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## BOOK REVIEW

### **POLAND IN THE MODERN WORLD. ATLAS OF POLAND'S POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**

Marcin WOJCIECH, Editor, University of Warsaw, 2018, 248 pages.

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As the editor of this valuable work argues in the atlas foreword, the book represents „a snapshot of contemporary Poland” (p. 1), since the work unveils a portrait of this state on the 100 anniversary of the first miracle of restored independence of Polish territories. Just from its very beginnings, the readers are informed about Poland’s geopolitical issues in a comprehensive manner, with relevant narratives on the specific aspects on national Polish identities. Therefore, the introduction makes a significant contribution to the major themes developed in the four chapters of the book, with the first chapter focusing on international relations. Through this lens the Poland evolution is framed by space and time, presenting the most important key moments in the national identity of this central European State. Against such a background, the issues of security and boundaries are set on the scene with the Polish geopolitical metaconcepts, arguing the role of the national politics and cultures in the international contexts and politics of Europe. Turning geopolitics in practice the most important themes as security and regional environments are in-depth addressed through thematic maps. Going further, the cartographies used in the Poland’s Atlas envisage related cultural topics as religions and language since they are integrative topics in the political background of the state.

Closely related to the geopolitical concept of state, the second chapter brings to the fore issues on national political system of Poland as well as justice and security. Furthermore, equality, administrative divisions, elections and referendums are also portrayed, using high quality thematic maps. They provide for the reader an understanding with a peculiar perspective, filtered by comparative and historical approach. Therefore, these issues are made to be perceived both in their complexity and interchangeability. Since public space remains a key issue in the political space, space is mapped and approached through the processes of communisation and decommunisation in order to understand the place of the independent Poland in the public space.



Considering the latter as part of the contemporary societies, it translates then in demographic topics and processes including migration, national and ethnic minorities, regional groups, while the item of the Polish people abroad is addressed through thematic maps. In the same vein, it is designed the fourth chapter that is focused on development. Against such a background, two major themes are developed in relation to quality of life, economy and infrastructure since they are closely connected to the backgrounds of national and international geopolitics. Beyond the concise narratives, the merit of this work consists in the numberless maps and related cartographic materials that visually express the above mentioned topics. Hundred of maps are designed to understand in a geographical manner the national geopolitics of Poland. The released cartographies are based on the recent GIS methods, using an impressive material of quantitative data and thematic statistics. The readers' attention is also captured by the high quality of the maps often completed by appropriated diagrams and specific figures framing comprehensive understandings on the investigated processes and phenomena. Beyond its originality, another merit of this publication consists in the attractive design of all maps and cartographic materials used throughout this emblematic work on Poland's geopolitics. Certainly, the Atlas of Poland's Political Geography remains an outstanding contribution in the field of new contemporary political geographies; both at the European and international scales since Central and Eastern European Countries represent fertile scenes for contemporary research in geography and in its related fields with crossdisciplinary approaches.