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Editorial

Political geography – a subdiscipline at the frontier of political science and human geography – has more than century-long history. While textbooks predominately mention German, Anglo-Saxon or French traditions, it is remarkable that there also were influential Czech political geographers – Dvorský and Korčák – in 1920s and 1930s. Czech political geography, however, effectively ceased to exist during the communist regime. The fall of that regime almost 30 years ago has led to a rebirth of Czech political geography, which has been reflected in the establishment of courses and even independent study programmes in political geography or geopolitics. From our perspective, this interest in political geography is only logical, as territory (be it physical or intersubjective entity) remains a key factor of political life.

Czech political geography has evolved significantly over the past two decades. The founders of modern Czech political geography were busy resuscitating the subdiscipline two decades ago. Today, Czech political geographers produce original research that engages with leading intellectual traditions of Western social sciences. The aim of this monothematic issue is twofold. Our main goal is to promote discussion between political geographers coming from both political science and geography, as we do perceive an unfulfilled potential for an inter-disciplinary dialogue. Our secondary goal is to bring together examples of current political geography research addressing different topics and on different scales.

In an effort to fulfil our goals, we selected four political geography papers written by geographers and a political scientist that aim at different scales and engage with different methods. We wanted to put together a rather diverse set of papers, as political geography is indeed a diverse field, and political geographers engage with diverse epistemologies and methods. They study different topics on varying scales (i.e. geography of elections, popular as well as formal discourse, geopolitics of great powers, nationalism, etc.). While this diversity makes political geography fascinating, it means that there is also great potential for creating overlapping cleavages endangering internal cohesion and communication within the subdiscipline.

Building upon the above-mentioned issue, Jan Kofroň's article – "*Shattered spaces of political geography*" – discusses causes of (sometimes) rather limited communication between the two parts of political geography: political science and geography. The article highlights how some cleavages (especially those related to a broader goal of science, epistemology or attitude towards methods) overlap to a large extent with disciplinary boundaries between political science and geography. Under this situation, it is unsurprising that political geographers are fragmented into two rather isolated clusters of researchers.

David Vogt's article "*Politically Active Civil Society in the Liberec Region: Traditional Associations, Independents or Local and Regional Political Groupings in Municipal Elections 2010 and 2014*" is an example of the growing number of quantitative political geography research focusing on a subnational level. Considering the main aim of this monothematic issue, it is promising that while the author is a geographer by training, his article is clearly crossing disciplinary boundaries as his theoretical framework is firmly rooted in geography, political science and sociology.

The article by Jakub Stauber "*Institutionalization of a Nationalized Party System: The Czech Case*" is quite unique if compared with the other articles in this issue. The author

(a political scientist) focuses on a single case (Czechia), yet his aim is to explicitly test a widely accepted theory that a uniform distribution of electoral results has a positive impact on party system stability. However, the Czech case (which has properties of a most likely case), casts heavy doubts on this argument, thus implicitly calling for further tests of the theory.

If Jakub Stauber's article is theory driven, then Kateřina Rudincová's paper "*Viability of a secessionist state in Africa: Case study of South Sudan*" is an example of more descriptive research that unfortunately is omitted by many political scientists today. The value-added aspect of the paper is obviously given by the recentness of the case under investigation. While the analysis is case driven (something typical rather for geographers), it is at the same time well framed in broader theoretical concepts.

We believe that all four papers illustrate two broader points about Czech political geography as well. It seems that Czech political geographers are rather willing to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, it is evident that their work reflects broader trends in Western geography and political science. Considering this, one hopes that the ever-increasing Westernization of Czech political geography will not lead to a separation of the country's political scientists and geographers. Ideally, we would like to see Czech political geographers as bridge builders (between political science and geography) even at the international level. To make a long story short, it is our hope that all the papers in this issue will be captivating and relevant for both geographers and political scientists interested in the subdiscipline.

Jan Kofroň