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Digitalization of Political Parties in Poland: Between Law and Practice

Abstract: Analysis of political parties' digital adaptation is a rapidly growing field of research that was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study of seven political parties in Poland, using the operationalization proposed by the DIGIPART project, provides information on the specifics of the external and internal use of digital tools in a young democracy. The main sources of data for the dataset are party websites, apps, social media and online participation platforms, which have been subjected to qualitative content analysis. The analysis confirms that the digitalization of parties is more advanced in external dimensions that directly connect parties with voters (the communication and resources pillar) than in dimensions related to internal party procedures (the electoral, deliberative and participatory pillar). The use of digital tools is influenced more by the level of intra-party democracy and the party's distance from the centre on the right-left axis than by age or party size.

Keywords: digitalization, party organization, party communication, Poland

Introduction

Change is written into the DNA of political parties. In order to survive in the political market, a party must identify and understand changes in its environment, respond to them accordingly and be adaptable. The technological and communicative progress of the turn of the millennium brought with it a significant increase in the popularity and use of digital tools in all spheres of social life (Giovannola, 2023; González-Cacheda & Cancela, 2024, p. 489; Rek, 2024; Troitiño, 2022) and is seen as one of the main reasons for undertaking new forms of collective and individual action in politics. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) describe this change as a transition

from a logic of collective action to a logic of connective action. As information and communication technologies influence the way people engage in politics, political parties are trying to adapt to the new reality (Jacuński, 2022, p. 108). While some of them underwent digital transformation fairly quickly, others experienced organizational inertia that slowed down the adaptation process (Ziegler et al., 2024). Although most parties have embraced new technologies to connect with and reach out to citizens, only a small proportion of them have used digital tools to make internal decisions virtually. One of the reasons for the far-reaching reluctance of political parties to implement new technologies for internal organizational management may be the fact noticed by Poguntke et al. that ‘meetings without physical presence fundamentally change the nature and logic of decision-making’ (2021, p. 15).

The challenges associated with party digitalization turned into opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic; the need for social distancing and pandemic restrictions forced parties to transform in order to fulfil their functions. During this particular period, all political institutions had to implement remote communication tools; otherwise they would have had to suspend their daily activities. While some parties limited the number of delegates at party congresses or shifted decision-making from party congresses to smaller, less inclusive bodies, others decided to postpone previously planned events until pandemic restrictions were eased, recognizing that a remote congress or policy convention would not fulfil all their functions; still others turned to digital mechanisms with greater confidence (Poguntke et al., 2021, pp. 15–16). The Polish research team of the Political Party Database Project collected data on this question during the pandemic, so it is worth returning to the same political parties after a few years to check the extent to which the tools and practices implemented at that time are still used in the functioning of the organization, and what has been abandoned after the lifting of state restrictions.

The aim of this article is to investigate the level of digital adaptation of Polish political parties, as most of the research to date has focused on parties operating in countries with a longer democratic tradition than those in Central Europe. Two research questions are formulated: (1) how and for what purpose parties in Poland use digital tools, and (2) which party organizations are more inclined towards digital adaptation and which are more cautious in this regard. The corpus of political entities analysed here includes seven parties with representation in the lower house (Sejm), which are ideal for comparison due to their diversity in terms of age, size, parliamentary strength and position on the political scene.

The paper is organized as follows: in the first part, I analyse the existing literature on the internal and external dimensions of the digitalization of political parties and present the analytical framework adopted in the article. Next, I provide basic information about the parties that constitute the case study; subsequently, I present descriptive results of the dataset. In the last section, I discuss the implications of the findings and the contribution to the existing literature.

1. Internal and external use of digital tools in party organizations

The adaptation of political parties to the new digital environment has given impetus to researchers on the parties, especially in the context of the previously diagnosed process of party organizations becoming distanced from society. The changing role of political parties in democratic regimes is driven by the perceived disconnection and an increasing gap between the representatives and the represented (Mair, 2013). Their traditional role as a so-called transmission belt between society and the state has been significantly diluted. Most parties are losing their membership bases, with the result that their social embeddedness is being eroded (Scarrow & Gezgor, 2010). In this context, digital technologies and the internet are perceived as a means to create new methods of connecting political parties with their social bases (Gibson et al., 2018). Examples of this include new membership options, such as ‘sympathizers’ or ‘party friends’, allowing registered supporters to participate in intra-party ballots or recruiting supporters as virtual members of online forums (Ponce & Scarrow, 2016, p. 679). The growth in the number and functions of digital platforms, which has enabled parties ‘to interact, mobilize resources and open up new participatory processes aimed at their grassroots’ (González-Cacheda & Cancela, 2024, p. 489), has led some authors to focus on the potential of digital tools to increase participation and interaction between political parties and citizens. Peña (2021) coined the term ‘activist party’ to describe party organizations that, taking advantage of the increasing opportunities of digital technologies, make policies and organizational choices that combine the arenas of social movements and political parties to strategically gain traction with members and voters.

The second strand of research on party digitalization concerns the use of digital platforms for internal organization management and their impact on intra-party democracy and power distribution. In recent years, there has been a trend within some parties towards increasing internal democracy (Cross & Katz, 2013) by giving individual members new rights and powers, such as selecting party candidates (Barnea & Rahat, 2007) or party leaders (Cross & Gauja, 2019) or influencing party policies (Scarrow & Gezgor, 2010, p. 826). Digital platforms enable quick ad hoc consultations with members on current political issues and facilitate internal party referendums, which results in a shift towards the plebiscitary variant of intra-party democracy and away from an assembly-based model, which promotes deliberation to a greater extent than simply voting on previously proposed solutions (Poguntke et al., 2016, pp. 670–671).

The existing literature shows that parties are more inclined to digitize external processes, such as relations and communication with supporters (Dommett & Temple, 2018; Gibson & Ward, 2009), than to invest in digital improvements to the management of party organization (Invernizzi-Accetti & Wolkenstein, 2017, p. 104). This seems to be due to cost–benefit calculations. Failure to digitize externally would risk

losing electoral votes, while a lack of digital facilities within the organization has a much smaller impact on either the functioning of the party or its image.

Observation of changes occurring in parties resulting from the use of digital technologies has prompted some scholars to propose new party models, naming them cyber (Margetts, 2006) or digital parties (Deseriis, 2020; Gerbaudo, 2019; Jääsaari & Šárovec, 2021); this is exemplified by the Pirate parties, the Spanish Podemos, or the Italian Movimento 5 Stelle. However, it is increasingly pointed out that digitalization is a ubiquitous phenomenon involving most, if not all, party types and forms (Peña & Gold, 2023 p. 3258). The COVID-19 pandemic triggered more changes and forced virtually all parties 'to switch to online organizing, accelerating the adoption of platform-based technologies and web-based collaboration tools' (Ziegler et al., 2024, p. 252).

Early research on party digitalization has focused on individual case studies (e.g. Datts & Gerl, 2024; Gerbaudo, 2021), followed by small-scale comparisons, e.g. of political parties operating within the same party system or parties belonging to the same political family (e.g. Barberà et al., 2019; Correa et al., 2024; Oross & Tap, 2023; Pedersen & Saglie, 2005). More recently, analyses of trends in digitalization in a larger number of countries have been published (e.g. González-Cacheda & Cancela Outeda, 2024; Sandri et al., 2025). The prevalence of digital innovations implemented by parties has led to these issues being included in cross-national initiatives creating a comparative database of political party organizations, such as the Political Party Database Project (Scarrow et al., 2017). Alongside many other aspects to do with the performance of party organization, the latest round of this project collects data on the functionality of party websites in terms of external communication, mobilization of supporters, fundraising and the use of digital tools for party management.

Smaller in scope but entirely focused on the phenomenon that interests us in this paper, the Digitalisation in Parties Dataset (DIGIPART) presents the scope of digital platforms' application and their affordances within political parties in five Western European countries (Sandri et al., 2025). The DIGIPART research team provides the first extensive operationalization and comparative data collection of both the internal and external dimensions of using digital tools in the process of intra-party elections, recruitment and engagement of party members, fundraising, electoral campaigns and communication with supporters and voters. The DIGIPART research team has assumed that the digital transformation of political parties is not a linear and all-encompassing phenomenon, and propose five key dimensions (pillars) of this process: electoral, deliberative, participatory, resources and communication (Table 1).

Table 1. Dimensions and main variables of party digitalization.

Electoral pillar	Deliberative pillar	Participatory pillar	Resources pillar	Communication pillar
online voting (party leadership)	deliberative online platforms	online consultations	online fee payment	party website
online voting (candidates)	other deliberative online initiatives	online membership	online crowdfunding/ donations	social media, social networking sites, mobile instant-messaging services
online voting (party bodies)	party congresses digitalization	digital activities for electoral campaigns	official online store	other forms of online communication

Source: Sandri et al., 2025, p. 1761

Since no data on Polish parties was collected as part of the aforementioned project, regardless of the distinctive features of Polish political parties and the historical context of a young but already consolidated democracy, in this paper I will deliberately use exactly the same research framework. Its application will allow me to fill in a missing piece from a newer democracy in the map of the digitalization of party organizations in Europe.

2. Case selection and methods

The conclusions drawn from the literature on the digitalization of political parties suggest that this process does not occur with the same intensity in all parties and does not concern the same dimensions. It can be assumed that the age of the party and its size, political position and parliamentary representation may be significant. With this in mind, I have characterized the corpus of my analysed cases.

Even though the Polish party system is relatively young, as its formation was initiated by the democratic transition in Central and Eastern European countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s, its political parties are diverse in terms of age. The parties with the longest history are successor parties, formed on the basis of parties that functioned in the non-democratic system. Two such parties have survived to this day: the New Left (NL; formerly the Democratic Left Alliance) and the Polish People's Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, PSL). The second group includes parties formed at the beginning of the 21st century which still dominate the Polish political landscape today, namely the Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO) and the Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS). The youngest parties appeared on the Polish political scene in the second decade of the 21st century. In this analysis, I will only include those of the youngest parties that have survived at least two elec-

tions, i.e. the Together Party (*Partia Razem*, R), the Confederation (*Konfederacja*, K) and the Poland 2050 (*Polska 2050*, PL2050).

The political parties in the dataset also vary in size, as determined by the number of formal members. Generally in Poland, party membership remains low. Only the post-communist parties (i.e. the two oldest ones) inherited a relatively extensive membership base, while the others had to build theirs with great effort. Only the Polish People's Party managed to retain part of its membership and remains the largest party to this day. The second largest party is the Law and Justice, which, despite its initial restraint in expanding its base of grassroots activists (Pacześniak & Winclawska, 2017), became attractive, especially during its eight years in power between 2015 and 2023, and recently accepted many new members. The newest parties are the least numerous, although there are visible differences between them resulting from the adoption of different concepts for building an effective party organization. The Confederation, for example, has focused on building a base of supporters, reserving membership status almost exclusively for politicians representing the party in parliament and other political bodies. In contrast, the Together Party had several thousand members in its first few years of existence, but after the 2025 presidential election, when the party's candidate ran for the first time, it attracted around 10,000 new members, as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. The characteristics of the analysed political parties.

Party	Year of creation	Membership	Percentage of parliamentary seats (first session of Sejm in 2023)	Political position
PSL	1990	73,222	6.9	Centre-right
NL	2021 (1999)	25,703	3.9	Centre-left
PO	2001	25,500	34.1	Centre-right
PiS	2001	48,000	41.3	Right
R	2015	12,000	1.7	Left
K	2019	90	3.9	Far right
PL2050	2021	848	6.9	Centre

Source: Author's elaboration based on *Sejm*, n.d. (parliamentary representation); *Jędral*, 2025 (party membership)

The parties analysed also vary in terms of their parliamentary representation, position on the right–left axis and current government status. As the latter changes due to the principle of alternation of power, it has not been included in Table 2.

The main data sources of the dataset were party websites, apps, social media and online participation platforms. I also subscribed to all possible party newsletters in order to compare the parties' communication promises with reality. In order to learn about the usefulness of digital tools in internal party management, concrete ques-

tions were sent to political parties. When contact with party headquarters proved ineffective (i.e. party representatives did not respond to two emails), I obtained information through less formal channels, contacting selected party members directly. Even though this is not a standard method of data collection, I decided that it was better to obtain data in this way than to remain without any data at all. This method of data collection carries the risk of obtaining unverified information and affecting the reliability of the results. The parties that did not respond to emails sent to their headquarters were the Confederation, the Poland 2050 and the Law and Justice.

3. Results: The further away from the centre, the better the digital adaptation

In this section I present the results of the analysis of each party, starting with those that use digital tools in the greatest number of dimensions and do so most consistently, and ending with those whose digital adaptation is weakest, random or unsystematic.

3.1. The Together Party

The most left-wing party in the Polish political landscape, remaining in opposition both to the United Right governments in 2015–2023 and to Donald Tusk's coalition government since 2023 (composed of the Civic Platform, the Poland 2050, the Polish People's Party, and the New Left), and with the smallest number of deputies in parliament, is the party that has implemented digital tools most extensively, both in internal relations and external communication. The electoral dimension of the digitalization of the party includes online voting for the party leadership and party bodies but not for candidates for national elections. The party strongly focuses on the active online participation of its members, offering them tools such as deliberative online platforms, online consultations and referendums. It promotes not only digital activities within the party (e.g. webinars, online training and information meetings with MPs), but also beyond it (such as digital initiatives promoting civic engagement, online petitions and protests). During electoral campaigns the party engages even more in digital activities (online canvassing, virtual meetings, message targeting). It is possible to send online donations but not membership fees; there is no official party store. The party congress is not digitalized nor streamed.

The party's communication pillar is the most developed. The Together Party has a website (in Polish, English and Ukrainian) and uses YouTube, social networking sites (Instagram, X, Facebook, Mastodon) and mobile instant-messaging services to contact members and sympathizers. There is no 'Contact' section on the website, but anyone can sign up to receive newsletters and emails from the party. Party information is sent out on average once a week, and much more frequently during election campaigns. The webpage gathers some application information about interested sup-

porters through an online form and promises 'someone will get back to you'; however, it is not possible to become a full member online.

3.2. The Confederation

Like the Together Party, the Confederation belongs to the youngest generation of Polish parties, but in terms of ideology, it occupies an extremely distant place, on the far right of the political scene. In popular perception, this group is the most effective in terms of its use of digital technologies. This belief stems from the fact that the party invests practically all its energy and resources in the most visible dimension of digitalization: external communication. The party has a website (as it is a nationalist group, it is only in Polish) and YouTube channel, and uses social networking sites (Instagram, X, Facebook, TikTok) and mobile instant-messaging services to contact sympathizers. Anyone can subscribe to the party's newsletter and receive selected news by logging on to the website. However, even during the 2025 presidential election campaign in which the party leader participated, the newsletter was not a communication tool frequently used with subscribers.

It is not possible to contact the party or download a membership form via the website; a mobile phone number and email address are provided for this purpose. This shows that the low size of the membership (less than 100 people) is not a coincidence: the party does not care about expanding its membership base, but instead relies on supporters. By contrast, there is no problem making an online donation to the party.

However, it is worth noting that the Confederation is a federal party, a coalition of several parties. They all have separate procedures, their own policies for communicating with supporters, and also structure their internal relations in their own way. For example, the New Hope party (*Nowa Nadzieja*), which is part of the Confederation, offers the possibility of becoming a party member online, although it does not have a dedicated gateway for paying membership fees.

3.3. The Poland 2050

One might expect that the Poland 2050, the youngest of the parties analysed, would consider the digital environment to be its natural habitat. This expectation also stems from the observations of the first presidential campaign of the party leader Szymon Hołownia, who made his political debut as a candidate in the 2020 election (Paczeńskiak, 2023, p. 1027–1028). After achieving a good result (over 13% of the vote and third place), he decided to capitalize on the mood and energy that had been awakened in society and founded his own party, the Poland 2050, in 2021. During the 2020 presidential campaign, the COVID-19 pandemic made it completely impossible for candidates to hold face-to-face meetings with voters; most communication and mobilization activities were therefore moved online. For a political newcomer who had no party structure behind him, whose funds were much more limited than those of his rivals, but who was adept at using social media, this proved to be a real boon.

Hołownia introduced a new style of communication in Polish politics. He broadcast live on Facebook every day to create the impression of building a personal relationship with each of his supporters. He also repeatedly stated that he wanted to hear the opinions of all Poles.

After he founded the party, the leader's declarations were turned into an experimental digital tool. In September 2021, the party announced the launch of a special app (called *Jaśmina* in Polish) that would allow registered supporters to co-create the party's programme by participating in direct online voting. It started with a single survey allowing users to express their opinions on the most important issues concerning Poland. There was also an aggregate of politicians' tweets, party programme documents and specialized analyses from many fields, as well as contact details for people and offices associated with the party leadership. It was also possible to search for other people and build a network of friends, which shows that it was intended to be a kind of new social network. After a few months, the application was shut down, and users saw an error message on their screens.

Currently, the Poland 2050 does not stand out in terms of digitalization among most Polish parties: it has a website and YouTube channel, and uses social networking sites (Instagram, X, Facebook). Content on social media is replicated, the YouTube channel is used irregularly, and activity only intensifies during election campaigns. The party's website features a 'Stay in touch' section, which allows users to subscribe to a newsletter promising to provide the latest information, keeping them up to date with the party's activities and the activities of parliamentarians and ministers. However, this promise has not been fulfilled, as after a few mails, I stopped receiving any information. Although there is also a 'Join us' section on the website, it is not possible to register with the party online; the website only allows an application form to be sent, after which the party will contact the user by phone. The most visible facility on the party website is the one that allows financial support for the party. It is the only red element on the site, marked with a beating heart icon. A dedicated payment gateway has been created, specific amounts are suggested and instructions are included on the conditions that must be met for the party to accept a donation.

In the Poland 2050, party leader elections are held online, as the public learned when the party founder's term was ending and his successor was being elected in January 2026. It turned out that digitising the internal procedure for electing the party leader could cause image problems for the party. During the second round of online voting, the IT systems failed. Some of the party's politicians speculated in the media that there had been an external attempt to disrupt the election process, and even that there might have been a cyberattack. The leadership elections were suspended, and the party plunged into a deep image crisis, which was also due to the fact that the public noticed a discrepancy between the policies proposed by the party (e.g. the introduction of universal online elections) and its inability to conduct internal party elections on a much smaller scale.

3.4. The Polish People's Party

The Polish People's Party is one of two successor parties analysed in my corpus, and the only one operating under the same name since the beginning of the democratic transition. Even though it is perceived by the public as a conservative party (which it is in ideological terms), and as traditional due to its rural electorate, the party presents an average level of adaptation to digital reality. The party has a website and YouTube channel, and uses social networking sites (Instagram, X, Facebook, TikTok). Content on social media is sometimes replicated, although it is clear that attempts are being made to diversify the message. YouTube is used irregularly and activity only intensifies during election campaigns, which seems to be almost the rule in Polish parties. Every member of the party's decision-making bodies has their own social media account, at a minimum on Facebook, but most also have Instagram and are active on X. All links are available on the party's website.

The party's website has a 'Contact' section that redirects to the email addresses and telephone numbers of local party offices. The party does not offer regular newsletters to supporters; this service is available to members only. It is not possible to register for the party online, but one can pay the membership fee or send a donation; a dedicated gateway for this has been created.

The Polish People's Party is committed to representative internal democracy and decision-making at congresses, which require personal attendance. Nevertheless, it regularly conducts consultations among its members using digital tools. In 2025, the party leadership polled activists twice in this way. In May, between the first and second rounds of the presidential election, the party leadership asked about support for the candidate put forward by the Civic Coalition, and in June about a possible change of coalition partner. Digital tools allow for a quick assessment of the mood within the party and give members the impression that they have an influence on the final decisions made by the leadership.

3.5. The Civic Platform

The Civic Platform uses digital tools mainly for external communication. It has a static website, fulfils the obligation to be present on YouTube and has accounts on social media platforms (Facebook, X, Flickr), although analysis of their content shows low engagement by moderators. Anyone can sign up on the party website to receive newsletters. The reality is less optimistic, as news is practically never sent outside of campaign periods. There is a 'Donate now' section on the party's website, but donations must be made via traditional bank transfer rather than a dedicated payment gateway. It is also not possible to join the party via the website, although it is possible to leave contact details and declare an interest in starting the membership procedure.

Even though the party does not use online tools to engage members in the day-to-day running of the party or internal discussions, it did use digital technology in the election process: in November 2024, the Civic Coalition held primaries to select a can-

didate for the presidential election. All members were eligible to participate in the vote via secure text message to choose one of two candidates selected by the leadership.

3.6. The New Left

The New Left is the second successor (post-communist) party analysed in the corpus, which changed its previous name, the Democratic Left Alliance, in 2021. The party has a website, where the first dynamic section is titled 'Join us'. This gives the impression of great openness to new members, but it is only possible to send a contact form or download a membership declaration to deliver in person. The rest of the content is very static, as if respecting the preferences of the older cohort of the electorate.

Two issues distinguish the New Left from the other parties analysed. It seems indifferent to raising funds, as its website does not have a section on support and there is no information on how to pay membership fees. Another characteristic feature is the party's YouTube channel, which is frequently updated with new content. Much of the credit for this goes to Magdalena Biejat, the left-wing candidate in the 2025 presidential election, who has maintained her campaign momentum and offers, for example, weekly political summaries, but other well-known politicians post their content on the YouTube channel too. The party uses also X and Facebook.

The party relies on traditional decision-making processes that require the personal presence of delegates. Elections to statutory bodies, including the party chair, are held by attending the local party headquarters and casting a ballot in a traditional ballot box.

3.7. The Law and Justice

The Law and Justice is the party with the oldest electorate, aged on average over 50 and over, whom it reaches through television and other traditional media, not social media. Furthermore, party leader Jarosław Kaczyński does not use social media himself, and there are even doubts as to whether he uses the internet at all. Therefore in August 2025 the party created its own smartphone app named White and Red (*Biało-Czerwona*, the colours of the Polish flag) to engage young people in its activities, to 'modernize the party' and 'strengthen mobilization before the elections'. What appears innovative and modern at first glance turns out to be unengaging. After logging in, the app welcomes users with a collection of 'the latest information and materials to help support the white-and-red team'. This includes links to social media posts (X, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram) from the PiS party's profiles and those of politicians associated with it. We find exactly the same content on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. The *Biało-Czerwona* app can hardly even be called an app, as it is a collection of several statements by the party leader, edited by the press office, and a partially functioning aggregator of content from party social media. The app does not have any original features, such as a discussion forum or the ability to send messages to politicians. It is hard to resist the impression that it serves only to collect users' personal data.

The Law and Justice has a fairly traditional and static website. Since autumn 2024, when the State Electoral Commission decided to reduce state subsidies for the party due to irregularities in the financing of the 2023 parliamentary campaign, the most conspicuous section on the website is the one entitled ‘Support us’. However, it is not possible to make a payment through a dedicated gateway; only information on the conditions that must be met and how to make a traditional bank transfer is provided. It is also not possible to join the party via the website, although it is possible to leave contact details and declare an interest in starting the membership procedure.

The party does not use any digital tools to increase members’ sense of influence on party decisions, and is based on traditional decision-making processes that require the personal presence of selected members at meetings of statutory bodies.

Table 3. Comparison of the digitalization of Polish political parties.

	R	K	PL2050	PSL	PO	NL	PiS
Electoral pillar							
online voting (party leadership)	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
online voting (candidates)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
online voting (party bodies)	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Deliberative pillar							
deliberative online platforms	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
other deliberative online initiatives	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
party congresses digitalization	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Participatory pillar							
online consultations	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
online membership	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
digital activities for electoral campaign	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Resources pillar							
online fee payment	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
online crowdfunding/donations	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
official online store	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Communication pillar							
party website	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Social Networking Sites (SNS), Mobile Instant Messaging Services (MIMS)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
other forms of online communication	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Score	10	6	6	5	4	3	3

Y – yes

N – no

Source: Author's elaboration

Conclusions

The evidence from the analysis of the Polish political parties confirms that digitalization is more advanced in the external pillars that directly link parties with voters (communication and resources) than in the dimensions related to internal party procedures. This is consistent with the results obtained in the DIGIPART project, whose methodology was used as an analytical framework. The analysis partly confirms the intuitive expectation that being a new party has a positive impact on the use of digital tools, although it does not determine whether digitalization affects all dimensions equally. Of the three youngest parties analysed here, only the Together Party stands out in its use of online platforms both in external communications and in resource acquisition, as well as within the organization in the electoral, deliberative and participatory pillars. In its early stages, the Poland 2050 also showed openness to innovations that affect the participatory and deliberative pillars of internal organization, but this was not a lasting trend. The Confederation, on the other hand, focused on building a base of supporters and voters rather than party activists, developing a vertical online linkage between the leader, voters and supporters, and does not invest in digital intra-party democracy procedures.

An analysis of the Polish case also shows that even older, well-established organizations, such as the Polish People's Party, are trying to replace their existing, tried-and-tested methods with new technologies and are demonstrating their ability to adapt to change. Therefore, it is not the age of the party that is the most important variable. It seems that parties with a high level of internal democracy are more open to technological progress and more willing to embrace digital conveniences, supplementing them with more traditional methods. On the other hand, if a party does not have mechanisms of participation or deliberation in its DNA, and the process of internal party elections is intended to confirm the will of the leadership or, to put it bluntly, the will of a single leader (such as in the case of the Law and Justice), then it sees no need for internal digitalization. The Polish case also shows that a party's dis-

tance from the centre on the right–left axis is an indicator (though not a predictor) of the level of party digitalization.

The next step in research could be to determine the relationship between the level of digitalization of political parties and their organizational culture. To avoid speculation on this subject, qualitative interviews with the parties' leaderships should be conducted. Another research recommendation is to conduct quantitative surveys among members, supporters and voters of individual parties in order to assess the effectiveness of the external dimension of party digitalization from the perspective of its target audience. This would allow the question of whether digitalization translates into greater political engagement among citizens to be answered.

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