

Danute Plecka (ed.), *Demokracja w Polsce po 2007 roku* (English translation: *Democracy in Poland after 2007*), **Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Naukowych w Katowicach, Katowice 2014, pp. 279** (Patrycja Rutkowska*)

The period after 1989 is undoubtedly important for Polish history, with democracy in Poland taking its shape and developing. From that year on the authorities, as well as the citizens, have been learning how and on what conditions a democratic state should function. On the publishing market, a number of books regarding the development of democracy in Poland has appeared, for example *Demokracja Polska 1989-2003* ("Polish Democracy 1989-2003"), the authors of which have tried to explain how democracy developed, how the country was governed, and what influence the citizens had on political decisions. However, on the market there is a lack of publications which would concentrate on the later period, which for Polish democracy is just as important as the initial phase of its development was. The period in which the democratic system in Poland was in development can be described as a training ground for politicians, as well as for Polish citizens themselves. Despite that, the quality of democracy in Poland still leaves much to be desired. However, in order to fairly evaluate these years, the way democracy functioned in that period has to be thoroughly analysed.

The year 2007 has become a crucial moment for the Polish democratic system, given that in the early election held that year, citizens decided to give power and trust to then opposition party Platforma Obywatelska (PO, Civic Platform), which formed a coalition government with Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL, Polish People's Party) and have remained in power to this day.

An attempt at summarising and evaluating the situation in Poland after 2007 was made by a group of political scientists who, following the initiative of the editor of *Demokracja w Polsce po 2007 roku*, Nicolaus Copernicus University Professor Danuta Plecka, Dr Habil., have analysed the issues that have been the most important for democracy after 2007. It is a collection of publications by political science researchers who have decided to study the quality of Polish democracy after 2007. This book is a continuation of the previous work edited by Nicolaus Copernicus University Professor Danuta Plecka, Dr Habil., entitled *Demokracja w Polsce po 2005 roku* ("Democracy in Poland after 2005"), published in 2005. At the very beginning, in the introduction, the editor of the book underlines the importance of the quality of democracy in the set time period, chosen by the author not by chance, as it saw early elections won by an opposition party, but also noticeable social divisions created in Poland after 2007, as well as such events as the global economic crisis, or the tragedy that struck Poland in 2010, namely, the Smolensk plane crash.

The array of topics discussed in the publications is vast, but they focus on political activity and events after 2007. The authors have attempted to analyse issues connected with the political elite (Jarosław Nocoń, *Między teorią a praktyką instytucjonalizacji naboru elit* ("Between theory and practice of institutionalisation of elite recruitment")), or relations between the government and the opposition (Andrzej Antoszewski, *Rządzący a opozycja parlamentarna po 2007 roku* ("The government and the parliamentary opposition after 2007")). An interesting topic is that of the leadership of Jarosław Kaczyński in Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, Law and Justice) party, discussed by Agnieszka Turska-Kawa in her article, entitled

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Fenomen przywództwa Jarosława Kaczyńskiego w kontekście specyfiki elektoratu Prawa i Sprawiedliwości ("The phenomenon of Jarosław Kaczyński's leadership in the context of specific features of the electorate of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość"). In the initial part of the article, the author presents features specific for the electorate of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość. Subsequently, she analyses typical characteristics of a leader and compares them with the characteristics of Jarosław Kaczyński. Another noteworthy article regards the participation and image of women in Polish politics on the basis of the 2011 parliamentary election, focusing on women politically connected with Jarosław Kaczyński (Olga Wadowska, "Aniołki prezesa" odleciały, czyli dlaczego kobiety w PiS nie ocieplity (wizerunku) Jarosława Kaczyńskiego ("«The leader's angels» have flown away: why women in PiS have not softened (the image of) Jarosław Kaczyński")). The analysis of the author can be described as very thorough. Starting with a detailed analysis of "Kaczyński's angels", she tries to explain the reasons of the defeat of "the leader's angels" in the election.

Much attention in the book was also devoted to matters connected with the national security. The articles that have appeared in the collection regard issues related to social security (Danuta Plecka, *Kapitał społeczny w budowaniu bezpieczeństwa społecznego w koncepcjach Platformy Obywatelskiej w latach 2007-2013* ("Social capital in the construction of social security in the concepts of Platforma Obywatelska in the years 2007-2013")), economic security (Maria Szatlach, *Wybrane aspekty polityki gospodarczej rządu koalicji PO-PSL w latach 2008-2013* ("Selected aspects of the economic policy of the PO-PSL coalition government in the years 2008-2013")), as well as the security of the Polish state in view of the threat of terrorist attacks (Adam Hołub, Beata Tomaszewska-Hołub, *Wizja bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski a zmiana układu władzy w 2007 roku – walka z terroryzmem* ("The vision of Polish national security in the face of transition of power in 2007: the fight against terrorism")).

The work also contains an analysis of participatory budgeting in the Polish context (Zuzanna Osmólska, *Budżet partycypacyjny po polsku* ("Participatory budgeting on the Polish ground")), as well as political relations between Poland and Ukraine and the aspirations of the latter to become a member of the European Union (Liana Hurska-Kowalczyk, *Polityka Polski wobec Ukrainy w kontekście integracji z Unią Europejską w latach 2007-2013* ("The Polish policy towards Ukraine in the context of its integration with the European Union in the years 2007-2013")). That publication excellently describes the foreign policy pursued by the Polish government of the day towards Ukraine. Undoubtedly, it is an article worth reading, presenting relations between Poland and Ukraine before the events that took place right after the publication of the book, namely, Russian aggression in the eastern regions of Ukraine.

Another merit of *Demokracja w Polsce po 2007 roku* is the fact it discusses issues pertaining to different areas, from the characteristics of power to security, or economic and image-related aspects. All publications included in the collection were based on a variety of source materials, from scientific studies to primary sources, including reports published by different research centres. Each of the articles attempts to deal with a given issue in a clear way. Authors also provide a base for individual reflection and decision on a particular phenomenon or event on the part of the reader. The wide scope of issues covered by the authors allows for a global understanding of the processes that occurred after 2007, which should be beneficial to the reader.

In my view, what has negatively influenced the work is a lack of division in distinct parts that would enable the reader to easily and swiftly access the section dealing with the issues that are of particular interest to them, especially since articles are devoted to given distinct issues.

Not to be found are also publications regarding the electoral campaign before the 2010 presidential election, and the campaign before the parliamentary election in 2011. Undoubtedly, they were significant for Polish democracy, taking into account the events that took place in Poland in 2010. Elaborating the book with publications regarding that issues would allow the reader to gain a wider perspective on the discussed topics.

To sum up, the work edited by Danuta Plecka, *Demokracja w Polsce po 2007 roku*, is an ideal summary of Polish politics after 2007. The publications included are well selected by the editor and ideally suit the subject of the book, which makes it interesting for the reader. The variety of sources and research methods employed by the authors has allowed them to objectively evaluate the political activity and events that took place after 2007. It should be underlined that in the work, almost all spheres that have been crucial for the functioning of the Polish state and its citizens after 2007 have been touched upon. The book is definitely recommendable for all who wish to enhance their knowledge of democracy in Poland after 2007 and to learn about the processes that undoubtedly influenced the whole political situation in the country.