Employees in the changing world

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Abstract: *The contemporary world is the world of changes. Probably there is no single domain for which the latest decades would not be the breakthrough time. As in a lens, all these transformations focus on the organization, modifying its character, the way of functioning, or finally the management process. This article is an attempt to answer the question what sort of changes affect the environment where the employee fulfils her/his professional roles and finally how the individual is changed in this context. The fulfillment of this purpose is based on analysis of three perspectives: general, organizational and individual.*
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I. The changing world

The world in which people are functioning nowadays is the same as it used to be, yet it differs. The conditions and factors which affect the individual's behaviour undergo changes which sometimes may even be elusive, yet their consequences sooner or later will be reflected in the individual's behaviour. Considered as the most significant determinants of these transformations should be globalization and development of information technologies.These issues have recently been comprehensively discussed in specialist literature. Depending on the field where the considerations are conducted, their economic, social or individual dimensions are emphasized. However, owing to the nature of this article, it seems advisable to avoid definition arrangements and relevant differences, for the benefit of analysis of consequences which globalization and development of technology may offer to the individual, and particularly for the individual's functioning within work.

Therefore it should be assumed that the essence of the globalization process is contained in four characteristics: specific constriction of the time and space manifested in exteriorization of phenomena and processes from a given territory; existence of a specific, transnational socio-cultural space functioning outside the area delineated by the country's borders; simultaneous occurrence of globalization processes at the level of states and international environment; development, by the processes of globalization, of qualitatively new psychological phenomena, such as the „temporary identity", or threatened continuation of identity (Bańka 2007).The importance of the globalization process is strictly correlated with the second of the above mentioned phenomena, i.e. changes in teleinformation technology. An intensive development in this area falls to several past decades. Popularization of personal computers, introduction of the Internet, electronic post and Word Wide Web resulted in a revolutionary change of the principles of information flow and access to it. The world for human beings has become not only smaller but also faster. The development of technology enables globalization, whereas globalization enforces the development of technology. These phenomena coexist, creating new conditions of the organization's functioning which require a new approach to management. However the use of contemporary concepts and methods of management entails very important consequences, as the work environment changes basically.

II. The changing organization

One of the most important consequences of the use of contemporary concepts and methods of management is the change of relationship between the employee and organization. Outsoursing, lean-managment or downsizing are mostly aimed at an improvement of the organization's condition and make it more competitive and adequately responding to the environment's challenges (Wood, Stride, Wall & Clegg, 2004). Obviously, such activities are necessary and fully substantiated. The pace of changes demands conferment of the priority criterion to the economic calculation - the organization has to survive and develop. However, in this situation there is no way to skip completely the aspect of psychosocial consequences of these transformations. The transformations undergone by the organization create the individual's new work conditions, new principles of participation and responsibility (Czekaj, Lisiński 2011). Therefore, it is worth considering in this context what is the current bond between the employee and the organization and what type of chances and risks may result from it.Recognized as the most symptomatic should be the following changes resulting from the development of contemporary concepts and methods of management: the organization's focussing on the employees' key competences, the use of flexible forms of employment and virtualization of work.

The choice of such characteristics is not accidental. Specialist literature contains a number of different descriptions of contemporary organizations. However in view of the subject of considerations and range of analyses made, it was these three characteristics that were considered as the most significant, so the divagations will be conducted in turn around them (Stokes, 2016; Beck, 2015; Januszkiewicz 2012). Focussing on the employees' key competences, from the organization's point of view actually means focussing on competences and searching for employees who at a given moment exhibit them. Consequently this leads to the division of employees into those of category „A", „B" and „C" as well as the division of positions into those of categories „A", „B" and „C" (Huselid, Beatty, Becker 2006). The positions of category „A", defined as strategic, directly affect the organization's activities, positions „B" are supportive, whereas those of category „C" may affect the organization's functioning but not in its strategic dimension. Decisive of the organization's success is the proper identification of the key positions and then undertaking such activities which make the respective people take up appropriate positions for an appropriate period of time. These are reasonable and justified activities. But such an approach causes also another consequence: apart from category A, also categories B and C are differentiated. Management of the positions portfolio diversified like this assumes their coordination but the success depends on positions A, therefore investments refer mainly to them. Such a diagnosis is often accompanied by additional entries in the employment contract where employees defined as the „retention potential" obtain additional remuneration for remaining in the company for a specific time. This does not mean that the other groups are ignored, and B is treated in a special way, as the one which supports A and a source of the potential of succession, whereas the positions of category C, as non-strategic, with time are eliminated or transferred outside.The authors of the positions differentiation concept indicate that there is a basic difference between fairness and equality in human resources management. The staff procedures evolving towards an equal treatment of all employees now in the days of enhanced competition must treat everyone according to her/his share in achievement of the organization's goals. Such activities, aimed at "loosening of bonds" with employees, are obviously dictated by the economic calculation. Through the flexibility of employment/competences and their appropriate management, the organization secures cooperation with those who currently satisfy the staff demand. It is such adequacy that is permitted by the latter of the characteristics mentioned at the beginning, i.e. the use of flexible forms of employment. More and more frequently instead of the employees in the traditional meaning of the word the organizations use the formula of "temporary partners" (e.g. employment by virtue of a specific task agreement or independent task agreement).

Apart from advantages of such development of the employment relation on the organization's part, the use of flexible forms of employment also seems advantageous for the employee because it creates the possibilities for independent management of one's own professional career and its correlation with other domains of life. Such an organization of work brings also many additional possibilities, including (Thompson, Payne & Taylor, 2015; Kossek, Thompson & Lautsch2015): combining of various forms of employment and related diversification of earning sources; parallel accomplishment of other tasks (e.g. higher studies, courses etc.); working at home (particularly advantageous for people bringing up children, disabled persons, chronically ill patients etc.); deciding about the time and place of performance of the tasks.The tendency to elasticize the employment forms additionally strengthens more and more frequent use, by organizations, of virtual task groups. In this article the virtual group is understood as a group which is characterized by the lack of limitation in the work time and place, lack of permanent allocation of employees to the workplace, adjustment of the group's composition to the current task, dissolution of the group after the completion of workTo some extent this is a consequence of the first two characteristics: the need of constructing the employees' portfolio adequate to the presently performed tasks and the possibility to use flexible forms of employment. Presently, the dynamic development of technology allows organizations to assemble employees' groups without limitations connected with the working place and time. The problem defined in Poland may be solved by specialists from the whole world. Videoconferences, teleconferences and Internet allow the virtual groups to combine the advantages of individual work with advantages of the team accomplishment of tasks. Yet, this instrument also has some drawbacks which cannot be ignored because in the long run this could appear costly for the organization and the individual, too (cf. Table 1).

Table 1 Selected consequences of the formation of virtual groups

CONSEQUENCES OF THE USE OF VIRTUAL GROUPS	**ORGANIZATIONAL**	• lack of the master- disciple relationship (risk for continuous transmission of knowledge) • organizational knowledge is collected in the form of ready solutions and not a way of reaching them (lack of possibility to use the inference through analogy for similar problems in the future) • risk of forming „new" groups basing on the „old" co-workers (*natural choice* in the selection process, introvertive individuals, emotionally weak, young, of unestablished professional position, have a much more difficult start in their career) • new dimension of the processes of employees' adaptation and integration human resources management in the strategic dimension no longer refers to the group of temporary employees, in virtual convention • cultural differentiation of employees
	INDIVIDUAL	• limited possibilities of forming the social support networks (in instrumental, social and emotional dimension) • limitations in regular professional development and long term planning of career • risks for the work – home balance (the individual mentally is all the time at home or all the time at work, which causes stress and disintegration within the fulfillment of social roles (employee – husband – father) • need to develop new competences within the manager's social skills (fast making of acquaintances, feeling fulfilled in a new group, passing from the role of the group's manager to the role of executive employee and vice versa)
	SOCIAL	• change of the employee – organization relationship • social professional environment in the classical perspective stops functioning • increased importance of verbal vs nonverbal communication (new channels enforce the concentration on the contents, leaving out the form, a new official language occurs, characteristic of correspondence using the e-mail

Source: K. Januszkiewicz, Konsekwencje zmiany relacji pracowik-organizcaja. Zarys problematyki, *Prace Nuakowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu*, Nr 218, 2011, 105-111.

Changes within the human resources policy significantly affect also the use of flexible forms of employment, furthermore they affect the form of the employee – organization relationship. The hitherto promoted activities were focussed around the individual's strong socialization within the workplace. The concept of organizational attachment/engagement in classical perspective determined the principles and criteria of functional adaptation based on the „former" psychological contract. Presently the development of organization is bound towards „cynical organization", basing their development on the „new" psychological contract the distinctive feature is the lack of a strong and stable affective bond. The functional adaptation in the old system will be disfunctional in the new one and vice versa (c.f Table 2). Therefore, a change of organizational reality requires a redefinition to explain what the functional and disfunctional adaptation is and the development of a new methodology of adaptation models at the individual and organizational level.

Table 2 Selected manifestations of functional and disfunctional adaptation

	FUNCTIONAL ADAPTATION	**DISFUNCTIONAL ADAPTATION**
YESTERDAY	• Loyalty towards the organization • Involvement in work exclusively within the organization • Adaptation to the change through evolution within the organizational environment and transformation of oneself by a change adjusted to intra-organizational environment	• Fluctuation, change of work and organization • Career without borders (taking up employment across professions, roles and organizations) • A comprehensive specialization in various domains of life etc.
TODAY	• Orientation towards a change and permanent exploration of new organizational environments • Treatment of separation /departure as acquisition of possibilities unavailable in the organization in return for the loss of emotional bonds • Proactivity and independence in searching for and establishment of the network of support and safe basis of professional development etc.	• Excessive attachment to organization as a personal place and environment • Fear of separation and dismissal • Sticking to the old concept of career

Source: The author's study acc. to Bańka, 2007, pp. 71 – 73.

The above characteristics of organizational changes referred only to selected areas, i.e.: focussing on the employees' key competences, using flexible forms of employment and virtualization of work. But even this limited perspective inclines to more comprehensive statements. It requires an analysis as to how the individual feels in such a new environment and how such changes affect the way the professional roles are fulfilled. Therefore, in the conclusion it is worth referring to studies on occupational psychology which analyse changes in the individual's identity in result of redefinition of work conditions and the notion of professional career.

III. The changing employee

In view of psychosocial factors, the most important problems which contemporary researchers have to tackle when analysing the individual's professional functioning in the changing world, are: structural changes of the development of mature identity and appearance of a new developmental period of the „rising adulthood"; the lack of decisions, prevalent in the countries dominated by globalization, inability to plan and start a professional career as a consequence of breaking down of the stable, in view of the course of life, professional preferences system as the whole-life orientation of personal goals; collapse of the traditional model of spatial identification, i.e. attachment to the place as the career's catalyst and human physical and mental existence in the world (Bańka 2007). In traditional models of professional careers the period of early adulthood falling to the years between the ages of 20 and 30 years was treated as the time of stabilization, establishment of professional position and taking up the place. However, since these concepts arose the demographic and social conditions have changed diametrically, creating a space for the new developmental period of the „rising adulthood". It is a period between the age of 18 and 30 years, constituting a wholly separate developmental phase, different from adolescence and early adulthood. The individual is here on the one hand between leaving the childhood's dependence and on the other hand – entering the life roles of permanent responsibility. Of the characteristics, the researchers list the following: lack of crystallized sense of identity, enhanced experimenting with the labour market and on the labour market, accumulation of risky behaviours, with simultaneous demand for institutional and psychological support, balancing of one's own professional experience in transnational dimension.

In that period the individual acquires experience connected with work, oriented towards getting ready for taking up adult roles as well as the works and tasks which may be carried on for the whole life. The individual estimates her/his chances for finding a job in the most suitable and satisfying profession. These activities are connected both with trying one's hand on the labour market and adjusting the carrer's capital to market possibilities. All values, not only those connected with work, are in early adulthood redefined in a way quite different from that experienced by the individual during socialization (Januszkiewicz, 2012). The individual wants and needs a broad ground for the contact with even the most controversial systems, because according to most young people reaching of adulthood is tantamount to the possibility of deciding of one's own convictions and values. So this is actually the period of exploration of Self through work, career and transition in which the individual seeks her/his individuality and distinction at the cost of the bonds connecting such individual with the existing social and psychological world (Bańka 2007).

According to Maria Straś-Romanowska, the contemporary human being lives under the pressure of being active, productive and at the same time attractive professionally. Although the external activity supports the adjustment to variable requirements and achievement of success, yet through the imposed pace it confines the subject's contact with herself/himself, makes it difficult to be distanced from the events, enforcing concentration on the present time. So a dominant tendency becomes the hedonistic fulfillment of today's desires, consumerism oriented to immediate gratification, obviously opposing philosophical concepts of development through shaping of ideas, reaching higher (intellectual) goods, even in the long run. Expectations from an individual exhibit a pragmatic nature, therefore her/his activity is mainly oriented to efficiency tasks raising qualifications and enabling accomplishment of ongoing tasks. So enhanced activity of the contemporary human being is enforced on the one hand by growing and varying requirements, competitiveness on the labour market, a need for rivalry, and on the other hand by the desire to possess and use goods. Consequently, there is no motivation and time to ponder over the sense of one's own life, usefulness of existence, whereas self-reflection in view of future activities constitutes an inalienable condition of development (Straś-Romanowska 2006).

Another effect of changes in the paradigm of professional career is the psychological phenomenon of the lack of decisions. The lack of decisions in career is specified as a set of affective, cognitive and behavioural response to difficulties which the individual encounters in manifestation of her/his professional identity. Such an inability to coordinate the vital purposes connected with the professional career has been within the researchers' range of interests for a long time. But nowadays this issue is analysed in a somewhat different dimension.
In the classical concept of professional career according to D. Super, the individual gradually accomplishes developmental tasks within consecutive stages of the life cycle. We can single out six basic criteria of maturity for career: orientation to a choice of profession, collection of information and planning, coherence of preferences related to career, crystallization of qualities, professional independence and wisdom of professional preferen-ces. Such sequential reaching of maturity by the Self structure is achieved once in a lifetime (Guichard, Huteau 2005).Instead, in the new perspective we should include changes in the career's paradigm where the category of maturity to career is no longer a developmental process accomplished once in a lifetime but a process accomplished many times, when necessary and with outdated current patterns. The maturity to career under present conditions is a cyclically repeated crystallization of the individual's professional identity. It is expressed by flexibility, openness and proactivity (Bańka 2007). The human being throughout her/his lifetime must repeatedly take a decision related to accomplishment of the professional function. Collecting, processing and using of information in a new reality must occur in two directions. The individual on the one hand should

analyse the environment, capture the chances and risks arising from it, and on the other hand – stay in continuous contact with her/his own professional identity and check whether and when she/he will be ready for a consecutive change.Therefore we should emphasize that in such perspective the lack of decisions may be considered as the individual's adaptive and functional response connected with postponement of the decisions as to a change in the range of work and career until an adequate recognition of the situation and conditions occurs. On the other hand, however, in view of so fast changes a dissonance is deepened between the factors basing on which the individual constructs her/his own social and unique professional identity (more or less permanent throughout the lifetime) and the factors basing on which the individual constructs her/his career identity (usually temporary), i.e. a sense of efficacy in undertaking vital decisions, attachment to the profession, environment and a specific career path (McElroy & Weng 2016)**.**

The third and last of the discussed consequences of changes in the human being's professional environment is a conflict between attachment to the community and place, as a safe system of exploring the individual Self based on continuity with the past, and the openness to spatial relocations.The human being is attached to the place through her/his knowledge of its structure and function. Such an attachment comprises not only complete knowledge on standards, values or code of conduct, but contains also their acceptance. Spatial relocations induce changes and disturbances in the sense of continuation of Self in relation to the place, changing significantly the foundations of the identity's functioning. In result of globalization of the dwelling environment people resign, in the process of sustaining their identity, from the so called reference continuation based mainly on the knowledge of the place's past to the advantage of continuation of conformity based on the knowledge of the future and expectations which may be accomplished only in the future. The object of interest in this case are chances and possibilities which the individual derives from the „new place". In the personality context it is important that the individual oriented to spacial migrations estimates its Self not by taking into account the places and permanent identification with them (after all the knowledge about them is insignificant) but by trying to maximize the knowledge about herself/himself in order to master the places and create a sense of momentary and each time new identity. But such temporariness of identification and multitude of identity causes the individual's permanent strive to sustain her/his distinctive features and integration of personality (Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001)**.**

A new generation of the people living in this way are nomads of our times. Not only in view of their lifestyle and frequency of transitions but also or maybe even first of all due to the way of constructing identity. It is worth noting that the changes which we discuss in this chapter are mostly generational and social changes and not political or technological changes. They happen here and now but refer only to a selected part of employees. In economy based on knowledge we deal with many groups of professionally active individuals whose professional values differ (Bednarska-Wnuk 2010). They were constituted by different social, economic conditions and even, which is also important, by different historical conditions. A new paradigm of professional career is formed, but this is a paradigm the accomplishment of which rests with generation Y. It would be a misunderstanding to announce an era of new work. Employees of generation 60+, 50+ or even 40+ will be fulfilling themselves professionally basing on course manuals which they have. Although they are also affected by particular contexts of changes, their impact on the form of professional career should be considered as relatively insignificant. The urge to adapt to the conditions contradictory to the cognitive patterns they have known may induce a sense of inadequacy. On top of that, some of them may feel frustrated in the new conditions due to a change in the importance of elements constructing their superiority in traditional relations where the age and experience allowed to achieve a specific social and professional status as if „ex officio". Others, however, may find it easy to adjust to the changes and develop some competences necessary to achieve and experience success in future organizations.Instead, a significant challenge is the comprehension of such discrepancies and skillful management of the group, observing the differences in the individuals'age, values and functioning. It is this value that seems to be missing in those organizations which assume one model of human resources management and try to adjust all employees to it.

IV.   Conclusion

The three perspectives of changes presented in this article are interrelated in a natural way. What happens in the comprehensive „world", creates the conditions of functioning of the organization where people work (Beck, 2015). Although, however, the existence of correlations does not arouse any reservations, determining their nature and interrelations is a great unknown. Analysing, for instance, the relationship between the organization and employees, we could hardly state whether it is a result of assimilation or accomodation. Which of the parties initiates the changes and which tries to adapt to them? The present state is most aptly described by the notion of dynamic equilibrium, balancing on the borderline in order to survive. Considering, however, the rightness of the thesis about the systemic nature of relations, we may be astonished by the highly prevalent analyses and studies that present the given issues separately. Such measures are not only groundless but also disadvantageous in view of the scientific cognition. If the researcher aspires to describe and explain the

individual – employee's functioning in the changing world, he must adopt an interdisciplinary, holistic perspective of his solutions, integrating knowledge from various domains. After all, the changing world requires also changes in scientific approach, and probably this is what the future science of the human being in the organization will be like.

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