

New Political Entrepreneurs in Poland

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Abstract

Parties launched by political entrepreneurs are usually newcomers into more or less established party systems. Their 'founding fathers' act without specific external group support and the literature on new parties predicts that there is a low survival rate for entrepreneurial parties. In the case of Poland, the party system had been relatively stable from the 2001 until the 2011 parliamentary elections and subsequently some new parties entered into politics, tried to gain electoral support as well as political relevance. The most recent groupings in the Polish political system which are closest to the theoretical concept of entrepreneurial parties are the Palikot's Movement (Ruch Palikota), Kukiz'15 and the Modern Party (Nowoczesna). The aim of the paper is to examine to what extent the leaders of these parties can be seen as political entrepreneurs and the parties as 'entrepreneurial parties'. Another point we discuss is in which aspects the leaders of the parties examined are similar in their role of political entrepreneurs and in which they differ. In order to answer these questions, the previous careers of the leaders, the ways they entered politics and the strategies they used to achieve their goals will also be analyzed.

Keywords: political entrepreneurs; entrepreneurial issue parties; Polish parties; new parties

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1. Introduction

While in the 1990s the main division line in Poland was between post-communist and post-Solidarity parties, that changed from the 2005 elections on as two post-Solidarity parties, Law and Justice (PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) and Civic Platform (PO – Platforma Obywatelska), became electoral rivals. Since the 2001 elections, no new party managed to enter the parliament for ten years. After the 2007 early elections, there were only four parties in the parliament: beside the two mentioned, also the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej) and the agrarian Polish Peasant Party (PSL – Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe). Thus, the Polish party system seemed to be relatively stable at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Both the media and the public were sure

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that it was almost impossible for new parties to break into this kind of arrangement, which looks like a kind of party cartel.¹

Still, a new party – Palikot’s Movement (RP – Ruch Palikota) – managed to enter the parliament in the 2011 elections, but after only one parliamentary term it lost all its seats. However, the empty space has been taken by two other groupings – the Association for the New Constitution Kukiz’15 (Kukiz’15) and the Modern Party of Ryszard Petru (Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru) – in the subsequent parliamentary elections in 2015. What all these three organizations have in common is the fact that they were created by personalities who in a sense came from outside of politics. Moreover, these political organizations were established soon before the parliamentary elections of 2011 (RP) or of 2015 (Kukiz’15, Nowoczesna) and succeeded even without having extra-parliamentary structures and support from other social movements or organizations. Their electoral results were impressive, as they managed to defeat the long existing parties with extensive structures (see Table 1).

Table 1: Parties’ vote percentage and seat share 2007–2015 in the Sejm – the lower chamber of parliament

Party	2007		2011		2015	
	% vote	seats	% vote	seats	% vote	seats
PO	41.51	209	39.18	207	24.09	138
PiS	32.11	157	29.89	157	37.58	235
SLD (LiD)*	13.15	27	8.24	27	—	—
PSL	8.91	31	8.36	28	5.13	16
RP/TR	—	—	10.02	40	—	—
Kukiz’15	—	—	—	—	8.81	42
Nowoczesna	—	—	—	—	7.60	28

Source: www.pkw.pl.

The aim of the paper is to analyze these three groupings using the theoretical framework of the ‘entrepreneurial party’ or ‘business-firm party’ model, although it must be admitted that even if André Krouwel (2006) has distinguished this cluster of party models as a subsequent step in the party evolution after cadre parties, mass parties (Duverger 1965; Neumann 1956), catch-all parties (Kirchheimer 1966) and cartel parties (Katz, Mair 1995), it is not as coherent and developed as the earlier ones. It encompasses some conceptualizations of other authors (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999; Carty 2004; Beyme 1996) who, independently of each other, elaborated their own types of parties on the basis of one or a few examples. This cluster of models can also be completed by similar concepts e.g. the ‘entrepreneurial issue party’ (Harmel, Svåsand 1993), the ‘personal vehicle party’ (Lucardie 2000) or the ‘media-mediated personality party’ (Seisselberg 1996).

However, as Lubomír Kopeček aptly noticed, ‘the definitions and descriptions of these new parties provided by individual academics differ. This is because authors highlight their various aspects, and sometimes also environmental differences.’ (Kopeček 2016: 3). Therefore, the parties which were included in the cluster are characterized by many, sometimes mutually exclusive, features. Although in the center of each party is a ‘founding father’ who

serves as a more or less charismatic leader, it is not obvious whether a party can be further considered to be an 'entrepreneurial' or a 'business-firm' one when the leader disappeared, i.e. died or resigned from the political activity. The issue of party structures is also not obvious. Jonathan Hopkin and Caterina Paolucci believed that the 'business-firm party' was characterized by being 'a lightweight organization with the sole basic function of mobilizing short-term support at election time' (1999: 315), while André Krouwel also claimed that its structure was 'minimal and irrelevant' (2006: 263). However, Robert Harmel and Lars Svåsand were convinced that in order to be a stable actor at the political stage, the party had to go through a phase of organization related to the creation of its territorial structures (1993). David Arter admitted that in order to create a 'resilient entrepreneurial party', which would be durable, a charismatic leader had to play 'a pivotal role in building a sustainable organization along the lines of the traditional mass membership party model' (Arter 2013: 2).

These problems show that new parties need more conceptualization. It is necessary to describe and compare as many cases as possible in order to answer the questions that arise. Therefore, our analysis encompassing the three Polish organizations is going to be a modest contribution to further research on theoretical party models in contemporary democracies. In our opinion, the investigated groupings, i.e. Ruch Palikota, Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna, do not comply with the 'business-firm party' model proposed by Hopkin and Paolucci, particularly its first sub-type (1999), as they were not created on the basis of pre-existing commercial companies whose structures could be used for a political project, the case, for example, of Forza Italia or the Czech ANO, both considered extreme forms of a business-firm party. The new Polish parties seem to be more similar to 'entrepreneurial issue parties' of Harmel and Svåsand (1993). However, these authors focused mostly on institutionalization and the phases of party development and less on the entrepreneurial party's definition and features, therefore we have decided to use the framework outlined by Hloušek and Kopeček as the 'minimal conceptualization' of entrepreneurial parties (2017).

Following this concept, the central role in an entrepreneurial party is played by a party 'founding father' who is also its leader (1) and the party serves him/her as a 'personal vehicle' to achieve his/her political goals (2). The leader has a special message to convey and this issue is crucial in order to ensure that voters identify with the party (3). It is very important that an entrepreneurial party was not formed on the basis of a social movement and that it does not have any sponsor organization (extra-parliamentary backing) which would supply resources for its activity or votes in the elections (4). An entrepreneurial party was not founded as a split party from another one or created by MPs seceding from another party, thus its origin is external (5). The aforementioned party features will be used to analyze the new Polish parties in order to answer the questions to what an extent the leaders of these parties can be regarded as political entrepreneurs and their parties as 'entrepreneurial parties'. Our aim is also to discuss in which aspects the leaders of the parties examined here are similar in exercising their role as political entrepreneurs and in which they differ. We expect that despite the differences between these groupings, they comply to some extent with the 'minimal conceptualization' requirements set for entrepreneurial parties.

The paper is divided into three parts, each devoted to a single political entrepreneur. The previous career of the leader, the way he entered politics and the strategies he used to

achieve his goals are analyzed. We focus also on the party agenda and organizational structures to show the issues included in the message conveyed by the leader and his position within the party structures. However, the part devoted to Janusz Palikot is longer than the subsequent ones. This is due to the fact that his political activity started earlier and the parties created by him took part in a series of elections – parliamentary (2011, 2015), European (2014), local (2014) and presidential (2015) – whereas Paweł Kukiz and Ryszard Petru have been political entrepreneurs only since 2015. Moreover, it must be admitted that Kukiz'15 has not formally registered as a political party and is still active as an association. Despite this fact, we decided to include it into our research firstly and most importantly because it exercises such functions of political parties as representing social interests, taking part in elections, and exerting influence on the government through a political grouping in the parliament. Secondly, we included Kukiz'15 because the other investigated organizations also started as associations and after a short time decided to register as political parties, and this may be the case for Kukiz'15 as well.

2. What is the message? The flamboyance of Janusz Palikot

The first party under consideration as an entrepreneurial is Palikot's Movement (*Ruch Palikota*, RP). It was created just before the parliamentary elections in 2011 and immediately succeeded in winning 40 seats, becoming the third largest party in the Sejm (lower chamber of the Polish parliament) behind the PO (207) and the PiS (157), but before the PSL (28) and the SLD (27). The success was significant because the Polish party system, dominated by these four parties, was regarded by both the media and the public as 'concreted-up', with limited or no opportunity for new parties to pass the electoral threshold (Stanley, Czesnik 2014: 2–3). The substantial state subsidies allocated for the existing parties along with limitations of party funding from private sources imposed by the Political Party Act have made it difficult for newly created parties to enter the parliament. According to the opinion polls, support for the RP in August, i.e. two months before the 2011 election was about 1 per cent (CBOS 2011: 2). Still, the party eventually received 10.2 per cent of the vote (PKW 2011).

The party was a private initiative of the successful businessman Janusz Palikot, who entered politics in 2005, becoming a PO MP. However, he left the Civic Platform in 2010 and started to create his own grouping, which could help him in his subsequent political career. In 2010, the first party was still registered under the name 'The Movement for Support', but it did not submit the financial statement on time and thus ran the risk of being banned (Siekłucki 2013). Palikot did not wait for this to happen, but in 2011 decided to establish a new party called Palikot's Movement, which functioned under that name until 2013 and then was changed to Your Movement (TR – Twój Ruch). Before establishing his first party, Palikot created the association 'The Movement for Palikot's Support', which supported his political activity before the electoral campaign started. Compared with political parties, there are fewer limitations as regards the funding of associations in Poland. Therefore, it was a cunning solution that enabled Janusz Palikot to finance his political actions from the private sources, including his own (Wojtasik 2012: 167).²

Before starting his political career, Palikot studied philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin and then turned to business. As an importer and producer of wine (the 'Ambra' firm) and vodka (Polmos Lublin), he became one of the richest people in Poland.³ Then he sold out his business and fully engaged in political activity as an MP. He presented himself as a businessman who entered politics not for money, but to repair it, because he believed the change could not be effected by replacing some party officials with others (Palikot 2010a: 13). Chairing the parliamentary committee 'Friendly State' focusing on cutting red tape, on behalf of the PO, he gained political experience and enhanced his recognition. Palikot has always been very eccentric and flamboyant. He became famous not only for criticizing the incumbent politicians, but also for organizing happenings to draw public and media attention to some problems. Using such surprising props as a plastic penis and a gun, a butchered pig's head, condoms, small bottles of alcohol or T-shirts with the inscription 'I'm gay' ('Jestem gejem')⁴ and 'I'm with the SLD' ('Jestem z SLD') (Kocur, Majczak 2013: 47), he succeeded in drawing attention, but the audience focused mainly on the props and not on the message they conveyed.⁵

Palikot directed strong political criticism towards one of the main parties – Law and Justice. A major commotion was caused in January 2008 when he asked the following questions on his blog: 'Is President Lech Kaczyński abusing alcohol? Is it true that his hospital stays are related to alcohol abuse treatment?' (Palikot 2008: 183). This caused hostility towards him from some conservative PO MPs. After the tragic Smoleńsk plane crash of 2010, where president Kaczyński together with 95 other well-known public personalities died, Palikot's position in the PO seemed even worse, especially when he said that: 'the moral responsibility for the deaths of 95 people is borne by Lech Kaczyński, because he prepared the trip. The blood of the people who died in the catastrophe is on his hands' (cf. Palikot 2010b). Afterwards, it became obvious that Palikot was a *persona non grata* in the PO, thus he decided to leave the party (in December 2010) before being thrown out of it. In January 2011, he also resigned from the parliamentary mandate.

Janusz Palikot was well-known even before creating the party. Thus, Palikot's Movement was not necessary to enhance the leader's recognition, which was already impressive,⁶ but instead it served as a 'personal vehicle' for entering parliament and allowed him to be present in politics after leaving the PO. The new group should be regarded as being created from scratch, without support from any social movements or sponsor organizations, and without parliamentary origins. Although Palikot was a former MP, his resignation from PO membership did not cause a split in this party. He left alone, criticized the PO and opposed placing well-known politicians on the electoral lists of the new party. Without local structures, the party decided to open the process of candidate selection to various political milieus as well as the public. An e-mail address was given out (biuro@ruchpalikota.org.pl) and anyone could write and submit their candidature in order to take part in the process. The preliminary electoral rolls had been announced earlier by the Political Committee of the party, but they were supposed to be supplemented by candidates nominated by citizens. The idea was to find young candidates who had become adults after 1989 and to take into account gender parity (Gazeta.pl 2011). Finally, the RP managed to register its lists of candidates in all 41 constituencies. There were some leftist and LGBT activists, mainly people connected with the party the Reason the Polish Left (*Racja Polskiej Lewicy*), Campaign Against Homophobia

and the initiative Free Hemp. Among them Anna Grodzka, the first-ever transsexual MP and Robert Biedroń, the first openly gay MP (Polskieradio.pl 2011).

Taking from Harmel and Svåsand (1993) that not all charismatic parties are 'entrepreneurial issue parties', because while the latter 'emphasize issues in the message the leader creates, for other charismatic parties the leader *is* the message', it must be admitted that it is difficult to point out clearly the message that Palikot has created. The program of the party, called 'Modern State' ('Nowoczesne Państwo'), concentrates on political change in Poland including the replacement of the party elites present in politics from the beginning of the transformation (new labels, same faces) and who are not able to make the country develop (Ruch Palikota 2011a). During the 2011 campaign, anti-party positions were related to presenting Palikot's image as a successful businessman. The slogan 'It is not for the money that I am in politics' placed on billboards served this purpose. Palikot's Movement was focused on socio-cultural reforms and anti-clericalism, and it was also strongly pro-European. However, the party leader is often accused of changing his ideological profile. Firstly, Janusz Palitot was the publisher of the weekly magazine 'Ozon' in 2005–2006, which popularized conservative ideas and values complying with the social teachings of the Catholic Church and it was only subsequently that he changed his views, fighting radically with the Church's influence on the public domain. Secondly, Palikot initially seemed to foster liberal stances in the economy and to support entrepreneurs, showing himself as one of them and thus knowing their problems. Subsequently, he took a left turn, especially during the party congress in 2012, and he entered electoral coalitions with some leftist politicians and parties. Despite these changes, it is possible to point out the main issues which have characterized the ideological profile of the RP and then the TR.

The party advocates for the separation of Church and state, the termination of the concordat, the liquidation of all state financial assistance to the Church as well as the withdrawal of religion classes from state schools and the removal of religious symbols from public institutions. It attaches great importance to gender equality and the rights of sexual minorities, the legalization of same-sex civil partnerships and soft drugs as well as the liberalization of abortion law.⁷ A lot of attention is paid to improving the functioning of the state. The party postulates abolishing the Senate, increasing the role of local government and the level of citizen participation in public life through referenda and public consultations. It also wants to introduce a mixed electoral system, abolish state financing of political parties, improve the decision-making process of the state, reduce bureaucracy and introduce clear rules for the appointment of state officials (Ruch Palikota 2011a). It is difficult to characterize the party's position on the economy because on the one hand it proposes flat taxes and the liquidation of barriers for business activity (lower taxes, friendly administration and enhanced innovation) (Ruch Palikota 2011b); on the other hand, however, slogans at the 2012 party congress such as 'Correction of capitalism' or 'Full employment, zero unemployment' fostered state interventionism (Typ.info 2012). Therefore, in terms of its economic profile, the party is classified as social-liberal.

The change of the party name to Your Movement in 2013 was related to the intention to expand its electoral base and the fact that some well-known leftist personalities like Prof. Jan Hartman or Marek Siwiec, MEP, were joining the party. This also led to changes in the party statute and structures. According to the first document, adopted in 2011, the

RP's structure was composed of three levels: beside the national one, there were constituencies encompassing those for parliamentary elections and local clubs as the lowest-level territorial structures. The party was centralized with much authority granted to the National Board and the local structures were just being created as the party was still new. However, the RP did not manage to complete the task and in some constituencies party structures existed only on paper.

The bodies of the party at the central level were: the National Congress, National Political Council and National Committee (decision-making bodies); the National Board and party Chairman (executive bodies); and the Scrutiny Committee and party Court. The Congress was composed of representatives of members chosen by lower-level congresses as well as members of other bodies at the central level. Their main duties included amending the party statute, and choosing party Chairman and members of Scrutiny Committee. The other decision-making bodies – the National Political Council and the National Committee – consisted of *ex-officio* members. The first included the party Chairman, members of the Board, National Committee, party MPs and leaders of the Youth Movement and the Women's Movement. The second was composed of the party Chairman and Chairmen of Constituencies (lower-level structure). Whereas the Council was a very powerful organ e.g. defining party policies, taking political decisions and recommending candidates for some public offices (president, members of government), the National Committee decided only about some actions undertaken in constituencies, could express its opinions concerning party activities and had some other competencies exercised at the request of the Chairman. For example, the National Committee chose, at the request of the Chairman, the two deputy chairpersons, secretary and treasurer, who besides the Chairman served on the National Board authorized to manage and represent the party. Within its wide range of power was also the approval of the electoral list for parliamentary, EP and regional elections, including candidates for city mayors. It was also able to abolish the party structure at the constituency level and remove party members. The chairman was not given much power, yet in practice he/she enjoyed extensive prerogatives as the chair of the Board (Ruch Palikota 2012).

When the party was renamed in 2013, the statute was changed accordingly and besides the traditional party membership, the institution of party supporters appeared, although it was not exactly precise. The TR introduced the fourth level of party organization – regional one (encompassing voivodship) and a new institution – the shadow cabinet modeled on British solutions. Moreover, one of the bodies of the central level – the National Committee – was abolished, and the Chairmen of constituencies became members of the National Political Council. The latter was entitled to co-opt further 30 members. The position of this body was more significant than before, yet the National Board remained the most powerful and the number of its members increased to 20, including members chosen by the National Political Committee at the request of the party Chairman, thus the Chairman – not enjoying ultimate authority – was able to control the Board which did enjoy it (Twój Ruch 2013).

The actual version of the statute was adopted in 2015 after three electoral defeats in EP, local and presidential elections, but before the most important parliamentary elections in October 2015. The regional level of the party structure and the shadow cabinet were withdrawn from the document, yet the most important change related to the introduction of two leaders, a man and a woman, replacing the chairman (Twój Ruch 2015). This was probably

due to the electoral defeats and the fear that the party would not pass the threshold and would be removed from the parliament after the election, which finally happened indeed.

After the 2011 parliamentary election, the RP was popular and its parliamentary group was even joined by the MPs who left other parties.⁸ The party as well as its parliamentary faction were led by the founder Janusz Palikot who decidedly dominated the party. According to one of his party MPs: 'He was always convinced of his own infallibility. It always had to be the way he wanted – he did not accept any criticism' (Halina Szymiec-Raczyńska) (Natemat.pl 2013). Power in the RP centralized around the party leader, therefore the internal management style that has evolved within the party can be considered a typical 'business firm-party' model (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999: 323). This was visible especially when, after the electoral success and a phase of enthusiasm, the MPs began to leave the party one after another, claiming that there was no discussion in the party, that 'the form [was] more important than the content' (Adam Kępiński) (Tvn24.pl 2013) and that 'the only aim [was] media coverage' (Halina Szymiec-Raczyńska) (Gazeta.pl 2013).

The aforementioned change of the party name and invitation addressed to some well-known leftist politicians to join the party can be regarded as attempts to rescue the project. As Harmel and Svåsand (1993) would put it, Janusz Palikot transformed Palikot's Movement into Your Movement in order to create 'an organization with many heads, hands, and voices'. However, these changes were not accompanied by the creation of local structures, which were weak or even non-existent and 'new heads' appeared only among party elites at the central level. The party's first defeat came with the EP election in May 2014. The TR became a part of the broad electoral coalition 'Europe Plus Your Movement' composed of some center-leftist parties (but without the biggest one, the SLD), created in order to pass the 5-per cent electoral threshold. However, the coalition received just 3.58 per cent of the vote, and thus did not get any seats in the European Parliament (PKW 2014a). In the November 2014 local election, the TR decided to go solo. According to the leader, during that election the party should: 'build the foundations for its further existence, development and strength' (Wyborcza.pl 2014). This strategy proved inefficient. Your Movement did not manage to register lists of candidates in many regional constituencies, thus its electoral committee did not have nationwide coverage. The outcome was even worse as the TR did not win any seats in regional assemblies. In the country as a whole, they got about 1 per cent of the vote (PKW 2014b). Many known politicians left the party, including MPs (e.g. the chairman deputy Anna Grodzka and the party spokesman Andrzej Rozenek). Consequently, in March, the parliamentary representation had fewer than 15 MPs and under the circumstances it lost the status of a parliamentary group and became a parliamentary circle.

The presidential election of May 2015 marked yet another attempt to boost the party's popularity, yet it failed once again. Janusz Palikot was the obvious presidential candidate of the TR. He used the slogan 'Everything is possible'. This was also the title of Palikot's autobiography, published in 2015 by his personal publishing house – Słowo / Obraz Terytoria (Palikot 2015). Palikot also campaigned under the other slogan of 'I will bring them to order' ('Zrobię z nimi porządek') which could also be seen on the bus used by Palikot to cross the country during the campaign. These words were directed mainly against the PiS politicians – its chairman Jarosław Kaczyński and his deputy Antoni Macierewicz (Natemat.pl 2015). The party leader changed his image once again, presenting himself as more

formal and noble than before. Despite the intensive campaign, Janusz Palikot received only 1.42 per cent of the vote, securing a measly seventh place, not only behind the favorites – the then President Bronisław Komorowski and his main opponent the current president Andrzej Duda, but also behind representatives of five other groupings, including two extra-parliamentary ones (Kukiz'15, KORWIN) (PKW 2015a).

After this defeat in June 2015, the TR changed its statute introducing gender parity into party leadership and Barbara Nowacka was chosen as the party co-leader; she is the daughter of Barbara Jaruga-Nowacka, a popular leftist politician who died in the Smoleńsk plane crash. With poor chances of passing the parliamentary threshold (5 per cent for parties), the TR decided to create an electoral coalition with other leftist parties, including the SLD (PKW 2015b). Barbara Nowacka became the leader of this coalition named United Left (ZL – Zjednoczona Lewica SLD+TR+PPS+UP+Zieloni).⁹ She seemed to be very popular among the voters (CBOS 2015: 12), but did not get sufficient support from the other party leaders during the campaign, as they often did not believe in the success of the coalition and thus did not engage in its activity. Finally, the coalition gained 7.55 per cent of the vote, failing to pass the electoral threshold (8 per cent for coalitions) (PKW 2015c). The parties of the ZL blamed one another for the defeat, thus their cooperation ended almost immediately after the elections.

The TR's founder and leader, Janusz Palikot, as well as the co-leader, Barbara Nowacka, retained their positions in the party. However, the former disappeared from the media and party life. Nowacka is still active yet unable to say what the political plans of the founder are. The strategy including the presence in the media and using marketing tricks seemed to be unsuccessful and the theory of Harmel and Svåsand (1993) concerning party institutionalization was confirmed once again (Kosowska-Gąstoł 2017, in print). It is difficult or even impossible for a party to survive if it has not created sufficient territorial structures. The party in question has not drawn conclusions from its defeat and it does not build such structures.¹⁰ The chairwoman prefers uncoordinated *ad hoc* activities benefiting civil society, engaging in social movements instead of building strong party structures.

To sum up, the TR can serve as an example of an entrepreneurial party of the 'minimal conceptualization' proposed by Hloušek and Kopeček (2017). The party was created by Janusz Palikot as his private initiative in order to serve him as a 'personal vehicle' helpful in achieving his political goals. The founder has always played the central role in the grouping, being not only the party leader but also chairman of its parliamentary group and its candidate for the presidential office. It can be said that it was not a party with a leader but a leader who used a party for his own purposes. The party was not created as a result of the activity of a social movement or another sponsor organization; it was also not founded by a group of MPs splitting from another party. The leader has constantly exerted crucial influence over his project and has retained the position even when the party was losing all elections after 2011. The only problem is the message, as while the concept of 'a modern, friendly and secular state' can be regarded as the main issue proposed by the party, it was not completely clear and was watered down by the leader; additionally, his charisma often seems to merit more than the message, which – according to Harmel and Svåsand (1993: 68) – is typical rather of charismatic parties than entrepreneurial ones.

3. All I stand for is SMDs. The non-partisan organization of Paweł Kukiz¹¹

The second group that can be analyzed by making use of the notion of an 'entrepreneurial party' is the Electoral Committee Kukiz'15. It took part in the parliamentary elections in Poland in October 2015, winning 42 seats and thus became the third force in the Polish Sejm, after the PiS (235 seats) and the PO (138 seats) (see Table 1). This respectable result came as a surprise, since Kukiz'15 had been organized only four months before the elections. Currently (mid-2016), the parliamentary group Kukiz'15 has 36 MPs and is a part of the Association for the New Constitution Kukiz'15, registered in February 2016 (hereinafter 'Kukiz'15' or the 'Association').

The name Kukiz refers to Paweł Kukiz, the chairman of the Association, its leading personality and to a certain extent the symbol of this new political entity. The current political career of Paweł Kukiz and his position in the Association brings to mind the category of a political entrepreneur and the Association itself fits the 'minimal conceptualization' of an entrepreneurial party as outlined by Vít Hloušek and Lubomír Kopeček (2017), although it has to be emphasized that the Association for the New Constitution Kukiz'15 is not officially registered as a political party.

Paweł Kukiz is a well-known Polish musician, who for several years now has also been known as a political activist, engaged in promoting the idea of change in the Polish electoral law by introducing the majority-based electoral formula and single member districts (SMD). The decision to run in the parliamentary elections in October 2015 followed his success in the presidential elections in May of the same year. As a presidential candidate, Kukiz won 20.8 per cent of the vote, which placed him third after the current Polish president Andrzej Duda and the former president Bronisław Komorowski. Apart from single member constituencies, Kukiz also talked about the necessity for deep reforms of Polish politics and the economy in his presidential campaign. In his speeches, he used simple, populist language, presenting himself as an advocate of the people. His main slogan was 'Poland, you can' (Potrafisz Polsko).

Paweł Kukiz can be considered a political entrepreneur in that his career thus far has not been connected with politics; he has been a rock musician since the 1980s. He studied law and political science, and the texts of his songs can be described as politically or socially engaged. He actively entered politics only in 2007, supporting the introduction of SMDs into Polish electoral law, proposed then by Civic Platform. After the PO dropped this idea, Kukiz engaged in promoting it. In 2012, he organized a civic initiative (and an Internet site closely linked to it) which demanded the restoration of the petitions which backed SMDs when the idea was still linked to the PO and also demanded the introduction of SMDs as such into the electoral system. This initiative was called 'milled.pl' (Zmieleni.pl), the name alluding to the alleged destruction (milling) of the abovementioned petitions. In 2013, as a leader of the 'milled.pl', Kukiz took part in an initiative organized by the Solidarity trade union called 'The Platform of the Indignant'. Apart from Solidarity, the meeting attracted also other trade unions and representatives of various organizations such as the Anti-ACTA Movement and Kukiz's 'milled.pl' (Polskatimes.pl 2013). The idea of the whole initiative was to express deep criticism of the Polish government and parliamentary parties and to demand reforms such

as the introduction of the SMD or a referendum concerning the dissolution of the parliament. Soon afterwards, the cooperation between Solidarity and *milled.pl* stopped, yet Paweł Kukiz did not cease his political engagement.

After the presidential campaign, Paweł Kukiz and his collaborators decided to organize the non-partisan Electoral Committee for the upcoming parliamentary elections. Potential candidates could apply through the Internet site *Ruchkukiza.pl*. They were supposed to present themselves by answering several questions about their education, profession, marital status, children, financial situation, previous engagement in political campaigns, NGOs, and political parties. Among the questions was also one about a potential candidate's debt, including enforced debt collection. Some questions concerned opinions on ideas such as decentralization of the Polish health service, the 're-industrialization' of Poland or regaining the banks from foreign owners (the so called 're-Polonization' of banks) (*Wyborcza.pl* 2015). The drafting of electoral lists involved some personal conflicts, reported by the media, among Kukiz's collaborators from the presidential campaign, some of whom were not included among the candidates. Those who finally ran in the elections were not a coherent team. Some of them defined themselves as nationalists, some liberal-conservatives, some were SMD activists, and some were just supporters of Kukiz. The Electoral Committee Kukiz'15 registered its lists in electoral districts in all Polish voivodships.¹²

The program for this election was called Strategy for Change Kukiz'15 (*Ruch Kukiza* 2015b). In the opening chapter, it was stated that this was not a political agenda, as that sort of document was characteristic of political parties and they were mostly unfair lists of promises which were not kept after the elections. As it was stated, the document presented was just a strategy for change; it was not a list of promises but a list of necessary steps which would make the change possible. The corrupt political class was identified as one of the most important problems in Poland today. Among the steps for change, the Strategy pointed to the amendment of the Constitution, introduction of the SMDs and an obligatory referendum without any thresholds. As a desirable change of the political system, the Strategy describes the presidential system with president being head of government but without legislative initiative, which should belong to MPs and the citizens. Among solutions that would lead to an improvement of the political and economic situation in Poland were the curtailing of the financial and tax privileges of international companies active in Poland, the simplification of the tax system, the 're-Polonization' of banks, the elimination of corruption and nepotism in public administration, and curtailing the privileges of political parties, particularly by eliminating state budget subsidies for those organizations. There was strong opposition against introducing the euro currency as well as a very assertive announcement to terminate international agreements concerning climate change. The position on Polish membership in the EU can be described as vague: there was no clear negation, however emphasis was put on the independent and sovereign state. The leading slogans for the Kukiz'15 campaign were 'Poland, you can' and 'Give the state back to the citizens'.

The statute of the Association for the New Constitution Kukiz'15 lists various objectives encompassing the promotion of the notion of civil society, economic liberty, self-government, or activities aimed at limiting state subsidies for political parties (*Ruch Kukiza* 2015a). There is also an aim almost symbolically linked to Kukiz, i.e. the promotion of the SMDs. In paragraphs 11 and 12 one reads that the Association is a social movement which

can be engaged in exercising public authority through the activity of its members, who can take part in all electoral campaigns in Poland. The decision to take part in elections is taken by the National Executive Board, which additionally recommends that members participate in exercising public authority. If a member of the Association wants to use symbols of the Association, it must be approved by the National Executive Board. The affiliation status with the Association can be threefold: members, supporters and honorary members. In order to join the Association as a member, it is necessary to fill out the declaration and present two recommendations from the existing members. Decisions to accept membership declarations are taken by a designated member of the National Executive Board. In case of rejection, the potential member can appeal to the National Executive Board, whose decision is final. Honorary membership is granted by the National Executive Board. The rights and duties of the members include active and passive voting rights when selecting the authorities of the Association, possibilities of taking part in the activities of the Association and formulating postulates, as well as paying membership fees. Supporters play only an advisory role in the meetings of the Association's bodies.

The main structures of the Association on the central (national) level are the National Meeting of Delegates, National Executive Board, Control Committee and Disciplinary Tribunal. The Association has a chairman, elected by the National Meeting of Delegates, however this is not a separate position included in the statute, nor are there special competences assigned to this position. Lower-level structures function on the level of constituencies and are called Divisions (*Oddziały*), and organizational units at this level mirror the units at the national level. The basic structure is called a circle. It is established by a decision of the National Executive Board at the recommendation of the Division Executive Board. The statute includes two bodies described as advisory: the parliamentary group and the Council of the Association. The latter consists of persons invited by the National Executive Board and chairmen of the Divisions.

The statute clearly shows the centralization of the Association, with most powers concentrated in the Executive Board on the national level. This body consists of 9 to 13 persons and includes the Association's chairman, deputy chairmen, secretary and treasurer. Guests invited by the Board may also take part in the work of this body, playing an advisory role. The body has a wide range of powers, including management and representation of the Association, adopting plans for thematic and financial activities, as well as the establishment of local circles and Divisions. The National Executive Board is currently (2016) chaired by Paweł Kukiz and consists of a group of his closest collaborators. The organization of the local structures of the Association have just begun (spring, summer 2016), the lack of a strong territorial base being explained by a lack of money, since Kukiz'15 as an association does not qualify for state subsidies for political parties (Olsztyn tvp.pl 2016).

On the one hand, Paweł Kukiz's and his Association's political message is simple and clear. On the other, Kukiz'15 in the parliament is criticized for being vague and hesitant. Those characteristics, coupled with the abovementioned incoherent composition of the Kukiz'15 parliamentary group, have already caused several splits. In December 2015, the group was abandoned by two MPs (Trojanowska 2015). In April 2016, the media widely covered the departure of a group of MPs linked to the National Movement, then Kukiz'15 was abandoned by Kornel Morawiecki (Onet.pl 2016). The most recent media information

about an activist leaving Kukiz'15 was the case of a very close collaborator of Paweł Kukiz, the musician Piotr 'Liroy' Marzec (Krzymowski 2016). It is interesting that Marzec used the argument of the excessive centralization of the decision-making process in Kukiz'15, limited to the closest circle around the leader.

All in all, the Association for the New Constitution is not formally a political party. The avoidance of the notion of a political party may be due to the lack of trust in political parties as intermediaries in the democratic process (Hug 2001; Brunclík, Kubát 2014). We argue, however, that even if an organization rejects the characteristics of a political party, it may be assumed that it acts as such, taking part in the elections, having representatives in the parliament, pursuing aims related to the exercise of public authority as it is stated in its statute. Consequently, if we decide to look at Kukiz'15 as a kind of political party, we further argue that it can be described in terms of an entrepreneurial party, using the minimal conceptualization proposed by Hloušek and Kopeček (2017). Paweł Kukiz certainly may be looked upon as the founder of the Association; he is its unquestionable leader and occupies the central position in its structures, being the chairman and part of the National Executive Board, the body which is central to the structure and functioning of the Association.

The political message promoted by Paweł Kukiz – single member districts – can be recognized as the major political project upon which the Association was organized. The Association is not connected with any sponsor organization or social movement. On the contrary, it aspires to become a mass social movement itself. Neither the founder of the organization nor any other prominent figure of the Association was previously a member of the parliament. The only element which may not quite exactly correspond to the characteristics proposed by Hloušek and Kopeček is the way in which the Association functions as a personal vehicle for its leader. In the case of Paweł Kukiz this might be problematic in that he does not seem to be particularly interested in his personal political career, perceiving himself rather as an activist devoted to a cause he believes in. However, it must be acknowledged that this dimension is difficult to assess, as it involves the politician's personal attitude. Moreover, the Association is a new one in politics and it is difficult to predict whether and how it will develop.

4. The message is still to be defined. The case of Ryszard Petru

The third formation analyzed in this paper is *Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru*, one of the Polish political parties bearing the name of its founder. It is a new entity, organized shortly before the 2015 parliamentary elections. It won 7.6 per cent of the vote and 28 parliamentary seats (see Table 1).

Ryszard Petru studied international relations and he already engaged in politics as a university student. In the 1990s, he worked as an assistant to the Union for Freedom MP Władysław Frasyniuk, and he later worked as a consultant for Leszek Balcerowicz when the latter was deputy prime minister and finance minister. Petru himself was a member of the Union for Freedom and in 2001 he ran for parliament, although without success. In the first

decade of the new millennium, he worked for the World Bank and several Polish banks. In 2011, he became chairman of the Association of Polish Economists.

In April 2015, Ryszard Petru announced the creation of the Association *Nowoczesna.pl* (*Modern.pl*). He declared that it was not a political party but rather a think tank, taking an active part in public life. Their first initiative was to collect signatures for a legislative initiative curtailing the retirement privileges of certain social groups such as miners and farmers (Gądek 2015). In May 2015, the Constitutive Congress of the Association took place, gathering several thousand people declaring the need for deep changes in Poland (*Fundacja.nowoczesna.org* 2015a). At that time, the intention to take part in the general election was not clearly declared, although it was not excluded either (Wilkowicz 2015). Shortly afterwards, in July 2015 – at the next congress held in Gdańsk – Ryszard Petru declared the aim of the *Nowoczesna.pl* to run in the general elections, he also announced himself as a candidate for the post of prime minister (*Fundacja.nowoczesna.org* 2015b). During this congress, 17 regional coordinators were presented, whose roles were to build local structures and create electoral lists.

Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru was registered as a political party in August 2015. The candidates were recruited by local coordinators. According to Petru, the selection criteria should be similar to that used by headhunters (Wiśniewska 2015). People willing to run were vetted by local coordinators, the criteria being competence, organizational abilities and experience. The electoral activity was supposed to be financed by means of crowd funding, and people willing to support the initiative financially were supposed to use an Internet site (*Fundacja.nowoczesna* 2015c). The basic idea of the Association, and later the party, was the creation of a modern society and the state. Among the main postulates of the *Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru* are the simplification of the tax system as well as the reduction of retirement privileges for miners, farmers, police officers and prosecutors. The party advocates curtailing current privileges of the trade unions, particularly those related to the rules of employment and financing. The state should be neutral in terms of religion, political parties should not be financed by the state budget and the parliamentary terms of the MPs should be limited to two (*Onet.pl* 2015; *Nowoczesna.org* 2016a).

According to the statute, the main bodies of the party at the central level are: Convention, National Council, Executive Board, Chairman, Control Committee and the Peer Tribunal (*Nowoczesna.org* 2015). The Convention consists of representatives of the members and is the main decision-making body of the party. It defines the party agenda, elects members of the other central bodies, including the chairman, adopts changes in the party statute, and defines the amount of membership fees. The National Council is also a decision-making body operating between conventions. The chairman is an individual executive body, representing the party, managing and organizing its works. He/she convenes and chairs the Convention, convenes and chairs meetings of the National Council and the Executive Board. He has the right to present the lists of the candidates for elections at the central level of the state and for the European Parliament. The Executive Board is a collective executive body made up of 3–11 members, including the party Chairman. From among the members of the Executive Board, the Chairman of the party appoints deputy-chairpersons, secretary general and treasurer. Particular tasks of this body stipulated by the statute include defining the rules for the activity of party authorities, approving the lists of candidates for elections at the central level of the state presented by the Chairman and approving the lists of candidates

for local elections presented by the local authorities of the party. The Executive Board also sets up and disbands expert, advisory and consultative party bodies.

The territorial organization of the party encompasses four levels: districts, counties, constituencies and voivodships. According to the information on the internet site of the party, it has structures in all 16 voivodships. The basic structure of the party is the circle, which is created by at least five members. In order to become a member of the party, it is required to hold a written (including electronic-form) recommendation of three members. The decision to accept a member is taken by the Executive Board of the Region on the motion of the Executive Board of the circle. The rejection of a member's application may be motivated by the fact that the applicant acted against the objectives pursued by Nowoczesna or harmed the good name of the party through his/her activity. There is no appeal procedure envisaged. The statute also mentions a Youth Forum, made up of supporters aged 16–30. The parliamentary group is not specifically mentioned in the statute, the MPs, Senators and MEPs being included in the National Council.

Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru has created a unique and interesting expert network called 'Better Poland' (Nowoczesna.org 2016b). It is an example of an expert body appointed by the Executive Board in order to provide advice and opinions for the party at the central and regional levels and to conduct consultations with the citizens. The experts active in the network are either members or supporters of the party, always knowledgeable in their respective fields.

To conclude, in our opinion Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru qualifies as an entrepreneurial party as defined by Hloušek and Kopeček in terms of their 'minimal conceptualization' (2017). Ryszard Petru is certainly the founder of the party, plays an important role as its Chairman, with relatively substantial power. It might be assumed that he has political ambitions for which the party might serve as a vehicle. His declaration of becoming prime minister in case of winning the elections can be interpreted as such. Both at the initial stages of the Association Nowoczesna.pl and then in the party, Petru defined the main issue of the initiative: a modern society and state. He personally became the symbol of both this slogan and the entire party, and he made personal efforts to make it recognizable while he travelled across the country when launching the party and then during the electoral campaign. However, this idea of modernity is not really very clearly defined and the main points in the political agenda of the party do not seem specifically related to this notion. Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru is certainly not connected with any promoter organization or movement, nor is it linked to the parliament. Although Ryszard Petru is not entirely new to politics, his previous and current political involvement are separated by at least a decade of activity outside the political realm.

5. Concluding remarks

In many countries, newly established parties differ from older ones and cannot be explained using the traditional models, thus new models are created which seem to be more useful for the description and analysis of new parties, the 'business-firm party' model among them. André Krouwel has even distinguished it as a subsequent phase in the evolution of party models (after the cadre, mass, catch-all and cartel party models). It is true that nowadays

a common phenomenon is the growing importance of leaders of political parties, often referred to as presidentialization of politics (Poguntke, Webb 2005); however, not all new parties fit the 'business-firm party' model. In the case of Poland, it is the 'entrepreneurial issue party' model outlined by Harmel and Svåsand (1993) that seems more useful in this context.

While analyzing three newly created groupings on the Polish political scene – Twój Ruch, Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna – we anticipated that they fulfilled the requirements posited by Hloušek and Kopeček in their 'minimal conceptualization' of entrepreneurial parties (2017). These parties showed some similarities to this notion and to each other. They were all created by and around more or less charismatic leaders from scratch and not as a result of a split in parliamentary parties. They do not have pre-existing social roots or external sponsor organizations. Moreover, they have gained their popularity and electoral support on the basis of criticism of establishment parties and especially of public disapproval as to the limiting of political competition to the two largest parties, which is the case in today's Poland. Their common feature is also critique of political parties financed from state subsidies that serve parties with the biggest electoral support. They present themselves as an alternative to established parties which create a kind of party cartel.

However, our research has exposed the fact that there are also some differences among the parties studied. Twój Ruch has proven to be closest to the minimal conceptualization of an entrepreneurial party, and its leader, Janusz Palikot, can surely be classified as a 'political entrepreneur'. The only problem is 'the issue in the message the leader creates.' The rather unclear vision of 'a modern, friendly and secular state' along with the leader's changing views and image caused uncertainty. Additionally, these issues were presented during surprising happenings during which Palikot used original props where the form seemed to be more important and more noticeable than the content. Because of all that, Palikot's party was seen more as his 'personal vehicle', one that was supposed to help him in his political career, than an organization established to promote some specific issues.

Things are quite different as far as another 'political entrepreneur' – Paweł Kukiz – is concerned. In the case of his association, the issue included in the message – single member districts – is definitely pushed to the fore. However, it is difficult to anticipate whether the association is thought to serve its leader as a 'political vehicle' in furthering his career. He did not establish a political party but a kind of movement and he seems to be interested mainly in looking for support for the notion of SMDs. The biggest unknown is the third 'political entrepreneur' Ryszard Petru and his party Nowoczesna. The issue conveyed in the party message – 'the modern state' lacks clarity and Nowoczesna does not look as if it had new ideas which could attract voters. Nevertheless, the party only recently came into existence and it is difficult to foresee its further development. Some media and members of the public consider it to be yet another version of Civic Platform. It is possible that this party will become increasingly similar to establishment parties.

Concerning the leadership style typical of the 'business firm party', it must be admitted that Your Movement largely corresponds with the model. According to Hopkin and Paolucci, leadership in this kind of party is related to 'personal popularity, organizational advantages, and crucially, access to unlimited professional expertise in mass communication' (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999: 322). In Palikot's party, all these features can be found. He ran his party as an enterprise, rejecting any intra-party discussion on party strategies and this caused many

Palikot Movement MPs chosen in 2011 to leave the party and its parliamentary group. The personal popularity of the leader and his permanent struggle for media attention became the most recognizable characteristic of the party. Analysis of the election campaign carried out online before the 2011 parliamentary election demonstrated that the image of the party was treated as one and the same with the image of its leader, Janusz Palikot (Godlewski 2012: 138), and even introducing gender parity into the party leadership and choosing a co-leader in 2015 did not change this. Therefore, Your Movement's internal management style demonstrates characteristics typical of a 'political entrepreneur party' both inside and out. The internal structure and relationships with other political actors resemble this style closely.

Both Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru are still relatively new organizations. It is therefore difficult to determine whether or not they have already developed stable internal management structures. Usually for the 'business-firm party' these structures involve a dominant leader, who in effect acts as a firm-party's Central Executive Officer. Both organizations are still in the process of organizing their national network. Kukiz has been working on it as recently as fall of 2016 (Ruch Kukiza 2016). Despite the fact that both parties are still in their developmental stages, leadership is already the subject of internal power struggles. Both parties have already experienced internal conflicts, with leadership being accused of ignoring the demands of grass-roots structures (Krzyszowski 2016; Szczepański 2016; Tvp.info 2016). With the leadership style being questioned this early in the party's organizing process it is uncertain whether the model so far applied to this type of political organizations, where the leader has the strongest and decisive vote, will be successfully implemented or whether it will be replaced with an as yet undefined alternative.

From our analysis of Polish parties we can draw the conclusion that the new parties – which are not rooted in social movements, but which have external origins and a strong position of the leader coming from outside of politics – cannot be treated collectively as 'entrepreneurial parties' without any further conceptualization, because they are significantly different. We therefore propose to distinguish some, in the case of Polish parties two, sub-types of entrepreneurial parties: the first one, when the party is needed only to promote its leader and the issues conveyed in the party message are only to help him/her (the case of Palikot) and the other one, where the party (or some other organization) is needed only to promote the issues conveyed in the message and the leader only provides help (the case of Kukiz). However, further analysis is needed encompassing e.g. the alternation of power within an entrepreneurial party, the development and extent of party structures as well as the sources of party financing. We consider it very important to address such questions because they are essential in explaining whether a 'business-firm party' or an 'entrepreneurial party' can be considered durable or whether it is only the first phase of party development and they have to change following the patterns of more traditional parties in order to survive.

Footnotes:

1. It was enforced as follows: firstly, by the electoral threshold in parliamentary elections (5 per cent for parties, 8 per cent for coalitions); secondly, by significant state subsidies granted to the existing parties. The latter were introduced by the Political Party Act of 1997, amended in 2001. The parties which received at least 3 per cent of the vote in the most recent parliamentary elections are entitled

- to state subsidies and the same applies to coalitions with at least 6 per cent of the vote. Moreover, the parties that have won parliamentary seats are eligible for the reimbursement of their campaigns. The funds granted from the state coffers are nowadays the main source of party income, thus new parties, which do not receive that money, have little chance of competing in Polish politics.
2. Palikot's estimated private expenditure to cover his public activities amounted to almost PLN 5 million.
 3. According to the list of richest Poles by the weekly magazine 'Wprost' (Kocur, Majczak 2013: 44).
 4. It must be explained that in some conservative circles of Polish society, homophobic attitudes are quite common. According to the Center of Research on Prejudice survey: every third Pole sees gay people as a source of threat to traditional values and the Polish family (Górska, Mikołajczak 2014).
 5. For example, during a press conference in April 2007 Palikot wore a T-shirt with the words 'I am with the SLD' on the front and 'I am gay' on the back in order to highlight the need to defend minorities. During another press conference in April 2007, he presented a plastic gun and a dildo in order to draw attention to an alleged rape by a few police officers from Lublin.
 6. In January 2012, only 3 per cent of the respondents declared that they were unfamiliar with Janusz Palikot (CBOS 2012: 2).
 7. This type of appeal was quite unique in Poland, as – according to the last general census – 88 per cent of Polish citizens have declared being Catholics, and most importantly as the Catholic Church has a great impact on Polish politics. Therefore, political parties, even leftist parties, avoid such declarations in order not to enter into conflict with the Church.
 8. Two from the SLD (Sławomir Kopyciński and Witold Klepacz) and one from the PO (Łukasz Gibała).
 9. The coalition was composed of: Democratic Left Alliance (SLD – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej), Your Movement (TR – Twój Ruch), Polish Socialist Party (PPS – Polska Partia Socjalistyczna), Union of Labour (UP – Unia Pracy) and Greens (Zieloni).
 10. The data provided by the TR suggest that in 13 out of 41 constituencies the party does not have any structures, in 11 constituencies it has only commissioners (appointed at the request of the party leader until the convening of the first party congress in the constituency), in further 6 constituencies – proxies (appointed when the constituency chairman resigns), and only in 11 constituencies are there Constituency Board Chairmen (Twój Ruch 2016).
 11. Although Kukiz'15 took part in the elections, which might be the base for treating it as political party, this organization strongly emphasizes its non-partisan characteristics as an association.
 12. According to the Polish electoral law, the candidates for the elections can be proposed by political parties and groups of citizens who form an electoral committee. Kukiz'15 ran in the elections using this second option.

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