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## **The *Political Leadership* Section of the Polish Political Science Association: Origins and Activity**

**Abstract:** One of the most important aspects of academic life is cooperation between researchers from different centres. Different levels of experience, approaches and paradigms enable researchers to observe the complete image of categories. The *Political Leadership* Section of the Polish Political Science Association has been formed during the Second Nationwide Congress of Political Science in Poznań (2012). The Association's Board has established it on February 7, 2013. Since that day the section integrates scholars from different universities interested in issues of political leadership, it supports development of this research field in Poland, it collects published monographs, editions and papers relevant to this field and it coordinates development of teaching standards in education on political leadership. The section's activity and its role in Polish academic community proves that this topic has become a significant aspect of social sciences in the country.

**Keywords:** *political leadership; leadership; research section; political science in Poland*

### **The Origins of the *Political Leadership* Section**

The research cooperation enables scholars to exchange ideas, circulate publications, train young researchers and integrate the community. This belief is the core of contemporary science. It stimulates discussions or constructive criticism and it mobilises scholars to work together. It has been proved by the International Political Science Association, the European Consortium for Political Research and national associations that organise specialised sections, committees and standing groups.

Since 2010 the Polish Political Science Association has started organising its sections. As a result in following years scholars have integrated themselves in groups focused on: Asian Studies (2011), Electoral Studies (2011), Political Parties and Party Systems (2011), International Relations (2012), Political Leadership (2013), Democracy Studies (2014), Public Policy and Administration (2015), Political Thought (2015), East Asian Studies (2015) and Research Methods and Tools (2016). Their organisation is regulated by the Association's Board.

The *Political Leadership* Section was formed in September 2012 during the Second Nationwide Congress of Political Science in Poznań, and it was formally established by the Board on February 7, 2013. Its first executive board includes Dr Maciej Hartliński as the chairman, Professor Jerzy Sielski, Dr Małgorzata Sikora-Gaca, Professor Bohdan Szklarski and Professor Przemysław Żukiewicz, while the section integrated 15 members. The section's scope includes: theory of political leadership, practices of political leadership, comparative studies, influence of political marketing and relationships between democracy and the quality of leadership. It inspires international cooperation of Polish scholars, as well as the development of education on political leadership in Poland (started by Professor Tadeusz Bodio at the University of Warsaw and Professor Szklarski at the Collegium Civitas).

### **Studies on *Political Leadership* in Poland**

The number of respected scholars has received their habilitation degree in the field of political leadership, including Professor Szklarski, Professor Agnieszka Kasińska-Metryka, Professor Filip Pierzchalski and Professor Żukiewicz. Doctoral degrees in this field has received Professor Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Dr Anna Kochnowska, Dr Agnieszka Zaręba, Dr Hartliński, Professor Żukiewicz and Dr Justyna Grażyna Otto.

There are monographs published in Poland that present valuable findings in this field (Bankowicz, 2007; Biernat, 2000; Hartliński, 2011; 2012; Kasińska-Metryka, 2012; Kortas, 2009; Pierzchalski, 2013b; Sielski, 2013; Szklarski, 2006; Wiatr, 2008; and Żukiewicz, 2009; 2011; 2012; 2013) and interesting collective works (Hartliński, 2013; Kasińska-Metryka, 2014; Piasecki, 2013; Rubisz & Zuba, 2004; Sielski & Czerwiński, 2008; Żukowski, 2008), including books edited by Professor Bodio (2001; 2010; 2012a; 2012b; 2014; Bodio & Jakubowski, 2010). Political leadership has also been a subject of numerous research papers published in respected journals (e.g. Marszałek-Kawa & Morin, 2014; Pierzchalski, 2013) and chapters published in other books.

The section supports the development of education on political leadership in Poland. Its goal is to increase the number of universities that offer this specialisation for its students, which is currently limited to two institutions (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin and University of Wrocław). As well as it helps with establishment of courses curricula on theory and practices of political leadership, local leadership and democratic leadership. Without the development of education, the impact of Polish scholars will still be limited, thus it has become the essential objective of the section.

### **The Activity of the *Political Leadership* Section**

The Section mobilises its members to design joint research projects and to identify common research interests. The result of cooperation is a book on political leadership which includes chapters written by 20 leading authors from Polish universities (Hartliński, 2013). It discusses theoretical framework, methodological approaches and various cases of political leadership. Moreover, it started the vivid academic debate that has led to next project on party leadership in the post-Communist states which integrates a number of section members (and researchers from other countries). Its objective is to realize a comparative study on the way how parties are lead in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to discuss if observations can be transformed into a theoretical model.

The Section was involved in organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops. Its members are actively participating in the academic life of Poland, they present research results and conclusions, and they exchange experience. Since its establishment in 2013, the *Political Leadership* Section of the Polish Political Science Association has become an important and visible part of the nation's academic community that contributes to the dynamic development of the state of Polish social sciences. The future opens new possibilities, including further integration of researchers in Poland and active involvement in research projects on the international level.

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