

European Identity and religious cultures



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* Picture front page: Martin Luther accused by the Catholic clergy at the Diet of Worms 1521.

Summary

The current existential crisis that the EU is currently going through, where the ‘permissive consensus’ of recent decades waned and has turned into a ‘constraining dissensus, has made the issue of a ‘European identity’ more salient than ever. The question of a ‘European identity’ is important because if the EU is to be durable, and further widening and deepening integration to succeed, decision-making of the EU must be viewed as ‘legitimate and democratic’ and enjoy wide public support. (Delanty, 1995:7-8) But right now the most important hurdle on the way to a democratic Europe is ‘the lack of a shared identity that can supply it with legitimacy.’ (Scharpf 1999:672) Research on the issue of a ‘European identity’ shows that most scholars have only analyzed economic, political, and cultural factors to explain what can engender feelings of belonging, solidarity and community that act as a ‘thick social glue’ between European citizens divided by language, nationality, class, ethnicity etc., for the emergence of a shared European identity. But these factors, as is evident today, have not been capable of engendering the necessary conditions to enable the emergence of a shared European identity. Therefore in this thesis I have chosen to look at the issue of European identity from a totally different perspective: religion. In this thesis I analyze if religion can be a contributing factor to the emergence of a European identity, by looking at the two main religious cultures and the division between them that has shaped Europe for the last 400 years: Catholicism and Protestantism. The division between two major European religious traditions is reflected in the past and present conflict over the nature and purpose of Europe and [European] integration. (Nelsen & Guth, 2003:3) In fact, anti-European or pro-European sentiments can be explained by looking at the historical divergence between Catholic and Protestant cultures: Protestant states often had/have a strong relationship between the Protestant church and the national political authorities, which often resulted in a strong religious cultural affection for the nation state and a strong refusal of Catholic universalism. (Scherer, 2014: 893-909) Nelsen and Guth, and Scherer’s claims are used then to examine whether Protestantism and Catholicism still are capable of mobilizing their members for or against the EU by asking the research question: ‘*Have religious cultures contributed to the shaping of public attitudes towards the EU in the UK from 1990-2016?*’

I will measure the impact of Protestantism and Catholicism on public attitudes towards the EU by looking at the *voting behavior* of Protestants and Catholics in the UK between 1990 and 2016.

I use the following three hypotheses that are derived from my theoretical framework to analyze the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants:

H1) Protestants are more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties, like the Conservative party and UKIP, while Catholics are more positive about the EU and thus more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour.

H1 for Brexit) Protestants were more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to have voted 'Leave', while Catholics are more pro-Europe and thus much more inclined to vote 'Remain'

H2) devoted Protestants were increasingly more skeptic and hostile towards the EU than nominal Protestants and thus are more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties than nominal Protestants, while devoted Catholics are more supportive of the EU than nominal Catholics and thus more inclined to vote for pro-European parties.

H3) older Protestants and Catholics vote differently than younger Protestants and Catholics: older Protestants and Catholics are more inclined to vote for the Conservative party and UKIP than younger generations who are more inclined to vote Labour.

I choose a quantitative social-scientific approach to test these three hypotheses and answer my research question, which means I use actual data on voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics from the General elections of 1992, 1997, 2010, 2015 in the UK and Brexit. In the second chapter I look briefly at the question how Protestant and Catholic cultures have played a role in shaping political and public attitudes and the 'permissive consensus' that allowed elites to push European unity forward in the first decades after WWII. In the third chapter I analyze the voting behavior of both groups by looking at data from the GE1992 and GE1997 to test H1-H3. The data shows that we can largely confirm our three hypotheses for both GE1992 and GE1997 which shows that Protestants had much indeed much more negative attitude towards the EC than Catholics, who were much more positive towards the EC. In the fourth chapter I analyze the voting behavior of both groups by looking at the data for voting behavior for the GE2010, GE2015 and Brexit to test H1-H3. Data shows that we can largely confirm H1 and H3, but not H2. Finally in the last chapter we interpret what the result of chapter two and three means for our researchquestion. My research shows that there is indeed a difference in attitudes towards the EU: Catholics have much warmer attitudes towards the EU than Protestants, since Catholics were much more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour or the SNP, and voted 'Remain' in the EU-referendum, while Protestants were much more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties like the Conservative Party and UKIP, and voted 'Leave' in the EU-referendum. This has obvious implications for the question what role religion can play in contributing to the emergence of a European identity. I then conclude by pointing out that as long as the two main *religious cultures* in the EU are at odds with each other, which impacts their member's attitudes towards the EU, we cannot expect *religion* to contribute to the emergence of a shared European identity. At the same time however the result of voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants from 1990-2016 does demand the acknowledgement of the fact that religion, despite advanced secularization on the European continent, does play a role in the issue of European identity. In other words, my research mainly shows that the issue of European identity does not only have a economic, political and social dimension, but also a religious dimension that should be taken into account in the decision-making processes of the EU and/or when we ask the question: what is the EU?

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ABBREVIATIONS

CofE	Church of England
CofSc	Church of Scotland
BES	British Election Study
BSA	British Social Attitudes
EB	Eurobarometer
EC	European Community
GE1992	General Election 1992
GE1997	General Election 1997
GE2010	General Election 2010
GE2015	General Election 2015
Lib Dem	Liberal Democrats
SNP	Scottish National Party
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party

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I Introduction

In 1992 Jacques Delors former president of the Commission said “*each of us must contribute to the building of Europe. Each of us must feel involved. The task includes the shaping of a people's Europe, and (...) broadening support for our shared venture if we are to create an open and effective community*”. (EC, 1992:1) Come 2017 and this ‘shared venture’ is in great danger: the rejection of the European constitution in 2005, the Euro and refugee crisis, the erosion of the welfare state, terrorist attacks, and finally Brexit all brought the underlying cultural and political differences among EU-member states to the fore. These events have had two consequences. First, while the EU has dealt with crises in the past, this time the crisis is ‘existential’: the tensions are threatening the cohesive force of the ‘peace, prosperity and solidarity-narrative that held the EU together for decades. Second, European decision-making has become much more contested since the ‘permissive consensus’ of recent decades waned and turned into a ‘constraining dissensus.’ (Hooge & Marks, 2009) These two consequences have in turn made the question of a ‘European identity’ more salient than ever: when integration progressed during prosperous times, a European identity was not necessary to reach a workable modus vivendi. (EuroNews, 2016) However the last crises have proofed that this modus vivendi has become unsustainable. (EC, 2004: 5-8) If the EU is to be durable, and further widening and deepening integration to succeed, decision-making of the EU must be viewed as ‘legitimate and democratic’ and enjoy wide public support. (Delanty, 1995:7-8) But according to Fritz Willem Scharpf the most important hurdle on the way to a democratic Europe is ‘the lack of a shared identity that can supply it with legitimacy.’ (Scharpf 1999:672) Thus a European identity, where at the basic level citizens share the same values that lead to a growing sense of ‘belonging’, identification with and solidarity for the ‘Other’ Europeans, plays a huge role in strengthening the legitimacy of European decision-making. This is why former president of the Commission Romano Prodi declared that ‘*Europe needs a soul: a shared sense of common identity and common destiny*.’ (Europa.EU, 2001)

Theories on the issue of European identity can roughly be divided into three categories: cultural, civic, and social constructivist. Cultural theories refer to a perceived pre-national past when political and intellectual elites across Europe shared the same cultural, linguistic, philosophical and religious framework. This theory claims that modern Europe has forgotten its historical roots, and that this forgotten sense of community needs to be re-established for a European identity to reemerge. (Walkenhorst, 2009:8-9) However, Anthony Smith point to an obvious problem with this theory: a European identity cannot be created by the same components as those for a national identity, because Europeans are too diverse to find any real shared characteristics, and that while national identity is vivid, well established, long popularized and still widely believed in, ‘Europe is deficient both as idea and as process because it lacks a common history which can provide it with emotional sustenance and historical depth to create a transnational collective identity.’ (Smith, 1992:62) In contrast are the civic theories, most notably represented by Habermas, that reject the idea of a need for a shared culture, history, religion, language or ethnicity, because what is needed is not an ‘ethnos’ but a ‘demos.’

Therefore they support the idea of shared beliefs in democratic, cosmopolitan *secular* values and practices, such as, equality, rule of law, human rights, citizenship, civicism, representation and participation. These shared values are preferably inscribed in a European constitution that over time creates loyalty towards this constitution, much like American loyalty towards the US Constitution. **(Habermas, 2001)** However, Heiko Walkenhorst points out that the civic theory suffers from ‘qualitative dissimilarity to national citizenship.’ Walkenhorst rightly points out that European citizenship cannot supplant national identities because it doesn’t carry the same legal, social and symbolic meaning for citizens of European states. Most importantly however, the secular cosmopolitan values have not been able to supplant national and religious norms and values, but have just created a layer above them. **(Walkenhorst, 2009:11-12)** The social constructivist theory has tried to move beyond the shortcomings of the above two, uniting them by emphasizing that ‘a European identity is not static but a social construction: it can be shaped and changed by Europeans themselves.’ **(Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009:8)** Micheal Bruter for example believes that on the one hand the civic element of shared cosmopolitan and democratic values can help individuals identify themselves with the political structure of the EU, while on the other hand cultural elements are still important for the creation of the feeling of ‘belonging to a group’ by contrasting them with groups from different cultures. If used correctly, both elements can stimulate feelings of a sense of ‘belonging and community’ among Europeans. **(Bruter, 2004:186-189)** Thus what is needed, according to Walkenhorst, is a process of ‘mutual constitutiveness of social structures’, intersubjectivity and communicative action, the identification of an out-group, thereby engendering the necessary conditions, social cohesion, feelings of belonging, solidarity and community, that act as a ‘thick social glue’ between European citizens divided by language, nationality, class, ethnicity and other social markers, for the emergence of a shared European identity. **(Walkenhorst, 2009:13)**

These theories on ‘European identity’ show that most scholars have only analyzed economic, political, and cultural factors to explain what can engender feelings of belonging, solidarity and community that act as a ‘thick social glue’ between European citizens divided by language, nationality, class, ethnicity etc., for the emergence of a shared European identity. But these factors, as is evident today, have not been capable of engendering the necessary conditions to enable the emergence of a European identity. Or as Jacques Delors once said: “People do not fall in love with the single market.” **(CVCE.EU, 1989)** Furthermore, these factors have not been capable of stopping the re-emergence of strong nationalistic sentiments in the public sphere: far right-wing parties across the EU have effectively hijacked the debate about the EU in the last 15 years in a way that has brought back strong nationalistic sentiments and the ‘us vs them’ rhetoric among Europeans. And the fact that European politics, the European economic market and European institutions *on their own* have no power to engender the conditions necessary for the emergence of a European identity, forces us to look further to see which other factors do have the power to engender feelings of ‘belonging, community and solidarity’ between European citizens and thus can contribute to the emergence of a European identity. And these theories on the issue of ‘European Identity’ also show that scholars and scientists have largely neglected the possibility of *religion* as a *contributing* factor to engender these feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, probably because they too assumed that since religion today plays no role in the public sphere it has no social force to engender the conditions necessary for the emergence of a European identity. **(Nelsen, Guth & Fraser, 2001)**

However, the possibility of religion as a *contributing* factor to the emergence of a European identity should be analyzed for several reasons. First, Brent Nelsen and James Guth point to the fact that the EU and its institutions have their ideological foundation in Judeo-Christian doctrine that shaped European and western societies in crucial ways: certain value-based principles and concepts developed largely within a Judeo-Christian cultural context. Furthermore, the Christian Democratic founders of the EU were mostly devout Catholics who saw themselves as ‘national identity constructors that sought common symbols grounding them in Christian or Carolingian iconography.’ (Nelsen & Guth, 2015:2) Second, Danièle Hervieu-Léger shows that religion can attribute to the creation of a European identity, because religion can offer shared frameworks of meanings, morals, and values that have the power to engage and influence citizens’ perceptions, attitudes and behavior. (Hervieu-Léger, 2005:45-47) Third, Nelsen also points to the fact that religious values have a strong transnational element that transcendent national, ethnic, gender and class boundaries. (Nelsen, Guth & Fraser, 2001:193) Finally, religion also has the power to draw imaginary boundaries, facilitating the identification of an in-group vs. the out-group, i.e. the ‘Other’ that has a different value and institutional system, which helps to create feelings of belonging and community within the in-group. (Bohn & Hahn, 2002:10)

But while it is now tempting research the possibility of *religion* contributing to the emergence of a European identity, at the same time we must take a step back and acknowledge the differences in *religious cultures* throughout Europe that have played a huge role in shaping European societies in the past few centuries: Protestantism and Catholicism. ‘Religious cultures’ refers to the denominations within a religion that operate largely under a common name, tradition, and identity and share broadly similar beliefs, practices, and historical ties with other denominations within the overarching religion, but which have their own doctrines and church authority. So when we speak of ‘religious cultures’ in this thesis we are speaking about the different ‘denominations’ within Christianity. What is important to understand is that while Protestantism and Catholicism are known to have broadly similar beliefs, practices and historical ties, they differ on certain issues such as the authority of the church, the apostolic succession and other doctrines that separate them from each other. (Niehbuhr 2004) This is important to keep in mind because despite decades of secularization, most countries in Europe can still be divided along the confessional lines of Protestantism and Catholicism. According to Nelsen and Guth ‘the division between the confessional communities in Europe reflects a conflict over the nature and purpose of [European] integration, a conflict rooted in the major European religious traditions.’ (Nelsen & Guth, 2003:3) In fact, Margarete Scherer claims that anti-European or pro-European sentiments can be explained by looking at the historical divergence between Catholic and Protestant cultures: Protestant states often had/have a strong relationship between the Protestant church and the national political authorities, which often resulted in a strong religious cultural affection for the nation state and a strong refusal of Catholic universalism. (Scherer, 2014: 893-909) And if Nelsen & Guth and Scherer are right that the conflict over European integration and euroscepticism are rooted in the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism, then this has implications for our aforementioned assertion that religion ‘can be a contributing factor to the emergence of a European identity.’

The implication is that before we can assert with confidence that ‘religion can contribute to the emergence of a European identity’ we need to understand that

- 1) the difference between the two religious cultures and what this means for the way they mobilize their members’ opinions towards the EU,
- 2) and whether the difference between these religious cultures *might* be a/the hurdle to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, and thus a hurdle to the emergence of a European identity.

In other words, before we can find an answer to the question whether *religion* can be a contributing factor to the emergence of European identity, we first need to understand the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism and whether these *religious cultures* still affect their members’ attitudes towards the EU. Therefore in this essay I will research the question: *Have religious cultures contributed to the shaping of public attitudes towards the EU in the UK from 1990-2016?*

Data and Methods

Before I explain my theoretical framework and the data that we will use to answer my research question, I first need to elaborate on the exact meaning of the research question. When we ask whether ‘religious cultures have contributed to the shaping of ‘attitudes towards the EU’, it means whether Protestant and Catholic cultures *have contributed and still contribute to the support for the EU* or whether they *have contributed and still contribute to the current ‘constraining public dissensus’ towards and rejection of the EU?* Furthermore, when we speak of researching ‘public attitudes’ I mean that in this thesis I will measure the impact of Protestantism and Catholicism on public attitudes towards the EU by looking at the *voting behavior* of Protestants and Catholics. Furthermore, the choice for the UK is because of its historical dominant Protestant culture, and smaller number of Catholics, which helps us to make a comparative analysis between Catholic and Protestant attitudes towards the EU. Furthermore, several studies done found that the UK is the most Euroskeptical county of the EU.

Furthermore, the choice for periods of 1990-2016 was made for several reasons. a) According to some scholars and historians the world pre-9/11 is a different world than the world post-9/11: true, tensions between different ethnic groups and states were already present but they were exacerbated by 9/11 and the ensuing ‘War on Terror’ that ushered the world in either complete meltdown of societal stability (Middle East), or caused (exacerbation of) great religious, societal and ethnic tensions between different groups (terrorism, populism etc.) It is therefore interesting to see whether 9/11 indeed has had such an impact, by not analysing the difference between Catholics and Protestants, but also whether there is a difference between the attitudes of both groups pre- and post-9/11. Therefore we will first look at the period of 1990-2000. Choosing the period of 1990-2000 makes sense since the 1990s started with huge optimism and even euphoria about the future. In fact, according to Francis Fukuyama, the fall of the SU was not only just the end of the Cold War, but also ‘the end of history as such.’ Fukuyama was convinced that liberalism had won as the best and final form of human government, which meant the end of mankind’s ideological evolution. **(Fukuyama, 1992:3-18)** But many other scholars disagreed, like Samuel Huntington who hypothesized that humanity did not reach the end of history since culture and religions would become the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world. **(Huntington 1993)**

When we look at the 1990s we signs that at first seem to confirm Fukuyama's thesis such as the closer international relations and corporation (the establishment of the EU for example) between states. However, soon we see signs that seem to confirm Huntington's thesis, such as the signs of a global religious revival that had a huge impact international relations and politics, one which continues today. **(Rodriquez, 2012; Micklethwait and Wooldridge, 2010)** Furthermore, we see the early signs of conflict between different cultures and religions (Gulf War, Rwandan Genocide etc.) Yet, despite these tensions the atmosphere in international relations in the 1990s was still much more optimistic than today, and the tensions between different cultural and religious groups had not yet reached the boiling point that is has today. All of this makes the period of 1990-2000 interesting to look at.

b) The reason for the period of 2009-2016 is that this period represents the culmination of several crises in the world and the EU, which made the question of a European Identity more salient than ever. The reason is that these crises brought the underlying cultural and political differences *between* Europeans to the fore, i.e. cultural and political differences which also relate to the issue of different *religious* cultures in Europe. When we speak of 'culmination of several crises' what it meant is the 'War on Terror' and the ensuing invasion in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003, that showed very clearly the underlying cultural and political differences between Europeans: while the Germans and French were vehemently against the 2003 US-invasion in Iraq and condemned it as a disrespect for international law and the UN, a.o. the British, Spanish, Italian and the Dutch supported and participated in the 'Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), also known as 'the Coalition of the Willing'. **(Habermas and Derrida, 2003)** The invocation of NATO's article 5 and the ensuing interventions caused internal tension and strive among the EU-members. Furthermore, the rejection of the European constitution in 2005 by two of the EU's founding members was not only a huge blow to the European integration project; it was another (early) clear sign of cultural and political differences between EU-member states. According to Nick Startin and André Krouwel the crisis only benefitted the eurosceptics and the radical right who would use this to galvanize the already increasing Euroscepticism within the EU. **(Startin and Krouwel, 2012)** In addition, it was the Eurozone crisis starting in 2009 that really brought the underlying cultural and political differences to the fore: the inception and the handling of crisis are, according to Frank Bohn and Eelke de Jong, rooted in the North-South cultural divide that in turn has its roots in the reformation. **(Bohn & de Jong 2011)** Then, the refugee crisis, born out of the Syrian Civil War and the chaos left behind by the US that led to the rise of ISIS in Iraq, did not just bring tension and division over how to solve the huge influx of refugees, but even more, caused a huge surge in the kind of nationalistic rhetoric that many thought Europe had left behind in 1945. This crisis further fuelled the raging Euroscepticism among constituents in many European member states and xenophobia that would even play a part in Brexit. And then Brexit happened that dealt another huge blow to the EU, while it was still reeling from the Euro and refugee crisis. Brexit showed very clearly that, despite secularism being highly advanced throughout the EU, Scherer's conclusion, that there is a considerably higher prevalence of Euroscepticism in traditionally Protestant countries, definitely holds true for the UK. In fact, the final result showed that predominantly protestant parts of the UK like England and Wales voted overwhelmingly for 'Leave' while the predominantly catholic part of the UK like Ireland voted overwhelmingly for 'Remain'. The spirit if the Reformation is thus still very much alive in the UK. **(Scherer 2014)** Finally, the terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016 in France and Belgium raised hard questions about the interstate intelligence cooperation and border controls in the EU, the refugee policy, the fact that the EU had still not found a good answer to fight and curb radicalism, multiculturalism and eventually the whole project of European integration.

All of these crises followed each other at a faster pace than the EU could handle, and the result was that in the period of 2009-2016 the ‘constraining dissensus’ towards the EU reached a clear boiling point, and made scholars and politicians speak of the EU going through ‘an existential crisis.’ Now that I have explained the exact meaning of the research question, I will explain my theoretical framework. To measure the impact of Protestantism and Catholicism on public attitudes I will look at and analyse data of the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants during the general elections of 1992, 1997, 2010, 2015 and the Independence Referendum of June 2016. Based on the claims of Nelsen and Guth and Scherer, we should see that from 1990-2016,

H1) Protestants are more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties, like the Conservative party and UKIP, while Catholics are more positive about the EU and thus more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour.

H1 for Brexit) Protestants were more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to have voted ‘Leave’, while Catholics are more pro-Europe and thus much more inclined to vote ‘Remain’

H2) devoted Protestants were increasingly more skeptic and hostile towards the EU than nominal Protestants and thus are more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties than nominal Protestants, while devoted Catholics are more supportive of the EU than nominal Catholics and thus more inclined to vote for pro-European parties.

H3) older Protestants and Catholics vote differently than younger Protestants and Catholics: older Protestants and Catholics are more inclined to vote for the Conservative party and UKIP than younger generations who are more inclined to vote Labour.

These hypotheses are logically derived from my theoretical framework and will be used to answer my research question. I choose a quantitative social-scientific approach to test my three hypotheses and answer my research question. The reason I choose a quantitative social-scientific approach is because to answer our research question, whether religious cultures in today’s secularized world are still capable of determining public attitudes, it is impossible if not inefficient and time-consuming to ask every single Protestant and Catholic how their belief in God and/or their religious upbringing and affiliation affects their public attitude and thus voting behavior. This is because very often it not entirely clear to people themselves how one affects the other. Therefore one of the best ways to gauge public attitudes towards the EU of both groups is by analyzing their voting behavior in a period of almost 30 years. The reason why analyzing voting behavior of both groups is one the best way to gauge public attitudes, is because, as James Tilley explains and as I will elaborate on in Chapter II, it was actually religious cultures that produce(d) a particular set of values, which are historically and presently largely similar to the values of the current Conservative and Labour party. For example, under the historical experience of the Reformation, Protestants prefer(red) a capitalistic economic system with little market-regulation and against (large) redistribution of welfare, similar to the fundamental tenets of Conservative party, while Catholics historically favoured more market-regulations and support redistribution of welfare, which similar to the fundamental tenets of Labour. (Tilley, 2015:908-909) Furthermore, because we analyse the voting behavior of both groups over a period of almost 30 years, 1990-2016 when huge social, political and economic changes happened, we are able to present a representative picture for both Catholics and Protestants, than if we had merely analysed the voting behavior of both groups for one general election. So, to see if Protestant and Catholic religious culture does still contribute to the shaping of public attitudes towards the EU in the UK from 1990-2016, we need to analyse data for voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants from 1990-2016, which thus results in a quantitative social-scientific method to answer our research question.

In the second chapter I look briefly at the question how Protestant and Catholic cultures have played a role in shaping political and public attitudes and the ‘permissive consensus’ that allowed elites to push European unity forward in the first decades after WWII. I will look at secondary sources and a few primary sources to understand the contribution of religious cultures in framing the project of the EU after WWII. The secondary sources will come from Nelsen and Guth and several other authors who have done an in-depth research on this subject. The primary sources are those that show the position of the Catholic Church and the Pope on the EU-project. In the third chapter I will look at the pre-9/11 world: 1990-2000. I do this by analyzing the voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics in the general elections of 1992 and 1997 to test H1-H3. The data that I will use comes from several sources. First I use data from the British Social Attitudes (BSA), which is an annual statistical survey conducted in Britain since 1983 to measure the overall levels of religiosity in Britain from 1990-2016, and data from several Eurobarometer studies to measure the overall public attitude towards the EC/EU in the UK between 1990-2016. Then to actually test H1-H3 I use the data for voting intentions of Ipsos Mori. Ipsos Mori is the second largest market research organization in the UK, conducting surveys for a wide range of major organizations as well as other market research agencies. For the GE1992 I use the data from Ipsos Mori poll conducted on 20-24 March 1992 with a base of 1,625 adults 18+ to gauge the voting intentions of Protestants and Catholics for the GE1992. I then use the data from the British Election Study (BES) face-to-face cross-section study done between April and August 1992 with a base of 3,534 adults to analyse the actual voting behavior of both religious groups for GE1992. The BES has been conducting surveys at every general election since 1964, and it has made a major contribution to understanding political attitudes and behaviour. Its main goal is ‘to describe and to explain why people vote, why they vote as they do.’ For the GE1997 I use the data from Ipsos Mori poll conducted on 21-24 March and 25-28 April 1997 with a base of 3,891 respondents 18+ to gauge voting intentions of Protestants and Catholics. I then use the data from the BES face-to-face cross-section study done between May-August 1997 with 3,615 respondents to analyse the voting behavior of both religious groups for GE1997. In the fourth chapter I will look at the post-9/11 world from 2009-2016. The data that I will use to analyse the voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics in the GE2010 comes from the BES face-to-face post election survey consisting out of 3,512 respondents. I use Wave 5 of the 2014-2017 BES Internet Panel online campaign data conducted from March to May 2015 with 30,275 respondents to gauge voting intentions. Then I use the BES face-to-face post-election survey consisting out of 2,987 respondents done from May to September 2015 to analyse the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants in the GE2015. Then we will analyse the EU-referendum held on June 23rd 2016 in the UK. I first use the BES face-to-face post election survey for the GE2015 consisting out of 3,512 respondents. This data we used for GE2015 also included a question on voting intentions for the EU-referendum and is thus very reliable. Finally we analyze actual voting behavior for the EU-referendum using data of the 2016 post-referendum wave 9 of the 2014-2017 British Election Study Internet Panel survey with 30,036 respondents 18+.

The data from Eurobarometer, Ipsos Mori, BES and BSA provide the best means of analyzing and measuring the impact of religious cultures on public attitudes towards the EU in the UK from 1990-2016.

Limitation of my research

Since my research question involves the period of 1990-2000 and 2009-2016 it is important to acknowledge that my research is limited in several ways, which cautions us to take hard conclusion without taking other factors into account. Because despite the fact that my conclusion will show that Nelsen and Brent's and Scherer's claim, that Protestants are much more negative towards the EU than Catholics, holds true for the UK, we still have to be careful to draw any hard conclusion and say that this claim holds true for all of Europe. Nelsen and Guth, and Scherer still have to explain why Protestants in the UK are in general (much) more negative and resistant towards the EU than Protestants in the Netherlands, France and the Germany for example, and why Catholics in Poland are, unlike most Catholics in other member states, less positive towards the EU. (**The Washington Post, 2017**) I believe that we can only explain this if we take other factors into account. For example France, Germany and the Netherlands have the firsthand experience of life under Nazi rule and occupation and thus naturally were much more enthusiastic towards the idea of European integration and corporation than the British who did not have that experience. The much less positive attitude of Catholics in Poland can be explained by the fact that Polish Catholics are not so much against the EU-project and actually strongly feel that EU-membership is beneficial for Poland, but they feel that the European elite has rejected its Christian roots by refusing to recognize God in the proposed constitution, and is trying to impose secular values on member states by adopting policies on sexual behavior and bioethics antithetical to Christian ethics. (**Nelsen and Guth, 2010:2, Nelsen and Guth 2016:272-273.**)

My research is also limited in the sense that I only analyse Protestant and Catholic voting behavior, and do not take Muslims and atheists into account. While since 9/11 Islam has been a hot debated issue in the west, and this issue has increased in salience since the terror attacks in Europe in 2015 and 2016, for the issue of European identity Islam in itself does not (yet) play a factor because Muslims still constitute a minority group in Europe. In fact, even after the influx of 1 million refugees in 2015 they are still a minority and thus do not have the same numbers as Protestantism and Catholicism to be able to say that their voting behavior actually can sway elections. Also, Islam has played no part in the inception and the integration project of the EU while Catholicism and Protestantism have. (**Pewresearch, 2016**) It is possible that in the future the Muslim population grows to a certain number that it then warrants to take Muslim voting behavior into account when we look at the issue of religion and European Identity. As for atheist voting behavior: while secularism is highly advanced throughout the EU, there are still more religious than non-religious people in the EU. (**EB 393, 2012:233**) In addition, most of current generations that identifies as atheist grew up in either Protestant or Catholic households and, as we will see in chapter 2 explained by James Tilley, parental voting behavior is often passed down to the children, even if they no longer belong to a religious affiliation. Furthermore, since my research question is pointed towards the question whether religion and religious cultures still have an impact on people's attitudes, it is only natural that we do not take the atheist voting behavior into account.

However, despite these limitations, we can still draw the conclusion that religious cultures remain a strong contributor to Catholics and Protestants' public attitudes in the UK towards the EU, since I conduct my research by taking into account several other variables than just religious denomination, as is shown with H2 and H3. Furthermore, my research can be used as a stepping stone for a broader research that takes all of the above factors into account, and which then can provide an even better picture of public attitudes towards the EU of all those who consider themselves religious.

II Catholics and Protestants: Post-War Europe and the idea of European unity

When WWII ended, Europe was in ruins and feelings of enmity and distrust were the only thing that connected the peoples of Europe. This fact makes the inception and unfolding of the EU-project even more outstanding. So then what exactly did the elites use to unite the peoples of Europe and shape the humble beginnings of the EU? According to Karl Deutsch successful integration is not merely a political or economic project, it is very much a cultural project which requires a 'sense of community' a 'we feeling' that overcomes traditional animosities and the 'us vs them' rhetoric. This in turn requires ideas, symbols, (new) traditions, and norms that act on a transnational level, bind different peoples together and create cross-border communities. **(Deutsch 1957)** Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet and Alcide De Gaspari found this idea in 'confessional culture i.e. Catholic culture that greatly informed the Christian Democrats and shaped the origin and direction of the EU from the start. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2015:5)** This in contrast to Protestant culture that would time and time again (try to) impede or slow down the process of EU integration.

In this chapter we will briefly discuss how Catholic confessional culture greatly facilitated the EU-project of the founding fathers in the first few decades after WWII, while at the same time exploring how protestant culture seemingly tried to impede and slow it down. Explaining this is important for this research, because in doing so we will be able to see clearly the main points of difference between Catholicism and Protestantism and the different roles they played in the EU-project. This in turn is important to help us better understand the voting behavior, that will be discussed in chapter 2-4, of Catholics and Protestants, and thus why Catholics are in general much warmer towards the EU integration project than Protestants.

First, when we look at the theology of both confessions we see a huge difference. Universality is inherent in Catholic rhetoric about the unity of humanity: while the command of Jesus to 'go and make disciples of all nations' **(Matthew 28:19)** is taken literally by most Christians in the sense that spreading the gospel is considered one of the main tasks for Christians, historically Catholicism went one step further and wanted to create a political and moral authority to unite all Christians under the Catholic Church headed by the Pope. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2003: 3)** Catholic catechism for example states: "*The visible church is the One True Church, the presence of Christ on earth, the Mother of all believers, and the final authority over all who call themselves Christian.* **(Catholic Church 1994: 53-55)** Thus the importance of the element of 'universality' of Catholic theology cannot be overstated: the element of universalism is inherent in the historical catholic idea of unity of all Christians under one banner. In fact, the word 'Catholic' comes from the Greek adjective καθολικός (katholikos), which means 'universal.' It also explains the reluctance of the Catholic Church and Catholics to accept the Westphalian state system, because in their view it shattered the unity that Rome had created and divided Christendom into several branches. In fact, the Church and Catholics would over the next few centuries come to see this system as the main reason for nationalism and the ensuing wars that plagued Europe in the 19th and 20th century. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2003:17-18)** Protestantism lacks this universal political theology and the need to unify all Christians under one political and moral authority.

In fact, according to Daniel Philpott the element of state sovereignty is actually implied in Protestantism, and he points to the political theology behind the Reformation as the best evidence for this. We see this when we look at the ideas of Martin Luther about God and the church which differ enormously from the ideas of the Holy Roman Empire. According to Luther's Doctrine of 'the Two Kingdoms and the Two Governments', God created two earthly orders with two forms of government: the realm of the spirit which alludes to the relationship between Christ and the believer, and the realm of the world which is the order of secular society governed by public servants, laws etc. These two realms must remain separated: the church must not perform public duties, and the kings, emperors etc. should not perform the duties of the Church. The Church was according to Luther nothing more than the aggregate of local churches, not a political authority. This ecclesial theology had enormous institutional implications because the separation of the two realms meant the separation of church and state. The theology behind the Reformation and the ensuing wars led to the loss of power of the Catholic Church that were then assumed by secular political authorities, kings, magistrates etc who established themselves as the highest political authority in their territories. (Philpott 2000: 222-226) And as we will see, the difference in Catholic and Protestant theology was still very much present in Europe after the end of WWII.

In addition, when we turn to the role of the Catholic and Protestant Churches in the integration process, we see that the Vatican and Catholic hierarchy actively inspired, strongly supported, promoted, and even shaped European integration from the start. Pope Pius XII articulated his new vision for Christian unity when he publicly backed the idea of an EU as way to smother nationalistic sentiments in 1948:

“That the establishment of a European union presents serious difficulties no one will gainsay. Yet there is no time to lose. If it is intended that this union shall really achieve its purpose, if it is desired to make it serve to advantage the cause of European liberty and concord, the cause of economic and political peace between the continents, it is high time it were established.” (Pius XII 1948⁶)

But Pius XII wasn't just calling for some kind of union, he was calling for a union which put 'Christian values at its core: one that 'formerly constituted the foundation and support of its existence and must seek out again today in a painful effort to save itself in the face of more powerful adversaries.' (CVCE, 2016) Pius believed that only the Christian message could reconcile Europeans and lead to peaceful coexistence, in which basic freedoms, respect for cultural diversities and the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation were present. (Llorens, 1996:20-21) And because Pius XII considered Catholic universalism and European unity mutually inclusive, he used his papal power in the first few years after WWII to get Catholic hierarchy and public opinion behind the creation of a supranational community, as he urged Catholics to support the Christian Democratic parties who pushed for integration. (Pius XII, 1948⁶, & Philpott and Shah, 2006: 61-63)

6. Pius XII, 'European Unity: An Address by His Holiness at an Audience Granted to a Group of Professors and Students from the College of Europe', quoted in *Roman Catholicism and the Founding of Europe: How Catholics Shaped the European Communities* Brent F. Nelsen James L. Guth, 2003. 17-18.

But while the European integration project was actively supported by the Vatican and Catholic hierarchy, Protestant churches and hierarchy only played a sporadic, ambivalent, and sometimes opposing role. **(Philpott and Shah 2006:51)** According to Nelsen and Guth this is because Protestant confessional culture lacked not only universal theology that stressed visible unity, it also lacked a centralized political organizational structure that the Vatican had, to shape public opinion and mobilize its believers. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2003:20)** In fact, in the 1950s many Protestants, who considered the Westphalian state system as the protector of their hard-won liberties, viewed the process of European integration as a conspiracy orchestrated by the Vatican to make the nation-state redundant and reassert the hegemony of the Catholic Church. 450 years of fighting off the Holy Roman Empire is not forgotten quickly, and thus the protestant churches were largely absent in the in the integration process in first the post-war years. **(Checkel and Katzenstein 2009:17, Nelsen and Guth 2003:20)**

However, starting in the 1950 an ecumenical turn took shape in the mainline Protestant churches, who now aimed at peaceful cooperation with Catholics, resulting in the Conference of European Churches in 1964. This eventually developed into a network of national ecumenical councils existing out of protestant member churches, which were open to the idea of corporation with Catholics on issues of mutual interests. But this interest did only go as far as supporting political corporation among nations and not *integration* of nations in a supranational community. In the 1967 rapport 'Christians and the Common Market', the British Council of Churches (BCC) decried the absence of Protestants in the EU-project, and in very careful words declared that British accession to the EC was favorable. But while the BCC argued that Protestants should have a deep interest in a European unity, this however did not require a political federal union, but rather institutions shared by nation-states. In fact, the BCC opposed any attempt to create a homogenous European identity. While this lukewarm approach to the EC mostly reflected the view of mainline Protestant churches and hierarchy across Europe, some small group of sectarian Protestants never made the ecumenical turn. These conservatives saw the ecumenical turn as conspiracy of the Catholic Church or a scheme of the Anti-Christ, to erode the fundamental tenets of Protestantism, national identity, to make the nation-state redundant and create some sort of 'Roman Catholic European Superstate'. While this group of sectarian Protestants became smaller in the 60s and 70s and thus had little political or public influence, they did make sure their voices were heard by supporting conservative anti-European political parties in Britain, Netherlands and the Nordic countries. **(Nelsen and Guth 2015:296-305)**

Furthermore, when we look at the EU founders we see that that, while they used the political platform of Christian Democratic parties, they heavily relied on the rhetoric of Catholic universalism to convince others of the need of European integration. After WWII Christian Democratic parties quickly rose to power in Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2015:149)** But what is truly interesting is that the leaders of the Christian Democrats, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gaspari, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, were all devout Catholics. In fact, Catholic culture had a powerful *direct* effect on elite attitudes toward integration. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2003:19)** The elites believed in a Christian-inspired European society with no national barriers, but one that was wholly voluntary and based on democratic values, human flourishing through freedom, dignity, and the right to fulfillment. Furthermore, they saw the reconciliation of former enemies as a divine mandate and a necessary precursor to human flourishing.

And they viewed the nationalistic sentiments across European and the communist threat as a danger to Christianity, and thus felt the need to restore the ‘Christian soul of Europe’. However, the elites thought that the fulfillment of these ideals was only achievable at a transnational European level. **(Nelsen and Guth 2015:157-160)** And they thought that the Catholic confessional culture, was best fit to engender the needed sense of community, the ‘we-feeling’ that is necessary according to Deutsch for successful integration. In fact, it was this combination of Christian Democratic Party and Catholic rhetoric that lay behind the proposal of Schuman to place coal and steel production under a common supranational authority, which was in line with a longstanding Catholic critique of the nation state sovereignty, as Schuman himself commented that

“ This project will be our pride, for us French and German Christian Democrats to have transposed in the first European institution the very principles that comprise our Christian ideals of charity, peace and social justice” **(Nelsen and Guth 2003:20)**

But there is more. Nelsen points to the religious origins of symbols used by the elite to denote the unity of Europeans. The blue flag with the 12 stars is a perfect example of this. After the establishment of the Council of Europe in 1949, the Christian democrats wanted a new flag to denote the Council to symbolize a united Europe. It chose the design of Paul Lévy, the Council’s Department of Culture director, and Arsène Heitz: a crown of 12 golden stars with 5 rays on a blue background. Lévy and Heitz were both devout Catholics who based the design on Catholic iconography and the book of Revelations: the shade of blue is historically associated with the Madonna, while Heitz, member of the Order of the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, based the flag’s crown of 12 golden stars on a passage in Revelations that Catholics interpret as depicting the Mary as queen of Heaven. **(Nelsen and Guth 2014:9-10)**

“And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars” **(Revelations 12:1)**

Protestants across Europe often point(ed) to the Catholic origins of the flag as a veiled proof of Catholic conspiracy. **(Nelsen and Guth 2014:9-10)** In the subsequent years, the Christian Democrats, with the support of the Vatican to whom they were closely connected, lobbied and pressed for the acceptance and ratification of the Treaty of Rome, while throughout the 60s they continued to push for greater economic integration and enlargement of the EC. **(Nelsen and Guth 2003:21-22)** It is thus clear that the Christian Democrats, and their values and goals based on Catholic ideals of universalism and community, proved essential to the success of the integration process in the first decades after WWII. And to this day, it is the Christian Democrats who push hardest for more integration in Europe. **(Nelsen and Guth 2015:148-154)**

Finally, confessional culture also influenced public attitudes toward integration during the early decades of the project. While between 1950 and 1962, overall European support for integration rose from 50 to 70 %, it was Catholics across Europe were the most enthusiastic supporters of the integration process in the first few decades, while Protestants remained skeptic or even hostile. Catholic theology, support of Vatican, and transnational network guaranteed almost immediately Catholics support for the Christian Democrats project. **(Nelsen and Guth, 2003:17-18)** This comes as no surprise if we look at the religious situation in Europe right after WWII. A religious revival spread across Europe right after the end of WWII, because the war had left many people wanting and longing for security, stability and hopeful for a better future. And it was the Catholic Church's theology of universalism, firm stand against nationalistic sentiments and transnational network and organization that offered its members all of this when nations were still in the process of rebuilding their nations. **(Nelsen and Guth 2015:164)** So while the Catholic Church was no longer a political power, it remained immensely influential in the daily lives of believing and practicing Catholics, and thus the Church had no difficulty to mobilize public Catholic opinion to support the project. **(Nelsen, Guth and Brian Highsmith, 2011:2-3)** Catholic support for the integration project is best evidenced in the fact that 95% of the Catholics across Europe, following the support and advice of the Vatican and Catholic hierarchy, voted for the Christian Democratic parties in their states. **(Nelsen and Guth 2015:165-167)** The next figure illustrates best the dominance of the Christian Democrats in (almost all of) the Six between 1946 and 1968, providing them with the necessary 'permissive consensus' that facilitated the construction of the EU-project from post WWII until 1970s. **(Nelsen and Guth 2015:175, Hooghe and Marks 2009:2)**

Figure 5.1 Christian Democrats in Government, 1945–70

Member state	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Belgium	///	xxx	xxx	***	***	***	***	***	///	///	///	///	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
France	x	xxx	***	xxx	***	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	***	///	///	///	///	///	///	///	///	///	///
FR Germany	x	x	x	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Italy	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Luxembourg	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
The Netherlands	***	***	***	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

Source: Wolfgang C. Muller and Kaare Strom, eds., *Coalition Governments in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

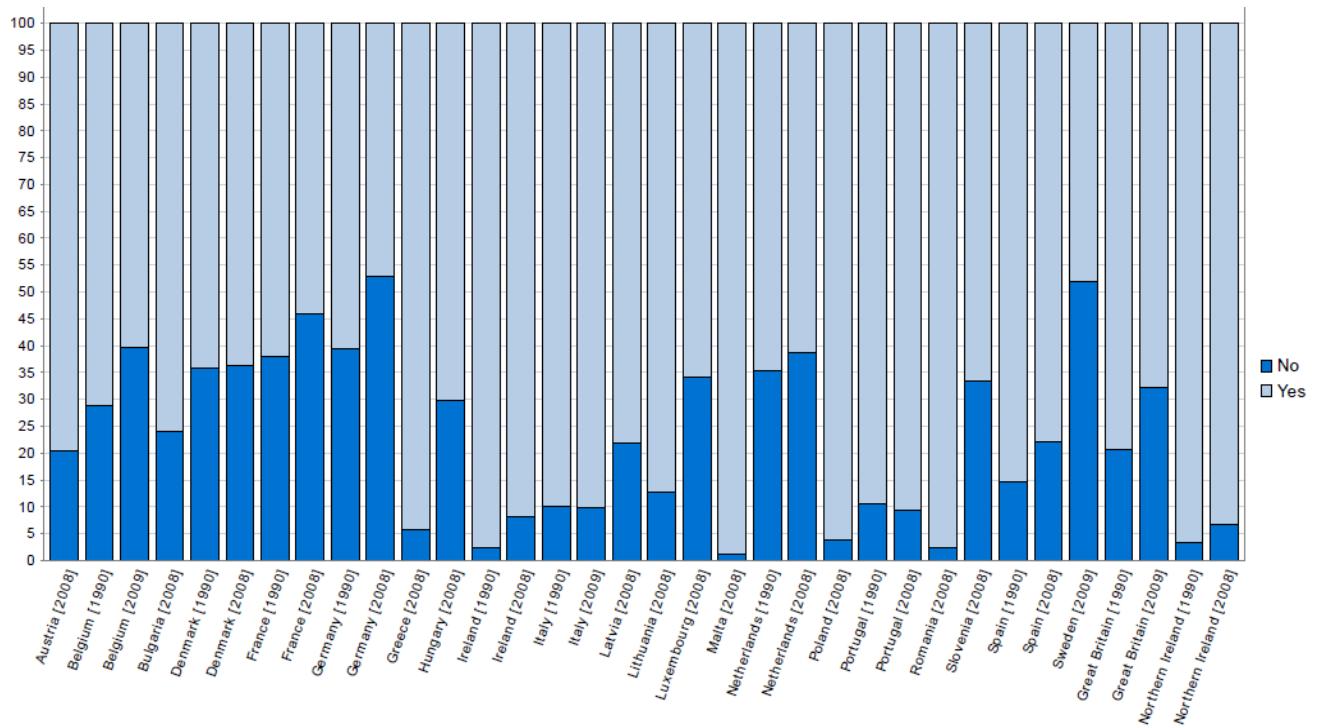
KEY

- *** = Catholic Party / Christian Democratic Party is the leading party in government
- xxx = Catholic Party / Christian Democratic Party participates in government
- /// = Catholic Party / Christian Democratic Party in the opposition
- x = No democratic government

Source: Nelsen and Guth 2016: 174

III religious cultures and public attitudes towards EU in the UK 1990-2000

Before we analyze the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants 1990-2016, it is important to explain briefly why religious cultures still are able to determine voting behavior in the present, despite secularism being highly advanced throughout Europe. Since the late 50s, European societies have undergone a rapid and drastic process of secularization. There are two clearly distinguishable processes here: 1) there has been a decline of religious belief and practice across Europe in the last 50 years, 2) religion has been regulated to the private sphere. (Casanova, 2006:83-86) However, according to Hervieu-Léger, a sociologist specialized in the sociology of religion, the *sacred* is still present in the public discourse since religion has not lost its ability to exert influence. This is because even when religious practice has been regulated to the private sphere, religious cultures, symbols and institutions continue to play a direct or indirect impact on social, cultural, and political life. In addition Hervieu-Léger reminds us that a lot of secular values and modern ideologies have religious origins, and thus the secular present is still very much connected to the religious past of Europe although not always immediately obvious. (Hervieu-Léger 2005: 54-57) When we look at the data of the European Values Study Longitudinal 1981-2008 for the EU-members between the years 1990-2008/09 we see that the results for the questions for belief in God' and 'belonging to a religious denomination' supports Hervieu-Léger's claim.⁸

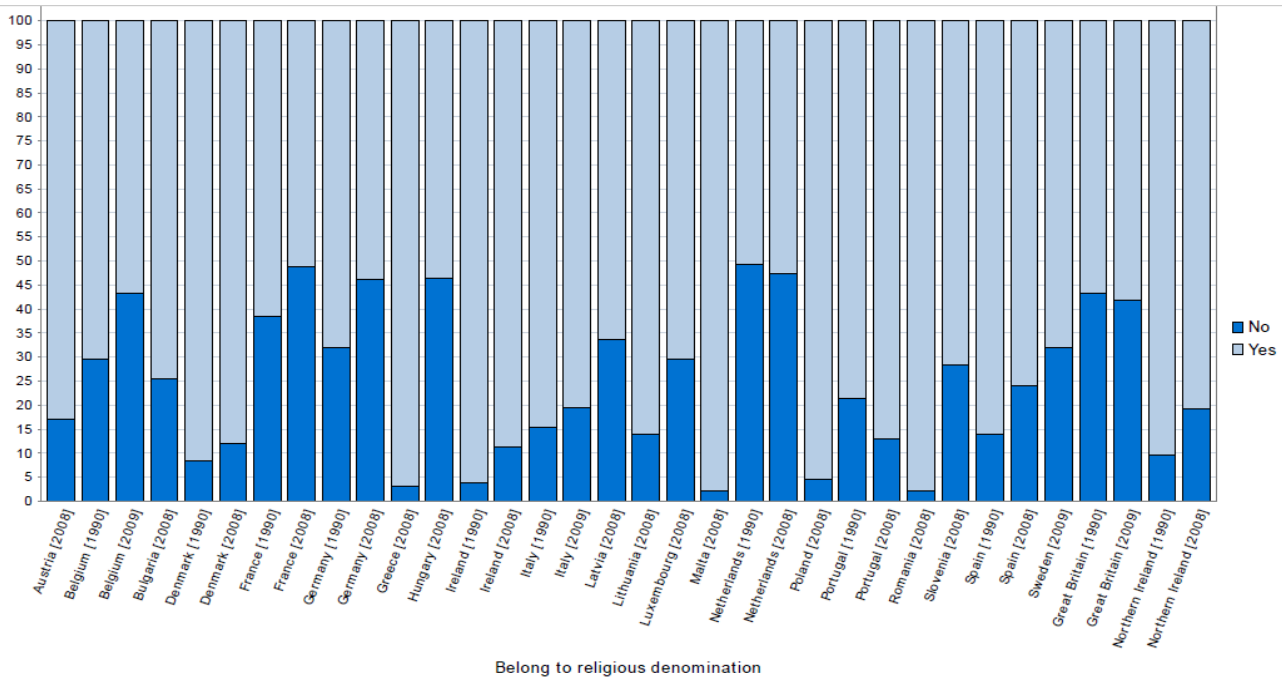


Source: Table is based on data drawn from EVS

Believe in: God

8. This EVS conducted the poll in the years 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2008, and for some countries 2009. I have taken into account the years 1990-2008 because this comprises a large part of the time period chosen for our research question. For some countries I have only taken the years 2008/2009 since they had not entered the EU yet in 1990.

Leibniz institute for Social Services, 'European Values Study Longitudinal Data 1981-2008.'



Source: Table is based on data drawn from EVS

EB393 of 2012 on ‘Discrimination in the EU’ shows that over 52% of Europeans still believe in God, while 27% believe there is ‘some spirit or force of life’. Of the 52% of Europeans who believe in a God 48% are Catholic, 12% Protestant, 8% Christian Orthodox, 4% belongs to other Christian denomination, and 2% Muslim. **(EB393, 2012)** A detailed BSA-survey on religious affiliation among adults in the UK also supports Hervieu-Léger’s claim: in 1990 36% identified as atheist, 60% identified as Christian, and 3% belonged to non-Christian religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism etc. In 2015 48% identified as atheist, 43% identified as Christian, while 8% belonged to non-Christian religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism etc. Of the 60% that was Christian in 1990, 51% was Protestant or belonging to one of its branches while 9% was Catholic. In 2015 this had dropped to 34% Protestant or belonging to one of its branches, and 9% Catholic. **(NatCenter 2015)**

Furthermore, while one would think that ‘the religious vote’ is inherent to the religious right in the USA, 40 years of data collected by the BES reveals that despite secularisation there is still a clear political demarcation between religious cultures and their party allegiance in the UK. **(Clements and Spencer 2014)** James Tilley explains that while it is often thought that the UK was the prime example of social class as the prime determinant for party choice, there are also other ‘frozen social cleavages’ that determine(d) party allegiance. Tilley refers to religious cultures that largely determined the choice for political allegiance in the past, and that because, unlike other European countries, there was no emergence of a singular Christian party in the UK after WWII, there is a continuation of historic religious-political bonds until today. **(Tilley, 2015:907)** Religious cultures continue to shape party choice, despite secularization, because voting habits are rooted in the religious divisions of the 19th and early 20th century ‘when religious cleavages were frozen within the system’ and provided a basis for social stratification and inequality.

This means that historically party allegiances cannot just be reduced to differences in the social make-up, class, economy etc., but it was actually the religious cultures that provided the justification for or the opposition against the class-system, which in turn determined the choice for political party. **(Ibid., 907-909)** The mechanism behind the impact of religious cultures for party allegiance today is through parental transmission into a party identity, i.e. the link between religious culture and party allegiance is passed down from parents to children. And even for those grown-ups who consider themselves an atheist, more often than not the link between religious culture they grew up in and parental party allegiance remains resilient in later life. **(Ibid., 907)** Finally, religious cultures produce(d), a particular set of values, which are historically and presently (largely) similar to the values of political parties. Thus under the historical experience of the Reformation, Protestants preferred a capitalistic economic system with little market-regulation and against (large) redistribution of welfare, similar to the tenets of Conservative party, while Catholics historically favoured more market-regulations and support redistribution of welfare, similar to the tenets of Labour. **(ibid.,909)**

Finally, before we look at the voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics to analyze their attitudes towards the EU, we need a picture of *overall* public attitudes in the UK towards the EU from 1990-2000 and 2009-2016. Eurobarometer 34 of October 1990 on the public opinion in the EC shows that 53% of those polled in the UK said that EC-membership was a good thing, as opposed to 16% of the English that said that EC-membership was a bad thing. **(EB34, 1990:14)** Furthermore, 38% of those polled supported the single currency, as opposed to the 43% that were against the Euro. **(EB34, 1990:26)** EB53 of October 2000 shows that only 25% of those polled in the UK supported EU-membership, which shows a significant drop in support of 28% compared to 1990. Compared to other EU-members, support for EU membership was the lowest in the UK. **(EB53, 2000:8)** Furthermore, only 25% of those polled in the UK felt that they had benefitted from the EU-membership, as opposed to 44% who felt they had not benefitted from the EU-membership. Again the UK had the lowest score compared to other EU-members. **(EB53, 2000:10)** In addition, 35% of those polled in the UK had a very negative image of the EU, as opposed to 20% that had a positive image of the EU. The rest, 32% remained neutral. **(EB53, 2000:26)** Finally, EB53 shows that only 18% of those polled in the UK trusted in the EU institutions and bodies. **(EB53, 2000:36)** EB71 of July 2009 shows that support for EU-membership in the UK was still among the lowest: 32% of those polled in the UK considered EU-membership a bad thing. **(EB71, 2009)** Another study done by EB on public attitudes in the UK towards the EU in 2009 found that only 37% had a positive image of the EU, while 40% had a negative image of the EU. 40% also felt that the costs of EU-membership outweighed the economic benefits for the UK. **(EB274, 2009:5)** EB84 of November 2015 shows that 48% of those polled in the UK felt that the UK could better face the future outside the UK. **(EB84 2015: 102)**¹⁵ 63% said they did not trust the EU and **(EB84 2015: 111)** 31% has a very negative image of EU as opposed to 30% that has a very positive image of the EU while 36% remained neutral. **((EB84 2015: 102)**

When we compare the results of EB84 of November 2015 with the results of a large NatCenter-survey also done in November 2015, we see that the overall picture of the public opinion in the UK on the EU both surveys present is nearly identical. The NatCenter-survey shows that 66% considers itself as 'only British' against 29% who considers itself British and European, and only 1% as European. (NatCenter 2015) 63% does not trust the EU, against 23% that does trust the EU.¹⁷ 32% has a negative image of the EU, against 31% that has a positive image of the EU. (NatCenter 2015) 54% believes that the interests of the UK are not well taken into account in the EU. (NatCenter 2015) 69% does not trust the EU-Commission, against 31% that does trust the Commission. (NatCenter 2015) And finally, almost identical to the result of the EU-referendum of 23 June 2016, 52% thinks that the UK could better face the future outside the EU, against 47% who does not think that UK could better face the future outside the EU. (NatCenter 2015)

Now that we have a clear picture of the religious affiliations of the British between 1990-2016, we established that religious cultures *can* still shape contemporary political attitudes, and we have a clear picture of the general public opinions on the EU in the UK between 1990-2016, we will now answer our research question *whether religious cultures contributed to the shaping of public attitudes towards the EU in the UK between 1990-2000 and 2009-2016?* Based on the claims of Nelsen and Guth, and Margarete Scherer we should see that between 1990-2000 and 2009-2016,

H1) Protestants are more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties, like the Conservative party and UKIP, while Catholics are more positive about the EU and thus more inclined to vote for the pro-European parties like Labour.

H1 for Brexit) Protestants were more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to have voted 'Leave', while Catholics are more pro-Europe and thus much more inclined to vote 'Remain'

H2) devoted Protestants are increasingly more skeptic towards the EU than nominal Protestants and thus are more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties than nominal Protestants, while devoted Catholics are more supportive of the EU than nominal Catholics and thus more inclined to vote for pro-European parties.

H3) older Protestants and Catholics vote differently than younger Protestants and Catholics: older Protestants are more inclined to vote for the Conservative party and UKIP than younger generations, while older Catholics are more inclined to vote for Labour than younger generations.

In this paragraph I will start by analyzing the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants between 1990-2000 by looking at the GE1992 and GE1997. The 1990s were characterized by the political and social upheaval in British society that was reflected in the war over the voters between the Conservatives and the Labour party. Margaret Thatcher legacy was contested and divisive and it was during the later years of the 1990s that the Conservative Party, under the impact of divisions on Europe and economic policy began to fragment, from which Labour would greatly benefit. (Berrington 2014: 1-28)

After Thatcher was replaced by John Major in November 1992 following her forced resignation, Major led Britain through the recession, the Gulf Crisis and Britain's involvement in the Gulf War, he introduced the Council Tax that replaced the unpopular Community Charge, and most importantly signed the Maastricht Treaty. (Berrington 2014:40-84) Furthermore, there was internal division in the Conservative party in the first year after Thatcher's humiliating resignation: while the conservatives abandoned Thatcher's ideology of 'permanent change', they did not abandon Thatcher's ideology of radical market reforms nor her Euroscepticism. So when Major, who was not a die-hard eurosceptic like most of his fellow Conservatives, signed the Maastricht Treaty in February 1992 securing an opt-out from the Euro for the UK, this caused great tension within the party. Especially the Thatcherites were aghast at the idea that they would be bound by legislation from Brussels and with the parties traditional voters that still largely existed out of eurosceptics. (Berrington 2014:44-45, 50-67) Thus naturally the recession and the EU became the key issues in the campaign leading to up the April GE1992. Looking at the final result, GE1992 was one of the most memorable and dramatic elections since the end of WWII: while the general thought was and all the polls showed that the Conservative party would be punished for the Thatcher debacle, the recession and Major's signing of the Maastricht treaty, the Conservatives won the greatest largest number of votes in the British history. The Conservatives won 336 seats while Labour won only 221 seats. (BBC 1992)

But what does this final result show when we break down the vote by religious affiliation? First we will look at the Ipsos Mori Poll conducted 20-24 March 1992 for voting intentions by religious affiliation. Table 1 shows the results for 1,625 adults 18+ giving a voting intention. The results of Table 1 show why the general thought was that Labour would win the election and the Conservatives lose: 41% of the total base said they would vote for Labour Party as opposed to 38% for the Conservatives. However, the results for voting intention confirm H1 that Protestants seem to be more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties, while Catholics tend to be more positive towards the EC and thus vote for pro-European parties: 43% of the members of CofE and 38% of the members who belong to one of the Other Protestant branches had the intention to vote for the Conservative Party, while only 38% of the of CofE and 22% of the members that belong to one of the other Protestant branches had the intention to vote for the Labour party. As for the Catholics: 40% said they would vote for the Conservative party while 48% said they would vote for Labour.

Table 1 Voting intentions GE1992 by religious affiliation

Party	Roman Catholic	Church of England	Church of Scotland	Other Protestant	None religious	Total %
Conservative	40%	43%	29%	38%	25%	38%
Labour	48%	38%	35%	22%	48%	41%
Lib Dem	9%	17%	9%	34%	23%	17%
SNP	2%	0%	27%	6%	4%	3%
Green	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
N=1625	197	916	96	29	210	100%

Source: Ipsos Mori 2005.

The fact that only 29% of the members of CofSc intended to vote for the Conservative party while 35% said they would vote for the Labour party is no surprise: the Labour party has traditionally been the dominating political party in Scotland since the 1960s, taking over the position from the Scottish conservative party, the Scottish branch of the English Conservative party that had dominated Scottish politics from the 30s until the late 50s. (Dyer 2001) In 1992 Labour was still seen as *the* party that fought for Scottish interests, with the SNP still being a minor political player. However, in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century the erosion of party loyalty among the Scottish that traditionally voted for Labour and the Conservative Party was set in motion when the SNP resurged slowly taking over the lead from the conservatives and Labour. And the 27% for the SNP from the CofSc members shows that the SNP was on the rise in Scotland 1992. (Hassan & Shaw 2012)²⁴

When we look at Table 2 for the BES Cross Section face-to-face survey done from April to August 1992, we see that the results for actual voting behavior do not present the same picture as the Ipsos Mori Poll for voting intentions. They do align however with the results of the GE1992. 54.4% of those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican and 35.1% affiliated with the CofSc voted for the Conservative Party, while the majority of the Catholics, 54.2%, voted for Labour as opposed to the 25.8% that voted for the Conservative party. This confirms H1 that Protestants are more inclined to vote for the Eurosceptic parties while Catholics are more inclined to vote for pro-European parties. What this result also shows is the fact that the SNP already received 22.8% of the votes from members of the CofSc, which as we have mentioned earlier shows that the SNP was on the rise in Scotland. Furthermore, what is also notable is the fact that the Conservative party received 4% more votes from the members of the CofSc than Labour: this does not align with the result of the voting intentions, but it does align with the actual result of the GE1992, and explains why it was a huge surprise when the Conservative Party won these elections while the polls had predicted a different outcome. Another factor explaining the Conservatives winning the GE1992 is the (short-lived) resurgence of trust among the Scottish in the Conservative Party after Major had replaced Thatcher, who by the end of the 1980s had become very unpopular in Scotland because of her neoliberal policies had caused the decline and fall of many Scottish industries. (Dyer 2001)

Table 2 Voting behavior GE1992 by religious affiliation

Which party did you vote for?	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Other	Total	N=
CofE /Anglican/	54.4%	27.3%	17.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	100.0	1,024
CofSc/	35.1%	31.3%	10.0%	22.8%	0.0%	0.8%	100.0	399
Roman Catholic	25.8%	54.2%	12.4%	7.3%	0.0%	0.3%	100.0	330
Other Christian	43.2%	33.3%	18.7%	4.1%	0.6%	0.0%	100.0	315
Non-Christian	38.9%	50.0%	9.3%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0	54
No religion	36.6%	38.3%	17.7%	6.4%	0.5%	0.5%	100.0	853
Total	42.1%	35.1%	16.0%	6.3%	0.3%	0.3%	100.0	2,975

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1992.

24. For a comprehensive study of the rise and fall of the Labour Party in Scotland please see the book 'The Strange Death of Labour Scotland' by British academics Gerry Hassan and Eric Shaw.

Table 3 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and EC

In the long-term GB should leave EC?	CofE/ Anglican	CofSc	Roman Catholic	Other Christian	Non-Christian	No religion	Total	N=
Leave EC	37.0%	11.1%	10.5%	8.7%	0.6%	32.1%	100.0	343
Reduce powers	41.5%	12.3%	6.9%	12.7%	1.5%	25.0%	100.0	981
Leave as is	29.5%	14.9%	12.4%	10.4%	1.6%	31.3%	100.0	579
Increase powers	29.8%	15.7%	12.4%	10.2%	2.2%	29.8%	100.0	1,021
Single govt	25.5%	11.2%	14.9%	9.2%	1.7%	37.5%	100.0	349
Don't know	33.1%	6.5%	12.7%	13.1%	4.5%	30.2%	100.0	245
Total	33.5%	13.1%	11.0	10.9%	1.8%	29.7%	100.0	3,518

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1992.

The BES Cross Section Survey also included questions about the EC. The results are shown in Table 3. Table 3 also confirms H1: Protestants are more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to say that they believe its better for the UK to leave the EC and/or reduce the powers of the EC than Catholics by significant difference of 27.7% for ‘Leave the EC’ and 34.6% for ‘reduce the powers’. We see that those who are affiliated with the CofSc, despite being Protestant, are much less skeptic towards and about the EC than their Protestant English counterparts. This makes sense when we look at the historical fight for an independent Scotland: by virtue of its large membership the Church of Scotland has traditionally been viewed as *the* national protector of Scottish identity and as one of the main forces behind the fight for an Independent Scotland.(Church of Scotland 2016) So despite being Protestant and a part of its members voting for the Conservative party in 1992, the CofSc and its members have had a more pro-EC/EU attitude than their Protestant counterparts in England. (Dardanelli, 2014:44-61) But as we will see when we look at results of the GE2010 and GE2015 and Brexit, this pro-EU sentiment in Scotland and among CofSc members will rise, while the votes for the Conservative and Labour party will sharply decline in the following elections.

When we add the variable for ‘devotion’, we see in Table 4 that we can confirm H2 for GE1992: Protestants, whether affiliated with the Anglican/CofE or the CofSc, who regularly attend church (once a week or more and once a month or more) are more inclined to vote for the Conservative party than those who attend church less or never/practically never, while Catholics who regularly attend (once a week or more and once a month or more) are more inclined to vote for the Labour party than those Catholics who attend church less or never/practically never. The fact that those affiliated with the CofSc who attend church more regularly were in 1992 still a bit more inclined to vote for the Conservatives than the SNP can, as earlier mentioned, be explained by the resurgence of trust among those affiliated with the CofSc in the Conservative Party after Major replaced Thatcher, and the fact that the SNP was then still a minor player in Scottish politics. (Dyer 2001)

Table 4 Voting behavior GE1992 by religious affiliation and church attendance

		Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Other	Total	N=
CofE/ Anglican	Never/practically never	49.3%	34.8%	15.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100 %	511
	Once a week or more	62.2%	7.1%	29.6%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	100%	98
	Once a month or more	60.0%	15.0%	23.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	100%	80
	Several times a year	58.3%	25.2%	15.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	100%	127
CofS	Never/practically never	25.5%	41.8%	7.8%	22.7%	0.0%	2.1%	100%	141
	Once a week or more	48.2%	16.1%	16.1%	19%.	0.0%	0.0%	100%	56
	Once a month or more	50.0%	22.5%	10.0%	17.5%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	40
	Several times year	39.2%	25.7%	9.5%	25.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	74
Roman Catholic	Never/practically never	22.4%	48.7%	17.1%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	76
	Once a week or more	25.3%	56.2%	13.7%	4.1%	0.0%	0.7%	100%	146
	Once a month or more	13.3%	60.0%	13.3%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	30
	Several times year	43.8%	46.9%	6.2%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	32
Total		43.9%	33.8%	15.2%	6.5%	0.2%	0.4%	100%	1,411

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1992.

When we add the variable for ‘age’ to test H3 we see that the results of Table 5 confirm H3 for GE1992: older Protestants, whether affiliated with the Anglican/CofE or the CofSc, are much more inclined than younger Protestants to vote for the Conservative party, while older Catholics are much more inclined to vote for the Labour party than younger Catholics. To show how significant the result is we compare the results for the Conservative party among those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican age 18-24 with those of age 65+: we see a difference of 12.7%. For Catholics the difference between these two groups is even bigger: 31.9%. What is notable here is the fact that in 1992 those affiliated with the CofSc within the age groups of 18-24 and 35-44 were much more inclined to vote for the SNP than the age group of 55-59 and 65+ with a difference of at least 21.3%. One reason could be that the SNP, as mentioned earlier, in 1992 was still a minor party in politics but on the rise, and older generations are more inclined to stay loyal to the political party they voted for in the previous election than younger generations.

Table 5 Voting behavior GE1992 by religious affiliation and age

		Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Other	Total	N=
CofE/Anglican	18-24	45.1%	35.3%	17.6%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	51
	35-44	54.8%	26.1%	18.1%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	100%	188
	55-59	50.6%	26.6%	22.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	79
	65+	57.8%	28.9%	12.9%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	249
CofS	18-24	31.0%	27.6%	6.9%	31%	0.0%	3.4%	100%	29
	35-44	28.4%	36.5%	6.8%	28.4%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	74
	55-59	35.5%	41.9%	12.9%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	31
	65+	47.6%	27.4%	13.1%	10.7%	0.0%	1.2%	100%	84
Roman Catholic	18-24	37.5%	37.5%	15.6%	9.4%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	32
	35-44	20.0%	50.0%	20.0%	8.3%	0.0%	1.7%	100%	60
	55-59	26.3%	57.9%	15.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	19
	65+	22.4%	69.4%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	49
Total		45.6	33.7%	14.7%	5.5%	0.2%	0.3%	100%	945

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1992.

Despite the incredible victory of Conservatives, Major's government was not as steadfast as Major had wished: the majority of 21 seats was soon defeated by 13 die-hard eurosceptic Thatcherites who were against ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and joining the single currency. (Berrington 2014:40-42) In June 1992, 100 conservatives signed a motion calling for Maastricht Treaty to be abandoned. On top of that many of the conservative voters were also not happy with Major signing the Maastricht Treaty, fearing Britain might lose its independency. (Ibid.,44-62) Furthermore, when in October 1992 first Britain was pushed out of the Exchange rate Mechanism of the EMS further tension arose, and then on 'Black Wednesday' bankers pulled money out of Britain because they felt the Deutsche mark was set at too high a rate, the pound became overvalued. Thus the economic recession worsened as a result of an overvalued pound and the high interest rates. (Ibid., 62-63, 84-85) While Major's government then decided to devalue the pound, which led to inflation but also economic recovery since the fall of the pound helped Britain's export trade to an all-time high, this did not help his government: support for the Conservative party fell to an all-time low as many people suffered from falling house prices. When by 1994 the majority of 21 seats had gone, Major's government was in danger of falling, and he depended on the Ulster's Unionists for a majority creating in essence a 'hung Parliament.' (Ibid., 64-67, 208-209) Major's government never recovered from the disunity within the Conservative party on the issue of the EU and the economic recession, and in 1997 the conservatives were dealt a huge blow when voters massively voted for Labour, who under Tony Blair had reinvented themselves to 'New Labour'. New Labour won 418 seats, the most seats the party ever held, while the Conservatives received an all-time low of only 165 seats. (BBC 1997)

But what does this result show when we breakdown the vote by religious affiliation? First we will look at the Ipsos Mori Poll for voting intentions conducted between 20-24 March and 25-28 April 1997. Table 6 shows that the result aligns with the final result of GE1997. However, this does not mean that we have to refute H1 and say that Protestants had become pro-Labour and pro-EU, despite an all-time low amount of those affiliated with CofE/Anglicans intending to vote for the Conservative party. While it is a small margin of 1% between votes for Labour and the Conservative party, it nevertheless aligns with the feelings of those who traditionally voted for the Conservatives that they felt abandoned by the Conservative party that they blamed for signing the Maastricht Treaty and the fall of the pound. The 53% of the Catholic vote for Labour is no surprise and confirms H1 for GE1997 that Catholics are much more positive about the EU and thus will vote for pro-European parties like Labour.

Table 6 Voting intentions by religious affiliation GE1997

	All	Roman Catholic	Church of England	Church of Scotland	Other Protestant	Other	None Religious
Conservative	29%	28%	38%	27%	24%	25%	20%
Labour	50%	53%	39%	40%	40%	52%	50%
Lib Dem	14%	13%	19%	11%	21%	20%	21%
SNP/PC	3%	3%	0%	21%	15%	0%	3%
Green Party	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Referendum	2%	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%
N= 3,891		493	1,978	248	67	188	637

Source: Ipsos Mori 2005

When we look at Table 7 for the BES Cross Section face-to-face survey done from May to August 1997, we see that the results for actual voting behavior by religious affiliation also align with the final results of the election. We can confirm H1 for Catholics because of the 65.5% of Catholic vote for Labour, which is not a surprise, although it is 10% more than in GE1992: it shows that Catholics are indeed much more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour. Neither is the 46.9% for Labour of those affiliated with the CofSc. However, what is notable here, is the fact that 43.4% of those affiliated with the CofE/Anglicans voted for the Labour party which is 3.8% more than the 39.6% for the Conservative party. Again this result makes sense when we look at the negative sentiment among conservative voters who blamed the Conservative party for the worsening economic recession and the Maastricht Treaty debacle that led to disunity within the Conservative party. This fact seems to suggest that we now cannot confirm H1 for those affiliated with the CofE/Anglicans, because the result does not show that the majority of Protestants voted for the Conservative eurosceptic party since they actually voted for Labour, a pro-EU party. However, we still have to keep in mind, and as we will see later when we look at the results of GE2010, GE2015 and Brexit, that this kind of sentiment against the Conservative party among Protestants is rare, and does not mean that Protestants had all of a sudden become pro-EU and therefore decided to vote for Labour. In fact, according to a research done by Geoffrey Evans, John Curtice and Pippa Norris on the GE1997 there was a strong increase in public opposition to the Conservative party, resulting in anti-Conservative tactical voting that helped provide New Labour with its overwhelming majority. (Evans, Curtice and Norris, 1999)

Table 7 Voting behavior by religious affiliation GE1997

Which party did you vote for in GE	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Other Party	Total	N=
Roman Catholic	16.3%	65.5%	12.8%	3.8%	0.3%	1.3%	100%	313
Anglican/CofE	39.6%	43.4%	15.9%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	100%	916
CofSc	20.6%	46.9%	13.1%	19.1%	0.0%	0.3%	100%	320
Other Christian	24.7%	47.3%	21.9%	4.8%	0.7%	0.7%	100%	146
Jewish	45.5%	27.3%	27.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	11
Muslim	14.8%	70.4%	7.4%	3.7%	3.7%	0.0%	100%	27
Atheists	19.6%	54.3%	19.4%	5.6%	0.3%	0.8%	100%	713
Total	27.2%	50.3%	16.5%	5.1%	0.2%	0.7%	100%	2,446

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1997

And when we look at the results of Table 8 and 9 that show the BES Cross Section Survey questions about the EC, we see a different picture for Protestants, that suggests we can still say that, while the results of Table 7 suggested that we could not confirm H1 for Protestants, Table 8 and show that we can actually fully confirm H1 for GE1997: those affiliated with the CofE/Anglicans are indeed far more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to say that they believe its better for the UK to leave the EC than Catholics by significant difference of 30%. To compare: in the GE1992 this was only 27.1%. Furthermore, Table 9 presents the same picture because it shows that Protestants with 76.4% overwhelmingly feel that UK should protect its independence from the EC. Looking at these results it is obvious that Protestants became even *more* eurosceptic, which aligns with the rising anti-EC sentiment within the party and among conservative voters after Major signed the Maastricht Treaty.

Table 8 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and EC GE1997

In the long-term GB should leave EC?	Roman Catholic	Anglican /CofE	CofSc	Other Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Atheists	Total	N=
Leave EC	12.1%	42.1%	10.5%	4.2%	0.0%	0.4%	30.6%	100%	503
Reduce EC powers	12.2%	41.3%	11.9%	6.2%	0.4%	0.7%	27.3%	100%	1,396
Leave as is	9.1%	29.3%	12.4%	7.2%	0.8%	2.1%	39.2%	100%	475
Incr. EC powers	14.1%	22.6%	12.0%	8.8%	0.3%	1.8%	40.5%	100%	341
Single Euro govt	15.2%	21.5%	9.9%	5.8%	0.9%	0.9%	45.7%	100%	223
Don't know	14.4%	31.8%	15.1%	4.8%	0.3%	2.7%	30.8%	100%	292
Total	12.4%	35.4%	11.9%	6.2%	0.4%	1.2%	32.5%	100%	3,230

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1997

Table 9 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and EC GE1997

Unite fully with EU or protect self?	Roman Catholic	Anglican/ CofE	CofSc	Other Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Atheists	Total
Unite fully with EU	38.7%	17%	30.4%	37.5%	25%	55.6%	33.2%	28%
Protect independence	53.3%	76.4%	60.1%	48.2%	75%	38.9%	57.5%	63.7%
Don't know	8.0%	6.6%	9.4%	14.3%	0%	5.6%	9.3%	8.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	150	423	138	56	4	18	334	1,123

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1997

When we add the variable for ‘devotion’, we see in Table 10 another notable thing confirming H2 for Protestants for GE1997: Protestants, affiliated with the Anglican/CofE or the CofSc, who regularly attend church are indeed more inclined to vote for the Conservative party than those who attend church less or never/practically never: for Anglicans this was 54.7% for those who attend once a week as opposed to 35.5% for those who attend never or practically never, while for those affiliated with CofSc this was 23.6% as opposed to 12.1%. These numbers are very telling and tell us that despite the negative sentiment against the conservative party in 1997, Protestants who regularly attended church were still more inclined to vote for the Conservative party than those Protestants who never/practically never attended church.

Table 10 also shows that we can confirm H2 for Catholics for GG1997: those who regularly attend church are also more inclined to vote for the Labour party than those Catholics who never/practically never attend church, although for the difference between those who attend ‘once a week’ is only 0.1% from those who ‘never/practically’ never attend. This small difference can be explained as the result of the good campaign led by Blair and Labours’ reinvention to ‘New Labour’. (BBC 1997) However, there is still a big difference of 18.6% between those who attend ‘once a month or more’ and those who ‘never/practically never’ attend.

Table 10 Voting behavior GE1997 by religious affiliation and church attendance

How often do you attend church?		Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Other Party	Total	N=
Roman Catholic	Once a week or more	17.9%	60.7%	14.5%	4.3%	0%	2.6%	100%	117
	once a month or more	4.2%	79.2%	16.7%	0%	0%	0%	100%	24
	Several times a year	22.9%	68.8%	8.3%	0%	0%	0%	100%	48
	Never or practically never	21.2%	60.6%	13.6%	3.0%	1.5%	0%	100%	66
Anglican/ CofE	Once a week or more	54.7%	26.7%	16.3%	2.3%	0%	0%	100%	86
	once a month or more	42.9%	37.1%	20.0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	70
	Several times a year	43.0%	37.6%	18.8%	0%	0%	0.7%	100%	149
	Never or practically never	35.5%	49.1%	14.5%	0%	0%	0.7%	100%	448
CofSc	Once a week or more	23.6%	34.5%	29.1%	12.7%	0%	0%	100%	55
	once a month or more	34.4%	21.9%	15.6%	28.1%	0%	0%	100%	32
	Several times a year	34.7%	30.6%	18.4%	16.3%	0%	0%	100%	49
	Never or practically never	12.1%	63.8%	6.0%	17.2%	0%	0.9%	100%	116
Total		31.9%	47.9%	15.2%	4.2%	0.2%	0.6%	100%	1,260

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1997

When we add the variable for ‘age’ to test H3 we see that the results of Table 11 confirm H3 for GE1997 for Protestants but not necessarily for Catholics: older Protestants, whether affiliated with the Anglican/CofE or the CofSc, are much more inclined to vote for the Conservative party, than younger Protestants, although the difference within the group of Anglican/CofE between 18-24 and 65+ is only 2,5% and for those affiliated with the CofSc is 7.9%. What is notable here is the fact compared to GE1992 older Catholics were less inclined to vote for Labour than younger Catholics, with a significant difference of 14.3% between the age group of 18-24 and 65+. The main reason that we cannot confirm H3 for Catholics for GE1997 is that Labour’s reinvention to ‘New Labour’²⁹ with its conservative pro-market approach to economics but progressive social attitudes, resonated more with the younger idealistic generation than the older generation who felt uncomfortable with Labour’s new conservative approach to economics that reminded them too much of the Thatcher’s neo-liberal policies.(Coats & Lawler, 2000:26-30) This makes sense when we look at the results for GE1992 Table 5 where only 37.5% of Catholics within the age group of 18-24 then had voted for Labour, compared to the 76.5% in GE1997.

29. Blair’s New Labour was a convergence of policies that was called ‘the Third Way’: this was in essence social progressive left leaning policies mixed with some of the main tenets of economic neo-liberal Thatcherism such as privatization.

Table 11 Voting behavior GE1992 by religious affiliation and age

		Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Other Party	Total	N=
Roman Catholic	18-24	11.8%	76.5%	11.8%	0%	0%	0%	100%	67
	35-44	15.8%	66.7%	14%	3.5%	0%	0%	100%	57
	55-59	5.6%	61.1%	27.8%	0%	0%	5.6%	100%	18
	65+	18.3%	62.2%	14.6%	2.4%	1.2%	1.2%	100%	82
Anglican/ C of E	18-24	43.5%	34.8%	21.7%	0%	0%	0%	100%	23
	35-44	36.0%	43.3%	18.9%	0.6%	0%	1.2%	100%	164
	55-59	38.1%	48.8%	10.7%	1.2%	0%	1.2%	100%	84
	65+	46.0%	39.9%	14.1%	0%	0%	0%	100%	291
CofSc	18-24	20.0%	30%	10%	40%	0%	0%	100%	10
	35-44	15.4%	48.7%	20.5%	15.4%	0%	0%	100%	39
	55-59	20.0%	52%	8%	20%	0%	0%	100%	25
	65+	27.9%	45.9%	13.5%	12.6%	0%	0%	100%	111
Total		33.2	47.2%	15.1%	3.8%	0.1%	0.5%	100%	971

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 1997

Despite Blairs' New Labour rhetoric there was not much difference in the economic policies from Majors' or Thatchers' economic policies. In fact, there was a lot of continuation on a number of subjects, because a lot of reforms started under Thatcher and Major were adopted by Blair's government. In fact, it was New Labour that introduced university tuition fees, tax reforms and privatized the London underground, which shows a clear break from Old Labour. Blair also secured a deal with all the advantages of an EU-membership without joining the Euro, despite Labour being very sympathetic to the EU and the idea of joining the Eurozone. **(Coats & Lawler 2000:109-113, 179-184, 248-252)** Blair's first term 1997-2001 is largely considered a huge success, despite critics arguing he abandoned Labours' fundamental tenets of socialism by adopting conservative, neo-liberal economic policies. Blair was in his first term able to introduce policies like the National Minimum Wage act, Human Rights Act, and as promised in their 1997-campaign, devolving power and thus establishing for the first time a Scottish National parliament, Northern Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly. **(Coats & Lawler 2000)**

Now that we have looked at the GE1992 and GE1997, we can conclude that despite the political, economic and social upheavals of the 90s that affected the British deeply, this was not necessarily reflected in the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants. True, Major winning the GE1992 was a surprise since the polls predicted Labour to win, but when we look at the results for voting intentions and actual voting results we see that we can confirm H1-H3 for GE1992: yes Protestants did vote overwhelmingly for the Conservative party, and they were overwhelmingly eurosceptic. Catholic voting behavior also aligned with our hypothesis that they are much more inclined to be pro-EC/EU and thus votes for Labour. Furthermore, we have seen that when we added the variables 'devotion' and 'age', we still could confirm our hypothesis that church attendance matters and older generations vote (slightly) differently than younger generations. In other words, there are no major surprises for GE1992 for both Catholics and Protestants.

As for GE1997, we were at first not able to confirm our first hypothesis that Protestants are much more eurosceptic and thus would vote overwhelmingly for eurosceptic parties like the Conservative party, as the result showed that 39% had voted for the Labour party and only 38% for the Conservative party. However, we still did not have to refute our first hypothesis for Protestants because table 8 and table 9, the questions about the EC, show that Protestants still were overwhelmingly eurosceptic compared to Catholics who were overwhelmingly pro-EU. This is why putting the data into the right context is so important: despite more Protestants voting for Labour than for the Conservative party for GE1997, this does not mean that Protestants were also becoming more positive towards the EU. In fact, Major signing the Maastricht Treaty was one of the key issues that led to disunity within the Conservative party and dissatisfaction with the conservative voters. This also is supported by the fact that in GE1992 54.4% of the Protestants voted for the conservative party, while this had dropped to 39%. So the general negative sentiment towards the Conservative party in years leading up to the GE1997 resulted in less Protestants voting for the Conservative party than before, but this was a rather, as mentioned before, due to tactical anti-conservative voting and not due to Protestants becoming more positive towards Labour or the EU. Furthermore, there was only a small surprise when looking at our third hypothesis for Catholics: younger voters were in 1997 much more inclined to vote for New Labour than older generation of Catholics, who were less impressed with New Labours' radically new conservative approach to the economy. **(Coats & Lawler, 2000:26-30)**

IV religious cultures and public attitudes towards EU in the UK 2009-2016

Blair's Third Way, a synthesis between capitalism and socialism, positioning Labour in the centre-right, was fairly successful in his first term from 1997 and 2001. The economy was strong again and the unemployment numbers kept falling. The Conservative party on the other hand had still not recovered from the loss of the GE1997 because it was still deeply divided over the EU and the question of joining the Eurozone, so it decided make a strong right-wing shift after losing the GE2001 too. **(Allen & Bartle, 2010:1-36)** The Labour Party was thus easily able to convince voters to vote for them and won another majority of 413 seats in the GE2001. **(BBC 2005)** Blair's second and third term however, were plagued by controversies and bad decision that would come back to haunt Blair, causing Labour's largest foreign crisis. In fact, it was the decision to join the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 that instigated the fall of Labour in the subsequent elections. Critics and the UN called the war 'unjust' as there was no proof of WMD's owned by Saddam Hussein, and the invasion lacked any mandate from the UNSC. British involvement caused great tension in Britain in the political as well as the public sphere: 1 million people marched on February 15th 2003 as a protest against the war. **(Elliot, Faucher-King & Le Galès 2010:120-125)** Labour support fell dramatically in the coming years and in the GE2005 Labour lost 66 seats, while the Conservatives won 33 seats. While Labour still had the majority of 355 seats, with only 35.2% of the popular vote it also had the lowest amount of approval of any majority government in British history. Blair even had attracted the ire and disapproval of some of his former most loyal party members, who no longer supported his foreign policy. The lustre of Blair officially faded when Brown and his supporters demanded that Blair promised to step down if Labour won a 4th consecutive election and make way for Brown. **(Allen & Bartle, 2010:1-36)** When the casualties in the Iraq War mounted and cause further tension within British politics, and when previously suppressed evidence on the Iraq War surfaced Blair was accused of misleading Parliament in 2001. **(Independent 2006)** But while Blair then officially resigned and handed the leadership over to Gordon Brown on June the 27th 2007, Labour support in voting polls kept declining. In fact, the events leading up to the GE2010 would show that Brown did not have the charisma that Blair exerted in his first term, and he was not able to convince the voters to return to Labour. So on 6th of April 2010 Brown went to Queen Elizabeth II and asked her to dissolve Parliament, and announced a new election on the 6th of May 2010. **(Allen & Bartle, 2010:120-124, 146-148, 175-176)** All the time, the Conservative party was on the rise, mainly benefitting from the events that cause Blair to resign and the failure of Brown to attract voters. However, despite securing 91 more than Labour, the Conservatives under Cameron had not been able secure the needed majority of 326 seats, which led to the Conservatives forming a coalition with the Liberal Democrats. **(BBC 2010)** The New Labour era was officially over. **(BBC 2010)**

But are the fall of Labour and the rise of the Conservatives also reflected in the voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics? This would be very important to know, because if despite political, economic and social changes in the UK Protestants still were inclined to vote for Conservative and Eurosceptic parties and Catholics for Labour and pro-European parties, then it would become very clear that religious cultures indeed contribute to the shape voting behavior and thus public attitudes. Which in turn means that religious cultures contribute to the issue of ‘European identity’, and this shows that, as Nelsen and Guth, and Scherer have claimed, that the issue of European identity not only has a political or economic dimension but also a religious dimension. Table 1 shows clearly that the majority of those affiliated with CofSc/Anglican voted for the Conservative Party, while the majority of the Catholics voted for Labour, confirming H1 that Protestants are more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties, while Catholics are more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour. And just like we saw in the GE1992 and GE1997, the exception here is those affiliated with the CofSc: the reason for the majority of votes for Labour is mainly due to the historical alliance between Scottish Presbyterians and Catholics when Scotland was fighting England for independence. (**The Spectator 2015, Theos 2010**) In fact, this fight received a boost in when the SNP in its manifesto for the 2007 Scottish Parliament election pledged to hold an independence referendum by 2010.³⁵ The SNP won the election and published a white paper entitled ‘Choosing Scotland's Future’. The 20.2% of those affiliated with the CofSc, despite being Protestant, is thus due to the fact that the SNP took on the role of ‘guarantor and defender of a distinct Scottish sensibility, pushing for elections,’ which resonates with the members of the National Church of Scotland, that has historically been the institution to defend and preserve the Scottish identity. (**Steven, 2010:93**) While the SNP was a minor player in the GE1992 and GE1997, by the time of the GE2010 it had already become Scotland’s number one political party. Furthermore, we see that the table also shows that UKIP received the most support from those affiliated CofE/Anglican, despite the difference with Catholics being only 0.4%. But while this result shows that we can confirm H1 for Protestants and UKIP, because the difference between Protestants and Catholics for UKIP for GE2010 isn’t that significant we need to be careful to draw any hard conclusions. However, because UKIP’s campaign message had strong anti-EU rhetoric, and it received almost 1 million votes, we can say that UKIP’s message apparently definitely started to resonate with Protestants. Thus what we can definitely say is that UKIP is on the rise, and as we will see later when we look at the GE2015 and Brexit, would start to make a significant impact on politics in the UK and the EU. (**Electoral Reform Society 2010**) But what is most notable about the result of table 1 is that it shows is that, despite the dramatic decline of support for Labour in the years leading up, 42.7% of those affiliated with the CofSc and 41% of the Catholics still voted for the Labour Party. Thus we see that here clearly that religious cultures do contribute to the voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics.

Table 1 Voting Behavior by Religious affiliation GE2010

	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	UKIP	Total	N=
CofE/Anglican	27.8	49.2	17.6	0.0	2.0	3.4	100.0	295
Jewish	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	6
CofSc	42.7	21.3	14.6	20.2	0.0	1.1	100.0	89
Muslim	68.8	18.8	6.2	6.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	16
Roman Catholic	41.0	27.0	21.0	6.0	2.0	3.0	100.0	100
Total	34.4	38.9	17.4	4.9	1.6	2.8	100.0	506

Table is based on data drawn from the BES face-to-face post election survey 2010

Table 2 and 3, which show the result for the questions on the EU, are very telling and also confirm H1 that Protestants are much more Eurosceptic while Catholics have a pro-EU attitude. 41.3% of those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican disapproves of the UK's membership in the EU, while only 28.3% of Catholics disapproves and 27.6% of those affiliated with the CofSc. Only 5.4% of those affiliated with CofE/Anglican strongly approves of the Eu-membership. Furthermore, 59.6% of those affiliated with the CofE/Anglicans rule out joining the Euro on principals, compared to 19.6% of the Catholics, and 16.3% of those affiliated with CofSc. 61.7% of the Catholics wanted to join the Euro as soon as possible, compared to only 20.7% of those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican. The results are thus very telling and proof that an overwhelming majority of the Protestants in 2010 still very much wanted to protect their independence from the EU and had no appetite for joining the Eurozone.

Table 2 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and EU GE2010

Membership in EU	CofE/Anglican	Roman Catholic	CofSc	Muslim	Jewish	Total
Strongly approve	5.4	11.7	6.1	18.8	0.0	7.3
Approve	34.1	46.7	48.0	37.5	37.5	39.8
Disapprove	41.3	28.3	27.6	31.2	50.0	35.5
Strongly disapprove	19.2	13.3	18.4	12.5	12.5	17.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	276	120	98	16	8	518

Table is based on data drawn from the BES face-tot-face post election survey 2010

Table 3 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and EU GE2010

Join Euro?	CofE/Anglican	Jewish	CofSc	Muslim	Roman Catholic	Total	N=
Rule out joining on principle	59.3	0.9	16.3	3.9	19.6	100.0	332
Stay out for at least the next four or five years	54.6	2.1	15.5	3.6	24.2	100.0	194
Join if and when the economic conditions are right	50.7	0.7	20.4	2.8	25.4	100.0	142
Definitely join as soon as possible	20.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	61.7	100.0	12
Total	55.9	1.2	16.9	3.5	22.5	100.0	680

Table is based on data drawn from the BES face-tot-face post election survey 2010

When we add the variable for ‘Devotion’ we see that ‘church attendance’ didn’t matter very much in 2010: table 4 shows that there is no or very little difference between regularly attending Protestants and irregularly attending Protestants, or those that never/practically never attend. Regularly attending Catholics were more inclined to vote for Labour than irregularly attending Catholics by almost 6% however, the difference is too small to say it is really significant. While this finding does not confirm H2 for the GE2010 for Catholics or Protestants, we need to be careful to say that it entirely refutes H2, since the difference between regular and irregular attendance for both groups in 2010 is not big enough to draw any hard conclusions. What is notable however is that, for all groups we see that those who attend church weekly are less inclined to vote for UKIP than those who attend irregularly or never/practically never. This is something that can only be explained by speculation, as there is no hard evidence that supports any argument. I would argue that we take into account the difference between ‘biblical Christians and ‘cultural Christians’ who identify themselves only with a religious culture they grew up in due to family background and/or the social and cultural environment.³⁷ That could explain why those who attend church more are less inclined to vote for UKIP, as they might sense that UKIP’s views and values do not align with biblical values. Again, because the BES did not make a distinction between these two groups, we can only speculate.

Table 4 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and church attendance GE2010

		Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	UKIP	Total	N=
CofE/ Anglican	Once a week or more	16.7	47.2	30.6	0.0	2.8	2.8	100	36
	Once a month or more	27.8	49.2	17.6	0.0	2.0	3.4	100	295
	Several times a year	32.2	47.4	14.3	0.0	2.2	3.9	100	230
	Never or practically never	27.2	49.8	17.4	0.0	2.1	3.5	100	287
CofSc	Once a week or more	28.6	28.6	14.3	28.6	0.0	0.0	100	14
	Once a month or more	42.7	21.3	14.6	20.2	0.0	1.1	100	89
	Several times a year	44.1	18.6	16.9	20.3	0.0	0.0	100	59
	Never or practically never	42.7	21.3	14.6	20.2	0.0	1.1	100	89
Roman Catholic	Once a week or more	48.4	22.6	16.1	6.5	3.2	3.2	100	31
	Once a month or more	42.9	24.7	20.8	6.5	1.3	3.9	100	77
	Several times a year	43.2	27.0	24.3	2.7	0.0	2.7	100	37
	Never or practically never	42.5	24.7	20.5	6.8	1.4	4.1	100	73
Total		33.5	39.6	17.4	4.9	1.6	3.0	100	1,317

Table is based on data drawn from the BES face-to-face post election survey 2010

37. For a clear discussion between the difference of ‘Biblical Christian’ and ‘Cultural Christian’ please see a.o. Harper&Row, *Postmodern theology: Christian faith in a pluralist world*, 1989. Or Joseph C. Aldrich, *Life-style evangelism: crossing traditional boundaries to reach the unbelieving world*. 1983.

Finally, when we add the variable for ‘age’ we can see a clear generational gap that obviously supports H3: older Protestants are more inclined to vote Conservative and/or UKIP than younger Protestants, and older Catholics are more inclined than younger Catholics to vote for Labour. While there are no surprises here, what is notable is the fact that those affiliated with the CofSc in the age group 18-24 overwhelmingly support the SNP. After this age group the numbers drop in the group 35-44, only to go up again in the age group of 55-59 and 65+. When we compare this to the % of those who voted for Labour we see that those affiliated with the CofSc seem to be almost split between the Labour Party and the SNP. Furthermore, while UKIP unsurprisingly received the most votes from those affiliated with CofE/Anglican, we see for all religious groups that the older generations are more inclined to vote for UKIP than younger generations. There is no hard evidence to support any evidence, but a rapport from the BSA claims that UKIP’s rhetoric of ‘superiority of western/British values’ and ‘protecting British/western values’ resonates more with older generations, because this is the generation that grew up in a social environment where western/British values greatly informed the life of most people, and thus those values were naturally considered superior, leaving less space for tolerance for different values. (BSA 2015)

Table 5 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and age GE2010

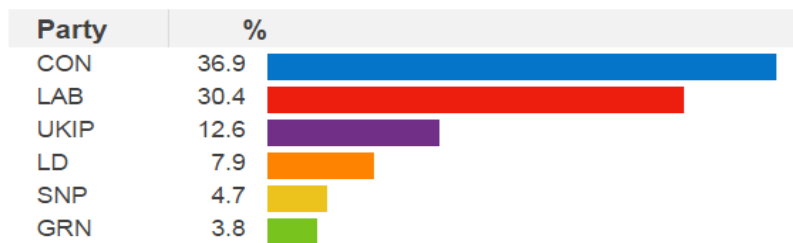
		Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	UKIP	Total	N=
CofE/ Anglican	18-24	26.1	41.1	26.1	0.0	4.4	2.3	100	23
	35-44	27.5	47.5	22.5	0.0	0.0	2.5	100	40
	55-59	30.8	49.1	17.1	0.0	0.0	3.0	100	26
	65+	29.2	51.8	13.1	0.0	1.6	4.3	100	137
CofSc	18-24	30.0	20.0	10.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	100	5
	35-44	39.0	19.0	13.0	29.0	0.0	0.0	100	10
	55-59	40.0	14.0	14.3	30.6	0.0	1.1	100	14
	65+	44.2	10.8	6.3	38.7	0.0	0.0	100	43
Roman Catholic	18-24	45.3	25.7	20.0	8.0	0.0	1.0	100	12
	35-44	58.3	16.7	18.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	100	12
	55-59	59.1	20.6	13.6	6.7	0.0	0.0	100	7
	65+	60.5	22.7	9.1	5.6	0.0	2.1	100	22
Total		34.8	38.5	17.7	5.1	1.7	2.3	100	351

Table is based on data drawn from the BES face-to-face post election survey 2010

The 2015 General Election

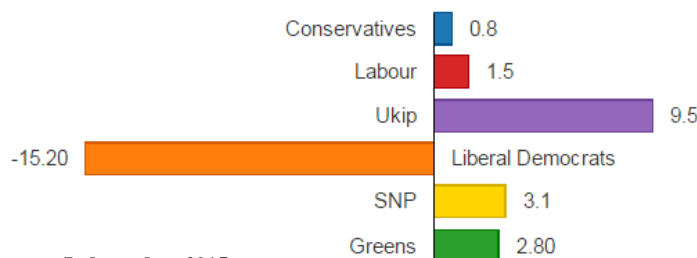
The GE2015 held on 7th of May was a watershed moment when the political map in the UK really began to change, with mainly Conservative and eurosceptic parties winning. The political earthquake caused in Britain had already started with the 2014 European Elections when UKIP won the elections and secured the most seats (24) in the European Parliament. But the most important change was that the Conservative party, after noticing the enormous growth of support for Eurosceptic parties since the GE2010 and the mounting pressure of the eurosceptic hostile mood, made the Conservative Cameron-government change its tone towards the EU in the two previous years before GE2015. The Conservatives started to adopt a much more critical attitude that sometimes was reminiscent of days pre-accession to the EC. Looking at the context there was plenty of reason to be eurosceptic according to the Conservatives and UKIPer's. The years between 2010 and 2015 saw the culmination of several crises: the Euro crisis, Greece, the refugee crisis born out of the Syrian Civil War and brought tension and division on how to solve the huge influx of refugees, the rise of ISIS and their heinous crimes broadcast all over the world, the terrorist attacks in France that left Europe reeling. All of these crises followed each other at a faster pace than the EU could handle, and the result was that in the period between the GE2010 and GE2015, the EU saw a rise in the kind of nationalistic rhetoric that many thought Europe had left behind in 1945. Thus, these crises further fuelled the raging Euroscepticism among constituents in many European member states, and it is thus no wonder that David Cameron promised in his campaign to 'renegotiate an EU-deal' or a referendum in the GE2015 Conservative manifesto. (BBC 2013) This was obviously a successful tactic as the Conservatives secured a 12-seat majority and won the GE2015 with 331 seats.

UK vote share after 650 of 650 seats



Source: BBC 2015

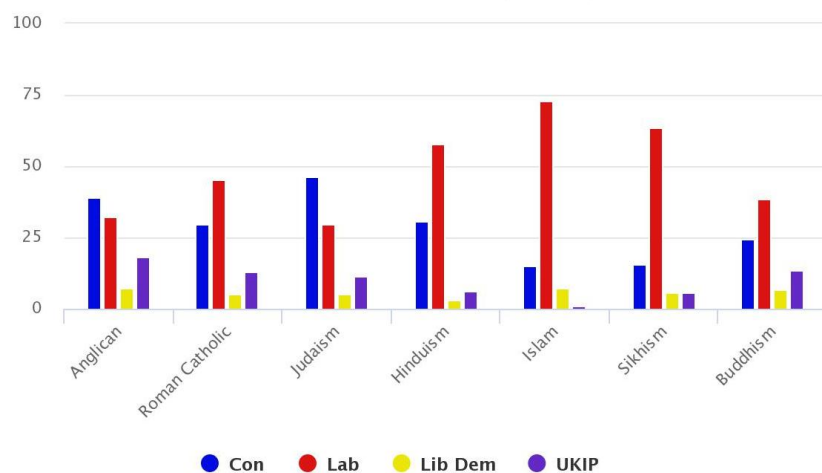
However, the next chart shows that while it only won a 12.6 % of the votes, it was the UKIP that had gained most votes in comparison with the GE2010.



Source: Independent 2015

But is this anti-EU sentiment also reflected in the religious vote? This is important because as the EU gained even more salience due to all the crises, the campaigns and manifesto's of the political parties showed that the EU was a key issue in the election of 2015. It is thus interesting to see if and how the Eurosceptic sentiment had an impact on Protestants and Catholics. First we look at voting intentions. Table 6 shows that 39.3 % of the Anglicans intended to vote Conservative and 18.3 % for UKIP, as opposed to 32.1 % for Labour. 45.3% of the Catholics showed a propensity to vote Labour, with 29.5% voting for Conservative and 12.9% for UKIP. This confirms H1 that Protestants are more likely to vote for the eurosceptical Conservative Party and UKIP, whereas Catholics support pro-European parties like Labour.

Table 6 Voting intentions by religious affiliation GE2015



Source: BES Election Study 2015

Table 7 on the actual voting behavior shows some small differences compared to the BES data for voting intentions: those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican support of 56.8% for Conservatives as opposed to the 22.1% voted for Labour and 13.3% for UKIP. The number for Catholics remains largely the same: 42%.2 supported Labour as opposed to the 34.1% support for the Conservative Party, and 8.6% for UKIP. This confirms H1 that Protestants are still much more inclined to support eurosceptic parties like the Conservative party and UKIP than Catholics whereas Catholics are still much more inclined to vote for Labour. What is notable here is that the support for UKIP among Catholics and Protestants has grown since 2010: in 2010 it was 3.4% for Protestants and 3% for Catholics: in 2015 this had risen to 13.3% for Protestants and 8.6% for Catholics. According to Christianity Today and the Catholic Herald the rise in support for UKIP among the religious comes mainly from the older generation of Protestants and Catholics in the UK. (**Christianity Today 2014, Catholic Herald 2014**) This is not surprising as we have seen that older generations in general are among those who are the most critical of the EU and that UKIP's rhetoric of 'superiority of western/British values' and 'protecting British/western values' resonates more with older generations, because this is the generation that grew up in a social environment where western/British values greatly informed the life of most people. (**Clements, 2015:198-220**) Another notable thing is the 0% for UKIP from those affiliated with the CofSc: a good explanation could simply be that UKIP was firmly against the independence of Scotland and even urged Queen Elizabeth II to intervene and back the 'no' vote in the September 2014 Scottish Referendum, (**BBC 2014**) while the Church of Scotland publicly supported the 'yes' vote for independence. (**BBC 2014**)

Table 7 Voting behavior by religious affiliation GE2015

	Labour	Conservative	UKIP	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	Total	N=
Atheist	34.3	31.8	12.5	9.5	6.5	5.3	100.0	789
Roman Catholic	42.2	34.1	8.6	5.4	8.1	1.6	100.0	185
CofE/Anglican	22.1	56.8	13.3	6.6	0.0	1.1	100.0	533
CofSc	28.8	26.9	0.0	3.8	40.4	0.0	100.0	52
Jewish	20.0	70.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	10
Muslim	77.5	16.9	0.0	0.0	2.8	2.8	100.0	71
Total	32.7	39.5	11.5	7.5	5.5	3.3	100.0	1,640

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 2015 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7972-1>

Table 8 presents the same picture as table 7: those affiliated with the CofSc are with 51.1 much more inclined to say that they ‘disapprove’ of Britain’s membership of the EU, than Catholics, thus confirming H1 that Protestants are much more inclined to be eurosceptic than Catholics.

The fact that those who are affiliated with the CofSc with 63.2% overwhelmingly approve of Britain’s EU membership makes sense, since the Scottish’s fight for independence from England received a boost after the SNP assumed power in Scottish Parliament in 2006 and promised a Scottish referendum which was held in 2014. We have also seen that the majority of those affiliated with CofSc started voting for the SNP in the GE2015. Finally, the CofSc has always had a positive attitude towards the EU and the past 20 years even continually spoke out in favor of membership in the EU. (BBC 2014, Ecumenical News 2016, Eurodaconia 2016)

Table 8 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and EU GE2015

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Britain's membership in the EU	CofE/Anglican	Atheist	Roman Catholic	CofSc	Other Christian	Muslim	Jewish	Total
Approve	48.9	58.8	62.9	63.2	66.7	66.7	77.8	57.0
disapprove	51.1	41.2	37.1	36.8	33.3	33.3	22.2	43.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	495	850	202	38	24	72	9	1,690

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 2015

When we add the variable for ‘devotion’ we see that in GE2015 while we can confirm H2 for Catholics, this does not necessarily apply to Protestants: while Catholics who regularly attend church tend to vote more for Labour, the difference between those who affiliated with CofE/Anglican and CofSc and attend church regularly and those who never/practically never attend is too small to draw any hard conclusions. In fact, what is very telling here is that for both Catholics and those affiliated with CofE/Anglican those who attend church regularly are much less inclined to vote for UKIP than those who attend less regularly or never/practically never. And just as we explained for the GE2010 a good explanation would be the difference between ‘biblical Christians and ‘cultural Christians’ who identify themselves only with a religious culture they grew up in due to family background and/or the social and cultural environment.⁴³ That can explain why those who attend church more are less inclined to vote for UKIP, as they might feel that UKIP’s views and values do not align with biblical values. Again, because the BES did not make a distinction between these two groups, we can only speculate.

Table 9 Voting behavior by religious affiliation and church attendance GE2015

		Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	SNP	Green Party	UKIP	Total	N=
Roman Catholic	Once a week or more	56.1	26.8	7.3	2.4	0.0	7.3	100	41
	Once a month or more	45.5	27.3	9.1	4.5	9.1	4.5	100	22
	Several times a year	48.1	33.3	3.7	11.1	0.0	3.7	100	27
	Never or practically never	34.0	46.8	0.0	8.5	0.0	10.6	100	47
CofE/Anglican	Once a week or more	29.4	56.9	7.8	0.0	2.0	3.9	100	51
	Once a month or more	29.8	50.9	8.8	0.0	1.8	8.8	100	57
	Several times a year	26.4	49.5	2.2	0.0	1.1	20.9	100	91
	Never or practically never	20.7	54.0	8.6	0.0	0.5	16.2	100	198
CofSc	Once a week or more	45.5	0.0	0.0	54.5	0.0	0.0	100	11
	Once a month or more	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	2
	Several times a year	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	100	9
	Never or practically never	17.6	29.4	11.8	41.2	0.0	0.0	100	17
Total		29.8	46.6	6.3	4.4	1.0	11.9	100.0	573

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 2015

Unfortunately for unknown reasons there is no data available for ‘age’ in the BES post-election face to face so we are not able to test H3 for GE2015.

UK's EU-referendum June 2016

After securing a parliamentary majority in the GE2015, Cameron tried to renegotiate an EU deal, tackling concerns about migration and the economy, which eventually failed. Cameron then vowed to honor his promise to hold a referendum on UK's EU-membership. But while Cameron and a few other well-known Conservatives campaigned for 'Remain' it became very clear the majority of the Conservative party had already set their mind on 'Leave'. **(BSA, 2014:2-3)** With over 1 million refugees entering the EU in 2015, the refugee crisis had started to become a great source of tension between EU-member states. This combined with the terrorist attacks in January and November 2015 in France and March 2016 in Brussels committed by some who had posed as Syrian refugees, gave ammunition to eurosceptic parties like UKIP and made the eurosceptic mood in the UK and throughout Europe even more intense. **(Pewresearch 2016)** Together with a still recovering economy in the EU, all these events set the stage in which Brexit could happen: on 23rd of June 2016 51.9% of the British voted 'Leave' against 48.1% who voted 'Remain.' **(Politico 2016)** The British became the first to leave the EU in a way that seems a testimony to the claim that the British have always been the EU's most critical and obstructive member, which is, according to Scherer's research, rooted in the Reformation and thus the religious division between Protestants and Catholics. **(Scherer 2014)** In fact, Nigel Farage likened the EU referendum 'a modern day battle for Britain'. **(Express 2015)** Thus Brexit is a good opportunity to look at the breakdown of the vote by religious affiliation and see if and how religious cultures still contribute to the public attitudes towards the EU. Unfortunately, there is only data available to test H1 for Brexit: Protestants are much more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to vote 'Leave', while Catholics are more pro-Europe and thus much more inclined to vote 'Remain'. First we look at the data of the BES Cross Section post-election face-to-face survey for voting intentions that I also used to analyze GE2015. The BES then also included a question about the EU referendum. The question asked was: *'If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, how do you think you would vote?'* Table 1 shows that with 50.6% those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican were more inclined to vote 'Leave' than Catholics with 36.9%, which is very telling and confirms H1 that Protestants are much more eurosceptic and thus more inclined to vote 'Leave', while Catholics are more pro-EU and thus much more inclined to vote 'Remain.' However, what is interesting is the fact that those affiliated with CofE/Anglican are almost evenly split: 50.6% intended to vote for 'Leave' and 49.4% intended to vote for 'Remain.'

Table 1 Voting intentions UK EU-referendum by religious affiliation

If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, how do you think you would vote?	Atheist	Roman Catholic	CofE/Anglican	CofSc	Jewish	Muslim	Total
Leave the EU	36.5	36.9	50.6	34.4	12.1	25.2	39.7
Stay in the EU	63.5	63.1	49.4	65.6	87.9	74.8	60.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	970.1	203.4	519.2	38.1	9.8	103.3	1,843.9

Source: Table is based on data drawn from the BES Cross Section Survey 2015

43. For a clear discussion between the difference of 'Biblical Christian' and 'Cultural Christian' please see a.o. Harper&Row, Postmodern theology: Christian faith in a pluralist world, 1989. Or Joseph C. Aldrich, *Life-style evangelism: crossing traditional boundaries to reach the unbelieving world.* 1983.

Now we will look at the post-Brexit data of the 2016 post-referendum wave 9 of the 2014-2017 British Election Study Internet Panel with a base of 30,036 respondents 18+ conducted from the 4th of June 2016 until the 4th of July 2016, to see whether we can still confirm H1 that majority of Protestants voted for ‘Leave’ as opposed to the majority of Catholics who should have voted for ‘Remain.’ Respondents were asked how they had voted in the referendum. When we look at table 2 we see that we are still able to confirm H1: 63.9% of those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican voted ‘Leave’ as opposed to 30.2% of the Catholics. In fact, all religious groups voted overwhelmingly for ‘Remain’ except for those affiliated with the CofE/Anglican, which is very telling because it shows that Protestants are indeed, as we have seen in all of the previous general elections, most inclined to be eurosceptic and vote for ‘Leave’.

Table 2 Voting behavior EU referendum by religious affiliation

How have you voted in the EU referendum on June the 21 st 2016?	Atheist	Roman Catholic	CofE/Anglican	CofSc	Jewish	Muslim	Total
Remain	54.8	69.3	36.1	65.7	60.8	59.2	69.1
Leave	45.2	30.7	63.9	44.3	39.2	40.8	30.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	8,568	6,541	10,567	2,345	1,023	992	30,036

Source: data drawn from the BES post-referendum online panel survey Wave 9 2016

Now that we have looked at the data for GE2010 and GE2015 and Brexit from a multivariate perspective, we can conclude that we can largely confirm H1 and H3: even when all other variable factors are included for we see that Protestants are indeed much more inclined to vote for Eurosceptic parties like Conservatives and UKIP than Catholics, who are much more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour. Also, older Protestants and Catholics do vote differently than younger Catholics and Protestants since they tend to be more eurosceptic and vote for the Conservative Party and UKIP as there is an obvious decrease among both denominations for Labour. However, we were not able to confirm H2, as the data of GE2010 and GE2015 shows that the difference between regular and irregular attendance for both groups in GE2010 and GE2015 is not big enough to draw any hard conclusions. What is notable however is that, for all groups we see that those who attend church weekly are less inclined to vote for UKIP than those who attend irregularly or never/practically never. This is something that can only be explained by taking into account the difference between ‘biblical Christians and ‘cultural Christians.’ However, we are able to draw the conclusion that the BES post-election face-to-face data for GE2010 and GE2015 does confirm there is a link between religious cultures and choice for political party.

V European identity and religious cultures

Our research on the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants shows there is indeed a difference in attitudes towards the EU: Catholics have much warmer attitudes towards the EU than Protestants, since Catholics were much more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour or the SNP, and voted 'Remain' in the EU-referendum, while Protestants were much more inclined to vote for eurosceptic parties like the Conservative Party and UKIP, and voted 'Leave' in the EU-referendum. Thus we seem to be able to confirm Nelsen and Guth, and Scherer's research and say that Catholicism seems to stimulate support for the European integration project while Protestantism contributes to the current 'constraining dissensus' towards and rejection of the EU.

But what does this conclusion, the fact that Catholicism *contributed and still contributes to the public support for the EU*, while Protestantism *contributed and still contributes to the current 'constraining public dissensus' towards and rejection of the EU*, exactly mean for our assertion that 'religion can play a contributing role to the emergence of European identity'? First, it is important to acknowledge that with the 'existential crisis' the EU is currently going through, the fact that Protestantism contributes to this constraining dissensus means that as long as these two *religious cultures* are at odds with each other which impacts their member's attitudes towards the EU, we cannot expect *religion* to contribute to offering shared frameworks of meanings, morals, and values that have the power to engage and influence citizens' perceptions, attitudes and behavior (Hervieu-Léger), or transcendent national, ethnic, gender and class boundaries (Nelsen), or to help draw imaginary boundaries, facilitating the identification of an in-group vs. the out-group. In other words, while *religion* does have the potential to do all of the above, because as we have seen Catholic religious culture did and still does offer all of the above necessary to establish a European identity, as long as the two religious cultures are still at odds with each other, religion *currently* is not able to contribute to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, and thus to the emergence of a European identity. Second, and more importantly is the fact that the result of voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants between 1990-2016 does demand that we acknowledge the following fact: while religion *currently* is not able to contribute to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, and thus to the emergence of a European identity because Protestantism and Catholicism are still currently at odd with each other which also influences the public behavior of their members towards a.o. the EU, this does *not* mean that religion does *not* play a role at all in the issue of European identity. In fact, while the European elite have focused their efforts on the economy and public services and payed very little attention to "identity issues" and/or how religious dimension to this issue, Peter J. Katzenstein and Timothy J Barnes warned in their book 'Religion in a expanding Europe' that enlargement to countries with a different and/or stronger religious traditions had actually fed rather than undermined the importance of religion for the EU. Especially because all these different religious traditions 'are advancing notions of European identity and European union that differ substantially from how the European integration process is generally understood by political leaders and scholars.' (Katzenstein & Byrnes, 2006:2)

The effect is that because of all these different understandings of the EU, they are advancing and reinforcing the issue of religion as an important aspect of the EU. In other words, European identity cannot be understood or constructed without taking the religious dimension of the issue into account. **(Katzenstein & Byrnes, 2006:2)** This is because despite secularization, in most members states in the EU there are still close ties between the predominant religious culture and the political and the public and sphere: Catholic religious culture still plays a huge role in Italy, Poland, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Croatia and France, while Protestant religious culture still is very present in the political and public sphere in the UK and Germany. On top of that we have a few member states where the Orthodox religion is the dominant culture that also shaped(s) the political and public sphere like in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus. This is important to keep in mind because while presently religious cultures do no longer hold the vast political power they once used too, like the Catholic Church for example, they have played and still play a significant role in shaping and protecting national identity, which is the an important factor for informing members' attitudes towards the EU. In fact, in some member states the churches held the role of 'guardian of the national identity' like the church of Scotland, the Church of England, the Greek Orthodox church in Greece, the Catholic Church in Italy and Poland etc. **(Katzenstein & Byrnes, 2006:20-24, 47-49, 68-70, 175-177, 240-241, 293-294)**

Of course, some of this can be attributed to the fierce debated about Islam and whether it is possible for Muslims who abide by Islamic values to actually integrate in Western nations, but this is not the whole story. In fact it is clear that the events of the last 20 years point to a simple truth: that despite advanced secularism the political power of religious cultures might have waned but the relevance of religion never really went away, because religion was always still present informing people's and politicians' values and outlook on life. The only difference is that while religion was in the past a latent force in the private sphere informing people's outlook on life, it has in the last 20 years been pushed back into the public sphere. This makes sense when we look at the fact that despite the infamous 'we don't do God', Tony Blair privately was very religious and that his faith informed many of his political decisions and later even admitted that he had asked God for help in period leading up to the decision to invade Iraq. **(Telegraph 2003, The Tablet 2016, Premier Christianity 2016)** Furthermore while in 2003 Blair and the Labour Party exclaimed that 'we don't do God', Theresa May has in less than a year after becoming the PM of the UK in July 2016, already spoken three times in public about how her Christian faith helps her to take difficult political decisions, that Christians have a right to 'express their faith in Christ in public', that the British 'should be confident about the role Christianity has to play in their lives' and that 'we must continue to ensure that people feel able to speak about their faith which absolutely includes their faith in Christ'. **(Telegraph 2016, Mirror 2016, Telegraph 2016)** Thus May is so serious about her Christian faith, that she has no problem in admitting in public that Christian values inform her political decisions or to encourage others to talk about Christ in public too. And this is only one example of how religion has found its way back to the public sphere. France is another good example: while it is considered the most secular country of the EU, in the recent years every election candidates were asked whether they believed in God and to declare their religious affiliation. **(1Jour 2007, Franceinfo 2012, RTL 2017, NPR 2017)** And in 2007 then president Sarkozy broke a French taboo by referring to France's Christian roots and declaring that religion 'should have a more active role in public life'. **(Christianity Today 2007)**

Even Angela Merkel, who is known to be very private about her faith, has in the last few years spoken more about her Christian faith in public, and said that when it comes to her job as Germany's chancellor 'God is my constant companion'. (**Christianity Today 2016**) Furthermore, in 2015 she responded to claims that Muslim immigration is endangering the Christian roots Germany by saying that that Germany does not suffer from 'too much Islam, but from too little Christianity', and during a visit to the University of Bern in 2015 pointed to the Christian values that helped to forge the European values that have shaped our modern day society. (**EvangelicalFocus 2015**) It is thus no wonder Habermas declared in 2006 that we are now living in a 'post-secular age.' (**Habermas 2006:4, 15-16**)

But while some scholars and politicians have spoken openly about the return of religion in the public sphere in the last 10 years, the European elite on the other hand grasped the far-reaching consequences that this would have for the EU far too late. The fact that they have not been able to suppress the rise of rightwing parties in the EU with the secular values they so heavily promoted while denying the Christian roots of the EU by, for example, vehemently protesting against the inclusion of 'God' or 'Christianity' in the then proposed EU-constitution (**O'Neill, 2007:244-246**), shows that the European elite have been taken by surprise over the fact that rightwing parties in the EU who use shallow Christian religious rhetoric linked to nationalism, have been very successful. It also shows that they don't have a good answer to the rightwing use of shallow Christian rhetoric ('we must protect the Christian roots of Europe against Islam') because merely pointing to secular values and EU's strong economic and political position in the world is no longer sufficient for Europeans with nationalistic sentiments. It is thus evermore clear that while a good and strong economy can give people jobs and a living, freedom of movement etc. it cannot replace cultural and spiritual values that are needed to engender shared frameworks of meanings, morals, and values that have the power to engage and influence citizens' perceptions, attitudes and behavior (Hervieu-Léger), or transcendent national, ethnic, gender and class boundaries (Nelsen), or to help draw imaginary boundaries, facilitating the identification of an in-group vs. the out-group. It is then important to realise the European elite's emphasise on secular values and strong economy of the EU created a vacuum that rightwing parties have capitalized on. And the European elite should realise that because the religious rhetoric of these rightwing groups shows that they only use Christianity as a cultural norm instead as a way of living according to certain moral values given by God, Christianity can then be easily abused for nationalistic sentiments that can have devastating consequences, like happened in Hitler's Third Reich for example. It is thus important that the shallow cultural Christian rhetoric is soon replaced by others with the full message of Christianity that includes the universality of the command of Jesus Christ to 'love your neighbour as yourself.'⁵³ But although we can conclude that, while religion *currently* is not be able to contribute to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans and thus to the emergence of a European identity since the two main religious cultures in the EU, Protestantism and Catholicism, are still at odds with each other, we can conclude that there is a strong return of religion to the political and public sphere that signifies that the EU is not merely an economic and political project because religion matters too. In practice this means that the European elite that push secular values should realize the limits of secular reason and be open to the truth content of religions, because the question 'What is the EU?' cannot (merely) be answered by pointing to the European Single Market. (**Habermas 2006:10-11, 17**)

53. Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

However, I wrote the word ‘currently’ in cursive because of the fact that an ecumenical process has been set in motion: the Protestant and Catholic hierarchy have in the last few years increasingly called for slow rapprochement of Catholics and Protestants, especially by Pope Francis who has made ecumenicalism and healing past wounds one of his top priorities. (**The Guardian 2016, Ecumenical News 2016, The Guardian 2016**) The ‘Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017’ where Pope Francis will attend a commemorative service of the Reformation in Sweden organised by the Lutheran World Federation, and the joint events that will be held in throughout 2017 by German Catholic and Protestant churches who a.o. will hold reconciliation services in which both Churches will ask each other for forgiveness, are only a few of the many examples of this ecumenical process that is currently unfolding. The main reason to watch keep a close eye on this process is because this ecumenical process can provide important advantages for the EU: if both Protestantism and Catholicism can find common ground and start working together closely on important social and political issues that touch everybody in the EU, both religious cultures are then capable of contributing to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, and thus to the emergence of a European identity. The European elite can thus then use this ecumenical process as one of the many tools to reach their goal of creating a shared European identity. However, it is important to keep in mind that until this ecumenical process, pursued by the Catholic and Protestant hierarchy, translates into ecumenical turn by their members, and the European elite take religion into account as an important factor for the EU, religion will not be able to contribute to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, and thus to the emergence of a European identity. (**Evangelical Focus 2016, Vatican 2013**)

VI Conclusion

In this thesis we have looked at the issue of European Identity from a religious perspective, to see if religious cultures, as Nelsen and Guth, and Scherer claim, indeed contribute to shaping public attitudes towards the EU. We chose to focus on one EU-member and compare the Protestant and Catholic attitudes towards the EU through the research question: *'Have religious cultures contributed to the shaping of public attitudes towards the EU in the UK from 1990-2016?'* To answer this research question, we three hypotheses based on the claims of Nelsen and Guth and Scherer. To confirm or refute the hypotheses we measured the religious vote in the GE1992, GE1997, GE2010, GE2015 and Brexit in the UK. Our research on the voting behavior of Catholics and Protestants shows there was indeed a difference in attitudes towards the EU: Catholics have much warmer attitudes towards the EU than Protestants, because Catholics were much more inclined to vote for pro-European parties like Labour or the SNP, while Protestants were much more inclined to vote for Eurosceptic parties like the Conservative Party and UKIP. Thus the social and academic relevance of my thesis consists in the fact that, by deriving three hypotheses from the theories on the issue of European identity and testing them by analyzing voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics between 1990-2016 in the UK, my research was able to show that, Catholic religious culture *contributed and still contributes to the public support for the EU*, while Protestant religious culture *contributed and still contributed to the current 'constraining public dissensus' towards and rejection of the EU*. Furthermore, we also had to conclude that while religion *currently* is not able to contribute to the process of engendering feelings of belonging, community and solidarity between Europeans, and thus to the emergence of a European identity because Protestantism and Catholicism are still currently at odd with each other and this influences the public behavior of their members towards a.o. the EU, this does *not* mean that religion does *not* play a role at all in the issue of religious identity. In fact, we saw that scholars like Peter Katzenstein and Timothy showed that enlargement to countries with different and/or stronger religious traditions had actually fed rather than undermined the importance of religion for the EU.

This conclusion should move the European elite to acknowledging and take the religious dimension into consideration while trying to tackle the current 'existential crisis.' *How* exactly the EU should take the fact that religion plays an important role in the EU 'into consideration' is not something that can be answered here because that is outside the scope of my research. However, following from the above conclusion and the academic relevance of my research I want to make some recommendations for further in-depth research on how to map the role of religion in the issue of the European identity. First, as I mentioned in my introduction, because my research is limited in several ways I consider my thesis as a stepping stone to a more extensive research that encompasses all EU-member states and all the different religious cultures. This is important, because while we were able to confirm that religion plays an important role, my research has not shown *how* exactly religion or the religious cultures affect a members' behavior towards the EU.

Second, religion does not affect a members' behavior on its own i.e. it does not play a role in a vacuum, since the economic, historic and social dimension also play a role. But how exactly all these dimensions interact with each other and *how* religion reinforces the other dimensions and/or how the other dimensions reinforce the religious dimension is something that needs to be clearly established. For example, because according to Max Weber capitalism and Protestantism are linked due to historical process of the Reformation, Protestants religious culture might reinforce the economic dimension of the issue on European identity. **(Weber 2013)** Third, to be able to answer the second point, more data besides 'age' and 'devotion' is necessarily to get a good picture of how all the different dimension interact with each other and *how* religion reinforces the other dimensions and/or how the other dimensions reinforce the religious dimension of one's public attitude. This will then also explain the difference between Protestants in UK as opposed to the Protestants in Germany, who have generally a much more positive attitude towards the EU than their Protestants counterparts in the UK. Fourth, because of the ecumenical process that has been set in motion by the Protestant and Catholic hierarchy in the last few years, it is necessary to understand what role the religious hierarchy can play to affect their members' behavior towards the EU. The Archbishop of Canterbury for example came out in support for the 'Remain'-camp for the EU-referendum in March 2016, and generally has a much more conciliatory tone towards the EU than most of the members of the CofE/Anglicans. **(The Guardian 2016)** Finally, it is also important to understand that if the EU then has mapped all the above points and understands *how* religion plays a role issue of the European identity, it also needs to understand *how* exactly the EU should convey that it is also taking religious values into account, and thus bringing back religion into the public sphere. It can do this in several ways i.e. incorporated it in its institutions and decision-making, but what is important is that it needs to convey this message in such a way that it speaks to both the religious and non-religious communities in the EU. One way is according to Jürgen Habermas, who acknowledges the newfound power and importance power of religion into politics and the public sphere, is by providing religion a role in the public sphere so that it can provide 'semantic potentials' on the grounds of which new social and political policies can be imagined. The only condition is then that these semantics are then translated in a way secular people can also understand. **(Habermas 2006:10-11, 17-18)** Another way that touches upon the issue of public sphere could be, in my opinion, for the European elite to work very closely together with the religious authorities to bring back religion in the public sphere. This has the advantage that they can guard the return of religion in the public sphere i.e. to direct it in a way that all can benefit from and more importantly avoid (further) abuse by rightwing parties. Again, these are only a few examples of how the EU could go about it. But whatever EU decided to do and *how* it will decide to take the religious dimension of the European identity issue into account, fact is that my research has shown very clearly that religion, even on the most secularised continent of the world, plays a very important role in the EU.

Thus, the vision of the Christian Democrats, who very soon after the end of WWII spoke highly about Europe's 'sacred Christian past' and 'Christian universalism' and wanted an EU who's politics, economics and societies were based on Christian principles, may come true after all. **(Nelsen & Guth, 2015)**

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