

***Meksyk w XXI wieku. Polityka – społeczeństwo
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***México en el siglo XXI. Política – sociedad – economía*,
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In recent years, Estados Unidos Mexicanos, or Mexico as we know this country's name in English, became a state, which attracted many scholars researching problems associated with the rule of one political party, the socio-economic reforms and internal security issues. Mexico is also the area of my research interests, and that is what prompted me to delve into the publication "Mexico in the XXI century".

The book, edited in Polish by Karol Derwich, is an interesting publication which synthetically describes the contemporary political, social and economic relations in Mexico. The publication is divided into three parts: the XXI century Mexico-Politics, Society and Economy, with analyses of each area.

The authors of the first part, Karol Derwich, Urszula Drzewicka and Edyta Chwiej, focused their attention on issues related to the process of democratization such as: assesment of Vicente Fox's presidency, the drug industry and Mexico's relations with other Latin American countries.

The democratization process has been analyzed in detail by Karol Derwich from the time of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 to the time of Vicente Fox's presidency in 2000–2006. The author cites a number of legislative acts to reform the functioning of the political system of Mexico at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It should be noted that democracy for Mexico is not new. After declaring independence in 1821, it began the process of shaping the state which culminated in Constitution of 1824 establishing the separation of powers and democratic institutions. Mexico's latest constitution from February 5, 1917 is a result of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Derwich describes the specifics of

the political system of Mexico known as authoritarian-bureaucratic and institutional. It is noted that the author devotes little space to the changes that were and are taking place in the area of citizen's rights. Mexican society is very diverse in terms of basic rights such as education, health care and participation in the electoral process. Events on the "Square of Three Cultures", Tlateloloco 1968, or uprising movement of Zapatistas in Chiapas, which led to an armed conflict with the government of President Zedillo, forced the authorities to carry out appropriate reforms. Continuation of the discussion of the process of democratization is assessment of the presidency of Vicente Fox, the first president of Mexico representing the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN). He is the first president who broke the monopoly of the party Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) which had ruled Mexico since the mid-30s of the twentieth century. The author, by evaluating the governments of Vicente Fox presented the circumstances in which there was a seizure of power by the PAN and the changes that have been made in internal and external policies of Mexico.

In the same part, Urszula Drzewiecka presents the problem of the criminality of drug world, its origin, the impact on the functioning of the political system and society in Mexico. The drug business in Mexico didn't appear in recent years, but its escalation occurred after the inauguration of the presidency of Felipe Calderón in 2006. The main subject of the analysis is the international cooperation between Mexico and the United States of America and the cultural and social dimensions of the phenomenon. It is difficult to agree with the author's assertion that "the drug industry in Mexico doesn't have an internal organization, and the political aspirations, to impose explicit rules of the game." Usually drug cartels in Mexico don't have direct influence on politics through the participation of their members in government institutions, as was the case with Pablo Escobar who was a member of the Colombian parliament, but certainly had political aspirations. Such aspirations were exhibited in actions of the cartel La Familia from the state of Michoacan, which had an impact on the election for the office of governor in 2007, and the terrorist attack made by the same cartel on September 15, 2008 in Morelia, during the celebration of Independence Day.

The last of the topics discussed in the first part is the cooperation of Mexico with Latin American countries. The author Edyta Chwiej analyzed treaties and agreements that Mexico has signed in recent years and discussed new projects of foreign policy of the country.

The topic of the second part of the publication is Mexican society. Anna Bartnik has focused her interest on the relations between Mexico and the United States of America on issues concerning Mexican emigration to the United States and the consequences of this phenomenon. The main thread is associated with illegal immigration, which was escalated in 2000, six years after the signing of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). Purchase of land from farmers by corporations has led to increase in the number of people unemployed and unable to provide basic necessities of life to their families. The only way out of the situation became illegal emigration to the United Sta-

tes. This is a very important issue because illegal immigration consists mostly of low social classes, uneducated people, not knowing the English language, not possessing advanced work skills and this is a source of tension between the Latino community and the “white America”.

Another area of interest is the multi-ethnicity of Mexico, presented by Anna Kaganiec-Kamienska. Linguistic and cultural diversity and government policies are one of the major internal problems. The visible change occurred in recent years, as evidenced by government programs to improve the situation of indigenous peoples and to ensure their decent growth. But this process will require goodwill from the both parties involved.

Another author, Tomasz Pindel, made a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the works of Mexican writers and the transformation that occurred from the mid-twentieth century to the early twenty-first century. Authors such as Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes undertook the difficult task of trying to look inside the Mexican soul. The new generation moved away from the formula of writing about Mexico and its culture, and focused instead on what is universal, not Mexican.

In the third part of the book, Aleksandra Grela and Edyta Chwiej analyzed the functioning of the economic system of Mexico and its transformations. The functioning of the maquiladoras, special economic zones in Mexico, is one of the causes of socio-economic changes which can be observed in recent years. Border area between Mexico and the United States is probably the best example of these changes. The effects of the creation of maquiladoras can be evaluated through the positive prism, like employment growth and improvement of the economic conditions of the population, as well as negatively – like the increase in acts of violence, especially against women working in the maquiladoras. NAFTA is undoubtedly the engine of economic growth and very important economic treaty shaping the international position of Mexico in the North American region. However, the long term effects of this cooperation may be the subject of discussion. The program of economic development of the state is a long process and is dependent largely on the political and social transformations.

In summary, the book is worthwhile reading, although one may wonder whether using the title “Mexico in the XXI century” is not an exaggeration. The authors, describing the political and socio-economic situation in Mexico of the XX century to the beginning of the XXI, focused mainly on what happened in the XX century, not the XXI century, which of course does not affect the reliability of the information contained in this publication. The book contains some inaccuracies and errors, for example, Lazaro Cardenas’ presidency was from 1934 to 1940, and not, as was written in the book, to 1948. However, in the end and taking all into consideration, I think that the book can certainly be an essential compendium of knowledge for those interested in the problems of modern Mexico.

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