

Does Party Change Matter?

Party Change and Electoral Recovery in the Dutch Christian Democrats, 1994-2002

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Political parties in contemporary democracies appear to be increasingly in flux. When thrown off-balance by a crushing electoral defeat, or even the prospect of one, parties seem to resort to changes in strategy, organization or ideology with increasing frequency, as documented in the expansive literature built around the theme of parties changing in response to external shocks (e.g. Panebianco 1988, 242; Harmel and Janda 1994, 264-265). However, parties make different choices when undergoing a process of change – some quite literally re-brand themselves and change their ideologies, such as the British Labour Party adopting the ‘Third Way’, while others choose more subtle ways, such as the Dutch Democrats in the course of the 2000s. These different choices, then, seem to lead to different outcomes in terms of the success or failure of recovery. However, the conditions that foster the success or failure of parties changing to recover have not yet been the subject of systematic inquiry in the literature.

This thesis, therefore, asks itself why political parties succeed or fail at recovering from a severe electoral defeat, and how political parties challenged in this way regain their electoral sustainability. More fundamentally, *does party change matter at all to the electoral recovery of political parties in crisis?* In answering these questions, it seeks to contribute to the construction of a theory that can explain the success or failure of existing political parties when they experience external shocks compromising their electoral sustainability and organizational persistence, and to validate a general theoretical framework for use in further research. It aims to answer these questions in the context of a qualitative study of the process of reinvention and recovery experienced by the Dutch Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) between their unprecedented defeat at the polls in 1994 and their return to government in 2002.

The main focus of this thesis, therefore, is the subset of party changes which take place after a party suffers an extraordinary ‘shock’ – in this case this is a crushing electoral defeat, but it can also be a prolonged lack of coalition potential or traumatic internal rebellion. These setbacks force parties to reconsider their role in the political arena, and often lead to changes in party strategy, ideology or organization. Therefore, I shall refer to this subset of party changes as *party reinventions*, even where the changes are more moderate. In short, party reinvention is defined as a process of party change in which a party seeks to address a threat to its electoral sustainability or organizational persistence.

Literature review

Scholars of party change disagree on why and how such changes take place. Some, such as Mair (1997, 51) and Krouwel (2012, 1), have taken a structural view. They conceive of party change as a process occurring gradually over time, evolving along with the general opportunity structure of party competition. The evolution of party organizations from their origins as mass movements into the more top-down cartel party is an important example (Katz and Mair 1995, 17). As the societies in which they operate change, political parties evolve alongside their respective societies.

Others have conceived of parties as essentially resistant to change, arguing that changes take place when a party is thrown off-balance by an external shock and continue until the situation stabilizes (Panebianco 1988, 242; Harmel and Janda 1994, 264-265). This matches the neo-institutionalist concept of punctuated equilibrium (Krasner 1988, 77). Harmel and Janda (1994, 265) relate party change to the pursuit of a party's goals. In their account, party change occurs when an external shock throws a party's ability to achieve its goals into question. Party change, in their eyes, is functional: it serves the purpose of ensuring that a party can accomplish its goals again.

There have been few attempts to bridge the gap between both theories, but it is conceivable that they could be successfully integrated. External shocks could be caused by a temporary loss of touch with the structure of society, and lead to changes to adjust to those circumstances. Similarly, agency can never fully explain changes even after an external shock, forcing us to consider the opportunity structure.

Despite the lack of research into the success or failure of existing parties, there is a developing literature on the success and failure of emerging parties, one-issue parties and extreme right-wing parties. When a new party becomes an established one is not often discussed in the literature: this is largely a result of the huge differences between clearly consolidated parties that have been part of a country's party system for ages and newcomers emerging in the last decades. For clarity in the discussion of new and existing parties that follows, we follow Bolleyer (2012, 12-13) in assuming that several decades of parliamentary experience on the national level is sufficient to consider a party consolidated.

Success is measured primarily in the electoral sense, but some contributions (Harmel and Robertson 1985, 512) have also studied government participation. Among others, the electoral system (Harmel and Robertson 1985, 517) and the structure of the party system (Arzheimer and Carter 2006, 439; Meguid 2005, 357) were found to determine party

success. These findings might apply to existing parties as well when these parties change ideologically or strategically, changing their place in the party system.

Bolleyer (2013, 2-3) takes a different perspective, trying to investigate the success of new parties in terms of the organizational as well as the electoral aspects of political parties. For any party to be successful, she says, it has to possess two characteristics: organizational persistence and electoral sustainability (Bolleyer 2013, 14). Organizational persistence reflects a party's role as a societal organization and its ability to represent its members (*ibid.*). Electoral sustainability, on the other hand, refers to the capacity to win and retain electoral support (Bolleyer 2013, 15). For new parties, the topic of her study, she sees a trade-off between *structure* and *leadership*, the interests of the party in the long run as served by party institutionalization and the interests of the leaders, who perceive short-term costs to building up party institutions (Bolleyer 2013, 21). Formulated in this way, the leadership-structure dilemma is very much geared towards new parties, but in a personalizing political arena, it can be argued that even longstanding parties experience a similar tension between the short-term interests involved in parliamentary work –in the form of both the leadership's personal interests and the imperatives of winning elections – and the long-term interests of the party's membership.

If we follow Bolleyer (2013, 12), extending the theory to old as well as new parties is easier said than done. She argues that in established parties the two dimensions of party success are so closely intertwined that they're inseparable (*ibid.*). This makes research into the success of existing parties problematic. However, the fusion of electoral sustainability and organizational persistence also means that a threat to either of them for an existing party amounts to a threat to the other – essentially, when the parliamentary or extra-parliamentary wings suffer a shock, the party's existence or position can no longer be taken for granted. Combined with Harmel and Janda's theory of party change to attain party goals, this gives us a useful opening to study the success and failure of existing parties by looking at how they react to such shocks and how this impacts short-term and long-term recovery of these characteristics, an important endeavor which has so far been problematic in the literature.

Concepts

The process of party reinvention is seen as a path leading from an external shock, termed the *trigger*, through a number of *changes*, to the *outcome*, as displayed in Figure 1. I distinguish three triggers which are roughly based on the party goals formulated by Harmel and Janda

(1994, 269-271): electoral defeat for the vote-seeking goal, coalition potential for the office-seeking goal and internal strife representing a crisis in a party's representative function. The former two are threats to what Bolleyer terms *electoral sustainability*; the latter is a threat to *organizational persistence*. In this research project, I have chosen to focus solely on threats to electoral sustainability, as they appear to be the most frequently occurring triggers.

Because the goal is usually to recover from a shock that threatens these two vital functions of a party, the nature of the external trigger determines what is considered success. For the electoral trigger, regaining electoral sustainability constitutes success¹. The absence of success is in itself a form of failure, but party death, defined as the moment when the party stops functioning as a party, is the most dramatic sign of failure.

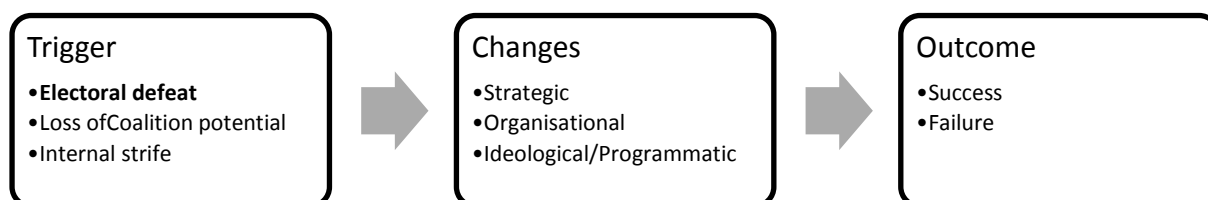
This means that for our focus on the electoral trigger, which can also be seen as a means of testing the applicability of the general theoretical and conceptual framework, success can be defined as returning to (a level close to) the level of electoral performance that the party had prior to the shock. This process of electoral recovery requires, of course, that voters return to the party or that new voters are attracted to the party to replace the votes lost in the election that constituted the shock. In other words: a party has recovered electorally if it has proven able to win enough votes to return to a position similar to the position it held prior to the shock.²

Bolleyer's *structure-leadership dilemma* can also be expected to play a role here. A similar dilemma would appear between the short-term interests of the political leaders who are trying to maintain electoral sustainability and the perhaps more long-term interests and ideological concerns of party members who are necessary to maintain organizational persistence. Specific to our proposed study of electoral success, this often means a trade-off between professionalizing the party machinery and moderating policy, ideology and image and satisfying the generally more ideologically pronounced preferences of the membership. This further underlines the need to distinguish between short-term and long-term success: a party might be successful in the short term but might endanger its long-term interests.

¹ Coalition potential triggers are, in a sense, also threats to electoral sustainability as they affect the party's ability to gain office. In other cases, where the trigger is a traumatic internal conflict, organizational persistence plays the dominant role.

² Of course, this is merely a short-term measure of successful electoral recovery. In practice, long-term considerations are perhaps more important, which would require that a party needs to prove not only that it can win these votes in one election, but that they can also keep them in subsequent elections in order to be fully recovered.

Figure 1: Party Reinvention Path



Systematic study also requires a clear conceptualization of the changes themselves. One of the advantages of the evolutionary party change literature in this regard is its clear conceptualization of key dimensions on which parties change. This project uses Krouwel's (2012, 37; 44) two-dimensional conceptualization of strategic (which he terms electoral) and organizational party transformation. For ideology, simple moderation or radicalization is used instead of Krouwel's (2012, 39) two more long-term dimensions. This conceptualization, translated to the individual party level, is displayed in Table 1, accompanied by concrete (non-exhaustive) examples. It should be underlined here that although the measurement of success depends on the trigger – in our case, electoral performance – the actions need not be constrained to strategy or ideology because of the interwoven nature of organizational persistence and electoral sustainability. Indeed, it seems often to be the case that when electoral sustainability is threatened, observers seem to expect internal difficulty as well. This might require changes to organization to attain the goal of restoring electoral performance.

Table 1: Conceptualization of three forms of change

Type	Dimensions	Examples
Strategic	Strengthen base vs. broaden appeal	Appealing to new groups in society; try to regain voters from base groups
	Inclusive vs. exclusive image	Recruitment changes to diversify slate of candidates; rebranding of party (new logo, style, etc.)
Ideological/ Programmatic	Moderate vs. radicalize ideology or policy	Increased/decreased appeal to ideology; substantive changes to ideology or policy
Organizational	Professionalization	More professional staff; increased use of spin
	Democratization	Increased/decreased involvement of membership in policy formulation and selection of leader and candidates

Hypotheses

The main proposition of this research project is that a party's actions determine to a large extent whether a party successfully manages to recover from an electoral shock. This is an assumption that is implicit in the theory of party goals and party change of Harmel and Janda: if we presume actions serve a purpose, then it is not unreasonable to assume they contribute towards that purpose, being party success. The central hypothesis of the theoretical framework is therefore that party changes matters. Put more elaborately: *a political party that makes changes to its strategy, ideology and/or structure following an electoral shock is more likely to recover successfully than a party that makes no changes*. This implies that *the extent of the changes made positively influences a political party's chances of recovery*.

An important corollary of this expectation that party change matters to the successful recovery of consolidated parties from electoral shocks is that the nature of the changes made can also be expected to impact on the prospects for recovery, but before we develop any more detailed hypotheses, a cautionary note seems to be in order. As we do not know whether party change matters at all, and we know even less of the mechanisms by which it might matter, it will be more difficult to formulate strong hypotheses that are immediately testable. The

hypotheses formulated below should therefore be perceived as expectations of what mechanisms we might find as we are building our theory, rather than hypotheses that will be put to a rigorous test immediately.

To introduce some rigour into their formulation, if not their testing, the hypotheses on the mechanisms by which party change might matter to electoral recovery will be based on the dimensions of change we have already discussed above. In terms of strategy, recovering electoral performance often requires that the political party look beyond its base and court the “floating vote”. After all, an electoral defeat often signifies a dramatic loss of appeal to floating voters in a time of increasing electoral volatility. Therefore, in most cases concerning the recovery of consolidated parties, *changes broadening a party’s appeal and making its image more inclusive are expected to contribute positively to the chances of a successful recovery.*³

Changes to ideology and policy work in a similar manner. The conventional wisdom postulates that “all politics is a battle for the centre”. Theoretically, if we adopt a Downsian model of party movements within ideological space (based on Downs 1957) in which voters vote for a party close to their preferences, and we act on the general assumption that in most cases, the distribution of voters on a left-right scale will be roughly normal, then convergence on the median voter’s position will help a political party’s chances of recovery. In other words: *when a political party takes more moderate policy positions and becomes less ideological, thereby moving closer to the median voter, it is expected to positively impact their chances of recovery.*

Of course, the Downsian model never applies in a way that entirely conforms to the assumption. First of all, political systems are rarely one-dimensional, which makes the measurement of moderation or radicalization rather tricky. This is, however, a matter of operationalization and our exploratory study will hopefully be able to distinguish more clearly whether the two-dimensional nature of a party system has an effect. Secondly, the voters might not be normally distributed but bimodal or multimodal – especially in a multi-party system, this is argued to be the case. This is a more fundamental problem, as a different distribution of voters may result in substantive differences in the changes made by successful parties. A related problem is distinguishing between the distributions of voters on the ideological spectrum – this might be done using surveys but it probably won’t lead to a clear-

³ It should be noted that this might depend on the type of party. Niche parties, or similar parties with a very specific base, might lose out because of disaffection in the party base, which would, of course, lead to the opposite tendency. Even in these cases, broadening the party base by appealing to the floating vote can be an option, but that is likely to depend on highly specific characteristics of individual parties.

cut typology. For now, this is something that should be kept in mind during our exploratory work.

As explained above in our discussion of the directions of change, it is also proposed that the changes made in response to an electoral sustainability crisis need not be restricted to strategy and ideology because organizational persistence is often thrown into question as well. Therefore, although organizational changes can be expected to have a less direct impact on electoral performance than strategic and ideological changes, it is expected that they nevertheless contribute to success. In one regard this is most clear: when a party is dependent on its voluntary wing to run its campaigns rather than a professional staff, it might be more difficult to win votes and regain lost electoral ground as the voluntary wing is less well-organised and more diffuse than political professionals. Therefore, it is expected specifically that *professionalizing the party organization will impact positively on the successful recovery of a party from an electoral defeat.*

We have not yet referenced the effects of the structure-leadership dilemma on our expectations - these effects are largely concerned with success in the long run, operationalized as maintaining the recovered level of electoral performance and avoiding compromising organizational persistence. The trade-off between the electorate and the membership is the crucial factor here which can be expected to constrain parties in their pursuit of long-term success. After all, a party cannot move too much from the preferences of its membership or it will risk angering them, thus posing a future threat to party unity and organizational persistence, which in turn might lead to a new threat to electoral sustainability. The resulting expectation is that *there is a cut-off point in the effects of party change on electoral recovery in such a way, that when ideological and strategic party change strategies go beyond this point in deviating from the ideological and policy preferences of the membership, they can impact negatively on the long-term prospects for party recovery.*

Of course, as the new party success literature already indicates, the agency of a single political party can only go so far in explaining its success. Much like new parties emerging and consolidating, existing parties experiencing a shock and recovering can be expected to be dependent to some degree on the context. Take for example the political positions and current electoral strength of a party's main competitors – usually, that is at least one of the governing parties. The closer to a party's position and the stronger electorally a competitor is, the more problems a party is going to have recovering its votes. Similarly, in an increasingly personalized and media-dominated political arena, the leaders of political parties can play a major role in their electoral fortunes. A party may be lucky enough to have a high-profile

popular leader or it might be unlucky because the leaders of competing parties are stealing the spotlight. Factors like these are bound to influence the paths to recovery of political parties and though not our main focus, we must keep them in mind in order to control for their influence.

Methodology and case selection

Because of the theory-building and exploratory nature of the project, the requisite methodology is necessarily a qualitative one. The specific methodology employed was a qualitative case study intended to test our framework and see whether the kind of causal connections implied by it actually exist. The single-case design that was chosen makes the case selection even more important – after all, the case selection determines the generalization potential of the findings to a large extent. Constraints on time and resources in the execution of the project meant we were confined to cases in the Netherlands.

The process of recovery experienced by the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) between 1994 and 2002 was selected as a typical case on which to test the validity of the theoretical framework and proposed methods. The CDA qualifies as a typical case because of its longstanding record in government – the party and its predecessors having governed continuously for over a hundred years at the time – and the unprecedented size of the defeat. In addition, earlier contributions to the literature have described the CDA as an “*ideal test-case*” for investigating how a party adapts after a severe external shock (Duncan 2007, 69). Duncan (2007, 84) also notes that the CDA case gives only partial support to the Harmel and Janda model, noting the lack of programmatic change, providing an excellent challenge to our hypothesis on programmatic change.

In order to validate the implied causal connections, the study employs an explaining-outcome process tracing method where the cause-effect relationship is as of yet uncertain (Beach and Pedersen 2012, 9-10). Such a method, tracing the changes from their causes in the electoral defeat through to their outcomes, seems to be the best way to test the validity of the model. Especially in the context of a single-case study, the influence of contextual variables in the process of party reinvention can lead to an underdetermination of the successful recovery by the changes, with all changes proving necessary but not sufficient, thus making a full-blown identification of necessary and sufficient causes difficult. In such a case, a detailed study tracing the specific effects of each change and their relationship with the eventual outcome – success or failure – can provide a useful alternative in judging the

relative impact of each change, if any.

To collect the data, archival research and semi-structured interviews were combined into a form of Qualitative Historical Analysis (as described in rough terms by Thies 2002, 352). In practice, this developed into a roughly two-step data collection strategy. The first step consisted of a study of archival and historical sources geared towards more or less objectively mapping out the changes made and classifying them in each theoretical category. The main data in this step consisted of documents from the party archives, specifically all the documents sent to the semiannual Party Council and Party Conference meetings, including minutes, agendas, annual reports and resolutions, complemented with the party magazine as well as secondary historical sources and memoirs.

The challenge in the second phase of data collection would be to attempt to link these changes with the successful recovery, describing the causal chains by which they did so. For this purpose, documents would not suffice as inside information and first-hand experience would be required. Semi-structured interviews with 6 (out of an intended 9) interviews with active participants in the reinvention process in all areas of the party were the primary method for this. These respondents were selected based on the data gathered in the first phase with an eye to gathering views from all wings of the party and all aspects of the process, and included both party chairmen during the period, members of Parliament and private members active in grassroots movements and committees. In each interview, the respondent was asked to describe and evaluate the impact of specific changes made to the party's organization, strategy or ideology. They were also asked to confirm the general direction and intention of the change arising from the archival and historical sources. Triangulating with the archival sources and other interviews, the interviews were intended to create a reliable picture of the impact of the changes (or lack thereof).

As with any method, the elite interview method has both its advantages and its drawbacks. It is a well-documented part of process tracing methodology, used to corroborate accounts from other sources, establish the thoughts of a group of people, make inferences about decision-making and reconstruct (series of) events (Tansey 2007, 766). Nevertheless, especially with political elites, there is also extensive literature on its drawbacks which will have to be kept in mind when interpreting the results. The greatest disadvantage, perhaps, is the tendency of many elite interviewees to subconsciously (if not intentionally) rewrite history in their favour (Lilleker 2003, 211-212). Factional differences and personal records can skew the accounts arising from the interviews and these problems merit careful consideration of the knowledge and motives a certain respondent had (George and Bennett 2005, 99-100).

Selection bias is also an issue, as all respondents necessarily stuck to the party during the reinvention process and are more often than not invested in portraying its recovery as successful, which might cause us to overestimate the effects of certain changes. Nevertheless, these drawbacks do not outweigh the advantages, especially when exercising due care in interpretation and triangulation.

The election defeat of 1994 and its aftermath

With a loss of 20 seats in the 1994 general election, the setback for the Christian Democratic Appeal qualified at the time as the single largest loss of seats for any major party in Dutch political history. After spending its entire merged existence in government, the party was consigned to opposition against the “Purple” coalition of Labour (PvdA), Liberals (VVD) and Democrats ’66 (D66). Despite the trend being readily apparent in the polls leading up to the election, the defeat came as a shock to the party, with the party chairman and party leader resigning. The party’s electoral sustainability and continued relevance was thrown into doubt, as evidenced by the attitudes of the opposition and the media experienced by CDA Members of Parliament like Hans Hillen (2014): “There seemed to be a kind of *Schadenfreude* that we had lost. (...) There was an enormous reaction against 100 years of government by Christian Democrats.” The defeat of 1994 represented a shock not just to electoral sustainability, but to the place of the party in Dutch society and its continuing relevance.

The report of the Gardeniers Commission, which evaluated the electoral defeat, describes a party which, under the influence of a long spell in government, has become accustomed to its demands in so many forms. The direction of the party had become muddled and its profile had become less distinct through the defence of compromises as party policy because of a monistic approach to politics in the parliamentary party (Gardeniers Commission 1994, 25). However, the Gardeniers report’s recommendations seem to diagnose a more structural and cultural problem with the party, noting that professionalization seemed to have “... come at a cost to the involvement of people.”(Gardeniers Commission 1994, 40, translation by the author). The commission also notes problems in internal communication and coordination as well as in the campaigning practices of the party, which were seen to be outdated (Gardeniers Commission 1994, 44).

It should be noted that the CDA never returned, numerically speaking at least, to its previous level of electoral performance. In terms of position in the party system, however, we can very clearly assert that it did regain the ground lost in 1994 when the party returned to

government in 2002 under the leadership of Jan-Peter Balkenende, winning a plurality of 43 seats in Parliament. In part, the party could never realistically return to its previous level because of the depillarization of Dutch politics – in 1989, any of the old mass parties would have a much larger base, whereas in 2002 they would be dependent on a floating vote in a fragmented party system. It can be argued, however, that the shock itself was so devastating because it brought an end to 100 years of continuous government by the party and its predecessors, and that returning to government (and staying there) therefore constitutes an ability to win sufficient votes to be considered a successful recovery. The period we are looking at, therefore, starts with the electoral defeat of 1994 and ends in 2002, the year of the first election in which the CDA returned to plurality status.

Table 2: Timeline of Party Change in the CDA, 1994-2003

Year	Organisational changes	Strategic changes	Programmatic changes	Personal/leadership changes
1994	Report <i>Herkenbaar en Slagvaardig</i> recommends smaller executive and provincial wings			Heerma elected as parliamentary party chairman and de facto party leader
1995	Party newspapers merged	Introduction of qualitative marketing techniques in targeting	<i>Strategisch Beraad</i> appointed.	
1996	<i>Kamerkringen</i> folded into provincial wings, smaller executive; committee “Political Party New Style”; pilots in local associations with small reforms	Committee “More Party with Women” set up to improve participation of women	<i>Strategisch Beraad</i> reports in “New Ways, Firm Values”	
1997		Attempt to broaden appeal by including outsiders on list; Helgers allows different lower ends of lists per electoral district	1998 manifesto “Living Together isn’t done alone” builds on <i>Strategisch Beraad</i>	Heerma replaced by de Hoop Scheffer as leader; new candidate list includes one-third newcomers
1998	“Political Party New Style” fails to get intended results			
1999	Janssen Committee on Party Development appointed	Centre for Politics, Religion and Spirituality founded by Van Rij	Year of Security starts themed years to allow further development of policy	
2000	Janssen Committee presents recommendations	Van Rij authors “Bridge-Builders and Pillars” strategy document	Van Rij launches <i>Competition of Ideas</i> for 2002 manifesto	
2001	Resolution calls for “One Man, One Vote”, multiple nominations and differentiated membership terms; Party Council elaborates sponsoring regulations		2002 Manifesto “Involved Society, Reliable Government”	De Hoop Scheffer replaced by Balkenende as leader
2002	Executive acts on 2001 resolution by nominating multiple candidates for all vacancies			
2003	Introduction of “One Man, One Vote” in chairmanship elections and party conference; abolition of singular nominations to the executive			

Changing the CDA

With the task set by the election defeat and its evaluation by the Gardeniers Commission, the CDA embarked on a process of party change spearheaded among others by the new Party Chairman, Hans Helgers. The changes made during this period, which runs from the electoral defeat in 1994 into the second year of Balkenende's premiership in 2003, are summarized in table 2 above along the lines of the three directions of change derived from Krouwel. Based on the data collected, a fourth category of personal and leadership changes was added, as the identity and selection of CDA politicians turned out to be important.

It should be noted that not all respondents agreed that the 2002 electoral victory had anything to do with the changes. Hans Hillen (2014), a sociologist by training and a member of Parliament during those years, contended that any impression by others involved in the process that their changes had helped along the recovery was merely wishful thinking and that the real causes of the downfall and recovery of the CDA were found in much more day-to-day situational characteristics to do with the personal popularity of political "heroes of the day", particularly the fall from grace of the Purple Government and the rise and assassination of the populist politician, Pim Fortuyn. This argument is an important one in light of the question whether party change matters at all, and we shall return to it in our conclusion.

As the party reinvention process kicked off, the party had to learn to face the challenges of opposition politics for the first time in its existence. This did not go smoothly, and most of my respondents noted that despite confidence boosts derived from the reforms described in greater detail below, the party did not truly expect to recover the lost ground in just four years. Nevertheless, the 1998 general election presented a sobering picture as the party, instead of the gains it expected, lost another 5 seats. Marnix van Rij (2014), who took office as party chairman following the 1998 defeat, remembers the first time he entered Central Office just after the 1998 losses: "There was a 'who will be the last person to turn off the lights?'-atmosphere in the air."

The 1998 defeat emerges as an important evaluation point because it locates the immediate circumstances leading up to the recovery somewhere between 1998 and 2002. These might have been the result of new changes brought in after 1998, or they might be brought about by pre-1998 changes slowly taking effect and changing the circumstances inside and outside the party. By looking at what changed between 1998 and 2002, therefore, we will be able to discern which changes led to the 2002 recovery.

Democratizing the party organisation

The large number of organisational changes contained in table 2 stands out immediately. When the party was defeated at the polls in 1994, the CDA was already in the process of changing its organisational structure, although these changes were more about the effectiveness of the party's organs. The Gardeniers report's recommendation to look at more options for input from the membership was embraced by Helgers (1996, 13-14), the incoming party chairman, who made reform of the party organisation one of his main priorities. Although the changes could be classified as democratisation, they were far broader in scope and concerned an updating of the political party structure to make membership more attractive. Several small initiatives formulated by the committee "Political Party New Style" (PPNS) ranging from a differentiated membership with different levels of fees and rights to "club deals" for party members were piloted by PPNS, but did not yield concrete results, as was recorded at the 1998 Party Council (CDA 1998a, 13).

Further moves were taken by Helgers's successor Marnix van Rij, who according to Koppejan (2014) created a "climate of openness" by emphasising his willingness to listen to the grassroots. Acting on the recommendations of the Jansen Committee on Party Development, which succeeded PPNS in 1999 (CDA 2000, 89 ff.), party conference adopted a One Man, One Vote system in party conference and for the party chairman in 2001 and abolished the practice of singular nominations and subsequent election by acclamation for the party's executive (CDA 2002a, 7). Especially the latter change was a long-standing wish of many members, as evidenced by recurring disapproving noises noted in party council minutes whenever a singular nomination was made (CDA 1995, 14; CDA 1997a, 10; CDA 1999, 10). The implementation of these changes in 2003 allows us to rule out any formal influence of the new rules on the recovery. However, it is conceivable, especially because of the desire for greater involvement in decision-making evidenced by the expressions of disappointment surrounding singular nominations, that the changes informally improved morale among the grassroots.

Although respondents agreed with my assessment ruling out any formal influence, they were divided on the existence of an effect on morale. While Van Rij (2014) agreed that the reforms enhanced the morale of grassroots activists, stressing the importance of motivating them to the recovery, Helgers (2014) pointed towards the failure to stem the decline of membership numbers as evidence that the desired effect had not been achieved.

The lack of agreement among respondents on the effects of organisational change

on morale in the party makes it difficult to discern whether this effect actually exists. In addition, the lengthy nature of the process (in part due to the lengthy procedures for changing the party constitution) and the failure by “Political Party New Style” to make headway beyond their local pilot projects will have further diminished those effects. Most likely, if any effect exists, it is eclipsed by other factors described below that have brought about a confidence boost.

Ideological and programmatic changes: New Ways, Firm Values

The paradox that the CDA did not stray from its ideological foundations has already been noted by scholars (Duncan 2007, 84). Rather than re-evaluating its ideological basis and making sweeping programmatic changes, the party responded to the analysis of the Gardeniers Commission (1994, 39) that years of government had weakened its programmatic profile by emphasising the continuity in its ideological basis first and foremost. This is evidenced among others by the right-left scores of the Manifesto Project dataset for the 1994 and 1998 manifestos, which barely shifted (Volkens *et al.* 2013). For a party that, in the words of Van Rij (2014) had “completely lost its way” in 1994, the first task seemed to be to regain this profile. From the first moment his candidacy was announced, Helgers repeatedly pleaded for a more prominent role of the Christian roots of the party ideology (Meijer 1994, 4; Schipper 1995; 13).

A group known as the *Strategisch Beraad* chaired by party grandee Frans Andriessen was set up in 1994 to report on the long-term programmatic agenda of the party. In the words of Scientific Institute Director Jos van Gennip (2014), one of the original proponents of the idea of a *Strategisch Beraad* its task was “... finding a horizon for the party to work towards; what kind of society do we want to see by 2020 and what are the policies we need to get there?” The title of the Andriessen Commission’s (1995, 1) report, “New Ways, Firm Values” (*Nieuwe Wegen, Vaste Waarden*) is indicative of its scope: the “Strategic Choices” made by the party in the report do not shift the party’s ideological foundations. Respondents were unanimous in describing the work of the *Strategisch Beraad* as not so much changing the party programme but of updating it and sharpening the party’s profile.

What does stand out is the success the report has in describing and responding to the challenges of the future – the strategic choices, among others, highlight issues of security and values (Andriessen Commission 1995, 33-35). The former became an important issue in the late nineties, whereas the latter is remembered as one of the signature issues of Balkenende’s premiership. It seems, therefore, that the report improved the CDA’s capacity to claim the

ownership of important new issues when they came up, aiding its recovery. In addition, the future-oriented approach of the Andriessen report led to positive commentaries in the press⁴, but the party proved unable to sustain that momentum in day-to-day politics as it proved difficult for the parliamentary party to translate its recommendations in the daily political arena owing to the broader problems experienced by the parliamentary party in opposition (as described in more detail in our discussion of personal changes below). Helgers (2014) and Van Gennip (2014), in their respective interviews, confirmed that as the 1990s progressed, the new redefined programme of the party allowed the party to win ownership of key issues.

Two different effects, however, may have proven more important than the issue ownership effect. Although these issues were mostly raised in the interviews, they also came up during the archival work. Firstly, the presence on the Andriessen Commission of names such as Balkenende, Piet Donner, Ernst Hirsch-Ballin and Ab Klink, important ideologues for the party in the late 90s and early 2000s, stands out. Indeed, Helgers (2014) confirmed that the selection of the members of the *Strategisch Beraad* was focused towards including new talent in the process. Especially the inclusion of Balkenende, then working at the Scientific Institute, as secretary of the group was a result of this approach. As we shall see in our discussion of leadership below, it can be argued that his identification with the Andriessen report emerged as one of the key strengths of his leadership. It was also noted that involvement in the commission forged “connections and friendship between party thinkers” (Van Gennip 2014). This meant a new generation in the party (broader still than the group immediately involved in the *Strategisch Beraad*) grew up with the conclusions of the report and made them their own – a generation including such important post-2002 names as Balkenende, Klink, Verhagen and Eurlings.

Secondly, the Andriessen report served to boost confidence among the party grassroots. At the 1995 Party Conference, Andriessen received a standing ovation from members when he told them: “we’re back. Let the feeling grow. And as the feeling grows, others will say ‘they’re back.’ And that’s the way it should be.”⁵ Party members’ spirits were raised by the report, believing they had a relevant answer to the challenges of the time (Van Gennip 2014). This confidence boost was much-needed, according to Koppejan, then active as a grassroots activist and co-initiator of the ‘Confrontation with the Future’ movement for party renewal:

⁴ Such as in *Trouw*. 1995. “CDA op nieuwe wegen (1).” *Trouw*, November 9, 1995.

⁵ Den Blijker, J. and C. Joosten. 1995. “CDA hervindt aarzelend zelfvertrouwen.” *De Stem*, November 20, 1995, p.3.

“The CDA was just no longer relevant [to people]. (...) As an opposition party they didn’t manage anything, the economy was doing well, Kok-I, Kok-II, people only got more money to spend so what was there to complain about? What has an opposition such as the CDA got, then? They were met with a certain amount of sardonic laughter. (...) If people don’t take notice of you on the streets anymore, thinking ‘the CDA, where’s the relevance in that party’, especially then you need to consider to yourself asking ‘what is our relevance?’ And that starts, then, at your ideological sources. That is what happened [with the *Strategisch Beraad*] and that was necessary to take the next steps.” (Koppejan 2014)

Even if the report failed to sustain its momentum towards a recovery, therefore, the increase in confidence it gave to party members was seen to be important.

The conclusions of the Andriessen report were translated into the 1998 and 2002 manifestos and the subsequent programmes of the Balkenende governments. The 1998 manifesto was widely perceived as a centre-left programme⁶, and did not do well in the economic calculations traditionally performed on all manifestoes by the Central Plan Bureau. Its language in describing the main priorities of the party is ideological, with the word “together” returning very often in the text (CDA 1998b). By contrast, the 2002 manifesto opens with an introduction quoting the Andriessen report, followed by the 4 principal values of the party ideology and a short list of concrete policy priorities (CDA 2002b, 3-11). Beyond this, in the main text of the manifesto itself, differences are more difficult to perceive, although some respondents have noted that here, too, the 2002 manifesto was more concrete than its 1998 counterpart (Van Gennip 2014; Van Rij 2014).

Van Rij (2014), believing the 1998 manifesto was still too “*high-level*” for voters, put a concerted effort into translating the Andriessen report into concrete policy. To this end, he started a series of themed years dedicated to specific issues with a “Year of Security” in 1999, which led to a number of detailed policy documents. More importantly, he changed the way the manifesto drafting process worked. Previously, a committee had been appointed to simply write the manifesto in a top-down fashion; for the 2002 manifesto, Van Rij started

⁶Algemeen Dagblad. 1997. “CDA slaat linksaf; Oppositiepartij herstelt sociaal gezicht.” *Algemeen Dagblad*, October 15, 1997, p. 5.

what he called a “Competition of Ideas”, formulating 10 themes on which input was then sought from members as well as non-members in a bottom-up fashion, to be further distilled by the manifesto committee (CDA 2001, 13; Van Rij 2002, 119). Without seeing all the submissions, it is hard to judge how many of these ideas made it into the manifesto, but all policies arising from the “Competition of Ideas” were marked in the final manifesto with an asterisk and a sizeable proportion of the manifesto – 76 chapters – is marked (CDA 2002b). In a similar vein, the Scientific Institute shifted its focus from long-term ideological reports to concrete day-to-day policy papers. Van Rij (2014) indicated that he thought that this operationalization of the programmatic changes made a key difference in 2002 – while the Andriessen report and Balkenende’s connection to it mobilised the base, the new leader was also able to present concrete alternatives to the governing parties.

The crucial importance of people: scouting and coaching talent

The struggle with the role of the party in opposition remained a constant theme. In line with the findings of the Gardeniens Commission (1994, 29-30), several respondents describe how the party’s formal structure and informal culture were almost exclusively geared towards government. As observed by Helgers (1996, 10-11) at the time, socialization processes within the party impelled active members towards an administrative rather than a political mindset. In other words: if a member of Parliament had been in Parliament before 1994, it was all the more likely that they were socialized for a role in government and therefore unprepared for opposition. Based on this, one would expect that a parliamentary party such as the one elected in 1994, containing only one newcomer to Parliament in its ranks, would experience serious difficulty in raising its profile in opposition, if only because its members were responsible for much of current governing policy carried over from the Lubbers era.

It seems that this was indeed the case. Attempts to profile the CDA by the parliamentary party met with much adversity – this is perhaps best illustrated by the derision with which Parliament met an important speech by parliamentary party chairman Heerma emphasizing family values⁷. In addition, old mechanisms from the party’s time in government remained in place. This sometimes led to absurd situations, one of which was described to me by Helgers (2014), who recalls that once when he raised an “open goal” in the field of defence policy with the parliamentary party, instead of raising the question publicly in the parliamentary arena, the spokesperson phoned the relevant Minister who was said to be “very grateful” to them for raising the problem.

⁷ Trouw. 1995. “Melkert: Ik ben minister van familie zaken.” *Trouw*, October 17, 1995.

Whether because of a lack of skills or because of the difficult environment described among others by Hillen (2014), the parliamentary party proved ill-suited to its role in opposition and failed to make headway in the polls. Coupled with the culture of government pervading the party, this meant that the selection of candidates for the 1998 election would be of key importance. Having already replaced Heerma as party leader and top candidate, Helgers and his executive presented the most far-reaching renewal of the party list ever for the party – of the first 15 candidates on the 1994 list, only party leader Jaap de Hoop Scheffer returned, while half the list consisted of new names. These new names included important individuals from the Balkenende years such as Balkenende himself, Camiel Eurlings, Joop Wijn and Pieter van Geel, most of whom were first elected in 1998. Allying with municipal associations, Helgers managed to push this list through virtually unchanged.

In our interview, Helgers (2014) elaborated on his intentions during candidate election, saying the 1998 electoral list was actually a “list for opposition”. In line with Helgers’s (1996, 10-11) earlier stated intentions, the selection of new candidates was geared in part towards bringing in those members of the parties as potential MPs who were capable of debating and keeping a high profile. To see how they aligned with the base, the party chairman scouted some of these talents, informally monitoring their performance with the base at a local level (Helgers 2014). The commitment to bring in a new generation extended beyond the electoral lists, as an effort was made to include new talent in the commissions that would elaborate on the necessary reforms of the party. This is especially the case for thinkers and ideologues such as the aforementioned Balkenende and Ab Klink. “In the end, the people [who were in politics for the CDA] are crucial,” Helgers (2014) notes. Indeed, the renewal of the lists in 1998 resulted in a rejuvenated parliamentary party in the following Parliamentary term and included many prominent CDA politicians in the early 2000s. In addition, this parliamentary party proved markedly better at its role in opposition and was able to profile the party along the lines set out in *Nieuwe Wegen, Vaste Waarden*.

Nevertheless, the leadership remained an issue of concern, which came to a head when Van Rij and de Hoop Scheffer clashed over it, leading to their resignation and the election of Balkenende as leader. Van Rij recalls that in the vacuum that ensued, the party was quick to unite behind its new leader, who had proven behind the scenes to be an excellent campaigner and was deeply invested in both the parliamentary arena and the programmatic changes:

“I managed to create a sense of urgency. Some thought that would be the end of the CDA. Well, that would not happen, you simply create

this great vacuum. When the new leader emerges, at that point, the party only wants one thing and that's to rally around him. And he did amazingly well, the match was right in one. (...) There was simply this need in the party for a person for whom you could give it your all." (Van Rij 2014)

The emergence of Balkenende, congruent as he was with the party's narrative would not have been possible without the efforts started under Helgers's chairmanship to find new talent that could bring across the new message. Combined with the negative evaluations of De Hoop Scheffer in electoral research, this suggests that the renewal of the list and the parliamentary party constituted at least a necessary condition for recovery.

Broadening the party's appeal: the troubles of targeting

As a result of the 1994 defeat, there were very clear attempts made by the Christian Democrats to extend the party's appeal beyond the natural base. This was a cause championed by Helgers (1996, 12), who observed in 1996 that the party still relied too much on an old conception of targeting, considering pensioners and agrarians for example as monolithic entities without regard for regional diversity. In this light, the most important development in the way the CDA approached its voters was an increasingly professional targeting strategy introducing qualitative marketing research. The party was among the first political parties in the Netherlands, quite possibly the first, to hire outside expertise from marketing research bureaus Interview and Trendbox (CDA 1997b, 43)⁸⁹. Rather than traditional targeting based on economic and religious characteristics, the new research method identified voters by lifestyle. Through focus groups, issues associated with the party and important issues the party could focus on strategically were identified.

The adoption of marketing techniques extended beyond research as the CDA adjusted its targeting strategy to be much more 'customer-oriented' in its presentation. This included conscious use of spin, with framing and priming of issues being seen as essential parts of campaigning. One example of this is the attempt in the 1998 manifesto to frame security in terms of family policy, framing the issue in such a way that the CDA would be able to own

⁸ This is what Helgers (2014) asserts. Of course, it is difficult to ascertain its truth with certainty because other parties aren't usually forthcoming with when they started using internal polling.

⁹ In all interviews, all respondents including Helgers (2014) named the marketing research bureau Motivaction as the source of the data, despite the annual reports of the party in 1997 and 1998 naming Trendbox. It is probably safe to assume they misremembered due to the present widespread use of Motivaction's research model among political parties including the CDA.

the issue (Helgers 2014; CDA 1998b, 32). While not a rebranding (as the impression existed that the party brand was still strong), the increased use of spin impacted very much on the way the party was perceived – among others, it enabled the 1998-2002 parliamentary party to capitalize on issues that would become important, including Balkenende’s signature “norms and values” narrative. Van Rij (2014) indicated that the marketing research data was used extensively to determine the themes of the themed years and the ten themes of the 2002 manifesto. The fact that the CDA was among the first to adopt these new approaches should have created a competitive advantage in the electoral market.

However, as the 1998 electoral defeat shows, this electoral edge failed to materialize. Respondents did not agree on who was to blame for this, giving indications of ambivalence surrounding the marketing research even during the 1998-2002 period. Helgers (2014) himself argues that the parliamentary party’s lack of skill at opposition politics might be a cause for this, but it seems some in the party were less comfortable with the new techniques than others, suggesting a reluctance to use them. Van Gennip (2014) remembers the parliamentary party between 1998 and 2000 stubbornly blocking the sharing of the data and describes how strategic conflicts between de Hoop Scheffer and the campaign team prevented any attempt to create a “unity of strategy”. Hillen (2014), a member of the parliamentary party at the time, gives an account of a member of the executive who as late as the runup to the 2002 election, discounted the party’s appeal to lower middle-class voters reading the popular newspaper *De Telegraaf* with the words: “These are not the voters I want.” In the end, for all of these reasons, the party failed to extend its appeal to new constituencies, lacking the organizational strength to fully use the acquired data to broaden its appeal.

Beyond the use of marketing techniques, the party took several other initiatives to reach out to new groups in society who might consider supporting it. Under the chairmanship of Helgers, the party placed Doctors Without Borders chairman Jacques de Milliano on the 1998 list in order to demonstrate its links with civil society and charitable organisations¹⁰. This backfired as De Milliano came into conflict with the party leadership over refugee policy and quit Parliament. In any case, the losses in 1998 demonstrated that extending the appeal of the party to new constituencies had not been quite as successful as the executive might have hoped.

Van Rij was even more active than his predecessor in taking up the cause of broadening the party base, focusing his attention on attracting minorities. The flagship initiative of this agenda was the party chairman’s Centre for Politics, Religion and Spirituality

¹⁰ Versteegh, K. 1997. “De Milliano op kieslijst van CDA.” *NRC Handelsblad*, September 16, 1997, p. 2.

(CPRZ), through which the CDA should "... open up to Jews, Muslims and Hindus" and "... make new coalitions in society" (Van Rij 1999, 5). The CPRZ as it eventually took shape was kept purposely at arms-length from the party, according to Van Rij (2014): "I even indicated once that I didn't really want any CDA members there". Despite or perhaps because of this, the CPRZ met with considerable resistance from the party brass and the grassroots, who suspected that the party chairman wished to substitute the Christian ideological inspiration with a more broadly religious one (Van Rij 2002, 77-78). Perhaps because of this, the CPRZ proved unable to attain its objective, and petered out shortly after Van Rij's resignation because of a lack of interest on behalf of the new party chairman (Van Rij 2014).

In another attempt to appeal to ethnic and religious minorities, Van Rij and his executive placed minority candidates such as the Surinamese Kathleen Ferrier and the Turkish Coşkun Çörüz, who were also involved in the CPRZ, on the list in an effort to appeal to those groups. A direct electoral effect of their presence on the list can be ruled out as they gathered insufficient preference votes to be elected in their own right (*Kiesraad* 2002). There could, however, be a long-term effect on the party image, making it look more inclusive. In our interview, however, Van Rij (2014) indicated that the return to government came before this change could happen, describing it as a "missed opportunity".

Overall, therefore, we can conclude that although there were considerable attempts by the broaden its appeal to new groups, and that this was quite certainly the path the party chose to pursue to recovering its share of the vote, the results were only partially successful in contributing to the electoral recovery. Internal ambivalence seems to represent a common theme in the accounts of the marketing research data and the CPRZ, suggesting that the party lacked the organisational strength to fully capitalise on the possible advantages of these initiatives and see them through. In addition, it turns out that image is far more important than actual votes in deciding to include minority or other 'outsider' candidates on the list – this is, in part, why the De Milliano affair was so unfortunate and why any effects of the inclusion of minority candidates in 2002 did not materialise in that election.

Conclusion and Discussion

It seems clear which factors correlate to the successful recovery of the CDA in 2002, but none of these seems to take the form of a necessary and sufficient condition for it. In light of the lack of opposition skills in the 1994-1998 parliamentary party, the rejuvenation of the lists and the parliamentary party successfully pushed by Helgers seems to have been an important

influence. This impression is strengthened further by the prominence of 1998 newcomers such as Verhagen, Balkenende and Eurlings in the Balkenende era that followed the 2002 recovery. A similar pattern, albeit of lesser importance, can be seen in the programmatic changes made by *Nieuwe Wegen, Vaste Waarden*. Contrary to our hypothesis on the matter, the party re-emphasised rather than changed its ideology in the report, positively influencing the recovery in two important ways. First of all, it contributed to the restoration of confidence in the party's own narrative, primarily among members. In addition, after concerted efforts under the chairmanship of Van Rij to translate it into a concrete policy agenda, it formed the basis of the manifesto which returned the CDA to government in 2002 and many of the policies pushed under the Balkenende governments. In combination with the changes to party strategy and particularly the increased use of marketing and spin, the new programme allowed the party to capture issue ownership more easily.

Some factors can be ruled out as contributing to the recovery of the Christian Democrats. For one, the changes to the party organisation which led to a One Member, One Vote (OMOV) system both at party conferences and in party chairmanship elections, although given higher priority after the 1994 defeat, were only completed by 2003. Despite the fact that a morale boost from increased influence and the implementation of long-desired changes such as the abolition of singular nomination to party offices would be conceivable, most respondents recounted how they were not aware of any effects on the morale of voluntary party members, thus eliminating the democratisation of the party as a factor.

Likewise, attempts to expand the party's appeal and make its image more inclusive seem to have run into problems hampering their effectiveness. The attempt to stress the party's civil society credentials by putting the independent-minded De Milliano on the list backfired spectacularly and ended in open conflict between him and the leadership over refugee policy. Later on, Van Rij's attempts to broaden the CDA's appeal among minorities ended prematurely with his resignation and the return to government. The competitive edge that the new targeting strategy could bring to the party appears to have been dulled by reluctance among some groups in the party to use such a strategy. However, this seems to be due in part to situational characteristics – the reason strategic changes contributed little to the recovery was not so much that the changes could not work as hypothesized, but that internal and external circumstances prevented them from working. They will therefore have to be retained in further comparative research.

What, then, is this missing element which led to the recovery? If none of the conditions listed above were both necessary and sufficient, we might be tempted to conclude

that Hillen (2014) was right when he attributed the recovery to specific circumstances, particularly the rise of Pim Fortuyn. In such a scenario, our central hypothesis would have to be rejected: party change only matters in a long-term fashion preventing new shocks, but it does not contribute to recovery in the modern media-dominated world of politics.

Such an approach would be too cynical given the causal mechanisms that can be traced between several changes made in the 1994-2002 period and the recovery in 2002. However, it does point towards the possible identity of the elusive sufficient condition in this case. Other respondents, despite their optimism about the changes, have described a similar phenomenon of the final years, identifying the need for a window of opportunity to arise. There is universal support for the thesis that the new losses in 1998 were a result of the election simply coming too early for the changes to take effect; besides, the Kok government proved popular and delivered economic growth, hampering the opposition's chances. Finally, the strategy of the government, co-opting CDA proposals at times, made it difficult to dent its momentum. The tipping point in 2000 or 2001 coincides with the fall from grace of the government, culminating in the rise of Fortuyn. It seems likely that this was the window of opportunity which allowed the changes to lead to the recovery. Short-term tactical arrangements have helped in this situation in the form of a CDA-Fortuyn non-attack pact (Hillen 2014; Van Gennip 2014).

Seen in a broader perspective, this typical case of a party falling from grace and subsequently returning to government can teach us something about the role party change plays in recovery, although any conclusion as to the effect of specific changes needs further comparative research before it can be generalised. Rather than taking the form of voter responses to specific movements by the party, the causal mechanisms found acted in a much more roundabout way, via factors such as motivation, confidence and professionalism. This suggests that party change in itself is not a sufficient condition for recovery, though it does appear to have been a necessary one. Rather, it is a combination of party change and a window of opportunity in terms of the day-to-day political context which ultimately leads to recovery. In other words: party change acts as a necessary preparation for the moment an opportunity arises.

In the specific case of the CDA, the combination of a new generation of professional politicians identifying with a new narrative and subsequent steps reviving the enthusiasm of the grassroots appear to have been the key factors. Van Rij (2014) described the party reinvention process as “a cooperation of voluntary party, parliamentary party and scientific institute”, an impression that appears justified given their complex interplay. The

dynamic between these three groups leading up to the recovery points towards a potential underlying cause: recovery from an electoral crisis seems to require a healthy and constructive relationship between the voluntary and parliamentary wings of a party. This, along with the repeated indications of conflicts of interest between the parliamentary leadership and the voluntary party organisation, suggests that the structure-leadership dilemma as described by Bolleyer for new parties might very well apply to the success of consolidated parties as well.

These conclusions are, of course, tentative. Further comparative research on an international level will be necessary to verify it and delve deeper into which kinds of changes best prepare a party to take advantage of a window of opportunity when it opens. The theoretical framework laid out in this article can act as a basis for this research, although the theoretical grounding of the hypotheses may be in need of some review in light of the finding that the impact of changes on electoral recovery is far less direct and far more internal to the party than previously assumed.

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