

Professionalization of Green parties?

Analyzing and explaining changes in the external political approach of the Dutch political party *GroenLinks*

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Abstract

There is a relatively small body of research regarding the ideological and organizational changes of Green parties. What has been lacking so far is an analysis of the way Green parties present themselves to the outside world, which is especially interesting because it can be expected to strongly influence the image of these parties. The project shows that the Dutch Green party 'GroenLinks' has become more professional regarding their 'external political approach' – regarding ideological, organizational as well as strategic presentation – during their 20 years of existence. This research project challenges the core idea of the so-called 'threshold-approach', that major organizational changes appear when a party is getting into government. What turns out to be at least as interesting is the 'anticipatory' adaptations parties go through once they have formulated government participation as an important party goal. Until now, scholars have felt that Green parties are transforming, but they have not been able to point at the core of the changes that have taken place. Organizational and ideological changes have been investigated separately, whereas in the case of Green parties organization and ideology are closely interrelated. In this thesis it is argued that the external political approach of GroenLinks, which used to be a typical New Left Green party but that lacks governmental experience, has become more professional, due to initiatives of various within-party actors who often responded to developments outside the party. The fact that government participation became the major party goal of GroenLinks strengthened and accelerated this process. As a result, GroenLinks has lost some of its uniqueness as a New Left Green Party. The study confirms the expectation that that Green parties are adopting a more 'professional' external political approach: it is the way GroenLinks presents itself that has undergone quite strong transformations.

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Literature

1. Introduction

Politics is much more than the actual debates and decision-making within the parliaments and governments of Western European countries. It is a 24/7-business, in which saying a seemingly innocent sentence can be political suicide and where journalists and spin doctors seem to be in charge. Since a couple of decades Green parties are part of many Western European party systems. Traditionally, Green parties are known for practicing grass-roots politics, emphasizing party democracy and protesting against mainstream politics. They have introduced 'new' themes, such as the (concern with the) environment, to the political playing field as well.

Scholars argue that although Green parties have changed over time, they are still true to their identity. Research on the development of Green parties, often executed in the form of case studies, shows interesting developments at the national level regarding organization, programme and strategy. Although so far no general trend has been discerned, research focusing at the organizational changes within Green parties has suggested that we might speak of 'a professionalization of Green politics' (Lucardie & Rihoux, 2008: 11; Burchell, 2002: 124; Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 266). Regarding party organization, scholars have also tried to analyze how well Green parties match political party ideal-types. A main question posed by Frankland, Lucardie and Rihoux (2008) has been whether Green parties are still the 'amateur-activist parties they originally were, or whether they have transformed into 'electoral-professional' parties. Focusing on the Netherlands, Lucardie and Voerman (2008) argue that GroenLinks might be considered a hybrid between the amateur-activist and the professional-electoral party type. Although this new label is not further elaborated upon, it points to a specific expectation regarding the Dutch Greens that needs more scrutiny. This suggests that Green parties may have preserved 'activist' elements, yet have transformed from 'amateurs' into 'professionals'. This implies it would not so much be the party organization or ideology per se that changed, but something in the way these Green parties approach politics. This aspect of Green parties, that can be called their 'external political approach', is important because it directly influences what voters see and know about the party.

By now Green parties have proved to be permanent members of various European national party systems. As many of these parties are moving closer to, or even in power, it would be very interesting to find out more about this development of the Greens from 'new' to 'established' parties. In what respects have Green parties changed in the course of time? What are the reasons behind these developments? As the characterization of GroenLinks as 'professional-activist' was only tentative, and regarding the fact that we are now almost a decade further in time, it is interesting to analyze whether this transformation has indeed taken place, and what its core elements are. The question is

thus if Green parties have moved away from their original position, and if so, in what way. The main hypothesis is that Green parties are converging towards a 'professional-activist external political approach'. This means we expect, as earlier research on organizational transformations suggested, that by becoming more professional Green parties have not lost their true identity. They are still recognizable and different, albeit in a more modernized way.

Secondly, the focus shifts to reasons behind the changing external political approach of Green parties. Party goals are considered to be the foundation of a party's external political approach. In order to understand any changes in the way Green parties approach politics, the focus will thus be on the primary goals the party is striving for. Following the integrated model of Harmel and Janda (1994), four types of party goals are considered to be relevant in the case of Green parties. Over time the party goal of government participation is expected to have become relevant for Green parties, as they are now permanent members of many party systems. Earlier on the actual passing of a 'threshold' (Pedersen, 1982), like entering parliament or government, was considered a major cause of organizational change. However, regarding changes in external political approach, aiming at the goal of passing the threshold of government is expected to be a main cause of anticipatory adaptations. This means that both parties with and without governmental experience may have changed their external political approach in similar ways. The multilayered approach adopted here emphasizes the behaviour of within-party actors as the determinants of party change. From this perspective, explanations for – differences in – the responses of parties to contextual pressures can be found by looking carefully inside the parties themselves. Changes in leadership and in dominant factions are considered to be relevant within-party independent variables, complemented by the incorporation of structural changes as external stimuli, whose relevance is dependent of their relevance for the primary goals of the party.

In this research project the main focus will be on analyzing and explaining the changes within the Dutch political party '*GroenLinks*', as this is a Green party without governmental experience that can be expected to have changed from an amateur to a professional external political approach. As a typical case of what Kaelberer (1993: 230) called New Left Green Parties, *GroenLinks* is an interesting object of research. Its development as a party is expected to be representative for the development of Green parties in general, as it is a typical case. The absence of governmental experience enables us to test the hypothesis regarding anticipatory adaptation while aiming at the goal of government participation.

First of all, the approach adopted will be explained further (Chapter 2). Then, the research field as it is now will be introduced by considering what Green parties are (Chapter 3). Subsequently, we will look at what is known so far about Green party changes (Chapter 4) and compare that to the changes that may be expected regarding *GroenLinks* (Chapter 5). Then, both the question how

GroenLinks has changed (Chapter 6) and why these changes have occurred (Chapter 7) will be taken into account. As the first part of the core project, the external political approach of GroenLinks will be analyzed by comparing on the one hand 'official party documents' – party manifestos and election programmes – and 'informal documents' – the other ways in which the party is exposed during election campaigns; on campaign flyers, posters, and in brochures. This will lead to an answer to the first research question: to what extent has the external political approach of GroenLinks changed during the twenty years of their existence? As the second part of the core project, the causes of the observed changes will be investigated. By interviewing (former) Dutch Green politicians and party strategists explanations for the changes observed will be explored in order to test the relevance of the multilayered approach. Possible explanations for the differences and similarities in party approach found will be compared. In the concluding chapter, it will be argued whether it is appropriate to label the external political approach of GroenLinks 'professional-activist' (Chapter 8). Also the relevance of the conclusions for our knowledge of Green parties in general will be discussed. To conclude, several recommendations for further research will be put forward, as this is only a first attempt to analyze changes in the Green party's external political approach.

2. Adopting an approach to party development

In order to understand the changes within Green parties, we should first take a broader look at party change in general. Various approaches to party development can be adopted. Whereas it is clear that the dependent variable is always in some way related to the behaviour and development of one or multiple political parties, this can be operationalized and measured in various ways. At least as crucial, however, is the type of approach adopted by the researcher: this determines the kind and range of factors that are taken into account as possible explanatory factors.

Roughly, three types of approaches to the study of party development can be distinguished. First, one can focus on structural explanations, which means that broad sociological, economic, cultural and political developments in societies are seen as the driving forces behind change and transformations at the level of parties. Second, one can focus on actor-centered explanations, which means that the primary focus is on developments within parties leading to decisions regarding the direction of the party. Third, an approach combining both types of factors can be adopted, thus taking variables from different levels into account. Although this last option is the more difficult one, integrating different types of explanations in this way allows for a more comprehensive research

design. We adopt a multilayered approach, thereby emphasizing the within-party actors as the determinants of party change.

2.1 Inglehart: structural explanation

Regarding party change and development from the 1970s on, a widely accepted theory is developed by Ronald Inglehart (1977). He offers a structural explanation, arguing that the changing nature of political participation and competition that emerged during that period was the result of a 'culture shift' among western populations. His key argument is that a postmaterialist value change has occurred, resulting from social change in western democracies, and he demonstrates the relationship between this value shift and the emergence of new social and political movements. His approach of party politics is a typical example of focusing mainly at broad socio-economic and cultural factors in order to explain developments. The value of this approach lies in the fact that Inglehart points to important rise of postmaterialist values and its influence on the functioning of political systems and parties.

2.2 New literature: multi-layered theoretical approach

Theoretically Inglehart's explanation has been criticized exactly because of its exclusive focus on socio-economic and cultural factors shaping parties' environments (Berman, 1997: 102). Scholars argue that it is inappropriate to fully ignore the role played by the political actors themselves: the parties. As a result, a new body of literature has emerged that treats parties not only as dependent but also as independent variables and thus as active shapers of their own fates. Structural factors are, despite the fact that it is a mainly an actor-centered approach, not fully ignored. They are regarded as general trends creating constraints and opportunities, not determining yet indirectly influencing the development of parties. It is acknowledged that the value shift towards postmaterialism poses challenges to parties. Important scholars part of this new school of thought are Herbert Kitschelt, Kay Lawson, Robert Harmel and Kenneth Janda, arguing that it is the interaction between individual parties and structural and environmental variables that matters instead of either system- or unit-level explanations. A crucial idea behind this approach is to be aware of the fact that there may be no direct link between the developments in the external environment and a political actors' perception of it (Berman, 1997: 105). Parties may behave differently under similar circumstances, both because other choices can be made but also because the way in which they experience contextual developments may vary.

The value of this approach to party development and change lies in the way in which party-specific and contextual factors are combined: it is thus a multi-layered theoretical approach. Empirically, this means that cross-national theories of political development must be built upon careful

country analyses (Berman, 1997: 117). Focusing on political parties themselves is necessary to understand how broad processes of socio-economic and cultural change are translated into political outcomes. Adopting this approach thus means that explanations for – differences in – the responses of parties to contextual pressures can be found by looking carefully inside the parties themselves.

2.3 Within-party variables influencing party survival

Kitschelt (1994) and Lawson (1994) both focused on explaining developments from the 1970s on, mainly the success and failure of (left-wing) parties in dealing with the post-materialist value change. Variables considered to be relevant from their actor-centered perspective are the parties' institutional structures, ideological traditions and leadership (Kitschelt, 1994; Lawson, 1994). In general, they conclude a party needs a certain flexibility in its institutional structures in order to quickly recognize new challenges and respond efficiently to them. In order to be successful parties must be able to absorb new demands and recognize the need to devise new strategies when old ones are no longer satisfactory (Berman, 1997: 111). Lawson (1994) also examined the strategic manoeuvrability of parties, how the internal party structures that shape responses to environmental challenges can themselves be changed.

Consciously reshaping institutional frameworks and decision-making structures is considered to be a powerful tool for parties in their struggle to remain politically competitive. Kitschelt (1994: 256) emphasized the importance of the ideational aspect, arguing that ideas are important because past ideological debates influence the type of policies parties find acceptable and appropriate. Lawson also points to the role of leadership in affecting party behaviour, an important though often overlooked subject (Berman, 1997: 13). The ability of party leaders to affect change however depends on a lot of things like the party's environment and the nature of the party's organizational structure. Whereas this newly developed approach has initially been utilized to explain the development of traditional 'left', social-democratic parties, it can be applied to the development of Green parties as well.

2.4 Choosing variables and adding another factor: party goals

It is of utmost importance that the same variables are not used as independent and as dependent variables at the same time. For Kitschelt and Lawson (1994) the dependent variable is the success and failure of parties to survive. In order to explain these developments, institutional structures, ideological traditions and leadership are taken into account as independent variables, possibly influenced by more structural factors. Harmel and Janda (1994: 266) developed their theory to explain why parties change. This is an important nuance, because it allows them to operationalize this dependent variable as the parties' political strategies, organizational characteristics and ideology. As we

are interested in the ways specific (types of) parties have changed over time, these are the exact variables that we want to measure. This means those party aspects can not be used as explanatory variables at the same time.

Harmel and Janda (1994) focus on other variables in order to explain why changes occur. They argue for an integrated theory taking another important aspect into account: party goals. Change is regarded as a discontinuous outcome of specific party decisions linked to party goals. The theory argues that major change is most likely to occur in parties when they perceive that their primary goal is no longer being achieved, generally resulting from the intervention of an exogenous event. Indeed, whether you focus on changes in organization, ideology or strategy, party goals are always heavily influencing the decisions that lead to party change. Being roughly comparable with the distinction between office-seeking, policy-seeking and vote-seeking models of party behaviour as developed by Müller and Strøm (1999: 5), Harmel and Janda emphasize that party goals are of tremendous importance for explaining party behaviour. What makes the approach as developed by Harmel and Janda unique is the way in which the theory about party goals and subsequent party behaviour is integrated in a more comprehensive theory of party change. The independent variables they focus upon are leadership change, change of dominant faction within the party and external stimuli for change. Their theory provides for differing impacts of different external stimuli, based on the fit between the stimulus and the party's primary goal (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 262). Thus, whether and how an external stimulus influences change within parties depends on its relation with the most important goals the party is aiming at. As such, the theory explains not only the occurrence of party change but also its magnitude and type. Adopting an actor-centered approach, they argue that independent of external shocks changes in the dominant coalition or party leadership may themselves result in fundamental change, but is likely to be more limited than when an external shock causes a significant reassessment of the party's effectiveness.

Changes in leadership and the dominant faction are considered as the relevant within-party independent variables, complemented by the incorporation of structural changes as external stimuli, whose relevance is dependent of their relevance for the primary goals of the party. Possible primary goals for political parties are (1) vote maximization; (2) office maximization; (3) policy advocacy; and (4) intraparty democracy maximization (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 269). For vote maximizers, important external shocks are expected to be electoral successes or failures. For office maximizers the shocks most dramatically shaking up the party are related to participation in government. For policy advocates, shocks more directly related to the party's policy positions such as the fall of the Berlin Wall for communists are important. For intraparty democracy maximizers, societal or party system changes fundamentally altering the makeup of the party's membership are external shocks of main importance.

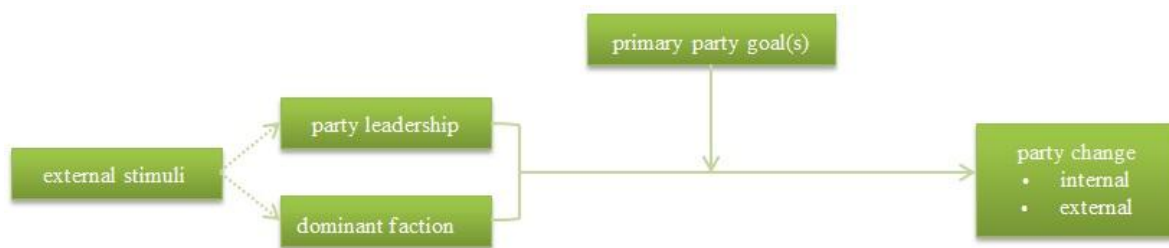


Figure 1: explanatory model, based on Harmel and Janda (1994)

2.5 Adopting Harmel and Janda's multilayered approach

Whereas scholars like Kitschelt, Lawson and Berman focused on parties' institutional structures, ideological traditions and leadership as independent variables explaining success and failure, Harmel and Janda thus consider political strategies, organizational characteristics and ideology to be the dimensions of party change that should be explained. Although these scholars all focus on leadership as an important independent variable, there is thus disagreement about whether organizational and institutional aspects are 'explanans' or 'explanandum'. As our goal is to explain party change – instead of a party's success and failure – it is more appropriate to adopt the explanatory model of Harmel and Janda. The others do not treat pure party change as the dependent variable, and they are not using party goals. However, in order to explain organizational, ideological and strategic changes, party goals are a fundamental aspect that should be focused upon.

What should be emphasized is that the within-party actors are the ones taking the decisions that result in party change. They are thereby often responding to external stimuli – as they experienced and interpreted them – and their decisions are heavily influenced by the primary party goals they are pursuing. As Berman (1997) also argued, how parties act in response to external stimuli depends heavily on their perception of these changes (Mair, 2004: 9). What distinguishes our approach from Harmel and Janda's is that we do not consider external stimuli as independent variables directly resulting in party change (see Figure 1). As a result we are taking it a step further by primary looking internally in the party, although decisions may sometimes be taken in response to external stimuli (in Figure 1 this potential influence is reflected by the dotted lines). Parties are the active shapers of their own faith, as they consciously respond to changes in electoral markets (Mair, 2004). Structural pressures from the environment in which Green parties operate are then taken into account – but not as immediate causes.

The particular characteristics of the various Green parties are expected to be key in understanding the way these parties have changed over time, because they determine the ways in which parties respond to structural pressures. This does not mean parties will never behave in similar ways in comparable situations. What it does mean is that explanations for the development of parties should

mainly be searched for within the parties under consideration. Parties can behave differently in comparable circumstances, and parties in different circumstances can behave in similar ways, depending on pressures from within the party. A party's sensitivity to changing environmental imperatives and its ability to formulate responses to them thus depends on the party's internal configuration. We do adopt Harmel and Janda's (1994: 275) definition of party change as 'any variation, alteration or modification in how parties are organized, what human and material resources they can draw upon, what they stand for and what they do'. The first hypothesis is that changes in leadership, in dominant factions and/or external stimuli may cause changes in a party's organization, ideology and strategy, depending on the primary goals the actors are aiming at. In order to be able to either verify or falsify this hypothesis, two things will have to be investigated: first of all, what party change has occurred – leading to an outcome on the dependent variable – and subsequently what caused these party changes – leading to knowledge about the various independent and intervening variables.

However, several alternative explanations might have explanatory value as well. In order to be sure that no elements will be overlooked, these other potential explanations will now be treated shortly as well. Starting with the role of external stimuli, the hypothesis is that this type of stimulus only indirectly influences party change, as within-party actors are expected to first interpret these developments and then decide whether or not to act in response to them. However, an alternative hypothesis is that external stimuli might directly influence party change, in the sense that no conscious decisions have been made by within-party actors. Regarding the independent variables, the within-party actors, hypotheses are that both the party leadership and the dominant faction will directly influence party change. An alternative explanation is that other party members than the formal party leaders might influence what is happening. The hypothesis regarding the dominant faction presupposes that there are various factions that act separately and have various interests. It might however not be the case that there are such clear and separate factions such as blood groups; an alternative hypothesis is therefore that individuals – possibly informally organized in an ad hoc manner – might influence what is happening. These people might not even necessarily be members of the party; one can also think of external professionals advising the party. Regarding the primary party goal(s), we hypothesize that the influence of the within-party actors is either strengthened or weakened by the main goals the party is aiming at. As a 'goal' is obviously not an actor itself, it should be considered as a factor expected to be influential in the within-party decision-making process leading to party change. Alternatively, however, the main party goal(s) might either be an example or result of party change as well, and thus be a dependent variable instead. The various hypotheses and alternative explanations do not exclude one another; however, the main hypotheses as stated above are considered to be the most plausible.

3. What we know about Green parties

Considering the fact that we want to learn about changes within Green parties, we should first answer the question: 'What are Green parties'? Although many scholars have paid attention to the original characteristics of the Greens, this remains ambiguous. Additional questions to look at whether the Greens are a distinct party family, and what types of aspects constitute the uniqueness of their identity.

3.1 Rise and origins of Green parties: protest

Historically, the political protest of Green parties is essentially based on the lack of responsiveness of established 'catch-all parties' to incorporate fundamental environmental issues in their policy making (Müller-Rommel, 1985: 484). Most Green parties began as networks of citizen-initiative movements, often at the local level, formed around social and environmental issues that were largely neglected by both established government and existing opposition parties (ibid.: 491). During their formative years, Green parties focused primarily upon highlighting this 'Green challenge' to established party politics and attempted to offer the electorate a new form of politics in terms of both ideology and active participation within the party (Burchell, 2002: 163). The Greens were during their first years of existence primarily 'amateur-activist' parties, meaning among other things that they originated in new social movements, had an explicit but partial ideology instead of explicit principles, informal ties with civil society, collective and amateur leadership, and activists as the main locus of power (Rihoux & Frankland, 2008: 266). As such, they were 'movement parties', embracing thin-centered ideologies from different movements and having an ambivalent relationship with the state (Lucardie and Rihoux, 2008: 7). In many cases the creation of the Greens was due largely to frustration because established parties failed to deal with new issues and concerns, rather than a real desire to reshape party politics (Burchell, 2002: 158). As a result, activists came into Green party politics with only a general picture of what was wrong with established political parties, although they had a desire to develop an effective role within their political systems.

3.2 Types of Green parties

Although the Greens have some similarities among nations, it is quite obvious that from the start not all Green parties are alike (Müller-Rommel, 1985: 496). Several attempts have been made to distinguish between types of Green parties. For example, regarding programme and strategy, Müller-Rommel (1985: 491) distinguishes between 'pure Green reformist parties', not rejecting free economic enterprise and selecting genuine ecology issues, and 'alternative Green radical parties' seeking

fundamental changes in social and political institutions and presenting a 'new alternative, social-radical, democratic paradigm'. Making a relatively similar distinction, Kaelberer (1993: 230) points to conservative Green parties as single issue parties on the one hand, and New Left Green parties on the other. There are also scholars, like Mair (2001: 107), that argue over time Green parties have been 'forced' to adopt more diverse issues. Whereas Green parties initially often presented themselves as 'neither left, nor right, but Green', in practice they soon came to be seen as a more radical part of the social-democratic left (ibid.: 106).

3.3 The Green party programme

In general it is justified to state that Green parties had a New Left policy agenda. Whereas most of them shared with socialists a critique of the capitalist system, the Greens advocated (radical) reforms of modern society. The degree of reform orientation varies with political wings of the Greens, most importantly fundamentalists versus realists (Kaelberer, 1993: 242). Essential elements the Green parties, who were strongly related to the 'new politics culture', had to do with organizational structure and electoral as well as programmatic profile (Müller-Rommel & Poguntke, 1989: 21). They saw themselves as presenting an entirely new and radical politics with a new economic and social order as the main goal of the Green agenda (O'Neill, 1997: 5).

Programmatic concerns were equal rights, ecological thinking, solidarity with the Third World, demands for unilateral disarmament, less emphasis on material goods and positioning against uncontrolled economic growth (Müller-Rommel, 2002: 146). Thus, besides their 'Green' environmental concerns, other important issues were women's rights, peace and civil liberties (Kaelberer, 1993: 230). The notion of 'exploitation' was expanded by the Greens from the relations of production to gender relations, relations with nature and relations among individuals within society and in relation to the state – the latter labelled with the term 'libertarianism' (ibid.: 231). Poguntke (1989) adds that the Greens also specifically rejected nuclear power, advocated individualism and self-determination. Kaelberer (1993), incorporating different research programmes on this issue, argues we can say the programmatic identity of Green parties originally consists of interconnected critiques of the dominant patterns of policymaking in social, economic, and international affairs in western Europe.

3.4 Green party organization and style

Poguntke (1989) adds that Green parties also resemble each other in political style, by adopting a non-hierarchical party structure and unorthodox protest behaviour. They also have a distinct electoral profile, consisting of young and highly educated voters, belonging to the new middle class or still students (Müller-Rommel, 2002: 146). Green parties are considered part of the broader type of 'new politics parties' (Poguntke, 1987) and 'left-libertarian parties' (Kitschelt, 1988). Ideal-typically, a

'New Politics-party' is characterized by a New Politics ideology – concerned with themes such as ecology, individualism, participatory or direct democracy, leftism, the Third World and unilateral disarmament – , a participatory party organization, an unconventional political style and membership and electorate profiles dominated by New Politics-groups – postmaterialists, indeed the young, highly educated people belonging to the middle class and living in urban areas (Poguntke, 1993: 36).

The Greens originally followed not a pure, 'realist' logic of party competition, but more or less a 'fundamentalist' logic of constituency representation (Kitschelt, 1989). As such, Green parties represented a fundamentally new pattern of party politics that sets them apart from traditional parties in western democracies. They also rejected corporatist policy making (Kaelberer, 1993: 231), not only because of its bureaucratic, hierarchical, exclusionary and secret style but also because concerns about nature, women's rights, and human self-fulfilment were not represented in the corporatist bargaining process. The Greens originally had an anti-elitist orientation, fashioned into an ultra democratic and participatory ethos (O'Neill, 1997: 8). They thus reflected in ideological terms to a high degree the new post-industrial alignment of political values, and in organizational terms were considered to be very sensitive to the participatory demands of the new generation of educated and politically competent citizens (Mair, 2001: 99).

3.5 A Green party family?

Whether we can consider Green parties as a specific party family is subject of discussion. Whereas Herbert Kitschelt (1988) already argued that Green parties are part of the broader party family of left-libertarian parties, most researchers of Green parties seem to assume that there is a Green party family (Burchell, 2002: 173). For example, not even considering it as an issue of discussion, Müller-Rommel (2002: 2) writes '...when analyzing the Green party family'. Authors do seem to agree that the Green parties at least represent a distinctive phenomenon in contemporary European politics (O'Neill, 1997: 11). There is relative consensus about the fact that the Greens have evolved into a stable element in most European party systems, something that is interpreted as an indicator that the 'new politics-dimension' is consolidated (Müller-Rommel, 2002: 6). In the end, the common sense seems to be that Green parties are a specific type of party. Although we know Green parties may differ in many respects, there is something about them that makes them distinct in a certain way. There is however no consensus on what these distinct characteristics are, and especially not whether their 'uniqueness' has remained the same over time – a question that we will soon come back to. Despite being highly controversial, several elements are often considered to be typical for Green parties as they were established: specifically they emphasized Green issues (sometimes resulting in being a one-issue party, but often combined with a broader range of issues. They have specific organizational structures such as collective leadership and a focus on within-party, grassroots de-

mocracy. To conclude, they are utilizing a protest-strategy against established parties, striving for another society and reforming politics.

3.6 Green party dilemmas

European Green parties have from the very beginning been continuously confronted with choices (O'Neill, 1997: 492). The core of the Green dilemma is that while an effective organization was necessary for practicing politics and becoming effective, influential political actors, they also wanted to retain a genuinely radical profile and stand for their political ideals (Burchell, 2002: 163). Organizationally, Green parties have been forced to find a balance between the commitment to the 'new politics'-style and the practicalities of operating within competitive party systems (ibid.: 126). This dilemma has often been reflected in practice by disputes between moderate and fundamentalist factions within Green parties, often referred to by using the 'realos' versus 'fundis'-terminology of Die Grünen (ibid.: 3). Whereas the realos were more willing to adapt to the pressures from the electoral system, the fundis preferred the party to stay true to their origins.

The tensions within Green parties are further specified by O'Neill (1997: 5) into an organizational and an ideological dilemma. The organizational dilemma concerns the anti-party debate, facing the choice between anti-party extremism and more pragmatic moderation (ibid.: 16). This debate about how far radicalism should be given up to conform to a conventional party model has been a constant source of tension in most Green parties (ibid.: 21). There has been a gradual shift of the balance of power, accommodating towards the 'realist' position (ibid.: 32). The second, ideological dilemma concerns the choice between a pure Green strategy and a 'red-Green' approach (ibid.: 10). This has to do with the positioning of the Greens vis-à-vis the conventional left (ibid.: 33). Whereas 'pure' Greens saw ecologism as a unique political paradigm above class politics, red-Green ecological activists had more in common with socialism. Whereas party organization often gets the most attention, the issue of ideological positioning is important as well because the most likely source of Green party influence over policy agendas will come from their linkages with other, mainstream parties. Although we often assume that Green parties no longer stand above the left-right political spectrum but have more or less explicitly chosen for the left, changing party systems might have opened up possibilities for cooperation with other, non-left types of parties.

4. Green party change: what do we know and what needs more scrutiny?

The goal of this research project is, contrary to what many other scholars have done, not to explain the electoral success and failure of Green parties or their effectiveness in influencing policy. The aim is now to develop a more comprehensive view of whether and how Green parties have changed over time. As we now know what characterized Green parties during their first years, and we chose to approach the research question from a multilayered perspective, it is now time to analyze the knowledge accumulated so far about Green party development. In what sense have Green parties changed over time? We know they were quite unique at the time they were established, emphasizing their Green ideology, with their specific organizational structures and utilizing a protest-strategy. What is left of this traditional nature of Green parties? As explained already, by party change we mean changes in the party's ideology, organization and strategy. First the question will be considered what we know already about changes within Green parties. Then, we will explore how we might expect Green parties to have changed besides the 'formal' changes that have already been investigated. A new but important distinction between a party's internal and external political approach will be outlined. Subsequently it will be argued why it is reasonable to expect that some important developments within Green parties have to do with their external political approach. We will take a look at the analysis of Green party change as presented by scholars so far; are the Greens still the special type of party they were twenty to thirty years ago?

4.1 Have Green parties changed?

Scholars in general acknowledge that Greens have changed over time: it is evident that the Green parties operating today are in many ways removed from the style and format of the 'anti-party party' they were in their formative years (Burchell, 2002: 157). However, mainly because of differences in research design and focus, there is no consensus about the sense in which Green parties have changed and how fundamental the changes are. Most authors do emphasize that the Greens have remained distinct over time, despite the fact that changes have occurred. But what is it about Green parties that has changed? And why are they, despite those changes, still a distinct type of party? Roughly, the research outcomes so far can be divided into organizational changes, ideological changes and changes in strategy – which is in line with the dimensions of party change of the theoretical approach adopted in this research programme. As this distinction is made only for analytical purposes, we have to keep in mind that in reality these changes are possibly interrelated.

4.2 Organizational change

In order to understand how Green parties today differ from the parties they were in their first years, researchers have often focused at major organizational changes within Green parties. As they were originally often considered as a 'new type of party', being truly distinct from the established parties in the European party systems, we might first of all wonder whether this is still the case. Burchell (2002: 51) argues the processes of organizational transformation reflect the dilemma between the ideological goals and commitments inherent within the Greens' historical roots, and the electoral opportunities and constraints facing the parties (ibid.: 163). He distinguishes a transformation from radical opposition to implementation of Green politics as a main explanation for both the reform process and the conflicts that have marked Green party development at the end of the 20th century (ibid. 164).

In a recent volume called 'Green parties in transition', Frankland, Lucardie and Rihoux (2008) attempt to answer the question whether Green parties in Western democracies have transformed organizationally from 'amateur-activist' into 'professional-electoral' parties. As grass-roots democracy was both ideologically and organizationally key for Green parties, their organization concerns the core of their identity and political project (Lucardie and Rihoux, 2008: 3). It should be mentioned that GroenLinks belonged to the four out of the fifteen Green parties that did not match neatly with the amateur-activist ideal type, but this can easily be explained by the fact that GroenLinks, contrary to almost all other Green parties, was not established directly out of social movements but was a merger of four already existing parties (Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 264). As a result they were in disagreement with the new social movement-concept of grass-roots democracy but were already more professional because of their active involvement in institutional politics. They conclude that in general Green parties have not become professional-electoral parties, although a trend of professionalization of both the party leadership and the party apparatus can be discerned (ibid.: 271). However, all Green parties still share some amateur-activist features (ibid.: 267).

Although there have thus in general been no organizational changes so fundamental as to give Green parties another label, Rihoux and Frankland do point to aspects that have changed like the concentration of power in the hands of a single leader instead of collective leadership. The overall conclusion is that Green parties have undergone a transformation process in the form of organizational adaptation (Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 280). Increasing support and electoral success were at the core of transformations in the organizational structures of the Greens (Burchell, 2002: 168). Major electoral developments stand out quite clearly as important intervening factors in organizational change processes. This is considered as a corroboration of Panebianco's (1988) thesis that after their formative years parties tend to adapt to their environment instead of changing it. A process of internal differentiation has occurred, which means three distinct party 'circles' can be distin-

guished as is the case with all institutionalized parties (Katz, 2002: 91-101): the 'party in public office', the 'party on the ground' and the 'party central office'.

This raises the question whether Green parties are becoming more like 'mainstream' parties, the exact group of parties they – at least originally – opposed. Green parties may be changing in ways we can expect parties in general to adapt: over time, party structures tend to become increasingly stratarchical in character, meaning there is erosion in the sense of linkage inside parties. Also, parties (especially the 'party in public office') are becoming increasingly state-oriented, and correspondingly become less firmly tied to civil society, especially in terms of resources (Katz and Mair, 1994: 18). It is however suggested that Green parties are a case apart: of the circles, only the party on the ground has remained firmly rooted in the amateur-activist grass-roots democratic practices (Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 281). We can conclude that organizationally the Greens are different types of parties at the same time. The image of 'centaurs' is used, as the Greens have professional-electoral, efficiency-seeking heads of parties but still amateur-activist, participation-seeking bodies (ibid.: 284).

4.3 Ideological change

As the most obvious novelty of the Greens – as their name also implies – used to be their emphasis on ecology, the environment and other 'typically Green' issues, it is interesting to consider whether, and if so in what sense this has changed. Regarding ideology, the most important general conclusion is that as far as Green parties were purely Green as they were established, over time they have placed greater emphasis on social concerns and so developed a more comprehensive ideology. As Burchell (2002: 149) demonstrates, during the 1990s they refocused policy towards social issues instead of the 'traditional' focus on natural environmental protection. However, there is an important difference between the 'substance' and the 'packaging' of a party programme (Janda et al., 1995: 178). It is suggested that Green parties have 'repackaged' their policies through a reprioritization of particular issues because of political saliency, without changing the substance of their programmes and the fundamental values it is based upon (Burchell, 2002: 151). This touches the strategic considerations the Greens have been confronted with: they have been forced to think about how to present and package the Green perspective (ibid.: 155). It is nevertheless evident that their policy focus has changed from natural to social environmental issues (ibid.: 170). This trend to focus on more diverse – and 'social' or 'leftist' – issues is in line with O'Neill's two-dimensional model showing that Green parties were already in the 1990s becoming both more pragmatic and less 'purely' Green (O'Neill, 1997: 17-18). However, it has been argued that in general we cannot speak of fundamental ideological change, because these two sets of Green doctrine are based upon the same core values and thus represent two sides of the same Green 'coin' (Burchell, 2002: 150).

4.4 Strategic change

In the analysis of formal organizational and ideological change, 'strategic' considerations are often mentioned. This goes without saying, because obviously the different party aspects are strongly interrelated. What is striking is that authors have often used the word 'professionalization' (Lucardie & Rihoux, 2008: 11; Burchell, 2002: 124; Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 266) to describe developments within Green parties. However, characterizations such as 'professional' and 'strategic actors' are not necessarily associated with Green parties during the first years of their existence. O'Neill (1997: 14) argues that a particular trend has been a propensity for activists who began their lives as 'fundis', yet impelled by the experience of party office or electoral success, to move towards a more moderate or 'realist' stance. That activists are following the path towards realism that, according to Rihoux and Frankland (2008), other groups within the party have already been taking for a longer period of time indicates that something relevant is going on.

The question is thus in what sense Green parties have changed their strategy. As they used to be 'anti-party' and 'protest' parties, we might expect them to have become a bit more mainstream, to have adjusted to the rules of the political game. Already during the early 1990s a common theme in research became the question whether the Greens are a protest movement or an established party (Kaelberer, 1993: 229). In general scholars seem to acknowledge a certain amount of mainstreaming has taken place, but they refuse to consider the Greens as part of the mainstream. As Mair (2001: 110) argues, there is a 'natural limit' in the risk of becoming part of the mainstream. This implies the strategy of Green parties is to retain some of their original characteristics, but at the same time to behave in a more generally accepted way and so commit to the 'rules of the game'. The Greens have readjusted some of the more unconventional aspects of their 'new politics'-identity that turned out to be damaging within the context of party-politics (Burchell, 2002: 164). It is wrong to suggest that the process of transformation has merely turned the Greens into 'part of the establishment', because despite some changes they remain more democratic and participatory than their competitors (ibid.: 170). They have however developed an active role in governmental decision-making in order to demonstrate their effectiveness in changing things, and thus gone beyond merely raising environmental consciousness and providing a critique of the establishment (ibid.: 164). They have also moved from an 'autonomous' strategy, being neither left nor right, towards direct working relationships with established left parties (ibid.: 165). We can thus speak of a strategic transformation, that was strongly influenced by the attempts of Green parties to achieve a stable basis within their party systems, to raise environmental awareness and to be perceived as effective national political actors who can influence policy instead of being a marginalized, single-issue protest group.

Kaelberer (1993: 240) agrees that strategically, the Greens have apparently been able to successfully balance their origins in the New Left social protest movements with the imperatives of party

politics and thus integrated into the established political system. However, he does acknowledge that the Greens are not as new anymore as they once were, by which he means that they are not as radically different from the other parties anymore. Rihoux and Frankland (2008: 281) state that the 'mainstreaming' of Green parties has been significantly mitigated, and that they did maintain some of their characteristic – as they call it – 'amateur-activist' features. They do recognize, however, that Green parties are faced with the same organizational constraints as all other institutionalized parties, referred to as the 'iron law of party institutionalization' (ibid.: 282). Over time the unstructured, reactive and utopian movements were replaced by expressions of 'radical realism' (O'Neill, 1997: 7). Green parties have a similar lifespan curve (Müller-Rommel, 2002: 2), moving towards a 'logic of electoral competition' (Rihoux, 2008: 93). They have moved away from the traditional 'logic of constituency representation', meaning they no longer focus on being a 'spokesperson' of their members and voters, but have shifted their attention to broadening their electoral base and gaining policy influence.

4.5 New focus: external political approach

As the above shows, the fact that the 'explanandum' of a research project is Green 'party change' is not yet that revealing. Scholars have focused on formal organizational changes, but also on ideological changes and changes in strategy. This makes sense, especially when the multilayered, 'integrated' approach as proposed by Harmel and Janda (1994) is adopted – as is the case in this project as well. However, the Green party changes under research have always been the formal, actual within-party changes that occurred, and that could be observed in the party's statutes, regulations and official documents. These documents are always considered to be actual reflections of the internal party organization, as summarizing the official party ideology and programme and the party strategy. In short, they have an internal orientation and reveal the way the party is organized, what its official standpoints are and how procedures work.

However, if you ask the 'average voter' (if he or she would exist) to tell you something about a Green party, there is quite a big chance that what people know – if they can tell you anything at all – is not based on these documents. The voter might eventually have read the party's election programme (and if it is an exceptional voter, he or she might have read the party manifesto as well). This is not really surprising, however, because election programmes are written also with an external orientation: the idea is that potential voters read election programmes and then choose a party. Political parties write such documents not only to accurately describe and reflect the ideas the party is representing, but also to inform 'party-outsiders' about what it considers to be important.

But, as we all know, the number of people that actually reads election programmes is relatively small – and the people who do read election programmes are often the people that feel strongly

related or that are even members of that party. There is thus quite a big chance that what 'the average voter' can tell you about a Green party is based on other information: what they saw or heard during election campaigns on party websites, in newspapers, on flyers etcetera. We know that parties have, in general, become more aware of the fact that their support is more and more contingent and that as a result they have to work harder and more carefully on gaining and maintaining support (Mair, 2004: 4). We can therefore expect Green parties as well to have (more or less) consciously developed over time the way in which they want to present themselves and that they try to influence the way in which they are portrayed in the media: they have a specific external political approach. The point that we are trying to make is that there is an important distinction between a party's internal and a party's external political approach. And within this external political approach we can distinguish between formal aspects, reflected in documents like an election programme or a party manifesto, and informal aspects, reflected in presentation in the media, election posters, flyers etc. This 'external' aspect of Green parties has not been subject of thorough comparative research, but it would be interesting to see if and how Green parties have changed in this respect. There are several indications in the body of literature so far that they have, in various respects.

4.6 Indications that the Green parties' external political approach has changed

❖ Regarding organizational aspects

Lucardie and Rihoux (2008: 10) have put forward the suggestion that besides formal organizational change, change may also pertain to the Green parties' organizational style and practices, or 'political culture'. This is quite a plausible idea, given that 'professionalization' has become a buzzword in descriptions of Green party transformation, although so far no scholar has considered it as the possible core of the changes. The fact that it is mentioned quite frequently to characterize what is happening in Green parties feeds the expectation that this is an important word, however. It seems like it is the way in which they approach politics that has distinguished the Greens from the beginning, and that has transformed over time. So far, scholars have only very infrequently pointed to this aspect of Green parties – and if they did, it was more as a marginal comment than as a core indicator of change. However, strategy, organization and ideology are interrelated aspects of the Green party's external political approach: the way they present themselves and their Green message. Kitschelt's (1989) for example already pointed to the fact that Belgian and German Green parties were beginning to cope with the dilemma that they were not simply social movements but parties participating in elections. It has been suggested that they did so by differentiating between the internal form of organization and external behaviour (Kaelberer, 1993: 234). Internally they followed a logic of constituency representation, meaning encapsulation and participation of members, less centralization of

power and less organizational coherence. However, in their external behaviour they already showed signs of moving toward a logic of party competition by emphasizing visible leadership and strategies of alliance building (Kitschelt, 1989: 281). According to Kaelberer (1993: 234) this left open the possibility that Green parties may in the future adopt more and more organizational and strategic features of traditional parties in western Europe and thus move toward a more conventional logic of party competition.

❖ Regarding ideological aspects

Regarding changes in the Green parties' ideology, it is suggested that ideological changes may reflect only changes in focus – within a broad range of core party policies – rather than a radical ideological shift (Burchell, 2002: 133). Thus we can speak of changes in priorities, which are assumed to be closely connected to the electoral goals of the Green parties. Burchell even suggests that the manner in which Green parties have portrayed their 'new politics' identity has changed as the parties have developed and evolved (ibid.: 129). As might have been expected, the search for effective ways of putting across the Green message to the public led to questions among party activists about the focus and priorities of Green policy – an example of the discussion between the 'realos' and 'fundis' within Green parties. Burchell (2002: 156) concludes that the Greens are 'clearly beginning to tackle the challenge of providing a broad representation of the Green ideology upon a party political stage'. This raises the question how the external political approach of Green parties has precisely evolved – also in ideological terms. We might expect the packaging and presentation of the Green message play an increasingly important role, because of general trends such as mediatisation and personalization (Karvonen, 2010; McAllister, 2007). So whereas we should consider the question how this prioritization and packaging of ideology has changed, we might as well ask how strategic considerations have developed in contrast to purely ideological ones, as part of the party's external political approach. As Rihoux and Frankland (2008: 284) suggested, the pressures of the current political-, party- and media-environment are strong, probably resulting in Green party adaptations.

❖ Regarding strategic aspects

As Burchell (2002: 172) argues, presenting the broader picture may be one thing, but trying to transform the public's perception of the Greens has proved much harder. The fact that Green parties are presumably consciously attempting to influence the way the large public sees them is something that has largely been ignored by scholars so far. We do know that public and academic perceptions of Green politics have changed only very slowly (Rihoux & Rüdiger, 2008: 1). Something of a 'strategic transformation' of Green parties has been suggested, meaning that Green parties have tried to be perceived as effective national political actors who can influence policy rather than act as marginalized, single issue protest groups (Burchell, 2002: 165). Green parties, especially the ones with gov-

ernmental experience, are expected to increasingly pursue a strategy geared towards accommodation and coalition-forming (Rihoux and Rüdiger, 2006: 21). They realized that although they did not want to create careerist Green politicians, they had to accept it was necessary to gain an understanding of how the party process works in order to be able to change it (Burchell, 2002: 168).

Also, it has been suggested that parties have found out it has become increasingly difficult to remove personality from party politics. Party leaders occupying governmental positions are expected to acquire more visibility and possibly more power and influence within the party (Rihoux and Rüdiger, 2006: 21). Whereas quite surprisingly in the case of organizational change leadership turned out to be only a marginal factor (Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 283), given trends of personalization it is reasonable to expect Green parties to focus more on party leaders and individual politicians. Regarding organizational change, 'framing' by individual and collective party actors has already been shown to be a key intervening factor (ibid.: 284). This suggests that the framing of Green party might be a crucial aspect of the Green external political approach.

4.7 Professionalization: a multifaceted concept

Something most scholars do agree on is that Green parties exist in many specific varieties and that they are a somewhat cameleonic type of party, not really fitting within existing party types. Specifically important is the suggestion – which has surprisingly enough not been scrutinized so far – that the Dutch Greens might be described as a 'professional-activist' party, a merger between the 'amateur-activist' and 'professional-electoral' party types. In short, this would mean that Green parties might be becoming more professional despite retaining their activist elements. So far professionalization has from a political science-perspective only been looked at in the sense of organizational professionalization, but no one has systematically looked at what this might mean besides organizational professionalization. We might however expect the Greens to have professionalized regarding their external political approach.

In the research field of political communication, the term 'professionalization' is being used in many respects (Lilleker and Negrine, 2002: 98). It has become a self-defining, catch-all buzzword employed to explain the recent changes in political communication (Negrine and Lilleker, 2002: 305). It is an umbrella term that is used specifically regarding political campaigning, but there it often makes sense only in relation to the activities and requirements of the media (Lilleker and Negrine, 2002: 100). 'Professionalized campaigning' seems to be nothing but the degree to which a party has specialized to the development of new knowledge or new skills. In contemporary media-centered democracies such skills for dealing with the media are highly valuable for parties: the technological advances and changes in the way in which politics is covered by the media needed a response from political parties (ibid.: 101). However, in that sense professionalization applies only to the internal

aspects of the process of campaigning as such, such as media training for party candidates and hiring political consultants and party strategists. It thus focuses on the methods by which political actors communicate through the media. The changing external political approach of parties that we are concerned with now comprehends more than just that, as it focuses on the way in which the party presents itself externally – and thus more on the ‘results’ of the professionalization of the campaigning process. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the two are fully separated; in fact, the external political approach of the party probably results in part from the introduction of party professionals that are specialized in dealing with the media in this age. However, professionalization in that sense is than more a cause explaining the changes in the external political approach of parties.

Responding to the need for a more careful definition of the term professionalization (Lilleker and Negrine, 2002: 102), a new interpretation of the concept ‘professionalization’ will be developed. As we are concerned here with the professionalization of the external political approach of Green parties, and have operationalized ‘party change’ as reflecting organizational, ideological as well as strategic aspects, professionalization turns out to be a multifaceted concept (inspired by Mair’s (2004) theory on party responses):

- *ideologically*, it relates to the range and type of issues a party is concerned with. Whereas it is more amateurish to treat one or only a few issues, a more professional party presents itself on a broad range of subjects. And whereas a more amateur party will choose issues more ad hoc, a professionalized party presents a more coherent picture in which for example ‘old’ and ‘new’ issues are integrated and the relationship between issues is evident. These parties will take the salience and level of politicization of subjects into account in the prioritization of issues;
- *organizationally*, it relates to the way in which a party is presenting itself as an organization, for example the visibility of the leader. Whereas it is more amateurish to focus purely on content and programmatic issues and to let any party ‘specialist’ talk about ‘their’ own issues, it is more professional when a party also highlights the party leader and makes him or her highly visible and thus recognizable. Also it is more amateurish to present the party as a pure political organ of interest groups and social movements, and more professional to have a clear own message instead of a combination of multiple other messages;
- *strategically*, it relates to the type of people through which the party is represented and the tone or tactics the party utilizes to present itself. Whereas it is more amateurish to not really care about how the representatives look, whether they are well-dressed and look well-cared-for, it is more professional if they dress as is considered more appropriately. Also it is more amateurish to present the party more radical as a protest party, or as an anti-party party, thereby campaigning negatively, whereas it is more professional to take a more moderate stance towards other parties and present critique in a constructive manner.

In general we expect that whereas the way in which the Greens approach politics has changed towards more professionalism, their primary characteristics have remained activist in the sense that they do still strive for changes in policy as well as politics. The hypothesis we can derive from the above is that during their lifespan the external political approach of Green parties has become more professional.

5. Green party change: explaining a changing external political approach

5.1 Explanatory value of the multilayered approach

As the above summary of the current research on the change and development of Green parties shows, there is considerable evidence of the fact that Green parties have changed – internal as well as external. Switching from the ‘how-question’ to the ‘why-question’, it is now time to take a look at the possible causes of the professionalized external political approach we expect to see. For reasons of clarity, it should once again be emphasized that the goal of this research project is twofold: first, by analyzing the changing presentation of GroenLinks as a typical Green party, its external political approach will be reconstructed; second, by interviewing within-party actors in order to develop explanations for the changes observed, the focus for the independent variables shifts to the experiences of the people internal to the party. It is thus important to clearly understand what is meant by internal and external, namely: the answer to the first research question is about the ‘external’ presentation of GroenLinks, namely, in what sense has the way the party presents itself (the external political approach of the party) changed over the past 20 years. The answer to the second research question is based on my focus on ‘internal’, within-party actors, who explain (thus based on their interpretation of history) who and what are the causes of this change.

In the second chapter the explanatory model of Harmel and Janda (1994) has been adopted to explain the Green party changes. Rihoux and Frankland (2008: 283) adopted their ‘integrated theory’ in order to explain organizational change and they corroborated its explanatory value. They confirm the primary importance of both positive and negative ‘external shocks’ in the process leading to major organizational changes, show that the negative external shocks with the strongest effects are the ones putting the party’s survival at risk (like electoral setbacks) because then the interests of everyone involved converges towards party survival, and confirm empirically external shocks as necessary but not sufficient conditions for major organizational changes to occur.

Burchell (2002) also adopted Harmel and Janda's model and argues that changes within Green parties reflect their desire to develop an effective role within their political systems as well as the environmental movement. As he confirms factional conflict reflects uncertainties and disagreements within parties regarding what their role should be, Burchell (2002: 158) thus corroborated the integrated theory for explaining Green party change. He demonstrated that a balance between internal and external pressures on party goals explains the variation in the patterns of change and the prioritization of party goals within the different Green parties (ibid.: 161). The three 'primary goals' he focused upon – winning votes, advocating interests/ideology and implementing party democracy – all turned out to have played a role in influencing the pattern of development and change within the Greens. An alternative party goal, 'gaining an influential role within the party system', is identified as a complementary key factor in influencing party strategies towards relationships with other political parties (ibid.: 161).

5.2 Framing, thresholds as causes of change and anticipatory adaptation

Especially interesting are the ways in which Rihoux and Frankland (2008: 284) have complemented Harmel and Janda's theory. First, they found out a key intervening factor is the 'framing' or the subjective perception of the situation by party actors, something Berman (1997) also suggested. This shows how important it is to focus on within-party actors when explaining party change. Whether external stimuli cause or influence party change depends heavily on how they perceive the situation, and this in turn depends on the primary goals these actors have in minds for the party. Whereas external shocks such as influential electoral results boost the need for – in this case organizational – change, it thus not only matters who are influencing and taking the decisions resulting in change, but also how they experience and interpret the external stimuli. Therefore, we see external stimuli only as indirect causes of party change, not as an independent variable.

Second, they emphasize the importance of the 'threshold logic' as a specific type of external shock causing party change. The idea of 'thresholds' originates from Pedersen's (1982) theory about party lifespans. He argues that parties are mortal organizations bounded by a lifespan, which can be described by means of four threshold concepts. It is according to him beyond doubt that parties as organizations are not 'frozen' (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967) components of political systems, but are changing all the time and in many respects (Pedersen, 1982: 2). His main point is that minor parties in all liberal democracies (strive to) pass some important thresholds: first the threshold of declaration, meaning becoming a party; then the threshold of authorization, meaning that requirements to participate in electoral campaigns and elections are fulfilled; third the threshold of representation, meaning that seats in the legislature are obtained; and fourth the threshold of relevance, more difficult to operationalize but roughly meaning being a 'party of significance'. The interesting question is

in what sense passing a threshold, which can be considered as an external stimulus, causes party change. Müller-Rommel (2002), in an attempt to analyze the political performance of Green parties with various types of lifespans, demonstrated that the lifespan curve is 'unimodal'. This means that nearly all Green parties have only passed thresholds up bound once in their lifespan and that almost no Green party in Western Europe 'died'. The analysis also shows that Green parties differ heavily in their development. What is interesting is that he operationalized crossing the threshold of relevance as 'entering government' (Müller-Rommel, 2002: 5).

In a comparable manner Deschouwer (2008: 10) amended and expanded Pedersen's lifespan model of parties to mark the presence in government as a very specific position, involving the crossing of a threshold and thus making a hard choice. However, while crossing the threshold of power does mark a new phase in the life of parties, it is not necessarily a step that leads to important subsequent within-party changes: these might and have often occurred *earlier*, in anticipation, as part of a gradual process (Deschouwer, 2008: 14). Especially smaller parties are likely per se to undergo organizational change, even if they do not pass thresholds (Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 283). Preparing for passing a threshold might be an important catalyst for change as well, in particular aiming at passing the 'threshold of government' (as we rename Pedersen's threshold of relevance). As Deschouwer (2008: 13) puts it, for most parties entering government is not a sudden and surprising affair but a growing process. Poguntke (2002) also argues that entering or supporting a government might make parties move and adapt in anticipation. In the case of ideological change, coalition theory tells us that parties that moved closer to at least one of the major and normally governing parties have a higher chance of being asked to join government. Although moving towards the core of the party system is not a guarantee, this is at least a major facilitator for getting in power (Deschouwer, 2008: 13) and might thus be considered an example of anticipatory adaptation. Because of the apparent relevance of the goal of government participation as a catalyst of change, the variable 'major party goal' is here integrated in the causal model as an intervening variable expected to influence the decisions of within-party actors that result in party change.

5.3 Refining the explanatory model: the importance of government participation as a party goal

Something that we should thus not overlook is how complementary threshold-based factors like the prospect of 'Regierungsfähigkeit' might be causes of change as well. Anticipating the occurrence of a possibility to negotiate about accessing government, but also learning from the disappointment with a first experience in coalition formation talks, have been reasons for Green parties to adapted organizationally (Rihoux and Frankland, 2008: 278). While anticipating the need for centralization should they eventually enter national government, Green parties have already been adapting their structure

in advance (Poguntke, 2002: 136). 'Prior organizational adaptations' have played a facilitating role for Green parties for eventual access to government (Rihoux, 2006: 74). It thus seems like not only passing a threshold, but also threshold-based factors have been causes of organizational change within Green parties. Also repeated failure to cross a threshold might contribute to change (Lucardie & Rihoux, 2008: 9). Parties have to decide how to approach issues in order to appeal to their electorate, especially when they think beyond the electoral arena and consider the impact their positioning on certain issues will have on future patterns of coalition formation (Mair, 2004: 7). It has been suggested that trying to make other parties willing to see the Greens as potential coalition partners has been a vital factor in changing party strategy (Burchell, 2002: 166). Even before actually passing a threshold, changes may already have taken place. The 'subjective passing of the threshold of Regierungsfähigkeit' and having passed the 'threshold of negotiation' before might be influential within-party causes of change. Furthermore, it is plausible that these anticipatory adaptations cause more than just organizational changes.

The idea of anticipatory change before (potentially) passing a threshold is important because it related to the role of party goals in the explanatory model used here. The party goals of vote maximization and office maximization respectively relate to the thresholds of parliament and government. Whereas the 'threshold of representation' was in the 1980s already passed by many European Greens, since the late 1990s some have broken through the threshold of executive power as well (Mair, 2001: 100). Besides actually participating in government, even more Green parties have taken part in government formation talks. Therefore it might be reasonable to expect that attempting to reach government representation ("office maximization") and thus passing the 'threshold of government' has become an important Green party goal. Rihoux and Rüdiger (2008: 20) expected that the goal of reaching – or even staying – in power would indeed increasingly become a goal in itself. Burchell (2002: 3), although he admitted Harmel and Janda's fourth possible goal of gaining executive office had become relevant, argued that at that moment it would require more time before this goals' impact could be measured. He did suggest that with the advent of government participation, the Greens are facing the pressures of an additional party goal, namely 'maintaining public office' (ibid.: 161). This confirms that there is plenty of reason to suppose that government participation has over time indeed become a primary Green party goal.

Therefore the question should be considered which goals Green parties have been trying to reach, and whether government participation is one of them. Specifically interesting is what the consequences of the adoption of the goal of government participation are for the way the party behaves and presents itself. We might expect Green parties to have changed substantially in anticipation of passing the threshold of government in a direction that has often been called 'professionalization', but there is no reason why this would only count for organizational change: we might expect to see

adaptations in ideological programmes and strategic choices as well. Applying Harmel and Janda's model to the case of 'professionalized campaigning', Gibson and Römmele (2001: 36) argued it is evident that parties with vote maximization as their primary goal would be most likely to adopt new, more professional campaigning techniques. In a similar manner, it can be argued that mainly office-seeking Green parties –which have government participation as a primary goal – would be most likely to professionalize their external political approach.

An important consequence of this idea is that Green parties that have and have not passed a similar threshold might still have undergone quite similar changes. In studies of Green party change, Greens with and without governmental experience are often treated as two completely different groups of parties. Looking at the influence of the goal of government participation on Green parties that do not (yet) have that experience might show us whether we should attach more value to explanations for change that point to anticipatory adaptation as a means for achieving the party goal of governmental representation. The question to be researched is thus whether and how the goal of government participation has caused Green party change. Why have Green parties changed, what are the main causes of change? Is it indeed leadership and dominant factions that cause changes, often triggered by external stimuli, thereby basing their choices on the main party goals they are aiming at? We hypothesize to see a professionalization of Green parties without governmental experience as a result of adaptation in anticipation of passing the threshold of government.

5.4 A new analytical model: multilayered explanation for changing external political approaches

Elaborating on the analysis so far, a new general model of party change can be developed. The model presents a multilayered explanation for changes in a party's external political approach. For the sake of clarity, the various aspects of the model are:

- parties always operate with several goals in mind; one of them is the primary goal, the other are sub-goals considered as means to achieve the primary goal;
- heavily influenced by these party goals, dominant factions or party leaders can decide to change the party ideology, organization and/or strategy, thereby often, but not necessarily, triggered by external stimuli;
- although passing a 'threshold' is proved to be an important external stimulus for parties to change organizationally, attempting to pass a threshold like governmental representation is considered to be an at least as important, internal trigger for – anticipatory – party change;
- when analyzing party change, we can distinguish analytically between the actual internal (ideological, organizational and strategic) changes occurring, and the changes visible for the (average) voter: this external presentation reflects the party's external political approach;

- a party's external political approach consists of ideological, organizational as well as strategic aspects and comprises all means by which a party communicates with and presents itself to the 'outside world'; we can distinguish between formal aspects, such as election programmes or party manifestos, and informal aspects such as presentation in the media, thus all the other ways in which information about parties is communicated.

5.5 Comparative project: the development of GroenLinks over time

In order to answer the questions raised, a comparative research project will be executed by investigating the way in which the Dutch Green party '*GroenLinks*' has developed during its 20 years of existence. GroenLinks is a typical case of what Kaelberer (1993: 230) called the New Left Green parties: despite being 'Green' it is not a one-issue party focusing exclusively on Green issues, it presents itself on a broader range of subjects and is positioned on the left-wing of the political spectrum. Besides being a typical Green party, GroenLinks is specifically interesting as it is one of the Green parties that has – contrary to other Green parties in Western Europe like the German and Belgian Greens – not been part of government. Therefore taking this party as the object under research will enable us to test the hypothesis regarding anticipatory adaptation while aiming at the goal of government participation. In order to anticipate potential criticism, it should be mentioned that GroenLinks might also be considered as a deviant case. The main reason that might be brought up is the fact that the party is a merger from four already existing parties (PPR, PSP, CPN and EVP) and therefore not originated from social movements, as most Green parties. The party was also established quite late, in the beginning of the 1990s. However, from the perspective chosen here, the fact that the party merged out of these four former 'New Left'-parties precisely shows that the party does have typical 'Green-party origins', as these New Left parties originated from the 1970s 'New Social Movements'. The only difference this makes that could be relevant is the fact that the predecessors of GroenLinks thus probably already had some organizational experience but this is enough reason to label GroenLinks a deviant case.

The party has recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. This means that, in order to conduct a proper longitudinal study these two decades have to be fully covered. For that reason – and for reasons of feasibility – three election campaigns evenly distributed in time will be subjected to research: the Dutch parliamentary elections of 1994, 2002 and 2010. At all three elections the list of GroenLinks was headed by (a) different person(s). In addition to these three campaigns, and to better cover the period as a whole, the two party manifestos of GroenLinks written in respectively 1991 and 2008 will be taken into account as well. In order to contextualize the three specific elections, a rough sketch of the various political contexts will be given. First of all, the elections of 1994 followed the third cabinet-Lubbers that was a coalition of the Christian-democratic CDA and the social-

democratic PvdA. 'Groen Links' was already represented Second Chamber as the candidates of the former parties had in 1989 been presented on a common list, but the party was only officially founded on the 24th of November 1990. Therefore the elections of 1994 were officially the first elections GroenLinks participated in. Twenty-five parties participated in these elections. There were four larger parties that did well in the opinion polls (Elzinga & Voerman, 2002: 198-205), and an electoral landslide was quite reasonable to expect. As one of the motives for the merger of the four parties into GroenLinks was to enlarge their electoral victories, the party had faith in winning in several seats during these elections.

The situation was comparable, yet at the same time completely different during the elections of 2002. From 1994-1998 and from 1998-2002 The Netherlands were governed by two so-called 'purple' cabinets, consisting of a coalition of the liberal VVD together with the PvdA and D66. These were the first two governmental coalitions since 1918 in which no confessional party took part. Prime minister Kok decided on 16 April 2002, only 29 days before the elections were scheduled, to resign over the NIOD report about the fall of Srebrenica in 1995. It was clear that the governing parties were going to loose seats, especially because several new parties like 'Liveable Netherlands' and the 'List Pim Fortuyn', heavily opposing government. The similarity thus has to do with the fact that it was clear that the balance between the various 'larger' political parties was expected to experience a relatively large change. This time the governing parties were however not the Christian- and social-democrats, but the liberals together with the social-democrats. The build-up to the elections was totally different from any other election, as on the 6th of May the leader of the LPF Pim Fortuyn was assassinated. As a result the campaigning was quitted. However, the GroenLinks-campaign under consideration here was already developed before the political assassination was conducted. Sixteen parties participated in these elections. The electoral contest was intense, especially because Pim Fortuyn introduced a more populist rhetoric and emphasized issues that had not been discussed extensively in earlier campaigns, like the 'multicultural society' and problems of integration.

The situation was once again very different during the parliamentary elections of 2010: since 2002 the Netherlands have had four cabinets lead by the Christian-democratic prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende. The last one was a coalition of the CDA, PvdA and the ChristenUnie ('Christian Union'). The cabinet had fallen as a result of the decision-making process about a military mission to Uruzgan, Afghanistan. The VVD had become ever more popular, the CDA was expected to loose many seats and the PvdA was growing due to the popularity of the new leader Job Cohen. The socialist party SP had grown a lot as well during the last couple of elections. The party that gained the most attention however was the PVV ('Party for Freedom') of Geert Wilders. The political landscape was thus extremely dispersed and the amount of floating voters was larger than ever.

5.6 Analyzing formal and informal external presentation: questions to be answered

A key idea behind this research project is that the purely 'internal' transformations within Green parties are not that interesting because they are not visible for 'the average voter'. Party manifestos and election programmes are however key in order to identify core policy ideas (Burchell, 2002: 133) and, more interestingly, how parties want to present themselves. Whereas these documents thus partly have serve an internal function, they are also orientated externally. Mudde (1995: 208) distinguished in his research on right-wing extremism between a party's 'front stage', party literature with an external orientation like party manifestos and election programmes, and its activities at the 'back stage', the unspoken ideology of the party. Whereas programmes and manifestos are still the basic documents for analysis in terms of the prioritization of subjects and the types of arguments being given, we know that only a marginal part of voters in any European country reads those documents. In trying to reach as many people as possible, we might expect Green parties to focus on other means in order to reach these 'other' potential voters.

What is at least as interesting, thus, is the way Green parties approach, and present themselves to, the larger public. As such, we might, in addition to formal party documents, the remaining 'informal' campaign materials as complementary aspects of the Green party external political approach. Results of research regarding Green party change thus suggests that, besides 'internal' changes it might be the external political approach of Green parties that has experienced quite radical changes. Therefore, the main question is whether and how the Green external political approach has changed over the past decades. Has the Green party external political approach and the way in which Green parties present themselves radically changed? We expect to see a development towards a 'professional-activist approach', inspired by the suggestion that the Dutch Greens are a cameleonic party combining elements of both amateur-activist and electoral-professional parties. A professional-electoral approach would mean that whereas the 'activist' element has remained unaffected, the Greens have moved from 'amateurs' to 'professionals'.

As Stein Rokkan argued, one should begin with an investigation of country-level trends and variables and then build broader, cross-national theories of electoral and party system development upon this analysis; 'we will have to live with comparisons of unique configurations but can still make headway in comparative electoral research by resolutely tackling the task of identifying the critical dimensions of variation across the historically given systems of political interaction' (Rokkan, 1968: 210). Therefore, in this research project the external political approach of GroenLinks during the 1990s and 2000s will be analyzed in two steps. First, the focus will be on official party documents: by comparing party programmes and manifestos, (changes in) their formal external political approach will be analyzed. Second, election campaigns – posters, flyers – will be analyzed. Due to reasons of

feasibility, other potentially interesting documents for the analysis (such as the party website, reports in newspapers and in television programmes) will not be taken into account.

The focus will be on the periods around election campaigns in the Netherlands in 1994, 2002 and 2010, complemented with the party manifestos published in 1991 and 2008. By executing this process-tracing method first of all the question will be answered whether the Greens external political approach has changed, and if so, if it is developing towards more professionalism. Have Green parties changed methods for delivering their message? The question will be answered whether it is appropriate to label the Green external political approach nowadays 'professional-activist'.

As a second step, explanations for the differences and similarities in the approach of GroenLinks over time will be explored based on interviews with within-party actors. Although probably difficult to disentangle, the role of party goals in decisions about changes (eventually anticipating the possible passing of a threshold as a party goal) will be analyzed. We expect party goals to play a large role in the way Green parties decide to present themselves. As government participation has over time become a more realistic party goal for Green parties, we would like to know whether and how the goal of government participation has contributed to changes in their external political approach. It is regrettable that scholars have analytically separated Green parties that do and that do not have governmental experience. The evidence showing that Green parties have in anticipation of passing a threshold already adapted themselves organizationally strengthens the expectation that externally they may have presented themselves in a more professional and thus ready-for-government way as well, already during the elections prior to government formation talks. The fact that threshold-based factors have explanatory value suggests that Green parties without governmental experience might have adapted their external political approach as well, and maybe even in the same way as Green parties that have become part of government. We should thus analyze whether the professionalization of the external political approach observed within Greens with governing experience are also visible for other Green parties not having passed the 'threshold of government', like GroenLinks. Therefore we hypothesize that adopting the aim of government participation led to anticipatory adaptations in the Green party's external political approach, caused by leadership changes and/or changes in the dominant faction.

We will try to analyze whether the multilayered model has explanatory value, thus analyzing the influence of external stimuli and the direct influence of dominant factions and leadership. In this way we will try to formulate a first tentative answer to the question whether within-party causes can explain professionalization, who within the party influence the party's external political approach, as well as if external stimuli are indeed only indirectly influencing party change. Also we will analyze whether the suggestion that especially the parliamentary 'circle' of the party heavily influences the party image can be corroborated – which is plausible as well because it will often be these people

that get the attention of the media. Based on these findings we will try to conclude whether the changes in the Green parties' external political approach can be called fundamental, and thus represent a break with the 'traditional' Green approach.

In the following empirical chapters, the two different research questions will subsequently be dealt with. First, in the sixth chapter, we will look for the answer on the 'how-question' resulting in a clearer vision of the dependent variable: what did and does the external political approach of GroenLinks look like, and has this changed over time? In the next chapter, we will focus on the causes of the changed external political approach of GroenLinks. By answering this 'why-question', we will be able to test the various (alternative) hypotheses based on our multilayered explanatory model.

6. Comparative analysis of the external political approach of GroenLinks 1991-2010

In order to grasp what the external political approach of GroenLinks looks like now and whether this is different from their external political approach during earlier years, an analysis will be conducted of the way in which the party has presented itself. For reasons of feasibility the focus will be on documents the party itself has developed, so although it would probably be another huge source of information, the attention devoted to GroenLinks by the media and more 'ad hoc' digital elements such as websites, twitter and facebook will not be taken into account.

Whereas a list by the name of 'Groen Links' already took part in the Dutch national elections of 1989, the analysis contains only documents with an external orientation from the moment the party was officially established – November 1990 – on. In the documents subjected to analysis a distinction will be made between what we called the 'formal' and the 'informal' aspects of the party's external political approach. The documents reflecting the formal external political approach of the party are the party manifestos and the election programmes. The documents reflecting the informal external political approach of the party are other elements of the political campaign we can think of: posters, flyers, and remaining campaign materials. As this is a master thesis and not a long-term research programme, only three parliamentary elections can be taken into account. However, combined with analyzing the party manifestos it is still justified to speak of a truly comparative longitudinal analysis in which developments and changes can be discerned. The analysis will be conducted per aspect of the external political approach of GroenLinks, and will focus subsequently on the ideological, organizational and strategic presentation of the party. Per aspect the documents will be analyzed chronologically, thereby utilizing the indications of 'professionalism' as developed at the end of chapter 5

(see p.25). The goal is to develop an answer to the first research question: to what extent has the external political approach of GroenLinks changed during the twenty years of their existence?

6.1 Documents to be analyzed

GroenLinks came into being in 1989, and took part in the national elections that year with the common list 'Groen Links'. However, the merger of the four parties was then still in process, and on the 24th of November 1990 the party was established officially. Therefore the first national elections the actual party was participating in were the Second Chamber-elections of the 3rd of May 1994. The way the party presented itself during the 1994-elections will be compared with the presentation of the party in the campaigns of 2002 and 2010. Theoretically we distinguished between the formal and the informal parts of political campaigns. Election programmes together with the party manifestos make up the formal part of the external political approach of GroenLinks. As the party was established, in 1991 the party manifesto called 'Uitgangspunten van GroenLinkse politiek' ('Points of departure for GreenLeft politics') was published. In 2008, a new party manifesto called 'GroenLinks, partij van de toekomst' ('GreenLeft, party of the future') with renewed points of departure was presented. For every election also the complementary, informal part of the campaigns of GroenLinks will be taken into account: the flyers, posters, pamphlets, booklets and other remaining campaign materials. The analysis will be conducted in accordance with the three elements distinguished earlier on: the ideological, organizational and strategic presentation of GroenLinks.

6.2 The ideological presentation of GroenLinks

❖ Ideologically: the 1991 manifesto

In the 1991 party manifesto it is emphasized that GroenLinks does not have one leading ideology or theory about society, but several ideals part of an 'open political utopia' (p. 5). Their ideals and principles are presented as the opposite of pragmatism, which is considered to be an empty shell. This could be interpreted as a sign of amateurism, as it seems that the party lacks a coherent vision of society and politics. However, we do have to realize that this document was developed during the period in time when the more absolute ideologies like socialism and communism were left behind. Especially as the former communist party CPN was one of the blood groups of GroenLinks, it can thus also be considered as a step forward towards a more realistic approach to politics.

Ideologically, the 'Green' and the 'left' part are explicitly presented as connected and inextricably bound up with each other (p. 5). However, they don't want economic policy to determine the content of environmental policy, but give priority to ecological politics determining the boundaries of economic policy (p. 6). First their points of departure regarding Green issues is presented, then their points of departure regarding left issues. Whereas it is thus already a sign of professionalism that

they do not focus purely on Green issues but consider them in relation to more socio-economic and socio-cultural issues, the party then gives specific attention as well to their points of departure regarding issues of 'state and market', 'globalization', 'arts and culture' and 'peace and safety' (p. 9-19). Therefore we can conclude that they are ideologically quite professional in the sense that they present a broad range of issues, in a quite coherent way. One does get the sense, however, that the ideology is more a combination of the different ideals and ideas the members of the party embrace, than that it is a very realistic ideological basis fully thought through and completely 'in touch with reality'. GroenLinks is trying to set a new agenda, more than that they are reckoning with the politicization and salience of issues at that moment. As they describe it themselves, 'Green and left should be connected with each other, and that is the challenge for the years to come' (p. 5). As a result, it seems a first nice try to develop a Green and left manifesto in which different issues are combined, but is also a bit amateur in the sense of being more a combination of several quite idealistic and quite separate points of view than a truly coherent story presented with a consciousness of realism and currency.

❖ Ideologically: the 1994 election programme

The first thing that one notices is that this is a large document presenting a broad range of ideas. In the introduction of the document already many different subjects are discussed¹. As the 'a new home'-section illustrates, it is not always clear how the different issues discussed relate to each other. The party seems to be trying really hard to show that they are not a 'one-issue' party focusing only on ecological issues, but as a result the links between the subjects sometimes seems a bit forced. As a result you often start wondering, as a reader, how the different ideals can be executed at the same time². What is interesting is that, referring to shifts in international relationships, it is already emphasized that 'sometimes interventions are necessary, especially to keep peace but sometimes also to force it military in situations of war for humanitarian reasons' (p. 3). This is quite a clear statement showing that they do not want to be seen as fundamental pacifists.

It is interesting that the document starts very internationally³; by emphasizing the 'new world order' changes in international organizations like the UN are mentioned. What stands out is that NATO is not explicitly mentioned. Then development cooperation and –aid, migration issues and (enlargement of) the European Union are discussed. In the chapter 'the European Community and

¹ Namely 'open politics' (about the functioning of the democracy), 'a new home' (a relatively vague title for a paragraph about international solidarity, migration, international cooperation and military interventions), 'ecological turn' (about environmental policy), 'individualization and solidarity' (about the welfare state, societal cohesion and safety) and 'parliamentary politics' (about the broader Green movement, the functioning of the fraction in the Second Chamber and government participation).

² For example, regarding the link between the 'Green' and the 'left': 'It is self-evident that the 'ecological turn' should go hand in hand with a just income policy. With that, the purchasing power of the minimum wage earners stays intact with an environment-friendly consumption pattern' (p. 4).

³ The rest of the document is split up in chapters about 'international politics', 'European cooperation', 'environmental policy', 'labour and social security', 'social service politics', 'economic and financial politics', 'democracy and politics' and 'the quality of society'.

other European organizations', NATO turns up quite surprisingly, about which they write that it should either disappear or become a 'facilities company' under the responsibility of the UN or the CVSE, the organization GroenLinks at that moment really believed in. The third chapter is about environmental issues, wherein a Green tax system, sector policy regarding agriculture, traffic, energy and waste, the role of the government and 'societal self-regulation' are discussed. This shows again how linkages are made with different other elements, but also new 'how-questions' arise as the ideology is presented in ideal-typical, general suggestions instead of concrete, detailed proposals⁴. The clearest illustration of the fact that albeit being broad, the ideology of GroenLinks is not really presented in a fully worked-out, concrete and coherent manner is a sentence in the chapter about labour and social security: 'The redistribution of labour, the prevention of the discharge of labour, especially by means of other levy's, taking hold of and punishing discrimination and pursuing a policy of positive action by employers must jointly bring about that the unemployment under immigrants decreases' (p. 31)⁵. GroenLinks presents itself as a strong opponent of many subjects: of the 'proliferation of nuclear weapons' (p. 10), of 'subsidizing the export of the glut of farm produce' (p. 11), of an own EC defence policy (p. 20), of nuclear power stations (p. 25), of taxes on the 'enjoyment, purchase and practicing of arts' (p. 57) and of the 'existing dual order of public and special education' (p. 59).

We can conclude that GroenLinks presents its ideology quite professional in the sense of delivering a broad story regarding lots of different issues, and that they have tried to show the way in which these issues are connected. The presentation is on the other hand quite amateurish at the same time, as it is by far not always clear how the issues are related to each other and how it would be possible to combine different ideals. Also the linkages are obviously a bit forced, and stated in a such a general sense that it seems like they were conscious of the fact that a more detailed elaboration would be problematic. What should be emphasized, however, is that the ideology concerns all kinds of subjects and that in this sense GroenLinks already presented itself quite professional.

❖ Ideologically: the 1994-campaign

In a booklet summarizing the programme of GroenLinks several subjects come up: the welfare state that 'is about to explode', the (threats to the) multicultural society, and 'environmental destruction'. The paragraphs are headed by slogans in the form of 'from ... to ...', which implies that GroenLinks is focusing on changing the current situation. This is confirmed by the slogan 'GroenLinks, of laten we

⁴ An example of this is the proposal for 'one national environment-indicator' (p. 28) to test the development in order to achieve the goals for sustainable development; they have not worked out in any further detail how such an indicator might actually be developed, which might have been a good idea as it does not speak for itself. Also they argue for 'increasing the salary of the employees of day care centres while the quality of their working conditions are also increased' (p. 40); where that money comes from, with how much the salary should be increased and in what sense the working conditions should change remains unspecified.

⁵ Some other interesting ideas that are proposed are a shorter working week (p. 32), a 'conditional basic income' (p. 35), a correcting referendum (p. 51), a 'chosen queen' (p. 52), the introduction of a 'civil service' (p. 53), the replacement of provinces by districts (p. 54) and a 'decriminalization of drugs' (p. 61).



Figure 2: Posters campaign 1994

het zo?’ (‘GroenLinks, or do we leave it this way?’). Regarding all issues there is first described why the current situation is intolerable and undesirable, and then a description of the solution as proposed by GroenLinks. The consequences of the programme of GroenLinks are illustrated by three charts from the Central Planning Bureau (CPB), which show the results of their policy proposals for the CO2-emission, the consumer purchasing power and the amount of extra jobs. The phraseology is quite catchy, with headings like ‘From waste to sustainability’ and ‘From writing off to participating’. However, there are also more philosophic phrases like ‘The progress that promised us prosperity, is harming the future of our children’. Although clearly alternatives are proposed, it is presented as a choice to the voter what to do. As is it obvious what GroenLinks thinks should be done, the alternatives are not always concrete – as in the election programme: for example, the booklet says that ‘GroenLinks invests strongly in the social service sector. More and better home help, extra nurses’. How much they are investing, where

the money comes from and how many extra nurses we can expect is not made explicit.

The posters of the 1994-campaign (see Figure 1⁶) confirm the description that the emphasis lies on the problems, not on the solution. This suits the fact that in the election programme many subjects that GroenLinks opposes are mentioned. A picture of busy traffic with the question ‘Are we on the right track?’, of an industrial zone where waste products are emitted in the air with the question ‘Do you also turn vicious of that?’, of empty pasture with the words ‘Some people claim that the Netherlands are full’, of an elderly couple with the words ‘The losers’, of the military police attacking people with the words ‘In The Hague they know what young people feel’ and of a knife cutting through the abbreviations of the Disablement Insurance Act, Unemployment Insurance Act and the Old Age Pensions Act. What is lacking, and therefore a reason to describe their ideological presentation as quite amateurish at the same time, is that the party more often says what they don’t want instead of what they do want – and if they do, the description of the alternative is often rather

⁶ All images presented in the various Figures from here on are part of an election programme and/or –campaign. They have been obtained from the archives of the Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen (DNPP) in Groningen with permission of Paul Lucardie.

vague. In this part of the campaign, the presentation of GroenLinks is however quite professional as they present themselves ideologically on a broad range of issues⁷.

❖ Ideologically: the 2002 election programme

The first noticeable thing regarding the ideology of GroenLinks in this election programme is the title: instead of only saying that it is the programme of GroenLinks – as was the case in 1994 –, this time it is called ‘Abundance and discomfort’. Both words have a negative connotation, and it is not immediately clear what is in abundance and who are in discomfort because of what. However, this is directly explained in the first chapter, which is a general discussion of developments in the Netherlands and the world in general, the principles of GroenLinks, and their ideas, proposals and solutions⁸. This already gives the reader the impression that the party is trying to present its programme in a coherent and comprehensible way, and in touch with current societal developments and problems. The chapter explains what the party means by abundance and discomfort by means of pointing to concrete problems and recent developments. The presentation of the ideology is thus strongly embedded in topicality, which shows that the party is not living in its own world but is aware of what is going on. The whole document contains references to concrete problems and developments. In this sense, the presentation of the ideology is thus fairly professional – at least compared to the campaign of 1994.

The ideology is presented as a coherent whole. Constantly different principles and subjects are connected and links are being explained. The document is constructed following the four principles of GroenLinks as mentioned in the introduction: sustainability, justice, openness and solidarity. Within the different chapters all kinds of issues are discussed in relation to the principles. We certainly cannot accuse GroenLinks of being a one-issue party focusing only on Green issues; quite the contrary, sometimes you have to look carefully in order to find ecological arguments⁹. However, it might be unfair to accuse GroenLinks of neglecting ecological issues; the chapter about the principle ‘sustainability’ is all about Green issues, and it is mentioned every now and then in the other chapters¹⁰. This shows that GroenLinks is not exclusively focusing on their ‘Greenness’. Because of that we can say that GroenLinks has become more professional by presenting a broad, comprehensive, coherent

⁷ And as the campaign itself as well as the campaign plan (GroenLinks/b, 1994: 11) show, the ‘Green’ as well as the ‘left’ are present in the core message regarding content: ‘the quality of our everyday surroundings’ as the interpretation of Green, and ‘humanity, human values’ as the interpretation of left.

⁸ ‘In this introductory chapter, GroenLinks gives its vision on recent societal and political developments in the Netherlands and in the world’ (p. 4)

⁹ For example, in the (short) introduction written by the chairman of the programme committee and the chairwoman of GroenLinks, only the ‘blind spot of the Purple government for environment and liveability’ and a ‘sustainable economy’ are mentioned, but the rest of the introduction refers to issues that reflect more the ‘left’ aspect of GroenLinks.

¹⁰ However, an independent committee did conclude in their 2007-report that ‘the party insufficiently passes the urgency of the ecological question on to the voters’ (GroenLinks/f, 2007: 4). It also says that because until then ‘GroenLinks particularly calls for voting ‘left’ instead of voting ‘GREENleft’’, they advise that ‘It would be beneficial for GroenLinks to emphasize the differences with other left-wing parties more’ (ibid: 5) – by which they mean, emphasizing the Green element more.

ideology. It might however at the same time be too broad and too little Green for some people – and damaging the uniqueness of the Green message. However, we can conclude that regarding the coherency of their message GroenLinks can by now be characterized as professional as well.

What strikes the most attention compared to the earlier programme and manifesto, is the way in which the discussion of issues has been extended. Every paragraph starts with figures about a subject or the results of recent research, and a discussion of different elements that relate to the subject. Then several concrete plans are worked out: detailed proposals, programs and target figures. As a result, various new subjects have become part of the ideology. A lot of issues are discussed as new or more detailed versions of other proposals or because over time new issues have arrived on the political scenery¹¹. Also, proposals and stances are now presented in a different way. For example: whereas the party wrote in 1994 very negatively about industrial estates, they now propose to ‘build new industrial estates carbon-neutral by optimal effort of energy saving and sustainable energy’ (p. 11). In the discussion of Green issues the emphasis shifted to new types of energy, innovation, a sustainable economy and ways in which current processes can be ‘Greened’ (p. 10). In short, the GroenLinks-ideology is presented by concrete proposals for changing society. Thereby the basic principles of society are implicitly ‘accepted’. Issues of sexuality and diversity are now mentioned in another context, for example ‘projects in order to advance the safety of homosexuals in their everyday surroundings (p. 41). We can conclude that the ideological presentation of GroenLinks has professionalized because of enhanced coherency, topicality and the integration and renewal of earlier proposals in the functioning of society.

❖ Ideologically: the 2002-campaign

The GroenLinks-campaign for the parliamentary elections of 2002 was organized around the slogan ‘Choose for a new balance’ (see Figure 2). This does not directly indicate what is meant ideologically (just like the title of the election programme), it only suggests that the ‘current equilibrium’ is not the way GroenLinks wants it to be. The caption explains that GroenLinks prefers a new equilibrium ‘between environment and economy, between poor and rich, between work and the personal’. The fact that the environment and the economy are linked emphasizes that



Figure 3: main poster of the 2002-campaign

¹¹ For example the ‘differentiated kilometre-tax’ (p. 12), ‘dispensing with tax breaks for leased cars’ (p. 13), ‘domestic flights are no longer allowed’ (p. 14), an ‘open space tax’ (p. 15), ‘ending the bio-industry’ (p. 18), the risk of ‘dehydration’ besides environmental pollution (p. 19), completely new is an extensive chapter about education resulting in many new, specific proposals such as a ‘study-tax’ (p. 28), constitutional testing (p. 44), there is a paragraph about the ‘virtual reality’ (p. 45-47), and there are also paragraphs about the ‘Palestinian state’ (p. 50) and the colonial history of the Netherlands (p. 52).

GroenLinks is in its presentation explicitly integrating 'Green' issues with other subjects.

In the 2002-booklet the consequences of the financial policy of the 'purple' governments are emphasized: 'After eight purple years financially many people are doing well. But the social services and education are in a deplorable state. Nature and the environment often come at the bottom of the list. The free market of 'purple' has resulted particularly in chaos'. This shows GroenLinks is presenting its ideology in close connection to recent (political) developments. The brochure is divided in several paragraphs, that are each presented by one of the candidates of the GroenLinks-list. What is notable is that the headings ('sustainable', 'honest', 'solidary', 'just' and 'open') do not indicate the subjects of the paragraphs, but are character traits suggested to suit the various GroenLinks-politicians¹².

The manner in which the ideology is presented clearly differs from the 1994-campaign. Sentences are shorter and as a result clearer¹³. Also a more modern phraseology is utilized, like 'GroenLinks invests in sustainable alternatives'. The fact that GroenLinks wants to change things, or as is literally written in the brochure, 'GroenLinks wants to turn the tide!' is still emphasized. Their ideas are well thought-out and feasible, expressed through sentences such as 'Worked-out plans to enlarge the grip from the government on the NS are ready'¹⁴. Although by saying this sometimes things remain a bit vague – for example, what does 'investing' mean and where does the money to do so come from – it is clear that they try to convince people of the realism of their plans. The emphasis in this campaign is thus less on the problems GroenLinks sees regarding the current situation, and more on the fact that they want to change things. This can be considered as more professional, just like the fact that even in the brochure a very broad range of subjects is treated.

❖ Ideologically: the 2008 manifesto

The introduction of the manifesto starts with the comment that 'GroenLinks still does not have one leading ideology or theory about society, but several ideals' (p. 4). By mentioning this the party is emphasizing the continuity in their approach. Content-wise, however, the first points of departure are in this document no longer the general objectives of GroenLinks but directly their main ecological principles. In general these have remained the same, but they are further elaborated upon in the direction of more (specific) issues and examples like 'sustainable agriculture, environment-friendly mobility and production of renewable energy', 'Green investments and innovation' and 'our Green, social and animal-friendly economy' (p. 6). Also new is the naming that 'Green is also nearby' in the

¹² In the paragraphs themselves a broad range of subjects is discussed; respectively traffic, the environment, agriculture and animals, international cooperation, refugees, social service, work, safety and public services.

¹³ For example 'Better public transportation, more nature and solar- and wind energy'.

¹⁴ Another example is the following, also from the brochure: 'GroenLinks has ambitious, yet practicable plans. Our programme has a solid financial basis. We do not choose for tax reduction that costs billions and end up particularly at the people that are doing well financially. We choose for investments in good public services for everybody'.

sense of one's everyday surroundings (p. 5). The document treats a broader range of issues than the first manifesto¹⁵. Often points are more nuanced or presented in a more positive, constructive manner, like the fact that 'we fully choose for embedding the Netherlands in the European Union' (p. 11) without directly adding a list of prerequisites. Another example is that 'military intervention is only a last resort, if it is at the same time the beginning of reconciliation and reconstruction' (p. 10), which is much more moderate than the earlier striving for a total and worldwide disarmament and the strong disapproval of 'peace-enforcing'. The party is thus presenting itself no longer as radically pacifist. Striking is as well that the dissolution of alliances like NATO has disappeared from the manifesto; instead, the 'necessity of worldwide cooperation' (p. 11) is emphasized, in addition to which a preference for the UN is articulated.

It is therefore reasonable to say that ideologically GroenLinks presents itself through the new party manifesto both less critical and on a broader range of subjects, which are indicators of professionalization. Despite the fact that it is emphasized that they do not have an absolute ideology, they try to be complete and present a coherent picture. Several radical elements, like abandoning NATO, have disappeared from the document. The party is ideologically presenting itself on roughly the same principles as before, but they are described and worked-out in a more modernized and up-to-date manner. By doing so they demonstrate their ideas are realistic. The salience of issues is taken into account, which is a clear sign of professionalization as well: 'trendy' topics like the scarcity of natural resources, Green investments and environment-friendly mobility are integrated into their basic approach towards ecology. Highly politicized issues like immigration are approached more cautiously¹⁶. This way of providing a coherent ideology that is obviously closely connected to actual politics is a clear sign of a professionalization.

❖ Ideologically: the 2010 election programme

Looking at the table of contents, GroenLinks is presenting its ideology again as a broad story concerning all kinds of issues. As a reader you might even start wondering what happened to the 'Green' part of GroenLinks, as the word 'Green' is only used in the title of chapter 2, 'Green economy'. The only other title the reader might expect to be about Green issues is chapter 5, 'Space to live' – yet 'Green' is not mentioned explicitly¹⁷. Several new subjects have appeared, as the Green issues are presented as especially relevant in relation to the economy. Also, a chapter about 'education' appears for the

¹⁵ There are also completely new elements like the fact that 'GroenLinks is an advocate of a republic' and that they want an 'administration that stands firm for the accessibility, affordability and quality of the public services' (p. 9)

¹⁶ Instead of plying for a generous immigration policy for the growing flow of refugees and asylum seekers, in a more hesitant way the party only wants to be 'a warm home to people that had to flee hearth and home' (p. 8). The addition that in the society proposed by GroenLinks 'people are not afraid of migrants' refers quite directly to the way in which immigration issues have been politicized.

¹⁷ The document starts with an introduction called 'ready for the future', and then chapters are about 'The Netherlands, country of the world', 'Green economy', 'Work for everyone', 'More education', 'Space to live', 'Directing care', 'Living together liberally', 'Better government' and 'Solid and solidary'.

first time. A new buzzword regarding issues of society and living together is introduced: 'vrijzinnig', translated at best with 'liberal' or 'free-thinking'.

This broadness and new way of presenting various issues can be found throughout the whole document. The introduction once again emphasizes the coherence of the ideology: 'left and Green reforms are the alternative' (p. 5). The programme truly is quite coherent, as many issues are presented as intertwined and interrelated. GroenLinks is stressing this quite firmly¹⁸: they are trying to show that the different ideas they present are all part of the same 'ideology' and thus part of the same solution. The Green issue does get relatively little attention on its own, but is related to issues of economy and described in terms like 'new energy' (p. 13) and 'sustainability'. The fact that the first of the concrete points about it go under the heading 'Green pays off' (p. 14) illustrates that Green issues are presented not as inherently valuable, but always in relation to other issues. This might be considered as a loss of uniqueness for a Green party, but the all-embracing interconnectedness of issues is an indicator of professionalism.

As in the earlier election programmes GroenLinks connects ideals with current problems and concrete measures. This is another indicator of professionalization. The presentation of many proposals is renewed and more detailed¹⁹. What stands out is the plea for measuring the 'gross national luck' of countries instead of their 'gross national product' (p. 6)²⁰. Besides the new proposals often nuances have changed, for example in the chapter about the labour market²¹. The emphasis in the presentation and thus in the type of arguments has shifted from the dichotomy labourers-people without jobs to the different types of people that (could) work. Whereas there is debate about whether this is a change towards a less left-wing and more liberal socio-economic stance, what is undisputable is that GroenLinks is thus trying to show that their programme concerns all kinds of, as well as ever more people.

What is notable is that in the document economic issues play a large role. As the Netherlands were experiencing a severe economic crisis at the time of these elections, this is a sign that GroenLinks is emphasizing the link with current events and the realism of the alternatives proposed. And whereas this was already the case in the election programme of 1994 as well, the start of the document is very international as issues of globalization, European and global cooperation, and

¹⁸ See for example also: 'GroenLinks not only wants to deal with the financial and the economic crisis, but immediately with the climate crisis and the imminent scarcity of nourishment, energy and raw materials as well' (p. 6).

¹⁹ Some of the issues that cannot be found in earlier election programmes are a 'levy on banks' (p. 5), a paragraph about meat consumption (p. 13), a plea for a 'law publicity of production and chains' (p. 16) as well as a 'law on freedom of information' (p. 43), and paragraphs about electric driving (p. 27), 'scheeffhuren', the fact that people live in social rental homes who have a relatively high income (p. 28), and bullying (p. 33). The chapter about better government now also contains proposals like 'better coordinating the activities of various government agencies with one another' (p. 41).

²⁰ Whereas this has a sense of unrealism around it, it is presented as an idea 'Nobel prize winners and governments' are working upon as a broader definition of welfare (p. 5): by presenting it in this way, GroenLinks is clearly trying to show that it is a serious subject.

²¹ The emphasis is on the fact that people feel the need for more 'flexibility' in their jobs (p. 19).

peace and security are all integrated in the first chapter²². More generally, the document is interlarded with references to issues that can be dealt with in a European instead of a national context. This ‘internationalization’ should be regarded as a professionalization as well. It is a way of broadening the horizon of the party in the sense of adjusting to trends of globalization and Europeanization. Also regarding issues of migration, GroenLinks is taking the salience of issues into account²³. The other issue that has the upper hand besides the ‘sustainable economy’ is the already mentioned issue of ‘vrijzinnigheid’, which can only be unsatisfactorily translated as ‘free-thinking liberalism’. This new idea about how to live together is entirely absent from the earlier election programmes. It has to do with approaching diversity, religion and sexuality. Concrete issues like migration are presented by GroenLinks as problems part of a larger vision of society²⁴. As such, it is another example of professionalism that the party is trying to make sure that by taking on new issues the coherence of the story is maintained – while even looking beyond the own country.

❖ Ideologically: the 2010-campaign

The posters of the 2010 campaign are centred around the slogan ‘Ready for the future’ (see Figure 3), with the addition ‘Green works’. The flyers consist of two parts: one that says, in capital ‘what we stand for’ and the other about what GroenLinks has achieved during the last couple of years. That the ideological presentation is not only directed to-



Figure 4: Main slogan of the 2010-campaign

wards the future but that is also illustrating what has been achieved is another new step that can be characterized as a professionalization. It shows that the party is efficient and trustworthy, really capable to implement their ideas.

What GroenLinks stands for is summarized in three short sentences: ‘GroenLinks is Green’, ‘GroenLinks is social’ and ‘GroenLinks is honest’. The Green issue comes first, but is once again presented in an integrated manner, namely by referring to the climate, clean energy, new, sustainable techniques and Green neighbourhoods. By ‘social’ they mean equal opportunities, good jobs, and – something new – : the development of talent. The word ‘honest’ is once again not a description of the subject but a characteristic GroenLinks wants people to associate with them: the paragraph says that ‘We choose for clear standpoints and dare to look over boundaries’. By describing their own

²² Regarding the last issue, specific passages are taken up like ‘the Netherlands will not leave Afghanistan alone’ (p. 11).

²³ Whereas earlier on migration was mainly regarded from a positive perspective, it is now mentioned that ‘we should be careful in identifying and dealing with the problems regarding migration’ (p. 7).

²⁴ Other minor adjustments in ideology are that GroenLinks no longer wants to leave (health)care to market forces (p. 6), they now want all schools to be ‘broad schools’ (p. 7) and they no longer want a chosen queen, but they want the Netherlands to become a republic with a chosen head of state (p. 43). Remarkable as well is that the proposal for a (corrective) referendum has disappeared in the national context, as they only propose ‘Europe-wide corrective referenda’ (p. 42).

standpoints as ‘clear’, GroenLinks emphasizes that what they stand for is evident and explicit. What stands out is that the flyers do not really say much about what GroenLinks wants to do, what their concrete plans are, but because of the explicit manner in which GroenLinks says that they are clear, that they truly stand for things, it is easy not even to notice that. What is new is that in the presentation a lot of attention is devoted to things GroenLinks has already achieved. By doing so GroenLinks demonstrates both that there is continuity in their ideology and that they are actually able to achieve things²⁵. The fact that no concrete plans are mentioned is compensated for in the presentation by emphasizing, even more than in 2002, the realism of the GroenLinks-ideology²⁶. It is clear that the attention is strategically focused on coming across as a government-worthy party that has what it takes to take government responsibility. As a result, the ideological presentation is less extensive and more directed towards convincing voters of the realism, applicability and successful implementation of the GroenLinks-ideology: it has become very professional.

❖ Summarizing the development of GroenLinks’ ideological presentation

As the above shows, there are several clear developments in the ideological presentation of GroenLinks – in other words, their external political approach has ideologically been professionalized over the years in several respects. From the very start, as the name says, GroenLinks tried to combine a Green and left ideology. In this sense they have become more professional as the linkages have developed from sometimes forced and ad hoc towards more self-evident and inextricably intertwined. However, the ideological presentation of GroenLinks has also become more professional in the sense that the topicality and salience of issues is clearly integrated in the way they are presented. In addition to that, societal developments and trends such as Europeanization are more and more taken into account. What stands out the most, however, is the way in which the ideas and proposals are actually presented: this evolved from a more abstract and negative attitude towards a more constructive and detailed approach in which alternatives are not only proposed but also presented in a detailed manner²⁷. By doing so GroenLinks increasingly succeeded in presenting their ideology as a coherent whole that is feasible and realistic, in such a way that the voter could get a relatively clear impression of what the consequences of choices are. Besides being more detailed, proposals are more clear and comprehensible and election programmes are more focused and as a result shorter.

²⁵ Issues thereby referred to are more Green in neighbourhoods, better air quality, a European directive against discrimination, the European agreement to achieve 20% sustainable energy in 2020, and a law that guarantees the right to part-time work. What stands out is that there are no economic or financial measures mentioned here.

²⁶ A flyer says: ‘GroenLinks works on the future. Practical and feasible plans are badly needed as an answer to the economic crisis and the climate change. Therefore we choose for new jobs and a healthy and safe environment for everybody’.

²⁷ Lucardie confirms this in an interview, based on the analyses of the election programmes he conducted as part of one of his research projects: ‘It is not so much or just a matter of moderation, but issues are being worked out more seriously as well’.

6.3 The organizational presentation of GroenLinks

❖ Organizationally: the 1991 manifesto

What is conspicuous is that GroenLinks is presents itself as a rather independent political organization, yet it is explicitly mentioned that GroenLinks does consider itself ‘a political movement covering a broader range than just the parliamentary-political’ (p. 15). They explicitly express their willingness to cooperate with ‘other progressive powers in society’, in order to attack the current power relations in society that hinder Green politics and maintain social inequality. They also explicitly refer to their ambition to connect with the activities of social organizations (p. 15). Regarding internal organization, at the very beginning of the document it is already emphasized that it is the congress of GroenLinks that has approved the propositions presented in the manifesto (p. 3). They consider themselves as a ‘mature political movement’ that is more than an ‘electoral association based on a collection of pragmatic goals and ad hoc-measures’ (p. 3). As the manifesto is a very serious document and the arguments developed are quite complicated and described in what could be called an ‘intellectual’ way, this shows GroenLinks is presenting itself as a party for which content is by far the most important thing.

We can thus conclude that organizationally GroenLinks is not presented as amateurish as one might expect from a recently established party. The party is professional in the sense of delivering an own message, but ‘between the lines’ one can read that in fact they are a political organ of several interest groups (feminists, anti-nuclear groups, anti-discrimination groups etc.) and that they have tried their best to integrate the ideologies from the four different parties they originate from. It would be incorrect to say that organizationally the external political approach of GroenLinks is purely amateur, but it is not very professional either in the sense of not having clear own image of the party as an independent organization.

❖ Organizationally: the 1994 election programme

In this election programme the organization of GroenLinks is presented as a broad, rooted and unanimous whole: ‘It is this attitude which all GroenLinks-representatives, whether on the local level, in The Hague or in Brussels, have in common’ (p. 2). The sentence ‘with this political idea of progress GroenLinks is part of a broad movement of Green progressive parties in Europe’ (p. 5), it is suggested that the party organization does not stand on itself but is part of a larger whole. Presenting the organization in this way could be interpreted as a sign of reliability and consistency. They emphasize as well that in the Second Chamber GroenLinks does not structurally cooperate with specific other parties, but that they work with others in varying associations. Furthermore it is emphasized that ‘the functioning of the parliamentary faction was characterized by openness’ and that ‘external expertise is being utilized more and more frequently’ (p. 6). Besides being independent but willing to cooper-

ate, they thus also present themselves as an ‘open’ party in parliament that is professional in the sense of relying on experts. It is also announced that on the list of candidates there will be room again for ‘external candidates’, and that non-members of GroenLinks will be ‘recruited based on their qualities and social engagement’ (p. 6). This means that in addition to being transparent about the functioning of the party, GroenLinks wants to prove they are also in the sense of attracting new people that have skills and knowledge. This is a clear indicator of professionalism as well, as they are showing they are not some inward-looking party relying fully on the accidental skills and knowledge of insiders and members.

❖ Organizationally: the 1994-campaign

The front of the booklet, also the main campaign poster (see Figure 4), shows the duo-party leaders, Ina Brouwer and Mohammed Rabbae. Jointly looking in the camera in a very friendly manner, while dressed neatly – although Rabbae is wearing a suit without a tie – GroenLinks is presenting the people heading the list in a peaceful, confidence-building way²⁸. The slogan ‘GroenLinks counts for two’ is clearly a pun referring to the party-leadership. In the presentation it thus is very much emphasized that GroenLinks is represented by two people, and because of that differs from other parties. At the back of the booklet several candidates of GroenLinks are presented with a small picture and description of their current job.

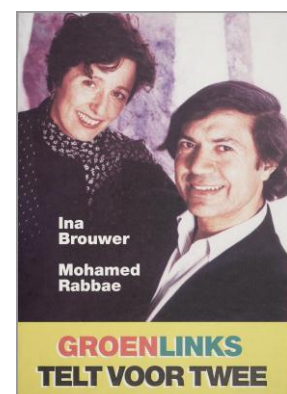


Figure 5: main poster of the 1994-campaign

Notable as well is that part of the booklet is a voucher that invites people either to order an information kit or to become a member of GroenLinks. By having this as part of the booklet it is made clear that GroenLinks is an open organization that welcomes new members. Whereas the duo-party leadership is in itself not either amateurish or professional, in the Netherlands it was at least not very common and has become even more rare over time. The fact that the party is presenting itself as an organization you can become a member of is typical for Green parties for who internal party democracy is characteristic. The organizational presentation during this campaign is not totally amateur nor professional: what stands out is the fact that Rabbae and Brouwer are depicted prominently on the poster, but it does seem a bit old-fashioned and they are more presented as nice people than as serious and capable politicians that will fulfil the promises of the election programme.

²⁸ A document called ‘Profile duo-party leaders’ (GroenLinks/c, 1994: 1) argues that the strongest point of the duo is the combination; of a man and a woman, of a ‘Dutchwoman’ and a migrant, and of a politician with experience and one with societal rootedness. It is argued that “the combination must especially be thought of as sympathetic” (ibid.: 1).

❖ Organizationally: the 2002 election programme

Very little attention is paid to the party organization of GroenLinks in the 2002-programme. The organization is mentioned only in the short introduction, as the programme committee writes about the process that preceded the document: ‘Members, study groups, employees and representatives of GroenLinks have contributed a lot’. Out of the description that ‘The programme committee has incorporated the results of the many debates, e-mail discussions and advices as good as possible’ the reader can derive the conclusion that GroenLinks is a democratic party organization in which all kinds of people can cooperate in decision-making processes. However, this indication might easily be overlooked. The last sentence that relates to the party organization says ‘The members have decided on and accepted the election programme at the programme-congress in January 2002’; as a result one knows that it is the members that take the final decisions regarding election programmes.

The fact that so little attention is paid to the party organization is revealing. The reader, especially when comparing this programme to the programme of 1994, does not know much, which might be interpreted as a fact that the internal party organization has lost some of its significance – or is at least considered as less important to present to the reader. The importance of members, discussion, political engagement of people etcetera is clearly not something the party wants to emphasize. This is specifically notable if one has in mind that the chapter ‘democracy and society’ is all about how important it is for people to participate actively in decision-making that affects them, resulting in a GroenLinks-proposal of an ‘Agenda for radical democratization’ (p. 43). Because of the little attention paid to the party organization, it is difficult to assess how professional GroenLinks is. However, one might say that a professional party organization would depict a clear picture of who they are. As a result, GroenLinks seems not to have become much more professional in this regard in the course of their first decade.

❖ Organizationally: the 2002-campaign

There is a large contrast between the election programme and the remaining elements of the 2002-



GROENLINKS
KIES VOOR EEN NIEUW EVENWICHT

Figure 6: main poster of the 2002-campaign

campaign. By introducing a candidate-parliamentarian in every paragraph of the campaign brochure, using a photograph of the candidate, the variety of the Groenlinks-politicians – as representatives of the party organization – is emphasized. The at that time familiar face of party leader Paul Rosenmöller gets a lot of attention as well. One of the pages of the brochure is, as one of the posters, a black-and-white picture of the friendly, smiling face of Paul Rosenmöller with a red pencil in his hands (see Figure 5). GroenLinks thus clearly takes advantage of the familiarity of Rosenmöller for the presentation of the

party organization²⁹. There is a resemblance with the picture of Rabbae and Brouwer in the sense that he is also presented in a very friendly, confidence-building and calm manner. Just like Rabbae, he is wearing a suit and a white shirt, without a tie. What is different is that the focus is fully on his face, and the picture is black-and-white, with the exception of the red pencil. This could be interpreted very literally as a visual reproduction of the slogan: 'choose' as reflected by the red pencil, and Rosenmöller as the person representing 'a new balance'.

As already mentioned regarding the ideological presentation in this campaign, the various headings of the brochure are words that can be considered as character traits of the various GroenLinks-candidates that are quoted regarding the subsequent issues. This emphasizes how the various 'faces of GroenLinks' are utilized not only to represent the organization but also to convince the reader ideologically. The only other way in which in the presentation attention is paid to GroenLinks as an organization is, just like in 1994, by explicitly offering the reader the possibility to request for information or become a member. This time less space has been devoted to this element³⁰. There are no referrals to the internal party democracy or possibilities to participate in the party, or to participatory processes within the party. In short, we can say that GroenLinks still is not amateur nor professional regarding their organizational presentation. Whereas it might be considered more amateur that less attention is paid to the internal party democracy, the way in which the politicians in general and Paul Rosenmöller specifically are utilized to represent the party is more professional.

❖ Organizationally: the 2008 manifesto

The renewed manifesto starts with the fact that the 'congress of the future' took the final decision about the renewed party manifesto, but the first sentence of the preface emphasizes that thousands of members as well as outsiders have joined the 1.5 year lasting 'open discussion' about the future of the party (p. 3). However, in the rest of the document, little attention is paid to the party as an organization³¹. The movements the party is related to are mentioned, but only on the eighth page. Later on, GroenLinks presents itself expressly as an 'open party' consisting of administrators and representatives from a 'diverse plumage' (p. 8). Whereas in the original manifesto the within-party democracy and importance of members received quite some attention, the emphasis has now shifted to ensuring the transparency of the party and to the people representing the party. In this sense the party is thus presented as an organ of trustworthy political professionals that can be checked upon by members or outsiders, instead of being a bottom-up party in which the representatives are not more than just spokespersons. However, emphasizing that they employ 'openness and honesty'

²⁹ The outcome of research on the (potential) voters of GroenLinks probably also played a role in this: it showed that Paul Rosenmöller was judged very positively and turned out to be seen as a sincere and reliable politician (Kunst et al., 1997: 38).

³⁰ However; there is not a full-page form that can be filled in and posted, but only two lines saying how to come into contact with the party.

³¹ The importance of within-party debate is nevertheless emphasized as well, resulting in 'together achieved political standpoints and decisions' (p. 8)

towards the 'organizations directly surrounding' them and 'transparency about the way in which we take decisions' insinuates that the party politicians themselves take the decisions. Yet it is also mentioned that they are taking the input of other people and organizations into account – but this differs from the party making decisions collectively and in a true dialogue with party activists. This suggests a professionalization in the sense that the decision-making processes of the organization have become more efficient. This despite the fact that the democratic quality of the party might be diminished by that development.

It is mentioned that 'the recognisability of politicians has become more important for voters than holding on to ideological programmes'. The party considers this development as a 'sign of emancipation' (p. 10). As the party manifesto is obviously not the right medium for presenting the party politicians, this might nevertheless be considered as an indirect way of emphasizing the importance of (the personality of) politicians in general – and thus for GroenLinks as well. Mentioning that 'our representatives in and outside the parliament cooperate with others with diverse means, thereby enjoying the confidence of the party' (p. 10) means emphasizing the fact that GroenLinks is by now relying quite heavily – at least more than before – on representatives. In this document the party is presented organizationally more professional, by letting go a bit of the emphasis on internal democracy, loosening a bit regarding the focus on content and ideology and presenting the party as an efficient organization.

❖ Organizationally: the 2010 election programme

As in the other programmes, little attention is paid to the party as an organization. As there is no longer an introductory writing from the programme committee, the reader does not gain any insight into the writing-process of the programme. Only in the colophon, on the last page of the document, we can read that 'the foundation for this election programme is laid by the programme committee' and that 'the final election programme has been decided on at 18 April 2010 by the congress of GroenLinks' (p. 47). In the document itself we can read that 'GroenLinks is an ally of creative and Green entrepreneurs, active employees and conscious citizens that are in front of the Green revolution' (p. 5). The word 'ally' suggests that GroenLinks is not intimately related to these (individual) people but an independent political organization willing to support others. Social movements are not mentioned at all, so no link is suggested with them anymore.

The front page of the document consists of a full-page picture of the party leader Femke Halsema. This clearly shows that in presenting the party the face of the woman strongly associated with GroenLinks has become very important. Taking advantage of the fact that Halsema was heading the list of candidates for the third time and that she was quite very well-known as chairwoman of the parliamentary party, she was inextricably linked to the organization of GroenLinks. It is very profes-

sional of GroenLinks to present its organization as independent in relation to its well-known politicians. It shows that the party has acknowledged that a political party is not only about ideas, but that to be successful recognizing and trusting its politicians is very important as well.

❖ Organizationally: the 2010-campaign

It is plainly clear that with this campaign GroenLinks has decided to present itself by means of party leader Femke Halsema. She is the face of the party, well-known and popular with a great audience³².

On the poster (see Figure 6) she is portrayed right in line with the slogan ‘Ready for the future’: we



Figure 7: main poster of the 2010-campaign

see a seriously looking Femke Halsema dressed in a neat grey suit-jacket and wearing decent make-up; in short, as a refined appearance. The organization and ideology of GroenLinks seem in this campaign subordinate to the strategic presentation of the party. The achievements of the party are emphasized in the campaign; the successes of the party receives quite a lot of attention³³. GroenLinks is presented as a ‘party of politicians’ at all levels who truly achieve things and influence what is happening. On the other hand, the back side of one of the flyers says in capitals ‘Your party of the future?’ and presents the party as a membership organization. This much attention was never before devoted to the possibilities of being a member: ‘If you want to support GroenLinks as a

member that will bring you, as well as ourselves, a lot’. There is a strong focus on the individual choice of the (future) members regarding what they want to do and contribute³⁴. GroenLinks is now thus presented professionally as a member-organization, and as a party that has achieved a lot. The party emphasizes that it has the people with the capacity to bring about things and realize the GroenLinks-ideas.

❖ Summarizing the development of GroenLinks’ organizational presentation

The emphasis of the organizational presentation of GroenLinks shifted from the organization as a democratic party, related to various social movements with roots in its preceding parties, to an independent organization that no longer has permanent allies. Whereas – albeit a lot less than one might have expected – the internal party democracy did gain some attention, this is no longer a fundamental characteristic of the party. Instead, the terminology of ‘transparency’ and ‘openness’ is often em-

³² As the 2010 campaign plan argues: ‘The image of Femke is cast-iron. She is confidence-building, intelligent, modern, directed towards cooperation, sharp when necessary. She radiates authority and leadership’ (GroenLinks/g, 2010: 1).

³³ A flyer for example says: ‘GroenLinks is a party of politicians who translate goals into concrete plans, in city councils, provinces and parliaments. We have proved ourselves to be a constructive opposition party, but also as a party that can handle responsibility by delivering aldermen and delegates in the provinces’.

³⁴ ‘You decide yourself in what way you want to be a member of GroenLinks. You can consider your support purely as support for our ideas. Besides, it is also possible to become active as a volunteer, politician or member of a board and you can take part in deciding on the outlines of the GroenLinks-politics. However you want to fill in your membership: you are very welcome!’

ployed. The emphasis has, in short, shifted from bottom-up towards more top-down decision-making procedures – under the condition of openness. Although GroenLinks was regarding organizational presentation for a long time neither very amateur nor highly professional, during the last decade the changes can be characterized as a professionalization. By referring to words such as ‘transparency’ it is suggested that the decision-making process is efficient and members are free to respond to and even criticize decisions. They are however no longer presented as the people participating in (or even initiating) decision-making processes of the party – which can be characterized as a professionalization as well.

6.4 The strategic presentation of GroenLinks

❖ Strategically: the 1991 manifesto

Of this manifesto one chapter is explicitly devoted to ‘strategy’: it describes how the party approaches politics. The bottom line is that GroenLinks chose a ‘radical reform strategy’ in order to achieve fundamental societal change, and that it has ‘radical orientations that function as a critical norm’ (p. 15). They do thereby emphasize that they realize that an ideology aiming at total and definitive overthrow of the existing system does not acknowledge that some things deserve to be defended, and that they therefore think and act proceeding from the ‘current society’ (p. 14). This shows that the party does accept society: GroenLinks is not a radical protest party criticizing established politics. Especially striking is the fact that ‘taking responsibility’ in the sense of participating in government is not rejected beforehand (p. 14)³⁵. This is a sign that the party is, despite being quite young, serious and thus quite professional in the sense of being willing to take responsibility.

Despite that also various quite radical elements of GroenLinks can be recognized in the party manifesto, especially regarding the phraseology chosen³⁶. In addition to this phraseology they also oppose established politics content-wise quite radically³⁷. Several truly protest-elements can be discerned, as the party is pleading against the established parties and against the way society, politics

³⁵ As at the local level it had by then already been proved that coalitions with others are possible to realize their goals via the administration, they say they are ‘open to taking governmental responsibility as there is a realistic perspective to achieve GroenLinks-goals’ (p. 16).

³⁶ They are referring to the ‘capitalist mode of production’ whose technological and industrial developments have led to ‘coarse forms of environment destruction’ (p. 4); to the fact that the ‘limitless trust in the possibilities of technological renewal’ is the basis of a ‘dangerous politics of illusion’ (p. 6); that pollutant sectors will have to diminish or disappear in order to create a ‘recycle economy’ (p. 6); that they choose for a ‘far-reaching redistribution’ of paid and unpaid labour and thus for the ‘abolishment of the division of labour of the sexes’ (p. 11); that they primary choose ‘nonviolent means’ for the solving of international conflicts (p. 12) and are dedicated to a ‘nonviolent politics of peace’ (p. 13).

³⁷ They propose ‘another attitude towards nature and the environment’ (p. 4); they point to ‘poignant problems’ like the ‘destruction of the environment’ and ‘the continued existence and coming into existence of new forms of poverty and dependence’ (p.4); that other parties, when it comes to the crunch, make environmental policy subordinate to other goals (p. 6); that GroenLinks positions itself against the ‘traditional growth model’ (p. 6); that the traditional liberal understanding of freedom is ‘inadequate to fully cover the pursuit of individual autonomy’ (p. 7); that ‘in our society a centralized planned economy is as unthinkable as the fiction of the free market’ (p. 9); that the decentralization of tasks to local governments and societal organizations should not, ‘as the CDA intends, lead to the restoration of traditional relations of dependency in families and neighbourhoods’ (p. 9); that the ‘current capitalist market economy is at odds with the economic order GroenLinks proposes’ (p. 10); that GroenLinks is ‘not a radical derivative of social-democracy, but an independent political movement’ (p. 14), taking an ‘own position at the left side of the political spectrum’ (p. 16).

and the economy are organized³⁸. Thereby sometimes the realism nevertheless is sacrificed for a quite radical idealism³⁹. Whereas the 1991 party manifesto is thus sometimes providing quite negative criticism to the way things are organized, at other times it is more moderate, not just 'anti' but focused on offering an alternative – although what they propose does not always come across as realistic. Strategically, they are thus also not purely amateur, but not very professional either.

❖ Strategically: the 1994 election programme

The first sentences of the introduction are quite revealing regarding the strategy presented by the party. The attitude of GroenLinks is described as the 'worried optimism' that characterizes the party. This could either be interpreted as a nuanced approach, or as an incomprehensible term revealing two different attitudes. According to the document 'the worried optimism of GroenLinks stems from a political position characterized by idealism as well as realism, by animation and eye for power' (p. 2). The strategy they decided to present is a twofold approach. On the one hand there is a more negative ('worried') and idealistic side driven by animation that we could characterize as more amateur; on the other hand is the more positive realism ('optimism'), with power as an important goal that can be characterized as more professional. This is reflected in the actual document itself, where more idealistic elements alternate with emphasis on the fact that solutions and alternatives have to be realistic. Although more 'reading between the lines', the way in which these two elements are combined feels a bit forced. For example, multiple times the importance of realism is explicitly emphasized, but at the same time not put into practice in the sense of concrete, realistic proposals⁴⁰. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that some of the points don't go together⁴¹. Also a lot of extra money seems necessary in order to be able to execute the plans⁴². Whereas GroenLinks tries to present itself as a party with a realistic programme, the details reveal that they might not be as realistic as they try to pretend. However, in several cases realistic consequences and details are taken into account.

Regarding phraseology, most sentences are quite long and complicated⁴³. They sometimes reveal

³⁸ The choice for this partial anti-attitude can at least in part be explained by the results of an exploratory examination of the identity and the image of GroenLinks conducted by IPM Research & Advice by order of GroenLinks in May 1993. One of the results says that (potential) voters of GroenLinks mainly have a negative image of politics in general (Nuyten & Associates, 1993: 7).

³⁹ For example as is stated that 'on the long term the pursuit of total and worldwide disarmament is central' (p. 17).

⁴⁰ An example is 'agricultural farming must in twenty-five years produce completely environment-friendly' (p. 26)

⁴¹ For example the 'governmental bureaucracy' (p. 50) is problematized, but at the same time one might wonder how much of a large increase in bureaucracy would arise if all the measures proposed – like 'a environment-audit: companies are obliged to make an annual public report on environment that is certified by an environment-accountant' (p. 30) – would be executed.

⁴² Like extra money that is proposed amongst others for foreign aid (p. 11), for subsidies for environment-projects (p. 30), for increasing the allowances for youngsters (p. 36), for increasing the salary of the staff of day-care centres (p. 40), for expanding (the salary of the staff of) homecare (p. 42), and even 'substantially more money for education' (p. 58).

⁴³ The party itself recognizes this in their evaluative study: "The ambitions of writing a programme on headlines, preceded by in essay-style written considerations have not been substantiated. (...) There was too little time to write a text of the required stylistic calibre and based on sufficient expertise regarding content. What was published was a 'conventional' programme that was on the one hand less contemplative and on the other more extensive than was intended" (GroenLinks/b, 1994: 18). And: "Not only have the election programme and the campaign not been bridged, also GroenLinks did not succeed in 'popularizing' its programme sufficiently" (ibid.: 37).

'anti-sentiments'⁴⁴, implicitly but also more explicit, for example as they write how 'GroenLinks does not expect much from continuing this coalition' (p. 6). They emphasize their opposition is 'critical and constructive' (p. 6), which shows that they present their strategy consequently as idealism combined with a sense of realism, in order to actually achieve something. The various parts of the programme differ in style. For example, the chapters on the European Union and financial and economic policy are written in much shorter sentences, less woolly language and more concrete proposals than the rest of the document. Short, catchy sentences are scarce, yet they are there⁴⁵.

The strategic presentation of the programme reveals a sense of seriousness; the document counts sixty-three pages of extensive explanations and discussions of issues the party considers to be important. Every chapter has several comprehensive sub-chapters, which then each have a list of central points. However, due to the lay-out as well, it is not easy to read the document and recognize the main arguments⁴⁶. The document is written in the same character size and in black. There are no pictures or illustrations, which reinforces the serious 'air' of the information. Obviously, readers are expected to be interested only in the content of the document and willing to read every single sentence of it. The title 'GroenLinks election programme 1994-1998 for the Second Chamber and the European Parliament' reinforces this. It is not catchy, nor summarizing the content of the document; but an informative title indicating the type of document. As a reader you start to wonder whether the presentation is based on conscious decisions or merely on coincidence. The fact that strategically there are multiple inconsistencies and discrepancies shows the strategic presentation is relatively amateur.

❖ Strategically: the 1994-campaign

The 1994 booklet shows that GroenLinks is trying to convince people that the current situation is intolerable. The words chosen to describe the situation as it demonstrates a clear anti-attitude⁴⁷. As mentioned in the paragraph about the ideological presentation, alternatives are presented. Because these are not always very detailed, they seem sometimes unrealistic and a bit naïve⁴⁸. However, GroenLinks is explicitly trying to get rid of that image: 'GroenLinks prefers to choose for the vulnera-

⁴⁴ Examples of this last point are seen in the choice of words like 'destruction of the environment' (p. 2), the 'superseded breadwinner principle' (p. 5), ending 'overarmament and military adventurism' (p. 9), 'finally taxing kerosene' (p. 25), that their alternatives yield substantially more than 'continuing with the 'throw away-society' and the 'clause-less growth-economy' (p. 37), that 'the elderly do no longer want to go to those homes for the elderly from the sixties' (p. 39) and the probability of voting for 'extreme-right parties with unsavoury ideas' (p. 50).

⁴⁵ Like 'Being old should not equal being redundant' and 'fair sharing is necessary' (p. 41)

⁴⁶ That is because the lists of central points are quite extensive themselves most of the time and there are many of them

⁴⁷ The booklet says: 'More people should work, it sounds unanimous. But in practice? Cutting in benefits of social security. Creating new jobs? Forget it'. A story about right-wing extremists in other countries is concluded with the warning text 'And in the Netherlands...'. Another paragraph says that 'Everybody feels that something is wrong. The environmental destruction continues and unemployment rates increase'. The seriousness of the situation is emphasized by phrases such as 'Everybody talks about the environment. There is no harm in saying that. Half of the trees are sic and die. Traffic-jams are getting longer. The air is getting more and more polluted'.

⁴⁸ The same counts for an advertisement in the newspaper de Volkskrant, about restoring the solidarity between the healthy and the chronically ill' in response to a proposal from the cabinet. It says that the Law Services for the Handicapped should be revised, and that 30.000 jobs must be created in the Social Workplaces, but not how they want to do that and why that is feasible.

ble adventure of change. Naïve idealism of starry-eyed idealists? Of course not: the engagement of sober realists! Who wants to cope with the problems of these times, should be willing to take big strides. And it is possible'⁴⁹. Thereby pointing to the graphs from the CPB shows that they are stressing the realism of the proposals. However, the proposals themselves are not very detailed.

One of the posters illustrates the 'fire' with which GroenLinks fights against the decisions of the current government. It is filled with red and Green chilli peppers (see Figure 7). Besides the metaphorical character of this picture⁵⁰, the fact that the peppers are red and Green obviously also a reference to the both red and Green characteristics of the GroenLinks-ideology. An interesting aspect of this campaign is that one of the flyers was published in the Turkish language. This shows that GroenLinks was strategically directing towards the group of potential immigrant voters⁵¹.



Figure 8: poster of the 1994-campaign

The fact that GroenLinks is presenting itself as different, and because of that also even a bit anti-establishment, is ever more visible in another large advertisement in *de Volkskrant* of 02/05/1994. It consists of a black-and-white picture of the plenary room of the Second Chamber, with the words 'Your chamber can use some colour'. Below it is a text that could be characterized as a lament about the dullness and greyness of the Dutch society and Dutch politics and the fact that established parties all look alike. The following sentence is illustrative: 'Parties argue: vote for us, and they mean that their hamburger has a little bit more ketchup on it. But who really tastes that?'. The solution is, according to GroenLinks, simple: 'Do you want a little less grey, than the 3rd of May you have the opportunity to show your colours. With one movement of the red pencil you give the Second Chamber a fresh and contrasting accent for the next four years'. The difference GroenLinks wants people to associate them with also neatly suits the slogan 'GroenLinks, or do we leave it this way?'⁵². It illustrates the relative amateurism of GroenLinks: they have an inclination towards pointing to what is wrong, and if an alternative is proposed it is not really worked out or substantiated why that is right.

⁴⁹ Another example: 'A sustainable society based on mutual solidarity is not a castle in the air but a reality'.

⁵⁰ The final report of a pre-test examining the slogans and posters of GroenLinks (Van der Zand, 1994: 9) demonstrates that people associate the peppers with 'hot' and 'fiery'; they also appreciated the choice of colours.

⁵¹ Although properly not part of the campaign of GroenLinks, it is interesting that in an interview with *Elsevier* (02/04/1999, p. 15-16) the main subject is the fact that 'We want to govern, even with the VVD'. The conversation with the party leaders focuses on the fact that GroenLinks wants to enter the government after the parliamentary elections. Brouwer and Rabbiae are thereby indicating that they are willing to compromise, even with the VVD. The conversation is about 'the tension between pragmatism and principles'. Explaining the willingness of GroenLinks to govern, Brouwer argues that 'Every party wants to have maximum influence. We want to participate in government if we can turn the tide with regard to the environment, social policy and the multicultural society'.

⁵² The 'campaign book' of the 1994 elections confirms that this was the central message of these elections: 'In short: GroenLinks is a party that is clearly different, but not a party that is having its head in the clouds' (GroenLinks/a, 1994: 5).

❖ Strategically: the 2002 election programme

The introduction of the document reveals the strategy chosen: it says that GroenLinks developed an ‘appealing programme’ (p. 3). This shows they chose to write and present it in such a way that it is attractive, inviting and also comprehensible⁵³. Another sentence says: ‘GroenLinks combines contagious ideals with attainable alternatives’ and ‘We found it important to be both descriptive and concrete’ (p. 3). Although they thus emphasize that ideals are still very important for the party, it is emphasized that these are now linked to more concrete alternatives – which are attainable as well, or at least, that is what try to convince the reader of. They remind them that GroenLinks has performed ‘quality opposition’ against the Purple cabinet and now ‘chooses’ for ‘a new balance’. Strategically they emphasize GroenLinks is willing to make choices, to restore the balances they believe are distorted. There is a strong sense an attitude of self-confidence and casualness, as if it almost goes without saying that what GroenLinks proposes is right. Also problems and solutions are posed with a strong sense of urgency⁵⁴. This is a clear sign of professionalism, as by being self-confident it is easier to convince others of the correctness of your point of view. It also shows that the party has made clear decisions about which concerns have priority and are the most pressing.

GroenLinks is also trying to convince the reader that their solutions are realistic. The clearest example of this is the fact that a separate chapter is added about the affordability of the programme. Also, in case the party writes they want (more) money for a specific goal, often the financial backing is explained⁵⁵. This does not mean that solutions or proposals are not radical content-wise, but at least they are presented as both possible and wise. The party at the same time expresses critique to the way things are organized and handled by the government, more comprehensively argued⁵⁶. Alternatives are accompanied by concrete numbers and figures GroenLinks uses to show realism. Although this does not necessarily mean that what they write is true, it is clear that strategically GroenLinks is in fact fulfilling their promise to develop ‘attainable alternatives’⁵⁷.

What is remarkable is that although this professionalization⁵⁸ suggests that GroenLinks might intend to get into government, they are not explicitly mentioning that government participation is a

⁵³ The already mentioned title ‘Abundance and discomfort’ is also clearly strategically chosen in order to make the reader curious.

⁵⁴ ‘Green taxes are indispensable in order to reach a sustainable economy’ (p. 25), ‘the enormous lack of teachers, a direct consequence of the neglect of education, is an acute danger’ (p. 27), ‘the (lower educated) migrants will be the first to experience the effects of a worsening of the economy; this forces us to additional effort on all those terrains where arrears are manifest’ (p. 37), ‘there are still thousands of asylum seekers in the refugee centres that are waiting for years already; this situation is intolerable’ (p. 39).

⁵⁵ For example, a ‘national social insurance for long-lasting care leave’ is proposed, and immediately it is explained that ‘this insurance will be covered through an pay-as-you-go system, in which everyone pays a contribution’ (p. 24).

⁵⁶ Regarding having an own house, GroenLinks criticizes the current system for being unjust (p. 26); next they explain exactly how the system works, which rules are part of it and what their effect is.

⁵⁷ This is reinforced by an emphasis on the fact that the alternatives they propose make sense, are relatively easy and foremost highly different. For example, it is written that: ‘The WAO (disablement insurance act) should be entirely different, people in The Hague say. Maybe there is a much easier solution: finally executing the WAO properly’ (p. 21). Another example is: ‘There circulate even proposals to fully abolish the progression in the income taxes, the ‘flat-tax’; GroenLinks is no advocate of this position and wants, on the contrary, to strengthen the progressivity of the income taxes’ (p. 25). And regarding the estimate, they literally write that ‘GroenLinks breaks with the Purple estimating policy’ (p. 59).

⁵⁸ As the campaign plan explains, ‘It is in line with the image of GroenLinks for the campaign to focus on the presentation of alternatives with respect to content by means of trend breaks’ (GroenLinks/d, 2001: 6). The focus thus lies on alternatives, instead of problems.

goal they are aiming at. Something they are explicit about is the fact that GroenLinks has been in parliament for several years in the opposition, actively trying to realize their programmes⁵⁹. This way of presenting the party reveals their strategy is thus also quite professional because that they are aware of the fact that it is wise to emphasize your successes and explain decisions you made that might be surprising or not obvious.

The greater part of the criticism is less radical and more cautiously formulated⁶⁰. Often both the positive side and the negative side of a matter are mentioned. The choice of words has become a bit more nuanced⁶¹; although it is for example still argued that military interventions should be legitimized by a UN-mandate, they now say that ‘in exceptional cases, if it is a question of (imminent) genocide or very serious violations of human rights and the UN cannot come to terms, the Netherlands can support peace operations without a resolution from the UN Security Council’. We could thus say that they have – if they had not already done that before – permanently let go of the pacifism and are now even pleading for a ‘generous contribution’ (p. 54) to UN peace operations. There are still some signs of radicalism, but that is more because the idea is radically different from current reality than that it is stated in a radical way⁶²: they show radical ideas and a professional approach can be combined. At least the phraseology has become less protest-like: instead, more creative and irregular words – like the newly invited expression ‘modern poverty’ (p. 24) – that are not necessarily offensive are used⁶³.

Another professional aspect of the strategy concerns the visual presentation of the document. Each paragraph of every chapter starts with a short piece in italics in which the urgency and importance of the subject is illustrated with figures and/or results of current research. The actual paragraph starts with a short and catchy sentence. In the lay-out there use is made of colours, various character sizes, and sometimes frames in order to further explain a specific issue. What leaps to the eye is that the pictures in the document illustrate the changes and other choices that GroenLinks

⁵⁹ For example, they refer to the fact that in the fall of 2000 the Second Chamber ‘passed the GroenLinks-bill “sustainable produced wood” (p. 9), their choice to oppose the liberalization of the energy supply is justified, ‘because there are too little guarantees to protect the environment and small-scale consumers’ (p. 11); their vote against the renewed tax system is justified ‘because the revision of the tax system cost 3.6 billion euros and the difference in income between working people and welfare recipients increased significantly’ (p. 25); they point to the fact that a committee chaired by GroenLinks-politician Andrée van Es warned a decade ago for a major lack of teachers (p. 27); also that a local GroenLinks-administrator developed a multicultural community centre (p. 33); and that ‘fortunately the government adopted the GroenLinks-proposal to provide a computer to minimum wage earners via the social service’ (p. 46).

⁶⁰ For example when they say ‘the politics of reduction in the tax burden for everyone should be traded for a clearly directed dedication to the lower incomes, where every euro counts’ (p. 24). Most notable is this cautious way of formulating: ‘The entrance procedure should be careful and transparent. Without offending the major effort of the staff of the IND (immigration- and naturalization service): this is what is lacking too often’ (p. 38).

⁶¹ Regarding issues of peace and security, for example, they now argue that ‘in the long run NATO is not the appropriate organization for a peace- and security policy in Europe’ (p. 53) and that it should ‘at a certain moment be replaced by a regional peacekeeping force from the UN (p. 54).

⁶² For example, the sentence ‘where possible planned infrastructure will be cancelled’ (p. 13) does say that plans that are already made regarding more motorways should be reversed, but it also shows that GroenLinks knows this is not always possible or even desirable and therefore probably the clause is added to show that it should not be carried out no matter what.

⁶³ It does not really feel like an anti-attitude to say that something is ‘not inspiring’, and it is encouraging to call something ‘challenging’, to plea for a more ‘relaxed’ more of operating. The ‘making messy of the landscape’ (p. 15) is something else than saying that it is destroyed or extremely ugly, and talking about ‘stopwatch-care’ (p. 5) in order to make the point that the attention should be shifted to other aspects is not very protest-like, although maybe rightly called a bit ‘frivolous’.

stands for ideologically⁶⁴. The document has a professional appearance; the lay-out makes the content very readable, as it is not just one mix of words but more conveniently arranged. This is reinforced by the fact that the document has a table of contents, so as a reader you know where to find the type of information you are interested in, as well as a subject index. The document contains a list of abbreviations in case the reader runs into an unknown word. All in all it is very reasonable to say that strategically, the way in which GroenLinks presents itself has become much more professional than before. The relatively few protest-elements have disappeared and made room for more realistic, concrete proposals and a clearly presented and illustrated approach.

❖ Strategically: the 2002-campaign

What stands out immediately is that the election campaign of 2002 is very sober. Besides the fact that the pictures are black-and-white (with a red twist), the atmosphere of the presentation is quiet and serious. As in the election programme, the focus has broadened from emphasizing problems to

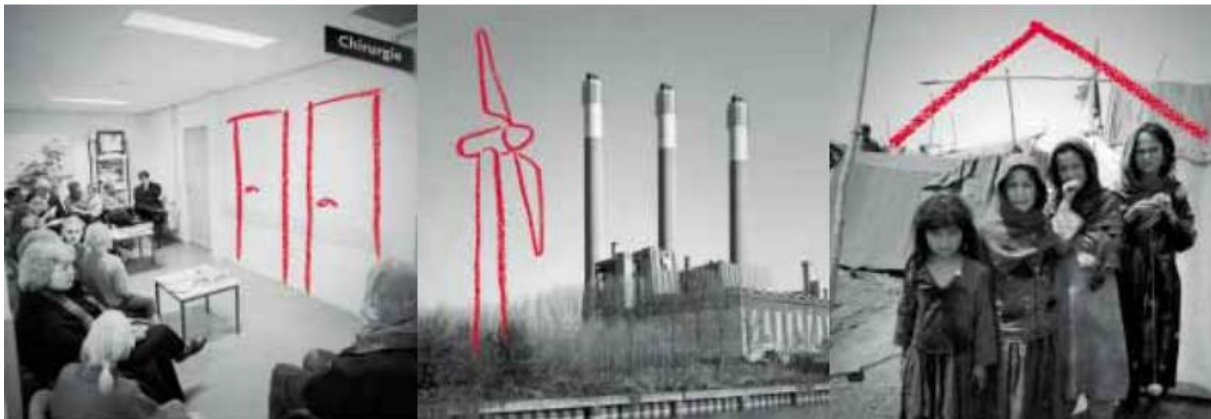


Figure 9: three posters of the 2002-campaign

immediately proposing concrete alternatives. This is directly reflected in the campaign images (see Figure 8): they are a black-and-white reflection of a current situation in which with a red pencil a solution is painted. Examples are a waiting room that has two extra doors painted; a power station with a windmill painted next to it; and four girls in a refugee camp with a roof painted over their heads. Other posters are a parking space with a baseball field painted in it; a picture of a traffic jam with the words 'BUS' written on the emergency lane; a pigsty with a sun and a cloud painted above the pigs; and a 'for sale'-sign in a new housing estate with the words 'rented' on it. These are very clear and comprehensible reflections of their proposals. Besides the fact that the attitude has thus become less 'anti' and more focused on the alternatives proposed, the 'tone' of the campaign is also

⁶⁴ Each time it is a black-and-white picture of a current situation, in which with a red pencil a drawing is made. This should clearly be interpreted as the way in which GroenLinks would like to see the situation. One picture shows a full waiting-room where there is only one door to the room of a surgeon; with the red pencil two extra doors are added. In a picture of a power station a windmill is added; in a picture of four child refugees a roof is drawn above their heads; in a picture of a traffic-jam the extra lane has the letters 'bus' on it; in a picture of several pigs in a barn, a sun and a cloud are drawn; and on a sign saying a house is for sale the words 'rented' are written.

different. Whereas in the 1994-campaign a choice was submitted to the voter, GroenLinks now suggests to actually make a choice. GroenLinks no longer says 'it is up to you', but 'choose' (for a new balance); formulated as an imperative. The fact that the front page of the brochure consists of a large picture of a pencil sharpener and the name 'GroenLinks' on it reinforces the emphasis on making the choice. This more commanding presentational strategy is less cautious and more professional.

The presence of the wish for government participation is less explicitly present in the 2002 campaign. However, the growing seriousness and concreteness of the alternatives presented does imply that the party is presenting itself as capable of more than just being in the opposition⁶⁵. In the 2002 brochure attention has been paid to this goal, by a quote of Rosenmöller below his (large) picture, under the heading of 'Ideals in practice!'⁶⁶. Besides the fact that this way of presenting emphasizes the possibility of governing, these words clearly convey a positive attitude. The fact that they describe the party as 'alive and kicking', that exclamation marks that are used and the faith in the possibility of changing things are perceptible for the first time in a campaign. Accompanied with a serious undertone, the problems pointed at are no laughing matter, but a sense of positivity can be traced. Strategically this campaign is thus quite professional because the focus lies in a very self-evident manner on the alternatives proposed by GroenLinks and because the style of presentation is now more quiet and directed towards being clear about what GroenLinks stands for.

❖ Strategically: the 2008 manifesto

The preface of the document explicitly mentions that 'feasible and realistic answers' (p. 3) will be formulated. This sets the tone for the rest of the document: GroenLinks is presenting itself as the 'party of the future' –the title of the manifesto – and seems to be trying to get rid of the 'idealistic' image by emphasizing that their way of operating is now based on feasibility and realism. This is a very clear instance of professionalism, as the tactics of the party have changed towards showing the competence and expertise of the party: they underline their ability to translate their know-how into effective policy. The way in which the document is written also demands for attention: more catchy statements are used and there is less of the 'intellectual' phraseology as in the original manifesto⁶⁷. It is a sign of professionalism that the party is adjusting to the spirit of the age and is trying to bring their ideas into the open more clearly.

Very interesting as well is the fact that more urgency is attached to the goal of government par-

⁶⁵ As the report on the voter research argues: 'It is important to seek alliance with a larger public, by being concrete and by working on a more accessible image' (Kunst & Witlox, 2001: 24).

⁶⁶ And: 'GroenLinks is an alive and kicking party that wants to change things. GroenLinks translates ideals in concrete proposals and recognizable alternatives. Both in the opposition as well as in a cabinet we will steer a course for a Greener and more social Netherlands!'

⁶⁷ Sentences are shorter ('Our heart is Green and it is at the left', p. 5; 'Labour is top-class sport', p. 6) and more popular ('You may choose yourself whether you wear a custom-made sit, a headscarf or a piercing with a pink triangle in your navel, as long as that is a choice without pressure from your acquaintances', p. 7). They seem surprised of their own flexibility: they argue to have shown their ability to realize concrete political ideas with social institutions 'and actually with companies as well' (p. 5).

ticipation compared to the original manifesto. It could not be stated clearer: 'We are ready for the next step: GroenLinks is ready to take part in government and to bring our ideas into practice at the national level in government' (p. 5). GroenLinks presents itself as a serious party that is prepared and willing to take responsibility. As a result, not much is left of their protest, anti-establishment attitude. Although ideas might still be quite radical⁶⁸, the way in which they are presented is much less radical. It is explicitly mentioned that they consider themselves absolutely not as political outsiders: 'We as Green politicians claim a spot in the centre of politics' (p. 5).

At the same time the party is trying to avoid the reproach of loosing too much content by describing themselves as a 'party of ideas in search of power and inspiration' (p. 10). The choice of the name of 'ideeënpartij' can hardly be interpreted as anything but a way to make sure they have not abandoned their ideology. As this reflects the ongoing struggle within Green parties in finding a balance between 'protest' and 'power', we might say that the party is clearly presenting its attitude and approach as more professional. This is reinforced by the accent on 'modernism' that we see repeatedly, for example as 'in our multiform society we stand for an ideal of modern community spirit' (p. 8). They are thus emphasizing how their ideas have remained the same but are adjusted to the world around us as it is right now. This manifesto has no chapter called 'strategy', which shows that they do not reveal much strategic information anymore. New is a separate appendix providing an overview of GroenLinks' political priorities (p. 13-15). All it does is reinforce the sense that is present throughout the document: they want to be clear about what they stand for, in what way the party will be operating and what can be expected if the party might actually reach government. Literally: 'The future begins with deciding on clear political priorities. What can you expect from us as GroenLinks gets the opportunity to transform our ideals into policy?' (p. 13). This should be seen as very professional.

❖ Strategically: the 2010 election programme

Very clearly GroenLinks chose in 2010 to present itself strategically as a party that is very serious, realistic and ready for government. The whole document breathes the necessity of true change, starting with the title 'Ready for the future'. It is clear and unambiguous, illustrating that the party is ready to truly translate their ideas into concrete policy⁶⁹. GroenLinks is presenting itself as very confident, for example when arguing that 'with these breakthroughs the Netherlands steer a course that many people want' (p. 5). They are presenting their own story with frequent references to other successful Green stories, like the successes of the German Greens in government (p. 6, 13). GroenLinks is quite clear about the direction they have chosen: they are positioning themselves on

⁶⁸ Such as a 'far-going redistribution of paid and unpaid labour' (p. 7).

⁶⁹ For example, the document starts with the sentence 'Doing nothing is not an option' (p. 5). Then, after illustrating shortly what is happening and what should change, we can read 'GroenLinks is eager to take part in government in order to realize to breakthroughs: first, we have to contain and create jobs' and 'second, we are no longer allowed to saddle new generations with our problems' (p. 5).

the left side of the political spectrum⁷⁰ and are clearly reacting against the current government⁷¹.

Words that can repeatedly be found are 'new', 'must', 'choose' and the need for 'modernization' and 'to reform'. There is thus a strong sense of urgency and necessity in the way they present their story⁷².

The way in which the document is written strongly resembles the programme of 2002, with uncomplicated language and quite a lot of relatively short sentences. However, the number of short and catchy statements has increased. Explicitly pointing to 'their agenda' and using easy-to-read sentences reveals a strategy of being clear, explicit and understandable⁷³. In addition to that, GroenLinks also emphasizes that they know what is going on in the Netherlands and in the world, and that what they propose is realistic and feasible⁷⁴. A new road they have taken is that they emphasize the importance of 'own initiatives' of people, which they strongly encourage. As already mentioned they consider themselves an 'ally' (p. 5) of these people⁷⁵. While suggesting that GroenLinks wants to be part of government, they conclude with 'These world citizens deserve a government that encourages, instead of discourages, them. The Hague should exchange their blinkers for a broader outlook to the outside' (p. 9). In the same sense, in the introductory paragraphs of all other chapters all kinds of private, individual initiatives are mentioned⁷⁶. This should be characterized as a professionalization, as it is clear to them that it is unrealistic to argue that a government should take care of everything. Something else that is now clearly emphasized is that GroenLinks is presenting itself as a party that is there for 'everyone'. This suggests that they decided to pick a strategy to reach as many people as possible and to prevent that people do not feel represented or feel like GroenLinks will not act in their interest⁷⁷. The phraseology in the document contains many 'new' words and interesting, original and sometimes funny formulations⁷⁸. Also metaphors and evocative language is utilized, like

⁷⁰ They are 'taking the side of the renewers' (p. 13), and argue that whereas 'the crisis came from the right, the solutions are now coming from the left' (p. 5).

⁷¹ For example, they write that 'The latest governments were not thinking much of our (Dutch) 'vrijzinnige' tradition. GroenLinks, on the contrary, is proud of it' (p. 35).

⁷² Like when they say that action should be undertaken 'before the climate really breaks away' (p. 6), and often they present the fact that a choice should be made and their own alternatives as inevitable, for example when they say that 'a gradual abolition of this tax-deductible expense is inevitable' (p.28).

⁷³ Other examples of short sentences are 'it is time for a different outlook on welfare' (p. 5), 'there will be no cutbacks on education' (p. 23), 'integration is emancipation' (p. 35), 'the web must remain free' (p. 36), 'because Green works' (p. 45).

⁷⁴ As the campaign evaluation explains it: "GroenLinks (...) wanted to show that a true change of course in the direction of a Greener and more social policy is both necessary and possible" (GroenLinks/c, 2002: 9).

⁷⁵ The introductory paragraph of the first chapter is illuminating: 'The Netherlands are full with practical idealists. They don't wait for politics to deal with the climate crisis or the credit crisis, but come into action themselves. They think of Green innovations or import honest products from Africa' (p. 9).

⁷⁶ The chapter about the Green economy also starts with multiple examples of sustainable entrepreneurship (p. 13). The chapter about education points to 'private initiatives that deserve ample support' (p. 23). The chapter about 'better government' argues that people deserve 'a government that gives them space instead of a government that throws up a wall of rules and paperwork; a government that helps them if necessary, but that interferes as little as possible with the private life of people and that does not deprive people of their own initiative' (p. 41).

⁷⁷ Whereas they used to be not specifically pro-farmer, they now developed ideas with which 'our farmers are building a nicer country with us (p. 14). The title of the third chapter is the most illuminating, as it is 'work for everyone' (p. 19). They point to the fact that 'everyone wants to live well in a safe environment (p. 27), and to 'care-on-size that you would wish for everybody' (p. 31).

⁷⁸ Words used are among others 'number-fetishism' (p. 5), that something is 'a terrible pity' (p. 6), an 'admission ticket to the future' (p. 6), a 'company of the future' (p. 7), 'without beating each other's brains out' (p. 7), 'globalizing honestly' (p. 9), 'more and more farmers are

when they write that the ‘government is coming from behind her desk’ (p. 6), and that something is pure ‘national showing the flag’ (p. 10). There are however also some radical elements ‘hidden’ in the choice of words⁷⁹. GroenLinks for example accuses current politics of ‘leaving consumers alone’ (p. 13), plea for a ‘drastic revision of the EU-agricultural policy’ (p. 15), but often when they mention a negative point they immediately propose a more positive alternative: ‘GroenLinks has a more fair proposal’ (p. 7)⁸⁰.

We can conclude that strategically GroenLinks has professionalized a lot. Although they are still critical and clear about what they don’t like about current government and politics, their critique is constructive. They consequently pose alternatives and emphasize that it is realistic to try to achieve them. Also part of the strategy is the fact that Femke Halsema is portrayed on the front-page of this election programme⁸¹. She is portrayed in a very well-cared-for manner, with decent clothing, looking very clean and proper. Looking straight into the camera, she radiates confidence and seriousness. GroenLinks is clearly trying to win the confidence of the reader, by showing its most famous politician and next by presenting a tight programme, without any further pictures but emphasizing the realism of their proposals. They are presenting themselves as a party that finally wants to participate in government and is serious enough and capable to do so, and they are doing so in a very professional way. Proposals are worked out in detail, it is emphasized that there is no money for everything so that choices have to be made, and GroenLinks is trying to bring into the open as clearly as possible what kind of choices she wants to make.

❖ Strategically: the 2010-campaign

The focus is clearly on presenting GroenLinks as a party that is ready and extremely willing to govern. The appearance of the party is quite sober⁸², as in the 2002-campaign, but now combined with an enormous emphasis on positivism. Every flyer, brochure and text breathes a belief and trust that GroenLinks has realistic and feasible ideas, an organization that can handle being part of government and that



Figure 10: slogan on the 2010-poster

going biological’ (p. 13), an ‘activating participation state’ (p. 35), ‘little empires’ (p. 41), and last but not least they talk about problems with the ‘administrative spaghetti’ (p. 41).

⁷⁹ They speak repeatedly of a ‘big revolution’ (p. 6), of the fact that the ‘tax-robbery’ should stop (p. 9), and that they want to ‘poke with an uplifted finger for action’ and want to ‘tame the casinocapitalism’ (p. 9). Quite critical as well is the phrasing that ‘still, the European agricultural policy is supporting environmental pollution and animal suffrage’ (p. 13).

⁸⁰ A comparable linking between a positive and a negative point can be found many times, for example when they say that ‘what the latest governments have done is neglect the environmental planning and increase the investments in asphalt’, but that ‘GroenLinks wants to maintain the space in our country and Green transportation’ (p. 27).

⁸¹ As the campaign evaluation says: in general “the campaign is pre-eminently built around the person heading the list of candidates Femke Halsema” (GroenLinks/d, 2010: 1). It also argues that with the focus on the party leader “her built-up authority in the media could be taken advantage of, and thereby the image of GroenLinks was further strengthened” (ibid: 2), and that “the campaign strategy seamlessly suited the built-up image of GroenLinks and Femke in the last couple of years”, which resulted in a “reliable and trustworthy” coming across of both the message and the messenger (ibid.: 2).

⁸² Or, as they call it themselves: “With the appearance we choose goes a serious, businesslike campaign” (GroenLinks/g, 2010: 3).

has the people that are capable of ministerial tasks. In the introductory words of the campaign brochure, the strategy is presented clearly: 'GroenLinks dedicates itself to a Green, social and just world. We want to realize our ideals, within and outside politics, are practically oriented, directed towards concrete results on the short as well as long term'. As the idealism of the party is still important, new aspects such as the practical orientation of the party and the concrete results the party strives at are clearly gaining attention as well. The slogan 'Green works' (see Figure 9) is a short summary of the belief of GroenLinks in what they can do. By presenting themselves in this manner, and this confident, they are probably trying to convince voters of what they want to do.

A key word that returns frequently is the word 'future'. The party is, besides looking back at previous successes and results, mainly focusing on what they want to do in the future. The picture of a horizon on one of the election posters represents this belief in the future. The other main poster, portraying Femke Halsema as a very serious stateswoman, is a reflection of that same readiness. However, a certain sense of intimacy is created by the presentation of Halsema as well, as she on one of the flyers she is called only by her first name, 'Femke', accompanied by a picture of Halsema with a large smile on her face. This personal approach is strengthened by one of the flyers which is designed as a personal letter from Femke Halsema to the voter. The text is written as if Halsema herself is trying to convince the reader of her trustworthiness and her ability to realize what GroenLinks stands for. In this letter the willingness of GroenLinks to participate in the next government is emphasized as well: 'GroenLinks makes real choices in order for everybody to participate and to handle the crisis. I want to lead this. GroenLinks is ready for the future. Do you support me and GroenLinks at the 9th of June?'. The content of the message is no longer mainly ideological, but the strategic presentation is in 2010 focused on only one thing: governing. The presentation has thus become very professional, as every aspect of the presentation appears to be thought out and consciously decided on.

❖ Summarizing the development of GroenLinks' strategic presentation

There is a clear development in the strategic presentation of GroenLinks. Over time the emphasis came to lie more and more on the feasibility and realism of the proposals the party does. This is ever more strongly emphasized by utilizing a very self-evident tone in presenting and explaining ideas. Whereas earlier on more 'anti' and 'protest'-elements could be observed in the approach of GroenLinks, they have in the presentation of the party now made room for 'necessary choices', 'reasonable' alternatives and often detailed elaborations on proposals. Although it is being emphasized that the ideals and principles are still the fundamental basis of GroenLinks, the sensibleness and concreteness of proposals have won ground. In the visual presentation of the party this development that can be characterized as a professionalization is directly reflected by a more serious presentation. The lay-out of documents, posters and brochures is tight, clean and clearly directed towards appeal-

ing a broad group of voters. GroenLinks kept up with the times and is for example trying to take advantage of trends like the personalization of politics. As all elements have obviously been taken into account, the phraseology chosen in documents fits this picture as well: words are hip, modern, easy to understand, and sentences are shorter. Strategically the presentation of GroenLinks has clearly become much more professional over time.

6.5 Summarizing: a professionalization of the external political approach of GroenLinks in various respects

In the fourth chapter a new interpretation of the concept 'professionalization' has been developed. As we are concerned here with the professionalization of the external political approach of Green parties, and have operationalized 'party change' as reflecting organizational, ideological as well as strategic aspects, professionalization turned out to be a multifaceted concept (inspired by Mair's (2004) theory on party responses). Regarding all three respects GroenLinks shows developments from a more amateur towards a more professional approach:

- *ideologically*, GroenLinks was never truly amateur in the sense of focussing only on one or a few issues. Nevertheless they became more professional as the party presented itself overtime on an ever broader range of subjects. And whereas GroenLinks was not purely amateur either regarding issues as they did not appear to be chosen ad hoc but have always been part of a broader ideology, GroenLinks' presentation has become very professional as over time the party presented a more coherent picture in which issues were more and more strongly and logically interrelated. In the ideological presentation the relationship between issues evolved from 'sometimes evident' into 'self-evident' and the salience, politicization and topicality of subjects has been taken more into account in the prioritization of issues;
- *organizationally*, it would be unjust to call GroenLinks purely 'amateur' in the beginning of the 1990s, but they were qua organizational presentation quite amateur at that time and have become more professional. As in campaigns the party leader(s) were always present, the way in which they have been presented as the personification of the organization changed from more informal to very serious. Also over time GroenLinks made the party leader more visible and took advantage of the recognisability of their leader, and as a result it focused less exclusively on content and programmatic issues. And whereas there used to be references to interest groups and social movements over time GroenLinks painted a more professional picture of themselves as an independent political organization with an own message instead of a combination of multiple other messages;
- *strategically*, the development in the way GroenLinks approaches politics is most evident. The type of people through which the party is represented and the tone and tactics of the party

evolved from clearly more amateur into very professional. GroenLinks more and more presented their leaders as more serious and therefore capable of performing important tasks, but at the same time in a confidence-building way by presenting them as friendly people. Whereas GroenLinks has never been purely amateur, the more radical elements of a protest or anti-party party used to be more present and have over time been transformed into constructive critique. By 2010 GroenLinks always directly poses 'realistic and feasible' alternatives: the party became more professional by adopting a self-confident attitude, a more moderate tone and a constructive attitude.

In short, we can conclude that GroenLinks' external political approach was never purely amateur. They used to have both amateur and professional characteristics and that have developed a very professional external political approach over time. In order to find out what caused this changing external approach now an actor-centered approach will be adopted: people from within GroenLinks clarify whether, and if so which changes were based on conscious decisions, and explain why GroenLinks decided to do so.

7. Explaining the changing external political approach of GroenLinks 1991-2010

The results of the analysis can be separated into changes observed regarding the ideological, organizational as well as strategic presentation of GroenLinks. It is now time to answer the second research question and find out the most important causes of the changes observed in the analysis. In order to do so, several people from within GroenLinks have been subjected to the results of the analysis in an interview. The aim was to find out whether these various within-party actors have themselves contributed to the changes, and to find out who (else) were and what was, according to them, important for these changes. The interviewees are Jaap de Bruijn (current head 'Party & Network' and secretary general and former Campaign Director of GroenLinks 2006-2011), Bart Snels (former head Press Briefing and head Political Coordination and Strategy of the parliamentary faction 2009-2011 and former director of the Scientific Bureau of GroenLinks 2004-2010), Ineke van Gent (current member of the Second Chamber for GroenLinks since 1998), Kees Kalkman (International Secretary of the GroenLinks Party Executive 1996-2002), Tom van der Lee (former head Press Briefing and head Political Coordination of the parliamentary faction of GroenLinks 1993-2009) and Leo Platvoet (former

party chairman 1989-1990 and former member of the First Chamber for GroenLinks 1999-2007)⁸³.

An important comment that has to be made is that the ideological, organizational and strategic changes have been separated analytically, despite the fact that they are in practice interrelated. As a result, it is evident that the causes of these changes are probably strongly connected as well. Out of the interviews, several causes for the ideological as well as organizational and strategic changes can be derived. Theoretically speaking we are especially interested in the question what the role of external stimuli is, the role of the party leadership and of the dominant faction. As an intervening variable, the role of primary party goals – specifically the goal of government participation – is focused upon (see also Chapter 5).

7.1 Ideological changes: the influence of a changing world, new people and strategic considerations

❖ Coherency: compromising, maturing, political practice

Looking at the official documents, it became clear that especially the programme and manifesto of 1994 are a compromise between the standpoints of the four parties that merged into GroenLinks. Platvoet explains: “A true bargaining process preceded the realization of these documents. It was a strong left-wing programme in which the environment was emphatically present as well”. Lucardie explains that whereas the merger itself passed quite smoothly, it took a lot of bargaining and discussion to agree on the first party manifesto and election programme. As it has been quite a challenge to reach a result that satisfied the participants from all four previous parties, Kalkman argues little or no attention at all has been paid to the coherence of the documents as a whole. The primary reason that it is relatively vague and – besides the fact that Green as well as left issues were present – quite incoherent is thus its compromise-character. De Bruijn: “GroenLinks is a typical merged party. The programmes of the 1990s consisted of compromises, often in general, empty formulations that did express the good intentions with the world, but in which the choices to be made were lacking”⁸⁴. Snels: “We have never been a one-issue party, but have always had a broad agenda in which we tried to combine Green and left. That hasn’t changed; however, there has been a development in proposals and ideas in the way in which these are combined and concretized”. Platvoet agrees that over time “the ‘Green’ issue has become part of ideas about energy, technological development, transport etcetera”.

De Bruijn points to the natural growth process GroenLinks has experienced over time as a cause

⁸³ All interviewees have read the chapter and agreed to the (translations of the) quotations and paraphrases.

⁸⁴ GroenLinks was aware of this already at the time the 1994-campaign was evaluated: “The further elaboration and concretization of parts of the election programme needs to be continued. This counts especially for the social-economic programme and the relationship between ‘social’ and ‘Green’ politics. This further concretization is an essential condition to make the ‘social face’ of GroenLinks more recognizable” (GroenLinks/b, 1994: 39). This shows that both the need for concreteness and coherency were clear already.

of the growing coherency: “The members of GroenLinks have grown towards one another, and started to comprehend that different opinions can coexist yet that the congress decides on the programme”. After the merger was truly accomplished, no more compromises had to be reached, but this is as a whole considered to be a new period in the life of GroenLinks. Van der Lee argues that although programmatically there are a lot of constants in the development of GroenLinks, there are several deviations from the trend which have to do with the true taking leave of the merger period around 1994 with Paul Rosenmöller. As De Bruijn describes it: “We have experienced a growth with respect to content, which is besides a professionalization also a process of getting used to each other”. The interviewees thus refer to the growing coherency as a likely result of the growing to maturity of GroenLinks. As Van der Lee explains: “The everyday political practice is more important than discussions about the party ideology or programme. New ideas about a dossier arise in practice and are then concretized. As a result, ever more cross-connections between the Green and the left arose, but standpoints are also more and more in-depth”. The interviewees agree that the political practice strongly influences ideological developments. Snels mentions an example: “Issues of diversity and emancipation gained more attention thanks to the culture debates at the beginning of this century”. Kalkman explains that another thing that increased the coherency of the later programmes and manifesto, is that later in time members of the programme committees were not only politicians but also experts in writing and adepts in PR⁸⁵.

❖ Concreteness and realism: influence of programme committee and the aim of governing

Besides the gradual processes just mentioned, the concreteness and realism of the programmes are things that have been consciously worked on by the more recent programme committees. Snels strongly influenced this: “We worked really hard to shorten the election programmes. Earlier on every working group wanted to see all of their ideas back. It took time to explain that the election programme is not just for ourselves, members of GroenLinks, to reflect what we think; but that it is also meant for voters, to show what is our basis for practicing everyday politics. We had to shorten it, restrict it, and focus on main points”. That the way in which the documents are written changed is thus not a coincidence: the people who are part of the committee writing the election programmes also initiated change, especially regarding the way the documents look and the phraseology – as discussions at the congress (which ultimately decides on the programmes and manifestos) are mainly about content instead of form. It does not mean that parts of the original content have been skipped: “It is just the presentation that has changed: restricting it to main points, less sentences and less words per sentence”, Snels explains. In order to enhance the accessibility and comprehensibility of the

⁸⁵ Lucardie argues that a ‘professionalization’ of the organization and the employees of GroenLinks thus also explains why the style of the earlier and later documents differs. As a result, the writing process of the ‘official’ documents became much less amateur.

document, the intellectualistic and philosophic style of writing was abandoned. De Bruijn gives another example: “The fact that in 2010 the EU is highly visible in the programme is in part caused by the fact that the secretary of that programme committee also worked for the European faction”. According to him, however, the people within the committee are not decisive: “It does fit with the conscious and consequently maintained decision of GroenLinks to see the EU as an advantage instead of as a threat”. This does show that an unexpected actor, the programme committee, also influenced ideological changes visible in the campaign.

The changed presentation was part of a larger turn in the focus groups of the party. Snels: “We have always had discussions about whether to focus on members or (potential) voters. The older programmes were really the programmes of the ‘association GroenLinks’, in which we were trying to describe in great detail what we thought of something. However, in the past ten years we started to focus more on the voters”. There are multiple reasons for this turn: “In part this reflected the maturing of GroenLinks, but it also had to do with mediatisation of politics and with the fact that we wanted to become part of government⁸⁶. Within the party, also on the local level, voters became more important. But now also at the national level, especially in 2010, the strategy was to show the voters that we were ready and able to govern”. The emphasis on the realism and self-evidence of proposals also relates to the goal of government participation. Van Gent: “From a certain disposition you want to be able to indicate concretely what alternatives you propose. Then voters and other parties can see that we are not living in a theoretical world, that we are not out of touch with reality, but that we have concrete and realistic ideas that will actually work”. This confirms the indirect influence of external stimuli, in this case the general trend of mediatisation as a reason for within-party actors (the strategists) to initiate and implement a change in ideological presentation – thereby having the goal of government participation ever more strongly in mind.

❖ Adoption of the strategy of ‘quality opposition’ as a cause of changing ideological presentation

The changes in the ideological presentation of GroenLinks also turn out to be caused by another general change of strategy: the idea of ‘quality opposition’ that was developed during the 1990s. Van Gent: “We were an opposition party, but under the lead of Paul Rosenmöller we started with something we call ‘quality opposition’. That means not just saying that you are against something, but immediately proposing an alternative. ‘I am against this plan, and instead I’d like to see it this way’ is

⁸⁶ A research report regarding the GroenLinks-campaign of 2002 confirms this development (Kunst and Witlox, 2001): in the preparations of this campaign the ideas regarding GroenLinks as a potential government party were just as important as the decisive issues for voters. Special attention was paid to ideas about ‘GroenLinks as potential government party’ (ibid.: 2) and it turned out that for the 2002 elections ‘governing is in the eyes of man voters a logical ambition of a political party’ (ibid.: 22). At the same time, some restraint was still present as ‘profiling on potential government participation fosters the idea that GroenLinks is giving up ideas and is too willing to reach compromises’ (ibid.: 23). By the time of 2010, however, they chose for government participation without restraint: ‘The goal of the campaign is bipartite: we want to score well electorally, but eventually also take part in the next government’ (GroenLinks election programme 2010: 3).

the way in which we started to present our ideology". The reason for this was the growing need within GroenLinks to actually achieve things instead of being just an anti-party. De Bruijn confirms: "Rosenmöller consciously made the turn from ideological to more realistic politics. We no longer wanted to be just an anti-party, but to indicate what we did want"⁸⁷. Indirectly this was thus also a response to the external development of electoral stagnation.

This gradual growth process thus actually happened within the party and was reflected in the way the party presented itself, and its ideology more specifically. Snels explains it was indeed the party leader of that time, Paul Rosenmöller, who initiated this change of strategy: "Quality opposition was really his terminology". Van der Lee nuances: "The political environment of that time gave him the opportunity to introduce it: the PvdA and D66 were part of the cabinet with the VVD, the CDA was in the opposition for the first time and didn't know what to do, so Rosenmöller became the leader of the opposition". This type of strategic choices is made by the parliamentary faction, according to Snels: "Members are involved in the development of ideas via the party congresses. However, in decisions like these, Paul Rosenmöller and his parliamentary party decided on how to relate to the new government within the political playing field". The choice for 'quality opposition' by the party leadership thus explains the changing presentation of the GroenLinks-ideology: the emphasis shifted to proposing alternatives instead of being 'anti anything'.

❖ Responding to changes outside GroenLinks

Several interviewees mention that these changes in strategy fit the party well, as a focus on renewal is mentioned as characteristic for progressive parties like GroenLinks. Van Gent: "We are not the kind of party that wants to keep things as they are. More and more we have been able to translate our openness to new ideas and solutions into concrete points, of which the piece 'Vrijheid eerlijk delen' ('Sharing freedom honestly') I wrote with Femke Halsema is an example. Things had changed, and we believed this asked for other solutions regarding socio-economic policy". Besides the fact that more and more concrete alternatives were presented by GroenLinks, the choice for the strategy of 'quality opposition' also explains the growing amount of new ideas in the programmes. Van der Lee: "Under the leadership of both Rosenmöller and Halsema there were for example debates about the own responsibility of people and paternalism. How far does the own responsibility of people reach, and when should the government interfere?" Within GroenLinks the own responsibility of people is of growing importance, reflected in various ideas like the socio-economic stance. "Experience taught us that many 'old-left solutions' just didn't work, and society had changed". Societal changes were especially important for these issues: "People are getting older and want to stay healthy, which means

⁸⁷ In the end this strategy of quality opposition increased the desire to govern even more: the 2002 campaign-plan talks about 'the wish to convert the quality opposition with feasible alternatives of the past years into actual policy' (GroenLinks/g, 2001: 8).

that from the point of view of affordability in order to let people participate the system had to be changed". Regarding pacifism Van Gent argues: "We have never been a purely pacifist party, but at a certain moment we realized that we were no longer living in the time of the Cold War. We now think about peace missions, about making the difference in countries where human rights are being violated, that sort of things. Lyrics such as 'We don't choose for the West, we don't choose for the East, we choose for the third road' are now useless because we live in a different world".

Besides the other factors mentioned, the open-mindedness characteristic of GroenLinks thus also enabled it to respond to changes in society and formulate different answers in the course of time. Van Gent: "It is not so much that the ideas of GroenLinks changed per se, but the environment and society have become different and as a result we propose different solutions. The labour market for example has become much more flexible: I think a political party should not close its eyes to this kinds of developments. You have to be willing not to use only solutions from the past, because they are not always applicable to the present". Van der Lee also emphasizes the importance of context: "As Machiavelli already knew: the context and the timing are crucial. The formation of an election programme and electoral battles are only halfway scores. What happens in between is at least as important: politics is a continuous conflict of interests in which the fine political craft combines content and making choices at draggers dawn".

Van Gent explains: "GroenLinks has always been very open to debates within society. As a result, it quickly responds to things happening within society". This is however also strongly related to the fact that GroenLinks became more and more focused on the goal of participating in government: "As a party-of-ideas looking for power, it is even more important to know what is happening and be very concrete and careful regarding the alternatives you propose". This explains why the ideology is over time presented in less abstract, theoretical terms and more as concrete and detailed proposals. Regarding ideological change, we can say that the aim of government participation is thus strengthening the changing processes that already started.

❖ The growing influence of the party leadership

The above illustrates that the people playing the political game strongly influence what happens. The fact that Paul Rosenmöller became party leader enabled him to conduct a change of strategy. For Femke Halsema, becoming party leader enabled her to influence the ideological development of the party. Platvoet explains: "Within GroenLinks, party leaders now have very strong agenda setting-power. As a result, especially Femke Halsema had the freedom to profile herself in a distinct way". According to Van der Lee it is obvious that people have become very important in politics – yet he warns that out of a need for myths, people tend to ascribe qualities to politicians that they do not necessarily have. However, as individual politicians are able to present issues freely as they want,

they impact by definition the way in which the ideology is presented.

Officially, documents like election programmes are proposals from the programme committee that are amended and approved by the members via the party congress. However, over time the party leadership became more decisive and dominant regarding the content of the programmes⁸⁸. Snels argues that in the beginning of the 2000s ideologically another large change occurred, regarding integration policy: “GroenLinks, like Dutch politics in general, started to approach integration differently. We replaced the slogan ‘integration while retaining identity’ by ‘integration by means of emancipation’. This was a first step for GroenLinks towards a more liberal standpoint, in which individual development became more important than groups”. According to him, this was a gradual development, in which GroenLinks responded to changed opinions in society: “We saw that problems regarding integration were always defined in terms of groups. We considered it more appropriate to focus on people, on individuals: therefore we changed perspective and paid more attention to emancipation, education and jobs”. The above analysis shows that besides this change with respect to content, the approach of integration-issues changed from very positive, almost naïve, towards more realistic and acknowledging problems that occurred. According to Snels, GroenLinks then started to focus on problems that occurred: “Especially women that are only scarcely active on the labour market became a central point regarding integration. That makes sense because GroenLinks arose amongst others out of the emancipation movement. What changed at that moment was that we really started to show off that we consider this to be an important subject: emancipation has not progressed enough, and thus there are problems that need attention”. Clearly the party leadership together with the strategists are decisive actors able to initiate changes. They decided to do so in part as a response to external developments, but the fact that someone new acquires an important position sometimes is enough as well.

According to the interviewees, the changes in ideological presentation are in part also the result of unconscious developments. For example, Platvoet argues that GroenLinks became used to being in parliament over time, and as they received no resistance from society or from within the party, it adjusted more and more to the parliamentary environment. According to Kalkman, the move towards the middle of the political spectrum “is partly a gradual process in which the party responded to its environment but also the result of a conscious decision of the leading group within the party”.

⁸⁸ Illustrative is the fact that, at the congress of April 2010, the proposal for the introduction of referenda was with a narrow majority voted out of the election programme by the congress. The party top including chairwoman Femke Halsema was extremely unhappy with this development. During the following congress of February 2011, as the attention was in fact focused on debates about the police mission to Kunduz, relatively unnoticed a motion was passed that gave the parliamentary faction the “freedom to continue with the legislative path about referenda” (groenlinks.nl, checked 14.07.2011). As is explicitly described as well, “The fraction has always aimed at strengthening the direct influence of voters by means of referenda”. This illustrates the fact that often the party leadership succeeds in getting their way. Snels admits: “We are well aware of the possibility of amendments. In 2006 we thought consciously about how to pilot the ideas of ‘Vrijheid eerlijk delen’ through the congress; by previously discussing it with party members, developing support and in the end hoping that there is a majority at the congress”. However, he admits that regarding the referendum nobody was aware that it might go wrong”. But, in his words, “It has been corrected and now we can just continue with our plans about the referendum”.

Platvoet agrees that “GroenLinks has programmatically become more libertarian”. Kalkman: “Regarding the EU, GroenLinks turned from critical-but-Europe-minded into strongly pro-European”. Ideologically the standpoint of GroenLinks is a continuum, the change has to do with ideas about the actual functioning of the EU. This illustrates once again how gradual developments in the world functioned as an input for ideological change within GroenLinks – resulting in a changing ideological presentation of the party. Kalkman: “The more positive stance towards the EU is justified by changes within the EU itself; because for example the Parliament has received more powers, GroenLinks has become less critical of its functioning”. Van der Lee explains: “Earlier on the requirements the EU should fulfil according to GroenLinks were very high, and therefore practically impossible to meet. Therefore her deeds in practice were judged very critically”. The fact that the EU has changed has thus been an external stimulus for people within GroenLinks to become less critical.

❖ The role of members: internal discussion as a result of societal and international change

About various issues there has been particularly much discussion within the party, such as the controversial subject of military interventions. Snels explains: “In the middle of the 1990s we had lots of internal discussions about international politics and interventions. That is when we for once and for all took formal leave of pacifism”⁸⁹. De Bruijn mentions that by 2005 it was more acceptable to agree with a role for NATO in the sphere of peace preservation than in the time of the Cold War. However, he acknowledges: “In internal discussions, it has been a conscious decision to say that it is out-of-date and undiplomatic regarding other pragmatic parties to still say in our programme that the Netherlands should leave NATO”. Van der Lee describes how in the beginning of the 2000s several ideological discussions regarding issues of peace and security have been settled: “There was a development that showed that under exceptional circumstances we were willing to support military interventions. This became more accepted over time”. This shows how members are also partly responsible for the changes in ideological presentation of GroenLinks. However, often the party came into action as they foresaw problems, for example during congresses. Kalkman describes: “By the end of the 1990s there was a GroenLinks-committee concerned with European defence under the lead Wim de Boer, chairman of GroenLinks in the Upper Chamber of the Dutch parliament, with people like Joost Lagendijk. This led to a resolution regarding military interventions and the attitude towards NATO: it said that NATO should on the long term be replaced by another organization, but that as long as NATO still exists it could sometimes provide a legitimation for military missions like the ones to Bosnia and Kosovo”. The members with a formal position within the party as well as the ‘active’ members thus both also played a role in causing change.

⁸⁹ According to him this is, together with the acceptance of market-conform instruments for environmental politics the biggest ideological change within GroenLinks.

❖ Changing ideological presentation: the strengthening influence of the aim of governing

According to Kalkman, the de facto acceptance of NATO is one of the changes that should be seen from the perspective of the goal of government participation. “They wanted to be clear that a government with GroenLinks would not get into trouble about the role of the Netherlands regarding NATO”. Snels confirms that this is one of the fundamental points that was adjusted as it would not make GroenLinks very attractive for potential coalition partners. This illustrates that GroenLinks aimed ever more strongly at participating in government has strengthened and likely also quickened the changes that were occurring in GroenLinks’ approach. De Bruijn confirms that in part because of potential government participation certain parts of the programme have been moderated: “Our wish to govern was not the only reason to change the standpoint regarding NATO, yet it is illustrative for our more realistic approach to certain issues”⁹⁰. Van der Lee: “We did not change our ideas about NATO because of the possibility of government participation; the history of coalition formation in the Netherlands shows that there are no points on the agenda that principally stand in the way of the formation process”. According to him the change is due to the continuous struggles and debates within the party about military interventions. According to Van der Lee, however, programmatically the anticipation on government participation did influence various positions, especially the financial-economic position, of GroenLinks. “It was nevertheless not just because of the aim of governing. We wanted to present credible alternatives that could be calculated in order to show that they had the effects we had in mind”. GroenLinks also had to anticipate on changed legislation as well as the financial possibilities because of the economic situation within the Netherlands. “But we also had in mind what type of government coalition we would prefer. In terms of the measures we chose to watch strategically what would be wise; this does not influence the principles”.

Another example is GroenLinks’ position towards the monarchy: as Van Gent explains, “We have always been proponents of a chosen head of state instead of the queen. The ‘chosen queen’ that was part of the programme for several years was like a funny compromise”. Platvoet explains this resulted from an amendment during one of the election congresses; according to Kalkman, it was a playful solution for the fact that GroenLinks was an opponent from the monarchy but was not unanimous about an alternative. The last decade the programme no longer explicitly says that GroenLinks wants a republic, but only that on the long term they do want to have a chosen head of state. Van Gent: “We understand that the monarchy is popular these days. Therefore we decided to plea for a ceremonial monarchy in the meantime”. Whereas this shows once again the fact that GroenLinks is taking into account the public opinion, this is also in part because GroenLinks wants to be considered as

⁹⁰ He argues: “In 1998 our programme still said that The Netherlands should step out of NATO; in 2002 that changed. We have during the last ten years consciously looked at potential obstacles for eventual coalition partners. That did not happen without any resistance from groups of members, but by now a large majority agrees we should accept NATO for the time being. The same happened with the way we deal with the monarchy”.

a potential coalition partner. Van Gent describes how GroenLinks has moderated its tone regarding this issue⁹¹: “I think that we have lost some of the open-mindedness we used to have; we are sometimes afraid to be anarchic, to ‘misbehave’ and just take a radical standpoint”. The fact that the ‘joke’ disappeared is according to Kalkman “because GroenLinks was afraid of not being taken seriously”. Snels describes the former standpoint about the monarchy as ‘mistakes that were the result of the congress’ that has been put right later on. The fact that participating in government became a main goal for GroenLinks contributed to a further moderation in the ideological presentation in the party.

❖ Summarizing the causes of the changed ideological presentation of GroenLinks

The changes in the programmes regarding integration once again illustrate what turns, according to the interviews, to be true for all ideological changes: they are caused by a combination of factors. External stimuli, primarily worldwide changes like the end of the Cold War, the changing labour market and the different actual functioning of the bodies of the European Union were input for changes. GroenLinks quite soon tried to be open to these changes and was willing to adjust earlier proposals. However, strategic considerations also played a role: GroenLinks tried to perform ‘quality opposition’, which meant less anti-sentiments, less pure radicalism and more refined, detailed and moderated proposals. Party leaders such as Paul Rosenmöller and Femke Halsema were catalysts for these changes, but party strategists were also decisive. Members influenced several changes, but no tight ideological discussions were initiated by members. They turn out to be more and more willing to follow the top-down initiated changes, which will be dealt with more extensively in the next paragraph.

7.2 Organizational changes: enhanced expertise, a changing role of members and a stronger emphasis on the party’s representatives

❖ Efficiency-oriented and pressure from outside

A shift from more bottom-up to more top-down decision-making under the condition of openness has been noticed. These developments in the organizational presentation of GroenLinks can for the largest part be explained by important actual organizational changes that have been made. The party itself became organized in a different way, due to specific measures taken after the need to operate in a more efficient way was identified. This is not directly reflected within the way the party presents itself, but it does have a strong influence on what we see of the party. Platvoet: “The professionalization of the party is visible in multiple ways: the organization is more professional, there is media poli-

⁹¹ What is interesting as well is that, according to Van Gent, the youth organization DWARS plays a large role in the moderation of GroenLinks. “They are often the ones that want to take things, out of the election programme, and sometimes they even succeed – for example with regard to referenda”. This point once again illustrates how organized groups of members influence the changing ideological presentation of the party.

cy and the congress is well-run". "During the first years a lot of energy has been devoted to integrating the former parties to a whole", Kalkman explains. This process continued roughly until 1995. The organization changed also as a result of the personnel management of candidates as well as employees of the party's office. In order to prevent that GroenLinks would fall apart in the former 'blood groups', the first Board members tried to bridge the differences by attracting 'new' people. Here the party leadership thus played an important role. Kalkman explains that within the organization over time the number of members of the former parties – who started as activists and had over time moved up – was decreasing. At the same time the number of former outsiders – who were members of GroenLinks, yet more known from their activity in for example trade unions or were important managers in the service sector – was increasing. As a result, there was more expertise present about how to present the party as an organization but also the decision-making processes and the division of tasks changed⁹².

In 2007 GroenLinks developed an evaluation of the previous elections – in which the party repeatedly lost seats. This resulted in the report 'Scoren in de linkerbovenhoek' ('Scoring in the left-upper corner'). According to De Bruijn, the recommendations of this document concerned not so much the campaigns, but more the inside of the party. "In what way is the strategy discussed, who decides on what, how are members engaged and informed about the campaign. The document showed that we needed to change things to make the whole party go along with the new campaigning-style". This is illustrative of two things: first of all, of how a negative external shock, bad electoral results, were an indirect reason to change things. Secondly, it shows the changes in the way the party and its decision-making processes were organized – from more bottom-up to much more top-down ('making the party go along'). In order to decide on the organizational adjustments a GroenLinks-delegation visited Die Grünen in Berlin who had just passed their 'Future congress' – a huge process with a lot of members from the Green party from all over Germany were involved⁹³. De Bruijn: "In 2008 we organized a big session about this in The Hague, after the German example, with all kinds of GroenLinks-members but also outside experts, journalists etcetera. One of the results was the refreshment of our principles the new party manifesto". "Organizationally, agreement has been reached about the type of party we want to be: an 'open association'. We started to focus more on our network, being an organization in motion, where knowledge and information flows. Strategically, we decided to try to radiate that we are ready for the responsibilities of government", de Bruijn explains.

Organizationally GroenLinks also changed in anticipation of potential government participation.

⁹² GroenLinks hired an advertising agency for the first time in 2002, for the development and creative elaboration of the campaign. This was evaluated as 'very useful' (GroenLinks/e, 2002: 36).

⁹³ In the end a trajectory on the future of GroenLinks was started with three panels, focusing on principles, strategy/campaigns and the organization – coincidentally the same three aspects of the party were separated that are also part of this research project.

Snels: “Now we already have to deal with the area of tension that sometimes exists between what the parliamentary faction wants and what members want. We know that is even more complex when you’re in government. Therefore we decided to improve the internal communication. Can members join the conversation, how do you inform them, how do you communicate your standpoints. If that’s not in order, and you have to arrange that in a short period of time, it would become very hard to manage”. Snels thus confirms that in anticipation of potential government participation GroenLinks changed in several respects: “Before you are ready to govern and before you are accepted as a potential coalition partner, you have to improve and renew yourself. Otherwise you will never get into that position”.

Whereas the various organizational changes were initiated by the party strategists, in the actual changing processes members as well as outside-party experts participated. Looking back, the interviewees agree that this fits the new type of organization GroenLinks decided to become neatly. It does illustrate, however, that within the organization the members are no longer the exclusive decision-makers. Besides, the reorganization of the party organization was directed towards more efficiency, responding quicker to current developments and so attracting more voters. In that sense, the organizational changes were subordinate to the goals of electoral success and governing. This is what is reflected in the campaigns from that moment on: GroenLinks tries to commit people to the party via membership, but relatively little attention is paid in the presentation to the party organization.

❖ From bottom-up to top down: pressure from the media and society

The party consciously decided to reorganize various times, Platvoet explains. The party’s office is reorganized for the first time under the lead of Ab Harrewijn in the beginning of 1995. Kalkman: “Before that, it was very chaotic: separate ‘kingdoms’ were working in a very inefficient way”. Part of the changing process was also getting more professional people into the organization; “for example, a former manager was attracted as the treasurer. He did not have anything to say about the political decisions, but was attracted as an expert”. Platvoet confirms: “Earlier on functions were much more intertwined. The party Board nowadays conversely functions as a management team that takes care of GroenLinks as an organization. The political primacy, on the other hand, lies in The Hague”. According to him, the reorganizations have been conducted in order to centralize the political power within the party at the level of the professionals, like the parliamentary group and the party chairman. The bottom-up process, insofar as that truly existed during the first years of GroenLinks, has been transformed into a top-down process.

The interviewees confirm that the move of the members from the basis or the beginning of the decision-making process to the end is in line with what actually happened within GroenLinks. Kalkman: “The Hague became the leading centre; they took the initiative and as a result the basic-

democratic character of the party faded into the background. It was a relatively conscious decision to formulate the reform-proposals so that they no longer would be hampered by the rest of the party”⁹⁴. Van der Lee confirms that the members have moved to another moment in the decision-making process – but according to him, this is just a logical response to the way the world changed. “It does not have anything to do with either a maturing process or a conscious decision; it is just because the world has become so much more complex and dynamic during the past twenty years. The speed of rotation has become so high, there are so many debates and you have to respond so quickly in the media that there is absolutely no room for consultation of members”.

Snels adds that the increased importance of the media also plays a role: “The parliamentary faction is the most important body of GroenLinks because it is the most visible. Besides that, the parliamentarians have a large group of assistants and staff, who produce a lot of ideas and initiate a lot of policymaking. Therefore it goes without saying that ‘The Hague’ leaves their mark on the ideas of the party”. Van der Lee agrees: “Ever more often members of the parliamentary group become solo performer because the media asks for quick responses. Sometimes parliamentarians also notice in political practice or from society that an argument is no longer applicable”. The spirit of the age is thus very important for understanding the role of the parliamentary group: members of parliament are ‘in the picture’ and expected to (re)act quickly yet properly to events. Van der Lee: “This puts an enormous pressure on the party, because then you are forced to confront members with a *fait accompli*”. He also points to the fact that sometimes even individual politicians have to take decisions before they had time to consult the rest of the parliamentary group: “If the media ask for a response they just have to give an answer; and then they have to hope that afterwards they will get the support of the rest of the group”. De Bruijn argues that the party board is now much clearer about the allocation of tasks than ten or fifteen years ago: “The board shows that GroenLinks has politicians in different spots, that they have their own role as they are chosen and can do their job within the borders of the election programme. Earlier on, it was suggested that members were also in charge regarding current political standpoints. Now the board explains to people that the tasks are allocated in a certain way. I think that is a fine example of the growing to maturity of GroenLinks”.

The above shows that in the perception of within-party actors they didn’t really have a choice. The party had to operate more top-down to keep up with the speed of the everyday parliamentary work⁹⁵. Regarding openness and transparency, Van Gent argues: “Regarding controversial themes it

⁹⁴ An illustration of this point is the fact that the parliamentary politicians were the ones to be working out and then presenting the themes that were chosen for the 2002-elections (GroenLinks/e, 2002: 9).

⁹⁵ According to De Bruijn, the way the party dealt with the decision regarding the mission to Kunduz, Afghanistan is a good illustration of the current process of decision-making within GroenLinks. The members of the parliamentary group reached the decision by themselves, without a long party-broad discussion preceding it. “We knew the decision was going to hurt, as we expected many members to have difficulties with it. Therefore we started a sort of ‘crisis communication’-trajectory, and we organized meetings all across the country”. He indi-

is sometimes difficult whether you ask permission in advance or give account afterwards. We now often choose this last option, which is the best option as it is often the only practicable method". The fact that the way in which GroenLinks presents itself showed a diminished role of members is thus a correct reflection of the way in which the decision-making process now works. What stands out is that the way in which the (former) strategists talk about decisions shows that there are strategic considerations behind every decision making process. For example, De Bruijn explains: "In 2006, as 'Vrijheid eerlijk delen' was presented, GroenLinks tried to keep it small. However, the media devoted a lot of attention to it, and before we knew it the image was created as if it was a tremendous turn to liberal policy and a break with our former principles. Therefore in the case of Kunduz, we did the exact opposite: we expected that it would become a large issue, and because of that decided to communicate actively with our members and channel information. In my opinion, we applied the lessons of crisis communication in a more professional way: you have to recognize that there are different expectations between a large share of your members, and show you readiness to talk with them and explain what you did".

The organizational presentation is thus a reflection of the actual way in which the organization is functioning now. Van Gent points to the fact that GroenLinks has several study groups and committees in which members discuss all kinds of subjects⁹⁶. Whereas members do thus still play a role at the input-side of the party, they are far more scarce than they used to be. As Platvoet explains, during the early years there used to be party committees concerned with specific topics that participated in the writing process of election programmes. According to Van Gent, this change is a combination of less of a need by members to actively provide input, as well as more confidence in the mandated people. The fact that the party as a membership organization is only very scarcely visible in campaigns is thus a true reflection of the functioning of the party.

❖ Gradual individualization of society and of membership

According to Van Gent, the changing role of members is based as well on a more fundamental change of attitude: "The collectivity of the standpoint is no longer leading, but the individual point of view of members". Thereby she refers to the fact that GroenLinks used to have a congress of delegates, but informally since 1995 and formally since 2001 party congresses are open to all members. In line with this individualization, the analysis also showed that GroenLinks is increasingly presented as an independent political party, with fewer connections with social movements and other organizations. Snels argues that this has not been part of a conscious strategy: "In general the relations be-

cates that the way they handled with this process is very different than would have been the case five or ten years ago: "It would then have taken much more time, as we would have managed it in a different way".

⁹⁶ But by 2010 the organization of GroenLinks regarding campaigns also changed: during these elections GroenLinks had a 'Steering Committee Strategy & Campaigns' that directed the outlines of the campaign (GroenLinks/g, 2010: 5).

tween social movements and political parties diminished, which is probably a result of the 'ontzuiling'. The amount of floating voters increased tremendously and the relation between organizations and parties became more flexible". This explains according to him why it was wise for GroenLinks to focus on (potential) voters instead of on members.

Snels reminds us that it is important to keep in mind is that the membership file of GroenLinks also changed over time. In part 'old' members are replaced and complemented with new members, who have a different background. They are younger and do not belong to the 'protest generation' a lot of the older members are part of, but are used to the 'individualized society'. The 'old members' have changed over time as well. Kalkman: "Many of them have become members of the local council or chairman of an executive. They have become older and have often turned from activists into managers. As a result the social basis of the party is now different to the basis twenty years ago". However, changes are often initiated by the party top, and the members follow later on in becoming for example a bit more moderate, Snels explains. As a result, "The more radical proposals are often originate from working groups". In the words of Kalkman, "the rank and file of the party has become quite obedient, not because their views have changed, but because they don't want to bother the party leadership"⁹⁷. The changed composition of the membership file of GroenLinks is the result of a natural and gradual process that influenced the development of the party.

❖ Personalization of politics as input for changed presentation

The fact that over time more attention was devoted to the faces and personalities of the GroenLinks-politicians, is a response to the personalization-trend that intensified during the last decades: "The person heading the list of candidates of course determines the image of a political party", Snels explains. According to Kalkman, GroenLinks over time became increasingly aware of that. "Experience taught us that it is important who people consider to be the party leader. To start with, the personality and charisma of Paul Rosenmöller have been very important". De Bruijn confirms: "We have indeed become less modest when it comes to putting the party leader in the centre of attention. At the beginning of the 2000s, there still was more reticence about that; people argued that we should make visible that GroenLinks consisted of a team of people of a high variety". Van der Lee prefers to call this development a 'forced choice': "In internal discussions we often found it important not to be represented by one face, but to show that the party is broader than just that one person. However, for example at the moment Femke Halsema took over the party leadership from Paul Rosenmöller,

⁹⁷ Since the 2000s the list of candidates has bureaucratized in the sense that more and more people have working experience in the civil service. However, Lucardie – also joint author of the book 'Van de straat naar de staat' ('From the streets to the state', about the history of GroenLinks) – explains that surveys of the members of GroenLinks show that although in 1992 the interest of the party leadership to govern was already very high, the interest of the members was still very weak. Lucardie: "Members followed later on. As during the 1990s government participation was not one of the primary goals of the GroenLinks-members, this became the case in 2002 and was even much stronger in 2010".

we had to make her face known very quickly in order to stand any chance during the elections”. The alternative to focus on content instead of the visibility of the leader is according to him no true option: “Than you are almost certain that you will lose seats. You cannot ignore the fact that people just find it important to be able to identify themselves with the political leader of a party”.

The suggestion to get back to the duo-party leadership is laughed at: “If only because of the droll sound, we already wouldn’t do that. It is really something of the past for GroenLinks. Within the party only a handful of people would be proponents of it, and people like Paul Rosenmöller and Femke Halsema have shown that party leader is something you really have to be day and night. It would not work to share that, and in addition, people would associate that with naïve starry-eyed idealism. And although we are idealists and want to change the world, we are not naïve”. Snels emphasizes that at the time of Ina Brouwer and Mohammed Rabbae the shared party leadership was not really meant as a statement. “GroenLinks just needed somebody new to head the list of candidates, and at that time Paul Rosenmöller then didn’t want to do it alone. Ina Brouwer wanted to compete with him and chose quite consciously to candidate herself together with an immigrant”. It was thus more the result of an internal political battle, not a symbolic decision. However, as GroenLinks again lost a seat in the elections, they never again chose for duo-party leadership. Snels: “We have learned that it is more professional to have one party leader that does the job fulltime”.

During the 2000s GroenLinks experienced Femke Halsema was truly becoming the face of the party. As a result, her fame was used ever more during campaigns. Van der Lee: “During her ‘first’ elections in 2003, we decided to present her as a soft power, to focus on her identity via a close-up. Goals were for people to become familiar with her and we also tried to create a sense of intimacy”. The fact that she was presented in a different way later on, is according to him in part thanks to her personal development: “Of course she grew regarding her debating skills, in her authority and in her knowledge about all kinds of issues. That coincided with a growth in her leadership and the growing ambition of the party to govern”. Over time, as Platvoet describes it, ‘the content of GroenLinks became the content of Femke Halsema’. De Bruijn explains that in the last campaign this came to a height: “In 2010 we chose very consciously to completely focus the campaign on Femke. We assessed that many people – including journalists – had come to see her as an authority: we tried to take as much advantage of it as possible. She perfectly suited the message: ready for the future”. Her personality thus came to dominate the campaign over the content of her message; and emphasizing the willingness of GroenLinks to govern gained the upper hand over explaining the ideals of the party. De Bruijn: “She was the living proof that we had people with the authority and the confidence to substantiate our ideas”. GroenLinks took advantage of the fact that the media became of tremendous importance. “Femke possessed the ideal combination of public appeal and the capacity to flirt with journalists in a professional way. We absolutely used that as much as we could”. In this case the

party strategists have thus been extremely influential in deciding on the amount of attention paid to Paul Rosenmöller and especially Femke Halsema.

Although ‘forced’ by the external development that is known as the ‘personalization of politics’ GroenLinks consciously decided to take advantage of it and place Halsema in the spotlights. The party leader herself obviously had to be willing to make this change. Snels explains the influence of the fact that GroenLinks anticipated on governing highly during the elections of 2010: “As I was head of the campaign we focused on just one strategy: presenting Femke as a stateswoman”⁹⁸. Instead of campaigning on themes, GroenLinks exclusively concentrated on Femke Halsema: this explains the fact that on the campaign-posters and -flyers Halsema is presented very large and with a serious look on her face. Snels: “We displayed her as a stateswoman, thereby referring to Hillary Clinton: ready for power and thus ready for the future, as the slogan said”. De Bruijn explains that focusing on the party leader is necessary, as government participation is also an important way to make the party more visible. “If you furnish several ministers, people start to associate multiple faces with your party. These people also often still get a lot of attention in the media; it is convenient to have such authoritative people”. It has thus been a conscious decision of the party strategists to increasingly focus on the party leader as the representative of the organization, with as the primary reason to convince voters of the willingness and ability of GroenLinks to govern.

❖ Summarizing the causes of the changed organizational presentation of GroenLinks

To conclude: things have actually changed quite fundamentally in the organization of GroenLinks, which is clearly reflected in the organizational presentation of the party. ‘Forced’ by external stimuli such as bad electoral results as well as more general societal trends such as the mediatisation and personalization of politics within-party strategists have initiated – together with the party leadership – the organizational changes that became visible in the organizational presentation of the party. Members have moved to the end of the decision-making process. These processes have as a result become more top-down and the people representing the party have become increasingly important. Causes of these developments are thus a growing need to operate more efficiently, especially because of the quickness of the media, and more general developments such as individualism. The decision-making power has been appropriated more and more by the party board and especially the parliamentary group. Due to the developments in society, GroenLinks has become a fully independent political organization that has adjusted itself to the needs of the current age.

⁹⁸ The emphasis on Halsema as the personification of the focus on governing can be recognized in the evaluative comments on the 2010-campaign: ‘We have chosen to pursue especially the strategic message (of wanting to govern), instead of focusing on the content of the message’ (GroenLinks/h, 2010: 2).

7.3 Strategic change: new approach, changing ambitions, complementary motives

❖ Changing focus: from own members to new voters

Kalkman explains that whereas the first manifesto was more the basis for GroenLinks as a party, the second manifesto is more a public relations-document, oriented towards potential new voters instead of the members of the former parties that merged into GroenLinks. The presentation of the party has been focused on different groups. “During the first years GroenLinks was directing its message to its members, the grassroots support and their direct environment; in order to display the GroenLinks-identity so that people would feel a bond with the party. Over time, the party decided it is more important to address voters directly”. This was for example visible in the discussion about the European Constitution: whereas the GroenLinks-members were divided on that issue, GroenLinks decided to focus on the modern middle class that has the pro-European sentiment. A theory about ‘focus groups’ is utilized, based on election and voter research by outside experts. This shows a professionalization in the sense that some of the work is even outsourced to other organizations. Kalkman: “Whereas the focus used to be ‘binding the grassroots support’, a more advertising-oriented professional attitude focused on the outside world has increasingly gained the upper hand”.

In short, the focus of the strategy has changed from members to voters. Kalkman: “In order to reach new groups of voters, the tone had to become more moderate. The Hague embraced the idea that the party cadre is stuck with old-fashioned critical ideas, whereas the voters have already developed further”. In 2005 under the lead of Wijnand Duyvendak and Van der Lee this thinking about a permanent campaign and the professionalization of GroenLinks regarding elections, campaigns and broadening the electorate started⁹⁹. This consisted basically of comparative research on the values of voters and the values of GroenLinks. Van der Lee: “You conduct this kind of research in order to better understand your supporters. In internal discussions the results played a large role, as our grassroots supporters tend to have a clear profile that deviated from the supporters of other parties”. He explains that it was difficult to execute programmatic changes based on the results of the research. “It did however influence the way in which we presented things. We learnt to put ourselves in the position of our voters and as a result adjusted the way in which we proposed or explained things”. As Snels argues, the fact that GroenLinks is striving for government participation leads to a continuous debate about what you want to be in the news with: “We now think more consciously about how far you can go, if you want to reach a larger group of voters”. The main reasoning is: the larger you share of voters, the larger the chance to become part of government.

⁹⁹ Although already in the campaign evaluation of 1994 one of the recommendations was that ‘GroenLinks should as a whole have a permanent campaign’ (GroenLinks/b, 1994: 39).

❖ Acceptance of current society

One of the biggest changes has to do with the ambitions of the party. As in the beginning years the party was striving to structurally reform society, this has changed very gradually in accepting and maintaining the current system. Kalkman: “GroenLinks now just wants to make it work in a different, better, more honest, environment-friendly way. We turned from a classical reformist party that wants to carry out structural reforms into a party that wants to organize the existing economic system in a better way, without changing it too much”. The crux is thus that by now GroenLinks would leave the relation between the state and the market roughly the same as it is right now. Platvoet: “Originally the parties merging into GroenLinks were anti-capitalist and had fundamental social criticism. Over time this disappeared”. He believes over time GroenLinks developed confidence in the good intentions and the changing potential of institutions like the EU, NATO, the IMF and the World Bank – although always critical comments have been expressed. Snels confirms that there have been discussions about environmental politics and capitalism. According to him, already at the beginning of the 1990s GroenLinks found out that it is possible to use measures in line with the prevailing market to practice environmental politics. Snels: “In a way that was an acceptance of the market. Several of the former parties that merged into GroenLinks used to consider environmental problems as problems of the business world. We had big discussions about this subject, and we turned out to no longer be radically anti-capitalist. That was when GroenLinks truly developed her own ideology”.

Despite the fact that GroenLinks has always been practically oriented, somewhere halfway the 1990s under the lead of Rosenmöller, Kalkman believes the final decision has been made not to be a ‘principles party’, but a ‘practical reform party’. “The key group discussing and deciding on this issue was the party executive. The alternative was to choose on the long term to focus on principles and to hope for society to move in the direction of these principles in order to gain influence. However, they chose to focus on developing practical reform proposals and trying to find workable majorities for specific subjects”. He believes enhancing the electoral results with this strategy, introduced by Rosenmöller, was the indirect goal. According to Van Gent, this is the largest change: “We developed from a pure ‘party-of-ideas’ into a ‘party-of-ideas looking for power’. It is not anymore just about being right, but about being proved right”. De Bruijn uses the exact same words, thereby referring to a strategy-memo of 2004: “Being proved right is important, because that means winning votes”. Often the moderation of GroenLinks is considered to be caused by the strong wish of the party to govern. However, it is often unclear which things were changed in anticipation of government participation, and which developments led to the strengthened wish of GroenLinks to become part of the government. Platvoet: “GroenLinks might have become less and less fundamentally critical of the establishment and of society in anticipation of government. Their wish to govern might also have been caused by this moderation and declining critique of society”. The interviews imply that it is a

matter of both: GroenLinks has changed over time, became more nuanced, more mature, more efficiently organized, as a gradual and maybe even partly unintentional process. This process resulted simultaneously in a growing wish to become part of government one day. This in turn reinforced the developments and that had already been set in.

❖ Diminished 'radicalism': a changing world, campaign strategists and the media

The causes of the process of diminishing radicalism are complex and interrelated. "As in other cases, changes are the result of an interplay between different factors", De Bruijn argues. All interviewees confirm, this has to do with general developments. In other words, external stimuli indirectly play a role. It is however clear that sometimes the content and especially the tone of GroenLinks has been moderated. In order to be able to put their ideas into practice, GroenLinks realized they had to make their ideas more attractive. Snels: "In the course of the 1990s we realized that we had to show proposals like environmental taxes were realistic and feasible. Therefore we started utilizing institutes to demonstrate that they were"¹⁰⁰. "Society changed, and based on national and international developments GroenLinks started to come to different conclusions", Platvoet believes.

Snels adds: "Our strategy was in any case to be realistic and become part of the power, but the world changed as well; as a result of both these things, we started to make different choices. We have always had the problem of strategic voting; GroenLinks is very popular as a second-best party". GroenLinks expected this to decrease if they had shown it would 'make sense' to vote for them as a party that can become part of government. De Bruijn: "If you have seriously participated in government once, you are in a different position: then you are able to convince the voters whose most important motive for voting is how much influence they have with their vote, that it is worthwhile to choose GroenLinks". From 2007 on that is what GroenLinks has focused upon: "building a stronger profile that shows clearly that you want to take the responsibilities of government and that you are organized in a professional way".

Although GroenLinks always had the goal of government participation in mind, under the lead of Paul Rosenmöller it became a serious goal¹⁰¹. Platvoet: "During the purple cabinets GroenLinks became more and more successful. At that time we realized government participation might be realistic, and therefore we decided to prepare for it". GroenLinks developed negotiation dossiers per subject, but Platvoet argues "this goal also had a moderating influence on the party. But it is hard to

¹⁰⁰ Lucardie describes: "The ecotax has been a very consistent part of the programme, but over time GroenLinks started to describe more precisely what is meant by it and what should be done to realize it".

¹⁰¹ Although clearly a lot of attention was started to being paid to government participation, the advice for the 2002-campaign argued that 'prudence is called for' (Kunst & Witlox, 2001: 24). As a result, the document presenting the plan for the 2002-campaign indeed says that there will be 'no focus on government participation in the campaign' (GroenLinks/d, 2001: 13). At the same time, it says that 'It is inescapable to deal with this issue seriously' (ibid: 13). In 2010 it seems to have become self-evident for GroenLinks to have government participation as a main goal, as it is mentioned directly in combination with the ideological goals of the party: 'Our core message is that GroenLinks wants a Green, social society in which everyone participates. And we want to govern to realise this' (GroenLinks/g, 2010: 2).

distinguish what changes were caused by the wish to govern, and what happened for other reasons. The reason why GroenLinks wanted to govern was not just to develop power, but being in power as a means to truly influence policy and effectuate her goals”.

The goal of government participation has become so important for GroenLinks for several reasons. According to Kalkman, participating in government would pre-eminently be a way of bringing about the changes you want. “Also it is a way for Green parties to prove their ability to survive as a political movement. In the Netherlands, the biggest fear of any political party is to become extremely small and insignificant so that nobody has to show consideration with them”. The increasingly explicit presence of that the willingness to govern is according to Van Gent a response to the fact that people were frustrated about ‘still being in the opposition’. The fact that GroenLinks has been close to governing several times has, according to Snels, only strengthened the willingness of GroenLinks to govern: “After the purple cabinets, in 2002, at the time of Fortuyn, but also in 2006, GroenLinks has been close to governing. It had become clear to the public that GroenLinks wanted to govern, but the fact that we weren’t able to make it into a government damaged our image”.

Within GroenLinks conscious strategic decisions have been made in response to the societal developments. One of these decisions was “to focus on the parliamentary area, and to strive for administrative functions”, Kalkman says. “GroenLinks changed its focus from considering parliamentary and extraparliamentary work as equally important – both in terms of concern and in terms of staffing – into becoming a fully parliamentary party”. The changing world and then changing focus also resulted in a new electoral strategy for campaigns, translated in ‘brand-values’ and the slogans like ‘Zin in de toekomst’ (‘excited for the future’). De Bruijn: “Our ambition was to become a professional organization able to incorporate member-democracy without being preponderant. That is important because of the significance of continuity. Voters understand that there can be internal discussions about subjects, but saying one thing today and saying the exact opposite one year later is incomprehensible”. The choice for a more top-down organization should also be seen in the light of this new strategy to present GroenLinks as clearly as possible to the voter. De Bruijn: “Of course members do not like to hear that things are being managed. But that is the way it goes: obviously we tried to steer things in the right direction. Especially in 2006 as we were trying to organize the permanent campaign there were complaints that the voter research was decisive for what GroenLinks considered to be important and that the ‘marketing people in The Hague and Utrecht’ decided on which road to take”. The changed strategy of GroenLinks was directly reflected in the strategic presentation of the party. Campaigns are in the course of the 00s ever more used as a way to convince potential voters.

Besides the conscious decisions made, the gradual development of GroenLinks maturing as a party and getting used to its role within the political area also played a role. Kalkman: “Choices were also constrained by the societal context; for example, GroenLinks in the 1970s would have had much

more input from the basis and social movements". Snels confirms that the need for change was inspired by multiple causes: "The political environment, your place in the political playing field, and thus your electoral chances and chances to profile yourself are important". This shows that, of course, the people part of the parliamentary group – the ones gaining the most attention from the media –themselves decide the strategy they want to employ and can therefore strongly influence the presentation of GroenLinks. Snels: "New people on important positions also cause changes. Halsema, for example, had clear opinions about emancipation and modernization, but also about how to respond to the upcoming left- and right-wing conservatism. In the end, it was Femke herself who decided in what way GroenLinks presented itself regarding a certain issue". Platvoet suggests that strategically, certain processes of change have also started to present a new party leader, for example the socio-economic more libertarian ideas with Femke Halsema: "The emphasis on emancipation and individualism fitted her image. It was appropriate because she had more libertarian ideas herself".

❖ Professionalization: permanent campaign and renewal

De Bruijn emphasizes: "I seriously think that regarding presentation, both content-wise and campaign/strategy-wise, it is not a coincidence that you see a professionalization-tendency". Snels agrees: "We have become much more aware during the past ten years that it is important to campaign permanently, because of the mediatization of politics. We became more professional, for example as we started to operate more consciously between elections". Kalkman explains: "At a certain moment a 'strategic consult' has been established, which is a non-elected gathering delegated from the various bodies". This body decided on all kinds of strategic questions. The fact that GroenLinks decided to establish such a body shows the growing importance of strategy for the party. Kalkman: "Over time the campaign work has started to dominate the work at GroenLinks in general. By the end of the 1990s a growing awareness of the competitive struggle between parties led to the decision to concentrate all activities around the campaign. Earlier on the party Board was always in charge, except from the 6 weeks preceding the national elections. From that moment on, the permanent campaign team decided on everything besides truly internal issues". In the permanent campaign team the members of the Second Chamber were strongly represented. Since then, the Board of GroenLinks is mainly deciding on issues regarding the functioning of the party bureau and longer-term issues. The decision of GroenLinks to start such a team is strongly related to changes that occurred in the media-landscape and in parliamentary politics: events are made the most of, in fact for the GroenLinks-fraction of the second chamber the campaign is truly permanent.

Nevertheless, according to Van der Lee, power politics is nowadays still not fully accepted within GroenLinks: "Members tend to have confidence that political disputes can be settled by rational arguments. However, that is not how the political game works; conflicting interests, especially in a

heated debate are mostly settled in favour of those who use the most effective emotional arguments. Therefore, in order to reach anything as a party, you have to play that game". Despite the restraint by members, "we stayed the course of professionalization and marketing". In recent years an example of this professionalization is the introduction of 'digital campaigning', like using social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Snels: "It seems to suit our grassroots support well. It is thus more the type of campaigning than the content of it that changed".

❖ The role of strategists in the changing image and tone

In the course of the 1990s GroenLinks already tried to get rid of their image of naïve idealists. Snels: "The first step was to change our image from naïve to realistic, which happened under Rosenmöller between 1994 and 2002. The second step was to become a candidate governing-party". Van der Lee explains: "The image of the starry-eyed idealists with goat's wool socks, men with beards and knitting women, was framed really from outside and therefore hard to get rid of. GroenLinks wanted to release itself from these impressions of naivety and idealism. As a result, views were developed regarding questions like what type of leader do you want, what kind of messages do you send and how realistic do you want to be". Van Gent agrees that the tone of documents changed over time: "The documents are now written in a more accessible way. We are also proposing our ideas in a self-evident way. In short: we no longer just raise our warning finger, but present an attractive alternative".

The reason for this is according to Van Gent earlier experience: "We realized that people started to see us as pedantic, because of that raised warning finger. Especially the more emancipated citizens were not really attracted to that, whereas they were exactly the people we were trying to appeal to". Besides these experiences, Van Gent points to the fact that the world has changed. She is also convinced that people nowadays want to be addressed in a different way. De Bruijn: "That pedantic tone was something we decided to get rid of in 2005 as we were discussing the permanent campaign. You then become stuck in the margin of people that are yelling what is wrong, whereas what we wanted was to develop and present ideas about what is possible". According to him, the reason GroenLinks wanted this was because they expected, as the voter research also showed, that progress-optimism and reformist-mindedness, the willingness to change things by means of innovations, would appeal to their potential voters. De Bruijn: "That kind of expressions, relating to progress and optimism, turned out to be important to reach our potential voters". He emphasizes that the party as a whole had to be convinced of this new message. "It is a long-winded process. By means of training and days for active members from all over the country, we have by now delivered this message".

This shows GroenLinks not only decided to focus more on their potential voters, but the voter

research conducted was truly employed as important input for strategic decisions. Also, the need felt to change the tone GroenLinks used was partly the result of the fact that GroenLinks experienced the way they used to approach things was not very successful. It was enhanced by the results of the voter research saying that people would be more accessible via more positive campaigning. Part of the strategic choices of GroenLinks has also been to put themselves away from other parties like the PvdA, D66 and the SP. As Snels describes, in the middle of the 2000s within GroenLinks a debate started about the question 'what type of party are we'. Snels: "We concluded to become a more liberal political party that distances itself from the 'old-left' body of thought, and also from the SP and parts of the PvdA. We have changed structurally into a reform party and have gained a relatively autonomous position, away from the SP and the PvdA". De Bruijn confirms: "We especially decided to distinguish ourselves from the SP. Because of that interpretation we have absolutely lost members, part of what can impolitely be called the 'old left'. But we consciously chose for a growth strategy that involved the hope and optimism, instead of the anti-attitude".

It remains difficult to point out how much influence the party strategists have exactly had on the strategic course of GroenLinks. As it seems straightforward to argue that their influence has grown, the strategists themselves are rather reticent about their role. As De Bruijn, campaign director from 2006 to 2011, argues: "It is difficult to indicate how much influence we had. I really believe the changes within GroenLinks are the result of an interaction between the parliamentarians, the choices we as campaign managers make and the responsiveness of the media. It is impossible to direct everything, even as a strategist". Van der Lee considers decisions to be the result of interaction "...between people that are part of the parliamentary group, people from within the party, as well as outside experts".

❖ Summarizing the causes of the changed strategic presentation of GroenLinks

The fact that GroenLinks started to present itself strategically in a different way over time turns out to have many different causes. It is clear that GroenLinks responded to general trends in society, specifically the diminished role of social movements, the individualization and mediatisation. However, strategy gained more attention and was considered to be ever more important within the party, resulting in the establishment of new bodies and the appointment of (campaign) strategists. These people are, together with the representatives of GroenLinks in the Second Chamber, the ones who initiated most changes in the strategic presentation of GroenLinks. They decided to present GroenLinks as a realistic party and to focus on potential voters instead of members. The results of research were used as the starting point for discussing questions of strategy. The changes observed in the strategic presentation are a logical result of the increasing attention paid to strategy. The realism of proposals and the fact that they are now much more detailed and substantiated, the serious-

ness of the party and the readiness to take responsibility, the changed tone and approach of problems and solutions; all of it is resulting from these developments within the party. And whereas it is reasonable to believe that unconscious developments and gradual processes also play a role in the strategic presentation of the party, we can conclude that changes are also heavily influenced by the strategists and the parliamentary group – especially the chair(wo)man of the parliamentary group.

7.4 Concluding: explaining the professionalization of the external political approach of GroenLinks

At the end of chapter 6 the conclusion was drawn that the development in the external political approach of GroenLinks can be characterized as a professionalization. To sum up: GroenLinks presents itself more and more based on a coherent, concrete ideology, as an efficient, open party for which the principles are leading but who recognizes that their politicians are all-important, and who poses constructive critique and realistic alternatives. This chapter has been devoted to discovering the reasons for the professionalization of GroenLinks' external political approach. The results of the analysis and the causes of change are summarized in table 1. It is now time to take a look at hypotheses and conclude to what extent the causal model developed corresponds to the actual developments within GroenLinks.

Generally stated we expected that changes in leadership, in dominant faction and/or external stimuli may cause changes in a party's organization, ideology and strategy, depending on the primary goals the actors are aiming at. More specifically, starting with the role of external stimuli, we hypothesized this variable would only indirectly influence party change, as within-party actors are expected first to interpret these developments and then decide whether or not to act in response to them. The reconstruction of the changing process as it has been developed in this chapter clearly confirms that external stimuli have been motives for within-party actors to act and change the way the party was presented – like 'shocks' such as disappointing election results but also more general developments and trends such as personalization, Europeanization and changing international relations but also electoral setbacks.

This does not necessarily exclude that the alternative hypothesis, which says that external stimuli have directly influenced party change, might be true. Conscious within-party decisions or actions might not always be the direct causes of the changes, but this process turned out to be too complex to draw any conclusions. The design of this research project is not appropriate to truly gain insight in the process of external stimuli directly causing change, as the focus lies on the within-party actors and their experiences. Whether this alternative hypothesis is also correct thus cannot be verified.

Aspect of external political approach	Results from the analysis of election campaigns (Chapter 6)	Causes of change according to within-party actors (Chapter 7)
Ideological presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development from relatively amateur to quite professional. • Over time an ever broader range of subjects is included in the presentation. • Picture is increasingly coherent and relationship between issues is presented as ever more 'self-evident'. • Salience, politicization and topicality of subjects have over time been taken into account in the prioritization of issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External stimuli, primarily worldwide changes were input for changes. GroenLinks became quite open to these changes and was willing to adjust earlier proposals. - Strategic considerations also played a role. GroenLinks tried to perform quality opposition: less anti-sentiments, less radicalism and more refined, detailed and moderated proposals. - Party leaders and party strategists were primary catalysts of change.
Organizational presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development from quite professional to professional. • Party is presented increasingly as an efficient organization and party leaders are presented in an ever more serious instead of informal manner. • There is more and more emphasis on the independency of the party and their own message. • The party adjusted to and started to take advantage of the personalization of politics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External stimuli, such as electoral results but also general societal trends such as the mediatisation and personalization of politics, were causes of change. - Party strategists, often in response to the external stimuli and together with the party leadership, initiated changes. - The party board and parliamentary group made the decision-making process more top-down, due to reasons of efficiency and the speed of the media in the current age.
Strategic presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong development from amateur to very professional. • Increased attention for strategy is primarily visible in the presentation of GroenLinks-politicians as capable of performing important tasks and of GroenLinks as a party that should be taken seriously. • Radical elements have gradually been transformed into more constructive critique; the emphasis shifted from primarily being critical to posing credible and feasible alternatives. • Over time an increasingly self-confident attitude and moderate tone has been adopted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General trends in society, like the diminished role of social movements, individualization and mediatisation were external stimuli for change. - More attention has been paid to strategy as it was considered to be of growing importance, which resulted in the establishment of new bodies and the appointment of strategists. - Strategists and parliamentary representatives (especially the chair(wo)man) became increasingly influential and capable of changing the focus and the presentation of the party. This was welcome as the party was maturing and became unsatisfied with (electoral) results.

Table 1: Summary of the analysis and causes of change in the external political approach of GroenLinks.

Regarding the independent variables, the within-party actors, it was hypothesized that both the party leadership and the dominant faction directly influence party change. The party leadership, possessing the final formal power to decide on the course of the party, have indeed caused changes in the external political approach of GroenLinks. However, what became plainly clear is that many different within-party actors at various times influenced what was happening and thus changing. Other actors that were mentioned by various interviewees are the parliamentary group, campaign strategists and the various writing committees of the election programmes. Other 'actors' that played an

(apparently diminishing) role were the party congress and the various working groups, both consisting of GroenLinks-members. The alternative hypothesis that there are individuals who (ad hoc) are able to cause changes turns out to be true as well, especially as more and more 'experts' and 'professionals' (who are increasingly not even members) are attracted to advise on or be involved in within-party decision-making processes. The hypothesis regarding the dominant faction however must be falsified, as it incorrectly presupposes the existence of various factions with differing interests that act separately. Within GroenLinks there have never really been clear and separate factions, such as blood groups resulting from the predecessors of the party or as several 'camps' in a large debate. Nevertheless, the conversations with the within-party actors revealed that the party leadership, especially the chair(wo)man of the parliamentary party, and the party strategists are pre-eminently the ones initiating, deciding on and thus causing changes in the external political approach of GroenLinks.

The hypothesis that the goal of government participation as a primary party goal strongly influenced changes in the external political approach of GroenLinks is confirmed. In many ways the presentation of the ideology, organization and strategy of the party has been influenced by the aim of governing. This confirms the theory developed about 'anticipatory adaptation'. The interviewees all confirmed that because of the ever stronger wish to govern various adjustments have been made. Examples are the moderation of the tone, the emphasis on the realism of their ideas and of course the presentation of the party as capable of and willing to govern. Yet it was not just the presentation that changed. The party as a whole turned out to have changed its attitude and approach; this subsequently resulted in a changing external political approach.

This brings us to another interesting conclusion that was not hypothesized, but came across during the research process. The developments in the external political approach of GroenLinks turned out to be a genuine reflection of actual developments within the party. For example, the organization was reorganized, more professionals were attracted and at the same time the way the organization was presented in election campaigns changed in that direction. In a comparable manner, the professionalized presentation of the GroenLinks-ideology went hand in hand with a growing and maturing process within the party that resulted in a growing coherency in the programme. And the professionalization in the strategic presentation of the party coincided with a changing attitude within the party what can roughly be described as delivering 'quality opposition' instead of just raising a 'warning finger'.

8. Concluding remarks

The larger goal of this research project has been to contribute to the scientific knowledge in political science about changes regarding to Green parties. In order to do so a case study of the Dutch Green party 'GroenLinks' has been conducted. To find out in what sense GroenLinks has changed, the development of the party as it has presented itself during the past twenty years has been investigated. The aim was first of all to analyze the way the party presented itself, or its 'external political approach', and see whether this has changed. The second goal was to understand and explain the causes of the identified changes. Therefore an empirical research project has been executed in two parts. First of all, the changing external political approach of GroenLinks has been identified by a comparative analysis of national election campaigns. Three different aspects of the presentation of the party have been analyzed separately: the ideological, organizational and strategic presentation of the party. Second, by conducting interviews with within-party actors, the causes of these changes have been identified from a primarily actor-centred perspective.

Over the past twenty years the external political approach of GroenLinks has been professionalized, for which various causes can be pointed out. This professionalization in the external political approach, or presentation, of the party has taken place regarding all three aspects that has been analyzed separately. The ideological presentation of GroenLinks has become more professional in the sense that the party presented itself over time on an ever broader range of subjects; the picture presented became more coherent as issues were more logically interrelated; proposals are presented ever more as self-evident; and the salience, politicization and topicality of subjects is being taken more and more into account in the prioritization and selection of issues. The organizational presentation of GroenLinks has become more professional in the sense that the party started to take advantage of the familiarity of the party leaders and let go a bit of the exclusive focus on ideology; presented them ever more as serious and capable politicians; and presented the party more as an independent political organization with an own message. The strategic presentation of GroenLinks has become more professional in the sense that the party gradually started to approach politics in a different way: over time the anti- and protest-elements and the more negative approach have been replaced by a positive attitude; the party started to consequently present – detailed – alternatives and explained why these were realistic and necessary; and the tone the party chose became more self-confident, moderate and constructive. GroenLinks has become more professional in its approach, and the diminished radicalism in the tone makes it questionable whether it would be appropriate to call the party 'activist'. The terminology of 'repackaging' used in earlier research might be pointing in the right direction: it is not so much the content that has changed, but the presentation of

it. However, various interviewees pointed to the fact that the moderation of GroenLinks does not exclusively apply to the content of the message. No matter to what extent this is true, it would imply that the party ideology does stain contain activist elements. On the other hand, the term ‘activism’ suggests a radicalism in approach as well: it insinuates not only radical ideas but also radical means. In short, it does not seem unequivocally correct to label GroenLinks as ‘professional-activist’.

8.1 The value of the multilayered causal model: explaining change

The interviews led to the conclusion that the different causes of change all apply to the ideological, organizational as well as strategic presentation of the party. Therefore it deemed unnecessary to separately point to the causes of the various changes; the causes have been separated in the explanatory chapter, but can now be assembled as the causes of the changed external political approach of GroenLinks – in general. The first of the causes for the professionalization are general developments outside GroenLinks, labelled as ‘external stimuli’, were often reasons for actors within GroenLinks to start debates or to initiate changes by themselves. However, these external stimuli are not a necessary condition as a cause of change: sometimes no development can be pointed out that preceded a changing process within the party. The approach chosen in this research project is not appropriate to draw any conclusions on the direct role of external stimuli as causes of change, as the interpretation of within-party actors was the focus during the interviews. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that it is often impossible to point out with certainty what was the exact, original, cause of changes. In addition, it is implausible to expect any change to have just one specific cause. Therefore, various causes that contributed to one type of change have been accepted.

Regarding the question of within-party actors we reach the conclusion that various types of actors influenced and initiated changes at various times and in various respects. The party leadership often caused and initiated changes, as expected. However, other within-party actors such as campaign strategists, the parliamentary faction and the writing committees of election programmes have also been influential regarding in the external political approach of GroenLinks. As the party congress has the formal power to decide on election programmes, this ‘actor’ also caused changes. In reality, however, this was only rarely the case. The same counts for the working groups in which members take place: formally they can initiate changes, but the interviews reveal that way more often changes were implemented top-down. People in important positions – members of Parliament, strategists, and to a lesser degree members of the Board – possessed the institutional power to initiate changes the ‘rest of the party’ followed and approved. Based on the existing literature a ‘dominant faction’ was expected to initiate changes as well, but this hypothesis was falsified as the history of GroenLinks reveals that no clear ‘factions’ or ‘blood groups’ can or could be distinguished.

The especially interesting part of this research project concerns the hypothesis that the main

goal of the party, expected to be the aim of government participation, would function as a catalyst of change. The interviews strongly indicate that the aim of government participation has indeed become ever more important for GroenLinks and as a result increasingly influenced changes. This was the case especially in the way the party presented itself; namely more and more as a party that is both willing and able to govern. The concept of 'anticipatory adaptation' seems appropriate to describe the various professionalization-tendencies in the external political approach of GroenLinks. The various adjustments made, such as a moderation of the tone, an increasingly constructive attitude and emphasis on the party's realism, should according to the interviewees often be seen in the light of potential government participation.

Nevertheless, it remains dangerous to draw strong conclusions on the actual causal chain of this changing process. It seems appropriate to consider the aim of government participation as a variable strengthening the wish of within-party actors to initiate change. However, the aim of government participation may also be the result of the professionalization-tendency itself. Or, the various 'failures' of GroenLinks to become part of government could be considered as a negative external stimulus that within-party actors respond to. With the information available it seems plausible to confirm the strengthening influence of the main party goal of government participation as an intervening variable. At this moment, therefore, the goal of government participation is considered as an important catalyst of change.

This research project provided more insight into the changing processes within the way GroenLinks presented itself. However, the actual changes in the party itself turned out to be inextricably bound up with the presentational changes of the party. In fact, the various interviews revealed that all changes in presentation can be reduced to actual within-party changes that preceded them. For example, the fact that the ideology was presented more by concrete alternatives and more positively followed Rosenmöllers' proposal to perform 'quality opposition'. The enhanced visibility of the party's willingness to govern followed the actual decision by mainly the party strategists to profile GroenLinks as a ready-to-govern party. As this may sound self-evident, it is an interesting and unexpected conclusion. Also, one could think of various possible reasons for a party to present itself slightly different from the way it actually is.

There is one important assumption behind this research project that might be considered as problematic. The fact that the explanatory focus was on various possible causes and initiators of change excludes the possibility of unconscious developments resulting in change. However, the interviewees have pointed out that gradual developments such as the maturing of the party, getting used to the parliamentary environment, and their growing experience, are developments that should be taken into account as well. This shows that it is impossible to always point at which – groups of – people are the initiators or causes of change. Sometimes, there is no clear reason why something

changed. And especially regarding presentation, it is unrealistic to expect people to know exactly how things were presented, formulated or portrayed in earlier campaigns. As a result, changes in presentation might even be a coincidence. What the reader should thus realize is that whereas the results of the project do reveal several changing processes within GroenLinks, it is impossible and would therefore be inappropriate to claim that unconscious developments and coincidence have not played a role.

8.2 Consequences: the remaining uniqueness of Green parties

Although not the original research goal of this project, the results achieved can be taken one step further. We now know in what sense GroenLinks has changed regarding its external political approach – it became more professional – and what the various causes of this process are. Subsequently, one might ask the question whether GroenLinks still is the typical ‘New Left Green party’ it used to be, or whether it lost (some of) its uniqueness. Considered to be the most essential characteristics of this type of party are advocating radical reforms of modern society, considering ‘basic democracy’ as the fundament of the organization, having and focusing on a distinct electoral profile consisting of higher educated, young people, and having ‘Green’ programmatic concerns as well as equal rights, peace, civil liberties. ‘Libertarianism’ was a unique characteristic of Green parties, meaning the extension of the notion of ‘exploitation’ from the relations of production to gender relations, relations with nature and relations among individuals within society and with the state.

It is important to keep in mind that the focus of this research project was the way GroenLinks presented itself –not the actual functioning of the party itself, although these things turned out to be heavily interrelated. Nevertheless, it is possible to consider the question in what sense GroenLinks presented itself over time as a typical ‘New Left Green party’. Ideologically, the subjects the party presents itself on are still the typical New Left Green issues; the range of subjects has even broadened over time, but the basic principles remained the same. Although GroenLinks dropped some of their typically ‘old-left’ socio-economic proposals and replaced them by what has been characterized as more ‘liberal’ alternatives, still the principle of creating equal opportunities for people persisted. And while Green issues are still an important part of the party’s programme as it is presented, environmental aspects are increasingly integrated in all of the other subjects the party is concerned with.

Qua organizational presentation GroenLinks has lost some of its uniqueness. For the internal functioning of the party as a membership organization, the originally important characteristic of within-party democracy has lost some of its value. The possibility of becoming a member is still visible in campaigns, but extremely little attention is paid to the way internal party processes work. As discussed, members have moved to another moment in the decision-making process that has become ever more top-down, despite the fact that the party emphasizes it is very open and transpar-

ent. In addition, the typically 'New Left' relations with social movements has almost completely disappeared out of the presentation of the party. Instead, GroenLinks presented itself increasingly as an essentially independent political party.

The largest change has however occurred in the strategic presentation of the party: the aim is no longer to radically change the foundations of current society. Relatively early on GroenLinks decided to present itself less radically. The party no longer approaches politics based on the 'interconnected critiques of the dominant patterns of policymaking in social, economic, and international affairs in western Europe', as Kaelberer (1993: 230) considers as characteristic for Green parties. Qua strategic presentation, GroenLinks has over time almost fully omitted its protest- and anti-sentiments. This does not mean that they are no longer critical, but critique is presented in a different manner. GroenLinks has adopted a more positive approach and as a result presents its critique in a more constructive way. Instead of emphasizing – as was characteristic for New Left Green parties – what is wrong they began to connect critique with proposing solutions.

A consequence of the changes in the external political approach of GroenLinks is thus that GroenLinks is no longer the typical 'New Left Green party' it used to be. Whether this is a good or a bad development is not the question under consideration here. Yet in the various respects mentioned above GroenLinks changed and thus less of the 'unique' New Left Green party it was remained intact. These changes are part of the 'professionalization' of their external political approach. Ideologically, the starting point remains the same and Green issues are still important, yet the party has integrated these issues more and is giving another, more concrete and sometimes more liberal ('vrijzinnig', as the party calls it) interpretation to the elaboration of their proposals. Organizationally, the party is clearly paying less attention to the internal party democracy and has become more independent. It focuses on a larger group than only the voters according to the typical New Left Green electoral profile. And strategically, the party took a new path in which the anti- and protest-elements have made room for a more constructive and less radical approach, of which the goal of presenting GroenLinks as a government-worthy party has become of high importance. GroenLinks no longer presents itself as the typical New Left Green party it was twenty years ago, but has lost quite a few elements of its uniqueness as a result of the professionalization of their external political approach.

8.3 Recommendations for further research

As any scientific research project, this examination of the development of GroenLinks raises many other potential research questions. First of all, the fact that GroenLinks professionalized its external political approach over time does not justify the conclusion that in general Green parties without governmental experience have professionalized. It does however show that this is possible. Therefore it would be very interesting to compare the development of GroenLinks with the development

of other Green parties without governmental experience. By doing so, it would become possible to decide whether the conclusions drawn are generalizable to a larger pool of Green parties. However, this research project could be seen as a first step in that direction: anticipatory adaption in the external political approach of GroenLinks in preparation of potential government participation turned out to be happening, so there is now reason to expect other Green parties to have changed in a comparable manner.

What made the causal model utilized in this project so special is the incorporation of the goal of government participation as a catalyst of change for Green parties. This case study reveals that it is indeed very plausible that Green parties, like GroenLinks, conducted anticipatory adaptations while hoping to get into government one day. In order to be able to analyze to what extent this derivative of the 'threshold-approach' has explanatory value, compared to its traditional variant – which argues that the actual act of governing is the catalyst of change – , it would be very interesting to test the alternative hypothesis that passing the threshold of government is a main cause of the professionalization of the external political approach of the Greens. By conducting a comparative research project between various Green parties, parties with and without governmental experience, one could compare the changes in the (presentation of) the parties and try to see whether, and if so in what sense, the various parties have professionalized over time. By doing so it might become possible to draw general conclusions on the way Green parties without governmental experience have changed and to also draw general conclusions on the way Green parties with governmental experience have changed. It might then be possible to develop an answer to the question whether Green parties with and without governmental experience are converging in the same direction – or whether these two 'groups' of parties are diverging.

What would be interesting to know as well is whether only Green parties have professionalized their external political approach. Maybe often 'New Left' parties have changed in this same manner over the past decades as well. It might be reasonable to expect this larger group of parties to have developed in a comparable manner, as they were all established in the same period and thus have the same origins. By taking all kinds of New Left parties into account in a research project, it might be possible to draw even larger conclusions that count not only for Green parties. There are thus many possibilities to conduct further interesting research in response to this research project. At this point, at least more insight has been provided in the development of GroenLinks, and there is plenty of reason to expect causal model developed and utilized here to be applicable to other cases as well.

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Interviewees

Bruijn, J. de (2011, 26th of May), current head 'Party & Network' and Secretary-General and former Campaign Director of GroenLinks 2006-2011.

Gent, I. van (2011, 30th of May), current member of the Second Chamber for GroenLinks since 1998.

Kalkman, K. (2011, 9th of June), International Secretary of the GroenLinks Party Executive 1996-2002.

Lee, T. van der (2011, 31st of May), former head Press Briefing and head Political Coordination of the parliamentary faction of GroenLinks 1993-2009.

Lucardie, P. (2011, 12th of May), political scientist at the Documentation Centre Dutch Political Parties and author of multiple publications on ideologies and political parties.

Platvoet, L. (2011, 28th of June), former Party Chairman 1989-1990 and former member of the First Chamber for GroenLinks 1999-2007.

Snels, B. (2011, 27th of May), former head Press Briefing and head Political Coordination and Strategy of the parliamentary faction 2009-2011 and former director of the Scientific Bureau of GroenLinks 2004-2010.