Church Affiliation, Church Attendance and the Support for Christian Democrats

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Introduction: Background and Research Design

Throughout its early modern history, German was divided into smaller Protestant and Catholic states. While the 19th century put an end to these divisions it did not put an end to the tensions. These tensions culminated in the so-called *Kulturkampf*, the struggle between the mainly Protestant, Prussian elite of the newly founded German Empire and the Catholic minorities in southern and especially western Germany along the Rhine. From this conflict the

Zentrumspartei (Centre party) emerged as the political defence of the Catholic minority, mobilising up to 80 percent of Catholics to cast their vote in its favour. This party continued to thrive after the transition from the authoritarian Empire to the first German democracy following Germany's defeat in World War Iand expanded its role from a defender of a (however large) minority to a leading pillar of the political system and to a recurrent member of government coalitions. Thus from its beginning German politics has been characterised by alliances between religious parties and religious voters.

Like all other parties the Centre party suffered a forced dissolution during the Nazi era, but re-emerged in a different guise after the end of World War II. The division of Germany after the defeat of the Hitler regime in the war led to a profound change in the balance between Protestantism and Catholicism democratic Germany. The former heartland of Protestantism in eastern Germany fell under Communist rule, whereas the remaining western part of Germany was almost evenly split between Protestants and Catholics. The Christian Democratic Party, the CDU, and its Bavarian sibling, the CSU, were founded with the express intention to overcome the confessional limitations of its predecessors. The CDU/CSU even became the dominant party in post-war West Germany and succeeded to a high degree in shaping the fate of the second German democracy and its emerging welfare system. Communist dominated East Germany also had a Christian Democratic party of the same name, even with constitutionally guaranteed representation in the East German parliament, yet without true political autonomy, merely serving to smoothly integrate Christians into the new regime. In 1989/1990 after the collapse of Communism, the two parts of Germany were united and the East adopted the West German political system including its party system. The united Germany, however, also inherited from the East a highly secularized population where roughly two thirds of the inhabitants were without any Church affiliation. In West Germany, on the other hand, decades of unprecedented economic well-being and a process of profound

value change had been leading to gradual but progressing secularization. As a result of the unification and of continuous secularization processes, present-day Germany has a more secular face than ever before, evenly split between Catholics, Protestants and secular individuals, with only a minority attending church on a more regular base.

While Christian parties survived throughout the turbulent German history of the last century, they changed their character and constituency and adapted to very different types of political regimes. Yet in more recent decades the Christian parties have been facing the dilemma of coping with an increasingly secular electorate while retaining their Christian strongholds. It is the aim of this chapter to examine the relation between Christian Democracy and religious voter segments across time and in the light of an ongoing secularization processes.

With regard to the linkage between party and voters, secularization can basically have two facets: *first*, a numerical decline of voters who belong to the party's core voter segment, i.e. Catholics and Protestants with active church involvement and,*second*, a weakening of the link between this (shrinking) voter segment and the Christian party. While the significance of secularization in its first facet, i.e. numerical decline, is not under dispute, there is less clarity about the development of the relation between party and its – potentially – most loyal voter segment. Moreover, it is highly unclear how both processes or facets relate to each other and in what degree they have led to a more secular face of present-day Christian Democracy.

In this chapter we will thus first sketch the trajectory of German Christian Democracy from the Catholic niche party of former days to the successful inter-confessional "people's party" (*Volkspartei*) that emerged after World War II and dominated West German politics for decades and to its struggles in retaining its dominant position vis-a-vis an ongoing process of

secularization and a fragmentation of the party system. Secondly, we will empirically assess, using data from Germany's longest time series of cross-sections, the German General Social Survey Programme (ALLBUS), whether and how different denominations are affected by secularization. Thirdly, we will empirically examine whether the link between denomination, church affiliation and party support has weakened in recent decades or has remained stable.

Religion and Politics – Past and Present

From the Catholic Niche Party to the Conservative Catch-All Party of the Present

The Centre party was founded in a spirit of defence (Anderson 1988, 135f.). In 1870 the German Empire was built by excluding all areas that historically belonged to the Catholic Hapsburg monarchy. This so-called small-German solution (*kleindeutsche Lösung*) was dominated by the large Prussian state and was a predominantly Protestant enterprise. Thus, suddenly German Catholics became a minority group, even though a strong one, manifesting roughly thirty percent of the inhabitants of the new *Reich*. Due to the principle "cuius regio, eius religio" of the Pease of Augsburg (1555) which meant that all kings and princes of the German states could dictate the religious denomination of their citizens (Maier 2004: 61; Roßteutscher 2009: 147ff.), Catholics were not distributed evenly across the Empire, but clustered in the Ruhr and Rhine area, in the Bavarian south and at the borders with France and Poland. Bismarck, the Empire's first Chancellor, supporter of the small-German solution and politically the most significant player in the constitutional monarchy, saw Catholicism as a potential threat to his vision of a patriotic, monarchist and Protestant nation-state. Indeed, the foundation of the Centre party – for Catholics an instrument of pure self-defence – was perceived by many non-Catholics and Liberals as a provocation (Cary 1996, 13; Anderson 1988, 147, 157). Nation-building in Germany (and elsewhere in Europe) thus led to a forceful

and emotional struggle for hegemony between state and the Catholic Church (Rémond 2000, 109). Bismarck (with the support of the Liberals) enacted a series of draconian anti-Catholic legislation that aimed at wrenching power and influence from the Catholic Church and its priests, such as the introduction of obligatory civil marriage, civil state registers concerning all aspects of demography, state supervision and regulation of the education and ordination of priests, the ban of the Jesuit order and – the most fiercely fought – diverse anti-clerical measures in the field of education (Anderson 1988, 166ff.; Cary 1996, 17; Nipperdey 1993, 374f.; Roßteutscher 2009, 170f.). The Pope's reaction was uncompromising, condemning any form of constitutionalism and the ideas of civil rights and liberalism and threatening all Catholics with excommunication who would obey anti-ecclesiastic laws. In Germany and other regions of Europe, a radical Rome-centred Catholicism emerged and the so-called ultramontanist movement was born. Both sides fought over primacy in state and society – a fundamental conflict between the modern nation-state and the Catholic Church, between liberal values and Catholic norms (Nipperdey 1993, 464; Mommsen 1993, 406). Contemporaries described this period in German history as a struggle of civilizations or culture war (*Kulturkampf*).

German Catholicism reacted with building defences. A tight-knit network of clubs, associations, media and institutions was created that catered to the needs of Catholics in all possible dimensions of life. The founding idea behind the Catholic sub-culture was the constitution of a "counter-society" (Damberg 2002, 339), which kept Catholics away from the lures of a secular environment, perceived as sinful and hostile (cf. Roßteutscher 2009, 177ff). Against this background of closing milieu structures and anti-etatist Catholic struggles, the Centre party came into existence. Although its founders had not wanted a purely Catholic constituency (Anderson 1988, 139), it became quickly and strongly the political defender of Catholic identity. As a direct result of the *Kulturkampf*, the Centre "was a party of and for

Catholics" (Cary 1996, 17). Protestants, even believing Protestants, no longer voted for this Catholic party (Pappi 1985, 264). The vote share of the Centre party sky-rocketed during the heated atmosphere of the culture war, and it remained high (above 20 percent) until 1884. Only thereafter the support returned gradually to the pre-*Kulturkampf* level .

After the Empire's defeat and abolition in 1918/19, Germany finally became democratic. The institutional context changed drastically – from constitutional monarchy to a parliamentarian democracy. With the exception of 1919, when the Catholic party profited particularly from the introduction of female voting rights, it consistently received between 11 and 13 percent of the vote. Nevertheless, the Centre was a part of every Weimar coalition, except for the last two of the three cabinets installed, in the advent of the coming Hitler regime, by presidential order and under circumvention of the parliament. Indeed, it was the only party that participated in all government coalitions, thus standing out as the most continuous and stable factor of Weimar democracy.

Following the unconditional surrender of the German state at the end of the Second World War, Germany ceded much of the eastern regions of the mainly protestant Prussia and was divided into an Eastern and a Western part. The eastern part, originally mostly protestant, formed a separate communist state, emerging from the Soviet occupational zone. In the western part a pluralist democracy emerged from the occupational zones of the western Allies, where Catholics were no longer a minority but constituted roughly half of the population. Moreover, right-wing political ideology was discredited and even today, mobilization efforts of the radical right are only insular and very short-lived. Thus, the social and political context seemed much more favourable for a Catholic party. That notwithstanding, the CDU that formed in western Germany was not just a Catholic party, but explicitly also appealed to Protestants. From the outset the CDU, in alliance with its Bavarian sibling, the CSU, was

founded to overcome the deficits of its predecessor: the party aimed to be a reservoir for conservatives and Christians of all kinds. It was designed as a strong opponent to the Social Democratic party, the SPD, and aimed at winning majorities far beyond the Catholic camp. This strategic move turned out to be highly successful.

From 1949 to 1957 the CDU/CSU gained rapidly in popularity and in 1957, as the first (and last) party ever, achieved an absolute majority of votes. Until 1966 the Chancellors of western Federal Republic of Germany came from the CDU/CSU and the first of these, Konrad Adenauer, an experienced Centre politician from Weimar days, was the leading figure of the emerging German democracy. Christian Democracy in Germany (but also elsewhere in Western Europe) formed its own model of welfare state (see e.g. Esping-Anderson 1990; Manow 2008; van Kersbergen and Manow 2008), which, accompanied by a thriving post-war economy, found the support of the masses.

Until 1998, the CDU/CSU remained the strongest party, both with regard to vote share and representation in parliament. In the sixty years from 1949 to 2009, it governed and recruited the Chancellor for a total of 40 years. In all respects, thus, its success has been immense. However, this evident success masked a failure in achieving one of the core goals of the CDU/CSU: inter-denominational orientation was strong on paper but weak in reality. Party elites and members were mainly Catholics (Pappi 1985, 267), whereas Protestants – even church-affiliated Protestants – voted for the party in much lower proportions. Indeed, German Protestants were highly sceptical of the new "Catholic Republic" and Adenauer's leading position (Blaschke 2002b, 48). In terms of voting behaviour, West Germany clearly inherited the old confessional cleavage, which had separated Catholics from Protestants since the 1870s. Only the secularization process of the 1960s and 1970s would end a long century of confessional divide (Blaschke 2002a, 9; Damberg 2002, 335).

Secularization and the Transformation of the Religious Cleavage

Up to the late 1960s, more than 90 percent of Germans were members of one of the two Christian churches. The decline started in the early 1970s and affected at first only the Protestant church. Since 1990, after the unification of the denominationally divided West with the heavily secularized post-Socialist East Germany – where more than two thirds of the population did not associate with a church – the Catholic Church was also hit by decline. In 2007, only 60 percent of the Germans were members of the Christian religion (Roßteutscher 2012, 117). There is no indication whatsoever that this trend will subside. The trend affected active church involvement as well. Up to the 1980s roughly 50 percent of Catholics attended church at least once per month, a percentage which is very similar to the church affiliation rates noted for the Weimar Republic (Fandel 2002, 299). Since the early 1990s, however, the proportion of Catholics who attend religious service on a regular basis fell to 30 percent (Roßteutscher 2012, 118).

From these clear indications of secularization, wide-reaching conclusions were drawn in the scholarly literature. Authors such as Wolf claimed that the classic denominational cleavage, that separated Catholic voters from Protestant voters, was displaced by a new religious-secular divide (Wolf 1996: 720). Until the 1970s, the Christian Democratic Party remained a predominantly Catholic party (Pappi 1979; Pappi/Terwey 1982: 181; Schmitt 1984: 39) – in spite of its inter-confessional pretensions. Indeed, evidence from the *Kaiserreich* and the Weimar Republic shows that the Centre Party received the support of Catholics from all social strata. Protestants, by contrast, had no single political representation but cast their vote dependent on their class and educational background. There was only one

party they never voted for: the Catholic party (Pappi 1985, 264). West Germany inherited this pattern of sustained party loyalty among Catholics and high scepticism among Protestants. From the 1970s onwards, church attending Protestants joined forces with Catholic voters – against an increasingly secularizing mainstream society. Thus, the denominational gap decreased (Wolf 1996: 714). As in other previously denominationally divided societies such as the Netherlands or Switzerland, a new cleavage emerged that plotted devout Christians of both confessions against secular voters (Wolf 1996, Pappi 1985, Schmitt 1984).

Looking at East Germany, the process of secularization followed a completely different trajectory. In the early GDR, where Catholics constituted a very small minority and more than 80 percent of the population were Protestants, the churches experienced a state policy of "material discrimination" (Hoffmann-Dieterich 1997: 34) with regard to access to print materials, travel opportunities, termination of state organized church tax collection, diverse measures to decrease the attractiveness of religious instructions in school and career options of church members. Most successfully, the Socialist state broke the ritual monopoly of the Church by inventing its own rite of passage into adulthood, the so-called *Jugendweihe*, aiming at preventing young people from participating in the Protestant rite of initiation, the Confirmation (Roberts 2000: 62; Hoffmann-Dieterich 1997: 34, Roßteutscher 2009: 203ff.). Those measures were highly successful. The proportion of citizens with church affiliation fell from about 90 percent in 1945 to 30 percent by 1980 (Schluchter 2001: 17). Rates of formal church exit were very high during the 1950s and a direct response to the measures of "enforced secularization" (Meulemann 2004). Both the minority Catholic Church and the majoritarian Protestant Church lost about 60 percent of their members (Pollack 1998: 18). Thereafter, further secularization proceeded through natural generational exchange.

Hence, it was very unclear how the Christians who withstood the GDR's secularizing regime would relate to the political parties after German unification. In the first elections there was no relationship between church affiliation and CDU vote in the eastern part of unified Germany. However, since 1998 we witness a re-vitalisation of the religious cleavage among East German voters (Elff/Roßteutscher 2009; 2011). That said, the GDR's most outstanding heritage for the unified Germany was a very high proportion of the unaffiliated, thus providing a further push towards secularization.

Moreover, those who remained within the religious sector, both in the East and the West of Germany, have become more secular over time. Trend analyses, tracing the effects of religious group membership from 1980 to the present, reveal that attitudinal differences between regular church-goers and secular individuals declined significantly. This concerns a wide range of attitudes such as political conservatism, left-right orientation, attitudes towards redistribution, immigrants, traditional gender roles or abortion. Accordingly, religious variables explain a diminishing fraction of the variance of such indicators (Wolf/Roßteutscher 2013). There is one exception to this rule: attitudes towards homosexuality. Homosexuality is the only theme where clear signals of polarization and trends towards increasing differences between the religious and the secular are visible. This observation on the basis of ALLBUS trend data corresponds to the lively public debate about the new family paper of the Protestant church (Kirchenamt der EKD 2013) which proposes a very liberal stance concerning equal sex marriages. The paper is heavily criticized by Protestants and Catholics alike. Clearly thus, homosexuality is a theme which provides the ground for heated conflicts – conflict between secular and religious groups *and* within the churches (Wolf/Roßteutscher 2013).

Church and State in Germany Today

Present-day Germany consists of three segments, all of them constituting roughly a third of the population: Catholics, Protestants and the non-affiliated. Mainly due to migration processes, there is a growing minority of "other" religions of which most belong to Muslim denominations. However, due to the fact that only German citizens possess voting rights and the difficulties attached in gaining citizenship if not granted via birth, only a small fraction of the inhabitants with "other" religions are permitted to cast a vote. Because of the historical legacy (see above), Catholics and Protestants are not evenly distributed across Germany. Protestants cluster in the North and the East, Catholic strongholds are in the Southern regions and the Rhineland, with some of the South-Western states (Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Hessia) being denominationally mixed.

In the concert of Western nations, Germany possesses a highly peculiar church-state law. Both Catholic and Protestant church have a privileged status, are officially recognized by the state and explicitly mentioned in the constitution. State-administered church tax collection dates back to diverse solutions of 19th century German states. During the Weimar Republic the system was harmonized, institutionalized and constitutionally guaranteed (Marré 2000: 224f.). After the defeat of the Hitler regime, West Germany re-established the Weimar legislation and after unification in 1990 it was also transferred to the former GDR. Church taxes are collected together with the general taxes by the local tax authorities and deducted progressively from an individuals' income up to eight percent of the general tax duty. In order words, church taxes vary by person depending upon the individual monthly income. The church tax is obligatory for all registered church members with a taxable earned income. Accordingly, the unemployed and those with marginal incomes below the taxation threshold do not pay church taxes (Roberts 2000: 64). Moreover, the German churches and their welfare organisations, *Caritas*

and *Diakonie* are core actors in the German welfare state and provide most of the services at the local level. Accordingly, they are among the biggest private sector employers, although most of the costs are carried by state agencies. Moreover, their privileged status includes the rights for running nurseries, kindergartens, schools, and universities, to have access to public broadcasting and a guarantee that the provision of religious education is obligatory in all public schools (Roßteutscher 2009: 231ff). Until now, secularisation processes have not produced critical discussions about the adequacy of such privileges. However, caused by the changing religious composition of the German population there are – contested – plans to extend these privileges to the growing Muslim community.

The increasing secularization of German society left traces on the Christian Democratic Party. In recent local city elections, the CDU lost almost all its leading positions to other parties and the majority of the larger cities are by now governed by either Social Democrats or Green mayors. During the last decade the CDU tried to shed the image of a party promoting presumably outdated, traditional (Catholic) family and gender roles – positions which are decreasingly shared even among loyal church members (Wolf/Roßteutscher 2013). At present, there is a kind of division of labour emerging with the Bavarian CSU putting traditional family policies on the agenda, and the CDU which tries to advocate more gender-equal issues. The nomination of Angela Merkel as the party's Chancellor Candidate in 2005 was a significant signal as well. Angela Merkel, a "career woman" without children, a Protestant from the highly secularized East Germany, was highly exceptional. Until then, all CDU/CSU chancellor candidates were Catholic males from the West (Roßteutscher 2007). Still, the party struggles hard to remain its dominant position. For decades it used to win clearly more than 40 percent of the votes, the last four federal elections since 1998 produced results clearly below this mark. In 2009, the CDU/CSU won 33.8 percent of the votes – a negative record that only the first democratic election in 1949 fell below of. Though other

processes contribute to this declining vote share, party fragmentation among the most important changes, a search for an explanation cannot exclude secularization and the numerical shrinkage of religiously motivated core voters. In the most recent federal election in September 2013, however, the Christian Democrats won again clearly above 40 percent of the votes. Whether this surprising result signals a trend reversal, or is due to the exceptional weakness of the CDU/CSU's traditional coalition partner, the Liberals and the immense popularity of Chancellor Merkel, will not be borne out before future elections.

[Figure 1 about here]

Data and Operationalisation

The task of tracking secularisation and its political consequences in Germany places high demands on the any data set used for analysis. Any data set suitable for such analysis should contain data on individuals' church-affiliation, denomination, ideological orientation, and political orientation over a longer stretch of time. So far the only data set that provides this information about samples from the German population is the German General Social Survey (*Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften* – ALLBUS, www.gesis.org/ALLBUS)

ALLBUS surveys have been conducted biannually from 1980 to the present thus allowing us to cover in our analysis a thirty-year time span from 1980 to 2010, i.e. precisely three decades of German history. For every second year within this time span we have data on

respondents' religious denomination, church-attendance, left-right self-placement, vote intention, and several other important socio-structural variables that we use as controls.

In each survey, sampled individuals were asked to state their membership in any church organisation and could chose among the response categories “Protestant” (“Evangelisch ohne Freikirche”), “Independent Protestant” (“Evangelische Freikirche”), “Roman Catholic” (“Römisch-katholisch”), “Other Christian religion” (“Andere christliche Religion”), “Other non-christian religion” (“Andere nicht-christliche Religion”), and “No Religion” (“Keine Religionsgemeinschaft”). Since the category “Independent Protestant” is rarely used by respondents, for the analyses of this chapter it is combined with the category “Protestant”, and since the categories “Other Christian religion” and “Other non-christian religion” are also rarely used by respondents these two categories are collapsed into a single category “Other”. Thus in our analysis the religious denomination variable has the four categories “Protestant”, “Catholic”, “Other”, and “None” (or “No Religion”).

Church-attendance is another of the standard variables in ALLBUS surveys. Respondents were asked how often they would attend church, with response categories being “More than once a week” (“Mehr als einmal die Woche”), “Once a week” (“Einmal pro Woche”), “1 to 3 times a month” (“Ein bis dreimal im Monat”), “Several times a year” (“Mehrmals im Jahr”), “Less often” (“Seltener”), and “Never” (“Nie”). In order to facilitate the analysis and the presentation of its results we combine the categories “More than once a week” and “Once a week” into a single category “(At least) weekly”.

In the earlier ALLBUS waves, until 1990, only respondents stating membership in a religious denomination were asked about their church-attendance, while respondents who answered “No religion” to the question about religious denomination were not asked this

question. Obviously, the principal investigators of the earlier ALLBUS waves assumed that non-religious people would not attend church. Yet as our analysis further below show, this assumption is empirically incorrect, at least for the later decades covered by the ALLBUS. This of course creates a dilemma if one wants to analyse religious denomination and church-attendance simultaneously. One could either drop the earlier ALLBUS waves where non-affiliated respondents were not asked about their church-attendance from the analysis, which would mean a loss of valuable information about the pre-unification years, or one could "impute" for the non-affiliated a level of church attendendance of "Never", following the obvious assumption of the pre-1990 principal investigators, which would mean running a risk of biasing analysis results. In order to save the valuable times series, we opted for the second solution, keeping the imperfect measure for the pre-1990 surveys into account.

Another crucial variable for the analysis provided for by the ALLBUS surveys is vote intention. In almost all ALLBUS surveys, respondents were asked what party they would vote for if there were an election on the next Sunday. Response categories available to the interviewed included the five main parties or party groups, viz, "CDU/CSU" (the electoral alliance of the Christian Democratic Union and the Bavarian Christian Social Union), "SPD" (the German social democratic party), "FDP" (the liberal party of Germany), "Die Grünen" (Greens) or "Bündnis 90/Die Grünen" respectively, "PDS" and "Linke" (the left-socialist party that emerged from the former socialist unity party of the GDR), "Republikaner" (a right-wing populist party), "NPD" (a right-wing nationalist party with some extremist elements), "DKP" (the communist party of West Germany), "Other party", and "would not vote". The last three parties, Republikaner, NPD, and DKP proved to be rather ephemeral after 1990,

receiving not much support in the surveys, so for the analyses of this chapter they were combined with the category of other parties.

Since ideology is envisaged in this volume to be an (at least potentially) important intervening factor between religion and political choices we also need a variable reflecting this concept for the analysis. Unfortunately, ALLBUS is missing a battery of standard questions about attitudes to ideologically charged issues. However, most ALLBUS surveys asked a question about respondents' left-right self-assessment. Respondents were asked how they would locate themselves on a 10-point scale ranging from “Left” (“Links” with code 1) to “Right” (“Rechts” with code 10). We are aware of the problems that left-right self-placement may have: People have only a limited understanding of the political meaning of the terms “left” and “right” (see e.g. Roßteutscher/Scherer 2013 for a further discussion on the multi-dimensionality and meaning of this indicator) and it is not clear whether left-right self-placement is exogenous to vote intention. We nevertheless follow the guidelines provided by the editors of this volume and enter left-right self-placement into the model.

In addition to these core variables we also consider a range of control variables, namely age (reconstructed from respondents’ statements about their year of birth), gender, education, and occupational class. The education variable is based on respondents' statement about their educational certificate attained, with categories “No certificate” (“Ohne Abschluss”), “Basic certificate” (“Volks-/Hauptschulabschluss”), “Medium-level certificate” (“Mittlere Reife”), “Certificate of aptitude for polytechnic schools” (“Fachhochschulreife”), “Certificate of aptitude for university studies” (“Abitur”), “Other” and “Still in school”. For the purposes of analysis we reduced the educational variable into three levels with “Low” (combining “No certificate” and “Basic certificate”), “Medium”, and “High” (combining “Fachhochschulreife” and “Abitur”). As occupational class variable we use a variable provided by the published

ALLBUS data set that is constructed from respondents' occupation of the respondents' spouses' occupation, where occupation was originally coded using the ISCO68 schema and the class variable following the specification of the Goldthorpe class schema, with categories "Upper service class", "Lower service class", "Routine non-manual", "Proprietors", "Self-employed", "Farmers", "Foremen/technicians", "Skilled workers", "Semi/unskilled workers", "Farm labourers", "Other non-manual", and "Cooperative farmers". For purposes of analysis we reduced this 12-category class schema into a 5-category class schema with categories "Proprietors and self-employed", "Upper service class", "Lower service class and other non-manual occupations" (combining the lower service class, the routine non-manual and other non-manual categories), "Industrial working class" (combining the foremen/technicians, skilled and semi/unskilled workers" and "Farmers and farm workers".

Empirical Evidence I: Trends in Church Membership and Attendance

As previously stated, in a society where it is common not only to attend religious services with a higher or lower frequency but also to possess an explicit church membership with institutional consequences such as extra-taxes one is obliged to pay, secularisation can surface in two ways, (1) in a declining average frequency in which people attend religious services or a declining proportion of people that attend church regularly, and (2) in a decline in membership in explicit church-affiliation or membership in a church. We will first look at the pace in which these two processes occur and then take a closer look at the structure of their interrelation.

[Figure 2 about here]

Figure 2 shows the development of church-attendance in East and West Germany. The first phenomenon to be noticed in this diagram is the striking difference between East and West in terms of the level of church attendance. In West Germany, the proportion of people never going to church is about 20 per cent and slightly increasing while in East Germany this proportion is more than 50 percent but, somewhat surprisingly, with a slight tendency of decline. Further, the proportion of people attending church seldom, several times a year, monthly or even weekly is clearly higher in the West than in the East. The proportion of those who attend church monthly or weekly in the East even seems to be almost negligible. Another striking finding the diagram conveys is that the pace of secularisation, in terms of declining rates of church-attendances, is limited in West Germany, and even seems to run in reverse in East Germany. In West Germany we can see that the proportion of people never going to church increases moderately from just below 20 percent to just above 20 percent while the proportion of those who attend church at least weekly declines from about 20 percent towards the level of just above 10 percent. Notably the proportions of the intermediate levels of church-attendance do not show any such clear trend. This might indicate that just as many people leave the medium levels for lower levels of church-attendance as people from the higher level of church-attendance enter those medium levels. While the level of church-attendance in East Germany is clearly very low to begin with, we find, in contrast to West Germany, a *decrease* of the proportion of people never attending church. However, this does not seem to indicate a broad-sweep return of East Germans into the arms of the church. The proportion of people who attend church several times a year, monthly or weekly stays at their respectively low levels while only the proportion of those who seldom go to church shows an increase. So it seems hard to argue that one can see a return to church commitment in the east of Germany. Rather, the modest increase in church participation signals the de-tabooing of religiosity in a post-socialist society (see also Wolf/Roßteutscher 2013 for a similar explanation).

[Figure 3 about here]

Figure 3 shows the secularisation process from a different angle, focussing on explicit church membership. Now an East-West comparison leads to a less ambiguous diagnosis of secularisation: In both East and West Germany we find that the proportion of people without religious membership increases, the East again starting at a much higher level. However, the various denominations seem to be affected differently by a loss of membership: In the West, membership in the Protestant churches shows a decline from roughly 50 percent towards below 40 percent, while the proportion of Catholics is almost stable and the membership in other religious communities even increases. This increase may result from migration processes and the growing proportion of Muslims in the German society. To some degree the same seems to be happening in East Germany: the membership in the Protestant churches declines, yet more slowly, while membership in the Catholic church remains more or less stable, yet at a much lower level.

The apparent discrepancy between the findings in Figures 2 and 3 can perhaps be reconciled by looking at church-attendance rates *within* groups defined by religious denomination. Such information is provided by Figure 4, which shows, among Protestants, Catholics, and the non-affiliated, the development of the proportion of those who attend church never, seldom, several times a year, monthly, and weekly.

[Figure 4 about here]

The findings that Figure 4 conveys are quite striking: First, once one controls for church affiliation or church membership, the differences between East Germans and West Germans in terms of church-attendance almost disappear. While on the aggregate, East Germans go much

less often to church than West Germans, East German Protestants hardly differ from West German Protestants in terms of the level and the dynamics of church attendance while the differences between East German Catholics and West German Catholics appear so small that they may as well be the result of sampling error (the proportion of Catholics in the East is very low as we saw in Figure 3). Second, we find relatively stable levels of church attendance among Protestants, although they tend to be lower than among the Catholics. But among the latter there is a slight increase in the proportion of those who seldom attend church and a slight decline of those who attend church weekly at least. Thus the decline of the proportion of regular church-going is mainly a phenomenon of Catholicism, whereas regular (i.e. monthly or weekly) church-attendance was already very rare among Protestants. Third, we find a decline of the proportion of respondents who never attend church among those who are not affiliated while at the same time the proportion of those who attend church seldom or even several times a year increases. Thus one may argue that the decline of non-churchgoers found in Figure 2 has nothing to do with a re-invigoration of religiosity but rather that non-affiliated are less church-averse: they may perceive church-attendance as a cultural or social event, such as occasioned by marriages, by Christmas or Easter services and the like. Among the non-affiliated there is a modest East-West difference however. In East Germany the non-attendance is slightly larger in this group than in West Germany.

To conclude, the secularisation process seems to exhibit a quite intricate pattern. While the proportion of Protestants declines in both parts of Germany, the rate of church attendance within this group is stable, though at a rather moderate level. The proportion of Catholics is more or less stable on the other hand, while church attendance declines somewhat in this group. Finally, while the proportion of respondents without religious affiliation increases so also does the rate of church attendance in this group. A potential, yet at this point speculative explanation for this pattern may be that some Protestants quit their formal affiliation with

their church but retain some social contacts with church-goers by attending church to some degree, while Catholics, if their allegiance with the church weakens rather go less often to church than giving up their church-membership altogether.

The complex pattern of change of church-membership and church-attendance poses challenges for explanatory modelling. We address this challenge by a two step-approach. We first model the dynamics of church-affiliation and the relevance of various predictors for this. And second we model the dynamics of church-attendance among the Catholics and the relevance of various predictors for this case.

[Table 1 about here]

For the analysis of the change in church affiliation, we concentrate on the proportion of Protestants versus the non-affiliated, because we found that the proportion of Catholics hardly has changed at all. Consequently, Table 1 compares the fit of various binomial logit models of Protestant versus no church affiliation by means of likelihood ratio tests. The first column in the table refers to the models being compared. The second column shows the deviance of respective models, a measure of goodness of fit that equals the negative of two times the log-likelihood of the model plus a constant independent from the model parameters. Lower values of the deviance indicate better model fit. The third column shows the loss in degrees of freedom of the current model relative to the simpler model to which it is compared. The fourth column contains the values of the likelihood ratio chi-squared statistic, computed from the deviances of the models being compared. Under the null hypothesis that the simpler model is the correct one, it has an asymptotic chi-squared distribution with degrees of freedom as given in the third column. The last column contains the p-values, that is, the probability under the null hypothesis of a value of the test statistic at least as high as observed for the data.

The first model, Model A0, contains as independent variables only some control variables, namely region (East vs. West), gender (Women vs. Men), and education (High vs. Medium vs. Low). Model A1 expands Model A0 by adding a simple term for a trend in the proportion of Protestants relative to the non-affiliated. As the result of the likelihood-ratio test suggests, the trend in the proportion of Protestants relative to the non-affiliated is statistically significant, even after controlling for region, gender, and education. Model A2 adds a region by gender interaction, but in this case the likelihood-ratio test indicates that this interaction is not statistically significant at the conventional 5% level. We therefore do not consider Model A2 any further and proceed by adding terms to Model A1. Model A3 adds a region by time interaction to Model A1, which achieves unequivocal statistical significance. Model A4 adds a time by gender interaction to Model A3. This interaction is only marginally statistically significant with a p-value of about 4%. The statistical test results so far corroborate the observations made on the base of figure 2.

The fact that the proportions of Protestants and non-affiliated changes over time does not mean that individuals change their affiliations. An aggregate change seen in Figure 3 and modelled by Models A1 through A4 instead may indicate that later born individuals do not acquire the church-affiliation of previous generations. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Model A5, which adds the year of birth as an independent variable to Model A4, greatly improves the fit of the model. As the likelihood-ratio test of Model A6, which adds an interaction for region and year of birth, versus Model A5 shows, there are differences between East and West Germany in terms of the pace of the intergenerational change with regards to Protestantism and non-affiliation. We select Model A6 for further inspection of its coefficients (see Table 3 further below).

[Table 2 about here]

In a second round we analyse the change in church-attendance among Catholics, using cumulative logit models (also known as proportional odds models) to accommodate the ordinal level of measurement of the dependent variable in.Again we use likelihood-ratio tests to compare models. The results are shown in Table 2. Like before, the baseline of the model comparisons is a model with only the control variables region, gender, and education, Model B0. Model B1 extends Model B0 by a simple time trend, which turns out to be statistically significant as the likelihood-ratio test indicates. Models B2, B3, and B4 each extend Model B1 by an interaction term, B2 includes a region by gender interaction, B3 includes a region by year interaction and B4 includes a gender by year interaction. Since none of these models lead to a statistically significant improvement of fit relative to Model B1 none of them is considered further. Instead, Model B5 is constructed by adding a birth-year effect to Model B1, again to represent intergenerational change. As the likelihood-ratio test of Model B5 versus Model B1 shows, there is clear evidence of such an intergenerational change in church-attendance among Catholics. Further, as the likelihood-ratio test of Model B6 versus Model B5 indicates, the rate of intergenerational change differs between East and West Germany.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3 shows estimates of the coefficients of the final models of Protestantism vs. non-affiliation and of church-attendance among Catholics. It reveals some interesting similarities and differences concerning the two separate aspects of secularisation: the increase of people not affiliated to any church – which goes together with a decline in the membership in the Protestant church – and the decline of church-attendance among members of the Catholic Church. First the similarities: Non-affiliation is more common in East Germany than in West Germany as is low church-attendance among Catholics in Eastern Germany. Women tend to be less likely to be non-affiliated and if they are Catholic, they are more likely to attend

church. Both church membership and church-attendance among Catholics declines with the year of birth, that is, later born people are less likely to be a member of a church or to attend church regularly. Church affiliation and church-attendance among Catholics differ insofar that there are interaction effects between gender and time and between region and time in the dynamics of church affiliation. Church-membership declines a bit faster among women but increases, *after controlling* for year of birth, in East Germany. Further, the inter-generational change in church-affiliation occurs faster in East Germany, while the inter-generational change in church attendance among Catholics occurs faster in West Germany and does hardly occur in East Germany.

Empirical Evidence II: Religious-Denomination, Church-Attendance, Ideology and Party Choice in Germany

As discussed previously, in a country with an established church and formal church-membership there are two ways of describing secularisation and, by the same token, religious-secular differences. If a religious-secular cleavage exists, it may be exhibited by differences in voting behaviour of people with different rates of church-attendance or by differences in voting behaviour between members of a church and the unaffiliated.

In mixed-denominational countries like Germany, a religious-secular cleavage however is not the only political cleavage that may be related to religion. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, a considerable part of German history was characterised by the tension if not conflict between Protestants and Catholics. This tension was relieved somewhat in West Germany by the fact that it was severed from the mostly Prussian and Protestant East and by the fact that no direct successor of the Protestant-nationalist DNVP emerged in the West. While the post-war CDU was partly built on the remnants of the former Catholic Centre party

it was by intention not a confessional party but a cross-denominational Christian-democratic party. Nevertheless, the CDU did not gain the same traction among Protestant as it did among the Catholics in the Rhineland and southern areas of Germany. As a consequence, the SPD not only re-emerged as a manifestation of the German labour movement, but also as the representative of northern German Protestantism. Thus the north of Germany was in the earlier decades of the Bonn Republic a stronghold of the SPD, even with inclusion of the relatively rural Lower Saxony.

Notwithstanding the lack of full traction among north German Protestants, the Christian-democratic character of the CDU and of its Bavarian counterpart, the CSU, seem to predestine it to serve as the expression of the Christian pole of the religious-secular cleavage in Germany. To the degree that this is the case one should expect that the more often people attend church (of whatever denomination) the more likely they are to support the CDU/CSU.

[Figure 5 about here]

Figure 5 bears out this expectation. The diagram shows how many people in the categories of weekly church-goers, monthly church-goers down to the non-churchgoers intend to vote which of the main four (before 1990) and five (after the unification of 1990) parties in West and East Germany. Clearly the support for the CDU/CSU increases with the rate of church attendance and, almost without exception, the support for any other party decreases with it. Only the support for Greens in East Germany seems to deviate from this pattern, yet the support for the Greens in East Germany is too small to lend much substance to such a conclusion.Nevertheless, the impact of church attendance on party support is far from perfect. While the difference in CDU/CSU support between weekly church-goers and non-churchgoers reaches about 60 percentage points in the earlier decades in the period of study,

at least 20 percent of the weekly church-goers support some other party than the CDU/CSU and at least 20 percent of the non-churchgoers support the CDU.

The relation between CDU/CSU support and church-attendance is not perfect but very strong. As also can be seen in Figure 5, there is a moderate decline in the difference between regular church-goers and non-churchgoers in terms of support for the CDU/CSU, but the decline appears modest in comparison to the overall size of the difference. Ironically the reduction in this difference occurs not because the CDU/CSU is able to reach into the group of non-churchgoers, but because the support in its apparent core constituency, the weekly church-goers, declines. Again ironically, it is not the main contender, the SPD, that profits from this decline – its support among the weekly church-goers stays stable at a low level. It rather seems that the beneficiary of the decline in support for the CDU/CSU among the regular church-goers is the Green party. The party that benefits from the decline in SPD support among the non-churchgoers does not seem to be the Greens, but rather the PDS/Linke.

[Figure 6 about here]

Figure 6 breaks down the support for the four or five major parties of Germany by religious denomination. To some degree it leads to findings that mirror those conveyed by Figure 5. The CDU/CSU finds most support among Catholics. At the same time the support for the Christian Democrats is considerably lower among the religiously unaffiliated. The Protestants take an intermediate position between the Catholics and the non-affiliated with regards to the support for Christian Democrats. Yet again the relation between religious (non-)affiliation and party support is not perfect. Only 40 to 60 percent of the Catholics support the CDU/CSU and at least 20 percent of the non-affiliated support this party alliance.

In contrast to the pattern that the relation between church attendance and party support shows in Figure 6, the relation between church-affiliation and support for other parties is not just the reverse of the support for the CDU/CSU. The support for the SPD among Protestants appears to be even higher than among the unaffiliated. By contrast, the support among the non-affiliated for the Greens is higher than among the Protestants and Catholics. A similar pattern can be observed with regards to the support for the PDS/Left, while church-affiliation does not seem to have a role in the support for the FDP. There also appears to be some evidence for a decline of denominational differences in support for the CDU/CSU and for the SPD, but the differences with regards to the support for the other parties seem to be more or less stable.

[Tables 4 and 5 about here]

Although now unified for over 20 years East and West Germany exhibit astounding differences in the patterns of voting, the most obvious of which being the much higher support for the PDS/Left and the relative weakness of the Greens and the FDP in the east. For this reason, we analyse the impact of religious affiliation and church-attendance in West Germany and East Germany separately. Since the dependent variable in our analysis is unordered categorical we use a multinomial logit model to analyse the impact and change of impact of church attendance and religious affiliation (and of various control variables) on vote intentions. Again we conduct likelihood-ratio tests to compare various models of vote intention constructed by sequentially adding more terms to a baseline model. The results of these tests for West Germany are shown in Table 4 while those for East Germany are shown in Table 5. Like Table 1, Table 4 and 5 contain a column listing the models being compared, a second column showing the model deviances as measures of goodness of fit (with lower values indicating better model fit), a third column with the differences in degrees of freedom between models being compared, a fourth column with the values of likelihood ratio chi-

squared statistics, and a fifth column with the corresponding p-values under the respective null hypothesis. The baseline model contains no trend components, but only church attendance and religious denomination as independent variables of interest as well as class, gender, and education as control variables, and is in the following referred to as model C0. Model C1 adds a simple trend component this model, that is, it enters time as an independent variable. For both parts of Germany this leads to a statistically significant improvement of the model fit as the results of the likelihood-ratio tests indicate. Model C2 expands Model C1 by interactions between time and the control variables, again leading to a statistically significance fit improvement. Model C3 adds terms for time by church membership and time by church-attendance to Model C2. The results of the likelihood-ratio test of Model C3 versus C2, which are the most important for the research question of this chapter, point to a change in the impact of church membership or church attendance on vote intention. Thus the (though moderate) change observed in Figures 5 and 6 is confirmed by a formal statistical test.

It is one of the objectives of this chapter also to examine the role of ideology for the connection between religious variables and voting behaviour. Unfortunately, the survey series of the ALLBUS does not contain a battery of issue questions that would make it possible to construct a full ideology scale. As explained above, we use a question about the self-location of respondents on a left-right scale as a substitute, thus obtaining Model C4. As the results in Tables 4 and 5 suggest, the coefficients of left-right self-placement in the multinomial logit model are highly statistically significant in both West and East Germany.[1] Adding interaction terms of left-right self-placement with time to the model leads to Model C5 and the likelihood-ratio tests in Table 4 and 5 indicate the statistical significance of the coefficients of

1

Note that the statistical significance of the coefficients of a predictor variable does not prove its exogeneity.

these terms. Thus if one subscribes to the belief that left-right self-placement is an exogenous factor influencing vote choice, the test results suggest that its influence changes over time.

Table 6 and 7 show the estimates of the parameters of interest in the final model of vote intention. In both cases it is Model C5 that includes church-attendance, religious denomination, education, gender, and left-right self-placement as independent variables as well as the main effect term of time and the interactions of the independent variables with time. For the multinomial logits the intention to vote for the CDU/CSU was chosen as a baseline category, so that the coefficients express the way that the probability of a vote intention for each of the other parties changes relative to the probability of a vote intention for the CDU/CSU. In order to save space only the main and interaction effects of church-attendance, religious denomination, left-right self-placement, and time are shown.[2]

The coefficient estimates in Table 6 indicate that there is hardly any evidence of a substantial decline in the relevance of religious denomination for the support for the Christian democratic parties relative to any of the other parties. None of the coefficients of the interaction terms of religious denomination attains a level of significance better than 5%. Such a level of significance can by definition be attained in 1 out of 20 cases even if the null hypothesis is true. The model however contains 124 parameters, so a 5% level of significance cannot count as evidence against the null hypothesis of no change. Two of the coefficients of interactions between church-attendance and time attain a level of significance lower than 1% and thus may be considered as evidence against the null hypothesis. They occur in the equation of the log-odds of the intention to vote for the Greens rather than for the CDU/CSU. Since the main effect of time in this equation is essentially zero and the interaction effects are positive, this means that the Greens, other things being equal, gain in votes (relative to the CDU/CSU)

[2]The full model contains 32 coefficients in each of the four logit equations, that is 124 parameters total. It would not fit onto a single page but is available by request.

among the monthly and weekly church-goers. This may indicate that the Greens gain traction among voters who are concerned in protection of the natural environment – understood as "God's creation" – and with helping the less advantaged people in developing countries, since environmental protection and developmental aid are two of the main issues promoted by the Green party. Another interaction coefficient that attains a high level of statistical significance is the one between left-right self-placement and time in the logit equation of the PDS/Linke vs. the CDU/CSU. While this coefficient has a positive sign its absolute size is quite small relative to the main effect coefficients of time and of left-right self-placement. This coefficient may indicate a slight weakening of the ideological aversion against the PDS/Linke, but since the exogeneity of left-right self-placement is somewhat in doubt, such an interpretation should be made with a considerable degree of caution.

[Tables 6 and 7 about here]

The estimates in Table 7 do not tell much of a different story. None of the coefficients of the interaction terms of church-attendance with time attains a level of significance "better" than 5%. The coefficient of the interaction term of Protestantism and time attains a 1% level of significance - not a strong evidence against the null hypothesis in a model with more than 100 parameters. If this coefficient is taken seriously it indicates that the PDS/Left increases its traction somewhat among the Protestants in East Germany. But since the other coefficients do not suggest any systematic pattern of change again such an interpretation should be done with great care.

To summarize the empirical analysis of the role of church-attendance and religious denomination for voting choice, the relative superficial examination of the patterns of vote intentions in West and East Germany in Figures 5 and 6 provides the impression of a modest

weakening of the religious-secular cleavage in both parts of Germany. However the closer examination using multinomial logit shows that if there is any such change it is neither strong nor systematic.

Conclusions

This chapter portrayed the trajectory of German Christian Democracy from its inspection in the 19th century throughout Germany's turbulent history to the present. It started as a niche party which represented minority Catholicism against the new predominantly Protestant Empire which wrenched traditional privileges from the Catholic Church. Already during the Weimar Republic, the first albeit short-lived democracy on German soil, the Catholic party changed its character. Still living exclusively from the vote share of the Catholic milieu, it became a stable part of Weimar's coalition governments and thus transformed from a pure means of self-defence to an integrated force that helped to ensure the survival of democracy. After Hitler's defeat, the CDU/CSU was founded to overcome the confessional constraints of its predecessor and re-emerged as a trans-confessional party aiming at representing all Christians against the Social Democrat competitor. However, it took decades and the progress of secularization associated with the unruly 1960s and 1970s that the inter-confessional character became reality and Protestants, particularly church affiliated Protestants, began to cast their vote in favour of the CDU/CSU. In terms of general vote share its success was immense. Both in terms of electoral support and government provision, the CDU/CSU was the dominant party of post-war West-Germany. However, since the late 1990s the party's structural dominance became fragile. It lost electoral support, it had to surrender chancellorship to Social Democracy and in 2009 experienced an all-time low concerning vote share. At the occasion of the federal election 2013, Christian Democracy experienced a striking electoral victory and almost gained an absolute majority of seats. Further elections

will have to show whether this was an exceptional result caused by the extraordinary weakness of its former liberal coalition partner, the FDP, and the popularity of Chancellor Merkel or whether German Christian Democracy has seriously recovered and will remain Germany's dominant party.

It was the aim of this chapter to examine how the trajectory of the CDU/CSU relates to (and suffers from) secularization processes and the numerical decline of its core constituency. Therefore, we first distinguished two processes of secularization, first, in terms of declining church attendance and, second, in terms of changes in institutional affiliation. With regard to church attendance we found striking differences between East and West Germany. Put simply, secularization in terms of declining church attendance rates is a reality in the West but not in the East. After decades of state socialism there is even a modest increase in the proportion of East Germans who visit church occasionally. However, as the upward trend concerns only the most moderate category of church-going, an interpretation referring to a revival of religiosity in the East is presumably misleading. Rather, we witness a normalization of the relationship between citizens and the church after decades of enforced alienation. Looking at trends in church membership, we found that decline is more or less restricted to the Protestant church. Indeed, further analyses reveal that secularization processes among the two major Christian denominations follow different trajectories: Protestants, notoriously low with regard to church-going, leave church altogether, while Catholics retain their membership but reduce the frequency of church attendance. In both manifestations of secularization generational exchange seems to be the driving force: younger cohorts no longer inherit the church attendance rates or the degree of affiliation that characterized their predecessor generations.

How do these trends in secularization affect voting behaviour? To give an answer to this question one needs to distinguish between long-term trends and short-term factors. In the long

term perspective, we do find a slight weakening in the relation between church attendance and support for the Christian Democrats, which nevertheless has been to slow to undermine the dependence of the support for these parties on the level of church attendance and a Catholic denomination of the voters. Since the CDU/CSU has not gained among the non-attending and non-religious to the degree that it has lost among the Catholics and church-goers and to the degree that these groups have shrunk, one should expect that, in the long term, the traditional voter basis of the Christian Democratic parties in Germany is in decline. Clearly, whatever religion-based support these parties enjoy, it is an inheritance of the past. Thus in order to maintain its electoral strength and to assure electoral victory the CDU/CSU will have to strike a delicate balance between pursuing votes from the secular segment of society, from secular conservatives in particular, by avoiding overt religious themes and maintaining its traditional religious stronghold, by not giving in too quickly to the demands of allowing more permissive lifestyles and post-traditional gender-roles and forms of family and sexual relations (see Roßteutscher 2012, for a fuller account).

The short-term perspective is however inevitably more complex. On the one hand we find that over the last couple of years the Green party seems to have been able to make inroads even into the core constituency of the CDU/CSU, the regular church-goers and the Catholics. That is, the Christian Democrats endured losses among their core constituency exactly to that party that was the polar opposite on many issues related to traditional or modern ways of life for many years. Whether this is just a statistical fluke or a substantial trend remains to be seen and may require further study. Yet it also may point to a curious transformation of the relation between conservatism and religion in Germany and perhaps elsewhere, which may exacerbate the conundrum that Christian Democrats face: To the degree that they transform themselves into a secular, more pro-capitalist than traditionally conservative party, they may come into conflict with Christian, especially Catholic social mores that emphasize the care for the poor

and the needy and also with religiously motivated concern about the protection of God's creation. The potential for such conflict is increased when the Christian churches adapt to generational changes in values and mentalities by distancing themselves from ideas of unquestioned authority and by emphasizing the more humanitarian aspects of the Christian creed. Such modernising tendencies have long been current in the Protestant church in Germany and may even have found expression in the Catholic church by the papacy of Francis I. While these changes within the churches have faced and are still facing resistance from their more traditionally minded sections, it may well be that recent scandals about child abuse or about the exorbitant spending of church income for personal luxury by the former bishop of Limburg invigorate the internal transformation of the Christian churches.

On the other hand, parties are able, within the restrictions imposed by the need to maintain credibility, to adapt to a changing electorate and to adjust their programmatic orientation and policy positions. The electoral victory of Angela Merkel's CDU in the recent Bundestag election of 2013 may indicate such a successful adaptation of the CDU. So far, this appears to be facilitated for the CDU by the absence of serious contenders on the political right. More explicitly religious parties, the "Christliche Mitte" and the "Partei bibeltreuer Christen" have existed in Germany for some quite some time, but never have won enough votes to even become visible in mainstream media. Secular right-wing parties have occasionally gained some traction at the fringe of the electorate, but have not yet been able to establish a permanent presence in the party system, partly suffering from the stigma that rests on any radical right-wing party because of Germany's Nazi past, partly because the CDU/CSU had been able to successfully outmanoeuvre them. Nevertheless, with the AfD a new competitor for the votes of secular conservatives has entered the political arena and time will tell, whether it will be able to create new troubles for the CDU/CSU or will prove to be as ephemeral as previous right-wing parties.

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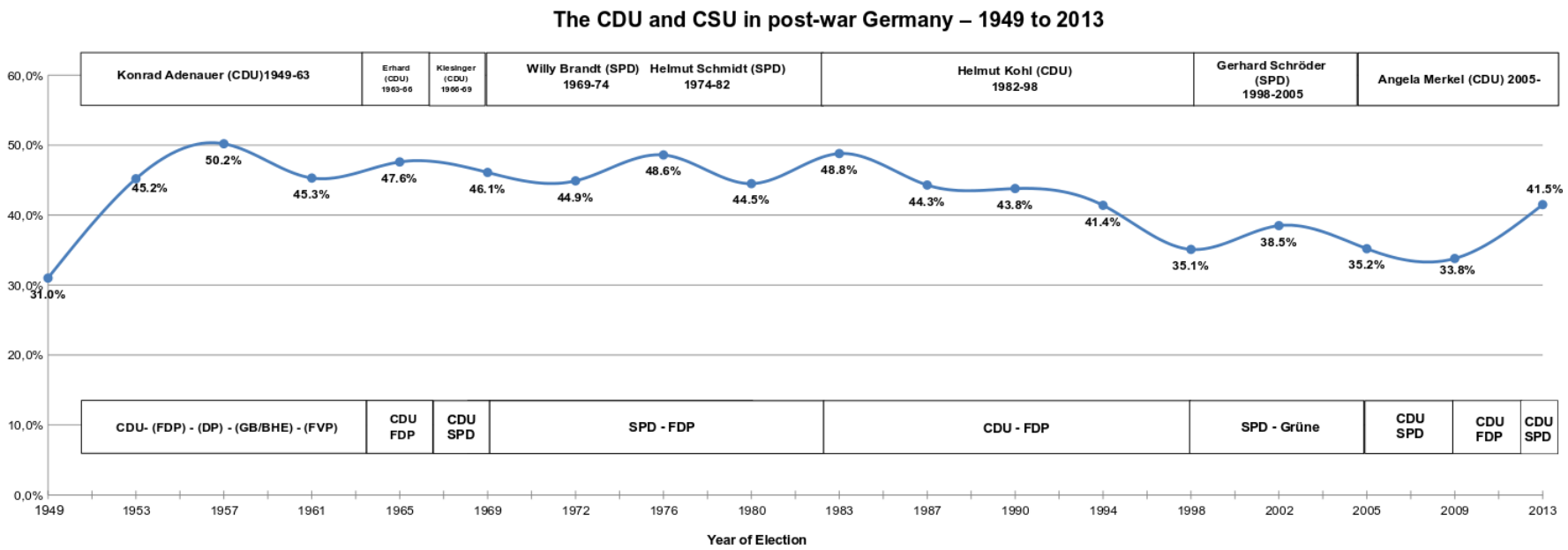
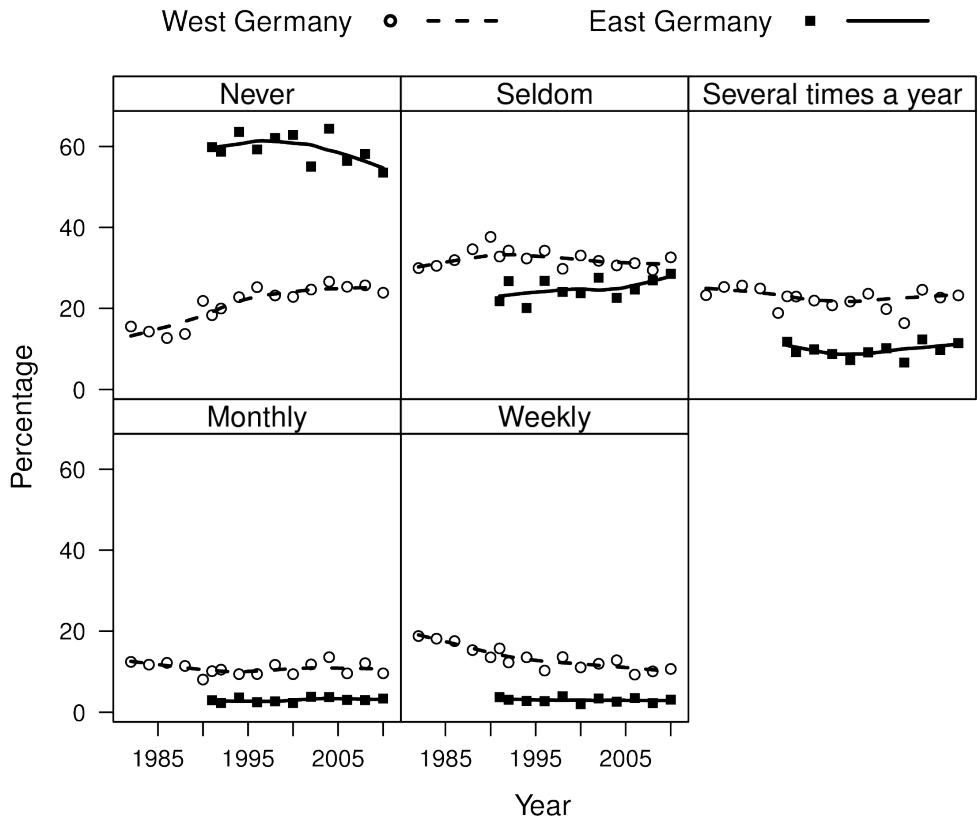
Figure 1: Christian Democrats' Vote share and government representation after the Second World War



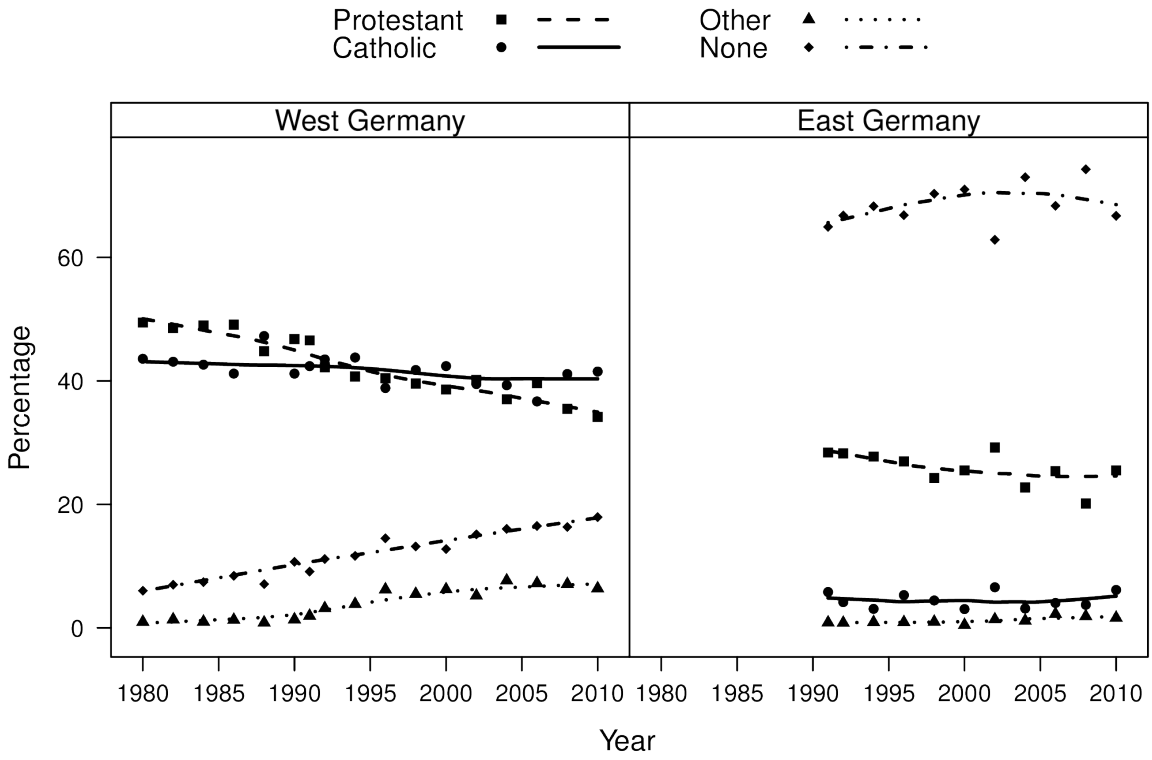
Source: http://www.wahlrecht.de/ergebnisse/bundestag.htm

Figure 2: Development of Church Attendance in Germany, 1980-2010



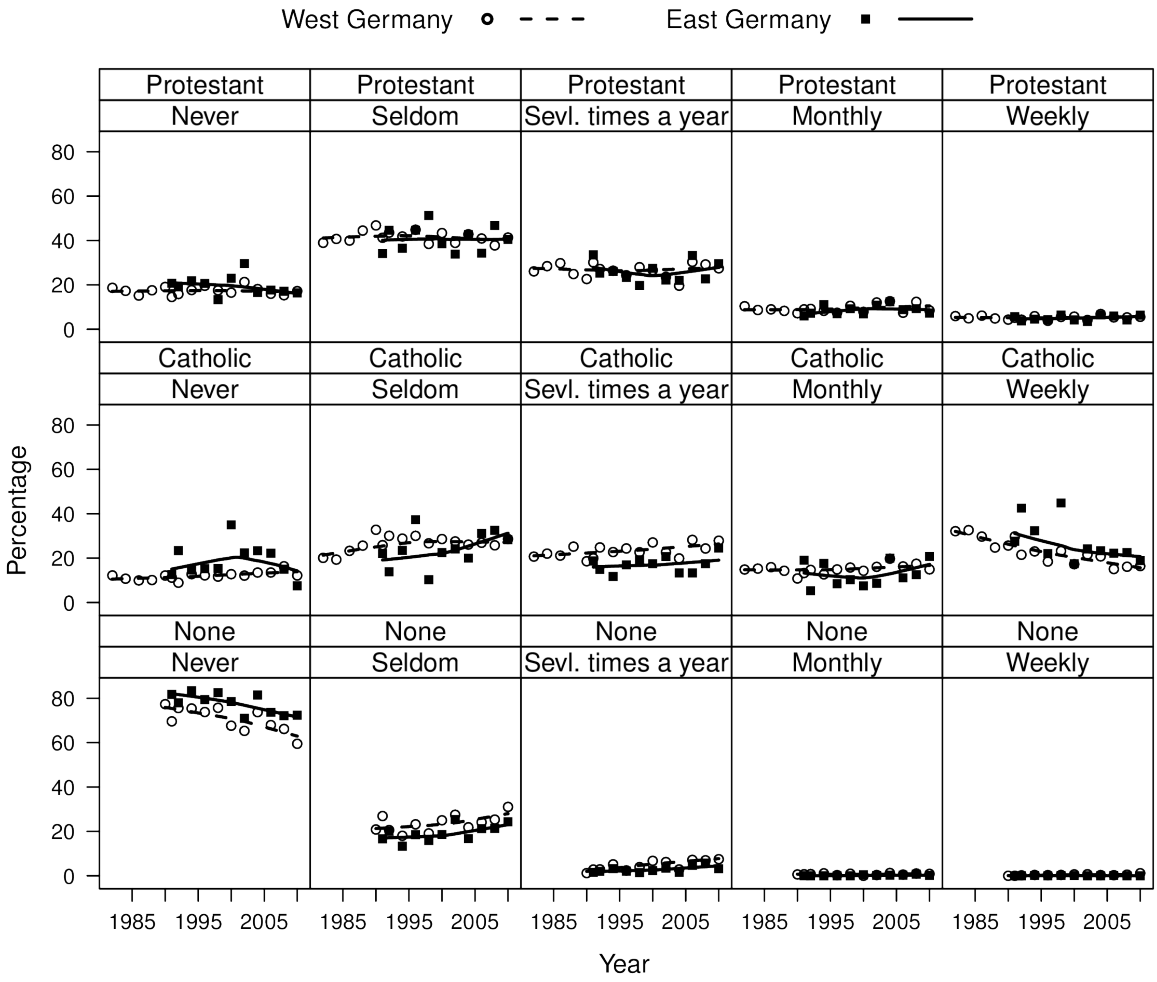
Note: The diagrams show per-survey percentages of respondents from West Germany and East Germany reporting to attend church never, seldom, several times a year, monthly and weekly.

Figure 3: The Development of Religious Denomination in Germany, 1980-2010



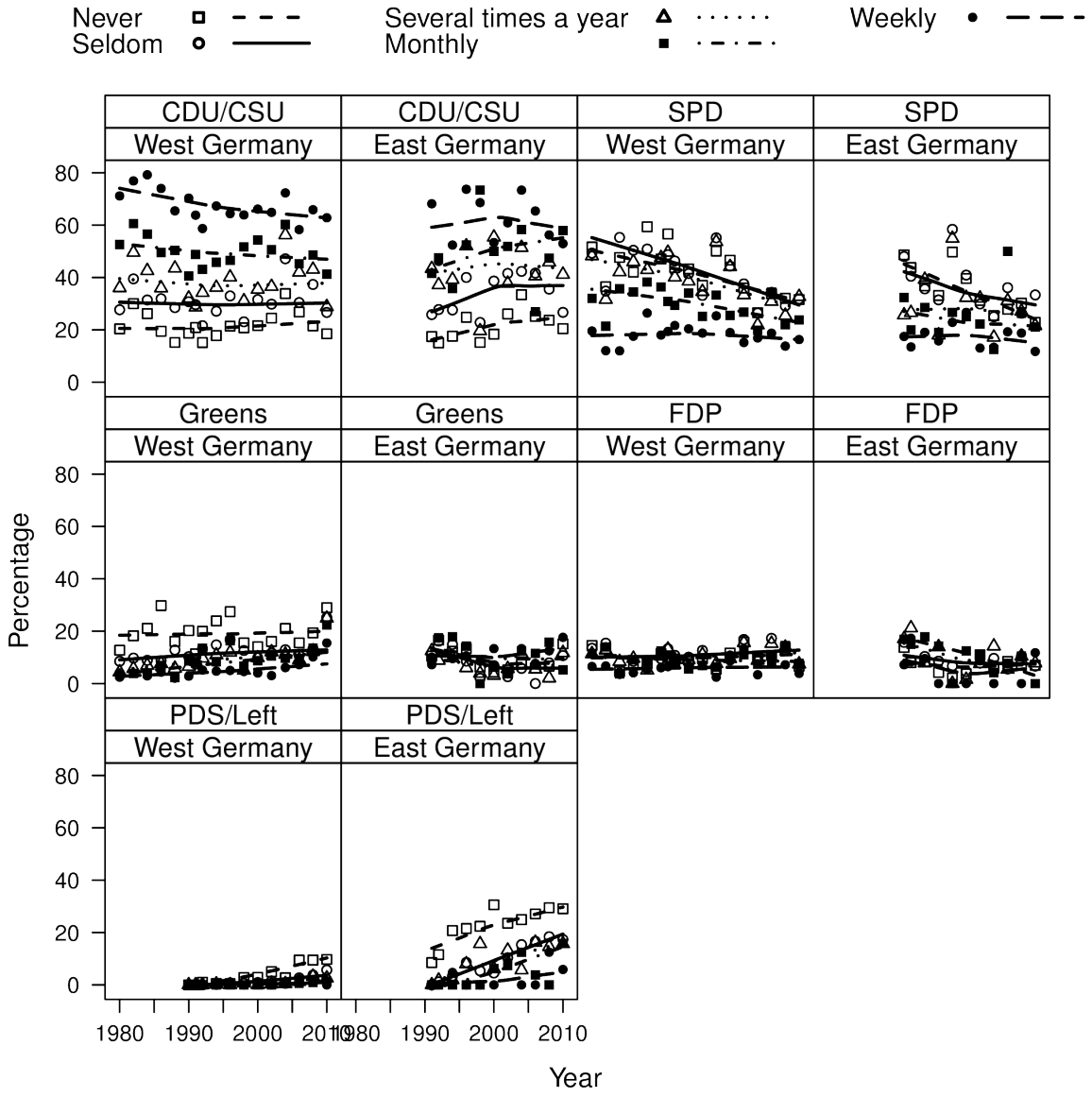
Note: The diagrams show per-survey percentages of respondents from West Germany and East Germany reporting to be member of the Protestant, Catholic or another church or no church at all..

Figure 4: Development of Church Attendance among Protestants and Catholics in Germany, 1980-2010



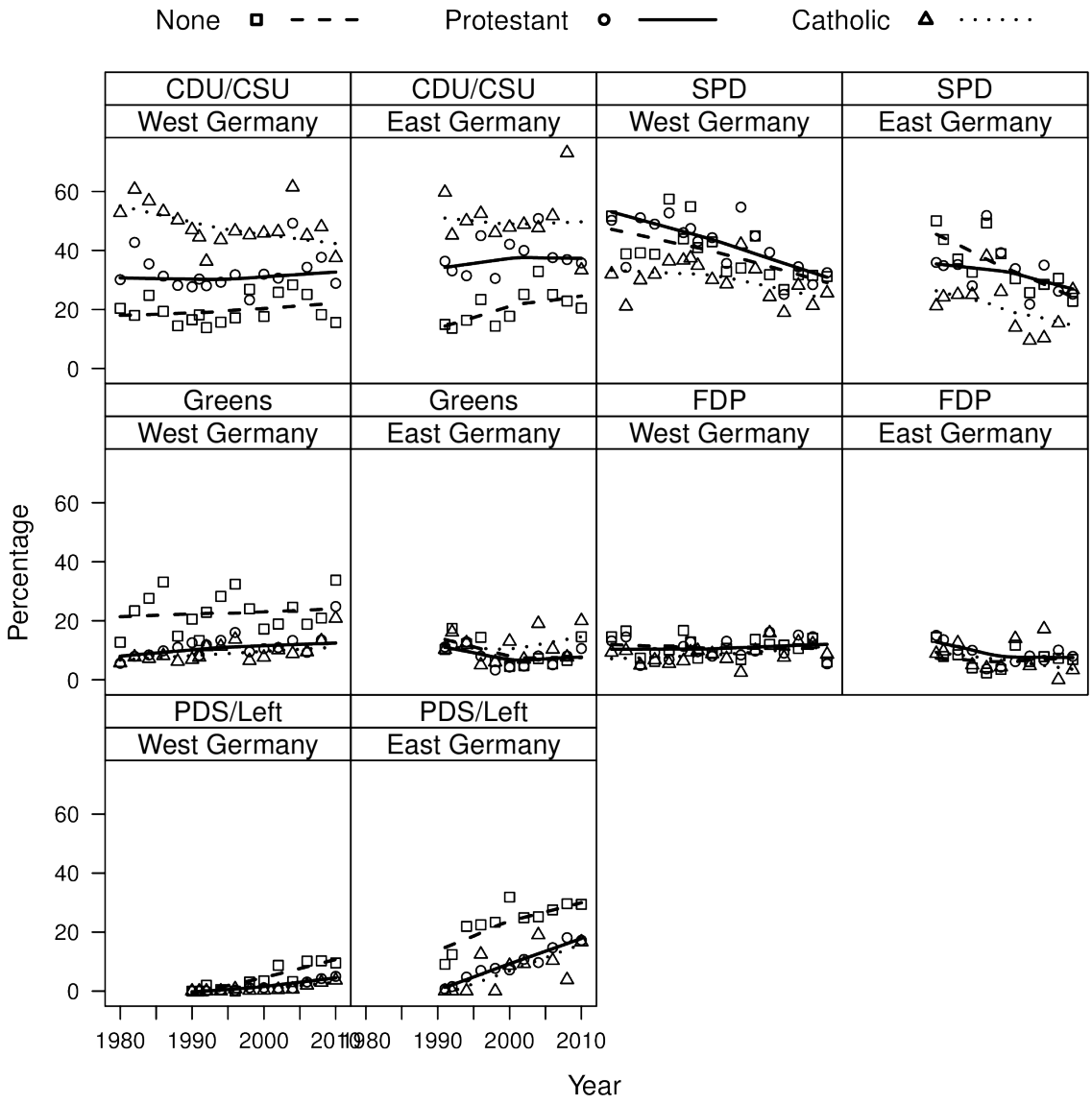
Note: The diagrams show per-survey percentages of respondents from West Germany and East Germany reporting to be member of the Protestant, Catholic or another church or no church at all and to attend church never, seldom, several times a year, monthly and weekly.

Figure 5: Church attendance and vote intention in Germany, 1980-2010



Note: The diagrams show per-survey percentages of respondents who report the intention to vote for the CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens, FDP, or PDS/Linke, broken down by region (West Germany / East Germany) and church-attendance.

Figure 6: Religious denomination and vote intention in Germany 1980-2010



Note: The diagrams show per-survey percentages of respondents who report the intention to vote for the CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens, FDP, or PDS/Linke, broken down by region (West Germany / East Germany) and religious (non-)affiliation.

Table 1: Likelihood-ratio tests comparing binomial logit models of the development of membership in the Protestant church (relative to having no church membership)

	Deviance	df	LR Chi-squared	p
Model A0 (no trend)	33684.3			
Model A1 (simple trend) vs. A0	33327.4	1	356.9	0.000 ***
Model A2 (region-gender interaction) vs. A1	33323.9	1	3.5	0.060
Model A3 (region-time interaction) vs. A1	33294.6	1	32.8	0.000 ***
Model A4 (time-gender interaction) vs. A3	33290.4	1	4.1	0.042 *
Model A5 (birth year) vs. A4	32824.5	1	429.2	0.000 ***
Model A6 (region-birth year) vs. A5	32758.0	1	66.5	0.000 ***

Note: The table shows model deviances, differences in degrees of freedom of the models compared (df), values of the likelihood-ratio chi-squared statistic and the associated p-values. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. The test of Model A5 vs A1 was conducted with a smaller sample than the test of Model B4 vs B1, because of missing values in the year of birth variable.

Table 2: Likelihood-ratio tests comparing cumulative logit models of the development of membership in the Protestant church (relative to having no church membership)

	Deviance	df	LR Chi-squared	p
Model B0 (no trend)	52161.8			
Model B1 (simple trend) vs B0	52014.5	1	147.2	0.000 ***
Model B2 (region-gender interaction) vs B1	52014.5	1	0.0	0.903
Model B3 (region-year interaction) vs B1	52014.5	1	0.0	0.981
Model B4 (gender-year interaction) vs B1	52012.5	1	2.0	0.155
Model B5 (birth year effect) vs B1	50733.2	1	1219.5	0.000 ***
Model B6 (region-birth year interaction) vs B5	50683.6	1	49.5	0.000 ***

Note: The table shows model deviances, differences in degrees of freedom of the models compared (df), values of the likelihood-ratio chi-squared statistic and the associated p-values. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. The test of Model B5 vs B1 was conducted with a smaller sample than the test of Model B4 vs B1, because of missing values in the year of birth variable.

Table 3: Estimates of the final models of change in church-affiliation (Protestants vs non-affiliated) and of church-attendance among Catholics.

	Model A6	Model B6
Region: East/West	-2.380***	-0.285**
	(0.046)	(0.090)
Gender: Women/Men	0.475***	0.409***
	(0.035)	(0.028)
Education: Medium/Low	-0.399***	0.018
	(0.034)	(0.035)
Education: High/Low	-0.530***	0.026
	(0.036)	(0.038)
Time	-0.258***	0.034
	(0.026)	(0.018)
Year of birth	-0.134***	-0.313***
	(0.011)	(0.009)
Gender x Time	-0.080*	
	(0.035)	
Region x Time	0.325***	
	(0.046)	
Region x Year of Birth	-0.144***	0.349***
	(0.018)	(0.049)
Intercept	1.483***	
	(0.030)	
Threshold: Never/Seldom		-1.921***
		(0.031)
Threshold: Seldom/Several times a year		-0.332***
		(0.026)
Threshold: Several times a year/Monthly		0.669***
		(0.026)
Threshold: Monthly/Weekly		1.428***
		(0.028)
Deviance	32757.975	50683.609
Log-likelihood	-16378.988	-25341.804
N	32194	16749

Note: The table shows estimates of the parameters of a binomial logit model (Model A6) and a cumulative logit model (B6), with standard errors in parentheses. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 4: Likelihood-ratio tests comparing multinomial logit models of the influence of religious denomination, church-attendance, social background, and left-right self-placement, West Germany only.

	Deviance			p
Model C0 (no trend)	48797.0			
Model C1 (simple trend) vs C0	48403.4	4	393.6	0.000 ***
Model C2 (interactions of controls with time) vs C1	48323.0	28	80.4	0.000 ***
Model C3 (interactions of churcht attendance and affiliation with time) vs C2	48234.6	28	88.4	0.000 ***
Model C4 (left-right placement) vs C3	39088.4	4	4894.5	0.000 ***
Model C5 (interaction of left-right placement with time) vs C4	39057.1	4	31.3	0.000 ***

Note: The table shows model deviances, differences in degrees of freedom of the models compared (df), values of the likelihood-ratio chi-squared statistic and the associated p-values. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. The test of Model C4 vs C3 was conducted with a smaller sample than the test of Model C3 vs C2, because of missing values in the left-right self-placement variable.

Table 5: Likelihood-ratio tests comparing multinomial logit models of the influence of religious denomination, church-attendance, social background, and left-right self-placement, East Germany only.

	Deviance	Df	Chisq	p
Model C0 (no trend)	16259.5			
Model C1 (simple trend) vs C0	15994.6	4	264.9	0.000 ***
Model C2 (interactions of controls with time) vs C1	15915.7	28	78.9	0.000 ***
Model C3 (interactions of church attendance and affiliation with time) vs C2	15863.9	28	51.8	0.004 **
Model C4 (left-right placement) vs C3	14371.3	4	1212.5	0.000 ***
Model C5 (interaction of left-right placement with time) vs C4	14355.5	4	15.8	0.003 **

Note: The table shows model deviances, differences in degrees of freedom of the models compared (df), values of the likelihood-ratio chi-squared statistic and the associated p-values. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. The test of Model C4 vs C3 was conducted with a smaller sample than the test of Model C3 vs C2, because of missing values in the left-right self-placement variable.

Table 6: Estimates of the coefficients of the main and interactions of religious denomination and church attendance in the final multinomial logit model of vote intention in West Germany

	SPD vs. CDU/CSU	Greens vs. CDU/CSU	FDP vs. CDU/CSU	PDS/Left vs. CDU/CSU
Intercept	5.122***	3.551***	0.432*	1.428
	(0.160)	(0.197)	(0.207)	(0.946)
Denomination: Other/None	0.923***	1.229***	0.766*	-2.384
	(0.259)	(0.337)	(0.337)	(3.542)
Denomination: Protestant/None	-0.069	-0.285	0.002	-1.207
	(0.143)	(0.170)	(0.183)	(0.669)
Denomination: Catholic/None	-0.520***	-0.422*	-0.425*	-2.039*
	(0.145)	(0.172)	(0.186)	(0.831)
Church-att: Seldom/Never	-0.120	-0.386***	0.169	-0.735
	(0.074)	(0.098)	(0.103)	(0.650)
Church-att: Several times a year/Never	-0.356***	-0.872***	-0.167	-2.061
	(0.077)	(0.110)	(0.109)	(1.147)
Church-att: Monthly/Never	-0.763***	-1.181***	-0.429***	-4.184
	(0.089)	(0.137)	(0.125)	(2.962)
Church-att: Weekly/Never	-1.392***	-1.899***	-1.019***	-1.453
	(0.090)	(0.147)	(0.128)	(1.300)
Time	-0.416**	-0.026	-0.361	2.351***
	(0.158)	(0.194)	(0.200)	(0.639)
L-R self-placement	-0.725***	-0.812***	-0.286***	-1.310***
	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.193)
Denomination: Other x Time	-0.218	-0.663*	-0.423	1.224
	(0.232)	(0.299)	(0.303)	(2.130)
Denomination: Protestant x Time	0.056	-0.109	-0.067	0.342
	(0.133)	(0.156)	(0.164)	(0.454)
Denomination: Catholic x Time	0.100	-0.229	0.045	0.504
	(0.134)	(0.159)	(0.167)	(0.547)
Church-att: Seldom x Time	-0.130	0.031	-0.240*	-0.024
	(0.079)	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.433)
Church-att: Several times a year x Time	-0.077	0.272*	-0.160	0.417
	(0.082)	(0.113)	(0.110)	(0.739)
Church-att: Monthly x Time	0.018	0.443**	-0.277*	1.199
	(0.095)	(0.137)	(0.127)	(1.780)
Church-att: Weekly x Time	0.092	0.509***	-0.148	-0.258
	(0.100)	(0.153)	(0.136)	(0.890)
Time x L-R self	0.015	-0.027	0.092***	0.066
	(0.016)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.127)
Deviance	39057.1			
Log-likelihood	-19528.6			
N	19210			

Note: The table shows estimates of the parameters of a multinomial logit model (Model C5) with standard errors in parentheses. Main and interaction effect coefficients of gender, education and class are not shown. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 7: Estimates of the coefficients of the main and interactions of religious denomination and church attendance in the final multinomial logit model of vote intention in East Germany

	SPD vs. CDU/CSU	Greens vs. CDU/CSU	FDP vs. CDU/CSU	PDS/Left vs. CDU/CSU
(Intercept)	3.746***	2.316***	0.479	4.083***
	(0.280)	(0.390)	(0.387)	(0.369)
Other	0.990	1.317	0.972	-0.199
	(0.941)	(1.080)	(1.116)	(1.912)
Protestant	-0.541**	-0.530*	-0.252	-1.565***
	(0.183)	(0.270)	(0.262)	(0.316)
Catholic	-0.656*	-0.339	-0.943*	-1.467*
	(0.329)	(0.438)	(0.467)	(0.717)
Seldom	-0.024	0.132	-0.111	-0.579*
	(0.178)	(0.250)	(0.257)	(0.262)
Several times a year	-0.876***	-0.213	0.152	-0.949*
	(0.249)	(0.352)	(0.326)	(0.423)
Monthly	-0.866*	-0.007	0.410	-1.781
	(0.389)	(0.541)	(0.477)	(1.158)
Weekly	-1.287**	-0.327	-0.300	-1.827
	(0.421)	(0.539)	(0.545)	(1.263)
Time	-0.363	-0.983*	-1.147**	0.260
	(0.267)	(0.414)	(0.405)	(0.321)
L-R self-placement	-0.520***	-0.714***	-0.260***	-1.128***
	(0.046)	(0.066)	(0.060)	(0.070)
Other x Time	-0.673	-0.726	-0.947	0.682
	(0.824)	(1.150)	(1.278)	(1.415)
Protestant x Time	0.329	0.383	-0.020	0.766**
	(0.175)	(0.285)	(0.265)	(0.256)
Catholic x Time	-0.244	0.354	0.655	0.057
	(0.335)	(0.438)	(0.444)	(0.590)
Seldom x Time	-0.040	-0.317	0.115	0.150
	(0.163)	(0.256)	(0.242)	(0.215)
Several times a year x Time	0.543*	-0.019	-0.032	0.354
	(0.229)	(0.360)	(0.327)	(0.333)
Monthly x Time	0.437	-0.215	-0.189	0.255
	(0.359)	(0.535)	(0.497)	(0.840)
Weekly x Time	0.169	-0.172	-0.614	-0.234
	(0.418)	(0.562)	(0.644)	(0.969)
Time x L-R self	-0.024	0.001	0.112	0.152*
	(0.044)	(0.069)	(0.061)	(0.059)
Deviance	14355.5			
Log-likelihood	-7177.7			
N	5752			

Note: The table shows estimates of the parameters of a multinomial logit model (Model C5) with standard errors in parentheses. Main and interaction effect coefficients of gender, education and class are not shown. ***: $p < .001$, **: $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.