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## Introduction

The present volume of *Studia Politologiczne (Political Science Studies)* is devoted to political processes taking place in contemporary Poland. It examines the tendencies and relations occurring within this sphere. They are placed in the global context as well as within the regional political tendencies with an emphasis put on the fact that certain processes are universal and typical of contemporary states, whereas others are an answer to the local conditions and challenges. Attention is drawn both to the legal frameworks of the state's political system and the constitutional practice in them. Although the legal frameworks are similar for many countries, in the Polish conditions being dominated by the consequences of membership in the European Union, the details are, however, determined by the human element: people's aspirations, images and possibilities. The doctrine of political systems raises the fundamental dilemmas appearing against this background. Not so long ago these dilemmas were not paid any greater attention to, being waved aside.

Studying political relations does not only require the analysis of the binding legal regulations but also a study of the constitutional practice since it is practice which specifies and not infrequently verifies and falsifies the state's political system determined by the regulations of the constitution and the laws. A typical feature of contemporary states is that a different political practice, including the practice questioning the expectations and assumptions of the authors of legal regulations, emerges on the basis of similar regulations of law. The reason is that not everything can be predicted and planned. In particular, it is not possible to plan the execution of the regulations of the constitution in accordance with something which is called the "spirit of the constitution". It is not possible to plan the motifs of action of the participants in political relations, their aspirations, intentions or the applied means of activity, which means everything called the participation of the human factor in politics and the related multitude of human behaviours. The will to act and to change is written into the essence of political activity, also at the cost of destroying the political frameworks and everything which is called the political order and which serves the common good.

The Authors of the texts presented here submit a variety of issues of the political system to analysis. They do this both on the level of the structures of the state power and on the local level. They prove that in the era of post-modernism the whole political system as well as its particular dimensions have a dynamic character. They are not permanent or established once and for all in the acts of law, as such being acceptable by the decision makers. They cannot be reduced to the analysis of normative acts only. Although normative acts establish the frameworks of the political system and they are of key importance for the latter, the analysis of normative acts must be supplemented with a study of behaviour of the participants of political relations. Without an analysis of the practice of political life it is hard to understand the specific character of the functioning of the political system of the Republic of Poland. The papers included in the volume of *Studia Politologiczne (Political Science Studies)* presented here are devoted to these and other similar issues.

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*Stanisław Sulowski, Jacek Zaleśny*