

**Tim Haughton
and Kevin Deegan-Krause:**

**THE NEW PARTY CHALLENGE:
CHANGING CYCLES OF PARTY
BIRTH AND DEATH IN CENTRAL
EUROPE AND BEYOND.**

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The reviewed monograph is not just another book about party politics in (East-)Central Europe. Tim Haughton and Kevin Deegan-Krause build on more than two decades of interest in the region and more than a decade of research on changes in parties and party systems to write a book going far beyond the Central European cases.

Let me start by acknowledging the use of the term 'Central Europe' very positively. Although there are almost as many definitions of Central Europe as there are authors writing on this subject, to describe all the formerly communist EU member countries with the term 'Central Europe' makes sense and can be used as a descriptive shortcut that is more appropriate than the term 'new member states.'

The key issue discussed by the authors is the phenomenon of new and even newer political parties emerging in the region. As Haughton and Deegan-Krause write in the preface (p. ix): 'It is no small irony for us that writing of this book has taken considerably longer than the lifespans of most of the parties we discuss (...)' How to explain the breakthrough of new parties, their persistence or collapse? How do the patterns of party change differ across the region, and why? These are the central questions addressed by the authors, who

are among the best experts on party politics in Central Europe worldwide.

Haughton and Deegan-Krause organised the book into eight chapters and around four main themes and points of departure: (1) the importance of agency and choice, (2) the role of time and timing, (3) the salience of the divide between 'clean' versus corrupted politics, and (4) new patterns of explanation linking the 'birth and death' of parties. What I appreciate most about such an approach is the permanent concern for and interest in the active agency of politicians and parties. The focus on the supply side, so to speak, links the book to the tradition of party politics research focused primarily on the parties themselves going back to Sartori and even earlier. The same applies to the consistent way in which the authors work with time and timing as strategic factors influencing the emergence, survival, or decline of new parties. Last but not least, Deegan-Krause and Haughton very convincingly and masterfully combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, borrowing the better parts of both worlds to explain the complex phenomenon under scrutiny.

The reader must be impressed by the amount of secondary literature and the scope and depth of original research conducted by the authors in the process of writing. This feature is very well demonstrated already in the first chapter, which excellently summarises the recent scholarship. Here, the authors discuss the traditional explanations of party birth, persistence and death, such as the role of institutional settings, cleavages, dealing with the legacies of the past, the 'populist appeal', and the EU. Without denying the importance of these factors, the authors persuasively argue that none of them suffice to explain the recent wave of new and even newer parties emerging (not only) in Central Europe. A scholar interested in Euroscepticism or Europeanisation of Central European party politics would proba-

bly attribute greater importance to EU issues and the mainstreaming of soft Euroscepticism. However, Deegan-Krause and Haughton are right that Euroscepticism in many cases serves as new ammunition for the older political battles. They perhaps only underestimate its current dynamics a bit.

The second chapter defines the concept of novelty. In the world of party politics, it is not always easy to say what is really new and what is the splinter away from or merger of existing parties, or a new variation on an already existing bunch of politicians. The authors' fourfold categorisation of novelty (inception, transformation, alteration, confirmation) very aptly deals with the fact that combinations of both novelty and continuity are possible. Haughton and Deegan-Krause operationalise these four categories very well to capture not only total newcomers but also to distinguish parties close to or distinguished from an original party. The concept is very meticulously applied, yet a Czech expert might seriously doubt whether 'inception' applies to TOP 09, and he or she can be almost sure it doesn't apply to the transformation of the Dawn of Direct Democracy party into Freedom and Direct Democracy. Of course, this remark neither disqualifies the usefulness of the concept nor undermines the general quality of its application in empirical cases.

The core of the work lies in the following four chapters. In the third chapter, party change is mapped and measured. Mapping party changes in particular countries is very illustrative, accurate and shows diverging trends within the region. I agree with the authors that diverse patterns of electoral cycles pose a problem for comparison, and I welcome their solution to create six half-decade long periods starting in 1990 as more than fair. Distortions might occur, for sure, but Haughton and Deegan-Krause mitigate this risk by qualitative interpretation of the results.

In this chapter, another great analytical device is introduced. The authors do not limit themselves to Central European cases; they compare Central and Western Europe. In doing so, they demonstrate that the difference between these regions lies in the scope and intensity of change, not in the simple fact that new parties have broken through. They start by measuring volatility, which does not suffice to capture the emergence of new and newer parties. Therefore, they proceed to measure the entry of new parties (generally higher in Central Europe, but the countries vary a great deal), new party trajectories (showing the aggregate share of the vote for parties originating in different tie cohorts), Kreuzer and Pettai's weighted party system age, and rough and weighted party age distribution.

The fourth chapter addresses the issue of differences between parties of different ages and at different stages of their lifespan, and the critical conditions for their death or survival. The focus is on organisation, leaders, and party appeals to the voters. What, then, is new about the new parties in each category? The Central European newcomers try to avoid as much as they can any link to the world of traditional parties, even in their names. They typically incline to have only a limited number of thoroughly controlled members. As far as their programmes are concerned, new parties typically signal dissatisfaction with the old parties and old politics; anti-establishment appeals are not scarce. Using the data from Chapel Hill Surveys, Haughton and Deegan-Krause show that the new parties occupy almost all spaces on both the left/right and GAL/TAN axes. Very important for further research is their analysis showing that the new parties tend to position themselves on the new dimension of competition between the 'clean' and 'corrupt', persuading their voters that novelty automatically means cleanness. Cleanness works here both as a definition of the target

(established parties are evil) and the selection of the tool for the campaign strategy. Last but not least, without naming it so, Deegan-Krause and Haughton analyse the importance of the personalisation of politics, since the new parties embody a strong emphasis put on the personalities of party leaders.

The fifth chapter deals with the essential question of why some parties fail and others survive. The same set of conditions is employed in this chapter as before, together with participation in the government. The authors persuasively demonstrate the vast array of patterns of death and survival of new parties across the region. The organisational aspect is important but not determinant. The same applies to the message of cleanness, especially when a party faces a scandal. For the Czech reader, the explanation that ANO has survived because of the positive perception of its governmental performance as 'delivering the economic goods' (p. 161) might be worthy of consideration regardless of his or her political preferences.

The sixth chapter tries to explain why new parties give way to even newer parties, since new parties have a shorter lifespan than older parties. To understand why voters do not simply return to the older parties, Haughton and Deegan-Krause delve deep into the position that new parties occupy within the party system. Good timing is the key for the emergence of new parties, especially when, as in Czechia in 2013, established political parties unwittingly open a big window of opportunity. The failure of the 'older' new parties to maintain a clean image paves the way for 'newer' new parties to emerge and attract voters with claims of being even cleaner and stricter in fighting corruption. Haughton and Deegan-Krause demonstrate this phenomenon by analysing voting shifts in Czechia 2010–2017 and Slovenia 2008–2017.

They worked as well with the concept of party subsystems. Their 'party subsystem

model' (pp. 198–202) will have, without any doubt, an impact on future research of new parties. Under precisely defined conditions, the basic idea is to conceive the set of new parties in a given country as a sort of subsystem within the general party system, a subsystem with specific patterns of (often fierce) competition among its units. A crucial part of the concept is the time dimension necessary to explain what makes the interactions among new parties a subsystem.

Under the catchy title 'Slovenia is everywhere', the seventh chapter again shows one of the book's assets: the authors' ability to go beyond the Central European area to show that the new parties are in no way a uniquely Central European phenomenon. Scholars can observe them all around the globe, starting with Iceland, for example, and down to Mozambique.

The last chapter connects empirical research and the theory of democracy with normative questions on the nature and quality of democracy and the contribution of new parties to it. For Haughton and Deegan-Krause, the essential role of a party in a democracy is to establish and maintain the linkage between citizens and those who govern. This function, of course, can be fulfilled by new parties and sometimes they manage it even better than their older counterparts. On the other hand, we should not forget the many risks connected with ever quicker changes in the party life-cycle. Deegan-Krause and Haughton name the danger of selfish politicians interested only in plundering state resources, inexperienced business-like (or wannabe) leaders who do not know how to manage everyday politics or tackle complex political problems. All this sounds very familiar to the ears of an observer of Czech party politics, by the way. In addition, new parties can negatively impact the quality of representation and level of accountability. Haughton and Deegan-Krause

recall Peter Mair's distinction between the responsible and responsive party. The book's final remarks on the media deserve further scholarly engagement.

Work on this book started more than a decade ago, a fact that helps us understand and admire Houghton and Deegan-Krause's amount of empirical knowledge. With their mastery of qualitative and quantitative methods, they have written an excellent book for area specialists as well as for scholars of party politics. Especially the last chapter is beneficial for everyone who wants to understand

some of the significant challenges that contemporary democracies face. The book is very clearly written, and its language is readable and fresh, yet professional and precise. I enjoyed the fairy tale framing at the beginning and the end of the book and the short stories introducing the particular chapters. Let me express the hope that this book will find many readers keen to follow and build on different aspects of the research of Tim Houghton and Kevin Deegan-Krause.

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