, and the general observance of civil and human right, and his disapproval of the invasion of Iraq. Regrettably, Sen. Obama was a moral reprobate on matters of abortion by virtue of his unwavering commitment to a woman's freedom of choice. From a conservative Catholic perspective, anyone who voted for Mr. Obama or who advocated his candidacy became morally complicit in these grave sinful matters. In this regard, even supporters of Mr. Obama who argued

that his unique and bold support for greater maternal health care would reduce the incidence of abortion[6] could not avoid the prohibition. The conservative Catholic instruction was to either avoid overt support for Mr. Obama or refrain from presenting oneself for the sacramental receipt of Communion. In other words in 2008, conservative Catholicism did not hesitate to judge, with some of the most strident voices indicating that Obama supporters disregarding the advice had, in essence, self-excommunicated themselves.

In 2016, asking the same question about Donald Trump produced a different answer for two reasons. First, consciously or unconsciously, Mr. Trump put himself on the right side of Catholic conservative instruction. As discussed below in greater detail, his campaign statements on abortion while contrary to personal views previously articulated by him were in their latest campaign iteration strongly pro-life. Not just doctors but women involved in seeking an abortion were to be punished criminally, articulated Mr. Trump. In this regard, Trump supporters did not run the risk of being morally complicit with an intrinsic evil. Again, of course, the formal guidance of the American bishops was not candidate-specific, but however peculiar it might be for a billionaire to become the spokesman of the disaffected and unemployed working classes, his express sympathy for the plight of the working person could only receive the approval of the church hierarchy. Oh, to be sure, the Trump articulation of these matters was more materialistic and consumerist than Catholic teaching, but with little more than a tweak of a Twitter, they could be made to coincide quite nicely with the dignitarian concerns long articulated in Catholic encyclical.

But there was a second factor at work that yielded the greater acceptability of Mr. Trump to Catholics in 2016. A Catholic faith that was extremely judgmental in 2008 would become by the informal pronouncement of a new Pope impressively nonjudgmental in 2016. That the articulation of this greater inclusiveness and charity was intended by the new pontiff, Pope Francis, not for the benefit of Mr. Trump but for same-sex individuals who might otherwise think themselves excluded by virtue of the church's continuing disapproval of same-sex relationships, let alone marriage. The complexity of that moral thinking just got added to the many ironies of 2016. The net result: Mr. Obama's commendable reputation as husband and father, community member working for the common good, and advocate for interreligious understanding producing mutual respect was, practically speaking—in terms now not of eternal life

but of contemporary campaign advantage—of no greater moment than Mr. Trump's persistent narcissism, materialism, and immodesty of all type. Virtue, as it is said, must be its own reward.

And so it was, with five words given in response to a media question aboard the papal plane—"Who Am I to Judge?"—that Pope Francis dispatched the overheated and highly judgmental position of the conservative American Bishops. That extraordinary witness of papal reconciliation and loving friendship received much approval, but it should also be observed that because it knocked the conservative bishops out of the headlines, it also deceptively rendered the impact of "the Catholic Vote" less discernible; as we now know, that impact was great and the proximate cause for the Trump win. Thus, answering in the affirmative the question put by the organizers of the symposium that gave rise to this chapter: would the Catholic vote be a "game changer" in the 2016 election in the USA? It was without question.

Barack Obama and Donald Trump both captured the Catholic vote, though as indicated above, with a different emphasis: Trump's Catholic contingent came more, but not exclusively, from the conservative wing of the church and Obama's from the more progressive. In 2008, Barack Obama won the Catholic vote overall by a margin of 53–46 against Republican John McCain and by a margin of 50–48 against Republican Mitt Romney in 2012. Donald Trump won the Catholic vote by a margin of 52–45 against Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016. The Catholic totals were necessary to prevail in the battleground states (Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan), which were won by both Barak Obama and Donald Trump. While some in the media might think it is anomalous to see a religious perspective as explanatory of electoral outcome, the fact that the Catholic voter has been on the winning side in the last eight presidential elections (meaning that Catholics have freely gone back and forth between parties) is evidence to the contrary. Of course, there is no understating the importance of the evangelical Christian vote and its overwhelming (80%) support for Donald Trump. Certainly, this was of great significance in the 2016 election, but it remains to be seen whether the evangelical Christian vote proves as good a barometer in future contests as the Catholics have proven to be.

It is a legitimate question to ask whether these evangelical Christian and Catholic votes for Mr. Trump are truly of that nature? Professor Jeremy Gunn reflects that from his point of view, support for Trump is a corruption of the Christian evangelical faith, and one presumes for him,

Catholicism as well. Professor Gunn writes: "one might have hoped that Trump would finally drive the evangelical community back to its moral senses. Instead, he seems to represent the final triumph [of] secularism, wealth, gambling, and braggadocio, and pornography, carpet bombing of populations, racism, and prevarication over the community that once professed its belief in the nonviolent and transcendent message of Jesus Christ."[7] It treads deeply into the substance of individual belief to assess whether a ballot cast by a Catholic voter contrary to the moral teaching in the church is truly a Catholic vote. Disqualifying a vote cast by a Catholic as not a substantively sufficient "Catholic" vote was in 2016 at least, unwarranted. First, Pew Research separately identifies voters who are without religious affiliation and their voting pattern is considerably different from that of Catholics and evangelicals—specifically, the religiously unaffiliated were in the Clinton corner 68–26%. Second, while "hot button" religious topics like the morality of abortion were somewhat less dominant in the 2016 primary contests when the choice became binary in the general election, Trump prevailed handily over Clinton, 56–40%, among active churchgoers. Moreover, Trump astutely took advantage of religious perspectives that were embedded within certain political choices.

In particular, Trump benefited from a Republican maneuver that denied President Obama the constitutional ability to appoint a member of the Supreme Court to replace the highly conservative Antonin Scalia. The Republicans, contrary to constitutional expectation and instruction, refused to meet with or hold confirmation hearings for President Obama's nominee, the well-respected Judge Merrick Garland of the US Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. The Republican rationalization for this constitutional default asserted that vacancies arising at the end of a presidency should be held over. Defining the last year of the presidency as within the ambit of its end seems more a play on words than a statement of chronology, political, or otherwise. Any Obama nomination—including that of Judge Garland—would yield a more progressive judicial voice and it was galling to Republicans to see a conservative favorite who often preserved the 5–4 rightward tilt of the Court to be replaced by someone of opposite perspective. Similarly, certain matters of executive discretion could be promised, such as the denial of public funding to foreign organizations that use their resources to promote abortion. Thus, even as religious issues per se did not appear to dominate the considerations of the general voter, evangelical Christian

or Catholic voters, sought and received promises of very tangible political benefits, be they appointments or the positions to be adopted on specific policy topics. Moreover, while the prevailing concerns of the working family can be difficult for the political dialogue to capture, the vocabulary associated with Catholic Church teaching on the relationship of work to human dignity fit comfortably.[8]

Mention was made earlier of Pope Francis' nonjudgmental appraisal of individual conformity to church teaching. It is important to note that this is not an embrace of relativism. To say, "who am I to judge?" is not to proclaim the absence of standards of judgment. Instead, it is an embrace of a gentler, more inclusionary, more merciful means of instruction. Insofar as pastoral counseling occurs not on the front pages but quietly in one-on-one instruction, it represents a maturation of the intersection of religion and politics. In particular, it suggests an appreciation that there is more than one way to advance religiously—grounded social teaching. The approach of Pope Francis facilitates a cooling off, a lowering of the volume, and because of that, those participating in the campaign may have mistaken civility and temperance for disinterest. While candidate Trump was criticized indirectly by the pontiff, he was nevertheless, the beneficiary of this more inward-looking papal instruction. Those attracted by Mr. Trump's proposed efforts to "make America great again," could do so knowing that the church would be forgiving of past moral shortcoming or error.

Interestingly, it was disclosed following the election that Stephen K. Bannon, the new president's chief of strategy had in his previous work as a publisher of conservative news won the confidence of the members of the highly conservative Catholic hierarchy in America. Prior to Francis, these prelates were applying a more punitive approach to members of the faith who didn't get the memo that it was "sinful" to give political support to a candidate whose views, were at odds with the church. The extent to which non-judgmentalism greatly distresses the conservative Catholic hierarchy in America can be seen in provocative questions (really, claims of error in doctrinal orthodoxy) that have been put before the Holy Father. Thus far, the Pope has wisely chosen not to respond to this provocation, but it is one that contains the seeds of schism.

Even within Francis' more inclusionary Catholic atmosphere, Mrs. Clinton could explain neither her aggressively pro-abortion position nor the pro-choice position of her "Catholic" running mate, Senator Tim Kaine. With a background profoundly honoring the family, service

to others, and the needs of the underclass, Tim Kaine had a personality which some would opine was the mirror image—or opposite—of Donald Trump. Regrettably, from the standpoint of Catholic orthodoxy, Kaine's advocacy of a pro-choice position portraying abortion as an individual right and routine medical procedure to be supplied at taxpayer expense was deeply antagonistic to Catholic teaching. The Clinton–Kaine position even differed profoundly from that of then-Senator Obama who while pro-choice in the run up to 2008 nevertheless characterized the termination of unborn life as tragic and something to be made less likely through the provision of proper prenatal care.

Indeed, Mr. Trump nominally articulated a stronger pro-life posture on abortion than even the conservative Catholic hierarchy in the USA. Mr. Trump reasoned with considerable directness that if the unborn child was a human life (and neither the question nor answer was hinged on viability), the deliberate taking of that human life would be appropriately regulated by potential criminal liability even against the mother. This strong "no exceptions" protection of human life has not been an argument made by the prelates of the Church in America,[9] even as the Church has called for a total ban on so-called late-term partial birth abortion. The position articulated by Mr. Trump was given as an unscripted response to an unexpected question. The query was put by Christopher Matthews, the TV host of a political talk show. A former Peace Corps volunteer and staff member of the late Democratic speaker of the house, Matthews, represents the center-left conception of Catholic belief. For this reason, Matthews expressed his surprise at the Trump answer—portraying it as a mistake. Mr. Trump never retracted the answer, but repeated it several times in the campaign, and since. Until the Trump administration, the Republican approach had been to criticize the Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, which reallocated abortion decision-making authority to the federal government, rather than the states. With a vacancy on the Court and the likelihood of more openings to come given the actuarial tables and the advanced age of several members of the Court, electing Donald Trump made the reversal of *Roe* seems more possible than it has at any time since the presidency of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan administration asked the Supreme Court five times to reverse *Roe*, losing each time 5–4.

Candidate Trump may not have been schooled in the nuances of pro-life advocacy, but by relying upon conservative legal organizations and think tanks to prepare a list of potential judicial nominees, Trump was able to convey the significance of support for his candidacy. His nomination of Neil Gorsuch has been widely applauded by conservative legal thinkers.

Mr. Trump had also confirmed his pro-life position in his choice of Michael Pence as vice president. In addition, there was little point in engaging Mrs. Clinton on the topic since she had early met with Planned Parenthood and indicated that a religious perspective contrary to an unfettered abortion right was a perspective in need of change.

But could not Mrs. Clinton have shaped her progressive ideology to be at least attractive to Catholic thinking as candidate Obama did in 2008? Frankly, it would've been more difficult. President Obama served as a better proxy for Catholic thinking on a number of the social justice Catholic issues than Mrs. Clinton's legislative record allowed. Consider, for example, Mrs. Clinton's perspective on matters of war and peace. This had been a difficult area for Mrs. Clinton insofar as she supported the Iraqi occupation (which Obama opposed) and was the principal advocate for the widespread intervention into Libya for "regime change"—over the hesitation of President Obama. These policies reduced Libya to a failed state, and cost thousands of lives and trillions of dollars and fed ISIS recruiting. While less empathetic in tone than Catholic instruction, Donald Trump insisted, as before noted, that he opposed the Iraq war and other violent interventions occurring under Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush.

Other issues from the unequal distribution of wealth to the fragility of the economic recovery were issues of resonance to the working family, but here affinity for the policies of President Obama worked against Mrs. Clinton. The workability of the Obama health care reform structure was, unclear, and unstable. Moreover, by the time Obama took to the campaign trail for Mrs. Clinton, Trump was avoiding his earlier statements advocating total repeal of Obama care in favor of fundamental, yet incremental, reform.[10]

While Mrs. Clinton's views on climate change were certainly closer to those of the Pope than that of Donald Trump, the issue is scientifically cloudy with a number of scientists who accept the concern over man's impact on the climate disagreeing over aspects of the papal presentation. There is little question that the holy father is a strong advocate of preservation of environmental resource especially in so far as it imposes obligations upon wealthier nations to mitigate the needs of the less fortunate. Where science and social policy collide, Donald Trump has used the diversion of the collision to take a more expedient path to favor economic opportunity over the more subtle insidious costs of

environmental irresponsibility. Thus, in the early days of his administration, President Trump has used executive powers to restart the construction of the Keystone pipeline from Canada to the Gulf States as well as to propose reducing fuel economy standards that had been the principal incentive for electric and less polluting cars. To cap his anti-environmental posture, President Trump reneged on President Obama's commitment to the Paris accord on climate change. Nevertheless, in so far as Trump's motivation is jobs, he is not entirely outside the scope of Catholic and evangelical instruction; instead, he has put himself squarely into the long-standing debate between environment and economy. Here, faith statement is no better at harmonizing these often inconsistent objectives than secular policy analysis, and as a result, Trump has greater latitude to act without giving faith offense.

The Working-Class Family—A Key Faith-based Constituency Missed by Mrs. Clinton and Captured by Donald Trump

A rather obvious aspect of the social gospel that Mrs. Clinton could've turned to her advantage relates to the working class. Specifically, Mrs. Clinton could have acknowledged the plight of the working family and not merely dismissed Mr. Trump's sincerity or capability to address the difficulties faced by this social cohort. Had Mrs. Clinton more effectively acknowledged Catholic empathy for the working class rather than deploring it, she would have been well served. There is both real and effectual poverty. Real poverty is as it is everywhere expressed through lack of food, shelter, and meaningful employment. These matters can be quantified. Effectual poverty is subject less to calculation and experience. It resides in the perception of falling farther and farther behind unable to meet present need let alone the unwanted future necessity. Seeing this linkage more clearly would have given Mrs. Clinton an opening to the Catholic vote, but that would have required an acceptance of what troubles the working class perhaps more than anything else—and that is, a failure to honor the dignity of working men and women. Often unable to address economically and socially deprived persons in these terms, Mrs. Clinton would fall back upon her political experience and knowledge of the micro-details of policy. As impressive as her grasp of tax, trade, and employment programs might have been, it lacked the

sincerity and spirit needed to persuade those down and out of the likelihood of change. Tending to see economic difficulty only through the lens of discrimination, be it race- or gender-based, Mrs. Clinton was late in coming to the needs of working class families. These families did not begrudge the rectification of civil rights violation, but they also did not see the important work of equality as directly addressing their plight, rather than simply showing favoritism to others. Where she campaigned (Pennsylvania, Ohio) and where she did not (Wisconsin), Mrs. Clinton was failing to convey with a worldview that truly understood how only faith sometimes makes it possible to survive hopelessness.

No matter how well considered her sophisticated prescriptions for prosperity may have made sense inside corporate boardrooms and the think tanks of Washington DC, they had little purchase outside. Mrs. Clinton took the easier path of believing that Mr. Trump's distasteful demeanor would make it impossible for those who took faith seriously to accept him. To compete with Mr. Trump, Mrs. Clinton did promise to materially enrich a broader portion of the American population, but this was a mirror an echo of Trump's message. Mrs. Clinton needed to advance a more meaningful—and faith sensitive—understanding of the dignity of the working-class family.[11] The words did not come to her.

But can a Catholic or Evangelical Christian be a Wall-Builder?

Before concluding this examination of the impact of the Catholic and evangelical Christian vote on the 2016 campaign, it is appropriate to make note of the one high visibility interaction between Mr. Trump and Pope Francis. In his travels, the Holy Father mentioned in passing that Christians do not build walls, and this was interpreted as a Pontifical slap on the Trump wrist. Mr. Trump took it that way and it prompted from him a relatively mild rejoinder stating that it is unfortunate when one person publicly criticizes another's religious practice. If one ponders this colloquy, it is fair to say that the often crudely spoken Mr. Trump managed on this occasion to rather insightfully turn the Pope's nonjudgmental teaching into Trump's own personal defense. Perhaps realizing this and being circumspect about any foreign interference with another country's national election

(cf., Russia), the Pontiff said nothing further. In fact, while the media tried to stir the pot a bit more and provoke additional comments, neither the Holy Father nor Mr. Trump said anything further.

The brief back-and-forth, however, did add a footnote to the Holy Father's nonjudgmental posture and it is this: the fact that we do not chastise one another publicly and individually for failings in matters of faith, neither means that such failings do not exist nor that there are not standards of objective truth by which those failings can be identified, especially as we work to form and examine our conscience. Standards of moral judgment can be witnessed and taught. Ultimately, these standards matter in our everyday life, and the life of our country, because they define how we treat each other when we disagree. These standards can only be effective if embraced by each individual as a matter of freedom, and that is true whether we are the daughter of a middle class family from the suburbs of Chicago who has risen to be Secretary of State or the son and successor of a local real estate broker in Brooklyn who transplanted the family trademark across the river to Manhattan to make a fortune.

The Catholic and Evangelical Vote Wins One for the Donald

The colloquy between the Holy Father and Mr. Trump did not dissuade a majority of Catholics from giving their vote to Donald Trump at levels largely comparable to that achieved by Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012.[12] The support of both Trump and Obama is made less anomalous when explained in the distinctly Catholic social justice vocabulary. This is one reason the 2016 commentators denying the continued existence or coherence of the Catholic vote have not made their case. In part, these commentators overlook the breadth and nuance of Catholic instruction as well as the fact that without specific endorsement being made from the pulpit, Catholic voters in all modern-day presidential contests have picked the winner. The one exception being the Catholic majority in 2000 for Albert Gore Jr over George W. Bush, though even there the Catholics were in sync with the popular vote. In 2016, in order to back the winner, Catholics needed to be capable of both switching parties and making a politically anomalous leap from Obama to Trump.[13]

Has Religion Benefited from Its Political Alliance?

It is far too early to assess whether the support given to Donald Trump by Catholics and evangelicals is perceived correctly by religious adherents as a price worth paying. Value received can be toted in two different ways. The first asks simply is the president keeping his promises to the Catholic and evangelical Christian communities? The second asks a deeper question; namely, is the intersection of religion and politics in the Trump era consistent with the values of religious freedom embedded prominently in the American Constitution? To conclude this chapter, let us look briefly at both measures.

Thus far, in terms of promise keeping, religious perspective mirrors the secular progressive–conservative split. Starkly, progressive Catholics believe that the members of the faith who gave their support to Donald Trump made the deal that Jesus turned down with the devil; conservative Catholics are likely to view progressives as the devil. Such is hardly the nonjudgmental witness given by Pope Francis. That said, the initial path taken by President Trump is not just "an alternative fact" that can mean anything or nothing. The record speaks for itself and it is far more conservative than Catholic. For example, President Trump has been notably attentive to ensuring that public funds do not support abortion and reducing the amount of public funding to organizations that undertake abortion-related practices with nonpublic monies. At the direction of the president, the vice president prominently participated—at levels no other White House has done—in the annual March for Life procession.

Conservative Catholics are also cheering the president's advocacy for parental choice in education, most prominently through the extension of educational vouchers redeemable at all schools, public or private, religious and nonreligious alike. Vouchers have in the past been a lightning rod issue, and it will be a significant test of the new President's deal making ability if he is able to translate his school choice rhetoric into reality. Broadening out the circle of support, evangelical Christians have expressed strong approval of Judge Neil Gorsuch as President Trump's nominee to fill the vacancy of Justice Antonin Scalia on the US Supreme Court. Beyond these important efforts at fulfilling the expectations of Catholics and evangelical Christians, much of the rest of the nascent Trump administration has been symbolic, but also deeply antagonistic to the balance of Catholic teaching. In this regard, an appraisal

of Trump policies to date cannot deny that they propose to undermine the social safety net in dramatic fashion. This was perhaps most clearly seen in the President's failed proposal to repeal Obama care and nominally, but not monetarily, substitute a freedom of choice insurance plan far different from the one-size-fits-all mandate of the original Affordable Care Act. The tax reduction elements proposed by President Trump but as of now not yet enacted are largely wealth transfers to the very rich. Certainly, the president's varying health reform proposals are an odd way to demonstrate how he would be the champion of the working class. The President's disregard for the physical environment has invited some marginal job improvement among out of work coal miners, and the men and women in the workforce associated with automobile manufacturing.

Beyond the domestic venue, the President's actions have often been bellicose and threatening. He has spoken inconsistently for a strengthened and a weakened NATO. He expresses little respect for the European Union. For President Trump, bringing a business model to the presidency means evaluating institutions like the European Union and NATO solely in terms of their economic cost without taking account of significance to their diplomacy or national security. President Trump's budget proposals advocate a disproportionate increase in military spending as well as a substantial defunding of the diplomatic initiatives and foreign aid of the State Department.

In matters of immigration, the Trump administration has substantially increased levels of deportation that had already been heightened under the Obama administration, though now the removal efforts seem far less cognizant of the effect they have on the day-to-day existence of families, and even the ability of family members not to be separated. With great fanfare, the President has attempted to shut the door (twice) to migrants from predominantly Muslim countries and with respect to refugees generally. The President has yet to identify the vetting or security screening weaknesses that he proposes to rectify with his proposed travel limitations. The travel bans have thus far been largely judicially checked on grounds of religious antipathy toward practicing Muslims and lack of statutory authority. Indeed, the haste and then disregard or slowly articulated defense of these travel suspensions has merely stoked the suspicion that the effort is anti-Muslim in the main. Finally, the president continues to indulge in personal fabrication and exaggeration that is of great concern because of the obvious negative effect on his credibility at home

and abroad. Overall, President Trump's early administrative efforts have rewarded only a narrow band of highly conservative Catholics.

What does the presidency of Donald Trump mean for the ongoing relationship between religion and politics? This is the second evaluative means and it is less concerned with particular policy actions than with whether or not President Trump is governing consistently with the constitutional protection of freedom of religion.

The sustenance of the constitutional value of freedom of religion calls upon citizens to be candid in civic participation about how faith influences our political understanding of each other. This measure assumes that the commonplace admonition to never speak about religion and politics in polite company is inconsistent with the American model of governance. The self-imposed silence of Trump supporters pre- and perhaps even more worrisome, post-election is a disappointing commentary on the health of our body politic—on our ability and willingness to hear each other out.

It is not in the American nature to suppress religious insight. Notably, in the midst of the 2016 election, the University of Southern California Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies convened a large, well-attended series on being honest about the influence of faith in ways avoiding either unjustifiable imposition or exclusion. The ideal to strive for is captured in a sentiment attributed to Thomas Jefferson: "I never considered a difference of opinion in matters of religion or politics to be a basis upon which to withdraw a friendship." It will take some doing to renew and keep that tolerant sentiment alive, but the success of the American democracy depends upon it, and the difference of opinion among Catholics as to what the Trump victory signifies reveals as much.[14]

Having been responsible for the advent of the Trump administration itself, religious believers—most notably Catholics and Evangelical Christians—must determine if the new president is acting to preserve religious liberty. To assist in that effort, it is helpful to distil religious liberty into seven brief principles or questions:

1. First, do Mr. Trump's actions observe *the explicit preference in the American experience of the importance of the freedom to pursue religious belief and practice*?
   William O. Douglas proclaimed Americans to be religious people whose institutions presuppose the existence of a supreme being.

That sentiment expressed in Supreme Court opinion is an echo of the two founding documents upon which the American Republic is based—the birth certificate for the Republic, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution. The first document proclaims existence for a corporate sovereignty based upon truth—a truth that the founders declared to be self-evident, including most expansively, equality for all with respect to inalienable rights traced to a Creator.

The prosperity of the American experiment turns on reconciling both the proclamation of self-evident and explicitly divine and transcendent truth with the freedom of conscience and freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment. The founders didn't leave the protection of religious freedom merely to the silence of unexercised constitutional power—that is the separation of powers; nor did those drafting our basic charter leave religious freedom to be merely a subpart of the expression protected by the protection of freedom of speech. Instead, the founding generation held out the freedom of religion to be of its own singular importance.

Freedom of religion would be advanced in two different ways; first was the clause providing that Congress shall not enact laws respecting the establishments of religion. The plural form of establishment, though not appearing in the text of the Constitution itself, better emphasizes that it was for the state and local governments close at hand to draw any reluctant boundary premised upon public order against a religious practice; it was not just that there should be no national church, it was also that religious belief and practice should be understood to be so fragile and individual, that the more remote federal or national government could not be entrusted with its safekeeping. And to underscore that it was not the province of the new government to either prescribe or proscribe religious choice, including the choice not to believe at all, is expressed by, the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.

Notice how an insufficient understanding of the importance of religious freedom can by single preposition turn freedom *of* religion into freedom *from* religion. Similarly, the unassailable proposition that no one should suffer disadvantage or be given preference for a particular religious belief can be transmuted into a type of claimed indifference between religion and no religion. When this happens,

neutrality is really disguised hostility or a preference for the secular over the sectarian. This interpretive mutation did not appear with force until the 1940s when respect for religious establishments became an instruction of "no establishment" misunderstood not as neutrality not among religions but between religion and other philosophical beliefs. In the second half of the twentieth century, the establishment clause became a type of coerced secularism with an accompanying affirmative obligation to eliminate from the public space symbols, prayers, and other things that might be chosen individually as matters of freedom of conscience or indeed even as freedom of expression.

2. The second of the seven points reminds us that *religion both needs to be protected from politics and politics needs to be protected from religion*. Tocqueville explains well how a religion that imprudently aligns itself with popular politics sacrifices the mystery of its divine nature for momentary acceptance or approval that in the blink of an eye can become out-of-favor. So too, failing to protect politics from religion rather swiftly leads to the imposition of belief of a preference for coercion over faith. Coerced preference is no longer democratic, but tyrannical.
3. A related third observation is *the necessity to adopt a spirit of accommodation rather than hostility*. Such accommodation in its boldest form may permit religion to be exempt from the general laws. A milder form makes space for private exercises of prayer in public places, protects the access of religious entities to public resources, and accommodates the presence of the diversity of religious symbols be they matters of dress or monumental reminders of the participation of religious believers in our history.
4. Fourth is really a question, and it is this: *do believers understand that the spirit of accommodation is two-way*? That is, as a matter of prudence more than law, do religionists temper demands for exception from general citizen obligation. Similarly, do religionists mistakenly see religious achievement as best measured by public enactment? If so, the reciprocal sensitivity that accommodation requires to be workable may not be observed. In this regard, when temporal political victory displaces the teaching of a faith with respect to eternal reward, the power of faith is trivialized and divisiveness is invited. The result is often sectarian violence.

In parts of the world today, most notably the Middle East, the question of religious freedom is one still being waged with bullets and armaments and physical violence and assault. In the USA, the battle for religious freedom is waged over the completion of forms said to be necessary to operate a health care system even when the formality is contrary to religious belief. In either case, the inquiry is the same: is it reasonable, charitable, to expect our brothers and sisters of different beliefs to supply accommodation for our own? It would seem reasonable to at least ask whether insisting upon absolute immunity from even the remotest claims of moral complicity is more self than other regarding?

5. Fifth is another question. *To what degree do we seek to employ an inclusive, common vocabulary that can be understood by believer and nonbeliever alike*? By culture and tradition, Americans have for the most part understood that however sincerely held, religious belief alone is an inadequate ground to justify a public course of action that affects believers of many faiths as well as nonbelievers. The argumentation for taking one path over another in matters of public policy contemplates empirical, scientific, and a reasoned basis, and not singularly religious explanation—even as that well may be the most important rationale for the believer. In considering the relationship between citizenship and faithfulness, we may think of ourselves as St. Thomas More, as "the King's good servant but God's first," but this should not understate the obligation of what it actually means to be the King's good servant and to explain ourselves to other servants of the King who know God differently or a different God.
6. The sixth consideration is to grasp that *contemplating the dynamic relationship between religion and politics has implication for the most important matters of the day.* In this, the rejoinder to the admonition to avoid speaking of religion and politics is that is to commit oneself to speaking of matters of little consequence. The list of matters affected by faith includes: attitudes toward war or peace, the death penalty, economic policies in light of the needs of the poor and the anxieties of the middle class, the treatment of migrant and refugee, sexuality and its relationship to marriage and adoption; transgender identity and its practical implementation in terms of even the most basic human functions; and turning to a topic that's never very far away from national elections and Supreme

Court nominations, the treatment of the unborn and abortion. Internally, within the church herself, there is the issue of divorce and remarriage and the full or partial participation in the life of the church thereafter. The list of topics of that which really matters is indeed greatly informed by the relationship between religion and politics.

7. The seventh and final consideration of special importance or relevance *is an honest assessment of whether our particular faith traditions have been a positive or negative influence upon the larger culture*. This consideration is perhaps a deeper version of the superficial political debate over how to label our opponents in the asymmetrical war on terror. Is it proper to fix blame upon radical Islamic fundamentalists or is it more accurate to leave out the middle adjective?

Pope Francis in his usual way and great ability to make difficult issues accessible rejects the notion that Islam is intrinsically violent. The Holy Father points out that, unfortunately, in every religion and social entity there can be violent and misguided people. Thus, in speaking of violence, the pontiff urges us to speak in terms that honestly identify the source of violence and alienation. While the means of warfare in the twenty-first century are different than those of ages past, the source of violence and alienation remains the same: it is the failure to credit the dignity of all men and women regardless of belief or nationality or race or gender or orientation. One cannot be walled off from the needs of others and any attempt to selfishly hoard money or power or to act in disregard of the scarcity and fragility of environmental resource becomes its own form of terrorism working against the whole of humanity.

So then, will the Trump administration—which owes its existence to religious believers—preserve these seven principles of religious freedom? Will Donald Trump actually restore America's greatness; the so-called American Dream? The phrase "American Dream" was coined in the 1930s and it is not a dream solely about material things. Far from it, it is "a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain the fullest stature [to] which they are innately capable, and likewise to be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position."[15] With even the continuation of the Trump administration uncertain, so must be any claim of capability to fulfill

a dream so central to the understanding of who we are as a people. Success or failure, the result is inescapably consequential to the recognition of human dignity and human right.

Notes

1. The symposium was held in southwestern France under the supervision of the Faculte de Droit et de Science Politique, Aix Marseille University, 22 and 23 September 2016. This commentary is solely that of the author and does not represent the views necessarily of the symposium organizers.
2. Among them was that of symposium participant Mark J. Rozell. Rozell, the distinguished dean of public policy at George Mason University in Virginia brought great clarity to the proceedings.
3. Electors are usually elected by the people in the several states, although the Constitution allows the state legislatures to determine the method of elector selection. Electors are typically locally active party members who pledge to cast an electoral vote to the candidate winning the popular vote within a state, and sometimes, within individual legislative districts.
4. The voter analysis also separates education from race, with education still being the dominant factor. Thus, contrary to some race-based assumptions, Trump won minority areas with lesser educational achievement.
5. I have chosen to emphasize the Catholic vote because of my own faith persuasion. That should not, however, mislead the reader as to the importance of both the Catholic vote and the vote of evangelical Christians. An excellent paper detailing the evangelical vote was part of the symposium and presented by Mokhtar Ben Barka of the Universite de Valenciennes. I commend the reader to that analysis, wherein Prof. Barka explains how early in the general campaign Trump was found to have secured close to 80% of the white evangelical vote. This is an extraordinary percentage since it represents 25% of the electorate. As Prof. Barka notes. "Evangelicals are sick and tired of politicians telling them one thing and doing another. They would support a known 'sinner' rather than a 'family values' politician who may well betray their trust.… Importantly, Evangelicals resonate with Trump's promise to defend the religious liberty of Christians and to keep Christianity from being further removed from the public square."
6. The position of candidate Obama was pro-choice, though with an understanding that it was a tragic choice that if possible could be avoided with better maternal health support. While there is a White House claim that the Obama administration has reduced the incidence of abortion, it is a claim that has been relatively muted, and as someone who advocated for Obama and this position, it cannot be said to be empirically established.

7. Symposium paper of Prof. T. Jeremy Gunn of the International University of Rabat. Professor Gunn's commentary is sharp and I believe ultimately overstated. It is not atypical, however, of comments of those supposing Mrs. Clinton to have a lock on the election in the last months of the campaign. Professor Gunn's revulsion at especially the videotaped commentary of Donald Trump a decade before his candidacy is understandable and was joined in by a great many Republican and Democratic leaders. That said, it is I think unfair to suggest that support for Mr. Trump represents an abandonment of faith when it may be in fact an act of mercy and forgiveness. Trump support in exchange for religion-friendly jurists is also a rational step to advance a conception of religious liberty more satisfactory to the Catholic hierarchy in America and evangelical leaders. Whether the conception of religious liberty is the correct constitutional balance between believer and unbeliever is an important but different topic than whether political support is reasonably still a manifestation of the Catholic or evangelical vote.
8. In 2008, there were loud and strident demands for orthodoxy made by highly conservative members of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in America. Some of these demands included the threat of, and in my case the actual denial of, Communion for announcing support for candidate Obama. However difficult it is to perceive the correct boundary between religion and politics, the intemperate incorrectness of that sacramental denial is clearly on the wrong side of the divide in a country that was consciously designed to give preference to the uncoerced pursuit of religious freedom.
9. By contrast, the late Professor Charles E. Rice, the founder of the Catholic Natural Law Institute and journal, the forerunner to the prestigious *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, authored a book entitled "No exceptions" which did argue for a position reflected by the book's name and one closer to that articulated by Mr. Trump.
10. President Trump with his usual inconsistency has not been reluctant to repeat his claim that he will repeal Obama care and substitute genuine access to care and not merely insurance coverage. Unfortunately, policy proposal has not matched policy rhetoric, and in the early days of the Trump administration an effort by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R—WI) attempted to effectuate the repeal of Obama care together with a substantial reduction of related tax upon the wealthy that had been supporting, however unclearly, the Medicaid and other insurance benefits for the poor and others finding it difficult to find insurance in the marketplace. The Republicans were divided in several ways including along religious lines that viewed the repeal effort as antagonistic to social justice. The Ryan initiative failed, even with Donald Trump's considerable efforts to persuade or intimidate members of Congress.

11. Joan Williams writes postelection in the *Harvard Business Review*: "manly dignity is a big deal for working-class men, and they're not feeling that they have it. Trump promises a world free of political correctness and a return to an earlier era, when men were men and women knew their place. It's comfort food for high school educated guys …. Today they feel like losers—or did they until they met Trump." https://hbr.org/2016/11/what-so-many-people-dont-get-about-the-u-s-working-class. But as Joan Williams notes herself. It's not just working-class men who supported Trump, but white working-class women voted for Trump over Clinton, 62–34%. In an election that held the promise of the first female president, class trumped gender, class also trumped redistribution of wealth from the forgotten middle class to the working poor. As Williams notes, federal entitlement programs are means tested and programs like head start often exclude middle income/working-class families. The fact that the income which makes the working-class income ineligible is derived from holding multiple jobs is not taken into account, and it is resented.
At the symposium, I made a similar argument to explain why, in spite of the polls showing Mrs. Clinton ahead, the attraction to Donald Trump was getting stronger. By making reference to an important new book by Arlie Hochschild, entitled *Strangers in their own land* wherein the author summarizes the deep feeling of resentment among the working class in this metaphorical manner:

> "You are patiently standing in the middle of a long line stretching toward the horizon, where the American dream awaits. As you wait, you see people cutting in line ahead of you. Many of these line cutters are black – beneficiaries of affirmative action or welfare. Some are career driven women pushing into jobs they never had before. Then you see immigrants, Mexicans, Somalis, the Syrian refugee yet to come. As you wait in this unmoving line, you're being asked to feel sorry for them all. You have a good heart. But who is deciding who you should feel compassion for? Then you see President Barack Hussein Obama waving the line cutters forward. He's on their side. In fact, isn't he a line cutter too? How did this fatherless black guy pay for Harvard? As you wait your own turn, Obama is using the money in your pocket to help the line cutters. He and his liberal backers have removed the shame from taking. Government has become an instrument for redistributing your money to the undeserving. It's not your government anymore; it's theirs." This quotation in a profile of the book can be found in the magazine Mother Jones. http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/08/trump-white-blue-collar-supporters.

12. For more insight into considerations shaping the Catholic vote, interested readers can find a closer examination of the 2008 election in Kmiec, *Can a Catholic Support Him* (Obama)? (2008), and for additional commentary leading up to the 2016 election that advocates inter-faith diplomacy as well as a theology of kindness prior to the election of Pope Francis, see Kmiec, *Lift up your Hearts* (2012).
13. The US Catholic bishops put out a voter's guide which explains the Catholic Church's participation in political matters and outlines the scope of that participation. The document is readily available online and in hard copy in some parishes. So too, voter guides prepared by individual religious orders like the Paulist's are quite excellent in substance.
14. For example, Matthew Sitman wrote in the 16 November 2016 *Commonweal* magazine that "last Tuesday night was a terrible night, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't still shaken at the results of the presidential election. My heart breaks especially for all the people of color, all the women, all the people without papers, all the Muslims, all the sexual minorities now living with heightened fear and dread. Whatever comes in the weeks and months ahead, we must find ways to express our solidarity with those likely to bear the brunt of the Donald Trump administration. This will require doing things many of us might not be accustomed to: marching, protesting, organizing, even civil disobedience. Trump will enable—he has enabled—dark forces in our national life. We must resist those forces however we can, and do so with creativity and resolve." Matthew Sitman, "One week later: working-class whites and the way forward." https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/users/matthew-sitman.
15. James Truslow Adams, The Ethic of America, 214–215 (1931).

CHAPTER 8

A Catholic Latino Vote?

Olivier Richomme

One might talk about a Catholic Latino Vote in so far as there is a specificity of the Latino community inside the Catholic population. Indeed, in electoral behavior terms, race and ethnicity are one the most important fault lines in America. Therefore, any discussion about a Catholic Latino vote comes down to a discussion of the Latino vote. Catholic Latinos present the same structural potential and constraint as the Latino vote in general. While Latinos have become the largest Catholic block and the largest ethno-racial minority in the country, their political impact has remained limited at the national level due to their geographical concentration, low rate of citizenship and registration, and even lower turnout rates. Yet, because of their demographic dynamism, Latinos represent a key segment of the future of American politics.

In the introduction to this volume, Mark J. Rozell explains that "there really is no unified Catholic vote in United States politics." One of the reasons for that is that the Catholic vote, much like the rest of the country is split along racial/ethnic lines. The largest ethno-racial group in the Catholic community is the Latino category which overall behaves electorally quite differently from the Anglo category.[1]

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_8

Catholics are about as diverse as Americans overall, but their specific racial and ethnic composition is somewhat different and has important electoral implications. Compared with all US adults, Catholics are made up of fewer Anglos (59% vs. 66%) and African-Americans (3% vs. 12%) and more heavily made up of Latinos (34% vs. 15%). As a consequence, the evolution of Latinos has a larger impact on the Catholic community. For instance, geography plays a big role in the ethno-racial profile of Catholics. The growing share of Latinos is linked to the shift in Catholic geography. Six-in-ten nonLatino Catholics live in the Northeast (32%) or Midwest (28%), while roughly three-quarters of Latino Catholics live in the South (33%) or West (44%). This means that in the Northeast (75%) and Midwest (82%), three-quarters or more of Catholics are Anglos, while fewer than one-in-five are Latino. But in the South, just 50% of Catholics are Anglo and 42% are Hispanic. And in the West, a clear majority of Catholics are Latino (57%), compared with 31% who are Anglo (as well as 8% who are Asian). In the two most populous US states, even bigger shares of Catholics are Latino: 67% of Catholics in California and 72% Catholics in Texas are Latino.[2] This geographic concentration also has important electoral implications for the presidential elections since Catholic Latinos are concentrated in noncompetitive states.

Moreover, it is difficult to talk about a cohesive Catholic community because for instance, Latino Catholics present different characteristics. Latino Catholic Parishes are generally poor and concentrate high levels of immigrants that sometimes do not speak English. As a consequence "parishes with Hispanic ministry are often centers where Hispanics seek spiritual accompaniment alongside support to meet other immediate needs."[3] From an electoral standpoint, Catholic Latinos make different choices than Anglo-Catholics (Fig. 8.1).[4]

As we can see during presidential elections the Anglo-Catholic votes and Latino Catholic votes are reverse images of each other. They actually follow the Anglo/Latino pattern of the vote. Religious affiliation seems to be less salient than ethno-racial affiliation.

In spite of its inherent heterogeneity, the Latino identity operates socially in a cohesive manner in the USA because of internal and external factors. The internal factors are historical in the sense that people in Latin America have a common language that, in spite of national and regional differences, allows for the sharing of cultural goods, ideas, and

	2000		2004		2008		2012		2016	
	Gore	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Obama	McCain	Obama	Romney	Clinton	Trump
Anglo Catholics	45%	52%	43%	56%	47%	52%	40%	59%	37%	60%
Latino Catholics	65%	33%	65%	33%	72%	26%	75%	21%	67%	26%

Fig. 8.1 Presidential vote by affiliation and race. *Source* Pew Research Center

world views. They share this cultural heritage because they share a common history of colonization by the Spain.[5] Colonization and fights for independence, along with a complicated relationship with the USA that has always perceived the western hemisphere as its zone of influence, have brought a sense of commonality in many Latin American countries.[6] And in the USA, as Douglas Massey and Magaly R. Sánchez have shown in their book *Brokered Boundaries*, people of Latin America origin have faced an external force in the form of an anti-immigration discourse that explains, in part, their sense of identity as a community: "For Latin American immigrants in the United States today, the processes of assimilation and identity formation are unfolding within a context characterized by an exceptional degree of anti-immigrant framing and immigrant-isolating boundary work. The tail wagging the dog is undocumented migration."[7]

Therefore, there is such a thing as a Latino community. And this community, at the mass level, has distinct policy concerns.[8] Immigration is only one of many issues but it carries "tremendous emotional weight and is inevitably tied to these other issues."[9] That is why immigration remains a rallying cry for Latinos and crucial policies such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) represent great mobilization tools.[10] These internal and external factors help explain why scholars have been talking about a Latino vote.[11]

But while a lot has been written about the Latino community and its role in American politics there remain some misconceptions. One of them is the idea that the Latino vote could be equated with a Catholic vote. However, only about 55% of Latinos consider themselves Catholics

even if Latinos represent the largest minority group among Catholics. That number is decreasing among younger Latinos. As a consequence, the median age of Catholic adults in the USA is 49 years old—4 years older than it was in 2007. Besides religion is not the electoral marker it used to be. And even if it was such a marker because Catholics are on average older than people who are not affiliated with any religion, whose median age is 36, projections suggest that the Catholic demographic weight will decrease in the future. In other words, Latino Catholics retention rate is decreasing even if it remains higher than the rate of other Catholics.[12]

A fundamental aspect of American society is that according to exit polls ethno-racial divisions are much more susceptible to be correlated to electoral behavior and these divisions drive identity politics nowadays.[13] Therefore, any discussion of the Catholic Latino vote amounts to a discussion of the Latino vote. Some may argue that there is evidence that Latino Catholics, Latino Protestants, and unaffiliated Latinos vote in different ways. That is true. The Pew Research Landscape Survey of 2004 shows that 56% of Protestant/Other Christian Latinos voted for President Bush while Catholic Latinos voted at a rate of 33% for that same candidate.[14] However, this 23% gap might need to be mitigated. Without mentioning the technical difficulty of such fine-tuned surveys and polls, one might notice that George W. Bush was the most popular Republican candidate among Latinos in a long time, maybe ever, as he was credited with 40–44% of the Latino vote, and he was particularly popular among all Evangelicals. Moreover, since 2004 the Republican brand's popularity in the USA, and especially in the Latino community, has decreased to reach, in 2016, a 24-year low.[15] In 2014, a Pew Research survey showed a much lower gap (around 10%) in political preferences between Evangelical Latinos and Catholic Latinos (Fig. 8.2).[16]

While these differences in political preferences according to religious affiliation might help explain Donald Trump's floor among Latinos in 2016,[17] one can't help but notice how low these figures are. White Evangelical Protestants identify or lean Republican at a rate of 68% according to a 2015 survey by the Pew Research Center (and 22% for those identifying or leaning Democrat).[18] That is a 38% drop in partisan affiliation inside the evangelical category directly attributed to being Latino. While there are some differences between Latino voters, and they may have been larger in the past, they are

Latinos	Unaffiliated	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Evangelical Protestant
Identify with or lean toward Democratic Party	64%	58%	54%	48%
Identify with or lean toward Republican Party	16%	21%	23%	30%

Fig. 8.2 Political views of Latinos according to religious affiliation 2014. *Source* Pew Research Center

dwarfed by race. Ethno-racial affiliation is a much stronger predictor of voting behavior than religious affiliation.[19]

One misconception about Latinos is that their demographics have reached such a level that they have become a crucial electoral group. While this statement may be true locally, it is far from being the case at the national level because such factors as their geographical concentration, low citizenship rates, and even lower turnout. Nonetheless, the demographic dynamism of the Latino community especially in comparison with the Anglo population implies that the electoral weight of the Latino vote will keep increasing. As a consequence, the impact of the Catholic vote in the USA will be more dependent on the evolution of the Latino vote. And beyond the Catholic vote, the Latino community seems in the process of reshaping the entire American political dynamic.

Catholic Latinos

Since the Latino community is the fastest-growing ethno-racial group in the USA, a lot has been written about it. Yet some misconceptions persist. The first one is that Latino necessarily means Catholic. Only a bit more than half of all Latinos in the USA consider themselves Catholics according to the latest Pew Research polls.[20] And the percentage of Catholics among Latinos has been steadily decreasing (Fig. 8.3).

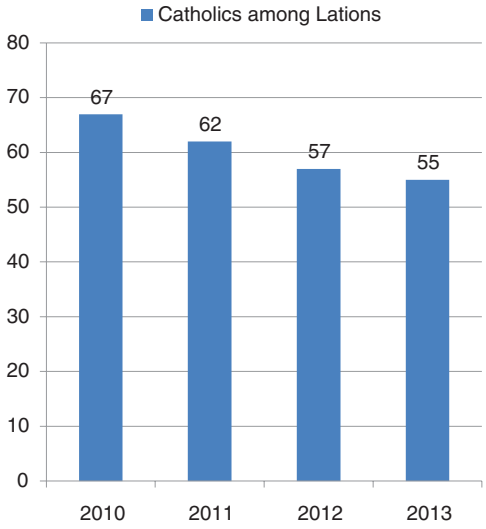


Fig. 8.3 Percentage of Catholics among Latinos 2010–2013. *Source* Pew Research Center

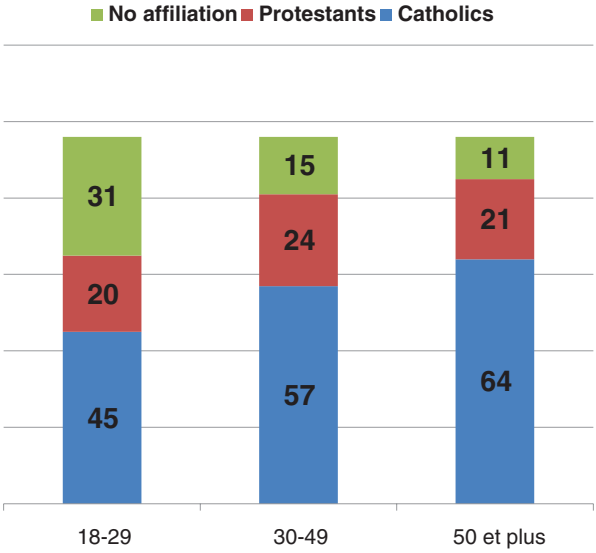


Fig. 8.4 Latino religious affiliation by age 2013. *Source* Pew Research Center

This is easily explained by the fact that the Latino community is on average younger than other ethno-racial groups and that young Americans overall tend to be less religious nowadays.[21] Latinos over 50 years old are much more likely to declare being Catholic than Latinos under 30 (Fig. 8.4).

This leads to the paradoxical situation in which Catholics are decreasing as a share of the Latino population but this population is increasing so much faster than the general population that Latinos are becoming the largest ethno-racial group among Catholics. Therefore, the perception is that Latinos catholic affiliation is on the rise while it is actually decreasing.[22] This does not mean that Catholicism is not an important feature of Latino identity; it just means that it is not as important as it once was and it is only one factor among many which make the Latino identity quite complex to decipher (Fig. 8.5).

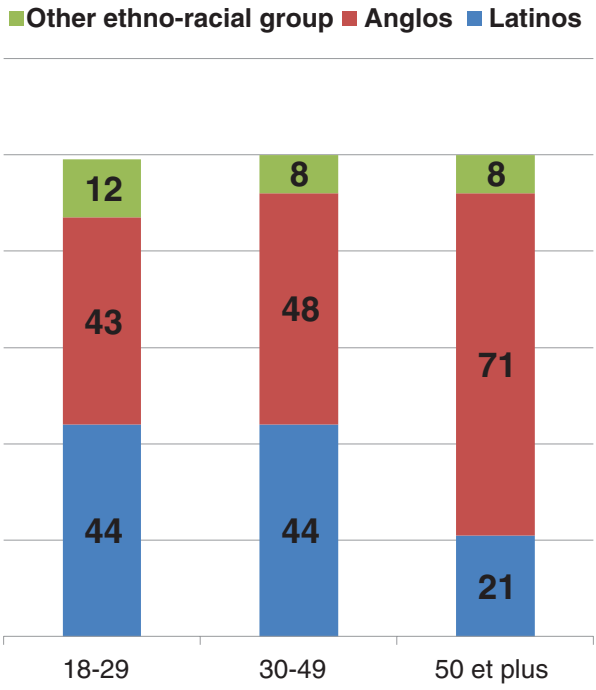


Fig. 8.5 Ethno-racial groups among Catholics 2013. *Source* Pew Research Center

The Latino Community Electoral Potential

The second preconceived idea about Latinos is that they are an electoral giant tilting American politics toward the Democrats. While this may be true locally in a city such as Los Angeles, it is not the case nationally, at least not yet. The Latino community has become a demographic giant and at the same time, at the national level, it is still an electoral dwarf. While in 1980 the Latino population comprised only 14.5 millions, according to the census, in 2015 it represented almost 18% of the US total population.[23] Estimates also indicated that of the 57 million Latinos in the USA in 2016, 27 millions were of voting age that is about 16% of the electorate.[24] Yet only about 17 million Latinos registered to vote and less than 14 million were actually expected to vote in 2016 (Fig. 8.6).[25]

In 2016, the Latino Voting Age population was estimated to represent 12.5% of the Total Voting Age Population. But the registered number of Latino only represented 10.4% of the total registered population and the number of Latinos projected to vote was only 10% of the American electorate going to the polls (Fig. 8.7).

To say it differently, projections estimate that about 12 million Latinos would not vote in 2016. By far the largest reservoir of votes in the USA that both major parties should try to tap into, especially since Latino numbers keep increasing in total numbers and as a share of the electorate. In that sense, Latinos represent the future of American politics. And the battle over this untapped potential should drive both major parties' agendas for the foreseeable future. Over the past 20 years, the GOP instrumentalized anti-immigrant, and anti-Latino sentiment, for local electoral gains but demographics suggest that this strategy is becoming more dangerous and counterproductive with each election cycle (Fig. 8.8).[26]

The Latino Electorate Structural Challenges

What are some of the reasons that explain the relative weakness of the Latino community as a voting group? First, to be eligible to vote one needs to acquire US citizenship. Many Latinos are born abroad even if that percentage is decreasing.[27] In 2014, 27.7% of foreign-born Americans were born in Mexico. About 35% of the Latino population (19 million people) was born outside the USA while 65% was born in the USA (36 million people). The foreign-born rates for other

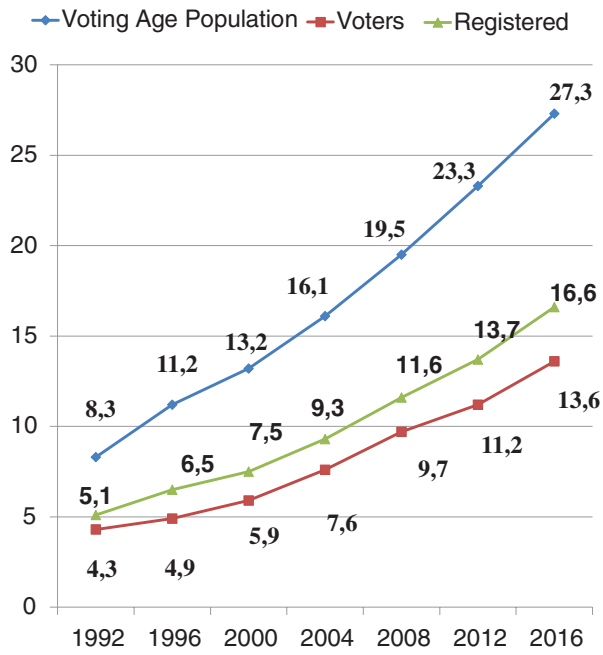


Fig. 8.6 Estimation of total numbers of Latino electorate. *Source* Current Population Survey, Pew Research Center, NALEO

ethno-racial groups were 4% for Anglos, 8.6% for African-Americans, and 67% for Asian-Americans (Fig. 8.9).[28]

The second reason for this low electoral impact is that one needs to be 18 years old to be eligible to vote in the US and the Latino community is on average much younger than the rest of the population or other ethno-racial groups.[29] Figure 8.10 shows the median age according to race/ethnicity.

The fact that the Latino population is on average younger than the rest of the country means that less people are over 18 years of age and therefore eligible to vote. However, when they are above 18 years old Latinos tend to be younger. According to the Pew Research Center the vast majority, that is to say 93%, of Latino youths, are US-born citizens and therefore will automatically become eligible to vote once they reach 18. It is estimated that every year about 800,000 Latinos turn 18. By 2030,

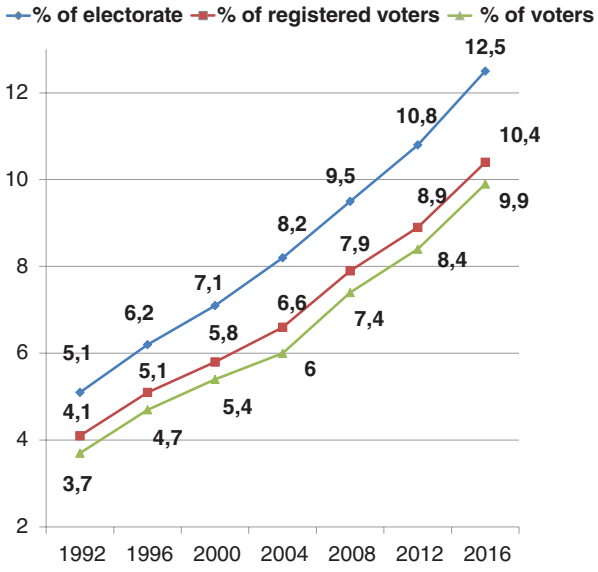


Fig. 8.7 Estimated Latino electorate impact as percentage of general electorate. *Source* Current Population Survey, Pew Research Center, NALEO

this number could grow to 1 million per year, adding a potential electorate of more than 16 million new Latino voters to the rolls by 2030 (Fig. 8.11).[30]

Millennials represented in 2016 the single largest cohort of eligible voters for the Latino community.[31] This has important electoral consequences since young people register and turnout at much lower rates than older people. Voting rates have historically varied by an array of demographic factors and age is one of them. In 2012, the overall population turnout rate of 18–24 year olds was 34.5% while that of 65–75 year olds reached 60%.[32] As a consequence, an older community has an electoral built-in turnout advantage (Fig. 8.12).

As a consequence, the third reason that the Latino vote remains much weaker than its total population numbers might suggest is that registration rates, in spite of massive registration drive efforts on the part of activists over the years, has remained extremely low. Since 1992 it has hovered around 58% and never peaked over 60% while Anglos and African-Americans have registered at rates superior to 70% (Fig. 8.13).

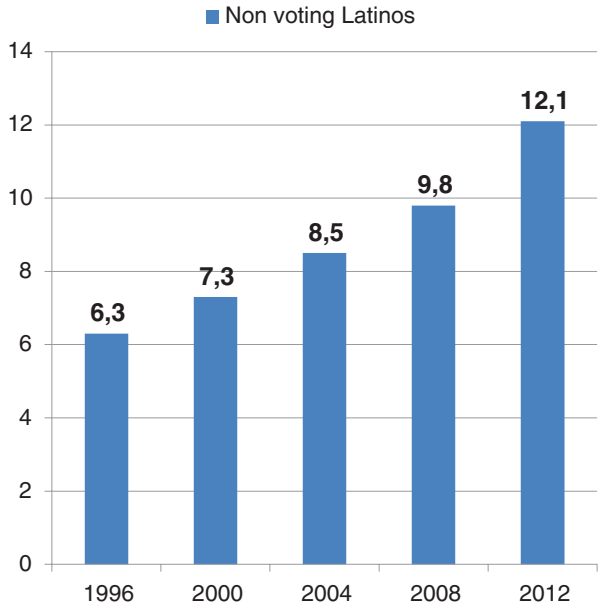


Fig. 8.8 Estimation of total number of Latinos not voting, in millions

This low registration rate is combined with an anemic turnout rate. The Latino turnout rate has never gone over 50%. Latinos and Asians are the two groups that lag consistently in turnout rate when compared to Anglos or African-Americans. Moreover, during mid-term elections, all groups suffer from a massive decrease so much so that Latino turnout rates can dip below 30% (Fig. 8.14).

All these combined factors help explain why the Latino electorate is at a disadvantage compared to Anglos and African-Americans. For instance, in 2012, Latinos lagged behind Anglos and African-Americans in registration rate but also turnout rate among registered voters and among eligible voters (Fig. 8.15).[33]

Finally, one of the main reasons why the Latino electorate has had a moderate impact on the presidential election is that Latino populations are highly concentrated in uncompetitive states such as California and Texas (Fig. 8.16).

This concentration has even more dire consequences during mid-term elections. According to Nate Cohn, in 2014, Latinos represented

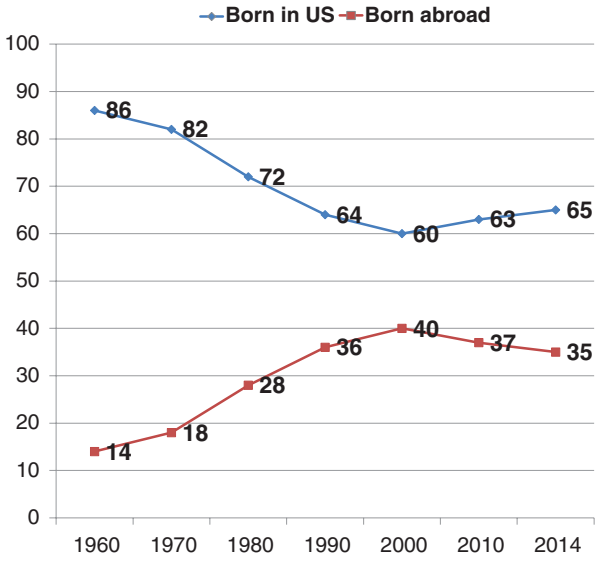


Fig. 8.9 Percentage of foreign-born Latinos. *Source* US Census

less than 5% of eligible voters in nine of the 10 most competitive Senate states, and about 4% of eligible voters in those races, that it to say they accounted for about 2.4% of the people actually voting. The situation is almost as calamitous in the House of Representatives where half of all Latinos live in just 65 of the nation's 435 congressional districts. Cohn estimated the Latino population share of the eligible electorate in the House battlegrounds in 2014 at 7.4%.[34]

Only a handful of swing states has Latino population that can have a real electoral impact during the presidential elections as the percentage of Latino voting age citizens is superior to 5% in only three traditional battleground states (Fig. 8.17).

The Specificity of Florida

Nevada and Colorado have voted for the Democratic Party in each of the last three presidential cycles but their electoral college votes only amount to 15. On the other hand, Florida with 29 Electoral College votes is by far the largest swing state in which Latinos can impact the

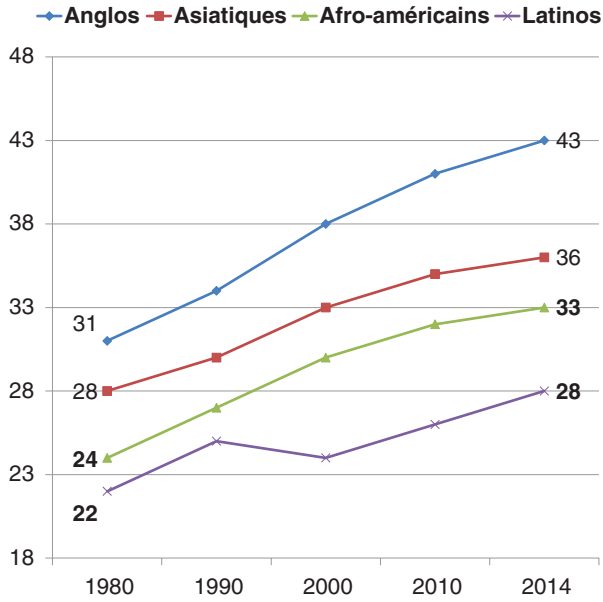


Fig. 8.10 Median age by racial/ethnic group. *Source* US Census

presidential election. But Florida is not representative of the Latino population in the rest of the nation. In 2016, the Latino population of the state was composed, roughly speaking, of 30% Cubans, 30% Puerto-Ricans and 30% Other, with Mexican-Americans only accounting for about 10% (López and Stepler 2016). This has an impact on the level of Catholicism since Cubans and Puerto-Ricans present rates of Catholicism of 49 and 45%, respectively. Much lower than the 61% of Mexicans-Americans who declare being Catholics.[35] This in part helps to explain why the percentage of Catholics in Florida is estimated to 26% (as opposed to California where it's 32%) (Fig. 8.18).

Moreover, the overall trend shows a decrease of the share of the Cuban population in the Florida Latino population over the past 30 years (Fig. 8.19).

This is important because Cubans and Puerto-Ricans don't see immigration issues in the same light as Mexican-Americans. Unlike foreign immigrants, Puerto Ricans arrive as citizens because of the island's status as a US territory. As residents of the island, they can't vote in the general

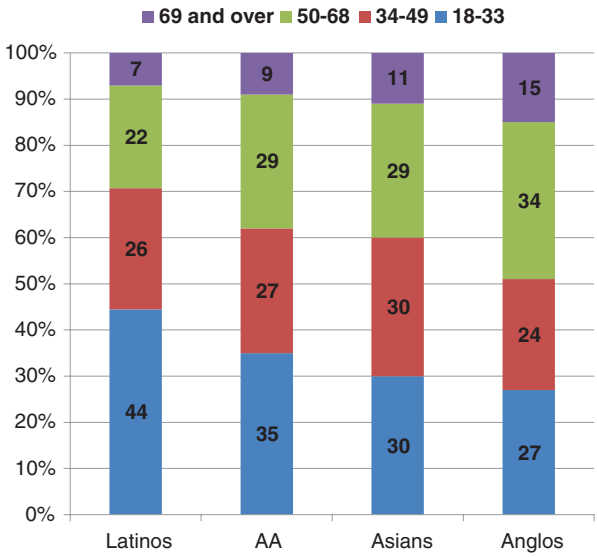


Fig. 8.11 2016 estimation of generation percentage in electorate by racial/ethnic group. *Source* Pew Research Center

election, but once they relocate to a US state they can establish residency and become registered to vote. Thanks to the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act almost all Cuban migrants have been admitted under a special parole power exercised by the US Attorney General that instantly grants them full legal status and puts them on a path to US citizenship. And historically speaking Cubans have supported the Republican Party because of its tough position toward the Castro regime.[36] For this reason, the Florida legislature is an exception in the Union because its Latino caucus is mostly Republican.

Moreover, Cubans have the highest turnout rate (67.1% in 2012) of all Latinos.[37] By comparison, the Mexican-American turnout rate was 44% that same year and 52.8% for Puerto-Ricans. However, Cubans support for the Republican Party has eroded over the years.[38] According to the national exit polls in 2004, 78% of Cuban Americans voted for George W. Bush, while in 2012, the Cuban vote in Florida was split 49–47 between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. In 2016 the split

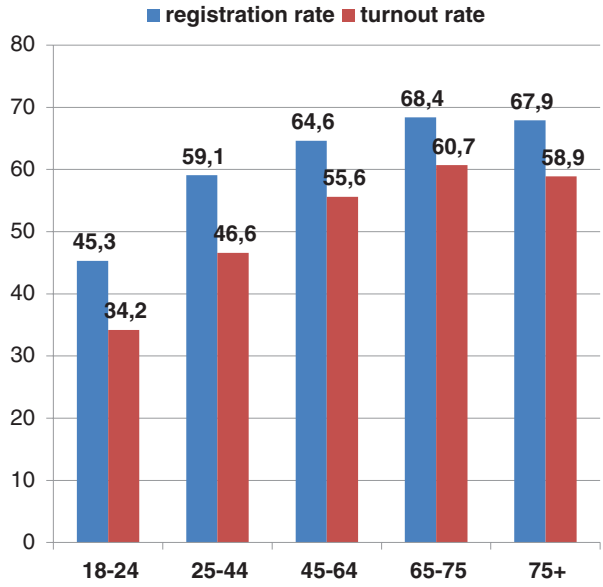
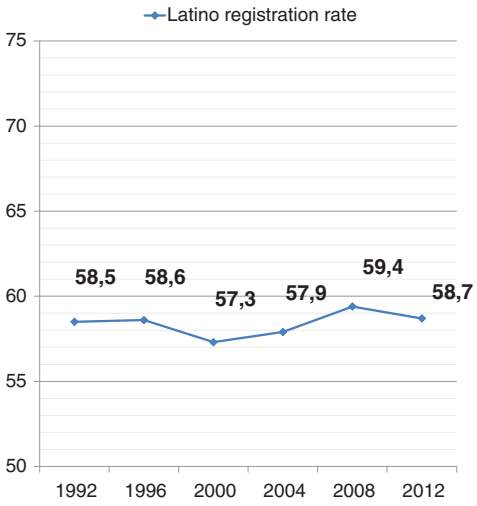


Fig. 8.12 2012 registration and turnout rate by age group. *Source* Current Population Survey

Fig. 8.13 Latino registration rate by presidential election year. *Source* Current Population Survey



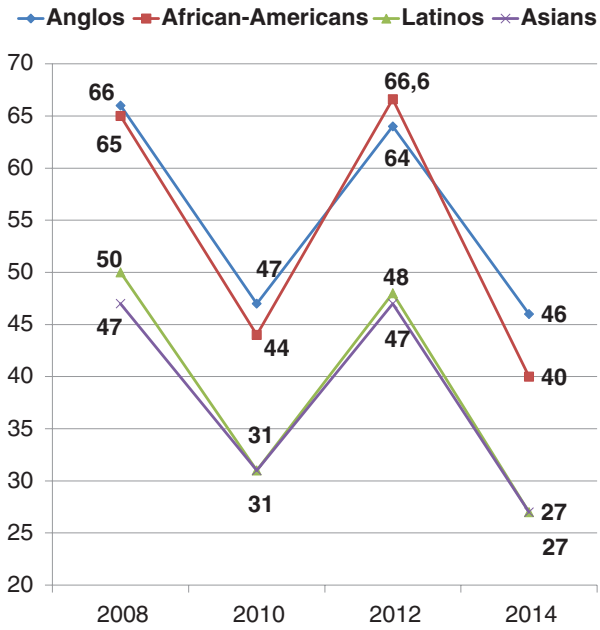


Fig. 8.14 Turnout rate by racial/ethnic group. *Source* Current Population Survey

seemed to continue.[39] This drop in popularity can be seen in the evolution of partisan affiliation of registered Latinos (Fig. 8.20).[40]

What characterizes the Florida Democratic coalition is that it has both a large Latino population but also a large African-American population. The following maps indicate that there is a strong correlation between the percentage of Anglo population in a county and the level of victory by Mitt Romney in 2012. Obama won only one county in which the Anglo population was superior to 79%. But he only won Monroe County by less than 200 votes. The odds of Obama winning a county increased as the Anglo population got closer to 70%. Obama reached 70% in Gadsden County, his best result in the state, in a county that was in 2010 36% Anglo.[41] Generally speaking, in presidential elections, African-Americans vote for the Democratic Party at a rate of 90% and for historical and socio-political reasons they identify strongly with that party.[42] While Latinos do not identify as strongly with the Democratic party they

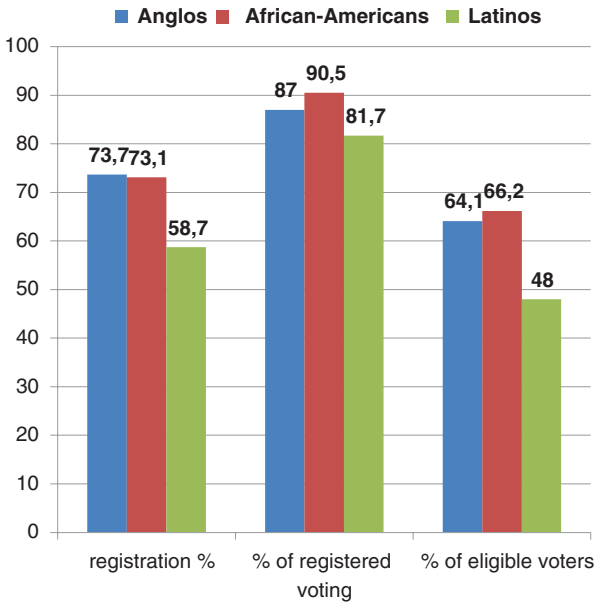


Fig. 8.15 Electoral participation per ethno-racial group. *Source* Current Population Survey

do vote for the presidential candidate at a rate hovering around 70% in most exit polls (Figs. 8.21, 8.22).

Such obvious ethno-racial and partisan polarization have had tremendous consequences since for GOP operatives could use ethno-racial statistics as proxy for partisan affiliation. This Republican Party's popularity decrease among Latinos in Florida led the GOP to pass measures, as in other states controlled by the Republicans, intended to discourage minorities to go to the polls with seemingly significant results.[43] The correlation between partisan affiliation and ethnic/racial affiliation has led the GOP to conclude that it was in its electoral interest to demobilize segments of the electorate. On 19 May 2011, Florida Governor Rick Scott signed into law Florida's notorious House Bill 1355 which prevented ex-felons from being able to cast a ballot after serving their time, cutting back early voting from 14 to 8 days, and severely restricting voter registration drives. At the same time, the state conducted a controversial statewide voter purge that attempted to eliminate individuals not legally

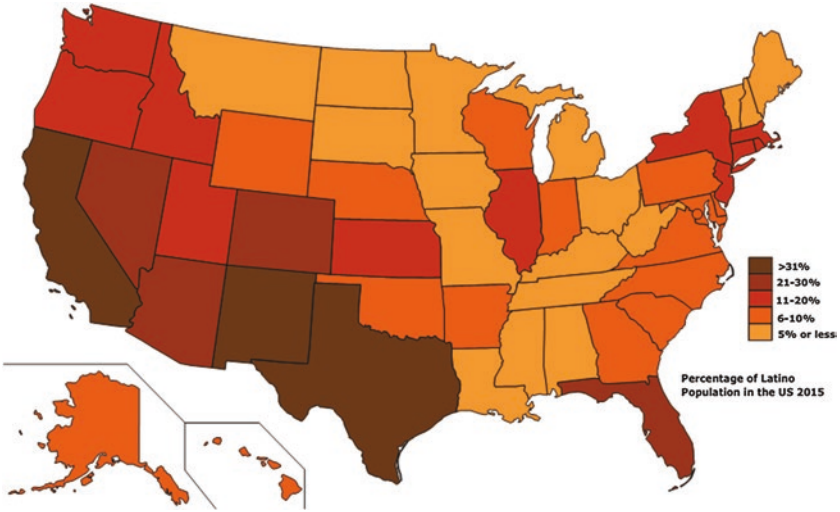


Fig. 8.16 Latino population concentration per state, 2015 census estimates. *Source* US Census

	% of Latinos voting age citizens	% of Latinos in state population
Florida	18.1	24.1
Nevada	17.2	27.8
Colorado	14.5	21.2
United States	11.3	17.3
Virginia	4.6	8.8
Pennsylvania	4.5	6.5
Wisconsin	3.6	6.4
Iowa	2.9	5.5
Ohio	2.3	3.4

Fig. 8.17 Latino population and voting age population in presidential swing states 2015. *Source* US Census

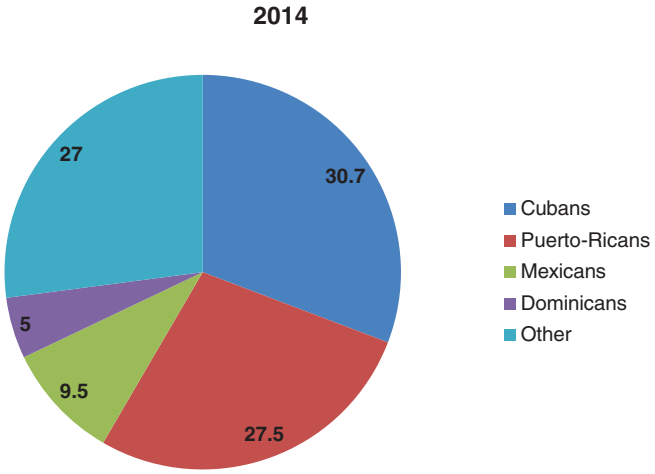


Fig. 8.18 Florida Latino population breakdown by national ancestry 2016. *Source* US Census

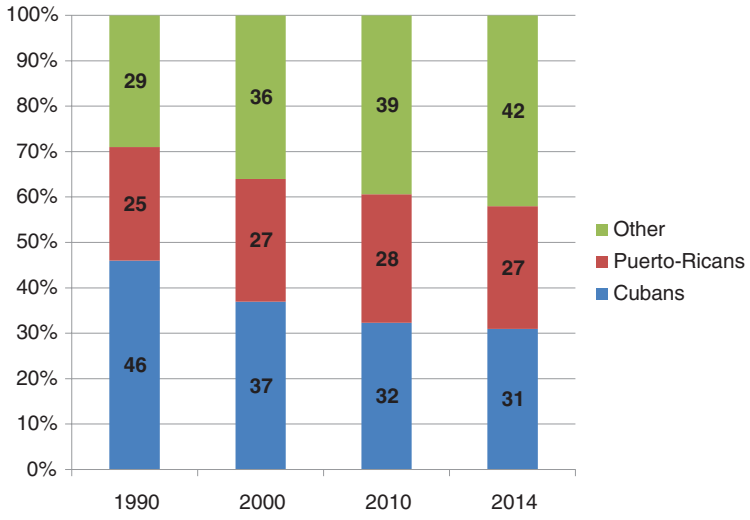


Fig. 8.19 Evolution of composition of the Florida Latino population. *Source* US Census

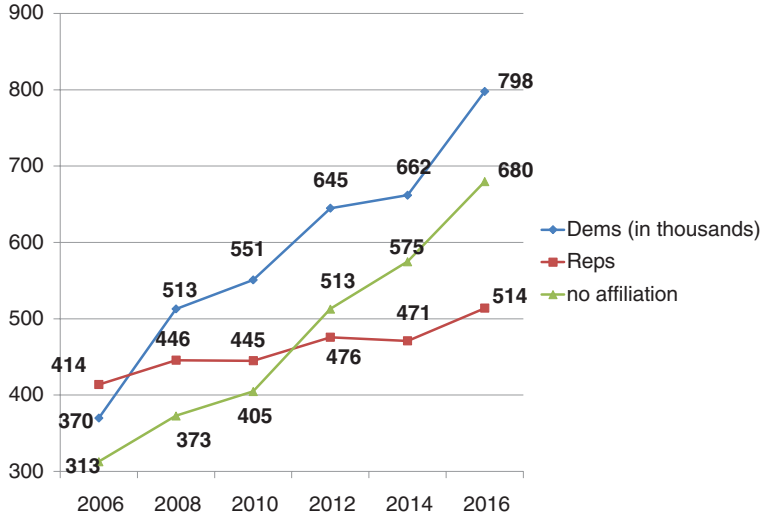


Fig. 8.20 Evolution of partisan affiliation of newly registered Latinos 2006–2016. *Source* Florida State Department

entitled to cast a ballot from voter rolls.[44] These measures were added on top of a nonstrict voter ID law on the books since 1977.[45]

The Paradox of 2016: Reshaping the American Electorate

In 2016, Clinton lost Florida by about 113,000 votes that is 1.2% of state votes. However, it ended up not being the most crucial state because even without Florida Donald Trump would still have reached 270 electoral votes because of his very narrow margins in Wisconsin, which he won by 22,748 votes (that is 0.77% of the votes), Michigan, which he won by 10,704 votes (that is 0.22% of the votes), and Pennsylvania which he won by 44,292 (that is 0.72% of the votes). In those states, Latinos represented 3.6, 3.1, and 4.5% of eligible voters. In such a tight election, any small constituency can claim being a decisive swing vote but one thing is sure: while Anglo-Catholics might have helped in winning those states, Latinos and therefore Latino Catholics, as a part of the electorate, are negligible in those states. The Electoral

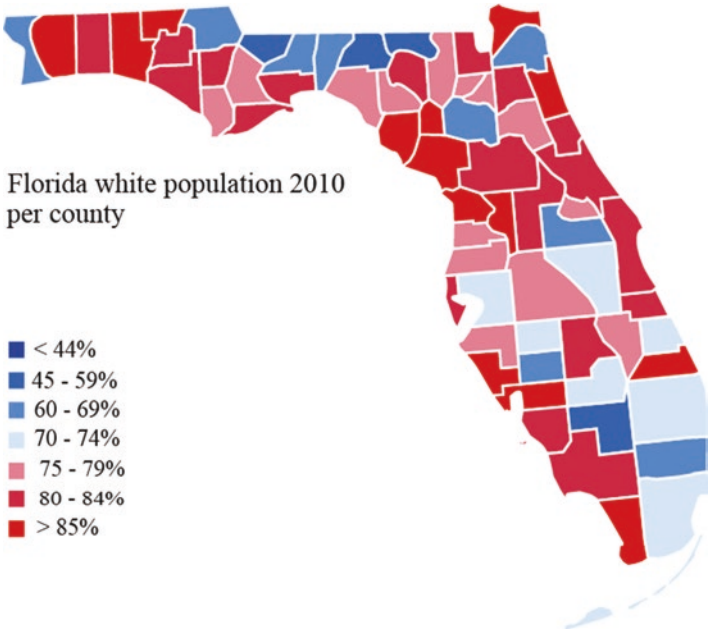


Fig. 8.21 Florida Anglo population concentration by county 2010 census

College gives an enormous advantage to swing states and it so happened that in 2016 the most crucial swing states where states with small Latino population. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by almost 3 million votes but received 224 Electoral College votes. To say it differently, she received 48% of the vote but 42% of the Electoral College. On the other hand, Donald Trump received 46% of the votes but 56% of the Electoral College votes (307). In the most populous state, California, the state with the largest Latino population of the Union, she won by a whopping 30% and received 4.3 million votes more than her opponent. In the winner-take-all voting system, these votes don't count.

In 2016, the Republicans did not need the Latino vote to win. Yet, it was one of the closest elections in the history of the nation and it probably could not be replicated again. First of all, because the margins in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania are extremely narrow and represent a worst-case scenario breakdown of the Democrats' "blue wall." Second, of all, the Latino population in the USA keeps increasing and

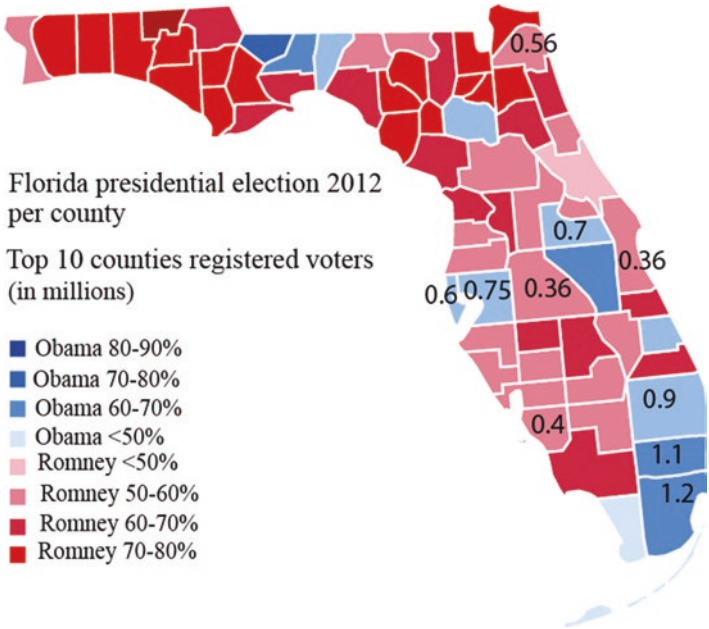


Fig. 8.22 Florida presidential election results 2012 by county

by 2020 their presence might extend the electoral map. After all, 31% of the Arizona's population identified was estimated to be Latino in 2016, representing 21.5% of the electorate. Hillary Clinton lost Arizona by 3.5% where Obama lost it by almost 10% in 2012 and 2008. In the same vein, Clinton lost Texas by less than 10%, in a noncompetitive state where none of the candidates campaigned, a state where 28.1% of eligible voters in 2016 where Latinos. About 10% is still a comfortable margin but an improvement from 2012 when Obama lost by 16%. Making Texas, and its 36 Electoral College votes, competitive again has been the Holy Grail for the Democratic Party for some time and it's not out of the realm of possibilities.

Since 2000, the fastest growing segment of the Latino population has been in southern metropolitan areas. When combined with the African-American vote, this growing Latino presence already helped flip Virginia and made North Carolina competitive. So the argument that this demographic evolution is bound to benefit the Democrats is still solid.

Nonetheless, it doesn't mean that Democrats can take the Latino vote for granted or clear the field for a historically unpopular Washington insider again. Finally, the popularity of the Republican brand among Latinos is at an all time low and may not improve during a Trump presidency.[46]

Exit polls estimated that 17% of voters in Florida in 2016 were Latinos, which of course is probably too high considering that they represented only 18% of eligible voters. The problem with exit polls is that they are notoriously unreliable when it comes to Latinos. As soon as the 2016 Exit Polls were released, they were at the heart of a controversy because they estimated that Latinos voted for Donald Trump at a rate of 28% while 66% voted for Hillary Clinton.[47] The polling firm Latino Decisions, co-founded by UCLA professor Matt Barreto, estimated that only 18% of Latino voters chose the GOP in 2016.[48] This was confirmed by another study by Francisco Pedraza and Bryan Wilcox Archuleta. Using Ecological Inference, they estimated that 77% of Latinos in Texas voted for Hillary Clinton and 19% vote for Trump as opposed to the 61–34 split presented by Exit Polls in that state.[49] Their study suggests that Latinos voted Democrat at a rate of 80% in Arizona, California, and Nevada. Before the election, a Pew Research Center polls also showed that the Republican candidate would receive less than 20% of the votes and that support number was actually a dreadful 15% among Latino Millennials (Fig. 8.23).[50]

What these numbers suggest is that the Republican brand, or at least the particular candidate in 2016, is especially unpopular among young Latinos. As a consequence, the future of the GOP among the next generation of voters is rather bleak. Furthermore, this rejection of the GOP by Latino youth indicates that the pattern of partisan polarization among Latinos might actually increase. Latinos do not vote Democrat at rates close to that of African-Americans but these polls and 2016 voting pattern analyses, along with the overall tone of the message by Donald Trump towards the Latino community, suggest that Latinos might feel repulsed by the GOP at the national level, which should, but may not necessarily, benefit the Democrats.

Conclusion

In an extremely tight 2016 presidential election, the Latino vote does not appear to have been determinant. Nonetheless, demographics indicate that while being limited by high geographic concentration, low

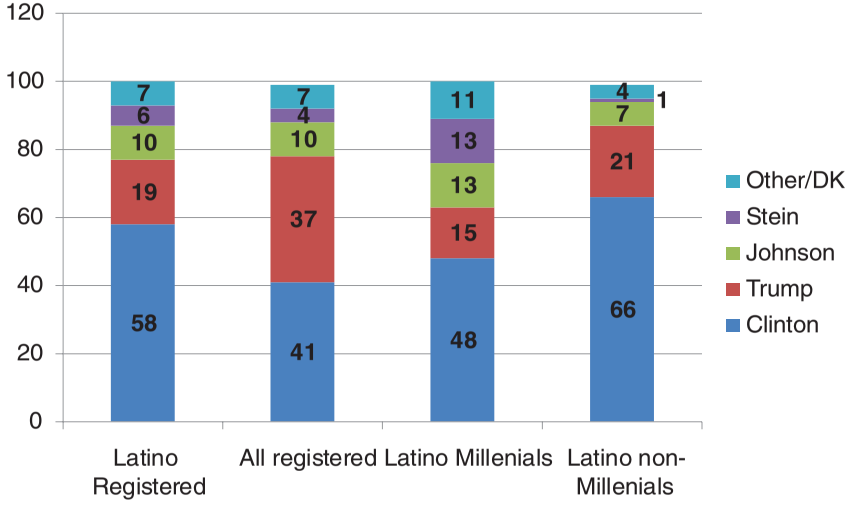


Fig. 8.23 Pew Research Center Poll August–September 2016. *Source* Pew Research Center

citizenship rates and low registration and turnout rates, the potential of the Latino vote is as strong as ever. In some states, the Latino electorate cannot be ignored. At the national level courting the Latino vote is poised to extend the electoral map and is still the best long-term calculation for the major parties. Alienating them is getting riskier with each election cycle and political context will determine how long the current GOP can survive on an electoral base that has been dangerously reduced.[51] If immigration reform is as central an issue as some scholars have observed, the very uncertainty surrounding the future of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) coupled with the national outcry surrounding Donald Trump's first executive order on immigration, leading to his abysmal approval rating so early in his presidency, do not bode well for the Republican Party's hope to regain popularity among the fastest growing segment of the American electorate.[52]

Notes

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CHAPTER 9

"Can We Get the Catholic Vote?" the Effects of Catholic Running Mates in Presidential Elections

Ted G. Jelen

Does the religious affiliation of vice-presidential candidates matter? More specifically, for purposes of this volume, does the presence of a Roman Catholic candidate for vice president affect individual vote decision in Presidential elections? Are Catholic voters more likely to support national tickets that contain one of their co-religionists? Conversely, does the presence of a Catholic on the ticket reduce support among some groups of non-Catholics?

There is a rather extensive literature that suggests that the answers to these questions may be negative. Most empirical attempts to isolate the electoral influence of vice-presidential candidates have shown such effects to be nonexistent[1] or very small.[2] Further, any relationship between attitudes toward vice-presidential candidates and vote intention may be spurious, since support for a favored candidate's running mate may present a form of post hoc rationalization.[3] That is, the causal arrow may run from

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_9

vote intention to evaluation of the candidate occupying the second spot on the ticket, rather than the reverse.

However, some studies have shown that specific running mates may have small, but potentially consequential, effects on decisions. For example, at least two analyses of the 2008 election showed that the vice-presidential candidacy of Sarah Palin may have reduced the likelihood of some voters (notably independents) to cast votes for the GOP ticker.[4] Ulbig has suggested that the effects of vice-presidential candidacies may be contingent on the extent of media coverage such candidates receive.[5] However, this would seem to pose a version of a "chicken-egg" problem. Do vice-presidential candidates influence vote choices because of extensive media coverage, or is enhanced media coverage a consequence of some (often undesirable) characteristic of the person occupying the second spot on a party's national ticket?

Thus, the extant academic literature suggests that the electoral effects of vice-presidential candidates are quite limited, and any such effects are likely to be unique to specific electoral contexts. The findings of these academic studies are often based on considerations that are theoretically and temporally proximate to voting choice. The effects of the vice-presidential nominee on vote choice for the national ticket are often estimated using respondent evaluations of the specific running mate, and, in such studies, the personal characteristics and campaign performances of running mates clearly matter. It is difficult to evaluate the effects of the choice of running mate in specific elections without considering such phenomena as Spiro Agnew's ethnic *gaffes*, Thomas Eagleton's psychiatric history, Dan Quayle's weak spelling, or Sarah Palin's inexperience or poor media interview performances.[6]

Nevertheless, journalistic and scholarly analyses alike have suggested that Presidential candidates often choose running mates for strategic purposes, and regard potential vice-presidential candidates (at least in part) as representatives of electorally important groups. "Balancing the ticket" is often considered an important element in the selection of a potential vice president.[7] Vice-presidential nominees are often selected to bring geographical balance to a national ticket (witness the Kennedy-Johnson and Dukakis-Bentsen "Boston-Austin" tickets in 1960 and 1988, respectively), or to provide ideological balance (e.g. Eisenhower-Nixon in 1952 and 1956, Reagan and George H.W. Bush in 1980; McCain and Sarah Palin in 2008, and, arguably, Trump-Pence in 2016). Running mates may also be selected to enhance the chances for the national

ticket in a specific electorally important state.[8] For example, in the 2016 Presidential election, it seems at least plausible to suppose that the selection of Michael Pence as Republican nominee for vice president may have been occasioned by a desire to placate socially conservative evangelicals who had reservations about Donald Trump. Conversely, Hillary Clinton's selection of Timothy Kaine as her running mate may have been motivated by her desire to carry Kaine's home state of Virginia, which was regarded as very competitive, and electorally crucial.[9]

The "Catholic Vote"

What of religion? After the Al Smith debacle of 1928, Catholic candidates for national office were considered by some to be electoral poison. However, even before John F. Kennedy's victory in 1960, the idea that adding a Catholic to a national ticket could be electorally advantageous was occasionally asserted. Indeed, when Kennedy sought the vice-presidential nomination in 1956, Kennedy aide Theodore Sorenson wrote a memo, arguing that the selection of a Catholic running mate for presumptive nominee Adlai Stevenson could be a net advantage in a number of competitive states that would be important in putting together an Electoral College majority. This document, circulated under the name of Connecticut party chair John Bailey, was entitled "The Catholic Vote in 1952 and 1956." The "Bailey memo" suggested that the Catholic vote could be decisive in as many as 14 states.[10]

Since John Kennedy's narrow victory in 1960, and John Kerry's (the "other" JFK) respectable performance in 2004, a Catholic affiliation is no longer considered an electoral disqualification.[11] Moreover, since the 1960 election, there have been a number of Catholic vice-presidential candidates. Two of these were Republicans—William Miller in 1964 and Paul Ryan in 2012. Democratic vice-presidential candidates with Roman Catholic affiliations were selected in 1968 (Edmund Muskie), 1972 (both Thomas Eagleton and Sargent Shriver were Catholics), 1984 (Geraldine Ferraro), the two Obama campaigns of 2008 and 2012 (Joseph Biden), and in 2016 (Tim Kaine).

It is difficult to determine the extent to which the Catholicism of potential running mates was an important consideration in their selection. With the unfortunate counterexample of Adlai Stevenson's decision to leave the choice of running mate to the national convention in 1956, the selection of a vice-presidential candidate is a choice

for which newly named presidential nominees have unusual discretion.[12] Clearly, the importance of the religious affiliation of potential vice presidential candidates will vary from election to election. Some journalistic accounts have emphasized, that Thomas Eagleton's Catholicism, as well as his forthright opposition to legal abortion, were important considerations in George McGovern's choice of Eagleton has vice presidential nominee. Conversely, after Eagleton's controversial withdrawal from the national ticket, Eagleton's replacement by Catholic R. Sargent Shriver was the result of McGovern's extended and humiliating public search for a replacement. It seems unlikely that Shriver's selection was in any way related to Shriver's Catholicism. The religious affiliation of Mondale's running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, in 1984, was overshadowed by Ferraro's status as the first female candidate for national office in US history. Similarly, although Joseph Biden's Catholicism was mentioned in many news stories (particularly in 2008), it seems unlikely that Biden's religious affiliation was a decisive consideration. Of course, these conjectures are mere speculation, since the choice of running mate is often made by a very small group of campaign insiders.[13]

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Catholic affiliation of potential vice-presidential candidates might be a consideration in their selection and that such affiliation might have some impact on individual vote decisions. Several analyses have suggested that the "Catholic vote" has switched from a virtual Democratic monolith to a crucial "swing vote," which is closely divided between the two major parties.[14] For example, I have shown elsewhere that Roman Catholic priests narrowly supported Democrat Bill Clinton in the 1996 Presidential election, but switched their votes to George W. Bush in 2000.[15] Since Roman Catholics remain concentrated in large, urban, states that are rich in electoral votes, it might be anticipated that Catholics would constitute a substantial political prize in contests for national office.

Moreover, it is not clear that anti-Catholic sentiment would necessarily constitute a negative electoral consideration in contests involving Catholic candidates. Since World War II, the Catholic population in the USA has shifted from a largely immigrant, working-class group to a segment of the population in which educational, economic, and social-class characteristics do not differ substantially from other Americans.[16] The assimilation of Catholics (especially those of European heritage) seems virtually complete. Moreover, Wuthnow has argued that American

religion has undergone a "restructuring," in which religious cleavages are no longer based on differences in denomination or doctrine, but are rather focused on degrees of religiosity.[17] In other words, the American religious landscape has come to resemble a two-party system, in which religious traditionalists are pitted against more progressive and perhaps less religious groups in the population.[18]

Wilson has provided an insightful comparison of the differences between the Kennedy campaign of 1960 and the Kerry campaign of 2004.[19] Both Kennedy and Kerry were Catholic, Democratic senators from Massachusetts (with a common set of initials). However, Wilson's analysis shows that the electoral bases of the two candidacies were quite different. Kennedy appealed primarily to voters identifying as Catholic, across levels of religiosity, and was opposed rather strongly by religiously observant Protestants. By contrast, Kerry drew disproportionate support from less observant Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation. Put another way, Kennedy's most loyal constituency in 1960 comprised Roman Catholics who frequently attended religious services. By 2004, Kerry was relatively popular with Catholics who attended Church irregularly, but Bush drew a majority of the votes of frequent Mass attenders. Thus, one very careful comparison of the Catholic Presidential vote in 1960 and 2004 is entirely consistent with Wuthnow's restructuring hypothesis.

The focus of this study is on the effects of Catholic candidates for vice-president on individual vote choices. The general hypothesis to be tested here is that, with respect to candidates occupying the second spot on national tickets, the restructuring of American religion is incomplete, and that the denominational affiliation of vice-presidential candidates matters. More specifically, it is hypothesized that the presence of a Roman Catholic on a presidential ticket will, *ceteris paribus*, increase the Democratic share of the Catholic vote (since, in the analyses that follow, all Catholic vice-presidential candidates have been Democrats). It is further expected that Catholic vice-presidential candidates will occasion countermobilization on the part of evangelical Protestants, and evangelicals will be particularly likely to punish national tickets that contain Roman Catholic running mates. Most analyses of the effects of running mates on vote decisions have focused on specific elections. In this study, I attempt a more general analysis of elections across the period in which Catholics were included in the quadrennial Veepstakes, and within particular eras of cultural politics.

Data and Method

Data for this study were taken from the General Social Surveys, 1973–2014. Separate analyses were conducted pooled surveys for elections in which the Democratic Party nominated a Roman Catholic for vice president (1968, 1972, 1984, 2008 and 2012) and for those in which the Democratic vice-presidential nominee was not a Catholic (1976, 1980, 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000).[20] Because the Democratic nominee for president in 2004 was Catholic John Kerry, the self-reported votes for the 2004 election are not included.

It should be noted that the entire GSS series was conducted after the beginning of the period during which the reconstruction of American religion has taken place—a trend that may have been initiated by the cultural liberalism of the campaign of George McGovern.[21] Nevertheless, since the rise of the Christian Right is often thought to have begun with the election of Ronald Reagan, for some purposes, separate analyses were conducted for the periods 1973–1980 (termed the "pre-Reagan era") and from 1982 to 2014 (the "post-Reagan" era).[22]

The main independent variable is the voter's religious affiliation, coded as dummy variable in which the voter is classified as a Roman Catholic or as a non-Catholic. Also included is an interaction term between Catholic self-identification and church attendance, in order to isolate the effects of being a religious observant Catholic. Church attendance and affiliation with an evangelical denomination are also included in the multivariate analysis.[23]

Because this study has as its primary focus the distinctive effects of religious variables, the models presented below include fairly elaborate multivariate controls, including party identification, residence in the South,[24] race,[25] education, and gender. It is hypothesized that *ceteris paribus,* Roman Catholics will be more likely to vote for the Democratic Presidential ticket in elections in which the Democratic vice-presidential nominee is a Roman Catholic.

Findings

To what extent are Catholic voters distinctive, and to what extent does the religious affiliation of the Democratic candidate for vice-president matter? This question is addressed in the first row of Table 9.1. In the post-reconstructionist era of American religion, Catholics are significantly more likely to vote for Republican presidential tickets in years in

Table 9.1 Multivariate models of presidential vote, by presence of Catholic vice-presidential candidate (Logistic Regression)

	*All Years**		*1972–1980*		*1982–2012**	
	No RC VP@	*RC VP#*	*No RC VP*	*RC VP*	*No RC VP*	*RCVP*
Catholic	–138**	–0.065	–0.264*	0.019	–0.121*	–0.18
Cath*Church Attendance	–0.053	0.067	–0.004	0.078	–0.046	0.051
Church Attendance	–0.421***	–0.356***	–0.581**	–0.225**	–0.415***	–0.401***
Evangelical	–0.251***	–0.352***	–0.188**	–0.304**	–0.231***	–0.461***
Party ID	0.613***	0.803***	0.518***	–0.231**	0.630***	0.876***
South	0.216**	0.549**	0.194*	0.871**	222***	0.415***
Black	0.261***	2.321**	0.048	2.128***	248***	2.318***
Education	0.099**	0.007**	0.098***	0.055**	0.087***	0.066***
Gender	0.091**	0.134**	–0.148*	0.028	0.120**	0.126*
Constant	–0.835**	–0.789**	–0.951***	–0.594*	–0.586**	0.106
Nagelkerke R^2	0.281	0.552	0.164	0.47	0.301	0.618
N	38,507	14,647	5640	6058	32,867	9601

*Does not include 2004 election
@No Catholic vice-presidential candidate #Catholic vice-presidential candidate on Democratic ticket
*significant at 0.05 **significant at 0.01 ***significant at 0.001
Source General Social Surveys, 1972–2014

which there is no Catholic on the ticket. The reader is reminded that this result is based on a fairly elaborate multivariate model, which includes, among other predictors, party identification. Conversely, the effects of respondent Catholic identification are reduced to statistical insignificance for the years in which Catholics Muskie, Eagleton/Shriver, Ferraro, and Biden were on the Democratic ticket. Thus, having a Catholic running mate appears to increase the vote total of Democratic candidates among Catholics voters, or, perhaps more precisely, a Catholic vice-presidential candidate reduces the tendency of Catholics to vote for Republicans. Inspection of the standard errors associated with these coefficients suggests that the differences between the effects of Catholicism on vote choice in these diverse electoral contexts approach conventional levels of statistical significance. The differences in Catholic voting behavior across elections which include a Catholic vice-presidential nominee and those which do not appear to be small, but genuine.

It is also perhaps noteworthy that different time variables do not seem to affect these results. As the columns in Table 9.1 that are limited to distinct time periods show, the negative, significant relationship between Catholicism and Democratic vote in elections without a Catholic on the ticket persists during the pre-Reagan and Reagan eras. Moreover, some analysts have suggested that, for many political attitudes, there exist important differences among Catholics who came of age before the Second Vatican Council, those who were politically impressionable during Vatican II, and those who might be characterized as the "post-Vatican II" cohort.[26] However, comparisons across these age cohorts (not shown) reveal no consistent pattern among Catholics with different experiences of the Ecumenical Council.

The results of the multivariate models presented in Table 9.1 are robust across a number of different specifications. As the data in the table indicate, the effects of the Catholic attendance on vote choice are small and statistically insignificant in all iterations of the model. Moreover, when survey year is entered as a predictor variable (in the model which includes respondents for all years), the effects of Catholicism on vote choice in elections with and without Catholic running mates remain substantially unchanged. Thus, the pattern of Catholic voting does not seem driven by a limited number of particular elections.

These results should be interpreted with a good deal of caution, as the large Ns that characterize the pooled samples render the possibility of Type I error rather likely. When the model is rerun separately for each election, the coefficients associated with Catholicism have the expected direction, but only approach statistical significance (somewhat counterintuitively) in 1984 and in 1992.[27]

The results presented in Table 9.1 also include an interesting finding. In both groups of elections, evangelicals are less likely to vote for Democratic candidates than are other respondents, and the effects of evangelical denominational affiliation are strong, negative, and significant. However, the effects of evangelical affiliation are considerably (and significantly) stronger in elections in which the Democratic candidate for vice president is a Roman Catholic. The differences among evangelicals between election types are statistically significant for all years, and for both the pre-Reagan and post-Reagan eras. Substantively, these differences suggest a countermobilizing reaction among evangelicals to a Catholic vice-presidential candidate from the Democratic Party.

Thus, the electoral effects of Catholic Democratic vice-presidential candidates are mixed. When the Democratic candidate for vice president is a Catholic, that candidate's coreligionists are less unlikely to vote for the Democratic ticket. The awkward double negative in the preceding sentence is deliberate. In elections in which Democratic candidates for president and vice president are not Catholic, Catholic voters are, other things being equal, more likely to vote for the GOP ticket. The net effect of Catholic affiliation in such elections is negative and statistically significant. However, in elections in which the Democratic vice-presidential candidate is a Catholic, the net Catholic advantage for the Republican Party largely disappears. A Catholic on the second spot on the ticket largely compensates for a slight, but significant tendency for Catholics to vote Republican. Conversely, the presence of a Catholic on the national Democratic ticket appears to have a strong effect of reinforcing and increasing the tendency of voters affiliated with evangelical denominations to vote Republican. Catholic vice-presidential candidates appear to make Catholic voters relatively more likely to support the Democratic ticket, but also seem to make evangelical voters even more Republican.

Discussion

As previous research has shown, the results of this study suggest that the characteristics of candidates for vice-president generally matter very little in national elections in the USA. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a recent presidential election (with the possible exception of 1960) in which the choice of a running mate could plausibly be considered decisive. Specifically for purposes of this study, it seems unlikely that the presence of a Roman Catholic on a national ticket significantly affected the outcome of any particular presidential election. Despite the attention paid to the selection of running mates by political activists and the news media, the effects of Catholic running mates do not appear to have mattered much in specific national elections.

That said, it should be noted, that, in the aggregate, the religious affiliation of vice-presidential candidates does appear to make a difference over time. Although the effects are not large, they do seem consequential across electoral eras, and across a series of election cycles. This "meta-analysis" of several elections suggests that the effects of running mate religious affiliation may have some slight, but significant and observable effects on individual vote choices.

Further, as weak as the effects of the religious identity of vice-presidential candidates seem to be, the overall electoral impact of Catholic running mates may even be less consequential. This study has shown that other things being equal, a Catholic vice-presidential candidate on the (Democratic) ticket makes Catholic voters slightly more likely to support the candidacy of their co-religionist. Specifically, such Catholic candidates largely eliminate a net tendency of Catholic voters to support the Republican Party in national elections. However, this result seems likely to be more than offset by the even greater tendency of evangelical Protestants to reject Democratic tickets that include Catholics than would otherwise be the case. The effects of an apparent anti-Catholic countermobilization among doctrinally conservative Protestants appear to be moderately strong, and consistently statistically significant. Again, such effects persist with the imposition of controls for partisanship, region, and church attendance.

Of course, the 1956 "Bailey Memo" discussed above noted that Catholics, even if outnumbered nationally, may be concentrated in large, urban states rich in electoral votes. This hypothesis is not easily tested using national survey data. Given the limited effects of vice-presidential selection generally, the insights of the Bailey memo should likely be treated with a good deal of skepticism.

However, the results of this study, with their empirical and statistical limitations, are of some theoretical interest. Specifically, the "belonging" aspect of religion in the United States has some effect on vote choices.[28] That is, independent of the effects of religious observance (the "behaving" aspect of religiosity), denominational affiliations appear to matter. To a very limited extent, Catholics are likely to support presidential tickets with Catholic vice-presidential nominees, and evangelical Protestants less so. For at least some voters, religious particularism seems to have a discernable effect.

This, in turn, suggests that Wuthnow's "restructuring" thesis may require some careful qualification and that the process by which American Christianity is coming to resemble a "two-party" system may be incomplete. To a rather small and limited extent, denomination matters, over and above the effects of the strength of religious attachment or the regularity of participation in religious organizations. A possible research strategy might be to conduct qualitative analyses of the preferences of religious observant voters, to determine the extent to which sharing a denominational affiliation with a candidate for national office is salient to citizens of faith.

Epilog: Mike Pence and Tim Kaine

Of particular relevance is the fact that both 2016 vice-presidential candidates had connections with the Catholic Church. Democratic candidate Timothy Kaine is, by most accounts, a devout Roman Catholic, who has a personal history of religiously motivated political activism in the USA and in Central America. By contrast, Republican vice-presidential candidate Michael Pence is a former Catholic, who has since converted to evangelical Protestantism, and who has embraced conservative positions on social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage.[29]

The extent to which either vice-presidential candidate influenced the outcome of the 2016 presidential election is not clear. The Clinton/Kaine ticket narrowly carried Kaine's home state of Virginia (Pence's home state of Indiana was never seriously contested), but Kaine's Catholicism was clearly not divisive in battleground states such as Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Indeed, Donald Trump's Electoral College victory, despite a major defeat in the popular vote, would seem to cast doubt on the Bailey memo. Conversely, Pence's outspoken and traditionalist positions on social issues may not have attracted much Catholic support, since recent research has suggested that Catholics are no longer distinctive on such issues as abortion or LGBT rights. Further, the paucity of media coverage of the running mates suggests a low level of salience for the importance of either Kaine or Pence. Thus, although a definitive conclusion must await more thorough empirical analyses, it seems likely that the effects of Kaine's active Catholicism or Pence's former Catholicism were quite limited.

Of course, this analysis is limited by the fact that, with the exception of William Miller in 1964, all Roman Catholic vice-presidential candidates have been Democrats. It is not clear what might happen in the event that a Republican presidential candidate selected a Catholic running mate. Indeed, prior to Donald Trump's nomination in 2016, Governor Brian Sandoval (R-NV) was prominently "mentioned" in various press accounts as a possible vice-presidential candidate. From a strictly academic standpoint, one wonders what the effect of a Republican Catholic running mate might have been. Would a GOP Catholic running mate create cross-pressures for Roman Catholics who identify with the Democratic Party (who remain a small plurality of Catholics)?

Speculation about a possible Sandoval candidacy for vice president raises the confounding issue of ethnicity. Would an Hispanic Catholic running mate (in either party) make a difference? Both the Catholic Church in the USA and the Democratic Party have experienced a "Latinization" in recent decades, and the increased ethnic and linguistic diversity of these two constituencies could conceivably have electoral consequences. Unfortunately, the lack of Hispanic candidates for national office and limitations of the General Social Surveys limit the analysis of this possibility to speculation. To the frustration of many scholars, including myself, the GSS does not include a separate code for "Hispanic" in its RACE variable. Thus, isolating the effects of Hispanic identification is not possible in the dataset on which this study is based. The possible effects of Hispanic running mates on future electoral outcomes must await the efforts of others.

That said, it seems unlikely that an Hispanic candidate would alter the outcome of a national election, absent very special circumstances. First, many Hispanic voters are located in homogeneous "red" states (such as Texas) or safely "blue" states (California, New Mexico). In more competitive states with large Hispanic populations (Florida, North Carolina, Illinois), the "Hispanic" vote is divided among groups of diverse national origin. It is not clear that Cuban-Americans in Florida or Puerto Ricans in North Carolina would respond positively to the presence of a vice-presidential candidate of Mexican origin. Thus, it might be argued that an Hispanic running mate might affect the outcome in a competitive, "swing" state with a large Hispanic population of relatively homogeneous national origin. Two such states come to mind: Nevada and Colorado. It seems at least conceivable that Sandoval might have helped Donald Trump carry Nevada since Sandoval is a highly regarded, experienced candidate from a small, competitive state.[30]

Given this improbably narrow set of circumstances, it remains unclear that the identification of an Hispanic running mate as a Catholic would add significantly to the appeal of a national ticket of either party. The fact that the states in which an Hispanic vice-presidential candidate might matter are located in the most secular region of the nation—the West—makes the hypothetical Hispanic Catholic's religious affiliation even less likely to have much of an effect.

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CHAPTER 10

Catholics and the 2016 Elections

Mark M. Gray

Election polls appear to reveal that Catholics in the USA voted for President Barack Obama twice and then for Donald Trump to succeed him. There are not too many other sub-groups in the electorate that can claim this voting history. Digging deeper, across elections, it becomes evident that the vote of Catholics for president in the USA is simultaneously everything and is nothing. It is everything in the sense that winning it leads to a very good chance of becoming president but it is also nothing in that Catholics do not vote together as a bloc and have not for quite some time, as shown in Fig. 10.1.[1]

Exit polls indicate that unlike Protestants, people of non-Christian religious affiliations, or those with no affiliation at all, Catholics sometimes vote in the majority/plurality for Democrats and sometimes in the majority/plurality for Republicans. Most often, this "swing" is an important determinant of the election outcome. Yet, the dynamics of this swing are often made up of a combination of some voters changing their minds from election to election about the party they seek in office as well as variations in turnout across elections among different sub-groups of Catholic voters that are more or less likely to lean Democrat or Republican.

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0_10

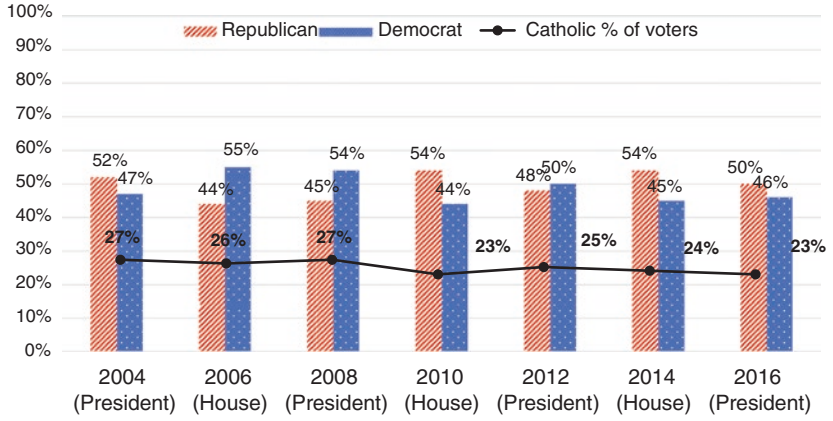

Fig. 10.1 The Bellwether: Election results for Catholic voters in the US, 2004–2016. *Source* Exit Polls, 2004–2016

The two largest and most important sub-groups of the Catholic electorate are non-Hispanic white Catholics and Hispanic Catholics. The former tend to lean conservative and Republican, and the latter tend to identify as moderate or liberal Democrats.[2] The Catholic electorate changes a bit election to election through shifting demography over time and through variations in turnout among sub-groups. In recent election years, vote shifts have been more about differences in turnout among sub-groups than demographic shifts in the overall electorate. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University has conducted national polls of the adult Catholic population since 2000. In these, the share of Hispanics among adult Catholics has measured between a relatively stable 34–38% in the last decade.[3] Thus, in recent election years, shifts in voting have been more affected by different levels of voter turnout among Catholic sub-groups than demographic changes.

Catholic voters in the USA are typically faced with a two-party choice and their faith does not always fit neatly into either of these options.[4] The recent election statements of the Catholic Bishops of the USA have been supportive of more liberal or Democratic policies, for example, when it comes to immigration and living wages. These statements have also been supportive of more conservative or Republican policies, for

example, when it comes to abortion and traditional marriage.[5] Arguably, every Catholic voter must choose a candidate or party over his or her faith. None of the options facing them on the ballot is likely to embody the issue position stances of the Catholic Church. At the same time, many Catholics do not hold positions on social, economic, and political issues that are broadly consistent with the Catholic Church.[6]

The 2016 Primaries

Knowing just how Catholic opinion was shaped during the primaries and campaign is challenging. In past election cycles, Gallup produced weekly tracking of the potential Catholic electorate. In 2016, Gallup chose not to do weekly election tracking polls. Thus, the analysis for this chapter has been based on the publicly available data from a much smaller number of polls than would typically be available after other recent elections.

The American National Election Study (ANES) fielded a national pilot survey from 22–28 January 2016 interviewing 1200 US citizens, aged 18 and older. Overall, 20% of the sample self-identified as Catholic and of these Catholics, 25% self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, 68% as non-Hispanic white, and 7% as some other race or ethnicity. Of the Catholics surveyed who voted in 2012, 53% recalled casting a ballot for Republican Romney and 43% for Democrat Barack Obama. In contrast, the 2012 election exit polls indicated that 50% of Catholics voted for President Obama to be re-elected and 48% for Mitt Romney.

Nearly two-thirds of Catholics (73%) said they were registered to vote in January 2016. Regardless of registration, when asked which Democrat and Republican candidate they preferred, they were most likely to select Hillary Clinton among the potential Democrats (37%) and Donald Trump among the Republicans (26%). When asked about a hypothetical head-to-head matchup between the two, Catholics and other Christians leaned toward Trump and those with non-Christian religious affiliations or those with no religious affiliation leaned toward Clinton (Fig. 10.2).

The Pew Research Center also had an early poll in the field from 7 to 12 January 2016. Respondents were asked if the candidates running in the primaries would be "a great, good, average, poor or terrible" president? Among Catholics, only 30% felt Trump would be a "great" or "good" president compared to 53% who thought he would be "poor" or "terrible." These views were shared by non-Hispanic white Catholics with 36% believing he would be "great" or "good" compared

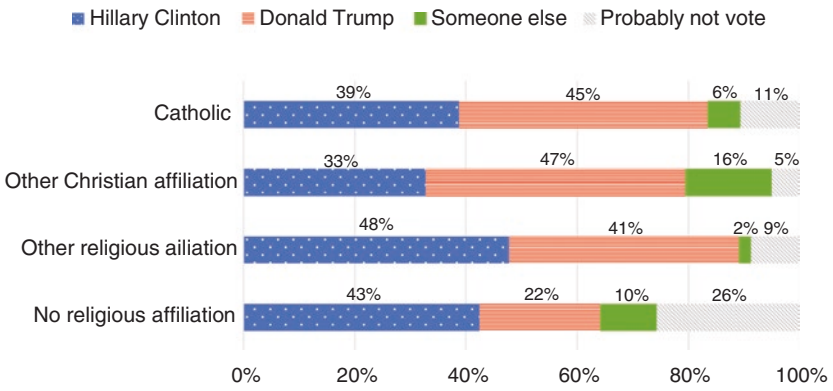

Fig. 10.2 If the 2016 presidential election were between Hillary Clinton for the Democrats and Donald Trump for the Republicans, would you vote for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, someone else, or probably not vote? *Source* American National Election Study 2016 Pilot, January 2016

to 46% feeling he would be "poor" or "terrible." The Catholics surveyed by Pew at this time were a bit more positive about the possibilities for Hillary Clinton with 40% believing she would be a "great" or "good" president. 41% felt she would be a "poor" or "terrible" president.

Thus, if we were to believe that the Pew and ANES surveys are accurately capturing Catholic sentiment in January 2016, we would see a Catholic voting-eligible population who are more likely to believe Hillary Clinton would be at least a "good" president than Donald Trump, but who also would prefer Trump to beat Clinton in a head-to-head race.

The ANES respondents were provided with a list of issues and asked, "Which of the following issues are the most important to you in terms of choosing which political candidate you will support?" They could then rank their top four. Table 10.1 on the following page shows the rank of these issues for all Catholics, for those who preferred Trump as the Republican nominee, for those who preferred Clinton as the Democrat nominee, those who would vote for Trump in a head-to-head matchup with Clinton, and those who would vote for Clinton in such a contest.

Overall, no issue was more likely to be included among the top four most important issues than terrorism and homeland security (45%). This was especially the case for those who preferred Trump as the Republican nominee (54%) and for those who would choose Trump over Clinton (62%). The issue most often considered important by Catholics who

Table 10.1 Ranked in top four most important issues in choosing a candidate

	All Catholics (%)	*Preferred Trump as Rep. nominee (%)*	*Preferred Clinton as Dem. nominee (%)*	*Would vote Trump over Clinton (%)*	*Would vote Clinton over Trump (%)*
Terrorism, homeland security	45	54	39	62	32
Economic growth	36	41	23	42	19
Social security	34	33	47	24	25
Health care	32	21	39	21	58
Immigration	28	46	26	50	24
Unemployment	27	30	39	24	42
Taxes	22	31	12	18	9
National debt	20	28	6	26	3
Gun control	20	13	28	21	30
Education	18	11	25	8	38
Environment, climate change	17	13	18	18	16
Foreign policy	15	10	7	16	3
Military strength	14	22	5	23	3
Income inequality	14	5	15	3	30
Crime	13	5	19	13	9
Abortion	10	5	13	0	6
Poverty	10	7	12	0	15
Women's rights	6	0	9	5	0
Gay rights	6	8	9	13	6
Morality, religion in society	6	5	1	8	0
Racism	6	5	5	0	13

preferred Clinton as the Democratic nominee was Social Security (47%). For those who would select Clinton over Trump, the issue most likely to be selected as important was health care (58%).

Across groups of Catholics supportive of Trump, the following issues seem to be most important in their decision-making: terrorism and homeland security, immigration, economic growth, Social Security, and the national debt. Among Catholics, supporting Clinton, the following issue appeared to have been most important: health care, social security, unemployment, education, and terrorism and homeland security.

Perhaps surprising to some, there are issues that one might think would be of greater importance to potential Catholic voters that were not often selected by respondents as important. Morality and religion in society were among the least likely to be selected as important. Also, only one in ten Catholics overall said abortion was important to their decision.

The prevalence given to the terrorism and homeland security issue and the lack of importance given to what might be considered "moral values" issues among Catholics could have been an early warning sign to Democrats. In 2004, with Catholic Senator John Kerry as the Democrat nominee, Catholics expressed a similar issue importance profile in polls for selecting their preferred candidate—who ended up being President George W. Bush.[7]

The 2016 General Election

After the nominations of Trump and Clinton, unusual volatility in election polls becomes evident. In available data, it is difficult to discern whom Catholics preferred for much of the race. In June, the Pew Research Center measured the Catholic vote as 56% favoring Clinton and 39% preferring Trump. Yet among white Catholics, Trump had an edge of 50% to Clinton's 46% share. Hispanic Catholics leaned heavily towards Clinton at 77% compared to 16% for Trump. Here we can see the difficulties in understanding how these shares might have translated into Election Day outcomes. Who will show up to vote and where? These distributions tend to determine the closely divided Catholic vote.

By August, Pew's surveys were measuring a different Catholic preference. Trump and Clinton were more evenly matched at 42% for the Republican candidate and 40% for the Democratic candidate. Just days earlier, a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll indicated a huge lead for Clinton among Catholics at 61%–34%. In the media, reporters and commentators began to gravitate toward the polls showing a big Catholic lead among Catholics and defined this as Trump's "Catholic Problem."[8] This big lead seemed to be confirmed by two Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) polls in August and October where Trump trailed Clinton by 23% points and 21% points, respectively. Yet in Pew's final pre-election reading, Clinton held and narrow 46%–44% lead over Trump—essentially a dead heat given margin of error.

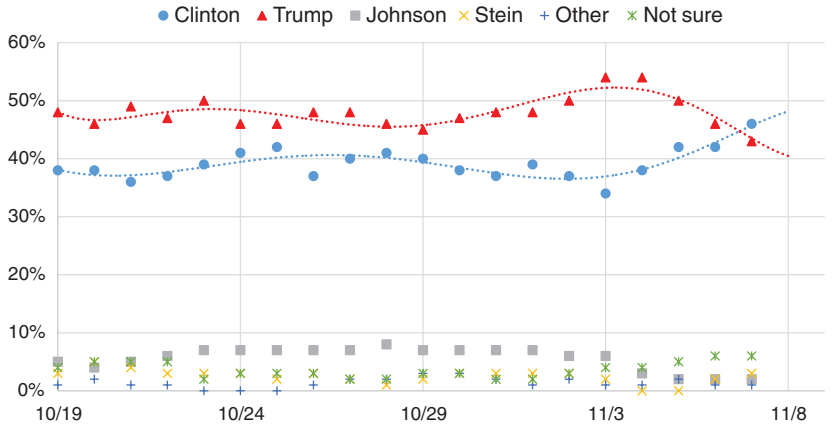

Fig. 10.3 Catholic vote intention in IBD/TIPP presidential election tracking poll, Oct. 19–Nov. 8, 2016. *Source* Investor's Business Daily (IBD) and TechnoMetrica Market Intelligence (TIPP)

In October, the IBD/TIPP Presidential Election Tracking Poll started to give a daily read on the Catholic vote. Trump's average lead in these polls from 19 October to 8 November, was 8% points. However, in the last days of the campaign, this series showed Clinton taking a small lead among Catholics. It is important to note that throughout this period, early voting was already underway and the actual election outcome reflects early voting as well as ballots cast on Election Day (Fig. 10.3).

It is difficult to discern explanations for the shifts in the Catholic vote that were evident in the polls throughout the campaign. Rather than these reflecting the real sentiments of potential voters, it is more likely that the surveys were not consistently reaching a representative or even compatible samples of what would be the Catholic electorate on Election Day. In the end, the exit polls indicated that half of Catholics voted for Trump and 46% voted for Clinton—a potential outcome predicted by the ANES pilot back in January 2016 (Fig. 10.4).[9]

The ANES pre- and post-election time series study for 2016, including 4271 respondents, was released at the end of March 2017 and provided some doubt about the widely cited exit poll's measurement of the Catholic vote nationally. In this ANES study, Catholics say they voted 48% for Clinton and 45% for Trump.[10] Neither the exit polls nor the ANES is a

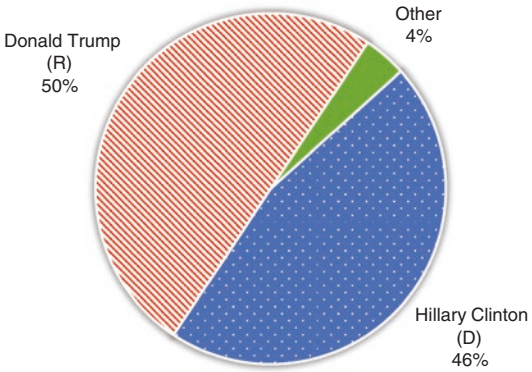

Fig. 10.4 Catholic vote for president, 2016. *Source* Edison Media Research, National Election Pool Exit Polls

definitive source and both have drawbacks.[11] Nationally, the 2016 election is similar to 2004 across major polling sources—just too close to call.[12]

However, where the votes of Catholics likely mattered most was at the local level. Only a few of the state-level exit polls utilized a religion question that allows for an assessment of how Catholics voted on a more local level. Trump won the vote of Catholics in Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, and Florida. Clinton won majorities of Catholics in New York, Nevada, and California. Trump's lead among Catholics was a necessity for winning Michigan and Florida—two states he needed to be elected. Both were 1% point races overall and Trump won Catholics in Michigan by 18% points and by 10% points in Florida. According to the Pew Religious Landscape study, 18% of Michigan's adults are Catholic as are 21% of Florida's adults. Thus, Trump would not have had the Electoral College votes to win the presidency without the votes of Catholics in Michigan and Florida (Table 10.2).

Conclusion

Streb and Frederick have argued that Catholics in the USA are not an important "swing vote" because, "Catholics vote quite similarly to non-Catholics, and their partisan affiliations and views toward the two major parties are basically the same" (109).[13] From the available data for 2016, Catholic voters appear to have approached the presidential election with an issue importance profile favoring Donald Trump's positions on homeland security, immigration, and economic growth. Catholics, in some

Table 10.2 State-level Catholic Presidential vote, 2016

	Catholic vote in exit polls		*Election results, all voters*		
	Trump (%)	*Clinton (%)*	*Trump (%)*	*Clinton (%)*	*Electoral college electors*
Ohio	58	38	52	44	18
Michigan	57	39	48	47	16
Iowa	56	42	52	42	6
Florida	54	44	49	48	29
New York	43	55	38	59	29
Nevada	40	55	46	48	6
California	32	63	33	62	55

key Electoral College states, voted for Trump by large margins, which resulted in narrow state-level wins among the broader electorates there, propelling him into the White House. If the Catholic vote in these states had been "the same" as other voters there, this chapter would have been about how Catholics voted in the election won by President Hillary Clinton.

In *Faithful Citizenship*, The Catholic bishops of the USA noted their aim in producing an election document for Catholics: "The Church equips its members to address political and social questions by helping them to develop a well-formed conscience" (14).[14] They add, "Those who knowingly, willingly, and directly support public policies or legislation that undermine fundamental moral principles cooperate with evil" (18). Catholics voters can, and usually have to, vote for a candidate or party that supports policies inconsistent with the Church. They are allowed to do so, but not specifically because that party or candidate supports the policies the Church opposes.

If the issue preferences of Catholics who voted for Donald Trump have been measured accurately by the polls analyzed here, then these choices may not have been guided much by the leaders of their faith. As *Faithful Citizenship* informs, "The Gospel mandate to 'welcome the stranger' requires Catholics to care for and stand with newcomers, authorized and unauthorized." (32). Further, they add, "Our country should support protection for persons fleeing persecution through safe haven in other countries, including the USA, especially for unaccompanied children, women, victims of human trafficking, and religious

minorities" (35–36). If these Catholics were voting for Donald Trump for reasons other than his policies on immigration and migrants, then the votes could still be consistent with what *Faithful Citizenship* describes as the Church's teachings. Certainly, concerns about terrorism and economic growth were evident. Current available polling data do not allow these to be examined more thoroughly. Regardless, the "everything and nothing" nature of the Catholic vote held in 2016. Catholics did not vote as a block, yet they still mattered significantly.

Notes

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3. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. 2016. CARA Catholic Polls (CCP). [Data File]. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.
4. Gray, Mark and Bendyna, Mary E. (2008). Between Church, Party, and Conscience: Protecting Life and Promoting Social Justice among US Catholics. In Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese (Eds.), Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power (75–92). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
5. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2015), 1–42.
6. D'Antonio, William V., Michelle Dillon, and Mary L. Gautier. (2013). American Catholics in Transition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. 135.
7. Gray, Mark M., Perl, Paul M., & Bendyna, Mary E. (2006). Camelot Only Comes but Once? John F. Kerry and the Catholic Vote. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36(2), 203–222.
8. Blake, Arron. (2016, August 30). Donald Trump has a massive Catholic problem. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/08/28/donald-trump-has-a-massive-catholic-problem/. Carmichael, Ellen (2016, August 23). Trump Has a Catholic Problem. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/ellencarmichael/2016/08/23/trump-has-a-catholic-problem/. O'Malley, Martin (2016, August 17). Mr. Trump's Catholic Problem.

The Huffington Post. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gov-martin-omalley/mr-trumps-catholic-proble_b_11569202.html.

9. Results from Exit Polls reported on Nov. 8, 2016 indicated Catholics voted 52% for trump and 45% for Clinton (as reported by *The New York Times*, Election 2016: Exit Polls. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html). As of Nov 23, 2016, after more election results had come in, reweighting of the Exit Polls for these results led to a final estimate for Catholics of 50% for Trump and 46% for Clinton (as reported by *CNN*, Exit Polls. http://www.cnn.com/election/results/exit-polls).
10. The distinct differences between nonHispanic white Catholics and Hispanic or Latino Catholics is evident in the ANES. Overall, 56% of nonHispanic white Catholic voters say they voted for Trump compared to only 19% of Hispanic or Latino Catholic voters and 18% of Catholic voters of other races and ethnicities.
11. Exit polls may not be consistently fielded across polling sites creating significant measurement errors. The post-election ANES allows voters to report their vote after knowing the outcome of the election.
12. Simply averaging the exit polls and ANES leads to an estimate of 48% Trump and 47% Clinton.
13. Streb, Matthew J. and Brian Frederick. (2008). The Myth of A Distinct Catholic Vote. In Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Micahel A. Genovese (Eds.), Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power (83–112). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
14. The document used for the 2016 election was originally drafted for the 2008 election and has been reissued since with updated introductory notes and other revisions.

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M. Gayte et al. (eds.), *Catholics and US Politics After the 2016 Elections*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62262-0