Alternatif Politika, 2022, 14 (3): 612-640
https://doi.org/10.53376/ap.2022.21

AT THE INTERSECTION OF FAITH, ALLEGIANCES TOWARD THE STATE, AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION: THE CASE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNIONS IN 19TH CENTURY WESTERN EUROPE

İNANÇ, DEVLETE BAĞLILIK VE EKONOMİK YOKSUNLUĞUN KESİŞİM NOKTASI: 19. YÜZYIL BATI AVRUPA'SINDA HIRİSTİYAN DEMOKRAT SENDİKALAR*

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ABSTRACT

Why were Christian democratic unions (CDUs) among workers and farmers more proactive in some Western European states than in others? Marxist theories explain union activity by industrialization. However, CDUs were not the most active in the late 19th century in rapidly industrializing states, e.g., Italy and Germany. Using social identity theory and Lipset's & Rokkan's cleavage theory, this paper conducts process tracing on the German, French, Italian, Dutch, and Belgian cases to test the following argument: CDUs were more likely to develop in states where anticlerical attacks unleashed a center-periphery conflict. CDUs are less likely to expand in states where anticlerical attacks precipitated a church-state conflict. The presence of a Catholic minority moderated this relationship. In the Protestant-dominant states, Catholicism allowed for mobilizing individuals and maintaining cohesion. The Lutheran states' hostility toward Catholic activism and

* I would like to thank to Murat Akan and the three anonymous reviewers for their invaluable insights.
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* Makale Geliş Tarihi / Article Received: 20.04.2022
Makale Kabul Tarihi / Article Accepted: 21.07.2022

the regional concentration of the minority accentuated this denominational difference, which catalyzed CDU development.

Keywords: Christian Democracy, Christian Democratic Unions, Cleavages, Industrialization, Denominational Differences.

ÖZ

İşçi ve çiftçi Hıristiyan demokrat sendikaları (HDS) neden bazı Batı Avrupa ülkelerinde diğerlerine göre daha fazla gelişme gösterdi? Marksist teoriler, sendikal faaliyetleri sanayileşme ile açıklar. Bununla birlikte, HDS'lerin en aktif oldukları devletler 19. yüzyılın sonlarında İtalya ve Almanya gibi hızla sanayileşen devletler değildi. Bu makale, sosyal kimlik teorisini ve Lipset & Rokkan'ın bölünme teorisine dayanarak, Alman, Fransız, İtalyan, Hollanda ve Belçika vakaları üzerinde süreç izleme yöntemi kullanarak aşağıdaki argümanı test eder: kilise karşıtı saldırıların bir merkez-çevre çatışmasına yol açtığı devletlerde HDS'lerin organizasyonel olarak aktif olabilmeleri daha olasıyken, kilise karşıtı saldırıların kilise-devlet çatışmasına yol açtığı devletlerde HDS'lerin önemli bir güç elde etmesi daha az olasıdır. Öte yandan, devlette Katolik bir azınlığın varlığı da bu ilişkiyi etkiler. Protestanların çoğunluğu oluşturduğu devletlerde, Katoliklik, bireyleri harekete geçirmeyi ve grup içi uyumu sürdürmeyi kolaylaştırdı. Buna ek olarak, Lutheran devletlerin Katolik aktivizmine yönelik düşmanlığı ve Katolik azınlığın belli bölgelerde yoğunlaşmaları, HDS gelişimini hızlandıran mezhepsel farklılığı vurguladı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hıristiyan Demokrasi, Hıristiyan Demokrat Sendikalar, Bölünmeler, Sanayileşme, Mezhepsel Farklılıklar.

"He who understands it (the social question) understands our times."
"The masses (…) believe that a new form of government will free them from their present misery. But when once they are convinced of their error, when once they see that neither liberty of the press, nor the right of association, nor popular assemblies, nor clever turns of speech, nor popular sovereignty are able to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to comfort the sorrowful, to nurse the sick, they will wreak vengeance on their seducers and in despair stretch out their hands to other anchors of rescue."
Bishop Ketteler, the Catholic Congress of Mainz, 1890

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INTRODUCTION

Christian Democratic social movements emerged in the 1850s to defend religious rights against anticlerical attacks (Kalyvas, 1996). In the 1870s, Christian Democrat elites organized workers and farmers around unions. A decade later, workers and farmers were emancipated from elite control. By 1914, CD unions (CDUs) were effectively responding to the socio-economic needs of their members. Even if their organizational developments resemble, historical records from the 1870s to World War I suggest that CDUs were more proactive among workers and farmers in some countries than in others (Fogarty, 1957). CDUs were most vivid in the Netherlands and Belgium, followed by Germany. Yet CDU development was limited in Italy and France. From 1870 to 1913, Germany, France, and Italy had higher per capita GDP growth rates than Belgium and the Netherlands (Maddison, 2006). The Dutch, Belgian, French, German, and Italian CDUs' development mismatches these states' industrialization levels. What explains the cross-sectional variation in CDU activity?

This paper studies the cross-sectional variation in the Dutch, Belgian, French, German, and Italian CDU development between the 1870s and World War I. CDUs occupied a special place among labor organizations by propounding cross-class cooperation (instead of class conflict) and advocating fair wages to alleviate social injustices without challenging the inner workings of capitalist development (Diedrickx, 1994; van Kersbergen, 1995: 22–25). For Marxist scholars, trade union activism intensifies in reaction to social injustices created by industrialization and the accompanying transformations —e.g., the escalation of capitalist control over work procedures, production pressure, and alienation (Cottereau, 1986; Hechter, 2004; Katznelson and Zolberg, 1986; Marx and Engels, 1906; Polanyi, 1944; Silver, 2003; Wright, 1996). The grievances these transformations entail trigger organizational activity. While these transformations also affected Christian democrat laborers, the latter characteristically mobilized against the "socialist threat" (Kalyvas and van Kersbergen, 2010: 31). Moreover, while industrialization boosted CDUs' development, CDUs were not the most powerful in the most industrialized states. CDUs' confessional character makes it worth investigating society's disposition toward Catholicism.

According to Lipset & Rokkan (1967), Catholicism bore different meanings in the Protestant-dominant states with a Catholic minority than in the Catholic-dominant states. The Protestant majority faced a Catholic minority in the former, which strained the nation-building process. In the latter, nation-builders experienced tensions with the Vatican. These environments differently impacted CDU activities. By drawing on social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 2004) and Lipset's & Rokkan's cleavage theory (1967), this paper postulates that the distribution of denominational differences in society had an independent effect on

how the church-state conflict played out in 19th century Europe. On the other hand, the literature on Christian Democracy focuses more on parties than professional associations.[1] The few works to study CDUs concentrate on country-specific developments rather than the effect of the societal distribution of denominational differences on CDU development (Fogarty, 1957; Howell, 2009; Patch, 1985; Strikwerda, 1997). This paper aims to contribute to the literature on professional associations and Christian democracy by examining this undertheorized phenomenon.

This paper argues that CDUs were more likely to develop in states where anticlerical attacks triggered a center-periphery conflict (i.e., the confrontation between nation-builders and ethnically, linguistically, and religiously distinct subject populations in the periphery" (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967: 15). CDU development remained limited in states where anticlerical attacks unleashed a church-state conflict. The presence of a Catholic minority proved instrumental. Catholics embraced their cultural and religious differences in the Protestant-dominant states with a Catholic minority. The Catholic heritage and church network enabled Christian Democrat activists to mobilize support within the working class and maintain cohesion against the Protestant state. In contrast, the Vatican's objection to political activism and the church-state conflict divided society and undercut CDU development in the Catholic-dominant states.

This study tests this argument on a small-N research design using process tracing. It selected Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands to maximize the variation in the dependent variable. These states experienced the church-state conflict, industrialization, and nation-building in the 19th century. These conflicts unfolded at different times and left different legacies. Catholics constituted the minority in Germany and the Netherlands, and the majority in France, Belgium, and Italy. While Germany and the Netherlands had national churches, France, Belgium, and Italy followed the Vatican. CDUs development showed variation in these states. CDUs were the most powerful in Belgium and the Netherlands, followed by Germany, whereas they were weakly organized in France and Italy. This study collected data from memoirs, and primary and secondary sources. It conducts process tracing since this method is appropriate for identifying causal mechanisms and necessary and sufficient causes and establishing causality by collecting diagnostic evidence to defeat alternative hypotheses (Brady and Collier, 2004, 2010; George and Bennett, 2005).

This paper is structured as follows: Section 1 discusses what explains the rise and expansion of CDUs. Section 2 introduces the theory and methodology. In

[1] For information on the rise of CD political parties, see (Kaiser and Wohnout, 2004; Kalyvas, 1996; Kalyvas and van Kersbergen, 2010; van Kersbergen, 1995).

Section 3, we examine the country-specific impacts of industrialization and secularization. Section 4 traces the organizational development of Dutch, French, German, Belgian, and Italian CDUs. This paper shows the independent effect of the societal distribution of denominational differences on CDU development.

1. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY & CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC FARMERS' AND WORKERS' UNIONS

CDUs differentiated from socialist labor organizations of the late 19th century by advocating class reconciliation and cross-class cooperation (Diedrickx, 1994; van Kersbergen, 1995: 22–25). What did the cross-class coalition involve? Christian democracy cast an organicist view of society such that each class (like each organ in the body) played a distinct and indispensable role in society's functioning. Classes complemented and assisted one another, which laid the foundation for cross-class cooperation (Almond, 1948). Christian democracy underscored fair wages, welfare for the poor, and prohibited usury. These proposals bore a distinctively Catholic character—whereas socialism talked about social justice without referencing religion. Instead of rejecting capitalism, Christian democracy proposed corrections to inequalities generated by capitalism.

Initially, Christian democracy did not address class conflict. Catholic elites started Christian democratic movements to counter anticlerical attacks against the church's properties and educational rights in the 1850s (Kalyvas, 1998). In time, lay Catholics across Europe formed confessional parties to defend "the Catholic interest and primarily aimed at building and preserving the political unity of Catholics" (van Kersbergen, 1995: 32).[2] These parties held strong ties to Catholic social movements and distanced themselves from the Vatican. Only after the social question challenged the industrializing European societies in the second half of the 19th century that did Christian elites address the social question. Adam Müller propounded social corporatism, the idea that the corporatist state should regulate production and coordinate class interests to overcome problems associated with laissez-faire (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013). Corporatist ideas traveled Europe and inspired the formation of guilds, brotherhoods, and cultural organizations, which lay the foundations of CDUs in the 1830s.

Following the 1848 revolutions, activist clerics organized believers through the church network. In Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria, Catholic Journeymen's Associations, St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Charles Borromeo Association, and the St. Joseph Missions Association mobilized the middle class

[2] Only after World War II, have the European Christian Democratic parties become aconfessional, evolving from middle and upper-class confessional movements to mass parties emphasizing cross-class cooperation and focusing on social policy (Fogarty, 1957; Kaiser, 2007; Kalyvas and van Kersbergen, 2010; van Kersbergen, 1995).

to promote Catholic culture through cross-class cooperation (Yonke, 2002). Christian intellectuals promoted social Catholicism through journals, such as *L'Avenir Sillon* and *L'Univers,* and urged the upper class to give charity to strengthen bonds between the rich and poor (Irving, 1980). Meanwhile, local movements began forming contacts at the national level. One noteworthy event was the general assembly of German Catholics convened by Archbishop Wilhelm von Ketteler in Frankfurt (Mich, 1998). On the other hand, the Papacy advised lay Catholics to operate under papal regulations and directives within a strictly apolitical area (Kalyvas, 1996).

Catholic activists distanced themselves from the Papacy in the 1860s, because *Syllabus Errorum* (PIUS IX, 1864) ardently opposed secular modernism, parliamentarianism and democracy (Habisch, 2017: 171). In contrast, Christian activists believed they would more effectively defend their interests through parliamentary participation (Berger, 1985: 30–31). Hence, they formed confessional parties. The lower clergy assisted party formation by recruiting members and local Christian organizations during Sunday masses. The Catholic Church disapproved of these initiatives. Not only was the formation of political parties meant to acknowledge parliamentarianism, but it could also rival papal authority (Kalyvas, 1996: 22–24). The Papacy's opposition divided Catholics over whether to follow church directives. In France and Italy, ultramontanism advocated for papal authority (Hastings et al., 2000). In Belgium, activist priests ignored archbishops' warnings. In the Netherlands and Germany, social and official discrimination induced the Catholic minorities to embrace Catholic symbols as their cultural difference (Mergel, 1996). The Vatican's objection to politicization lost its effect in these states due to the center-periphery conflict.

In the 1870s, Catholic activists formed CDUs to organize Christian workers against "the socialist threat" (Kalyvas and van Kersbergen, 2010: 31). Initially, these unions resembled the traditional guild-like organizations representing both employers and workers, and elites maintained control (Fogarty, 1957: 193).[3] Over time, workers and farmers realized they would address members' demands more effectively if they organized along occupational lines. They had taken control of unions by the 1880s (Fogarty, 1957). It was only with Rerum Novarum (1891) that the Vatican finally addressed the condition of workers and offered an alternative way to unfettered capitalism and socialism via corporatism (Fanning, 2021: 77–79).

[3] Paternalism proved necessary for fostering cross-class coalition. In the words of van Kersbergen, "the success of Catholic democratic power mobilisation to a large extent came to depend on whether the parties managed to generate cross-class appeal and on the manner in which they nourished their affiliation with the organisations of social Catholicism" (van Kersbergen, 1995: 33).

2. THEORY & METHODOLOGY

This paper relies on Lipset's and Rokkan's cleavage theory (1967) to explain the variation in CDU development in France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. From a long durée perspective, Lipset & Rokkan trace the origins of these conflicts back to Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The states that embraced Protestantism controlled national churches (e.g., Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands). In contrast, Catholicism predominated in the states where kings allied with the Vatican (e.g., France and Italy) (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967: 14). At the next critical juncture in the 19th century, liberals attacked the church's rights and privileges regarding education (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967: 15). Whether Lutheran, Roman Catholic, or reformed, churches would handle children's education until the French Revolution. In the aftermath of the 1789 Revolution, states sought to monopolize education to control and influence citizens directly. Hence, when anticlerical attacks began, all churches contested. Yet, contestations proved unsuccessful in states with established national churches because the alliance between secular liberals and nation-builders overweighed supporters of the church. In the Catholic-dominant states, demands for secular education polarized societies (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967: 15). Tensions peaked in France, where Catholicism and its long-standing ally royalism lost their ground to republicanism under the Third Republic (Agulhon, 1993; Akan, 2017). Thus, not only did Western European states experience the state-church conflict differently, but also the church-state conflict interacted with the center-periphery conflict between nation-builders and the ethnically, linguistically, and religiously distinct subject populations in the periphery that opposed nation-building (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967: 15). The infamous social question, which introduced the urban-rural and the labor-capitalist divides, unfolded in these different environments. The nature of these environments and the legacies of the major conflicts codetermined the patterns of coalitions among laborers, capitalists, landowners, and middle classes in Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

The Netherlands and Germany featured sizeable Catholic minorities concentrated in regions where industrialization took off. These communities simultaneously experienced economic deprivation and religious differences, which must have shaped their relationship with the state. There are good reasons to expect that the presence of a Catholic minority affects CDU development. First, Catholicism's vast hierarchical institutional network advantages Catholic clerics in mobilizing believers vis-à-vis clerics of more decentralized denominations of Christianity (Kalyvas, 1998). Second, social identity theory suggests that if some minority in a society distinguishes by some ethnic, religious, or cultural attribute or a combination of these, that attribute gains salience. In a context of center-

periphery conflict, the minority becomes more likely to embrace that characterizing attribute and tighten in-group solidarity (Tajfel and Turner, 2004).

Building on Lipset & Rokkan and social identity theory, this paper hypothesizes that the *Catholic minority is more conducive to CDU development*. In states with a Catholic minority, denominational differences triggered the center-periphery conflict during the nation-building process. Not only did Catholics embrace their cultural and religious differences, but also the Catholic heritage and church network helped mobilize support and maintain cohesion against the Protestant state. This structure proved permissive for CDU development. In contrast, the church-state conflict divided society and undercut CDU development in the Catholic-dominant states. If the hypothesis is correct, we should expect more significant CDU development in the Netherlands and Germany than in France, Italy, and Belgium. Furthermore, Protestant workers' and farmers' unions must be feeble in France, Italy, and Belgium if the Catholic network is distinctly prone to mobilizing followers.

This paper tests this hypothesis on a small-N sample. It selected Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands to maximize the variation in the dependent variable. While all five states experienced the church-state conflict and nation-building in the 19th century, Germany and Italy underwent unification, while France swung between empire, republic, and monarchy. Catholics constituted the minority in Germany and the Netherlands, and the majority in France, Belgium, and Italy. Also, Reformation and counterreformation left dissimilar legacies in these five states. Germany and the Netherlands broke with the Catholic Church. In Italy, the Vatican maintained its power vis-à-vis the state. The French state asserted its authority against the Papacy. In Belgium, the church's relative power ranked lower than in Italy and higher than in France. Yet, Belgium seceded from the Protestant Netherlands in 1830. Given the recently gained independence, the church and the state cooperated rather than confronting one another. In addition, Belgium and the Netherlands entered industrialization earlier than others. Overall, the countries varied in the timing and legacies of the church-state conflict and industrialization but experienced the rise of anticlerical attacks around the same time. They again differed on the CDU outcome.

This paper applies process tracing to this small-N sample to consider the causal effect of timing and sequencing (Fioretos et al., 2016). Process tracing identifies causal mechanisms and necessary and sufficient causes to establish causality by collecting diagnostic evidence to defeat alternative hypotheses (Brady and Collier, 2004, 2010; George and Bennett, 2005). This paper examines memoirs, official documents, and primary and secondary sources to collect data.

3. LEGACIES OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE CHURCH-STATE CONFLICT

Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, and France started industrializing in the second half of the 19th century. Industrialization antagonized the bourgeoisie, workers, and landed elites in all these states. Yet, coalition patterns among these societal groups differed in part because the church-state conflict had left different legacies. The church-state conflict instigated utmost tensions in France, Belgium, and Italy. Anticlerical attacks had emerged relatively later —in the 1850s— in the Protestant-dominant states, i.e., Germany and the Netherlands, and had antagonized the state and Catholic minorities during state-building (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Let us examine the legacies of the church-state conflict across the five states.

Italy and Belgium underwent state formation and industrialization in the second half of the 19th century. These processes deepened territorial divisions because centrifugal forces in these Catholic-dominant states capitalized on religious grievances and garnered support from the Vatican. Yet Italy and Belgium had opposite experiences because of how nation-state building unfolded. In Italy, support for the Italian state remained weak in many regions after the unification. The northern Italian regions, strongholds of industrialization, were reluctant to share the financial burden of modernizing the south. Thus, the state building interacted with the labor-capitalist divide. The Italian state tried to fracture the coalition between the Vatican and centrifugal forces by exchanging the unbounded liberty of the church in the spiritual sphere for its noninterference in the relations between the state and regions (Richard, 1877). Belgium underwent an opposite experience because of the recent secession from the Protestant Netherlands in 1830. Belgian Catholics had endorsed Belgium's independence. Their allegiances toward the state remained strong after the independence. Accordingly, Belgian Catholics did not face significant opposition and maintained control over education from 1830 to the 1850s. They lost these privileges around the 1850s (Evans, 1999: 136–137). Nevertheless, given their allegiances towards the state, they were not perceived as threatening the nation's interests as in France or Italy.

France is an exception in which Christian democracy did not gain ground in continental Europe. Three factors hindered the development of Christian democracy; the prevalence of republicanism under the Third Republic, the strength of the leftwing, and the decline in religiosity as a function of modernization in the second half of the 19th century. To understand why republicanism set back Christian democracy, one needs to go back to the legacies of the 1789 Revolution. Although the Revolution eradicated the estate-based system, societal segmentation continued along the republican-royalist divide in post-revolutionary France (Rosanvallon, 2007, 2011). Under the Bourbon

Monarchy, the church sided with the royalists and supported absolutism against republicans' and liberals' demands for inclusion. This alliance precipitated a countercoalition, which advocated for secular education and the confiscation of church properties in the late 1820s (Alexander, 2004). Religiosity began to steadily decline thereafter (Kaelble, 1976). The dethronement of Charles X in 1830 struck a blow against the royalist-clerical alliance. Under the July Monarchy, socialism emerged as a novel rival to political Catholicism (Sewell, 1986). The 1889 elections under the Third Republic marked the end of the clerical-royalist alliance. The victory of the republicans definitively undercut support for royalism, depriving Catholics of their long-standing ally. Finally, socialists in power adopted the 1905 law on the Separation of the Churches and State, casting the final blow on political Catholicism (Akan, 2017).

In Germany and the Netherlands, societal coalitions of the second half of the 19th century were shaped by domestic conflicts over nation-state building, industrialization, and the French threat under Napoleon III. Belgium's secession had stirred nationalist allegiances of the Dutch (Wills, 1998). French threat solidified Dutch nationalism. On the other hand, German states had long shared a common cultural and linguistic heritage predating the unification. French threat and the 1866 Austro-Prussian War fortified these already existing nationalistic allegiances among the Protestant majority. German and Dutch nation-builders perceived Catholic minorities as a potential threat in this context. In Bismarckian Prussia, Kulturkampf marked the apex of anti-Catholic policies (Zimmerman, 2011: 360).

Overall, nation-builders perceived Catholicism as an ally in Belgium and a threat to unity in France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. The urban-rural and capitalist-labor conflicts that industrialization introduced overlaid these tensions. Industrialization began earlier in Belgium and the Netherlands than in France, Italy, and Germany. These states prospered at different speeds from 1820 to 1913 (Maddison, 2006). According to the data in Table I, Belgium and Germany experienced the highest GDP growth rates between 1820 and 1870, followed by the Netherlands, whereas Italy and France had modest growth rates. From 1870 to 1913, Germany had the highest growth rate of all five. While Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands almost doubled their growth rate, France fell behind.

On the other hand, per capita GDP growth rates in Table II show that not all societal groups equally benefited from rising wealth. Between 1820 and 1870, Belgium reaped the highest per capita GDP growth rates, followed by France and the Netherlands, while Italy and Germany lagged. Notice that the per capita growth rate in Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands equals half of the growth rate in GDP, which hints at income inequality. Between 1870 and 1913, the late-

https://doi.org/10.53376/ap.2022.21

industrializers, namely Germany, France, and Italy, outperformed the early industrializers, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Germany surpassed them all. In this period, the gap between the rise in per capita GDP and the rise in GDP growth rate was the widest in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, suggesting growing inequality. If industrialization drove organizational activity among classes, we should have seen CDUs thrive in Belgium and France in 1870 and in Germany and France during 1870-1913. Yet, CDUs emerged later than 1870 in Belgium and never were the most powerful in France and Germany (Fogarty, 1957).

Table.1: GDP Growth Rates: European Countries, the Former USSR and Western Offshoots (Maddison, 2006: 187)

	1820–70	*1870–1913*	*1913–50*	*1950–73*	*1973–98*
Austria	1.45	2.41	0.25	5.35	2.36
Belgium	2.25	2.01	1.03	4.08	2.08
Denmark	1.91	2.66	2.55	3.81	2.09
Finland	1.58	2.74	2.69	4.94	2.44
France	1.27	1.63	1.15	5.05	2.10
Germany	2.01	2.83	0.30	5.68	1.76
Italy	1.24	1.94	1.49	5.64	2.28
Netherlands	1.70	2.16	2.43	4.74	2.39
Norway	1.70	2.12	2.93	4.06	3.48
Sweden	1.62	2.17	2.74	3.73	1.65
Switzerland	1.85	2.43	2.60	4.51	1.05
United Kingdom	2.05	1.90	1.19	2.93	2.00
12 West Europe	**1.71**	**2.14**	**1.16**	**4.65**	**2.03**

Table.2: GDP Per Capita Growth Rates: European Countries, the Former USSR and Western Offshoots (Maddison, 2006: 186)

	1820–70	*1870–1913*	*1913–50*	*1950–73*	*1973–98*
Austria	0.85	1.45	0.18	4.94	2.10
Belgium	1.44	1.05	0.70	3.55	1.89
Denmark	0.91	1.57	1.56	3.08	1.86
Finland	0.76	1.44	1.91	4.25	2.03
France	0.85	1.45	1.12	4.05	1.61
Germany	1.09	1.63	0.17	5.02	1.60
Italy	0.59	1.26	0.85	4.95	2.07
Netherlands	0.83	0.90	1.07	3.45	1.76
Norway	0.52	1.30	2.13	3.19	3.02
Sweden	0.66	1.46	2.12	3.07	1.31
Switzerland	1.09	1.55	2.06	3.08	0.64
United Kingdom	1.26	1.01	0.92	2.44	1.79
12 West Europe	**1.00**	**1.33**	**0.83**	**3.93**	**1.75**

Yet, such a structural view of the economy overlooks microlevel dynamics. Table III shows the sectoral allocation of labor between 1870-and 1913. According to the data, the major shift from agriculture happened in Belgium (by ≈50%), followed by Germany (≈70%), the Netherlands (≈72%), and France (≈82%). Services in Belgium accommodated ≈76% more people. By contrast, Dutch labor shifted mainly to industry; services attracted only ≈2% more of the workforce. In Germany, services and industry received about 30% more workforce than agriculture. In France, services and the industry employed ≈17% more of the workforce; agricultural workers shrank by 82% in size. Independent peasantry explains the modesty of France's sectorial transformation vis-à-vis Germany. Agriculture lost ≈9% of the workforce in Italy, while services and industry accommodated ≈15% more people. Immigration also affected the Italian labor market (Daudin et al., 2010). In 1913, agriculture constituted ≈90% of gross output in Italy, Germany, and France, 63% in Belgium, and 53% in the Netherlands, indicative of the urban-rural divide. If Lipset's & Rokkan's theory is correct, class conflict must have sharpened in Germany, France, and Italy. Yet, states could have cushioned the adverse effects of uneven sectoral development. Let us see if this is the case.

Table.3: The Distribution of the working population by major sectors 1870-1913 (Broadberry, Federico & Klein, 2010: 61)

	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	c. 1870	c. 1913	c. 1870	c. 1913	c. 1870	c. 1913
North-west Europe	31.7	20.9	35.0	39.5	33.3	39.6
Belgium	44.4	23.2	37.8	45.5	17.8	31.3
Denmark	47.8	41.7	21.9	24.1	30.3	34.2
Finland	75.5	69.3	10.1	10.6	14.4	20.1
Netherlands	39.4	28.3	22.4	32.8	38.2	38.9
Norway	49.6	39.6	22.9	25.9	27.5	34.5
Sweden	67.4	45.0	17.4	31.8	15.2	23.2
United Kingdom	22.2	11.8	42.4	44.1	35.4	44.1
Southern Europe	58.6	49.3	23.2	26.8	18.2	23.9
France	49.8	41.0	28.0	33.1	22.2	25.9
Greece		49.6		16.2		34.2
Italy	61.0	55.4	23.3	26.6	15.7	18.0
Portugal	65.0	57.4	24.9	21.9	10.1	20.7
Spain	66.3	56.3	18.2	13.8	15.5	29.9
Central and eastern Europe	56.6	54.9	25.8	24.4	17.6	20.7
Austria–Hungary	67.0	59.5	15.5	21.8	17.5	18.7
Bulgaria		81.9		8.1		10.0
Germany	49.5	34.5	29.1	37.9	21.4	27.6
Romania		79.6		8.0		12.4
Russia		58.6		16.1		25.3
Serbia		82.2		11.1		6.7
Switzerland	42.3	26.8	41.8	45.7	15.9	27.5
Total Europe	51.7	47.1	26.9	27.8	21.4	25.1
Total Europe (14 countries)	51.7	41.4	26.9	32.3	21.4	26.3

Following the unification in 1871, the German state aided industrialists through investment banks and strategically used the tariff policy to secure the support of farmers, industrialists, peasants, and landowners. Protectionism in agriculture (grain in particular) satisfied small farmers and industrialists for whom cheap food prices kept manufacturing costs low (Gourevitch, 1977: 290–293). The result was the famous iron-rye coalition. While this coalition mitigated the urban-rural divide at the elite level, it condemned unskilled workers to subsistence wages (Luebbert, 1991). Unionization, protests, and social critique met state oppression (Caruso, 2019), making capitalist-labor conflict more visible.

How was the German Catholic minority affected by industrialization? In Aachen, Trier, Ruhr, Westphalia, Baden, or Wurttemberg, Catholics either constituted the majority or formed dense communities through migration (Mergel, 1996; Patch, 1985). Most Catholics were workers, farmers, or middle class. These strata were most hit by income inequality (Cary, 1996). Religious differences and poverty intertwined and catalyzed Catholic activism, particularly in Westphalia and Silesia (Mergel, 1996: 173), and catalyzed Catholic activism. Church attendance rose among the Catholics, and the Christian democratic notions of solidarity, confraternity, and fairness gained greater salience. Catholic associations and brotherhoods mushroomed (Kaelble, 1976). The proliferation of Catholic organizations intrigued the German state because Protestantism had been integral to German culture since Reformation. Protestant middle classes, industrials, and landowners perceived Catholicism as challenging to the nation (Smith, 2016). Bismarck's Kulturkampf marked the apex of anti-Catholic policies (Zimmerman, 2011: 360). In response, the Catholics got organized through the conservative Zentrum party, which most non-Catholic Germans perceived as provocation (Cary, 1996). Thus, as industrialization and state formation synchronized, the religious conflict projected onto the center-periphery axis.

Dutch industrialization also began in regions with a Catholic concentration. Unlike in Germany, the Dutch state did not ally with industrialists. Workers unionized along sectoral lines, and labor-capitalist divides gained a decentralized character. On the other hand, the urban-rural confrontation proved very intense, with unemployment, strikes, and escalating poverty (Heerma van Voss et al., 2005: 62). Circumstances were ripe for both socialism and Catholic activism. While socialists organized workers through unions, Catholics mobilized them around confessional organizations. However, due to the legacy of the church-state conflict in the first half of the 19th century, the Dutch state found Catholic activism suspicious. It attacked the church's financial sources and schools and excluded Catholics from the public sector (Sengers, 2004: 131–133). Centrifugal tendencies escalated in Catholic regions; a Catholic party was formed and entered the Parliament (Sengers, 2004). The conflict persisted until parliamentary rules obliged Catholics and Protestants to collaborate. In the 1880s, this coalition

granted state support to Christian schools. Over time, the Netherlands recognized both corporatism and accorded different religions the right to form educational, cultural, and political associations. Non-Catholics accepted these policies to keep the opposition decentralized. Thus, a Catholic minority, disadvantaged by industrialization during state-building, caused a center-periphery conflict as in Germany until electoral rules favored Protestant-Catholic cooperation.

Under the Third French Republic, industrialization was concentrated in cities like Reims, Alsace-Lorraine, Champagne, and Grenoble (Crouzet, 1996). The resulting economic deprivation played into the hands of socialism (Thorpe, 2001). As mentioned earlier, political Catholicism was also set back by declining religiosity and the rise of republicanism and socialism. As a matter of fact, many Catholics abandoned the clerical cause in 1889, given the republican victory and because the Vatican encouraged believers to cooperate with the state (Irving, 1980).

The church-state conflict did not materialize in Belgium because Belgian Catholics had endorsed secession from the Protestant Netherlands and supported the state following independence. Therefore, Catholics maintained control over education from 1830 to the 1850s without being challenged. In the 1850s and 1860s, liberals, who aimed to modernize the nation, revoked the church's control of education (Evans, 1999: 136–37). On the other hand, industrialization, which concentrated in Walloon cities, enhanced the regional disparities as of the 1830s (Van Der Wee, 1996). These workers initially turned to socialist unions. As strikes became increasingly frequent in the 1880s, liberals, who grew concerned about working-class militancy, saw Christian democracy as a promising ally in mitigating the labor-capitalist conflict. CDUs emerged as a rival to socialist unions in 1891. The liberal-Catholic entente agreed to working-class enfranchisement in 1893. By the early 1900s, CDUs had become the largest of the unions (Strikwerda, 1997: 347–350). Thus, the absence of the church-state conflict and the liberal-catholic entente against socialism distinguished Belgium from France.

In Italy, industrialization began in Piedmont, Lombardy, Turin, Milan, and Naples in the 1850s. Economic development deepened regional disparities between southern and northern Italy. The Italian state encouraged industrialization through investment banks, protectionism, and low wages. This policy appealed to industrialists, but alienated southern landed elites and lower classes. Lower classes turned to socialism and extremism and demanded enfranchisement. The state did not enfranchise the lower classes to maintain its alliance with the industrialists, which deepened labor-capitalist divides. Labor militantism challenged the stability of the political system (Adler, 1995: 63–78), which the Vatican's disapproval of parliamentarianism only aggravated. Southern elites perceived state-building as Piedmontese attempts to dominate the south

(Poni and Mori, 1996). Hence, centrifugal interests aligned. The Vatican challenged the Italian state until the acquisition of statehood in 1929 (Coffey, 1998). Thus, the church-state and center-periphery conflicts interacted with the labor-capitalist divide.

Overall, although industrialization created economic growth and regional inequality in all five states, this paper did not find an association between cross-sectional variations in CDU power and the patterns of capitalist development. The legacies of the church-state conflict and the state-building process projected the labor-capitalist confrontation on the center-periphery axis in the states with a Catholic minority. Domestic coalitions determined whether Catholic activism thrived or perished. In Germany, which championed industrial growth and inequality, anticlericalism intensified during the state-building process. Yet, because the German state repressed the Catholics, CDUs could not attain significant power. In the Netherlands, anticlericalism also catalyzed the center-periphery conflict. Yet, because the electoral system encouraged a Protestant-Catholic alliance, state pressure on Catholics lifted, offering a permissive ground for CDUs to thrive. In the Catholic-dominant states, anticlericalism propelled the church-state conflict. In France, state control over the church and the rising popularity of republicanism and socialism set back political Catholicism. In Italy, where religious and economic grievances also overlapped, the church-state conflict intertwined with regional separatism. In neither Italy nor France could CDUs gain substantive power. In contrast, CDUs thrived in Belgium because liberals allied with Catholic activism to counter militant socialism. The following section explains how CDUs varied in different structures and why the Protestant minority did not produce the same effect. The analysis will show that Protestant mobilizers lacked the Catholic Church's institutional support.

4. FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TO CDUs

This section traces the development of CDU across Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The analysis will show that CDUs developed best when religious and economic grievances concentrated on a Catholic minority.

As mentioned earlier, elites formed Christian professional associations to offer professional advice, vocational training, and services like providing insurance, healthcare, and childcare to lower classes. CDUs built on these efforts. In the 1880s, CDUs branched into specific units (e.g., farmers, mine workers, etc.) but remained within the network of Christian associations (Fogarty, 1957; Kalyvas, 1996). Their organizational development was uneven, with CDUs bearing different names. Workers' associations/leagues prepared lower classes for professional life through education and personal formation. Trade unions and federations handled economic and political issues, including vocational training

and wage bargaining. Rural cooperatives provided credit to farmers. Friendly and cooperative societies offered social and cultural services for Catholic families (Fogarty, 1957). Christian elites and the Church appreciated CDUs for providing vocational training and financial and cultural assistance but also feared such activism because it might have encouraged the lower classes to demand inclusion and participation. The Catholic-dominant states had tenser relations with the Catholic Church than the Protestant ones. Catholics in France, Italy, and Belgium were torn between religious allegiances and loyalties toward the state. In contrast, in the Protestant-dominant states, evangelical churches focused on charity and left political solutions to social matters to social democrats or liberals (Damberg et al., 2005). It was only with *Rerum Novarum* that this dilemma was solved. Following Rerum Novarum, the Vatican embraced social corporatism and an organizational strategy to address the social question (van Kersbergen, 1995).

In sum, Catholic elites formed CDUs to mobilize lower classes to defend the church and turn lower classes away from socialism. Thus, while attempting not to fall behind socialist unions, CDUs spread and took up different services to best assist Christian workers and their families in economic life. Catholic culture and cohesion facilitated collective action, especially in Protestant-dominant states, where Catholic minorities embraced their religious culture. In contrast, loyalty toward the state hindered Protestant activism in the Lutheran countries. Finally, the Catholic Church inhibited lower-class activism until the 1890s. Hence, religious allegiances constituted the primary motivation for the lower class to join CDUs. Let us examine CDU development in context.

Germany

In German states, CDUs mushroomed in the 1860s to counter anticlerical attacks. Christian activists assisted farmers through cooperatives (Raiffeisen) and workers through clubs and workers' associations (Arbeitervereine) (Prinz, 2002). With politicization in the 1870s, unionization began. At the paternalistic stage, elites formed the *Christian Social movement* for Protestants in 1878 and *Arbeiterwohl* (Workers'Welfare) for Catholics in 1879; farmers' cooperatives also flourished in this period (Dill, 1953: 72–77).

The 1890 antisocialist law catalyzed CDU activities. New organizations formed in industrializing cities with a sizeable Catholic community, including *Volksverein* (People's League for Catholic Germany) in Rhineland, *Katholische Arbeitervereine* (Catholic Labor Leagues) in Munich, and Berlin, the German Clerical Workers' Association for Protestants in Hamburg, the Raiffeisen agricultural credit banks, Farmers' Union for Protestants in West Germany. In 1893, Catholic Priest Hitze formed the first workers-led *Arbeiterwohl* (Dill, 1953: 74–75). Older organizations continued to operate under working-class leaders like

Joos (head of western Arbeitervereine), Steigerwald (Secretary-General of the Christian trade unions), etc. (Cary, 1996; Löffler, 1912). Hence, by the turn of the century, CDUs had completed their emancipation from elite paternalism. Also, they enjoyed considerable support among German Catholics. In 1889, *Arbeiterwohl's* survey counted 232 associations representing 52,239 members (Heerma van Voss et al., 2005: 55). These CDUs emulated early cultural associations' structure and organizational strategy, providing their members and their families healthcare, childcare, cheap insurance, credits, advice on professional problems, and cultural services (Heerma van Voss et al., 2005: 56–57).

Overall, the German case fits the general trend. Anticlerical attacks underlay the rise of CDUs, but antisocialism catalyzed their development. On the other hand, CDUs gained ground among the Catholics, if not in the entire German society, because the Catholics were concentrated in industrializing cities and had strong cultural and regional allegiances as a reaction to past anti-Catholic policies of the German government.

The Netherlands

Confessional unions in the Netherlands also emerged to counter anticlerical attacks. By the 1870s, the Protestant *Patrimonium* actively mobilized workers at the national level thanks to its strong ties to other Protestant organizations (Palamar, 2018). CDUs emerged in the 1880s. Some emulated Patrimonium's organizational strategy —e.g., the Catholic People's Union or the Workers' League for Protestant textile workers. Others got organized at the local level— e.g., the Catholic Textile Workers' Trade Union and the Catholic Association of factory workers trade union in 1890 (Heerma van Voss et al., 2005: 60–64). In the 1890s, Patrimonium fractured, spawning independent trade union sections and an autonomous Workmen's Union. Farmers, in turn, got organized through the Protestant *Boaz* and the Catholic Farmer's Union (Peeters, 2020: 12–13). Nevertheless, in 1895, Patrimonium remained the largest union; its social congresses and strikes shaped the labor policies of liberal decision-makers (Palamar, 2018).

In 1895, the first interdenominational union Unitas was founded following the adoption of pillarization. Pillarization granted freedom to all religious group activities and reinforced cooperation under the federative structure (Palamar, 2018). This strategy aimed to promote interdenominational unions against socialism. Unitas rapidly became popular among the lower class because its federative structure permitted Protestants and Catholics to preserve their identity. Like Patrimonium, Unitas frequently utilized strikes to assert its demands (Damberg et al., 2005; Fogarty, 1957). While large workers' unions had emerged

by the 1900s, farmers continued to work with local associations, such as the Catholic Farmers' Union and the Calvinist unions. Farming communities had local allegiances, which they kept vivid through regular cultural and educational activities. Therefore, their organizations focused on parochial interests and rarely engaged in interdenominational cooperation (Paterson, 2001). The absence of a federative structure delayed the unification of farmers' associations. In 1918, local Catholic unions unified under the nationwide Christian Farmers and Gardeners Union (Robinson, 1961: 53–55). However, they fell behind interdenominational unions, which operated on the national scale.

Overall, as in Germany, CDU development in the Netherlands is closely associated with the state's antisocialist policy. Unlike in Germany, where anti-Catholic policies forged the cultural bonds and religious allegiances of Catholic minorities inducing them to turn to CDUs, pillarization deemphasized the center-periphery conflict and allowed CDUs' integration into the Dutch system. The federative structure of unions enabled Catholics to preserve their religious culture and actively participate in labor policies without challenging the state.

France

In the 1870s, as in the rest of Western Europe, CDUs defended France's Catholic values and morals. The Catholic circles of workers, unions of workers associations, and the Catholic Assembly preached social Catholicism to the lower class (Turmann, 1899). In 1887, the clerical workers formed a union in Northern France. The first workers-led CDU, *Workers Study Circle Movement*, emerged in the 1890s –one decade later than in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. This movement attempted to form a CD party, but these efforts failed (Fogarty, 1957). In the 1890s, the Raiffeisen type of local cooperatives began to spread in the countryside. In 1919, workers' associations formed the French Christian Confederation to coordinate their activities. Yet, they failed to emerge as a strong union (Delbreil, 1990).

Overall, CDU development remained limited in France because of the Church-state conflict, the popularity of positivism and socialism, and the Papacy's distrust of Christian activism. Christian activists further embraced their religious character in defense, but these efforts proved counterproductive in a context of persistent church-state polarization.

Belgium

CDUs emerged around the same time in Belgium as in other Western European states despite the Vatican's objections to Catholic activism. Three Catholic congresses convened in 1863, 1864, and 1867 thanks to the Vatican's support. These congresses transformed into the Union of Federation of Workers'

Associations based in industrial cities like Liege, Louvain, and Ghent (Erk, 2005: 558). In the 1870s, the federation adopted a class-based organization; workers' guilds and clubs came about. Following Rerum Novarum, the Belgium Catholic Church fully supported the organization of labor movements. Thereafter, Christian activism in Belgium experienced its heyday (Erk, 2005: 559–560). The first worker's organizations and peasants' league were established; guilds transformed into the Belgian Democratic League; the scope of activities extended to printing, cooperative societies, pension funds, and banks; unions began pressuring Catholic deputies through strikes (Pauwels, 1946; Plater, 1914; Strikwerda, 1997). In the 1900s, the Raiffeisen type of cooperatives spread in industrialized cities, and Christian activists attempted to form a national trade union. The General Secretariat of the Christian Trade Unions of Belgium and the Christian Trade Unions Federation followed these initiatives (Gérard and Wynants, 1994: 156–157).

Overall, Belgium constitutes an exceptional case where CDUs thrived in the absence of the Catholic minority. Loyalty to the state and the Catholic-Liberal agreement against antisocialism underlie this success.

Italy

In the 1870s, Italian Catholic Action, an umbrella organization led by the church, mobilized farmers and workers. While cultural organizations existed for both categories, the Congress Movement specifically addressed workers (Agocs, 1988: 131–133). In 1885, Priest Wollemborg founded rural cooperatives, the Italian equivalent of the German Raiffeisen (Masiero, 2020). Unlike in France, membership in rural cooperatives did not require confessionalism, which eased their horizontal and vertical development. By 1888, cooperatives had grown into the federation of Italian rural credit unions (Masiero, 2020: 112). Meanwhile, friendly societies and savings banks mushroomed in rural areas. The Christian workers' movement emerged in 1894 as a semi-independent branch of the Congress Movement. In the 1900s, it had branches spread across the country, thanks to Catholic Action's organizational support. In 1909, an Italian federation of trade unions was formed to coordinate local branches (Leonardi, 2006: 34). Rural cooperatives also proved successful because they provided economic assistance to farmers. By 1914, cooperatives had constituted 77.2% of the total number of credit unions (Leonardi, 2006: 35). Italian CDUs were the last to emancipate from elite control within our sample regardless of these developments. Apoliticism hindered the development of the workers' movement more than elsewhere because church organizations were strong in the industrialized north (Poggi, 1967).

The case of Italy conveys that center-periphery conflict is not conducive to CDU development in the absence of the Catholic minority. Except for agricultural credit unions, Italian CDUs primarily offered cultural services.

To recap, CDUs struggled with the Vatican, Christian elites, and socialists between the 1870s and 1920s. Notwithstanding country-specific factors, class conflict propelled emancipation from elite paternalism. This effect was most potent on workers' organizations. Autonomous unions went beyond antisocialism, specializing in professional needs. CDU membership accrued under working-class leadership. CDUs had their heyday from the 1900s to World War I. Even though socialist organizations outnumbered them in all five countries, CDUs spread fast in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Embeddedness in the church network explains the speed of horizontal development. Initially, ideology and elite paternalism constrained CDUs' protest activities and disadvantaged them vis-à-vis socialist unions. After their emancipation, CDUs frequently used strikes and protests to pressure employers and parties. These strategies proved most influential in Belgium and the Netherlands (Fogarty, 1957). CD communities remedied atomization in industrialized society by specializing in sectorial interests, offering cultural services with affiliated organizations, and creating a community environment. The community environment was strongest in Belgium and the Netherlands, followed by Germany. The case of German Catholic CDUs communicates the positive effect of being a Catholic minority on collective action. German Catholic CDUs spread following Kulturkampf. CDUs had more limited success among farmers. Less exposed to modern life, farmers were less familiar with issues like just wages or protests. Also, they were more defensive of local interests given the urban-rural divide. Therefore, only farmers' cooperatives thrived. The same cross-sectional pattern stands out for farmers' associations: Strongest in Belgium and the Netherlands, followed by Germany, weaker in France and Italy.

The Vatican's ban on politicization inhibited CDUs' organizational development. CDU activities remained limited in France and Italy, where papal control weighed the most. The liberal-catholic entente against socialism allowed Dutch and Belgian CDUs to exert considerable influence on policymaking. In Germany, the church and activists disagreed on interdenominational cooperation. Moreover, Zentrum parliamentarians' links to upper-class unionists increased upper- and middle-class Catholic support for CDUs at the expense of lower-class support. Germany and the Netherlands had opposite experiences due to different state policies: Kulturkampf tried to assimilate Catholics by emphasizing German nationhood but made them more defensive of their religious difference. German Catholics excluded Protestants from unions until after World War I (Fogarty, 1957). Equally suspicious about the minority, the Dutch state conditioned religious activism to interdenominational cooperation. Both states tried to

deemphasize religious differences in the minority-majority conflict. While Germany ignored religion by using nationalist discourses, the Netherlands preferred to dilute Catholic differences within pluralism. Overall, CDUs developed most in Belgium and the Netherlands, followed by Germany, and remained weak in France and Italy.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the cross-sectional variation in CDU development in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy from the 1870s to World War I. Using process tracing, it studied the puzzle that the Dutch, Belgian, French, German, and Italian CDUs' development mismatched these states' industrialization levels. By drawing on social identity theory and Lipset's & Rokkan's cleavage theory, it propounded the argument that CDUs were more likely to develop in states where anticlerical attacks unleashed a center-periphery conflict. In contrast, the states where anticlerical attacks precipitated a church-state conflict offered less conducive conditions for CDU development. Findings suggest that economic deprivation and anticlericalism constitute necessary conditions for CDU formation. While anticlericalism propelled Catholic elites to form CDUs, CDUs developed a specialization in sectorial interests to alleviate their members' economic grievances.

A key finding was that the presence of a Catholic minority proved instrumental in whether CDUs would acquire substantial power. In the Protestant-dominant states with a Catholic minority, shared Christian values became valuable assets for activists to mobilize individuals and maintain in-group cohesion against the Protestant state. Also, the hierarchical nature of the church network facilitated support mobilization. The speed with which CDUs spread substantiates the positive effect of the church network in mobilization and organizational power. The Lutheran states' hostility toward Catholic activism and the regional concentration of the Catholic minority accentuated the denominational difference. The comparison of the German to Dutch case reveals the moderating effect of state policies in the minority-majority conflict. The German state's anti-Catholic policies politicized Catholics, leading to the formation of the Zentrum. Initially, the Dutch state was also hostile to Catholic activism. By the turn of the century, the state decided to ally with Catholics against socialists. It adopted pillarization to dilute Catholic differences within pluralism. Pillarization appealed to Catholic workers for it allowed preserving their religious identity within interdenominational unions and pressuring the government through larger-scale unions.

In contrast, the Church-state conflict played out at the national level in the Catholic states and triggered legitimacy and authority debates (Lipset and

Rokkan, 1967). Catholics' allegiances were divided among the state, the Vatican, and the nation. The Vatican's objection to political activism further set back CDU development in the Catholic-dominant states. The comparison of Italy to France shows that power disparity between the state and church accounts for the variation in CDU development. Under a strong French state and intense republican allegiances, the church-state polarization discouraged Christians from joining CDUs. In contrast, the nascent Italian state faced the Vatican, which condemned political participation and nation-building until the 1900s. This environment was not permissive for CDU development.

Belgium constitutes an exception. Anticlerical attacks did not unleash a church-state conflict despite being a Catholic-dominant state. Given the recent secession from the Protestant Netherlands, Catholics had loyalty toward the young independent Belgian state. Furthermore, antisocialism propelled a liberal-Catholic alliance, which endorsed CDU development, despite the absence of the Catholic minority. This study has significant limitations, such as the small sample size. Future work should test the theory on other cases, such as Austria, where Christian Democracy also has a strong foothold. Another potential avenue of research is to compare Islamist parties to Christian democratic parties. Such a comparison would test the prevalence of the church-state conflict on party development and help understand when what triggers confessional parties to evolve into aconfessionalism. Nevertheless, these in-depth case studies provide invaluable evidence for the roles of the church-state conflict and the societal distribution of categorical differences in the organizational development of CDUs. This paper's findings point to a larger dynamic of collective action: Societal distribution of categorical differences accounts for cross-sectional variation in the effects of similar structural variables on similar contexts.

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