

Combating an Ethnopolitist Takeover: Can Poland Return to a Liberal Democracy?

Luke Habegger

ABSTRACT

I argue that liberal democracy is still achievable in Poland for three reasons. First, the success of President Duda and PiS was a product of specific conditions existing in 2015. By utilizing their nationalist, populist platform and the lack of EU action to prevent the PiS government's replacement of independent judges with party loyalists, PiS took advantage of the existing political environment in a way that will not be as easily replicated in the future. With increased pressure from the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and lost majority in the Polish Senate in 2019, the PiS government will have a weaker capacity to systematically undermine democratic norms and principles. Second, PiS's influence over other democratic institutions is not as deeply-rooted as it is in the judiciary. The senate, media, electoral framework, and mass protests in Poland are largely independent and provide opposition groups with useful platforms to express discontent and even stop authoritarian legislation from passing, despite disadvantageous shifts in the playing field. Third, I argue that public opinion polls reveal that PiS is losing popular support and effective methods of appealing to Poles, suggesting cooperative opposition parties will become more competitive in future elections despite a somewhat polarized political environment.

Keywords: Poland, PiS, democracy, populism, democratic backsliding

Introduction

Poland's democracy once represented a bright, optimistic example of democratization in a post-communist state. Liberal democratic values have dominated the beliefs of Polish citizens and the government ever since the Solidarity movement under communism. Poland's undying commitment to the EU throughout countless delays in defining their membership requirements further solidified their status as a successfully consolidated, post-communist, Central Eastern European (CEE) liberal democracy. Unlike Romania and Bulgaria, Poland's rapid yet peaceful transition from communism to democracy gave them an upper hand at economically and institutionally recovering from the drastic shift to Western capitalism and democratic values. Yet, the right-wing ethnopolitist Law and Justice party (PiS) quickly abandoned this modern Polish tradition of liberal democracy after they took control of the government in the fateful 2015 Polish elections. The damages inflicted by PiS and its leadership to the democratic institutions of Poland in the immediate years following their 2015 victory were both vast and deeply-scarring; still, they merely signified the beginning of Poland's democratic backsliding. After the subsequent elections in 2020, President Duda's re-election further deteriorated the party influence and cooperative power of Polish opposition against PiS and now threatens the future survival of liberal democracy in Poland.

How, then, did the PiS government undermine Poland's democratic institutions and manage to win reelection after their initial victory via a relatively free and fair process? Once President Duda and PiS took office in 2015, they quickly moved to weaken the Constitutional Tribunal (CT), Poland's highest court, and many other parts of the judicial branch with illiberal

tactics that put party-loyal appointees in control. Despite the presence of federal checks and balances and the influence of the EU, President Duda and PiS also managed to avoid immediate legal consequences for their obvious display of illiberal, authoritarian motives in dismantling Poland’s court system. Furthermore, it is important to consider what other democratic institutions have been undermined by PiS, and if any are still independent and strong enough to oppose these anti-democratic pressures. Given how much PiS has already eroded Poland’s liberal democratic institutions, what are the pathways for reversing this damage? Why does Poland have a better chance at recovering its liberal democracy than Hungary?

I argue that liberal democracy is still achievable in Poland for three reasons. First, the success of President Duda and PiS was a product of specific conditions existing in 2015. By utilizing their nationalist, populist platform and the lack of EU action to prevent the PiS government’s replacement of independent judges with party loyalists, PiS took advantage of the existing political environment in a way that will not be as easily replicated in the future. With increased pressure from the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and lost majority in the Polish Senate in 2019, the PiS government will have a weaker capacity to systematically undermine democratic norms and principles. Second, PiS’s influence over other democratic institutions is not as deeply-rooted as it is in the judiciary. The senate, media, electoral framework, and mass protests in Poland are largely independent and provide opposition groups with useful platforms to express discontent and even stop authoritarian legislation from passing, despite disadvantageous shifts in the playing field. Third, I argue that public opinion polls reveal that PiS is losing popular support and effective methods of appealing to Poles, suggesting cooperative opposition parties will become more competitive in future elections despite a somewhat polarized political environment.

I draw on news articles from 2015 to the present. I also use Freedom House’s analytical brief on the capture of Polish courts alongside other scholarly journal articles that address the PiS government’s effect on individual rights, society, and party landscape of Poland. To measure public opinion, I include data from EUobserver’s surveys recorded by Listen to Europe, the 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey, and Pew Research Center’s survey results in 2019.

The rest of this paper is divided into 3 parts. First, I sketch the emergence and eventual victory of PiS in 2015. I explain how the Constitutional Tribunal was strategically paralyzed and dismantled by PiS while avoiding ramifications from federal regulators and the EU. Second, I consider which democratic institutions are still strong and independent after PiS’s occupation of the judiciary and which institutions have been the most restricted or threatened. Third, I contrast Poland’s democratic trajectory after the 2019 elections with the situation in Hungary, a country often rendered as the prime example of CEE democratic backsliding. I then conclude whether or not we will see a return to liberal democracy in Poland.

Dismantling the Constitutional Tribunal

Before PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski launched his extraconstitutional attack on the CT, PiS first won a surprising victory in the 2015 Polish parliamentary election. This was the first time a single-party government was formed with a 51% parliamentary majority, rather than a coalition formed through negotiation and compromise between parties (Markowski, 2018). These results can be attributed to large shifts in the voter bases of various parties and in PiS’s tactics that created a ‘supply-side revolt’ against democracy. The deciding factor in the electoral outcome was not from a change in Polish voters’ ideologies and party loyalties, which would be indicative of a political “demand side revolt” (Markowski, 2018). The significant loss in voter shares of the

center-liberal Civic Platform party and the left-wing Polish Peasant party made a coalition formation to contest PiS more difficult. This election was not “a landslide victory for PiS, and [not] indicative of a fundamental change in the political preferences of Poles” (Markowski, 2018), as PiS only increased their votes by 2% compared to a 1% change in the results for the Civic Platform party and other liberal competitors. Furthermore, prevailing public opinion on individual economic wellbeing at the time was relatively positive, so the economy itself was not the leading cause of the incumbent’s loss (Markowski, 2018). Rather, it was the ethnopolitist rhetoric against Poland’s “corrupt elites” and the abstract evaluations of Poland’s economy as a “country in ruins” that gave PiS a foundation to further illiberal solutions through manipulative tactics (Markowski, 2018). The framing of the PiS campaign to radically oppose existing party platforms and reshape Polish voters’ perspectives on political realities through ethnopolitist rhetoric reveals a “classical ‘supply side’ nationalistic/authoritarian/conservative revolution” (Markowski, 2018). By winning the 2015 election through supply-side, illiberal tactics, PiS solidified their status as an ethnopolitist government that would defend the “will of the Polish people” and discredit any opposition to their sole interpretation of this will.

Kaczynski and PiS quickly targeted the CT after the election, wasting no time in setting the authoritarian precedence that “... no state authority, including the Constitutional Tribunal, can disregard [their] legislation” (Davies, 2018). After a long history of the CT striking down previous PiS policies on media regulation, the newly-elected government was resolute to begin their rapid dismantling process by denying and replacing opposition-appointed judges with party puppets. As Christian Davies of Freedom House reports, “President Duda refused to swear in five Tribunal judges appointed during the last sitting of the outgoing parliament – despite the fact that he had no legal authority to do so” (Davies, 2018). Although the CT ordered the PiS-controlled parliament not to make any new appointments until they assessed President Duda’s situation, the parliament did so anyways right before the rulings returned that only 3 of the 5 appointed judges were constitutional (Davies, 2018). After the parliament refused to recognize the CT’s legitimacy in their rulings on the appointments, pressure between the two branches continued to build until Judge Rzepliński’s term ended. After stalling the Court’s nomination of a successor to Judge Rzepliński by having his loyal party appointees all call in “sick” on the day of the vote, President Duda established an interim president for the court and presided over the new vote. Instead of including all the judges for this new vote, President Duda swore in a new PiS judge with only six of the judges and his interim court president present, thus giving PiS a majority in the CT (Davies, 2018). Once the CT had been successfully overrun by PiS-appointed judges, the government began massively restructuring the Supreme Court, the National Council of the Judiciary (KRS), and other lower courts. After initial proposals, President Duda and PiS dismantled and paralyzed these courts by terminating the terms of existing judges, giving the Parliament the right to nominate replacements, forcing all Supreme Court justices over 65 to retire, and introducing the ability to reopen and hear any final judgments since 1997 (Davies, 2018).

After this authoritarian takeover and paralysis of the Polish judiciary system, the European Commission made demands for President Duda and the PiS-led parliament to reverse and reform their actions through sanction procedures under Article 7. In defiance of the European Commission’s report and broader EU membership conditions, the Polish incumbents instead published a 94-page “White Paper” defending themselves and floating superficial concessions that did not remedy PiS’s systematic influence over the judicial branch (Davies, 2018). The EU currently plans to impose further sanctions through the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and to cut

some of the funds from the Cohesion Policy and CAP to Poland, but suffers from delayed negotiations and complications from Brexit (Harper, 2019). For now, President Duda and PiS incumbents have successfully gotten away with undermining the CT and the Polish judiciary system more broadly.

The potential for future dismantling of Poland’s judiciary is not as likely now as compared to President Duda and PiS’s initial success in the CT in 2015. Unlike in Hungary, the Polish parliament did not introduce any constitutional restrictions on the CT. While Fidesz restricted the power of the Hungarian constitutional court on fiscal matters and scrutiny of amendments, PiS only took control of the CT through a majority of seats occupied by party loyalists. This means any constitutional restrictions imposed on the CT would be counter-productive to the role of PiS loyalists in further legitimizing their illiberal authority in the Parliament and the Presidency (Sadurski, 2018). European authorities will also be watching Poland much more closely, particularly the ECJ. In 2019 alone, the ECJ ruled some PiS reforms illegal, such as allowing the president to personally grant 5-year extensions to Supreme Court judges’ retirements, and lowering the retirement age of judges in general courts to 60 for women and 65 for men (Walsh, 2019). While PiS’s initial success in dismantling the Polish judiciary system was both rapid and destructive, President Duda and PiS are not in a position to restrict the constitutional authority of the courts and can only maintain a party-empowering judiciary through a majority of seats held by loyal PiS judges in the CT, Supreme Court, and KRS.

The Survival of Polish Liberal Democratic Institutions

After 2015, President Duda and PiS leaders successfully maintained a dominant party majority in the Parliament, CT, Supreme Court, and KRS. This dominance in the Polish government gave PiS significant leverage over various additional institutions, allowing them to further dissolve liberal democratic values in Poland. Despite systemic disadvantages, many important institutions and political outlets such as protests and the media remain independent of PiS influence today. The independence of key institutions serves as a valuable asset to opposition groups and safeguards against further erosion of liberal democratic structures in Poland. The senate, electoral framework, media, and ‘Black Protests’ prove that Polish citizens can and will defend liberal democracy from further erosion by resisting PiS takeover and directly stopping restrictive, authoritarian laws from passing.

The collective opposition parties’ control over the Senate after 2019 is a great example of recent resistance to PiS takeover. President Duda’s reelection in 2020 largely signified a failure “of Poland’s leading opposition parties to hold Law and Justice effectively to account” (Davies, 2020). Similar to the 2015 election, Polish opposition parties were unable to cooperate together and beat President Duda in the 2020 Polish presidential election, once again failing to secure a traditional party victory against the ethnopolulist PiS. The most damning piece of evidence was general public opinion towards the Civic Platform’s nominee Rafał Trzaskowski, as over 30% of Poles answered “don’t know” in regard to their thoughts on Trzaskowski’s favorability (European Movement International, 2019). While party influence and opposition cooperation has grown weaker in the face of PiS, the 2019 election also showed the first signs of weakness in PiS incumbents’ abilities to maintain seats and control the entire Polish government. An opposition coalition successfully captured 51 of the 100 total seats in the Polish senate, the less powerful upper-house of Polish parliament (Cienski and Wanat, 2019). The PiS-controlled Sejm, the lower-house of parliament, can still override any delays or amendments by the senate with an absolute

majority. Nonetheless, the senate is still responsible for nominating key officials, which will “undermine PiS’s attempts to put all government institutions under its control” (Cienski and Wanat, 2019). Since PiS derives the majority of its power and institutional influence through sheer majorities in number of seats rather than overtly-illiberal restrictions in the constitution, the opposition’s control over the senate marks a valuable victory in the survival of existing democratic institutions in Poland. The fact that opposition parties can still win seat majorities in a branch of parliament suggests that PiS has not been able to fully dismantle the safeguards of Poland’s liberal democracy.

Alongside the results of the 2019 election, reports also indicated a relatively strong electoral framework was still present in Poland. Freedom House found that Poland’s electoral framework “generally ensured free and fair elections” despite President Duda’s changes to the electoral code that allowed the parliament to nominate some members of the National Electoral Commission (Freedom House, 2019). The OSCE also determined that “... the elections were generally conducted in a ‘professional and transparent’ manner” (Freedom House, 2019). Some concerns persist over regulations on campaigning with state resources and a lack of impartiality in the public media, but Polish elections largely remained free and fair during PiS’s first term. A new PiS threat to the electoral framework could be in the vulnerability of the easily politicized Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs, which has the authority “to validate or reject election and referendum results” (Freedom House, 2019). Yet, after PiS requested votes to be recounted in their lost Senate races, the Polish Supreme Court did not overturn any of the results. Despite existing vulnerabilities to PiS politics, the Polish electoral framework has not yet been fully undermined through delegitimized election results and party-loyal Commission nominations from the PiS Parliament.

Unlike the senate and elections, Polish independent media was and still is the liberal democratic institution most threatened by PiS. While most privately-owned media outlets continue to operate independently thanks to support from foreign ownerships, public media was entirely purged of independent voices after PiS took power in 2015 (Freedom House, 2019). The Polish public television broadcaster, TVP, quickly became an active propaganda tool and even openly supported the PiS campaign in 2019. Most notably, PiS and the TVP tried to sue Professor Wojciech Sadurski for civil and criminal defamation over tweets he made regarding the public media’s corruption (Ticher, 2020). In Sadurski’s words, the TVP “has become an active instrument of PiS propaganda, engaging in grotesque glorification of the party and vilification of its opponents” (Sadurski, 2019). Despite public media’s complete takeover by PiS, private media outlets have stayed independent from party influence. The PiS leadership has made claims to “repolonise” private media, or reduce foreign ownership in Polish media and assure a purely “Polish point of view” is portrayed, instead of foreign-owned outlets having a “conflict of interest” in their perspectives (Shotter, 2019). The true intent of PiS in calling for reductions in foreign ownership of private media is more focused on eliminating opposing political views across Polish media, as foreign-owned private media outlets are usually the loudest voices against the PiS government (Freedom House, 2019). In what is a positive sign for the survival of liberal democracy in Poland, PiS has not yet passed any of these “repolonising” laws, so private media currently survives as an independent, democratic institution that allows dissenting voices against the PiS government to be heard.

One of the most powerful instances of successful resistance to PiS influence can be seen in the waves of Polish ‘Black Protests’. Starting in June 2016, the ‘Stop Abortion’ project launched

with the goal of reforming abortion laws in Poland. Gaining support from both PiS and the Roman Catholic Church, a petition backing ‘Stop Abortion’ gained over 450,000 signatures and had to be put to a vote in parliament as a ‘citizens’ project’ (Szelegieniec, 2018). Alternatively, the ‘Save Women’ organization launched an “opposing campaign in favor of liberalizing abortion laws” that garnered over 250,000 signatures (Szelegieniec, 2018). Although both campaigns were voted on in Parliament at the same time, the PiS majority rejected the ‘Save Women’ project but advanced the ‘Stop Abortion’ campaign into the commission stage (Szelegieniec, 2018). During all of this, massive demonstrations, known as ‘Black Protests’ for the all-black attire of demonstrators, came in waves against both the initial ‘Stop Abortion’ proposal and its subsequent victory in passing a Parliamentary vote. On October 3rd alone, over 250,000 men and women joined the Women’s Strike, a part of the broader second wave of Black Protests, and inspired solidarity actions for women’s rights across Poland and in other countries like Argentina and South Korea (Szelegieniec, 2018). More importantly, the protests pressured PiS to step back and not vote further on the ‘Stop Abortion’ project for the remainder of their first term. The success of the Black Protests at halting PiS from passing anti-abortion legislations shows how vulnerable PiS is “in the face of mass resistance” (Szelegieniec, 2018). Throughout multiple waves of demonstrations, the Polish Black Protests successfully stopped the PiS government from passing illiberal abortion bans despite their control over Parliament with a majority of seats. Moreover, mass mobilization as an independent institution is strong enough to resist PiS influence and actively defend from PiS’s attempts to undermine liberal democracy.

Hungary’s Desperate Situation and Poland’s Future Potential

Hungary and Poland are a valuable pair of Central Eastern European states to use for comparisons, as their democracies share almost identical roots in communist opposition and post-communist development. Both states are also experiencing serious democratic backsliding in modern times, but to somewhat different degrees. Most notably, these states varied in how ethnopolitist parties in Hungary and Poland, Fidesz and PiS respectively, successfully polarized their political systems. Ethnopolitist parties benefit from polarization within the prevailing party system of their state, as “a polarized society can help ethnopolitists come to power – and, as incumbents, ethnopolitists pursue strategies to deepen polarization” (Vachudova, 2020). Since ethnopolitists wish to consolidate power solely for the sake of “the people”, polarizing themselves through increasingly radical appeals, such as anti-establishment and anti-Muslim trends (Blackington and Vachudova, 2020), helps put opposition parties in a challenging position to reject ethnopolitist claims and simultaneously appeal to distrustful voters.

As previously discussed, Polish opposition parties have been greatly undermined by the illiberal PiS government and have struggled to effectively cooperate and prevent President Duda’s re-election in 2020. However, the success of opposition parties in capturing a collective majority in the Senate proved that cooperation against PiS is still possible. The cooperation of opposition parties in Poland reveals an important distinction from Hungary in their response to an ethnopolitist party in control of their government. As Dr. Milada Anna Vachudova and Courtney Blackington determined, opposition parties faced with ethnopolitist competition must decide “whether to cooperate or compete with each other” (Blackington and Vachudova, 2020). Unlike Polish opposition’s attempts at party cooperation, opposition parties in Hungary instead “compete with one another rather than merging or building electoral coalitions” (Blackington and Vachudova, 2020). Hungarian political parties also suffer from much deeper polarization along “regime divides”, as seen in the 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey data on anti-establishment and

anti-Muslim rhetoric in various European states with significant ethnopolitist presences (Blackington and Vachudova, 2020). Opposition parties in both Hungary and Poland face serious polarization and competition against dominant ethnopolitist incumbents, but the continued efforts of Polish opposition parties to cooperate and reclaim majorities in government put them in a better position to resist illiberal tactics than Hungarian opposition parties.

Opinion polls are another indicator that public support of PiS is weakening and that opposition parties have the capacity to retake control of the Polish government. Listen to Europe’s opinion polls on civil society and feelings towards key actors indicated a weakening outlook on PiS incumbent’s overall approval. President Duda’s rating by surveyed Poles showed signs of polarization, either being “somewhat favorable” or “very unfavorable” (European Movement International, 2019). This may seem like more polarization is taking place in Poland, which could threaten opposition capabilities, but a comparison with similar Hungarian opinion polls reveal a much worse state of polarization caused by Viktor Orbán and Fidesz. In a 2017 report by the IRI, 38% of Hungarians said that, overall, Hungary is heading in the right direction, while 58% saw Hungary heading in the wrong direction (IRI, 2017). Conversely, PiS leader Kaczynski had nearly half of the surveyed Poles rate him as “very unfavorable”, which indicates significantly less polarization and a broader disillusionment with PiS’s ethnopolitist platform among Poles (European Movement International, 2019). These public opinion results may not be a clear indication of Poland’s greater potential to return to liberal democracy, but are an important factor that further widens the difference in public attitudes towards Poland and Hungary’s levels of democratic backsliding.

Another important opinion poll by Pew Research Center revealed clear differences among European countries in their attitudes towards the EU and democracy, as well as their perception of economic prosperity. On average, the majority of Europeans disagreed with the statement “Most elected officials care about what people like me think”, but only 48% of Poles disagreed versus 71% of Hungarians (Wike et al., 2019). Additionally, Poland showed more positive attitudes towards the EU than Hungary, with 84% of Poles saying they “Have a favorable view of the EU” as opposed to 67% of Hungarians (Wike et al., 2019). These results give us insight into the political capacity of Poles, since they have more positive outlooks on their current political setting than Hungarians. There is greater potential for Poles to resist further democratic backsliding from PiS than Hungarians from Fidesz, particularly if PiS were to directly attack their current status in the EU while opposition leaders inversely champion the stance of everyday citizens better than PiS. This potential is further supported through Pew Research Center’s survey results on the current and future economic prosperity of European countries. They reported 57% of Poles say “children today will be better off financially compared to their parents” and 74% say “the economic situation in their country is good”, while only 37% and 52% of Hungarians supported the same statements respectively (Wike et al., 2019). As previously mentioned, the ethnopolitist appeal by PiS towards economic reform was not based on actual economic hardship, but rather a claim to one’s “fair share” in the economy. Since economic satisfaction and expected prosperity are growing in Poland today, the ethnopolitist appeal by PiS will likely become less effective as younger generations grow up in economic prosperity. Overall, the positive outlook of Poles, as seen in most public opinion results and contrasted with that of Hungarians, reveals a far greater potential in Poland for the competitiveness of opposition parties to succeed against PiS, especially if ethnopolitists continue to undermine liberal democratic values and institutions in Poland.

Conclusion

After President Duda’s reelection in 2019, Professor Agnieszka Graff claimed that “right now it really feels like it’s game over” (Davies, 2020). However, in this paper, I argue that Poland is far from reaching the final stages of dismantling democracy despite such efforts by PiS since 2015. The quick and unique attack on democratic institutions by paralyzing the CT and dismantling the Polish judiciary in 2015 will not be so easily replicated by PiS in the future. Poland’s various other institutions have held on to their independence and have a significant potential to both survive and maintain liberal democratic traditions. Lastly, the differences in Hungarian and Polish ethnopolitists’ successes in polarizing their people show just how much potential the Polish citizens have to mobilize around and capitalize on the competitive potential of cooperative opposition groups. Democracy in Poland suffered a heavy blow in 2015, but did not fall into complete authoritarian control and can still revitalize its liberal democratic values before PiS incumbents can dismantle any more institutions.

Works Cited

- IRI, Center for Insights in Survey Research (2017). “Public Opinion in Hungary”.
https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/hungary_poll_presentation.pdf
- Blackington, Courtney and Vachudova, Milada Anna (2020). “Oppositions Assemble, Ethnopolitists in Power and the Parties that Oppose Them” *APSA*, 6 September. Early and partial draft.
- Ciensi, Jan, and Zosia Wanat (2019). “5 Takeaways from the Polish Election.” *Politico*, 15 Oct. www.politico.eu/article/poland-pis-tougher-times-despite-winning-election/ .
- Davies, Christian (2018). “Hostile Takeover: How Law and Justice Captured Poland's Courts.” *Freedom House*. freedomhouse.org/report/analytical-brief/2018/hostile-takeover-how-law-and-justice-captured-polands-courts.
- Davies, Christian (2020) “‘It Feels like It's Game over': Polish Liberals Despair after Duda's Win.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media. 13 July. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/13/the-coffin-is-being-closed-on-democracy-polish-liberals-despair-after-dudas-win.
- Fassoulas, Petros, and Vanessa Cotterell (2019). “Polish Election: Analysing Why PiS Won.” *Listen To Europe*, European Movement International. listentoeurope.info/polish-election-analysing-why-pis-won/.
- Freedom House (2019). “Freedom in the World 2020: Poland Freedom Score”. freedomhouse.org/country/poland/freedom-world/2020.
- Harper, Jo (2019). “EU Weighs Costs of Punishing Poland: DW: 19.07.2019.” *Deutsche Welle*, 19 July. www.dw.com/en/eu-weighs-costs-of-punishing-poland/a-49640512.
- Markowski, Radoslaw (2018). “Creating Authoritarian Clientelism: Poland After 2015.” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, vol. 11, no. 1, 24 Sept., pp. 111–132., doi:10.1007/s40803-018-0082-5. <https://link-springer-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/article/10.1007/s40803-018-0082-5#Sec13>.
- Sadurski, Wojciech (2019). “Opinion | I Criticized Poland's Government. Now It's Trying to Ruin Me.” *The Washington Post*. 23 May 2019. www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/05/21/i-criticized-polands-government-now-its-trying-ruin-me/.
- Sadurski, Wojciech (2018). “Polish Constitutional Tribunal Under PiS: From an Activist Court, to a Paralysed Tribunal, to a Governmental Enabler.” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 63–84., 13 June. doi:10.1007/s40803-018-0078-1. <https://link-springer-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/article/10.1007/s40803-018-0078-1>.

- Shotter, James (2019). “Poland's Ruling Party Plans to 'Repolonise' Media If Re-Elected.” *Financial Times*, 20 June. www.ft.com/content/1a4f9232-9358-11e9-aea1-2b1d33ac3271.
- Szelegieniec, Paweł (2018) "Behind the 'Black Protests': The Struggle for Abortion Rights in Poland." *Monthly Review*, vol. 70, no. 1. May, pp. 45-59. *ProQuest*, <http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/docview/2036728022?accountid=14244>, doi:http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.14452/MR-070-01-2018-05_5.
- Ticher, Mike (2020). “Long Arm of Law and Justice: the Sydney Professor under Attack from Poland's Ruling Party.” *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 3 Oct. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/04/long-arm-of-law-and-justice-the-sydney-professor-under-attack-from-polands-ruling-party.
- Vachudova, Milada Anna (2020). “Ethnopolitism and democratic backsliding in Central Europe, East European Politics”. 36:3, 318-340, DOI: 10.1080/21599165.2020.1787163. <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F21599165.2020.1787163>.
- Walsh, Alistair (2019). “What Are Poland's Controversial Judicial Reforms?: DW: 05.11.2019.” *Deutsche Welle*, 5 Nov. www.dw.com/en/what-are-polands-controversial-judicial-reforms/a-51121696.
- Wike, Richard et al. (2019). “European Public Opinion Three Decades After the Fall of Communism.” *Pew Research Center*, Washington, D.C. 15 October 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/15/european-public-opinion-three-decades-after-the-fall-of-communism/>
- YouGov (2019). “Country Specific Data: Poland.” *Listen To Europe*. European Movement International, Feb., listentoeurope.info/poland-country-specific/.