

Foreword

2018 was a special year for Poland. We celebrated the 100th anniversary of the revival of Polish statehood after 143 years of captivity. On 27 January 2018, we also celebrated the centenary of the Polish Geographical Society. The fact that the association of Polish geographers was established a few months before the Polish statehood was reborn inspired the Editors to reflect on the role of the state in the political, social and economic life of nations. When an independent Poland was forming, the state was a desirable entity, necessary for the realisation of national aspirations. The borders of this state had to be fought for militarily, often sacrificing lives to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the era of globalization, which in the 21st century became a leading trend in civilisation development all over the world, does a state still play the same role as before? This present volume No. 8 of the periodical “Studies in Political and Historical Geography” entitled *The role of the state in the era of globalization* attempts, through the texts of the invited Authors, to give at least a partial answer to this question.

In the very first article entitled *Do we need state and what for? The role of the state in modern World*, Marek Sobczykński, political geographer from the University of Lodz, attempts to show how the approach to the issue of statehood has changed in the history of mankind. It starts from presenting the variability of the definition of state starting from antiquity. It then focuses on a different understanding of the functions of the state and the contemporary differentiation of their implementation in different states of the world. This issue is illustrated by maps of the diversity of the world’s states in terms of democratisation, prosperity and social welfare, economic freedom and health. The author points out that not only politicians, but also poets and writers dealt with the issue of statehood, quoting examples from various historical periods and cultural circles of literary works that focused on the role of the state in social life. Finally, the author analyses the processes of functioning of quasi-states, i.e. geopolitical entities that proclaimed independence, but this fact was not accepted by the international community. The examples he mentions, mainly from the post-Soviet area, serve as an illustration to consider whether the existence of a sovereign state is necessary for society and for what purpose.

The issue of the importance of the state for the citizen is also the subject of the second article by Jan Kłós a philosopher from the Catholic University in Lublin entitled *The State – a necessity or an enemy?* This author also starts from the definition of the state, starting with Aristotle, to present against this background the historical process that led to the formation of a modern state. He then goes on to consider whether the state should be limited in its plenipotency or completely eliminated. Throughout the article, Jan Kłós supports his arguments with quotations from philosophers and political scientists dealing with the essence of the state. Using Poland as an example, the author analyses the relations between the state and society, reviewing this process over the course of several centuries. In conclusion, J. Kłós reflects on the relationship between the state and society, referring indirectly to the current discourse in Poland whether the state has the right to deeply interfere, even control social development or whether it should only serve and support grassroots processes.

Another article by Ryszard Żelichowski a political scientist from the Institute of Political Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw is entitled *Poles and Finns under Russian rule*. The author compares the process of approximately concurrent (1917–1918) gaining independence in two different states, Poland and Finland, liberating themselves from the same invader – Russia. Outlining the historical background very broadly, he shows the political and social processes, both similar and different, taking place in both states. He also takes up a personal theme by comparing the characters of two heroes of the struggle for independence, Carl Mannerheim and Józef Piłsudski. In conclusion, he raises the issue of the Russification of the two societies, stating that the tsarist government had hoped for a successful assimilation policy in Finland rather than in Poland, but had failed in both cases.

American political geographer William R. Stanley from the University of South Carolina in Columbia discusses the problem of the disintegration of states in the Middle East. In his article entitled *Syria's ordeal: A modern state's disintegration in an age of fake news and superpower regional rivalry*, he shows the process of social revolution in the Arab states of North Africa, the so-called Arab Spring and its impact on the social rebellion in Syria. Against this background, he draws attention to the role of the flow of information and the media, and in particular to the importance of fake news for the destruction of the state. He also addresses the problem of internationalisation of the conflict in Syria by showing all foreign actors who benefited from the disintegration of the state in Syria to pursue their imperial interests, which resulted in the formation of the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

An article by Zoltán Hajdú a Hungarian geographer from the Research Centre for Economic and Regional Studies of Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest entitled *A historical and politico-geographical analysis of Hungarian-Polish border before 1939 in the Hungarian historical geography* presents the process of variability of state borders in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular focusing on the relatively episodic existence of a common border between Poland and Hungary within just a few months of 1939. The author presents the process of shaping political borders in the long term, starting with the formation of Hungarian statehood in the 9th century. Polish-Hungarian relations for centuries were formed in a friendly and peaceful way, so the establishment of a common border was a kind of culmination, although politically and morally it was controversial, because it was supported by Nazi ideology and resulting from the looting of Czechoslovakia's territory by both countries.

The role of the state in shaping migration processes is raised in the study entitled *Challenges to the state policy towards migration processes in Poland* by Krystian Heffner and Brygida Solga, geographers from the University of Economics in Katowice and Silesian Institute in Opole. The authors start by discussing the migration policy of the Polish governments after 1900. Then they identify the migration challenges faced by Poland, paying attention to the impact of immigrants on our labour market. In the final part of the article they review some of the instruments of migration policy that the government is trying to use to implement it.

In the next article, *From the Adriatic to the Black Sea: The Italian economic and military expansion endeavour in the Balkan-Danube area*, Corrado Montagnoli from the University of Milan addressed the issue of fascist state propaganda on Italy's political and economic interests in the Balkans. The author analysed both the texts and cartographic material published in the Italian scientific journal "Geopolitica". It also shows how Italy, in its expansion towards the Black Sea, had to take into account the political and military allies of the axis states – the governments of Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria and their interests.

The same Italian magazine "Geopolitica" was used by Antonio Violante from the University of Milan in his article *The Baltic sea as the mediterranean of the North. The Baltic Region and Poland in the periodical "Geopolitica" (1939–1942)* to present a fascist point of view on the role of the Baltic Sea in the politics of Poland and the Baltic States. The author starts from the geopolitical significance of Poland's access to the sea in the interwar period. He then presents how the issue of the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact was reported in "Geopolitica", illustrating it with maps from this journal. The

author then reports on the opinions of Italian geopoliticians from the period of Germany's invasion of the USSR, also referring to the unification concepts of Central and Eastern Europe, including one by Józef Piłsudski.

Political geographer Marek Barwiński and historical geographer Łukasz Musiaka from the University of Lodz in their article *The Sikhs – religion and nation. Chosen political and social determinants of functioning* present an example of a nation aspiring to its own statehood but as a result of political arrangements finally divided by the Pakistani-Indian border. Starting from the historical origins of the Sikhs and their religious distinctiveness, they focus on the functioning of this minority in modern India and its economic success.

Robert Wieczorek from the Silesian Institute in Opole wrote an article entitled *Integration around regional development goals. Discourse concerning the European Social Fund utilization in Opolskie region*. The process of European integration was presented using the example of one Polish voivodeship. The author discussed the EU legal regulations concerning the functioning of European Social Fund, then presented the Polish regulations in this respect, followed by a presentation of the Communication Strategy of European Funds in Opolskie Voivodeship for years 2014–2020 and the role of the media in its popularisation in the Opole region.

Krystyna Krawiec-Złotkowska from Pomeranian Academy in Słupsk in her article entitled *NSZZ “Solidarity” notions for the state's role in social life. Their social and political roots and status in 3rd Republic of Poland* showed the impact of ideas propagated by the first in the communist countries free trade union “Solidarity” on the political and social life and economy of Poland after 1989. The authors also showed the influence of these ideas on other communist states, and their path to political and economic freedom.

The presented volume 8 of “Studies in Political and Historical Geography” closes with an article by the team of historical geographer Anna Majewska from the University of Lodz and activists of the regional movement from Northern Poland – Krzysztof A. Worobiec of The “Sadyba” Association for the Protection of the Cultural Landscape of Masuria in Kadzidłowo and Edyta Bugowska from The “Światowid” Center for European Meetings in Elbląg. The topic of the article is *Locality in the era of globalization. Carriers of the memory of historical landscapes – studies on the Evangelical cemeteries of the Masuria region (Poland)*. The text is a fruit of field research done as part of two research projects on old Evangelical cemeteries carried out by A. Majewska in the Masuria region. The aim of the article is to present the cultural heritage of disappearing religious and national minorities in the light of modern research methods of contemporary archaeology used to study the cemeteries in Pasym and Wilki.

The articles collected in volume 8 of “Studies in Political and Historical Geography” by authors from Italy, Hungary, the United States and Poland show the diversity of views on the role of the state in the contemporary world and a wide range of research undertaken, mainly in Europe, on the issue of the influence of state structures on the functioning of societies, including national minorities. The editors hope that the material presented in this volume will be an inspiring reading for further studies on the role of the state in the life of societies.

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