

**ARTICLE**

Why Geography in Poland Has Never Radicalized

Political and International Entanglements of Polish Geography Seen Through the Prism of Antoni Kukliński's Professional Trajectory

Tomasz Zarycki

t.zarycki@uw.edu.pl

Abstract

This paper deals with the role of social sciences, and more specifically of geography and regional planning, in the legitimization of European integration and neo-liberal economic and social reforms introduced since 1989 in Poland and, more broadly, in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. Using the example of an intellectual biography of Antoni Kukliński, one of the most prominent Polish geographers, the role of the old intelligentsia elite and its American professional experiences in the evolution of the Polish academia is also analyzed, as well as its involvement in the first non-communist government. The paper also discusses the absence of critical schools within the field of Polish geography as well as other disciplines of social sciences. This is done through the reconstruction of the basic structure of the given academic field and its evolution over time from late communist period to present days. This specific structure of the field of Polish geography, which as it is argued is similar to other fields of social sciences and humanities in Poland, also helps to better contextualize the trajectory of Kukliński.

Keywords

Poland, geography, post-communist social sciences, regional planning, intelligentsia

INTRODUCTION

While this paper will centrally focus on the biography of one eminent Polish geographer, its aim is to also explain the almost complete absence of a “critical” sector (which is inspired by the so-called social theory) in the field of Polish social geography. This will be done by reconstructing the basic structure of the field of geography in postwar Poland and relating it to other parts of the social sciences. This paper will also reconstruct the relation of the given academic field to the broader political and social context. This should allow for interpreting the roots of a specific configuration of the broadly understood social geography in Poland as an academic field. What interests me in this context is the weakness of its autonomous pole, to use Pierre Bourdieu's notion. As a reminder, Bourdieu argued that most social fields, in particular those of the academic disciplines, can be

divided into what he called autonomous and heteronomous parts. They respectively refer to, on the one hand, the sectors which are distanced from the demands of external actors, in particular from politics and economy or more generally the field of power, and on the other hand, the sector which is oriented towards servicing the field of power. This division is reflected in most fields of the social sciences in the form of opposition, which may be framed as the opposition between the “applied” and “critical” schools of respective disciplines (Burawoy 2005). In this paper, I will focus on the autonomous sector of geography, one which in most of the Western countries of the postwar era was first of all represented by the broadly understood human geography (Johnston and Sidaway 2016). Among its more uncompromising and politically engaged currents, one should mention the so-called “critical” and “radical” schools, which crystallized in the late 1960s (Peake and Sheppard 2014). Their main fora included *Antipode: A Journal of Radical Geography*, which was initiated in 1969, and the critical geography journal *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, established in 1983. David Harvey can probably be considered the most broadly known critical geographer, and his intellectual trajectory also involved the assumption of politically radical positions at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s (Harvey 2001). What is one of the crucial puzzles of this paper is that such a critical school that is distanced from dominant economic and political interests never fully developed in Poland. Moreover, one can also argue that a similar tendency is characteristic of most of the other social science branches in Poland. None of them developed a fully-fledged counterpart of the “critical” schools that emerged in Western countries since at least the late 1960s. In this paper, I will offer an explanation of that specific development in Polish social geography.

This paper utilizes the Bourdieusian assumption of homology between the fields of the social sciences and humanities and the field of power, and it will argue that this perspective could be applied to the cases of communist and early post-communist Poland as well (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1993). It is based on the case study of an eminent Polish professor of regional economy, the late Antoni Kukliński, who can be considered a representative for the mainstream elite of the field of geography in Poland at the turn of century. Kukliński was born in 1927 in Bydgoszcz in North-Western Poland. In his late years, he was best known as the founding director of the University of Warsaw’s European Institute for Regional and Local Development (EUROREG), which was established in 1991. He retired in 1996 but remained very active intellectually, in the institute and beyond, until his death in 2015. Kukliński’s biography seems to be a good illustration of the role of the intelligentsia, or the Polish cultural elite (Gella 1976), as the core of the Polish academic elite. As one of the most prominent Polish geographers and at the same time an intelligentsia member involved in the first non-communist government in Poland, his professional trajectory illustrates some of the more general tendencies in the evolution of the Polish field of social sciences, particularly in relation to what can be called, in Bourdieu’s terms, the field of power. It also shows the role of the intelligentsia and its changing engagement in the legitimization of the political and economic order. This paper will rely mostly on the published sources on the history of Polish economic and regional geography as well as on the late Antoni Kukliński’s career, including some of his unpublished papers, documents, and short unpublished memoirs (Kukliński 2007a and 2007b).

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY AND THE FIELD OF POWER IN POLAND

Social geography as defined in this paper is a broad field, often known as socio-economic or economic geography, which should be defined in opposition to the other major sector of geography as such, that is, physical or physiography. Socio-economic geography has a complex relationship with several other related academic fields, in particular with economics. Regional science is one major field that

could be seen as an interface of both, originally proposed by Walter Isard in the 1950s. Spatial and regional planning is another one, as it is related to both geography and economics as well as urban planning. In many cases, including the biographies of researchers such as Kukliński, clear disciplinary distinctions are difficult to make, as career trajectories often cross formal institutional borders, and institutional assignments vary across countries and periods. What is important in this context is that these sectors (regional science and regional planning) of the broadly understood field of geography and its adjacent disciplines should be considered its heteronomous sectors. For that reason, although they are currently not the most visible publicly, they constitute an interesting lens for observing the emerging process of the current ideology legitimizing post-communist neo-liberal reforms. Geography as a discipline, rather than playing an essential role in the geopolitical reorientation of the region after the fall of communism, has been marginalized partly as a result of that very reorientation, as it seems. Of course, that marginalization of geography can be linked to a broader argument about the global institutional crisis of the discipline. It was most evident in the United States, where several departments of geography closed down in the 1970s and 1980s (Haigh and Freeman 1982). That trend can also be linked to the neo-liberal turn involving, among others, the gradual weakening of spatial and urban planning and a more general retreat from the statist paradigms, which until the 1960s justified the central role of the state in economic planning (Leszczyński 2017). But the same period witnessed an emergence or consolidation of the more autonomous, often critical currents within social geography, particularly human geography, in several Western countries. In this paper, I will attempt to explain why Poland, while it also witnessed the general decline in the status of geography as such, it did not see the consolidation of its more autonomous or critically oriented sector. This study is thus envisioned, first of all, as a contribution to a wider effort at reconstructing the evolution of social sciences in communist and post-communist Central Europe – in this case, in Poland.

Let me now draw a picture of the configuration of the field of politics as well as the broader field of power in communist and post-communist Poland. I will superimpose it on the configuration of the field of social sciences in given periods to eventually relate it to Kuliński's trajectory. The communist power, which had been established in Poland in 1944/1945, was firmly consolidated in 1948. A symbolic moment in that respect was the unification of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and the Polish Workers Party (PPR), which merged to become the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR), which was the Polish equivalent of communist parties in other countries of the Soviet bloc. This moment can be considered as the beginning of Stalinism in Poland that lasted until the so-called thaw, which began in 1956. In the academic field, the respective symbolic moments of consolidation of the communist grip on Polish academia took place in 1951, when the First Congress of Polish Science took place, which was followed by the establishment of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). During that period, the political scene was dominated by hardline Stalinists, while academic institutions were controlled by party loyalists. The conservative (that is, non-communists, right wingers) politicians and activists were persecuted, some of them even imprisoned and killed. Those who were not fully loyal to the Communist Party were in rather marginalized positions, with some of them losing their jobs.

This situation changed dramatically around 1956, when the communist regime in Poland liberalized radically, which was quite in opposition to the trajectory of Hungary at the very same time. In effect, what can be called the "enlightened" communist elite ruled the country until 1968. Numerous liberal leftist intelligentsia members rose to the top party positions, often becoming key players in the academic field at the same time. Among them were figures such as philosopher Adam Schaff (1913–2006) and literary scholar Stefan Żółkiewski (1911–1991), who were both members of the central committee of the Communist Party (PZPR) and heads of institutes at the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Stanisław Leszczycki (1907–1996) enjoyed a similarly privileged position in geography. Several scholars were already prominent during the Stalinist period, just as Leszczycki was, but the 1960s appeared to be their truly “golden years.” This was a period of relative intellectual freedom and considerable openness of Poland towards Western and, more generally, global contacts. Previously marginalized academics and intellectuals – if they were not publicly challenging the rule of the Communist Party, what was called “socialist values,” and Poland’s membership in the Soviet bloc – were now allowed to pursue their intellectual passions and often travel abroad. In other words, the period between 1956 and 1968 was a period of relatively intense engagement of the intelligentsia, which included many representatives of its old elite, in the mainstream state-controlled fields of economy, academia, and culture. At the same time, former Stalinists who did not have enough cultural capital to profit from that period moved into the internal and informal opposition within the field of power. This started to change during the second part of the 1960s, when that internal opposition within the Communist Party, mostly centered around officials with weaker intelligentsia credentials, started to challenge the status quo. The tension erupted in March 1968, which can be seen as a crucial turning point in the history of Poland’s communist period (Osęka 2019). At that moment, the so-called hard-line communists, the faction of the party relying on political rather than on cultural capital and legitimizing itself using the overtly nationalistic discourse, took over. The liberals (both those who were members of the party and its leadership, as well as those who were only benefiting from the liberal climate) were marginalized within, or even pushed outside, the field of power. Some of them were exiled, some moved to internal exile (opposition), and others were relegated to less prominent positions. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017) is probably the best known of those who were sent into exile in 1968. Adam Michnik (b.1946), who was a student at that time, is the most prominent of those who were forced into internal exile. The fate of Antoni Kukliński, as it will be shown below, can probably be interpreted in terms of marginalization.

In more general terms, the clash of 1968 implied a considerable reconfiguration of the field of power. It was now structured by the opposition between, on the one hand, the hardliners or orthodox communists allied with the so-called “technocrats” or younger, newly educated pragmatists (Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley 1998), and on the other hand, former communist “liberals,” many of whom gradually assumed so-called anti-system or anti-communist stances especially since the mid-1970s and entered a coalition with the Catholic Church and anti-communists conservatives. This division was reinforced during the emergence of the independent “Solidarity” trade union in 1980 and the introduction of the so-called martial law in 1981. An important aspect of the formation of this structure within the field of power was that the anti-communist side, which included a major part of the 1960s liberals, rejected its former left affiliation. This included the renouncement of any references to Marxist theory and criticism of capitalism. Instead, Western market capitalism and its liberal democratic system became an ideal for them to emulate. After the fall of communism, this central cleavage assumed the form of confrontation between the so-called post-communists and the radical liberal reformers (Zarycki 2011).

In a similar, or more precisely, homological way, the field of the social sciences and humanities was structured during the communist period. On the one hand, we could find more “conservative” scholars, who usually displayed stronger loyalty to the Communist Party and at least rhetorical reliance on Marxist ideology. They had, on average, lower cultural capital and tended to be party members. On the other hand, there were the “liberal” scholars who held more distance from the communist ideology and displayed higher levels of openness towards ideas coming from the West. They were quite often intelligentsia members, including those from families with several generations of intelligentsia traditions. In some fields, and in some periods, particularly the 1980s, the most radical

representatives of the “liberal” pole could even assume an anti-communist stance – that is, a openly oppositional political stance. This was, for example, the case of sociology (Bucholc 2016) and history in late communist Poland, although most of the overtly anti-regime historical works were published outside the formal academic system, in the so-called *samizdat* (underground publishing system), or *tamizdat*, the Western-based diaspora-run publishing houses (Behr 2017). This opposition was much less visible in the case of the political sciences, a field that was much less autonomous in relation to the Communist Party and dominated by its loyalists (Warczok and Zarycki 2018). Geography, particularly social and economic geography (which also includes so-called regional planning in the Polish case), was a case in between. Its “liberal” pole was much weaker and less radical if compared to the liberal poles of the fields of sociology or history. Yet the field of geography still enjoyed much more autonomy from the ruling Communist Party in comparison to political sciences, which mostly played an overtly legitimizing function. Thus, it developed the above-mentioned essential opposition in a clear manner, even if not the most radical or strongly politicized.

As several authors have already pointed out, the original intention of the communists when they came to power in 1945 was to radically reform or even partly reinvent higher education and research institutions in Poland (e.g., Connelly 2000, Behr 2017, Zysiak 2016). The new model of academia was supposed to educate a new intellectual elite for the communist country along the lines of Marxist versions of all academic disciplines. At least in Poland, this project proved difficult to implement, first of all given the hegemony of the old intelligentsia elite, which could not be eliminated completely as it was in neighboring countries. The communists attempted to hire and promote mostly those declaring left or communist positions, but even among these academics who were mostly educated in pre-war Poland, class identities proved stronger than political views. In effect, most of the disciplines of the social sciences proved to be dominated, at least intellectually, by representatives of the old intelligentsia families, who were known for generations for their assets of cultural capital. Even young students with non-elite, peasant or working class backgrounds were usually socialized during their university education with this traditional viewpoint and worldviews of the intelligentsia elite. These partly new elites with old identities had respected the rules of the game imposed by the ruling Communist Party. However, many of them used any opportunity to turn towards the West in search of inspiration and new ideas, which was particularly the case after 1956. Thus, the fields of research, development, and planning as well as culture not only gained relative intellectual autonomy after 1956, but also become relatively (according to the standards of the Soviet bloc) internationalized, which allowed many intellectual elites to gain foreign experience. Many of them already had considerable assets of cultural capital inherited from their families, in particular good knowledge of foreign languages and manners, which appeared useful in making friendships with Western scholars.

The 1960s could be thus seen as a period of pronounced intelligentsia domination, at least in the fields of arts, academia, and education. This happened despite the propagation of socialist slogans of the official party ideology and relatively egalitarian policies of the communist state. Nevertheless, a considerable segment of the intelligentsia elite could be seen as dominating the field of power and enjoying numerous privileges. Many members of the party elite, not only its dominant members (e.g., the academic or artistic elite), were in fact of intelligentsia origin. After the war, numerous representatives of the intelligentsia, particularly those with sympathies for the political left, had already joined the new state elites during the first period of their formation, starting in 1944. During the communist period, different factions of the intelligentsia were engaged in politics, academia, or culture with changing intensity. Many got disillusioned with communism sooner (in the mid-1950s) or later (in the late 1970s), and by the mid-1980s, most of their representatives were rather critical of the communist government. Once communism collapsed, these very elites acquired dominant

positions in their respective fields, which could be seen as an aspect of a broader process of consolidation and full institutionalization of what I have called earlier “the intelligentsia hegemony” (Zarycki 2009; Zarycki, Smoczyński, Warczok 2017). At its core is a thesis that the intelligentsia, as the elite of cultural capital, had already become the dominant elite of the newly restored Polish state in 1918. This was the moment when the Polish economic elite lost a large portion of its assets, which were dependent on the economic and legal system of the fallen Russian Empire. The so-called old intelligentsia families were historically often of noble or petty noble, bourgeois origin, although the bourgeoisie were always less numerous in Poland than the nobility (Gella 1976). Unlike in the Soviet Union, when one faction of revolutionary intelligentsia elite transformed itself into what was later called *nomenklatura* or the political-capital elite, interwar Poland had a social hierarchy with the cultural elite at its top. A part of the very same elite who survived the Second World War formed the backbone of the elite in communist Poland. Even if the Stalinist period saw an attempt to create the Polish equivalent of the *nomenklatura*, the project appeared to be futile in the long term. This was also the group that was able to take the most advantage of opportunities to participate in academic exchange programs to the West, which started around 1956 (Czernecki 2013, Kiliński 2017, Sułek 2010).

These exchanges had some specific, common ideological effects on the academic visitors from Poland. Some studies point to encounters with what could be called early neo-liberal ideology, which were experienced by some of the young economists from Central Europe. This argument was developed by Johanna Bockman and Gil Eyal (Bockman and Eyal 2002), who pointed to the crucial role of the Ford Foundation in that process. As they argued, American involvement in the training of young East Europeans, particularly Polish and Hungarian social scientists, involved an internal Western—or rather, an internal American—confrontation between two camps of social scientists: state interventionists and Keynesians on the one hand; and on the other, free-market, neo-liberally oriented scholars who eventually gained the upper hand. In that process, young scholars from communist countries appeared as useful allies and suppliers of empirical evidence supporting the thesis about the inefficiency of central planning. The visits to the U.S. by several generations of the Polish intelligentsia elite also allowed the Polish academics to shape their idealized image of the West. I am, however, not trying to generalize about specific political effects; rather, I would posit that most of the alumni of these exchanges were strongly impressed by the Western standards of living and the academic excellence of the universities they visited. In effect, they gradually saw the West as the only source of the “true modernization.” One can speculate that their experiences in exchange programs made them more likely to adopt mainstream theoretical approaches dominant in specific disciplines in the given periods. At the same time, they were much less attracted to sectors of their disciplines that could be identified as belonging to critical schools in social sciences (e.g., critical sociology or critical geography) or labeled as more autonomous, to use Bourdieu’s language. In any case, the way they later used their knowledge acquired in the West was rarely critical towards the post-communist transformation processes or the West itself.

Let me point again to a homological effect between the structure of the field of power and most academic fields of social sciences. In particular, I am focusing on the period of the 1970s and 1980s: Most scholars with lower levels of cultural, academic, and family social capital, especially those who relied primarily on their political capital, their loyalty to the Communist Party, or the state in general, tended to lean towards the “heteronomous” pole in their respective disciplines towards the Communist Party (PZPR) and the Soviet Union. In the early communist period, that pole was overtly politicized, while later increasingly “neutral,” characterized rather by a strong reliance on conventional, often “outdated” approaches in given disciplines, weak internationalization, and avoidance of

politically controversial questions. On the other side were Western-oriented and cultural capital-equipped scholars who were increasingly distancing themselves both from the Communist Party as well as everything that could be identified with communist ideology. That pole of the respective academic disciplines could be called autonomous from the Communist Party, but it was increasingly heteronomous towards what can be called an imagined West and the global capitalist system. Since the late 1980s, major parts of these sectors of the respective academic disciplines were slowly engaged in the so-called transformation of post-communist Poland and the introduction of market economic relations and democratization.

This structural configuration can explain the role of the Polish social sciences in the transformation, and in particular, the legitimization of neo-liberal reforms introduced after the fall of communism. Specifically, the increasingly dominant (especially since the late 80s) liberal faction saw its vocation as challenging its opponents labeled as “communist” or “post-communist” as both morally and professionally inferior. Since these opponents often still referred to Marxist approaches (usually in a rather superficial, rhetorical way) or had a history of using Marxist language, the identity of the liberal camps was built in opposition to Marxism, communism, and other approaches related with the left. The liberal camp, which became dominant after 1989, did not necessarily openly identify itself as anti-communist. Yet it was clearly distancing itself, first from the Marxist orthodoxy in the late 1950s and 1960s and later from the left altogether. Participation in international exchanges, which was experienced by many members of the camp in the 1960s and 1970s, seemed to provide valuable assets of a different kind, particularly after 1989. At the moment of the fall of communism, representatives of the liberal (non-Marxist, Western-oriented) camps in most disciplines of the social sciences were in positions to take on leading roles. In many cases, it happened much earlier. Western experiences gave those who were fortunate to take part in the academic exchanges additional credentials and self-confidence stemming from, among other factors, personal relations with global academic celebrities. After the fall of communism, the basic message of the social sciences in Poland and other countries of the region was that the generalized West represented an ideal social model to follow, and the local academic elite was the most competent teacher of the Western standards (Böröcz 2006). At the same time, this increasingly dominant liberal pole in most of the social sciences and humanities fields in Poland – not only sociology, economics, history, and legal studies, but also geography, psychology, and linguistics – started to provide the field of power with both crucial ideological legitimization of the new order as well as fresh cadres, in terms of members of the first post-communist government and state administration. A large number of the old intelligentsia members, who should not be confused with the intellectuals, joined the ranks for the first post-communist government and the parliament in 1989 and 1990,¹ or in fact, a transitory political establishment. This could be seen as a return to power of the old intelligentsia, who later partly retreated from the most visible political roles. They did, however, remain the country’s dominant intellectual elite, which also shapes national ideology, including the meaning of Europeanization (Zarycki 2009).

KUKLIŃSKI’S SOCIAL ORIGIN AND HIS EARLY INTELLECTUAL TRAJECTORY IN POLAND AND THE U.S.

The first part of Kukliński’s intellectual trajectory took place within the broader context of postwar transformations and the evolution of the field of geography as described above. One could classify

¹ Marek Jerzy Minakowski, a genealogist, has estimated that the first postwar, non-communist parliament elected in partly free elections in 1989 had a spectacularly high number of descendants of noble and old intelligentsia families, comparable only to the prewar Polish parliaments (Minakowski 2014).

Kukliński as a typical representative of the old intelligentsia families, even if his father should be seen as closer to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, just as the landowners, were gradually losing their economic and political position since the early twentieth century, through the entire interwar period, to being completely eliminated as social classes by the communists in the late 1940s (Zarycki, Smoczyński, and Warczok 2017). Those who retained higher social status joined the ranks of the intelligentsia, mostly by converting their remaining economic capital into cultural capital, or simply relying in the new system on their earlier cultural capital, which often included knowledge of foreign languages and sometimes an education from good European universities. The Kukliński family seems to illustrate this process very well. His father was representative of the local bourgeoisie as a director and co-owner of a large brick factory in Bydgoszcz who suffered both under the German occupation and the early years of communist Poland. Young Kukliński was, however, able to obtain his M.A. in political economy in 1950 and another one in law in 1951, both from the University of Poznań (today Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). After completing brief postgraduate studies in Poznań, he moved to Warsaw in 1953 to work at the University of Warsaw, where he defended his Ph.D. in economic geography in 1958. He received his habilitation degree in 1962 from the Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Sciences and later served at various prestigious academic and state posts, which will be discussed below.

This context is important for understanding Kukliński's deep involvement in the development of a distinct Polish school of spatial planning, which emerged during the second part of 1950s in Poland with Władysław Gomułka's democratization and de-Stalinization of the Polish model of economic development. That school received recognition in the West and became an object of Polish export to developing countries. Kukliński was one of the leaders of the generation that obtained their degrees in the Stalinist period, and was able to take full advantage of the ensuing liberalization. The dominant actors in the field at the time were pragmatically oriented geographers who made their careers just after the war but managed to adapt to the post-Stalinist context, in particular Stanisław Leszczycki (1907–1996) and Kazimierz Dziewoński (1910–1994). Leszczycki served in 1945–1950 as a deputy foreign minister representing first the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and later the PZPR (he remained a member of the party until its dissolution in 1990). Leszczycki led the introduction of the Soviet-inspired reform of the field of geography in Poland since the early 1950s. However, soon after the so-called thaw in 1956, he adapted to new liberal climate and appeared as the most influential figure in the field during next several decades. He was trying to act as its arbiter and was relatively supportive of the early career of Kukliński, who after 1956 emerged as one of the young leaders of the liberal, non-Marxist, and Western-oriented camp (Kukliński 2007a). Dziewoński was best known as an urban and economic geographer who promoted his "balanced model" of spatial organization, one which would reach equilibrium between excessive concentration and efficiency. Both Leszczycki and Dziewoński aspired to maintain a central or neutral position in the field. With time and the rising dynamic of the liberal pole, however, they were pushed towards the more "orthodox" (or the more heteronomous in relation to the Communist Party) pole of the field. Kukliński's most important peers included Zbyszko Chojnicki (1928–2015) and Ryszard Domański (b. 1928), both quantitatively oriented economic geographers. None of them, however, was able to play any visible roles beyond their discipline, so over time they were overshadowed by Kukliński (Kortus, Kulikowski, and Domański 2008).

American experiences appear as crucial for Kukliński's early academic career. He was awarded a Ford Foundation fellowship for the 1958–59 academic year, which meant that he was part of the early

contingent of Polish social scientists visiting American universities.² He spent that period at several locations, including Clark University and Harvard University. He also visited “Resources for the Future” in D.C., a think tank founded in 1952 at the initiative of President Truman with an initial grant from the Ford Foundation. This think tank conducts research into environmental, energy, and natural resource issues, primarily via economics and other social sciences. At Harvard, Kukliński attended seminars of rural economist John Kenneth Galbraith, regional economist Edgar M. Hoover, and the founder of input-output analysis in economics, Wassily Leontief. The latter, as Johanna Bockman suggests, was one of the key figures in the organization of the East-West exchanges and meetings during that period (Bockman 2011). In 1963, Kukliński was also a visiting professor at the geography departments of the University of Washington in Seattle and the University of Minnesota.

Besides Kukliński, a couple of other economic geographers of the same generation took part in the exchanges. Most notable were Zbyszko Chojnicki and Andrzej Wróbel (1928–1999) (Parysek 2014). Wróbel’s trajectory seems most similar to Kukliński’s. As a Ford scholar he visited the University of Wisconsin, University of Pennsylvania, and University of Chicago in 1959–60, and later, in 1964–65, the University of Washington and University of Minnesota. Just as Kukliński, Wróbel joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1990 to become the head of its Department of Planning and Analyses. Unlike Kukliński, who returned to academia in 1992, Wróbel later became the ambassador of Poland in Chile, where he had worked as an advisor to the government under Salvador Allende between 1970 and 1972 (Parysek 2014). Zbyszko Chojnicki in turn was a Ford Fellow at the University of Washington in Seattle, the New York-branch State University of New York (SUNY), and the University of Michigan (Parysek and Stryjakiewicz, 2008). All of these scholars adopted the mainstream quantitative paradigms of the American economic geography, trying to combine them at home with modernized versions of socialist central planning. However, even if following this path after the fall of communism, they presented themselves as opposing the “outdated” and “normative” Soviet doctrines of spatial planning (Chojnicki and Kukliński 2000).

Kukliński’s American experiences undoubtedly helped him in his later career, which accelerated in the years after 1960. He served as an executive secretary of the Committee for Space Economy and Regional Planning (KPZK) at the Polish Academy of Sciences from 1958 until 1967, and as the head of the Department for Space Economy and Regional Planning at the Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Sciences between 1962 and 1967. In these years his truly international career began. In 1965–66 he served as a consultant for the Economic Commission for Europe at the United Nations in Geneva. He was tasked with a study on the criteria for the location of industrial plants in Poland, which allowed him to build upon his earlier academic work on industrial locations. From 1967 until 1971 Kukliński served as the Program Director of Regional Development at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in Geneva, where he worked on a new model of global studies on regional development. As he later recalled (Kukliński 2007a), the model was a compromise between his fascination with the American quantitative school of regional science and the European social approach of relying mostly on micro-scale, regional-level monographs. One of the aims of the program was to “assess the role of growth poles and growth centres in regional development” (Komorowski 1985: 292).

In 1971 Kukliński returned to Poland but regularly commuted to Geneva in the period 1971–74 where he served as the editor of the UNRISD-Mouton Regional Planning Series (Komorowski 1985). It was an academic book series published by Mouton de Gruyter (currently known as De Gruyter) based in

² The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations began exchange programs in Poland in 1957 (Richmond 2003). Between 1956 and 1960, the USA was visited by a total of 132 Ford scholars and 167 Rockefeller fellows from Poland (Berghahn 2001).

The Hague. Kukliński held this position formally until 1984. During that period, he was able to oversee the publication of 17 volumes, several of them under his personal editorial leadership. These volumes were dedicated to issues such as regional planning (Kukliński 1971), growth poles (Kukliński 1972), or regional information systems (Kukliński 1974). These books, according to international citation databases such as the Web of Knowledge, are still today the most often cited works by Kukliński. In many respects, the period from 1966 until 1974 can be seen as the zenith of Kukliński's career. The book series was supported by Resources for the Future, which was very actively involved in the early stages of the program, probably due to Kukliński's earlier contact with the institution. His older colleague Stanisław M. Komorowski noted that both the works of the UNRID Institute and the book series revolved around the concept of growth poles. That notion was proposed by the French regional economist François Perroux and later developed by Jacques Boudeville and other French scholars (Kukliński and Petrella 1972). This rather vague concept, which abstractly defined space, emphasized the role of concentration (agglomeration) of industries as a condition for growth and innovation. It could be seen as theoretical legitimation for geographical polarization, which was expected to bring a general benefit with the so-called "trickling down" or "spread" effects. Interestingly, Komorowski noted a change in attitude between the time when the series was established in 1967 and when it ended in 1984:

The period of time when this approach was enthusiastically welcomed and regarded as fashionable is now over. It did not yield all what was expected, those who did use it became disappointed. And thus the opinion f[ell] from one extreme to the other, from enthusiasm to several and through criticism [...] Thus the circle has been closed. From the belief in available knowledge as reflected in the effort to assess the state-of-the art – through its critical evaluation which lead to incertitude – to arrive finally to the conviction that we are in the need for a new paradigm of the social system." (Komorowski 1985: 293)

Komorowski noted quite a broad international network was built around the book series by Kukliński. The French interest was mainly, although not exclusively, focused on the concept of development poles and growth centers, given its French origin. Considerable interest in the UNRIDS series was shown in the developing countries, especially in Latin America, hence the Spanish translations. Moreover, Soviets published large and detailed critical reviews both on the activities and publications, even if Komorowski argued that the notion of growth poles "was and still is irrelevant for planned economies" and "it was indeed doubtful whether it is relevant for developing countries, which independently of their socio-political set-up, must rely upon planning for development and which cannot depend on the free play of forces which is at the base of the growth poles and centers concept" (Komorowski 1985: 293). The increasingly controversial nature of the growth pole doctrine was reflected in a critique of Kukliński put forward in the late 1970s by John Friedmann and Clyde Weaver. They argued that Kukliński as a head of UNRISD "had much to do with the worldwide spread of the evolving growth centers doctrine. Despite their superficial appeal, there was little evidence that growth centers actually helped to diffuse economic growth. Indeed, there was mounting evidence to the contrary" (Friedmann and Weaver 1979: 128). However, Kukliński remained close to the schools of thinking in regional science that considered increasing concentration, even at the cost of growing inequalities, as a price worth paying for an increase in economic efficiency.

Kukliński became marginalized in the early 1970s, which can be probably interpreted in the context of the above-mentioned changing configuration of the field of power. After his return to Poland from Geneva, he was not offered any positions that would reflect his leadership ambitions and unique international experience, besides a regular university professorship. Between 1974 and 1976, he joined the African Institute at the University of Warsaw and became a full professor only in 1982. However, unlike many of his peers, Kukliński did not join the anti-communist opposition, which

started to consolidate during the second part of the 1970s. As it seems, he assumed a middle ground between the two emerging political camps (communist government and the opposition led by the Solidarity trade union), having some highly placed connections in both of them. In the context of his not highly politicized academic field, however, this already implied a clear positioning in its liberal, pro-Western sector.

In the 1980s, the configuration of the field of Polish geography included two main camps: on the one hand, there was a “conservative majority” dominant in a large academic department, relying on traditionally oriented services to state institutions, including the standard education of new cadres and legitimation of the political order of the time. On the other hand, there was the “progressive” camp of Kukliński, using his strong international links and trying to push the state institutions in the direction of technocratic “rationalization” of regional policies and spatial planning. He had some success in this respect. In 1975 he returned to the Committee for Space Economy and Regional Planning (KPZK) of the Polish Academy of Sciences in the capacity of its deputy chairman and the head of the publishing arm of the Committee where, during the political crisis in 1980 when the Communist Party position was considerably weakened, the Planning Committee entrusted him with preparing a diagnosis of the state of the spatial economy in Poland. The document was critical of the earlier regional policies and proposed several reforms. In Kukliński’s words, it was “the most critical document related to the evaluation of the Polish Space Economy in the conditions of real socialism” (Kukliński 2008). In December 1983, it was officially rejected by state officials and several members of the academic establishment who joined criticism of Kukliński’s team. Among them was Stanisław Leszczycki, the most powerful representative of the old generation of geographers. The document’s language was subsequently softened in a consecutive version prepared by a new expert group, while Kukliński left the Executive Board of the Committee in 1984. Kukliński remembered that moment as one of the most traumatic in his professional career (Kukliński 2007a; 2007b), a clear defeat that made him perceive himself as a dominated actor in the field.

KUKLIŃSKI, THE POLISH SCHOOL OF REGIONAL PLANNING, AND THE ABSENCE OF A CRITICAL SCHOOL IN THE FIELD OF POLISH GEOGRAPHY SINCE THE 1970S

Kukliński’s biography seems to reflect a broader trajectory of Polish social sciences, and geography, including regional planning, in particular. Polish geographers have developed a relatively distinct school of regional planning, which could be seen as a fruit of post-Stalinist democratization. They were able to successfully integrate what was called “socialist values” and ideals of central planning with some elements of sustainable development, ecological values, and a participatory approach (Secomski 1974). Polish regional science also integrated popular new ideas and methodologies of Western social sciences, which became fashionable in 1960s, to which Poland was relatively open. This ability to mix Western theoretical approaches, Marxist-inspired concepts, and indigenous intellectual ideas was a landmark of the Polish school of social planning, which gave it some global visibility and ability to influence other communist countries. In this way, Polish geographers contributed in an important way to the international development of regional planning (Mazurkiewicz 1992). They were also among those in Polish social sciences who established contact with Western academia relatively early, beginning in 1956.

The emerging picture of the development of geography and related social sciences, including economics in which prominent figures such as Michał Kalecki and Oskar Lange were active, during the 1960s in Poland resonates with the complex image of Hungarian geography in the same period

drawn by Zoltán Ginelli. He criticized the simplistic thesis of “Sovietization” and “colonization” of the field, asking for the reconstruction of hybridity and ambivalences characteristic of the Hungarian social sciences during the communist period (Ginelli 2017). Kukliński saw himself as “deeply involved in the successful paradigmatic revolution in Polish economic geography which took place in the years 1954–58 in the political and intellectual climate of Polish October [1956].” (Kukliński 2007a). As he recounted at the end of his career, “this splendid achievement was the result of an alliance linking the old and young generation of Polish economic geographers. My hope that this alliance will function again in the climate of Polish August of the years 1979–81 ended in a grand disillusion. Contrary to my expectation the eighties were not a time of accelerated paradigmatic change in Polish geography” (Kukliński 2008). In fact, in the 1980s Kukliński already saw himself as one of the leaders of the “progressive” camp in Polish geography. This camp was not so much interested in any Marxist or leftist inspiration, but open to new ideas coming from the West and supportive, although usually not directly, of gradual democratic and market-oriented reforms.

By the end of 1970s, the native Polish schools of thought were losing their dynamics and attractiveness. This was not only the case of the Polish school of planning, but also the Polish school of social stratification research in sociology (e.g., Ossowski 1963 or Wesolowski 1979) or the field of Polish economic history, which flourished in the 1960s and strongly relied on dependency theory and even played a role in the development of the world system theory, as Anna Sosnowska has shown (Sosnowska 2018). All of these schools abandoned their critical edge and interest in economic processes in the 1980s and turned to culturalist approaches. This was probably part of a wider global tendency but was very visible in Poland given the political transformation of the entire generation of liberal intelligentsia, which gradually moved from a dominated to dominant position in, or in relation to, the field of power. The turning point of this process in Poland took place in 1989, placing a major part of the intellectual elite, who in most Western countries would remain within “the dominant sector of the dominating class,” at the highest level of the social hierarchy. This tendency also involved a transformation of thinking about the future of the country, from one focused on the systematic and long-term planning of its social and economic development, to one focused on flexible and spontaneous processes directed by market demand. The latter focused on “catching up with the West,” first of all in “cultural” and “psychological” dimensions, and then in following new intellectual trends such as globalization. This trend was most visible in disciplines such as economics, sociology, and psychology, but also noticeable in geography. Such transformation in the dominant modes of thinking eliminated any traces of dependency theories, both in the early Latin American form and the later incarnation of the world system theory, in Polish social sciences. It also eliminated notions such as “exploitation” or “political economy,” which were now seen as terms of the non-scientific Marxist newspeak. These changes prepared a perfect intellectual ground for Poland’s integration with the Western core, which was now perceived as the “essence of goodness,” to use József Böröcz’s words (Böröcz 2006).

The attempts by Polish scholars to develop original variants of critical social theory—inspired by both creatively interpreted Marxist tradition and other sources of inspiration, including new Western intellectual trends—seemed innovative and attracted interest from all over the world in the 1960s. By the beginning of the 1980s, these efforts started to be abandoned and increasingly forgotten. All those referring to Marxists were increasingly perceived as backward and intolerably politicized. Kukliński always distanced himself from leftist and Marxist inspiration, so it is not surprising that the “liberals” who were forming around him saw those still relying on Marxist approaches, or central planning doctrines, as opponents. The increasing weakness of that traditional Marxist-inspired camp, as well as its strong relationship with the state and the Communist Party through the

role of central planning, implied that it was also not attractive to new generations of scholars aspiring to develop critical approaches. This was, in particular, manifested by a group of younger geographers, which started to form in the late 1970s around Zbigniew Rykiel (b.1949). Most of them recently defended their Ph.D. and were interested in British and American human geography, including its critical threads, which they found more inspiring than any local school of thought. At the same time, they perceived Kukliński's school of thought as a representative of the positivist establishment.

These views are reflected in critiques presented by Zbigniew Rykiel, who discussed Kukliński's role at the 1983 conference of Polish geographers held in Rydzyna near Leszno in Poland (Rykiel 2012). For Rykiel, Kukliński at that moment was already a representative of the "old guard" who rejected an attempt by a younger generation of Polish geographers to adapt to the new wave of human geography in Poland, particularly the school of critical geography inspired by the work of Derek Gregory (Gregory 1978). The dispute between Rykiel and Kukliński, who both emerged as leaders of their respective camps, entered the global debate on the state of human geography. In particular, Rykiel published a critique of Kukliński in the journal *Progress in Human Geography* (Rykiel 1988). Interestingly Rykiel's account accused Kukliński of "enlightened dogmatism" and being "more likely to arrive at a compromise with the establishment." Rykiel identified himself with a younger generation of "angry young geographers" or "anarchistic," "structuralist/Marxist challengers," who in November 1981 established the Working Group of the Radical Geographers.³ This was a clear attempt at inscribing their revolt on the revolutionary activities of the anti-communist Solidarity movement, which celebrated its greatest triumphs around the same time. However, the attempt appeared futile on several levels. One was probably related to the fact that the Solidarity movement, even while having a trade union at its center and being supported by numerous left wingers from the West, was not accepting any clear identification with the left. Later, in the late 1980s, Solidarity leaders entered an alliance with free market-oriented neo-liberal reformers (Ost 2005). An attempt to revive the Polish Socialist Party in 1988 failed, and for many years the only visible political force identifying with the left on the Polish political scene was the post-communist Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD), which took an active role in the introduction of the neoliberal reforms in 1990s. These developments had important homological effects for most fields of the social sciences, where no camps critical of restoring neo-liberal capitalism emerged. In any case, Rykiel argued that in the early 1960s "many junior scientists interested in economic geography, including the original economists who had looked for asylum in geography in the 1950s, were given the opportunity to join fellowships in the United States. The new contracts revealed the sterility of the pragmatic, ideologically fixed economic geography, lacking a grand theory" (Rykiel 1988: 400), which seems to be an attack on the technocratic and positivist nature of Kukliński's camp. Kukliński in turn complained about the Rykiel group's "shyness in formulating critical assessments of the state of Polish geography" (Rykiel 1998: 403).

Therefore, at that moment in the early 1980s, both Kukliński and the representatives of younger generations born after the war were dreaming about a "new revolution" in Polish geography, assuming the first one took place in 1956. However, the ways in which these two groups understood new global—that is, Western—trends were quite different. As mentioned above, the Rykiel group was attracted by the new wave of critical geographers. For Kukliński, the second revolution would imply a

³ One of the founders of the Working Group of the Radical Geographers was Norwegian scholar Roger Bivand, who obtained his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics in London 1975 and was a postdoctoral student in Poland, where he defended his habilitation at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 1982. Bivand later returned to Norway and, paradoxically, became a highly specialized, quantitatively oriented, GIS expert.

stronger reliance on “geographical information systems” and other new technologies such as satellite imagery, a greater focus on the role of knowledge, and innovations as the drivers of progress (Zarycki 2008). In other words, while Rykiel and his colleagues were attracted to critical approaches and qualitative methodologies coming from Western academia, Kukliński saw this revolution as a leap toward a technocratic modernization project, one based on the “rationalization” of the communist system and reliance on modern methodology, including information and computer technologies (Kukliński 1984a). Both of them saw themselves as leaders of a progressive camp representing “youth,” at least symbolically, in terms of the freshness of ideas and implied political direction change that they advocated. They differed in how they defined their opponents, even if they both confronted what they saw as the “mainstream,” or the backward majority of the communist era geographers with few international contacts. However, Rykiel saw Kukliński as part of that mainstream, a representative of the older generation who idealized the idea of service to the state. Rykiel could have adopted Bourdieu’s terminology and called his opponent Kukliński the leader of a heteronomous camp.

Neither were able to achieve their goals, and no major transformation occurred in Polish geography, at least until the end of 1980s. But it was the generation of Kukliński which clearly emerged as the winner of this confrontation. His group was able to take advantage of the fall of communism, which was specially facilitated by the accumulated institutional, social, and cultural assets. In contrast, the group of Rykiel remained marginal and disintegrated by the early 1990s. Rykiel was unable to obtain any tangible resources for the implementation of his program. In particular, he remained an assistant professor until 1994, when he finally obtained his habilitation at the Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Other members of the potential camp of critical geographers (such as Konrad Dramowicz) emigrated to the West in the late 1980s. Some left for the private sector after the fall of communism. This was, for example, the case of Piotr Szeliga (b. 1953), who worked at the Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Sciences on “international economic dependency,” using inspiration from the world system theory (Szeliga 1991). In 1990 he joined the newly established Stock Exchange in Warsaw to soon become one of the members of its board. Most importantly, no major school of critical geography emerged in Poland. In particular, the question of inequalities, with the key issues of urban inequalities, did not become the focus of systematic studies by Polish geographers as well as a wider group of scholars. In addition, if these questions were addressed in other branches of Polish social sciences such as sociology, they were usually analyzed by individual scholars with no major institutional resources.

Let me now return to the analysis of Kukliński’s professional trajectory. Despite the above-mentioned problems he encountered in the early 1980s, his institutional position remained strong. His opposition to government officials who were uninterested in any radical changes in the regional planning policies and paradigms became more apparent, but he was able to soon find new allies. In the meantime, he changed his focus and moved away from regional-level planning to the so-called “local Poland,” which included mostly questions of self-government, lower levels of spatial organization, or self-organization. This so-called “discovery of local Poland” or provincial Poland, symbolized by Kukliński’s article entitled “Local Poland – a dormant potential” (Kukliński 1984b), may be seen as part of a retreat from spatial planning and the beginning of a new rhetoric of bottom-up development, one largely independent from the central state institutions. Soon after, he celebrated an important institutional success. In 1985 he was awarded, together with sociologist Bohdan Jałowiecki (1934–2020) and economist Grzegorz Gorzelak (b. 1949), a large government grant within the framework of a centralized research scheme in late communist Poland called “Central Programs of Fundamental Research” (CPBP 09.8). The generously founded six-year project was named “Regional Development, Local Development, Territorial Self-Government,” and was implemented in

collaboration with an impressive network of academic institutions from several cities in Poland. The program resulted in a rich publication output dealing with, among other topics, regional heritage, identities, and traditions of self-government. As Kukliński later put it, “the programme was able to anticipate indirectly the great structural change after 1990” (Kukliński 2008). It provided a useful intellectual background for the renowned reform or successful introduction of local government in Poland already enacted in 1990, and later the reform of Poland’s administrative system in 1999 (in particular involving the change of the 49 regional units into 16 larger regions known as voivodships).

Given the strictly centralized nature of the distribution research funds at the time and an impressive budget of the above-mentioned program, one could speculate that the award involved some kind of patronage for Kukliński from members of the field of power, or more precisely, the establishment of the Communist Party. Among its high-ranking members, whom Kukliński perceived as his loyal supporters, and who could also have been involved in decision to fund this project, was Kazimierz Secomski (1910–2002), deputy prime minister from 1976–1980 and a member of the State Council from 1980–1989 (Kukliński 2007a). Kukliński’s position as head of the project allowed him to consolidate his power and domination over the “progressive” camp of Polish geography. He was able to offer interesting research contracts to a high number of scholars from all over Poland, and Zbigniew Rykiel was among them.

KUKLIŃSKI’S CAREER AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM: TOWARDS THE LEGITIMIZATION OF NEW SPATIAL HIERARCHIES

Even if Kukliński was not a public intellectual or politician, although he attempted to act in the fields of politics and public debate⁴ from September 1990 to mid-1991, he joined the first non-communist government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki—not in a position related to regional or local issues, but as an undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski. Kukliński’s brief period of service for the Mazowiecki’s government included, among other activities, representing Poland at the general assembly of the United Nations in New York (Kukliński 2007a). The abrupt ending of his career as an undersecretary of state is related to his disappointment with Poland’s declining global ambitions after 1989. Kukliński, according to his memoirs, parted with Skubiszewski because of the minister’s lack of support for Kukliński’s ambitious project to establish a highly internationalized diplomatic academy in Warsaw (Kukliński 2007a). Instead, a much more modest project of a diplomatic school was implemented, which could be seen as an internal ministry training center. This was the defeat of one of Kukliński’s many visionary ideas that were inspired by the earlier period of active Polish involvement in international organizations that Kukliński was part of as an academic.

⁴ Kukliński published several articles in the press (e.g., Kukliński 1984b). He also had a least one political episode in his life, in particular an attempt at establishing the “Club of Modern Liberalism.” It is documented in a letter signed by the coordinator of the Warsaw office of the German Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung dated September 27, 1993 (FNSt 631/93), addressed to all those invited to the conference “Liberalism today” (*Liberalizm dzisiaj*) to be held at the University of Warsaw on October 21, 1993 (letter from the archives of the EUROREG Institute at the University of Warsaw). The conference’s program included a keynote speech by Kukliński as the representative (presumably president) of the “Club of the Modern Liberalism.” Among discussants, well-known political figures were present such as Donald Tusk, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, and Janusz Lewandowski, leaders of what was then the Liberal-Democratic Congress (KLD) party. Bielecki was at that time a former prime minister, while Tusk was a future prime minister. Both in 2010 and 2015, Kukliński was a member of the honorary committee in support of Bronisław Komorowski as a liberal candidate for the president of Poland.

After he resigned from the post at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kukliński became an undersecretary of state at the State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN), a new institution that was modeled after the American National Science Foundation. His stint at KBN, however, lasted only one year, and in 1991 Kukliński returned to academia. His institutional and informal position (one of the leading scholars in the field of geography, former deputy minister of foreign affairs and vice-chairman of KBN) allowed him to gain autonomy for his institute, which until then was part of the Department of Geography at the University of Warsaw and known as the Institute of Spatial Economy. It was renamed as the European Institute of Regional and Local Development, or EUROREG in short, and became an independent unit of the university⁵.

After returning to academia, Kukliński became involved in active research and policy work. In particular, he produced numerous commissioned reports for Western public institutions and foundations. Among them was an extensive study of the state of economy and society in the Visegrad group for the European Commission DG XII Science, Research, and Technology (Gorzela et al. 1994, Polish version 1995) which focused on an estimation of the “potential for transformation” in the region. Other funders of his team’s work in the 1990s included the Vienna Institute for Human Sciences and German foundations such as the Friedrich Ebert Foundation or the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. This was a typical career path for the elite of the liberal intelligentsia in Poland after 1989, who benefitted from Western and state-sponsored expert work related to the Europeanization of Poland and its EU accession in particular. The main orientation of this work was towards the assessment of the “potential for transformation,” “measuring readiness for integration,” openness to privatization and inflow of foreign capital, etc.—that is, an adaptation of Poland to Western European standards, seen as an ideal reality.

Kukliński’s biography reflects this specific intellectual and ideological role played by an entire generation of the liberal intelligentsia elite. This group relied on uses of Western intellectual models and funds, which allowed them to legitimize the neo-liberal reforms introduced after the fall of communism. However, and typically for the Polish intelligentsia elite, Kukliński was also able to secure relatively large grants from Polish state institutions. He received funding from the above-mentioned State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) as well as several ministries, including the Ministry of Regional Development that financed, mostly using EU funds, his numerous edited volumes in the last two decades of his life. Kukliński was also able to secure funds for his publication from private, primary Western companies, like the Skandia insurance company,⁶ which financed a volume dedicated to his scholarship (Gašior-Niemiec and Niżnik 2008).

During the late years of his intellectual activity, Kukliński’s primary fields of interest were related to a “neo-liberal modernization” of Poland based on a classic catch-up model, one relying on mainstream Western intellectual models that he had helped import in earlier years. These models included a new generation of science policy, knowledge-based economy and global and strategic studies in their recent Western forms. Kukliński promoted, for example, Michael Gibbons’ concept of a “new production of knowledge” known as “mode 2” (Gibbons 1994). Kukliński’s publications during

⁵ The institute is known today as the Center for European Regional Studies (EUROREG) at the University of Warsaw (<http://www.euroreg.uw.edu.pl/en/about-us>).

⁶ The contact with the specific company was based on Kukliński’s personal link to the Polish subsidiary president. But from a broader perspective, such a subsidy can be seen as a part of a strategy of Western companies to legitimize their presence in Poland through the support of social science research, particularly one promoting Poland’s integration with Western economic and political structures.

that period usually contained general discussions of developmental challenges for Poland laid out in mostly non-spatial terms of a general modernization approach.

However, Kukliński was far from uncritical praise of neoliberalism and often revealed his awareness of the ambiguities within the so-called transformation process. In a programmatic paper entitled “The Geography of New Europe,” he argued as early as in 1993 that “the ideological and political climate in Central and Eastern Europe is a mixture of two ideologies – the ideology of populism and the ideology of the 19th-century laissez-faire approaches” (Kukliński 1993: 456). This framing, which suggests the existence of two extremes, implied an act of distancing from the most radical proponents of neo-liberal reforms such as Leszek Balcerowicz. However, from time to time, Kukliński would complain about the absence of large-scale and effective regional planning in post-communist Poland during his improvised and often emotional talks and conferences. He would also grumble about the chaotic expansion of Polish cities and development dominated by unrestrained market forces. He was complaining about insufficient large-scale strategic thinking in Western Europe and North America, particularly in relation to the region of Central Europe. Despite these critical remarks, Kukliński never engaged in a more systematic attempt at a critical interpretation of the post-communist transformation. As the above section shows, this was conditioned by both his own biographical trajectory and structural conditions. Being deeply and personally involved in the legitimization of neo-liberal reforms, Kukliński was probably unable to look at it from a further distance. The structure of the field, at the same time, permanently placed him in the “progressive,” “pro-Western” camp, one which was expected by the field of power to provide expertise and guidance for efficient economic reforms and integration into the global economic system.

As the liberal ideology of the post-communist period assumed, inequalities in economic development and wealth might appear in the process of integrating the country into the EU, but they would principally be the side effects of the market’s uncontrollable natural forces, like globalization or “metropolization.” The notion of “metropolization,” which has been developed at EUROREG by Kukliński and his colleagues Bohdan Jałowiecki (e.g. Jałowiecki 2005) and Grzegorz Gorzelak (e.g., Gorzelak 2009) since the late 1990s, implied that the growing concentration of wealth, power, and prestige in global metropolises was a “natural” and inevitable aspect of globalization. What they implied was that Poland had to adapt to that model and try to apply some of the policies of global metropolises to the largest Polish cities. This inevitably meant the acceptance of both growing social inequalities and regional disparities, presented as the only way of “catching up” with the West and increasing the efficiency of the national economy. Kukliński has noted that his early American experience stimulated his fascination with the doctrine of growth poles, which can be seen as an early inspiration for his later “metropolization” model (Kukliński 2008).

Metropolization was one of Kukliński’s favorite notions at the turn of the 1990s and the 2000s. Importantly, it assumed that the rise of metropolises was an important aspect of post-communist modernization. This concept may be seen as a normative reinterpretation of different threads of Western studies on the rise of mega-cities. The resulting synthesis worked out by Kukliński and his colleagues may be an example of a broader tendency in the post-communist social sciences, especially in sociology: namely the redefinition of notions and theories imported from Western academia, which originally had a critical or at least descriptive nature, into prescriptive, normative models to be followed in order to reach the ideal Western social order (Warczok and Zarycki 2014). Thus, in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, Western metropolises became ideals to imitate in terms of concentration of wealth, intellectual and technical innovation, or embeddedness in the network of global cities based on information and transportation infrastructure. At the same time, the largest

cities in the post-communist space, as future members of a global metropolitan network, were supposed to be the first to join the European standards of economic development and average living standards. Such celebration of metropolises, seen as islands of growth and lighthouses of ideological progress, was an aspect of the emerging neo-liberal and individualistic paradigm of social transformation, which accepts the increase in spatial and other inequalities as a necessary condition for economic growth. In this framework, metropolises are spatial concentrations of the “transformation’s winners” and in contrast to peripheral areas, which are populated by the “transformation’s losers.” Just as in the original scheme of “winners vs. losers,” which is a popular notion of post-communist social sciences vocabulary (Buchowski 2006; Danilova 2014), the opposition between metropolises and the remaining parts of the country (in fact “peripheries,” even if this concept is usually avoided) implies that the misfortunes of peripheral regions should mostly be blamed on their inhabitants.

Even with his relatively nuanced approach to radical free-market reforms, Kukliński was one of the crucial actors introducing key notions into the Polish social sciences, which later helped to naturalize processes of economic and social polarization of inequalities implied by the so-called post-communist transformation. One can note that the above-mentioned notion of “metropolization” was later instrumental in the development of the official spatial doctrine of Donald Tusk’s liberal government, presented first in 2009, namely the “polarization-and-diffusion model” (*model polaryzacyjno-dyfuzyjny*). This doctrine included incentives for the development of metropolises as engines of growth for the entire country, even at the cost of economic decline in peripheral regions, which had to wait some time to profit from the economic stimuli coming from the growth centers. Criticism of this doctrine, in particular the negligence of the development of peripheral areas in Poland, was later a prominent theme of the successful electoral campaign of the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) Party in 2015.

Kukliński also promoted other concepts that later appeared useful in the legitimization of polarized development of post-communist Poland. The notions of “innovative regions,” “adaptive regions” and “lagging regions” were all introduced in his paper on “the geography of new Europe” (Kukliński 1993). These concepts were important for developing a new paradigm of regional development in which regions became actors and entered a competitive game for capital, talents, and markets. All these ideas have been very prominent in Kukliński works since the late 1980s and early 1990s, and they have become central concepts to policy-oriented work done at the institute he directed. One of the synthetic concepts developed in EUROREG and popularized in Poland by Grzegorz Gorzelak, Kukliński’s successor at the institute, was the notion of the “competitiveness of regions” (Gorzelak and Jałowiecki 2000).

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the intellectual trajectory of Antoni Kukliński against the structure of the field of Polish social and economic geography. As I have argued, this structure strongly conditioned not only Kukliński’s career, but also the broader role that he played in the development of Polish geography and legitimization of the post-communist transformation. Moreover, the specific structure of the fields of social sciences in Poland may explain why a large number of Polish academics, especially those with upper family status and international experiences during the communist period, engaged so strongly in the legitimization of the post-communist transformation, while no stronger critical schools of social thought emerged after Marxism lost its attractiveness in the 1970s. The biography of Antoni Kukliński also illustrates how that broad faction of the intelligentsia

provided crucial expertise for implementing the liberalization of Poland's economy and reconstruction of public administration along Western, mostly neoliberal lines. This was possible due to the competence and social status of these scholars, including their family cultural capital and experiences accumulated during their careers in communist Poland, which often included long periods of international (in particular American) fellowships from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. In this way, the social sciences have also helped to legitimize and naturalize such effects of the transformation and European integration as a growing dependency on the Western core, rising inequalities, and, last but not least, the hegemonic position of the intelligentsia as the dominant social strata in Poland. In the case of the field of geography, it included the legitimization of spatial polarization as an aspect of broader social inequalities.

The trajectory of the field of Polish geography, as presented above, is of crucial importance for understanding this outcome. In particular, a clear rift emerged in the field of geography over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. It was mostly homological to the structure of the field of power, which was divided along the continuum between radical party hardliners on the one hand and the anti-communist opposition on the other, with progressive/liberal technocrats remaining loyal to the Communist Party in the middle. As I have mentioned earlier, most fields of the social sciences and humanities developed similar structures, although they differed in the intensity of their politicization and their location between the two poles. In some fields, the non/anti-communist pole was stronger (e.g., history), while in others it was very weak (e.g., political sciences). In most cases, those who had a history of participation in exchange programs with the U.S. and other Western countries found themselves attracted to parts of the field that were somewhat closer to the "progressive," non- or anti-communist, or at least "reformist" pole. Very few of the participants in these international exchanges embraced more radical variants of critical social sciences, while the majority became enthusiastically involved in the post-communist transformation process, often taking on important roles outside of academia, which the trajectory of Antoni Kukliński illustrates well. At the same time, this configuration made the emergence of critical poles in most of the social sciences structurally impossible. This effect is particularly evident in the field of Polish geography: No equivalent of a critical sector—one questioning the dominant images and legitimations of the spatial order and denouncing increasing inequalities as a result of neoliberal policies—ever emerged in the field of Polish geography, as it has in the case of most Western academic context with the French geography as one of the clearest cases in point. One can also point to the roles of public intellectuals played by critical geographers in France, such as Christophe Guilluy, whose works "La France périphérique" (2014) and "No society: La fin de la classe moyenne occidentale" (2018) had wide social resonance. As mentioned above, the lack of a critical sector in the Polish field of geography and other social sciences and humanities can also be seen as a homological effect of the lack of a stronger left presence in the Polish political scene.

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Author biography

Tomasz Zarycki is Professor and Deputy Director of the Robert Zajonc Institute for Social Studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland. In the academic year 2020/21 he is Johan Peter Falck Fellow at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS).