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## **Parties under pressure : explaining choices made by parties in the wake of heavy electoral defeat**

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## 4 Methodology and Case Selection

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has outlined a heuristic model that can be used to interpret and explain the choices made by a party in crisis and formulated a number of hypotheses to help test its validity as well as generate insights that can be used to refine the model and develop it into a full theoretical model. This chapter will start by justifying the choice of a research design based on the comparative and case study methods in section 4.2 below. This is followed in section 4.3 by the specification of this comparative research design, in particular the case selection. After this, section 4.4 discusses the archival method of data collection and discusses the sources to be used in each case. Section 4.5 gives an operationalisation of the various concepts introduced in chapter three as dependent and independent variables. Finally, section 4.6 brings it all together, outlining the way in which this method will be used to test the six propositions formulated in chapter three.

### 4.2 The Comparative and Case Study Methods

A qualitative research design best suits the subject matter of this dissertation. So far, both quantitative and qualitative designs have been used in studies on shock-induced party change. The first test of the Harmel and Janda model by Harmel *et al.* was a quantitative large-N study.<sup>1</sup> However, as Müller observed, it is not really a causal analysis since alternative expectations cannot be ruled out by the method and it cannot resolve conflicts between the possible factors empirically – if multiple explanatory factors are present, what caused the change?<sup>2</sup> These are problems that also pop up, as already observed in chapter three, in the tentative model that is being tested in this dissertation. Without looking in-depth at cases and taking into account the causal chains linking various factors to outcomes, there is a ‘black box’ over the case which prevents looking in to isolate precisely what causes certain categories of party change.

Following Müller’s reasoning, it therefore seems logical to use a case study.<sup>3</sup> This method focuses on the detailed qualitative examination of a single case, seeking to understand the way in which various factors lead to various outcomes. It is a method often used in

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1. R. Harmel and K. Janda, “An Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6, no. 3 (1994): 8; R. Harmel et al., “Performance, Leadership, Factions and Party Change: An Empirical Analysis,” *West European Politics* 18, no. 1 (1995): 1–33.

2. W. C. Müller, “Inside the Black Box: A Confrontation of Party Executive Behaviour and Theories of Party Organizational Change,” *Party Politics* 3, no. 3 (1997): 295.

3. *Ibid.*

historical institutionalist research involving path-dependency.<sup>4</sup> This is also a matter of necessity – since the theoretical concept of path-dependency involves the idea that the sequence of events in each case is of crucial importance, the cases need to be examined at a level of detail that allows the complex sequences of events leading to different outcomes in each case to be observed.

However, case studies such as Müller's also reveal a problem of the method: their analytical method focuses in part on what is particular about the case.<sup>5</sup> By cleverly selecting the cases such that they are least-likely or most-likely scenarios for the theory to apply, this can be partly mitigated in the sense that there is less of a problem with generalisation. However, as observed in chapter two, there is also the problem that the conception of change varies slightly in each case – what is explained in each study is different from the next. This is in part also due to the method, which by focusing on detailed examination of a single case is better equipped to explain the presence of an outcome than its absence (since for an outcome to be absent somewhere it must be present elsewhere). This is probably why Duncan could not go further than suggesting certain explanations for the perceived absence of programmatic change in his case study of the Dutch CDA.<sup>6</sup> Without evidence of what caused programmatic change to be present in another case, it is harder to explain what the CDA lacked to produce an outcome without it. More generally speaking, therefore, without evidence from other cases, in the same terms, it is hard to conclude what determines the presence or absence of certain changes.

Since the propositions formulated in chapter three frequently propose that certain factors increase the probability of one strategy rather than the other, it is necessary to use qualitative evidence from multiple cases using the comparative method. Ideally, the cases should be either as similar or dissimilar as possible in order to demonstrate the presence of a causal relationship across cases. Even if this is rarely possible in practice, the comparative method can thus do what is more difficult in a single-case study: apply the same logic across cases and provide evidence why the causal relationships proposed apply in some cases but not in others. Therefore, this dissertation will have to include a comparative research design.

The case study method and the comparative method are often considered to be similar to each other. Together, they constitute the most used qualitative research methods in political science. Lijphart noted that the two methods were and should be closely connected, and might even overlap in some applications.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, some case studies, even studying a single case, draw on the logic of comparison in the sense that they belong to a certain class of cases and the selection of the single case might have consequences for the class. George and Bennett went a step further, stating that the comparative method, or structured comparison, was a version of the case study method rather than the other

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4. E.g. R. Berins Collier and D. Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

5. Müller, "Inside the Black Box."

6. F. Duncan, "'Lately, Things Just Don't Seem the Same': External Shocks, Party Change and the Adaptation of the Dutch Christian Democrats During 'Purple Hague', 1994-8," *Party Politics* 13, no. 1 (2007): 84.

7. A. Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 691.

way around, and was characterised by mimicking the experimental method.<sup>8</sup> Seen in this way, the two methods operate in a similar way by qualitative description of a case and drawing inferences from those observations in a structured way. These inferences are, in both methods, made useful by the design of the study, particularly in the selection of the cases, which is the most crucial part of the research design.

Both methods are well-suited for the purposes of this dissertation. This study is concerned with testing a heuristic model in order to build a full theoretical model of shock-induced party change. Lijphart noted that generating hypotheses where a gap exists in the literature is one of the most useful aspects of case studies.<sup>9</sup> By examining empirical evidence, a case study can arrive at new or fine-tuned explanations of a previously unaddressed problem. Even though this study already has testable propositions, this reasoning does apply to the broader heuristic function of the model. By studying single cases in detail employing the conceptual and heuristic toolset provided by the model, we can generate data that can be used to refine the model and the propositions. Case studies can also be useful to validate a broad theoretical model such as the one formulated in chapter three. This is because studying this particular class of cases, involving an element of chronology and observable reasoning behind decision-making as they do, allow us to test whether the theoretical direction of the argument is at all plausible.

The comparative and case study methods complement each other. A weakness of the single-case study is that unless selected as a deviant or crucial case, there is limited scope for generalisation. This is a problem combined with the more general propositions formulated in chapter three. Take for instance the proposition that parties with higher electoral base attachment are more likely to pursue the reinforcement strategy, while those with lower electoral base attachment are more likely to pursue the extension strategy. A single case study might be able to offer support for either of these sides of the proposition, but only a multiple-case design that shows that the reverse applies as well can fully validate this proposition. However, the sheer number of propositions means that the problem of “too few cases, too many variables” applies. The cases vary on multiple independent variables and might also be subject to many of their own idiosyncrasies. In such a context, the case study method is helpful: by conducting within-case analysis as well as between-case analysis, some of these idiosyncrasies of each case might be resolved and evidence produced prioritising between the various factors proposed to impact the choice of recovery strategy. The comparative method is indispensable for testing the propositions generated by the model, while the case study method is most useful in complementing this test with the data needed to refine the model further.

Thus we arrive at the final form of the research design with both a comparative and a single-case component. The comparative component of the research design consists of four cases. These cases should be selected in such a way that they vary on the two major independent variables of the model – electoral base attachment and electoral system. In this way, the four cases effectively yield four different comparisons as illustrated in table 4.1 below. These comparisons approximate the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD)

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8. A. L. George and A. Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 151.

9. Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 692.

by keeping either electoral base attachment or electoral system constant while the other varies, thus allowing tests of the most important propositions.

Ultimately, the setup of this design meant a choice had to be made between ideological attachment and electoral base attachment as a selector variable. Taking both into account in the case selection and research design would double the number of cases needed since it would then require two out of three independent variables to be held constant for the method to work optimally. This would also have increased the probability of an open cell where no case displays a particular configuration of independent variables, especially if it is taken into account that most FPTP systems have fewer parties and therefore a smaller population.

Electoral base attachment was preferred because it is closer to the basic logic of the model. The two strategies are conceptualised largely in terms of the voters they appeal to, and the causal mechanism is mediated by the way certain internal and external factors make parties relate to their core electorate in different ways. Since electoral base attachment essentially represents this importance of the core electorate to a party, it is more central to the model.

While the comparative part of the research design figures mainly as a theory-testing device for the most important propositions, the case study method will be used to validate the nuts and bolts of the model. It is better-suited to testing the proposition that various variables impact different parts of the recovery strategy, which apart from evidence across cases can be strengthened significantly by specific within-case evidence linking specific variables to specific parts of the recovery strategy. Such links are easier to discern at the level of the individual case. They are especially important because at this early stage of development, the model will likely require some degree of revision as a result of the comparative test. The insights generated by using the model more loosely as a heuristic device in the case study chapters will be very useful in the refinement that results. This is why combining the two methods is crucial at this stage of theory-building.

The single-case studies make use of the process-tracing method, with some qualifications. This method was designed to study the intervening steps between a known outcome and a possible cause correlated with it. It can also involve backwards reasoning down a causal chain to explain an outcome in a similar fashion to studies using the historical method.<sup>10</sup> It can be argued that cause and effect are known in this way: despite the theoretical possibility that nothing happens, it is fairly well-documented that an external shock leads to some kind of party change. In a sense, each individual case study represents tracing the causal chain of events from the cause of change, the shock, to the change itself, with multiple independent variables intervening to determine the kind of strategy we end up with.

### 4.3 Case selection

Table 4.1 displays the way the comparative part of the research design operates as a test of proposition 3 on electoral base attachment and proposition 6 on electoral systems.

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10. D. Beach and R. B. Pedersen, *Process-tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (2013), 20.

Table 4.1: Test of the main propositions using four focused comparisons; expected recovery strategies

		Electoral system	
		<i>Proportional Representation</i>	<i>First Past the Post</i>
Electoral base attachment	<i>High</i>	Reinforcement	Reinforcement, then extension
	<i>Low</i>	Extension, then reinforcement	Extension

As can be seen, each of these two propositions is tested by two Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) comparisons. Electoral base attachment is studied by comparing the parties that differ in electoral base attachment in the same electoral system, and vice versa the electoral system is studied as an independent variable by comparing parties with similar electoral base attachment in different electoral systems. This produces the four-cell research design displayed in table 4.1. This design requires four cases: in two electoral systems, a low-attachment and a high-attachment party were selected. If the model is to be validated, then the configuration of the recovery strategy in the four cases should be as shown below. Because of the different times at which internal and external factors come into play, there is also an element of sequencing: where internal factors lead to a preference that is impacted by external constraints in such a way that it should change, the second electoral cycle should show a different strategy than the first. The methodological considerations underlying the research design shall be discussed first before moving on to the justification of the final selection.

Technically, it could be possible to select parties from similar systems in different countries. However, for the method to closely approximate the ideal MSSD condition of variance only existing on the variables under study, it is better to select the cases from one country for each electoral system. This is not just because electoral systems have subtle differences across countries, even if they are of the same type, but also because the political conditions differ considerably between countries in other ways. For example, while the United Kingdom might technically have the same basic electoral system as Canada, Canadian politics as a whole can be said to differ considerably from Britain's because Canada more often elects a parliament without a majority. The same argument applies to longitudinal variations in the same country, adding the consideration that the cases selected in each country should be as close to each other in time as possible. To use the example of Britain again, British politics was substantially different in the 1950s and 1960s, when both major parties were more moderate, than it would be in the 1970s and 1980s, which saw polarisation in politics.<sup>11</sup>

After two countries have been selected, two cases should be selected in each, one with a low electoral base attachment and one with a high electoral base attachment. Here the case selection runs into an operational question. The population of cases from which the

11. J. Black, *A History of the British Isles* (2003), 281-282.

cases are selected must be defined. This population consists of all cases in which a party has suffered an electoral shock. It follows that a criterion must be established by which a ‘normal’ electoral defeat can be distinguished from a shock. The most obvious way in which shocks can be distinguished is their magnitude. Here any limit will always be arbitrary. Balancing the necessary number of cases to select from in a number of Western countries with the necessity of having as high a threshold as possible, the rule of thumb employed in this study is that a shock is any electoral defeat in which a party loses at least a third of its votes or seats. Even then, there are other cases of electoral defeat which are generally understood to have been shocks. These shocks were, in some cases, added to the population for more qualitative reasons, such as that they involved a sizeable loss while in opposition or loss of government status for the first time.

The requirements placed upon the case selection by the comparative method have a potential drawback for the case study method. While the comparative method requires that the cases be as similar to each other as possible for the comparison to be controlled, the case study method thrives on diversity of the selected cases. After all, if the causal mechanisms can be shown to be present in a number of very different cases, this provides stronger evidence that they work in the same way across the entire population of parties in crisis. The choice was made to prioritise comparison in order to get a better test of the propositions. This does not mean, however, that the single cases cannot be selected within the comparative design in such a way that they present, for instance, typical or deviant cases. Where possible, if such a rationale for the case study method is feasible, it will be noted in the final case selection below.

### **4.3.1 Selecting two countries**

As described in section 4.2 above, this research project operates through a combination of case studies and a total of four focused comparisons between parties within and between two countries. The practical considerations of case selection, then, start with the question of which countries should be used to select cases from. The countries selected were the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This involved a number of considerations practically similar to those made when selecting two MSSD cases. The two countries should be comparable in most respects except where their electoral systems are concerned. To aid the comparison, furthermore, two countries should be selected that differ as much as possible on this variable. As the electoral systems were operationalised in terms of a continuum between the majoritarian FPTP system and an extreme proportional electoral system, the countries selected should be as close to these two poles as possible. As shall be considered in more detail discussing the cases below, both countries satisfy these requirements.

The British “Westminster” system of government can be considered the archetype of a majoritarian system. From 1945 onwards, there have been only three occasions, in February 1974, 2010 and 2017, on which the election produced a “hung” Parliament at Westminster, that is, when no party had an overall majority. The FPTP system in single-member constituencies where members are elected by a simple plurality of the votes is seen to advantage the two major parties - the centre-left Labour Party and the centre-

right Conservative Party - with a chance of a majority.<sup>12</sup> Minor parties have, for the most of British post-war history, only had a handful of seats, but have occasionally become important. Britain is therefore often called a two-party system. The psychological as much as the mechanical effects of the British electoral system make for a very majoritarian playing field, where only the two major parties are serious competitors for office.

Ideally, we should then select a proportional system that is as different as possible in these respects from the British system. The Netherlands seems to present a clear candidate. Since 1917, the Dutch electoral system has been one of the most radical Proportional Representation systems. Though there are multiple administrative districts for the purposes of lists of candidates, there is only a single national district for calculating the results of elections and allocating seats among parties. In addition, there is no threshold beyond the natural threshold required for a single seat in Parliament. This results in a system with a multitude of political parties represented in Parliament, and continuous coalition government. More importantly, as is the primary requirement for the case selected, it weighs every vote the same way. In such a context, the effect of the electoral system can be expected to be rather different from the British case. With such low barriers to winning seats and entry into the party system for newcomers, the system is more competitive between the multiple parties. This is particularly the case after pillarization broke down, as evidenced by a relatively high level of electoral volatility compared to other Western European countries like it.<sup>13</sup> This might result, as proposed in chapter three, in pressures towards cultivating the loyalty of one's core voters, and therefore a reinforcement strategy.

### 4.3.2 Selecting the parties

In chapter 3, electoral base attachment was conceptualised as the strength of attachment of a party's decision-making elite to its electoral base through formal rules as well as informal values and ties. Because parties do not usually approach voters as unique individuals but rather as members of groups, this attachment is also to the electoral base seen as a particular group. Often, this will take the form of a particular social class or religious group, especially if the party originated from a cleavage. The strongest form of electoral base attachment was stipulated to be a formal tie with an organisation perceived to be representing this group, such as a trade union or a church. Absent any formal ties, electoral base attachment could also be the result of overlapping personal loyalties within the party elite. Since these two forms of attachment are at once the clearest and often the strongest forms of electoral base attachment, they will be employed as a logic for case selection.

The criterion for case selection is therefore that two parties should be selected which have formal or personal ties to the base, and two which do not. To further strengthen

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12. M. Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, trans. from the French by B. North and R. North (London: Methuen, 1954 [1951]), 218; G. V. Golosov, "Party nationalization and the translation of votes into seats under single-member plurality electoral rules," *Party Politics* 24, no. 2 (2018): 126.

13. S. Mainwaring, C. Gervasoni, and A. España-Najera., "Extra- and within-system volatility," *Party Politics* 23, no. 6 (2017): 626.

Table 4.2: Years post-1945 in which British parties lost at least 33% of votes or seats

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>
Liberal Party	1951	1951, 1970
Labour Party	1983	
Liberal Democrats	2015	2015
Democratic Unionist Party	1987, 2010	1997
Plaid Cymru	1964, 1979	1979
Ulster Unionist Party	2005	2001, 2005, 2017
National Liberal Party		1964, 1966
Scottish National Party	1979	1979, 2017
Communist Party of Great Britain	1951	1950
Conservative Party		1997
Nationalist Party (Ireland)	1950	
Alliance Party (Northern Ireland)		2015
United Kingdom Independence Party	2017	
Green Party of England and Wales	2017	
Social Democratic and Labour Party		2017

the case selection, we might select from parties lacking such ties those where informal norms and conventions inimical to privileging a certain base exist. In this way, we can counterpose parties which definitely have some form of ties to the base beyond informal rules with parties that definitely will have lower levels because their informal rules are inimical to electoral base attachment. This strengthens the comparison by making the difference between the two cases as large as possible.

In the United Kingdom, from a population consisting of all parties having suffered an electoral defeat in excess of one-third of the previous vote or seat count or added for qualitative reasons (see table 4.2<sup>14</sup>), two parties were therefore selected: the Labour Party and the Liberal Party. The Labour Party is a typical example of a party with formal ties to its base. Having grown out of the trade union movement, the party has a constitution which reserves a certain formal influence or power for the unions.<sup>15</sup> It is the best high-attachment case available, given the unique nature of this arrangement among British parties. It is also a typical case of party recovery, since the rise of New Labour is among the most high-profile transformations in social democratic parties in Europe. When looking for a party which lacks such ties and exhibits low attachment by informal conventions or norms, there is likewise not as much choice. Since most other small parties are geographically based, they can be said to have some form of attachment, in this case to a geographical base. This leaves only the nationwide parties. Looking for a case that is temporally close to the case of the Labour Party, the Liberal Party was selected. Not

14. Data obtained from H. Döring and P. Manow, "Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov)," Information on parties, elections and cabinets in modern democracies, 2018, accessed December 11, 2018, <http://www.parlgov.org>.

15. A. Clark, *Political Parties in the UK* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 178; P. D. Webb, "The United Kingdom," in *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook*, ed. R. S. Katz and P. Mair (London: SAGE, 1992), 855-857.

Table 4.3: Years post-1945 in which Dutch parties lost at least 33% of votes or seats

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>
Boerenpartij	1971, 1977	1971, 1977
Centrumdemocraten	1998	1998
Communistische Partij Nederland	1959, 1977, 1986	1959, 1977, 1986
Democraten 66	1972, 1982, 1998, 2002, 2006	1972, 1982, 1998, 2002, 2006
Democratische Socialisten '70	1977	1977, 1981
Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond	1977	1977
GroenLinks	2012	2012
Lijst Pim Fortuyn	2003	2003
Nieuwe Middenpartij	1972	1972
Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij	1971, 1977, 1986	1971, 1977, 1986
Partij van de Arbeid	2002, 2017	2002, 2017
Partij voor de Vrijheid	2012	2012
Politieke Partij Radicalen	1977	1977, 1982
Reformatorische Politieke Federatie	1986	1986
Socialistische Partij	2010	2010
Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij		1992, 2002
Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	2002	2002

only does the Liberal Party lack formal and personal ties to organisations representing their core voters, they can also be said not to have much in way of a core vote.<sup>16</sup>

Turning to the Dutch cases, for which the universe is enumerated in table 4.3,<sup>17</sup> there is one obstacle: none of these parties had the same formal arrangement Labour maintains to the organisations of its trade unionist base at the time of a crisis. It seems prudent to select a party of a similar size, type and position in the party system to Labour, but which exhibits electoral base attachment by personal ties rather than through formal rules. This is how we arrive at the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), our high-attachment Dutch case. The CDA has many personal ties between its leadership and the leadership of Christian-inspired organisations in civil society, from which it often recruits its candidates and leaders.<sup>18</sup> It is also, like the Labour Party, a major party. In addition, the CDA is a case that has defied the expectations of previous studies and could therefore be used as a deviant case study.<sup>19</sup> For a low-attachment case, Democrats '66 was selected. It is ideologically similar to the Liberal Party: advocating a centrist Liberalism very similar to the position the Liberals arrived at.<sup>20</sup> To avoid the problems a young party suffers which

16. J. Curtice, "Liberal Voters and the Alliance: Realignment or Protest?," in *Liberal Party Politics*, ed. V. Bogdanor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 105.

17. Data obtained from Döring and Manow, "Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov)."

18. K. Van Kersbergen, "De christendemocratische feniks en de moderne, niet-seculiere politiek," chap. 197-216 in *De Conjunctuur van de Macht: het Christen-Democratisch Appèl 1980-2010*, ed. G. Voerman (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011), 203.

19. Duncan, "'Lately, Things Just Don't Seem the Same'."

20. Even though the party itself refused to adopt any sort of ideological orientation, and multiple discussions on whether the party was "social liberal" ended without any adoption of such an ideological label, it did in the end define itself as a liberal party, and many members saw the party as the spiritual

Table 4.4: Summary of the case selection

	<b>Labour Party, 1983-1992</b>	<b>Christian Democratic Appeal, 1994-2002</b>	<b>Liberal Party, 1970-1974</b>	<b>Democrats '66, 1982-1989</b>
Year of crisis election	1983	1994	1970	1982
Country	United Kingdom	Netherlands	United Kingdom	Netherlands
Year of foundation	1900	1980	1859	1966
Ideology	Democratic socialism	Christian democracy	Liberalism	Officially none (social liberalism)
Pre-crisis vote share	36,9%	35,3%	8,5%	11%
Pre-crisis seats	269/635	54/150	12/630	17/150
Crisis vote share	27,6%	22,2%	7,5%	4,3%
Crisis seats	209/650	34/150	6/630	6/150
Electoral base attachment	Formal ties	Personal ties	No ties	No ties

are peculiar to its newness, which may hamper comparison, the 1982 crisis was preferred to the earlier one in 1971. Moreover, Democrats '66 has informal norms and conventions against prioritising the interests of any sort of core voter, preferring a programmatic appeal.<sup>21</sup>

Thus we arrive at the final case selection summarised alongside a number of key variables in table 4.4. The cases that have been selected form a strong basis for comparison. The cases are not just as comparable as possible given the total number of cases in each country, but also in terms of the voteshares polled before the crisis and their position in the party system.

## 4.4 Archival research: opportunities and limitations

Like many qualitative studies, this study has to rely on historical data. This is more restrictive on the cases than it seems. Historical records almost always have restrictions placed on them for a certain amount of years to protect the persons involved in the decision-making process, some of whom may be prominent political leaders. Therefore, the youngest available will have its crisis at most 20 years ago. This has certain implications that must be kept in mind. For one, the structure of party competition may have been

successor of a pre-war social liberal party, the *Vrije Democratische Bond*.

21. M. S. Van der Land, *Tussen Ideaal en Illusie: de Geschiedenis van D66, 1966-2003* (Den Haag: SDU, 2003), 380.

different. Defeats on the scale of what we term a crisis occurred less often. Certain practices that are now very wide-spread, such as One Member One Vote (OMOV), were less wide-spread, and external democratisation was almost unheard of. This has to be kept in mind in judging the cases.

In order to observe the decision-making processes of a historical case of a party in crisis, using Qualitative Historical Analysis, there are a number of possible sources.<sup>22</sup> The most direct ones are primary sources, in this case the archival records. One could also find the necessary information in the secondary sources compiled by historians, but it has been observed by methodologists in the social sciences that it is too often forgotten that historians have had to select and interpret their data, and that their accounts by necessity give only a partial picture.<sup>23</sup> To make a judgment wholly tailored to the needs of the research question, therefore, there is a need to consider source material that is as complete as possible. This can be found in archival sources that are accessible.

Literature on archival research distinguishes between two sources of data: the running record and the episodic record.<sup>24</sup> The episodic record consists of often personal instances of data that are not compiled continuously, such as correspondence and diaries.<sup>25</sup> The term running record refers to the records made by organisations, often in a continuous run, of their decisions and meetings. Minutes and papers of official bodies are the part of the running record that will be most useful to this research project.

There is one significant advantage to the running record over methods like surveys and interviews: the data was not produced with research in mind. The people who compiled the running records of a political party did not do so bearing in mind that they were talking to a researcher who might in some distant future read their files.<sup>26</sup> Rather, they were concerned with preserving certain historical decisions and meetings for the record of their particular party. This means that researchers do not have to deal with questions normally raised in obtrusive research, such as whether the observations are biased by the fact that actors know they are being scrutinised by researchers.<sup>27</sup>

In this way, the archival records of political parties can provide us with the data needed to understand the causal mechanisms at work in the model. Archival records preserve not just the decisions made, but also what decisions were originally proposed but changed or ultimately decided against. Papers included in runs of files from party institutions often also include some of the evidence on which decisions were based. The evaluation reports (also occasionally called "post-mortems") often produced after electoral defeat are a very important example of this type of source, because they reveal what a party knows as well as how they propose to deal with it. Most crucially, however, minutes often set out at

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22. See C. G. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations," *International Studies Perspectives* 3, no. 4 (2002): 351–372.

23. *Ibid.*, 364.

24. E. J. Webb et al., *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972), 53.

25. *Ibid.*, 88.

26. *Ibid.*, 53.

27. Of course, the running record is preserved so that there is an internal record, and this means there is some possibility of scrutiny by future decision-makers. The key phrase here, therefore, is "by researchers": scientific research entails a different mode of perusing the archives that is unlikely to have been on the mind of decision-makers at the time these records were made. It is, therefore, a different kind of scrutiny.

least the bare bones of the reasoning leading to a certain decision, and this is primarily how the model works: via the perceptions of party decision-makers.

This mitigates what is seen as the most important weakness of archival research: the risk of a selection bias creeping in.<sup>28</sup> Of course, selection bias is still a problem. Because the running record is preserved with an eye to keeping internal records of decision-making, there is the risk that certain parts which are less comfortable or not deemed as important are not recorded.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the justification of decision-making on the record might have its own social desirability reflex, that is, it might not tell the full story. However, the fact that the record is coloured by the perceptions of party decision-makers is exactly what we are looking for: it does not matter so much whether a party's base is actually important if those who make the decisions at least believe it is important, for example. Similarly, the perceived effects of an electoral system are more important to the way the choices parties make are modelled than its actual effects. In this way, the justification given in the running record for certain decisions, especially where the record was intended to stay private and not released to rank-and-file members, can be counted on to reveal something close to the reasoning that forms the causal mechanism hypothesised in the model.

Another way of mitigating the risk of bias creeping into archival observations is triangulation with different data sources.<sup>30</sup> Triangulation is undoubtedly strongest when the archival record is cross-referenced with primary data from non-archival sources. Interviews with key figures seem a clear candidate.<sup>31</sup> Matters that are not on the record for any reason, hidden meanings and suchlike can be checked with interview respondents who were in important positions at the time. There is, however, a drawback: having to find respondents would put a maximum on the number of years one can go back to find cases, since any decision-maker in his or her 40s during a crisis would be at a very advanced age now. For all these reasons, the only case where interviews will be used in this dissertation shall be the CDA, the most recent case, and only to fill in temporal gaps in the archival data. These interviews were conducted within the context of a previous study of party recovery involving this case.

This study shall mostly rely, therefore, on the running records of political parties as preserved in their party archives. Where a personal archive is used, the focus will still be on documents that are part of a running record or relate to a running record, such as memos prepared for meetings. Correspondence from personal archives is occasionally used where it concerns important actors, but the use made of these sources is limited. Where diaries and memoirs were available, they were referenced but only used where they add information to the running record, such as the personal perspective of certain actors.

In the absence of interviews, triangulation can only be between different archival records and contemporary media accounts, as well as with the secondary source material. This is

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28. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations," 355; Webb et al., *Unobtrusive Measures*, 54.

29. Webb et al., *Unobtrusive Measures*, 55.

30. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations," 357.

31. O. Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: a Case for Non-Probability Sampling," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40, no. 4 (2007): 765–772.

not necessarily a problem, since the historical method often relies on triangulation between multiple primary sources as well.<sup>32</sup> Some parties have enjoyed extensive treatment of their histories by historians or in other case studies by political scientists and these multiple sources can be used for the purposes of triangulation, taking into account the caveats above about the fact that each history is in itself an interpretation that makes its own selection from the sources. If the interpretation of the running record diverges wildly from the judgment of previous scholars of the party in question, it might reveal a bias in either source which we were unaware of and which should be approached carefully. In this way, secondary sources can be used for a limited triangulation. However, the primary focus is on the archival sources, with the secondary sources being used to fill in historical gaps and supplement missing facts. The available sources will be discussed for each case selected in more detail.

As argued in chapter three, the choice has been made to fix the span of the data for each case so that it starts at the crisis election and ends two elections after that, incorporating two electoral cycles. In that time, the contours of a more or less final strategy will likely become clear and there is enough scope to examine the impact of the party's performance on its eventual choice of strategy. It also results in time periods of at most ten years, which is a practicable timespan to do the labour-intensive work that is archival research.

#### 4.4.1 Sources per case

Although the type of sources used for each case is similar and poses broadly similar challenges, no running record is exactly the same as the next one. This is especially the case when used in a qualitative manner rather than, as implicitly recommended by Webb *et al.*, by quantitative measures such as indices constructed from the data.<sup>33</sup> The depth and breadth of the data differs between the cases and sometimes even within the cases, depending on the way in which it records certain events or decisions, ranging from a simple list of conclusions reached or decisions made to verbatim reports. The types of documents included in each archive also vary, as each party has a different structure and even comparable bodies have different remits, which affects the kind of documents they produce. Therefore, what follows is a brief overview of the data (see table 4.5) to be used per case and potential problems or biases.

##### 4.4.1.1 The British Labour Party, 1983-1992

The archives of the British Labour Party are extensive and well-preserved. The full run of minutes and documents from all the national bodies of the party, particularly the National Executive Committee (NEC), is deposited at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre of the People's History Museum in Manchester and available for the period under study without restrictions<sup>34</sup>. This meant the case study was able to draw on papers from

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32. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations," 357.

33. Webb *et al.*, *Unobtrusive Measures*, 82-83.

34. People's History Museum. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, "Collection Catalogues & Descriptions," accessed December 12, 2017, <http://www.phm.org.uk/archive-study-centre/online->

Table 4.5: Overview of primary sources

Labour Party, 1983-1992	Liberal Party, 1970-1974	Christian Democratic Appeal, 1994-2002	Democrats 66, 1982-1989
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour Party Archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National Executive Committee</li> <li>– Shadow Cabinet</li> <li>– Parliamentary Labour Party</li> <li>– Policy Review and other ad hoc committees</li> <li>– <i>Labour Weekly</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Kinnock Papers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal Party Archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National Executive Committee</li> <li>– Liberal Assembly</li> <li>– Liberal Party Council</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDA Party Archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National committee</li> <li>– Party council</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Documents available at CDA Central Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National congress papers</li> <li>– Party council papers</li> <li>– Personal archive of 2000-2001 national committee minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interviews from a previous study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D66 Party Archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National committee</li> <li>– National executive</li> <li>– Party council</li> <li>– National congress</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Party magazine <i>Democraat</i></li> </ul>

all major actors, including the National Executive Committee (NEC), Shadow Cabinet and the Parliamentary Party, as well as papers produced by various committees instituted to work on certain aspects of the recovery strategy, chiefly the Policy Review. All in all, there is possibly too much material for the 1983-1992 period available to consult in the scope of this study, but the selection includes the party publications, the full runs of NEC and Parliamentary Party/Shadow Cabinet minutes for the entire period and documents of the Policy Review Group, Franchise Review Group and Trade Union Links Review Group, selected to focus in on certain parts of the recovery strategy.

This leaves one important actor in the Labour Party uncovered – the leader, Neil Kinnock and his team. Luckily, the papers of Neil Kinnock have been preserved and extensively documented at the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge.<sup>35</sup> These papers give an important perspective on the recovery strategy that, when triangulated using the official party papers, should give useful information. More importantly, it gives an insight into the motivations driving one of the central figures of the recovery project. There is the risk of bias, but this has been mitigated by looking mostly at copies of the running record contained in Kinnock's papers, which allows an eye on the context.

#### 4.4.1.2 The British Liberal Party, 1970-1974

The Liberal Party archives are a greater challenge. Perhaps unsurprising given the smaller size of the party organisation, the archives as preserved at the British Library of Political and Economic Science are at times uneven, with some bodies missing in the run of the papers.<sup>36</sup> The papers of the Standing Committee, which dealt with policy, were missing for the 1970-1974 period, for example, leaving only a few papers sent to other bodies. The main bodies, however, all had their minutes and resolutions preserved, including the NEC, the Party Council and the Liberal Assembly. This should give enough information for the analysis.

It should be noted, in addition, that the archives of the Liberal Parliamentary Party do not seem to be available. An extensive overview of sources on party organisations maintained by the Political Parties and Parliamentary Archives Group UK at the Bodleian Library in Oxford<sup>37</sup> makes no mention of the location of any such files. Attempts to supplement this gap with personal archives from Liberal MPs at the time were also unsuccessful, given that they did not have the years in question or only contained correspondence and constituency papers.

#### 4.4.1.3 The Dutch Christian Democratic Appeal, 1994-2002

The Christian Democratic Appeal is the most recent case. The documents, while archived at the National Archives in the Hague, are not yet publicly available and have not yet  
catalogue/.

35. University of Cambridge, "The papers of Neil Kinnock," accessed December 12, 2017, <https://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id=EAD%2FGBR%2F0014%2FKNNK>.

36. LSE Library, Catalogue record for the Liberal Party, accessed December 12, 2017, <https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=LIBERAL+PARTY&pos=1>.

37. Political Parties and Parliamentary Archives Group, UK, "Guide to Political Records," 2010, accessed December 12, 2017, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/pppag/pppag-records.htm>.

been fully catalogued.<sup>38</sup> The project was therefore dependent on the permission of the national executive of the CDA to consult the requisite files. Permission was given to consult the bulk of the material, the national committee and party council files, and to make use of resources freely available at the party's central office, which included all the council and congress files and a number of party publications. Permission to consult the files of the national executive (see chapter 5) was denied. Even with this restriction, the data was ample and provided the necessary information, with little clarification needed.

Among the archival sources, a prominent source of information is the 1994 evaluation report of the Gardeniers Commission.<sup>39</sup> Chaired by former Minister Til Gardeniers-Berendsen, this report contains an exceptionally clear picture of the party's strengths and weaknesses that resonated within the party and was taken up as the guiding thread throughout the recovery process. Because of this, the report can and will be used to measure the independent variables – illustrating how the CDA perceived its own position and what it knew about external challenges – as well as providing a point of reference for the analysis of the strategy itself.

There was a major hurdle to be overcome during the archival research: the national committee data was only available up to 2000 because it had only been catalogued up to that year. To resolve this issue, requests were sent out to the members of the national committee during those final two years to make minutes and files they had on the period available. This resulted in the donation by an unnamed member of the national executive of national committee files up to 2001 to central office, where they were made available for consultation. While it concerns a personal archive, the collection only consisted of copies of the running record. Although the data was not as extensive as the official archival material, it was enough for the purposes of the analysis.

The data was also supplemented by a number of semi-structured interviews conducted in the context of a master thesis on a related subject, in which the same CDA crisis figures as a case. This was mainly done to fill in the gap in the data that exists for the year 2002. These interviews give insights into the thinking of several high-profile figures from the crisis years, including both Party Chairmen during that period, Hans Helgers and Marnix van Rij. All quotes from these sources are used with the permission of the respondents. Additionally, they are only used where the data was not also in the written sources.

#### **4.4.1.4 The Dutch Democrats '66, 1982-1989**

The archives of D66 are deposited at the Documentation Centre on Dutch Political Parties at Groningen University, and are publicly available with prior permission from the party's headquarters.<sup>40</sup> They contain the full run of all documents related to the party's national congress, advisory council, national committee and national executive during the 1982-

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38. The archivist provided a provisional catalogue, which is used as the basis for citing from the archives.

39. Christen-Democratisch Appèl, Gardeniers Commission, "Rapport Evaluatiecommissie" (1994), inventory nr. 1678, Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA): Partij, 1980-2000, voorlopige toegang, Nationaal Archief, the Hague.

40. Documentation Centre on Dutch Political Parties, "Democraten 66 (D66) archieven," accessed December 12, 2017, <http://dnpp.nl/dnpp/node/834>.

1989 period.<sup>41</sup> These files were used, in addition to the party magazine *Democraat*, which, because of the party's unusually democratic internal structure, contains most of the papers for the national congress and also reports on the decisions made by party bodies, although this is becoming progressively less the case as the crisis continued. Van der Land's party history *Tussen Ideaal en Illusie* is also used extensively as a secondary source to establish the historical background of the party.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.4.2 Comparability of the data

A key question to be answered in regard to the sources outlined above is whether the data are comparable. That is, whether sources which are as similar as possible are used. Insofar as data can really be comparable where the record is produced with bodies with different competences, the main bulk of the data is indeed comparable since it consists of sources from similar bodies in the party organisation. Each contains the full run (or close to it) of at least the minutes of those bodies. These bodies are the national committee, the party council (where applicable) and the national congress of each party. They can be regarded as central to the party organisation, receiving reports from most other bodies. To get a picture of what a party has done, and the most rudimentary reasons why, the research project can rely on these comparable records.

Does the addition of certain sources, such as those of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Policy Review and Leader's Office and the CDA interviews, hamper the comparability of the data? In essence, this is only an issue where there is a comparable body that is known to have been active during the crisis, but to which for whatever reason we have no access. Most of the problem can be mitigated by using references to these bodies in other parts of the party organisation's records. For example, the leadership of a parliamentary party is represented in most executives and usually makes a statement from which the positions of the parliamentary party can be inferred. Likewise, most committees set up during a crisis report to the national committee of these parties, and will update them on their progress and the decisions they propose.

While the absence of, say, Policy Review records for the CDA or Parliamentary Party records for the Liberal Party prevent the analysis from going into the maximum possible amount of detail examining key actors in the recovery process, and may lead to their interests being underrepresented in any candidate explanation, they do not necessarily compromise the comparability of the data as such. Care should be taken, however, when using additional sources, to remain aware of any potential bias introduced by the presence or absence of such material.

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41. An inventory is not yet available online. The catalogue used was a provisional one in which the boxes were ordered chronologically.

42. Van der Land, *Tussen Ideaal en Illusie*.

## 4.5 Operationalisation of key variables

### 4.5.1 The reinforcement and extension strategies

The choice between the reinforcement and extension strategies, on the whole and (in the case of propositions 5a through 5c) on each of the separate tactical, organisational and programmatic dimensions, acts as the dependent variable. In chapter three, these two strategies were conceptualised in terms of the strategic question where the votes to replace the voters who deserted the party should come from: from core voters (the reinforcement strategy) or by extending the base of the party durably with the votes of non-core voters (the extension strategy).

The greatest challenge in operationalising the reinforcement and extension strategies and their component dimensions is the relative paucity of qualitative operationalisation of the various dimensions of party change. Previous case studies of party change are rarely explicit about their operationalisation, often because they seek to explain a particular instance of change rather than map out the broader picture.<sup>43</sup> Even where this is not the case, a full operationalisation is rarely offered.<sup>44</sup>

Like most of these studies, this study uses the actions taken by parties in the process of recovery as evidence of their approach. In general, these actions will be measured with reference to the minutes of the national committee, party council and/or national congress of parties. These bodies, even if they do not take the decisions themselves, often receive reports from the actors that do. Their proceedings therefore should provide a reasonably accurate total picture of what a party did. We can then proceed to look at the specific dimensions and classifying specific actions into the reinforcement or extension strategies. The general logic by which this is done is as follows: since the recovery strategy differs from an electoral strategy by occurring at a moment of heightened contingency, we are looking first towards more long-term and radical measures. Where these are lacking, the constantly changing elements of normal electoral strategy like manifestos and campaign plans can also be used. In any case, we should cross-reference between the former and the latter to see if the changes made are also reflected in the usual documents.

Before jumping into the specific dimensions, a few general issues should be considered. The first is that the choice between the two strategies is conceptualised as a continuum: parties can and often will pursue elements of both. This introduces the question of weighting the various measures on each dimension and each dimension as part of the overall strategy. Determining a precise rank-ordering of dimensions and of individual measures will always be hard. After all, even if the amount of possibilities is constrained by the conceptualisation into a number of dimensions, there is still an almost boundless

43. J. Burchell, "Evolving or conforming? Assessing organisational reform within European green parties," *West European Politics* 24, no. 3 (2001): 113–134; W. C. Müller, "Inside the Black Box: A Confrontation of Party Executive Behaviour and Theories of Party Organizational Change," *Party Politics* 3, no. 3 (1997): 293–313; L. Bille, "Leadership Change and Party Change: The Case of the Danish Social Democratic Party, 1960-95," *Party Politics* 3, no. 3 (1997): 379–390; F. Løvlie, "Explaining Hamas's Changing Electoral Strategy, 1996-2006," *Government and Opposition* 48, no. 4 (2013): 570–593; E. Bélanger and J.-F. Godbout, "Why Do Parties Merge? The Case of the Conservative Party of Canada," *Parliamentary Affairs* 63, no. 1 (2010): 41–65.

44. Such as in Duncan, "‘‘Latently, Things Just Don’t Seem the Same.’’"

set of possible actions under each of them.

To make sense of that complexity, this study first imposes a number of criteria by which some actions can be judged to be more far-reaching than others. These are the direct result of the conception of the two strategies as superlatives of “normal” electoral strategy where fundamental changes to the party are possible as a part of it. These changes can be deeper and more long-term than adaptations to “normal” strategy, changing things that in normal circumstances would be more or less immutable. For example, where “normal” electoral strategy often involves a change of a single policy in an election manifesto, a party in crisis might also change its underlying ideological documents or review its entire raft of policies. This would be a further-reaching change, since such documents are normally off-limits, and should therefore be assigned a heavier weight when determining the party’s strategy on the programmatic dimension. Long-term projects that make use of the fact that a recovery strategy, in contrast to “normal” electoral strategy, does not just take place during one election campaign but over the course of an entire electoral should also be assigned a heavier weight. For example, while a “normal” electoral strategy might adapt the target groups in the campaign plan, a recovery strategy could also contain long-term measures such as setting up a new body to appeal to a certain group.

Having determined the strategy on each dimension, we can then proceed to determine the overall strategy. In general, the choice has been made to accord equal weight to each dimension. This is, of course, a significantly simplified view of the recovery strategy, but nevertheless a necessary one. Most importantly, the complexity of the concept of a recovery strategy makes it hard to establish which dimensions should be weighted more strongly than others. Various parties might, from the viewpoint of their histories and characteristics or from circumstances, consider different parts of the strategy to be more important. Since the rationale of weighting the strategies should be uniform for the sake of rigour, this is hard to model at this point in time. The choice made to use equal weights therefore also serves the express function of being a starting point for inquiry - like many aspects of the model, it is an admittedly simple version that can and probably will be refined and made more complex as the model is being refined.

#### 4.5.1.1 Measuring organisational change

The operationalisation of the organisational dimension of the strategy is summarised in table 4.6. Organisational change will usually be reflected in some way in (amendments to) the party’s constitution or statutes. However, the minutes and papers of party bodies also offer a deeper perspective. They include not just the changes that did happen, but also those that were attempted or tested. Large reports on the party organisation, in particular, are useful in this regard, insofar as they touch upon the issue of democratisation or the power of the membership. With Cross and Katz, we take a broader understanding of democratisation, asking a number of questions including who is to be empowered in democratic decision-making and in what fields.<sup>45</sup> This can be in the field of policy-making, candidate selection or leadership elections.

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45. W. P. Cross and R. S. Katz, “The Challenges of Intra-Party Democracy,” in *The Challenges of Intra-Party Democracy*, ed. W. P. Cross and R. S. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6-10.

Table 4.6: Organisational components of the reinforcement and extension strategies

Category	Carrier	Reinforcement	Extension	Sources
Actual rules changes	Rules amendments	Empowering party members	Empowering elites or registered non-member supporters	Party constitutions, reports and terms of reference
Intended rules changes	Pilots	Empowering party members	Empowering elites or registered non-member supporters	Reports and terms of reference
	Planned changes	Empowering party members	Empowering elites or registered non-member supporters	Reports and terms of reference

The distinction between the reinforcement and extension variants of organisational change is that the former is about empowering those ‘inside’ the party: the members. This is usually done through a process of internal democratisation. Democratisation can touch a number of fields of party activity, including leadership and candidate selection and policy formulation.<sup>46</sup> Studies of selection have measured the breadth of the group involved in selecting party leaders (the selectorate), running from the whole electorate (inclusive) to a single individual (exclusive).<sup>47</sup> Extrapolated to other fields of intra-party decision-making, this inclusiveness measure can be used to operationalise organisational change: if the selectorate is broadened to include more members or to include members more directly, it is evidence of internal democratisation and therefore of a shift in power towards the membership. If the opposite is true, and powers are being concentrated in the hands of the party leadership, power is instead shifting away from the membership. If the selectorate is broadened beyond members, this is evidence of a shift in power away from the membership as well: after all, such reforms detract from the exclusiveness of membership by vesting powers previously vested in members or leaders of the party in a wider population.

#### 4.5.1.2 Measuring programmatic change

The first documents to look at in measuring programmatic change will be those which represent big efforts to reshape a party’s programme. These efforts range in extent from

46. Cross and Katz, “The Challenges of Intra-Party Democracy,” 9.

47. G. Rahat and R. Y. Hazan, “Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework,” *Party Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001): 301; Ofer Kenig, “Classifying Party Leaders’ Selection Methods in Parliamentary Democracies,” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 19, no. 4 (2009): 243, doi:10.1080/17457280903275261.

Table 4.7: Programmatic components of the reinforcement and extension strategies

Category	Carrier	Reinforcement	Extension	Sources
Ideology	Review of ideology	Reaffirm ideology	Reinterpret ideology	Reports and terms of reference
Programme	Comprehensive review	Highlight traditional values	Downplay traditional values	Reports and terms of reference
	Review of individual issues	Highlight traditional policy positions	Downplay or abandon traditional policy positions	Reports, terms of reference and manifestos

more fundamental to less fundamental. An overview of this range of measures can be found in table 4.7. At the furthest extent, a party might revise its ideological underpinnings and publish new descriptions of its ideological foundations. Going a bit less far, it might change the way in which it translates these foundations into concrete policy with either a comprehensive or a piecemeal overhaul of policies. We are therefore looking for reports on the party's ideological and policy programme, particularly those of such ideological and policy reviews. To judge whether such changes are highlighting or downplaying a party's values, terms of reference and reports of the bodies appointed to conduct the review should be considered.

A first operational issue associated with this, then, is how to determine what these values are. The secondary literature often already offers an interpretation. Combined with information on topics the party has generally considered of symbolic importance and any available ideological documents of the party, the values of a party can be established. In addition, what a party elite *thinks* its traditional values are, as evidenced by the way programmatic decisions are argued in the minutes of its decision-making bodies, is also of key importance.

Suppose, for example, that a party's traditional values were against nuclear weaponry. We could know this because there is a general scholarly consensus on it, because a declaration of founding principles asserted it, or simply because the documents show a generally expressed consensus that it is fundamental to the party. Any programmatic change qualifying the policy could then be considered to play down this element of the party's values, and a major policy document boldly reasserting it to highlight it. Depending on how deeply the conviction were held, this would be at least a medium-extent programmatic change.

As a final check, it is also important to consult the traditional measure of programmatic change and look at manifestoes. Manifestos change every election and therefore we cannot be sure whether a change in the manifesto would not also have been made outside a crisis situation. However, it could be relevant to see whether the priorities of reviews also occur in the manifesto a party presents at an election, and whether the drafters of the manifesto took the work of such reviews as major input.

As regards the use of manifesto data, a qualitative approach to each manifesto informed by available secondary sources has been preferred over the use of datasets such as the Chapel Hill Expert Survey<sup>48</sup> or the Comparative Manifesto Project<sup>49</sup>. The former is only available since 1984, which excludes some of our cases. More importantly, however, the operationalisation of the programmatic dimension requires a certain level of detail. Shifts in a party's traditional values can be evidenced by very specific issue areas such as nuclear disarmament in the case of the Labour Party or direct democratisation in the case of D66.

While the Comparative Manifesto Project has recently added sub-categories which could do this, these are as of yet unavailable in the dataset for the required period of time.<sup>50</sup> Without such sub-categories, the data is not fine-grained enough to use it as a reliable indicator in very specific issue areas. In addition, the data is measured relative to the entirety of the source document. While this remedies effects the length of the document would have on absolute score, it introduces noise in the measurements. In particular, a decline in the score for a certain issue might mean one of two things: the issue is less important or others have, potentially independently, increased in importance. Under such circumstances, qualitative study of the text of documents themselves seems the preferable option.

#### 4.5.1.3 Measuring tactical change

Within the archival records described above, we are looking for more fundamental or long-term initiatives for tactical change. These include two general categories of measures: targeting measures, i.e. long-term measures to reach out to a particular group of voters; and image measures, that is changes to party symbols and changes to parliamentary and governmental tactics to influence how voters perceive the party in general.<sup>51</sup> These tactical measures are outlined in table 4.8. In addition, the party's campaign plan for any new election will be examined if available, cross-referencing to see if the long-term plans of the party also find expression in its concrete campaign plan. Where specific measures of this type are absent, we can go on the campaign alone,<sup>52</sup> but since campaign plans always change according to circumstances even in normal electoral strategy, we can assume that these measures are always of a lesser extent.

Targeting measures are the most obviously recognisable in the papers of party decision-making bodies. They include every measure consciously designed to increase the party's attractiveness to a particular group. Depending on whether the party perceives these groups to be part of its electoral base already or not, the measure can be classified as a reinforcement or extension strategy. Evidence for this decision can be found in campaign evaluations and in the discourse used to justify the measures. In addition, since electoral

48. M. Steenbergen and G. Marks, "Evaluating Expert Judgments," *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3 (2007): 347–366; L. Ray, "Measuring party orientations toward European integration: Results from an expert survey," *European Journal of Political Research* 36, no. 2 (1999): 283–306.

49. A. Volkens et al., *The Manifesto Data Collection: Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR)* (Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung (WZB), 2018).

50. Ibid.

51. As in Duncan, "Lately, Things Just Don't Seem the Same," 77–78.

52. As in R. Rohrschneider, "Mobilizing versus chasing: how do parties target voters in election campaigns?," *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 3 (2002): 367–382.

Table 4.8: Tactical components of the reinforcement and extension strategies

Category	Carrier	Reinforcement	Extension	Sources
Targeting	Long-term targeting measures	Group within electoral base	Group outside electoral base	Campaign plans, executive documents
Image	Party symbols	Reinforce traditional symbolism	Downplay traditional symbolism	Executive documents, symbols
	Candidates	More representative of electoral base	More diverse candidates	Candidate lists, executive documents
	Coalitional and parliamentary strategy	More rigid strategy; lesser willingness to make concessions	More flexible strategy; greater willingness to make concessions	Executive documents

base attachment also requires some idea of who the party perceives to be its electoral base, this information can also be involved in judging whether a targeting measure represents an attempt to broaden or narrow the base.


Image measures are more tricky since they do not always directly appeal to specific groups. It includes changes to symbols such as the party logo, attempts to affect the image projected by its candidates and changes in the way a party conducts itself in office. Such an image can be more inclusive, geared towards making a party more attractive to the public in general, or exclusive, in which case the aim is to emphasise its symbolic ties to its electoral base. To get at attempts to shift the party image, this study examines logos and house styles, changes to affect the personal composition of candidate lists and documents and reports on the party's strategy in parliament. Not every change is necessarily linked to one of the strategies: a logo that has simply been updated to look more relevant and modern need not fall under either of them, for example. As with targeting measures, strategic intent and reasoning is key. The intent to change a party's image to be more broadly appealing or conversely more narrowly appealing determines which strategy it falls in.

## 4.5.2 Electoral base attachment

The main mediating variable in the model constructed in the previous chapter is electoral base attachment: the strength of attachment of a party's decision-making elite to (parts of) its electoral base through formal rules as well as informal values and ties. Detailing this conceptualisation further, a roughly ordinal scale was constructed employing the distinction used in institutionalist literature between formal rules and informal norms and conventions.<sup>53</sup> Formal rules giving influence to organised representatives of (parts

53. E.g. W. R. Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests* (London: SAGE, 2008), 51.

Table 4.9: Operationalisation of electoral base attachment

Level of electoral base attachment	Carrier	Concrete examples	Location
Highest  Lowest	Codified rules giving power to base representatives	Trade union members having reserved seats on party bodies.	Party constitution
	Codified rules expressing relationship with base	Statement that the party represents the working class	Party constitution
	Personal ties with base	Several party members have held leadership in unions	Personal data and secondary sources
	Informal norms that privilege base	Sentiment that defence of working-class interests is important	Minutes
	Informal norms against privileging base	Sentiment that party should not be an interest party.	Minutes
	Codified rules expressing general focus	Statement that the party opposes sectional appeals.	Party constitution

of) a party's electoral base constitute the strongest form of electoral base attachment. Overlapping personal loyalties among the party elites and informal norms and conventions are ranked below this. The weakest electoral base attachment is evidenced where formal rules or informal norms and conventions stipulate that a party should not privilege its core supporters.

The operationalization of electoral base attachment as shown in table 4.9 thus hinges on measurement of both formal rules and informal ties, norms and conventions. Institutional analysis usually identifies certain carriers containing these institutionalised attitudes.<sup>54</sup> By identifying these carriers or concluding that they are at work, we can infer the presence of a certain institutionalised attitude to the base. Measuring electoral base attachment, therefore, should start by examining the evidence for the presence of these carriers.

Although the logic is the same (look for the carriers), this works out different for formal and informal types of electoral base attachment. According to Scott, the carriers of formal, regulative institutions are rules, laws, governance systems and power systems. Their chief characteristic is their codification.<sup>55</sup> It is easy to identify these carriers in a political party: they consist in their written rules and in the power relationships among actors

54. Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 79.

55. *Ibid.*

within the party that they constitute. Identifying formal electoral base attachment, then, is a matter of consulting the party's written rules. If these rules give power or influence to representatives of an organised base group, then that is evidence of strong electoral base attachment. Where they are absent, a party's constitution, statutes or ideological documents might also contain references to the group a party wishes to represent. These are more symbolic, since they do not imply power relationships, but they still constitute electoral base attachment.

Within more informal types of institutions, we can distinguish between normative and cultural-cognitive types.<sup>56</sup> The carriers of these are more intangible, such as values, expectations, informal regimes, systems of authority, roles and identities. They are more difficult to recognise given that they cannot be directly observed. Instead, they must be inferred from evidence on the loyalties, behaviour and beliefs of party elites. Where loyalties are concerned, an important indicator is the occurrence of interlocking directorates: double roles played by members of the party's decision-making bodies.<sup>57</sup> We make one modification to the way Lijphart operationalised interlocking directorates.<sup>58</sup> In the Dutch context he describes, counting only simultaneous memberships of various elites in the same pillar made sense. They are still the strongest instances. However, non-simultaneous memberships can be equally telling, even if they represent a weaker form. An elite member who is socialised in an environment embodying a particular social interest will likely carry something of that affiliation over to the allied party.<sup>59</sup> Parties like the Dutch CDA have been noted to have a high degree of overlap in their leadership with (former) leadership of civil society organisations connected to their Christian base.<sup>60</sup> Such members will undoubtedly have some loyalty to these organisations and the groups they represent, and therefore increase electoral base attachment.

Even less tangible are the roles played by values and expectations, and informal norms and conventions in general. The presence of such institutionalised norms can therefore only be established by inferring it from rhetoric or argumentation in internal documents. Statements that express belief in the party's links to society or a certain subset of society, insist that the interests of a certain group are crucial or fundamental or that connect the identity of the party to a certain group all provide evidence of the presence of informal electoral base attachment. Of course, the more generally these opinions seem to be held and the more they are seen to sway opinion in the party, and the more often they recur, the more certain we can be that electoral base attachment by informal ties is at play.

Especially where informal norms are concerned, it can be hard to know where to start. To remedy this, two additional sources can be employed. First of all, electoral base attachment was conceptualised as having formed over the course of a party's history, the historical development of the party can serve as evidence. The roots of a party,

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56. Ibid.

57. A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 59.

58. Ibid., 61.

59. See also R. A. Koole, "Cadre, Catch-All or Cartel? A Comment on the Notion of the Cartel Party," *Party Politics* 2, no. 4 (1996): 266.

60. Van Kersbergen, "De christendemocratische feniks en de moderne, niet-seculiere politiek," 203.

in particular, have been held quite widely to relate to its character.<sup>61</sup> If a party was founded as a mass party of the working class, it makes sense to look particularly for signs of this heritage. Conversely, a party built upon the idea of some general interest might be expected to display norms against privileging sectional interests. Similarly, the secondary literature can be used to provide information on the general level of electoral base attachment to be expected.

### 4.5.3 Ideological attachment

In chapter three, ideology has been conceptualised as “the characterisation of a belief system that goes to the heart of a party’s identity”.<sup>62</sup> Attachment to an ideology, therefore, is characterised by the loyalty of a party and its elites to this characterised belief system and by the degree to which their actions and decisions are guided by the party’s ideology. It has further been conceptualised as a developed institutional characteristic of a party. Operationalisation of ideological attachment, therefore, could follow the same general schema as the one used for electoral base attachment. However, since most parties have statements of their core beliefs in some sort of formal codified document, the mere presence of formal rules and statements become less useful to distinguish between parties. Since all parties have them, we must distinguish in some other way to what extent the parties are attached to the ideologies expressed in them. As such, the operationalisation of ideological attachment must lean far more on informal norms. In other words, we must determine to what extent a party lets itself be guided by its ideology.

In particular, this concerns the attitudes of decision-makers. The concrete evidence for this is found in expressions of the strength of the party’s ideology and refusal to change positions regarded as ideologically significant for the sake of electoral expediency, as well as in the use of ideological concepts and vocabulary to frame decisions. Such expressions might be found in the minutes, consultation documents or in party newspapers. In addition, the judgments of other scholars in secondary literature will also be used to judge the ideological attachment of the parties under study. In this way, parties can be classified as more or less attached to their ideology.

In primary sources, ideological attachment can be recognised in much the same way as we recognised electoral base attachment through informal norms (see 4.5.2 above). As an additional challenge, however, we are looking for the use of ideological language and argumentation. It is unlikely that we can ascribe the same meaning to a member of a party arguing that “ideology X is important” as to a member arguing that “base group Y is important”, since the ideology of a party is quite multi-interpretable. Rather, we should look for certain “signal words” in the documents which signify ideological commitments. The more frequently these occur and the more they seem to sway opinion, the more ideologically attached a party is. These words differ from party to party. They can be more generic, such as the name describing the ideology (e.g. “democratic socialism” for a

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61. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and voter alignments: cross-national perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 5-6; Duverger, *Political Parties*, xvii.

62. P. Mair and C. Mudde, “The Party Family and its Study,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 220.

socialist party), or concepts and agendas more specific to a certain party (e.g. “community politics” for the British Liberal Party and “democratic renewal” for the Dutch D66).

Much like we can look towards history and secondary sources to identify what to look for to indicate electoral base attachment, these “signal words” can also be derived from other sources. With constitutional party documents such as party constitutions and programmes of principles, the question is not so much whether they are present (since most parties have them at least in the countries under study) but how much value is put on what is expressed in them. They contain the “official ideological language” of the party, however, and this makes them very useful. Signal words derived from these documents can therefore be seen as strong indications of ideological attachment. Similarly, secondary sources might point us towards certain traditions prevalent in a certain party, especially in comparison with parties in the same party family.

#### 4.5.4 Identity of defectors

The next variable to be operationalised is the control variable of the identity of the defectors during the crisis election: which votes were lost? The conceptualisation of this particular variable is based on the concept of the normal vote: were the votes lost those of loyal voters who almost always supported the party, or were they floating voters won in the last election? The key operational concern here is what baseline to compare it to: how do we determine what a party’s normal vote is? In his original formulation of the concept, Converse makes a complicated calculation taking advantage of the American two-party system. In multi-party contexts, such an operationalisation based on “equal rates of defection between the parties” is not possible.<sup>63</sup> The concept has been adapted to a multi-party concept but the complexity of such models of the normal vote in a multi-party system are beyond the scope of this study.<sup>64</sup>

However, since the normal vote is a baseline constructed on the basis of variations in the election results of a party between elections, it can be approximated by taking an average of past electoral performances. This should suffice for our purposes, since all we need to know is whether the election result before the shock occurred was higher or lower than usual. If it is above average, then it is at least likely that a larger part of the voters that deserted the party in the shock defeat will have been floating voters. If it is below average, then it seems likely that the proportion of core voters will in general be higher. Following Converse, five elections before but not including the shock election will be used to calculate this.<sup>65</sup> Many parties will have their own electoral research done after an election. This means that, of course, the evidence obtained by comparing the election preceding the shock to the average calculated in this way can and should be cross-referenced with the evidence arising from this to see if the party comes to a similar conclusion.

Another operational question on this control variable is where it comes in. Since the variable is intended to control for the possibility that functional considerations (winning

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63. P.E. Converse, “The Concept of a Normal Vote,” in *Elections and the Political Order*, ed. A. Campbell et al. (New York: John Wiley / Sons, 1966), 27.

64. For example: Anker, *Normal Vote Analysis*.

65. Converse, “The Concept of a Normal Vote,” 21.

back the lost votes in the most direct way) rather than institutional ones determine the party's strategy. This means that it is specifically a rival to the effects of electoral base attachment and ideological attachment. It is also constrained in the same way by the electoral system: a plan designed to win back those voters lost in the shock election can be more or less viable based on the effects of the electoral system. Therefore, like electoral base attachment and ideological attachment, it will be seen as impacting via the formation of a preference for a strategy, which means it has the most influence during the first electoral cycle.

#### 4.5.5 External factors

The model formulated in chapter three makes a distinction between the way internal and external factors can be expected to impact upon the recovery process. While the internal factors impact upon the response in a more direct way, through the formation of preferences at the start of the process, external factors are conceived as impacting as constraints on the party acting on those formed preferences. This creates a temporal difference between the two: while the internal factors are present from the start, external factors only enter into the model later on, and their effects should therefore only become visible later on.

To operationalise this in a simple way, this study proposes to take advantage of the two-cycle time period under study. To measure the potential constraining effect of the external environment, we make the assumption that the external environment only enters into consideration after a new evaluation point in the form of an election. As an election provides evidence of the success or failure of the chosen course of action, it is likely to give grounds to reconsider some elements of it in light of the prevailing external environment. Even if external factors did impact during the first electoral cycle, it is entirely plausible that if the strategy adopted during this cycle does not work, the party might pay more attention to its environment and be willing to compromise on its initial preferences. This is a somewhat strong assumption, but the alternative would be to argue a separate point in each case when external influences started to act to constrain a party's actions, which could introduce all sorts of idiosyncrasies. By contrast, using this admittedly strong assumption we could compare the strategies during the first and second electoral cycle to see whether it has changed in response to potential external factors.

##### 4.5.5.1 Electoral system

The proposition on the impact of electoral systems developed in the previous chapter only refers to one characteristic of the electoral system that is most important to electoral recovery – the way in which votes are translated to seats, the so-called mechanical effects of the electoral system.<sup>66</sup> The previous chapter's proposition makes a distinction in this regard between majoritarian and proportional electoral systems.

Admittedly, there are many mixed forms in between these two extremes. However, as the comparative research design only involves two countries which were deliberately

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66. Duverger, *Political Parties*, 266; A. Blais et al., "The Mechanical and Psychological Effects of Electoral Systems: a Quasi-Experimental Study," *Comparative Political Studies* 44, no. 12 (2011): 1600.

selected at the extremes, it is best to keep the operationalisation of the electoral system simple. After all, the comparative design already accounts for two very different environments. In the chapters on the separate parties, therefore, the electoral system will be represented simply by the mechanism by which it returns members of the lower house of Parliament – either a majoritarian First Past the Post system or a Proportional Representation system. This should be enough for now to make inferences on the basic effect of the most important characteristic of electoral systems to this study on the choice of the recovery strategy.

## 4.6 Conclusion: testing the propositions and the importance of sequence

Using the methodology and operationalisation presented above, we can proceed to test the six propositions formulated in chapter three. In doing so, it is vitally important to pay attention to the temporal dimension of the argument, operationalised by using the two electoral cycles following the electoral defeat. This is particularly important for testing propositions 3 through 6, which concern the 'how'-stage. After all, propositions 1 and 2, which test the model at the 'whether'-stage do not depend on the possibility of changes to the strategy: a party either diagnoses the crisis and formulates a strategy or does neither of these things. In addition, since all cases were selected from a population of parties which had suffered a crisis, the probability of one of our four cases not diagnosing a crisis is very low. In the likely event that no party fails to diagnose a crisis, the test of the proposition will therefore rely solely on within-case evidence. Here, temporal sequencing is important, as the speed with which the party acts after a crisis can be an indication of reluctance to diagnose the crisis.

Since all the independent variables involved in propositions 3 through 5 were conceptualised as impacting on the preference formation of political parties, the first-cycle strategy is key to testing these propositions. Regardless of what changes later, for the effects to be as proposed in our model, what is important is that the strategy the party settles on before the next election (our first point of measurement) takes the form that is to be expected based on the proposition. Likewise, for proposition 6 on electoral systems to be confirmed, we need to observe a change of strategy between the two cycles where the constraints of the electoral system would run counter to the first-cycle strategy. Concretely, any British (FPTP) cases which show a reinforcement strategy in the first cycle should switch to an extension strategy, while Dutch (PR) cases showing a first-cycle extension strategy should switch to a reinforcement strategy.

The case studies presented in chapter 5 through 8 each form a building block of the comparative analysis to be presented in chapter 9, as well as an analysis of the recovery strategies and the variables involved in each case. The comparative analysis in chapter 9 will likely lead to the conclusion that a number of the propositions and indeed the model needs to be further refined. To this end, chapter 9 can also build on the case studies in a different way, bringing in the detailed evidence of the causal mechanism observed in the case studies to suggest the possible direction of this refinement. In this

way, the methodology outlined here will fulfill the dual purpose of this study: to test the propositions derived from the model we have constructed, and at the same time to generate data which can be used to suggest where this model can be further refined afterwards.