

## **NEW POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**

**Jakub Potulski**, University of Gdansk, Department of Political Science, 4 Bażyńskiego str., 80-952 Gdansk, Poland e-mail: wnsjp@univ.gda.pl

**Abstract:** Contemporary world is changing at an incredibly fast pace. IT revolution and globalization processes have led to a deep transformation of our social life and the change of relations between human activity and space in which this activity takes place. Growing correlation on a global scale, mutual conditioning of what is global (external) and what is local (internal), high mobility of people, capital, ideas flowing freely on a global scale affect the increasing permeability of borders, which to a lesser extent perform their functions. Political geography, which as a scientific discipline focusing on the spatial aspects of human activity, must find an answer to the question how to analyze spatial systems in their relation to power in the world where majority of processes assumes global character, spatial distances in their current meaning lose their importance, and human activity is often separated and independent from a specific location in space. In the submitted article the author argues that political geography has undergone deep changes that create a “new political geography”.

**Keywords:** humanistic geography, globalization, IT revolution, geopolitics, new political geography.

Space constitutes one of the central elements of our life and experience. We live in space and we affect it and it affects us. Our life is rooted in space which forms an inseparable context of our social activity. Each society and each individual develops in a defined geographical area which directly or indirectly provides objective conditions for their existence. Geographical factors have always constituted elementary basis and framework for human development. Individuals and social

institutions do not develop in special vacuum and physical elements of a human surrounding form the foundation creating an individual together with his individual and social activity. Localizing in space shapes our life situation to a great extent. Therefore, one of the most crucial political sciences is geography that is knowledge of space in which social actors perform.

Geography is characterized through analysis of the world from a special perspective. Historians perceive the world temporarily or chronologically, economists or political scientists look at it from the perspective of social institutions and structures; however, geographers observe it from special perspective in which human activity occurs. Geographers also examine natural world, 'physical' surrounding of man, conducting the research on glaciers, mountains, deserts, weather, and climate. Geographers also examine social world, ranging from regional planning of the cities to constituting borders between the countries. Moreover, geographers are concerned with studying complicated relations between human societies and their natural environment (de Blij 2007: 5-7; Lisowski 2005: 27; Jędrzejczak 2001: 13). That is why geography can be perceived as science about space where social activity takes place. Analyzing and studying space one can deduct that it constitutes one of the pillars of scientific knowledge of a man. A significant role of space in the life of a man originates from the fact that this is the factor which we encounter every day. Space affects human consciousness which is reflected in displays of social life. One of the classical scholars of sociology Emil Durkheim indicated that social life proceeds on the basis defined by size and form. This basis is composed of masses of individuals forming society, a way of their location in the world, character and the structure of any kinds of things which affect the collective relations. Depending on whether the population is more or less numerous, depending on whether it gathers around the cities or scatters in the countryside, whether space taken by society is smaller or greater, depending on whether it concentrates in cities or scatters in the countryside, whether space taken by a population is more or less vast, depending on borders which surround it and roads which cross it, depending on all these factors and some other – one social background differs from

another. The constitution of the background directly or indirectly affects all other social phenomena, similarly to mental phenomena, which maintain direct or indirect relation with the state of a brain of an individual.

Space of human activity is of two-fold character – on the one hand, it exists as a natural environment, shaped in a particular way as a result of evolution (natural, geographical space), but on the other hand it exists as a man-made creation, anthropogenic, cultural and social, and thus created by individuals, groups, and human communities (social and cultural space). Political space, where political activities occur, can be considered as one of the forms of social space that is created by humans and equipped with symbols and values. Politics as social activity of a man is strongly rooted in space. Significance of geographical environment for the human activity (also for the political activity) causes that great value is attributed to geography, which as science about human space is an important factor of attitudes, behaviour or human activities; a man cannot exist outside of nature, he is subject to its influence and transforms it (Chodubski 2004: 61). Politics as a form of social activity of a man is connected with specific geographical space and its features. Geographical space is always a place for events and political phenomena. Location as well as strong and dynamically changing territorial diversity is a characteristic feature of political events. Therefore, analysis of special conditionings of these processes is a crucial element of recognition of the mechanisms of political phenomena. This relations are versatile and often underestimated although the surrounding space constitutes one of the most essential parameters of our life which we encounter every day.

Geography, taking interest in a spatial arrangement of certain phenomena and objects on the Earth, developed a few specific scientific disciplines dealing with facts and conditions essential for political process (political and economic geography). Economic geography focuses on spatial environment, conditioning of business activity and its environmental effects. However, political geography examines spatial phenomena of conditioning political processes, the impact of natural lay of the Earth on these processes and vice versa. It is thought that a complex explanation of the

phenomenon of social life may be reached only due to combination of problems of spatial structure, political processes, and economic systems (Short 2003: 1).

Traditional area falling under interest of geography – mutual relations between people and natural environment, people and space, people and places – cannot be considered in isolation from political circumstances. Therefore, within the framework of geography, political geography formed as sub-discipline of geography which concentrates on territorial research of political phenomena. The territorial research of political phenomena has been attracting attention since Ancient times. Works of Greek scholars as Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle or Strabo were a proof of their interest in combination of knowledge of historical and political processes with ethnological and geographical descriptions. At the time of formation of the modern science knowledge of relations between spatial phenomena with political processes gradually gained some autonomy and it started to be defined as political geography or geopolitics.

Political geography was formed at special time, i.e. it was connected with formation of so-called modern societies. At the Age of Enlightenment, attempts of semantic, scientific reflection were undertaken; they concerned with relations between an individual and society, and the surrounding geographical environment, which caused an unusual revival of scientific research in 19<sup>th</sup> century, development of particular disciplines of this science and formation of a more specific area of research. Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) had the greatest influence on the process of establishment of political geography as individual discipline. Ratzel was a geographer, biologist and chemist – professor of the university in Leipzig. His works greatly affected geographical research and he is commonly recognized as an founder of political geography and geopolitics. Ratzel's political ideas originated mainly from his conception of a man presented in his work *Antropogeographie* (1892). For German scholar it was a mere variant of matter, which similarly to other organisms is subject to the law of evolution existing in the nature based on the principle of a struggle for survival. A man depends on the environment to the same extent as animals, plants; consciousness and human activity, despite the pretence of independence, are determined

by geographical environment. Ratzel's anthropogeography based its approach to a man upon the idea that humanity is of the same geographical character as for example plant cover or animal world. Therefore, a man should be considered mainly as a biological being belonging to the Earth materially and physically; a being that is "a phenomenon of the Earth's life", its product (Jędrzejczyk 2001: 50). Ratzel's notion of political geography was also settled in the notion of anthropogeography. His work *Politische Geographie* (1897) was above all devoted to the analysis of the country and its relation with space, geographical position, and borders. Being under the influence of Darwinian and social notions, Ratzel perceived the country as one of the forms of spreading life on the Earth, which is subject to the same laws as the whole nature. Ratzel's political geography in whole was devoted to the analysis of a country in its spatial aspect. According to Ratzel, space (territory) was one of physical coordinates on the basis of which the study of political phenomena should be carried out. The ideas of Friedrich Ratzel affected the extensive development of political geography as a specific research discipline. Ratzel's tradition caused that consideration from the field of political geography concentrated on the country as the most important institution organizing political life of people's communities. Therefore, one may assume that the basic object of political and geographical analysis is comprised by a country, its location, parameters, configuration of its territory, administrative division, economic organisation, demographic and military potential, etc. It is noteworthy that the discipline's focus on the country results from the fact that it plays an important role in the management of political processes; it defines its organizational structure, territorial division, infrastructure, and ways of utilisation of natural resources. Therefore, political geography, in its classic form, dealt with great territories – most often with the whole countries, their political and geographical dissimilarity and mutual relations (Baczwarow, Suliborski 2003: 51).

Despite the fact that research made by political geographers was concentrated on the country, the subject matter of this discipline was and is a dynamic one undergoing changes together with the appearance of new political problems, sources of information and techniques of analysis. In expert

literature of the subject it is noticeable that political geography has undergone a few characteristic stages in its development. The first stage: from the end of the 1890s (from publishing of Ratzel's *Political Geography*) to the outbreak of World War I. During this period the research on the field of political geography was determined by social and Darwinian ideas, and focused on analysis on the country and the problem of political borders. At that time, classic works on the field of political geography by Ratzel, Vidal de la Blache, Rudolf Kjellen or Halford Mackinder were created. The second stage falling to the inter-war period (from the 1920s to the 1940s) was characterised by the growth of political geography in its significance, and it was its 'golden period' of popularity. Political geographers such as Isaiah Bowman from the USA or Eugeniusz Romer from Poland became close advisers of politicians. Research in the field of political geography was focused not only on the country but also on broader, global systems consisting of many countries (macro and meso level of analysis). During the interwar period political geography and geopolitics were treated as an essential element of territorial and political strategy of the organization of a society. Country was still perceived as a leading political actor competing with other countries about the territory and the access to rare resources. The third stage of the development of political geography (from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s) was characterised by the decrease in the dynamics of the research in the field of political geography. Despite numerous changes on the world map connected with the decolonization processes, the international situation was stable, dominated by the two-bloc system. During this period domination of scientific, philosophical and methodological orientations, tendency to research differentiation as well as the containment of the environment of political geographers were not conducive to the research in the field of political geography (Колосов, Мироненко 2002, : 245-248).

Modern stage of the development of political geography is connected with the changes that occurred within the framework of this discipline research at the end of the 1970s. So-called new political geography started to be formed then and it differed from the classic one taking philosophical and methodological assumptions and range of problems into consideration. Domination of anti-scientist (humanistic) trends

is one of the most important elements of a gradual evolution of political geography. Humanistic geography postulated that geographical space should be studied together with its 'humanistic factor', so in the same manner as it is experienced by people. Within the framework of this notion the following is assumed: there is no commonly experienced, objective space in which people move. In human experience, both in individual and collective experience, there is a variety of space qualitatively different, limited, and changeable, and at the same time positively and negatively assessed (Jędrzejczak, 2001: 90-91). Humanistic geography has undertaken research on human activity and interactions between a man and his environment as a basic variable influencing organization of a society as well as activities and behaviour of social units (Lisowski 2005: 31).

In the 1970s, within the framework of political geography there was a change in dominant methodological approaches, which meant an increase in the interest in a man and his activity, and decrease in the interest in 'hard' subject-matter for the benefit of 'soft' problems connected with 'social creation of space' and so-called social space. French geographers, especially Henri Lefebvre and Yves Lacoste, contributed to humanistic turn- point. Henri Lefebvre, in his study paid an attention to the same process of creating space and its participation in reproduction of social relations and experiencing the space by its users. His work *La production de l'espace* of 1974 became one of the most significant works that contributed to development of humanistic geography. In the 1970s, Yves Lacoste made an attempt to renew and re-orientate French geography and geographical analysis of political phenomena. One of the elements of Lacoste's academic activity was an attempt to gather political geographers around the magazine 'Herodote' which he founded. The authors connected with 'Herodote' recognized that any geographical and social space is shaped and transformed by people. They accepted that the main aim of geography was analysis of human activity and its influence on formation of the space in which human societies and activities were located (Parker 1994: 119). The importance of 'Herodote' resulted from the fact that the scholars gathered around this magazine rejected Eurocentric and country-centric research

orientation for the benefit of regional, ecological research or social movements. Owing to this, within the framework of political geography regional political geography (micro-level analysis) started to emerge rapidly and it focused on the analysis of sequential political problems and their conditioning – e.g. regional identity, problems of social spatial segregation, motives of political choices and political conflicts, internal administrative divisions, social and political relations in border zones, etc. The ideas of French scholars affected the whole society of political geographers and in the 1980s the idea of ‘new political geography’ became an extraordinarily popular.

At the turn of 1980s and 1990s, another important turn-point occurred within the framework of political geography. It was connected with the IT revolution and progressive process of globalisation as well as with creation of global economic, political and social space. Globalisation and IT revolution contributed to limitation of the country’s control over space. All three elements of sovereignty of the country were limited – political, economic and cultural – and moreover, globalisation processes contributed to the modification of the relations between the three constituent elements of a modern country and its international environment: borders, population and authority. The post-modern era is also characterised by new spatial organization of political life. Liberalisation of the international environment connected with abolishment of the present economic, social and political barriers have caused that borders became more ‘permeable’ facilitating free movement of goods, people and information. Creation of structures and mechanisms of managing social life on a global scale has become a crucial element of political path of globalisation. Alongside with an increase in global interdependence, erosion of sovereignty and possibility of the institution of a nation -state proceed. It brings about a growing importance of ‘global regulations’ created outside the country within the framework of international institutions such as ONZ, WTO, IMF, World Bank or G-8 and G-20. Furthermore, in the sphere of solving international and local problems non-state entities have been activated. They require universal rules of coordination and control in order to improve effectiveness and activity harmonisation. Integration processes have been recognised as the most effective way of solution and regulation



of many problems, first and foremost economic problems. It has been recognised that in the period of globalisation regional integration is the best way conducive to the challenges of modern world. As a result of these processes in a global interdependent world a greater role in the sphere of organization of social, political and economic life started to fall on macro regions that are political and economic systems comprising many countries

Globalisation processes have caused that the present cognitive categories of political geography, which originated in the world of primacy of modern nation-state, efficient borders, clear sovereignty and territorial identity, to some extent have become inadequate for understanding of the modern world and their application did not allow explanation of the occurring phenomena. As a result of globalisation processes, which accelerated especially in the 1990s, the world has gradually become more interdependent and 'open', and borders have started to lose their functions as a barrier defining space of a sovereign nation- state and limiting flow of financial resources, goods, migration of people and also cultural and political influences. Changes occurring in the international space provoked researchers to ask questions concerning the subject-matter of political geography and the method of its analysis. New political geography started to be formed in a situation where traditional categories from the scope of political geography such as space, location, borders started to lose their importance. Characteristic feature of globalisation is deterritorialization of some phenomena and social processes which means that globalisation launches bonds and interactions relatively separated from a specific location, and owing to this specific trans-national economic, social and political space is created.

Transformation which the world has been undergoing now requires change in the research priorities, methods, means, notions and categories. It requires establishment of new methods of analysis of rules of the international environment development which would include world globalisation, IT revolution and other civilisation megatrends. Awareness of the necessity to adapt geography to the pace of the changes occurring in the world has caused that people started to pay attention to the fact that 'globalisation needs a

geography' more and more often, which would prove a new spatial structure of the world, and thus crystallise new cultural, economic, political and social lines of division (Murray 2005: 7-8; Taylor, Watts, Johnston 2002a: 9). The attention was drawn to the fact that globalisation is a process comprising the whole world but it is not a homogeneous process and its influence is diverse depending on the region of the world. There are some territories and societies which have been included into global space but there are also some regions and people who are marginalised and excluded. Describing the phenomena and processes of globalisation, changes occurring in the global space and spatial diversity of globalisation should become an objective of 'the geography of global changes', which would analyze changes and transformations occurring in the global space examining geo-economic, geopolitical, geo-social and also geo-environmental changes (Taylor, Watts, Johnston 2002b: 443-452). 'Geography of global changes' and 'geography of globalisation' have become one of the most important field of research of 'new political geography' and such works as *Geographies of globalisation* (W.E. Murray, London-New York 2009) and *Geographies of globalisation occurred* on the publishing market. *A critical introduction* (A. Herod London-New York 2009) appeared. The authors made an attempt to analyze the changes occurring in the global space and show the way in which local (macro) levels, national (meso) levels and global (macro) levels permeate into a new reality often breaking or modifying the present divisions and borders.

Progressing globalisation of the world caused return of political geographers to the analysis on macro regional and global level. Bringing back geopolitical subject-matter to the *mainstream* academic discussions was a characteristic element of a new political geography connected with transformations of the international environment and return to the macro-level analyses. Geopolitics, which was, in the post-war period, associated with an ideological expansion of Nazi Germany, has started to regain its present significance since the 1970s. Geopolitics underwent a real renaissance in the 1990s. It was connected with the fall of the Eastern Block and dissolution of the USSR. These events brought significant changes to the international order and dominated bipolar East-West rivalry.

In the post-Cold War international environment formed at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century a change in composition of the system occurred – new countries and new non-state actors of the international relations appeared; change of structure of the system, modification of diverse international networks connecting all the subjects as well as change of the functions carried out by the elements of this system. Due to the occurring changes there was a need to define the reality in which we live from the beginning. Therefore, along with the fall of the present order, geopolitics as a construction used to describe and forecast the international relations in a spatial aspect, started to experience prosperity. Demand for a ‘geopolitical imagination’ appeared and it would enable description of the occurring changes and to analyse new emerging political order. It was common to use geopolitical rhetorics in political discussions as well as in a jargon. An Italian geopolitician Carlo Jean wrote that the popularity of geopolitics in the recent years was caused by many factors: the end of the world’s ideology, replacing the Yaltan order with lack of order, destroying blocks, greater autonomy of the average powers caused by the fragmentation of the international system, so-called balkanization of the world, and the influence of new technologies on the international system, etc (see Jean 2003: 34-35). However, regardless of the number of the reasons, the renaissance of geopolitics and revival of geopolitical terminology have become one of the most characteristic elements of ‘new political geography’.

Research works analysing the influence of modern technologies and IT revolution on spatial organization of the modern world have become an inspiration for political geography. It is commonly accepted that for a modern stage of human development ‘narrowing of time and space’ is an effect of new technologies entangling the world with communication and telecommunication networks creating a dense network of channels which are used for people to travel and information to move all around the world. At the time when electronic means of communication exist, the territorial distances have lost their previous significance, which is believed to bring about deterritorization of human activity and experience which to a lesser extent is connected with a specific spatial location. Modern technologies ‘take away’ social activities from a located

context and they organize social relations on distances in time and space. Anthony Giddens wrote that in the conditions of the late modernity place become more of a phantasmagoria which means that the place of action (social activity) is under social influence which is remote from them and is created by them (Giddens 2008:13).

New communication technologies strongly affect our experience of space and time making a physical distance and time passing shorter or 'tighter' as far as it is associated with the activities concerning communication (Barney 2008: 76). In a society dominated by the flow of information and images, where spreading of information technology instantly enables the transfer of a great amount of information resources at a distance, human experience of time and space, as naturally localized, fades away. The compulsion of a place does not limit the growing scope of human activity expressed in transferring the information by means of global network of media.

It was Manuel Castells who put an emphasis on this aspect of the processes of deterritorialization, and he assumed that the starting point to analyse complexity and changes of the modern world should be an IT revolution. New information and communication technologies create a global electronic network, by means of which information is instantly transferred from one part of the world to another almost without any control of the bureaucratic machinery of a state. Castells is an author of one of the most interesting theories aiming at definition of the character of changes occurring in the modern world. In his works, he concentrated on phenomenon which he calls a network society. The thesis of this Spanish scholar is as follows: IT revolution causes that the spirit of our times is the spirit of the network: the basic principles of the network have become a drive for individual, social, economic and political life. Network society is a society in which network form of an organization replaces other forms, crosswise to present political, economic and cultural categories. As Castells wrote, network constitutes new social morphology of our societies and spreading the logic of networking changes to functioning and results in the production processes, experience, authority and culture. The presence or absence in the network and the dynamics of every network in relation to the others are the key sources of

domination of changes in our society that can be called a network society characterized by supremacy of social morphology over an activity (Castells 2007: 70-80, 467).

To a great extent, information technologies have a global and deterritorialized character and in the network society they define a conceptual shape of relations between communication and geography, because, as it is indicated the network society, it is a society 'without location.' The activity of communication networks brings about the political, social and eco-deterritorialization of economic life (Barney 2008: 77). Societies undergo structural transformation and, as a result, new forms and special processes emerge. Interesting moment from the point of view of geopolitics is that the Spanish scholar while writing about the deterritorialization of the world under the influence of information technologies, put an emphasis on the fact that network (and what follows also network society) has its own geography – the geography of network and connections, which manage the flow of information created in different places (Castells 2003: 233). The word 'network' describes the structural conditions owing which the separate points become connected with each other. The network structure consists of three basic elements: nodes, connections, and flows. Network is a collection of interrelated nodes and what a node is depends on a specific type of network (e.g. stock markets in the network of global cash flow or cocaine fields in the network of drug trade etc.) (Castells 2007: 468). While analyzing the changes occurring in the organization of space, Castells emphasized that modern network society is more and more concentrated around the flow of capital, information, technology, sounds and images passing between the nodes within the framework of a specific network. Flows represent a dominant process organizing social life at the time of information, and the flow space, which constitutes the material organization of social practices occurring by flows, is becoming the most important social space (Castells 2007: 412).

New 'geography' of network society is thus a geography of network and geography of flows, and morphology of network is a source of radical re-organization of power relations. In a network society, power and exclusion represent function of an access to the network. In the society, in which all most

important economic, social and political activities are organized as or by the network, access to the network forms a significant element of exclusion, the condition of power or its absence, a source of domination or conquest. New opportunities are created inside the network and survival outside the networks is more and more difficult. Presence or absence in the network, dynamics of each of them are the key source of domination in a society dominated by modern information technologies and diverse flows. Thus, traditional dichotomy 'centre-periphery' is replaced by the 'connected-disconnected' system in the network society. In the system of diverse networks (technological, financial, commercial, political, social etc.) which create the geography of network society, some networks and nodes are more significant and have more power than others. Some nodes can control and initiate the flows, while other network will receive the flows, and they will have only limited control over them. Some very strong nodes can control the use and access to the connections and network infrastructure by means of the other weaker nodes. However, transmitters connecting networks are in privileged tools of power and those who control the transmitters are the holders of power (Castells 2007: 468, Barney 2008: 41). Therefore, we deal with a 'new geography' of network society role of which should be to identify the key nodes and transmitters as well as to create the flow map. Due to the above, location of the key elements of special structure of the world is possible though. Such knowledge would constitute a new 'geography of power' and would enable understanding of modern mechanisms of its functioning and would show its special configuration.

Diverse changes, which have been occurring in the world since the 1970s (IT revolution, the fall of bipolar world, globalization) have transformed our social reality to such an extent that the symptoms of the birth of a new type of society started to be observed. In modern social sciences there has been an ongoing discussion concerning the character of the civilisation changes happening right in front of us. Researchers cannot agree on the character and consequences of the occurring changes but it is clear that occurring changes are so significant and multiple that they present research categories created in order to describe and analyze social

relations in the societies defined as industrial/modern ones, more and more often do not fit into a newly-created reality. Therefore, demands for searching the new fields of research and new scientific paradigms appeared (see Touraine 2007: 1), as it is commonly recognized that transformation, the world has undergone, requires change of scientific priorities, methods, means, notions and, categories. There is a need to create new methods of analysis, which would take consequences of the IT revolution and progressive globalization of the world into consideration. This demand also concerns political geography to a large extent. Necessity to change scientific approaches was even more visible than the birth of political geography in its traditional formula was connected with the intellectual and political transformations occurring in Europe in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Meanwhile, IT revolution and globalization processes led to a deep transformation of our social life and change of relations between human activity and space in which the activity takes place. There occurred a demand for being able to think in categories of space in the world in which the borders and spatial distances start to lose their significance, and we live – according to the definition of Marshal MaLuhan – in a ‘global village’.

Response of political geography to the challenge connected with the transformation of the world was so-called ‘new political geography’ and changes in the issues being the subject of the analysis of this scientific discipline. Russian geographer Mikołaj Mironienko wrote that the analysis of changes occurring in the mutual relations between ‘classic triad’ of the objects being the objects of interest of political geography such as territory (borders) – country – identity became the basis of ‘new political geography’. Moreover, some characteristic features connected with creation of a ‘new political geography’ are noticed. Firstly, since the 1970s domination of humanistic geography and a specific ‘cultural turn-point’ (or ‘a turn-point of the post-modernistic’) in geographic research connected with scientific emphasis placed on social creation of space, that is treating it not as objects of objectively but actively created and transformed by people depending on the expectations and aims, were noticeable. One of the consequences of a ‘cultural turn’ was the departure from Retzel’s model of political geography and recognizing it as a

critical social science in which critical evaluation of existing social conditionings, group existence, communities, societies and human societies also includes political mechanisms creating and transforming these conditions. Secondly, at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s renaissance of the interest in macro-level theories (such as Immanuel Walerstein's analysis of systems-worlds), regaining recognition of geopolitics in academic environment (the renaissance of geopolitics) and revival of geopolitical jargon in academic and political disputes. Geopolitics has become one of the fields of research enjoying the greatest popularity among scholars not only due to its value as the approach to the analysis of global changes but also with regard to a specific 'intellectual trend' towards geopolitics. Thirdly, as in case of other political sciences also within the framework of political geography, there was 'a global turn-point' which was a consequence of acceleration of globalization processes, a complex social process leading to integration of the world. Possibly, it is the process of globalization which led to the greatest overestimation within the framework of political geography and forced the researchers to change the basic paradigms and research fields. It was globalization that contributed significantly to modification of relations between the basic elements of today's political world: borders delimiting territory, population, sovereign authority, and national identity. The appearance of a new field of research of developing 'geography of globalization' has become an essential element of 'global turn-point'. And finally, within the framework of 'new political geography' new research connected with the consequences of IT revolution started to develop. It is observed that at the beginning of a new millennium information and communication technologies (ICTs) transformed the time and spatial relations radically configuring the relations between people and space (see Mezzapelle and Zarrilli 2009: 133-139). Within the framework of this trend of research, new analysis of geography of 'network society' was undertaken not only under the influence of Castells' works but also research concerning the appearance of new forms of space created by electronic media (cyberspace) was initiated. It is especially difficult area of research due to the fact that it requires combination of specialist technical knowledge with the abilities to analyze social phenomena, and



therefore it requires breaking the traditional division of social sciences and natural (technical) sciences. Authors connected with the scientific trend particularly emphasize that regardless the theory of 'the end of distances' new forms of space created by people appeared, time and spatial relations underwent transformation but still they constitute an important aspect of human activity and that is why geography is still a living discipline and needed for understanding of transformation which the world has been undergoing (see Dodge and Kitchin 2000: 1-31).

Changes that occurred within the framework of political geography caused that it became a dynamically developing scientific discipline of social research and the forecasts of 'the end of geography' turned out to be the end of a specific manner of practicing it. Regardless the fact that anthropologists such as Arjun Appandurai think that modern communities/societies are characterized by 'lack of the feeling of location' and there is a progressive depreciation of a place and location, and a human frees himself from the limits and limitations of space (Appandurai 2005: 34), so current 'shrinking' of the world does not mean that the distances and the features of space lose their significance for human activity. Therefore, geographers put an emphasis on the fact that despite the fact that we live in a 'global village' where the notion of place and location lose their importance, and despite the fact that traditional distances in an absolute sense lose their role, the distances in a relative sense gain in importance and create totally new social barriers, which reflect in the global organization of economic, political and social space.

## REFERENCES

- Appandurai, A., (2005), *Nowoczesność bez granic. Kulturowe wymiary globalizacji*, Kraków.
- Baczwarow, M., Suliborski, A., (2003) *Kompendium wiedzy o geografii politycznej i geopolityce*, Warszawa.
- Barney, D., (2008) *Spoleczeństwo sieci*, Warszawa.
- Castells, M., (2003), *Galaktyka Internetu*, Poznań.
- Castells, M., (2007), *Spoleczeństwo sieci*, Warszawa.
- Chodubski, A., (2004), *Wstęp do badań politologicznych*, Gdańsk.
- de Blij, H., (2007), *Why geography matters*, New York.

- Dodge, M., Kitchin, R., (2000), *Mapping cyberspace*, New York.
- Giddens, A., (2008), *Konsekwencje nowoczesność*, Kraków.
- Jean, C., (2003), *Geopolityka*, Wrocław.
- Jędrzejczyk, D., (2001), *Wprowadzenie do geografii humanistycznej*, Warszawa.
- Колосов, В.А., Мироненко, Н.С., (2002), *Геополитика и политическая география*, Москва.
- Lisowski, A., (2005) *Geografia jako nauka chronologiczna*, in *Podstawowe idee i koncepcje geograficzne w świetle przemian geografii współczesnego świata*, vol.1, (eds) S. Liszewski and W. Maiek, Bydgoszcz
- Mezzapelle, D., Zarrilli, L., (2009), *Border and cyberspace: some reflections of political geography*, *Romanian Review of Political Geography*, no. 2., pp. 133-139.
- Murray, W.E, (2005) *Geographies of globalization*, London-New York.
- Parker, G., (1994) *Herodote*, in *Dictionary of geopolitics*, (eds) J. O'Loughlin, London.
- Scholte, J.A., *Globalization. A critical introduction*, New York.
- Short, J.R., (2003) *An introduction to political geography*, London-New York.
- Taylor, P.J., Watts, M.J. Johnston, R.J., (2002a) *Geography/globalization*, in *Geographies of global change. Remapping the world*, (eds) Johnston R.J, Taylor, P.J., Watts, M.J., Malden-Oxford.
- Taylor, P.J., Watts M.J, Johnston, R.J., (2002b) *Remapping the world: What sort of map? What sort of world*, in *Geographies of global change. Remapping the world*, (eds) Johnston R.J, Taylor, P.J., Watts, M.J., Malden-Oxford.
- Touraine, A., (2007), *A new paradigm for understanding today's World*, Cambridge.