

# When do parties change their political product?

Causes of programmatic-, organizational – and personnel party reforms in the Belgian mainstream parties

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## **Abstract**

Many West-European parties have responded to a changing and challenging environment by adopting party reforms. In this article we propose an innovative approach to study party reforms based on an adaptation of Harmel & Janda's (1994) *Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change* and its application to the concept of political product. We argue that the causes leading to reforms are multiple and differ according to the targeted components of the political product (i.e. programmatic-, personnel- and organization identity). Based on the conduct of three QCA, we show that the reforms on these components implemented by the six mainstream Belgian parties between 1987 and 2010 are all explained by fundamentally different complex causal pathways. Moreover, no single causal condition considered was sufficient in itself to predict party reforms. Hence, we argue that the literature should now extend its approach in two complementary directions. First, we suggest moving away from considering party reforms as only explained by separate conditions, since those are always the result of a combination of causal conditions. Second, future research should better link the nature of the reforms undertaken to the different causes that may push parties to adopt them since our results show that it is not possible to commonly explain reforms of different nature without stressing that only a diversity of (combinations of) causes allows to do so.

*Keywords:* Party reforms ; mainstream parties ; Belgium ; political product ; QCA

## Introduction

West-European party systems have been described as disintegrating since the late 1970s. Mainstream parties in particular were diagnosed as being *in decline* if not *dead* as they saw their popularity, vote share and membership gradually declining (Dassonneville, 2018; Luybaert, 2019). Yet, mainstream parties are still considered as central actors in modern representative politics despite these widespread downwards trends (Pierce, 1999). Clearly, they have adapted to their changing environment to survive the challenges they have faced (de Vries & Hobolt, 2020; Gauja, 2017).

Scholars have already extensively investigated party reforms used by parties as responses to internal and external challenges such as electoral defeats (e.g. de Vries & Hobolt, 2020; Paczesniak et al., 2020), membership decline (e.g. Kölln, 2014) or change of party leadership (e.g. Panebianco, 1988; Somer-Topcu, 2009). The remedies used by the parties to counteract the shocks they are experiencing are multiple. We can for example find valuable studies about programmatic reforms (e.g. Abou-Chadi, 2016; Hobolt & Tilley, 2016), leadership turnover (Ferreira da Silva et al., 2021; H. H. Pedersen & Schumacher, 2015) or democratic organizational reforms (W. P. Cross & Katz, 2013; Ignazi, 2020; Sandri & Amjahad, 2015). The common feature of all these studies is that they consider parties as ready to reform certain of their features if it allows them to rebrand their image and survive new challenges (Gauja, 2017). In that sense, parties can be seen as *entrepreneurs* competing for political dominance on the market by selling the best political product to the public opinion (Speed et al., 2015; De Vries & Hobolt, 2020).

Yet, two gaps remain in the literature on the causes of party reforms. First, scholars often consider them as being explainable by individual factors on their own, while we argue that party reforms can only be explained by multiple causal configurations. Second, few distinctions are made between the conditions that lead political parties to implement reforms of different nature. The literature has typically focused on identifying the causes leading to reforms on an individual

component of the political product (i.e. programmatic-, organizational- and personnel identity). We argue, however, that these three types of party reforms should be investigated in an integrated and comparative manner as they form reforms on the three components of the indivisible political product.

Hence, this article seeks to answer two research questions while developing an innovative approach to party reforms: What are the causes leading parties to reform any part of their political product? And, are those causes the same regardless of which components of the political product they apply to? In order to answer these questions, we conduct three QCA studying the reforms implemented by the six mainstream Belgian parties between 1987 and 2010. Our approach is derived from a critical reading of Harmel and Janda's (1994) *Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change* and focus on five conditions commonly accepted as key explanatory factors of party reforms in the literature, namely electoral performances, governmental status, leadership, membership rates and the occurrence of political scandals and crises. QCA is used precisely because it allows the identification of the causal pathways leading to particular outcomes while providing room to display a great amount of information about the cases under study (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009)

The paper proceeds in four sections. We first bridge the existing literature about political marketing with party reforms and their causes. After setting out the methodology, we report the analyses and discuss the main results. We then conclude with the main findings and the implications of our study.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **The conceptualization of the political product**

Recent developments in the political marketing literature consider that parties can be seen as *entrepreneurs* competing for political dominance on the market by shaping and selling an

attractive and multicomponent political product to the public (Speed et al., 2015; Hobolt & De Vries, 2020). The most visible component of the political product are the policies offered by the parties (Spoon & Klüver, 2019). However, perceptions of party policies can be blurred, and they are in any case supplemented with other cognitive shortcuts and contextual factors, such as the party organization, party leader and its candidates (Dahlberg, 2013 ; Coan et. al, 2008). Several authors have proposed a three-components concept with different labels. Farrell and Wortmann (1987) refer to party image, leader image and manifesto. Worcester and Mortimore (2005) talk about issues, party image and leader image, while other scholars report on ideology, person and the party (Butler & Collins, 1994; Speed et al., 2015). In sum, these authors refer to components with similar party-characteristics: program, person and organization. Thereby, the components of the political product are part of the party broader image and, thus, directly linked to the associations made by voters (Gorbaniuk et al., 2015). These images are influenced by (among others) political communication, strategies of other parties and branding strategies. At the party level, however, it would be more correct to speak of an *identity* that the party tries to create and directly communicate to their voters. The building of this identity will reflect the substantive character of the political product and suggests that parties have a direct control to adapt by reforming its components (Figure 1).

### **[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE – PARTIES’ POLITICAL PRODUCT]<sup>1</sup>**

The fundamental feature of the political product is that the three components cannot be offered separately (Speed et al., 2015, p. 132). Instead, it is the interplay between its components that forms the knowledge of a political brand. If studies have

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that all tables and figures are included at the end of the document.

already looked at individual types of reforms extensively (e.g. Sandri & Amjahad, 2015; Abou-Chadi, 2016; Ferreira da Silva et al., 2021) few have proposed a comparison of these while analysing the causes that may explain them in a configurational approach.

Indeed, it remains unclear to this day if organizational reforms are the result of the same causal pathways than programmatic- or personnel reforms for instance. Our main argument is that the causes leading towards different reform types may differ since parties target various audiences when communicating their product (voters, members, interest groups, media, etc. but also other parties<sup>1</sup>; Kotler, 1999). When one audience indicates that it does not favour a party's product, the latter may focus on reform(s) on one of the components in order to (re-)convince this audience to support it or be prepared to (simultaneously) reform several of them at once.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to account for the causal pathways leading parties to reforms each of the three components of the political product. The integrative approach we propose is not only innovative regarding the literature but also relevant since it concerns the evolution of parties' multicomponent offer to the public. Consequently, this article investigates whether the causes of party reforms differ according to reforms on different components of the political product.

### **The causes of party reforms – A review of the *Integrated theory of party goals and party change***

So far, the *Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change* developed by Harmel and Janda (1994) remains arguably the one of the most elaborated explanatory theory of party reforms. Their seminal work builds on Panebianco's (1988) own theory and provides one of the best illustrations of the discrete change approach which considers party reforms as erratic phenomena and that electoral results and leadership behaviour remain the most powerful driving forces of changes (Gauja, 2017).

Following their theory, the most substantial party changes occur when parties fail to achieve their *primary goal* (i.e. either vote-, office-, intraparty democracy maximizers or policy advocates). This would increase the pressure on the dominant coalition, functioning as a *coalition of the willing*, which may in turn force it to strategically renew the party in order to respond that pressure or, on the contrary, to consolidate its position. Although this approach is still one of the most ambitious attempts to develop an integrative approach to party change, two limitations can nevertheless be identified in Harmel and Janda's (1994) theory.

First, the authors do not differentiate the very nature of the reforms that parties can implement in the building of their argumentation. We therefore propose to complement their theory by linking it to the concept of the political product which aligns with the multiple happenings that reforms of different nature represent. In doing so, this new conceptual framework allows to differentiate programmatic-, organizational- and personnel reforms and to distinguish more fine-grained explanations for these different realities while preserving the basic principles of the discrete approach (see Figure 1).

Second, several authors have already showed that operationalising the principle of primary goals is complex and eventually lead towards contradicting and inconclusive results on the causes of party reforms (e.g. Rihoux, 1999). Translating the primary goals into operative factors, four main key causal conditions in Harmel and Janda's explanation of party reforms can be identified: electoral defeats, change of leader and governmental status and membership decline. While Harmel and Janda (1994) argue that these conditions can each be strong incentives for parties to reform depending on their primary goal, more recent studies find mixed evidence for the net effects of – and the rationale behind – these individual conditions. Perhaps the best illustration of this type of debate concerns the centrality of the electoral defeat in the explanation of party reforms. While some authors follow Janda's argument that electoral defeat is 'the mother of party change' (e.g. Gauja, 2017), others qualify its importance (e.g. Paczesniak et al., 2020) or argue that winning votes

is not simply a primary goal for a party but can often be a corollary to achieving two other goals, namely office and policy maximization (Strom, 1990; De Vries & Hobolt, 2020). Yet, what remains sure is that political parties compete in the building of their political product in exchange for public support and votes from the electorate. Hence, electoral defeats are probably one of the most obvious signals of disapproval for parties (Gauja, 2017; De Vries & Hobolt, 2020).

Harmel and Janda (1994) also note that failure to get into office might be a strong incentive for party reform. This accounts especially for those parties that see the refusal of other parties to associate with them as critical or if they were former and reliable coalition partners. Hence, being rejected may lead them to reform [their political product] in order to distance themselves in the hope of finding alternative partners or - on the contrary - to get closer to the original partners again. Another argument found in the literature explains the effect of this condition rather by linking it to the rebalancing between the different party faces, whose sometimes different interests can result in organizational change (Cross and Blais, 2012). A change of governmental status would also force parties facing a drastic decline in their resources (human, material, media resources, etc.) to make *distress* innovations to mitigate the consequences (Knight, 1967) but could at the same time allow them for a greater flexibility in the articulation of their political product (Panebianco, 1988; Van Spanje, 2011; Walgrave & Nuytemans, 2009).

A substantial membership decline could also push parties to rethink the way they aggregate and articulate their political product. They are primary resources providing the party organization with a recruitment pool, loyalty, money and free labour during electoral episodes (Scarrow, 1994, 2000; Fisher et al., 2006; Kosiara-Pedersen et al., 2017; van Haute et al., 2018; Legein et al., 2020). Besides, they can serve to legitimise parties' political product by acting as their primary voters or by validating leaders and decisions taken internally through the building of a structure that promotes participation and deliberation (Deschouwer, 1992). However, recent studies show that the straightforward link between membership decline and party reforms seems more complex. Gauja



(2012) showed for instance that it is one party-level explanatory factor among many others situated at the party or political system ones while Legein (2021) has already argued that this condition is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain the organizational reforms operated by Belgian parties during the 1990s.

In the same vein, looking at party leaders is important in view of the increasing role that they play within (and outside of) their party (Poguntke & Webb, 2005; W. P. Cross & Pilet, 2015). They are explicitly those in charge of the survival of the organization and to respond to external stimuli it may experience. They oversee driving the party's policy, making the organization achieve its goals and hold the most powerful levers to implement such reforms (Walgrave and Nuytemans, 2009; W. P. Cross & Pilet, 2015; Gauja, 2017). As the party leader generally personalises the dominant coalition, a change of leader can lead to adaptations of the political product (Panebianco, 1988; Rihoux, 1999). An even greater shock to the party could be that the arrival of a new leader who has not yet served in that position within the party is than the returning of a former president who has already participated in - and been socialised into – his or her party, political product and structures. Yet, Harmel and Janda (1994) themselves qualify the importance of this condition by pointing out that party reforms can also be initiated by an established dominant coalition in order to consolidate its power (see also Rihoux, 1999). Later, Harmel et al. (2008) empirically found only a 'modicum of support' (p. 101) for party change caused by leadership changes.

While all these works discuss (the intensity) of the effect of each of these conditions in contrasting ways, they nevertheless continue to attribute to them an identical causal direction: the challenge of defining the best possible political product for parties to offer on the market. This observation leads us to extend the approach proposed by Harmel and Janda (1994) by moving away from the principle of the inability to reach the parties' primary goal causing party reforms since these goals are difficult to operationalise. Although these conditions may be key to understand the implementation of party reforms, they are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain party reforms.

Therefore, we argue that party reforms are caused by a combination of these conditions rather than one condition on its own.

Finally, we also supplement Harmel and Janda's theory (1994) with political scandals. Political scandals can be defined as "publicly revealed transgressions of moral, political, or legal norms by politicians or political institutions" (Lee, 2018, p. 714). This definition can also be applied to large-scale political crises that have demonstrated the inability of political parties to agree and that have severely impacted on the confidence of citizens towards the political institutions. Nowadays, these events built on "dramatisation, storytelling and attraction" (Ekström and Johansson, 2008) have become central to the point of playing a pivotal role in modern politics (Zulli, 2021). Indeed, it is common nowadays for contemporary parties to adopt accommodating reforms in the face of such events that are damaging to their popularity and legitimacy (Pennings and Hazan, 2001, p. 268; Renwick et al., 2011). This will result in the adaptation of their political product in order to reappropriate or divert the narrative of these events (Scarrow, 2006; Pollack et al., 2018).

## **Data and methods**

To test our approach, we focused on the six Belgian mainstream parties (Table 1). Belgium has the advantage of allowing a comparison of political parties operating in two distinct but fundamentally similar party systems. The consociational nature of the Belgian political system also gives us the opportunity to observe these actors in an environment that is particularly prone to strong variations on the conditions considered. The mitigation of the strong tensions that may divide the Belgian society is operated through the pursuit of consensus, usually materialised in broad government coalitions (De Winter & Dumont, 2006; Peters, 2006). Hence, all mainstream parties are used to governmental participation (Dandoy & Lebrun, 2021) and are characterised by two core characteristics: a high degree of elitism in the decision-making process and the apathy of the masses meaning that "the process of joining a party is demonstrated less in an active personal commitment

than as a global sociological phenomenon” (van Haute & Pilet, 2007, p. 4). They share basic organizational features (Legein and van Haute, 2021) and their strong links with the state and their central role in the partocratic political system make them particularly vulnerable to scandals as well as the electoral- and membership decline that has characterized West-European party systems since the 1980s (Luybaert, 2019).

**[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE - BELGIAN MAINSTREAM PARTIES]**

Some have already highlighted the reforms carried out over time by these parties on the three components of their political product (Deschouwer XXX; van Haute and Pilet, 2007; Wauters, 2014; Delwit and van Haute, 2021). What emerges from this work is that a significant proportion of the reforms of interest to us are concentrated around the 1990s. While programmatic and personal reforms are in any case an integral part of the life of political parties (LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966;)<sup>2</sup>, van Haute and Pilet (2007) have shown that an important part of the democratic reforms of Belgian mainstream parties was concentrated around the 1990s. Consequently, our analyses focused on the reforms implemented by those parties over the 1987-2010 period during federal legislative terms. This allowed us to observe a wide variety of cases related to the three components of the political product while ensuring an adequate balance between observations for which the outcomes were positive (i.e. implementation of a party reform) and negative (i.e. absence of a party reform). Table 2 displays all the reforms implemented by these parties during the period under review.

**[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE – PARTY CHARACTERISTICS – to be done]**

## **Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)**

We use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) since we consider that the causal pathways leading to party reforms can only be explained by the convergence of multiple contextual catalysts. QCA is a holistic tool that presupposes that the phenomenon being studied is more than likely explained by equifinality (i.e. different solutions can lead to the same outcome), conjunctural causation (i.e. the causal condition is only explanatory in combination with others) and can give rise to causal asymmetry (i.e. if the presence of the outcome is explained by the presence of one causal condition, the absence of the latter does not automatically explain the absence of the outcome) (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010), which aligns with our expectations about the explanation of party reforms. QCA is moreover particularly well fitted for (medium-N) case-oriented comparative studies and is receiving an increasing level of attention in political science (e.g. Rihoux 1999; Beyens et al., 2016, p. 264; Spierings and Jacob, 2019).

The use of a more fine-grained fuzzy-set analysis allows us to avoid dichotomizing causal conditions of a more complex nature and bring more nuance in their operationalisation. Rather than defining cases as members or non-members of a well-defined set along each condition, observations are assigned a degree of (partial) membership in each set situated between 0 (full non-membership) and 1 (full membership) where it corresponds better with the reality. Nevertheless, the corollary to this approach is that a considerable responsibility rests on the shoulders of the researcher, who must decide for himself on the *calibration* of the conditions. This presupposes a constant dialogue between theoretical considerations and detailed knowledge of the cases involved.

## **The operationalization and calibration of conditions and outcomes**

Three databases provided extensive data on party leadership (COSPAL; Cross & Pilet, 2015), programmatic stances (MARPOR; Volkens et al., 2020) and membership (MAPP; van Haute et al.,

2016). These data were supplemented with information in institutional sources and in the extensive literature about the Belgian political system (among others Wauters, 2009; Put, 2015; Delwit & van Haute, 2021).

Table 3 displays the causal conditions and their calibration included in the analyses. All of them were calibrated based on theoretical and empirical considerations. The DEFEAT condition was dichotomised based on the combination of two distinct realities of an electoral defeat. A party will be considered as defeated if it has lost 1 or more ranks compared to the last legislative and/or regional elections and/or if it has lost 2% (or more) of the votes share at these two levels. The percentage of votes remains an adequate indicator of the relative electoral health of these parties, but the consideration of their ranking remains however important to consider since they suffer from a continuous electoral decline since the 1980s (Luypaert, 2019). The governmental condition (GOVOPP) was operationalised as follows: value 1 was given to parties sitting in opposition during a parliamentary term at the national level. Yet, value 2 was given to those who have been rejected in opposition after one governmental participation since the shock suffered by them is all the more violent as they had previously enjoyed the benefits related to being in office (see. above). Value 0 when the party was in government during the legislative term. Only the national level was considered because the formation of regional and national governments was highly congruent over the period studied, with the formation of the national government dictating the composition of regional executives (with rare exceptions). Based on the theory, the arrival of a new party leader (LEADER) serving his or her very first term (value 2) is seen as a more likely condition for implementing party reform than the arrival of a leader who has already served in the past (value 1). Concerning the decline of party membership (MEMBERS), we calibrated the condition based on the percentage of members lost by the party over the 5 last years at the end of the legislature. It is indeed unlikely that a party would start a reform process after a small loss of membership in 2002, when it has experienced a steady increase of it over the last three

years. Consequently, all parties having lost at least 5% of their members over this period will be considered as partially in the set of parties having suffered from this type of shock<sup>3</sup>. Finally, the value 3 was given to parties in government when a major political crisis occurred and/or to parties fully involved in political scandals (such as mismanagement, corruption, etc.) (SCANDALS). The value 2 was given to parties whose officials have been personally linked to political scandals without this implying any fault on the part of the party itself. This distinction is made because although both types of scandal can affect the image and popularity of the party concerned, we expect that the party will adopt different strategies to counter this depending on the nature of the event. The value 1 was given to all the parties not in government when a major political crisis occurred at the party-system level. This is because such political crises have a profound effect on the confidence of citizens in the political institutions of which mainstream parties are an integral part. Finally, a new causal condition has been specifically added in the QCA concerning personnel reforms (TERMEND). Indeed, while each of the previously defined conditions is expected to play a role in explaining these reforms, a change of leader may simply be the result of what we called ‘overriding reasons’, i.e. practical factors related to party statutes (e.g statutory end of the mandate) or circumstances unrelated to political life (e.g illness, personal reasons, death).

**[TABLE 3 HERE – overview causal conditions]**

Our analyses consist in three QCA. Each of them focuses on one type of party reform (i.e the outcome) themselves related to one component of the political product (see Figure 1). The value 1 was given to the outcome if democratic organizational or personnel reform(s) was observed while a value 0 denotes the absence of such reform(s) (Table 4). We have decided to focus only on democratic reforms in the organizational identity component since those are generally considered as being one of the most powerful tools for parties when they must renew their organization (Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Wauters, 2014; Gauja, 2017). Hence, we decided to narrow

our analyses to two types of democratic reforms that have been widely implemented by West-European parties, namely the democratisation of leadership- and candidate selection processes. Personnel reforms refer to observations that have changed leadership during the legislature under review. Programmatic reforms were operationalised for their part as substantive shifts in socio-economic positioning. Data provided by the Manifesto project consist of ideological scores ranging from -1 (left-wing positioning) to +1 (right-wing positioning) on numerous ideological categories based on the coding of quasi-sentences (e.g. economic, cultural, social or ecological positioning of the party based on its program). Following Adams *et al.* (2006, p. 516) example, we used this standardized indicator because it allows to make them correspond with many other measures of party positioning commonly used in the literature (e.g. expert placements, parliamentary voting analyses, party placements by voters, party self-placement). As we are only interested in substantial change in the parties' socio-economic positions, we first categorized the parties' position in terms of Left-Right placement ranking from extreme left (category 1) to extreme right (category 5). Afterwards we subtracted the category with the category from the previous election. This change of categories is calibrated in a fuzzy-set manner, whereby the value 1 is given when the party changed 2 categories, 0.5 when the party changed 0.5 categories and 0 when there has been no change of category.

## Results and discussion

### The Truth tables

A first step in the QCA analysis consists in looking at the truth tables produced by the software<sup>2</sup> used in the analysis. Truth tables are used to list all the logical combinations that can be empirically observed. As shown by Annexes 1, 2 and 3, we can observe 21 combinations of which 13 led the observed parties to implement programmatic reforms. 12 combinations (out of 20 observed empirically) led to personnel reforms while 6 (out of 13) were identified when organizational reforms were implemented over the period. The interest of looking at these tables before the minimisation that allows us to obtain the solution and our final results is that they reflect the empirical diversity that party reforms covers. On the one hand, we can see that the reforms are systematically related to a high number of combinations. On the other hand, it appears that there is very little similarity between the causal pathways that can lead to reforms on the different components of the product.

### Necessary conditions

A second step consists in assessing whether one of the selected causal conditions turns out to be necessary for the outcome, meaning whether a reform can be explained only in its presence. Besides, this step also allows an evaluation of the (individual) net effect of our causal conditions on the outcome. As shown in Table 5, none of the causal conditions meet the theoretical thresholds characterizing necessary conditions (i.e. a consistency very close to 1 and a coverage of at least 0.5 (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010)). Hence, another piece of information that these results give us is that our expectations seem to be correct. Each of the conditions has an individual effect on the outcome, but none of them is unavoidable in the explanation of party reforms. These conditions do indeed lead all parties to consider adopting new reforms. But it is above all a diversity

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<sup>2</sup> fsqca; Ragin and Davey, 2016



of causes that must be taken into account to explain them. Furthermore, they all have differentiated effects depending on the component of the political product considered.

**[INSERT TABLE 5 HERE – Analyses necessary conditions]**

Finally, the last step of the analysis evaluates the sufficient (combination of) conditions resulting in a positive outcome. The parsimonious solution highlights twelve different combinations that led Belgian mainstream parties to implement party reforms on the three components of their political product between 1987 and 2010. Beyond illustrating the complexity of the explanation of party reforms, results also confirm our expectation that they are far more often explained by combinations of conditions and can give rise to causal asymmetry.

### **Causal pathways leading to programmatic reforms**

Four causal paths were uncovered leading towards programmatic reforms (see Table 6).

**[INSERT TABLE 6 HERE – QCA programmatic reforms]**

**~DEFEAT\*LEADER.** The first combination shows the decisive role of new party leaders in a context where their authority is not undermined by an electoral setback. The 1990s was a prolific decade for the Liberals, who progressively increased their electoral score to become the leading political family at the turn of the 2000s, which resulted in the formation of a Liberal-led government in 1999 after ten years in opposition. This progression started in the 1991 legislative elections during which the score of OpenVLD was even satisfying insofar as it was the only mainstream parties to maintain its electoral status at the time (Luyt, 2019). The programmatic reforms OpenVLD implemented for the 1991 and 1999 legislative elections coincided both times with the arrival (or return) of Guy Verhofstadt as party leader. This latter was known for his hard-

line liberalism which earned him the nickname “Baby Thatcher”. This is also through the alternation of leaders belonging to the social-liberal and the conservative-liberal factions of the party that the MR programmatic profile changed during the 1990s. For its part, the electoral status of the Vooruit did not change at all in the 1987 elections. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the symbolic triumph of liberal ideas confirmed the direction of the programmatic changes that the new president pledged to continue in the wake of his predecessor, before opening a chapter of reforms resolutely focused on the internal organization in the 1990s (Moens & Bouteuca, 2021).

**GOVOPP\*MEMBERS.** Another explanation for the programmatic reforms implemented by the OpenVLD during the 1990s can be found in the second causal pathway. Although the party did not lose votes during these three elections, they were disregarded as a coalition partner. CD&V and cdH experienced the same shock in 1999 by being kicked out of government after a long participation period of 41 years. This major event combined with a substantial decline of the parties’ primary voters (i.e. the members joining and supporting the party organization and ideological identity) even resulted for them in a major transformation of the whole political product (i.e. reforms on the three components). It therefore seems to highlight the fact that a decline in membership can be perceived by party elites as a signal of growing disapproval of the party's ideological line, which in turn can draw on a broad enough electoral base to work on a programmatic reorientation in view of the next elections.

**DEFEAT\*~LEADER\*MEMBERS.** The previous line of thought about the party members can also be extended to the third causal pathway, which shows the importance to promote an appealing platform towards both the electorate and the parties’ primary voters (i.e. the members). If the logic appears to be the same concerning the programmatic reforms implemented by the PS in 1995 and MR in 2007, the role of an incumbent leader with the explicit role of promoting the party's political product to members and voters seems to have been decisive here. This also confirms the role that

electoral defeat can play in the willingness of these parties to renew their ideological message strategically and constantly, even when they manage to stay in power.

**~SCANDAL\*~LEADER.** The fourth causal pathway is more straightforward as it combines, once again, the role of an incumbent leader and the non-occurrence of political affairs. On the one hand, the cdH was engaged in a long process of generational renewal and repositioning started after a dramatic electoral defeat in 1981, when the party lost over 25% of its electorate (Pilet & Rangoni, p. 172). This process was carried out by an emblematic figure of this new generation - more sensitive to the discourses disseminated by the rise of the Third Way - who governed the party from 1982 to 1996. On the other hand, the PS was repeatedly engaged in attempts to reposition itself under the leadership of three successive party presidents with exceptionally long mandates compared to other Belgian parties between 1987 and 2003. The fact that these parties were not negatively impacted by political affairs describes the stability that the party brand enjoyed in the minds of the public opinion. Reforming the programmatic component of the political product could therefore be clearly advertised by these parties whose message would not be blurred by a negative media context. It is interesting to note that the condition of *scandals* never enters the explanation of the programmatic reforms of Belgian parties over the period studied, which reflects the fact that rebranding the programmatic component of the political product does not appear to be considered as the priority strategy to make voters forget about those.

### **Causal pathways leading to personnel reforms**

Four causal pathways were also identified by the analyses about personnel reforms implemented by the Belgian mainstream parties between 1987 and 2010 (see. Table 7).

**[INSERT TABLE 7 HERE – QCA personnel reforms]**

The first pathway is logical and was highly expected (TERMEND). When the incumbent party leader resigns for what we called overriding reasons (see above), it ultimately leads to leadership change as a normal and inevitable event in political parties. The other pathways consist, however, in different causal combinations.

**SCANDAL\*GOVOPP.** The first of these, highlights the joint influence of the conditions linked to the shock return of the CD&V to the opposition after 41 years of governmental participation and of a context particularly marked by a series of political affairs. These affairs led several CD&V ministers – including the new leader himself – to resign before the reform was carried out. Faced with this negative spiral, the incumbent leader had to resign as a result of internal pressure illustrating that these two factors combined were sufficient to create enough instability in the party's dominant coalition which ultimately saw its composition change. It also shows that a return in opposition and/or the occurrence of a political scandal that changes the composition of a government can rhymes for parties with a return of dominant party elites who previously held ministerial responsibilities and who, while waiting for new responsibilities, can claim by their reputation a prominent position in the party leadership.

**~SCANDAL\*DEFEAT\*~GOVOPP + ~SCANDAL\*DEFEAT\*MEMBERS.** Finally, the third and fourth combinations can be interpreted together. Indeed, the results obtained show that they overlap by both explaining four cases in common. The first of these combinations puts the shock of electoral defeat at the centre of the reasons why parties change their leaders. Since they personify their party in Belgium, party presidents are often forced to resign following a major electoral defeat, which may reflect a disapproval of their competence to achieve the organization's objectives - or to carry out its action in government - on the part of the voters. Such event may ultimately be instrumental in degenerating into tensions the internal power relations between party elites. The latter, wishing to reverse the trend of bad electoral results, are

therefore likely to take advantage of elements conducive to a change of leadership: media visibility guaranteed by the party's presence in government and not negatively impacted by affairs or scandals to which the party was linked. Nevertheless, it appears that the combination of electoral decline with substantial membership decline was also sufficient in Belgium to lead to a reshaping of the dominant coalitions in several mainstream parties. Indeed, such questioning of a party's action, whether in government or not, can strongly undermine the credibility of party elites who see two primary sources of their legitimacy weakened even when they are not directly implicated in political scandals.

### **Causal pathways leading to organizational reforms**

Finally, the third QCA provided four explanatory pathways that led Belgian mainstream parties to implement organizational (democratic) reforms.

#### **[INSERT TABLE 8 HERE – QCA organizational reforms]**

Similar for personnel reforms, results show that electoral defeat is key to understand the implementation of democratic reforms in Belgium by the mainstream parties. Whether these were in a stable context for the organization or during a highly destabilising period for the organization, electoral defeat appears in three of the four causal combinations. However, this condition is not sufficient in itself in order to fully account for these reforms. What is also noteworthy is the absence of the scandal and change of leadership conditions in the explanations accounting for organizational reforms. This suggests that parties see a change of leader as the best strategy when image-damaging political issues arise in a context of personal reform since this condition is only found in the second QCA. It also shows that initiating democratic organizational reforms requires a sufficient bedrock of legitimacy that a newly elected party leader certainly does not have

at the beginning of his or her mandate. The presence of the condition 'no change of leader' in 3 of the 4 causal paths seems to confirm this hypothesis

**~LEADER\*DEFEAT\*~SCANDAL + ~LEADER\*DEFEAT\*~MEMBERS.** Concerning the second and third combinations, results depict a willingness on the part of the established dominant coalition to rebrand the party's identity while (re)mobilising the members and the voters. One way of doing that were for them to demonstrate the organization's openness to the latter, not to clean up the brand of a political affair or to make it attractive again to defecting members, but rather as a reaction to a loss of political legitimacy following an electoral defeat.

**GOVOPP\*DEFEAT\*MEMBERS.** The fourth combination, on the other hand, shows the implementation of reforms that looks more like *distress innovations* in Knight's (1967) terms than a controlled response to a more or less pronounced electoral decline. Interestingly, these innovations proposed by the Christian Democrat parties in the late 1990s coincide with a change in the political centre of gravity in the Belgian landscape. The liberals, boosted among other things by a unprecedented democratisation of their organization (Legein, 2021), finally managed to form on their own initiative a new government without the Christian Democrats in 1999. Faced with a worrying cocktail made up of conditions commonly described in the literature as constituting individually major shocks for these organization, these old mass parties therefore saw the experiments carried out by the liberals as being potential tools for softening the instability resulting from it.

**GOVOPP\*~LEADER.** The organizational reforms implemented by the liberal parties at the beginning of the 1990s were more a matter of internal management or a major organizational project carried by well-defined party elites than *distress innovations* (Knight, 1967) associated with the violent return of these two parties to the opposition. The first pathway highlights the role the

dominant coalition can play when its leader remains in office despite a major change in the party's political status. The key to interpret these results is the fact that the failure of the Liberals to be part of the government was not due to a substantial electoral defeat but to political alliances. In the case of the MR, the opening of the election to all members as well as the creation of a bicephalous presidency allowing two candidates to be co-elected can be seen as a solution to preserve the stability of the dominant coalition at the head of the party in front of the rivalries between its two leading figures (Delwit, 2021). The role of Guy Verhofstadt in the radical transformation of his party throughout the 1990s was also decisive. It was following a second legislature spent in opposition that he had the opportunity to launch his organizational reform project made possible by the governmental status of the party, which was no longer involved in the day-to-day running of governmental affairs. By doing this, he explicitly wanted to “bridge the gap between citizens and state” (Verhofstadt, 1992).

## **Conclusion**

The resilience of mainstream political parties has been extensively studied in the political literature. Despite that political parties are seen as conservative organizations who are reluctant to change, the literature stresses the ability of parties to reform. Parties are only prepared to reform when their survival, or the pursuit of their (primary) goals, is in question. Consequently, the literature has already identified a range of individual conditions that are considered influential for parties to adapt. However, we argue in this article that the literature needs to broaden its approach by moving in two complementary directions. First, we argue that reforms can no longer be explained only by considering conditions whose effects are studied separately. Party reforms are always the result of a multiple convergence of causal conditions that only acquire explanatory power in combination with each other. Secondly, we show that party reforms can relate to multiple components of the parties' political product. In doing so, we conclude that it is not possible to commonly explain

reforms of different nature without stressing that only a diversity of (combinations of) causes allows to do so.

This article focuses on the programmatic, personnel and (democratic) organizational reforms implemented by the six Belgian mainstream parties: PS, VOORUIT, MR, OpenVLD, cdH and CD&V between 1987 and 2010. We argued that these three types of party reforms should be investigated in an integrated and comparative manner as they form reforms on the three components of the indivisible political product offered to the public opinion. Hence, we conclude that an integrated approach, both in their causes as in their different types, of party reforms are needed to fully account for their explanation.

Three main findings resulting from Qualitative Comparative Analyses illustrate the value of adopting this new approach. First, results show that 11 out of the 12 causal pathways identified consists of conjunctural causations. It therefore confirms the underlying assumptions on which our approach was built: party reforms are characterized by equifinality since each type of reform are always explained by a minimum of four different causal pathways. Second, results show that none of the causal combinations identified was able to explain more than one type of reform. This illustrates that the three components of the political product, although forming a whole, are linked to very distinct realities. Programmatic reforms were implemented as adjustment variables to external factors on behalf of incumbent leaders or linked to political affinities infused into the party by new ones, or concrete party responses to electoral and/or political imperatives. Most of the personnel reforms were linked to statutory requirements, departures for executive responsibilities or other factors beyond political life (i.e. death, illness, etc.). But these reforms were also implemented when the dominant coalition was destabilised by a change in governmental status combined with political affairs or when the legitimacy of the incumbent leader was challenged by electoral defeats sometimes combined with



a substantial decline in membership. For their part, the democratic organizational reforms were implemented following three patterns. On the one hand, the Christian democrats carried out what can be called *distress innovations* in the face of a particularly worrying political and electoral context. On the other hand, some party leaders implemented this type of reform in order to remobilise members and voters by demonstrating the openness of the organization following an electoral defeat. Finally, liberals' reforms were either a tool to neutralise possible factional tensions that would have been highly damaging for the party, or the manifestation of an exceptional modernisation of a party willing to distinguish itself from its competitors once they were sent back in opposition. Third, this study also shows that the importance given to certain conditions in the literature needs to be clarified depending on the nature of the reform. It appears, for example, that electoral defeats do not play a major role in the solutions that can explain programmatic reforms in Belgium during the period studied, despite what can be read in the literature. In the same vein, if one could expect that political affairs would play a role in personal reforms based on the reasoning that 'each scandal has its face', this is not the case either. Finally, it could be assumed that a substantial membership decline would inevitably prompt parties to implement democratic reforms. However, this condition plays only a marginal role compared to other conditions such as parties' governmental status for example.

While the ambition of this article is to contribute to moving the literature on party reform in the right direction, it is useful to define its limits. First, this study focuses only on mainstream parties, whose decline has long been documented. Rihoux (1999), for example, has already been able to demonstrate that the causal mechanisms at work when younger, less institutionalised and policy-maximizers parties are involved may be different. Secondly, Belgium presents a typical case of a consociational political regime where all parties studied without exception are accustomed to the exercise of power, where the acceptance of intra-party elitism is widely accepted and where party affiliation has long been a societal fact before being a mark of political activism (van Haute & Pilet,

2006). In doing so, the meaning of conditions such as change of governmental status may take on different realities applied to other political systems. We therefore encourage future research to apply this new approach to different institutional contexts in order to refine the knowledge of the different (combinations of) conditions that can lead political parties to reform.

## Footnotes

1. Parties who co-govern based on a government agreement are for example expected to at least tacitly 'buy' parts of their partner's political product, making them an additional audience.
2. For La Palombara and Weiner (1966), a political party can only be defined as such when its organization survives its leader. Stimson and colleagues (1995) argue that parties operate a dynamic representation as they adapt their public policy packages to public opinion.
3. This ratio was decided on the basis of informal discussions with Belgian party officials. In Belgium, parties experience a 'natural' non-renewal rate of 5% of total membership each year. A decline of 5% reported in the data therefore actually expresses a decline of 10% in total, which can be considered a worrying trend by officials over a 5-year period.
4. fsqca; Ragin and Davey, 2016

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1

[INSERT TABLE 9 HERE – Truth Table programmatic reforms]

## Appendix 2

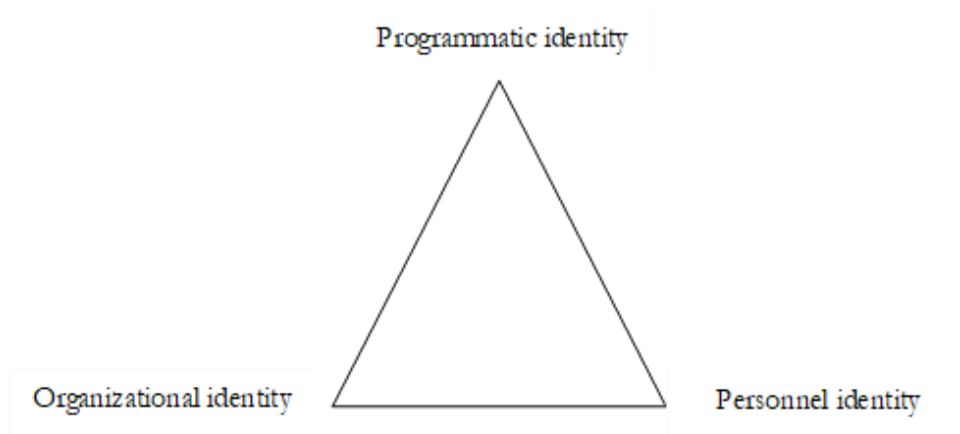
[INSERT TABLE 10 HERE – Truth Table personnel reforms]

### Appendix 3

[INSERT TABLE 11 HERE – truth table organizational reforms]

## Figures and tables

Figure 1 Parties' Political Product



**Table 1 Belgian mainstream parties**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Party name</b>	<b>Founding year</b>	<b>Party family</b>
<b>PS</b>	Parti socialiste // Socialist Party (French-speaking)	1885	Social democrats
<b>Vooruit</b>	Vooruit // Forward (Dutch-speaking)	1885	Social democrats
<b>MR</b>	Mouvement réformateur // Reformist Movement (French-speaking)	1846	Liberals
<b>OpenVLD</b>	Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten // Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	1846	Liberals
<b>cdH</b>	Centre démocrate humaniste // Humanist Democratic Centre (French-speaking)	1884	Christian Democrats
<b>CD&amp;V</b>	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams// Christian – Democratic and Flemish	1884	Christian Democrats

**Table 2 party characteristics**  
TO BE DONE

**Table 3 Definition and coding of the causal conditions**

Condition	Label	Details*	Coding	Calibration
Electoral defeat	DEFEAT	Did the party suffer an electoral defeat during the last federal and/or regional elections? Defeat is assessed based on the party's ranking in terms of the number of seats obtained in the federal and regional parliaments and/or electoral support in terms of vote share at the federal and/or regional level.	0 = The party did not lose any rank or % during the previous legislative or regional elections 1 = The party lost 1 rank (or more) during the previous legislative and/or regional elections AND/OR The party lost 2% or more of the vote share during the previous legislative and/or regional elections	Dummy
Gov. status	GOVOPP	Was the party sitting in opposition at the federal level at the end of the legislature? If so, was this due to a change in its governmental status compared to the previous legislature?	0 = No 1 = In opposition, after being in opposition during the previous legislative term 2 = In opposition, after being in government during the previous legislative term	(0 ; 0.9 ; 2)
Membership decline	MEMBERS	What percentage of members has the party lost over the last 5 years on the year of the reform? In case of no reform: What percentage of members has the party lost over the legislature?	[Percentage]	(0 ; 0.05 ; 0.2)
Change of party leader	LEADER	Has the party leader changed during the legislature (or is the current leader serving his or her first term)? If so, is this the first time this individual has held this position in the party?	0 = no leader change 1 = leader change, but s/he already held this position before 2 = leader change and s/he never held this position before	(0 ; 0.9 ; 2)
Scandal	SCANDAL		0 = No such event occurred	(0 ; 0.5; 3)



		Did a political scandal or a large-scaled political crisis occur during the legislature?	1 = Political crisis occurred but the party was not in government 2 = Party personnel is directly involved in a political scandal 3 = The whole party organization is directly involved in a political scandal AND/OR the party was in government when a large-scaled political crisis occurred.	
Overriding reasons	TERMEND	Did the incumbent party leader have to step down for overriding reasons? Those are: practical factors related to party statutes (e.g statutory end of the mandate), a decision to take on ministerial responsibilities or circumstances unrelated to political life (e.g illness, personal reasons, death).	0 = No 1 = Yes	Dummy

Note 1: Conditions are coded according to the situation at the time of the reform when a party has implemented a party reform during the legislative term.

Note 2: Anchor points are presented in the brackets. They are used to assign a value between 0 and 1 to observations based on their initial coding. It will define their degree of membership to the related set.

**Table 4 Definition and coding of the outcome**

Component of the political product	Reform as outcome	Details	Coding	Calibration
Programmatic identity	Substantive change in socio-economic position	Has the party changed its socio-economic position substantively compared to the previous national elections? Substantive change is measured as a change of category on the socio-economic cleavage (i.e. extreme-left, center-left, center, center-right, extreme right).	A number X between 0 and 5, whereby X is the number of categories changed over one electoral cycle.	(0 ; 0,5 ; 2)
Personnel identity	Change of leader	Has the party leader changed during the legislature?	0 = No 1 = Yes	Dummy
Organizational identity	Democratic reform	Has the party implemented leadership- and/or candidate selection democratisation processes?	0 = No 1 = Yes	Dummy

**Table 5 Analyses of necessary conditions for programmatic-, personnel- and organizational reforms**

	Programmatic reforms		Personnel reforms		Democratic reforms	
	Consist.	Cov.	Consist-	Cov.	Consist.	Cov.
DEFEAT	0.597	0.462	<i>0.760</i>	<i>0.760</i>	0.727	0.571
~DEFEAT	0.403	0.708	0.240	0.545	0.273	0.300
GOVOPP	0.421	0.784	0.339	0.816	0.357	0.523
~GOVOPP	0.699	0.528	0.661	0.645	0.643	0.429
MEMBERS	0.680	0.716	0.547	0.728	0.716	0.572
~MEMBERS	0.509	0.558	0.453	0.658	0.283	0.305
LEADER	0.713	0.561	---	---	0.459	0.354
~LEADER	0.396	0.668	---	---	0.541	0.611
SCANDAL	0.438	0.529	0.402	0.628	0.437	0.499
~SCANDAL	0.677	0.654	0.598	0.747	0.563	0.431
TERMEND	---	---	0.400	1.000	---	---
~TERMEND	---	---	0.600	0.577	---	---

**Table 6 Causal pathways to programmatic reforms (parsimonious solution)**

	~DEFEAT* LEADER	GOVOPP* MEMBERS	DEFEAT * ~LEADER *MEMBERS	~SCANDAL* ~LEADER—
<b>Raw coverage</b>	0.25	0.28	0.13	0.31
<b>Unique Coverage</b>	0.15	0.10	0.07	0.15
<b>Consistency</b>	0.92	0.92	0.93	0.87
<b>Covered cases</b>	MR_87-91 VLD_87-91 Vooruit_87-91 MR_95-99 MR_99-03 VLD_95-99	cdH_99-03 CD&V_99-03 VLD_91-95 VLD_95-99 VLD_87-91	MR_07-10 PS_95-99	cdH_87-91 cdH_91-95 cdH_03-07 PS_87-91 VLD_91-95
<b>Solution consistency</b>	0.87			
<b>Solution coverage</b>	0.67			
<b>Uncovered cases</b>	Vooruit_99-03 Vooruit_95-99 CD&V_87-91 CD&V_95-99 CD&V_03-07 VLD_03-07 PS_91-95 CdH_95-99 CdH_03-07 CdH_07-10			

**Table 7 Causal pathways to personnel reforms (parsimonious solution)**

	<b>TERMEND</b>	<b>SCANDAL *GOVOPP</b>	<b>~SCANDAL *DEFEAT *~GOVOPP</b>	<b>~SCANDAL *DEFEAT *MEMBERS</b>
<b>Raw coverage</b>	0.4	0.14	0.32	0.34
<b>Unique Coverage</b>	0.26	0.03	0.08	0.06
<b>Consistency</b>	1	0.86	0.94	0.96
<b>Covered cases</b>	CD&V_1991-1995 CD&V_2003-2007 cdH_1995-1999 MR_1987-1991 MR_1995-1999 Vooruit_1987- 1991 Vooruit_1995- 1999 Vooruit_2003-2007 VLD_1987-1991 VLD_1995-1999	MR_1995-1999* Vooruit_2007-2010** VLD_1995-1999* CD&V1999_2003	MR_2003-2007 PS_1999-2003 Vooruit_1999-2003 Vooruit_2003-2007 VLD_2003-2007 CD&V_1987-1991 VLD_1999-2003	MR_2003-2007 CD&V_2003-2007 cdH_1999-2003 PS_1999-2003 Vooruit_1999-2003 VLD_2003-2007 MR_1991-1995 Vooruit_2007-2010
<b>Solution consistency</b>	0.96			
<b>Solution coverage</b>	0.77			
<b>Uncovered cases</b>	CD&V_1995-1999 CD&V_2007-2010 MR_1999_2003 PS_1991-1995 Vooruit_1991-1995 VLD_2007-2010			

\* The changes of leader in the MR and the VLD in 1995 are due to arguments linked to the TERMEND condition.

\*\* Regarding the reform implemented by the Vooruit in 2007, we touch here on one of the limits of QCA. As in-depth study of the case shows that the incumbent president resigned in the aftermath of the legislative elections, which were a substantial defeat for the party, after having taken the deliberate decision to sit in opposition in the next legislature. The fourth combination therefore seems to be the most relevant in order to explain this reform.

**Table 8 Causal pathways to organizational reforms (parsimonious solutions)**

	<b>~LEADER *DEFEAT *~SCANDAL</b>	<b>~LEADER *DEFEAT *~MEMBERS</b>	<b>GOVOPP *DEFEAT *MEMBERS</b>	<b>GOVOPP * ~LEADER</b>
<b>Raw</b>	0.13	0.14	0.19	0.19
<b>coverage</b>				
<b>Unique</b>	0.06	0.08	0.15	0.16
<b>Coverage</b>				
<b>Consistency</b>	0.82	0.80	0.79	0.71
<b>Covered cases</b>	Vooruit_1999-2003	CD&V_1991-1995	cdH_1999-2003 CD&V_1999-2003	MR_1987-1991 VLD_1991-1995
<b>Solution consistency</b>	0.82			
<b>Solution coverage</b>	0.51			
<b>Uncovered cases</b>	CD&V1995-1999 cdH_1987-1991 PS_1995-1999 PS_1999-2003 Vooruit1995-1999			

**A.1 Table 9 Truth Table Programmatic reforms**

DEFEAT	LEADER	GOVOPP	SCANDAL	MEMBERS	N	Programmatic reform	Cases	raw c ons
0	1	1	1	0	1	1	MR_95-99	1
0	0	1	0	1	1	1	VLD_91-95	1
0	1	1	0	1	1	1	VLD_87-91	1
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	VLD_95-99	1
1	0	1	0	0	1	1	cdH_03-07	1
0	1	0	0	1	1	1	Vooruit_87-91	1
0	1	0	1	1	1	1	MR_99-03	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	CD&V_99-03	0,94
1	0	0	1	1	2	1	MR_07-10; PS_95-99	0,93
0	0	0	0	1	2	1	cdH_87-91; PS_87-91	0,92
0	1	1	0	0	1	1	MR_87-91	0,91
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	cdH_91-95	0,91
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	cdH_99-03	0,90
1	1	1	1	0	1	0	Vooruit_07-10	0,71
1	1	0	1	1	3	0	CD&V_91-95; CD&V_07-10; cdH_95-99	0,64
1	1	1	0	0	2	0	CD&V_03-07; MR_91-95	0,63
1	1	0	0	1	5	0	CD&V_87-91; MR_03-07; PS_99-03; VLD_03-07; Vooruit_99-03	0,59
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	cdH_07-10	0,59
1	1	0	1	0	5	0	CD&V_95-99; PS_91-95; VLD_07-10; Vooruit_91-95; Vooruit_95-99	0,59
1	1	0	0	0	2	0	VLD_99-03; Vooruit_03-07	0,48
1	0	0	1	0	2	0	PS_03-07; PS_07-10	0,45
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	empty	
0	1	0	1	0	0	0	empty	

0	0	1	1	0	0	0	empty	
1	0	1	1	0	0	0	empty	
1	0	0	0	1	0	0	empty	
1	0	1	0	1	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	1	1	0	0	empty	
1	0	1	1	1	0	0	empty	



**A.2 Table 10 Truth Table Personnel reforms**

<b>DEFEAT</b>	<b>TERMEND</b>	<b>GOVOPP</b>	<b>SCANDAL</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Pers. Reforms</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>raw cons</b>
0	1	1	0	0	2	1	MR_87-91; OpenVLD_87-91	1
0	1	1	1	0	2	1	MR_95-99; OpenVLD_95-99	1
1	1	0	1	1	2	1	cdH_95-99; Vooruit_95-99	1
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	CD&V_91-95	1
0	1	0	0	1	1	1	Vooruit_87-91	1
1	1	0	0	1	1	1	Vooruit_03-07	1
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	CD&V_03-07	1
1	0	0	0	1	4	1	MR_03-07; PS_99-03; Vooruit_99-03; OpenVLD_03-07	0.94
1	0	1	0	1	2	1	cdH_99-03; MR_91-95	0.90
1	0	0	0	0	2	1	CD&V_87-91; OpenVLD_99-03	0.84
1	0	1	1	0	1	1	CD&V_99-03	0.84
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	Vooruit_07-10	0.81
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	MR_99-03	0.56
1	0	0	1	1	7	0	CD&V_95-99; CD&V_07-10; MR_07-10; PS_91-95; PS_95-99; Vooruit_91-95; OpenVLD_07-10	0.55
1	0	1	0	0	1	0	cdH_03-07	0.49
1	0	0	1	0	2	0	PS_03-07; PS_07-10	0.41
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	cdH_91-95	0.22
0	0	1	0	0	1	0	OpenVLD_91-95	0.05
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	cdH_07-10	0.05
0	0	0	0	1	2	0	cdH_87-91; PS_87-91	0.03
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	empty	
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	empty	

1	1	1	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	1	0	1	0	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	1	0	0	0	empty	
1	1	1	1	0	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	empty	
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	empty	
0	1	0	1	1	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	1	1	0	0	empty	
0	1	1	1	1	0	0	empty	
1	1	1	1	1	0	0	empty	

**A.3 Table 11 Organizational reforms – Truth Table**

DEFEAT	GOVOPP	SCANDAL	LEADER	MEMBERS	N.	Ref	Cases	raw cons
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	CD&V_99-03	0.80
1	0	0	0	1	1	1	Vooruit_99-03	0.79
1	0	1	0	0	1	1	CD&V_91-95	0.76
1	1	0	1	1	1	1	cdH_99-03	0.72
0	1	0	0	1	1	1	OpenVLD_91-95	0.70
0	1	0	0	0	1	1	MR_87-91	0.67
1	0	1	1	1	3	0	CD&V_95-99; cdH_95-99; Vooruit_95-99	0.59
1	0	0	1	1	2	0	CD&V_87-91; PS_99-03	0.55
1	0	1	0	1	2	0	PS_95-99; Vooruit_91-95	0.53
0	0	0	0	1	2	0	cdH_87-91; PS_87-91	0.50
1	0	1	1	0	1	0	PS_91-95	0.38
1	1	0	1	0	1	0	MR_91-95	0.35
1	0	0	1	0	1	0	OpenVLD_99-03	0.20
0	1	0	1	1	1	0	OpenVLD_87-91	0.13
0	0	1	1	1	1	0	MR_99-03	0.12
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	cdH_91-95	0.12
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	Vooruit_87-91	0.09
0	1	1	1	0	2	0	MR_95-99; OpenVLD_95-99	0.08
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	empty	
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	1	1	0	0	0	0	empty	
1	1	1	0	0	0	0	empty	
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	empty	
0	1	0	1	0	0	0	empty	

0	0	1	1	0	0	0	empty	
1	1	1	1	0	0	0	empty	
1	1	0	0	1	0	0	empty	
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	empty	
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	empty	
1	1	1	0	1	0	0	empty	
0	1	1	1	1	0	0	empty	