

Functioning of the Local Production Systems in Central and Eastern European Countries and Siberia

Case Studies and Comparative Studies

**Edited by
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*Katarzyna Januszkiewicz**

A CAREER MODEL UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF CHANGE AND ECONOMIC CRISIS – A COMPARATIVE STUDY CONDUCTED IN POLAND AND RUSSIA

1. Introduction

Modern technologies and organizations, as well as societies undergo changes that influence the way of career functioning of an individual. All the transformations are concentrated in a new dimension of the person versus organization relation.

These changes specifically concern two groups. On the one hand the changes shape the reality which professionally active people have to deal with. It is they who are forced to react to changes, based on the reaction mechanism of adaptation to the new conditions. And being able to prepare themselves, they are forced to operate on the spot. The second group is young people standing on the threshold of adulthood who shape their vision of how they pursue their career on the basis of observations. Therefore, it is worth considering how these transformations affect the perception of professional career and whether in times of globalization they

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have an unified character, or whether in spite of access to the Internet, professional activity of an individual is still determined by their nationality and cultural circle in which they grow up. The theoretical aim of this paper is to describe a new career model and to indicate the factors determining its course. Whereas, its practical aim is to explain in what scope these changes have been incorporated in the perception of professional career representatives of generation Y from Poland and Russia.

2. Determinants of professional career

It is assumed that the development of a professional person is determined by two groups of factors (determinants):

- internal (subjective) – related to a person, to his or her individual characteristics – such as biological, physical or psychological ones,
- external (objective) – situated outside a person, situational – such as historical, economic, technical, cultural, social, political and pedagogical background.

Leaving aside subjective determinants and recognizing that they are relatively insensitive to changes, it is worth considering what external factors decide on the course of career nowadays. In the literature, among the most frequently mentioned trends that describe work of the future, are the following:

- dispersion of work in time and space,
- rapid pace of innovation,
- increasing complexity of work,
- global competition,
- development of smaller and larger organizational units,
- a change in the concept of work and career,
- increased use of teamwork,
- reduction of supervision,
- increasing cultural diversity.¹

¹ N. Chmiel, *Psychologia pracy i organizacji*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2002, p. 462.

To the factors mentioned, one should also add an economic situation which seems to be the catalyst for any change. The confirmation of these words are the results of a survey conducted by the service Monster.com, which asked visitors to the website the following question: Does a national or global crisis make you consider a career change? The question was answered by more than 3,400 people. More than 50 per cent of respondents had tried to change jobs due to the economic crisis, one third of the respondents wanted to change career path, and only 14 percent stated that the crisis did not affect their professional life.²

The number and diversity of factors influencing the professional career model of an individual lead to the observation that the model valid for decades, undergoes significant transformations today and will also undergo them in the future. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the professional career is increasingly connected to other areas of activity of an individual and just like in the system model, a change of a component changes the whole system.

3. A new paradigm of professional career

In traditional terms, simultaneity of development in different areas of the functioning of an individual means that at certain periods, various activities support and complement each other. There is no contradiction between personal and professional development of an individual. These dimensions are placed on the same continuum of the individual's life, from birth to death, specifying the use of given time. Primarily they are characterized by the consistency and sequence of successive phases.³ For each period of life of the individual, there are certain characteristic developmental challenges as well as crises related to them (see table 1).

² Monster.com, fc: <http://pracaikariera.pl/s/2574/64840-Newsy-kariera/4022727-Poszukiwanie-nowych-sciezek-kariery-przez-kryzys-ekonomiczny.htm> [accessed 15.02.2014].

³ K. Januskiewicz, *Sukces zawodowy w perspektywie jutra*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu (249), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2012, p. 274.

Table 1. Levinson's model of adult development

Early adulthood 17–39 years of age	Early adult transition 17–22 years of age	An individual looks for his place in the world, crystallizes his or her preferences as for the further way of life, these processes are due to leaving their parents' home
	Entering the adult world 22–28 years of age	Creation of the sense of identity at work and outside work
	Age 30 transition 29–33 years of age	Summary and evaluation of the achievements
	Settling down 34–39 years of age	A stage of implementation of the objectives and full involvement in work and family
Middle adulthood 40–60 years of age	Mid-life transition 40–45 years of age	Assessment of life goals set at the age of 30 and realization of the limitations of length of life
	Entering middle adulthood 46–50 years of age	A stage of particular care and attention to professional and life stabilization
	Transition connected with 50s age 51–55 years of age	Another verification of objectives that were set earlier and of achieved results
	Culmination of the middle-aged adulthood 56–60 years of age	A stage of full adaptation to earlier choices and omission of changes in live
Late adulthood Over 60 years of age	Time of finishing of active working life	The statement of achieved results

Source: E. Turska, *Globalizacja a restrukturyzacja a nowy model kariery i sukcesu*, [in:] B. Kożuszniak (ed.), *Kapitał ludzki w dobie integracji i globalizacji*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2005, p. 252.

Dependencies and mutual relationships between the professional sphere and private life of an individual were very well captured by D. Super in rainbow model of a career, where the stages of life correspond to a particular type of professional activity, whereas different roles that the individual takes on lose or gain meaning depending on the dominance of one

of the spheres.⁴ D. Super's model is currently not exactly dated, but it seems not to take into account in a comprehensive manner the diversity and variability of the environment and the individual (see figure 1).

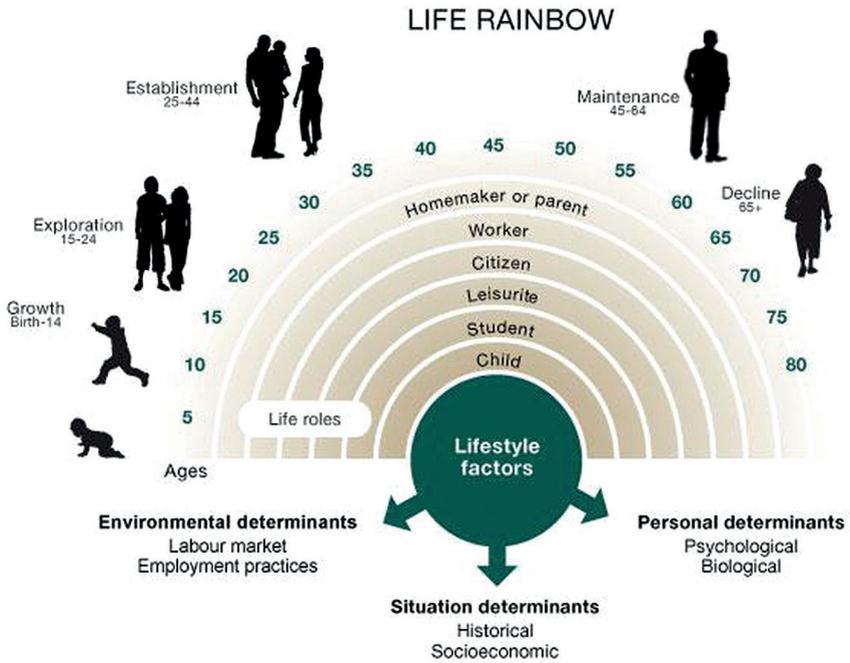


Figure 1. Rainbow model of a career by D. Super

Source: Super's theory, <http://www.careers.govt.nz/educators-practitioners/career-practice/career-theory-models/supers-theory/> (accessed 15.04.2014)

On the other hand, the new paradigm of a career that implies permanent transitions, destroys the old order of simultaneity of sequencing of development. The requirement of flexibility prompts the individual

⁴ Nevill, Super 1986, p. 4 for: E. Hornowska, W. J. Paluchowski, *Technika badania wazności pracy D. E. Supera*, [in:] M. Strykowska (ed.), *Współczesne organizacje. Wyzwania i zagrożenia. Perspektywa psychologiczna*, Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, Poznań 2002, p. 275.

to repeatedly change the place and character of work in search of opportunities to achieve professional success. Therefore, there is no stabilization period, maintenance of the position, or pause in acquisition of new skills. The activity is of course a prerequisite for staying on the labor market, but one should bear in mind that the tendency of sequencing in achieving professional and personal goals is lacking. In this case, waiting for a longer period of stagnation in a career – the achievement of professional success allowing concentration on other aspects of life is becoming more and more unrealistic.⁵

Table 2. Super's five life and career development stages

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Growth	birth–14	Development of self-concept, attitudes, needs and general world of work
Exploration	15–24	“Trying out” through classes, work hobbies. Tentative choice and skill development
Establishment	25–44	Entry-level skill building and stabilization through work experience
Maintenance	45–64	Continual adjustment process to improve position
Decline	65+	Reduced output, prepare for retirement

Source: <http://www.careers.govt.nz/educators-practitioners/career-practice/career-theory-models/supers-theory/> (accessed 15.04.2014).

In the classical concept of career by D. Super, an individual gradually performs developmental tasks during subsequent phases of the life cycle (see table 2). Six basic criteria of maturity for a career are distinguished: focus on choice of profession, gathering information and planning, consistency in the career preferences, crystallization of qualities, professional independence and wisdom of professional preferences. So called sequen-

⁵ K. Appelt, *Środkowy okres dorosłości. Jak rozpoznać ryzyko i jak pomagać*, [in:] A. I. Brzezińska (ed.), *Psychologiczne portrety człowieka. Praktyczna psychologia rozwojowa*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005, p. 453.

tial growth of structure of I to the maturity is achieved once in a lifetime.⁶ It is precisely this cumulation of experience, which determines professional success.

However, in the new approach, one should take into account the changes in the paradigm of a career, where a category of career maturity is no longer a developmental process carried out once in a lifetime, but the process executed many times when it is necessary or when present patterns become outdated. Maturity for a career under the current conditions is repeated crystallization of a professional identity of an individual. It is shown by flexibility, open-mindedness and pro activity.⁷ Several times during lifetime, a person has to make a decision regarding the implementation of professional functions. Collection, processing and use of information in the new reality must be followed in two ways. An individual on the one hand should examine the environment, capture opportunities and risks that go with it, on the other hand – stay in touch with their own professional identity and check if and when it will be ready for another change. That is precisely a multiplication of professional success, which unfortunately takes place with harm to its quality.

Thus, changes in the scope of implementation of a career have a permanent character and remain in strong dependency with the environment in which a given professional activity of an individual is carried out. Therefore, it raises a question of whether young people experiencing these changes (representatives of the generation Y), defined through the prism of flexibility and via the Internet, (unlimited access to the world far beyond their direct experience), have an unified vision of their professional future, or whether their perception of a career has more individual character, still defined by the socio-cultural factors. The answer to this question is given by the results of own research, which allows to compare the representatives of the generation Y from Poland and Russia. The subject of the analysis is the perception of professional success as an intermediate category, which allows for the description of a new career model.

⁶ Super 1972 for: A. Bańka, *Kapitał kariery – uwarunkowania, rozwój i adaptacja do zmian organizacyjnych oraz strukturalnych rynku pracy*, [in:] Z. Ratajczak, A. Bańka, E. Turska (eds.), *Współczesna psychologia pracy i organizacji – wybrane zagadnienia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2006, p. 62.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

4. Professional career in the perception of generation Y – a comparative study

The study involved 155 students from Poland (111), and Russia (40). Selection of the sample had incidental character, the questionnaire was filled in by students present on the day of testing at the lecture for the third year of studies. The study had a character of the identification diagnosis, within which were put the following research questions:

- whether professional success is a desirable category?
- at what stage of career they expect to be successful?
- how subjects rate their chances of achieving career success?

Answers to the research questions served as the basis for a comparative analysis of the perception of career success of future managers from Poland and Russia, because from the way they perceive the desired activity in the professional sphere will affect not only the shape of their own future career but also of the people that they will manage in the future.⁸

Orientation on professional success seems to be something obvious for a modern manager. This seems to be one of the components of work in the area of management. Proper performance of the duties and responsibilities is significantly associated with success.

In the examined group, the vast majority of people declared desire to achieve professional success (table 3). It is certainly a positive result from the point of view of the organization. Such people seem to have a strong inner motivation and will try to raise quality of work to increase their chances to achieve it.

Table 3. Orientation on success

Would you like to achieve professional success?	Poland		Russia	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	99%	1%	100%	–

Source: own study.

⁸ It should be noted that the study was conducted in two local industrial centers: Łódź and Novosibirsk, and therefore terms used in the article “future managers of Polish and Russian”, refers only to the study group.

However, from a psychosocial point of view, such an explicit attitude leads to reflection and analysis of the obtained result in the category of a certain phenomenon – success orientation.⁹

In the modern world, an individual faces a cultural imperative of making independent choices. The transformation in the scope of value (including the progressive secularization) means that the vision of life and attitude to challenges from the environment does not need to be confronted with intersubjective values. The weakening of their impact makes a person to define their own priorities and make their own choices among many possibilities. Such self-construction of their own space of values and aspirations is very tempting. In such a situation, professional success may have a lot of dimensions, indicators, attributes. Its definition will depend on the individual. The results of the research indicate that both for the youth from Poland and Russia, professional success is seen as something positive, as the goal being sought and equally highly estimated by the respondents probability of achieving it (table 4).

Table 4. Rating the chance of success (%)

Chances	Poland	Russia
0	1	0
10	1	0
20	2	0
30	13	5
40	8	3
50	28	18
60	7	13
70	13	18
80	14	18
90	4	15
100	11	13
Σ	100	100

Source: own study.

⁹ Definition by the author.

The vast majority of surveyed students turned out to be people optimistically perceiving their future, although it should be pointed out that the belief in their own abilities is higher among young Russians, the average assessment of their chance to achieve professional success is 71%, while for the Polish – 59% (see table 5). There is also a lower value of the standard deviation, indicating a greater consistency in the examined group.

Table 5. Evaluation of the chance of success 2

Measure	Poland	Russia
Number	111	40
Average (%)	59,5	71,0
Median (%)	50,0	70,0
Standard deviation (%)	23,0	19,3
Mode (%)	50,0	70,0
Index of similarity of structure for countries	0,73	

Source: own study.

The analysis of results of research presented so far, invites us to reflect that success seems to be an inherent attribute of thinking about work, regardless of the method of its definition and understanding. Such oriented individuals will expect certain results of actions not only from each other, but will also expect the organizations to create opportunities for their accomplishment. Understanding these expectations proves to be necessary from the point of view of organizational behavior.

That apotheosis and faith in the possibilities of a person, which could be assumed from the obtained results, seems to emphasize the unique character of an individual. While in the personal sphere, the choices may be made on the basis of partially negated or partially accepted values, which are kind of heritage of humanity (religious, moral values), the professional life of modern person is dominated by a sense of ambivalence.

On the one hand, work relations characteristic for the previous political and economic system have developed in employees lack of responsibility for their own future, lack of desire to the initiative or need for participation in creating their own work environment. On the other hand, the requirements towards such ‘lost’ individual are becoming increasingly clear. Employees are expected to be absolutely subordinate to the current trends which define the direction of work. One of the challenges singled out as the basic one and conditioning success is the need to supplement knowledge, develop skills, need for permanent learning. However, if we want to such an initiative to take place, it seems to be necessary for the employees to accept requirements formulated towards them and internalize the values promoted by the environment. In the face of so many and so diverse choices, the way to success is no longer obvious or very simple. It puts a condition of engagement resulting from the acceptance of a given value. However, representatives of generation Y, also called Millennials, tend to treat these circumstances, not as a challenge posed by the changing environment, but as usual conditions in which they will have to pursue their professional career and achieve success.

In this context, it is interesting to see the answers of the future managers, who point out that the best time to achieve professional success is the time between the 25 and 45 years of age. At the same time as the most likely period to succeed, most of them considered the period from 30 to 45 years (see table 6). It is difficult to provide exhaustive interpretation only the basis only of these data. However, one can presume, that before the 25 years of age an individual is seen as not yet ready and prepared for the satisfying performance of professional tasks. The second of omitted periods (45–60+), the respondents probably perceive as a period of stagnation, leisure, celebration of achievements.

Table 6. Age of achievement of professional success

Age from/to		Poland (%)	Russia (%)
1	2	3	4
20	25	0	3
26	30	9	15
31	35	28	35
36	40	31	15

Table 6 (cont.)

1	2	3	4
41	45	14	5
46	50	1	0
51	55	1	0
56	60	0	0
61	80	0	0
lack of answer		0	0
any age		17	28
		100	100

Source: own study.

These results, however, are puzzling for two reasons. Firstly, at present times being active professionally means the necessity of permanent development. Thus, one can not expect that when you reach a certain age job opportunities will shrink and the world of achievements will be closed you. Among the respondents from Russia, the average age at which they expect to achieve what they consider professional success is 33.3, for the Polish this value is only slightly higher, namely 36.3 (see table 7). This is the last interval of so called early adulthood, which in the traditional career model means realization of set objectives and full involvement in work and family.

Table 7. Age of achievement of professional success 2

Measure	Poland	Russia
Numer	92	29
Average [years]	36,3	33,3
Median [years]	36,6	33,1
Standard deviation [years]	4,91	4,58
Index of similarity of structure	74%	

Source: own study.

Nevertheless, the second reason why it is worth considering these results seems to be more important. Accepting the perspective emerging from the research we can conclude as for the measure of success in the per-

ception of the respondents. They do not associate it with the professional satisfaction felt at the end of the path, but with some objectives, the attributes available in the period of intense activity. Even if you take into account the response of people for whom the age category does not matter, they still remain in the minority in their group, where no one expects professional success before the 25 and after 45 years of age.

5. Conclusion

Transformations of the career model are a permanent process. One must admit that they constitute almost its inherent trait. Up to now, they have never had such a dynamic nature and have not included such a broad spectrum of activities of an individual. These new conditions analyzed in comparison with the old career paradigm, for people just entering the labor market, are habitual reality, a reality which will be updated on a regular basis to verify their activities.

The presented research results show quite a coherent picture of the professional future of the young Polish and Russians. This coherence is comes out in the observation in both groups of the following tendency to:

- high evaluation of the category of success (in both groups almost 100% want to achieve what is considered professional success),
- high-rating of the chances to succeed (in both groups the average rating exceeded value of 50),
- placement of achievement of professional success during middle adulthood.

On the other hand, the detailed analysis of the results leads to a conclusion that this is only a tendency, under which one can find diverse characteristics of the representatives of Poland and Russia.

Index of similarity of structures for each of the analyzed parameters indicates slight similarity in the distribution of features in the examined collectivities (within $w_{(p)} \in (0,7; 0,8>)$). Future managers from Russia are more optimistic than their Polish peers, assessing their chances of professional success on average on a higher level. Certainly it is worth, in search of interpretation of such a result to raise the question of the reason. This may on the one hand, be the result of lack of awareness of changes occurring

on the labor market, on the other hand, however, may indicate the differences in the nature and strength of the impact of the determinants of a career. Poland is a country belonging to the European Union, numerous relations and contacts with partners that shape the work space here are of very dynamic and unpredictable nature, while the experience of students from Novosibirsk is certainly to a large extent determined by the Russian labor market. This situation is additionally reinforced by the geographical location of Novosibirsk. Similarly, representatives of Russia expect earlier achievement of professional success than the Polish, and although this difference seems slight, it confirms their greater optimism in thinking about the future.

The results of the research, due to the selection of the sample can not be considered representative. An additional drawback is a significant difference in the number of students in the examined groups. Therefore, the resulting conclusions should be taken with caution as an observation of trends, which may in the future lead to in-depth research and analysis in this area.

Despite these limitations, it is difficult to escape the valuation and indication of the risks of such an understanding of a professional career. What seems to be a simple change of meaning of a word, in turn may lead to a sense of frustration and confusion. Young people less and less look up in their lives to authorities, also more and more rarely use objective indicators and determinants of behavior. Through almost unlimited access to the entire world they take advantage of it by selecting the values and norms that seem to them attractive at the moment. This process can not be stopped besides it is not worth trying. The only thing worth doing is to try to understand the new generation and provide them with the conditions for action and development, for shaping themselves in the organizational and social space.

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Abstract

Currently, the entire space professional functioning of individuals undergoes significant changes. These changes on the one hand have a global character, but on the other hand are strongly determined by local factors. The theoretical aim of this paper is to describe a new career model and to indicate the factors determining its course. Whereas, its practical aim is to explain in what scope these changes have been incorporated in the perception of professional career representatives of generation Y from Poland and Russia.

Key words: professional success, professional career, generation Y.