Catholics have long been an important force in American electoral politics even if they make up 21% of the American population. Could they be, compared to the other religious denominations, the game changer of the next elections? Once a vital and loyal component of the New Deal Democratic coalition, Catholics in recent decades have shifted their political loyalties away from the Democratic Party to more of a partisan equilibrium. Anglo-Catholics were strongly Democratic in the 1940s, with that partisanship reaching a peak in the Kennedy election of 1960, before receding significantly thereafter. By 2012, they were almost evenly distributed on the political spectrum; the historical Democratic advantage had disappeared. In comparison, their Latino brethren have exhibited strong Democratic tendencies over the past three decades, and their growing numbers suggest rising political importance. At the same time, by 2012, the White Catholic vote had become predominantly Republican, even in a year in which a Democrat was re-elected to the White House, and on balance party identification among these voters showed a slight Republican edge. Only the growing contingent of Latino Catholics kept the national vote of the entire religious community closely balanced. Latino Protestants, a growing segment of the Latino community, are more likely to vote Republican than their Catholic compatriots, giving George W. Bush over 60% of their vote in 2004, before reverting to majorities for Obama in 2008 and 2012, perhaps in response to GOP policy on immigration.

Despite widespread agreement among scholars that the partisan behavior of Catholics has changed, there is much less consensus on the nature of that change, its permanence, and its causes. Of course, Catholic transformations must be put in the larger context of the changing partisanship of other religious groups. The partisan equilibrium among White Catholics has now been matched by mainline Protestants, as the latter have abandoned their ancient Republican preferences. At the same time, evangelical Protestants have shifted from Democratic to overwhelmingly Republican attachments, while Black Protestants became almost monolithically Democratic. In addition, the unaffiliated or secular population has recently become more important because of its increased size and Democratic propensity. Smaller ethnoreligious groups exhibit varied patterns: Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) are strongly Republican, Latino Protestants are notably less Democratic than Latino Catholics, while Jews and “other” religions (Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus, for example) still align with the Democrats.

This symposium will review the historical patterns of Catholic partisanship and voting behavior, as well as those of the other denominations, discuss major perspectives on electoral change (Republican shift, Hispanic and Asian vote, interreligious alliances) and test these perspectives with the latest survey data. Of course, the unexpected choice of Donald Trump as the Republican Party candidate will be a key issue of the debate.

**RELIGIONS and Presidential Elections in the USA**

**Are the Catholics a Specific Game Changer Compared to the Other Denominations?**

23 septembre 2016
9h15
Faculté de droit et de science politique
Salle des Actes
3 av Robert Schuman

22 septembre 2016
14h00
Sciences Po Aix
Amphi Cassin
25 rue G. de Saporta

Entrée libre
14:00 __________ Opening Remarks
Rostane Mehdi, Director, Sciences Po-Aix
Hervé Isar, Vice-President, Aix-Marseille Université, Director, LID2MS, Aix-en-Provence School of Law and Political Sciences (FDSP)
Gilles Leydier, Deputy-Director, BABEL, Université de Toulon

14:15 ___ Keynote Speeches
Vincent Michelot, Sciences Po-Lyon, Triangle
“The Religious Vote in the Age of Micro Targeting: Obsolete or Strategic?”
Gerald Fogarty, University of Virginia
“Can the Holy See Influence the Outcome of American Presidential Elections?”

15:15 _______ Break

15:45 _______ Panel I: The Catholic Vote
Chairman:
Florian Michel, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, Institut Pierre Renouvin et SIRICE
Moderator:
Guy Scoffoni, Sciences Po-Aix, CHERPA

Douglas W. Kmiec, U.S. Ambassador (ret.), Pepperdine University

Mark J. Rozell, Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University
“The Catholic Vote as an Obvious Key Vote”

16:45 _______ Break

17:00 - 18:30 _ Debate on Some Other Denominations and Ethnic Communities
Moderators:
Jean-Marc Chouraqui, Aix-Marseille Université, Director, IECJ and Laurent Sermet, Sciences-Po Aix, CHERPA

Olivier Richomme, Université Lyon2, Triangle : Hispanic Vote
Dominique Cadinot, Aix-Marseille Université, LERMA : Muslim Vote
Mokhtar Ben Barka, Université de Valenciennes, CALHISTE : Evangelical Vote
Laura Hobson-Faure, Université Paris 3, CREW : Jewish Vote
8:45 ________ Welcoming Coffee

9:15 ________ Opening Remarks
Jean-Philippe Agresti, Vice-Dean for General Affairs, Faculté de Droit et de Science Politique (FDSP), Aix-en-Provence School of Law and Political Sciences
Hervé Isar, Vice-President, Aix-Marseille Université, Director, LID2MS, (FDSP)
Gilles Leydier, Deputy-Director, BABEL, Université de Toulon

9:30 ________ Panel II: The Catholic Influence on the Political Debate
Chairman: Dominique Avon, Université du Maine, CERHIO
Moderator: Bernadette Rigal-Cellard, Université Bordeaux-Montaigne, CLIMAS
Amandine Barb, Humboldt University Berlin
“Catholic Patterns in the American Left”
Blandine Chelini-Pont, Aix-Marseille Université, LID2MS
“Catholic Colonization of the Republican Elites”
Marie Gayte, Université de Toulon, BABEL
“From Strict Separatism to Public Interventionism: The Other Catholic Shift”

10:45 ________ Break

11:00 - 12:30 __ Debate on Interreligious Political Strategies
Moderator: Gregory Mose, Sciences-Po Aix, CHERPA
Carter Charles, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, CLIMAS
Jeremy Gunn, Université internationale de Rabat
Neil J. Young, Independent Scholar

12:30 - 13:00 __ Conclusion
Nathalie Caron, Université Paris-Sorbonne, HDEA

13:00 ________ Buffet lunch
Catholics have long been an important force in American electoral politics even if they make up up 21% of the American population. Could they be, compared to the other religious denominations, the game changer of the next elections? Once a vital and loyal component of the New Deal Democratic coalition, Catholics in recent decades have shifted their political loyalties away from the Democratic Party to more of a partisan equilibrium. Anglo-Catholics were strongly Democratic in the 1940s, with that partisanship reaching a peak in the Kennedy election of 1960, before receding significantly thereafter. By 2012, they were almost evenly distributed on the political spectrum; the historical Democratic advantage had disappeared. In comparison, their Latino brethren have exhibited strong Democratic tendencies over the past three decades, and their growing numbers suggest rising political importance. At the same time, by 2012, the White Catholic vote had become predominantly Republican, even in a year in which a Democrat was re-elected to the White House, and on balance party identification among these voters showed a slight Republican edge. Only the growing contingent of Latino Catholics kept the national vote of the entire religious community closely balanced. Latino Protestants, a growing segment of the Latino community, are more likely to vote Republican than their Catholic compatriots, giving George W. Bush over 60% of their vote in 2004, before reverting to majorities for Obama in 2008 and 2012, perhaps in response to GOP policy on immigration. Despite widespread agreement among scholars that the partisan behavior of Catholics has changed, there is much less consensus on the nature of that change, its permanence, and its causes. Of course, Catholic transformations must be put in the larger context of the changing partisanship of other religious groups. The partisan equilibrium among White Catholics has now been matched by mainline Protestants, as the latter have abandoned their ancient Republican preferences. At the same time, evangelical Protestants have shifted from Democratic to overwhelmingly Republican attachments, while Black Protestants became almost monolithically Democratic. In addition, the unaffiliated or secular population has recently become more important because of its increased size and Democratic propensities. Smaller ethnoreligious groups exhibit varied patterns: Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) are strongly Republican, Latino Protestants are notably less Democratic than Latino Catholics, while Jews and “other” religions (Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus, for example) still align with the Democrats.

This symposium will review the historical patterns of Catholic partisanship and voting behavior, as well as those of the other denominations, discuss major perspectives on electoral change (Republican shift, Hispanic and Asian vote, interreligious alliances) and test these perspectives with the latest survey data. Of course, the unexpected choice of Donald Trump as the Republican Party candidate will be a key issue of the debate.