

Organisational culture and long duration on the semi-peripheries

Zbigniew Rykiel

gniew@poczta.onet.eu

ORCID: 0000-0002-4580-127X

1. Introduction

This text is the result of the author's participant observation, and therefore no reference is made to the existing literature.

2. Origin

In 1951, the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) was established as a corporation of scientists and a network of scientific institutes with a joint administration. From 1960-1990 it served as a governmental institution. The establishment of the PAS administration coincided with the liquidation of the Fish Trade Headquarters, whose administration passed to that of the PAS. This had a profound impact on the organisational culture of the administration of the PAS and its institutes.

In 1953, an institute was established within the Polish Academy of Sciences, whose scientific interests, traditionally derived from natural sciences, also included economic sciences, evolving over decades towards strict social sciences. While the triunity of the corporate, institute and state-administrative functions was characteristic of the organisational culture of the PAS, the Institute was characterised by the natural-economic (and later natural-social) dualism of the research field, while the role of the Institute's administration was – in line with the logic of the state socialist system – more supervisory and regulatory than providing services for research activities, especially towards academics.

Not being a university, the Institute did not explicitly refer to the tradition of *universitas* as a community of scholars, but cultivated the traditions of a semi-peripheral post-feudal society, with its manorial culture, which, in fact, was effective

in semi-peripheral feudalism. The elements of this culture were: (1) a multi-level hierarchy of academic and service degrees and titles (flattened over decades), (2) social distance between social positions in the scientific community, which was overlapped by (3) a poor hierarchical structure of the Institute's administration, whose social positions were an intrusion into the scientific hierarchy at a fairly high causative, if not decisive, level. To put it simpler, while the task of the administration of the PAS was bureaucratic and political supervision over the institutes, the implied task of the Institute's administration was to keep hierarchically younger academics in line rather than to provide technical and organisational support in their research activities.

3. Publications

The periodicals and series published by the Institute were important tools for publishing the research results of the Institute's employees and its contacts with the outside world. The number of these publishing units has been historically volatile, but temporarily significant. For the purposes of further consideration, it is worth pointing to four such units, which – to avoid going into details – have been given the following nicknames: (1) *Journal*, (2) *Series-Journal*, (3) *Series* and (4) *Oddity*.

The *Journal* had been published for three decades (since 1918), before the newly established Institute took it over (1954), which – incidentally – from the historical perspective, turned out to be beneficial for the *Journal*.

The *Series-Journal* appeared in 1964 as a series primarily publishing materials from international scientific conferences co-organised by the Institute. Initially, it was published mostly in English, rarely in French, and eventually it became a consistent English-language series. Signalling the usefulness of transforming the series into a journal to the authorities of the Institute eventually met with success at the end of the millennium (1999).

The *Series* published monographs, usually at a high scientific level, including the best doctoral dissertations promoted at the Institute.

The *Oddity* had ambitions to be a journal, publishing translations into Polish of significant – according to the publisher – foreign texts, usually articles or book chapters. Conceived as a spotlight which, after the post-war regime change, was to en-

lighten the poorly oriented masses of Polish scientists with the splendours of Soviet science, which, formalistically and rather unreasonably, was misidentified with Marxist science. After the political turn of 1956 it was more bold about publishing texts by Western authors who, from the 1970s, definitely dominated these publications. The specificity of the *Oddity* was an intellectual piracy, consisting – following Soviet customs – of breaching copyright, because neither the authors nor the original publishers of the translated works were asked for permission, or even notified about the pirated translations. After the change of the political system in 1990, the *Oddity* was liquidated due to its unlawfulness. This met with disappointment from the editors and notorious participants of this project.

For over three decades, the functioning of the Institute's publications was based on the following unwritten rules of local organisational culture:

- (1) the Institute's publications were its official organs, thus representing its official position;
- (2) to publish texts inconsistent with the views of the editorial office was not possible;
- (3) the position of the editor-in-chief of all major editorial offices in the Institute was held by its director;
- (4) the positions of vice-editors and members of the editorial boards of individual editorial offices were held by the oldest and highest-degree professors employed at the Institute;
- (5) the same decision-making group held – in various configurations – positions in various editorial offices and boards;
- (6) the peer reviewers showed repeated slowness in their reviewing duties, and even disregarded the authors;
- (7) texts submitted for publication by professors were not subjected to peer review;
- (8) texts by other authors were subjected to only one peer review;
- (9) the publishing process was long and was rarely – from submitting the typescript to the editorial office to publication – shorter than two years;

- (10) the order of qualifying individual texts for publication depended not on the order in which they were submitted to the editorial office, but on the position of the author in the formal hierarchy; thus the youngest academics had to wait three years to have their articles published;
- (11) word length limitations of published texts did not apply to professors;
- (12) only a person occupying a higher hierarchical position than the author could be a peer reviewer;
- (13) the peer reviews were not anonymous;
- (14) the review did not have to be substantive; generalities indicating the “immaturity” of the text, if not its author, were sufficient;
- (15) providing the author with reviews of his/her work was not a regular practice, especially if the review was limited to brief generalities;
- (16) critical texts had little chance of publication, which concerned in particular criticism up the formal hierarchy;
- (17) plagiarism by some reviewers of their peer-reviewed works by younger authors went unpunished;
- (18) fees were paid to authors after their texts were published.

4. The Solidarity awakening

Organisational cultures can have considerable durability. Their values and norms can appear permanent. As a result, one can speak of the non-reformability of institutions, stagnation and stasis. An awakening from this stagnation, which surprised interested parties, came via attempts to reform the Institute’s publications and the Institute itself during the Solidarity revolution in the early 1980s.

The part of the memo of the Solidarity Trade Union’s Commission of 24 October 1980, devoted to the publishing activity of the Institute, presented a structured set of employees’ postulates addressed to the Institute’s director. The postulates were a good illustration of both the organisational culture of the time and those of the reformers. A shortened set of these postulates is presented below:

- (1) the need to rejuvenate and expand the recruitment base of editorial boards; the idea that boards include, apart from professors, only one asso-

ciate professor, vis-à-vis two retired persons and two other from outside the Institute, was considered dangerous for the future;

- (2) the necessity to introduce the principle of rotation of members of editorial boards and editors-in-chief;
- (3) prohibition of combining the functions of the editor-in-chief and director of the Institute;
- (4) prohibition of simultaneous membership in two or more editorial boards;
- (5) observing the principle of publishing works in the order of their submission, regardless of the author's rank and position; to check compliance with this rule, the date of submission to the editorial office should be printed;
- (6) introducing the principle of universality of reviewing submitted works, regardless of the rank and position of the author;
- (7) appointing two reviewers or adopting the principle of appointing a super-reviewer at the author's request; this would increase the impartiality of reviews and reduce the likelihood of being guided by non-scientific considerations;
- (8) making the reviews anonymous; the author and reviewer should not know one another's names;
- (9) developing a system to enforce the timeliness of reviews;
- (10) developing effective mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and self-plagiarism, e.g. by refusing to publish works of authors who has been proven to plagiarise;
- (11) to not use the services of reviewers guided by non-scientific reasons;
- (12) observing the length limitations of articles, regardless of the degree and position of their authors.

Most of the presented postulates, shocking to the management at the time, remained valid until the end of the millennium.

In October 1980, at a meeting of the Solidarity Trade Union's Committee at the Institute, a memo was presented which publicised – to call it euphemistically – ethi-

cally questionable practices in the Institute's publications which negatively impacted younger academics.

- (1) A certain M.A. submitted his article to the editorial office of the *Journal*. After seven months, the author received a negative review, which resulted from the incompatibility of the views of the author and the reviewer. After the author's reply to the review, nothing happened for two years; behind the scenes it was said that the reviewer took offence at his younger colleague who dared to have different scientific views. After this time, a super-reviewer was appointed who found nothing in the work that would justify its rejection. The work was published more than three years after its submission. During this time, a certain scientific event took place during which the first reviewer presented a paper on a topic similar to the reviewed one, but the work he reviewed was not included in the extensive bibliography.
- (2) A certain doctor submitted his article to the editorial office of the *Journal*. The critical and negative opinion of the reviewer, written one and a half years later, showed – according to the assessment of one of the professors – the incompetence of the reviewer. The author's reply ended with a request to appoint a super-reviewer. The author was informed orally that the work was reportedly sent for a second review. After a year, the author sent a letter to the editorial office asking for information on the fate of his article. For over half a year further, i.e. three years from the submission of the article, he had not received any reply.
- (3) A doctor submitted a critical review of a book by a certain author to the *Journal's* editorial office. After a year, the editor-in-chief recommended making available the review to the supervisor of the reviewed work. She deleted most of the reviewer's critical remarks and submitted the review for publication without notifying him of this fact. The author of the review found out about it accidentally and immediately withdrew the invalid review in order to publish his full work elsewhere.

- (4) A team of authors prepared a monograph for the *Series*. The editor-in-chief of the *Series* tried to make changes to the text without consulting the authors, which was discontinued only after intervention by the editor of the monograph.
- (5) A certain doctor submitted an article to the editorial office of the *Journal*. Already prepared for publication in the forthcoming issue, the article was not published at all, and it was not considered appropriate to inform the author about the reasons why. The fact that a certain professor's article on the same subject had been published meanwhile was, of course, pure coincidence.

It can be assumed that the phenomena presented in the document cannot be eradicated before the death of the generation that considers them as the norm, which was already suggested in the Old Testament's Book of Exodus, because they result from the organisational culture of the institution in the process of its *longue durée*.

On 11 May 1981, as a result of negotiations between the Institute's director and a delegation of the Solidarity Trade Union's Committee, the principles of the Institute's publishing policy were agreed, which – after substantively justified shortening – are presented below.

- (1) Unless there are compelling reasons for adopting a different solution, scientific papers are published in the order in which they are accepted for publication by editors.
- (2) To print the date of submission of texts to all of the Institute's publications is obligatory.
- (3) At the author's request, the manuscript will be submitted for review without disclosing his name. At the reviewer's request, his name will not be disclosed to the author.
- (4) The rule of submitting a copy of the review to the author will be respected if it contains serious critical remarks and indicates the need to revise or reject the work.
- (5) The review recommending to reject the text should contain a substantive justification. In the event of receiving a negative review that does not con-

tain such a justification, the secretary of the editorial office will ask the reviewer to supplement it or, in the event of refusal, will appoint a new reviewer.

- (6) The author has the right to appeal against the reviewer's decision. The editorial office will then appoint another reviewer.
- (7) The reviewer should not prepare a review for longer than three months, and, in the case of the *Journal*, not longer than two months. Reviewers should not hold up papers beyond this period.
- (8) Articles, progress reports and monographs by all authors, without exception, are reviewed.
- (9) Occasionally, scientists who are not members of the editorial boards will be entrusted with the editing of individual volumes or issues.
- (10) The text of this announcement will be made known to the employees of the Institute, and the director will forward it to the editors-in-chief and editorial secretaries together with a written instruction to follow the agreed rules.

The above document remained largely an exercise in wishful thinking until the end of the millennium, which was an important element of the organisational culture not only of the Institute.

5. The system's transformation?

As part of the discussion on the place of the Institute and its publications in the new external situation caused by the political transformation after 1989, three assistant professors prepared in the spring of 1990 a project to reorganise the publishing activity of the Institute. Having concluded that this activity required profound reforms aimed at increasing the efficiency of publishing activity by treating it on a market-oriented basis, the memo concluded that this requires vigorous efforts to increase the attractiveness of publishing products. The publishing activity reflected a deep crisis of the discipline, which manifested in parochialism, a lack of broader horizons and concepts, institutional formalism, obstruction of information channels and the atrophy of discussion.

The main reason for this was not the difficult economic situation of the country but rather the long-term entanglement of the discipline in the system of state socialism (and its organisational culture). This resulted in the domination of institutionalisation over substantive approaches, the feudalisation of personnel relations, the rigidity of interdisciplinary divisions and the poor permeability of interstate borders in Eastern Europe for the movement of people and ideas. The socio-political changes taking place since 1989 in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe shown anachronism of this system.

The memo stated that, in the new economic situation, the Institute would probably not be able to afford to publish all the previous series and journals in their current programme profile and bureaucratic organisational system. Indeed, it would threaten a collapse of all publishing activities. The ways of overcoming the then state should therefore be radical, albeit gradual. It was not necessary to formally liquidate any of the periodicals or series published by the Institute, as some of them had actually atrophied. Instead, the authors of the memo suggested launching a new, fully modern and professionally edited journal, which could be treated as an experimental field for further transformations of the Institute's publications.

The functioning of the proposed periodical was to be based on the principle of programme independence and financial autonomy. The Institute would therefore appoint the editorial office of the new journal, which would be free for a predetermined period to shape the thematic profile of the journal, the editorial team, organisational forms, technical solutions and the selection of collaborators.

The authors of the memo expressed their readiness to undertake the organisation of such a journal and soon present its programme line, organisation and operating costs. The result of the memo presented here was the preparation, at the request of the director of the Institute, of two further memos.

On 8 May, the same authors submitted to the Institute's director a project to organise a new periodical. They stated that the current publishing activity of the Institute is particularly marked by the lack of a critical quarterly, at a high substantive level, addressed to a clearly defined type of reader, which would be attractive and published efficiently by an energetic editorial team. The authors declared that they

would organise and run such a journal, which would be a forum for an authentic scientific discussion, pluralistic in terms of worldview and methodology, and with a clearly defined programme line, as well as attractive content and good graphic design. Importantly, this periodical should not be an organ of the Institute, but should also publish opinions that differ from those of the Institute.

The periodical's attractiveness for potential authors would result from:

- (1) publication speed,
- (1) equality of all authors,
- (2) treating authors seriously and politely by the editorial office,
- (3) reliability of editorial reviews of each submitted text,
- (4) purely substantive grounds for qualifying texts for publication,
- (5) preferences for critical texts.

The reaction of the Institute's director to this memo was oral advice that the authors should take risks and reform measures as part of their own business, which some of them took advantage of, while the Institute's publications remained within the proven framework of its organisational culture for decades.

Soon, at the request of the Institute's director, the same authors prepared another memo concerning the transformation of the *Series-Journal* from the series into a quarterly, which testified to the incurable optimism, if not naivety, of these authors. They stated that – as an export showcase of the Institute's scientific thought – this publication should try to come closer to the world standards of scientific editorial activity, because publishing in foreign languages is a necessary, but far insufficient, condition for getting out of parochialism. The organisational separation of natural and socio-economic issues was considered the basic requirement for achieving this goal.

The high substantive level was proposed to be ensured by:

- (1) conducting an active policy of shaping the journal's profile;
- (2) a common system of independent peer reviews;
- (3) promoting discussion, including a preference for critical texts and running a permanent section of critique, polemics and discussion;
- (4) a strict length limit of articles accepted for publication;

- (5) not paying royalties to authors;
- (6) efficient and professional secretarial services, especially the efficiency of correspondence;
- (7) speed and regularity of publication;
- (8) consistent Anglo-lingual publication, i.e.:
 - a) publishing only in English,
 - b) accepting for publication only texts in English,
 - c) cooperation with an experienced native English-language editor.

By analysing these postulates, one can form an opinion about the existing elements of the organisational culture of this publishing house. Even more revolutionary was the proposal of the authors of the memo regarding the legal and organisational form of the operation of this publishing house as a limited liability company with a majority stake owned by the Institute.

The only noticeable organisational effect of this memo was the dismissal in 1991 of the first of the co-authors from the position of vice-editor of the *Series-Journal*, because he did not understand that – in accordance with the organisational culture of this publication – the function of the editor was not to edit the submitted texts, but to express his adoration to their authors. After ten years were wasted by abandoning any actions, at the beginning of the 21st century, the *Series-Journal* is slowly being transformed into a journal (from 1999 as a biannually, from 2012 as a quarterly), although in a much more difficult external situation.

To sum up, the result of the political transformation in the early 1990s was a distrustful, unhurried and specific transformation of the Institute's publishing policy, which did not affect its organisational culture. The symptoms of this transformation are presented below.

(1) The secretariats of individual editorial offices were rejuvenated, which was not, however, accompanied by a change in their organisational culture. While experienced editors of the older generation felt confident because of their experience, even if conservative, the younger generation had to gain their substantive authority, which was a difficult and time-consuming task, so it was easier to replace it with an institutional authority consisting in showing the authors that it is not the editorial of-

fices that are to serve authors, but it is the authors who are the applicants of the editorial offices.

An example of a certain author is known who, at the beginning of 1999, submitted to the editorial office of the *Journal* not only the typescript of his text for publication consideration, but also e-mailed the text directly to the editor's computer, which was a surprisingly modern solution at the time. In response, he learned from the secretariat that the printout should be resubmitted to the editorial office due to its wrong line spacing. However, the author expressed the hope that the basis for the evaluation of his text will be its substantive content rather than the size of the line spacing. The editor-in-chief assured the author that his text would be reviewed within three weeks. Therefore, when, after six weeks, the author asked the secretary about the results of the review, he was informed that for the two months since his text was on the editorial office's computer, nothing had been done to send this text for peer review, because "a legible printout will be absolutely necessary" and that it is the author who should provide an "improved printout" – probably from the editorial computer, while the secretary goes on vacation during this time. The author, however, did not take advantage of such an interesting proposal and withdrew his offer to publish his article in the *Journal*; a few months later the article was published in a commercial publishing house, and the author received a royalty.

(2) To a lesser extent, and a little later, there was a rejuvenation of the vice-editors of individual publishing offices, provided, however, that the respective vice-editors would not strive for independence.

(3) The payment of royalties was abandoned.

(4) The professors' texts submitted for publication were published not only without being reviewed, but even without linguistic and substantive revision, retaining the original incorrect punctuation and the authors' ignorance of Polish exonyms of foreign geographical names.

(5) Texts submitted to the editorial office with the support of professors, and, especially, those delivered by them personally, were neither subjected to peer reviews nor substantive revision. An example is known of publishing a text in the *Jour-*

nal, the author of which suggested by the nomenclature used in his paper that he had not mastered the knowledge of geography of Poland at the primary school level.

(6) The commercial competition was unnoticed, which was manifested in fact that the modernisation of the *Journal's* graphic design consisted of changing its grey-brown cover to varnished grey-brown.

6. The NEP

At the end of the last decade of the twentieth century, a discussion about the reform of the Institute's publishing policy was revived, like a reflection on the Loch Ness monster. At the beginning of 1999, an associate professor presented his memo "Proposals for a new publishing policy of the Institute [...]". In response, on 26 January 1999, one of the authors of the previous "revolutionary" memorials presented his "Comments on the Institute's New Editorial Policy (NEP) [...]". The acronym NEP – and its development – consciously alluded ironically to Lenin's New Economic Policy – with its spectacular symptoms of success and the inevitably regrettable, though by no means spontaneous, collapse. Fragments of these "Comments" are discussed below, as they show interesting, although not surprising, elements of the organisational culture of the Institute.

(1) According to the author of the "Proposals", "publishing activity should be the strongest and most efficiently organised structure of the Institute". The author of the "Comments" assessed this view as an idealist's dream, which has little chance of materialising. For this dream to come true, the Institute would have to have efficient organisational structures. The latter are based, to put it simply, on the functioning of efficient administrative and technical services that play an auxiliary and service role in relation to research activities. However, there have never been such services in the history of the Institute so far. Moreover, the entire organisational structure of the Polish Academy of Sciences and its individual institutes, designed at the time when the administration of the recently liquidated Fish Trade Headquarters passed *in gre-mio* to the Polish Academy of Sciences, was designed in such a way that the role of the administration and technical services consisted of keeping academics obedient. For they were treated as potentially suspect ideologically, politically or intellectually,

because they were thinking. Despite the change of the political system in 1989, this role of administrative and technical services did not change at all, the results of which were felt everywhere by scientists so much that most of them did not even notice it anymore, which met the conditions of symbolic violence. It turned out that it was easier to change the old manners of the police and tax office clerks than the perpetual sulks of a maid from the Institute's administration.

The Publishing Department was, all proportions regarded, part of this larger whole. Even after e-mailing a text in the standard version of the word processor directly to the editor's computer, the author could be sure that he would be argued with not for the reasonableness of his substantive proposals, but for the size of the heading and the width of the margin.

(2) The basis for the publishing success of modern scientific periodicals is their market orientation. The market has numerous disadvantages, it is, however, exceptionally effective in enforcing certain behaviours, otherwise considered socially desirable, not to mention good manners. The market success of scientific periodicals is based on: (a) discussion and scientific polemics, (b) active publishing policy, (c) independent and energetic editorial teams. In the Institute publications, none of these conditions for market success have ever existed. Traces of scientific discussion appeared at most at times of historical breakthroughs, while after successfully overcoming them, the blissful times of "normalisation" and even "further normalisation" returned. The publishing policy was replaced by passively waiting for some materials to be published from authors who had to be avoided so that they would not interfere with the thankless work of the editorial office.

A real oddity was the age structure of the editorial staff at the Institute. According to the hypothesis of the author of the "Comments", the average age exceeded 70 years. Among the members of the editorial teams, there were people who were dead or mentally and physically impaired, and it was difficult to count retired people on the fingers of one hand. On the other hand, it was difficult to notice people under the age of 40 in these bodies.

(3) A high rank of publication can be achieved only through a high level of editorial activity, i.e. regularity of publications, their speed, professionalism, respecting

the client, attractive graphic design and efficient marketing. The Institute's publications lacked all of this, the most characteristic being the market image of the Journal, with the cover in the colour of the wrapping paper. Thus, it was possible to doubt the effectiveness of any "further improvement" of this pattern.

(4) In this context, the idea of the author of the "Proposals" aimed in fact at the administrative order to publish the works of the Institute's employees in its publications, with further avoidance of external authors. This is bizarre, since elsewhere the Institute's employees could publish their works faster, in more prestigious outlets, in a more pleasant atmosphere (sometimes even courteous), often also receiving fees.

(5) If the Institute's publications were to survive on the publishing market before they are completely marginalised, it would be necessary, inter alia, to:

- a) treat membership in editorial boards and, especially, that of the editor-in-chief, as a challenge rather than a sinecure after their well-deserved retirement;
- b) treat scientific journals as discussion forums rather than as legitimate bodies;
- c) entrust editorships of journals to people under the age of 40;
- d) introduce the principle of anonymous reviews of submitted materials.

(6) The above-mentioned changes in the Institute's publications are considered necessary by the author of the "Comments". At the same time, however, due to their revolutionary nature, he considers their introduction impossible to implement, as he does not see in the Institute a possibility of taking the risk necessary to achieve success. It is much easier to commit omissions leading to an inevitable institutional collapse - incompatible, perhaps, with the long-term interests of the Institute, resulting, however, from its established organisational culture.

There is a view in management sciences (referring to the Calvinist dogma of predestination) that companies are generally divided into good and bad. The latter will not be helped even by a change in management, because they are so saturated with inertia and apathy that they are unreformable, so they can only be liquidated. Consulting companies clearly discourage investors from getting financially involved in such ventures. All proportions regarded, the Institute's editorial offices can be in-

cluded in this group. For this reason, one can agree with the suggestion of the author of the "Proposals" to liquidate the Publishing Department, and commissioning publications via a specialised private firm.

Generally, it can be said that, in their then organisational form, the Institute's editorial offices were unreformable and required radical action. Throughout the decade following the political transformation, editorial offices have failed to cope with the civilisation challenges that the transformation brings. The electronic version of an author's text caused decision paralysis at the editorial office, and their employees confused courtesy with awkwardness, and their own incompetence with high substantive requirements.

The author of the "Comment" was invited to a meeting of the Institute's Assembly, to present the theses of his memo, previously disseminated among the participants. In line with the organisational culture of the Institute, it had no organisational consequences.

7. The turn of the millennium

At the beginning of the 21st century, the internet appeared, which revolutionised not only the speed and expansion of the range of information exchange, but also the form of scientific publications. At the same time, Poland joined the political, economic and social structures of the West, locating itself on the semi-periphery of the capitalist world system, while in the post-war Stalinist decade it was located on the external arena of the system, and for the next three decades on its periphery.

This change of context was visible in the Institute's publications, the analysis of which cannot be, however, separated from the national context of the Institute's activities. The loss of the function of a government administration body by the Polish Academy of Sciences reduced the role of the Institute as a leading scientific institution in terms of organisation and content, in favour of a relative increase in the importance of universities. A generational change, caused by the retirement of the generation of the Institute's founders, and then the gradual departure of their direct successors, opened the way for the Institute and its publications to be managed by the younger generation, for whom the direct experience of the Solidarity era rebellion

was unavailable, and the organisational culture of the Institute was the environment of socialisation. On the other hand, this generation was open to the challenges of the infosphere and virtual space, the challenges of which were, however, increasingly difficult to meet due to the marginalisation of the role of science by successive governments of post-transformation Poland.

In the new millennium, coloured covers appeared in the Institute's publications, editorial boards were internationalised, old issues of publications were digitised, and then online editions appeared. The transformation of the *Series-Journal* from the series into a journal was a slow process rather than a one-off event, as individual issues of the formal journal were monothematic for years, and reviews were published rarely and irregularly (most recently in 2016). Reviews also rarely appear in the *Journal* (most recently in 2018). This phenomenon can be treated as a symptom of a resignation from treating these publications as forums for the exchange of scientific ideas in favour of returning to the internalised belief that the function of these publications is to preach non-controversial views. This observation seems to be confirmed by the fact that the discussion section could not be noticed in none of these publications. It cannot be ruled out that the reluctance to discuss and scientific criticism is strengthened by the ministerial scoring system, which depreciates these forms of scientific creativity, however their ignoring in the Institute's publications seems to result from its (and not only its) organisational culture, in which scientific criticism is perceived personally rather than substantively.

Opening to the world resulted in the emergence of international competition, both in the form of a brain drain and the relative ease of publication abroad, which led to a decline in the prestige of domestic publications. The frustration of the young generation of decision-makers resulted both from the feeling of progressive marginalisation of the discipline represented by the Institute in the Polish scientific community and the feeling of uncertainty about one's own scientific prestige, replaced – as always in such situations – by attempts to display formal prestige. A proven method of dealing with the latter was to refrain from taking any risky actions. In publishing policy, it was manifested in attempts to marginalise the actual, potential and imag-

ined substantive competition. Three examples of such actions are known to the present author.

(1) In April 2016, a conference was organised at the Institute devoted to one of the founding fathers of the Institute, a world-renowned scholar and educator of a whole generation of students, including many eminent ones. Almost all of the professor's living students and associates attended this conference. The papers prepared, delivered and submitted for publication were to be published in the prestigious volume of the *Series*. In the five years that have passed since then, this volume was unable to be published, and meanwhile some authors have published their texts elsewhere.

(2) In 2018, on the occasion of the centenary of Poland's regaining independence, a monumental work was prepared on the sub-discipline that was so far poorly represented in Polish monographs. Signed by the Institute as a publisher and under the patronage of the highest state authorities, this work was unable to be published for three years, until the editors finally published it in a limited edition at their own expense.

(3) In 2019, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the scientific work of one of the former long-term employees of the Institute, a collective monograph was published outside the Institute with the participation of a galaxy of outstanding representatives not only of the discipline represented by the Institute, but also several related ones. The Institute's library – the largest library in this field in the country – showed no interest in purchasing this book.

8. Conclusion

As can be seen from the above considerations, a generational change alone is not sufficient to change the organisational culture that the older generation created, and the younger one grew up in and internalised. One can risk a hypothesis that the organisational culture of the Fish Trade Headquarters, which was the mainstay of the power and durability of the Polish Academy of Sciences until 1990, remained in this role in the Institute in question. Directors and generations have been changing while the organisational culture of the Institute is admirably enduring. Although subjected

to certain modifications, it does not go beyond the framework of the *longue durée* process.

As the Readers may have had chance to notice, the organisational culture of our journal “Przestrzeń Społeczna (Social Space)” is fundamentally different from the one described above, the lack of symptoms of long duration being by no means the only reason for this.

Wpłynęło/received 12.04.2021; poprawiono/revised 14.04.2021