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## **Ile państwa w państwie?**

### **Streszczenie**

Autorzy artykułu pragną skłonić do refleksji i zastanowić się nad zadaniami jakimi powinno zajmować się państwo. Poruszane kwestie dotyczą bezpieczeństwa, administracji, państwa opiekuńczego i finansów publicznych. Wiele poruszanych aspektów wydaje się na czasie, zwłaszcza dyskusja wokół spółek skarbu państwa. Pojawia się wiele pytań, między innymi: na ile ingerencja państwa sprzyja rozwojowi i obywatelom, a w jakim stopniu spowalnia gospodarkę i ogranicza swobody obywatelskie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** bezpieczeństwo, liberalizm, podatki, państwo opiekuńcze

### **How much state within a state?**

### **Abstract**

In this article, the authors aimed to induce reflection on some strategic and development challenges the Polish state should deal with. The issues discussed in this paper concern safety, administration, welfare state and public finance. Many of the aspects seem to be current topics, especially regarding state-owned enterprises. A number of questions emerges, among them: to what extent state interference is conducive to development and citizens' well-being, and to what it slows down the economy and limits civil liberties.

**Keywords:** safety, security, liberalism, taxes, welfare state

**JEL CODE:** A12, A13, A19

### **Introduction**

In European civilization, the functioning of man in the state organism has always raised dilemmas and considerations among social thinkers. It is difficult today to deny and criticize the sense of the existence of the state. At the same time, however, Leszek Balcerowicz, famous contemporary Polish economist, debates the essence of the state in light of the fact the estimated market value of the Polish economy is USD 431 billion against Apple's USD 613 billion. In Asia, meanwhile, there is Zomia, a cross-border area covering parts of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, China and Burma, with a population of one hundred million people living beyond the control of their respective states, regimes and the law. The research problem comes down to an attempt to address the question of the role of the state nowadays, with it being developed on many a social and economic level. The hypothesis that guided the authors was a statement that the role and functions of the modern state are at their maximum (are the reverse of the minimum), and thus they are not always effective and become too expensive. This study attempts to examine the models of the state which, in their extreme form, arouse approval and worship of citizens on one hand, and aversion and hostility on the other.

### **The state as seen by thinkers**

In philosophical considerations, the concept of the state has never existed, and to this day it lacks unambiguously determined content. From ancient times philosophers have wondered how the state arises and how it exists, or what the main functions of the state are. One can risk the statement that philosophical disputes regarding the essence of the state are one of the most characteristic aspects of European civilization.

Plato thinks the state should be unity. It should therefore integrate all the elements that make up a coherent whole; connect in a harmonious relationship people who, as self-insufficient beings, need interdependencies. Plato seeks a perfect, unchanging solution and he is convinced of the possibility of dealing with this task. Plato despises democracy. He believes that it essentially means destruction - a gradual disintegration of society. The principle of equality is the absurdity that causes the ever-expanding rigmarole. Hierarchies fall down, all seriousness disappears. Differences become blurred. What is lower and inferior usurps all privileges. In democracy, the passion of the crowd plays a decisive role, reason loses its significance. In general turmoil, loud demagogues have the upper hand. The most basic instincts come to the fore. Democracy leads the state inevitably towards ruin. The power of demagogues, leaders of the spoiled crowd, is uncertain. Uninhibited passions such as anger, irritation and envy play the decisive role (Filipowicz 2003, p. 14).

The concept of the state as a community of the general good is developed by Plato's student - Aristotle. In *Politics*, he teaches the basic theses of his concept. Aristotle proceeds from the assumption that "every state is a community that arises with a view to accomplishing a certain good (since everyone, in every action, causes what is good in their view) and it is therefore obvious that all (communities) strive for a certain good, but above all the most superfluous, entrusted with the most important of all tasks and encompassing all others. It is the so-called state and state community (Aristotle, 1964, p. 3).

Aristotle represents the theory of the creation of the state in a natural way; in a way that corresponds to the demands and needs of human personality. The previous forms of people associating into groups, such as family or in broader terms household (*oikia*), are also natural occurrences and they lead to the highest form of organization, i.e. the state. In this light, man by nature turns out to be a "state being" (*zoon politikon*), striving to live in a group, finding in it conditions for both personal and collective growth. People living outside of society and the state undoubtedly remain at some inappropriate and primitive stage of development. Thus, the community is the result of the natural behavior of the individual, whereas the state is the highest form of people's organization into a community in which the free man obtains the status of a citizen (Sylwestrzak 2003, pp. 59-60).

The state is to organize a good life for the people, that is give them a sense of security, material prosperity and conditions favorable to development. In this sense, a well-organized state should promote the expansion of the moral, cultural and property wealth of both citizens and the community. Aristotle, unlike Plato, does not share the former's contempt for tangible goods and perceives them to be a natural component of the properly functioning and developing community like a family, a commune, or a state. "The state arises to make life possible, and it exists to make life good". It is therefore an organization that unites individuals, families and social groups, and in this sense it is a whole that consists of parts, which awards it priority on the basis of the advantage of a whole over its parts (Zieliński 2006, pp. 40-41).

Like Plato, Aristotle sees many weaknesses of democracy. He believes that power belonging to the people does not always lead to results serving the people. The general public tends to favor short-sighted interests, being motivated by the desire to obtain even minor benefits. As a rule, the people, understood in holistic terms, are incapable of pursuing a long-term policy aimed at securing the interests of the city-state. The disadvantage of democracy is the ability of people who have majority and power to decide, but often with omitting or violating the

law. The public then becomes their own despot, the fact willingly used by demagogues in transforming democracy into tyranny.

The concepts of the state emerging in the early modern era were quite different. One of their most characteristic aspects was the emancipation of the individual. Individualism and the conviction that all problems concerning the state and law should be recognized from an individual's perspective became increasingly important.

Early modern reflection on the state focuses precisely on the problem of freedom. What extent of freedom can an individual enjoy? How should the relationship between freedom and power be shaped?

English thinker T. Hobbes provides an interesting answer to these questions. According to the author of *Leviathan*, emergence of the state means leaving the state of nature, in which conflict and unrestricted competition prevail. The image of the state of nature is obtained by asking the following question: how would people act if there were not one power they could be afraid of? It would be a pathetic scenario - in the state of nature, everyone is a threat to each other and competes for the same trophies. Fear and mutual distrust are the basis of survival. The state of nature is, according to Hobbes, a state of war. People are hostile towards each other - they know that someone else's success translates into their defeat, the reason for which they are constantly trying to fight one another. In the state of nature, says Hobbes, "constant fear and threat of violent death prevail. Man's life, meanwhile, is lonely, poor, sunless, bestial and short" (Hobbes 1954, p. 16). Only the emergence of an "artificial man" with superior "power", and therefore of the state, can put a stop to this. This is the background for the emergence of the state called Leviathan, the "mortal god" to whom everyone is strictly subordinated. Also because of this the engraving depicting that biblical monster in the work of Hobbes takes the form of a giant consisting of little pieces that are human individuals. The emergence of society and the state is identified, while the conclusion of a social contract means abandoning the state of anarchy and achieving a standard of orderly and safe life. Establishment of a sovereign by means of social contract causes the transformation of the community of people into a society - the state (Sylwestrzak 2003, p. 196).

In Hobbes' philosophical doctrine, a social contract is an exit dictated by reasonably predominant calculation for living in peace and unity instead of destructive anarchy. People conclude a "peer-to-peer" agreement, entrusting full power to the sovereign. It is not a bilateral agreement in which the ruler undertakes to observe such or other rules. The subordinates simply renounce the rights to their natural freedom, transferring them in entirety to the sovereign.

J. Locke approaches the question of social contract and state formation differently. He does not agree with Hobbs that by way of social contract man deprived himself of all rights, renouncing them in favor of the sovereign, who is the ruler. A contract so conceived would not make sense to man. Man enters the agreement when it protects the basic values that nature has provided him with. A social contract implies the protection of natural rights, which the individual does not relinquish, but rather obtains a stronger defense of them. The state, then, is not a divine or a creation of nature, but a result of man's reasonable behavior. It stems from the will of individual citizens and in this sense it is based on the individualism of civic actions, with citizens participating in the act of establishing a society and the state. Establishing the community requires, in Locke's view, the consent of each and every citizen, thus it becomes, to a large extent, an act of fulfilling the will of individual persons. However, the consent of the majority is enough to establish state institutions (Sylwestrzak 2003, p. 200).

As a pioneer of liberalism, Locke found a continuation in the Enlightenment thought, particularly influencing Montesquieu, Rousseau as well as ideologues of the American constitution, which was one of the first doctrines to present a mature list of the basic principles and goals of capitalist development.

An interesting concept of the creation of the state is represented by A. Smith. In his opinion, the state emerged at the time of the division of society into the rich and the poor so as to warrant the safety of property, order and subordination of citizens. Four causes make up this subordination: a) individual characteristics, such as physical strength and reason, although the latter has a basic meaning, b) age advantage, playing a relative role, c) wealth leading to almost total subordination of individuals, especially among primitive peoples, d) superiority of birth, which in fact indicates merely the tradition of inheriting wealth (Sylwestrzak 2003, p. 253).

The prime task of the state is to defend a society against rape and lawlessness. Security is the more jeopardized the greater the wealth of the state and the citizens. The army should protect the people against external aggression, although it is equally important to defend them against injustice and oppression from their fellow citizens. To this end, courts should be established based on a categorical separation of executive and judicial powers. The state should also maintain public institutions, regardless of costs, so as to secure communication channels and routes as well as promote education that favors the "free play" of social and economic forces (Sylwestrzak 2003, p. 254).

### **Disputes about the state – then and now**

J.M. Keynes, founder of the theory of state intervention in the field of economics and state finance, emphasized (Smith 2007, p. 126):

- only a state that uses the services of scientists can demonstrate rationality,
- the state will properly manage the flow of income so as to foster prosperity and a better life for everyone
- state-owned investments are better than private ones,
- many missed investments have failed only because private individuals did not know each other or indulged in speculation,
- state institutions can, not only motivated by profit, correct market imperfections and prevent social unrest, reduce the size of forced unemployment by boosting employment and consumption,
- the state must interfere in the economic sphere because only in this way can it improve the degree of utilization of the existing production capacities,
- the action consisting in increasing the level of expenditure by the state in due time would provide impetus to growth in other sectors of the economy,
- for the state, it is not important to do similar things a little better, but to do things that are not currently done at all,
- in the sphere of private property, it is better if someone vents their tendency to tyranny on their bank account and not their fellow citizens.

In the contradictory conceptions, M. Friedman argued the state should (Friedman, 1999, p. 35, Friedman 1996, p. 67):

- ensure external security of the country,
- ensure order and domestic peace,
- control monopolistic prices, comply with anti-trust laws,
- protect free trade (eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers, counteract technical monopolies),
- account for private philanthropy,
- protect the free market and promote economic competition,
- protect private property.

James D. Gwartney and Richard L. Stroup (1994, pp. 78-117) write about the economic progress and the role of the government, mentioning that:

- the government contributes to economic progress when it protects the rights of the individual and provides the goods the market cannot provide,

- the government is not an intervention instrument,
- the cost of functioning of the government is a) a decrease in production in the private sector resulting from the use of government funds, b) the cost of taxes, and c) unrealized profits from transactions halted by the government that hindered trade,
- if there are no restrictions in the form of appropriate constitutional principles, the legislators head towards a budget deficit, which is often detrimental to the economy,
- when the government is strongly committed to supporting certain groups at the expense of other citizens, the available resources become subject to appropriation instead of serving production. Economic progress is then inhibited,
- the cost of redistributing government revenues will be much greater than the net benefits of those who will benefit from this activity,
- central planning in the economy means replacing the market with politics, i.e. wasting resources and hindering economic progress.

The questions posed by the opponents to excessive interference of the state boil down to: how can one oppose government programs? The state is there to help people. It is true - but which people? And for whose money? And with whose permission? And with what effect? (S'Souza 2006, p. 85). They also admit that: "At the same time, we realize that whatever the state deals with, it usually does not deal with it properly (I know only one exception to this rule: writing parking tickets)" (S'Souza 2006, p. 87).

For the opponents of the state, even the program of economic and social reforms introduced in the United States, aimed at counteracting the effects of the Great Depression of 1929, became the object of criticism. And while the New Deal temporarily restrained the negative effects of the economic crisis, the entire concept of "company rights, property rights and the role of the state faltered sharply" (Heilbroner 1993, p. 246). The supporters of the New Deal assure that huge budget expenditures brought new jobs and prompted economic development (Heilbroner 1993, p. 246), but then again, one can finance these jobs only by taking money from one group of people (taxpayers) and giving them to another, which means that there is no "net stimulus" whatsoever. In reality, these programs bring more bad than good because they divert capital from the private sector, which hinders the creation of "healthy jobs" (Woods 2007, p. 176). Government's "help" for industry sometimes has to be feared just as much as its hostility. This applies to the same extent to government loans. The government never lends nor gives the industry what it first has not taken from it (Hazlitt 2012, p. 46). When the government grants loans or subsidies to the industry, it actually taxes those private entrepreneurs who have succeeded in order to support those who have failed (Hazlitt 2012, p. 46).

A model example of where the state cares and is interested in the citizen is the welfare state, or social state - Sweden, in which economic activity relies on various forms of regulating private economics, extensive social measures and redistribution of social income, whereas funds for financing many social goals are obtained by means of tax progression. Sweden is a welfare state starting from detailed sexual education up until the constitutional status of the Lutheran Church (O'Rourke 2006, p.70). However, this model example of extensive state activity also fuels the battle of "libertarians", who draw attention especially to indoctrination through education and the media. State education is criticized for being based on a uniform teaching system where everyone learns the same material (the principles of Marxism were presented in textbooks for middle-school students). The media industry was regulated by the state for a long time and it was not until the 1990s that non-state television and commercial radio appeared. The state also took care of citizens' health by limiting the consumption of alcohol (sales based on rations stamps and "prescriptions" in pharmacies).

### **Discords about the place and role of the state in Poland**

R. Woś in "*Dziecięca choroba liberalizmu*" (lit. childlike disease of liberalism) refers to the myth of "the evil, cruel state and the good, persecuted business": "Complaining about tax officers or high labor costs, critics do not really mean actual burdens. Maybe they simply do not trust that the Polish state will be able to use this money wisely. In doing so, we become convinced that our native bureaucracy is extremely inefficient (Woś 2015, p. 106).

A different approach was taken by priest J. Bocheński, who is very distrustful of the state: "An organization claiming the right to monopoly, physical coercion, rape. (...) The state imposes taxes, issues regulations, links, etc. Other social organizations (e.g. municipalities, Polish: *gmina*) may have some of these rights, but only in so far as the state allows them to, i.e. if they delegate part of their monopoly" (Bocheński 1994, p. 95).

In light of these considerations, W. Woźniński (2014, p. 4), in his work "*To nie musi być państwowe*" (lit. it does not have to belong to the state), made a very thorough institutional analysis of statehood, held in a similar vein. He demonstrated things that in fact do not need to belong to the state: "architecture, libraries, weapons, roads, children, education, energy, cinema, stock exchange, municipal institutions, railways, minerals, the space, books, forests, aviation, marriage, media, cities and towns, apartments, museums, music, drugs, slavery, environmental protection, social security, penalization, money, post, the police, law, religion, agriculture, health care, sport, fire brigade, theater, universities, water army, zoos".

Economist T. Cukiernik (2007) calculated that the Polish state handles, among other things, "manufacturing of clothing, footwear, thread, meat, sugar, vinegar, mustard, wire, processing machines, grinding wheels, springs, grinders, rolling bearings, cranes, furniture, lamps, ropes, plastics, rubber objects, bookbinding and construction machines, catering devices, electromedical appliances, orthopedic and communication equipment, artificial fertilizers, power cables, it is a publisher, printer, tourist office, food wholesaler, plant, horse and fish farmer, trades in agricultural equipment, seeds and farm animals".

At this point, we touch upon the dilemma of privatization, analyzed in depth by M. Bałtowski (2002, p. 81):

- most privatized Polish enterprises started to generate profits instead of losses (negative profitability turned into a positive one),
- average work efficiency increased by 94%,
- average remuneration after privatization increased by 11%,
- share of privatized enterprises in the market increased significantly (by 48%) and so did their exports (by 40%), which points to the growth of these companies,
- innovation noted a record growth, with the number of new technologies increase by 90% and new products by 80%,
- quality of products improved by 80%,
- machinery resources were modernized,
- investment expenditures increased significantly above depreciation, by 57%, while none had significant outlays above depreciation before privatization.

Recently, the notions of renationalization/nationalization have emerged in the context of OFE (open pension funds), PKP (Polish State Railways), energetics, the company Ciech, or the broadly understood privatized banking sector, among others. It should also be emphasized that in recent years there have been numerous expert voices calling for the revival of state ownership in the economy, with the tipping point in this respect reached in 2008-09.

Opponents to private property remind of irregularities resulting from the sale of national assets. Privatization in Central and Eastern European countries, unlike privatization in Western Europe, was carried out in absence of a capital market and very broadly outlined market mechanisms with excessive relative public sector participation against private property, limited financial resources of the society and, last but not least, little interest in attracting poten-

tial foreign investors due to relatively high costs of the capital utilized (Puślecki 1998, p. 110).

J. Winiecki (2001, p. 49) reminds that ruling elites in most third-world countries subordinated in the 1950s and 1960s, or even later, private banking systems, nationalized some banks and created various state banks, all in the name of the proclaimed development strategy. This was supposed to serve "acceleration", growth (a slogan also remembered in Poland from Gierek's campaign of the "great leap forward"), but it did otherwise, as expected by then not too many supporters of the free market (Winiecki 2001, p. 49).

The ideal of a Polish enterprise is a state-owned company with a monopolistic position, managed in strict accordance with political instructions. Politicians willing to provide instructions are plenty. Worse with contractors (Grzeszak 2016). Case study: Polish gas mogul PGNIG; the Minister of Finance expects the company to maximize fiscal revenues, the Minister of Treasury - dividend, the Minister of Environment - exploratory works and gas production, the Minister of Economy - energy security, the government - low gas prices for voters. As a result, the management board of the company pursues conflicting goals and the priorities are chosen depending on the political strength of individual ministers (Musialek 2015). One should add to this the insoluble problem of nepotism in state-owned enterprises (87 fully state-owned companies, 29 companies with a majority share of the state, 90 companies with a minority share of the state). R. Gwiazdowski (2016) argues in his article "*Niech żyje neipotyzm*" (lit. long live nepotism): "If they were to be managed in accordance with the principles of economic calculation, then they would not have to be state-owned".

The local-government reform put an end to the monopoly of the totalitarian state, creating in its place regional/local autonomy. Due to indebtedness, local government authorities began privatizing municipal companies: Łódź - *Zakład Wodociągów i Kanalizacji i Zakład Drogownictwa i Inżynierii*, Tczew - *ZKM Tczew* and ZUOS, Opole - sale of the town's majority share in *Energetyka Ciepła Opole*, Poznań - *Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Gospodarki Mieszkaniowej*, Sopot - cooperation with the private sector in municipal resource management, Warsaw: *Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Usług Komunalnych. Przedsiębiorstwo Gospodarki Maszyn Budownictwa*, *Miejski Kombinat Budowlany Zachód*, Krakow: city shares in *MKS Cracovia*. Privatization shows that although this process may prompt corruption, the prices provided by the public and private sectors are at the end of the comparable, but there is effective management resulting in downsizing of up to 50% (Sarnacka 2004, p. 126).

### Conclusions

According to K.R. Popper (1993, p. 133) "unrestricted capitalism should give way to economic interventionism". G. Kolodko (2008, p. 242), meanwhile, tries to find the middle point in his reflections: "Today, certain state functions should be limited, while others must be strengthened. The former include e.g. engaging in research and development expenses, as some of these tasks are successfully overtaken by the commercial private sector. The latter must include outlays for environmental protection given that this problem cannot be dealt with by the commercial sector" L. Balcerowicz (1995, p. 25) sees at one extreme a state that permanently shuts off the "invisible hand" and let the problems fall on the "visible hand" of the well-developed political and economic bureaucracy, and at the other extreme a state that focuses only on a number of fundamental functions that no one else is able to undertake: creation and enforcement of law, national protection, foreign policy, etc. One must see in the state an important but limited resource. After all, the time and competence of the government and employers are limited, and so is the number, qualifications and knowledge of state officials. Also modest are the state's actual financial resources since it only has so much of them as it takes away from the people through various taxes (Balcerowicz 1995, p. 25). Analyzing the function of the state - be it in terms of adaptation, stabilization, allocation or redistribution -

one must not overlook the economic (economic growth or changes in the structure of the economy) and social (equal opportunities and protecting the most vulnerable individuals and social groups) context.

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