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Barriers to Consolidation of Democracy in Poland

Abstract. The text discusses selected factors impeding the consolidation of democracy in Poland. It presents the basic assumptions of the transition paradigm, the concept of consolidated and deconsolidated democracy. Referring to Poland, the uniqueness of this country before 1989 and the phenomena that block the process of consolidating democracy in Poland. This includes the instability of institutional solutions (especially within electoral law), personalization of power and its consequences and distrust of rival political elites and its impact of relations between the states — local government and the state — civil society.

Key words: transition; consolidated democracies; unconsolidated democracies; instability of institutional solutions; personalization of power; distrust of rival political elites.

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This text is an attempt to discuss selected factors responsible for the level of consolidation of Polish democracy 30 years after the beginning of a political transformation. The limitation in terms of the volume of this text mean that some of these factors are only mentioned and some, in particular where related to aspects of democratic changes which are more social and psychosocial in nature, are completely omitted.

The transition paradigm is a useful concept in analyzing the democratization process in Poland. Like many other concepts used in social sciences, "transition" is a notion of polemic nature since a number of authors use it interchangeably with "transformation." However, I share the standpoint of Zbigniew Blok (Blok, 1999: 291–293) who claims that transition concerns primarily the political aspect of the changes of the system, while transformation concerns mainly the economic and social dimensions of these changes. Andrzej Antoszewski defines transition as a "temporary period separating two distinct moments: the commencement of the dismantling of a specific political regime and a new regime achieving the status of consolidation" (Antoszewski, 1998: 436). This concept is usually used in reference to the process of building and stabilizing democracy. The opposite ends of a transition, when understood in the above manner, are the declaration that elections based on true contention will be held and the installation of a democratic regime (Antoszewski, Herbut, Jednaka, 1993: 15). However, it is important to stress, that the final result of a transition is not a foregone conclusion and the fact that it has been commenced does not guarantee that a status of a consolidated democracy will be achieved. This concept sparks controversy[1], but it is nevertheless possible to define it in detail.

Today, democracy is most often equated to a polyarchy that functions efficiently and without disruptions, as defined by Robert Dahl (Dahl, 1989) (access to alternative sources of information, freedom of speech and political views, universal active and passive suffrage, the freedom for political parties to be established and to function, fair and cyclical elections based on contention). A consolidated democracy is a system where the above is true, further accompanied by 1) maturity (understood as a long existence of democracy), 2) stability (democracy is not threatened in spite of adverse factors, such as an economic crisis), 3) a high level of institutionalization (universal acceptance of democratic standards), 4) integration (cohesion between values, structures, and political behaviors), and 5) flexibility (democratic reproduction understood as overcoming crises not only in accordance with the principles of democracy, but also in a manner that boosts trust in these principles) (An-

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1   On the one hand, there are supporters of "consolidology," while on the other hand, outright critics undermine the sense of using this concept (Nowotarski, 2012: 64).

toszewski, Herbut, 2001: 23–27). However, the main feature of consolidated democracies is the fact that they are liberal, which means that "no group is refused the right to express their political interests, the right to organize themselves for political purposes, the right to participate in elections, the right to parliamentary representation, and the right to defend its interests. At the same time, both the freedom and the political equality of individuals are protected" (Ibidem, 28). Larry Diamond defines a liberal democracy as a system where power is exercised exclusively by public officials who are elected by and responsible to voters; the executive is subject to limitations; minorities have the right to their own identity and separateness, as well as political representation; there are no barriers to the functioning of a civil society; access to alternative sources of information is provided, and, finally, the rule of the law functions, based on independent courts that protect individuals against abuse from authorities (Diamond, 1996).

Unfortunately, it is estimated that these democracies are an exception (DI 2018). Most democratic states are defined as defective democracies. These include both those that can be seen as suffering from a temporary weakening of consolidation (France, the USA) and those classified as non-consolidated democracies, i.e. those where "the relevant standards of a liberal democracy are not yet prevalent among the norms regulating public life" (Antoszewski, Herbut, 2001: 29). This means that the first step towards transition has taken place, i.e. elections based on true contention have been taking place, but everyday political practice shows that they are still far from a situation where democracy is "the only game in town" (Przeworski, 1991: 26). These democracies may become consolidated, but this is not a certainty, with erosion of democracy being possible, leading to deconsolidation. They may stop at the stage of electoral democracies and stabilize as hybrid regimes (Prokop, 2017). Their common element is the fact that they usually function in unfavorable economic, social, and cultural circumstances; they are often characterized by internal conflicts and a propensity to ignore the interests of minorities in real politics (even if these minorities have the right to voice their expectations) (Antoszewski, Herbut, 2001: 32–34). However, their main feature is the lack of long-lasting democratic practice. This category includes mostly, but not exclusively, the (mainly European) countries of the former Soviet Bloc[2].

Non-consolidated democracies can be divided into two categories. The first one is represented by the countries that have a number of features of

2   The term also applies to other countries where democracy has regressed, i.e. countries that used to practice democracy, but in which the real power is wielded, for longer or shorter spells, by authorities that are not elected (Turkey, some Latin American countries) or in which political freedoms are periodically suspended (e.g. India) (Antoszewski, Herbut, 2001: 31).

a consolidated democracy, but lack a history of democracy. Furthermore, they are characterized by instability of institutional solutions, personalization of power, high changeability of political preferences, and mutual distrust of rival political elites. It is also possible for non-elected entities to play a role in public life. In case of the latter group of countries, which are characterized not only by a lower level of advancement of democratic reforms, there are much more barriers to a consolidation of democracy, such as unsolved ethnic conflicts (e.g. Slovakia or Romania), continued political immobility meaning the impossibility of alternation of power (e.g. Croatia until the death of Franjo Tuđman), open conflicts within the ruling elites (e.g. the conflict between Michal Kováč and Vladimír Mečiar in Slovakia), and the use of force in internal conflicts (Serbia) (Antoszewski, Herbut, 2001: 33–34).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the European non-consolidated democracies that nonetheless were prospective in terms of consolidation included primarily the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia (Agh, 1998: 202–234) and, with some reservations, the Baltic states.3 These countries, in addition to guaranteeing free elections based on true contention that allowed for peaceful alternation of power, were successful in introducing a parliamentary form of governance, implementing the principle of separation of powers, ensuring civil control over military institutions, guaranteeing protection of civic rights, and allowing minorities to express themselves. However, this does not always mean that these rights can actually be exercised in practice.

Among the countries listed above, Poland seems to be in a privileged situation, which is a result of a homogeneous structure in terms of ethnicity and denomination. This exceptional situation of Poland, seemingly contributing to a consolidation of democracy in comparison with the other post-communist countries, was also related to the fact that it was Poland that commenced the process of political and socio-economic changes known as the Revolutions of 1989 and its pre-1989 situation that was different if compared to other "people's democracies." This is due to the fact that the Soviet model (collectivization of agriculture, liquidation of private property, a single-party system, etc.) has never been fully implemented in Poland. A significant portion of the agricultural sector remained private; the so-called "private initiative" was also permitted, mainly in terms of services and minor production; and, at least formally, the political system involved three parties—even though the Polish

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3   In the case of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, the problem of limiting the rights of ethnic minorities, especially the Russian one (and in the case of Lithuania, also the Polish one), has been raised, pointing out the necessity of changes in this respect as a condition for the process of consolidating democracy (Antoszewski, Herbut, 2001: 29).

United Workers' Party was officially the leading party, the separateness and autonomy of its satellite parties (the United People's Party and the Democratic Alliance) was recognized. Similarly, in comparison with the other Eastern Bloc societies, Polish society appears to be less submissive, striving after independence and full political sovereignty. It was largely due to these elements that Polish society commenced the process of dismantling real socialism and was the first to enter the path of reforms.

The factors listed above should therefore contribute to a democratic transition and speed up the consolidation of democracy, allowing for overcoming the phenomena still present in non-consolidated democracies of the first type. These phenomena undoubtedly include instability of institutional solutions. Poland, which was clearly at the forefront of the changes that led to the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 1989) was the last of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe[4] to adopt a constitution. In October 1992, the so-called "small constitution" was adopted, which regulated the relations between the legislative, the executive, and the local governments. It was in force between 8 December 1992 and 16 October 1997 when the constitution drafted by the National Assembly and accepted in a national referendum came into effect. Even though it has been amended only twice[5] so far, it is difficult to claim institutional stability in Poland in terms of constitutional matters. Leaving aside a dozen or so attempts to amend the constitution on the initiative of the lower house of the Parliament or the President (OT 605 2011), it is worth noting the "4 x YES" initiative started in 2004 by the Civic Platform (an opposition party at the time), which provided patronage for a campaign of collecting signatures for holding a national referendum concerning major changes of the political system[6]. In January 2015, the relevant request was submitted to the Speaker of the lower house of the Parliament, but was never put to vote since the proposed referendum questions concerned amendments to the constitution and according to the constitution itself, "a bill of a law on amendments to the Constitution may be

4   Before Poland, a constitution was adopted by the Baltic States (Lithuania and Estonia in 1992; Latvia reintroduced its 1922 constitution in 1990) and in the Balkans (Croatia in 1990; Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia in 1991); Slovakia and the Czech Republic did it in 1992 (i.e. even before the formal dissolution of the Czechoslovak federation). Hungary is an exception, as it adopted a new constitution only in 2011, previously functioning on the basis of the 1949 constitution that was amended a number of times.

5   On 8 October 2006, Article 55 concerning the extradition of Polish citizens was amended and on 7 May 2009, Article 99 concerning passive suffrage was amended (a prohibition of standing for election for persons convicted to imprisonment for an intentional criminal offense subject to public prosecution).

6   The "4 x YES" name was related to the fact that the Civic Platform proposed this answer to questions concerning decreasing the number of MPs by 50%, liquidating the Senate, introducing single-member constituencies, and abolishing immunity for MPs.

submitted by at least 1/5 of the statutory number of the members of the lower house of the Parliament, by the Senate, or by the President of the Republic of Poland" (Article 235). Considering that it is unlikely that the politicians of the Civic Platform were unaware that they were interfering with constitutional matters, which (in the form of a referendum organized on the initiative of citizens) is prohibited by the very constitution they sought to amend (providing for specific conditions of introducing such amendments), the "4 x YES" initiative seems to be blatant evidence of an instrumental, or even disrespectful, attitude to the constitution. It is also difficult to speak about its stability and about respect for its provisions in the context of the events occurring after 2015 when the United Right (the coalition in power) violates the constitution, in particular in terms of the justice system[7]. This reference to just a single, yet—from the point of view of a consolidation of democracy—highly important aspect of political life, i.e. the right of suffrage, shows that the Polish rules of suffrage are far from stability. Over three decades following a political transformation, changes in this respect were introduced several times, often in line with ongoing political needs and polls. The constitutional provision that the elections to the lower house of the Parliament are to be proportional does not mean that there are no changes, and sometimes even manipulations, concerning suffrage regulations, in particular with respect to converting votes to parliamentary seats, the size of constituencies, the technical conditions of voting, or the criteria to be met by the candidates standing for election. If we look at Polish parliamentary elections based on true contention (i.e. excluding the 1989 "contract" election), in the first decade (1991–2001), the method of counting votes was changed three times (1991: the Sainte-Laguë method, 1993: the d'Hondt method, 2001: a modified Sainte-Laguë method[8]; in 2002, the d'Hondt method was reintroduced and has been used ever since). In 2002, another change, this time justified, was introduced to the voting rules concerning local elections[9]. In 2011, a new Electoral Code was adopted. The Code contains provisions that regulate the process of holding parliamentary, presidential, local, and European Parliament elections. However, since it came

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7   This includes the violation of the provisions concerning the non-removal of judges from office, their independence and the autonomy of tribunals, the method of appointing the members and specifying the composition of the National Council of the Judiciary, the obligation to publish and implement the judgments of the Constitutional Tribunal, appointing its members, and the use of pardon by the President (pardoning a person before they were convicted).

8   This was a one-off solution adopted in order to decrease the extent of the expected victory of the Democratic Left Alliance.

9   They were related to the introduction of monocratic executive bodies at the local level, i.e. votes in communes and mayors in towns and cities.

into effect, it has been amended nearly 30 times; sometimes, the amendments were in conflict with the Code itself, e.g. in February 2019 the principle of a six-months legislative blackout (in force since 2006) was violated before the elections to the European Parliament. In August 2018, an attempt was made to violate the constitutionally guaranteed principle of proportionality of the elections to the European Parliament: a bill of a law radically (more than three times) increasing the effective electoral threshold was proposed. However, the President vetoed the bill. It is also worth noting that recent (i.e. taking place over the last two years) amendments to electoral regulations in fact are "self-amendments," i.e. amendments to regulations previously adopted by the coalition currently in power (Szołucha, 2019).

Another feature of non-consolidated democracies is personalization of power. Personalization of politics, understood as looking at politics through individuals and equating political parties and programs with specific persons, especially in view of the dominant position of political leaders, in particular during electoral campaigns (which more and more often become a permanent campaign), is precepted as something natural (McAllister, 2010). However, in case of personalization of power, one could speak both about the influence individuals have on the way in which power is exercised (making decisions that are important from the point of view of society) and about the influence of interpersonal relations and characters on these aspects of political life. This leads to a situation where purely psychological elements decide about the functioning of a political system. In many cases counts the character of the persons involved, also known as "chemistry" between people. The personal ambitions of the persons involved in politics often lead to irrational decisions, which in Poland is exemplified by the process of creating political parties by means of division of the existing ones. Albeit it was initially typical to the Right, the establishment of the new political subjects[10] has also occurred, though to a lesser extent, within the Left[11]. In spite of the fact that a fragmentation of the political scene is clearly a major problem, especially for a country

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10   In the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s, a large number of political parties were created on the Right; the authors of a split would often give their new party a name close to the name of the party they left. The Movement for the Republic of Poland gave rise to the Movement for the Third Republic of Poland, the Confederation for Independent Poland (founded in communist Poland) produced the Confederation for Independent Poland–Patriotic Camp, and Conservative and People's Alliance New Poland appeared next to Conservative and People's Alliance.

11   In the case of the Democratic Left Alliance, the split occurred after the electoral success of 2001 when the party's prominent politicians (known as "barons") were involved in a number of abuses and scandals. The attempts to reform made by the party's leaders and their expectations of a reconstruction were ignored by the barons, which resulted in a secession and the creation of a new party, the Polish Social Democracy.

that has not been a democracy for a very long time, it is still far worse that relations between politicians reflect how the state functions. In a situation where personal animosities concern politicians within the party or coalition in power, "rough friendship" is often the case[12]. However, in the event of cohabitation, there may be not only political tensions between the Parliament (plus the government) and the President, but also events that harm the country's reputation, which was the case in Poland between 2007 and 2010[13]. A situation where politicians belonging to opposing camps are unable to raise above their private ambitions and interests reinforces the natural aversion between political competitors, often translating into a decrease in the importance of certain events or celebrations that are important from the point of view of the state. Some of these events are depreciated, while others are glorified; those the importance of which is beyond discussion are celebrated separately, in competition[14]. Sometimes, the actions of certain state authorities are sabotaged, like between 2010 and 2015, when Jarosław Kaczyński boycotted the meetings of the National Security Council convened by President Bronisław Komorowski[15].

Personalization of politics may also be analyzed in the institutional context, when institutions adopt strategies that emphasize the importance of leaders. Wojciech Peszyński provides the example of subordinating the functioning of the government to the Prime Minister, which may be reflected in certain normative solutions, such as the German chancellor system (Peszyński, 2014: 122). It is also possible for politics to be dominated by a strong leader who does not perform any formal functions, but whose opinions and decisions have a decisive character. This seems to be the case in Poland. For the first time, this model was used after the 1997 election, when Marian Krzaklewski, the leader of the victorious Solidarity Electoral Action, did not become the Prime Minister (Jerzy Buzek was designated instead). Back then, it was done

12   This was the case between Prime Minister Leszek Miller and President Aleksander Kwaśniewski.

13   The most blatant example was foreign policy where "wars for planes" (bound for Brussels) were waged or "battles for a chair" were fought at the meetings of the European Council.

14   An example here is the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Round Table Talks (which for the opposition was the beginning of democratic changes in Poland and for the party in power a "media show"). The anniversary of the 1989 parliamentary elections was celebrated by the opposition with a "Feast of Freedom and Solidarity," while the government focused on the 40th anniversary of John Paul II's pilgrimage to Poland, celebrating the 1989 elections with a ceremonial session of the Senate attended by the President and a concert.

15   In September 2014, Jarosław Kaczyński ceased to be a member of the National Security Council. Between the assumption of office by Bronisław Komorowski and the removal of Jarosław Kaczyński from the Council, 29 meetings of the Council were held. Jarosław Kaczyński attended only one of them (the one of 3 March 2014, which concerned the situation in the Ukraine).

to avoid the burden of unpopular, but necessary decisions that had to be made and that could negatively affect the image of Marian Krzaklewski who aspired to win the presidential election. This evasive maneuver did not pay off, as Marian Krzaklewski was accused of being a grey eminence and a backseat driver. What it contributed to was a decrease in public trust to him, resulting in not so much a defeat, but a disaster in the 2000 presidential election when he lost not only to the incumbent Aleksander Kwaśniewski, but also Andrzej Olechowski, a candidate with no party standing behind him. However, this tactic continues to be popular with right-wing governments in Poland. In 2005, after Law and Justice won the parliamentary election, Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz became the Prime Minister instead of the party's leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, who announced that he did not want to create a precedent where the Prime Minister and the President would be twins. However, after several months, he changed his mind and replaced Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz as the Prime Minister, holding this position until November 2017 when an early election took place, with the Civic Platform winning and Donald Tusk becoming the new Prime Minister. When Law and Justice came back to power after eight years, Jarosław Kaczyński decided to become an ordinary MP[16] who, however, wields the actual power and has implemented a model where the will of the leader of a political party determines the functioning of the state.

Such an importance of the personal factor has other consequences, as well. These are related to distrust, being typical for non-consolidated democracies as well as the rivalry of political elites also affecting the society. The lack of trust among the elites, is especially severe if — as is the case in Poland — the political affiliation of central authorities is different from those of the local authorities. The relationship of the two is characterized by the dominant position of the former over the latter. This is reflected by the central government and its subordinate entities taking more and more competences away from the local authorities, which has never happened since 1990, i.e. since the beginning of the formation of local governments in Poland. The independence of local authorities in carrying out public tasks is being limited as well as their prerogatives. More and more often, anti-local solutions are introduced through parliamentary legislative initiatives, which allow to avoid public consultations; or urgent bills, which in turn make it possible to follow the so-called "short legislative path". Both methods are convenient to power because they allow to skip consultations within the Joint Commission of the Central Government and Local Governments, which discuss and approve only the bills proposed by

16 Not only is he not the Prime Minister, but he also decided not to be the official head of his party's parliamentary fraction and not to perform any other function within the structures of the Parliament.

the government (Paczocha, 2018). This institutionalized distrust is also characteristic for entities from outside of the political order. This becomes evident in case of civil society, which is treated with visible reserve by those in power. This approach was already presented during Law and Justice's first spell in power. After taking over again in 2015, there had been fears that the situation from the years 2005–2007 would come back. This time, the ruling party's approach towards the third sector was changed, but it soon turned out that it was an empty and short-lived declaration[17]. It quickly became obvious that the old distrust towards non-governmental organizations was still there and that the government tried to bring the third sector close to the first. The best example was the establishment in 2017, against the opinions of activists from NGOs, of the National Institute for Freedom — the Center for the Development of Civil Society, whose purpose had been the support of the development of the third sector. In the opinion of non-governmental organizations, the sole fact of creating such an institution is in conflict with the ideas of self-organization and self-determination, which are the very bases of civil society (Wygnański, 2016). They also criticize the fact that the Institute took over the Civic Initiatives Fund, which today sponsors mainly those entities whose activities are in line with the priorities of the government and not necessarily with the goals of third sector entities, in particular if those goals are concerning minorities, migrants, freedom of speech, environmental protection, or security activities (Klaus, 2018).

Distrust towards the third sector had become a problem also because it makes it difficult to build a functional civil society, being able both to carry out the consolidation process and to sustain a consolidated democracy. A functional civil society is one of the three types described by Inka Skłodkowska. It is characterized by the existence of mesostructures that are functional both in relationships with the state and in view of the interests of individuals and groups. The second type is a revolutionary civil society that is focused mainly on the interests of the rule and, in the case of non-democratic systems, openly confronts the authorities and initiates systemic changes by means of negotiations and compromises with those in power without using violence.

The last type, an ethical civil society, is an expression of an ideological and normative community in a society, which is contrary to the official ideol-

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17   The first sector is the area where decisions are made and administrative activities are carried out at the level of the state, municipality, or agency (usually referred to as the public sphere); the second sector covers business, production, commerce, and service, i.e. for-profit operations; the third sector is where non-governmental organizations function for the benefit of everyone, i.e. both themselves and others, and where profit is non-material, as it most often takes the form of satisfaction (Lasocik, 2004: 4).

ogy and politics of the state that has no moral basis (Skłodkowska, 2006: 305). According to Inka Skłodkowska, Poland before 1989 featured both a revolutionary and an ethical civil society. The first one was embodied by the Solidarity movement, which at the same time was a result of the existence of an ethical civil society. However, the focus on values that were clearly clashing with the "antivalues" presented by the communist authorities had been also a reason of weakness of this society. This weakness had been so significant and durable that it was called a "defective civil society." This term was introduced by Piotr Ogrodziński, who understood it very widely. It covered the forms of activity not defined in the system, i.e. on the one hand all actions opposing the politics of the state (protests of dissidents, underground publications, underground culture, religious life, good-neighborly assistance), but, on the other hand, also the black market and "a vegetative regulation of economy described by Jànos Kornai in his *"Economics of Shortage"* (Ogrodziński, 1991: 18). For a defective civil society, the most significant element was the ethical aspect, which was "characterized by a massive emphasis on the common values believed in by the members of this society, as opposed to the values the state was trying to impose" (Szacki, 1997: 36).

For Poland, the most desired model is a functional civil society. However, to be able to develop and establish it, certain elements of a defective civil society, which on the one hand are being feed up by distrust of the authorities and, thus fuel the aversion towards the state as an institution, have to be overgone. In spite of the political transformation, the Poles still "do not like" the state and continue to express similar expectations towards it, mainly in the social sphere. By fulfilling these expectations, often in a manner providing little satisfaction, the communist state ("their" state) purchases the neutrality of its citizens. Since the state has ceased to be an enemy, then, paradoxically, society, in its own opinion, becomes even more entitled to demand that the duties imposed on the state (which is now "ours") by the citizens should be carried out. These postulates are accompanied by a propensity to circumvent regulations or blatantly treat the state as a de facto hostile institution[18].

The philosophy of a strong and centralized paternalist state as preferred by Law and Justice (and the entire United Right), i.e. a state that takes care of its citizens, but also demands loyalty and controls as many areas of life as possible, is being attractive to some part of society. Those in power make promises in which the state undertakes the task to provide certain social benefits and,

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18 An example here is the common inclination of the Poles to excessively use all forms of tax relief or even evade taxation and to work on the black market, which, paradoxically, is often a result of the state imposing additional restrictions and taxes that are intended to finance the carrying out of social functions.

utilizing economic prosperity, does so, without considering the future consequences of these activities, but winning social approval and support "here and now." In this way, they draw on the strategy of a "collective bribery of a nation" (Feher, Heller, 1983) that was typical of the communist era and the purpose of which had been to win over the society (and strengthen the reputation of the state), but which, at least for some members of society (including those who enjoy these benefits), is ethically dubious. This is the situation when social transfers are accompanied by cuts in other areas of social life, in particular those related to civic freedoms the deficit of which was most severe before 1989. The overlapping distrust of those in power towards civil society, which they treat as a rival or even a threat for the state, means that the dichotomy between state and civil society returns to the public sphere, with the state being described in much more positive terms, that in turn results in a revival of the ethical, but also defective civil society that seemingly faded into the past, with the citizens that do not share the values in which the authorities believe and feel obliged to "bear testimony" to democratic and liberal values (Skarżyńska, 1999).

Due to the limitations concerning the volume of this text, a number of problems have been omitted, including the growth of populism-oriented attitudes (Przyłęcki, 2012; Dzwończyk, 2016); political wavering (Markowski ed., 2017) and the functioning of the system of political parties[19], where regress is being visible. It refers to parties that until recently were marginalized (the Confederation for Freedom and Independence) and now are having seats in the Parliament. It would be interesting also to dwell on the issue of the attitude to the past and its impact on the principle of equality in access to public positions; or the fact that some of the mass media are being taken over, which is another evidence that Poland is moving more and more towards a non-consolidated democracy of the second type[20], even though it is free from majority of the problems typical of such a democracy. Going down by 17 places in the Democracy Index over five years (from 40th in 2014 to 57th in 2019) (DI, 2019), being presented as an example illustrating the tendency of defective democracies in Europe that will collapse very quickly ("Poland is carrying out its non-liberal program of reforms") (DI 2018, 30–31) increase the probability that Poland will become, like Hungary, another example of a

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19   This means that e.g. the phenomenon of overparticipation, which consists in public space being taken over by political parties, or the attempt to achieve overparliamentization, which means that the parliament becomes the sole public debate forum (Agh, 1993) have been omitted.

20   In 2015, in the ranking of media freedom published by the Reporters Without Borders, Poland came 18th; in 2019, it was 59th (RSF 2019).

"reverse transition" from a country that is prospective in terms of consolidation to a non-consolidated democracy of the second type, i.e. the type where chances for achieving democratic consolidation are much smaller.

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Пределы консолидации демократии в Польше

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются факторы, препятствующие укреплению демократии в Польше. Обозначены основные положения транзитной парадигмы, концепций консолидированной и неконсолидированной демократии. Что касается Польши, то отмечена уникальность положения этой страны до 1989 года и явления, не позволяющие завершить процесс консолидации демократии сегодня. В центре внимания — нестабильность институциональных решений (особенно в рамках избирательного права), персонализация власти и ее последствия, а также недоверие к соперничающим политическим элитам и влияние этих факторов на отношения между государством, региональными администрациями и гражданским обществом.

Ключевые слова: транзит; консолидированные демократии; неконсолидированные демократии; нестабильность институциональных решений; персонализация власти; недоверие к соперничающим политическим элитам.