

## **2015 – Elections in Poland and Spain and their consequences**

**Editors:**

**Mariusz Kolczyński, Małgorzata Myśliwiec, María José Pérez del Pozo**

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## INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present to you the book *2015 – Elections in Poland and Spain and their Consequences*. The book was inspired by the events which led to considerable political changes in Poland and in Spain. In Poland, the presidential election of May 2015 and the parliamentary election of October 25, 2015 changed the balance of power on the Polish political scene completely. The central political power was taken over the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS), which resulted in an essential change in perception of the role of the state and public affairs in Poland. In the same year, parliamentary election of December, 20, caused serious political changes in Spain. As a result of the election, two new state-wide-parties obtained seats in the Congress of Deputies: Podemos and Ciudadanos. That event did not only mean a transformation of the system previously dominated by two political parties into a multi-party system, but also – for the first time since 1977 – prevented the formation of a central government. On May 3, 2016, for the first time since the establishment of a democratic political system after the death of general Franco, the Spanish parliament was dissolved and the new election was not arranged upon the request of the prime minister but upon the decree of the king.

The changes outlined above did not only affect the balance of power in state parliaments, but they also influenced the mode of political competition and contributed to the introduction of new problems and concepts to public discussion. Those issues became the inspiration to research carried out by scholars and journalists in Poland, the Czech Republic and Spain. The choice of paper subjects was motivated by the research interests of project participants and the specificity of the analyzed political systems. Both in the case of Poland and Spain the analysis involved the attitudes of political parties to the main directions of foreign policies of the studied countries, as well as media (TV and SNS) accounts of parliamentary electoral campaigns. In addition, the Polish authors (Rafał Głajcar, Agnieszka Turska-Kawa and Waldemar Wojtasik) concentrated on selected aspects of presidential elections carried out as part of Polish political system. The Spanish ones (Ramón A. Feenstra, Maria Medina-Vicent and Sergio Príncipe Hermoso) mostly focused on parliamentary elections, because in Spain the head of state is not elected, and the office is closely connected with the issue of political leadership.

The book is divided into two sections, devoted to Poland and Spain. They are preceded by an article by Małgorzata Myśliwiec titled *Causes of Changes in Political Situation in Poland*

and Spain in 2015. The author introduces the readers into the subject of the book and hypothesizes that the main factor of the political environment that significantly influenced the changes is the economic one.

The section devoted to Polish issues begins with the article by Rafał Glajcar, Agnieszka Turska-Kawa and Waldemar Wojtasik, *Political and Personality Aspects of Creating Political Leadership in 2015 Presidential Election in Poland*. Its main goal is to discuss three aspects of creating political leadership in Polish presidential elections: institutional, party, and personal.

The next two articles are devoted to the concepts of selected political parties connected with the perception of Polish foreign policy. At the beginning of the paper *European Union in Electoral Programmes of Polish Political Parties in 2015* Tomasz Kubin analyzed data and indices illustrating Poland's economic situation in the first year of EU membership and before the 2015 election, as well as the attitudes of Polish society to the EU. This provided a synthetic context for the formulation of programme assumptions of Polish political parties with regard to the EU and Poland's position in it. Further, concepts concerning the EU present in political programmes of parties represented in the 8th term of the Sejm (since 2015) are presented. The analysis involves the following parties: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, *Law and Justice*), Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (PO, *Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland*), Kukiz'15, Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru (*Ryszard Petru's Modern Party*) and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL, *Polish Peasants' Party*). Sebastian Kubas in his article *Central and Eastern Europe in Electoral Programmes of Polish Political Parties in 2015* concentrated on the problem of parties' attitudes to issues connected with Central and Eastern Europe. He had four initial assumptions: First, the definition of the boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe in electoral programmes of Polish political parties is varied and unclear. Second, the range of political parties' interest in the area and problems of Central and Eastern Europe depends on their position on the political scene. Third, one of the most important issues related to Central and Eastern Europe is the role of Poland in the region. Fourth, considering Russia as the most powerful entity in this part of Europe is evident in party appeals. It must be remembered that the author analyzed programmes of political parties that won the representation in Polish parliament as a result of the 2015 election.

The authors of the next two articles in the Polish section gave attention to the problems of media coverage during the Polish parliamentary election campaign in 2015. The first of them was prepared by Mariusz Kolczyński and Dagmara Gluszek-Szafranec and is entitled *Television in the 2015 Electoral Campaign in Poland*. Its objective is to find out what led to the victory of the right wing and PiS taking over the power in Poland, what was the course of

the 2015 parliamentary campaign, and how it was different from the previous campaigns. The main goal of this text is to analyze the course of parliamentary electoral campaign on TV. Marek Mazur and Katarzyna Stelmach, in turn, in the article *Social Media in an Electoral Campaign: The Case of Polish Parliamentary Campaign in 2015* attempted to outline the role of social media in politicians' and political parties' electoral communication during the campaign.

The section devoted to Spanish problems begins with an article by Ramón A. Feenstra and Maria Medina-Vicent titled *Democracy, electoral behaviour and new political parties: reflecting on the evanescence and volatility of new forms of electoral participation*. Its authors first outlined the theoretical framework for the analyzed problem, and then they concentrated on changes that explain the behavior of Spanish voters in the 2015 parliamentary election and characterized the new parties that appeared on Spanish political scene.

The issue of Spanish parliamentary election is also discussed in the paper by Sergio Príncipe Hermoso, *Post crisis-2015 Elections in Spain. Four Candidates Run for Office in a Tense Country*. Its author concentrated on the analysis of four party leader candidates: Mariano Rajoy (PP), who was the only one to run for re-election, and three new ones: Pedro Sanchez (PSOE), Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) and Albert Rivera (Ciudadanos). The political, media and journalistic analysis, the beginnings, challenges, and context in which each politician devised their particular governance plan for Spain is analyzed.

The main concepts concerning Spanish foreign policy in the political programmes of parties competing in the parliamentary election of 2015 are presented in the article by María José Pérez del Pozo, *International questions in the electoral programmes of the Spanish political parties*, which is the third text devoted to Spanish affairs.

The last two texts – just like in the Polish section – focus on the media coverage of the 2015 parliamentary campaign. The first of them was written by Yolanda Sobero and is titled *General elections in Spain d 20-2105: television as battleground for votes*. The article points out that “never before has a Spanish election race been so focused on the small screen preferably on entertainment shows.” Its author focused on the analysis of the problem of TV coverage of the electoral campaign. Myriam Redondo and Ignacio Martín Granados in the paper titled *Irony in the World of politics: #20D in the Spanish social networks* presented the characteristics of the campaign in social media.

The book is the effect of collaboration between scholars from University of Silesia in Katowice, Silesian University in Opava, Complutense University of Madrid, and Jaume I

University in Castelló de la Plana, as well as the outstanding representatives of Spanish journalistic circle. Therefore, we hope that the volume will have many readers in the academic and media circles and among all those who are interested in the functioning of the studied political systems or public life in Poland and in Spain.

*Mariusz Kolczyński*

*Małgorzata Myśliwiec*

*María José Pérez del Pozo*

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Authors:            Mariusz Kolczyński  
                         Małgorzata Myśliwiec  
                         María José Pérez del Pozo

Referees:           Prof. dr hab. Anna Sroka  
                         Prof. dr hab. Rafał Riedel

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