

As we enter the Third Wave of Autocratisation, democratic backsliding is on the rise. Current research has emphasised the causes of backsliding to the detriment of its components, with the role of the legislature curiously absent from most work in this field. Filling the gap, this thesis attempts to establish the place of the legislature in the anatomy of democratic backsliding. Using the Polish Sejm as a case study, this paper analyses the two dimensions of parliament: formal rules and informal practices. Formal rules are measured using the Weighted Legislative Powers Score, whilst informal practices are analysed with the Discourse Quality Index (substantiated by observations). The results suggest that although the formal power of the Sejm has not decreased during democratic backsliding, the quality of informal practices has. The implications of these findings are that they support the theory that changes in parliamentary practice are an important component of democratic backsliding, yet undermine the importance of formal parliamentary strength for democracy.