

MACIEJ MARMOLA

New political parties in the party systems of the Visegrad Group countries

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SUMMARY

The presented dissertation provides a comparative analysis of new political parties in the party systems of the Visegrad Group countries. The primary aim of analysis is to define the factors which have impact on gaining parliamentary representation by new parties in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Research on new political parties in these countries seems to be especially important for at least two reasons. Firstly, due to differences in social and political conditions, it is impossible to uncritically adapt the theoretical models made in western democracies. This stems from short tradition of functioning of democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe (also in V4 countries) which shaped the specific pattern of emerging of new political parties, diametrically opposed to patterns formed in consolidated democracies. On the basis of this pattern, two types of groupings can be distinguished: Old Regime parties and New Regime parties. The first type has personal or organizational ties to the previous communist regime, while the second one descends from anti-communist opposition. Secondly, in the case of the former Eastern bloc, indicators describing the party systems (e.g. the electoral volatility index or the effective number of parties) do not provide full information about their real dynamics, because in conditions of weak institutionalization of political parties, changes in configuration on the political scene usually occur within the party system (as a result of mergers, splits or transformations of political parties). For this reason, it is worth analysing changes in the parliamentary arena resulting from the transfer of electoral preferences to new extra-parliamentary political entities.

This dissertation contains four main chapters. The first of them – called *New political parties - a theoretical approach* – presents the main theoretical findings connected with defining and typologizing new parties as well as factors influencing their formation and political success. In this part of the dissertation it was also decided to establish the original definition of new parties, which to some extent correspond to the concept of the genuinely new party proposed by Allan Sikk. The following definition of new political parties was proffered: *parties that are not successors to any groupings formed as a result of the first fully competitive elections (which means that they do not have connections with Old and New Regime parties), have a novel name and structure, and do not have any important figures from past democratic politics among their major members.* In the case of the last condition, similarly as in Allan Sikk's analysis, the assumption was made that the lack of important political actors is connected with the absence of presidents, prime ministers, a significant portion of ministers or members of the parliament in the party structure. During the analysis, the functional definition of a political party was adopted. This enabled the inclusion of entities that, although not registered as political parties, actually fulfil their functions.

The second chapter (*The party systems of the Visegrad Group countries*) discusses the specificity of systemic transformation in the studied countries and the impact of historical background on the process of shaping political pluralism and the formation of party systems. This chapter also presents the determinants of the evolution of electoral law in the Visegrad Group countries along with the author's assessment of the level of electoral systems' discrimination. Then it investigates issues related to cleavages and electoral volatility in the Visegrad Group countries.

The third chapter of dissertation (*The road of new political parties to the parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries*) shows the origins of 21 new parties that have gained the parliamentary seats in analysed countries. The study included the following groupings: League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin*), Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (*Samoobrona RP*), Palikot Movement (*Ruch Palikota*), Kukiz'15, Modern (*Nowoczesna*), TOP 09 (*Tradice Odpovědnost Prosperita 09*), Public Affairs (*Věci veřejné*), ANO 2011, Tomio Okamura's Dawn of Direct Democracy (*Úsvit přímé demokracie Tomia Okamury*), Mayors and Independents (*Starostové a nezávislí*), Czech Pirate Party (*Česká pirátská strana*), Party of Civic Understanding (*Strana občianskeho porozumenia*), Alliance of the New Citizen (*Aliancia nového občana*), Freedom and Solidarity (*Sloboda a Solidarita*), Bridge (*Most-Híd*), Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (*Obyčajní Ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti*), Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia (*Ľudová strana – Naše*

Slovensko), We Are Family – Boris Kollár (*Sme Rodina – Boris Kollár*), Network (*SIET*); Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*) oraz Politics Can Be Different (*Lehet Más a Politika!*). This part of the work presents the resources of these formations, their positioning on the political scene and conditions that allowed to obtain the attributes of political relevance. The characteristics of each party's electorate in the spatial, psychological and sociodemographic dimensions are also presented.

Last chapter (*New parties in the party systems of the Visegrad Group countries - a comparative perspective*) was divided into two parts offering different research approaches. First part, based on electoral geography perspective, examines regularities in the geographical distribution of support for new political parties in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The author compares nationwide results of parties with support gained in particular territorial units. Afterwards, he creates an indicator showing the average profit (or loss) of a new formation in relation to the share of votes at the national level and calculates the Pearson's correlation coefficients to evaluate the relationship between results of new political parties. The results of the study show that only in case of Czech Republic, it is possible to distinct the territorial units where citizens are more likely to vote for new parties. Nevertheless, most of differences in the geographical distribution of support for new parties in analysed countries arise from three interrelated factors: the specificity of the territorial unit, ideological autoidentification of population inhabiting a particular territorial unit and popularity of party leaders. Second part offers an empirical model including factors of potential political success for new parties in the Visegrad Group countries. The analyzed parties were embedded in an innovative model taking into account political, social, institutional and economic factors. The conducted logistic regression analysis shows that the parliamentary success of new parties depends on social and economic factors. Low GDP growth rate (measured at constant prices), low trust in the EU institutions and propensity to prospective voting (negative citizens' forecasts regarding the situation of the state and the situation of their household) turns out to be beneficial for new parties.