

Introduction

The present volume of *Studia Politologiczne* sets to explore Polish politics in the country's post-transformation period. It does not intend to provide a finite answer to the complex and persistently debated questions in the literature on the subject, that is whether the transformation process has now been completed in all its areas, so that we can truly speak of a post-transformation policy, or is it the case that, within the different areas of political relations, we are dealing with various dynamics of the transformation processes, and accordingly, different rates of progress of the transformation? Presented here is the outcome of continued research on the transformation pursued at the Institute of Political Science, University of Warsaw. In addition to publications analysing the various aspects of Polish transformation, the Institute has published books which provide a multi-dimensional study of the course and effects of political changes taking place in Poland since 1989. Three of them in particular must be mentioned here: *Poland: Government and Politics* (1997), *The Political System of Poland* (2007), and *Dylematy polskiej transformacji*, published in 2008, and its English version *Dilemmas of the Polish Transformation* published in 2010.

Even if we were to assume that Poland, Anno Domini 2013, is a country which has completed its transformation, questions remain as to the quality and permanence of the whole undertaking. Nevertheless, the transition process itself from the political system of real socialism to liberal democracy, in its current form, must be considered as done. The transformation of the Polish political system had its own peculiarity and dynamics, different to what the other post-communist states experienced. These issues were outlined in the last of the four books mentioned above and are again alluded to in some of the studies in the present volume. The landmark event which summed up the systemic metamorphoses underway, was the enactment of the new constitution in 1997, which took place at a later date than in the majority of the countries of the region and allowed it to benefit from their experience.

All the analyses which make up the present volume of the *Studia Politologiczne* have been written by the academic staff of the Institute of Political Science, University of Warsaw. The first group of papers investigates the various aspects of the changes occurring in Polish political relations. For instance, Polish politics is shown against the backdrop of the theory of democracy, or through the prism of building the country's position within the international environment. By portraying external points- or rather planes of reference, an analysis of the individual areas of internal relations was made possible. Another significant cluster of papers examines from a constitutional perspective (which defines the systemic framework of political relations) the conditioning of domestic political culture and the way it is manifested in the political participation of Poles. In yet another group of articles, specific areas of the activities engaged in by public authorities are examined, such as faith relations, the secret service, social and economic policies. The last group of papers discusses the didactic potential of our Institute. In addition to foreign-language studies (Master's Degree Studies in Political Science), study courses taught in Polish are discussed (political science, internal security and Euro-Asiatic studies), as well as the scope and nature of the international exchange of students and academics.

On presenting this volume of *Studia Politologiczne*, we are proud to say that the periodical can boast of some considerable history, having its first number published in 1996. Over the years the periodical steadily earned widespread recognition and a solid academic status. Our contributors, who hail from the best academic and R&D centres at home and abroad, regularly receive the highest number of points for their papers awarded under the Polish system of evaluation of academic papers. Their analyses and reviews cover fields such as the theory of politics, philosophy of politics, political systems, public administration, internal security, political sociology and political psychology. They are published in Polish, English and Russian. Contributions on any of the above subjects or a related topic are most welcome.

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