

Built to Last?

Explaining durable success of new parties through complex causation

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Abstract

Despite the difficulty of building support from the ground up, some new political parties have managed to achieve durable success. The literature provides various explanations for differences in success including institutions, the attitude of the electorate and interactions between parties. No previous research has measured the durability of success and the interaction between explanatory factors has only been investigated for specific types of parties. A research is proposed to investigate the causes of durable success in post-World War II Western European parliamentary democracies, including all types of new parties and allowing interactions between explanatory factors to be found.

The research design is based on fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fs/QCA), a method proposed by Ragin which allows complex patterns of causation to be discovered from specially coded data. The analysis requires election results, content analysis of political manifestos and macro-economical indicators, each of which are readily available for the time period covered by the investigation. This research can be conducted in approximately five to six weeks.

1 Introduction

One important aspect of democracy is anyone being able to set up a new political party to compete for votes and to seek office. In practice it may be difficult to build a political movement from the ground up and gather lasting support, as established competitors have more experience and are already known by the electorate. Nonetheless, several such parties have acquired substantial vote shares or even acquired government positions in recent years. In The Netherlands for example, the right-wing parties created by Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders are recent cases. The Socialist Party and the social-liberal party Democrats '66, which were newly established in the past, have obtained a durable position. Which factors determine which new parties are successful? Insight in success factors may be useful for established parties to determine how to react to these parties in an effective way and it might show leaders of new parties which pitfalls to avoid.

There has been much research into the emergence of new political parties and factors that influence the success of these parties (amongst others Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie 2005, Harmel and Robertson 1985, Hug 2001, Ignazi 1996, Mair 1999, Tavits 2006 and Willey 1998). Explanatory factors found in this body of literature can be split in three major categories. First, institutional approaches stress the effect of electoral institutions, as found in Harmel and Robertson (1985) and Willey (1998). A second group of explanations focusses on the demands or attitudes of the electorate, such as in Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2005). The third group discusses strategic interaction between parties (Hug 2001 and Meguid 2005), including spatial competition (Pennings and Keman 2003).

Despite this abundance of research, the current state of the art is lacking in two ways. First, research has tended to focus on countries rather than parties. This means it that one cannot distinguish between lasting success of one party and temporary success of multiple successive parties. Second, there has not been much effort to combine explanatory factors in a way that may explain the fortunes of all kinds of new parties. Lucardie (2000) and Redding en Viterna (1999) suggest that there may be interaction between the various causes, but the former performs no comparative test while the latter is limited to left-libertarian parties. Redding and Viterna (1999: 505-506) have found that Boolean analysis is effective to combine explanatory factors in new party research. Boolean analysis investigates which combinations of explanatory factors cause certain outcomes. It yields explanations in terms of necessity and sufficiency (Ragin 1987: 99-100) rather than the additive models resulting from linear regression.

I attempt to unify several categories of explanations over all types of parties, so there has to be a trade-off to keep the research manageable. First, I adopt a most similar systems design, considering West-European parliamentary democracies using a system of proportional representation. Although this reduces variation in institutions, it also reduces the number of potential confounding variables. This allows for comparison even though a limited number of cases is considered. Second, unlike scholars who focus on the rate of emergence of new parties (like Tavits 2006), I limit my analysis to the electoral success of new parties after they have formed.

In this thesis I present a research design that gives more insight in the factors determining which new parties experience lasting success. First, I discuss previous work in this area. Next I present my research question and the theoretical framework used to answer it. After this I operationalize the variables involved and discuss the methodology used to analyse them, including methods of data collection. Finally I present an approximate time frame in which the research can take place.

2 Prior work

Besides differences in explanatory variables, as described in the introduction, literature on the emergence and success of new parties also differ in case selection. Based on this, it can be split in two broad groups: those researches that provide a general overview that applies to all types of new parties and those that focus on new parties with a specific political orientation. My research considers all types of parties, so I focus on the former group. Some studies limited to specific types of parties propose new factors that can be applied in a broader setting. These prior works are discussed in a separate section. To give an overview of all research discussed here I listed them in Table 1, including the most important factors found in each study.

There is a difference between studies focussing on emergence of new parties and others focussing on the subsequent degree of success of those parties. These are different dependent variables and different factors are needed to explain them (Harmel 1985: 412). I include only those studies discussing the degree of success, as this is the primary concern in my research. As the two topics are closely related, there are some studies that treat both phenomena simultaneously. These analyses are included in my overview.

2.1 New parties in general

Current research finds numerous causes that influence the success or failure of new parties, but individual analyses typically consider only a limited number of such factors and do not investigate interaction between them. I first consider two studies that are mostly exploratory and then continue with those that attempt to explain new party

| Reference | Factor(s) explaining success | Remarks |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Mair (1999) | (no explanation) | exploratory |
| Harmel and Robertson (1985) | number of effective parties number of issue dimensions proportional representation | exploratory |
| Willey (1998) | proportional representation | cannot distinguish emergence and success |
| Hug (2001) | interaction between political actors | influence of electorate ignored |
| Meguid (2005) | interaction between political actors | about niche parties rather than new parties |
| Lucardie (2000) | type of party perception of the electorate resources available political opportunity structure | not generalizable; no comparative test |
| Hakhverdiana and Koop (2007) | consensus democracy federalism | specific to right-populist parties |
| Arzheimer and Carter (2006) | position of mainstream parties grand coalition unemployment | specific to right-populist parties |
| Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2005) | electorate spatial competition | specific to right-populist parties |
| Pennings and Keman (2003) | spatial competition | specific to right-populist parties |
| Harmel and Svásand (1997) | (no explanation) | specific to right-populist parties; studies policy impact |
| Redding and Viterma (1999) | institutions left-wing government policy performance (left-wing) | specific to left-libertarian parties; uses QCA |

Table 1: Factors explaining success of new parties in prior work

success from specific causes.

Exploratory studies

One exploratory study is done by Mair (1999), who does not attempt to explain new party success, but gives an overview of the degree to which new parties have been successful in various European countries. He distinguishes three origins of new parties: mergers, splits and the remainder being genuinely new (*ibid.*: 216). He finds that new parties capture increasing vote shares, but that genuinely new parties do badly when compared to those of other origins (*ibid.*: 220).

The other exploratory study is by Harmel and Robertson (1985). They perform a broad investigation of factors that influence emergence and success of new parties, attempting to figure out which ones may have some influence. Using a low-threshold definition of new parties, they provide statistics about new parties in Western

democracies. Tests are performed against a large number of independent variables, finding that new party success increases with a large number of effective parties, a large number of issue dimensions and proportional representation. Only effects of individual factors are analysed and no attempt is made to use control variables. The factors found correspond with the executives-parties dimension of consensus democracy found by Lijphart (1999), which suggests there may be a single causal mechanism explaining all of them, for example based on the institution of proportional representation.

Institutions

One research favouring this institutional approach is Willey (1998). He measures new party success as the total percentage of seats acquired by new parties in elections and evaluates the effects of a number of institutional factors. He finds that the effective district magnitude (a measure of the proportionality of the electoral system) has most effect, with large districts (more proportional systems) showing more successful new parties (ibid.: 667).

Interaction between actors

Another important explanation is interaction between political actors, which is found in Hug (2001) and Meguid (2005). I first consider Hug, who discusses at length the influence of interaction between established parties and new parties, analysing both the emergence of new parties and their degree of success. He performs his analysis at the country level to avoid selection bias due to self-selection (ibid.: 78). Within this research design, success receives less attention than emergence and the causes Hug finds for success are mostly those that inhibit emergence of weaker parties. Although this is a useful and credible finding at the country level, such an approach does not take into account factors related to the parties themselves. Hug excludes the influence of the electorate and suggests that it be included in future research (ibid.: 150).

Meguid focusses on niche parties rather than new parties specifically. The main argument is that niche parties can obtain a large degree of success depending on the way other parties approach them. When fiercely opposed by their mainstream non-proximal opponent, they can gain high levels of electoral support (ibid.: 357). When

accommodated instead, they may not receive as much electoral support, but they may cause substantial policy shifts in mainstream parties (loc. cit.). This argument is useful, as it may well apply equally to new parties as to niche parties.

Combinations of factors

Those researches discussed previously did not consider interaction between explanatory variables. Lucardie (2000) argues that there are four kinds of parties, for each of which the factors that determine success have a different impact. Explanatory factors addressed are the perception of the electorate, resources available to new parties and the political opportunity structure. Unfortunately, Lucardie does not test his hypothesis comparatively and he expects that generalizing them outside The Netherlands would be problematic (ibid.: 183). Besides that, it would be hard to find an objective way to operationalize his typology, which is mostly concerned with the degree to which a party is driven by ideology and whether this ideology is new or old.

2.2 Specific types of parties

Research on specific types of parties has focussed mostly on right-wing populist/anti-immigrant parties and left-wing libertarian/green parties. Although not all this research has an explicit focus on new parties, many explanations can be applied to new parties. I first discuss works on right-wing parties and then continue with one relevant study of left-wing libertarian parties.

Institutions

Like some of the more general researches, Hakhverdiana and Koop (2007) focus on institutions. They explain how the workings of Lijphart's dimensions of consensus democracy influence the success of populist parties, and find that consensus democracy and federalism both positively influence the success of these parties. This is a typical institutionalist approach and seems generalizable to other types of parties.

The electorate and interaction between actors

Arzheimer and Carter (2006) find causes concerning other political parties as well as the

electorate. Mainstream parties that are strongly right-wing can have a legitimizing effect, causing higher support for extremist parties (ibid.: 434). Grand coalitions also have this effect (loc. cit.), probably due to the dissatisfaction they cause (ibid.: 424). The most notable finding is that high unemployment reduces support, possibly because voters turn to the trusted mainstream in troubled times (ibid.: 439). This last explanation would potentially affect all kinds of new parties.

The paper by Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2005) focusses especially on the electorate, finding that extremist right wing parties require support of their policies as well as mobilization of the electorate, which is particularly high if there is no strong right-wing alternative. As such, Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2005) support spatial competition and contradict the legitimizing effect found by Arzheimer and Carter (2006). This article has more information about the role of the electorate than most others, which makes it a useful for the second category of explanations.

A single case study of the LPF in The Netherlands by Pennings and Keman (2003) finds that the success of this party, obtaining the second largest number of votes and reaching office in its first participation in elections, is mostly due to mainstream parties having moved to the middle of the electoral spectrum. As such it supports spatial competition as a major factor explaining success of new parties, like Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie.

Definition of success

Harmel and Svåsand (1997) do not introduce a new explanatory factor, but instead discuss another dimension of success, namely policy impact. They find that new extremist right-wing parties in Denmark and Norway have greatly influenced the policy position of their prime mainstream rival, even when they did not capture many votes from them (ibid.: 336-337). I do not include this dimension of success, but it would be interesting to perform a similar investigation with a different definition of success.

Combinations of factors

Finally, I discuss one research on left-libertarian parties. The paper by Redding and

Viterna (1999) is especially interesting due to its methodology. They use qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) as proposed by Ragin (1987) to find how several factors interact to cause success for left-libertarian parties. This results in three conjunctive conditions explaining all cases except for two (ibid.: 500-501). It is important to note that both were borderline cases and a small change in a single variable would have made them fit the pattern (loc. cit.). This shows that QCA is an attractive approach, especially if borderline cases can be coded properly.

3 Research question

I found that several competing explanations for the success of new parties are present in previous work: electoral institutions, the attitude of the electorate and interactions between parties. Due to a most similar systems design containing only countries with proportional representation, it is not possible to analyse the effect of institutions. I will attempt to find how the the remaining two factors jointly determine how successful new parties are after they have been established. This leads to the following research question: “How do the attitude of the electorate and the strategy of other parties interact to determine which new parties experience lasting success in national level parliamentary elections in Western European parliamentary democracies after the Second World War?”. Before an in-depth discussion of my research design, I first define the concepts used in this question.

3.1 Attitude of the electorate

The attitude of the electorate refers to how well people think democracy is functioning and is about their perception of the trustworthiness of politicians and their own influence on politics. This would measure anti-political and apolitical attitudes, which Swyngedouw (2001: 232-234) found to be strongly related to protest votes and also to blank or invalid votes.

3.2 Interactions between parties

It should be noted that interactions between parties, as found in the prior work, can be split in two related but distinct concepts: strategic reactions of old parties to new

parties, and the more static concept of spatial competition. The former is indicated by parties adopting part of the issues of the new party on one side of the scale or attacking the party on those issues on the other side. An indicator for the latter is the number and strength of parties close to the new party on a left/right scale.

3.3 New parties

A new party is a party that has recently started competing in national parliamentary elections. Parties derived from earlier parties are not considered genuinely new. Specific criteria for genuine newness are given in the theoretical framework section. The first time a party is new is defined as the first elections in which at least five percent of the popular vote is obtained. I use this threshold to remove parties that obviously do not have any support. Having a fixed threshold as a percentage of the popular vote rather than counting the first time a party gains representation makes the measure comparable between states with different thresholds of representation. It should be noted that five percent is the maximum such threshold in the countries under investigation (found in Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg). Although selecting on the number of votes in the first elections constitutes some form of selection on the dependent variable, this can be mitigated by adjusting the definition of lasting success.

3.4 Lasting success

I have not found prior research investigating lasting success, as most research focusses on countries rather than on parties. To investigate lasting success, one should investigate results for each party over a longer time period. To reduce selection on the dependent variable, I exclude the results of the first elections from my definition. This leads to a clear distinction between initial success and lasting success. To exclude old parties, I investigate only the success in a fixed number of elections after these qualifying elections. There are several possible indicators of success, such as vote share, seat share, reaching office and policy impact. I use only vote share. Seat share is hard to compare across countries due to different thresholds, reaching office is expected to be relatively rare and policy impact is hard to investigate unless a detailed analysis of each case is possible.

4 Theoretical framework

4.1 *Model of causation*

This research takes place in a framework where individuals in the electorate select a party based on their policy preferences and their view on the current state of affairs, both of which are influenced by the political discourse between parties. It is assumed that certain factors make it more likely that people support specific new parties, whereas others make it less likely. This means that under specific circumstances, a specific new party may be successful. It is possible however that this party would not be successful under different circumstances or that other new parties are not successful under similar circumstances. Therefore I do not use an additive model of causation as required for linear regression, but rather an alternative model which is capable of dealing with complex causation. Before elaborating on my research, I will give a basic explanation of this model.

The model I use is called fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fs/QCA). The term QCA refers to a method proposed by Ragin (1987) to perform Boolean analysis in comparative research. In Boolean analysis, all variables are dichotomized and the number of occurrences of each possible combination of truth values is counted. This results in a truth table, each row of which represents a conjunction of independent variables and the resulting outcome. Ragin describes methods used to reduce this truth table to minimal Boolean formulae which capture the original complexity, providing a concise statement of necessary and sufficient conditions for the outcome to occur. The term fuzzy set part refers to an extension by Ragin (2000) which does not dichotomize, but rather assigns values between zero and one for cases which are not clear. This allows better coding of intermediate cases, which may help alleviate the problem of boundary cases Redding and Viterna (1999: 500-501) experienced when they applied Boolean analysis to new parties.

I perform a research measuring the degree to which new parties experience lasting success, attempting to explain it from a number of independent variables. It should be noted that the number of possible configurations increases exponentially with the

number of independent variables, so care should be taken to include only those that are deemed most important. I use four independent variables: the type of party, the attitude of the electorate, spatial competition and reactions of other parties. These variables are discussed in detail in the section on operationalization.

It should be noted that a number of factors not included as independent variables might influence the vote share of new parties. I control for one such factor by adding it as another independent variable, and discuss why three others cannot or need not be controlled for.

Policy performance of the previous government is controlled for. One could reasonably expect that if the government fails miserably in achieving its goals, opposition parties – including new parties – will get a larger vote share. On the other hand, Arzheimer and Carter (2006: 439) found that high unemployment – signalling bad policy performance – makes people turn to the trusted mainstream parties rather than to the extreme right. Therefore one might expect this variable has some effect, although it is unclear which effect, especially since it may interact with the type of party.

I now turn to the three factors I do not control for. First, Lucardie (2000: 179) suggests that resources, such as money and publicity, might be a relevant factor. This seems credible. Unfortunately these factors – especially publicity – are hard to measure in the past and to compare across time due to gradual adoption of mass-media channels. Each of these channels may have different impacts, both between them and across time. Second, institutions other than the electoral system (which I eliminated through a most similar systems design) may play a role. In particular, Hakhverdiana and Koop (2007: 417) found that federalism increases success of populist parties. Harmel and Robertson (1985: 517) on the other hand found no such effect. Since the latter focusses specifically on new parties while the former considers all populist parties, I consider it justified to accept the result of Harmel and Robertson and not include federalism in this research. Finally, I do not give attention to historical events. Although I readily admit that such events, like the murder of Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, may have a substantial effect, there does not seem to be a good way to consider them in the model. One could exclude elections which were held after major events, but it would be hard to draw the

line. Moreover, this judgement might be led by the perceived affect on the elections, which might bias the results.

I aim to find configurations of factors that allow new parties to gain durable support. Fs/QCA provides a means to find such configurations, each configuration being the conjunction of specific values of the independent variables. Although these individual factors have been investigated before and one may be able to predict their individual effects, these configurations have not been investigated. The current literature does not give enough insight in the way factors interact to be able to formulate a hypothesis at this time.

4.2 Limitations in scope

To keep this research manageable and to create a most similar systems design, its scope is limited in a number of ways. There are limitations of three kinds: limitations on country selection, temporal limitations and limitations on party selection. I discuss each kind in turn.

Three considerations play a role in country selection. The first criterion is that only countries in Western Europe are selected. The nature of political parties may be different in other regions, making the situations more difficult to compare if other cases are added. The term “Western” is intended to be political rather than geographical in nature, so Western Europe is defined as those countries that were members of the 15-member European Union. Secondly, only parliamentary democracies are included. If presidential elections play major role in politics, this may effect new parties. The third criterion is proportional representation. Plurality systems cause two party systems due to Duvergers law (Duverger 1972: 23), giving new parties little chance of success.

My temporal limitation is that only elections after the Second World War are selected. The war must be excluded because the states under consideration did not remain democratic during the war. To keep the time period contiguous, I use the end of the war as the starting point for my research.

Parties are only considered if they compete in national parliamentary elections. Sub-

national elections are expected to involve local issues that are harder to compare and may be less politicized. At the European level, on the other hand, elections involve cooperation between multiple similar parties across borders to form combined parliamentary groups, which may give new parties less policy freedom.

5 Operationalization

I now define the central concepts in such detail that they can be applied to real data and provide measurable definitions for my variables. First, I discuss the central concept of which parties are genuinely new. After that, I provide operational definitions for my dependent and independent variables.

5.1 Genuinely new parties

One important definition in this research is what constitutes a genuinely new party. As discussed in the introduction, I am interested specifically in parties that need to build support from the ground up. Similar concepts are used in the literature, such as Harmel and Robertson (1985: 508-509), Hug (2001: 14) and Mair (1999: 216), respectively using the terms “naturally formed party”, “genuinely new party” and “new new party”. Each excludes parties resulting from mergers, Harmel and Robertson and Mair exclude parties resulting from splits and Harmel and Robertson also explicitly exclude reorganized parties. It should be noted that it may be hard to determine whether a party resulted from a split, and that splits (unlike mergers) increase the number of parties and therefore competition in the system (Hug 2001: 13-14) and are similar to “new new parties” in this way. Moreover, pre-existing support is not guaranteed for parties resulting from splits. Therefore I include splits but exclude mergers, like Hug. Like Harmel and Robertson, I exclude reorganization and name changes since the resulting parties do not need to build support from the ground up. Therefore, I define genuinely new parties as parties that were created in an event that increased the number of political parties in the system.

5.2 Fuzzy set coding

Before discussing the various variables, I discuss the way they are coded into fuzzy set

values. I use a continuous scale, allowing all values between zero and one (inclusive) to be assigned. Ragin (2000: 8) mentions three important points on the scale: fully in the set, valued 1, fully out of the set, valued 0, and the crossover point where there is maximal ambiguity, valued 0.5. The fully in and fully out points are most important, as they serve to truncate uninteresting variation at the extremes. Once these points are determined, the values in between are mapped to fuzzy set values linearly.

My data has the advantage of being continuous and based on a relatively large number of cases, but unfortunately it is not always clear theoretically what would be the most suitable locations for the special points. Wherever there are no clear theoretical boundaries, I use statistics to place them. This is justifiable as the number of cases is relatively large for use with fs/QCA, so the statistics are more reliable than they would have been for smaller samples. In these cases, one standard deviation above the average marks the “fully in” point while one standard deviation below marks “fully out”. Consequently the average corresponds with the crossover point, which is intuitively a sensible value to mark as maximally ambiguous.

My analysis suffers from a level of analysis problem: although analysis is at the party level, parties have separate data points for each relevant election. My definition for lasting success involves multiple elections, as there can be higher inaccuracy if only a single election is used. Including all data points individually would not be meaningful, as lasting success is achieved at the party level, not at the election level. To be able to assign a single fuzzy set score for each variable measuring each party, I aggregate multiple elections into a single value. I do this by simply averaging the fuzzy set scores over all relevant elections for each of the variables. This may hide some variation, but at least it allows me to analyse lasting success. It should be noted that averaging after computing the fuzzy set scores is more consistent with Ragin's (2000) definitions than doing so in advance. One would expect that a variable is only fully in if all components are also fully in. If averaging is done in advance, the average of a point that is fully in and the crossover point might still be fully in; this happens if the pre-coding score for the first point is very high.

5.3 Lasting success

The dependent variable, lasting success, is coded in terms of vote share in elections. As argued in the research question section, other measures also have some validity, but are hard to measure and compare between countries. When a genuinely new party as defined previously is established, I start considering it after the first time it has won at least 5% of the popular vote in national-level parliamentary elections. This is the highest threshold found in the countries under consideration, so that such a party always has representation.

To make sure the parties included are indeed new, only a limited number of elections are considered for each party. This number is a difficult trade-off, as a higher number of elections means more information on durability, while a lower number means that more recent parties can be included. This choice is arbitrary, and I settle for counting three successive elections. This excludes the first elections where the new party reaches the threshold. These are not counted to make sure initial and lasting success are clearly distinguished, thereby reducing selection on the dependent variable. Assuming elections are held at least every five years, this choice implies that I can include at least all parties that have achieved their first success no less than twenty years ago. It should be noted that due to early elections and shorter intervals between elections – five years is the maximum for the selected countries and is found only in Luxembourg – some more recent parties can be included.

For lasting success, theoretically meaningful boundaries are available. If the vote share is below 5% the party is out of the set of successful parties, since in some countries it would not even gain representation. Mair (1999: 218) uses 10% vote share as the criterion to find the most successful new parties, so this makes for a good upper bound. Due to linear coding, the crossover point is set at 7.5%. Note that, as explained in the previous section, the fuzzy set scores are averaged over three elections.

5.4 Type of party

The first independent variable, the type of party, is in principle multi-dimensional. However, I found prior work to be mainly about left-libertarian parties and right-wing

anti-immigrant parties. This means one can reasonably expect the left-right dimension to capture most of the relevant variation. This dimension has the advantage that much research has been done about its measurement. Two common ways to measure it are using expert surveys (such as Castles and Mair 1984 and Huber and Inglehart 1995) and through content analysis of manifestos (such as Budge et al. 2001 and Klingemann et al. 2006). Both have their issues, but according to Budge (2000: 111) expert surveys are especially problematic because there are no well-defined criteria for experts to evaluate parties, and the results are hard to compare across countries. Klemmensen, Hobolt and Hansen (2007: 747) note that although expert surveys have a particularly high level of validity, they are hard to use for time-series analyses. Moreover they find that the outcomes are highly similar between expert judgements and content analysis of manifestos (ibid.: 750). Therefore I use content analysis of manifestos. Data is available from the Comparative Manifestos Project, found in Budge et al. (2001) and Klingemann et al. (2006). I use the “rile” variable which indicates whether the manifesto is left-wing or right-wing.

The “rile” index is based on sentence frequencies and as such has no theoretically important values. Therefore I use the standard deviation to find the boundaries as described in section 5.2. The resulting fuzzy set indicates to which extent the party was right-wing at each election and the score used in the analysis is again the average of three such scores.

5.5 Attitude of the population

The second independent variable, the attitude of the population towards politics, is hard to measure correctly. In particular, it is impossible to determine this attitude in the past, so historical survey data must be used. Such data is scarce and hard to compare if several different surveys are used. For this reason operationalization must be considered together with data collection. The Eurobarometer (European Commission 2008) contains a question about satisfaction with democracy, which comes reasonably close to what I need. Unfortunately, this survey starts only in 1974 and early editions do not include this question. Moreover, Austria and Sweden only joined the European Union in

1995. Since I need values for the independent variables for at least four elections for each new party, restricting my scope to that of the Eurobarometer would leave too few cases. Due to this lack of data, I resort to voter turnout as a measure of the attitude of the electorate. Although this measure is somewhat indirect and still hard to compare, especially due to compulsory voting in some countries, it has the advantage of being available for the entire period under consideration. Swyngedouw (2001: 233-234) found that blank and invalid votes are strongly related with anti-political and apolitical attitudes, which is exactly what I intend to measure and which suggests that turnout may be a good indicator as well if defined appropriately.

I define turnout as the number of valid non-blank votes cast as a percentage of the number of people eligible to vote; by explicitly excluding blank and invalid votes, more variation is created in countries with compulsory voting. I assign fuzzy set scores statistically, computing mean and standard deviation separately for cases with and without compulsory voting to make turnout figures more comparable. This results in per-election fuzzy sets which indicate a positive attitude of the population. As before, this score is averaged over the relevant elections for each new party.

5.6 Spatial competition

Spatial competition is my third independent variable. This should provide a measure to what degree the niche of the new party is occupied. For simplicity, this is coded in terms of left-right competition again, allowing the re-using the fuzzy set scores I computed before. The computation is based on five assumptions: first, parties with the same fuzzy set score compete maximally; second, parties on different extremes – that is one is fully in and the other fully out of the set of right-wing parties – do not compete at all; third, competition decreases linearly with the absolute difference between fuzzy set scores on left-right position; fourth, competition provided by a party is proportional to its strength, measured by its vote share in the last election; and finally, total competition is the sum of competition provided by all other parties. These assumptions can be summarized in a formula to compute competition experienced by party k (c_k) from the left-right positions of parties i (p_i) and the number of votes parties i received at the last

elections (v_i):

$$c_k = \frac{\sum_{i \neq k} v_i (1 - |p_i - p_k|)}{\sum_{i \neq k} v_i}$$

Since fuzzy set scores range between zero and one, so does the absolute difference between two of them. Since each v_i in the numerator is scaled by a number between zero and one, the numerator is never negative and never larger than the denominator. As a consequence, the computed score also ranges between zero and one. The zero and one have theoretically important meanings, respectively showing competition between extremes and between identical parties. Division by zero can occur only in single-party states, which are not in the data set.

To clarify the formula I provide an example. Assume that there exist three old parties: the liberal party L is moderately right-wing ($p_L = 0.75$), the Christian democrat party C is centrist ($p_C = 0.5$) and the socialist party S is firmly left-wing ($p_S = 0$). The new party N is firmly right-wing ($p_N = 1$). 8000 votes were cast in the last election, in which the new party did not compete yet ($v_N = 0$). The Christian democrats and socialists are equally strong, both receiving fifty percent more votes than the liberals ($v_L = 2000$, $v_C = 3000$, $v_S = 3000$). The competition experienced by the new party is computed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} c_N &= \frac{v_L(1 - |p_L - p_N|) + v_C(1 - |p_C - p_N|) + v_S(1 - |p_S - p_N|)}{v_L + v_C + v_S} \\ &= \frac{2000(1 - |0.75 - 1|) + 3000(1 - |0.5 - 1|) + 3000(1 - |0 - 1|)}{2000 + 3000 + 3000} \\ &= \frac{1500 + 1500 + 0}{8000} \\ &= 0.375 \end{aligned}$$

Note that the liberal and Christian democrat parties provide the same amount of competition. Although the liberals are spatially closer to the new party, this is balanced by the higher numerical strength of the Christian democrat party. The socialists do not offer any competition due the distance between the parties.

Since the computed values already range between zero and one and because these values have theoretical significance, only averaging is needed afterwards. A one on the

fuzzy set score indicates a high degree of spatial competition.

5.7 Reactions of other parties

Interactions between political parties are hard to measure directly. Even if one has access to all relevant sources and the ability to analyse their content, it would be hard to find interactions other than direct attacks. In the strategic interaction model described by Iyengar and Simon (2000: 161-163), interactions are mostly about steering the debate towards issues owned by the party and away from issues owned by other parties. This justifies an approach based on issue positions rather than direct attacks. In the prior work, Meguid (2005) has most focus on interaction between parties and uses a similar approach. She codes mainstream party reactions as dismissive, accommodative or adversarial based on the issues measured in the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) (ibid.: 352). I will do something similar. For each new party the most salient policy area – the CMP has seven areas consisting of a number of issues each – is selected as the one with the highest average issue scores. For each combination of an issue i in the issue area and an established party p , the quantity $a_{ip} = (i_p^+ - i_p^-) \cdot (i_n^+ - i_n^-)$ is computed. Here i_p^+ and i_p^- are respectively the number of positive and negative mentions of the issue by the established party and i_n^+ and i_n^- are those counts for the new party. a_{ip} indicates accommodation, since its sign is positive where parties agree, its sign is negative where they disagree and its magnitude is large where they consider the issue important. One would expect this quantity to vary strongly between parties – left-wing and right-wing established parties are likely to disagree on many issues – but a general tendency of either accommodation or adversity should be visible across the spectrum. All a_{ip} values are therefore averaged and coded as a fuzzy set value as described in section 5.2. A one means that the party is in an accommodative environment.

5.8 Policy performance

Besides the independent variables discussed before, the control variable policy performance is included. Typical policy goals that impact the electorate include economic growth and reduction of unemployment. To combine these measures, they

can be standardized and added together. Although one could add weights, there is no objective way to determine which weights would be most appropriate and the factors are simply weighed equally. The result measures policy performance and is coded into a fuzzy set score as before. A one means that policy performance is good.

6 Methodology

6.1 Research design

My theoretical framework is based on complex causation, which should be reflected in the use of methods. I use the qualitative Boolean analysis (QCA) method as described by Ragin (1987), extended by the use of fuzzy sets as found in Ragin (2000). At this point it is important to determine whether this approach is indeed suitable, especially concerning the number of cases. I do not know the exact number of parties in the research yet, but an estimate can be made based on previous research. Mair (1999: 217) found 118 “new” new parties and 39 parties resulting from splits since 1960 in sixteen countries. My criteria are somewhat more strict than his, so it seems reasonable that I will find roughly 50 cases in my eight countries. This number is somewhat on the low side for large- n statistical techniques, but is far too high for detailed qualitative analyses. This makes Boolean analysis attractive, as it is a “middle road technique” (Ragin 1987: 121) that is especially suited for an intermediate number of cases.

According to Hug (2000) one important consideration in research designs on new parties is selection bias due to self-selection. Factors that inhibit the creation of new parties may on average increase the success of those parties that are created (ibid.: 189). This effect may be mitigated since I only select cases with proportional representation, which is relatively friendly to small parties (Duverger 1972: 23). To make selection bias less of an issue, my selection is based on initial success rather than simply selecting all new parties. This approach mostly eliminates the self-selection bias that Hug warns about, as the electorate rather than the parties themselves perform the selection. To reduce the effect of selection on the dependent variable this may cause, my definition of lasting success does not include this first election that qualified the party for inclusion.

My research is a most similar systems design due to selection of Western European parliamentary democracies. I elaborate on the exact countries I select here. It should be noted that these countries are not my cases, since parties are the unit of observation. However, together with the selection criteria for parties described before, the party selection is fixed through country selection. I start out with the 15-member member European Union, since I use it to define Western Europe. Of these members, France and Finland are dropped because they are semi-presidential republics. The United Kingdom is dropped because it uses a plurality election system, which is non-proportional. Greece, Portugal and Spain are dropped because they have been non-democratic for a significant amount of time after the Second World War. Italy is excluded because its democracy has been highly unstable, with an excessive number of early elections (Álvarez-Rivera 2008), making it hard to compare with the others. Having dropped seven countries, eight remain: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, (West) Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Sweden.

6.2 Data collection

To select parties, measure their success and to measure the attitude of the population I need complete election results for the entire period under investigation. In particular, vote shares per party are needed rather than seat shares, and turnout figures are also needed. Historical election data is typically collected and published by the national statistics office or other government bodies. Table 2 provides a list of sources of election data. These sources provide almost all data I need, although some remarks need to be made. Data from Denmark starts only in 1953, which is when the parliament became unicameral (Folketinget 2008b). This does not pose much of a problem as the missing period is relatively small. Ireland has a single transferable vote system where, although its outcome is proportional, there is no such thing as a vote share since people can specify a number of preferred candidates. Using the percentage of first preferences instead seems a reasonable alternative. For Luxembourg only seat shares are available. I will compute approximate vote shares from these numbers, but it should be noted that this is rather inaccurate, especially when parties did not make it to the threshold.

| Country | Reference | Period | Remarks |
|-----------------|---|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Austria | Bundesministerium für Inneres (2003) | 1919-2002 | |
| Belgium | Federaal Wetenschapsbeleid (2008) | 1848-2003 | |
| Denmark | Folketinget (2008a) | 1953-2007 | Missing post-WW2 elections |
| (West) Germany | Friedrich Ebert Foundation (2004) | 1949-2002 | |
| Ireland | Took and Donnelly (2008) | 1918-2007 | Single transferable vote |
| Luxembourg | Chambre des Députés (1994) | 1918-1994 | Only seats (no vote shares) |
| Luxembourg | Statistiques du Luxembourg (2005) | 1959-2004 | Only seats (no vote shares) |
| The Netherlands | Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2007) | 1918-2006 | |
| Sweden | Statistiska centralbyrån (2006) | 1910-2006 | |

Table 2: Sources providing election results

For the left/right orientation of parties, I use the “rile” variable found in Budge et al. (2001) and Klingemann et al. (2006). This information is used to determine the type of party and to determine the amount of spatial competition. The issue positions in this same data set are used to determine the nature of strategic interactions.

Finally, I need measurements of policy performance to be able to control for it. Statistics of economic growth and unemployment are available from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008). These data series start in 1960, so they provide the bulk of the data but unfortunately not all of it. The remainder of the information should be available at national statistics offices.

7 Time frame

The work that still needs to be done can be divided in roughly three categories: data collection, analysis and writing. I discuss each in turn and finally indicate the total time needed.

Concerning data collection, all data needed for my research is readily available and I already have direct references to nearly all of it. This means locating data is easy and will not take much time – approximately half a day of downloading and visiting the library. Unfortunately, not all of this data is in formats that are easy to process. In particular, election results are all presented in different formats, most of which cannot be processed by SPSS. These have to be entered manually, which takes approximately one day.

Analysis involves computation of fuzzy set scores, which is rather involved due to

summations over multiple data sources. This may be hard or even impossible to do with standard statistical packages such as SPSS. Fortunately SPSS can convert tables to delimited plain text, which means that it would be easy to create a custom data analysis tool. It would take me no more than a day to write such a program, for example using Microsoft C# as a programming language. Converting all data to plain text and running the program might take another half-day. The output would be fuzzy set scores, which the freely available software package fs/QCA 2.0 can logically minimize to obtain the results. Getting to know the program and obtaining the results could take up to a day.

Finally, writing will use up most time. The results should be presented in proper tables and their implications should be discussed. This may involve finding more literature to cross-validate findings. Moreover a conclusion should be added to the paper and all should proofread and corrected. I estimate all of this to take approximately fifteen more days of work.

All in all, I estimate the time needed at about nineteen working days, or approximately four weeks. It should be noted that this assumes working full-time and no major setbacks. In practice therefore the time needed is likely to be somewhat higher, maybe five or six weeks.

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