

The loyalty of the Christian democratic voter

A case study on the voting behavior of CDA voters between 1980 and 2012

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Specialization	Comparative Politics
Course:	Master Thesis
Date:	25-05-2018
Words:	14219
Version:	1

Abstract

How is it possible that Christian democratic parties have been able to stay relevant in Europe, while societies became increasingly secular? Further investigation into the electorate of parties could give an indication of what is important when it comes to people's voting behavior. This thesis concerns itself with the question to what extent the CDA voter has changed ideologically between 1980 and 2012. In order to address that question, two opposing theories are postulated. The first theory is the 'cleavage theory', which implies that Christian people still vote CDA because their religion is important to them and they want to express that politically. The second theory is the 'secularization theory'. The empirical implications of this theory would be that people are becoming increasingly secular and would therefore be less inclined to vote CDA for religious reasons. This thesis has found support for the cleavage theory. This indicates that the relevance of the party to a large extent can be explained by the loyalty of the Christian voters.

Key words:

Christian Democracy, CDA, Christen-Democratisch Appèl, Cleavages, Secularization

Content

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
5	Introduction
8	Chapter 1: Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Christian democracy- The state-church cleavage- Changing societies and the consequences for religion- The contradiction
20	Chapter 2: Data & Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Case selection- Methodological choices
29	Chapter 3: Results <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bivariate logistic regression analyses- Multivariate logistic regression analyses
36	Conclusion
39	List of figures and tables
40	References
44	Appendix <ul style="list-style-type: none">- List of variables- Descriptive statistics- Multicollinearity- Logistic regression analyses

Introduction

Many authors have predicted the demise of Christian parties. Most of them used the secularization theory to support their argument. It is quite remarkable that Christian democracy survived, while the secularization theory predicts they should have faded away a long time ago (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p192). How did certain parties, despite a decreasing loyal electorate, manage to stay relevant in Western European politics? One possibility is that Christian parties hold the key to survival without complete ideological capitulation (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p205). They may have found a way to keep voters aligned, even though society is becoming increasingly secular.

So, the problem is that there is a contradiction between the theory and the empirical data. On the one hand the secularization theory predicts that Christian democratic parties should already have faded away a long time ago. On the other hand the empirical data proves that Christian democratic parties are still successful in European politics. It seems one cannot just assume that these parties will disappear within a certain number of years.

This thesis is trying to deal with this problem by offering two opposing theories. The first one is the cleavages theory of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). According to this idea, there are certain divisions in society which are deeply embedded. Parties succeed in tying groups of people by positioning themselves on one side of the cleavage. This could increase voter loyalty because cleavages are important to people. Also, the groups are rather fixed throughout the years.

This is relevant to this thesis because of the state-church cleavage. According to Lipset and Rokkan the religious affiliation of people could lead them to vote for a certain party since their stance on that topic is important to them and they want to express that politically. This is expressed by the division in society of different religious groups and non-religious groups. Religious people are, for example, expected to be well-represented in the electorate of parties with the same religious affiliation. In other words, the first theory suggests that the Christian democratic parties have succeeded in remaining relevant because religion is still important to people and they want to express their religion politically.

In opposition to that stands the secularization theory. The key element is that religious identities are eroding and values are changing (Norris & Pippin 2011, p200). People tend to become less religious in advanced industrial democracies and this influences their ties to Christian democratic parties.

Furthermore, new issues are on the rise, which are undermining the traditional cleavages (Norris & Pippin 2011, p200). Moreover, television has replaced the traditional media. This is disadvantageous to Christian parties because they benefited from the ties with the media. As a consequence of this phenomenon, identities based on religion no longer fit in the new societies, which opens the way for new parties (Norris & Pippin 2011, p200).

By adopting this theory, one believes that the importance of the state-church cleavage is decreasing. On the whole people are becoming less religious, so this will influence the extent to which religion plays a role in their voting behavior. Another possibility is that religious people no longer feel a strong loyalty anymore towards confessional parties, despite their religiousness. In that case the party might attract voters due to other, more short-term issues that are important to people.

In summation, currently there are two contradicting theories. The first theory about cleavages implies that the religious parties in Europe have survived because religion is still important to religious people. Therefore, they have an affinity with those parties that share their ideology. In contrast to that, the second theory on secularization suggests that the loyal electorate of religious parties is diminishing. People are no longer tied to religious parties for religious reasons.

In order to test these theories, the Dutch party Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA) was selected for analysis. CDA is a very suitable candidate to apply these theories on because the party has been able to remain powerful in a very secular environment. By testing the theories it is possible to find out whether the voter still votes CDA because of his or her religious affiliation or because of other reasons, for example the party's economic policy or central position on the political scale. The outcome is important for the future of the CDA and maybe for other Christian democratic parties as well. Therefore, the main question of this thesis is the following: *How has the ideological profile of the CDA voter changed between 1980 and 2012?*

This question is scientifically relevant because most of the literature has focused on the decline of Christian democratic parties in Western Europe. There is not much literature on how the parties have managed to remain relevant, despite the fact that society is becoming increasingly secular and partisan ties are weakening. Therefore, the goal of this research is to make a contribution to the research and debates on the ongoing political relevance of Christian democratic parties in Europe. This research is also relevant for society because it is concerned with the voting behavior and voting decisions. Christian parties have largely shaped society into its current form. And it is quite possible that those parties will remain important in the future. However, this seems unlikely because of the fact that the power of these parties is slightly but steadily decreasing all over Europe.

The next chapters will attempt to find an answer to the main question of this thesis. In Chapter 1 the theoretical framework will be presented. First the origins and developments of Christian democratic parties will be discussed. After that, the central contradiction of the thesis will be elaborated on by highlighting the cleavages theory and the secularization theory.

Chapter 2 discusses the methodological choices and the data. First potential cases will be reviewed in order to select suitable cases. After the selection of cases, the data will be discussed. The variables and their sources will be shown. The chapter concludes with an explanation of methodological choices. This will concern the research method, the assumptions and the interpretations of the findings.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the most important results in tables. These will be analyzed in order to determine their meaning. Using this data it becomes possible to reflect upon the consequences for the CDA. How do the findings effect the hypotheses?

The thesis will round up by providing a conclusion in order to translate the results into an answer to the central question. Based on that it becomes possible to formulate several implications for the future of the CDA and suggestions for further research. The appendix presents the variables and the results that were not shown in Chapter 3.

Chapter 1:

Theory

In this chapter of the thesis, a theoretical background of the link between voting behavior and Christianity will be presented. The first part will give a broad perspective on Christian democracy. The term will be defined and the development of the movement will be discussed. Furthermore, the question will be posed whether Christian democracy could be considered a distinctive phenomenon. In the later parts of the chapter two different contradicting theories will be presented. The first one is the cleavages theory. The meaning and relevance of a cleavage will be explained. It deals with the question why voters are attached to certain parties. The second theory is the secularization theory. The meaning of the word and the consequences for Christian democratic parties will be discussed. At the end of the chapter the central contradiction of the theories will be made clear and this in turn culminates in the formulation of two hypotheses.

Christian Democracy

Christian democracy is a political movement which has its roots in Europe, and became especially influential in Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland (Grabow 2011, p7). It is a relatively new phenomenon in Europe and it has its roots in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Christian democracy is an undertheorized topic (Gerard & Van Hecke 2004, p10; Hanley 1994; Van Kersbergen 1995), which means that too little is known about the success of the movement in European countries. Therefore the dynamics of the Christian democratic phenomenon still need to be disentangled and explained (Leonardi & Alberti 2004, p28).

The rise of Christian democratic parties in European countries

The parties did not come into existence out of nowhere; they are evolutions of the Catholic confessional parties (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p185; Grabow 2011, p7). That means that most of those parties were founded as a result of a fusion of different other religious parties. The movement could be considered a counterpart to the liberalization of democracy in that time.

Although Christianity is directly linked with the church, the role of the institution in the Christian movement and parties has been subject to change over time. Confessional movements were supported by the church at the beginning because the organization feared to lose its privileges as a result of the increasingly liberal society. However, the movements later became independent from the

church because the activists started organizing themselves into political parties (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p185). The movements were institutionalized and the parties became autonomous.

So, Christian parties were not founded because of, but in opposition to the church (Kalyvas 1996). The church wanted to prevent the movements from organizing themselves into parties because this would mean loss of power for the church. It is easier to influence a movement than a political party because the parties were independent from the church, while movements were more closely connected to it.

A political party derives its legitimacy from the electorate, instead of from the religious ideology.

Although the two sides often follow the same line, from time to time they also disagree with each other. A case in point is the clash between the CDA and the Dutch churches. Their relationship was at a low in the early 1980s because of a difference of opinion regarding the modernization of nuclear weapons (Lucardie & Ten Napel 1994, p56). The churches campaigned against modernization, but the CDA was in favor.

According to Kalyvas and Van Kersbergen (2010), the process by which those confessional parties were formed had two important consequences. The first being that religion became the core element of those parties, although this became a serious obstacle instead of a benefit (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p185). The parties had been struggling with the meaning of Christianity and the desired influence of religion on politics. The second consequence is that their religious appeal had united many heterogeneous groups within one party (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p185).

Confessional parties managed to consist of highly heterogeneous coalitions of interests groups that were only united by their religiousness. Religion is a means for cross-cutting other divisions in society. In other words, religion is like a glue that holds all parts together. It contributed for example to the decrease in the importance of class in their party systems (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p185). This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

The distinctiveness of Christian democracy

What makes Christian parties different from other party families? It is not easy to explain what Christian democracy is and what it is not because it consists of a collection of parties which are very diverse. The Netherlands provide a perfect example of this diversity because the religious parties can be found all over the political scale. They are present from left to right, from progressive to conservative, from tolerant to discriminating, from a principal interpretation of religion to a freer one and so on (Vollaard 2012, p115).

The CDA, the ChristenUnie (CU) and the Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP) differ from one another in many aspects. They all adhere to the Christian religion, but not to the same extent. The CDA could be considered moderate, while the SGP is more orthodox. This is interesting because the

CDA considered to be the only real Christian democratic party in the Netherlands. The SGP is a more orthodox-Christian and the CU is more social-Christian. What is distinctive about Christian democracy? To answer that question, the next step is to look at overarching patterns of similarities.

Although Christian democratic ideologies have gone through different developments under different circumstances, they show a striking similarity with one another (Dierickx 1994, p29). In addition to that, according to Van Kersbergen (1994; 1995), Christian democracy can be called a distinctive political movement because of what he calls “social capitalism”. By this he means that those parties have a general commitment to capitalist market relations, but are also prepared to correct the detrimental effects of the capitalist market. He calls it a “safety-net” (Van Kersbergen 1995, p2). So in a way it could be argued that the Christian democrats take a middle position between the liberals and the socialists. On the one hand they accept the capitalist market, but on the other hand, they are prepared to correct its negative consequences, which is what distinguishes them from liberalists generally. But they are also different from the socialists because they want to correct for the negative effects of the market, although they do not actively want to intervene and redistribute.

Thus, Christian ideologies in general seem to be very similar, despite their differences. The most important values of the political movement are integration, (class) compromise, accommodation, and pluralism (Van Kersbergen 1994, p36; Van Kersbergen 1995, p21). Christian democratic parties were continually trying to integrate and reconcile different groups of society that had opposing interests. This was exactly what made Christian democracy different from other political movements, like the Catholics, socialists or conservatives. This fits with the Christian tradition because the parties themselves were in fact created out of multiple and diverse Christian movements. Catholics and protestants in European countries were often combined into one party with the overarching label “Christian”.

By bringing together voters with opposing interests, Christian democratic parties could be seen as catch-all parties *avant-la-lettre* (Bale & Krouwel 2015, p21; Van Kersbergen 1994; Van Kersbergen 1995; Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p187). Even before the phenomenon of catch-all parties gained ground, Christian parties were already able to attract a larger electorate than their main target group. For instance, the parties were successful in attracting religious voters, but they also succeeded in luring voters without a religious denomination. They had the ability to accommodate divergent class interests within the party and therefore developed a greater ability to attract people across classes and sectors. The parties knew how to incorporate diverse social groups and interests and that is why their electorate consisted of farmers and fishermen, entrepreneurs and employers, the religious part of the working class and broad parts of the white collar middle class (Bale & Krouwel 2015, p21).

All those diverse groups are united into one single party based on their overarching religious affiliation. A party is able to provide mediation in an attempt to bridge the class gap between different groups (Bale & Krouwel 2015, p21). Summing all this up into one sentence, according to Van Kersbergen (1995, p82) the distinctiveness of Christian democracy is that it is a political movement that seeks to establish cross-class compromises by handling a policy mix of social capitalism, while appealing to religious affiliations.

Although different people with opposing interests voted for Christian parties, it is possible to distinguish certain groups of people which are overrepresented in the electorate. Te Grotenhuis, Van der Meer, Eisinga and Pelzer found that the correlation between belonging to a church and voting for the CDA was between 0.4 and 0.5 during the period 1970-2004 and 0.35 during the period 2006-2008 and 0.3 in 2010 (Te Grotenhuis et al 2012, p7). To put it differently, a large part of church goers votes CDA. The rest will probably consider the CU or the SGP to be the right party for them.

In addition to that, according to Broughton (1992, in Hanley 1994, p5) there is a distinct type of Christian democratic voter. He or she is older than average, has a high degree of religious observance, takes a middle position amongst the classes, is more likely to come from rural areas than from urban areas and is predominantly pro-European.

It is quite possible be that Christian parties hold the key to survival without complete ideological capitulation (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p205). In other words, Christian parties probably use a strategy which combines rationality and religious values. Modern Christian democratic politics can neither be called religious, nor secular because it is “unsecular” (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p204). Unsecular politics attempts to avoid explicit religious ideology, but at the same time creates new beliefs, values and norms which are inspired by religion.

The state-church cleavage

Measuring voting behavior of people is difficult because there are so many influencing factors. People are shaped by their structural circumstances because different circumstances create different people. One can be a man or a woman, religious or atheist, rich or poor, boss or employee, old or young, living in rural or urban areas. Most of these contradictions are translated into cleavages, which means that the people’s vote in elections will depend on their circumstances in daily life. Cleavages could simply be described as “divisions in society that cause people to vote for a certain party”. This section of the thesis will further elaborate on cleavages and link them to religion.

Cleavages

The most influential writers on the topic of cleavages are Martin Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan. In 1967 they wrote a book on research of the voting behavior of people, which became a very important work in political science. The book is called *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). In the introduction the authors laid the basis for our current understanding of the social-structural foundations of politics (Jansen 2011, p18).

According to Lipset and Rokkan, the cleavage basis of Western party systems has been frozen since the 1920s (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). By this they mean that the party system of the 1960s reflected that of the 1920s because generally the same issues were salient in both time periods. People in the 1920s, for example, were divided on the economy because there were two groups with opposing interests. On the one hand you got the owners and on the other hand the workers. In the 60s this also was the case. This division between groups of people translated into a cleavage, meaning that people are tied to a certain party because of their position in society.

According to the authors, cleavages are “divisions in society which are deeply embedded” (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). They align, dealign or realign voters to certain parties because cleavages are important to people. The position of the party regarding the cleavages can create partisan loyalty for the longer term. Also, cleavages go hand in hand with the rise and fall of parties and politics (Mair 2006, p372). If the divides change, for instance because old ones become less important and new ones emerge, this will lead to the decline of certain parties and to the emergence and rise of others.

That does not mean that every division in society is automatically a cleavage. In order to become one, it must be a division that is deeply embedded in society and it must be institutionalized (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). For instance, the division between younger and older people can not automatically be called a cleavage because the division is not deeply embedded and there are no new large parties that attract specifically young or old people because of their position on that division.

Mair and Bartolini have argued that a cleavage has three characteristics (Mair 2006, p373; Bartolini & Mair 1990, p212-249). Firstly, they agree with Lipset and Rokkan that a cleavage must find an organizational expression. They have, however a broader view of the expression because it includes also churches and trade unions, instead of only political parties. Secondly, it must be a social division that distinguishes between groups of people, based on social-structural characteristics. Examples could be status, ethnicity or religion. Thirdly, there needs to be a collective identity. People need to identify with each other as a group and there needs to be a certain awareness of it.

Lipset and Rokkan identified four different cleavages in their work: owner-worker, center-periphery, land-industry and state-church (Lipset & Rokkan 1967, p47). The two most important cleavages are class and religion. The basis for the class cleavage was laid in the Industrial Revolution because the opposition was on the rise at that time: the owners and the workers (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). The first group are the employers. It is rational for them to strive for a maximum profit, which means for example that wages should be low and contracts should be as flexible as possible. The second group, the workers, have exactly the opposite interests. They usually have a family to feed and therefore they want the wages to be as high as possible, good working conditions and a fixed contract.

The religious cleavage in Western Europe is more complex than the cleavage which is based on class (Jansen 2011, p19). It is essential to know what the origins of the state-church cleavage are. According to Lipset and Rokkan, the different opposing religious attitudes have their roots around the 16th and 17th century, when there were tensions between the supporters of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, p37-41). Today, however, the opposing groups would consist of the believers and non-believers or Christians and people who adhere to another religion.

The cleavages of Lipset and Rokkan have persisted through time and are still relevant. According to Peter Mair this is due to a couple of reasons (2006, p5). The first is one is that the interests remain relevant and the groups involved still feel they are a collective identity. During the last 70 years little has changed with respect to the foundations of cleavages. There still are for example owners and workers, and believers and atheists. Although the strength of cleavages may have decreased, people still take a side and identify with each other as a group.

The second reason is that other political identities in the past were often mobilized when the suffrage was extended to a new group (Mair 2006, p5). This means that at the time large numbers of new voters become incorporated into the political system, new issues, opinions and identities can be mobilized. This is unlikely in Western societies because the last time this happened was when countries accepted the universal suffrage. Since the twentieth century there has generally been a broad consensus in liberal democracies that every adult of mental health who is not imprisoned has the right to participate in elections (Altman 2011, p34). However, one possibility is that the legal age to vote will be brought down to sixteen, which will add new voters to the system.

The third reason is that the rules of the current electoral system favor the already existing parties (Mair 2006, p5). This means that also the current cleavages are maintained due to the relatively fixed system because the current parties are built on those cleavages. Our understanding of a political system is shaped by labels like “left-right” and “conservative-progressive”. Current parties have

already established themselves by taking positions on all cleavages. When new cleavages arise, parties will probably try to fit it into their own program.

The fourth and last reason is that cleavages are presented by parties trying to survive by controlling the terms of reference of political conflict and by narrowing down their electoral markets (Mair 2006, p5). The broader the scope of conflicts, the harder it will be for people to identify with a party. Keeping the current cleavages is beneficial to the parties because it aligns voters to them. The more cleavages, the more divisions, the harder it is to tie people to a party.

Religion and voting behavior

Obviously the most relevant cleavage for this thesis is the state-church cleavage. In the previous section the basis and the origins of the divisions have been explained. According to Lipset and Rokkan religious, cultural and regional struggles were translated into political divides, although less evenly and less frequently than the struggle between classes (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). The authors wrote their book in 1967 and it is interesting to see what the situation is at a more recent point in time. How strong is the cleavage in contemporary times?

Many authors have dealt with the impact of religious attitudes on voting behavior. Van den Brug and De Vreese found that the importance of religion with regard to voting behavior at the elections of the European Union for all party groups has declined between 1989 and 1999 (Van den Brug & De Vreese 2009, p1274). However, between 1999 and 2004 there has been an increase for all party groups. Their main finding was that religious denomination has a significant effect on party choice (Van den Brug & Vreese 2009). Against all expectations, this effect is disproportionately strong when it comes to preferences for Christian democratic parties (Van den Brug & Vreese 2009, p1278). This means that people who are a member of a Christian religious organization are more likely to vote for a Christian party than voters who are unaffiliated with religious organizations.

When it comes to the strong impact of religion on voting behavior, others have come to similar conclusions. Despite the secularization, the impact of religion on party choice has remained high over the years (Knutsen 2004). Te Grotenhuis, Van der Meer, Eisinga and Pelzer have tried to test the connection quantitatively for the CDA and they found a high correlation between belonging to a church and voting for the CDA (Te Grotenhuis et al 2012, p7). To put it differently, a large part of the church goes votes for the CDA. However, Rose, Urwin and Jansen argue that the religious-secular cleavage has become even stronger than the owner-worker cleavage (Rose & Urwin 1969, p12; Jansen 2011).

Changing societies and the consequences for religion

Around the 1950's the voting behavior of people was quite structured and predictable. People voted according to their religious beliefs, their classes or their parents' voting behavior. Cleavages were really important because they were largely determined how people voted. Although some cleavages were stronger than others, they all became less important than they used to be. What is important is that not only the voting behavior has changed over the past 50 years, but also the electorate itself. People are more capable of understanding the political situation because of a better education and more transparency. The combination of these factors has led to more volatility and a less predictable voting structure.

Social changes

People have changed a lot since the Second World War and so has their voting behavior. Dalton, Flanagan and Beck have argued that the traditional cleavages have declined, especially class and religion (1984). In their opinion this could mean two things. Firstly, it could be that new cleavages are becoming important. For instance, Kriesi (2008; 2012) argued that there is a new demarcation-integration cleavage and that this has consequences for the demand side and the supply side of politics. The parties as well as the voters have changed because of the new relevant issues. Parties have to take a side in the division and this in turn could attract or reject voters.

Secondly, it could mean that the voting behavior has shifted from ideological to more issue-related (Dalton, Flanagan & Beck 1984). So, people could be voting for a Christian democratic party for other reasons than religious ones. Possibly many people are attracted to those parties because they are generally more right-wing and conservative. This new system allows for more volatility and uncertainty because voters are to a lesser extent loyal to a certain party. Their vote depends on the short-term interests of the person. However, electoral volatility does not necessarily mean that a cleavage is declining (Bartolini & Mair 1990).

In summation, voting behavior has changed in the past decades. Guido Jansen has made an effort to summarize the most important bottom-up changes in the electorate and parties (Jansen 2011, p.35-37). The first social change was the decreasing importance of classes when determining the vote. There is an increasing inter- or intra-generational mobility, which means that voters shift more easily between the boundaries of the cleavages. For example, being rich may be less important when voting for an economic right-wing party today than it was 50 years ago. People increasingly look to other themes or issues which are important to them. This idea is summarized into the mobility hypothesis (Jansen 2011, p35).

The second social change was the increasing heterogenization of the electorate. This means that the composition of social categories is changed and that groups are increasingly different from each other. With regards to the working class, it is not easy to make the distinction between manual and non-manual labor anymore (Jansen 2011, p35). Due to the industrialization, a large part of manual labor have been disappeared. In contrast to that, the services sector has grown rapidly since the end of World War II. Moreover manual labor can now be categorized into more sub-divisions and the same goes for the services sector.

For the religious cleavage the heterogenous electorate has consequences. An increasing percentage of the electorate has more secular orientations, which means that the composition of society has shifted. Also, the secular group becomes more and more heterogeneous because they are strengthened by first and second generation church leavers from various religious origins (Jansen 2011, p35). To summarize this change, society becomes increasingly secular and the secular people are becoming more heterogenous themselves.

The third social change is the rise of new social divisions. The “old” cleavages from Lipset and Rokkan (1967) are partly replaced by new “post-industrial” cleavages. Gender, ethnicity, education, sector employment or new identity and interest groups are issues which are increasingly important to people (Jansen 2011, p35). Therefore, religion and class are expected to become less salient, while the new issues are expected to become more salient in the future.

The fourth social change is that the people with the right to vote generally have become smarter. This idea is explained in the Cognitive Mobilization thesis (Jansen 2011, p36). Voters developed more cognitive skills and resources that allow them to make political choices by themselves. They don’t need to rely on partisan ties, religion or their parents anymore to make political choices because they are able to think for themselves which party represents their interests best.

The fifth change is that the average person in advanced industrial societies has become richer. There has been a growth in affluence, which means that incomes have increased and the living standards have improved (Jansen 2011, p36). The economic situation has stabilized, what has led to a change in political choices. As a consequence, the fixed support for left-wing parties has declined. The incomes are better assured, the living standards have improved and the consumption patterns of lower incomes have become closer to those of the middle class. With regards to the religious cleavage, this could mean that religion has become less of a determining factor in voting behavior because people have more existential security. In this case, religion is less needed.

The sixth, and last, change is the rise of new attitudinal cleavages. Post-materialist issues are increasingly important for political choices (Inglehart 1990). There are more issues which could be a

determining factor in voting behavior. Democratization, civil rights and environmental protection are increasingly important to the middle class (Jansen 2011, p36; Inglehart 1990). Furthermore, there is an increase in non-economic issues, like anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism, nationalism, and law and order (Jansen 2011, p37). Also the new demarcation-integration of Kriesi (2008; 2012) seems to support this claim. The traditional division between left and right is declining and other parties, like the Populist Radical Right parties and Green parties, are on the rise all over Europe.

The secularization theory

These six changes in the electorate have significant implications for the religious voting behavior. A decreasing importance of classes, the rise of new cleavages and issues, a smarter electorate and a richer electorate all have contributed to the fact that a dwindling part of society is religious and that religion is becoming less and less important to people in their daily lives. People have more cognitive means to make their own choices and are less dependent on previous structures. This idea has been summarized in the secularization thesis.

Already in the nineteenth century authors wrote about secularization. Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Marx and Freud were known to believe in the fading importance of religion in societies. These first versions of the secularization thesis were about a slow but steady death of religion (Inglehart & Norris 2011, p3). Secularization was expected to go hand in hand with bureaucratization, rationalization and urbanization and would turn medieval agrarian societies into modern industrial nations. These kind of societies there would no longer have a need for religion because people are able to rationalize religion and the average level of wealth is higher, which means that God is not necessary anymore for existential security.

However, this determining law of a slow and steady death of religion has received a lot of criticism (Inglehart & Norris 2011, p3) mainly on three aspects. Firstly, Christianity is still quite vivid in a lot of advanced industrial countries. Even in the Netherlands and Germany, which are among the most secularized countries of Europe (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p194-195), the Christian parties thrive in the political arena. Secondly, America turned out to be the exception to the rule. Although the country is rich and developed, Christian religion still has a major impact on the lives of American citizens. Thirdly, there is one religion that is not shrinking, but growing. Islam seems to be on the rise all over the world. Therefore, the traditional secularization thesis needs to be updated to the current situation (Inglehart & Norris 2011, p4).

The most important change in comparison to the traditional variant should be to stop considering it an iron law and start to think of it as a tendency (Inglehart & Norris 2011, p5). So, although a lot of societies are increasingly secular, this does not mean that it is a process which is continuously taking

place. Furthermore, it also does not mean that this process is happening all over the world. One must distinguish between different kinds of societies to come to a better founded claim. Almost all advanced industrial societies have moved towards more secular orientations for the past fifty years, but the world as a total contains more people with religious beliefs than ever before (Inglehart & Norris 2011). The poorer parts of the worlds are more religious than they used to be and they are increasingly so.

The reason of existential security still seems to explain for a large part the number of religious people in countries. Due to increasing levels of human security almost all advanced industrial societies have become more secular (Inglehart & Norris 2011). The living standards of the people have improved and the risks of dying have diminished. This has caused people to shift away from their religious beliefs. The process of modernization, which globally means rising levels of industrialization, urbanization, education and wealth, has weakened the influence of religious institutions in wealthy countries. It also meant a decline in church attendance, and has made religion less important to people in their daily lives (Inglehart & Norris 2011, p25).

In addition to that, Johan Verweij, Peter Ester and Rein Nauta have argued that two causes are significantly important to the extent of secularization (1997). The first is the development of the welfare state. This is a bit similar to the argument of the existential security thesis. The second one, according to the authors, is the shift away from a masculine society towards a more feminine one. When a culture is more feminine and the welfare state is more advanced, people are less orthodox and the religious beliefs are considered less important. Moreover, the modernization and the culture seems to be explaining the level of church attendance to a large extent (Verweij, Ester & Nauta 1997, p321).

The contradiction

Now the contradiction between the two theories becomes more evident. The first section of this chapter explained how cleavages have been established and how they have persisted through time. The conclusion from that part was that religion was still a good predictor of religious voting behavior. The second section of this chapter, however, argued the opposite. The electorate has changed. It has become richer, smarter and more autonomous with regards to voting behavior. One consequence of this is that the society is secularized. People in advanced industrial societies are decreasingly religious and they feel less need to go to the church generally. The second section concluded that, according to the secularization theory, religiousness does not greatly influence voting for religious parties. This contradiction has led to the formulation of the next two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

Having Christian beliefs has remained to have a significant effect on voting CDA between 1980-2012

Hypothesis 2:

Having Christian beliefs no longer has a significant effect on voting CDA between 1980-2012

The question is not whether cleavages are still as strong as they used to be because that answer is simply that they are not (Jansen 2011; Dalton, Flanagan & Beck 1984). All cleavages have declined throughout the years all over Europe, but that does not necessarily mean that they are not still decisive in voting behavior. The religious cleavage has become the strongest predictor of voting behavior in comparison to other cleavages. The question is to what extent is it important and whether it has changed throughout the years.

Chapter 2:

Data and method

This chapter will explain and justify the choices made regarding the selection of the data, the methods and the cases. First the potential cases will be discussed. Subsequently the chosen case, which is the CDA, will be introduced. The next section will provide a justification of the chosen data and the method. At the end of this chapter the assumptions will be formulated and tested in order to ensure that the reliability of this research is sufficiently guaranteed.

Case selection

As mentioned before, the Christian democratic phenomenon has been very successful in Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland. This does not automatically mean that each party in these countries is relevant to the same extent regarding the main problem of this thesis.

Christian democratic parties in Europe

There are a lot of Christian democratic parties in European countries of which many are still successful in contemporary times. For starters, Italy provides an excellent example of this because from 1946 until 1994 the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) has been the largest party in Parliament. The Italian party represents a case which is almost unique among Western competitive multiparty systems (Pasquino 1979, p.88) because it has supplied all the Prime Ministers and most of the ministers in each government from 1946 till 1981.

However, this success does not mean that the DC is automatically the most suitable case. In 1994 the party has stopped to exist because of a scandal and the Italian People's party became its successor. Furthermore, while secularization has also hit Italy, it still is one of the more Christian countries of Europe. This probably plays a major role in the explanation of the success of the Italian party. This situation insufficiently fits the central issue of this thesis. Therefore the DC is not the best case to pick.

In Germany and the Netherlands the setting is a little different. The most important reason is the fact that both countries belong to the least religious countries of Europe (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p.194-195). Secularization has had a big impact on the number of religious people and on church attendance. For many years the CDU/CSU has contributed in shaping the modern German political landscape. The party is made up of the Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU) and the

Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU). On the federal level both parties cooperate closely, like an alliance. It has been a true governing party because of the considerable electoral successes. Moreover, the CDU on its own has the most members of all German political parties. In short, the CDU/CSU can be considered quite successful in the German politics.

The Netherlands also have a Christian democratic party which has been very successful since its foundation. The *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* (CDA) was formed in 1980 from three different parties, the ARP, the CHU and the KVP. Since then, there have only been three cabinets without the CDA. This indicates that the CDA can also be considered a true governing party. Furthermore, the CDA is the Dutch party with the most members.

When making a selection of cases, one often has to deal with certain trade-offs. If a high number of cases would be selected, it is not likely that one can provide a deep, detailed research for every single case because there would be an overload of data. The number of cases would be more important for the research than the specific details of every single case. In contrast to that, by choosing a limited amount of cases, one would be able to dig deeply into a case. However, it will become harder to generalize this to a larger number of cases.

The CDA and the CDU/CSU happen to be in more or less similar circumstances. Both are Christian democratic parties that are very successful while they both operate in the most secular countries of Europe. This is generally the core problem of this thesis, which is why both parties would be suitable for being selected as a case. Nevertheless, the choice has been made to zoom in on just one party because that creates opportunities to present a very detailed image of the electorate of a party and the role it has played in the electoral history of a country. There has been too little emphasis on how these type of parties have been able to stay in power, while theoretically they must have shrunk. A deep analysis of the party and the electorate might contribute to understanding this success.

The choice has been made to focus on the CDA only. This has two reasons, both regarding the political landscape of the Netherlands. Firstly, the Dutch party system is more open than the German one. Parties can establish easier and have more possibilities to grow. This could, in theory, endanger established parties, like the CDA. Secondly, unlike the CDU/CSU, the CDA plays in an arena next to two other Christian parties. The SGP and the CU also attract a portion of the Christian voters. This could make it even harder for the CDA, since the voters have more Christian alternatives. For these two reasons it is even more remarkable that the CDA still plays such a big role in the Dutch politics. This makes the party even more interesting and relevant for investigation.

The Christen-Democratisch Appèl

The idea of Christian politics emerged in the Netherlands when the leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), Abraham Kuyper, led the cabinet, between 1901 and 1905 (Snel 2012). He decided to call it a “*Christelijk kabinet*”, literally a “Christian cabinet”. The reason behind this was that the cabinet was made up of a mixture of four different Catholic and Protestant parties. From that moment on Christianity became an overarching word for all those parties in the Netherlands. The various Christian parties decided to cooperate because they needed each other to build a unified position on the topic of the Dutch education system (Snel 2012, p88). The party system was divided and the Christian parties managed to build a unified position by bundling their strengths. It was not their intention to merge, but it was the outcome of a process, according to Snel (2012, p88).

However, from that moment on there was still no official Christian democratic party in the political arena. Christian democracy in the Netherlands came into being in the second half of the 1970’s (Van Kersbergen 1995, p291). Due to a dwindling share of the votes and a declining influence in politics since the 1960s, Protestant and Catholic parties all over Europe were in trouble. This was also the case in the Netherlands. In reaction to this, three confessional parties decided to bundle their strengths by uniting into one single party, cooperating together and by calling their movement *Christian*. In 1980 the *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* was established based on rational considerations. The Catholic and Protestant parties on their own were not influential enough, so combining their strengths was the rational thing to do. Officially, the CDA was already founded in 1973, but it used to be just a federation, instead of a political party (Parlement & Politiek n.d.).

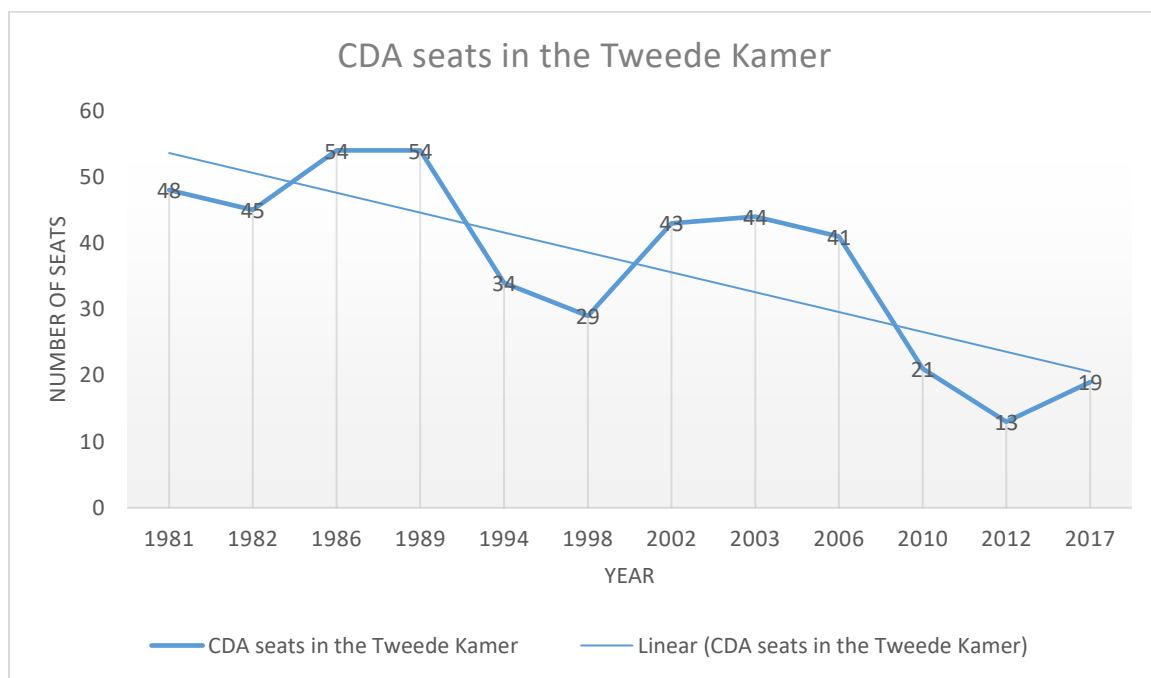
As mentioned before, this Christian democratic party was formed from three different parties. The first is the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* (ARP). This party was the first political party ever of the Netherlands. The party fought against the ideas of the French revolution and had Protestant roots. The second is the *Christelijk-Historische Unie* (CHU). This party is known for its Christian and Protestant roots. The third is the *Katholieke Volkspartij* (KVP). This Catholic party was established in 1945 and has often been in government. So, it becomes clear now that the CDA is a mixture of different Christian ideologies.

The CDA is positioned on the center of the political scale. It follows principles that are based on the Bible, but at the same time it presents itself as a “people’s party” in order to represent the whole Dutch population, even if people have different religious beliefs or social statuses (Lucardie & Ten Napel 1994, p64). The party was more distinctively Christian democratic than its predecessors in respect to the social-policy profile and its cross-confessional and cross-class appeal (Kalyvas & Van Kersbergen 2010, p193). From the beginning the party has embraced certain values. One of those is

self-responsibility. One needs to take care of oneself, but also of others around you who are in need of help. This complements its other key value: solidarity. This is the principle which dictates that one needs to take care of those who need it the most in society. It is linked to one of the most important words for the CDA: *naasteliefde*, which is derived from the second commandment “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*”.

These values seem to benefit the party simply because the party has generally been very successful since its inception. The CDA has taken a part in almost every cabinet since 1981 (Parlement & Politiek n.d.). Only in the cabinets Kok I, Kok II and Rutte II the party has been in the opposition. This indicates that the CDA can be considered a governing party. As shown in the graph below, the party has been a major player in the Dutch political landscape. At its climax, the number of seats reached 54 in the elections of 1986 and 1989. Considering that the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* has 150 seats, this is a large share. However, in the 1990s the position of the CDA considerably weakened (Bosman 2004, p64). Although the trend is clearly downwards, the CDA managed to get 19 seats in the elections of 2017. This is, obviously, not even close to the earlier 54 seats, but the party could climb further or at least stabilize.

Graph 1: CDA seats in the Tweede Kamer



In conclusion, one might say that the CDA has been very relevant throughout the years and still is so today, which makes the party an interesting case for further investigation. The Christian democratic party can be considered as one of the most successful parties ever in the Dutch political history. Many authors have focused on why the party has declined in seats and members. However, instead of

focusing on why the party is declining, it is much more puzzling to see how the party has managed to stay relevant in one of Europe's most secularized countries.

Methodological choices

Doing research is always about making choices. In this section the methodological options and choices will be discussed. The text describes which data and method have been selected in order to find an answer to the main question of this thesis.

Logistic regression analysis

In order to deal with all the data, this thesis will provide multiple multivariate logistic regression analyses. When trying to check the effects of one or more independent variables on dependent variables, doing a linear regression will often be the logical option. However, in this case the dependent variable is not interval or rational-scaled, but nominal and dichotomous. This means that there are just two categories; either the event is present or it is not. Logistic regression is suitable for a dependent variable which is dichotomous (Sieben & Linssen 2009).

The starting point of the observation is 1980 for the simple reason that the CDA was founded in that year. This data will be distilled from the Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek (NKO). This is a Dutch research initiative which analyzes the voting behavior of the Dutch population during elections. The questions contain political perceptions and priorities, perceptions of political phenomenon, political behavior and other characteristics of the respondent. This makes it possible to analyze developments of perceptions, priorities and behavior of the Dutch people and to do research into elections and voting behavior (SCP n.d.). The elections for the *Tweede Kamer* in 1981, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2012 will be used in trying to answer the main question.

Although the Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek has done research on all those years, the names of the variables have changed year by year, so instead of mentioning all the variables of all the years here, a list of variables has been included at the end of this thesis. Sometimes the measurement of a variable differs a little bit because the minimum and maximum values of certain variables have been adapted in several years, but this will be mentioned later on.

The dependent variable in all regression analyses is the party for which people voted. However, this variable includes all parties separately which is of no use for this analysis because the only information needed is whether one voted CDA or not. Therefore this variable is recreated into a nominal, dichotomous variable which divides the choices between CDA (1) and others (0). This variable and all others are presented in descriptive tables 1 through 10 in the Appendix.

Te Grotenhuis and his co-authors found a strong correlation between being Christian and voting CDA (Te Grotenhuis et al 2012). Adhering to the Christian ideology is expected to be salient for someone to vote CDA, which is why it is the independent variable of this thesis. This variable again has a nominal scale. Simply checking whether or not someone is religious is not enough because the goal is to determine if the Christian religion is a significant factor in voting CDA, since the CDA is a Christian party. Being Muslim is not expected to be very relevant in voting for a Christian party. So, the variable offers a dichotomous choice between being Christian or not.

The next question is what this would mean for accepting and rejecting the hypotheses. So, in this thesis two hypotheses were made about whether or not Christianity has remained to have a significant effect on voting CDA between 1980 and 2012. When Christianity is no longer significant in the multivariate logistic regression analyses, H1 will be rejected and H2 will be accepted. When, however, Christianity has remained to be significant throughout the years, H1 will be accepted and H2 will be rejected.

Confounding variables

There are factors that could affect the relation between voting CDA and being Christian. Therefore, researchers often add control variables in order to make sure that a particular observed relation is not distorted by a third variable. Confounding variables could influence both the dependent variable and independent variable and cause spurious effects. By adding these, a bivariate regression analysis becomes a multivariate regression analysis.

The social class of a person could influence a person's choice of a party. For Christian democratic voters this means that they generally take a middle position in the division of classes (Broughton 1992, in Hanley 1994, p5). To control for this effect, this variable will be included in the analysis. The scale of this variable is ordinal.

A person's gender could influence his or her choice of a party. For instance, according to Lucardie and Ten Napel, the CDA voter is more often female (1994, p60). Therefore, gender could affect the relation between voting CDA and adhering to a Christian religion, and therefore it needs to be included in the analysis. The scale of the variable is nominal.

People's education is possibly important for their political beliefs. According to Fesnic (2008), the moderate right receives a much higher level of support from well-educated people than the left. By including this in the analysis, one is able to control for spurious associations caused by this confounding variable. The scale of this variable is ordinal.

A person's age could have an impact on his or her voting CDA (Lucardie & Ten Napel 1995). The electorate of Christian parties is generally older than the electorate of other parties (Lucardie & Ten Napel 1995, p60). An important cause for this is that the youth is generally less religious than the elderly. That is why this ratio-scaled variable is taken into account. Also a squared variant of this variable is included in every database. The reason behind this is that age can show a non-linear relation to voting CDA. This is usually modelled by adding age squared to the model (ESS EduNet 2013).

In the NKO file of 2006 age was not included in the database. However, instead of that the year of birth of the respondent was mentioned. Therefore, a new variable has been created, which calculates the age of the respondent by using the formula $(2006 - \text{year of birth respondent} = \text{age of respondent})$. Also, in 1989 age was measured differently compared to other years because the ages of the respondents were divided into thirteen categories. The scale of this variable is therefore interval. This does not necessarily have to be a problem.

The region in which a person lives could influence the likelihood of whether one will vote CDA or not (Broughton 1992). Religious voters are known for being overrepresented in agrarian areas (Broughton 1992, in Hanley 1994, p5). In the Netherlands the CDA usually is quite successful in certain regions which are more agrarian, like Brabant and Limburg. Religious parties seem to find it harder to attract voters in regions which are much more urbanized. So, it is important to include the degree of urbanization in the analysis in order to take the place people live at into account when measuring voting behavior. The scale is ordinal because it is possible to distinguish between different degrees of urbanization, but the intervals between the values are not the same and there is no true zero point. Measuring the variable of urbanization has been done differently in several elections. Usually the minimum value is 1 and the maximum value is 5, but in a few elections the maximum value was 6, 13 or 15. This difference is not expected to be crucial.

The last variable which needs to be controlled is whether someone is positioned more to the left or to the right on the political spectrum. The church has always been affiliated with parties on the right that had more conservative ideas on the economy and initially had more traditional values, for example regarding marriage and family (Norris & Inglehart 2011, p198). The Christian democratic parties attract disproportionally more voters from the right (Norris & Inglehart 2011, p202; Van der Brug & Vreese 2009, p1278). In conclusion, the effect needs to be controlled for and that is why this ordinal variable is included. Ideally, the variable would be split up into a cultural and an economic component. However, the NKO does not provide this division, so instead people's self-rating of their left-right position has been used.

Assumptions

Rather than showing the results of the regression analysis, it is a good thing to first discuss a few assumptions made in this research in order to improve reliability. It is very important that the model satisfies certain assumptions because otherwise problems like biased coefficient estimates or very large standard errors for the logistic coefficients could occur (UCLA 2017). This can lead to invalid statistical inferences. But first a few practical matters regarding the interpretation of the results. To determine whether an effect is significant or not, this research will use a limit for the alpha of 0.1. Also the alpha's of 0.05 and 0.01 will be checked in order to see different degrees of significance.

Then the next question is how to determine how much of the effect can be explained by the model. Normally, in order to do this one would analyze the R^2 because this value tells you what percentage of the total variability is accounted for by your model. When performing a logistic regression however, the output does not present an R^2 value. There are some decent alternatives, however (Sieben & Linssen 2009, p6). One option is to look at the Cox & Snell R^2 , but this value is not often used because this method can never reach the value 1. The R^2 van Nagelkerke is more common because this method is able to deal with the value 1 (Sieben & Linssen 2009, p6), and that is why this thesis will use it.

A variability of 0.10 or lower is considered to be very weak. Between 0.11 and 0.25 it would be considered weak. When the variance is a little bit higher, between 0.26 and 0.50, the effect will be called moderate. A strong value will be talked off when it reaches the range between 0.51 and 0.75. It will only be called very strong if the variability is 0.75 or higher.

The logistic regression analysis requires other assumptions than the linear variant. First, the relation between the dependent and independent variable does not have to be linear (UCLA 2017a; Midi, Sarkar & Rana 2010, p.254). When using logistic regression, one is able to deal with all variants of relation. Second, the independent variable does not necessarily have to be multivariate normal, although that is desired for better stability. Also the error values do not require a multivariate normal distribution. Third, logistic regression does not have to be homoscedastic. Variances are not needed to create heteroscedasticity for every level of the independent variables. Fourth, and last, the logistic variant does not have to be interval or ratio-scaled, as is the case in a linear regression analysis (Anderson N.D., p2; UCLA 2017b). The logistic regression is able to deal with independent variables of a nominal or interval level.

The binary logistic regression uses different assumptions in order to provide better reliability. First, the dependent variable needs to be dichotomous (UCLA 2017b; Midi, Sarkar & Rana 2010, p254). This means that the variable contains a contradiction between "presence" and "absence" of a certain

phenomenon. For example, someone is a member of a church or not. There is no degree as to what extent one is a member. The dependent variable in this research is voting CDA. As mentioned before in this chapter, there are only two options for this variable. One either vote for the CDA or not. In conclusion, the dependent variable is indeed dichotomous and there are no problems regarding the first assumption.

The second assumption for binary logistic regression discusses the negative impact of an overload of outliers (Statistics Solutions 2017). When this is the case, it could decrease the reliability of the research. Boxplots can be used to trace outliers in the observations (SPSS Handboek 2017). Every variable of every database has been checked for possible outliers, but this is not presented in the Appendix because that it is unnecessary to show around a hundred boxplots. In every election there are between 15 and 25 outliers. Chapter 3 will deal with the question whether or not this is harmful for the conclusions of the research.

The third assumption is that there must be no multicollinearity (Midi, Sarkar & Rana 2010, p255). When this is the case, two or more predictor variables in a multiple regression model are highly correlated to one another to such a high extent that it could limit the reliability of the research. This is problematic because it is hard to get good estimates of the distinct effects of the variables on the dependent variable (Midi, Sarkar & Rana 2010, p255).

Therefore, the VIF values will be checked. If the value is between 1 and 10, there is no multicollinearity. In case it is 10 or higher, the multicollinearity is considered high. That would be problematic because it could limit the reliability of the research. In logistic regression, however, it is not possible to request collinearity statistics. Therefore, linear regression will be used only for this purpose.

The results of the multicollinearity check are presented in table 11 of the Appendix. As one can see, the VIF values are quite low. Not a single number comes close to 10, in fact all are below 2. In short, the VIF values are rather low, which leads to the conclusion that the reliability of the research is not limited due to high levels of multicollinearity. The age-squared is of course not included because this will certainly be collinear to age.

Chapter 3:

Results

This chapter will continue on the methodological basis described in the previous chapter by running the statistical tests. First the bivariate logistic regression analyses will be presented in order to observe the direct effect of being Christian on voting CDA. In the next step the control variables will be added in order to deal with potential confounding variables. The analysis thus becomes multivariate. At the end of this chapter the implications for the hypotheses will be explained.

Bivariate logistic regression analyses

In this first section the bivariate effects will be tested. This gives a good idea of the direct effect that being Christian has on voting CDA. The elections have been split into two parts because this gives a better overview of the data.

1981-1994

The logistic regressions of the bivariate relation between voting CDA and being Christian has been presented in table 12 below and table 13 on the next page. The first table shows a rather similar pattern for all five elections. Christianity is significant in every year, even with an alpha of 0.01. For an overview of the complete analysis and additional details of the data, please refer to tables 17 till 21 in the Appendix.

Table 12: *Bivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1981-1994)*

Variable	1981	1982	1986	1989	1994
Constant	-2.837*** (.191)	-3.048*** (.205)	-1.940*** (.124)	-1.915*** (.116)	-3.060*** (.178)
Christianity	2.794*** (.202)	2.749*** (.217)	1.925*** (.147)	1.960*** (.138)	1.162*** (.196)
N	1491	1334	1250	1384	1386
R ²	.283	.277	.215	.225	0.260

Significant at $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Also the R^2 of Nagelkerke seems to be roughly equal for each election. All variances lie between 0.215 and 0.283. This means that between 22% and 28% of the variance can be explained by Christian religiousness itself. The effect, according to the standards of this thesis, is considered weak to moderate.

1998-2012

The next five elections are rather similar to the first five, except for the election of 2002. These are presented below in table 13. The Appendix shows a detailed logistic regression analysis for these years in table 22 till 26. In 2002, being of Christian faith is highly significant, but with an explained variance of just 3%, the conclusion is that the effect of having Christian beliefs on voting CDA is neglectable. The question is how is it possible that one election differs to such a large extent from the other elections.

Table 13: *Bivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1998-2012)*

Variable	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012
Constant	-3.584*** (.216)	-1.368*** (.299)	-1.723*** (.075)	-2.977*** (.129)	-2.947*** (.151)
Christianity	2.859** (.229)	1.197*** (.309)	1.536*** (.100)	2.005*** (.153)	1.162*** (.182)
N	1629	782	2320	2031	1427
R^2	.267	.030	.150	.178	.170

Significant at $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Going deeper into the data, might reveal the cause. A first step is to present a frequency table of the data of 2002, which is shown below in table 14. What stands out immediately is the large number of missing observations. This is undesirable, but does not necessarily have to be a problem if the missing data is randomly divided across the variables and their values.

Table 14: *Frequency table 2002*

	Chris tianity	CDA	Social Class	Gender	Edu cation	Age	Age squared	Urban ization	Left Right
N Valid	979	1517	1853	1907	1904	1907	1907	1907	1871
Missing	2199	1661	1325	1271	1274	1271	1271	1271	1307

To be able to test whether the missing data is randomly divided, as a second step one could execute a Little's MCAR test. If the model is significant for that test, it could have major consequences for the reliability of the research. Unfortunately, the test provides a significance of 0.000 for the database of 2002. This means that the H0 hypothesis must be rejected, which leads to the conclusion that the values are not completely randomized. This reduces the representativeness of the sample and possibly provides a false image of the population. Therefore, the data is biased and cannot be interpreted correctly, as it is lacking reliability. The findings for this year will not be considered very valuable.

The elections of 1998, 2006, 2010 and 2012 tend to conform to the same pattern as in table 12. Christianity is significant in all four elections, even against an alpha of 0.01. The R² has returned to a high value, although not as high as the average level in the previous group of elections, except for 1998. In the most recent years 15% to 18% of the variance can be explained by being Christian, which means that the link between being Christian and voting CDA has changed to weak.

It seems like the effect of being Christian on voting CDA is substantial but has diminished a bit throughout the years. However, apart from 2002, the explained variance still is moderate-weak. Important here is that Christianity has been significant in all elections. The first analysis seems to support the first hypothesis that having Christian beliefs has remained to have a significant effect on voting CDA between 1980 and 2012. At this point H2 would be rejected.

Multivariate logistic regression analyses

A bivariate regression analysis is obviously too minimalistic to make real claims about the effects because there are many factors that can affect the relation between the dependent and the independent variable. Therefore, in this section the multivariate tests will be performed to a more realistic image of the connection between being Christian and voting CDA by adding control variables. This way it is possible to test whether there are effects that can disturb the connection between being Christian and voting CDA. Again, the elections are split up in two parts.

1981-1994.

Table 15 on the next page presents the multivariate logistic regression analysis for the years 1981 till 1994. The first thing that stands out is the significance of the Christianity variable. In all five election observations the variable is significant, even against an alpha of 0.01. This means that in all cases one can say with 99% certainty that there is an association between voting CDA and being Christian. Also the left-right variable is very significant at every election. This implicates that the left-right position of people is important for voting CDA.

Table 15: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1981-1994)*

Variable	1981	1982	1986	1989	1994
Constant	-4.959*** (.879)	-5.237*** (.955)	-3.992*** (.899)	-3.313*** (.646)	-4.585*** (.959)
Christianity	2.148*** (.218)	2.357*** (.240)	1.536*** (.168)	1.676*** (.153)	2.276*** (.221)
Class	-.145* (.082)	-.068 (.092)	-.033 (.084)	.037* (.073)	.047 (.094)
Gender	.110 (.147)	.139 (.163)	.057 (.152)	-.004 (.098)	-.096 (.166)
Education	-.065* (.037)	.049 (.039)	-.097*** (.037)	.037 (.073)	.166** (.085)
Age	.045* (.025)	.043* (.026)	.019 (.025)	-.004 (.098)	-.044 (.030)
AgeSquared	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.003 (.007)	.001** (.000)
Urbanization	-.051** (.025)	.034 (.027)	.007 (.025)	-.050 (.040)	.171*** (.064)
LeftRight	.411*** (.038)	.358*** (.039)	.376*** (.037)	.400*** (.046)	.189*** (.041)
N	1316	1193	1149	1317	1234
R²	.437	.400	.361	.323	.331

Significant at $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

The remaining variables do not have a really major direct impact on voting CDA. Some of them are significant at one election and some at none. The only exception to this is the education variable because it has been significant at the elections of 1981, 1986 and 1994. This means that a person's level of education has an impact on whether that person will vote CDA or not.

The explained variance of this model is quite stable, but decreases slightly throughout the years. The highest value was reached in 1981. At that point the R^2 of Nagelkerke had a value 0.437, which means that 43.7% of the variance can be explained by the presented model. The lowest value was found in

the year 1989. In that year the model is able to explain 32.3% of the variance. The strength of the model can therefore be called “moderate”.

1998-2012

The second part of the multivariate regression analysis concerns elections of the years between 1998 and 2012. This model is presented in table 16 on the following page. Here one can see that much has stayed the same. However, a few things are actually very different compared to the previous model.

Christianity has, for example, remained a rather stable factor throughout the years. The variable has been significant for all elections with an alpha of 0.01. One can still say with 99% certainty that there is an association between voting CDA and being Christian.

The influence of being left or right on voting CDA is still considerable. This variable is also significant for every election, even against an alpha of 0.01. The B-value varies between 0.109 and 0.406. However, the lowest value of 0.109 was in the year 2002 and the reliability of this data should be questioned. Generally this means that the CDA voter is, according to this research, more right-wing. Remarkable is that this has declined throughout the years. The electorate seemed to be more right-wing in the early elections than in the later ones.

A few other variables tend to show a different pattern than in the first years of observation. The age and age-squared are increasingly relevant, due to their significance at three different elections. The B-values of age are negatively associated with voting CDA, which means that the older people are, the less likely they are to vote CDA. Also, the urbanization variable has been significant in the elections of 1998, 2010 and 2012. The B-values are positive, which means that if one lives in more agrarian surroundings, the more one is likely to vote CDA.

The education variable, which was three times significant in the first bivariate logistic regression tables, is not even once significant in this table. Also the social class of people does not have a significant impact on voting CDA anymore. Gender is the same and has not been significant at any of the elections.

The R^2 of Nagelkerke in this model shows a partly different pattern from before. All variances have steadily but slowly decreased, except for the election of 2002, which shows an extremely low explained variance. The values for the other elections vary between 0.258 and 0.386, which means that 25.8% to 38.6% of the variance can be explained by using this model. The strength of the model has remained “moderate”.

Table 16: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1998-2012)*

Variable	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012
Constant	-4.647*** (.924)	-3.481*** (1.041)	-4.042*** (.640)	-4.329*** (.859)	-3.427*** (1.113)
Christianity	2.665*** (.258)	1.058*** (.325)	1.201*** (.118)	1.622*** (.173)	1.668*** (.202)
Class	-.074 (.096)	.036 (.099)	-.106 (.065)	0.075 (.093)	.038 (.106)
Gender	-.085 (.160)	.026 (.155)	.016 (.115)	.366 (.160)	.136 (.185)
Education	-.029 (.036)	-.033 (.033)	.020 (.057)	.018 (.080)	-.024 (.084)
Age	-.046* (.027)	.042 (.028)	.000 (.019)	-.064*** (.025)	-.076** (.031)
AgeSquared	.001** (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)
Urbanization	.274*** (.063)	.039 (.062)	.059 (.047)	.296** (.065)	.170** (.076)
LeftRight	.284*** (.046)	.109*** (.041)	.406*** (.032)	.188*** (.037)	.171 *** (.045)
N	1517	760	1968	1770	1295
R²	.368	.070	.286	.259	.258

Significant at $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

The election of 2002 is the exception again and explains only 7% of the variance. This is considered to be “very weak”. As mentioned in the previous section not too much value should be attached to the findings of that election. This sample was not considered representative and could lead to biased results and a lack of reliability.

The next question is what these values implicate for the two hypotheses. When evaluating the data, has Christianity remained to have a significant effect on voting CDA throughout the years? The variable has been significant from the beginning till the end, even in 2002, with an alpha of 0.01. This means that for every election one can say with 99% certainty that there is an association between

being Christian and voting CDA. This has not changed in 32 years. Moreover, the log odds of Christianity are very high for every election, which means that being Christian makes people significantly more likely to vote CDA. This can be found in the Appendix at the end of this thesis. The effect has decreased a little, but is still quite significant.

In Chapter 2 was mentioned that this chapter would discuss whether or not the identified outliers are problematic for the conclusions of the research. Outliers could distort the effect of Christianity on voting CDA. However, in every election this relation is very strong and significant for every model. To put it differently, the outliers are not necessarily problematic for this research and the reliability is not affected too much.

In conclusion, this research has found support for hypothesis 1: *Having Christian beliefs has remained to have a significant effect on voting CDA between 1980-2012*. This means that H2 is rejected. As can be observed in the tables, the impact of being Christian on voting CDA has indeed decreased. The B-values, the explained variance and the log odds tend to get lower in the later elections. But looking at the total picture, the conclusion is that having a Christian affiliation has been of a major importance for voting CDA in 1980 and still is in 2012.

Conclusion

Secularization has its consequences all over Europe. People are becoming less religious, churches are closing and society is increasingly secular oriented (Norris & Inglehart 2011). Despite these developments the Christian democratic parties have managed to keep their heads above water. One could argue that they are having a hard time to re-identify and re-invent themselves, but they seem to succeed in it because most of those parties are still relevant in the political arena. The Dutch CDA is a good example because this party is still one of the major players in Dutch politics. How is this possible? Using all the previous information it is now possible to adequately answer the central question: *How has the ideological profile of the CDA voter changed between 1980 and 2012?*

When the CDA started to participate in national parliamentary elections, the results showed that there was a strong association between having a Christian affiliation and voting for the party in every single election. There was no other factor that had more influence in any election. The state-church cleavage has remained very powerful throughout the years. Religion is important to people to such an extent that they want to express it politically.

But there was another factor of which the influence was undeniable. The position people consider themselves to take in the political spectrum was also salient for voting for the Dutch Christian democratic party. A connection was found between people voting CDA and being more right-wing. So to consider oneself Christian and right-wing has contributed a lot to the success of the CDA in the first years. The question is how this has developed throughout the years.

In later elections there are two things that stand out immediately. First, Christianity has remained the strongest predictor for voting CDA from the start till the election of 2012. However, this needs some further explanations because the effect of Christianity has actually decreased throughout the years. Despite that fact, it is still the major factor. Second, the left-right self-rating of people has been of major importance to voting CDA the whole time. Being right-wing is linked with voting for the Christian democratic party. It is worth mentioning is that also this effect decreased to a certain extent.

Since the elections of 1994 urbanization started to matter. The effect was positive and moderately-high. This means that people living in agrarian areas are more likely to vote CDA than people who live in urban areas, according to the results. Since 1994 the effect has largely stabilized. In contrast to that, the effect of the education of people has been of minor importance. In the first five elections it has

been influential, but the effect was not straightforward. Between 1980 and 1994 the less educated were generally a little bit more likely to vote CDA than between 1998 and 2012, which seems to go against the results of the research by Fesnic (2008), who claims that the well-educated are generally more likely to vote for the moderate-right. Sometimes the effect was slightly positive and sometimes negative. At any rate, it was too little to draw solid causal inferences.

The influence of the age of people has shifted a bit. In the first two elections the effect was substantial and positive. Aging had a positive influence on voting CDA. After that the impact of age has become neglectable for a few elections until the second series of elections. During those elections the age of people was negatively associated with voting CDA. It seems that aging started to have a negative influence on voting for the party.

The conclusion on the basis of the findings of this research is that the ideological profile of the CDA voter has only changed to a minor extent. Being Christian was and has remained to be the most important predictor for voting CDA. In other words, this thesis has found support for the cleavages theory of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Cleavages have persisted through time and still matter today. Religion is still important to people, despite changes in society like secularization.

The findings of this research with regards to the ideological profile are partly in line with the research of Broughton (1992, in Hanley 1994). First of all, the voter adheres to a Christian faith. Furthermore, he or she is generally more right-wing. Also, many voters seem to come from rural areas, instead of urbanized areas. This research found insufficient evidence to make claims about the class or the age of voters with regards to voting CDA.

For further research, several suggestions can be made. This thesis has been very specific by focusing on only one case in order to provide a detailed image of the CDA and its electorate. However, it could be helpful to research into Christian democracy to discover more about the electorates of other Christian democratic parties. It is also relevant to know whether the CDA voter can be generalized to Christian democratic voters across Europe.

To begin, it would be good to take a closer look at the German CDU/CSU and its electorate because of the similarities between both parties. Both parties have found their way as a religious party in very secular surroundings. It will be interesting to see whether the parties have made the same choices and if the ideological profile of the CDU/CSU voter is similar to that of the CDA voter. And of course it would also be good to look more closely at other countries with successful Christian democratic parties, like Austria, Belgium France, and Switzerland. This could shed a light on overarching patterns of Christian democratic voters.

While this research has mainly focused on the demand side of politics, a second suggestion would be to focus more on the supply side. So, instead of focusing on the voting behavior of people, one can research what parties have done in order to attract more voters. Did they make a lot of changes in response to the secularization, or was it remaining traditional that helped them to stay in power? This might help in getting more insight in the phenomenon of Christian democracy.

The third suggestion is to make better use of micro level data. For this research only macro level data of the NKO has been used. It is possible to observe general patterns and to draw causal inferences based on the data. However, it is hard to measure for what reason people actually voted for a certain party. Macro level data only allows for the observation of a general association between variables. Through surveys and interviews it is possible to measure whether Christianity is really the main motivating factor for people to vote CDA. So even though this research has found a strong connection between voting CDA and being religious, that does not necessarily have to mean that people actually voted CDA because of religious reasons.

In addition to that, Ariana Need has tried to formulate an answer to the question why parties have managed to stay relevant in the political arena while a decreasing number of people is attending church. In her book *The kindred vote* (1997) she argues that the intergenerational mobility is low when it comes to voting. The reasonable voter does not want to spend too much time on politics. Therefore the parents are used as a shortcut to creating political views. The children are likely to follow the political views of their parents. Also, people who left the church usually do not immediately vote for a non-confessional party (Need 1997). The main point here is that despite the fact that it is good to use macro level data, it should be combined with micro level data in order to test whether the findings are supported by the individual experiences of people.

It is possible to formulate an advice for the CDA, based on the findings. The key point is that the party should definitely not neglect its Christian identity and the Christian values. The cross class appeal is very important to the party since it allows for achieving an electorate that is broader than the loyal group of voters. It would be unwise to neglect this either. However, the main focus should not lie on broadening the appeal by attracting the non-religious voter. The party should instead care the most about its loyal voter, which is predominantly Christian. These voters care about the Christian identity of the party and therefore it is beneficial to keep it. And even though this number is decreasing, there are still plenty of people with a Christian affiliation. The Christian voter has been well-represented in the CDA electorate and has proven to be very loyal throughout the years.

List of figures and tables

Figures:

- *Graph 1: CDA seats in the Tweede Kamer*

Tables:

- 1: *Descriptive statistics 1981*
- 2: *Descriptive statistics 1982*
- 3: *Descriptive statistics 1986*
- 4: *Descriptive statistics 1989*
- 5: *Descriptive statistics 1994*
- 6: *Descriptive statistics 1998*
- 7: *Descriptive statistics 2002*
- 8: *Descriptive statistics 2006*
- 9: *Descriptive statistics 2010*
- 10: *Descriptive statistics 2012*
- 11: *VIF-value of every variable in every election year*
- 12: *Bivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1981-1994)*
- 13: *Frequency table 2002*
- 14: *Bivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1998-2012)*
- 15: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1981-1994)*
- 16: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1998-2012)*
- 17: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1981)*
- 18: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1982)*
- 19: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1986)*
- 20: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1989)*
- 21: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1994)*
- 22: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (1998)*
- 23: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (2002)*
- 24: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (2006)*
- 25: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (2010)*
- 26: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis with CDA vote as constant (2012)*

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Appendix

There are many tables that are too extensive to be presented in the research itself. Therefore they will be presented in this section of the thesis. This Appendix contains a list of the variables, the descriptive statistics, the multicollinearity check, and the complete multivariate regression analyses for every election year.

List of variables

Below all variables used from the NKO are shown in order to provide as much transparency as possible regarding the used data. The names of the variables have changed with every election, which is why they are presented here. The variables are ordered by election year.

1981

v513 → *party voted for in 81 elections*

v174 → *religion*

v173 → *social class*

v127 → *sex*

v167 → *education of respondent*

v128 → *age*

v187 → *degree of urbanization*

v345 → *left-right self-rating*

1982

v1046 → *party voted for in 82 elections*

v1306 → *religion*

v1305 → *social class*

v1265 → *sex of respondent*

v1301 → *education of respondent*

v1266 → *age of respondent*

v1319 → *degree of urbanization*

v1031 → *left-right self-rating*

1986

v181 → party voted for in 86 elections

v138 → religious affiliation

v096 → sex of respondent

v132 → education of respondent

v097 → age of respondent

v136 → social class

v173 → degree of urbanization

v262 → left-right self-rating

1989

v147 → party voted for in 1989 parliamentary elections

v108 → religious denomination of respondent

v093 → sex of respondent

v094 → education of respondent

v092 → age of respondent

v122 → social class

v105 → degree of urbanization

v086 → left-right self-rating

1994

v281 → party voted for in 1994 parliamentary elections

v159 → religious denomination of respondent

v176 → sex of respondent

v174 → education of respondent

v172 → age of respondent

v178 → social class

v180 → degree of urbanization

v139 → left-right self-rating

1998

v0611 → party voted for in 1998 parliamentary elections

v0377 → religious denomination of respondent

v0288 → sex of respondent

v0352 → highest education (completed) of respondent

v0316 → age of respondent at time of interview

v0394 → social class

v0013 → degree of urbanization

v0160 → left-right self-rating

2002

v0647 → party voted for in 2002 parliamentary elections

v0489 → religious denomination of respondent

v0459 → sex of respondent

v0463 → highest education (completed) of respondent

v0457 → age respondent on Election Day 2002

v0505 → social class

urb02 → degree of urbanization

v0234 → left-right self-rating

2006

v512 → party voted for in 2006 parliamentary elections

v426 → religious denomination

v420 → sex of respondent

v430 → highest education (completed) education of respondent

v421 → year of birth respondent

v428 → social class

v451 → degree of urbanization

v691 → left-right self-rating

2010

v512 → party voted for in 2010 parliamentary elections

v401 → religious denomination

v010 → gender

v443 → age

v410 → highest education (completed) of respondent

v403 → social class

v434 → degree of urbanization

v711 → left-right self-rating

2012

v212 → party voted for in 2012 parliamentary elections

v331 → religious denomination

v341 → gender of respondent

v344 → highest education (completed) of respondent

v340 → age of respondent at election date

v333 → social class

v361 → degree of urbanization

v130 → Left-right rating self-rating

Descriptive statistics

This section shows the descriptive statistics of all variables used in this research. They are presented by listing each database separately. In other words, the ten tables with descriptive statistics of all the variables for each election are shown. The minimum and maximum value of the variable, the mean of the sample, the standard deviation of the sample, and the valid number of cases are given for each variable and for every election.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics 1981

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.336	.473	1494
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.623	.488	2297
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.610	1.122	2175
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.530	1.499	2305
<i>Education</i>	1	10	4.250	2.667	2287
<i>Age</i>	17	94	43.040	17.487	2296
<i>Urbanization</i>	2	13	8.490	3.077	2305
<i>LeftRight</i>	1	10	5.600	2.358	1660

Table 2: Descriptive statistics 1982

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.268	.443	1337
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.584	.493	1537
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.490	1.086	1481
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.530	.499	1541
<i>Education</i>	1	10	4.410	2.786	1531
<i>Age</i>	18	93	42.560	17.082	1541
<i>Urbanization</i>	2	13	8.560	3.046	1541
<i>LeftRight</i>	1	10	5.560	2.415	1388

Table 3: Descriptive statistics 1986

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.321	.467	1255
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.515	.500	1623
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.460	1.095	1567
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.530	.499	1629
<i>Education</i>	1	10	4.490	2.775	1613
<i>Age</i>	17	93	44.280	17.606	1630
<i>Urbanization</i>	2	13	8.740	3.146	1630
<i>LeftRight</i>	1	10	5.510	2.425	1287

Table 4: Descriptive statistics 1989

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.328	.470	1385
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.519	.500	1752
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.380	1.047	1700
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.490	.500	1754
<i>Education</i>	1	5	2.540	1.108	1754
<i>Age</i>	1	13	6.300	3.386	1754
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	6	3.670	3.670	1754
<i>LeftRight</i>	1	7	4.130	4.130	1687

Table 5: Descriptive statistics 1994

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.195	.397	1393
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.456	.498	1804
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.310	1.038	1743
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.510	.400	1812
<i>Education</i>	1	5	2.650	1.160	1806
<i>Age</i>	17	89	45.560	17.283	1812
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	5	2.980	1.378	1812
<i>LeftRight</i>	1	10	5.530	2.228	1609

Table 6: Descriptive statistics 1998

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.195	.396	2215
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.507	.500	2101
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.250	.980	2059
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.510	.500	2101
<i>Education</i>	1	10	5.030	2.683	2098
<i>Age</i>	17	90	44.530	16.609	2100
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	5	2.960	1.314	2101
<i>LeftRight</i>	0	10	5.100	2.070	1939

Table 7: Descriptive statistics 2002

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.276	.448	1517
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.903	.297	979
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	2.990	.964	1853
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.510	.500	1907
<i>Education</i>	1	11	6.250	2.850	1904
<i>Age</i>	18	97	49.21	16.028	1907
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	5	2.900	1.306	1907
<i>LeftRight</i>	1	11	6.030	2.029	1871

Table 8: Descriptive statistics 2006

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.271	.445	2321
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.395	.489	2802
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.320	1.047	2696
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.510	.500	2806
<i>Education</i>	1	5	3.600	1.224	2618
<i>Age</i>	18	95	47.720	17.031	2751
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	5	2.960	1.286	2806
<i>LeftRight</i>	0	10	5.270	2.238	2345

Table 9: Descriptive statistics 2010

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.130	.336	2034
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.361	.480	2617
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.240	1.015	2534
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.510	.500	2621
<i>Education</i>	1	5	3.690	1.235	2440
<i>Age</i>	16	94	47.180	17.213	2620
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	5	2.900	1.286	2621
<i>LeftRight</i>	0	10	5.140	2.347	2125

Table 10: Descriptive statistics 2012

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Valid N</i>
<i>CDA</i>	0	1	.128	.334	1427
<i>Christianity</i>	0	1	.342	.474	1677
<i>SocialClass</i>	1	5	3.260	.998	1649
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	1.150	.500	1676
<i>Education</i>	1	5	3.750	1.226	1593
<i>Age</i>	18	96	49.640	17.492	1677
<i>Urbanization</i>	1	5	2.910	1.263	1677
<i>LeftRight</i>	0	10	5.210	2.186	1601

Multicollinearity

The table below shows the VIF values of all variables in all databases. If this value is 10 or higher, the reliability of the research may have issues. However because all values are below 2, it can easily be concluded that this research is not even close to having problems with multicollinearity.

Table 11: VIF value of every variable in every election year

	1981	1982	1986	1989	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012
(Constant)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Christianity	1.251	1.181	1.190	1.197	1.242	1.166	1.022	1.140	1.123	1.137
SocialClass	1.534	1.495	1.524	1.293	1.271	1.262	1.370	1.292	1.268	1.279
Gender	1.058	1.060	1.048	1.043	1.029	1.043	1.049	1.013	1.037	1.019
Education	1.810	1.873	1.810	1.396	1.394	1.404	1.470	1.344	1.336	1.398
Age	1.263	1.269	1.250	1.120	1.154	1.155	1.131	1.108	1.113	1.163
Urbanization	1.114	1.083	1.077	1.039	1.083	1.077	1.053	1.063	1.054	1.050
LeftRight	1.281	1.232	1.224	1.177	1.149	1.085	1.077	1.102	1.070	1.103

Logistic regression analyses

The B-values, the significances and the standard deviations of all variables have already been shown in the chapter texts. In this section the exact value of the significance can be checked and the odds will be discussed by looking to the exponential values of B. The first five elections will be presented on the next two pages in tables 17 to 21.

After observing the first five elections, it is possible to discuss some general patterns. The chapter text already mentioned that Christianity is highly significant for all these elections. The impact can also be observed when looking at the Exp(B). At its lowest level in 1986 the value is 4.646, which means that people who consider themselves Christian are 4.6 times more likely to vote CDA than people who do not consider themselves Christian. At its highest level, which is in 1982, Christian people are 10.6 times more likely to vote CDA than non-Christians. The impact of Christianity on voting CDA is quite big compared to other variables.

Also the left-right variable was highly significant for all presented elections. The tables show that the impact is also considerable because the Exp(B) is high for every election. In 1994 the variable's value is at its lowest level. For every unit that someone is more rightwing, he or she is 1.2 times more likely to vote CDA in that year. In 1981 every unit higher on the left-right scale means that the chance is 1.5 times bigger that a person votes CDA.

The rest of the variables do not have a major direct influence on the dependent variable because they are not systematically significant. Only education is significant for three different elections, however, it is hard to provide a straightforward explanation. In 1981 and 1986 the chances that a person votes CDA are smaller with every unit higher on the education variable, while in 1994 the chances for a CDA vote are 1.2 times higher with every unit higher for the education variable. Social class, the age variables and urbanization are only significant for one or two elections. Gender is not significant for any of the elections.

Table 17: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA 1981)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-4.959	.879	31.850	1	.000	.077
Christianity	2.148	.218	96.785	1	.000	8.572
SocialClass	-.145	.082	3.136	1	.077	.865
Gender	.110	.147	.563	1	.453	1.117
Education	-.065	.037	3.176	1	.075	.937
Age	.045	.025	3.272	1	.070	1.046
AgeSquared	.000	.000	2.151	1	.142	1.000
Urbanization	-.051	.025	4.133	1	.042	.950
LeftRight	.411	.038	120.267	1	.000	1.509

Table 18: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1982)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-5.237	.955	30.100	1	.000	.005
Christianity	2.357	.240	96.307	1	.000	10.557
SocialClass	-.068	.092	.555	1	.456	.934
Gender	-.139	.163	.728	1	.393	.870
Education	-.049	.039	1.599	1	.206	.952
Age	.043	.026	2.762	1	.097	1.044
AgeSquared	.000	.000	1.647	1	.199	1.000
Urbanization	-.034	.027	1.549	1	.213	.966
LeftRight	.358	.039	83.234	1	.000	1.430

Table 19: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1986)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-3.992	.899	19.734	1	.000	.018
Christianity	1.536	.168	83.258	1	.000	4.646
SocialClass	-.033	.084	.155	1	.694	.968
Gender	.057	.152	.141	1	.707	1.059
Education	-.097	.037	6.829	1	.009	.907
Age	.019	.025	.568	1	.451	1.019
AgeSquared	.000	.000	.464	1	.496	1.000
Urbanization	.007	.025	.070	1	.792	1.007
LeftRight	.376	.037	101.374	1	.000	1.456

Table 20: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1989)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-3.313	.646	26.338	1	.000	.036
Christianity	1.676	.153	120.253	1	.000	5.344
SocialClass	-.155	.076	4.118	1	.042	.857
Gender	.179	.138	1.682	1	.195	1.196
Education	.037	.073	.263	1	.608	1.038
Age	-.004	.098	.001	1	.970	.996
AgeSquared	.003	.007	.182	1	.669	1.000
Urbanization	-.050	.040	1.570	1	.210	.952
LeftRight	.400	.046	74.442	1	.000	1.492

Table 21: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1994)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-4.565	.959	22.884	1	.000	.010
Christianity	2.276	.221	105.777	1	.000	9.738
SocialClass	.047	.094	.253	1	.615	1.048
Gender	-.096	.166	.333	1	.564	.909
Education	.166	.085	3.846	1	.050	1.181
Age	-.044	.030	2.183	1	.140	.957
AgeSquared	.001	.000	4.745	1	.029	1.001
Urbanization	.171	.064	7.165	1	.007	1.186
LeftRight	.189	.041	21.008	1	.000	1.208

The second half of the elections is presented on the next two pages in tables 22 to 26. They paint the same picture if one considers only the degree of significance. The log odds have shifted a little bit. In 2002 and 2006 being Christian makes a person 2.9 to 3.3 times more likely to vote CDA. In 1998 however, Christians are 14.4 times more likely to vote CDA than non-Christians.

The influence of the left-right variable has remained more or less the same. The odds, except for the year 2006 vary around 1.1 and 1.2, which means that with every unit higher on the scale of the variable, people are between 1.1 and 1.2 times more likely to vote CDA. More specifically, the more

right-wing people are, the more likely they are to vote CDA. However, 2006 is a minor exception with odds of 1.5.

Most of the other variables did not vary substantively. Gender is again not significant even once, and the same goes for social class this time. Education was quite present in the first group of elections, but that has changed in the second group of elections. Urbanization and the age variables show a little different story. Age and Age-squared are significant three times. The Exp(B) values of age are between 0.927 and 1.000, which means that people are between 0.9 and 1 times less likely to vote CDA with every year that they get older.

Table 22: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (1998)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-4.647	.924	25.284	1	.000	.010
Christianity	2.665	.258	106.293	1	.000	14.364
SocialClass	-.074	.096	.599	1	.439	.929
Gender	-.085	.160	.643	1	.595	.918
Education	-.029	.036	.643	1	.423	.971
Age	-.046	.027	2.986	1	.084	.955
AgeSquared	.001	.000	8.480	1	.004	1.001
Urbanization	.274	.063	18.873	1	.000	1.096
LeftRight	.184	.042	25.284	1	.000	1.202

Table 23: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (2002)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-3.481	1.041	11.183	1	.001	.031
Christianity	1.058	.325	10.605	1	.001	2.882
SocialClass	.036	.099	.132	1	.716	1.036
Gender	.026	.155	.027	1	.868	1.026
Education	-.033	.033	.985	1	.321	.968
Age	.042	.028	2.266	1	.132	1.042
AgeSquared	.000	.000	.925	1	.336	1.000
Urbanization	.039	.062	.395	1	.530	1.039
LeftRight	.109	.041	6.939	1	.008	1.115

Table 24: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (2006)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-4.042	.640	39.880	1	.000	.018
Christianity	1.201	.118	102.974	1	.000	3.325
SocialClass	-.106	.065	2.603	1	.107	.900
Gender	.016	.115	.021	1	.886	1.017
Education	.020	.057	.126	1	.722	1.020
Age	.000	.019	.000	1	.998	1.000
AgeSquared	.000	.000	.201	1	.654	1.000
Urbanization	.059	.047	1.592	1	.207	1.061
LeftRight	.406	.032	163.268	1	.000	1.500

Table 25: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (2010)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-4.329	.859	25.399	1	.000	.013
Christianity	1.622	.173	87.584	1	.000	5.062
SocialClass	-.075	.093	.651	1	.420	.928
Gender	.366	.160	5.228	1	.022	1.442
Education	.018	.080	.052	1	.819	1.019
Age	-.064	.025	6.717	1	.010	.938
AgeSquared	.001	.000	11.960	1	.001	1.001
Urbanization	.296	.065	20.585	1	.000	1.344
LeftRight	.188	.037	26.358	1	.000	1.207

Table 26: *Multivariate logistic regression analysis of influencing factors on voting CDA (2012)*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Significance	Exp(B)
Constant	-3.427	1.113	9.487	1	.002	.032
Christianity	1.668	.202	88.126	1	.000	5.300
SocialClass	.038	.106	.126	1	.722	1.038
Gender	.136	1.185	.542	1	.462	1.146
Education	-.024	.084	.084	1	.773	.976
Age	-.076	.031	5.810	1	.016	.927
AgeSquared	.001	.000	10.835	1	.001	1.001
Urbanization	.170	.076	5.001	1	.025	1.166
LeftRight	.171	.045	14.368	1	.000	1.167