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THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON LEADERSHIP MODELS:
AN ANALYSIS BASED ON POLAND AND SPAIN

INTRODUCTION

A comparative analysis covering Poland and Spain have both historical and contemporary justification. After a period of political transformation and the stabilization of democracy, it is time for systematic changes, which, although initiated by different stimuli, contribute to the transformations of existing models of political leadership. The leadership model adopted here is a fixed mechanism of interaction with the external and internal environment based on the conscious style of leadership, a repeatable way of elaboration, implementation and realization of decisions. *The components of this leadership model are, among others, the way information is collected, processed and communicated, an acceptable level of conflict, a degree of delegation of tasks, the range of political leader's interests and the motivation to take action*¹.

The aim of this discussion is to identify the vector of ongoing transformations, diagnose the determinants of the evolution of leadership, and finally describe the projected target models of leadership. The main thesis of this

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¹ A. KASIŃSKA-METRYKA, *Proces kreacji przywódców politycznych. Od ujęcia tradycyjnego do marketingowego*, Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej 2012.

article is a statement that in Poland we have observed a transformation from a charismatic to a marketing – oriented leadership; whereas in Spain, the charismatic leadership underwent erosion. As a result of a process of Italianisation, a model of *quasi*-leadership appeared which was based on patterns developed in South America.

The relevant period of analysis covers the years 2008-2015 and the turning point takes into account the beginning of the crisis in Spain as well as the subsequent elections in both countries, i.e. the parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland. In order to identify the emerging trends, however, it was necessary to refer to the history of leadership, especially in the context of comparative transformation processes.

The beginning of the formal transformation in Poland takes place in 1989. The processes of dismantling the previous regime had begun many years earlier and were progressive. Ultimately, however, it was the agreement reached by consensus at the Round Table that allowed the ruling party and their opposition to start building a young democracy.

Political leadership, which went into the hands of Solidarity activists, was a valuable yet surprising gift. The signatories of the agreements mentioned years later that none of them had the necessary knowledge or experience necessary for the political elite. The famous slogan “your president, our prime minister”, appeared as a result of the election of the regime’s leader Wojciech Jaruzelski as president and opposition activist Tadeusz Mazowiecki as prime minister. The next election (i.e. first general presidential election) presented society with a dilemma because there were originally 16 candidates. The final clash took place between Lech Wałęsa and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, two icons of Solidarity. Lech Wałęsa’s win sealed his victory, i.e. his path from worker to president of a democratic country.

The phenomenon of Lech Wałęsa has been discussed in detail and the authors in large part agree that Wałęsa’s particular personality traits combined with his intuitive understanding of politics contributed to his success. However, the leadership of the opposition by Wałęsa would not have been possible without strong support of the people who contributed to Europe’s largest trade union movement and carried their leader to the presidency.

However, while Wałęsa was running successfully as a dissident, it was governance in formally designated frameworks that he found difficult. Instead of charisma, there was a strong need for legalism, requiring a high level of competence, a concept he struggled with. His target vision of the presidency assumed an extension of the powers of the head of state as it was in the American model, but – as he claimed – in order to carry out the planned

changes, he needed two terms in office, which were not given to him. The so-called “falandyzacja” (i.e. bending law to particular interests), having “wars at the top”, distrust towards the environment and finally the lack of flexibility in managing his image contributed to electoral defeat.

Wałęsa introduced a new quality of leadership that can be described as bottom-up leadership, reformative, intuitive, corresponding to the times of transformation, but also prone to failure in a young democracy. The next presidential election confirmed that it was a decision based on the negation of the existing leadership style as the next president was from the left-wing, Aleksander Kwaśniewski. Both presidents were different in terms of their origin, education, political past, lifestyle and image.

The opponents of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski accused him of advocating a “Byzantine style of governance” and of avoiding conflict. The President stated that the role of the head of state is to implement the function of arbitration (in accordance with the Constitution) which seemed to meet the expectations of the majority of citizens who elected him to the presidency again in 2000. It is worth noting that Kwaśniewski’s wife followed her husband’s style of ruling and, as opposed to busy housewife Danuta Wałęsa, she accompanied her husband, was in charge of various charitable activities and looked after her and her husband’s image.

While searching for an analogy in Spanish young democracy, one can recall the figure of Prime Minister Felipe González. Although the president’s role in the political system in Poland and the Prime Minister of Spain are not similar, the strong, almost “chancellor”-like position of the latter allows a comparison that is not based on the position held, but on a developed model of leadership. González personified modern Spain – a well-educated and handsome social democrat who was at his best when it comes to international politics. At the same time, he was perceived as one of the architects who wanted to dismantle the old regime and build a new one.

González first became Prime Minister in 1982, and then he repeated his electoral success in 1986, 1989 and 1993 (in three elections he obtained an absolute majority). His economic reforms implemented with leftist sensibilities, opening up Spain to the world and working on Spain’s accession to NATO (though he initially objected to this) made Gonzalez one of the most recognizable and top-rated Spanish politicians. *His private life was always kept separate from his public life. Even when his family lived in the Palace de Moncloa, he tried to isolate his children – Pablo, David and Mary from*

*the world of official politics*². Aleksander Kwaśniewski behaved similarly – his daughter Alexandra for years lived outside the world of mass media.

What both of these politicians have in common is their left-wing provenance, modern image, communication efficiency and conciliatory style of ruling. It seems that, after a period of turbulent transition from non-democratic regimes to democracy, it was the most socially desirable model of leadership. Both Poland and Spain needed the recognition and acceptance of the Western world to realize changes and full inclusion in the “Western European bloodstream”. These two leaders faced similar challenges: location on the edge of Europe, long-term isolation from the standards of liberal democracy, a lack of civil society tradition and the need to rescue the economy.

Further later changes of political elites in both countries meant the transformation of leadership models. In Spain, F. González was replaced with right-wing José Maria Aznar, who did not have his predecessor's sophistication and communication efficiency, but as the Spaniards expected, he was supposed to fix the economy. In Poland, Kwasniewski was replaced by right-wing president, Lech Kaczyński.

Aznar held the position of Prime Minister for eight years, and tragic events in Madrid's subway in March 2004 meant the end of his leadership. The two terms of Aznar's government differed immensely. In 1996-2000, his PP (Popular Party) had to win the favour of the Catalan CiU (Convergence and Union) and thus a “forced settlement” and consensual action were created. In 2000, the PM had the absolute majority and decision-making autonomy, but it ultimately led to numerous conflicts and confrontations, and to a limiting of the public debate.

Spaniards felt disappointment during the decline in the second term; they also noticed a causal link between the attack in Madrid and earlier actions the government and Aznar took in the Middle East conflict. Aznar failed to build a civil society; the regime had no points of reference in Spain as the state was always seen as an external being that existed outside the natural community, this being the family and the immediate environment. *Lack of one vision for Spain led to a deepening of decentralization – the autonomies were ruled by local groups while the central axis of the ideological dispute*

² M. GALAZ, *Felipe González se ha casado con su novia, Mar García Vaquero*, „El País”, August 3, 2012, www.elpais.com/elpais/2012/08/02/gente/

was between left and right, or PSOE and PP (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and Popular Party)³.

A lack of a strong civil society was also a characteristic of the Polish political system. Social mobilization, which occurred just after the transformation, quickly gave way to so-called consumer involvement resulting from market liberalisation from the influence of the state. Post-transformation stability did not provide an impetus to grassroots activity; it also was not the aim of the political elite.

Lech Kaczyński won the presidential elections in Poland in 2005, defeating Donald Tusk. The difference in obtained support was approx. 8 percent with a voter turnout of 51 percent. The tragically interrupted presidency prevents its comprehensive assessment, however it is possible to specify the characteristics of Lech Kaczyński's leadership. According to the existing typology, he can be described as a leader-ideologue, who tried to implement a vision of the state as determined by his own political party. His decisiveness was connected with the politics implemented by his twin brother Jarosław Kaczyński who served as prime minister then.

Opinion polls conducted during the term and after the death of Kaczyński show how his social assessment changed. When he became a president, Lech Kaczyński had the highest support during his presidency for the first three months. With time, one could observe signs of mistrust and the conviction that his presidency was „party dependent”. His president competency was positively evaluated (3.3 on the five-point scale), his activity in the political life of the country (average 3.48), as well as the way in which he represented Poland in the world (3.2). The worst comments referred to the efficiency of the former president.

The Smolensk catastrophe significantly affected the image of L. Kaczyński in the media, which in turn influenced social opinion (CBOS 82/2010). They began to promote the strengths of the presidency, forgetting with time the weaknesses and as a result, the research carried out in May 2010 showed that his presidency was much better assessed after the death of Lech Kaczyński than during his term. Due to the dramatic end of the tenure, respondents evaluated not only the actions taken by the president during his presidency, but also all of his achievements.

³ A. KASIŃSKA-METRYKA, *Przywództwo polityczne w Hiszpanii po 1975 r. w perspektywie zmian systemowych*, Kielce: UJK 2015.

While the Right was gaining strength in Poland, the leftist government of J.L.R. Zapatero was in charge in Spain (2004-2011). Two incomplete terms of the PSOE government between 2004 and 2011 took place, each in different ways. The first term was a time for implementing the promises of the campaign, mostly of a moral nature. Zapatero first withdrew Spanish troops from Iraq (which was met with 70 percent support from society), and it was him who first approved the European constitution by means of referendum, followed by introducing a whole package of reforms.

The simplification of the rules of divorce, the legalization of residence for illegally-working foreigners, permission of same-sex marriage and the law against the use of violence against women were some of the changes introduced in Spanish society, which until this point had been mainly associated with traditional patriarchal views. While dealing with social and equality problems, Zapatero also touched upon some issues related to so-called historical policy, although opinions about the legitimacy of these activities divided society. The law on historical memory assumed, among others, a rehabilitation of victims of the 1936-1939 war and victims of the Franco dictatorship repression, the removal of Francoist symbols from public places, as well as the identification and exhumation of anonymous graves scattered throughout Spain during the war. In 2005, the last statue of General Franco and Francoist symbols disappeared from Madrid.

It is worth noting that after the seizure of power by the Social Democrats, the Spanish economy was developing well, but it was the result of both a liberal economic policy and the construction boom, which took place then. *In 2007, the unemployment rate was less than 8 percent and economic growth was at 3.8 percent, which put Spain in second place in the EU*⁴.

A slogan which the Social Democrats used in their following election campaign, *„Ruling for all, but especially for those who do not have everything”* had no populist overtones as the first term was assessed as a time of fulfilled promises.

Finally, in the elections of 9 March 2008, PSOE won 44 percent of votes, and the PP 40 percent. PSOE gained a lot of support from young people for whom custom reforms, low unemployment and negative motivation (typified in the slogan “anything but the Right”) were more important than the economy. The future showed that the leader of the PSOE had no plan for times of crisis, which began to deepen in 2009. Spaniards invested in real estate, lived

⁴ M. IKONOWICZ, *Lekcja Zapatero*, „Tygodnik Przegląd” 2008, No. 23.

beyond their means, the banks did not warn against risk taking. As a result, Zapatero's government did not fare well during the economic crisis—unemployment (especially among young people) began to grow exponentially, there was a crash on the real estate market, and the representatives of public sector took to the streets protesting against the liquidated privileges.

An unpopular austerity plan envisaged a reduction of wages in the public sector by 5 percent in 2010, freezing wages in 2011, making thirteen thousand central administration officials redundant, decreasing benefits for the elderly by 5.2 percent and housing benefits by 16 percent, the abolition of new-born allowance, liquidation of benefits for the long-term unemployed, freezing pensions, raising the VAT etc.⁵

The mandate of the ruling party was due to expire in the spring of 2012, but as the party had lost their public support (which was confirmed by opinion polls). J.L.R. Zapatero handed in his resignation on November 29th, 2011⁶. The former prime minister decided that he would not run for office again; he was also hoping that his stepping down would subtly serve the socialists in their electoral battle. As a consequence, it was the Deputy Prime Minister in Zapatero's government, Alfredo Rubacalba, who became the official candidate for the position⁷.

It is difficult but necessary to assess the leadership model developed by Zapatero because the extent of his reforms set him as an "icon" of European Left, on which many party leaders based their own models, including Poland. Can Zapatero really be classified as a leader-reformer, who created an innovative leadership model, or was the work of "the spirit of the time" (Zeitgeist Theory)? Paradoxically, longer-term perspectives of Zapatero's ruling has been much more critical. It is certainly due to the crisis which still affects Spaniards today, and the symptoms of which Zapatero ignored.

Despite the Spaniard's critics, it should be noted that the balance of Zapatero's achievements indicates his strong ideological motivation, which he tried to transform to marketing success. Such a double-track policy was possible, but only in favourable economic conditions. It is therefore not obvious how to embed Zapatero's leadership into existing typologies.

⁵ D. MILLET, E. TOUSSAINT, *Kryzys zadłużenia i jak z niego wyjść*, Warszawa: Książka i Prasa 2012, s. 88.

⁶ K. SETKOWICZ, *Oficjalny koniec rządów Zapatero*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, September 26, 2012.

⁷ Alfredo Rubacalba was General Secretary of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) from 2012 to 2014.

The most reasonable statement is that the Prime Minister was a reformer and represented a transformational type of leadership. He strived not only to introduce systemic change, but also to a qualitative change of the environment which involved building a sense of community around promoted ideas. The economy as well as international politics were not areas focused on by the Prime Minister's activity – one can even say that he avoided those activities that did not make him feel comfortable. Instead, social issues, politics of equality, the rights of the excluded (including refugees), and finally the revision of history were the areas on which he concentrated most, often in an emotional manner.

The path to reforms initiated by Zapatero is sometimes called the “second transition”, however, because of the importance of the changes he made, the term is a metaphor rather than a description of the actual situation. The socialist leader was not a politician similar to Gonzalez in terms of competencies and personality traits; nonetheless, having been promoted from the position of local activist he proposed a new vision of their country to Spaniards, which for some – especially the young population – was the biggest advantage of his office. Currently, there are opinions that it was a PSOE mistake to make Zapatero a prime minister; however, without this leader, neither the party nor the state would be in the place where they are today, and many European social democrats would not have a leader who they could point to as representative of their ideals.

TIMES OF CRISIS – THE RIGHT TAKES OVER THE POWER

The disappointment with Zapatero again swung the elites' pendulum toward the right. The governments of the Partido Popular, with Mariano Rajoy in charge meant the implementation of the “austerity measures” for Spaniards, which aroused aversion, but also the expectation of economic improvement. In terms of character, Rajoy was a denial of his predecessor – he could be described as a technocrat who learned a lot in Aznar's office.

Rajoy, a predictable, balanced character without any special leadership skills, had a mission to organise the state to a wider electorate. In his biography “In confidence” he presented himself as a person who respected rules, had a sense of justice, and devotion to family. The outlined image seemed tedious, but it gave Spaniards a sense of security. This image of the leader operated until early 2013 when the daily El Pais revealed a gigantic corruption scandal involving the ruling party and the prime minister.

It was revealed that Rajoy for 10 years received a salary from the construction industry, which was repaid via won tenders. A corruption scandal in the ruling party was not only a failure of image, but also a signal of problems dating back to the essence of the democratic transitions. Once again, the confidence of the Spaniards in the ruling elites was seriously weakened and the politicians' explanations and a lack of strategy regarding crisis management only worsened the condition.

According to the classification proposed by Jerzy J. Wiatr, Mariano Rajoy is an example of the counter-reformation leader. A prime example of measures to restore the "state before Zapatero" was a project tightening the abortion law presented in 2012 by the Justice Minister Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon. It was one of the platform points of Partido Popular, which the Prime Minister was going to implement in order to gain the support of the church community. However, in autumn 2014, the Prime Minister decided to withdraw the draft on tighter legislation on abortion, which was interpreted as a result of electoral calculation as previously proposed changes triggered a huge wave of protests.

Bronisław Komorowski was president of Poland in the years 2010-2015, who although somehow associated with the ruling Civic Platform, was identified as the type of politician – Sarmatian. Born in 1952, he was jovial, valued tradition and conservative values, was a practicing Catholic, a former dissident and father of a large family – he also met expectations of Poles for whom the PO party was too liberal. It is difficult to identify the leadership model that he created – as a president, he sought to demonstrate his independence from the party from which he came from, but these actions were perceived as ineffectual.

The president's activities focused on the celebration of historical events, meetings with the authorities of local governments and trips around Europe. As shown by the analysis, the president had very little contact with business representatives and non-governmental organizations. Statistics also show that unlike his predecessors, he rarely used the legislative initiative, vetoed fewer laws, and on the other hand, he was more cautious about using the ability to pardon⁸. His loss in the presidential election of 2015 came as a surprise to both the current president, the ruling party and to society because, according

⁸ J. WIATR, *Przywódstwo polityczne. Studium polityczne*, Łódź: Wyd. WSH-E w Łodzi 2008, p. 42-54 (According to the classification proposed by Jerzy Wiatr).

to forecasts of public opinion polls as well as to most experts – re-election of Komorowski was almost certain.

So what was behind his failure? The most important reasons include: a nonchalance in the existing authority and its involvement in the so-called phone hacking scandal, Komorowski's too-little too-late campaign activities and a lack of professionalism, particularly compared to his main rival Andrzej Duda's campaign, which was conducted with panache and engagement. The Law and Justice, a party which had lost eight consecutive elections, mobilized to lead their candidate to victory. Duda's win not only meant a real change to the head of state, but it opened the door to a wider change in that it pioneered the way for Law and Justice's victory in the parliamentary elections which took place in the same year.

CONCLUSION

This way, history repeated a peculiar loop in the Polish political scene – from the leadership of Lech Walesa based on a natural charisma, through the marketing – oriented Kwaśniewski, to the ideologically motivated L. Kaczyński, to a conservative Komorowski to a relatively young and image conscious A. Duda. The presidency of the latter will certainly be an area of numerous analyses, but the first half of the year proved the president's far-reaching dependence on the victorious party's leader, J. Kaczyński. Entanglement in a dispute over the Constitutional Courts, a lack of decision-making, efficiency of communication and a positively perceived image make A. Duda "administrator" leader (according to H. Lasswell typology). It should be noted here that according to a public opinion survey (Research Danae for "Polityka" Insight, May 2016) question on "Who would make the best opposition leader?" 15 percent of respondents indicated Donald Tusk, 13 percent Paul Kukiz and 12 percent Ryszard Petru⁹.

It can be concluded that the political situation in Poland and in Spain in terms of expectations towards leaders is similar – in both countries, the societies expressed dissatisfaction with the existing elites and both countries' parties came to power as a result of social discontent. The disappointment with existing power is not accompanied by a clear vision of the desired leadership. In Spain, the December parliamentary elections did not result in the

⁹ <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/16611576.l.tusku-musisz.read> [10.07.2016].

creation of the government therefore, re-election will take place on June 26th, while the change of power in Poland also did not lead to the consolidation of society, but to its polarity.

In conclusion, these countries need a new type of a leader, and the main reason for it is the change that has occurred in Europe, particularly in relation to a lack of security (at various levels). Currently, neither economic pragmatism nor marketing attractiveness match society's expectations. Spaniards, like the Italians, experienced so-called Berlusconisation of elites (see: Juan Carlos), and like other countries in southern Europe, they see corruption in all levels of government as the main blemish on the political system. In Poland, the disappointment with power came from its isolation from society and a loss of the governance potential. In both countries we have new political forces, although in Spain they already are of a more permanent nature, while in Poland they are still ephemeral. The analysed examples confirm that leadership is not created by a developed algorithm, but it is a response to the variables resulting from the environment and personal characteristics of a leader.

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WPLYW KRYZYSU NA MODELE PRZYWÓDCZE: ANALIZA NA PODSTAWIE POLSKI I HISZPANII

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Artykuł ma na celu zdiagnozowanie zależności zachodzących pomiędzy sytuacjami kryzysowymi (w wymiarze ekonomicznym, politycznym, społecznym) a przeobrażeniami modeli przewodzenia. Analizę porównawczą dokonano na przykładzie Polski i Hiszpanii, tj. państw zbliżo-

nych powierzchnią, liczbą ludności, religią, ale także przeszłością, tj. doświadczeniem transformacji systemowej. Cele szczegółowe niniejszych rozważań to wskazanie wektorów dokonujących się zmian, określenie wiodących czynników wpływających na ewolucję przywództwa i opisanie kształtujących się w warunkach kryzysu nowych modeli przewodzenia.

Główna teza artykułu sprowadza się do stwierdzenia, że po 1989 r. w Polsce można wskazać przechodzenie od przywództwa charyzmatycznego do zorientowanego rynkowo, podczas gdy w Hiszpanii tzw. przywództwo oparte na charyzmie ulega stopniowej erozji. Jest to efekt procesu „italianizacji” przywództwa i kształtowania się mechanizmów *quasi*-przywództwa opartych na wzorcach zaczerpniętych z Ameryki Południowej a implementowanych przez kraje południa Europy.

Tekst powstał na podstawie materiałów zgromadzonych podczas kwerendy w Hiszpanii, korespondencji z tamtejszymi politykami, a główną metodą badawczą jest metoda komparatystyczna.

Słowa kluczowe: przywództwo; transformacja; Polska; Hiszpania.

THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON LEADERSHIP MODELS: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON POLAND AND SPAIN

S u m m a r y

The aim of the article is to show how the crisis impacts leadership models. A comparative analysis; the main research method covers two countries: Poland and Spain. The author has tried to identify the vector of transformations, diagnose the determinants of the evolution of leadership, and finally describe the projected target models of leadership. The main thesis of this article is a statement that in Poland, there was a transformation from a charismatic to a marketing-oriented leadership whereas in Spain the charismatic leadership underwent erosion. As a result of an Italianisation process, a model of quasi-leadership appeared, which was based on patterns developed in South America. The period of analysis covers the years 2008-2015 and the turning point takes into account the beginning of the crisis in Spain as well as the subsequent elections in both countries (the parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland and parliamentary elections in Spain).

Key words: leadership; transformation; Poland; Spain.