

Abstract

The submitted diploma thesis deals with Christian Democratic political parties in the political systems of Scandinavian and Baltic countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia and Latvia. These parties form a unique "Nordic" branch of European political Protestantism; and structurally and functionally distinctive, but to a great degree homogenous, subgroup of Christian democracy. A major theoretical tradition to be applied is the Rokkanian party system analysis. Contrary to its counterparts on the continent, the Nordic branch grew not from a church-based defence stance against a secular state, but from both territorial and religious dissent on the periphery. The "cultural periphery" analysis relies heavily on history and geography of religion of the Nordic countries. However, other theoretical perspectives are taken as well in order to compare different aspects of the parties' affiliations and policies, such as their cabinet policies, ideology or EC/EU attitudes. In another chapter, possibilities and limits of Christian democracy in the Lutheran environment of Latvia and Estonia are examined. Is Scandinavian experience portable? Or are there other ways of Christian political mobilization used in the public spheres of the two Baltic countries? A similar theoretical framework is applied, albeit the regime type comes in as a major intervening variable. In the concluding chapter, I contextualize the findings by confronting them with the European secularization theory debate, running mainly under the domain of the sociology of religion. A broader perspective on the social and the political function of the organized religion in the Lutheran Balto-Scandinavian region may lead to a better understanding of these parties' identities, but also to a more thorough understanding of protestant political engagement in general.