

# ABSTRACT

## SCRUTINY AND FORMATION FUNCTIONS OF THE SEJMN IN SHAPING THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND (1997–2004)

Parliament is a key institution in the system of liberal democracy. There is an ongoing debate in political and scholarly thought about the extent to which parliament is in fact involved in the process of creating policies. In particular, this concerns such key and sensitive matters as foreign policy. This issue can be studied using the deductive method, which helps to formulate models of normative democracies, or the inductive method, which indicates how democracy functions in reality, but which brings with it the necessity of being cautious in generalizing the conclusions. The author has chosen the second method. The theoretical aim of the book is to explore, using the Republic of Poland as an example, the ability of parliament (including the opposition) to influence the foreign policy pursued by the government of a democratic country.

The parliament of a country primarily serves a legislative function, while shaping foreign policy is a natural competence of the executive. Since the law mainly regulates internal affairs, the influence of parliament on foreign policy is reflected predominantly in its functions of scrutiny and formation. The book deals with the issue of the parliament performing the scrutiny and formative functions in the process of shaping foreign policy in the key period of the history of the Third Republic of Poland, that is, the years 1997–2004. During that time, Poland achieved two of its fundamental political objectives formulated after the transformation of 1989: NATO and European Union memberships. It also took part in wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Research has shown that the influence of the Sejm upon shaping foreign policy is limited, which to some extent stems from the principle of rationalized parliamentarism, formulated in the Polish constitution of 1997. In the case of the competences to make the decision to involve the country in war, the influence of the Sejm has turned out to be lower than that laid down in constitutional regulations. The role of the Sejm manifests itself most clearly in the moment of the appointment of a new prime minister. However, the vote of no confidence in the minister of foreign affairs has ceased to be an effective instrument of enforcing political accountability by the Sejm. Consequently, it can be concluded that it is the government, and not the parliament, that is the main actor in the process of shaping the foreign policy of the Republic of Poland.

*transl. by Ewa Balcerzyk*