

## FOREWORD

*Papers on Global Change* was a journal published annually by the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP). Since 2017 (since issue 24/2017), our journal itself has been experiencing a process of significant change, in connection with the fact that the IGBP drew to a close, marking an end to the related activity conducted by the Polish Academy of Sciences. It was initially uncertain whether journal would continue. In the end, we decided that the title and the issues raised in it should survive, but in a slightly different form. Instead of a journal, we decided to maintain a series of monographs devoted to global problems. The initial result you are now holding in your hands.

The process of change is not yet complete, however, we believe that this new form will suit your expectations. Nevertheless, a new direction for the *Papers on Global Change* future has been set by linking it to the work of the “Poland 2000 Plus” Foresight Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS). The first and most visible change is in the form of publishing. The journal became a book. The subject matter of the journal will also be altered slightly, as is demonstrated by the contents of this issue. This certainly does not mean that the topics discussed in the 25 issues of the journal will be abandoned – publishing articles on global change will indeed remain the guiding principle of the book. We will in addition be focusing on issues of the future, so that our articles point out the opportunities and threats related to the future of the world.

At the same time, we wish to expand the thematic scope of our publication. In addition to the environmental issues that the notion of sustainable development has mainly been used to address in recent years, we also want to publish articles about other facets of this important concept, i.e. social and economic problems. Often, these topics will be interconnected. The articles will not have to refer directly to sustainable development, and they may indeed even point out the consequences of unsustainability, i.e. to what may happen if the current paths of economic and social development are continued. The goal is to reflect on the direction in which the modern world is heading.

We also wish to adopt a longer-term view of the future (i.e. adopting a perspective of at least a decade or two), and so such articles will be given priority for publication in our pages. At the same time, the future will not necessarily have to be addressed overtly or directly; sometimes articles dealing primarily with the past, yet relevant in the context of research on the future, will also be published.

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This issue is meant to serve informative purposes, illustrating the change in the subject-matter that will be dealt with in the series. For this reason, we decided to shift the emphasis away from environmental issues in a particularly prominent way, and instead focus very much on the socio-economic and humanistic issues that are predominantly addressed by the PAS Foresight Committee. By so doing we wish this issue to demonstrate the extended possibilities of publishing on global change and also to help showcase the achievements of the PAS Foresight Committee, boosting its visibility in the international arena. For this reason, in addition to new texts, in this issue we have decided to include articles that have already appeared in similar form in the publications of the Committee. In subsequent issues, we will only publish new articles and we also intend to highlight the problems of the natural environment to a greater extent.

This issue presents six articles, which are quite diverse in terms of the topics addressed, length, and form. We would like this heterogeneity to demonstrate that we are open to a variety of proposals for articles to be published in the journal.

This issue opens with a lengthy article by Jerzy Kleer and Konrad Prandacki entitled “*A world defined by change: a historical and methodological approach*”. The authors seek to show that in the history of mankind, change has been a constant phenomenon, accompanying us since the dawn of time; as such it should not be equated solely with the processes taking place today, e.g. with globalization. Although the issues discussed in this text mainly refer to the past (contrary to the editorial declarations above), the article is suited for the journal – as we noted – because the issues are of considerable relevance in the context of the future.

The second article is “*The reverberations of globalization*” by Paweł Kozłowski. It presents various kinds of reactions to globalization, which now seem to have a greater impact on global processes than globalization itself.

The third text, “*Waves of Information Revolution*” by Jan Grzegorek and Andrzej Wierzbicki, describes the wave-like nature of the information revolution, both in the context of the past, e.g. the development of television or computers, and the future, i.e. the development of robots, knowledge engineering and biomedical engineering.

The fourth, quite short article, “*Determinants of human development*”, was written by Leszek Kuźnicki. The author briefly, albeit comprehensively, presents the most important determinants that have underpinned the worldwide domination of *Homo sapiens sapiens* as a species. In particular, these involve group cooperation and aggression towards strangers. These considerations may serve as the basis for further work on the human ability to solve global problems.

The fifth article, “*Where are we headed? Reflections on civilization, culture, and education*” by Irena Głuchowska, offers reflections on human responsibility for the future that we will bequeath to future generations. The author postulates that we should not judge the future in the context of the conditions that surround us, i.e. looking for an answer to the question “Where are we headed?”, but rather focus on the context of “What can I do?”

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This issue closes with Konrad Prandecki's article "*Factors affecting the availability of food in 2050*". The author presents numerous factors influencing food availability and tries to shed light the interrelationships between them.

All in all, with this collection of articles we aim to highlight the new opportunities for publishing in *Papers on Global Change*. We hope that the new form and profile of our publication will facilitate more comprehensive discussion of global issues and also bolster the status of the monograph itself.

*Konrad Prandecki*