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## Rydzyna: the anatomy and symbolism of a scientific counter-revolution

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### Abstract

The approaching 30th anniversary of the conference in Rydzyna seems a good opportunity to reveal the anatomy of a scientific counter-revolution that appeared at this event. The frustration of Polish human geographers with the neopositivist paradigm in the late 1970s resulted in their massive support of the Solidarity movement in 1980. Moments and personalities of the bottom-up movement within the discipline are presented, which combined to lead the way towards a change in the paradigm of Polish geography. The socio-political context of those events is also highlighted. The course, atmosphere, and symbolism of the Rydzyna conference is presented, which ultimately failed to be usher in a paradigm change. It is shown that now obvious and generally accepted concepts were actually opposed by the establishment three decades earlier. The group-creating bottom-up social mobilisation was appeased and procrastination was used to block the necessary changes in the discipline in the name of a protection of the anti-developmental interest groups.

As a classical example of a scientific counter-revolution, the conference resulted in a deliberate decision not to take any action to reform the discipline. To mask the counter-revolution, an Orwellian version of the events in question was eventually published, however it was done too locally and too late to impress the internal collectivity and external readership. The evolution towards the post-Rydzyna paradigm was aimed at the preservation of the post-Stalinist structure of power within academia and was based on a negative selection of scientific cadres. As a symbolic finale to the Rydzyna

epoch a conference was organised in a place located between the village of Nędzówka (Misery Place) and Mount Ciemniak (Obscurant) in the Tatra Mountains.

**Key words:** Poland, human geography, paradigm, scientific revolution, counter-revolutionary theory, neo-Stalinism

## 1. Introduction

As has been indicated elsewhere (Rykiel 2011b), the conference in Rydzyna in 1983 was one of two milestones in the history of Polish geography and also a classical example of a scientific counter-revolution. However, this conference has been internalised by the collective consciousness of the post-Rydzyna generations of Polish geographers in a mythical rather than factual version (Rykiel 2011a). It needs discussion in terms of social stratification within the geographical community, symbolic violence, the group formation processes, including interest groups and, especially, anti-developmental interest groups (*ibidem*). The approaching 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference, celebrated by a conference in Łódź in September 2012, seems a good opportunity to reveal the basic mechanisms of the events of the early 1980s in Polish geography set within their socio-political context.

## 2. The socio-political context

The origins of new phenomena, structures, and forms should be found in their predecessors. The origin of the social conditioning of the Rydzyna conference should thus be sought in the 1970s. The neopositivist philosophy underpinning the development of the quantitative approach in Polish human geography was based on a developmental dependence on Anglo-Saxon geography. The import of individual mathematical methods and techniques resulted, however, in the opening up of new research areas. Thus the interest in factor analysis resulted in interest in factorial ecology or, more extensively, social urban geography (Rykiel 1988).

Social studies, introduced to ‘positivist geography by the back door, must have involved ideologically coloured questions’ (Rykiel 1988: 401) that could not, however, ‘be answered within the established paradigm[,] which by design avoided axiology’ (*ibidem*). A scientific revolutionary mood inevitably appeared in the

strongholds of neopositivist geography, i.e. the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organisation, the Polish Academy of Sciences (IGiPZ PAN) in Warsaw, and the Institute of Geography, Adam Mickiewicz University (IG UAM) in Poznań. The mood was intellectually inspired by Derek Gregory's (1978) book while Marek Jerczyński should be recognised as the initial disseminator of the intellectual ferment.

The Solidarity revolution indicated, practically before it did so theoretically, an inextricable link between scientific and social revolutions, a phenomenon that David Harvey (1972, 1973) pointed to nearly a decade earlier. The practice was materialised by a massive support, at least in the IGiPZ PAN, by assistant professors in their thirties of the Solidarity movement. The support had its structural foundation in the fact that, after the students riots of 1968, supported by intellectuals, dissidents were removed from universities in order to not ideologically corrupt the youth. They found asylum in institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, where they had no students of their own to corrupt.

In September 1980, Stefan Kurowski, himself an associate professor well past his thirties, initiated the foundation of a new trade union in the Institute. Within the still dominant branch structure of the syndicalist organisations, related to the structure of individual ministries, the new trade union operated within the 'nine-letters-union', i.e. the Independent Self-Reliant Trade Union of Employees of Science, Higher Education, and Technology (NSZZPNSWiT), with Konrad Dramowicz elected as the head of the Institution Commission. In October 1980, the 'nine-letters-union' joined the Masovia Region, which was then amalgamated in the Independent Self-Reliant Trade Union 'Solidarity' as a nation-wide organisation.

During the meeting of the employees of the IGiPZ PAN with its management on 24 October 1980, Zbigniew Rykiel presented, on behalf of the Institution Commission of Solidarity, a document entitled *The organisation of the scientific research and personnel policy in the Institute*. It was stated in this document, *inter alia*, that:

*'the global position of Polish geography [...] began to wane gradually in the mid-1970s. The reasons for this are complex. It should be mentioned here: [...]*

*3. the wrong publication policy, [...]*

*4. but above all, the lack of a methodological discussion in geography since 1967.*

*To organise a carefully prepared discussion (a scientific session) on the character and directions of research conducted in the Institute is urgent. [...] The session should be held in the initial half of 1981. [...] Social needs require addressing, in a wider range than ever, of social geographical research'.*

Jerzy Kostrowicki, the Director of the Institute, however represented – what seems now the right – opinion, that the scientific session should be solidly prepared, and this required somewhat more time, especially in the then technical and organisational civilisation, in which, importantly, there were no personal computers, printers, Internet, e-mails, telefaxes, and mobile phones, while the only Xerox-copier in the Institute was, in accord with the national regulations, obligatorily controlled from being politically abused.

In the early 1981 the responsibility for the organisation of the planned conference was assigned to the Committee of Geographical Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences, with Zbyszko Chojnicki as its head and Jerzy Parysek as its secretary.

In March 1981, Antoni Kukliński began a debate on the diagnosis of space economy within his project on this topic. The debate was held within open seminars in the Faculty of Geography, University of Warsaw, which shared its seat with the IGiPZ PAN. Within the seminars, a discussion on the necessity to change the paradigm of Polish geography was begun, and thus also on the mechanisms for paradigmatic changes in science. The participants of the seminars, including their organiser and the present author, then read the literature relatively poorly, referring to the classical but somewhat obsolete book by Thomas Kuhn (1962/1968).

In the autumn of 1981, the discussion attracted a growing number of the interested ‘angry young’. After one seminar, the Working Group of Radical Geographers, proposed by Roger Bivand, was founded in November 1981.

In opposition to the dominant attitude of young Polish geographers, that was limited to the critique of those in power, indicating their mistakes if not bad intentions, R. Bivand, who was socialised in the Anglo-Saxon culture, categorised this opinion as ‘meowing in corners’ – as it was gorgeously phrased by A. Kukliński (cf. Rykiel, Węławowicz, 1987). R. Bivand held this to be insufficient, suggesting that

dissatisfaction should be institutionalised within the above mentioned Working Group.

Like Solidarity on the societal scale, the Working Group had a precise negative and a rather loose positive programmes. The latter stressed the socialisation and humanisation of Polish geography as well as the demand to organise a national methodological conference, referred to as 'the other Osieczna' or 'anti-Osieczna', with the conference of 1955 in Osieczna as a reference point, during which the normative structure of geographical investigations in Poland was established. The postulated conference was aimed at the development of a normative structure of geographical investigations in Poland. According to the originators, the geographical establishment's (i.e. the 'elders') role was to present reports on new perspectives and directions for the development of Polish geography while the 'young' were to prepare critiques of those reports for the conference. Interestingly and importantly, the Group represented – similarly to the Solidarity movement at this time – demanding attitudes and expected that their claims would be implemented by someone else. The explanation, if not justification, for this phenomenon was the fact that the 'angry young' had no organisational background for and perhaps not even the knowledge of how to organise such a conference themselves.

The Group was ideologically pluralist, referring to a widely yet vaguely understood notion of 'radicalism'. The two most pronounced programmatic options included: (1) the widely understood humanistic project, referring especially to neo-Thomism, represented in the Group by Maciej Jakubowski and Jerzy Grzybowski, and (2) neo-Marxism, opted for by Zbigniew Rykiel. It was decided that a programme declaration should be prepared before the Christmas holidays, i.e. till 21 December 1981, the task being assigned to Zbigniew Rykiel. Because of the imposition of martial law on 13 December of that year, the Working Group never met again. Nonetheless, the would-be author of the programme declaration attempted to complete the assigned task by writing a text, between November 1981 and March 1982, which grew to the size of a book. Because of the difficult contacts of junior Polish geographers with the external world in those times, the book was published only two years later in Barcelona (Rykiel 1984). It was in this book that the slogans

*geography with a human face* and *geography on the human scale* first appeared and soon entered common disciplinary parlance. In what was then characteristic of the social relations, the book was hardly read in Poland, the linguistic barrier being only one reason. Another was that it was deemed to be ‘unjust’.

After martial law was imposed the call to fight against the ‘counter-revolution’ in Poland ‘was eagerly identified by some conservative [...] politicians] with the fight against any symptoms of the [social] dissatisfaction[,] which was revealed in 1980-[19]81’ (Rykiel 1988: 402). Importantly, however, within this framework, science enjoyed considerable autonomy. Unlike cases of departure in previous political crises, all the books intended for publication and not printed were allowed to be published (Rykiel 1988). Paradoxically therefore, the most acute criticisms of the communist system ever legally published were those published under martial law. The general atmosphere of ‘normalisation’ or even ‘further normalisation’ favoured, however, a counter-revolution in science (Rykiel 1988).

### 3. The conference

After martial law had been lifted in July 1982, preparation for the expected conference began. It was to be held from 27 till 30 June 1983 in Rydzyna. Apart from other circumstances, the choice of this location was of a great symbolic importance for three main reasons. Firstly, Rydzyna is located a dozen kilometres from Osieczna, a fact that appeared to reinforce the legacy of the post-Stalinist paradigm established in Osieczna. Secondly, the castle in Rydzyna, where the conference would have been held, was owned by the Leszczyńskis family, including Stanisław Leszczyński, who, elected with the Swedish support as a king of Poland in 1705, was dethroned by a Russian-Saxon coalition and, as a result, had to leave Poland for Lorrain. Thirdly, sold by the Leszczyńskis, the castle was owned by the Sułkowskis, including Józef Sułkowski, Napoleon Bonaparte’s aid-de-camp during the Egyptian campaign of 1798 and ‘an officer of the greatest hope’, who was killed during this campaign. Generally therefore, from the symbolic point of view at least, the place was not very suitable for a design aimed at either glory or at radical change.

From the organisational point of view no revolutionary experiments were planned by the organisers. The 'angry young' were supposed to prepare papers that were to be subjected to general discussion. Subjects of the papers, although not enforced, were set by the organisers and framed within the – still applicable even though contested by the 'angry young' – 'branch geographies'. The teams of authors were not voluntarily matched but designated by the organisers. Among a dozen of the groups, the present author happened to participate in one preparing a paper on *The main problems, research results, and functions of human geography* (Potrykowski et al., 1983), whithin which he was responsible for the chapter on *The changes in the paradigm of Polish human geography*.

Because the groups met twice with the organisers in Poznań before the conference in order to refer the theses of their presentations, the subjects of the papers and views of their authors were known, arousing the interest of the organisers and discussion among the potential speakers. Information about the general tone of the papers was diffused by informal channels outside, arousing some nervousness among the establishment, this nervousness being manifested during the conference itself. This especially applied to papers by Zbigniew Rykiel and Andrzej Rachocki (*A thing about our geomorphology*). The nervousness resulted in a few facts, two of which were spectacular. Firstly, 40 minutes were granted to every presentation in the curriculum in order to give speakers the opportunity to present their papers in details. When, however, the first speaker, Konrad Dramowicz, took the floor, the chairman, Antoni Kukliński, announced that there would only be 20 minutes for every presentation, including the first one. (In contrast, there were four-hours-long speaches during the Osieczna conference in 1955; cf. Rykiel, Węclawowicz, 1988). In this situation, the present author, designated by their colleagues to make a presentation, had to limit his speech to its paradigmatic part, a fact that even reinforced the emotions of the establishment's members, and – secondly – both the chairman and a few older participants were unable to refrain from shouting their disapproval.

In both presentations referred to above, the most important metaphors of the conferences appeared, including those that were to be used for quite a time within

the Polish geographical community. These included the *Natolin geography* and *Kórnik geography* from the presentation by A. Rachocki, as well as *geography with a human face*, *geography on the human scale*, *manorial geography*, and Osieczna as the *Yalta of Polish geography* from the presentation by Z. Rykiel.

The Natolin and Kórnik geographies were metaphors of the parochialism of Polish geography, Natolin being a suburban settlement with an eighteenth-century palace within the city of Warsaw where an extensive housing estate was built in the late 1970s while Kórnik is a small town 20 km from Poznań with a mediaeval castle. The postulate of geography with a human face and on the human scale applied to the socialisation of Polish human geography, which, since the conference in Osieczna of 1955, generally represented the macro-scale economic geography, even though this pattern had been undermined since the 1970s.

The metaphor of manorial geography applied to the mode of the institutionalisation of Polish geography which developed at the Osieczna conference. This was based on departments, with all important organisational functions performed by their heads who grew up over time as the true masters of their scientific schools while other students performed functions of scientific underlabourers, outstanding in cases, and the whole system worked efficiently.

The metaphor of (the conference in) Osieczna as the Yalta of Polish geography, authored by Marek Jerczyński but presented publicly in Rydzyna by Zbigniew Rykiel, turned out to be shocking to some members of the establishment. This shock, verbalised by Antoni Kukliński, resulted from the fact that the conference of the three leaders of the great powers in Yalta in 1945 was misidentified with the selling out of Poland by her western allies to Russia, even though the 'transaction' had been done at the conference in Tehran in 1943 while in Yalta the Poles were merely informed about this sad fact; besides it was in Yalta that Winston Churchill proposed to Joseph Stalin zones of influences in Europe, and it was this very fact that the metaphor applied to. It appeared therefore in Rydzyna that the historical frustration of some members of the geographical establishment outweighed a well-balanced analysis of the historical facts.

The assessment of the prevailing achievements of Polish geography and its ideological involvement turned out, however, to be especially shocking. The establishment was shocked by the banal thesis – which can now be found in every analysis of the postwar period – that a mere change in the ruling team occurred in 1956. A slightly more liberal regime came to prominence and there was no major ideological turn. Andrzej Friszke (2003) argues that actual socialism after 1956 was Stalinism minus widespread terror. Andrzej Paczkowski (1995) maintains that this very state happened after 1956 and lasted up to 1980. Krystyna Kersten (1990), Andrzej Paczkowski (1995), and Hanna Świda-Ziemba (1997) do not agree that October 1956 put an end to the totalitarian experiment. Antoni Kukliński, on the contrary, believed, and expressed this during his 1981 seminars, that Stalinism in Poland had been overthrown by himself with Stanisław Leszczycki even before Władysław Gomułka, a new, post-1956, political leader. A. Kukliński's evident wish to be at the centre of historical events seemed to imbalance his assessment of the past and his place in it.

The programme of the development of Polish geography presented at the Osieczna conference of 1955 must have been based on, only slightly mitigated, (neo)Stalinism, referred to as 'enlightened dogmatism' (Rykiel 1988: 398). 'Every researcher is [...] free to choose his own world view and thus also a corresponding philosophical system. The assumption that this may be an unrestricted choice would have to be, however, based on the assumption that the researcher is not involved in relations in the society he lives in. Even if, however, one assumes that – as a human being – the researcher has a considerable freedom of choice of suitable philosophical systems, it would be naïve to suppose that he has an equal freedom of choice as a researcher – since normal science has existed. [...] The supposition would be unjust that the state, as the main financial supporter of basic research, would be able and wish to deprive itself of the impact on directions of the research and its ideological assumptions' (Rykiel 2005: 92).

During the break at the conference Kazimierz Dziewoński stated that it is necessary to be 60 to formulate general conclusions about the changes in paradigms of Polish geography such as thirty-four-year-old Z. Rykiel did in his presentation.

These appeared to be words of both recognition and warning. The present author, having completed the desired age now, dares to state that not all conclusions he formulated at Rydzyna were correct, not, however, because they reached too far but because they were too cautious – due both to the then state of knowledge of the author and to his courtesy to the establishment. Even though both centres of the contestation of normal geography, i.e. A. Kukliński and the ‘angry young’, differed ideologically and were aimed at other institutional goals, they had one common characteristic, viz. a naïve belief that common aims of the establishment and its challengers were possible. A. Kukliński’s naiveness stemmed from his conviction that a repetition of the revolution of the establishment of 1955 against itself was possible (cf. Rykiel, Węclawowicz, 1987) while the naiveness of the ‘angry young’ resulted from the demanding attitudes that they had been brought up with.

#### **4. Appeasement**

What was badly lacking in the Rydzyna presentation of the assessment of the mechanisms for the functioning and development of Polish geography was a lack of comprehension of the group-creating mechanisms in the collectivity of Polish geographers, including the formation of interest groups and, especially, anti-developmental interest groups (Zybertowicz 2005), even though one should call into question the definition of ‘development’ that is being used here. David Harvey’s (1973) relation between scientific and social revolutions and his classification of theories into revolutionary, counter-revolutionary, and the status quo theories (Harvey 1972) can be taken as a good starting point for further discussion. It is therefore important for the assessment of the history of Polish geography that – against the illusions at Rydzyna – not every change in the paradigm must result from a scientific revolution simply because counter-revolutions and counter-revolutionary stagnations may happen. The pivotal fact is that the neo-Stalinist revolution of the mid-1950s was the sole scientific revolution in Polish geography. It was because the only intrinsic change in the structure of power in the discipline occurred then (Rykiel 1988). It also applied to the mechanisms for its functioning and development, and to social mobility (Rykiel 2006), which were only reproduced subsequently according to

the unchanged rules. A transfer of the management of the just liquidated Fish Storehouse in 1953 to the central administration of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Rykiel 1989) was a symbolic expression of this fact.

The Rydzyna conference was an obvious failure from the point of view of the reconstruction of Polish geography since, in contrast to the Osieczna conference, it resulted in no normative decisions. As a successful attempt to canalise the ferment among the ‘angry young’, who – typically for the spirit of the epoch – were allowed to talk almost whatever they wanted but never allowed to publish the most critical original conference papers, partial publication of the conference materials emerged (Kulikowski et al. 1984), but ‘unfortunately in English’ (Kukliński 1985: 175). Interestingly, what was ‘unfortunate’ in the publication in English was not the fact that the publication was unavailable for the Polish readership but rather that the ‘unjust’ opinions were available to the international readership, if the latter could reach the limited number of copies published locally at a university over the, still existing, even if already soft, Iron Curtain.

As a classical example of a scientific counter-revolution the conference resulted in a deliberate decision not to take any action to reform the discipline (Rykiel 2011). Then, after years of the anticipation of the collapse of the no longer strong revolutionary mood, it was eventually decided to publish an Orwellian version of the events (Kulikowski et al. 1991), i.e. one as they should have been rather than what in fact was. The ‘just’ version was designed to create an impression that neither a radical mood of the younger generation nor a nervousness of the older generation appeared in Rydzyna. This fact can thus be categorised as a classical example of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1988), involving the transfer by those teaching to those taught a description of the world which the latter will recognise as obvious and reasonable or, more generally, involving such an influence of the dominant social groups, which would make the subordinated perceive reality in the designed way, including the very relation of dominance that they are victims of (Rykiel 2011). The reproduction of academia’s social structure is one result of this. The Rydzyna conference as a social phenomenon was therefore appeased and censored within the

discipline, which proves that it was dangerous for the then Polish geographical establishment.

A first attempt was made in Rydzyna, even though mild if not naïve, to reveal the social mechanisms behind the rise and fall of Polish geography as a scientific discipline, and it was because of this that this line of thinking was not allowed to be publicised. This must have resulted from the fact that the self-preservation of the decision makers in Polish geography applied to *their* social group rather than the social category of geographers, and even less to the interests of the discipline (Rykiel 2011), the community of interests being a group-creating factor.

The present author had the opportunity to participate merely in the paper published ‘unfortunately in English’, the Polish readers could thus get an impression that he had not been participating in the Rydzyna conference, and a ‘just’ paper had been presented there by Antoni Kukliński. The views of the present author presented in Rydzyna were, interestingly, published under a pseudonym (Chojnicki 1986), stating what views ‘were presented’ at the conference (*ibidem*: 358) while authors of the ‘presented views’ were not indicated in the references. Interestingly, even though not unexpectedly, repeated attempts to publish texts on this topic by the present author failed even if they were ordered by editors. It was argued that the author presented an untrue course of events of the 1950s and evaluated them inappropriately, the best evidence of this being – to put it ironically – the publication of those arguments in *Progress in Human Geography* (Rykiel 1988). If the arguments of the author were really untrue, their scientific critique, even if devastating, could be expected while the refusal of the publication ennobled the arguments symbolically to the rank of an anti-systemic manifesto which they certainly were not. Interestingly and importantly, however, the ‘unjust’ views were countered in a Bolshevik mode, i.e. by providing polemics against unferred to texts (Kukliński 1985: 175; Chojnicki 1986: 358; Domański 1986: 353), a fact that itself disputes the argument that Stalinism had been overthrown in Poland in the mid-1950s.

The fact that ‘no real, honest [...] academic debate developed around the theses of the [would-be publication] serves as an additional argument for the accuracy of the representation [...], which emerges from [them]. It is a serious

argument for a thesis of the intellectual weakness of a substantial part of the [academic] milieu' (Zybertowicz 2012).

## 5. Assessment

The argument that there were two milestones in the history of Polish geography, i.e. the conferences in Osieczna of 1955 and Rydzyna of 1983, is not new (Rykiel 1988). The former was one element of the only scientific revolution in the history of the discipline, which resulted in a solid change in the power structure within the discipline. The latter, on the contrary, was a classical example of a scientific counter-revolution, within which, in the name of the defence of group interests, a necessary change in the paradigm of Polish geography was prevented (Rykiel 2011). The role of the Stalinist revolution in Polish geography consisted of the permanent division of physical and human geography, based not only on different methodologies and subjects of investigation but above all on the formation in the community of geographers of such social relations and their institutionalisation that no scientific revolution is possible. The whole mechanism for the negative selection of scientific cadres results from this very social process, in which the structure of interests and power, institutionalisation, symbolic and structural violence (Rykiel 2011), anti-developmental interest groups (Zybertowicz 2005) and the related mechanism for a negative selection of scientific cadres loom large (Rykiel 2006).

D. Harvey (1973) indicated an inextricable link between scientific and social revolutions; in this context, no scientific revolution is possible in Polish geography without a solid change in the social structure of the collectivity of geographers. This idea is still valid.

The revolutionary nature of the Rydzyna conference consisted in the fact that – unlike in Osieczna – it was a bottom-up initiative and every participant of the conference, both presenters and discussants, were saying what (s)he thought, a phenomenon that remained permanent for some of them. The Rydzyna conference was a generational, if not generation-creating, experience for the Solidarity thirty-somethings, as the Rydzyna generation can be identified. For individual participants of the conference it was one of the most important events in their scientific lives,

determining their further careers, even fates in some cases. The prolonged lack of a post-conference publication was responsible for a mythologisation of the Rydzyna conference, especially among the generation somewhat younger than the speakers. Copies of the conference papers distributed among the participants were of such poor quality that they were unsuitable for further copying. Readers copied them manually while the present author offered free lectures and seminars to students in a number of Polish universities on his Rydzyna concepts.

The Rydzyna conference was a lost chance to regenerate Polish geography while the achievements of the conference were wasted since the publication of the Orwellian version of the events in 1991, i.e. eight years after the conference and after a change in the political system of Poland, was meaningless, especially since it was published by a university publisher in a limited number of copies. The conference in Kościelisko in 1998, i.e. 15 years after the Rydzyna conference, can be recognised as the symbolic finale of the Rydzyna epoch, for, located in the Tatra Mountains, Kościelisko is placed between the village of Nędzówka (literary Misery Place) and the mount Ciemniak (Obscurant).

## 6. Results

The failure of the Rydzyna conference resulted very obviously in the defence of the group interests of Poland's geographical establishment. In this context, an uncontrolled change in the paradigm by a scientific revolution was prevented. The informal conversations of the present author with members of the establishment and, more generally, the participating observation of the Polish geographical community allow him to hypothesise that at least the older members of the establishment felt rather than understood the direct relation between the scientific and social revolutions. What they were afraid of, however, was a politicisation of geography, which would challenge the comfortable equilibrium between the political non-commitment, loyalty to the existing system, and profitable own social position.

The procrastination must have, however, resulted in an evolution of the paradigm, which could only be achieved by a negative selection of the scientific cadres. This mechanism included four main elements. Firstly, discretion was the essential

criterion for formal scientific promotion, the general conviction of the community about allowance to the club rather than measurable achievements of the candidates being the main criterion for promotion. Secondly, the challengers were hampered in their careers and marginalized, cynically in cases. Thirdly, the mediocre and passive but staunch were promoted. These people would not have had such chances in a competitive scientific market and owed their careers to their protectors. Fourthly, management by culture was implemented (Zybertowicz 2005, Rykiel 2006), in which group conventions rather than social and legal norms ruled behaviour in the scientific milieu. In this context, unfair reviews of scientific achievements of candidates were accepted, legally defined deadlines were ignored, conflicts of interests in reviewing grant applications were disregarded, and plagiarism of the ideas of subordinates were not condemned. The fact that those behaviours were a legacy of former paradigms explains rather than questions the functionality of the whole system. The conservation of a limited social and spatial mobility was the main result of this system, in which single university stars dominated who developed their careers – from under-graduate till honorary doctor – within a single scientific institution.

The fates of Rydzyna's 'angry young' were differentiated. Individuals and their groups (1) emigrated, (2) left science for careers in business or bureaucracy, (3) left geography for other social sciences, (4) were marginalised within geography or, in very few cases, (5) made a career in geography, although more formal than scientific.

The paradigm of Polish geography evolved after 1990 from scientific to 'realist'. It tends to follow the norms of 'applied' technical sciences, lacking solid theoretical background, and shows little interest in the philosophy of geography and the history of geographical thought, its adherents being far from fluent in basic methodological knowledge and unfamiliar with any basic philosophical concepts (Wilczyński 2011).

The progressive marginalisation of the discipline resulted from a voluntary self-isolation and its attempted cure is by the application of developmental dependence on pure conventions rather than the norms of Anglo-Saxon geography (Rykiel

2011b). What contemporary Polish human geography badly needs is a much more solid than that provided herein sociological analysis of geography (Rykiel 2011a).

The notion of the *refusal of knowledge*, or even more so the system of the refusal of knowledge, is essential for such an analysis (Zybertowicz 2012). A system is concerned herein that ‘too often is woven with illusions, fear, manipulation, desire, deceit, half-truths, betrayals, lack of courage, and finally, the interests of such strength that they did not allow [...] for so many years their own extrication from this spiral of deceptions. [...] The original and still unique, scientifically legitimated insight into the game of interests [...] would] give insight into the mechanisms of creation and maintenance of so called [...] authorities – as informal but sometimes effective regulators of collective behaviour[;] an insight into the attitude of a significant part of [...] academia’ (Zybertowicz 2012).

In this context, the notion of *paradigm* seems not to be limited to concepts, categories, relations, methods, and procedures, as T. Kuhn (1962) believed, or even to be extended to types of narration and the language of science in general (Rykiel 2009), nor be understood as a set of social norms (Harvey 1973) generally accepted in the given discipline in a certain time (Johnston 1978) but rather be the entirety of social relations in a scientific collectivity.

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