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Book Section:

Calvo, K. orcid.org/0000-0002-8831-6346, Martínez, A. and Montero, J.R. (2023) Spain: religiosity, ideology, and voting. In: Montero, J.R., Segatti, P. and Calvo, K., (eds.) Religious Voting in Western Europe. Oxford University Press , pp. 341-378.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198807858.003.0013>

Spain: religiosity, ideology, and voting Calvo, K., Martínez, A. and Montero, J.R., Religious Voting in Western Democracies edited by José Ramón Montero, Paolo Segatti, and Kerman Calvo, 2023, reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press
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Religiosity, ideology, and voting

Kerman Calvo, Álvaro Martínez-Pérez, and José Ramón Montero

C13P1 In the mid-2000s, the Spanish Catholic Church became the staunchest political adversary of the Socialist government led by Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The confrontation was characterized by both its scope and intensity. Conflicts included same-sex marriages, the value of religion in the educational curriculum, new bioethics issues, and a permissive reform of abortion (Aguilar 2010, 2013). Changes in this dense agenda were viewed by the leadership of the Spanish Church as representing a ‘gender ideology’, a morally compromised policy that clashed ‘with the most fundamental values of our culture’, diluted ‘institutions as fundamental as that of marriage and family’, and placed ‘Christians in a strange and hostile world.’¹ The Church started to build a large coalition with the conservative Popular Party (PP, Partido Popular), numerous family-oriented associations, long-standing anti-abortion organizations, and right-wing media outlets (Aguilar 2012; Calvo 2009). This period marked a clear change in Church–State relations in Spain. Despite policy differences, Socialist governments (between 1982 and 1996) avoided an open confrontation with Catholic leaders. And subsequent Conservative governments (between 1996 and 2004) helped the advancement of ecclesiastical interests when implementing their policies. In more recent years, Catholic lay activist groups took up the fight in the defence of the Church’s interests, intensifying the confrontation with left-wing political parties and advocacy groups at all levels of government (Cornejo-Valle and Pichardo 2018).

C13P2 Different as they are, these successive periods of religious accommodation and polarization constitute only but two moments of a long history in which religion and politics interacted in a large variety of conflicts and institutional settings

¹ Conferencia Episcopal, ‘Orientaciones morales ante la situación actual de España. Instrucción Pastoral’, at <https://www.conferenciaepiscopal.es/documentos/Conferencia/OrientacionesSituacionActual.htm>, accessed on 23 November 2006.

(Linz 2013 [1993]). They include occasional outbursts of anticlerical violence during the oligarchical democracy presided over King Alfonso XIII in the first three decades of the twentieth century. They reached a critical intensity when religious and class cleavages fully overlapped during the short-lived Second Republic in the 1930s. They have also experienced four decades of what was known as *National-Catholicism*, according to which the Catholic Church blessed Francisco Franco's dictatorship and was paid off with an endless number of privileges in the moral, educational, social, and political fields. During the transition to democracy, in the mid-1970s, new party elites adopted a deliberate strategy of reducing the divisive effects of the main social cleavages which contributed to the breakdown of the republican democracy and to the outbreak of the Civil War. Since many surveys were revealing a sharp division at the mass level around religious issues, political parties were concerned about the possibility that the old religious cleavage could resurface and thus put at risk the consolidation of the new, fragile democracy.

C13P3 This chapter traces the relationship between religiosity, ideology, and voting in recent elections in Spain. After a short account of the religious cleavage during the Second Republic and the subsequent strategies adopted by all parties during the transition for deactivating their negative consequences, we will devote the remaining sections to analysing religious voting in two stages. Firstly, we will explore a broad period starting in the mid-1980s and going to the 2008 general elections. In seven electoral contests extending over two decades at the height of the electoral competition between the Socialist Party (PSOE, Partido Socialista Obrero Español) and the PP, religiosity and ideology left distinctive imprints when voting for accommodating or polarizing religious issues. For that, we have built a pooled dataset from some post-election surveys that allow us to perceive the impact of religious and moral questions in different elections. Secondly, we will compare the role of religiosity in the 2008 and 2016 general elections. Following the trails left by the previous 2015 elections, in 2016 the two major parties, PP and PSOE, jointly lost 3 million of their former voters in the previous 2011 elections, whereas two entirely new parties, We Can (Podemos) and Citizens (Cs, Ciudadanos), were able to receive a joint 37 per cent voting share (Orriols and Cordero 2016). With these outcomes and a radically transformed party system, the question now becomes to discuss the extent to which traditional electoral anchors such as religiosity are resilient when voters must decide among more parties, and also when electoral competition revolves around new issues such as policies against economic crisis or remedies for democratic regeneration. But let us first have a look at some of the events that shaped religiosity as a relevant electoral factor in recent Spanish history.

C13S1

The foundations of the religious cleavage

C13P4 Spain became one of the most unstable and short-lived of the European democracies that failed in the interwar years, and the only case in which the final breakdown led to a bloody civil war.² Moreover, Spain and Portugal were the only countries in which their authoritarian regimes survived around four decades (Linz 1978: 142). This exceptional instability was to a large extent caused by the interaction of class, religious, and regional cleavages. Because of their contribution to the violent outbreak of the Civil War in 1936, those cleavages were thought to re-emerge even under different organizational dimensions after the long Francoist dictatorship and during the transition to democracy in the mid-1970s. This disruptive outcome, however, did not materialize. And in the series of electoral contests beginning in the 1977 founding elections, the old religious cleavage became transformed into an unprecedented religious voting.

C13S2

A radical religious cleavage

C13P5 Religious conflicts in Spain originated in the mid-eighteenth century with disputes within the intellectual and political elites over the proper role of the Church in society; in 1773, the clerical vs anticlerical strains increased when Carlos III, an enlightened absolutist monarch, expelled the Jesuits. In the early nineteenth century, Catholicism was literally omnipresent (de la Cueva 2021: 732). With the arrival of liberalism and enlightened political thought, the overweening role of the Church was subjected to numerous challenges. By the 1830s, religious conflicts had spread to the mass level and involved considerable violence. Spaniards became divided into those who strongly identified with a traditional, conservative, and even reactionary Roman Catholicism that constituted the basis of a Spanish identity forged in the course of a centuries-long struggle against many enemies and which of course favoured close ties between Church and State, and those more secularists who favoured liberal policies and public institutions separated from the Church (Miley 2015). This was not an exceptional story: the religious cleavage resulted from the same kinds of tensions between liberals and conservative Catholics that can be found in other West European countries. But, in Spain, as in Portugal, conflicts over the role of the Church in politics and society were often quite violent and included many episodes of anticlericalism (Sánchez 1972: Chs 10 and 12; Manuel 2002). Extending over most of the nineteenth century, the three so-called 'Carlist wars' involved a rebellion by those demanding the preservation of regional self-government rights against what they perceived as the centralizing

² This section draws extensively from Montero and Calvo (2000b), Linz and Montero (2001), Calvo and Montero (2002), Gunther, Montero, and Botella (2004), and Gunther and Montero (2009).

tendencies of the State, but also were rooted in a deep resentment of the part of Liberals against the intolerance often exhibited by the Catholic Church and the repression of individual liberties. A period of stability and moderation of these tensions accompanied the signing of a Concordat with the Vatican in 1851. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, a sharp polarization reappeared as the Church drifted towards the reactionary right and was opposed by increasingly militant anticlericals.

C13P6 Also as in other European and above all Catholic countries, social conflicts derived from class differences imbricated with religious hostilities between clericals and secularists. The more limited economic development and relatively slow industrialization in Southern Europe meant that class conflict spread to rural society, nourished by the existence in much of Spain of *latifundia*, or absentee landowners, and a large and growing landless rural proletariat. In the centre and north of the country, smallholders with conservative values and traditional religious allegiances supported conservative and even extremist right-wing parties. Moreover, both the urban and the rural proletariat were largely secularized and, in contrast to the situation in Belgium, the Netherlands, or Germany, social reform tendencies in the Church came too late to attract a significant part of the working class to Christian trade unions and parties. In many parts of Spain, class and religious cleavages were thus cumulative rather than cross-cutting. Besides, leaders of the working-class organizations rejected social-democratic reformism, and anarcho-sindicalism acquired an influence without parallel in other European countries. Bourgeois anticlericalism further fuelled polarization on the religious axis, particularly after the 1931 republican Constitution.

C13P7 A set of institutional and political factors had a particularly significant impact on the salience of the religious cleavage during the Spanish Second Republic (1931–36). While the Socialist party suffered a process of radicalization combining class and anticlerical positions, a package of harsh anticlerical measures included in the constitution of the new regime encouraged the mobilization of Catholics against the Republic and the formation of the CEDA (the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas), a mass confessional party which very quickly established itself as the main bastion of the Catholic, conservative, and anti-republican vote (Montero 1977). Religious conflicts split Spaniards into partisan blocs as violently opposed to each other as they were irreconcilable. These conflicts remained unresolved throughout the life of the Second Republic. The new regime was thus confronted by an extremely divisive cleavage structure of social and religious conflicts, as well as by a marked regional cleavage and the fierce confrontation between republicans and monarchists. The cumulative character of these cleavages and the extreme, polarized party system decisively contributed to the democratic breakdown and to the Civil War. Support for fundamental democratic principles declined over time, and the rules of the game were increasingly violated: both the PSOE and the CEDA adopted semi-loyal if not disloyal stands vis-à-vis the

Republic, and many Spaniards were increasingly attracted by the non-democratic models of Soviet communism and Italian fascism or German national-socialism. In July 1936, the legitimacy of the regime was called into question by most parties, including the two largest (Linz 1978).

- C13P8 Following the outbreak of the Civil War, the Church fully joined the nationalist side under Franco. She declared the war to be a *war of religion* or a *Crusade* in that the choice of Spaniards was restricted between Communism, Moscow, and the Freemasonry, on the one hand, and Christian civilization, on the other. In the next decades, a symbiotic relationship was established: while the Church needed protection and enforcement, the *Nuevo Estado* (or the New State) needed international respectability and domestic popular support or at least acquiescence. Church-State ties that emerged in the early years of the regime were formalized in a Concordat with the Vatican in 1953 and remained to a large extent intact throughout the regime's existence. Catholicism was declared to be the official religion of the State, and the public practice of other religions was outlawed. Divorce was abolished, and the Church was granted an exclusive monopoly over marriages and burials. The State subsidized the wages of priests and the construction of Church buildings. Most importantly, the Church regained its dominant role in every step of the education process, mostly in Catholic schools. In return, Franco re-established prerogatives once exercised by monarchs concerning the appointment of bishops. The full restoration of the traditionally dominant position of the Church represented the temporary victory of one side over the other in a see-saw struggle extending back over a century and a half (Linz 2013).

C13S3

The politics of 'never again'

- C13P9 In 1975, when Franco died and the transition to democracy began, Spain was a very different country. In place of the poor country of the 1930s, badly divided along with class and religious lines, Spain had become a relatively affluent, mass consumption society undergoing a significant secularization. Urbanization, expanded affluence, the emergence of a larger and more prosperous middle class, and the virtual disappearance of the impoverished rural proletariat of the 1930s contributed to a reduction of social polarization. Abandonment of partisan, conservative traditionalism by the Church, coupled with greater involvement of younger members of the clergy with the working classes, helped to blur previous religious divisions. These changes altered the contours of the class and religious cleavages. In the 1970s, the class divide was already conformed to the model to be expected in a modern society: the traditional class structure had been replaced by a pattern of social stratification more typical of a post-industrial society, and sharp class differences had given way to a more equal society thanks to accelerated processes of social mobility and a generalized improvement in educational levels.

The modernization of cultural patterns also implied an equally intense process of secularization. The heavy presence of Catholic orthodoxy was replaced by a more complex situation in which growing numbers of Spaniards became estranged from the Church as an institution, found their religious convictions weakening, and felt that their political choices could be independent of their religious beliefs (Montero 1994).

C13P10 The translation of these new religious and class divides into political preferences, however, was not without problems. The main political parties remained strongly linked to religiously loaded images. The traditional anticlericalism of leftist parties (as the Communist [PCE, Partido Comunista de España] or the Socialist) contrasted with the pronounced Catholic profiles of those in the centre-right (as UCD, Unión the Centro Democrático) and right (AP, Alianza Popular). In a 1978 survey, while only 13 and 26 per cent considered that the Communist and Socialist parties were respectively 'defenders of Christian values', figures for the centre-right and conservative parties reached 68 and 71 per cent, respectively (Linz et al. 1981: 414 and 483). Also, this divide pitted leftist voters, traditionally considered anticlerical or at least very critical of the influence exerted by the Church on Spanish society, against the centre-right and conservative voters, who included large numbers of devout Catholics and who overwhelmingly considered Church influence as positive. The stark division of attitudes toward the Church was also extended to Church-related public policy issues. They involved several relevant controversial issues, such as legalization of divorce, regulation of abortion, and reform of the structure and financing of the education system. In all of them, the two main parties of the left clashed with the two conservative parties over the specific provisions to be included in the new Constitution (Gunther and Blough 1981).

C13P11 In short, the degree of polarization of mass attitudes toward the Church during the transition was indeed considerable among electoral clienteles of the various parties. It would therefore have been relatively easy for irresponsible political or ecclesiastical leaders to articulate these differences, triggering a religious conflict whose great potential for polarization would, moreover, have made it very difficult to resolve. But this did *not* happen. Instead, a constitutional text was written that represented an acceptable compromise to all politically significant parties (except Basque nationalists); the Constitution was later ratified by an overwhelming majority of 88 per cent in the December 1978 referendum. In this period, the outcome could be primarily explained by the so-called *politics of consensus*—a set of deliberate strategies developed by party elites to adopt consensual rules when drafting the Constitution and pragmatic attitudes in negotiating their differences with the Church (Gunther 1992; Linz and Stepan 1996: Ch 6). Party elites also decided *not* to politicize conflicts around religious matters and, more particularly, *not* to mobilize voters around religious issues (Montero and Calvo 2000a). This included resolving their differences with the Church through discreet, interparty

negotiations (Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1986: 221ff.). For their part, the Church hierarchy assumed the political change by clearly supporting the new democratic regime and deciding not to engage in politics through a new Christian Democratic party;³ the bishops also showed an unprecedented capacity for pragmatism in their defence of the rights of the Church. In other words, these new positions revealed the efforts undertaken by political and religious ecclesiastical elites to achieve the religious *peace* that would characterize the transition. As Juan J. Linz put it (2013: 464), all agreed on a politics of *never again*.

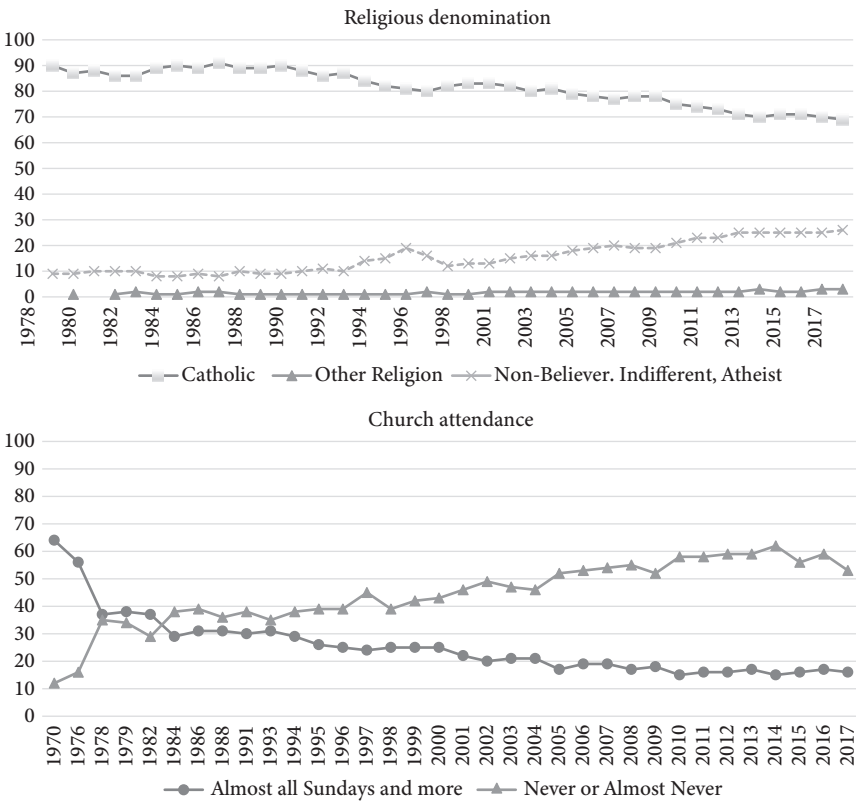
C13S4

Increasing levels of secularization

C13P12 From the demand side, this picture should be complemented by the remarkable degree of secularization achieved by the Spaniards (Bericat 2015). Under the Franco regime, the presence of the Church was to be found in many facets of public and private life, from mandatory religious education in every school and massive religious attendance at religious celebrations, to numerous mechanisms of social control, including censorship of entertainment media. Around the time of Franco's death, in the mid-1970s, Spain was undergoing an extraordinarily rapid process of secularization, that, moreover, continued throughout the new democratic period. It incorporated changes that led to structural processes of estrangement from the Church as an institution, a decline in the strength of religious beliefs, and a drop in religious observance (Casanova 1993). And this was accompanied by other evident symptoms of secularization, understood as political-cultural laicization and the individualization of consciences, two processes which in turn challenged the social significance of religious institutions, beliefs, and practices (Dobbelaere 2004a). As revealed by the 2013 edition of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's 'religion monitor', many Spaniards have become largely indifferent to religion; they have also become very wary of dogmatism. For instance, less than 10 per cent of the population believes that its religion 'is the only road to salvation' (Pickel 2013: 35). This is lower than in Sweden or Switzerland, and similar to France or Great Britain.

C13P13 To testify to the scale of these changes, we trace in Figure 13.1 the evolution of religious denomination and church attendance. Both tell a straightforward story about the declining relevance of religiosity at the individual level. In the late 1980s, almost every Spaniard declared to belong to the Catholic Church; the group of

³ As a matter of fact, during the transition both religious and conservative elites rejected the possibility of forming a confessional party and more generally the creation of lasting linkages between parties and ecclesiastical or religious organizations. In the 1977 founding elections, several minor Christian Democratic groups coalesced into a Christian Democratic federation (FDC, Federación de la Democracia Cristiana), but it received only 1.4 per cent of the vote share. The electorate typically voting for Christian democratic parties gave its support to the UCD, which in practice served as a sort of 'functional alternative' to Christian democracy (Linz 2013: 457); see also Gilmour (2005).



C13F1 **Figure 13.1** Religious denomination and church attendance in Spain, 1970–2017

Sources: Banco de Datos, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), several surveys; for 1970, de Miguel et al. (1970: 443); for 1976, 1978, and 1979, Orizo (1983: 177); for 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1991, Banco de Datos, DATA; DATA surveys 1979, 1982, and 1993; and for 1994, 1996, and 1998, Arroyo (1999).

non-believers, indifferents, and atheists only reached somewhat less than 10 per cent. In a steady but constant trend, both groups have been changing. While those declaring their belonging to the Church have been reduced to around 70 per cent, non-believers have increased up to 26 per cent. In its turn, church attendance has evolved in much more sizeable terms. Whereas in the last years of the Franco dictatorship 70 per cent declared that they attend religious services every Sunday or more often, only twenty years later this figure has dramatically dropped to a third of Spaniards. Naturally, the opposite trend has also come about: the proportion of citizens who never attend church more than doubled. The evolution of both groups was irreversible—increasing in those who never attend religious services, decreasing in those who do it every Sunday and more often. In both cases, these trends coexist, as in many other European countries, with important

generational changes (Halman and de Moor 1993: 44–5). Along with Belgium and the Netherlands, Spain is the country in which church attendance rates have fallen most sharply and rapidly (Jagodzinski and Dobbeleare 1995: 95). As argued with a different measurement by Ferruccio Biolcati and Cristiano Vezzoni in Chapter 5 in this volume, Austria, Luxembourg, and Spain share a quite strong and continuous decline in church attendance.

C13P14 These changes accompanied others which took place in similar religious dimensions. For mentioning only a few, they were evident in the drastic decline of the organizational infrastructure and institutional presence of the Church, in the widespread autonomy of Catholics for expressing their beliefs, in the extended disregard of the Church's magisterium on moral issues, or in the strong rejection by even those practising of Church's opinions on governments, policies, parties, and more generally politics (Calvo, Martínez, and Montero 2010). The outcome points to a historically new religious map in Spain. At the mass level, Spanish society combines a Catholic cultural identity with a significant estrangement from the Catholic Church, in which expressions of religiosity are kept usually out of the public realm. Spaniards have now become divided into three main groups: the very religious, who may also practise their religion; the Catholics who practise only irregularly and/or show a certain reluctance to accept the basic precepts of the Church; and those who consider themselves indifferent, either not feeling identified with the Church or rejecting the religious experience.

C13P15 Thus, these processes reinforced from below the strategies developed from above by political and religious leaders. In contrast with the Second Republic, the disruptive potential of political conflicts along religiosity was greatly reduced. Party elites had studiously avoided taking conflictual stands on religious issues, and mutual tolerance and respect had characterized political relations between religious Spaniards and non-believers for the first time since the early nineteenth century. But, similarly to most European countries included in this volume, that does not imply that the religious dimension lacks any political significance. As we will analyse in the remainder of this chapter, it has taken the form of a religious voting which in the last four decades has evolved differently according to party elites' decisions to activate it or not in political competition.

C13S5

Changing intensities in religious voting

C13P16 To what extent is religiosity salient in Spanish electoral politics? A superficial answer would confirm that it is virtually absent. Spain is after all a homogeneous Catholic country with high levels of secularization and without confessional parties. But the relationships between religiosity and parties are multifaceted. Religious divides can very well exist even in religiously homogeneous countries lacking confessional parties: the various political preferences held by religious and

secular voters can be easily translated into conflicts when activated by religious or party elites on a large number of religious or moral issues.

C13S6

The weakening of the religious divide

C13P17 Religious voting made its entrance quite early into the new Spanish democracy. Even though all major parties sought to avoid religious conflicts and the Church took no overt stand in partisan politics, religiosity emerged in the very first, founding 1977 elections as a relevant component of the voting choice (Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1986: Ch 6). The electorates of the major parties were differentiated along religious lines. There were as well strong linkages among religiosity, ideological orientations, and partisan preferences. Reflecting the political polarization over religious questions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the very concepts of *left* and *right* were related to religiosity (Medina 2015: Ch 3). The Kendall *Tau-c* ordinal association in a 1979 post-election survey between left–right designation and religious identity was 0.41. And the *Tau-c* relationship between religiosity and vote for one of the major nationwide parties of the left (PCE or PSOE) or of the right (UCD or AP) was even stronger, a stunning 0.53. Most conservative supporters of the latter parties described themselves as religious, if not as practising Catholics, as compared with only minorities of Socialist and particularly Communist voters.

C13P18 This strong correlation between religiosity and partisan preferences began to substantially weaken in the mid-1980s. Once the format and dynamics of the old religious cleavage had disappeared, the religious voting became depolarized in the new party competition. This was in large measure due to three complementary factors that had been missing from Spanish politics for over a century and a half: the strategic depoliticization by party elites of religious conflicts, the atmosphere of religious tolerance triggered by the ever-increasing secularization, and the diminished role of organized religion in everyday life (Montero and Calvo 2000b). In this period, each nationwide party put in motion different mechanisms regarding religious voting. The PSOE, being the government party and the main component in a predominant party system after the 1982 earthquake elections, had an extraordinary success in pushing its catch-all strategies: its voters became a sort of representation of Spanish society. This success overturned its old anticlerical, anti-religious images and permitted the party to receive voters from almost every religious category. Consequently, the religious variables had only a weak influence on the probability of voting for the PSOE. The case of the Communist Party and later the United Left (IU, Izquierda Unida), the coalition formed in the mid-1980s, was different: non-believers systematically preferred voting for it than for any other party. In the competition with the PSOE for the non-religious voter, the PCE-IU was always the winner. Much more than for the

Socialist party, the interaction effects between religiosity and ideology were crucial for the Communist party: the impact of the former on the vote was dramatically dependent on the value of the latter. These indirect effects were also relevant for the PP vote, although the strength of its association with religiosity was in decline. In short, religious variables during the 1980s and most of the 1990s did play a secondary role in the electoral competition between the two main parties. It is also likely that voters for these two parties respond to two different types. Most PP voters hold a more or less traditional understanding of religiosity, in which religious beliefs, moral principles, and rates of church attendance were linked to standard criteria of their electoral behaviour. In contrast, many PSOE voters seem to be more attracted by a less orthodox and more individualistic understanding of religiosity, much closer to a sort of *à la carte* spiritual understanding of the world.

C13P19 It should be said that religious issues could have very easily been activated. Despite the secularization process, large sections of society still had religious interests, there were potential opposing groups in various religious conflicts, and minorities in both groups had intense and easily mobilizable preferences. If the religious voting was not activated it is because of both sets of actors, political parties and the Church, adhered to strategies of self-restraint, moderation, and contention (Orriols 2013). As a consequence, the religious conflict has been kept out of the *political* agenda despite of the existence of occasional clashes over the implementation of several relevant policies. The Spanish case, therefore, provides evidence for the joint effects of depolarization from above and secularization from below. One result of these strategies is the greater heterogeneity of the electoral preferences of both religious and secular groups. And a second result underscores the self-reinforcement effects brought about when party elites have to deliver their electoral supply through a package appealing to all religious categories, and therefore compatible with the preferences expressed by their core nuclei of voters (Montero and Calvo 2000b).

C13S7

The politicization of religious voting

C13P20 During the 2000s, however, religious voting experienced a radical change (Cordero 2017). As a relevant component of their electoral strategies, the two main parties decided to politicize religious issues. The first step came in 1996, when the Popular Party was able to defeat for the first time the Socialist party and occupied the government. It was to some extent a *new* party, since the old Alianza Popular (AP) 'refounded' itself as the Partido Popular (PP) in 1989; the older generation of party leaders was replaced and the party image was targeted to change from a right-wing programmatic party to a conservative catch-all party. Once in government, the new prime minister, José María Aznar, sought to mobilize the religious vote by taking up religious themes both rhetorically and politically through the

implementation of public policies. The Conservative government made decisions that followed very closely the preferences of the Catholic Church concerning a wide variety of issues. It increased financial support for privately owned but publicly funded schools, mostly religious; it reintroduced religious instruction into the public-school curriculum, and it substantially rose state financial contributions to the Church. As Susana Aguilar (2013: 321) remarks, the leaders of the Spanish Bishop's Council (CEE, Conferencia Episcopal Española) at the time applauded Aznar's policies: as they underlined, they were 'more open' to the Church's interests.

C13P21 This strategy had a reinforced continuity ten years later, when the PP, led now in the opposition by Mariano Rajoy, decided to polarize the 2004–8 legislative session through the priority given to religious issues in its competition against the Socialist government (Gunther and Montero 2012). Zapatero's victory in the 2004 elections represented a crucial moment for Church–State relations. As prime minister, Zapatero abandoned the framework of peaceful cohabitation with ecclesiastical authorities that did characterize the two previous decades. Since 2004, the government's initiatives included same-sex marriage and adoption, bioethics, reproductive rights of women, and further plans for a more permissive abortion (Chaqués and Palau 2012). This large set of policies and proposals made it chronic in those years the harsh conflict between the Church, the PP, and their conservative allies in the media, on the one hand, and the government, the PSOE, and other left-wing parties or progressive groups, on the other (Calvo 2010). The Catholic hierarchy coined in 2001 the term 'gender ideology', building up since then a frame where government's initiatives were cast as an effort to annihilate the Catholic family and Spanish traditional values (Cornejo-Valle and Pichardo 2018). The PP also vehemently opposed those initiatives, combining its parliamentary opposition with no fewer than fifteen massive public demonstrations against the government, co-sponsored by the extremely conservative Church hierarchy and the even most conservative Catholic organizations (Aguilar 2013). These confrontational protests culminated in the abandonment of the three-decades-old partisan neutrality of the Church: it behaved as a peculiar interest group whose intense political activism has been quite exceptional when compared to other European Christian Churches (Aguilar 2010). Nevertheless, it seems apparent that the Church's appeal to moral fractures and the decay of core social beliefs have greatly contributed to the contemporary saliency of *cultural wars* as a defining feature of the Spanish political landscape.

C13P22 The following sections of this chapter analyse the extent to which religious voting appeared in several elections, more particularly in the 2008 and the 2016 ones (Montero and Lago 2010; Llera, Baras, and Montabes 2018). As we hope to demonstrate, the impact of religious issues on the vote was strengthened. It strictly followed a top-down logic, a deliberate strategy by party elites and Church hierarchy for activating religious divides for receiving positive electoral results.

Major parties included in their manifestos proposals for those contested moral and religious issues, many of which were taken up by the media (Cordero 2014). In the 2008 electoral campaign, the Church hierarchy intervened with ferocious attacks against the government (asserting for instance that the PSOE was destroying democracy, contributing to the disintegration of the family, and breaking national unity), and the bishops' conference released a statement explicitly calling all Catholics to cast ballots for the PP (Calvo, Martínez, and Montero 2010).

C13P23 The return of the PP to power in the 2011 elections did not restore Church–State relations to the situation previous to 2004. A conservative legal expert defined Rajoy's approach to religious politics as a peculiar attempt to 'normalize' Church–State relations, defined as the abolition of every policy passed by the previous government in the fields of education, marriage, and abortion (Navarro-Valls 2013: 22). After 2011, and in parallel to the expansion of the action repertoire of Spanish religious groups together with conservative media, the ties between the Catholic Church and the PP, on the one hand, and between the PSOE and secular social groups, on the other, became stronger. Former precautions when it came to dealing with religious issues were lifted, helping a large selection of moral and religious issues find a permanent role in parties' political agendas. The (unsuccessful) attempt by Rajoy's government to impose new stringent limitations on abortion between 2013 and 2014 came as a fitting example of this new state of affairs (see Karel Dobbelaere in his Chapter 2 in this volume).⁴ The PP has also intervened heavily in the fields of education and social security to attain goals that reflect the views of the Catholic Church. Rajoy's minister of Education sealed the place of the teaching of (Catholic) religion as a compulsory course in curricula; at the same time, a new education law allowed (the mostly religious) schools that segregated according to gender to remain eligible to receive public funds. Decisions in the area of social security banned same-sex female couples from public fertility programmes.

C13S8

Analysing religious voting: data and variables

C13P24 Table 13.1 shows the actual electoral results in votes and seats received by the main nationwide parties for the Congreso de los Diputados (or the lower house of the parliament) since the mid-1980s. We will analyse the impact of religious voting on them through two different research strategies—longitudinal and cross-sectional. For the latter, we employed a logit model for the odds of voting for PP against

⁴ Building on an electoral commitment, Rajoy's minister of Justice, Alberto Ruiz Gallardón, pushed for a new legal framework that did away with Zapatero's policies on women's sexual and reproductive rights; in the new framework, abortion would be restricted to only two scenarios, namely rape and serious health risk for the mother (Márquez 2018). Aligning with Church preconceptions, abortion should be outlawed even in the case where the foetus showed signs of malformation or disability.

C13T1 **Table 13.1** Votes and seats for the main nationwide parties for the Spanish Congreso de los Diputados, 1986–2019^a

Parties	Votes and seats ^a	1986	1989	1993	1996	2000	2004	2008	2011	2015	2016	2019a	2019b
PCE/IU	Votes (%)	4.5	9.1	9.6	10.6	5.5	4.5	3.8	7	3.7			
	Seats	7	17	18	21	8	5	2	11	2			
Podemos	Votes (%)									20.8	21.1	14.7	11.8
	Seats								69	71	42	35	
PSOE	Votes (%)	44.6	39.9	38.8	37.5	34.2	42.6	43.9	29.2	22.2	22.7	28.7	28
	Seats	184	175	159	141	125	164	169	120	90	85	123	120
UPyD	Votes (%)							1.2	4.8				
	Seats							1	1.4				
CDS	Votes (%)	9.2	7.9										
	Seats	19	14										
Ciudadanos	Votes (%)									14.1	13.1	15.9	6.8
	Seats									40	32	57	10
AP/PP	Votes (%)	26.3	25.9	34.8	38.8	44.5	37.7	39.9	45.3	28.9	35.1	16.7	20.8
	Seats	105	107	141	156	183	148	154	186	123	137	66	89
VOX	Votes (%)											10.3	15.1
	Seats											24	52

^a The Congreso de los Diputados (the parliament lower House) has 350 *diputados* or MPs. Regionalist and nationalist parties are not included in the table. The 2019a elections were held in April, and those of 2019b, in November.

Source: Spanish Ministry of Interior (<http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es>).

PSOE in the 2008 and 2016 elections. For the former, we created with the corresponding post-election surveys a cross-section panel that covers the 1986, 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections.⁵ In this case, and following standard practices with pooled datasets (Wooldridge 2002), we proceeded to merge the distinct databases. We obtained a new one that contains our key variables which are observed four times in consonance with each of the four surveys included in the new pooled dataset. In addition, a new categorical variable that groups the observations belonging to the different survey years has been included. In these analyses, we used a multinomial logit specification where the odds of voting for PP and IU against PSOE (in both cases) are considered. As Table 13.1 makes clear, the leftist coalition IU was, during the period 1986–2008, an important electoral competitor to the PSOE. To properly estimate the vote choice for the Socialist party, we have to do so with the two parties ideologically placed at its left (IU) and its right (PP).

C13P25 As employed elsewhere in this volume, we have used attendance at mass and participation in religious services as the standard indicator of the respondents' religiosity (Jagodzinski and Dobbeleare 1995; Michelat 1997). Its distribution at the individual level is displayed in the previous Figure 13.1. We used additive models, i.e. models in which individual variables are added sequentially to verify their individual effects and, also, their effects on the significance of the remaining variables (Long and Freese 2006). In additive models, samples remain constant to make coefficients readily comparable across them. The causal mechanism here is a simple one, especially in the case of the Catholic religion. Religious dogmas contain participative rules of obligation. Participation has a cost, and individuals who meet the most demanding obligations can be considered to have more solid religious sentiments and also a greater disposition to assimilate the moral and political vision of the Church (Linz 2013: 442; Esmer and Petterson 2007). We created dichotomous or fictitious variables for each one of the categories of mass attendance using those who never attend mass as a reference category, a large group that assures the statistical efficiency of the models (Hardy 1993: 10); it also is a group substantively interesting in relation to the dependent variables, as much in the probability of voting for PP (and IU in our longitudinal analysis) against doing so for PSOE. Furthermore, changes in the level of religiosity of the respondent always indicate a greater religious commitment concerning those who never go to church.

C13P26 We also hope in the following pages to unravel the always complex relationship between religiosity and ideology. As in other Western democracies, in Spain the ideological self-placement of citizens has been considered the best predictor of their vote choice (Sani and Montero 1986; Gunther and Montero

⁵ Surveys were undertaken by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), Madrid, in 1986 (#1542, $N = 8,286$), 2000 (#2382 and 2384, $N = 5,283$), 2008 (#2750 and 275, $N = 6,086$), and 2016 (#3145, $N = 6,175$), as well as the one carried out by TNS/Demoscopia in 2004 ($N = 2,929$).

2001; Medina 2015). But, as John Bartle (1998: 501–2) rightly pointed out, not all of the explanatory variables have the same role in the causal chain. Because ideology occurs causally *later* than most of the independent variables included in conventional regression models, it very often *robs* much of their effects on the vote. This has been documented to take place, for instance, in the case of class voting (Evans 1999b). Failing to acknowledge the distinction between *direct* and *indirect effects* can give way to misleading interpretations of the results. Particularly in those cases where religious identities are strongly correlated with ideological positions, the effect of ideology can lead us to believe that religiosity is *not* influential when in reality it is so. Our additive models allow us to carefully analyse the existence of those indirect effects of ideology on the religiosity of those interviewed, and consequently on their voting decision. The model is complemented with a variable measuring the difference in the evaluation of PSOE and PP leaders. The decision to opt for a combined variable of leadership, instead of the more traditional evaluation of candidates, stems from the requirements of our longitudinal analysis, where they are subject to change over the period analysed corresponding both to PSOE and PP. The variable proposed has the advantage of enabling meaningful comparisons at different points in time as its interpretation remains constant: namely, how a more positive evaluation of the PSOE leader vis-à-vis the PP leader affects the odds of voting for PP or IU (against PSOE) in the period 1986–2008. Also, for the sake of comparability, we have created the same variable for our cross-sectional analysis of the 2008 and 2016 elections, although, in this case, we were able as well to include some other variables. Finally, standard socio-demographic controls have also been considered.

C13S9

The longitudinal analysis, 1986–2008

C13P27 Table 13.2 presents our longitudinal analysis of the impact of religiosity on the PP and IU vote (versus PSOE vote) in four general elections held between 1986 and 2008. As already anticipated, the table contains the additive multinomial logit models with which we hope to understand as much the *direct* effects of religiosity on the vote as the *indirect* effects of ideology; thus Model 1 excludes the ideological variable, while it is included in Model 2. The different models for each party have been estimated using the same samples, making it possible to compare their results *with* and *without* ideology. The glaring differences between the coefficients of both models confirm the importance of the indirect effects. For IU and PP, the impact of religiosity is considerably greater when ideology is *not* present; and is of lesser impact, even though it continues being relevant, when ideology is included and therefore *absorbs* a substantial part of the religiosity effect. Coefficients have a similar magnitude, although of opposite signs, for the odds of voting for PP and IU against PSOE. More specifically, in the model without ideology, whatever shift

toward more frequent church attendance for the reference category (never attending) reduces to a significant degree the probability of voting for IU. In Model 2, the inclusion of ideology reduces the negative impact of religiosity, but keeps significant church attendance at whatever level in comparison with those who never attend religious services. This implies that the religious profile of Socialist voters (the comparison group in the outcome variable) vis-à-vis the IU profile is clearly more moderate. Stated in another fashion, ideology allows Socialist voters with moderate religious positions to maintain their support for the Socialist party: they feel ideologically closer to the party, even though in religious and moral issues they find themselves more distant from it. In the case of the PP, ideology also moderates the weight of the religious factor among its voters; but their religious profile is more intense than that of the Socialist voters (also the reference group in the outcome variable). In this period, the PSOE seems to have been more successful, if limited, in developing a catch-all strategy concerning the religious factor as compared to PP and IU.

C13P28 The remaining variables included in Table 13.2 confirm our expectations, particularly about ideology and leadership evaluation, but not in the cases of education and occupation. The size of the municipality points out to urban voting both for PP and IU (against the PSOE) over the period 1986–2008 in the full models once the effect of ideology is controlled for. Finally, older voters are less likely to vote for IU as compared with PSOE, while for the PP this effect is not significant. The results of the dummy variables marking the election years deserve special attention. In 2000 (and concerning the 1986 elections, which is the reference category), the probability of voting for the PP increases considerably, as is also the case for IU; these were indeed the elections in which the PP won a parliamentary absolute majority. In the 2004 elections, the odds of voting for PP and IU against the PSOE dropped, but this is not significant. In 2008, only the likelihood of voting for IU against the PSOE fell dramatically, highlighting the success of the first Zapatero government in attracting the support of leftist citizens who used to vote for the IU coalition.

C13P29 We just confirmed that ideology absorbs an important part of the effects of religiosity on the vote; also, results suggest that there are quite remarkable differences in the religious profiles of PSOE, PP, and IU voters, and in the correct direction. To what degree have these effects been changing over time? How has religious voting evolved over the past two or three decades? Simplistic approaches to social cleavages could easily answer that the impact of religiosity on voting should keep diminishing until they completely vanish: secularization does away with religious differences, religious groups are decreasing, and the place of religion in the public sphere has been irreversibly declining in the last decades. But, as in other countries included in this volume, these arguments assume a linear process which could be interrupted by several contingencies; for instance, by party leaders should they

C13T2 **Table 13.2** Multinomial logit regressions to explain vote for PP and IU (vs vote for PSOE) in the Spanish 1986, 2000, 2004, and 2008 Spanish general elections^a

Variables	PP/PSOE vote		IU/PSOE vote	
	Model 1 Without ideology	Model 2 With ideology	Model 1 Without ideology	Model 2 With ideology
<i>Church attendance</i> (r.c., Never)				
Several times per year	0.871^{***}	0.671^{**}	-0.954^{***}	-0.734^{***}
Several times per month	1.181^{***}	0.871^{**}	-1.368^{***}	-1.024^{***}
Almost every Sunday	1.480^{***}	1.219^{**}	-1.530^{***}	-1.261^{***}
Sundays and festivities	1.854^{***}	1.472^{**}	-1.748^{***}	-1.416^{***}
Several times per week	2.312^{***}	1.611^{**}	-1.569^{**}	-1.030
Ideology		0.804^{***}		-0.654^{***}
Difference evaluation leaders	-0.775^{***}	-0.583^{***}	-0.187^{***}	-0.255^{***}
PSOE-PP				
Sex (women)	-0.245^{***}	-0.325^{***}	-0.011	0.109
<i>Education</i> (r.c., Without primary education)				
Primary education	0.350^{***}	0.313^{**}	0.068	0.118
Professional education	0.397^{**}	0.336[*]	0.051	0.091
Higher education	0.521^{***}	0.423^{**}	0.104	0.151
University degree	0.812^{***}	0.786^{***}	0.602^{***}	0.629^{***}
<i>Occupational status</i> (r.c., Unemployed)				
Working	0.676^{***}	0.580^{***}	0.004	0.019
Retired	0.655^{***}	0.547^{**}	0.021	-0.020
Student	0.549^{***}	0.348	0.354[*]	0.348
Housekeeper	0.653^{***}	-0.263	0.622^{***}	-0.257
<i>Age</i> (r.c., 18–30)				
31–45	0.078	0.114	-0.110	-0.074
46–65	0.038	0.026	-0.146	-0.093
More than 65	-0.193	-0.214	-0.632^{**}	-0.491[*]
<i>Size of municipality</i>	-0.004	0.048[*]	-0.013	0.050 [*]

*Elections (r.c.,
1986)*

2000	0.157	0.469^{***}	0.683^{***}	0.311^{**}
2004	-0.048	-0.000	-0.154	-0.189
2008	-0.084	0.161	-0.511^{***}	-0.517^{***}
Constant	-1.655^{***}	-5.520^{***}	-0.842^{***}	1.225^{***}
N	9,546		9,546	
χ^2	1747 ^{***}	1968 ^{***}	1747 ^{***}	1968 ^{***}
Prob.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R ²	0.51	0.58	0.51	0.58
Log-likelihood	-3994	-3433	-3994	-3433

^a Models have been estimated using robust standard errors; r.c., reference category. In bold, significant coefficients. Levels of significance are the following: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Sources: Post-electoral surveys undertaken by the Spanish Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) in 1986, 2000, and 2008, and by TNS/Demoscopia in 2004.

decide to activate religious issues or by Church elites if they decide to react to a secularized environment by an attempt to reinforce religious credentials.

C13P30 One strategy for exploring those two opposed approaches consists in estimating the conditional effects of religiosity on voting over time through interactive models between the religious attendance variable and the election year variables, while controlling for voters' ideological self-placement. Results are shown in Table 13.3; for considerations of space, we are only showing the coefficients of the main variables of interest. Coefficients are difficult to interpret. The reason lies in the fact that, together with the effect of interaction itself, the main effects of each of the variables that constitute the interaction term should also be considered (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). In our case, we have tried to facilitate the accurate interpretation of the many interactions included in Table 13.3 through simulations of the voting probabilities for the PSOE, PP, and IU using a representative type of voter. The reduced sample size in some of the cells of the interaction model affects the reliability of the results in the case of IU (not shown). Nonetheless, separating the three voting outcomes is necessary to properly estimate the voting probabilities for the two main parties, PSOE and PP.

C13P31 To define this *representative* voter, we have selected the mean or modal values of the variables using the estimation sample of the full models. In this longitudinal analysis, our ideal type of voter is a woman from 46 to 65 years old, with primary studies, employed, living in a municipality of medium size (less than 50,000 people), ideologically self-placed more or less in the centre (position 5 in a scale from 1 to 10), and with an average difference in the evaluation of PSOE and PP leaders (1.62, which implies a more positive evaluation of the PSOE leader).

C13T3

Table 13.3 Multinomial logit regressions to explain vote for PP and IU (vs vote for PSOE) in the Spanish 1986, 2000, 2004, and 2008 general elections: interactions between church attendance and year of election^a

Variables ^b	PP/PSOE vote	IU/PSOE vote
<i>Church attendance</i> (r.c., Never)		
Several times per year	0.640 ^{***}	-0.977 ^{***}
Several times per month	0.644 ^{**}	-1.451 ^{***}
Almost every Sunday	1.382 ^{***}	-1.336 ^{***}
Sundays and festivities	1.402 ^{***}	-1.140 ^{***}
Several times per week	0.897 ^{**}	-14.081 ^{***}
<i>Elections</i> (r.c., 1986)		
2000	0.225	-0.451
2004	-0.140	-0.401 ^{**}
2008	0.750	-0.661
<i>Interactions</i>		
Several times per year*2000	0.373	0.891 [*]
Several times per year*2004	0.228	0.517 [*]
Several times per year*2008	-0.571	0.358
Several times per month*2000	0.775	1.372 ^{**}
Several times per month*2004	0.147	-0.871
Several times per month*2008	-0.371	0.688
Almost every Sunday*2000	0.175	0.873
Almost every Sunday*2004	-0.043	0.619
Almost every Sunday*2008	-0.874	-0.475
Sundays and festivities*2000	0.647	0.401
Sundays and festivities*2004	0.024	0.497
Sundays and festivities*2008	-0.642	-0.790
Several times per week*2000	1.258	0.799
Several times per week*2004	1.299	15.690 ^{***}
Several times per week*2008	0.174	0.547
Constant	-5.528 ^{***}	1.274 ^{***}
N	9,546	
χ^2	7225 ^{***}	
Prob.	0.000	
Pseudo R ²	0.58	
Log-likelihood	-3418	

^a Models have been estimated using robust standard errors; r.c., reference category. In bold, significant coefficients. Levels of significance are the following: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

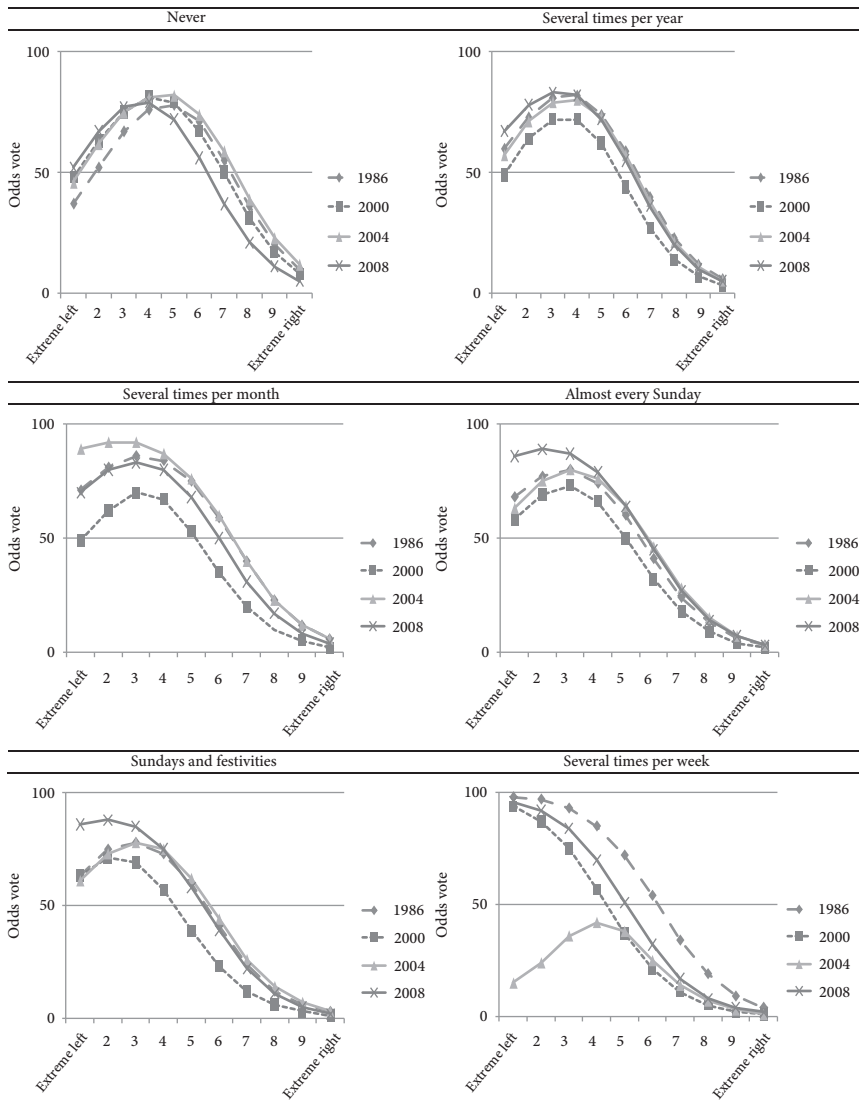
^b Models also include the following variables: ideology, difference in evaluations of PSOE and PP leaders, sex, education, occupation, and size of municipality.

Source: Post-electoral surveys undertaken by the CIS in 1986, 2000, and 2008, and by TNS/Demoscopia in 2004.

C13P32 Figures 13.2 and 13.3 report the predicted probabilities of voting for the PSOE and the PP in the four selected elections analysed for our representative voter along the ideological continuum at different levels of church attendance; we hold to this operationalization of the main independent variable as it was the one used to estimate the models presented in Tables 13.2 and 13.3. Religiosity has gained importance as a voting factor in the successive electoral years, and for both parties. This is directly related to the consolidation of the differences in the religious profiles of PSOE and PP: while the PP has kept the support over time of the most religious voters, the PSOE has increased its attraction among the most secular ones. Clearly, this has been facilitated by the weakening of the electoral prospects of the leftist coalition, IU. This finding provides evidence at the individual level for the relevance of the politicization strategies of religious and moral issues developed by political leaders over more than a decade. While in the 1980s the religious factor appeared to be less salient in the political debate, the more intense electoral competition between PSOE and PP since the 1990s has favoured the re-politicization of religious and moral issues. The ensuing conflicts have confronted both parties, mobilized many social organizations, and nurtured part of the electoral competition. And those conflicts emerged around religious and moral issues that certainly are not inconsequential: they included same-sex marriages, the right of adoption by same-sex couples, the place of religion in the educational curriculum, civic education, stem-cell research, and new abortion regulations.

C13S10 **The cross-sectional analysis, 2008 and 2016**

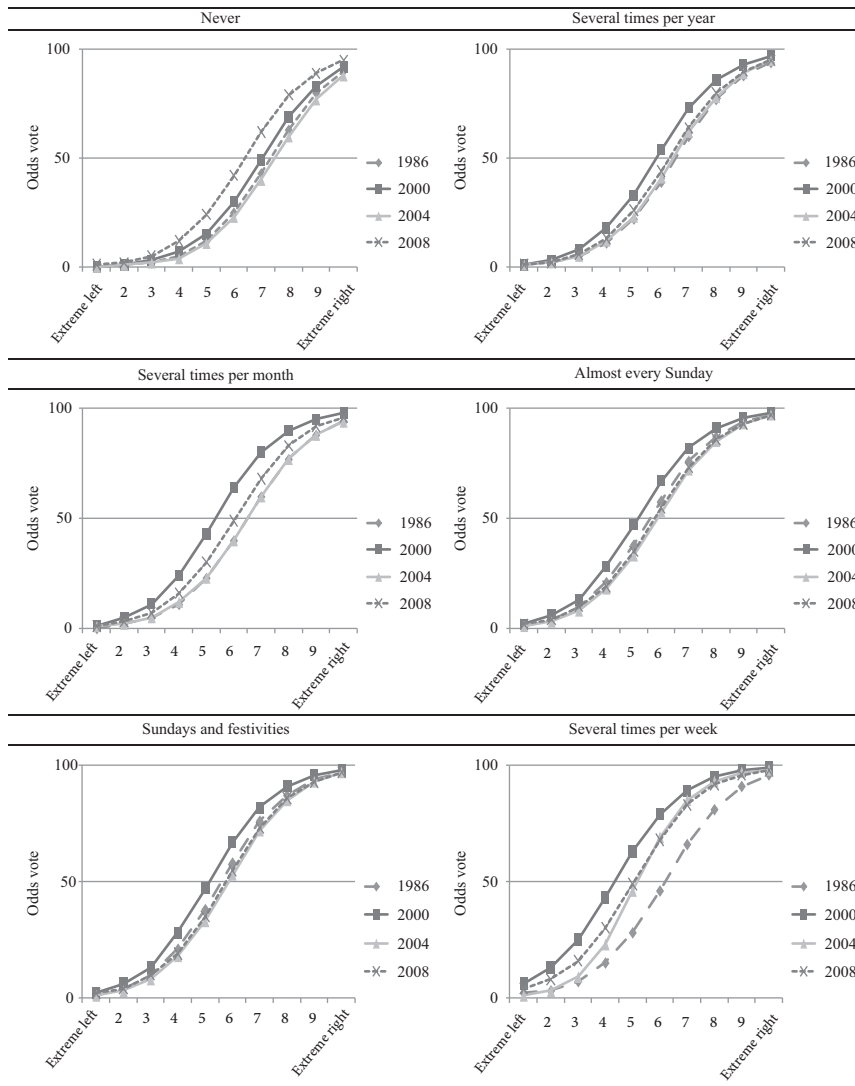
C13P33 We now complement the longitudinal analysis undertaken in the previous section with a cross-sectional exploration of the 2008 and 2016 elections. These were remarkably different contests. While the former was *normal* elections dominated by moral and above all economic issues that gave the victory to the incumbent Socialist government, the latter entailed the consolidation of a major realignment that took place for the first time in the 2015 elections. Since this contest did not end up in the formation of a new government, the snap 2016 elections had to be held. The 2015 electoral realignment, confirmed in the 2016 elections, provoked the loss of millions of votes by the two main parties, and two entirely new parties made their entry into the Congreso with sizeable results (Montero and Lago 2010; Anduiza et al. 2014; Llera, Baras, and Montabes 2018). For the 2008 elections, we used a panel survey carried out by the CIS; for the 2016 contest, a post-electoral survey. Thanks to data availability, for 2008 we have used the two waves available. This means that we have only analysed the sample of individuals who answered both the pre- and post-election questionnaires (nearly six thousand interviewees). The section aims to study in greater detail the influence of religiosity on the electoral behaviour of Spaniards at specific elections. As in the previous models, we will



C13F2 **Figure 13.2** Predicted probabilities of voting for PSOE according to ideology and church attendance in the Spanish 1986, 2000, 2004, and 2008 general elections

Sources: Post-electoral surveys undertaken by the CIS in 1986, 2000, and 2008, and by TNS/Demoscopia in 2004.

here also pay attention to both the *direct* effects of religiosity on the voting decision and its *indirect* effects through the mediation of ideology. Most of the variables included in the longitudinal models are also replicated in the cross-sectional estimations. But single-point analysis allows for the inclusion of a larger number of



C13F3 **Figure 13.3** Predicted probabilities of voting for PP according to ideology and church attendance in the Spanish 1986, 2000, 2004, and 2008 general elections

Sources: Post-electoral surveys undertaken by the CIS in 1986, 2000, and 2008, and by TNS/Demoscopia in 2004.

variables related to the social, economic, and political context. In the case of the 2008 elections, for instance, we were able to include a variable measuring the respondents' assessment of a moral issue as relevant as adoption by homosexual couples—one of Zapatero's main policies in his agenda of enlargement of citizens' rights.

C13P34 The additive multinomial logit used before permitted us to examine the impact of religiosity and ideology on the PP and IU vote (versus the PSOE vote) in four selected elections between 1986 and 2004. In this section, we will estimate logit models for the odds of voting for PP against PSOE. Since the IU's electoral fortune had considerably weakened following the 2000 elections (and in 2016 it even disappeared as such after its merging with Podemos), this implies that the reduced sample of respondents declaring their choice for the leftist coalition does not allow a meaningful estimation of the IU vote against PSOE or vice versa. In this section, we aim as well to contribute to an accurate interpretation of the set of interactions estimated through simulations of the voting probabilities for PSOE and PP. In this case, our *ideal voter* reiterates some of the characteristics already calculated in the previous longitudinal analysis. She is a woman from 46 to 65 years old with primary studies, employed, living in a municipality of medium size (less than 50,000 people), holding a centrist ideology (position 5 on a scale from 1 to 10), and maintaining a difference in the evaluation of PSOE and PP leaders that goes in favour of the socialist leader: the average difference used in the estimation of probabilities is 1.43. She also assesses as regular the performance of the government and the economic situation. Taking advantage of the indicator on adoption by homosexual couples, we constructed a Likert scale gathering voters' opinions on gay adoption and have calculated the conditional probabilities of voting for PSOE (against PP) as their ideology and religious attendance vary for two contrasting stands regarding same-sex adoption: those in favour (positions 0–5 in the scale) and those against (position 6–10). The idea is to capture not only the interplay between ideology and religiosity, but also how opinions on this moral issue may intermediate such a relationship and influence voting decisions.

C13S11 The 2008 elections

C13P35 Table 13.4 examines the importance of the direct and indirect effects (also through ideology) of religiosity on voting in the 2008 elections. It also attempts to understand what impact a moral issue such as the adoption of children by homosexual couples had on the vote for the PP versus PSOE (our outcome variable in Table 13.4). Three additive models are presented. Model 1 only considers religiosity, Model 2 adds the moral question to the specification, and finally Model 3 introduces the ideological self-placement of respondents. Again, as before, the models are estimated for the same sample of individuals to allow the straightforward comparison of the results across them.

C13P36 The comparison between the three models allows us to explore the strength of the direct and indirect effects of both religiosity and the particular stand on this very relevant moral issue for the 2008 elections. Results are particularly revealing. Thus, while in Model 1 the most religious voters were more likely to support the

C13T4 **Table 13.4** Logit regressions to explain vote for PP (vs vote for PSOE) in the Spanish 2008 general elections^a

Variables	Model 1 Reference (only religiosity)	Model 2 With moral question	Model 3 With moral question and ideology
<i>Church attendance</i> (r.c., Never)			
Several times per year	0.088	-0.065	0.487
Several times per month	0.370	0.143	0.568
Almost every Sunday	0.658	0.403	0.903
Sundays and festivities	0.772	0.499	0.846
Several times per week	1.482[*]	1.136	1.218
<i>Moral question: in favour of adoption by homosexual couples</i>		-0.887^{***}	-0.718^{***}
<i>Ideology</i>			0.674^{***}
<i>Difference evaluation</i> leaders PSOE-PP	-0.609^{***}	-0.597^{***}	-0.449^{***}
<i>Evaluation of government performance</i>	-0.926^{***}	-0.889^{***}	-0.819^{***}
<i>Evaluation of economic situation</i>	-0.041	-0.027	-0.019
<i>Sex (women)</i>	-0.196	-0.081	-0.069
<i>Education (r.c., Without primary education)</i>			
Primary education	0.504	0.523	0.279
Professional education	0.579	0.652	0.402
Higher education	0.521	0.533	0.199
University degree	0.721[*]	0.795[*]	0.629
<i>Occupational status</i> (r.c., Unemployed)			
Working	0.507	0.476	0.378
Retired	0.434	0.328	0.191
Student	-0.155	-0.085	-0.360
Housekeeper	0.930^{**}	0.938^{**}	0.889^{**}
<i>Age (r.c., 18-30)</i>			
31-45	0.006	0.062	0.108
46-65	0.061	0.014	0.099

Continued

Table 13.4 *Continued*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Reference (only religiosity)	With moral question	With moral question and ideology
More than 65	0.188	0.136	0.247
<i>Income</i>	0.125**	0.144**	0.145**
<i>Size of municipality</i>	0.018	0.029	0.014
Constant	1.043	1.298	-2.700**
<i>N</i>	1,846	1,846	1,846
χ^2	308	322	343
Prob,	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.57	0.58	0.62
Log-likelihood	-524	-511	-463

^a Models have been estimated using robust standard errors; r.c., reference category. In bold, significant coefficients. Levels of significance are the following: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Source: Electoral panel survey undertaken by the CIS, # 2750 and 2757, in January-February and March-May 2008.

PP, such effect is completely offset in Model 2 after introducing the moral question on gay adoption. These findings suggest that moral issues, vis-à-vis religiosity, were gaining momentum in voters' electoral decisions. Specifically, negative opinions about the newly recognized rights for homosexual couples increased the odds of voting for the Conservative party against the Socialist. As for Model 3, where voters' ideological self-placement is introduced, it is remarkable that the strength of the effect of this variable is very much like that of the moral issue. The correlation between both is $r = 0.34$ (at $p < 0.000$). In this latter model, the effect of religiosity increases, but does not reach statistical significance. However, the fact that the coefficients for ideology and the stand on same-sex adoption are similar may be misleading. Indeed, the previous analysis of predicted probabilities concluded that the strength of the two variables on voting varies significantly. More specifically, the odds of voting for the PP of a change from the extreme left-wing to the extreme right-wing position in the ideological continuum increased by 97 per cent; but the same change from very favourable to very unfavourable opinions concerning the rights of homosexual couples only increases the probability by 28 per cent.

C13P37 The analysis of the combined effects of religiosity and ideology on the 2008 elections is particularly interesting. To what extent did the ideological position of the voters contribute to an increase (or reduction) in the probability of voting for the PP (against the PSOE)? It can be expected that the harsh debates about these moral issues in the period 2004–8, when Prime Minister Zapatero implemented his many moral policies and the opposition party developed its strategy

of *crispación* (or rancorousness), had played a heightening role (Gunther and Montero 2012). To confirm that, in Table 13.5 we have introduced an interaction between the separate levels of religious practice and the ideological self-placement of respondents in the final model for the PP vote; as before, only the coefficients of the variables of interest are shown in the table. In order to facilitate the interpretation of the interactions, we have also here estimated the predicted probabilities for our previously outlined ideal voter. They are shown in Figure 13.4 for different levels of church attendance as ideology changes. As a cautionary note, we should warn that in a few cases the small size of the cells in the interactive model may hinder the accurate estimation of the predicted probabilities.⁶

C13P38 The results suggest that the combined effects of ideology and religiosity are weak for the odds of voting for PP against PSOE. For exploring the likely effect of the stand on the moral question regarding same-sex adoption and whether this is comparable to that of the ideological self-placement, the different graphs show how the slope of the odds of voting for the PSOE changes for positive and negative opinions toward gay adoption. Overall, these results confirm that the religious profile of the voters for the two main political parties has become more well defined and differentiated from each other. They also underline that ideology remains the strongest predictor of voting. However, opinions on moral issues not fully captured by ideology or fully determined by voters' church attendance seem to have gained momentum over the last recent years in response to the politicization strategies displayed by the main political and religious actors. Thus, a consistent result in Figure 13.4 is that positive opinions on gay adoption increase the probability of voting for PSOE irrespective of voters' ideological or religious profiles.

C13S12 The 2016 elections

C13P39 The first two elections held after the Great Recession caused an outstanding realignment in voters' linkages to main parties; the previous Table 13.1 included their vote and seat shares. The 2015 elections, like those of 2016, celebrated six months later because of the failure to form a government, altered the format and dynamics of the party system in a very significant way (Llera, Baras, and Montabes 2018). Two new political parties secured for the first time a sizeable parliamentary representation, successfully competing with PSOE and PP on both camps of the left–right ideological continuum. Citizens (Cs, Ciudadanos), self-defined as a Liberal political party (Rodríguez Teruel and Barrio, 2016), has not developed a high profile concerning religiosity and Church–State relations. This party aimed to build on its identity, based on its anti-nationalism and its zero tolerance for corruption. In the particular issue of religion and morals, Citizens endorsed a liberal

⁶ The cell sizes are available from authors upon request.

C13T5 **Table 13.5** Logistic regressions to explain vote for PP (vs vote for PSOE) in the Spanish 2008 general elections: interactions between church attendance and ideology^a

Variables ^b	PP vote
<i>Church attendance</i> (r.c., Never)	
Several times per year	2.226
More than once per month	−0.100
Almost every Sunday	3.626
Every Sunday	2.810
More than once per week	−0.978
<i>Ideology</i>	0.935[*]
<i>Interactions</i>	
Several times per year [*] ideology	−0.306
More than once per month [*] ideology	0.161
Every Sunday [*] ideology	−0.344
More than once per week [*] ^I	0.410
<i>Ideology</i>	
<i>Moral question</i> : in favour of adoption by homosexual couples	−0.726^{***}
Constant	−4.206
N	1,846
χ^2	350
Prob.	0.000
Pseudo R ²	0.62
Log-likelihood	−459

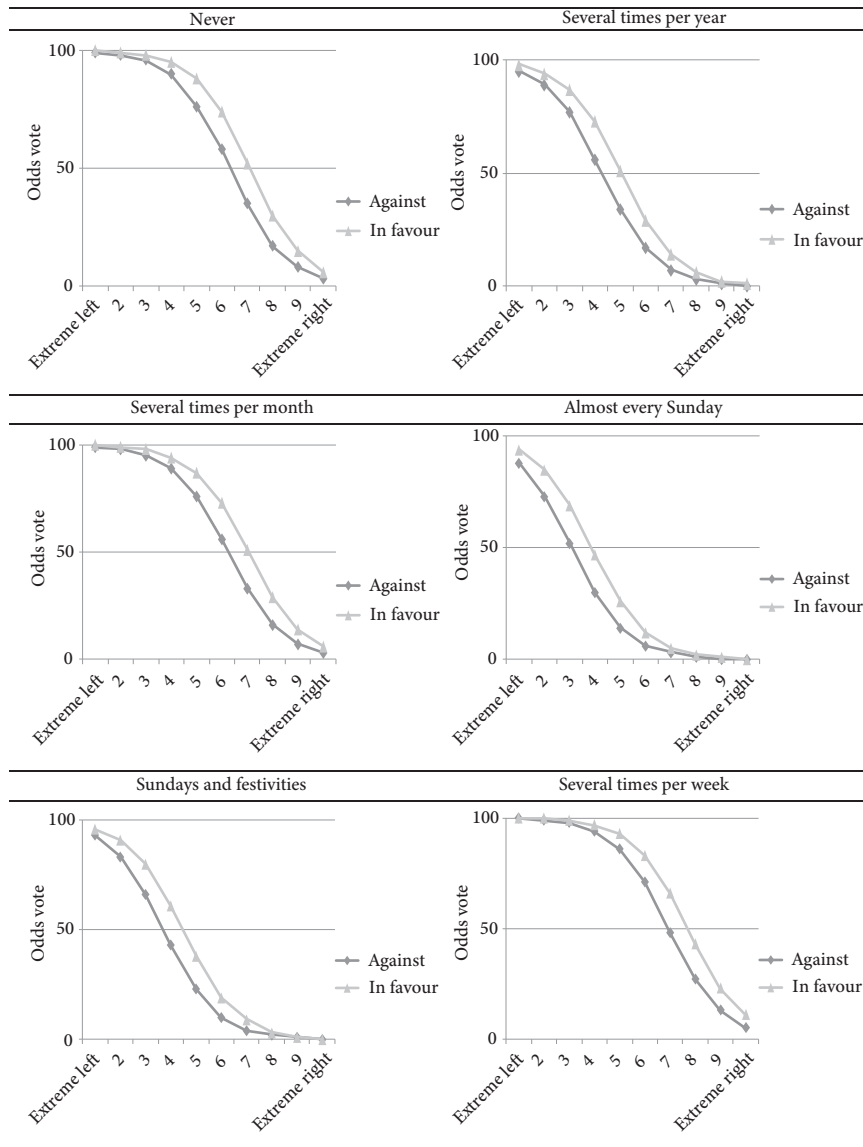
^a Models have been estimated using robust standard errors; r.c., reference category. In bold, significant coefficients. Levels of significance are the following: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

^b Models also include the following variables: ideology, difference in evaluations of PSOE and PP leaders, sex, education, occupation, and size of municipality.

Source: See Electoral panel survey undertaken by the CIS, # 2750 and 2757, in January–February and March–May 2008.

understanding of rights, one where individual choice is strongly defended. This has led to the occasional defence of policies in the field of gender rights that are not strictly in line with the moral blueprint of the Spanish Catholic Church (such as the regulation of prostitution, for instance); care has been put, however, not to frame the party's discourse on rights as opposition against Catholicism. In this line, Albert Rivera, the head of Ciudadanos, was quoted in a religious news site saying that he was 'quite happy with the framework governing Church–State relations in Spain.'⁷

⁷ In <https://www.noticiasreligiosas.com/cual-es-la-postura-del-partido-politico-ciudadanos-respecto-a-la-iglesia-528.html>, accessed on 17 July 2019.



C13F4 **Figure 13.4** Predicted probabilities of voting for PSOE according to ideology and opinions in favour or against adoption by homosexual couples in the Spanish 2008 general elections

Source: Post-electoral panel survey #2757, undertaken by the CIS in March–May 2008.

C13P40 The approach towards religion by We Can (Podemos, converted in 2016 in United We Can [UP, Unidos Podemos] for its merging with IU) is very different. The manifesto for the December 2015 general elections included a whole section

devoted to religious freedom, where several significant promises were made.⁸ These included a radical revision of the fiscal status of the Church, a strong defence of secular education, a new religious freedom law, or the repelling of the provisions that make offences against religious sentiments a crime. On the contrary, both newcomers shared a concern about some structural deficiencies of the Spanish political system, challenging established national political parties on issues of corruption and lack of stamina when it came to upgrading Spanish democracy to the standards associated with what they considered a *real* democracy. This presents us with the interesting question of how resilient can religiosity be as a force influencing voting when political competition is structured around *new* themes and new players.

C13P41 We begin by showing in Table 13.6 the religious profile of voters to the four nationwide political parties. Three main conclusions can be drawn from the table. Firstly, the least religious voters are those choosing UP, the coalition between Podemos and IU. These have a clear left-wing stance where non-religiosity is a key element of their ideological self-placement. Secondly, PP voters, at the other extreme of the ideological continuum, maintain the most religious profile even though church attendance overall appears not to be very high. Finally, the religious profiles of PSOE and Cs voters are surprisingly similar across all categories of church attendance.

C13P42 We now move to the multivariate analysis to investigate the impact of religiosity on the vote choice of the 2016 elections. As before, we run in Table 13.7 alternative models to test both the direct effects of religiosity on voting and those indirect when they are mediated by voters’ ideology. The first three models show the impact of church attendance on voting for PSOE, UP, and Cs (versus voting

C13T6 **Table 13.6** Church attendance of voters for the main nationwide parties in the Spanish 2016 general elections (in horizontal percentages)

Party voted in 2016	Church attendance				
	Almost never	Several times per year	Few times per month	Almost every Sunday	Several times per week
Unidos	81	11	3	3	1
Podemos	69	14	7	9	1
PSOE					
Ciudadanos	67	16	7	8	2
PP	41	19	13	24	3

Source: Post-electoral survey #3145 undertaken by the CIS in July 2016.

⁸ In <https://www.lasprovincias.es/elecciones/generales/201512/08/programa-electoral-podemos-para-20151208174919.html>, accessed on 19 August 2019.

C13T7 **Table 13.7** Multinomial logit regression to explain vote for PSOE, UP, and Cs (vs vote for PP vote) in the Spanish 2016 general elections^a

Variables	Without ideology			With ideology		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	PSOE/PP	UP/PP	Cs/PP	PSOE/PP	UP/PP	Cs/PP
<i>Church attendance</i> (r.c., Almost never)						
Several times per year	-0.774^{**}	-0.887[*]	-0.518	-0.399	-0.703	-0.494
Few times per month	-0.435	-1.513^{**}	-0.485	-0.159	-1.409	-0.222
Almost every Sunday	1.118^{***}	3.220^{***}	-0.709^{**}	-0.640	-2.715^{***}	-0.265
Several times per week	-0.308	9.892^{***}	0.717	-1.437	11.776^{***}	0.010
<i>Ideology</i>				1.536^{***}	-1.736^{***}	0.600^{***}
Difference evaluation leaders PP-PSOE	1.428^{***}	-0.337^{**}	-0.174^{**}	1.168^{***}	-0.147	-0.100
Difference evaluation leaders PP-UP	-0.101[*]	1.293^{***}	-0.074	-0.049	-1.248^{***}	-0.052
Difference evaluation leaders PP-Cs	0.196[*]	0.280[*]	0.922^{***}	0.068	0.149	0.939^{***}

Continued

Table 13.7 *Continued*

Variables	Without ideology			With ideology		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	PSOE/PP	UP/PP	Cs/PP	PSOE/PP	UP/PP	Cs/PP
Evaluation economic situation	0.360^{**}	-0.008	-0.220	-0.412	-0.171	-0.155
<i>Evaluation of political situation</i>	0.269	0.362	-0.028	0.299	0.565[*]	0.015
<i>Sex (women)</i>	-0.033	-0.015	-0.005	-0.015	0.153	-0.117
<i>Education (r.c., Without primary education)</i>						
Primary	-0.140	2.433^{**}	0.393	-0.738	2.046	0.430
Lower secondary	-0.631	2.285[*]	0.123	-1.304	1.263	-0.039
Upper secondary	-0.631	1.914	-0.192	-1.566[*]	0.811	-0.517
Professional education	-0.035	2.833^{**}	0.573	-0.343	2.593[*]	0.622
Tertiary education	-0.627	2.302[*]	-0.159	-1.508	1.373	-0.362
<i>Occupational status (r.c., Employed)</i>						
Retired	-0.246	-0.692	-0.690 [*]	0.022	-0.171	-0.575
Unemployed	-0.421	-0.419	-0.145	-0.302	-0.158	-0.246

Student	-0.176	1.617	1.987**	0.454	2.475	2.254**
Housekeeper	-0.110	-0.645	-0.330	-0.014	-0.506	-0.294
Age (r.c., 18–30)						
31–45	-0.254	0.535	0.312	-0.898	0.179	0.060
46–65	0.227	0.591	0.617	-0.430	-0.118	0.386
Over 65	0.074	0.923	0.720	-0.664	-0.078	0.356
Income	-0.076	-0.142	-0.006	0.067	0.072	0.080
Size of municipality	0.009	0.041	0.020	-0.040	-0.004	0.002
Constant	1.567	-3.821*	-0.080	9.760***	3.958*	2.890*
N	1,722	1,722	1,722	1,605	1,605	1,605
χ^2	1,109	1,109	1,109	1,202	1,202	1,202
Prob.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R ²	0.689	0.689	0.689	0.737	0.737	0.737
Log -likelihood	-686	-686	-686	-542	-542	-542

^a R.c., reference category. In bold, significant coefficients. Levels of significance are the following: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Source: Post-electoral survey #3145 undertaken by the CIS in July 2016; $N = 2,784$.

for PP) *without* ideology. All models confirm that PP voters are the ones with the most defined religious profile as the odds of voting for PSOE, UP, or Cs (versus voting for PP) fall considerably as church attendance increases. Within this overall pattern, results for UP in Model 2 further confirm the findings of the descriptive analysis shown in Table 13.6: UP is indeed the party with the least religious voters. As for PSOE and Cs voters, the fact that some of the coefficients for church attendance are not significant (even if all are negative) suggests that religiosity is not always a key factor in their electoral competition with PP.

C13P43 The introduction of ideology in our regression analysis leads, as expected, to relevant changes in religiosity: its impact on voting for UP, PSOE, and Cs is considerably weaker. As it has been already discussed, this again confirms that, unless there was a politicization of religious issues by party or religious leaders, religious voting does *not* become a central factor in electoral competition. For PSOE and Cs, the impact of religiosity vanishes completely after introducing ideology in Models 4, 5, and 6. For UP, it is still negative and significant, but only for the most frequent categories of church attendance: almost every Sunday and several times per week.

C13P44 This conclusion, however, is not definitive. It may be possible that the vanishing impact of religiosity on voting when ideology is considered may vary with voters' ideology, a finding that Table 13.7 does not allow us to properly investigate. We can remedy this problem by interacting religiosity and ideology in the odds of voting for PSOE, UP, and Cs (versus voting for PP). Our results in Table 13.8 suggest that religiosity, even though weak, is still relevant in voting for the three parties: some of the categories for the main effect of religiosity (in the case of extreme left voters) and some of the interaction terms when ideology moves to the right are significant.

C13P45 On the other hand, both main and interaction terms need to be considered to properly calculate the odds of voting. As we have already estimated before, we have used post-estimation methods to calculate the odds of voting for PSOE, UP, and Cs (versus voting for PP). Results are shown in Figure 13.5. With regards to PSOE voters, the most striking finding is that their religious profile is not necessarily absent as long as their ideological self-placement matches with that of the party. Thus, PSOE voters who self-placed in positions 1 to 4 on the ideological scale (from extreme left to centre-left) and attend religious services several times per year or almost every Sunday have higher odds of choosing the party than those who rarely attend religious services. And for what concerns the odds of voting for UP or Cs (versus the odds of voting for PP), they clearly do not appear to be driven in any meaningful way by any indirect impact of ideology on religiosity. For either party, the odds are never above 50 per cent for any of the categories of church attendance alongside the ideological scale. These results suggest that, whereas PSOE and PP are still apparently competing for voters where religiosity may play a key role, this is not the case for the new parties: their electoral competition does not seem to be so far based in the contingent facets of religious voting.

C13T8 **Table 13.8** Multinomial logit regressions to explain vote for PSOE, UP, and Cs (vs vote for PP) in the Spanish 2016 general elections: interactions between church attendance and ideology^a

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	PSOE/PP	UP/PP	Cs/PP
<i>Church attendance</i> (r.c., Almost never)			
Several times per year	6.500 ^{***}	5.923 ^{**}	3.820 [*]
Few times per month	3.073	7.534 [*]	1.599
Almost every Sunday	15.565 ^{***}	15.751 ^{***}	-0.322
Several times per week	2.694	-23.866 ^{***}	-1.551
<i>Ideology</i>	-1.233 ^{***}	-1.437 ^{***}	-0.452 ^{***}
<i>Interactions</i>			
Several times per year*ideology	-1.312 ^{***}	-1.225 [*]	-0.729 ^{**}
Few times per month*ideology	-0.611	-2.394 ^{**}	-0.306
Almost every Sunday*ideology	-3.226 ^{***}	-3.767 ^{***}	-0.006
Several times per week*ideology	-1.175	2.169 ^{***}	0.237
Constant	7.833 ^{***}	2.099	1.648
<i>N</i>	1,605	1,605	1,605
χ^2	1,665	1,665	1,665
Prob.	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R ²	0.744	0.744	0.744
Log-likelihood	-528	-528	-528

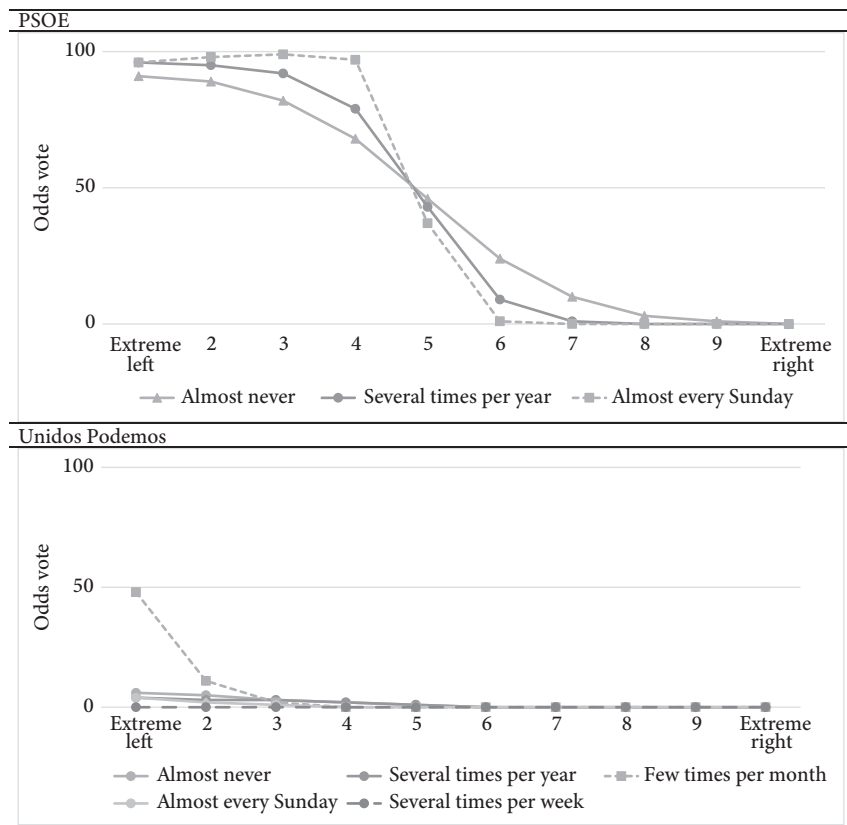
^a R.c., reference category. In bold, significant coefficients. Levels of significance are the following: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Source: Post-electoral survey #3145 undertaken by the CIS in July 2016; $N = 2,784$.

C13S13

Conclusions

C13P46 As occurs with social class, religiosity is a dimension political elites can mould, reinforce, or deactivate for channelling the electoral preferences of religious groups. Religiosity and moral conceptions articulate the value system to which voters can turn as a shortcut for their electoral decision. Differences in beliefs and religious practices can have significant effects on ideological identities. And for many citizens incapable of applying the left–right schema, religiosity can become an alternative heuristic simplifying mechanism for the complexities of political life. In all of these cases, the religiosity of voters is tied to the electoral fortunes of



C13F5 **Figure 13.5** Predicted probabilities of voting for PSOE, UP, and Cs (vs. the probabilities of voting for PP) according to ideology and church attendance in the Spanish 2016 general elections
Source: Post-electoral survey #3145, undertaken by the CIS in July 2016.

political parties through religious voting. In this chapter, we have argued that the politicization of religious conflicts by the Church and party elites allows voters to turn to their religious and moral beliefs for making their electoral decision. The problem does not necessarily lie with the revamping of religious sentiments at the social level: it is safe to argue that Spanish society has become fairly secular, at least when traditional indicators of religiosity are observed. Religiosity, however, remains a powerful cultural signifier, a relevant instrument in the building of collective identities. Social and political elites are thus responsible for the strength or weakness of religious voting. Relatively independent of the outcomes in the secularization process, religiosity continues to play a relevant role in political behaviour; it appears as a domain of identification to which voters can easily turn even when they have ceased actively practising their religion.

C13P47 This suggests the need to take a careful look at the electoral strategies of both secular and ecclesiastical elites. We have shown that after a long period of 'religious peace', the alliance between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the PP became reinforced after 2004: both actors searched for coordination mechanisms to oppose Rodríguez Zapatero's quest to place values and rights at the centre of policymaking. Reacting to new legislation in the field of moral politics, the Church, via well-organized and even better publicized protests, gained street presence and secured the loyal support of the conservative media. It is this concatenation of political processes that explains the recent vitality of religious voting in Spain. Religiosity does not equally have a similar effect on all voters or parties. As we have seen, ideology *robes* the religiosity effect (or, perhaps better said, its lack of it) relative to the PSOE. In the case of the PP, nonetheless, the greatest difference between religious or ideological identities allows religiosity to enjoy a greater degree of autonomy at the time of explaining the vote for the conservative party. In whatever case, and more generally, we argue that religious voting will be maintained as an important element in the explanation of electoral behaviour in Spain to the extent that elites, political as well as ecclesiastical, find incentives to activate a domain of identification that had remained passive until well into the 1990s. By their very nature, the social and political dimensions of religiosity are changeable, as is their ability to take on new forms or their malleability to cement various coalitions. New conflicts about abortion, euthanasia, education, or changing family formats are nothing more than expressions of the divisions that have always been behind religious conflict in Western democracies. It is evident that religiosity faces a clear process of *privatization*, but it is also true that the positions of the Spanish Church concerning respect to themes important to citizens can continue to be a crucial factor for understanding the formation of ideological and political identities in Spain.