

You need to know when to leave the stage

Zbigniew Rykiel

gniew@poczta.onet.eu

ORCID: 0000-0002-4580-127X

At the beginning of 2011, a group of my associates and postgraduate students in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Rzeszów agreed to organisationally support my less-than-new idea of establishing an internet-based scientific journal to promote high-quality critical texts in the field of social space. Taking sociology as a starting point, we intended to make our journal a tool to promote discussion among researchers working with individual social sciences. The subject of our interest were the interdependencies between society and space; we tried to find a balance between sociologists' observation that space matters and human geographers' conviction that space itself explains little, if anything.

Our intention was to publish research papers quickly, and to ensure the high substantive and formal quality of the published texts. In publishing an intentionally international journal, we tried to avoid placing ourselves at the peripheries that overcome parochialism by the thoughtless duplication of Anglo-Saxon forms. Instead, we strove to accept norms rather than forms of scientific literature at the core of the world socio-economic system. Hence it was decided to make the journal a bilingual Polish-English publication, with monolingual published texts. Our intention was to promote texts presenting Polish concepts, theories and views – that are less known in world literature – without avoiding the use of the Polish language.

The innovation of our journal consisted in the fact that although social space is a subject of discussion in sociology, there was no journal devoted to social space in Polish sociology before, and it is not easy to find one in world sociology. On the other hand, texts on social geography, including those devoted to social space, are poorly known to sociologists, especially Polish ones. So far, there has not been an inter-

disciplinary journal interested in social space, nor a bilingual Polish-English journal promoting Polish ideas in social sciences in the international forum. In this sense, therefore, our journal had a chance to fill the niche.

Designed and registered as a biannual, our journal has been published in this form for 12 years. Twenty four issues have been published, including this one as the last one. During this time, 248 texts have been published. In total, 186 authors published their texts with us, including 84 women (45%), representing institutions from 27 countries across six continents, among which only Antarctica was not represented. One hundred thirty nine submitted texts, or 36%, were rejected.

During this time, the function of managing editors was performed by three persons, subject editors by 10 persons, who were replaced by thematic editors (nine persons in total) after changing the editorial structure; the functions of statistical editors were performed by three persons, language editors by two, technical editors by three, forum moderator by one, and the editor-in-chief by one person – the present author. In total, 22 people, including 10 women (45%) devoted their time and energy to the editorial office for longer or shorter periods. The first four issues were published by BOSQO, while the remaining ones were published by the Scientific Society Social Space and Environment.

An important role was played by the journal's Editorial Board, from which the reviewers of the submitted texts originated. During the 12 years of the journal's operation, 66 people, including 27 women (41%), from 25 countries on six continents, honoured the membership of the Council.

The fact that during the journal's operation the function of the editor-in-chief was performed by one person who made (except in the cases of his own texts) the final decision on acceptance individual texts for publication, made – rightly or wrongly – “Przestrzeń Społeczna (Social Space)” identified with its editor-in-chief. This meant that, rightly or wrongly, our journal could hardly be imagined under the editorship of another person. This connected the fate of the journal with the strengths and weaknesses of its editor-in-chief.

My master and mentor was saying that a professor who had raised a successor, *could* safely retire; and if he had not raised one, he *should* retire. Not developing

this issue at this point, it should be said that it is worth being aware that one will have to retire one day regardless, especially if one leaves the collective achievements of the team in a good condition.

This issue is the last edited by the present author. This issue closes the epoch of this journal's existence in the current form. It is a journal listed on several important platforms and rated by the Ministry at 70 points, although the ministerial *scoriosis*, especially politically controlled and discouraging interdisciplinarity, has never been at the centre of our interests, the more so in that it is irrelevant to our foreign authors. Our norm was to publish texts that were thoroughly reviewed and carefully edited; it happened that only the twentieth version of the text was accepted for publication. We have never accepted deviations from these standards in return for a publication fee, incidentally not collected from the authors. If this would change in the future, it would be another journal despite its retained title.

It cannot be ruled out that this will happen – in the situation of mass science, in which authors are forced to publish – not necessarily good and important texts – or perish, so they are willing to pay for the publication of their texts. This is a temptation for the proliferation of predatory commercial publications, with the value of the publication fees higher than the quality of the published texts. In the pre-mass science era, known to the present author, it was the authors who were paid fees for their published works. Our time as representatives of the old – although not always good – times has probably passed, so one needs to know when to leave the stage undefeated...

I would like to thank (1) all my Associates from the Editorial Office, without whom this fascinating undertaking would not have been possible, (2) the Members of the Editorial Board, who honoured us with their participation for the sake of the publisher and editor-in-chief, (3) Authors, who decided that it was worth submitting their texts to our journal, and (4) the Readers who gave signals of interest in at least some of the texts published with us.

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