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THE PERSISTENT WEAK POSITION OF THE NORDIC CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Introduction

Christian democracy in Nordic countries has had poor electoral gains. Protestant countries with a one single strong religion without significant religious minorities have been known for promoting the welfare state policy. The emphasis of political parties on social issues plays a primary role in all Western democracies and social conservatism (one of the basic characteristics of modern Christian democracy) is not derived only from papal encyclicals. What is the main cause of failure of Christian Democratic parties in Scandinavia? The basic research question of the text is to identify the structural causes of this long-term failure of Christian Democrats in Scandinavia. Despite the participation in several governments of their countries, parties do not even play the role of an important small pivotal party.

The article is divided into three main chapters. In the first chapter, it is necessary to characterize the connection between religion and politics in the context of the stand-alone Christian Democratic party family, as well as a typology of Christian Democratic parties in contemporary European party systems. The question is whether it is possible to perceive the Christian Democrats as the uniform party family or if there are various subgroups in it. If they exist, how many of them we recognize. The second part will be devoted to the historical development of Christian democracy in the Nordic countries. Specific position is certainly determined with the delayed formation of these parties. The chapter will primarily deal with the historical development of Christian Democratic parties in the surveyed countries. The article is based on the methodology of comparative politics, therefore, the conclusion will be generalized on the findings of analogies. The third chapter will deal with the analysis of research questions and the attempt to identify the root causes of weak position in comparative perspective.

From the object of the study, it was necessary to withdraw the Icelandic party system. In Iceland, there is no Christian democracy. In the nature of the political system there is obvious another major historical cleavage, which does not reflect connection of Christianity and politics. Founding of *Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn* (Independence Party) in the decade of the 1930s was the reaction to the hegemony of dominant political parties *Alþýðuflokkurinn* (People's Party) – social democrats and *Framsóknarflokkurinn*

(Progressive Party) – agrarian party. „The party (Independence party) was said to be representative of the nation, not of any interest group“.¹ Class politics receded to the politics of independence. The absence of conflicts on the right wing of the party spectrum caused the formation of a single conservative catch-all party (more in the form of post-war German union party). Continuing conflict among those parties ruled out the possibility of state-church cleavage.

Christian Democracy as a Specific Party Family

Party families are often seen by experts as unequivocal categories having no doubts. In fact, the problem is broader and is not just about differences in space and time. Research of party families remains according to Mair and Mudde “one of the most under-theorized and least-specified approaches to the general classification of parties”.² Studies of political parties focus primarily on the whole group of political parties or on its subgroups, determining what characteristics all political parties within subgroup have in common. Elementary distribution of party families is possible in pursuance of: origins and sociology, transnational federations, policy and ideology and in the end, by name. Subsequently, Mudde modified its claim and said that parties are predominantly based on their ideology.³ Probably the most appropriate will be the combination of their same origin and ideological policy profile. At first glance, we could seem, based on Mudde claims, that all members of party families have to exhibit all the same characteristics. Always and everywhere. But affinity can be only approximate, not absolute, links between belonging to a party family, self-identification and source of legitimacy can differ state by state.⁴ It is not, therefore, possible to argue that for the small deviations (different voters structure, the name of the party) from the ideal and ideological standard model it is a party of another party family. Party family may occur in a certain period of tension in the social structure as a response to the historical development. The second possible way of formation of the party type is the incorporation of the ideology to the party program and the gradual adoption of the voter space. This second way of creating ideological parties, typical for the East Central European countries, where political parties after a certain period have developed into the classical Western parties type. Classification of the party families is based on the classic Stein Rokkan comparative approach of examining Western European party sys-

¹ S. Kristjánsson, *The Electoral Basis of the Icelandic Independence Party 1929–1944*, “Scandinavian Political Studies“, vol. 2, no. 1, 1979, p. 33.

² P. Mair, C. Mudde, *The Party Family and Its Study*, “Annual Review of Political Science“, vol. 1, 1998, p. 214.

³ C. Mudde, *Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Manchester, 2000.

⁴ P. Fiala, M. Strmiska, *Ideově-politické rodiny a politické strany v postkomunistických zemích střední a východní Evropy*, [in:] *Politické strany ve střední a východní Evropě*, eds. P. Fiala, J. Holzer, M. Strmiska et al., Brno 2002, pp. 13-27.

tems. Although the countries went through various historical developments, almost in all of them was located a similar ideological cleavage.⁵

We could include Christian Democratic parties among the advocates of a particular social structure. Klaus Von Beyme in his classic work *Politische Parteien in Westeuropa* (1984) ranked Christian Democratic parties as a unique fourth type of specific party family mostly based on ideological criteria (in Von Beyme's words spiritual families). Von Beyme's distinguishing criterion was, in particular, the name of the party and in the case it is no longer satisfactory, on the perception of the programmes and ideology by voters. An essential part of the integration of parties into the party families after the country's accession to the European Union could become an international Europeanized party affiliation and affinity of individual policies.⁶ The categorization method of the trans-national federations, however, is not strictly correct, because it can bring together different ideologies. Within the one Europeanized party (e.g. EPP) can coexist along with Christian democrats also Conservative and theoretically Agrarian parties. At the same time, not all parties of the particular party family are forced to be a member of the trans-national federation of parties. Mair and Mudde in their basic work simplified affiliations of the Christian Democratic parties⁷ and stated that belonging to the EPP is automatically one of the basic signs of Christian Democracy. After the founding of the European Christian Political Movement in 2002 this statement is doubtful.

The Christian Democratic party family is considered a specific phenomenon, because the member parties may differ essentially, except for minor differences in policies. The main differences can be geographic location and/or denominational identity.⁸ Parties of the same party family may be even antagonistic and conflict to each other within the national party system. When identifying Christian democracy we come to the problem of defining the exact boundaries of the ideology. The basic features of the Christian Democratic party family are often identical or confusingly similar to the Conservative parties, with traditionalist aspects and even with right-wing nationalist and extremist parties may abuse Christian ideology.

The current Christian Democratic parties mainly evolved from the Catholic confessional parties in the 19th century. They arose primarily from mass movements that challenged the ascendancy of liberalism in opposition to social movements.⁹ The very process of the Christian Democratic parties origin raises the primary problem of our research. Could arise in Lutheran countries such a party type mentioned above? As

⁵ S. M. Lipset, S. Rokkan, *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction*, [in:] *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, eds. S. M. Lipset, S. Rokkan, New York, 1967.

⁶ M. Gallagher, M. Laver, P. Mair, *Representative Government in Modern Europe*, Boston, 2001.

⁷ P. Mair, C. Mudde, *The Party Family and Its Study*, "Annual Review of Political Science", vol. 1, 1998, p. 217.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 212.

⁹ S. Kalyvas, K. van Kersbergen, *Christian Democracy*, "Annual Review of Political Science", vol. 13, 2010, p. 185.

indicates earlier Kalyvas 1998 article *From Pulpit to Party* a model of confessional party formation is transferable to another Christian faith denomination. For example, the first confessional party in the Netherlands was a Calvinist party established in 1879.¹⁰ Thus, we can agree, that Christian Democratic parties in an the effort to represent the majority of citizens identify with a particular (one) confession¹¹. Despite this declaration, the gains of the Christian Democratic parties are very low as a result of secularized society (as the breadth of the right spectrum). Belonging of the one confession to the one party is an unwritten condition. What really Christian democracy is, and is not, has been defined by several authors dealing with its ideology and history.¹² Because of the scope and focus of the article, it is not possible to deal with the issue. Methodologically we can build our article on the criteria of the party name and ideological proximity, while certainly important will be democratic, non-fundamentalistic, party base.

Fiala and Strmiska in their critical remarks to Coppedge's (1997) classification of Latin America confessional party types had identified often overlooked factor in European political science. European Christian Democratic parties are perceived to be uniform. All are reportedly the same. Location of the parties in the left-right spectrum is the result of their interaction within the party system, as well as the interaction of the parties with the entire political environment. In different country the parties find themselves in different sectors of the left-right spectrum, although they may remain in the same party family.¹³ The authors examining European space mostly resign on this fact, and therefore they are forced to find another distinctive feature.

The last important contribution to the exploration of Christian democracy and to the relation between religion and party systems is the comparative analysis of Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond. Mass-based parties, Gunther and Diamond distinguished two types of political parties which essentially separate confessional parties. The first, denominational party, is a typological equivalent to a general understanding of Christian democracy. In addition to the classic organizational mass character and a horizontal power separation in the party, there is a standard phenomenon relation of the party to the clerics or religious institution. The Party program is based on religious beliefs and it is often determined outside of the party itself. The basic ideological theses are related to the Christian religion and the promotion of individual elements in the system leads to tension within the party and to the disputes with external influences and voters. Party operates in the liberal democratic pluralism and does not try to radically

¹⁰ S. M. Lipset, S. Rokkan, *Cleavage Structures*, p. 16; more on the issue of parties formation with confessional background see S. Kalyvas, *From Pulpit to Party: Party Formation and the Christian Democratic Phenomenon*, "Comparative Politics", vol. 30, no. 3, 1998, pp. 293-312.

¹¹ J. Lenč, *Náboženstvo v politike a pozícia náboženských politických strán*, Trnava, 2015, p. 170.

¹² See S. Kalyvas, K. van Kersbergen, *Christian Democracy*, pp. 183-209; P. Pombeni, *The Ideology of Christian Democracy*, "Journal of Political Ideologies", vol. 5, no. 3, 2000, pp. 289-300.

¹³ P. Fiala, M. Strmiska, *Stranicko-politické rodiny a ideologické sektory. Příspěvek k diskusi o pojetí rodin politických stran*, "Středoevropské politické studie", 2001.

enforce the agenda. The second type of confessional party is fundamentalist party. The party is based on strict religious regulations and standards. The authority of the party leader de facto follows the theocratic model. The party does not differentiate between state and religion, members are disciplined, the party leadership is authoritarian and undemocratic.¹⁴ Usually, these parties exist outside of the European area, but with minor modification they could be found in Europe, as well. The condition should be the absence of the real fulfillment of religious laws and the assumption of the misuse of the laws for gaining and maintaining the power.

Position of the Nordic Christian Democratic Parties

Christian Democratic parties in Europe are examined in several collective monographs.¹⁵ The research, however, started at the end of the millennium. Homogeneous confessional Catholic countries are dominated by catch-all parties with Christianity in the party name. Confessionally divided countries (Switzerland, the Netherlands) have more confessional ones, but just Catholic ones are considered Christian Democratic. Calvinist and Lutheran parties are designated as smaller radical confessional organizations with the exception of the Scandinavian countries. The coalition CDU/CSU in the Federal Republic of Germany is due to the absence of another conservative (and right-wing nationalist) group perceived only as a catch-all Conservative party. Although their origin is mostly Protestant. In East Central Europe there is the problem over the genuine position of Christian democracy. In Poland, there is no classical Christian democracy.¹⁶ In the atheistic Czech Republic the situation is complicated by the regional nature of KDU-ČSL (Christian Democratic Union). The Hungarian party system is determined disproportionately by the elected representatives and it precludes the existence of smaller, separate confessional Catholic and Calvinist parties. In Slovakia, KDH (Christian Democratic Movement) represents only a narrow majority of Catholics.¹⁷ It is possible that in homogeneous denominational Lutheran Northern European countries where the Christian democracy was established, there is no classic state-church cleavage? Of the late accession of Sweden and Finland into EU in 1995 were Scandinavian Christian democracies often excluded from the comparative re-

¹⁴ R. Gunther, L. Diamond, *Species of Political Parties. A New Typology*, "Party Politics", vol. 9, no. 2, 2003, pp. 182-183.

¹⁵ S. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*, London 1996; E. Lamberts, (ed.) *Christian Democracy in the European Union 1945/1995*, Leuven 1997; S. van Hecke, E. Gerard, (eds.) *Christian Democratic Parties in Europe since the End of the Cold War*, Leuven 2004; W. Kaiser, (ed.) *Christian Democracy and the Origins of the European Union*, Cambridge 2007.

¹⁶ See T. Bale, A. Szczerbiak, *Why is There No Christian Democracy in Poland – and Why Does This Matter?*, "Party Politics", vol. 14, no. 4, 2008, pp. 479-500. A. Grzymala-Busse, *Why There is (Almost) no Christian-Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, "Party Politics", vol. 19, no. 2, 2013, pp. 319-342.

¹⁷ R. Štefančík, *Christlich Demokratische Parteien in der Slowakei*, Trnava 2008, p. 113-128.

search of European.¹⁸ Major interreligious differences with continental Europe were one of the possible reasons for the delay of the late foundings of researched party family in Scandinavia. Causes of this issue persist to the present, however, the geopolitical importance of the Nordic countries is increasing, and they are getting out of the periphery into the position of a politically important player.¹⁹ Generally, the countries cease to be specific, and they are beginning to approach the standards of Western Europe. They are also the only countries with an extremely polarized pluralism of the party system, which shows elements of democratic stability and the relative constancy of party spectrum. If we generalize again, the steps of Social Democratic governments directed towards secularization and the rejection of traditional values, created therefore a demand for Christian-oriented parties in Scandinavia. The founding of the Christian Democratic party family was not the result of class differentiation (as in continental Europe), but the growing activism of religious subcultures.²⁰

For Nordic countries this was the typical dominant (at certain times predominant) position of Social Democrats (in Sweden and Norway they were the general elections winners for almost a century). The support for minority government was provided by the New Left parties, and in some cases with Agrarian support. Cause of such a condition was unidimensionality of the system, the existence of a single cleavage (workers – employers) and the freezing of party systems. In all countries the absentee Christian Democratic aspect and 5 party model (communist – social democrat – agrarian – liberal – conservative) have become a characteristic sign for Scandinavia.²¹ In the founding period of Christian Democracy, the political fight consisted of materialistic base labor, business and farmers. In comparison with European countries the party system shifted slightly to the left in all aspects.

The first Nordic party with a Christian element in its name was the Norwegian Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF) – Christian People's Party, founded in 1933. The cause of the formation was that no nomination for a Christian politician on the candidate list of the Liberal party (Venstre), and perceived moral decay.²² The party was established by the group of religious revivalists in Norway's Bible-belt in the south and south-west of the country²³ where the voters was prevalent in such a rural environment. In 1933 and

¹⁸ Not mentioned in Kalyvas or Lamberts, but surprisingly included e.g. in Hanley; van Hecke and Gerard.

¹⁹ R. M. Czarny, *Geopolitics of the High North and its Consequences*, "Slovak Journal of Political Science", vol. 15, no. 4, 2015, pp. 274.

²⁰ J. Madeley, *Reading the Runes: The Religious Factor in Scandinavian Electoral Politics*, [in:] *Religion and Mass Electoral Behaviour in Europe*, (eds.) D. Broughton, H.-M. ten Napel, London, 2000, pp. 28-43.

²¹ More see S. Berglund, U. Lindström, *The Scandinavian Party System(s). A Comparative Study*, Lund 1978. On nature of the system see M. Brunclík et al., *Skandinávie. Proměny politiky v severovýchodních zemích*, Praha 2011, p. 149-184.

²² J. Madeley, *Scandinavian Christian Democracy: Throwback or Portent?*, "European Journal of Political Research", vol. 5, 1977, pp. 282.

²³ J. Madeley, *Reading the Runes*, pp. 28-43.

1936 general election party acted as a specific regional entity and nominated the candidates in only one (resp. two) constituencies (1933 Hordaland, 1936 Hordaland; Bergen). In both cases the party gained vote(s) in Storting. From 1945 the party participated in the elections at the national level (for results of all parties see Table 1). Due to its position in the party system, after WWII the domination of Einar Gerhardsen and the Norwegian Labour Party worked closely and in cooperation with other right-wing parties, allowing to have Christian Democrats. Since 1945, we can characterize the Norwegian political system as a six party system. The Norwegian Christian People's party after stabilization of their own conditions helped to establish all the other Nordic Christian Democratic parties. This occurred during the time of Norway's social democracy crisis (after Gerhardsen's fall) and the Norwegian Christian People's party was a member of John Lyng's (Conservative) and Per Borten's (Centre) governments. In the eighties, the party participated also in Kåre Willoch second cabinet and the short intermezzo government of Jan Peder Syse (both Conservative). Twice Christian Democrats obtained a Prime Minister's position. At its peak, Nordic Christian Democracy was during the period of 1997-2005 when Kjell Magne Bondevik was a Prime minister (with an interlude in 2000-2001). Even though he was not a Party leader. Bondevik was the first and so far the only Christian Democratic Prime Minister designated on the position after the election in Scandinavia. Briefly, Lars Korvald 1972-1973 government was the result of majority Labour government resignation.²⁴ Although the party did not record the position of the strongest one (or even the strongest opposition party), due to the extreme increase in votes the center-right parties agreed on nomination of Bondevik. After re-entering of the Social Democrats to power (Jens Stoltenberg in 2005) the position of KrF radically declined.

Table 1. Party leaders of Kristelig Folkeparti

Nils Lavik	1938–1951
Erling Wikborg	1951–1955
Einar Hareide	1955–1967
Lars Korvald	1967–1975, 1977–1979
Kåre Kristiansen	1975–1977, 1979–1983
Kjell Magne Bondevik	1983–1995
Valgerd Svarstad Haugland	1995–2004
Dagfinn Høybråten	2004–2011
Knut Arild Hareide	2011–

Source: Kristelig folkeparti website, <https://www.krf.no/partiorganisasjonen/krfshistorie> [April 15, 2016].

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 28.

A wave of new parties emerged (birth of the new Europeanization cleavage) in the seventies in Denmark caught an anti-secularization oriented Kristeligt Folkeparti (KrF) – Christian People’s Party. The cause was an almost complete removal of control over pornography and free abortion policy.²⁵ Electoral gains were recruited mainly by former voters of the Conservative party and the strongest position was held traditionally in the west of Jutland and the island of Bornholm.²⁶ The party was from the very beginning a protest entity, which responded on the emergence of negative phenomena in the Danish society. It also benefited greatly from the debates on EC membership. Maximum gains amounted to the party in the 1975 election, obtaining 9 Votes in Folketinget. Although it remained an extremely small party, the Christian Democrats participated in the government formation for their centrist position (in the „Four-Leaf Clover“ cabinet of Poul Schlüter 1982-1988). In 2003, according to the Swedish and Finnish model, an attempt to europeanize the party occurred with the leaders trying to change the name to KristenDemokraterne (Christian Democrats). „On the right the small centrist Christian Democrats has vacillated between moderate support for integration and soft Euroscepticism”.²⁷ The party is weakened mainly due to the extremely fragmented Danish party system and from the beginning of the millennium due to the rise of anti-immigrant Danish People’s Party. Compared to other Scandinavian Christian Democratic parties it is strongly oriented on religious conservative values.

Table 2. Party leaders of KristenDemokraterne

Jacob Christensen	1970–1973
Jens Møller	1973–1979
Flemming Kofod-Svendsen	1979–1990
Jann Sjursen	1990–2002
Marianne Karlslose	2002–2005
Bodil Kornbek	2005–2008
Bjarne Hartung Kirkegaard	2008–2011
Per Ørum Jørgensen	2011–2012
Stig Grenov	2012–

Source: KristenDemokraterne, <http://www.kd.dk/skolesiden/kds-historie/> [April 15, 2016].

²⁵ J. Madeley, *Scandinavian Christian Democracy*, pp. 282.

²⁶ L. Karvonen, *In From the Cold? Christian Parties in Scandinavia*, “Scandinavian Political Studies“, vol. 16, no. 1, 1993, pp. 25-48.

²⁷ T. Raunio, *Softening but Persistnet: Euroscepticism in the Nordic EU Countries*, “Acta Politica“, vol. 42, 2007, pp. 191-210.

The Swedish party system has maintained the five party model for the longest period of time. Despite the regular participation of Swedish Kristen Demokratisk Samling (KDS) – Christian Democratic Unity in the election to Riksdag since 1964, the party obtained the first Votes in the 1991 elections (if we do not count the coalition with Centre party in 1985 and Vote for chairman Alf Svensson). The founding of KDS was a reaction to the liberalized abortion policy, promiscuity and spreading venereal illnesses, as well as the exclusion of religion from public schools. Analogically to other Scandinavian countries, there was a need for the defense of cultural traditions of Christianity from leftist secularization.²⁸ It was not just an initiative of the state Lutheran Church, but also of the Baptist and Pentecostal renewal movements. The main cause of a failed infiltration into Riksdag was a 4% threshold and an independent position in the polarized party system. Traditional support of the party was geographically oriented in rural areas of south Sweden around Jönköping.²⁹ After the change of the name of the party to Kristdemokratiska Samhällspartiet (Christian Democratic Social Party) came electoral success in 1991. We can assign it to a combination of conventional (family policy and religion) and protest voting. The Party has been included into anti-social democracy block of parties alongside Moderates, Centrists, and Liberals.³⁰ Immediately after the election success the party became a part of the coalition cabinet of Carl Bildt. Since 1991, there was a change of attitude towards the European Union. From eurosceptic positions the party changed to being pro-European. Chairman Alf Svensson also launched a policy change from Protestant oriented to Mass conservative. Svensson's popularity reached its peak after a change of the name of the Party to Kristdemokraterna (Christian Democrats) in the 1997 election. The Party gained 11,8% of votes and 42 Votes in the Riksdag. The Christian Democrats after right-wing losses initiated founding of the pre-election coalition named Alliance for Sweden, where they anticipated a strengthening of their positions. But the new leader, Göran Hägglund, had no Svensson's charisma. Change of the program priorities was reflected in the greater universality and slight diversion from the foundations of the Christian policy.³¹ Nevertheless, the party won three ministerial posts in the Fredrik Reinfeldt government after the elections in 2006. The Christian Democrats were part of the government for two terms until 2014 (until 2010 majority government, after 2010 minority government). A choice of five centre-right parties in Sweden, however, reduced

²⁸ P. Maškarinec, *Křesťanští demokraté. Analýza identity švédské relevantní křesťansko-demokratické strany*, "Středoevropské politické studie", vol. 9, no. 1, 2007, p. 58.

²⁹ L. Karvonen, *Christian Parties in Scandinavia: Victory Over The Windmills?*, [in:] *Christian Democracy in Europe. A Comparative Perspective*, eds. D. Hanley, London, New York 1994.

³⁰ D. Sainsbury, *The 1991 Swedish election: Protest, fragmentation, and a shift to the right*, "West European Politics", vol. 15, no. 2, 1992, pp. 160-166.

³¹ More in P. Maškarinec, *Křesťanští demokraté. Analýza identity švédské relevantní křesťansko-demokratické strany*, "Středoevropské politické studie", vol. 9, no. 1, 2007, p. 56-75.

the possibility of sustainable adaptation of Christian Democrats.³² The rise of the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats (13% in 2014 elections) reduced the change to a minimum.

Table 3. Party leaders of Kristdemokraterna

Birger Ekstedt	1964–1971
Alf Svensson	1971–2004
Göran Hägglund	2004–2015
Ebba Busch Thor	2015–

Source: Kristdemokraterna, <https://www.kristdemokraterna.se/Om-oss/Historia//> [April 14, 2016].

The founding of the second oldest Christian democracy in Nordic countries was the reaction on the strong position of Finnish communists in the political system, with their usual antichurch and secularized program. Second typical sign of the party was the struggle against the reduction of alcohol tax.³³ Although Suomen Kristillinen Liito (SKL) – Finnish Christian League was founded in 1958, and the Finnish voting system does not contain a threshold, the Finnish Christian Democrats could not gain a Vote until 1971. After a relatively successful campaign of chairman Raino Westerholm, the parliamentary number after 1975 nearly doubled.³⁴ The Finnish Christian League could play a pivotal role during Koivisto’s government, but it declined.³⁵ Despite consensuality of Finnish politics and closeness of most of the other political parties, SKL became a partner of the government just thrice. In 1991 as a small coalition in Esko Aho. And after 2011 when Christian Democrats (party chairwoman Päivi Räsänen) received the post of Ministry of Interior in the government of Jyrki Katainen and Alexander Stubb (2011–2015) Kokoomus (National Coalition Party led governments). Weak gains potentially reflect the fact that in Finland strong parties do not exist and extreme inter-party volatility is not possible. In later period was for the party typical strong eurosceptic position, also due to the effort to obtain a new electoral base. Since 2001 the party acts under the name Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats). Finnish Christian Democrats have the strongest position in the Vaasa region. Their former General Secretary Peter Östman is even the chairman of European Christian Political Movement, the political party at European level (and a deputy for Vaasa constituency). ECPM has also the European Parliament club which consists of eurosceptics of “radi-

³² H. Oscarsson, *A Matter of Fact? Knowledge Effects on the Vote in Swedish General Elections*, “Scandinavian Political Studies“, vol. 30, no. 3, 2007, pp. 301-322.

³³ L. Karvonen, *In From the Cold?*, pp. 25-48.

³⁴ D. Arter, *The Finnish Christian League Party or “Anti-Party”?*, “Scandinavian Political Studies“, vol. 3, no. 2, 1980, pp. 143-161.

³⁵ L. Karvonen, *Christian Parties in Scandinavia*, p. 136.

cal” confessional parties (Calvinist Dutch Reform Party, Christian Union, Slovak MEP Branislav Škripek). The party is only an observer of European People’s Party. In addition to the Danish Christian Democrats, it is one of the opponents of the European Union in Scandinavia, although just in 2007 John Madeley labeled the party as moderately pro-European.³⁶

Table 4. Party leaders of Kristillisdemokraatit

Olavi Päiväsalo	1958–1964
Ahti Tele	1964–1967
Eino Sares	1967–1970
Olavi Majlander	1970–1973
Raino Westerholm	1973–1982
Esko Almgren	1982–1989
Toimi Kankaanniemi	1989–1995
Bjarne Kallis	1995–2004
Päivi Räsänen	2004–2015
Sari Essayah	2015–

Source: Kristillisdemokraatit, <http://www.kd.fi/politiikka/puolueen-historia/> [April 12, 2016].

The cause of party name changes was an effort to move closer to European Christian Democratic parties, which is not only programmatically, but mainly denominational impossible. Scandinavian Christian democracy is different from continental European parties. Parties do not have any catch-all tendencies and do not seek integration of new voters (they don’t change ideology, nor policies). Primary emphasis on Christian moral teaching is still the basis of the program, as well as the state-church relationship and family policy. With the exception of Alf Svensson in Sweden, the parties never tried to apply a universal program. Another features that make a difference against Christian fundamentalists are the liberal tendencies on abortion, liberalism in economy, anti-individualistic attitudes, gender equality, and the environment. Furthermore, important roles affect the Nordic Social Democracy as well as the different Lutheran interpretation of essential parts of the New Testament. Difference between them and continental parties is their distinctive anti-EU character, even within the Swedish Christian Democrats.

An interesting phenomenon is also the „snowball effect”. The election results in one country affecting the results in another country. This means that the wave of suc-

³⁶ J. Madeley, *Grit or Pearl? The Religious Factor in the Politics of European Integration*, „Religion and Politics: Conflict or Cooperation?”, Workshop 22, 2007, p. 9.

cess/failure is caused not only by internal factors, but also by the external position of a neighboring Christian democracy. In the recent period such changes of political leaders have occurred (mainly due to weak electoral gains) with women in the party leadership (Ebba Busch Thor in Sweden and Sari Essayah in Finland), though the problematic issue remains male leaders (Stig Grenov in Denmark and Knut Arild Hareide in Norway). If we evaluate the parties' positions, all of them are just above fall-out from the national parliaments (in Denmark already since 2005). Historically the oldest and strongest party, the Norwegian KrF also got into trouble. After the departure of chairman Vegard Svarstedt Haugland, liberalization took place and the party shifted left. Party members and supporters are continuously leaving. In the elections the following scenario is possible. As a reaction to the weakening of Christian elements in KrF's program Partiet de Kristne (The Christians) can become successful. Election results of the Nordic Christian Democratic parties are listed in Table 5.

Table 5 Results of Christian Democracy in the general elections

Norway (KrF)			Denmark (KrF-KD)			Sweden (KDS-KD)			Finland (SKL-KD)		
Year	%	Vote	Year	%	Vote	Year	%	Vote	Year	%	Vote
1945	7,9	8/150	1971	1,9	0/179	1964	1,8	0/233	1958	0,2	0/200
1949	8,4	9/150	1973	4	7/179	1968	1,5	0/233	1962	x	x
1953	10,5	14/150	1975	5,3	9/179	1970	1,8	0/350	1966	0,5	0/200
1957	10,2	12/150	1977	3,4	6/179	1973	1,8	0/350	1970	1,4	1/200
1961	9,3	15/150	1979	2,6	5/179	1976	1,4	0/349	1972	2,5	4/200
1965	7,8	13/150	1981	2,3	4/179	1979	1,4	0/349	1975	3,3	9/200
1969	7,8	14/150	1984	2,7	5/179	1982	1,9	0/349	1979	4,8	9/200
1973	11,9	20/155	1987	2,4	4/179	1985	Centre	1/349	1983	3	3/200
1977	9,7	22/155	1988	2	4/179	1988	2,9	0/349	1987	2,6	5/200
1981	8,9	15/155	1990	2,3	4/179	1991	7,1	26/349	1991	3,1	8/200
1985	8,3	16/157	1994	1,9	0/179	1994	4,1	15/349	1995	3	7/200
1989	8,5	14/165	1998	2,5	4/179	1998	11,8	42/349	1999	4,2	10/200
1993	7,9	13/165	2001	2,3	4/179	2002	9,1	33/349	2003	5,3	7/200
1997	14,3	23/165	2005	1,7	0/179	2006	6,6	24/349	2007	4,9	7/200
2001	12,4	22/165	2007	0,9	0/179	2010	5,6	19/349	2011	4	6/200
2005	6,8	11/169	2011	0,8	0/179	2014	4,6	16/349	2015	3,5	5/200
2009	5,5	10/169	2015	0,8	0/179						
2013	5,6	10/169									

Source: Global Election Database; Statistic sentralbyrå

Causes of the Weak Position

On the basis of historical development and election results of Christian Democratic parties, we can identify two elementary aspects of the low confidence of voters in Nordic countries. On this basis, we are identifying the causes of their weak position.

As a first issue, we identify the relationship between the distribution of citizens and religious practice. Although the affiliation to the church still plays in Nordic countries an important role despite secularization of the society, the problem remains with perpetuating self-identification and with absence of inter-Christian conflict in the Protestant North, where Lutheran churches are still established.³⁷ From this perspective, belonging to the church does not have a regular bond linking religion to an institutionalized political party. Historically the pure Lutheran countries were Scandinavian countries, Prussia and Estonia. The religious tradition of the homogeneously Nordic countries was characterized until the nineteenth century by: church submissiveness towards the state (included with accommodation to social democracy), individualistic public attitudes, a relatively low level of anticlericalism and a higher level of public education. According to regular research studies of European social survey, Nordic countries are among the most de-confessionalized European countries. In three of four surveyed countries nominal Protestants are still a majority. However in Sweden, just 30% of citizens declare that their faith is active, semi-active or passive. The rate of active religious affiliation is under five percent in all countries.³⁸ Already in this example it is significant that the promotion of Christian Democratic Party does not move above that threshold. Voters have an extra wide scope of choice. Coakley's analysis clarifies the electoral structure of Christian Democratic parties. If the focus will put emphasis on religion as the most important identity factor by respondents, 40% Norwegians, 26% Finnish, 25% of Swedes and 19% of Danish citizens describe themselves as active believers. Proportional representation showed that one in four active believers voted in his county for Christian Democrats. Relationship of religious practice and elections does not show an absolute dependence, but points out, that an above average number of declared active believers in Finland (50%), Norway (40%), in Denmark and Sweden (to 30%) votes for surveyed party family. Nevertheless, the Protestant religious identity was surprisingly higher in the North than in mixed catholic-protestant countries (for more accurate party support by Protestant commitment see Coakley, pp. 12-14).

The second issue is the delayed emergence of Christian Democratic parties on the continent. The process of their creation is unlike with creation and escalation of cleavages in the 19th-century European party systems. We can say that the parties failed to win a pivotal position in the system between the Social Democrats and right-wing Conservatives, for they incurred and which sought to obtain from. The actual problem

³⁷ J. Ruane, J. Todd, *Protestant Minorities in European States and Nations*, IBIS No. 1 in the Discussion Series: Politics and Identity, 2009. L. Karvonen, *In From the Cold?*, pp. 25-48.

³⁸ J. Coakley, *A Political Profile of Protestant Minorities in Europe*, IBIS No. 2 in the Discussion Series: Politics and Identity, 2009, pp. 4-7.

of poor Christian democracy rests besides secularization wave in the systematic structural area of the party system. The polarized pluralism is the cause of minimal voters volatility and the existence of stable electoral parties bases. The ongoing conflicts between the parties are permanent and system of minority governments and an atypical creation of coalition governments ensure stable functioning of the party system. The systematic issue that Christian democracies are weak, but persistent, lies in a number of parliamentary parties and high proportionality.

Table 6. Effective number of parliamentary parties, electoral parties and least square index in Nordic countries in the last 3 elections

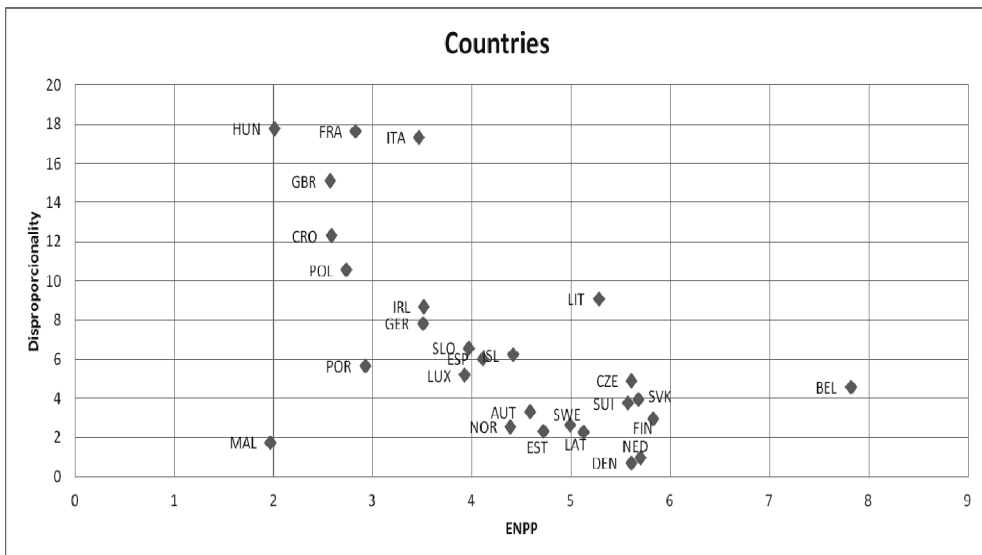
Norway				Denmark			
Year	ENPP	ENEP	LSq	Year	ENPP	ENEP	LSq
2005	4,56	5,11	2,67	2007	5,33	5,41	0,35
2009	4,07	4,55	3,01	2011	5,61	5,72	0,46
2013	4,39	4,87	2,56	2015	5,74	5,86	1,40
Sweden				Finland			
Year	ENPP	ENEP	LSq	Year	ENPP	ENEP	LSq
2006	4,15	4,66	3,02	2007	5,13	5,88	3,20
2010	4,54	4,79	1,25	2011	5,83	6,47	2,95
2014	4,99	5,41	2,64	2015	5,84	6,57	2,94

Source: own calculation by M. Laakso, R. Taagepera; M. Gallagher.

The effective number of parliamentary parties has an average indices on the 4.5 to 5.9 level for the successful functioning of Christian Democracy in Europe. All four countries fit in the column. In the case of an effective number of electoral parties, the number is 6.5. A prerequisite at these results is, of course, the absence of a dominant, respectively predominant party. A related feature of the quantity of parties is high proportionality, providing for almost every party electoral Vote. The existence of proportional electoral system and the threshold of 4% level in Sweden and 2% in Denmark and highest quotient methods (d'Hondt, Saint-Laguë) on each single constituency in Finland and Norway should show a higher degree of disproportionality. Moreover, there is a significant Swedish minority in Finland. Danish indicators are extreme; though with the exception of Denmark Christian Democrats into Folketinget gain all Votes of the running parties. The effective number of parties over 4.5 means an actual number of 6 and more parties. These parties ideally fill most of the classic party families without exception. One party family equals one political party. In the case of the party system which has such high numbers of proportionality (and low numbers of

disproportionality) is the probability of individual candidacy of every small party absolute matter of course. The system does not force small right wing parties into the creation of strong catch-all parties and the parties prefer to conclude among themselves pre-election alliances to be able to eliminate Social Democrats (sometimes with Liberals) from power. Finally, the two-bloc issue of the party system is enhanced by the existence of the Nordic New Left (communist parties).

Graph 1. Comparison of effective number of parties (ENPP) and disproportionality (least square index) in European countries³⁹



Source: own calculation by M. Laakso, R. Taagepera; M. Gallagher.

The fact that Christian Democracy can only exist in polarized pluralism as indicated in graph 1, points to the comparative analysis of European countries which shows an effective number of parliamentary parties and a disproportionality system. In the cluster of countries that have an effective number of parties from 4 to 6 and disproportionality below 5, there is a stable, but small and weak Christian democratic party family. That type of Christian democracy is not the union party with Christian in the name, which is very common with a lower number of parties (Germany). Estonian and Latvian system are obviously different, Christian democracy does not exist, but it is replaced by a small conservative party. Both systems show signs similar to other Scandinavian countries, deformation of the system is Russian minority voted for Social Democrats (former Communists). The position of Austrian Christian People’s Party (ÖVP) will approach the Swiss Christian People’s Party (CVP). But in Switzer-

³⁹ Excluded are Eastern Orthodox countries and predominantly Muslim countries.

land, there is 3 confessional subjects, same as in the Netherlands. Austrian Catholic homogeneity will bring different conclusions. A significant part of a stable electoral base departs right to the nationalistic entities, due to changes in the ethnic structure of the population and radicalization of the electorate. Ideal conditions for a standard Christian democracy linked to the religion are a higher number of parties and the lowest threshold in the proportional voting system, as in Scandinavia.

Conclusion

Christian democracy is portable, and it can operate in non-Catholic countries. On their successful existence it is necessary to fulfill a number of conditions. To have Christian in the name is not enough. It is necessary to fulfill the Christian content. Von Beyme and Mudde state that the classification name is sufficient. But the basis should become the origin of party. Scandinavian Christian democracy was not founded as Christian Democratic. We can say that they arose as interest groups of active Christians in other words that they arose as a moral appeal sides.

In the article, we have attempted to identify in particular the structural causes of the functioning of the Scandinavian Christian Democratic parties. Their weak position is based particularly on two issues. Political parties should be linked to their voters and should reflect changes in their moods and needs. In doing so, they should educate them. Support of parties in Northern Europe from census data may seem extremely low. From this reason we included the data from Coakley's study. He states the voter self-identification towards religion. With more detailed analysis we can assume that the low number of voters in Scandinavia is decided by reference to the church. Only few voters put emphasis on religion as a priority. There can be two reasons. One of them is the absence of inner-state conflict of two Christian religions. That low number of active believers drastically reduces the number of voters of Christian democracy. The second part is the absence of the state-church cleavage. In the nineteenth century the terms state and church were the same. The Church was subordinated to the state and the state was identified with the church. Secularization began after the long period of Social Democratic governments and promotion of socialism in the society.

The second aspect of the successful functioning of an authentic Christian Democracy identified in the article is a type of party system. Christian Democracy cannot successfully operate in a two-party system or a system of moderate pluralism. The main condition is high proportionality. In the case of high disproportional changes, the behaviour of the parties in the party system, parties cooperate more and form coalitions, and respectively they form one strong party in one (left or right) bloc. The possibility of Christian Democratic existence rests beside necessary rigid minority believers in polarized pluralism. Scandinavian countries meet all three conditions, therefore Christian Democracy exists there. However, there is no standard state-church cleavage and at the time of Christian Democratic parties founding too many parties were established in the system, therefore their position is persistently low.

Acknowledgements

I thank Aaron Thomas Walter, MiSW. for his linguistic corrections.

Summary

THE PERSISTENT WEAK POSITION OF THE NORDIC CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

The article discusses the reasons for the weak position of Christian Democratic parties in the Nordic countries. It characterizes different types of Christian Democracy at the European level and examines the most important factors of belonging to a party family. Briefly sets out the historical development of the Nordic Christian Democratic parties and their most significant achievements. The comparative analysis examines the causes of low gain of researched political parties, as well as their relevance and potential problems of the Nordic Christian democracy. In addition to including countries into the periphery and that they religiously different from the rest of continental Europe, we are attaching particular importance to the structure of the party system and high proportionality, which does not contribute to the cohesion behaviour of the centre-right parties.

Keywords: Christian democracy, Nordic countries, political party, party system, cleavage

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The date of submitting the paper to the Editorial Staff: May 27, 2016.
 The date of initial acceptance of the paper by Editorial Staff: June 11, 2016.