polish sociological review 1(173)'11
ISSN 1231 – 1413

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The State and the People: Relations Old and New*

Abstract: This article strives to assess the condition of the contemporary state. The author thinks that the contemporary state is more powerful than ever in history and that this power is strongly rooted in the wants of its citizens. The recent global economic crisis has legitimized the state even further. Although the contemporary state is increasingly polycentric and its structures are less and less hierarchic and transparent, the identity and integration of the political system are not in danger. The state's immense power is a serious threat to its citizens and to democracy. The processes of nationalization of societies are stronger than the processes of socialization of states. Hence one of the (widely understood) key problems of the West is how to preserve citizen autonomy. This autonomy is being increasingly threatened by various state agencies and the welfare state's typical clientism, which try to control each and every citizen. The usual response to this danger is to call for limitation of the state's role, for a minimal state, etc. This author thinks that such postulates are unrealistic, because citizens want the state to be a welfare state and because such a state is functional for democracy. The best response to the threat to individual autonomy and to democracy is the republican response: only the politically mobilized people can maintain an elementary level of state socialization and an essential degree of state segmentation, both of which create the necessary space for individual freedom.

Keywords: state; nation state; powerful state; welfare state; legitimization; the people; citizen; civil society.

Introduction

The main thesis of this article is this: the contemporary state is more powerful than ever in history and that is what people want more and more. It makes no sense to speak of the autonomy of the state, we can only speak of the autonomy of the market, society, Church, assemblies, etc. The state seems to be very present everywhere, albeit in increasingly refined, polymorphic and non-transparent ways. Other social entities located in public space have to fight for their separateness from the state.

Aristotle's opinion that "it is [man's] nature to live in a state"[1] is still valid. To this very day, it indicates the basic mechanism of individual socialization, which begins with precise distribution of individuals between states. This is what makes them citizens, that is, state-affiliated individuals. It is this state affiliation which is at the root of the legal definition of nationality (Jagielski 1998), and the contemporary international order is based on the distribution of people between states.

* Paper presented at the Plenary Session of the 14th Polish Sociological Congress, Kraków 2010.

[1] Whether or not *polis* can be understood as a state in this context is a matter of dispute. In my opinion, the whole context of the work from which this quotation is taken (*Politics*, book 1, 1253a) suggests that what Aristotle means is socialization in the state rather than the family, tribe or some nonpolitical society.

A state's citizens constitute its people. This definition is more akin to the Roman *populus* than the Greek *demos*. The Athenian *demos* was not a source of authority, it exercised authority in the democratic *polis*. The idea of a sovereign people as the source of state authority only emerged in the Middle Ages, when it competed with the principle that "all authority is from God" and was used in the supremacy dispute between the empire and the papacy (Canovan 2005: 35–39; Sartori 1987: 28—31).

From the perspective of interactionist sociology, the people as a source of legitimate authority and authority exercised for the good of the people is a typical social construct, whose development was heavily influenced by the role of state authority and its ideological apparatuses. The case of the Polish People's Republic is an excellent exemplification of this creative process. With the onset of the Polish People's Republic, the concept of the people-as-nation was substituted by the concept of the 'working people of towns and villages 'with the working class at its core. This people, a seemingly purely ideological notion, became a reality and spoke up as a sovereign more than once (first in 1956, and especially forcefully in 1980), then finally dismantled the political system of the state in which it was sovereign. In the context of his analysis of the role of utopias, Stanisław Ossowski gave an excellent account of the mechanism whereby such group identities are conferred. "Social reality," he wrote, "does not exist outside the sphere of thinking about reality. As far as this is concerned, the Marxist theory of the nature and historical role of the proletariat is one of the most spectacular examples. Counter to narrow interpretations of Marx's claim that existence determines consciousness, this theory played a major role in the development of the modern proletariat as a conscious social class. Who knows what the factory proletariat would be like today if this theory had not taught the worker to view himself and his comrades in a specific way" (Ossowski 1967: 184).

Never mind that the proletariat which Ossowski described no longer exists. What is important is that there was a time when it did exist and viewed itself as the core of the people in whose name authority was exercised. The way the authority of the communist party was legitimized contained a powerful load of de-legitimization. It was during working class revolts that the people were no longer "a reserve-bench-people" and became a republican people-in-action, politically mobilized social actors, both individual and collective.[2] Such a definition of the people is not exactly compatible with the principles of democracy. Democracy rejects the claims of even the most mobilized, educated and virtuous minorities to the right to constitute the people. In representative democracy, all the citizens constitute the people and it is this which legitimizes their demands to exercise sovereign authority. Here, the people are a legal institution, a pure abstraction. They have no claims on governance, even though such claims are ascribed to them.

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[2] In this context it is worth quoting the opinion of Margaret Canovan (2005: 136): "Of all recent cases of 'people power', the strongest claim to authenticity as a grass roots movement of the People belongs to the Polish 'Solidarity' movement that emerged unexpectedly in 1980. No sorcerer conjured or controlled those events, which seem to have been a source of astonishment even to those involved. One of the most striking features of the movement was its awe-inspiring scale: in its heyday, and in the teeth of official hostility, it mobilized ten million people out of a population of less than forty million."

In descriptive approaches to democracy, we need a new concept of the people. The people must be real somehow, must make their existence known, if only from time to time. Meanwhile, the people as a collective subject very seldom make themselves known. In everyday democratic practice, the people manifest themselves through an active minority, and the largest minority usually expresses the will of the people. Hence the people remain outside the state, so to say. They also seem to show little interest in the day-to-day development and maintenance of the state.

This level of abstraction enables us to address questions of practical importance. If we accept a moderately nominalistic definition of the people, i.e. we believe that it is a group of citizens, but also of collective actors with emergent properties, then we can legitimately enquire about the quality of the citizens, about their wants, and the people's aggregate will. So let us ask: what do people really want from the state? First and foremost, they want the state to exist.

The End of the State?

Surely no phrase in the social sciences is more hackneyed than "The end…" or "The decline…": *The End of History* (Fukuyama), *The Decline of the West* (Spengler), *The End of Man* (Derrida). Such ideas as *The End of Work* (Riffkin), *The End of Ideology* (Bell), the end of capitalism, religion, politics, the family, etc. pale in comparison. "Births" and "dawns" reinstate some balance, but ends and declines dominate the picture of social phenomena. Therefore, the idea of the end of the state, present already in classical Marxism, but now returning in a completely new context, comes as no surprise. Even if we discard this expression, it does not change the fact that something is happening to the state in general and the nation state in particular.

Before we ask what is changing, we must begin with the traditional understanding of the state, in the spirit of Jellinek and Weber. The state is a political organization of citizens living in a strictly bounded territory. It has a monopoly for legal coercion, internal sovereignty and sovereignty with respect to other states. In more modern terms, but still within the Weberian tradition, the state is described as a corporate agent that we can invest with identity (as long as there are people convinced that they belong to a specific state), interests, and the ability to act intentionally according to these interests—an ability which implies the existence of an institutionalized decision-making structure (Wendt 2006: 198–238; Wnuk-Lipiński 2005: 79–100). Therefore, the state has agency and is quite distinct from society: there is society and there is state.

This understanding of the state was questioned in the 1980s. In his *Risk Society*, Ulrich Beck (1986/2002) wrote that the state is no longer able to control the most important economic, social and political processes for which it is nominally responsible. And Helmut Willke, inspired by Luhman, refined this thought further: "The foundations for attributing special status to the state have collapsed. The state is a part of a heterogeneous whole—society, one of many social actors, at best—primus inter pares" (Willke 2007: 138). The architecture of contemporary societies has changed and authority has dispersed. Society seems to be absorbing the state and their very

opposition, once the foundation of the political sphere, is losing its cognitive applicability.

The most important aspect of the decline of the traditional state is its loss of legislative monopoly and the break of the defining relation between the state and law. Today the state emerges in response to very complicated, decentralized and depersonalized processes in which the sovereign people cannot be seen in any form. Grażyna Skąpska (2008: 60) wrote: "the legal order of contemporary societies is increasingly becoming a dynamic effect of spontaneous, bottom-up processes of self-regulation and negotiation." I agree. This is particularly obvious when we consider the European Union. EU laws are passed in a very complicated process in which a very important role is played, in addition to member state governments, the European Commission, and especially the bureaucracy in Brussels, by industrial and professional corporations, supranational interest groups, international and transnational organizations. Equally spectacular is the practical role of the European Court of Justice, because the norms laid out *expressis verbis* in the treaties are naturally very general and declarative. To complete the picture, we must point out that other laws and regulations also exist: international public and (more recently) criminal law, international economic arbitrage, local law, various other corporate laws and, above all, international human rights standards. The overlapping of all these different legal orders is a source of great confusion regarding the nature of law and methods of its application. This situation leads to what Skąpska (2008: 61) called semantic legal uncertainty, and it lends support to the thesis that the contemporary state has lost its legislative competencies.

Yet we do not cease to doubt. First, international law is still passed first and foremost through international negotiation and must be ratified before it can be enforced. More importantly, the processes of globalization and integration do not always weaken the state: they can reduce the state's impact at the national level while increasing it at the transnational level. In this seemingly unrestrained development of global rules of the game, large states in particular have much more to say. The interdependence principle applies to all actors in the global spectacle, including large states, but there is no symmetry here. The largest states gain a kind of meta-power, the capacity to affect the rules of rule-making, and they decide what is and what is not to be regulated. Finally, if we take a closer look at some laws which are allegedly passed and applied at a non-state level ("as if") (e.g. economic arbitrage, local law, the laws of professional self-governments), we shall see that the state is their ultimate warrant and executor. The self-regulation and self-reference (in Luhmann's sense) of some of these subsystems is spurious or applies only to ordinary situations, not crisis situations.

The Strength of the State in Crisis

The second basic dimension of the crisis of the contemporary state is its alleged complete loss of economic power. The financial, commercial and service markets have all gone global and beyond anyone's control, and the only available form of regulation is self-regulation via crises. "Capital has no nationality," "Markets are always right,"

"Money knows no frontiers"—these and dozens of similar slogans and opinions are supported by hundreds of research studies of linearly accelerating globalization and have led many to believe that the state is no more than a bubble, at least as far as the economy is concerned, and can only, at best, pretend to be in control.

The crisis experience triggered by the fall of Lehmann Brothers in 2008, whose depth and consequences are still unknown, compel us to treat such claims with caution. Just a few days after Lehmann's collapse the US administration launched a rescue kit worth 700 billion dollars. Banks received various forms of support, including guarantees and loans. In some cases the government simply took over their shares, leading to partial or complete nationalization. Companies which took advantage of this support had to accept the limitations imposed by the administration, particularly those concerning managerial salaries. The history of General Motors is very instructive in this context. Until recently, GM was the largest motorization concern in the world, with annual sales of nearly 200 billion dollars. At the beginning of the crisis GM received 19 billion dollars from the US government. This was not enough, so the government put the bankruptcy procedure in motion and bought 70 percent of the concern's shares for 50 billion dollars. This was blatant overnight nationalization. If we include other programs, we can see that the US administration spent over 1.5 trillion dollars in total to counteract the crisis.[3] Together, European governments spent a similar amount of euros. This is an incredible amount of money, not to be found in any treasury. It is virtual, state-generated money which reveals the fictitiousness of the market and shows how helpless even the largest companies are vis-à-vis the state. It used to be said that if something was good for General Electric, it was good for America, which I take to mean that the interests of the state were subordinated to the interests of huge capital. After the recent experiences Barack Obama seemed to have said to the presidents of General Motors: "I'm taking away your toys, because my electorate does not like what you are doing."

But another conclusion can also be drawn from the crisis: its suddenness and scale show how badly the order based on nation states has eroded, and so far no new political order capable of controlling global finance and economy has emerged. The reaction to the first stage of the crisis belonged in the nation state logic. Capital and enterprises regained their national colors, protectionist practices intensified and state boundaries were strengthened. The steps taken during the second stage of the crisis were equally traditional: the G-20 states convened at a summit meeting in April 2009 and agreed to strengthen the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as well as to increase developmental aid for the poorest countries, and promised to coordinate other funds to overcome the crisis. Note that these actions too are compatible with international and not transnational logic. They are traditional, because they are undertaken by the governments of nation states, not some new world meta-games.

It is impossible to say at present whether this reaction to the crisis, based on instruments which are at the disposal of the nation state and international organizations, will be sufficient. If it is, we will have to accept new ways of viewing globalization and

[3] All data after: Małkiewicz (2010: 134–173).

the role of the state, and admit that the reports of its death were greatly exaggerated. It would be in the spirit of Harold James (2010) who understands globalization as a cyclic historical process: globalization first gains momentum, then there is a crisis and a rapid slowdown or even reversal. The role of the state increases in times of de-globalization: societies force the state to adopt anti-migration and protectionist policies, there is universal clamor for state intervention and powerful governance to put an end to speculation and export of capital. The last great instance of de-globalization was the Great Depression of the 1930s. But, in order to demonstrate that social reactions to globalization and universalization are stable, James reminds us of the situation in the early sixteenth century, a time when globalization progressed rapidly due to the great geographical discoveries, and he quotes Martin Luther who said that

> (…) foreign trade, which brings from Calcutta and India and such places wares like costly silks, articles of gold, and spices—which minister only to ostentation but serve no useful purpose, and which drain away the money of land and people—would not be permitted if we had proper government and princes… God has cast us Germans off to such an extent that we have to fling our gold and silver into foreign lands and make the whole world rich, while we ourselves remain beggars (after: James, 2001: 8).

This cry for a powerful, wise government, serving its own people, not foreigners, has therefore been heard for centuries. And the people reward such governments, especially in times of crisis.

The Strength of the State in Ordinary Times

Compared with the institution's earlier history, the last century has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of tasks assigned to the state, especially in Europe. In addition to its traditional functions (i.e. defense of its territory against enemies, execution of the law, especially property law, and ensuring elementary communications infrastructure), the state began to be responsible for economic growth and the quality of life (in a very broad sense) of its citizens at all its stages. This responsibility (leaving aside for the moment the matter of its source) means the expansion of regulation in every major area of social life, beginning with the regulation of human biological reproduction, supervision of children's upbringing, strict control over the entire educational process, regulation of conditions of work and the labor market in general, guaranteeing retirement pensions, healthcare and everyday safety, helping the poor, organizing leisure time and assuring of the burial of the dead.

Another group of tasks of the state involves prevention of market dysfunction, i.e. direct state involvement in the production of goods and the redistribution of income. In particular, the state invests in high-risk sectors (e.g. research) or sectors ignored by the market for other reasons (e.g. major infrastructural investments). Keynes demonstrated that state activity may be economically effective, lead to economic growth and maintain social peace. Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a renewed faith in the market and a critique of Keynesian economics, but although the state has been withdrawing its ownership of economic enterprises, it has developed on a previ-

ously unknown scale mechanisms for the regulation and supervision of the economy, and hence of consumers and citizens. Company mergers and transactional prices are supervised within the frame of anti-monopoly law; traditional and electronic communications are supervised in the name of widely understood state and citizen security; banks and insurance, electronic media and the production of excise goods, especially alcohol and cigarettes, are also regulated; airspace and underground space—natural resources and even treasures buried by our ancestors—are all state-owned; hundreds of forms of activity require state permission and licensing; the state owns seas and oceans (except international waters), rivers, roads and (most) railway tracks.

The most frequently applied measure of state expansiveness is the ratio of public expenditure to the annual GNP. In 1913, estimated average public expenditure in the 10 most developed countries in the world was 12.5% of the GNP. This proportion had risen to 24% in 1937 (12 countries), to 29% in 1960 and to 45% in the next 30 years. The ratio of public expenditure to the GNP in Western Europe has been more or less stable since the mid-1990s (about 45%), but in France, Sweden and Denmark it exceeded 50% in 2008 (after: Hausner 2008: 73; Tarchalski 2009: 28–29). In 1996, several years after Poland's shift to market economy, the public expenditure to GNP ratio was 51%. It dropped to 42% 12 years later (Tarchalski, op. cit.) due to an increase in GNP and rationalization of public expenditure. These enormous sums are paid by the tax payer, but they are usually insufficient and states are now systematically in debt. Public debt in the USA is now nearly 15 trillion dollars and is oscillating around the annual GNP. Western Europe's total debt is even higher. Once again, this shows that this is virtual money—these debts are abstractions and it is wrong to think about the state budget the way we think about the household or company budget.

Of course whether the state is actually in control of certain areas or is only pretending to be in control is a legitimate question and one which is difficult to answer abstractly. Sometimes the state has the ultimate and obvious say in the matter. For example, in Poland the state really controls the condition of the main roads. But in other areas this control is a fiction, like in the case of the anti-abortion law in Poland. The difficulty to establish the actual range of state control over a particular area is an inherent feature of the contemporary state, with its lack of transparency of the political system and the increasing autonomy of its subsystems. But it has often been announced that the state was shrinking, when in fact it was merely being reorganized. For example, a frequent source of misunderstandings concerning the role of the state in Poland is the tendency to define territorial self-government as separate from, or even in opposition to the state. Meanwhile, territorial self-government is just one of the state's ways of functioning. The tendency to view the territorial self-government system as separate from the state, found not only among lay people, is actually a sign that the administrative reform has been successful.

The huge army of people the state directly and indirectly employs, and the speed with which the public sector is growing, are another sign of its power. And the source of people's income is one of the main sources of sociological distinctions. Mirosława Marody's distinction of "Private/Privatised Poland," "State Poland" and "Poland on the Dole" retains its explanatory power (Marody 2002). To illustrate this distinction

let me say that in 2009, 3 620 thousand people (i.e. 26% of all employees) worked in the public sector in the narrow sense, i.e. the public administration, army, police, education and health service (Central Statistical Office Yearbook). And if we include employees in state-controlled enterprises as well as old age and disability pensioners who receive social welfare benefits, we shall see that the number of people "fed" by the state is much higher than the number of people fed by the market.

There are many reasons for this dynamic development of the public sector and the public administration in particular. The most important and also the most general one is that the welfare state is functional for capitalism and democracy, especially in its social-democratic and corporatist version. The emergence of welfare citizenship saved the market, which otherwise could have been swept away by democratic, not Bolshevik means (Mann 1987; Burballett 1993). The welfare state is functional not only because of its ability to weaken redistribution conflicts, but also because it has agreed to carry the burden of training a qualified work force, caring for its health and keeping a reserve army of workers in good condition.

Very many theorists are heralding the demise of the welfare state, for different reasons. Zygmunt Bauman thinks that the welfare state is dying or already dead. It is no longer necessary from capital's point of view, because the latter has removed the nation state's limitations and transferred them to places where the costs of production can be minimized, especially the cost of labor. It is dying because it has fallen prey to its own success. The satisfied majority, molded by post-war prosperity, has learned to believe in its capacity to acquire privately the commodities which the state used to supply at an average level, and is now discarding it (Bauman 2006: 87–116). The income criterion as a condition of participation in state benefits is operating on a large scale. These benefits are addressed to the poorest citizens who are unable to satisfy their basic needs on the market. This is the minimal (liberal) welfare state and has little in common with the real welfare state. Ulrich Beck argues that the trans-nationalization of the economy, expressed for example in massive migrations, will inevitably lead to a collapse of national social security systems. And this is the crucial question: is the welfare state we know from Western European practice only possible in the conditions of the nation state?

This corresponds with another question: is democracy only possible in the conditions of the nation state? It is difficult to answer this question just yet, but there is certainly a powerful actor who is helping to maintain the welfare state and the democratic nation state: the people in the form of a civil nation (existing at least in some places). Nobody else is acting on behalf of the cosmopolitan project with equal determination.

What do the People Want?

"What the people want is good exactly because that's what they want" wrote Carl Schmitt (after Habermas 1998: 135). Well then, what sort of state do the people want? Let us assume, after Sartori, that by the people of the democratic state we

are going to understand the majority of citizens, whose rights are limited by those of minorities. This way we can simply ask the people what they want. The will of the people is the will of the majority of citizens, not their representatives and certainly not their spiritual leaders. This is where we say goodbye once and for all to the traditional romantic definition of the people.

Systematic empirical research in Poland suggests that Polish citizens' expectations of the state are enormous and amazingly stable despite the systemic transformation. It would be hard to think of a postulate addressed to the state which is not endorsed by the majority. A recent survey I conducted with my collaborators (2009) showed that the majority of respondents want the state to take care even of its citizens' morality. People's expectations concerning the state can be divided into four groups. The first group contains postulates to guarantee health care for everybody, houses for the poor and welfare benefits for the unemployed. Each of these postulates was endorsed by 90% of the Poles. These beliefs are so powerful that they are taken for granted. They are also very stable, as attested to by opinions concerning the following statement: the government should ensure that everybody who wants to work finds employment. In 1988, 70% of respondents definitely agreed with this statement; 65% definitely agreed in 1991; the acceptance dropped to 47% in 1997, only to increase again to 50% in later years. And if we include those whose acceptance is less extreme ("I agree"), we find that, despite the transformation, more than 80% of Poles have not changed their opinion that the state should guarantee employment for all.

The second group of expectations, only slightly less readily endorsed than the first group, consists of postulates concerning extensive state involvement in the economy and market control. In 1996, 80% of respondents demanded state assistance for industry; this acceptance increased to 90% in 2009 (probably in response to the crisis). An even more spectacular sign of the strength of statist attitudes is the postulate that the state should control prices: 66% of Polish citizens agreed with this statement in 1990, and 76% in 2009.

In the third group we gathered postulates to increase the power and coherence of the state as a community of citizens. Among the most popular demands in this group concern pronatalistic policies and steps to boost public morality. On the other hand, investing in the army is an idea which enjoys only moderate support. In general, the postulates in group three are endorsed much less eagerly, although over 70% of Poles accept them, albeit in varying degrees.

The Poles' acceptance for the postulates of the fourth group (concerning the participatory vision of the state) is similar. People want the state to consult its decisions with the citizens and to support associations. One indicator is optimistic, however. A guaranteed freedom of speech and the right to protest rank high in respondents' lists of expectations.[4] We also found that these expectations are class-related. Representatives of the upper class, whatever the employment sector, were much less willing to accept state intervention in the economy and had significantly lower expectations

[4] For an in-depth analysis of expectations of the state, based on research conducted by my collaborators, see: Bartkowski 2010.

concerning the state's social welfare responsibilities. Members of the lower class, also regardless of their employment sector, had much higher expectations as far as social welfare was concerned (Sadura 2010). Since the upper classes dominate economically and especially ideologically, it is doubtful whether the people will be able to defend their "compassionate society."

Witold Morawski analyzed the much larger 1997 PGSS survey (on the role of the government) and found that the principle "to each according to his/her needs," justifying large social transfers and state intervention, is very popular in Poland. The rival principle of allocation of goods, "to each according to his/her effort," or the "hard work" principle, is much less accepted (from 2 to 3 times less frequently) than in the USA and Western European countries, although the acceptance is gradually increasing (Morawski 2001: 149). The transformation has not changed what used to be called people's feeling of entitlement, but is now thought of as quite a sensible expectation addressed to the state from the social democratic perspective. It was Morawski (1998: 79) who pointed out a certain paradox: "The state," he wrote about Poland in the 1990s, "is becoming more and more overloaded, although (…) its activity in such areas as education, health care, ecology or research is still too limited." In other words, the reason why the state is overburdened is not only that people have high expectations and the state is working really hard. Part of the problem is that the state is inefficient.

But people have more important expectations of the state than the ones just mentioned. The people want law and order, they want safety. And that is what the state has always promised to guarantee. Time and again in history, it was enough to produce these slogans to win great popularity and even support for dictatorial solutions. Every democratic country's constitution foresees the eventuality of suspending democratic procedures to ensure order and widely understood safety. These expectations are also well-articulated in empirical research. In the 1997 PGSS survey, when respondents were asked to choose from among four political goals, "maintaining order in the country" definitely came first (50%), followed by "putting a stop to rising prices" (30%), "increasing people's influence on government decisions" (17%) and "protecting the freedom of speech" (4%). People do not easily change their opinions on such matters, so these results are probably still valid.

Beck and Grande (2007: 115) wrote: "States, no matter how overwhelming their power, are no longer able to fulfil their original promise to guarantee the security of the citizens."This is a controversial opinion. First, there are bankrupt states which are unable to do anything, and there are very weak states incapable of guaranteeing safety for their citizens. But there are very many states which have provided their citizens with a historically unprecedented level of safety, and even global risks, technological catastrophes and acts of terrorism have not affected the statistics which show that nowadays people live longer (even though they engage in very many risky behaviors), are less frequently beaten and robbed, live in better houses, eat better food and obtain state assistance when natural calamities strike. Generally speaking, states are becoming increasingly efficient in guaranteeing safety for their citizens, and contemporary European states (with just a few exceptions) have almost reached perfection in this

respect. Slightly more than 60 years ago, people murdered each other by the million in Europe; today in the European Union violence is taboo.

To sum up, the people want law and order and safety, and the nation state gives them what they want. This is not a Eurocentric opinion. Within the last decade or so, China has radically improved its citizens' so-called safety. The safety imperative determines the maintenance of the structures of a nation state. Of course there is no guarantee that the nation state will survive. The present police functions of the state may be fulfilled by other, supranational structures. But if this happens, it will be more difficult to legitimize the use of force.

One of the most important sources of the power of the nation state and its optimistic perspectives is the existence of the people forming a nation. In the past, states played a special role in the formation of nations, such as we know today. Nowadays it's the other way round: nations are crucial for the survival of states, especially because national identity is one of the strongest forms of collective identity. In its developed form, national identity contains a cultural component (identification with the naturalistically understood nation) and a political component (a sense of belonging to the state). A co-existence of these two identities—political and cultural—cannot be viewed as an anomaly. In practice, especially in Europe, we have a complex situation, where sometimes the civic component seems to be stronger, and other times the national component prevails, but often the two blend and become undistinguishable.

Everybody knows that national identity can be powerful, often ominously so. In ceremonial terms we can say that the 20th century was a century of nationalisms. We can also say (prematurely, mind you) that it was a century of the ultimate catastrophe of nationalisms. But we must also pay attention to the everyday, ordinary manifestations of national identities and their role in the reproduction of power relations. Power is still the basic instrument of political socialization and one of the most important instruments of mobilization and rationalization of control. This power results perhaps from the fact that common thinking, despite the efforts of the cosmopolites and the postmodernists, is unable to do away with the state and the nation as useful cognitive heuristic categories. The social sciences are also suffering from methodological nationalism, as Beck and Grande (2007) have recently lamented.

People are satisfied with their nation state forms of existence. Large-scale cross-national research conducted in 1995 (the National Identity Study, conducted in Poland within the PGSS framework) found that most people are proud of their country, glad to be its citizens, do not want to emigrate anywhere, consider their country to be their most important place on earth (more important than their town/village or region/province), and do not want others to come in large numbers (for a discussion of some of these findings, see Bokszański 2007: 136–167). They are also often convinced that "one must stand by one's country even if it is doing wrong"—this statement was particularly frequently endorsed by Russians, Bulgarians, Hungarians and Poles. The Eurobarometer surveys have systematically yielded similar results concerning the strength of identification with one's nation (Szawiel 2009: 487–489).

Enough about surveys. Let us turn to sport. National-state identifications manifest themselves extremely intensely in this area. Sport is becoming one of the most im-

portant forms of existence for nations and their states. This is somewhat paradoxical, because the organizers of sporting competitions led by the IOC, FIFA and UEFA are typical transnational organizations, not international ones. They belong to the cosmopolitan order, yet they glean enormous profits from maintaining of the national order.

States have their symbols: national anthems, flags, emblems and colors. They too participate in the process of consolidation of the national-state order, and are the means of institutionalization of patriotism and management of collective emotions. It is amazing how punitive the Poles' reactions to purely symbolic violation of their community can be. We found that nearly 20% of respondents endorsed the opinion that anyone who "publicly insulted the Polish nation, e.g. ridiculed its national anthem or stamped on the Polish flag" should "go to jail for a year and lose his/her public rights for 5 years" on returning home, and 28% of respondents thought they should lose their public rights. Only 3% thought that they should not suffer any consequences. In comparison, only 2% of respondents endorsed the opinion that people who withhold 5000 zlotys of taxes (quite a large sum in the ordinary tax payer's budget) should be sentenced to one year of (suspended) imprisonment.

Finally, people sometimes show their relation with the state in special ways such as grief, sadness or emotions. I think that the first reactions to the Smolensk catastrophe were a sign of activation of the civic nation. The emotions and the grief were a sign of experiencing the state as a whole, a human community which had just lost its supreme representative. Never mind that this reaction did not last long. A moment, a glimmer was enough to bring sociological tangibility to the civic nation.

Surely we could find a long list of similar situations in the history of other nations. Suffice it to recall the reactions of the American people to the events of 9/11. What I am saying is this: contemporary people are very emotionally attached to the nation state and its authorities. These are mass sentiments, not elite ones. The Poles are not immune to them. Never in all history has the range and depth of acceptance of the state been so large, although on the other hand we must also point out that Poles tend to identify with the state as a nation rather than a community of citizens. The January insurrection (1863), the Warsaw Uprising (1944)—they stirred the elites. The Second Republic (1918–1939) witnessed considerable progress in the nationalization of the Polish society, but this project did not have much impact on ordinary people. The project of the Polish People's Republic had other important inherent barriers to the development of intense identification with the state (these were mainly ideological and geopolitical), and hence it only partly succeeded in developing a civic nation. It was only in 1989 that really favorable historical conditions emerged in which the civic nation could develop and thrive.

The People in Action?

Theories of democracy present various ideas about how the people are to execute their authority and what postulates citizens are to put into practice. The basic line

of division is between republicanism and liberalism. In the republican approach, citizens are integrated with the political community like a part with a whole, should be constantly mobilized, well-informed and competent in community matters, care for the common good and put the common good over and above their own interests. When commenting on this approach, Habermas said that it leads to moral overload in citizens but is still better than the liberal approach, because only from the republican perspective is it possible to lay the foundations of a legitimate, contemporary state. The freely communicating people must produce laws and it is up to the administration (the state in the narrow sense) to safeguard this process.

In the liberal approach citizens are considered to be external with respect to the state (government) and to actively pursue their interests. The common good is simply the aggregate interests of the (majority of) citizens. The state is an instrumental good and its main function is to guarantee freedom and equal treatment to each and every individual. These are primary values. So citizens can be either active or inactive, act alone or through their representatives.

Whatever perspective we take, several practical questions remain: what minimal obligations must the people meet to ensure the reproduction of the democratic state? First, they must elect a government in free elections. In order to do so, they must show an interest in politics and have minimal political competencies and skills, allowing them to decide what they prefer. In general, the portrait of the Polish society is rather dismal in this respect: a) the lowest average turnout in parliamentary elections in Europe; b) negligible interest in politics; c) very poorly crystallized voting preferences; d) complete lack of interest in electoral campaigns and only a trace of participation in them. Besides, even those who are active vote ritualistically, i.e. they vote, but not because they accept the values and rules of democracy. Those who do not vote also rarely have an "ideological" explanation for their decision to stay at home.

My own research as well as a review of very many other studies have led me to the conclusion that no more than 30% of adult Poles meet standard voting requirements, and thus they cannot fully participate in this fundamental democratic procedure. What is more, there are no more than 20% of really good quality citizens, i.e. those who not only vote, but also understand what elections are all about, know what political parties are for, and definitely reject suggestions such as: "a good leader can do more for the country than the government or the parliament," or "one good and efficient political party would be quite enough in Poland" (in the 2007 PGSW survey 44% of respondents accepted this statement and only 17% definitely rejected it).

Yet democracy may survive despite the citizens' poor electoral involvement. And fortunately, the turnout of Poles is not dropping despite European trends to the contrary. Also, from time to time we observe mass actions which prove that they treat their voting rights very seriously. For example, during the last presidential election (2010) about 800 thousand certificates were issued entitling voters to vote away from home, even though it was quite an effort to obtain such a certificate.

Citizens influence the state directly (e.g. by voting) or indirectly. If their influence is to be really effective, they must associate in order to encourage the state to ensure goods that can only be produced at state level, or to defend freedoms the state is

violating. Only citizens who are organized, i.e. a structured people, can participate in the peculiar bargain which results in passing new laws. In a state ruled by law, argue the authors of *Democracy and the Rule of Law* (Maravall & Przeworski eds. 2003), legal norms are the expression of institutionalization of balances in a game played by organized social forces. However, once the norms come into existence, they also become an element of this balance and contribute to social stability. When all interests are well organized, the state is merely a playing field on which the game between social forces is played. This vision is based on American pluralism. It too places high demands on citizens, but not as high as republican visions of the altruistic citizen and the moral community.

Now to move to the empirical level: in countries where a civil society exists, its condition is causing widespread worry. Civil involvement is waning everywhere. This process is particularly evident in decreasing association membership (Putnam 2000). The situation in Poland is dreadful. The country lags behind all or nearly all other European countries as far as membership in all sorts of associations is concerned (Jasińska-Kania & Marody 2002; Domański 2009). Poles have a particular aversion to political associations and the dominant attitude toward political parties is indifferent or hostile. But are new forms of associating for the sake of collective action not emerging? Forms which are replacing old well-institutionalized associations? I am thinking in particular of various new forms of organized influence on the state.

The Internet is one good place to look. Within just a few days, an almost entirely unknown young man managed to mobilize many thousands of people via the Internet to take part in a political demonstration in Warsaw. There are many other examples of using the Internet to mobilize people to undertake real political action. In this context it is worth considering the following question: if the costs of collective action can be as low as in the above-mentioned example, then why is the political world so stable, inhabited by small old parties and old politicians? One would think that when the cost is negligible, traditional barriers to self-organization associated with the parasitizing of collective goods should no longer be important. We should be witnessing a literal explosion of social and political initiatives, demonstrations, online political networks, etc., yet nothing of the sort is happening on a larger scale. There may be a number of reasons: perhaps a) the cost of collective action, despite the Internet, is not as low as we think; b) incidental mobilization leads nowhere; c) people in general feel that their opinions and political preferences are being represented in the public sphere by the old actors; d) the Internet attracts the young and satisfied, who are not often moved and mobilized by political issues, etc. We could go on and on about why the Internet has still not become an instrument by means of which the people gain structure and the people in reserve become the people in action.

Various examples of collective action show that people only organize spontaneously, quickly and autonomously around a small number of issues—issues which are socially conspicuous, "easy" but not necessarily socially significant. The simple democratic mechanism does not guarantee that really important issues will be submitted to public judgment either. The solution suggested by the democratic elitists—

that it is enough if people choose their representatives then mind their own business (Schumpeter in particular)—is hard to accept when we are observing the degradation of the political significance of elected bodies. "Those whom we have elected have no power. Those who have power are not the ones we elected"—this slogan from a student demonstration quoted by Beck (2005: 14) seems to be a good reflection of the situation in contemporary democracies. Hence the people's capacity to interfere with current political processes must remain one of democracy's important postulates.

The situation in Poland proves that citizens are capable of meeting even the most exacting demands of deliberative democracy. They are able to take initiative, submit new parliamentary bills by means of the so-called people's initiative procedure, and see that they are passed. They are able to do so not only incidentally. They can impeach inefficient city presidents in referendums. Ever since the institution of people's initiative was introduced (in 1999), 14 bills, supported by at least 100 000 citizens each, have been submitted to the parliament. Most of these initiatives were unsuccessful. The parliament rejected twice the people's initiative to make the Epiphany (January 6th) a state holiday. Nine hundred thousand citizens signed the second petition, a really impressive number. But 9 people's initiatives managed to succeed in the parliament, e.g. in the case of the reinstatement of the Alimony Fund. A genuine social movement developed to support this initiative. Some manifestations of local democracy can be even more impressive. Since 2002, there have been nearly 200 referendums concerning the impeachment of local self-government officials. In order to organize a referendum, the initiative has to be supported by at least 10% of the inhabitants of the district, town or county in question. This is quite a substantial number considering that, for obvious reasons, the local authorities do their best to stop such initiatives. Most referendums are eventually declared invalid due to insufficient turnout. Yet 27 of the referendums were valid and in 26 cases they led to the impeachment local leaders, mayors or presidents. The impeachment of the president of the city of Łódź is an excellent example of the people in action. Even those referendums which were eventually declared invalid due to insufficient turnout can regulate political conflict successfully, because in fact they too are conclusive. The fact that behind every successful initiative stood organized social interests, various associations or even political parties, should not serve as an argument against those elements of direct democracy. Spontaneous democracy would be a very bad idea.

There is still another very important channel by means of which the people can have influence on the state—sociological surveys. No matter how ruthlessly politicians ridicule them, and no matter how many genuine shortcomings they have, civic preferences aggregated by means of public opinion polls have become part of the political process. In this sense the people influence the state. Public opinion polls contribute to an even greater extent to the shaping of people's preferences and therefore help to manage them. In this place we can merely signal the complicated and multifaceted role of surveys in democracy. For a more detailed discussion I must refer readers to the literature (especially Sułek 2001; Sitek 1995).

Concluding Remarks

What I have presented is almost an apotheosis of the nation state and a diagnosis suggesting that it is becoming increasingly powerful and ubiquitous. This is not to say that governments or any other hierarchical and well-defined power structures are gaining importance. State power is becoming dispersed and objectively polycentric, but not to the extent that its identity is at risk or the political system is disintegrating. The field of power also varies: certain areas are being deregulated, but others are becoming increasingly controlled. This even applies to tasks one would think were central for the state: for example, when Poland decided against the republican model of the army (conscription), the state lost its exclusive control over hundreds of thousands of young men.

Contemporary states have also learned to manage legitimization deficits which—according to Habermas's old thesis—are inevitable in the face of such numerous tasks and in a democracy which allows claims to be articulated and aggregated. People want the nation state and they will balk at the powerful tendency toward globalization and the increasing fuzziness of the nation state. Of course, although this is what people want, it does not necessarily mean that the nation state will live forever. But for the time being it is a source of the nation state's vitality.

Finally, let me ask a general question concerning the diagnosis of the power of the state: is the state becoming increasingly socialized or is society becoming increasingly nationalized? It seems to me that so far nationalization of society is the more powerful process or, to put it another way, society is being colonized by the state. This proposition remains valid even when we accept the idea that societies are becoming increasingly individualized. Individuals are being dragged out of the community and confronted with the state. This is why one of the West's key problems is how to rescue citizen autonomy, which is being particularly threatened by the increasingly total control of each and every citizen by various state agencies and by clientism. A typical response to this threat is to postulate limiting the state and to produce such liberal slogans as "minimum state," etc. These demands are unrealistic. The welfare state is functional for democracy. The proper answer to such dangers is republican: only the politically mobilized people can maintain an elementary level of socialization of the state and its essential degree of segmentation.

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