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NEW AND OLD AUTHORITARIANISM IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In early 1990s, in the aftermath of the "third wave of democratization" optimism prevailed in the way future of young democracies was perceived. However, even then there were scholars who expressed concerns about the stability of democracy in the countries which had just departed from dictatorial regimes. In his comparative study of democratization in the twentieth century, Samuel Huntington saw six "potential causes of a third reverse wave": (1) systemic failures of democratic regimes, leading to the undermining of their legitimacy, (2) a general international economic collapse, (3) a shift to authoritarianism by a great power, (4) the lack of the usual preconditions for democracy in several newly democratic states, (5) the growth of power of a nondemocratic state beyond its borders, and (6) the emergence of "various forms of authoritarianism" appropriate to the needs of the times (Huntington 1991: 292–293). Among these forms of new authoritarianism Huntington listed authoritarian nationalism, religious fundamentalism, oligarchic authoritarianism, populist dictatorships and communal dictatorships.

Old concerns and new experiences

Huntington was not alone in his concerns. In 1991, Adam Przeworski in a comparative analysis of political and economic reforms in Latin America and in some European post-communist states, expressed his worry that radical economic reforms might result in massive social malaise and, consequently, undermine the newly established democratic governments (Przeworski 1991). The importance of social and economic issues for the survival of young

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democracies was also stressed in the comparative study of democratization (Bresser Pereira, Maravall, Przeworski 1993). In early 1990s, I have participated in two international teams set up with the aim of the analysis of conditions conducive to the consolidation of new democracies and on the identification of potential dangers (Przeworski 1995, Jahn, Wildenmann 1995). In both, we came to the conclusion that the greatest danger for democratic consolidation lied in the potential social conflicts resulting from radical economic transformation. Seen from this perspective, the formerly communist states of East and Central Europe were more vulnerable, since they faced a combination of political and economic transformation on the scale absent in Latin America or in Southern Europe (Portugal, Greece and Spain) in the 1970s. This, however, was not the only problem. In early 1990s, I identified three main sources of authoritarian danger faced by post-communist countries: socio-economic conflicts, nationalism and religious fundamentalism (Wiatr 1995). All three were present in the post-communist countries, but their respective strength depended on the nation-specific conditions.

There was also populist rejection of the "rule of elites" as the newly established democracies were perceived by less privileged strata. "Some disappointed groups – wrote the Polish sociologist and politician Hieronim Kubiak – began to perceive democracy not as 'power of the people, for the people and by the people' but as power of political elites, by elites and for elites" (Kubiak 1998: 63). In the aftermath of the democratic upheaval, which had brought the communist regimes to their end, such feelings have been a fertile ground for populist rebellion against the new, democratic elites.

We are now in a position to test the hypothesis of the "third reverse wave" against the political experience of last twenty-five years. Compared to the earlier reverse waves, the last years of the twentieth century and the first part of the present can be seen as relatively successful. No "old democracy", existing prior to the beginning of the third wave of democratization, turned into a nondemocratic regime and a great majority of new democracies in Latin America and Europe avoided the reverse wave. Economic tensions, resulting mostly from growing economic inequalities, produced populist movements but they did not cause an anti-democratic upheavals. An international economic collapse has not materialized, in spite of the financial crisis of 2008. Contrary to the pessimistic scenarios based on the historical analogies, the lack of democratic traditions and the perseverance of authoritarian traits in the political cultures in many of the new democracies, have not prevented them from consolidating their democratic institutions. The recent experience of the "Arab Spring" which had begun in 2011 has been much less positive. All Arab

states where dictators had been overthrown, except Tunisia, either fell into the state of the civil war, or reversed to the authoritarian rule.

There has been an important difference between the way in which the third wave of democratization changed the political situation in Latin America and in Southern Europe and the results of the collapse of the communist regimes. In Latin America and in three South European countries (Greece, Portugal and Spain) the removal of dictatorship resulted in the establishment of democracies, which with the passing of time reached the state of consolidation. While in some of them (for instance Brazil) new democracies have been plagued by corruption scandals and witnessed removal from power democratically elected presidents, the rules of democracy have not been broken.

The same cannot be said about the formerly communist states. Some of them from the very beginning switched from the dictatorship of the communist party to the authoritarian dictatorship, frequently with the former head of the republican communist party as a powerful president. This was the case particularly in the majority of the former Soviet republics in Asia. In several post-communist states the collapse of the old regime resulted in prolonged chaos and/or ethnic wars. This was particularly true about some of the former Yugoslav republics (Serbia, Croatia, and particularly Bosna-and-Herzegovina) as well as Russia and three post-soviet republics in the Caucasus. With the passing of time most of these states reached a degree of internal consolidation, but not necessarily fully democratic system of government. The third group of post-communist states is composed of those in which democratic governments have been established instantly after the collapse of the communist system, or very soon after. This category included all Central European states, including the three Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 and always remaining a foreign body within the Soviet state. In addition, there have been countries where the collapse of the communist rule produced mixed results, including prolonged instability (Albania, Belarus, Ukraine).

These contrasts can best be explained by referring to the specific historical and cultural identity of Central Europe. The region can best be defined as composed of the group of countries which belong to the Western civilization (with Western Christianity as the dominant faith) and which had become parts of the Soviet empire during and because of the second world war. During the cold war comparative studies of communist systems stressed the impact of historical heritage and cultural identities on the character of Central European communist regimes (Shoup 1971). The way in which communists came to power also played a role. In none of the Central European countries communists won power on their own and in most cases they were a weak minority before the

war (Czechoslovakia being the main exception). This historical background explains both the strength of opposition to the communist regimes and the relatively strong position of the reformists within the ruling parties, particularly if compared with the situation in the Soviet Union. This does not mean that the Central European nations owe their success to history alone, but history seems to be the most powerful explanatory factor.

With the passing of time two different processes produced growing political differences between post-communist states. One was the consolidation of democratic forms of government and its expansion to some countries which at the beginning lagged behind. Serbia and Croatia – the two post-Yugoslav republics which in the first years after the collapse of communism were governed by nationalistic leaders (respectively, Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tudjman) are now considered consolidated democracies. The same can be said about Albania, after the stormy 1990s where the election of 1996 was stolen and the new regime kept using arbitrary arrests against the opposition. On the other hand, however, in some post-communist states a new type of authoritarianism emerged combining strong position of the popular supreme leader with the maintenance of contested elections and the existence of political opposition. The Russian Federation under Vladimir Putin is the best example of this new phenomenon, but she is by no means the only case.

Neither is this phenomenon limited to formerly communist states. Turkey under President Recep Erdogan is in many ways similar, even if her past has been different. Authoritarian tendencies grow in several African and Asian new democracies. In his lecture delivered during the 24th World Congress of Political Science, senator Peter Anyang' Nyong'o of Kenya spoke about "constitutional coups d'état in various African autocracies where elections are held mainly to legitimize the ruling regimes on their own terms while undermining the very tenets of democracy" (Nyong'o 2016: 18). What we are dealing with cannot be reduced to the specific conditions of post-communism. Even in some old democracies recent political developments (for example, election of Donald Trump in the United States, strong showing of Marine Le Pen in the French presidential election, strong position of the populist party in Austria and of Geert Wilders in Holland) suggest that there exists a potential for the "escape from freedom" to use Erich Fromm's formula. The danger of authoritarian retreat from democracy is, however, considerably smaller in those countries where democracy exists for several generations and is entrenched in the democratic political culture.

This is not meant as an expression of naïve optimism. Future is uncertain and students of politics, as well as political practitioners, should seriously

consider the worst case scenarios. The main question is: do we face a retreat from democracy to authoritarianism and what kind of authoritarianism?

Authoritarianism as an analytical concept

More than fifty years ago the American political sociologist with Spanish background Juan J. Linz presented a sophisticated conceptual analysis of two different types of dictatorships: totalitarian and authoritarian. While it was well understood that totalitarianism was a special type of dictatorship, the specific features of which had been defined by Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzeziński (Friedrich, Brzeziński 1956), authoritarianism remained a residual category including a variety of non-totalitarian dictatorial regimes.

At the Round Table of the Committee on Political Sociology (Tampere 1963) Linz presented a paper on the authoritarian regime in Spain (Linz 1964). His main contribution was the comprehensive definition of authoritarianism, which he kept using in his later studies (Linz 2000). The explicit intension of this analysis was to do away with the simplified dichotomy of democratic versus totalitarian regimes, within which "failure to reach the totalitarian stage might be due to administrative inefficiency, economic underdevelopment, or external influences and pressures" (Linz 1964: 293). Instead, he suggested that we should see authoritarianism as a separate type of nondemocratic regime, distinctly different from the totalitarian dictatorship.

"Authoritarian regimes – wrote Linz – are political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism; without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilization (except some points of their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones" (Linz 1964: 297).

Authoritarian regime defined this way is less rigid and usually less oppressive than the totalitarian regime but they have at least one common characteristics: neither of them is based on free and fair election and neither accepts honest competition between independent political forces.

The concept of authoritarianism helped to clarify the nature of nondemocratic regimes. It also served as a useful tool in the analysis of changes taking place in some totalitarian regimes, which – under pressure from below or due to the reformist tendencies within the regime (or both) were losing their totalitarian character and moved in the direction of authoritarian regime. Poland after 1956 has been the often quoted example.

In last two or three decades we have been confronted with developments which call for further terminological discussion. Ever since the third wave

of democratization scholars have been puzzled by the phenomenon, which could hardly be explained in terms of democratic-authoritarian-totalitarian divide. Democratically elected leaders behave like dictators but manage to maintain high level of public support and do not deny their citizens the right to vote in strongly contested elections. The Argentinian political scientist and president of the International Political Science Association Guillermo O'Donnell proposed the term "delegative democracy" (O'Donnell 1991) and Fareed Zakaria suggested that we call such systems "illiberal democracies" (Zakaria 2007).

My own preference is to use the term "authoritarian regime" but with distinction. What we are confronted with is a *new authoritarianism,* which shares some characteristics with the old model but differs from it in some essential aspects.

First, new authoritarian regimes are based on basically free elections, in which rulers receive and renew their mandate in an open competition. The political opposition not only exists but have the possibility to compete in election. Support for the regime is so strong that there is no need to steal the election; at the worst, there might be some manipulation with the results, but not to the extent which would make elections meaningless.

Second, political pluralism exists and is reflected in the existence of political parties and associations as well as in the media. The regime controls public media, but there is plenty of room for independent channels, including the internet.

Third, new authoritarianism uses coercive measures but does it in a less flagrant way than old authoritarianism, except in condition of acute crisis, like in Turkey after the abortive coup d'état of July 15, 2016.

Fourth, in most of the authoritarian regimes of the past, the armed forces were either in power or constituted a very important part of the ruling bloc (like in Spain 1939–1975). New authoritarianism is based on civilian control of the armed forces, and – while supported by the military – does not depend on them for staying in power.

It is a new form of government, but a version of authoritarianism, nonetheless. The key difference between new authoritarianism and democracy is in the sphere of the rule of law. Independent judiciary, effectively protecting the rights of citizens, is a necessary condition for a truly democratic system. Without it, government enjoying support of the majority can become as oppressive as the one which is based on a sheer force (Maravall, Przeworski 2003). New authoritarianism may enjoy support of the majority but as long as it does not respect the rule of law, it cannot be considered a democracy, even an "illiberal" one.

The road to power

Old authoritarianism was mostly the product of violence. Authoritarian regimes were products of military coups (like the Polish coup in 1926 or the Chilean coup of 1973) or of civil wars (like the Spanish war of 1936–1939). While they had support of a part of society, they almost never tested their public support in an open and fair election. The rare exception was Poland, where parliamentary election of 1928 (two years after the coup) was basically fair and resulted in the defeat of the ruling party. Because of the previously introduced amendments to the Constitution, the electoral defeat has not led to the change of regime and the new election (of 1930) was flagrantly rigged.

Massive coercion was the trade mark of old authoritarian regimes, even if they have not reached the level of violence practiced by the totalitarian regimes of Germany, Soviet Union or China. Nonetheless the magnitude of state coercion in some authoritarian regimes has been frightening. More than thirty thousand people perished during the Argentinian authoritarian regime of late 1970s and early 1980s, and over three thousand people were killed on orders of the military junta in Chile after the coup of September 1973. Not all authoritarian regimes were equally blood thirsty, however. During authoritarian rule in Poland (1926–1939) political opponents were frequently put in jail or forced to emigrate or in a concentration camp but relatively few lost their life.

The new authoritarian regimes come to power in democratic elections. In most cases, the victors had not been in power prior to the election and, therefore, cannot be accused of manipulating the results. Vladimir Putin's first victory in the presidential election (2000) was different in this aspect, since he had become the acting president due to the resignation of his predecessor Boris Yeltsin, when Putin served as Prime Minister. There is no doubt, however, that overwhelming popular support for him was genuine. In this sense, genuine democratic support is the distinctive characteristics of new authoritarian regimes.

There are various, nation-specific, reasons for such support. In Russia, it was mostly the reaction of the population to the prolonged crisis of the state, the deteriorating economic situation and flagrant corruption (Shlapentokh 2008). In Belarus, Alexander Lukashenka's election of 1994 was mostly due to the longing for Soviet-style stability and the chaotic state of the Belorussian democratic forces. In Turkey, the electoral victories of the "Justice and Development" party (AKP) in parliamentary elections of 2002, 2007 and 2011, as the election of its leader Recep Erdogan as president of the republic in 2014, have their roots in the opposition of the conservative, mostly provincial sectors of the population to the secular, modernizing heritage of kemalism, more or

less faithfully followed by the traditional democratic parties. In Hungary, the impressive electoral victory of Fidesz in the parliamentary election of 2010 came in conditions of the economic crisis and in the atmosphere of universal condemnation of massive corruption under the previous (Socialist) government. What all these developments have in common is the democratic way in which state power came to the hands of authoritarian leaders. Moreover, they not only came to power in a democratic way, but have confirmed their title to rule in consecutive elections.

In the new authoritarian regimes, this road to power – based on free expressed public will – allows the representatives of the regime to define it as democratic. If democracy is understood exclusively as the "government of the people", new authoritarian regimes can proclaim themselves democracies. In Russia, the term "sovereign democracy", invented by Vladimir Surkov, has been adopted by the ruling party to justify the existing system (Shlapentokh 2008: 170). The president of Turkey Recep Erdogan refers to his country as "majoritarian democracy". Unlike the authoritarian leaders of the past (for instance Marshall Józef Piłsudski in Poland), contemporary autocrats do not reject democracy but give it a special meaning. Their understanding of "democracy" restricts it to the expression of the "will of the people", leaving aside the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Political consolidation

The crucial problem for new authoritarian regimes is how to consolidate the new system. In democracy, parties get used to the fact of political rotation. Since they respect the rules of democracy, they do not fear electoral defeat, knowing that with the passing of time they would have their second chance. The authoritarian leaders are in a different position. The more they consolidate their hold on state power by legal or extra-legal means, the more reasons they have to fear defeat. Therefore, they have strong interest in fortifying their political position so that their removal from power would be very difficult, if not impossible.

There are three crucial elements in this process. First, they have to establish political control over the judiciary to prevent independent courts from questioning their power. This is being done by a combination of new laws and of buying support of some of the judges. In extreme cases (like in Turkey after the failed coup of 2016) massive arrests and dismissals are used to pacify the judiciary.

Second, they have to put their hand on mass media, particularly those which give them access to the less educated strata. Television – much more than the printed media – is particularly important since it is the primary source of political information for the less educated. It is true that today, with the free access to internet, it is more difficult to establish full control over the exchange of information and of opinions, but the extent to which internet is being used varies depending on education and social status.

Third, the new authoritarian regimes buy support of the poorer strata by adopting populist social and economic strategies of redistribution. Even if, as it is the case in Russia, they tolerate or even support oligarchs, they make systematic effort to improve the economic situation of the poorer strata – something that many of the previous liberal governments neglected.

In addition to these three policies, common for all new authoritarian regimes, there have been nation-specific policies reflecting specific conditions of various countries.

Lukashenka's unexpected victory in the presidential election of 1994 was mostly due to the post-Soviet nostalgia, remarkably strong among the Belarussians, many of whom felt themselves lost in the situation created by the rapid collapse of the USSR. His long tenure has been marked by the preservation of the Soviet heritage, both in the institutional structures and in the symbolic sphere. Consecutive elections show the effectiveness of this strategy.

In Russia, the crucial factor of the enormous popularity enjoyed by Vladimir Putin is the belief of Russian population that during his rule – and because of his assertive foreign policy – Russia is in the process of regaining her position as a great power. Russian political scientists have documented this phenomenon in public opinion surveys, including the impressive increase of support for Putin and for his party United Russia after the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 (Shestopal 2016: 15). A recent poll, conducted by the American Pew Research Center in February 2017, showed that 87 percent of Russian respondents trusted president Putin and that close to sixty percent believed things in Russia were going in the right direction, while in 2002 only about twenty percent saw things in this way ("Gazeta Wyborcza", 21 June 2017). Because of Russians' traditional concern with issues of national security these findings are not a surprise.

In Turkey, Recep Erdogan and his moderately Islamic party AKP owe the coming to power and then the consolidation of their rule to the rejection of the secularist policies of the earlier governments. Secularism has been one of the key principles of Kemalism, protected by the constitution and seen as part of the legacy of the founder of modern Turkey. There has always been, however, opposition to it among the conservative, less educated (and poorer) strata,

particularly outside the big metropolitan cities. Carefully playing this card, Recep Erdogan has been able to mobilize those who considered themselves ignored by the liberal elite.

In Hungary, Fidesz exploited the shortcomings of the Socialist government (in power since 2002), particularly its poor economic performance and massive corruption. In this, it was helped by the fact that the Hungarian socialist party had its roots in the former communist party, while Fidesz had been built on the base of the youth wing of the democratic opposition prior to 1990. In addition, Victor Orban skillfully exploits the national feeling of frustration, which had been a permanent element of Hungarian nationalism since the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920, in which Hungary lost provinces inhabited by one-third of the ethnic Hungarians.

Each case is different, but they have one common trait. New authoritarianism appeals to the real or imagined worries of the less privileged strata. Populist campaigns against the better off serve very well in the struggle against the liberal elites, which mostly come from and are supported by the better educated and more affluent sectors of the population.

New authoritarianism is not a passing phenomenon. While things may change in individual countries, there is no reason to believe that the contemporary authoritarian regimes will disappear in the nearest future.

This forecast is based on the analysis of the social base of new authoritarianism. The economic and social structures of contemporary capitalist societies produce massive frustration among those who have not been able to join the ranks of the beneficiaries of the capitalist system. In societies which adopted this type of economic system recently, feeling of frustration is particularly strong.

There are also non-economic reasons for the durability of new authoritarianism, particularly the cultural ones. Political cultures of nations presently ruled by new authoritarians have always favored strong personal leadership and identification with the national symbols. Authoritarian regimes have no monopoly for strong leadership and on the use of national symbols, but they can use both to perpetuate themselves.

Nothing is eternal in politics. The present authoritarianism will, sooner or later, encounter problems and, perhaps, crises. The continuous presence of consolidated democracies may serve as a reminder that there is a different road, particularly if the main democratic states manage to free themselves from the orthodoxy of neo-liberal economic thinking and return to the tradition of socially concerned welfare state. In any case, however, it is not the scenario for the nearest future.

Poland: a special case?

The case of Poland is interesting for two reasons at least. First, with its past – as the first state where the non-communist government came to power – Poland was seen as the model of democratic transition. The first twenty-five years of transformation were considered – both in Poland and abroad – a success story. On the eve of the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2015, the majority of commentators believed that the ruling Civic Platform could not lose.

They were wrong mostly because they underestimated the psychological consequences of social malaise. Ten years ago, I suggested that "social malaise is the strongest in those countries were expectations were the highest" (Wiatr 2008: 160). Remarkably good economic performance of Poland – even during the world financial crisis – combined with relatively high level of economic inequality, made a large part of Poles angry with the existing system of government and ready to cast their votes for an alternative. Economic inequality in Poland, measured by the Gini index (32,4 in 2012), is approximately on the average level for the EU countries. However, Polish society has not been prepared for the relatively high level of inequality, if compared with the more egalitarian social structure under the previous system. When high inequality is combined with news of the economic success, less fortunate members of society tend to believe that they have been victims of the unfair, or even criminal, practices of the privileged stratum. This feeling creates a fertile ground for demands of change. "Law and Justice" provided such alternative. It promised new policy of a "good change": more sensitive to the needs of the underprivileged and guided by traditional national and religious values. In 2015, it worked. Two years later it is clear that Polish politics has changed. What is less obvious is the durability of this change.

Has Poland become already an authoritarian regime? Has democracy failed? Will the "good change", proclaimed by the "Law and Justice" party during the election of 2015, transform Polish state and society for many decades to come?

These questions are often asked, both in public debates and in private conversations. It is important to look for objective answers, free of value judgements. By this, I do not mean that the recent trends in Polish politics should not be subject to criticism (which I have voiced many times), but that when attempting to predict the future we should avoid the danger of wishful thinking.

"Law and Justice" party in many ways resembles the Hungarian Fidesz or the Russian United Russia party. It has vague, but essentially conservative, ideological orientation, it is dominated by the supreme leader and it is

committed to the populist concept of democracy, by which it simply means the rule of the majority, unrestricted by the principles of legal state.

During its two years in power (since its victory in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2015) it went a long way to consolidate its hold not only over the state apparatus, which has been fully politicized, but also over public media and the courts. The struggle for political control of the judiciary has not yet ended, but the "Law and Justice" scored some important points, particularly by changing the composition of the Constitutional Tribunal. Because of its policy of establishing party control over the judiciary the Polish government has become subject to the special procedure instigated by the European Union.

There have been other events indicating that Poland was moving in the authoritarian direction. Purges in the military and in the police eliminated a large part of experienced cadres. Official propaganda castigates the opposition as "enemies of the state" or even "agents" of foreign powers. Extreme right-wing nationalist organizations enjoy support of the state administration. Prominent public figures, including some former presidents of the Constitutional Tribunal, have already declared Poland an autocratic state.

All these developments justify a pessimistic assessment of the state of democracy in Poland.

Yet, it is by no means obvious that what has been happening in Poland since late 2015 equals the establishment of the authoritarian state. There are several reasons to believe that the present political process will not result in authoritarian consolidation.

First, the political support for "Law and Justice" in the last parliamentary election (2015) was barely 37%, which gave it the absolute majority only because the United Left running as a coalition failed to pass the eight-percentage threshold. Had it been registered as a single party, its results (7,5%) would have deprived the "Law and Justice" of the parliamentary majority. Unlike the Russian, Turkish or Hungarian ruling parties, the "Law and Justice" does not have the parliamentary majority necessary for changing the constitution as is not likely to win one. Even more important is the fact, that during the two years after last election the ruling party failed to increase its political support.

Second, strong movements in opposition to the authoritarian policies of the government emerged, protesting against the attacks on the judiciary, as well as against the proposals to strengthen the anti-abortion legislation – already one of the most restricting in Europe.

Third, the ruling party has antagonized the majority of intellectual and cultural elites, whose influence on the public opinion should not be ignored.

Fourth, "Law and Justice" follows the policy of confrontation with the European Union – in a country where the overwhelming majority declares its strongly pro-European sentiments. The prospect of a deepening rift between the Polish government and the European Union will almost certainly weaken public support for the ruling party.

Fifth, the "Law and Justice" has a serious problem with its leader Jarosław Kaczyński. He is in full control of his party but, for a variety of reasons, he is one of the most unpopular politicians of Poland. Public opinion surveys regularly show that he is not trusted by the majority of respondents. Contrary to the authoritarian leaders of Russia, Hungary or Turkey, he is considerably less popular than his party. One of the consequences is that in elections "Law and Justice" puts other people on the ballot for top position, including the presidency of the Republic and the post of the Prime Minister. In spite of his unquestionable position, Jarosław Kaczyński is not – and never was – a political asset for his party.

All these factors combined make the Polish new authoritarian regime unstable. In fact, it can best be defined as the authoritarianism *in statu nascendi*. The jury is out on its ability to become a consolidated authoritarian regime. Two years before the parliamentary election and less than three before the presidential it is too early to predict the outcome. This in itself is important. In the consolidated authoritarian states predicting the electoral victory of the ruling party is very easy. In Poland, it is not.

This makes Poland a very interesting case for a comparative analysis. From the recent history of other countries we know how the new authoritarian regimes come to power. The attempt to establish such regime in Poland – if it fails – can show, how such process can be stopped and reversed.

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The third wave of democratization, unlike the first and the second, has not been followed by the reverse wave. However, in several countries (Russia, Belarus, Turkey, Hungary, Poland) democratically elected leaders interpret democracy narrowly, as the rule of majority only. Other conditions for democratic government (the rule of law, protecting human rights) are ignored. Such system of government differs from the authoritarian model (as defined by Juan J. Linz) and can best be called "new authoritarianism". Poland is a special case because, while after the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2015 authoritarian practices became common, the hold on power by the ruling party ("Law and Justice") is relatively weak. Future development of Polish politics depends mostly on the next parliamentary (2019) and presidential (2020) elections.

Key words: authoritarianism, democracy, election, leadership, parties, rule of law