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The Emotional Dimension of the Spanish Far Right and Its Effects on Satisfaction with Democracy

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Abstract: The recent rise of the far right in Spain highlights the importance of analysing the elements that have contributed to VOX's success and the party's ascent to the third political power in the country after the general election held in November 2019. In order to explain the electoral support for VOX, in this study we adopt an emotional perspective, giving emotions a fundamental role alongside the traditional variables involved in the far-right vote. After describing the emotional regime of VOX voters, we observe the relationship between these voters' emotions towards political actors and the levels of satisfaction with democracy. Subsequently, we try to identify the determining elements of the vote for VOX through a multivariate analysis. Finally, after stating that hope in Santiago Abascal is one of the main variables that explain voters' support for VOX, we analyse its constituent elements. Our findings reveal that hope for VOX's leader is not made up of structural elements but cultural elements, citizens' ratings of political leaders and ideological and identity questions.

Keywords: far right; emotions; satisfaction with democracy



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1. Introduction

The electoral success of the far right is a phenomenon that has spread throughout Europe, becoming increasingly important. Proof of this are the recent electoral successes achieved by the far right in countries such as France or Italy. However, its arrival in Spain (and subsequently in Portugal) has occurred later than its European neighbours. That defeated resistance places Spain in the spotlight for researchers analysing the factors driving the rise of the far right 40 years after the end of the Franco dictatorship.

Since VOX became part of the national Parliament, but especially after becoming the third political power in the country in November 2019, political scientists have made many attempts at explaining the emergence of the far right in the Spanish party system. However, as is also the case in the literature on the rise of these parties in Western Europe, few contributions have centred on both the structural aspect of the vote and the underlying emotion that motivates supporting a political group that flirts with the margins of the political system and undermines the principles of liberal democracy and values agreed and accepted by our society. This phenomenon defies the political system itself, whether through its impact on and conditioning of the political debate, its implications for partisan competition, its influence on the shaping and functioning of governments or parliaments or, more recently, VOX's role as a member of the government of Castilla and León and the resulting public policies.

First of all, our research aims to determine the variables that explain the vote for the Spanish far right in the November 2019 general election, proving that both emotions and structural elements have contributed to VOX's success in the urns, contrary to what has been traditionally argued. Finally, from a constructivist perspective of emotions, we go a step further and aim to determine which elements contribute to generating hope for VOX's

leader. As it turns out, this is a determining factor when citizens decide to vote for the far right instead of supporting the mainstream political parties.

In other words, in this analysis the emotional component acquires a dual role: on the one hand, it is the independent variable that helps to explain the vote for the Spanish far right. On the other hand, it becomes the dependent variable in order to determine which elements generate said emotion. Finally, we complete our work by analysing the relationship between the emotions towards VOX and its leader and the level of satisfaction with democracy. Our aim is to show how emotions towards political actors are related to the attitudes of Spaniards towards our political system.

Therefore, the questions guiding our research are as follows: first, what are the emotions explaining the vote for the Spanish far right and how important is the emotional component compared to the other variables influencing the vote for VOX in the November 2019 general election? Second, what are the elements that compose the emotions that explain the vote for VOX and, specifically, the hope for Santiago Abascal; and how are emotions towards political actors related to the attitudes of Spaniards towards the democratic system?

In order to answer these questions, we have divided our paper into five parts. In part one, we present a brief overview of contributions that include the emotional component when studying political behaviour in general and electoral behaviour in particular, putting special emphasis on the constructivist tradition we have taken as a starting point. Then, we gather the most relevant studies trying to explain the rise of the far right in Western Europe, focusing on those that include an emotional component in the study of this type of political party. Subsequently, after briefly explaining the objectives and research hypotheses, as well as our methodological design, we present the results of our investigation. We start with an analysis of the emotional profile of VOX voters and its relationship to levels of satisfaction with democracy. After that, we perform a multivariate analysis that reveals the components of the vote for the Spanish far right and the emotions that explain that support.

2. Emotions as a Social Construct and Their Role in Explaining Voting Behaviour

In recent decades, emotions have been progressively included in explaining political phenomena. The most recent theoretical developments incorporate the relationship between the cognitive and the emotional (Lynggaard 2019) and are completed with proof that emotions are empirically operationalizable, specifiable with some degree of accuracy and susceptible to being measured (Lagares et al. 2022, p. 20). Despite this, it is also true that there is still a lack of consensus over which emotions should be measured to explain political behaviour.

Specifically, in the past few years of emotional revival, there has been a proliferation of studies from different disciplines and approaches that address the importance of emotions and their relationship to different aspects of politics, such as the construction of collective emotion and the role of identity in politics (Hogget and Thompson 2012); the influence of negative emotions like fear or anger on the emergence of populist attitudes (Rico et al. 2017), political communication and information processing (Redlawsk 2006); or, more recently, the role of emotions on social media (Rivera et al. 2021). Other contributions include political marketing and defining the emotional dimensions specific to each electoral campaign that could influence voters' ratings (Brader 2005); the relevance of the emotional factor in the perception of political leaders and their actions (Sullivan and Masters 1988); or the weight of emotional components when explaining the vote for specific political parties (Jaráiz et al. 2020), including far-right parties (Jaráiz et al. 2020; Rivera et al. 2021).

However, there is still a lack of contributions incorporating the emotional component to the study of political behaviour in general and electoral behaviour in particular, and there are even fewer works investigating which factors trigger emotions in politics; that is, what are the elements that compose them.

Traditionally, it has been assumed that emotions are intrinsic to human beings, a phenomenon that each person experiences individually and even in isolation, forgetting

that, as Aristotle said, 'man is by nature a social animal' and therefore emotions can also be produced socially, as is the case with principles or values.

Thus, contrary to the physiological, psychobiological or psychoevolutionary approaches, which study emotions from an essentialist or positivist perspective and assume them as pre-existing, cognitive approaches (Appraisal Theories) acknowledge the importance of social processes in their formation, even if they also interpret emotions as an intrinsic phenomenon. The constructivist approach goes one step further, understanding emotions as social constructs, which is to say that emotions are produced socially within a specific cultural context. Traditionally, it has been assumed that emotions are essentially internal and strictly personal reactions. However, from the 1980s onward, the budding constructivist approaches incorporate a social dimension to the analysis of emotions, providing a more suitable approach for the study of emotions in the field of Political Science.

Armon-Jones (1986) refers to four aspects that would become key elements of the constructivist approach to emotions: firstly, attitudes such as beliefs, judgements, and desires characterise emotions, but these attitudes would not be "natural", they would be determined by each community's system of cultural beliefs and values, and would therefore have a cognitive background. Secondly, the processes of learning and socialisation allow us to understand what is culturally appropriate in regard to emotions. Thirdly, there is a prescriptive relationship between the emotions and values of each cultural community, which means there is a link between the specific context in which an emotion arises, expressed in a specific way and with a specific intensity. Finally, since emotions are at least partially learned, they have a socio-cultural role in regard to the responsibility of citizens towards their own emotional expression.

To Lupton (1998), it is possible to distinguish between three major areas within the constructivist approach: structuralism, which examines social structures, the belonging to a social group and the power dynamics as elements that shape emotion; phenomenology, which understands emotions as an inherent part of the ego; and post-structuralism, which focuses on the discursive construction of emotions.

On the other hand, Mead (1993) suggests the existence of a strong constructivism, which posits that emotions are a result of the individual experience of conceptualizations formed through language, beliefs and social norms; and a weak one that acknowledges that emotions can be a natural phenomenon, even if they depend on social norms. Therefore, the differentiating factor of both types of constructivism would be the presence or absence of the biological component: while strong constructivism categorically rejects the biological component, weak constructivism admits its impact, but is always mediated by socialisation processes (Mihai 2016). The latter approach would stop positioning the biological and sociological components as opposites, recognising both as the product of the creation of emotions. As argued by Averill (1980, p. 308), even if emotions are defined as socially constructed syndromes or as transient social roles, the biological component of emotions is not denied.

However, if the biological component is the differentiating element, the idea of emotions as the result of experience is the uniting component, leading to another key aspect of constructivism. According to this approach, the individual would not behave as a passive subject, but would play an active role in the generation of emotion (Armon-Jones 1985; Averill 1980; Felmand 2018) as they themselves would select and organise the repertoire of actions in the process of constructing emotion. Additionally, if individuals are not passive subjects, then citizens would be responsible for their emotional expressions towards politics (Hall 2005; Mihai 2014).

Assuming the individual's active role in the production of emotions, Felmand (2018) proposes the theory of constructed emotion to explain the process of generating emotions. To the author, emotions would not be reactions to the world, but the brain would rather build the emotion from stimuli and the individual's previous experiences. However, without those previous experiences, it would be impossible to recognise the stimuli and have the ability to react to them in one way or another. It is precisely the role played by

previous experiences that leads Feldman to assert that emotions are not predetermined by genetics, but are generated due to the individual's cultural context, and therefore different cultures could produce different emotions. In this way, socio-cultural and historical features would be as unquestionable as the biological component of emotions.

In this regard, beliefs and social norms provide "prototypes" that enable the identification of emotions and these prototypes would be included among the elements differentiating one culture from another. Nevertheless, we should not only consider the emotional diversity arising from culture. As pointed out by [Averill \(2008\)](#), each individual's socialisation is different and, therefore, it seems impossible that two individuals experience the same emotion in an identical way.

However, without denying that each person can experience an emotion in a particular way and on the basis that emotions are culturally constructed, in our constructivist interpretation of emotions there is room for two more concepts: emotional regime and emotional architecture. The former refers to the emotional components that are present in a given context or situation, while the latter refers to the proportion and intensity in which these emotions are distributed ([Lagares et al. 2022](#)). In other words, while emotional regime refers to emotions that are generated in a given context arising from a particular situation, emotional architecture would be somewhat more specific, referring to how and how much, to the way and the quantity in which these emotions towards leaders or political parties are distributed in society.

3. The Rise of the Far Right and Its Threat to Democracy

Without delving into the complex debate about the most suitable concept to refer to the family of far-right parties¹, the fact is that this is a multifaceted phenomenon that has acquired an increasing presence throughout Western Europe, especially after the 1980s. In fact, Spain was one of the few countries that did not have one of these political groups in its national parliament.

However, in the context of the fourth wave ([Mudde 2019](#)) and after the turning point that was the 2018 Andalusian election ([Rivera et al. 2021](#)), VOX managed to enter the Congress of Deputies in April 2019 with 24 seats, becoming the third political power after the second election in November of the same year. Since then, and as seen in the rest of Europe, many contributions have tried to explain the rise of the Spanish far right ([Aladro and Requeijo 2020](#); [Álvarez-Benavides 2019](#); [Bernardez-Rodal et al. 2020](#); [Ortiz 2021](#)), but few have taken into account the emotional component ([Cazorla and Jaráiz 2020](#); [Castro and Jaráiz 2022](#)).

In part, this absence may be due to the lack of studies on public opinion that address the emotional aspect and to the difficulty of operationalizing emotions, despite the fact that, in theory, there have been many papers linking emotions to the populist style adopted by far-right parties in recent decades ([Betz and Johnson 2004](#); [Evans 2005](#); [Mudde 2007](#); [Rydgren 2003](#)). We say 'style' because, unlike what authors like [Mudde \(2004, p. 543\)](#) defend, rather than a 'soft' or 'thin' ideology, we understand populism as a 'political style' ([Inglehart and Norris 2017](#)) characterised by a rhetoric that evokes latent grievances and appeals to the emotions they cause, offering simplistic and unrealistic solutions to socio-political issues ([Betz 2001, p. 393](#)).

As with any other party adopting populism as a political strategy, the far-right populist discourse is built on dividing society in two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: the 'pure people' against the 'corrupt elite' ([Mudde 2007, p. 65](#)). They embellish this with a plethora of emotions such as anger, contempt ([Fieschi and Heywood 2004, p. 291](#)) or resentment ([Betz 1990](#)) in order to mobilise people against the political establishment. However, unlike other types of organisations, the elite the far right opposes is not a problem merely for being the elite, but for implementing policies aimed at immigrants, the unemployed, feminists or environmentalists ([Castro and Jaráiz 2022](#)).

In other words, the populist discourse of the far right restricts the right to citizenship to a limited group of people that fits the ethical and moral criteria of what these parties

consider ‘what’s right’. In this citizenship, there is no room for family models other than the two-parent family, with or without children, in which the woman must have a secondary role and without room for foreigners unless (in some instances) they are similar to the locals. When the idea of citizenship becomes such a restrictive concept with no room for ‘the others’, for ‘the nation’s enemies’, it is a direct attack on the principles of liberal democracy and, therefore, the far right represents a real threat to democracy.

Immigration is not only the issue most frequently used to explain the rise of the far right in Western Europe (Hainsworth 2008, p. 70), but it is also one of the focal points targeted by these political leaders in their discourse of fear. Whether by linking immigration to unemployment, crime and the loss of national identity or religion, the far right seeks to cause a wave of anxiety and resentment (Arter 1992) that, together with their self-appointment as a bulwark against the ineffectiveness or mismanagement of the political establishment, turns into electoral gains. However, in the case of Spain, although the arrival of immigrant flows has increased in recent years (Bover and Velilla 2005; De Bustillo and Antón 2010) and a change in the composition of the foreign population (Castro and Jaráiz 2022; Castro and Mo 2020), previous research indicates that its impact on electoral behaviour is uncertain (Mendes and Dennison 2021; Méndez and Cutillas 2014; Ortiz 2018).

Given the increasing tension and the latent unrest in society, it seems evident that this discourse does not have an innocuous effect on it. Citizens react to the perceived lack of attention to social demands by voting for the far right as a form of protest. From this perspective, the vote for far-right parties, rather than being based on ideological and/or programmatic affinity, looks more like a negative vote arising from the rejection of the political establishment and democratic institutions. Once again, we see the danger the far right presents to the levels of citizens’ satisfaction with democracy. When a structure of opportunity arises and is characterised by people’s dissatisfaction and disaffection with the political establishment, the far right can be seen as the saviour in the current situation. However, far from reinforcing the legitimacy of the political establishment, the success of these political parties poses a threat to the principles and proper functioning of democracy.

In fact, studies incorporating the emotional component to the explanation of the vote for VOX have found that negative emotions impact the decision to support the Spanish far right. Specifically, Castro and Jaráiz (2022) found that resentment and bitterness towards PODEMOS and the emotions included in the ‘anxiety’ dimension (Marcus et al. 2006)—i.e., fear, anxiety, anger and worry triggered by Pedro Sánchez—have a significant effect in explaining the vote for VOX. Other emotions involved are fear (Castro and Jaráiz 2022) and worry (Oñate et al. 2022) towards the Spanish Prime Minister.

Something that is not included in traditional literature on the rise of the far right in Western Europe and that these papers address is that negative emotions are not the only ones that help to understand the reasons for voting for VOX. Both the far-right leader Santiago Abascal and the party itself are capable of evoking positive emotions such as pride, enthusiasm, hope and peace of mind. These emotions, whether through the positive rating of the leader or sympathy towards the party, have both a direct effect in the explanation of these phenomena and an indirect effect in the explanation of the vote for the Spanish far right (Castro and Jaráiz 2022). Jaráiz et al. (2020) obtain similar results and state that Santiago Abascal’s leadership, together with the peace of mind triggered by him, help to explain the vote for the party. Meanwhile, Oñate and others (Oñate et al. 2022) also claim that one of the positive emotions that influences the vote for VOX is the presence of hope for Santiago Abascal.

The findings of these papers (Castro and Jaráiz 2022; Oñate et al. 2022) present a new roadmap to study the phenomenon of the far right, showing that their electoral success is not only due to dissatisfaction and discontent with the traditional political establishment. Like the rest of the political parties and their leaders, far-right groups and candidates are able to trigger pride, enthusiasm, hope or peace of mind among their supporters, turning this emotional awakening into electoral support.

4. Research Methodology

The main objective of this paper is, firstly, to prove the presence of the emotional component in the explanation of the vote for VOX in the November 2019 general election, while also linking it to dissatisfaction with democracy; and secondly, to find out which elements construct the presence of these emotions. This dual objective leads to raising a series of hypotheses that will be contrasted throughout our investigation.

Hypothesis 1. *The emotional regime of VOX voters is defined by negative emotions towards the left-wing political establishment and positive ones towards the right-wing political establishment.*

Hypothesis 2. *Dissatisfaction with democracy is related to the vote for the far right.*

Hypothesis 3. *There is a relationship between positive emotions towards the far right and dissatisfaction with democracy.*

Hypothesis 4. *Emotions are the most important component when defining the vote for VOX.*

Hypothesis 5. *Hope for Santiago Abascal is constructed through perceptive, ideological and political elements.*

In order to test these hypotheses, we have used the post-electoral study from the November 2019 general election carried out by Political Research Team², whose technical information is shown in the table below. On the one hand, the study provides a wide range of questions related to the explanations given from the field of Political Science to the rise of the far right in Western Europe. On the other hand, it provides a battery of questions about the emotions felt by citizens towards the main leaders and political parties.

In order to achieve our dual objective, we have followed both a descriptive and an inference methodology. In other words, in the first part we present a descriptive analysis showing the emotional regime and the emotional architecture of the voters of the Spanish far right and their relationship to levels of satisfaction with democracy. In the second part, we use multivariate statistical analysis techniques to test which variables have an effect in the explanation of the vote for VOX, as well as the elements that compose the feeling of hope triggered by Santiago Abascal, which, as we shall see, is one of the major factors explaining the support for the party. Thus, we have built two additive binary logistic regression models which aim to explain, from a constructivist perspective, electoral support of VOX and the construction of emotions towards the far-right leader Santiago Abascal.

Beginning with the model explaining the vote for VOX in the November 2019 general election, we have identified a total of six groups of variables (see Table A1). The first group is made up of socio-demographic and contextual variables such as gender, age, level of education, employment status, income level, religious affiliation and the rating of economic and political situations. These variables have traditionally been used to profile the European far-right voter 'persona': a lower-middle class man with a low level of education, employed in the private sector or unemployed and with a low income (Betz 1990; Arzheimer and Carter 2006), who would perceive himself as the 'modernisation loser', the person who has been most affected by economic restructuring and its social consequences (Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995).

The second group includes variables we have classified as attitudinal, i.e., ideological and identity self-placement and the extent to which an individual feels more Spanish or from their respective autonomous community; the degree of trust in the political class and democratic institutions; the perception that politicians represent citizens' interests and the level of satisfaction with democracy; issues (Catalan independence, homophobia, anti-Europeanism); and post-materialist values (multiculturalism, support for public services, freedom vs. security). Therefore, this group consists of topics traditionally linked to the rise of the far right: immigration, homophobia, the European Union and the economy, topics

that are often related to the division of society along ideological and identity cleavages. We also include political attitudes that could evoke a climate of dissatisfaction or discontent that the third and fourth group of variables also includes: populism and disaffection, respectively.

The third group of variables includes questions related to populism, inspired by the scale suggested by Akkerman et al. (2014).

The fourth group is made up of variables related to political disaffection, proposed by Montero et al. (1998) and often used in this type of analysis, to which we add the individual's degree of disaffection.

The fifth group refers to leadership, i.e., the respondents' ratings of Pablo Iglesias, Pedro Sánchez, Albert Rivera, Pablo Casado and Santiago Abascal.

Finally, the sixth group includes the affective and emotional component, so in this section we include both sympathy towards VOX and the presence of emotions such as pride, fear, hope, anxiety, enthusiasm, anger, hate, contempt, worry, peace of mind, resentment, bitterness and disgust towards the main political leaders and their respective parties when they are present in percentages above 10%.

In regard to the model to explain the presence of hope for Santiago Abascal, the variables introduced as independent are, for the most part, the same as those selected for the models to explain the vote for VOX, but have been grouped differently (see Table A2), since the process of emotional construction differs from the explanation of electoral behaviour.

Therefore, in the first group we include only structural elements, i.e., gender, age, level of education, employment status, income level and religious affiliation.

The second includes political attitudes and attitudes towards institutions, such as the degree of trust in the political establishment and democratic institutions, the representation of citizens' interests by politicians, the level of satisfaction with democracy and variables related to populism and disaffection.

The third group combines the cultural elements and post-materialist values mentioned above.

The fourth group consists of perceptual elements such as the ratings of the main political leaders and of the economic and political situations.

The fifth group includes identity elements such as sympathy for VOX, ideological and identity self-positioning, the Spanish sentiment and the issue of Catalan independence.

The sixth group refers to the role played by the media in shaping emotions. This latter section includes variables about the frequency of following political information in newspapers, television and the radio, and the extent to which individuals use social media to learn about and take part in politics.

Finally, the seventh group represents the political landscape, i.e., citizens' ratings of the government and the opposition, as well as of the inauguration and the formation of the coalition government between the PSOE and Unidas Podemos.

5. Constructing the Explanation to the Rise of VOX

5.1. The Construction of the Vote for VOX

We start our analysis by presenting the emotional regime of VOX voters in the context of the November 2019 general election, after which the Spanish far right became the country's third political power by achieving almost a million more votes than in April³.

As seen in Tables 1 and 2, contrary to what is postulated in the literature, VOX voters do not feel negative emotions towards the political class as a whole, but towards the leaders and political parties on the left side of the ideological spectrum: PODEMOS and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). This is easy to understand since they are the political groups most ideologically distant from far-right voters.

Table 1. Emotions of VOX voters towards political leaders.

| | | Political Leaders | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------|------------|
| | | Pablo Iglesias | | | Pedro Sánchez | | | Albert Rivera | | | Pablo Casado | | | Santiago Abascal | | |
| | | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence |
| Emotions | Pride | | | | | | 28.8% | 4.00 | 68.8% | 27.4% | 3.46 | 94.1% | 75.7% | 4.59 | 100.0% | |
| | Fear | 72.6% | 4.50 | 100.0% | 62.2% | 4.38 | 100.0% | 3.1% | 4.00 | 100.0% | 1.6% | 100.0% | 3.5% | 3.33 | 100.0% | |
| | Hope | | | | | | 58.9% | 3.37 | 28.4% | 56.0% | 3.39 | 90.7% | 93.4% | 4.50 | 98.3% | |
| | Anxiety | 40.6% | 4.61 | 100.0% | 30.6% | 4.00 | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | 1.6% | 100.0% | 3.5% | 2.89 | 100.0% | |
| | Enthusiasm | | | | | | 32.2% | 3.73 | 36.2% | 24.7% | 3.45 | 100.0% | 74.1% | 4.14 | 100.0% | |
| | Anger | 65.3% | 4.51 | 100.0% | 67.4% | 4.31 | 100.0% | 8.2% | 3.29 | 61.4% | 8.2% | 3.69 | 100.0% | 1.6% | 100.0% | |
| | Hate | 23.8% | 4.20 | 100.0% | 24.2% | 4.34 | 93.3% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | 1.6% | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | |
| | Contempt | 40.6% | 4.21 | 100.0% | 49.1% | 4.18 | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | 1.6% | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | |
| | Worry | 82.5% | 4.59 | 100.0% | 88.1% | 4.46 | 98.2% | 6.7% | 2.70 | 23.3% | 10.0% | 3.16 | 83.9% | 5.1% | 3.31 | 68.9% |
| | Peace of mind | | | | | | 32.1% | 3.90 | 68.1% | 37.8% | 3.60 | 90.7% | 77.1% | 4.26 | 100.0% | |
| | Resentment | 19.9% | 4.37 | 100.0% | 27.2% | 3.94 | 88.7% | 3.5% | 4.56 | 100.0% | 3.6% | 3.00 | 44.3% | 1.6% | | 100.0% |
| | Bitterness | 24.6% | 4.20 | 100.0% | 22.1% | 3.93 | 100.0% | 3.1% | 4.50 | 100.0% | 3.1% | 3.01 | 50.5% | 1.6% | | 100.0% |
| | Disgust | 35.5% | 4.14 | 100.0% | 39.7% | 3.88 | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% | 1.6% | | 100.0% |

Source: authors' own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

Table 2. Emotions of VOX voters towards political parties.

| | | Political Parties | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| | | PODEMOS | | | PSOE | | | C's | | | PP | | | VOX | | |
| | | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence | Presence | Intensity | Permanence |
| Emotions | Pride | | | | 3.2% | 4.00 | 49.9% | 25.0% | 3.58 | 85.8% | 23.5% | 4.11 | 36.5% | 72.2% | 4.52 | 100.0% |
| | Fear | 62.4% | 4.72 | 100.0% | 46.8% | 4.37 | 96.6% | | | | | | | 2.0% | 3.00 | 100.0% |
| | Hope | | | | 6.7% | 2.47 | | 58.1% | 3.22 | 63.3% | 67.0% | 3.52 | 70.3% | 91.8% | 4.42 | 98.3% |
| | Anxiety | 36.7% | 4.73 | 100.0% | 20.3% | 3.95 | 100.0% | 1.6% | 3.00 | | 1.5% | | 100.0% | 2.0% | 2.00 | 100.0% |
| | Enthusiasm | | | | 3.5% | 2.45 | | 31.0% | 3.23 | 52.6% | 37.6% | 3.33 | 59.3% | 74.9% | 4.11 | 100.0% |
| | Anger | 65.2% | 4.59 | 100.0% | 63.2% | 4.50 | 100.0% | 3.5% | 4.11 | 100.0% | 15.2% | 4.08 | 76.6% | | | |
| | Hate | 19.9% | 4.92 | 100.0% | 11.9% | 4.59 | 87.2% | | | | 2.0% | 5.00 | 100.0% | | | |
| | Contempt | 33.6% | 4.49 | 100.0% | 19.0% | 4.31 | 100.0% | | | | 3.5% | 4.56 | 56.2% | | | |
| | Worry | 78.5% | 4.55 | 100.0% | 73.5% | 4.52 | 100.0% | 1.6% | 3.00 | 100.0% | 7.0% | 3.95 | 100.0% | 3.5% | 3.34 | 100.0% |
| | Peace of mind | | | | 3.2% | 3.50 | | 32.5% | 3.58 | 84.2% | 47.0% | 3.51 | 69.3% | 75.5% | 4.12 | 100.0% |
| | Resentment | 18.7% | 5.00 | 100.0% | 23.8% | 4.45 | 100.0% | 2.0% | 5.00 | 100.0% | 5.4% | 3.44 | 100.0% | | | |
| | Bitterness | 19.9% | 4.92 | 100.0% | 20.3% | 4.58 | 100.0% | | | | 3.5% | 5.00 | 55.3% | | | |
| | Disgust | 33.4% | 4.45 | 100.0% | 23.3% | 4.00 | 100.0% | | | | 2.0% | 5.00 | 100.0% | | | |

Source: authors' own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

Nonetheless, we can observe differences in the presence and intensity of specific negative emotions felt by VOX voters towards Pablo Iglesias and Pedro Sánchez and their parties. While far-right voters have at times felt more bitterness and, in particular, more fear and anxiety towards Pablo Iglesias than towards Pedro Sánchez, they have also felt these emotions more intensely—with the exception of hatred—towards the leader of PODEMOS than towards the socialist leader. At the same time, a greater proportion has felt negative emotions more intensely—except for resentment and bitterness—towards PODEMOS than towards the PSOE.

In contrast, those who supported VOX in the last election express positive emotions towards leaders and parties on the right side of the ideological spectrum, but always to a lesser extent and with less intensity than towards Santiago Abascal and VOX. Thus, while the presence of positive emotions towards the far-right leader is above 70%, the presence of positive emotions towards the leaders of Ciudadanos and the Popular Party sits around 30%, with the exception of hope, which sits above 55% in both instances. Even if the presence and, in general, the intensity of the pride, hope and enthusiasm felt by VOX voters is slightly higher for Albert Rivera than for Pablo Casado, the permanence of those emotions—to which we can add a peace of mind—is significantly higher for the latter. This suggests that emotions towards the then-leader of C's result more from the 'heat of the moment', while the affection felt towards the Popular Party leaders is more stable and sustained over time among VOX voters, many of whom have previously voted for the PP.

This statement about political parties is corroborated by the observation that the presence of positive emotions—with the exception of pride—and their intensity—with the exception of peace of mind—is greater towards the PP than towards C's. Nevertheless, the permanence of positive emotions towards Pablo Casado is much higher than their permanence towards the PP. This could point to a loss of affection towards the PP and even anger towards the organisation (15.2%) as the possible cause of the flight of voters towards VOX, a loss that Pablo Casado has been unable to mitigate. As expected, what stands out in the emotional regime of VOX voters are the negative emotions towards left-wing parties and leaders and the positive emotions towards right-wing parties, especially towards VOX and its leader Santiago Abascal.

Next, we study the relationship between the support for the far right and the level of satisfaction with democracy through a correspondence analysis conducted with the variables of satisfaction with democracy (recodified into five groups: not satisfied at all, not very satisfied, satisfied, fairly satisfied and very satisfied) and the recall of vote choice for the five main parties in the November 2019 general election. In Figure 1, we can see that voters of traditional political parties are the most satisfied with democracy, while those supporting the most ideologically extreme formations, whether on the ideological left or right, are the least satisfied with the current functioning of democracy.

Specifically, PP voters are the most satisfied with democracy, followed by PSOE voters—the parties with the longest political tradition—and C's voters. On the contrary, those who have chosen to support Unidas Podemos in the last general election are not very satisfied with democracy, an attitude they share with VOX voters, who are even closer to the highest level of dissatisfaction.

This dissatisfaction with democracy among far-right voters is also observed when relating positive emotions towards Santiago Abascal and VOX to levels of democratic satisfaction. Those who feel three or four positive emotions—pride, hope, enthusiasm or peace of mind—towards Santiago Abascal (Figure 2) and those who feel all four positive emotions towards VOX (Figure 3) declare that they are not at all satisfied with democracy. Therefore, as noted in the literature and as is the case for other far-right groups, the rise of VOX in Spain is related to the climate of tension and political unrest prevailing in our country, and to a low level of satisfaction with our democratic system. Parallel to this disaffection towards the political establishment and democratic institutions, positive emotions—namely pride, hope, enthusiasm and peace of mind—arise towards the far right,

which has an anti-democratic tradition. Far from reinforcing the legitimacy of the political class, these emotions threaten democratic stability.

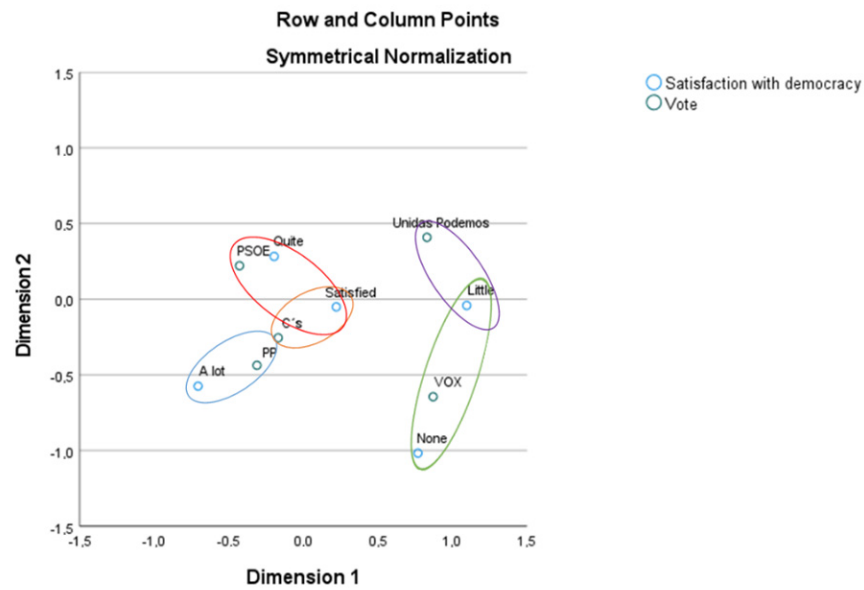


Figure 1. Correspondence analysis of the level of satisfaction with democracy compared to the recall of vote choice in the November 2019 general election. Source: authors’ own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

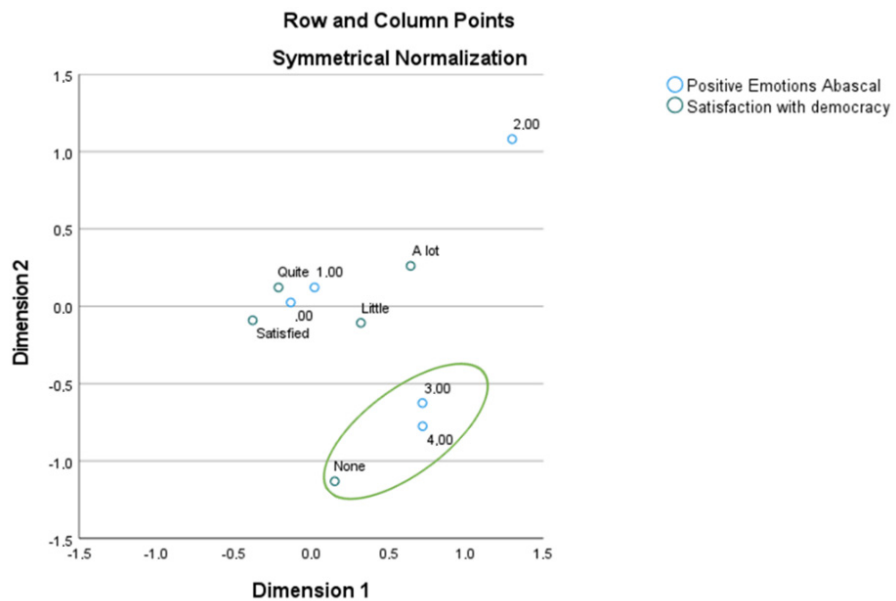


Figure 2. Correspondence analysis of the level of satisfaction with democracy in relation to positive emotions towards Santiago Abascal. Source: authors’ own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

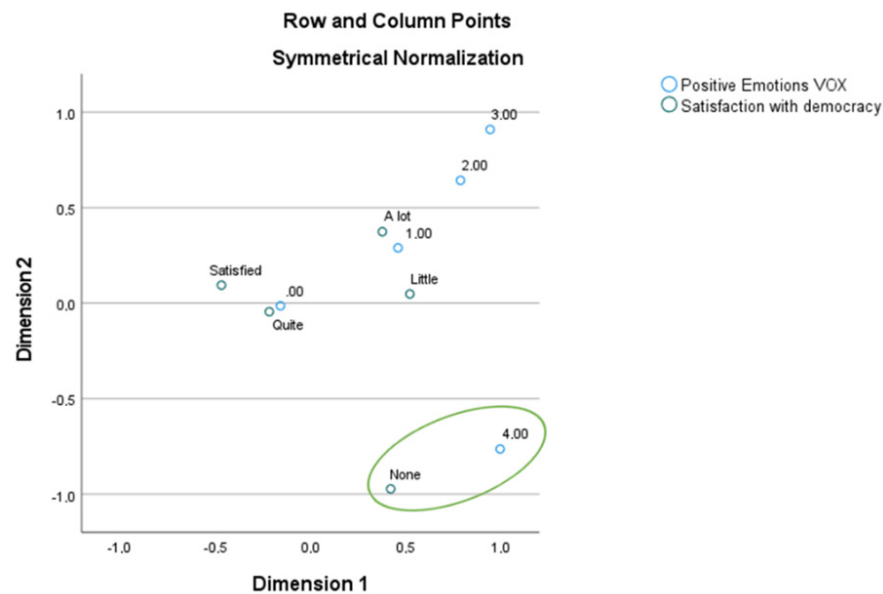


Figure 3. Correspondence analysis of the level of satisfaction with democracy in relation to positive emotions towards VOX. Source: authors' own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

After verifying the presence of positive and negative emotions in VOX voters and their relationship with the levels of democratic satisfaction, we will now show which factors have impacted the decision to support the Spanish far right; in other words, what are the constituent elements of the vote for VOX (Table 3)⁴. Firstly, when socio-demographic and contextual variables are introduced as explanatory variables for voting for the party, we observe that the level of explanation is low (R^2 Nagelkerke = 29.0%). Being male and identifying as Catholic increases the likelihood of voting for the far right. At the same time, as the individuals' ratings of both the current and future political situations improves, the likelihood of supporting VOX decreases. Therefore, this first model reveals that the structural component has little weight in the construction of the vote for the far right, while the negative rating of current politics and the absence of hope in its future evolution seem to indicate the weariness and dissatisfaction of VOX voters with politics.

Our second model significantly increases the level of explanation (R^2 Nagelkerke = 54.7%) and supports the previous finding that, as citizens become more satisfied with democracy in our country, the likelihood of supporting the far right decreases. This democratic dissatisfaction, together with the negative rating of the current political situation and the Catalan independence movement (i.e., perceiving Catalan independence as a problem), increases the likelihood of supporting VOX. Furthermore, ideology also influences the decision to vote for the far right, so as individuals move further to the right on the ideological spectrum, the likelihood of voting for VOX increases.

When variables relating to disaffection are introduced in the third model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 56.8%), the level of satisfaction with democracy continues to be significant and three of the variables representing disaffection are significant too: while the perception of politics as complicated (internal efficacy) and the ability to influence politics (external efficacy) have a negative effect on the support for VOX, the idea that politicians do not care about 'people like me' increases the likelihood of voting for this party. VOX voters are still citizens who are dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy, at least as far as the principle of representativeness is concerned, but do not consider politics to be too complex a subject for them to follow or understand. In this third model, the significant effect of socio-demographic and contextual variables also disappears.

Table 3. Explanatory models of the vote for VOX.

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Socio-demographic and contextual | | | | | | |
| Gender | 2.629 ** (0.327) | 2.299 * (0.411) | | | | |
| Catholics | 3.468 ** (0.439) | | | | | |
| Rating current political sit. | 0.711 ** (0.148) | 0.799 * (0.090) | | | | |
| Rating prospective political sit. | 0.805 * (0.132) | | | | | |
| Attitudinal, issues and post-materialist values | | | | | | |
| Ideological self-placement | | 2.313 *** (0.101) | 2.527 *** (0.099) | 2.663 *** (0.106) | 1.801 ** (0.137) | 1.735 ** (0.243) |
| Independence | | 5.491 *** (0.411) | 7.698 *** (0.394) | 9.673 *** (0.434) | 6.226 *** (0.489) | 10.236 ** (0.675) |
| Satisfaction with democracy | | 0.814 ** (0.080) | 0.857 * (0.080) | | | |
| Disaffection | | | | | | |
| Complicated politics | | | 0.863 * (0.070) | 0.823 ** (0.072) | | |
| Lack of worry | | | 1.177 * (0.076) | 1.225 ** (0.082) | | |
| Influence of vote | | | 0.804 ** (0.061) | 0.774 *** (0.068) | 0.837 * (0.077) | |
| Populism | | | | | | |
| Representation of ordinary citizen | | | | 1.126 * (0.057) | | |
| Leadership | | | | | | |
| Rating Santiago Abascal | | | | | 2.032 *** (0.105) | |
| Rating Pablo Casado | | | | | 0.611 ** (0.155) | 0.686 * (0.157) |
| Rating Albert Rivera | | | | | 0.768 * (0.098) | |
| Rating Pablo Iglesias | | | | | 0.747 ** (0.088) | 0.653 ** (0.139) |
| Sympathy and emotions | | | | | | |
| Sympathy towards VOX | | | | | | 39.251 *** (0.761) |
| Hope for Abascal | | | | | | 40.564 ** (0.903) |
| Enthusiasm for Casado | | | | | | 0.095 ** (0.845) |
| Enthusiasm for C's | | | | | | 0.235 * (0.670) |
| Anger towards PSOE | | | | | | 3.583 * (0.587) |
| Constant | 0.108 *** (0.510) | 0.002 *** (0.797) | 0.001 *** (1.039) | 0.000 *** (1.064) | 0.007 *** (0.965) | 0.002 *** (1.153) |
| R ² Nagelkerke | 29.0% | 54.7% | 56.8% | 59.5% | 70.8% | 80.8% |
| % Correct | 91.4 | 93.9 | 95.3 | 95.1 | 96.7 | 97.0 |
| % Correctly predicted VOX observations | 0.0 | 47.3 | 58.2 | 56.9 | 75.0 | 77.8 |
| % Correctly predicted Other parties observations | 100.0 | 98.1 | 98.7 | 98.4 | 98.7 | 98.7 |

Source: authors' own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

These variables, except the level of satisfaction with democracy, together with ideological self-placement and the issue of independence, are still significant in our fourth model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 59.5%), in which we add variables related to populism. Among these, the

fact that the only significant variable is the degree of agreement with the statement 'I would rather be represented by an ordinary citizen than by an experienced politician' reinforces the lack of democratic representation and the distrust towards the political establishment perceived by voters of the Spanish far right.

However, some of these variables cease to be significant, but not citizens' influence in politics through voting when we stop referring to the political establishment as an abstract concept and we start mentioning the main political leaders in our fifth model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 70.8%), which shows a significantly higher level of explanation. In a way, VOX voters would express this crisis of representativeness through their negative ratings of Pablo Iglesias, but also of Albert Rivera and Pablo Casado. This means that the likelihood of supporting the far right increases as voters rate these three political leaders lower while rating Santiago Abascal higher.

In our sixth and last model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 80.8%), the ratings of Albert Rivera and Santiago Abascal are no longer significant when we introduce the affective and emotional components in the explanation of the vote for VOX. Rather than opposition to the leader of Ciudadanos, it is the absence of enthusiasm towards the party that constructs the vote for the far right. Additionally, rather than the perception voters have of Santiago Abascal, it is the hope for this political leader that encourages citizens to support VOX. In the case of Albert Rivera and Santiago Abascal, emotion replaces ratings, which reveals the importance of the emotional component in constructing the ratings of political leaders. However, in the case of Pablo Casado, the negative effect of his rating on the election is reinforced by the absence of enthusiasm towards him. It should be added that the effect of opposition to the political establishment on the decision to vote for VOX is complemented by the presence of anger towards the PSOE. Finally, as is usually the case with all political parties, feeling sympathy for the far-right party increases the likelihood of supporting it, despite the recent introduction of this group in our party system.

Something that is related to the recent introduction of a political party or the novelty of a leader is the emergence of the feeling of hope. Hope is an emotion that is constructed looking to the future, and therefore requires trust in the political leader and the project they propose. That is why, in this awakening of hope for Santiago Abascal, the populist style of his leadership also becomes evident. Populism does not only play on negative emotions such as resentment, contempt or anger—as evidenced by the impact of anger towards the PSOE on the vote for VOX in our model—but also on positive emotions, such as hope, which is projected into the future.

5.2. *The Construction of Hope for Santiago Abascal*

In the above model for explaining the decision to vote for VOX, we have found that hope for the party leader is one of the main conditioning variables of the electoral support they receive. Therefore, to complete our analysis, it is relevant to study the constituent elements of this hope and how it is constructed. To this end, we create five regression models, following the same logic, which are shown in Table 4.⁵

In the first model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 10.2%), we only include the structural components. We observe that, as with voting intention, the fact of identifying as Catholic increases the likelihood of feeling hope for Santiago Abascal, together with income level and level of education, the latter in the opposite direction. This means that, as the level of education increases, it is less likely to feel hope for Santiago Abascal, while the increase in the income level has the opposite effect. As a result, while those with lower levels of education would be more likely to feel hopeful for the leader of the Spanish far right, given their level of income, they would not be considered as 'modernisation losers'.

These variables remain significant when political attitudes and attitudes towards institutions are introduced (second model, R^2 Nagelkerke = 17.8%). In line with our model of the vote for VOX, we also observe a relationship between disaffection and hope. As the level of trust in democratic institutions increases, the less likely it is to feel hope for

Santiago Abascal. We observe this same effect with respect to classic variables indicative of political disaffection, such as perceptions of internal and external efficacy⁶.

Table 4. Explanatory models of the hope for Santiago Abascal.

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Structural elements | | | | | |
| Level of studies | 0.817 * | 0.809 * | | | |
| | (0.092) | (0.100) | | | |
| Income level | 1.173 ** | 1.244 *** | 1.375 *** | 1.306 ** | |
| | (0.060) | (0.067) | (0.073) | (0.100) | |
| Catholics | 4.644 *** | 4.229 *** | 2.311 ** | | |
| | (0.261) | (0.272) | (0.298) | | |
| Attitudes towards politics and institutions | | | | | |
| Trust in democratic institutions | | 0.917 * | | | |
| | | (0.045) | | | |
| Will of the people | | 0.831 *** | | | |
| | | (0.051) | | | |
| Politicians talk too much | | 1.155 ** | | | |
| | | (0.052) | | | |
| Politics as complicated | | 0.931 * | | | |
| | | (0.034) | | | |
| Influence of voting | | 0.916 ** | 0.908 * | 0.864 ** | 0.900 * |
| | | (0.034) | (0.040) | (0.055) | (0.054) |
| Cultural elements | | | | | |
| Multiculturalism—Immigration | | | 1.256 *** | 1.202 ** | |
| | | | (0.046) | (0.067) | |
| Public services—Taxes | | | 1.170 ** | | |
| | | | (0.053) | | |
| Freedom—Safety | | | 1.296 *** | | |
| | | | (0.060) | | |
| Sexual freedom | | | 0.746 *** | 0.722 *** | 0.779 ** |
| | | | (0.060) | (0.078) | (0.020) |
| Perceptive elements | | | | | |
| Rating Santiago Abascal | | | | 2.198 *** | 1.899 *** |
| | | | | (0.080) | (0.078) |
| Rating Pedro Sánchez | | | | 0.742 *** | 0.757 *** |
| | | | | (0.102) | (0.068) |
| Rating Pablo Iglesias | | | | 0.818 * | |
| | | | | (0.101) | |
| Ideological elements | | | | | |
| Ideological self-placement | | | | | 1.646 *** |
| | | | | | (0.133) |
| Sympathy towards VOX | | | | | 10.802 *** |
| | | | | | (0.569) |
| Constant | 0.062 *** | 0.282 | 0.020 | 0.136 *** | −3.508 ** |
| | (0.568) | (0.896) | (0.938 ***) | (1.151) | (0.867) |
| R ² Nagelkerke | 10.2% | 17.8% | 35.9% | 71.3% | 73.4% |
| % Correct | 84.7 | 84.8 | 86.5 | 92.7 | 93.7 |
| % Correctly predicted VOX observations | 0.0 | 5.5 | 25.4 | 68.0 | 72.4 |
| % Correctly predicted Other parties observations | 100.0 | 99.2 | 97.0 | 97.1 | 97.4 |

Source: authors' own creation based on the data of the post-electoral survey of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

If we pay attention to the variables considered indicative of populist style, we observe that disagreement with the statement 'the politicians at the Congress must follow the will of the people' is significant in the explanation of feeling hope for Abascal. In other words, those who feel hope for Santiago Abascal, despite showing symptoms of disaffection and discontent with the traditional political establishment, do not consider that the political

establishment should obey the will of the people. Their hopes are placed in a strong leader—Santiago Abascal—typical of far-right parties.

Among all the aforementioned variables, only disagreement with citizens' influence in politics through voting, income level and religion maintain their effect by introducing cultural elements in the third model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 35.9%). Thus, this model shows that disagreement with some of the post-materialist values increases the likelihood of feeling hope for Santiago Abascal. Some significant elements include the perception of immigration as a cultural threat; a preference for tax cuts even if this translates into cuts in public services; a preference for security even if this means losing freedom; and disagreement with the statement 'Gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they wish'.

Nonetheless, among these values only the cultural threat of immigration and sexual freedom maintain their significant effect when we add the effect of leaderships to the model. In this fourth model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 71.3%), the level of explanation of hope for Santiago Abascal considerably increases. Furthermore, it is observed that hope for the leader of VOX is also constructed in opposition to Pablo Iglesias and Pedro Sánchez, because as individuals rate left-wing political leaders more highly, the likelihood of feeling hope for the leader of VOX decreases.

Finally, when including ideological and identity elements in our last model (R^2 Nagelkerke = 71.4%), the fact that citizens feel close to VOX, as well as their self-placement on the right side of the ideological spectrum, increases the likelihood of feeling hope towards Santiago Abascal, as expected.

Ultimately, we have seen how the construction of hope for the leader of VOX is made up of elements linked to political disaffection, certain values typical of reverse post-materialism, ideological and identity elements, and the rating of the leader himself, as well as of other opposition leaders.

6. Conclusions

According to the results obtained in the analysis of our research, the emotional regime of VOX voters is defined firstly by the presence of positive emotions towards the leader and the far-right party. Secondly, by the presence of positive emotions towards the leaders and political parties that are close in the ideological spectrum (Pablo Casado and the PP and Albert Rivera and C's). This has to do with the fact that many VOX voters are traditional voters of these close alternatives, and still feel more positive than negative emotions towards them, which also implies the possibility of returning to them at some point, since there has been no emotional disengagement. Thirdly, the absence of any hint of positive emotion towards left-wing leaders and parties (Pablo Iglesias and PODEMOS and Pedro Sánchez and the PSOE) shows these voters' centrifugal orientation. Fourthly, this is also consistent with the presence of negative emotions towards these left-wing leaders and parties. Finally, the emotional regime of VOX voters is also characterised by the presence of very negative emotions towards left-wing parties and leaders, emotions linked to aversion, which are rarely so present in the Spanish political reality.

In this emotional regime of VOX voters, the presence of high levels of pride and hope—emotions linked to the past and the future that support the link with the leader or the party—and of enthusiasm and peace of mind—both motivating emotions—stand out. In particular, the high levels of hope indicate that these are voters looking for a subject they can identify with (either a party or a leader), a result of the dissatisfaction towards other groups on the ideological right.

Among the negative emotions, those expressed by VOX voters towards Pedro Sánchez stand out. Some of them are particularly negative, such as contempt, disgust, resentment and bitterness which, as stated before, are unusual to see in Spanish society. Others are more common, such as anger, fear, anxiety and worry. The politician who triggers the highest level of aversion is Pedro Sánchez, while among left-wing political parties this emotion is felt at its highest towards PODEMOS. The presence of this type of very negative

emotions is consistent with what has been described in the literature on emotions and their link to the emergence and rise of far-right parties.

The emotional regime described corresponds to the levels of democratic satisfaction, as VOX voters who feel more positive emotions towards the leader and the far-right party are the ones who feel more dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in our country. Dissatisfaction is also related to the decision to vote for VOX in the November 2019 general election.

The explanatory models of the vote for VOX reveal, firstly, the significance of emotional explanation, which considerably increases the levels of explanation. Secondly, it is worth noting the low presence of the structural component in the construction of the vote, which disappears when the variables relating to political disaffection are introduced into the regression. Furthermore, the disaffection and discontent felt by VOX voters towards the political establishment becomes clear, as they do not perceive they care for the problems that affect citizens and declare their preference for an ordinary citizen over an experienced politician when it comes to deciding who will represent them. It is precisely their disagreement with the fact that citizens can influence what happens in politics through voting, together with democratic dissatisfaction, that once again highlights VOX voters' dissatisfaction with the principle of representation in particular and with the functioning of democracy in general. This discontent is reflected in the negative ratings of Albert Rivera and Pablo Casado, as well as in the anger felt towards the PSOE.

The emotional variable with the greatest explanatory power, and which even replaces the rating of Santiago Abascal in the model, is hope for the leader of VOX, whose ability to attract voters to his party is comparable to that of party identification. The absence of enthusiasm towards Casado and Ciudadanos also plays a relevant role.

The feeling of hope for Santiago Abascal would consist not so much of structural elements, but rather of the defence of values, disaffection, the rating of political leaders and the ideological and identity components. Starting with the first ones, the fact that hope for Santiago Abascal is partly explained by the defence of reverted post-materialist values, as formulated in our research, makes us think of an emotion with cognitive components, that is, an emotion in which the evaluation of our perceptions plays a relevant role, as part of the literature pointed out. Hope for Santiago Abascal is not only an emotion generated by opposition to the political elite but to left-wing policies, such as lessening the obstacles to immigration, relaxing the repressive capacities of the state, tax increases to offer a wider variety of public services or the extension of LGBTI+ rights.

The positioning towards these post-materialist values is also a response to one of the cleavages that Spanish politics still hinges on: ideology. This, together with sympathy towards VOX and Santiago Abascal's leadership, would be the other constituent element of the hope for Santiago Abascal. In other words, beyond the individuals' structural conditions, hope for the leader of the Spanish far right would be triggered by elements of a perceptive nature. In the face of a difficult reality to which other right-wing parties offer no solution, far-right voters need to place their hopes for a better future in the leader of VOX.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Variables introduced in the explanatory models of the vote for VOX.

| Variable | Type | Interpretation |
|---|-----------------|---|
| VOX vote | Nominal (dummy) | 1: VOX–0: Other parties |
| Socio-demographic and contextual | | |
| Gender | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Male–0: Female |
| Age | Quantitative | 0–98 |
| Level of education | Ordinal | 1: Uneducated–6: University |
| Interest-bearing assets | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Interest-bearing assets 0: Other employment situation |
| Interest-bearing liabilities | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Interest-bearing assets 0: Other employment situation |
| Non-interest-bearing assets | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Interest-bearing assets 0: Other employment situation |
| Level of household income | Ordinal | 1: Up to EUR 300–10: +EUR 6000 |
| Catholics | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Catholics 0: Other religious affiliation |
| Rating personal economic sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating current economic sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating prospective economic sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating current political sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating prospective political sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Attitudinal, issues and post-materialist values | | |
| Ideological self-placement | Quantitative | 0: Left–10: Right |
| Nationalist self-placement (Autonomous Communities) | Quantitative | 0: Minimal nationalism–10: Maximum nationalism |
| Spanish nationalist self-placement | Quantitative | 0: Minimal nationalism–10: Maximum nationalism |
| Spanish sentiment | Ordinal | 1: Only Spanish–5: Only from Autonomous Community |
| Independence | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Independence 0: Other issues |
| Sexual freedom | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| European integration | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Trust in political establishment | Quantitative | 0: No trust–10: Maximum trust |
| Trust in democratic institutions | Quantitative | 0: No trust–10: Maximum trust |
| Representation of interests | Quantitative | 0: None–10: A lot |
| Satisfaction with democracy | Quantitative | 0: None–10: A lot |
| Multiculturalism—Immigration | Quantitative | 0: Multiculturalism–10: Immigration |
| Public services—Taxes | Quantitative | 0: Public services–10: Taxes |
| Freedom—Safety | Quantitative | 0: Freedom–10: Safety |
| Populism | | |
| Will of the people | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| People’s decisions | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Differences elite—people | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Representation of ordinary citizen | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Politicians talk too much | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Consensus | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Disaffection | | |
| Search for interests | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Complex politics | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Lack of worry | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Influence of vote | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Informed | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Disaffection | Quantitative | 0: No disaffection–10: A lot of disaffection |
| Interest in politics | Quantitative | 0: No interest–10: A lot of interest |
| Leadership | | |
| Rating political leaders | Quantitative | 0: Very bad–10: Very good |
| Sympathy and emotions | | |
| Sympathy towards VOX | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Sympathy towards VOX 0: Other parties |
| Emotional presence | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Presence of emotion 0: Absence of emotion |

Source: authors’ own creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

Table A2. Variables introduced in the explanatory models of the hope towards Abascal.

| Variable | Type | Interpretation |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Presence of hope for Abascal | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Presence of hope 0: Absence of hope |
| Structural elements | | |
| Gender | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Male–0: Female |
| Age | Quantitative | 0–98 |
| Level of education | Ordinal | 1: Uneducated–6: University |
| Interest-bearing assets | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Interest-bearing assets 0: Other employment situation |
| Interest-bearing liabilities | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Interest-bearing assets 0: Other employment situation |
| Non-interest-bearing assets | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Interest-bearing assets 0: Other employment situation |
| Level of household income | Ordinal | 1: Up to EUR 300–10: +EUR 6000 |
| Catholics | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Catholics 0: Other religious affiliation |
| Attitudes towards politics and institutions | | |
| Trust in political establishment | Quantitative | 0: No trust–10: Maximum trust |
| Trust in democratic institutions | Quantitative | 0: No trust–10: Maximum trust |
| Representation of interests | Quantitative | 0: None–10: A lot |
| Satisfaction with democracy | Quantitative | 0: None–10: A lot |
| Will of the people | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| People’s decisions | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Differences elite—people | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Representation of ordinary citizen | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Politicians talk too much | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Consensus | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Complicated politics | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Lack of worry | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Influence of vote | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Informed | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Disaffection | Quantitative | 0: No disaffection–10: A lot of disaffection |
| Interest in politics | Quantitative | 0: No interest–10: A lot of interest |
| Cultural elements | | |
| Multiculturalism–Immigration | Quantitative | 0: Multiculturalism–10: Immigration |
| Public services—Taxes | Quantitative | 0: Public services–10: Taxes |
| Freedom—Safety | Quantitative | 0: Freedom–10: Safety |
| Sexual freedom | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| European integration | Quantitative | 0: Strongly disagree–10: Strongly agree |
| Perceptive elements | | |
| Rating political leaders | Quantitative | 0: Very bad–10: Very good |
| Rating personal economic sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating current economic sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating prospective economic sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating current political sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Rating prospective political sit. | Quantitative | 0: Really bad–10: Really good |
| Ideological elements | | |
| Sympathy towards VOX | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Sympathy towards VOX 0: Other parties |
| Ideological self-placement | Quantitative | 0: Left–10: Right |
| Nationalist self-placement (Autonomous Communities) | Quantitative | 0: Minimal nationalism–10: Maximum nationalism |
| Spanish nationalist self-placement | Quantitative | 0: Minimal nationalism–10: Maximum nationalism |
| Spanish sentiment | Ordinal | 1: Only Spanish–5: Only from Autonomous Community |
| Independence | Nominal (dummy) | 1: Independence 0: Other issues |
| Media | | |
| Frequency of information monitoring in the media | Ordinal | 1: Never or hardly ever–6: Every day or most days |
| Social media information | Quantitative | 0: None–10: A lot |
| Social media participation | Quantitative | 0: None–10: A lot |
| Political landscape | | |
| Rating management of government and opposition | Quantitative | 0: Very bad–10: Very good |
| Rating inauguration | Quantitative | 0: Very bad–10: Very good |
| Rating coalition | Quantitative | 0: Very bad–10: Very good |

Source: authors’ creation based on the data of the post-electoral study of the November 2019 general election conducted by Political Research Team.

Notes

- ¹ For further reading on the terminological debate see: [Jaráiz Gulías et al. \(2020\)](#).
- ² This is a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) carried out between 14 January and 22 February 2020, with a sample size of 1000 units. The universe is comprised of a population over 18 years of age and residing in Spain and the sampling method is simple random sampling with proportional affixation according to sex and age quotas. The error for the sample $\pm 3.1\%$, for a 95% level of trust and according to the principle of maximum indeterminacy $p = q = 0.5$.
- ³ In the April 2019 general election, VOX got 2,688,092 votes, which translates into a 10.26% of the valid votes and 24 seats, and in the November general election of the same year, they got 3,656,979 votes, a 15.08% of the valid votes and 52 seats, according to Spanish Ministry of Interior.
- ⁴ Table 3 shows the values of the odds ratio and the heterocedasticity-robust standard errors.
- ⁵ Table 4 shows the values of the odds ratio and the heterocedasticity-robust standard errors.
- ⁶ Degree of agreement with the statement ‘Through voting, people like me can influence what happens in politics’ and ‘Politicians talk a lot but do very little’, respectively.

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