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New Political Parties: What are They and How to Study Them?[2]

Abstract: Economic, social and political crises cause mainstream parties to lose their electoral support, paving the way for new parties and political movements. However, new parties are not always genuinely new, sometimes they are merger or split parties or for other reasons may be considered a continuation of previously existing parties. The question is therefore what constitutes a new party? Is it a new name, structure, election participation for the first time or merely competing on new issue? Newness is usually not a dichotomous variable, parties are not just new or old, they are new to some extent or in some areas, hence multi-dimensional analyses are required in order to assess party novelty. Shlomit Barnea and Gideon Rahat (2011) have pointed out that newness can occur in three key areas: party in the electorate, party as organisation and party in government. However, in each area it is still deemed as a dichotomous variable. We know the area in which a party is new, but not to what extent. In turn, the concept of Allan Sikk and Philipp Köker (2019) introduces the interval scale of party novelty that enables one to assess the level of newness, however, they have limited their framework to some areas of party activity omitting, for example, party programmatic stances. This paper constitutes an overview and is of a conceptual nature. After a brief outline of current ideas, a new analytical framework will be discussed that draws from the existing concepts but aims both to cover three areas of party activity and to assess the level of party newness in each of them.

Keywords: new parties, analytical framework, party newness, party in electorate, party as organization, party in government

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Introduction

Despite the growing body of literature focusing on changes occurring in the party systems of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (Hanley, 2012; Haughton, Deegan-Krause, 2015; 2020; Enyedi, Casal Bértoa, 2018), it is hypothesized that their stability can be much bigger than it is usually assumed as not all parties perceived as new are genuinely new. On the one hand, following the collapse of communism almost all elections have brought new entities into parliaments, with political parties being unstable and fluid (Markowski, 2006; Casal Bértoa, 2014), on the other, not all of them have been genuinely new, some can be considered as a continuation of something previously existing in terms of ideological or/and organizational identity (Markowski, Cześnik, 2002; Resende, 2009) as well as leadership, MPs or voters. Many parties have resulted from a split, merger, transformation, or a rebranding of existing entities. Even if parties claim to be new in order to draw the attention of citizens and to attract voters, we still observe the same faces of politicians often presenting the self-same political stances. The party labels maybe new, but the parties are still the same, commonly referred to as "new wine in old bottles".

For this reason, it is often difficult to define clearly what constitutes a new party and to determine dichotomously whether a party should be classified as "new" or "old". However, proper coding has far-reaching consequences for party system institutionalization and electoral volatility. Dichotomous coding of ambiguous cases as new or old parties can cause that we over- or underestimate party system stability and electoral volatility. Hence it is necessary to look for more sophisticated approaches for any analysis of party newness. Assuming that a political party can be partly new and partly serve as a continuation of a previously existing one (or ones), we can distinguish various areas of party activity in which newness occurs (Barnea, Rahat, 2011; Litton, 2015). As a party may be new not only in certain areas but also to some extent, it is crucial to grade the level of party newness as well (Sikk, Köker, 2019).

To examine party novelty, it is important to define "founding elections" which are deemed the starting point of the analysis. We usually think about the first elections that took place after a war, collapse of authoritarianism, communism or another breakthrough that resulted in the creation of a new party system from scratch (Lago, Martínez, 2011; Hino, 2012; Aït-Aoudia, 2018). Parties that entered parliament in the subsequent elections are compared with those which were in parliament after the founding one to determine in which areas and to what extent they are a continuation of pre-existing groups and to what extent they can be considered new parties. This procedure is repeated for all subsequent elections. If there are few parties in parliament, we can consider all parties which received state subsidies or gained a certain number of votes. Each

time, parties are compared with those which overcame such a threshold in preceding elections.

The results can serve for a verification of hypotheses related to the level of party system stability and electoral volatility as well as new parties' chances of survival. It is anticipated that there is often more continuity in political parties than may be suggested by the numerous changes to their labels (names, organizational identities), while the level of electoral volatility is lower than that calculated on the basis of the often-applied dichotomy of old *versus* new parties. As far as the chances of survival on the political scene are concerned, we anticipate that "rooted newcomers" (parties that exhibit a certain level of continuation) are more likely to continue (and to achieve electoral success) than genuinely new parties themselves (Hanley, 2012; Deegan-Krause, Haughton, 2018), including entrepreneurial ones (Bolleyer, Bytzek, 2013; 2017; Arter, 2016; Hloušek, Kopeček, 2017; Kosowska-Gąstoł, Sobolewska-Myślik, 2017), which are supposed to be replaced by even newer ones very soon (Haughton, Deegan-Krause, 2015).

The measurement of party newness is also useful for the assessment of the connections between new parties' chances of entering politics and gaining electoral success (electoral and legislative emergence) on the one hand (Marmola, 2019), and institutional explanatory variables on the other (Tavits, 2006; 2008; van Biezen, Rashkova, 2016). Research can focus on cross-national factors (Harmel, Robertson, 1985; Hino, 2012) as well as country specific ones such as party law, electoral system, and public party funding etc., however, it is noteworthy that these elements have changed over the course of time, hence parties should be studied considering those regulations in force at the time of their existence (Marmola, 2020; Smolík, 2023).

The innovative nature of the article stems from a few key factors. Firstly, drawing on the existing literature we are going to construct our own comprehensive framework for the analysis of new parties. This will enable one both to research those areas of party activity in which the novelty occurs and to measure the extent to which it occurs. This framework could be used to investigate new parties in various countries, especially those challenged with democratization as changes are supposed to be more frequent there. Secondly, in using our framework scholars are able to prove that the level of continuity in parties is higher while the electoral volatility and party systems instability lower than is usually assumed, the results will contribute to revise the way electoral volatility is measured (Powell, Tucker, 2014; Sikk, Köker, 2018; 2019). In order to analyse the replacement volatility, one should go beyond the dichotomy of old *versus* new party and take into consideration the level of novelty itself.

The article is of a conceptual nature, the main goal being to present the multidimensional framework for an analysis which makes it possible to identify areas of party novelty and assess the level of novelty in each of them. This framework

can be used in further research into political parties and party systems. The article comprises three parts, in the first, a brief overview of existing definitions of new parties is given in order to answer the questions as to what constitutes a new party, what criteria must be met for a party to be considered new. However, the existing definitions of a new party differ meaningfully from each other, causing the dichotomy old *versus* new to be possibly misleading. Some parties can be classified as new and at the same time as old depending on which definition we adopt. Hence in the second section, some concepts are presented that go beyond the dichotomy old *versus* new parties, they just disaggregate a party into the areas of its activity and evaluate the level of novelty. In the third section our own analytical framework is discussed drawing from the existing concepts but which aims both to cover all the key areas of party activity and to assess the level of party newness in each of them, tending to create a comprehensive tool for the assessment of party novelty.

How to recognise a new party? An overview of definitions

Despite the growing literature on new parties, the question of how to clearly distinguish a new party from an old one still waits an answer. What constitutes a new party? How to recognise it? Should it be an entity that is newly created, or maybe it should be competing in an election for the first time (Bolleyer, 2013) or competing on novel issues (Lucardie, 2000; Zons, 2015)? Should we take into consideration party origin, electoral success, programme, or all of them together? Even if we decide to consider party origin itself, the problem of a proper definition will not disappear. Contemporary political parties are created as a result of transformation, merger, split or birth (Krouwel, Lucardie, 2008). However, only the last category is devoted to parties created from scratch, which are often named as genuinely new parties (Hug, 2001; Sikk, 2005) or start-ups (Litton, 2015); the others grew out of pre-existing ones, therefore it is disputable as to whether they can be regarded as new at all.

The lack of a commonly accepted definition causes individual researchers dealing with new parties simply formulate their own. One of the broadest definitions of new parties is that of Robert Harmel; according to him new parties are "all those that have been added to a country's original party system" (1985, pp. 405). In his research, conducted with Robertson, within the category of new parties they included both genuinely new entities and those resulting from the splits, mergers, and reorganizations (transformations) of earlier existing groupings. They focused their research on the reasons for new parties' emergence and electoral success, especially investigating the impact of electoral system on their entry (Harmel, Robertson, 1985). Birch (2003) narrowed the definition of new parties to genuinely new, and only to these mergers or splits that have new names

ones differing from the names of their predecessors. According to Nicole Bolleyer (2013) and ScottMainwaring, Carlos Gervasoni, and Annabella España-Najera (2016) in the case of splits only the largest party is considered as a successor while the others as new parties. Similarly, in the case of mergers, only the biggest predecessor is regarded as a continuation. In turn, according to Simon Hug (2001) and Margit Tavits (2006) a new party is an organization that for the first time puts forward candidates at a general parliamentary election, hence "a new party is one that either results from a split from an existing party or is genuinely new in the sense that it emerges without any help from members of existing parties", mergers and electoral alliances are excluded. There are also definitions that consider parties as new merely when they do not derive from the structure of existing parties, therein excluding mergers and splits (Chiaramonte, Emanuele, 2015; Emanuele, Chiaramonte, 2016). Allan Sikk's definition (2005) is even narrower, for he excludes not only all parties resulting from splits and mergers, but also those in which there is continuity in terms of political leadership and personnel.

Regardless of which definition we adopt, they all are based on the dichotomy new *versus* old, however, the political reality is usually much more complicated and next to parties that can be easy qualify as new, there are more problematic cases, which require in-depth analysis. Parties can be new in some areas of their activities or to some degree, hence more sophisticated analytical tools are necessary that allow us to go beyond the dichotomy and treat newness as a multi-dimensional variable.

In which areas and to what extent is a party new? Some criteria of newness

The conception proposed by Shlomit Barnea and Gideon Rahat (2011) partly fulfils this analytical gap, disaggregating parties into eight areas in which newness can be seen. They took as their starting point the concept of parties as "tripartite systems of interaction" elaborated by Valdimer Orlando Key Jr. (1964). According to him a political party contains three aspects: the *party-in-the-electorate*, *party-in-government*, and *party-as-organization*. The concept is nowadays better known among party students in a version elaborated by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair as the three "faces" of party organization: *party on the ground*, *party in public office*, *party in central office* (2009). In order to assess party "newness" Barnea and Rahat (2011) assigned certain criteria to these facets, and then operationalized them (Table 1). Within the first facet *party-in-the-electorate*, the name of the party (1), its ideology (programme) (2) and voters (3) were analysed; in the second *party-as-organization* – formal status (4), institutions (5)

and party activists (6); in the third *party-in-government* – representatives (7) and party policies (8). The advantage of this concept is the distinction of many areas in which party "newness" can be measured. However, in each of these areas a dichotomy is applied – the party is old or new, there are no intermediate categories. Thus, the concept allows us determining areas in which the party is new, but not to what degree. It was successfully used by Stefanie Beyens et al. (2017) to assess the newness of the Belgian New-Flemish Alliance as well as by Beata Kosowska-Gąstoł and Katarzyna Sobolewska-Myślik (2019) to evaluate newness in a few Polish parties.

Table 1. The analytical framework for the measurement of party "newness" by Barnea and Rahat

Party face	Criterion	Operational definition
party-in-the--electorate	party label	Is the name genuinely new or does it contain an "old" party name?
	ideology	How different is the "new" party platform from the old party/ies platform/s?
	voters	How different is the "new" party electoral base from the old one?
party-as-organization	formal/legal status	Is the party registered as new?
	institutions	Were the party institutions separated and different from those of the old party/ies?
	activists	Does the "new" party have new activists, or did they "immigrate" to it from the old party/ies?
party-in-government	representatives	Are the top candidates new (non-incumbent)? Did most or all of them come from a single party?
	policies	How different are the "new" party's policies from the old party/ies policies?

Source: Barnea, Rahat, 2011, p. 306.

The other concept giving up on the idea of dichotomy between old and new parties is Krystyna Litton's (2015), called by her the "thick" concept of party newness. The author argues that in the popular "thin" conceptions of party novelty, a party is regarded as new when it appoints, for the first time, candidates at a general election and then it loses its newness (Harmel, Robertson, 1985; Lucardie, 2000; Hug, 2001; Sikk, 2005; Tavits, 2006; 2008). However, as Litton points out, in real politics few parties remain completely unchanged from one election to the next and the changes sometimes are far-reaching, hence all parties may change in various ways and in variable degrees becoming more or less new. Party novelty is defined as "the quality that reflects the degree of change within a party in terms of its structure and attributes within one electoral cycle" (Litton,

2015, p. 723). Litton's concept is extremely important for our framework as our aim is also to track the analysed parties' development from one election to the next in order to assess the level of their newness. Litton proposes to map party novelty in two-dimensional space. One dimension describes changes of party attributes (name, leader, programme) and the second changes in party structural affiliation (structural connections with other parties) (Table 2). She takes into consideration party appearance during European Parliament elections, but the conception can also be used to analyse party transformation between national parliamentary elections.

Table 2. The analytical framework for the measurement of party newness by Litton (2015)

Dimensions of party novelty	Criterion	Operational definition
party attributes	party name	Official name of a party as defined in its manifesto or on its website at the time of the given election
	party leader	Leader, spokesman or chairman (if more than one, whoever has the most exposure in the mass media)
	party programme	Party manifesto (party platform) published ahead of the election
party structural affiliation	abandoned its electoral list	Creates its own list before election, but in the previous election was part of an electoral coalition
	joined an electoral list	Is part of an electoral coalition, but in the previous election created its own list
	expanded by merger or elite defection from other parties	Absorbs another party in whole or in part (key elites) without changing its structural affiliation
	suffered a split or a defection	Loses a considerable proportion of its membership (or prominent members defect to another party)
	emerged anew from a merger	Two parties of any size consolidated their efforts to create a new party (leadership scheme, membership rules and organizational apparatus are usually new)
	emerged anew from a split	Is formed from prominent elites or by a sizeable portion of members who left another party.
	emerged anew from a dissolution	Established from a previously existing one which has been dissolved
	emerged anew from scratch	A start-up party

Source: developed by the author based on Litton, 2015, pp. 715–716.

The crucial advantage of both Barnea and Rahat's (2011) as well as Litton's (2015) conceptions is that they go beyond the simple dichotomy of new *versus* old parties. Their authors disaggregated parties into some dimensions (areas) and pointed out that parties can be new in some of them while old in the others. Using the concepts, we can answer the question as to which areas a party is new, but in each of them newness is treated as a dichotomous variable. In order to avoid the abovementioned limitations, Allan Sikk and Philipp Köker (2019) have proposed an interval index of party congruence *versus* novelty. "Congruence" refers to the degree of similarity between a pair of parties in consecutive elections whereas "novelty" refers to the newness of a party towards a predecessor or all previous parties combined. The authors attribute "zero" to new parties that do not show any similarity to the previously existing ones and "one" to groupings that are simply a continuation of those previously existing. Between these extremes they place intermediate categories – parties that are to some extent similar to the groupings that functioned before, while not being their simple continuation. The index allows us not only to determine whether a party is new or old, but also to assess to what extent a new party is actually new. However, it is based on three components only: organization (including the party name), leadership and candidates (Table 3). Sikk and Köker did not include here programmatic changes, for example, claiming that party competition is not always highly programmatic, especially in CEE countries (Sikk, Köker, 2019). However, not all scholars perceive this kind of explanation as convincing. For example, Gregor Zons (2015) perceives programmatic factors as important, Barnea and Rahat (2011) and Litton (2015) have also included them in their frameworks. We think that programmatic congruence can be an important feature of political parties, hence we prefer to include it for our analysis as well.

Table 3. The dimensions of party "novelty" and "congruence" and their operationalization by Sikk and Köker

Dimensions	Code	Operationalization
organizational structure and party name	1	an old formation must retain both organizational structure and name
	0.75	a formation with a minor change to its name, organizational structure or both
	0.5	a formation with a more substantial change to its name, organizational structure, or both (e.g., a merger of two similarly sized formations)
	0.25	a formation that uses an old name despite being organizationally highly novel
	0	a genuinely new formation must have no identifiable precursors in terms of both organizational structure and name

party leader change	1	no leadership change
	0.75	a new leader has previously been near the party leadership, leading a faction or holding a top political office for the party
	0.5	a new leader has held a political office as an independent or a medium-ranking office within the party
	0.25	a new leader has held a low profile in the party
	0	a new leader has no previous political experiences
party candidates' selection	1	all candidates of a formation contested the previous elections with the same formation
	1>x>0	the share of candidates who contested the previous election with the same formation
	0	none of the candidates contested the previous elections with the same formation

Source: developed by the author based on Sikk, Köker, 2019, pp. 759–770.

How to measure the novelty of political parties? Analytical framework for comprehensive measurement of party newness

Our framework for analysis is based on the subject literature findings, combining the advantages of the existing conceptions. Similarly to the concept of Barnea and Rahat (2011) we take three faces of the party organization as our point of departure: *party in the electorate*, *party as organisation*, *party in government* (Key, 1964). The criteria and operational definitions are also partly taken from this conception and partly from the party attributes of Litton (2015). The idea of coding is modelled on the Sikk and Köker idea (2019), however, we do not limit ourselves to the three dimensions differentiated by them but expand the scope of the research to other areas in order to make our framework more comprehensive.

Starting from the *party in the electorate* dimension, following Barnea and Rahat (2011) we have distinguished three criteria: party name, ideology, and voters (Table 4a). In each case we use ranges from "zero" (genuinely new party) to "one" (perfect congruence with earlier existing party) and between these are some intermediate categories (0.25, 0.5, 0.75). Taking *name* into consideration: 1.0 is given when a party keeps its name without any changes, 0.75 when it has a slightly new name, but it contains an old party name (e.g., the second part of the name is added), 0.5 is assigned if a party introduces a minor change to its name, 0.25 when a change is substantial and 0 in the case of a completely new name (Sikk, Köker, 2019).

Table 4a. The analytical framework for the measurement of party "newness", dimensions of party newness and their operationalisation. Party in electorate

Party face	Criterion	Operational definition	Code	Operationalization
party in electorate	party name	Is the name genuinely new or does it contain an "old" party name?	1	The party keeps the name without any changes
			0.75	The party name is new, but it contains the old party name
			0.5	The party introduces a minor change to its name
			0.25	The party introduces a substantial change to its name
			0	The party name is completely new
	ideology	How different is the "new" party platform from the old party platform?	political issues	
			1	Party stances on political issues are the same as in the old party and expressed in the same words
			0.75	Party stances on political issues are similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them
			0.5	Party stances on political issues are partly new and partly emulate those of the old party
			0.25	Party stances on political issues are new, however some influences of the old party are visible
			0	Party stances on political issues are quite different than in the old party

economic issues	1	Party stances on economic issues are the same as in the old party and expressed in the same words
	0.75	Party stances on economic issues are similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them
	0.5	Party stances on economic issues are partly new and partly emulate those of the old party
	0.25	Party stances on economic issues are new, however some influences of the old party are visible
	0	Party stances on economic issues are quite different than in the old party
social issues	1	Party stances on social issues are the same as in the old party and expressed in the same words
	0.75	Party stances on social issues are similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them
	0.5	Party stances on social issues are partly new and partly emulate those of the old party
	0.25	Party stances on social issues are new, however some influences of the old party are visible
	0	Party stances on social issues are quite different than in the old party

	international issues	1	Party stances on international issues are the same as in the old party and expressed in the same words
		0.75	Party stances on international issues are similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them
		0.5	Party stances on international issues are partly new and partly emulate those from the old party
		0.25	Party stances on international issues are new, however some influences of the old party are visible
		0	Party stances on international issues are quite different than in the old party
voters	How different is the new party electoral base from the old one?	1	All electorate of the new party voted for the old party in the previous election
		0.75	No fewer than 75% of the party electorate came from the electorate of the previously existent party
		0.5	About half of the party electorate came from the electorate of the previously existent party (fewer than 75%, more than 25%)
		0.25	No more than 25% of the party electorate came from the electorate of the previously existent party
		0	None of the new party electorate voted for the old party in the previous election

Source: developed by the author.

Moving on to *ideology* we try to answer the question of how different a "new" party platform from an old party platform is. For analytical reasons, this criterion is divided into four factors: political, economic, social, and international. Each of them takes the value 1.0 if party stances are the same as in an old party and are expressed in the same words, 0.75 when they are similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them, 0.5 when they are partly new and partly emulate those from the old party, 0.25 when they are new, however some influences of the old party are visible and 0 if party stances are quite different than in the old party.

The last criterion in this dimension are *voters* and we try here to answer the questions of how different the new party electoral base is from the old one. When the whole electorate of the new party voted for the old party in the previous election, the party is given the score 1.0; if no fewer than 75% of the party electorate came from the previously existent party, the new party is given 0.75, if about half (fewer than 75% but more than 25%) – 0.5; if no more than 0.25% – 0.25. When none of the new party electorate voted for the old party in the previous election the party is given 0.

The second dimension stands for **party organization** characterized by four factors: legal (formal) status, organizational structure, party leader and party elites (Table 4b). Starting from *legal status*, we should remember that entities taking part in an election (the functional definition of) acquired the formal status of being political parties (legal definition). Hence, the first step is to check whether an entity is registered as a party, and then whether it is registered under a new number (score 0) or as a continuation of a previously existed grouping (score 1.0).

More complicated is the *organizational structure* criterion, here we include party bodies at the central level as well as the territorial structure of the party. In the first case we take into consideration bodies' number, names, appointment, composition, competencies, and mutual relations in term of supervision and subordination. If party bodies at the central level and their mutual relations are the same as in the old party, the party is given 1.0; when they are similar with only minor differences – 0.75; partly new and partly emulate the bodies and relations from the old party – 0.5; new, however with some influences from the old party – 0.25; quite different – 0. In the second case we consider the number of territorial layers where the party operates and the relations between levels in terms of mutual interdependence (autonomy and influence). A score of 1.0 is awarded when the territorial structure of a party is the same as in the old party; 0.75 when it is similar with only minor differences; 0.5 – partly new and partly emulates that of the old party; 0.25 – different than in the old party, however some influences are still visible; 0 – territorial structure is quite different than in the old party.

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Table 4b. The analytical framework for the measurement of party "newness", the dimensions of party newness and their operationalisation. Party as organization

Party face	Criterion	Operational definition	Code	Operationalisation
party as organization	formal/legal status	Is the party entered within the official party register as new or as a continuation of a previously existing grouping?	1	The party is entered into the register as a continuation of a previously existing grouping
			0	The party is registered as new
	organizational structure/party bodies and their mutual relations from a formal viewpoint (*official story*)	Were the party bodies different from those of the old party? Are the relations between them similar or different?	1	Party bodies at the central level and their mutual relations are the same as in the old party
			0.75	Party bodies at the central level and their mutual relations are similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them
			0.5	Party bodies at the central level and their mutual relations are partly new and partly emulate those of the old party
			0.25	Party bodies at the central level and their mutual relations are new, however some influences of the old party are visible
			0	Party bodies at the central level and their mutual relations are quite different than in the old party
		Territorial structure of the party (number of territorial layers where the party operates, relations between structures operating at different levels in terms of autonomy and influence)	1	The territorial structure is the same as in the old party
			0.75	The territorial structure is similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences between them
			0.5	The territorial structure is partly new and partly emulates that of the old party
			0.25	The territorial structure of the party is different than in the old party, however visible are some influences from the old party
			0	The territorial structure is quite different than in the old party

party leader	Is the party leader new? What was the leader's earlier position in the party and experience in politics?	1	No change of party leader
		0.75	The new leader held earlier a prominent position in the party (e.g., deputy leader, faction leader) or a top public office for the party
		0.5	The new leader held earlier a medium-ranking office in the party or a public office as an independent
		0.25	The new leader was earlier in the party and/or politics, but did not hold any prominent offices
		0	The new leader is without any earlier political experiences
elites	Does the party have new elites, or did they come to it from the previously existing party? Are they new in politics?	1	All important party elites came to it from the previously existed party
		0.75	No fewer than 75% of the party elites came to it from the previously existed party
		0.5	About half of the party elites came to it from the previously existed party (fewer than 75% more than 25%)
		0.25	No more than 25% of the party elites came to it from the previously existed party
		0	All important party elites are new

Source: developed by the author.

Moving on to the *party leader*, we should start with solving a problem signalled in the subject literature (e.g., Litton, 2015) of naming who is a party leader – a spokesman, the chair, the general secretary, the leader of a parliamentary group. Then taking from Sikk and Köker's conception (2019) we assess both whether a leader is new in a party and in politics as a whole. When there is no change of party leader, a score of 1.0 is given; when a new leader held earlier a prominent position in the party (e.g., was a deputy leader, a leader of a parliamentary group) or a top public office for the party – 0.75; when the new leader held earlier a medium-ranking office in the party or a public office as an independent – 0.5; was earlier in the party or in the politics, but did not hold any prominent offices – 0.25; had no earlier political experience – 0.

The last indicator of the organizational novelty are *party elites*, which are defined on the basis of the compositions of the party board (highest executive body) and the presidium of the parliamentary group of a party if applicable. We are looking for information as to whether party elites are new in the sense that they do not come from the previously existing party and whether they are from outside of politics itself. When all important party elites came to if from the previously existent party, the score is 1; when no fewer than 75% of them came from the previously existent party – 0.75; half of the party elites (fewer than 75% and more than 25%) – 0.5; no more than 25% – 0.25 and 0 when all important party elites are new.

Party in government is the last dimension in which the level of novelty is assessed. We consider here three indicators: party candidates and representatives as well as party policies (Table 4c). In the case of *party candidates*, we consider whether candidates are new and whether they come from a single party. However, it is a promising idea to analyse only top-ranking candidates, accepting Sikk and Köker's notion that stability is substantially higher among top candidates than in the tail of a candidate list (2019). For this reason, we use the top 25% of candidates from the list and compare them with all the candidates who took part from the party list in the preceding election. However, whereas in a closed list system the candidates from the first places can be taken into considerations, in a system with open lists, top candidates are identified by preference votes: 25% of candidates according to voters' preferences should be analysed. Next to candidates we are also going to analyse separately data on *party representatives* in parliament as a kind of double check. For parties without parliamentary representations, party candidates will be exclusively analysed. The score 1 is given when all candidates contested the previous election with the same party or all party representatives are incumbents coming from a single party respectively; 0.75 – no fewer than 75% of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party or no fewer than 75% of the party representatives are incumbents; 0.5 – about half of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party or about half of the party representatives are incumbents

Table 4c. The analytical framework for the measurement of party "newness", dimensions of party newness and their operationalisation. Party in government

Party face	Criterion	Operational definition	Code	Operationalisation
party in government	candidates	Are the top party candidates new? Do they come from a single party?	1	All candidates contested the previous election with the same party
			0.75	No fewer than 75% of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party
			0.5	About half of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party (fewer than 75%, more than 25%)
			0.25	No more than 25% of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party
			0	None of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party
	representatives (if the party has representatives)	Are the party representatives new (non-incumbent)? Do they come from a single party?	1	All party representatives are incumbents from a single party
			0.75	No fewer than 75% of the party representatives are incumbents
			0.5	About half of the party representatives are incumbents (fewer than 75%, more than 25%)
			0.25	No more than 25% of the party representatives are incumbents
			0	None of the party representatives is an incumbent
		General policy (political and party system, elections etc.) How different are the new party's policies from the old party policies?	1	General party policy is a simple continuation of the predecessor's policy
			0.75	General party policy is similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences
			0.5	General party policy is partly new and partly emulates this of the old party
			0.25	General party policy is new, however some influences from the old party are visible
			0	General party policy is quite different from the predecessor's policy

Economic policy	1	Economic party policy is a simple continuation of the predecessor's policy
	0.75	Economic party policy is similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences
	0.5	Economic party policy is partly new and partly emulates that of the old party
	0.25	Economic party policy is new, however some influences of the old party are visible
	0	Economic party policy is quite different from the predecessor's policy
Social policy	1	Social party policy is a simple continuation of the predecessor's policy
	0.75	Social party policy is similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences
	0.5	Social party policy is partly new and partly emulates that of the old party
	0.25	Social party policy is new, however some influences from the old party are visible
	0	Social party policy is quite different from the predecessor's policy
International policy	1	International party policy is a simple continuation of the predecessor's policy
	0.75	International party policy is similar as in the old party, however, there are minor differences
	0.5	International party policy is partly new and partly emulates that of the old party
	0.25	International party policy is new, however some influences from the old party are visible
	0	International party policy is quite different from the predecessor's policy

Source: developed by the author.

(fewer than 75% and more than 25%); 0.25 – no more than 25% of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party or no more than 25% of the party representatives are incumbents; 0 – none of the candidates contested the previous election with the same party or none of the party representatives is an incumbent.

The last indicator within this dimension are *party policies*, which is supposed to answer the question of how different the new party policies are from the old party policies. The issue is related mainly to governing parties, however, the criterion can be used also for other entities that have their parliamentary representations and try to realize their policies using this arena (taking part in parliamentary debates and advancing legislative initiatives). For parties that were not able to enter government and/or parliament this criterion is irrelevant. When assessing party policies, we propose to divide them into general policy (mainly issues related to political, electoral, and the party system), economic, social and international policy (including stances towards European integration) (Table 4c).

Conclusions

The outlined framework for analysis is multidimensional in nature, it focuses on: party names (1); the formal status of parties (2); their electoral manifestos (3); organizational structures (4); and party officers (party leadership) (5); elites (6); representatives (7); and candidates (8); as well as the electorate (9); and policies (10). Comparative analyses of the mentioned features of political parties at subsequent stages of their development will allow one to outline the continuation and discontinuation (changes) that occurred in a party system throughout all elections beginning from the founding one.

Party names and their formal status may be determined on the basis of a formal register of political parties kept by a registration authority. Even if a party changed its name, but is registered under the number of its predecessor, it can be regarded as its continuation in terms of its formal (legal) status. The most challenging and time-consuming is research into party programmes. A categorization key that needs to be created, which enables coding party programmes and comparing them with those from previous elections. A qualitative content analysis should be employed while looking for the issues, while a quantitative content analysis when searching for the attributive salience concerning the issues themselves. The research aims to identify continuity and changes in party platforms, but also some political options (trends) that encompass groups of similar political parties, which are relatively stable, even if parties change in terms of names or structures. The findings can be confronted with the popular data from the Manifesto Project Dataset (MARPOR) (Lehmann et al., 2024). However, we are not able to base ourselves on them exclusively. Firstly, in the case of some countries,

especially those of CEE, these data are only fragmented as far as the 1990s are concerned. Secondly, the gathered data are not tailor-made for searching on continuity and changes in parties.

The content analysis is also used to research the organizational structures of political parties. This analysis is based on party statutes, the aim is here to identify party bodies and their competencies as well as the relations between these bodies. The old and new structures are compared in order to answer questions about the level of congruence and novelty. The comparative analysis is used to investigate the party personnel as well, including party candidates in general elections and party representatives (MPs). In the case of parliamentary parties both data sets can be examined, in the case of extra-parliamentary parties exclusively candidates. The next comparative analysis is focused on the composition of top party elites, including party leaders. The party officers who lead parties for the general election are compared with those who led the formations during previous elections. The last analysis encompasses party policies; however, this is related only to parties that had their representatives in government or at least in parliament.

A party can be new or serves as a continuity of earlier existing party in some areas and to some extent, but it can be also a continuity of a few or even many previously existing parties. It can have a leader from one party, some candidates and/or elites from another, its program may emulate the manifesto of another party, while its organizational structure can resemble the structure of yet another. Hence, the picture is even more complicated and multi-dimensional than expected. The proposed framework needs to be tested, discussed and further developed in order to be more comprehensive. Its previous, less-elaborated version has been already used to measure the level of novelty and continuity in three Polish parties: the governing Civic Platform (PO), the main opposition party Law and Justice (PiS) and the far-right Confederation Liberty and Independence (KORWiN, Konfederacja) (Kosowska-Gąstoł, Sobolewska-Myślik, 2023). The omissions were related to party voters, representatives, and policies; party ideologies were analysed exclusively based on the MARPOR dataset.

The results obtained in the process of analysing party continuity and novelty can help to develop further research into the conditions of new parties' entries and exits, their chances of survival as well as their influence on party system stability and electoral volatility.

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