

ARGUMENTA OECONOMICA

1 (22) • 2009

Recommended papers

Giuseppe Calzoni, David Aristei, Valentina Bacchettini

**INCOME DISTRIBUTION, GROWTH AND
WELL-BEING: EVIDENCE OF A QUANTITATIVE
APPROACH FOR SELECTED OECD COUNTRIES**

Frank Lambrechts, Koen Sips,

Tharsi Taillieu, Styn Grieten

**VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS AS TEMPORARY
ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS: BOUNDARY
BLURRING, DILEMMAS, CAREER
CHARACTERISTICS AND LEADERSHIP**

Janusz M. Lichtarski

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

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REVIEWS AND NOTES

PL ISSN 1233-5835

Wrocław University of Economics

Wrocław University of Economics
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ARGUMENTA OECONOMICA

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Wrocław University of Economics
Wrocław 2009

Editor

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Verified by Elżbieta Macauley,
Tim Macauley and Ewa Kania

Graphic design: Maciej Szłapka
Printed by: Reprographers of
the Wrocław University of Economics
Order 164/09
300 copies

Published with the help of a grant
from the State Committee for Scientific Research

Argumenta Oeconomica is covered in **Thomson Reuters** services:

- Social Sciences Citation Index[®]
- Social Scisearch[®]
- Journal Citation Reports/ Social Sciences
Edition

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II. REVIEWS AND NOTES

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The integration of an increasing number of countries within the European Union and the expansion of EU contacts with other countries require that the capabilities to effectively communicate should be improved. Existing stereotypes and imperfect knowledge about the cultures of country's local communities may create barriers which encumber understanding. Oftentimes there are multicultural teams being initiated in enterprises and they need knowledge about effective communication and methods of learning foreign languages. These issues are significant and difficult to investigate. Therefore one can emphasize the importance of the topics discussed in the reviewed book which submits the research findings of many authors representing different scientific environments and disciplines.

The strength of the book is the wide range of discussed problems and references to the results of the research work. On the other hand, however, it may be seen as the book's weakness because there is no systematic ordering of analyses in terms of methods and subject matter under study. This has been greatly neutralized by means of organizing all papers in four compact parts where more homogeneous topics are discussed. Thus, readers may focus on the problems of their interest. The book is edited as Scientific Papers, not a handbook, which justifies the way of presentation.

The first part of the papers focuses on the needs of managerial staff both referring to business communication and to language proficiency. The discussed matters are essential for the perspective of small and medium-sized enterprises. Whereas in global, transnational firms it is typically English that is used by managerial staff, other languages are necessary in the case of small and medium-sized enterprises in addition to English. The authors formulate conclusions and practical hints for managers. The deliberations are deeply rooted in topics under study, however, they are confined to selected markets, products (e.g. sweets) or services (e.g. banking).

The second part consists of research findings in the area of cultural conditioning of the communication process. The authors of the papers present their research on cultural differences, existing stereotypes and conditions for verbal and nonverbal communication. This part of the book contains many interesting recommendations which make it possible to increase the effectiveness of communicating and

negotiating as well as modifying the offered products with respect to customers' expectations as they function within a given culture.

The subsequent parts of the book, fourth and fifth, are dedicated to analysis and evaluation of the European Union's programs supporting language study, cultural patterns comprehension, exchange of experience among people of different cultures, and practical aspects of teaching foreign languages. The conclusions put forward by respective researchers may be very helpful in improving the existant and newly developed programs of language teaching as well as in comprehending other cultures. Many interesting remarks have been presented based on experiences in teaching Spanish, communicating between Poles and Austrians, and teaching foreign languages to students of economics.

The deliberations, research findings, and experiences reported in the book may be very supportive to enhance marketing communication among managerial staff in enterprises. The book should also be very useful for teachers of foreign languages at universities, for students and those who need and want to learn languages and cultures of countries with which they maintain business, social and cultural relations. The book under review and the research findings presented in it deserve propagation in all member countries of the European Union. This is especially important now that the European Union has expanded, and there are still ongoing preparations to accept new members. Such decisions do widen the scale of problems linked to the communication between representatives of a growing number of cultures. The research conclusions presented in the reviewed book may be valuable in enhancing communication both within the European Union and in its contacts with other countries and cultures.

Henryk Mruk

Tadeusz Listwan, Marzena Stor (eds.): ZARZĄDZANIE KADRĄ MENEDŻERSKĄ W ORGANIZACJACH MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH W POLSCE [MANAGEMENT OF MANAGERIAL STAFF IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN POLAND]. WUW 2008, 308 pp.

Life in a global village which is the modern world in the era of globalization calls for a better understanding of ongoing processes. More and more firms operating now in Poland are organizations with foreign capital, subsidiaries of larger international concerns or parent companies with branches abroad. If we presume that employees of these new organizations together with technological knowledge and capital fundamentally determine a firm's success, then we need to deeply analyse staff management processes. When performing these processes, a special role is

played by managers of various levels, who on one hand count as a major asset at any organization, while on the other, they carry out an organization's personnel strategy.

The authors of the book under review have undoubtedly addressed a very important, relatively novel problem in our environment which is human resources management in international organizations focused on managerial staff management working there. Thus, the book fills the gap in the Polish literature and responds to the growing demand of practitioners, students of economic and social sciences, and, to begin with, of scholars. Research was carried out during 2004-2007 under a program funded by the Committee of Scientific Research with an impressive sample of 35 international enterprises. The ingenuity of the authors who accessed such an ample research material should be appreciated as we are aware of the resistance of many organizations to fully reveal their strategic personnel activities.

The main body of the book is preceded by the *Introduction* where the editors present the fundamental theoretical premises, research problems, methodology and research methods. When reading the *Introduction* the reader realizes that the book is not just another review monograph, but empirical studies strongly rooted in Poland's reality. In this part of the book we gain knowledge of the widely discussed problems of the conducted research and of their methodological foundations. The structure of the book is consistent because, in addition to the *Introduction*, seven essential chapters present all the basic subsystems of a staff management system: beginning with deliberations and research findings as regards staff strategy (chapter 1), through the main problems of selecting, improving, assessing, motivating, supervising and communicating during the process of managerial staff management. The book ends with an extensive *Conclusion* authored by the volume's editors.

The perception of the whole rests significantly on the two-part chapter authored by Marzena Stor entitled *Personnel strategies of managerial staff management*. The first part deals with strategic management, particularly with focus on strategies of staff management, whereas the second part presents the extensive results of empiric research carried out into applied strategies of managing top executive staff.

The theoretical part presents a proficient and broad introduction into the problems of business strategic management with an emphasis on personnel strategy. This part itself could serve as a collection of knowledge about strategic management and its linkages to the development and exercise of a business personnel strategy. A less experienced reader might have some difficulties to perceive numerous classifications and theoretical approaches to issues under study, but the author has included a subchapter, which brings together the previous deliberations and presents her own stance, as a theoretical foundation for the performed research (2.1.7). The stance has been defined as *a concept of hierarchical output system for a staff strategy* and it presumes some output, hierarchical linkages between a business strategy of a firm and its staff strategy. Practically following this standpoint gives an opportunity to a more flexible management of complexities, diversities, contradictions and changes which is indispensable for managing any modern firm,

and arguably optimal at international firms. The author shows dilemmas of this approach during empirical research and inclines towards a systemic treatment of the personnel function and the assumption that a monolithic strategy is the lowest level strategy whereas a transnational (diffusion and capitalization based) strategy is the highest level strategy. These two strategies make up a continuum over which one can describe any one of the personnel strategies discussed by the author.

After amply reviewing the theory, the author presents the results of her empirical research. The findings are extensive and directly linked to the prior theoretical ruminations and to research questions asked in the *Introduction*. The empirical material shown delivers a lot of very interesting, new data about personnel strategies pursued in international firms. The author systematically provides evidence that, among other things, global, transnational and pluralistic strategies dominate at corporate levels, and monolithic strategies are less frequent. The data with respect to personnel strategies compared at local and corporate levels are very remarkable and shed light on material and nonmaterial motivating, evaluating employees, training and developing staff, workforce layoffs, controlling the personnel function, and communicating. Particularly interesting material has been collected about the relationship between personnel strategy and the home country of an organization (2.2.6). The reviewer claims to have been diligently keeping track with Polish and world literature on the subject matter but nowhere is such strictly documented data provided as has been the case with the contribution of the author thus enriching our knowledge.

The main conclusion drawn from the research regards a relatively low internal coherence among personnel strategies at corporate level and those at local level. A psychologist of management would appreciate recognizing the consequences of such a state of affairs for the functioning of employees (including managers) and teams in a given organization. This aspect, in my opinion, has not been adequately addressed. Conventional wisdom has it that the objective of staff management is not only the streamlining of an organization but also, in addition, the improvement of the functioning of individual workers and teams, stabilization of employment and increased satisfaction with being employed by the organization.

The subsequent chapters of the book provide empirical evidence proving data and remarks included in chapter 1. The chapter entitled *Selection of workers for executive positions* by Sylwia Przytuła offers a deep analysis of how managers are being acquired by international firms. In the beginning, the author precisely formulates research goals and questions. As it turns out, the research focused on the acquisition of data about the sources and sorts of recruitment and selection (forms, techniques). Following Hofstede, she adopted the classification of firms with respect to culture into those stemming from the USA, Asia and Europe (Germanic, Nordic and Latin countries). An important goal of research was to delineate a qualifications profile of managers in international firms examined during research. The way in which the author understands the term *qualifications and competencies* is not

generally accepted by the Polish literature of the subject matter. Here, it is noteworthy to remember that the Wrocław School of Staff Management of Professor Tadeusz Listwan perceives qualifications as *interpersonal attributes of managers, their dispositions (such as psychological properties and knowledge) which interact and, if used during behaviour, may result in professional skills* (p. 106). Based on the literature, the author describes a qualifications model of an international manager encompassing psychological properties, knowledge and skills. The components of the profile are presented in table 3.1. A question arises whether this is a profile specific to international managers or a profile of any proficient manager, and what is specific in it (except geographic mobility)? If this is just a profile, one may not assume that its components should be maximized, because most relationships in social sciences are nonlinear and it has not been evidenced that, e.g. the higher empathy, intelligence, assertiveness, and the like, the higher the manager's proficiency.

In the empirical part the author contrasts the theoretical model against the very interesting results of her own investigations. She shows the opinions of managers on qualifications mostly required for executive positions at diverse levels. The resulting evidence supports and details the well-known relationship between the qualifications required and the level of management. With respect to the author's remark on p. 143 which points at the differences found among answers given in surveys and data from interviews, one has to discuss the credibility of the obtained data and to answer the question as to whether survey data reflect merely academic knowledge of respondents rather than their perception of the actual reality in the examined firms.

The main empirical part exhibits extensive material illustrating choice, criteria and techniques of selection, and introduction into work with cultural differences (American, Asian, and European firms – Nordic, French and Spanish). These results are presented and commented by the author in a very communicative fashion, so that even a less experienced reader will find it easy to comprehend and gain knowledge of them. In order to minimize the difficulties of reading, the author includes an integrating, condensed and reflexive summary. The empirical material acquired proves that a formalized process of choice along with the development of strictly devised procedures to acquire and select executive staff eliminate the necessity to appoint home-country nationals to executive positions. This is a significant conclusion because preferring mainly foreign staff (which has been the case at the beginning of the transition period) and discriminating against local staff for senior management positions typically have negative consequences: they signal a lack of confidence, build up culture-based conflicts and inhibit the communication process.

The next two chapters deal with improvement and assessment of employees. The part entitled *Improvement and development of executive staff* authored by Andrzej Suchodolski analyses organizational processes linked to the enhancement and growth of managerial staff. In reference to the most recent literature of the subject matter, the author employs the three phases in his analysis, i.e. preparation,

execution and control. After a short theoretical introduction, empirical research findings are presented considering the respective phases of managing the development of employees. These findings evidence that along with the strengths of improvement and growth of workers in international firms (mature phase of preparation, multidimensional growth activities) there have also been some weaknesses, specifically, neglected control and inconsistency between workers' assessments and paths of their development. The conventional wisdom is that this happens quite often in Polish firms. The *Summary, proposals and postulates* put forward by the author are particularly worth appreciating and recommending in their close relation to the prior analyses of the empirical material. The content may prove specially interesting for managers in Polish firms because, on one hand, it is quite universal, and on the other hand, it proves that the level of human resources management in the field of improvement and development in many of our organizations does not actually deviate much from the level of many renowned international firms.

The research by Andrzej Suchodolski reveals difficulties in some organizations when evaluating workers from the viewpoint of their development. How the assessment is performed in international firms is a subject of the chapter entitled *Assessment of executive staff* by Adam Fiącek. The author presents the research goals and systemizes the findings obtained. The goals are shown at the background of theoretical deliberations as regards evaluating, however, it is not an extensive presentation of existing standpoints, but rather a summary related to theoretical premises put forward in the *Introduction*. If readers of the theoretical part were expecting to find more information about assessment, they will be disappointed. However, one can say that the objective of the chapter is to present the material results of research. We get a lot of information on the subsystem of assessment in international firms. The empirical data presented considers both the cultural sphere (North America, Asia, Europe), and also the size of firms. We get acquainted with assessment criteria (we do not know whether there are any differences as regards the management levels) and the influence of the assessment results on other subsystems of staff management. The problems with assessment found in international firms resemble those existing in Polish firms: unwillingness to be evaluated, fragmentariness of assessment, inadequate expertise to perform an assessment, lack of reliable feedback, resistance of trade unions. In numerous firms there are many methods and criteria which have been imported from foreign cultural spheres, but are incoherent with Polish peculiarities and experiences. It is also worth noting that the research found a lack of confidence and degrading of the skills of Polish managers by foreign executives, especially coming from the Asian cultural sphere. This interesting chapter gives no information about the applied principles of assessment (e.g. acceptance, flexibility of criteria, long-term approach, etc.), although most of them are applied when evaluating workers in Polish firms.

The salaries of executives in international firms are the subject of many rumours simply distorting the truth. The process of economic motivation is discussed by Tomasz Kawka in the chapter entitled *Executive staff compensation*. Although the author does not specialize in financial motivation, the chapter is very interesting. After a solid, albeit short, theoretical introduction and a review of the most important empirical studies on executive compensation, the author formulates his major research goals, i.e. investigating a compensation strategy, models of manager's compensations and principles of managing a compensation system. The results of research are presented consistently with former chapters, i.e. considering three cultural spheres and three sizes of firms: small, medium and large. This consistency is an asset of the entire book. It is not easy to achieve the effect of coherently presented material when a book is authored by a team. Thus, it proves that the authors have shown discipline and the editors have done a good job.

The data on the so-called local remuneration repatriation are exceptionally remarkable. The author supports the relevance of the fact that second league foreign executives are delegated to Poland, which may be quite disturbing. We know that some of those executives joke that they go to *Ostfront*, thus proving that their attitude is not positive and they feel anxiety against an unknown culture. Another issue, just marginally mentioned, is also interesting as to what are salaries of foreign managers once they are repatriated to their country of origin. One may believe that after they return they reevaluate their decision of going abroad, and the profits and losses account is usually positive. The chapter ends with a concise summary of the entire empirical material and a list of future research questions. This is a very good way of summarizing the chapter which shows the achievements and the future work. The conclusions are mostly acceptable.

The subsequent part of the book makes most Polish managers feel good because it proves that as regards information systems supporting personnel management, we are at a decent, European level. This is a topic of a chapter entitled *Controlling and IT support of staff management* authored by Stanisław Kowalczyk. The author takes on an important and interesting problem of how foreign managers participate in controlling the processes of staff management. The results of his research are optimistic also because they point at the decreasing amount of controlling activities by foreign managers. However, we do not know whether their activities have been taken over by Polish managers or whether this is due to the reduction of overall controlling processes. Next, control tools of staff management process as applied in firms from the given cultural sphere are presented. This part lacks a deeper interpretation of why, e.g. surveys of workers' opinions dominate in Asian firms whereas in American firms it is an analysis of staff procedures. The research also proves that as regards IT support of staff management, there are no significant differences between international and Polish firms because all predominantly make use of the internet.

As we know, there are complaints in Polish firms that the processes of information flow are selective and one-way. An extended analysis of those processes is provided by a wide and knowledgeable chapter by Marzena Stor which is entitled *Communication in the process of managerial staff management*.

The chapter under review begins with an all-embracing theoretical introduction (24 pages) showing diverse approaches to studies of communication in organizations. The author has significant accomplishments of many publications in the area of culture-based conditions of communication processes in organizations. Some sections of the chapter are taken from prior publications which is adequately annotated. Another asset of the chapter is its empirical part along with the findings obtained. The main hypothesis argues that trans-corporate communication is key in obtaining results in the area of managerial staff management. The communication is perceived as a resultant force of international and intercultural communication. One of null hypotheses, supported by the research, argued that inconsistency of communication at corporate and local levels will have negative consequences.

Next, the empirical material used to verify hypotheses is presented. The author does not merely focus on the quantitative analysis, but also provides some interesting and deep qualitative analyses (e.g. on non-cultural and intercultural communication problems and their actual symptoms). Communication problems in organizations are shown with respect to a cultural sphere. We find out that in the American and European firms under study non-cultural communication problems prevail whereas Asian firms suffer mainly from culture-based communication difficulties. This is a quite obvious finding, given the geographical and cultural distances. A positive and negative evaluation of CIS (cultural identity salience) components is also very interesting. The cases under study (table 8.7) illustrate the importance of national stereotypes (e.g. Poles vs. Germans) as a communication barrier. The research proves also that American firms lead in efficient communication which is arguably due to long-time experience of national and cultural diversities.

The book ends with an extensive *Conclusion* authored by the volume's editors. Such a diligent summary of wide-spread research is seldom the case.

To sum up my evaluation I can announce that the book *Management of managerial staff at international organizations in Poland* edited by Tadeusz Listwan and Marzena Stor has very few weaknesses. One could expect more rigorous and sophisticated methods (e.g. group comparisons lack the indication on the statistical significance of differences observed), more communicative presentation of some diagrams and an appendix with a list of research methods being used. Undoubtedly, the book is an original empirical study which is significant for our scientific publication market and is very much demanded by both researchers and practitioners from the area of staff management and psychology of management. Definitely there is a deficit of works in this field because such wide-ranging research requires strong theoretical, methodological and procedural foundations as well as securing access to empirical material which is otherwise unable to be acquired. In the case of the book

under review, all those conditions have been satisfied. The main assets of the reviewed monograph are:

- Reference to recent world concepts and research findings;
- Communicative offering of the original, unique research concept founded on the theoretical premises of the Wrocław School of Staff Management of Professor Tadeusz Listwan;
- Unusually resolute consistency in carrying out research and presenting the findings according to assumed theoretical and methodological assumptions;
- Professional, comprehensive summary of the entire research, thus enabling a reader to get the picture of authors' achievements;
- Valuable applicatory conclusions, useful for human resource management both in Polish and international firms;
- Significantly high merits for teaching and cognitive aims because the book is a recommendable pattern for other similar research into each stage of the research procedure.

Stanisław A. Witkowski

Mieczysław Sobczak: STOSUNEK NARODOWEJ DEMOKRACJI DO KWESTII ŻYDOWSKIEJ W LATACH 1914-1919 [THE NATIONAL DEMOCRACY AND THE JEWISH QUESTION IN 1914-1919]. WUW 2007, 249 pp.

The book by Mieczysław Sobczak *The National Democracy and the Jewish question in 1914-1919* is one of three books published by the author in 2007 and 2008 by the Publishing House of the University of Economics in Wrocław. In this way he concluded the analysis of National Democracy's approach to the Jewish question during the movement's legal and non-legal activities (1893-1939). The first publication dealt with the first period of ND before the First World War when the movement's political, ideological and social judgments developed, including their approach to the Jewish question. The second publication dealt with the same issues from the period of the Second Polish Republic. Now, the third volume embracing the period of 1914-1919 was published. One may figure out that this period was most difficult for the author. I have partly supported his research efforts and helped him access some literature, mainly dealing with the Prussian partition, including my private book collection.

I believe that due to this chronology of three books, the author was able to formulate the right conclusions since he had already examined the attitude of ND to the Jewish question during the period before the First World War and the political consequences of the post-war period. Whereas the military conflicts during the First

World War and the relations on the Polish side have already been extensively studied, the relations between the Polish parties (including National Democracy) and the Jewish parties with their politics are still biased by subjective assessments both on the Polish as well as the Jewish side. This issue has been frequently discussed, but only marginally, as it contributed to the problems of the First World War. Therefore, it is a significant achievement of the author now that he presented the comprehensive description of the above problems.

The author correctly concluded that in this period there was a clash between Polish and Jewish nationalisms, exactly in the midst of the rebirth of an independent Poland and in the first months of its existence. In addition, other parties were involved in the disagreements, i.e. the partitioning powers, Western European countries (mainly England and France), the United States, Jewish parties on the Polish territories and influential Jewish lobbies, mainly in the US.

The book has been written in a combined chronological and problem spectrum. It consists of three parts. Part one describes the approach of the National Democracy to the Jewish question. Inevitably, the author often relates to some events which occurred before 1914. First in this period, Russia was a dominant power in the Kingdom of Poland, and then, the central states. Therefore, the author believed that issues emerged which needed a separate treatment. Those were: a political declaration on the Polish issue (November 1916), events in Ukraine, the situation in Lithuania and two revolutions in Russia. The German occupation authorities were also aiming to solve the status of the Jewish communities and the municipal election was held with the significant participation of the Jewish population.

In the second part, the author focuses on the activities of Poland's National Committee and its stance on the Jewish issue. At this time, Polish-Jewish relations were often exacerbated, exactly at the beginning of the regained independence. As mentioned by the author, the Jews succeeded to receive the international support of their political claims which was confirmed by the Balfour declaration. In order to counteract the initiatives of the Jewish Diaspora in the United States, the leader of National Democracy, Roman Dmowski, went to the US, but no agreement with the Jewish leaders was reached.

Another conciliatory mission was undertaken by S. Grabski, the representative of Poland's National Committee on the territory of Congress Poland. His talks with the Jewish delegates proved unsuccessful. Then the relations with the Jews were exacerbated even more, after they announced a declaration of neutrality in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict over East Galicia. In addition, the news about anti-Jewish unrest was amplified by the press hostile to Poland. The disturbances were not politically inspired by the ND or other political groups. The Jewish groups escalated their political requests.

The third and last part is dedicated to the Jewish problems resulting from the peace conference in Paris. It was also time of the election for the Legislative Assembly (Sejm, which was to enact the constitution) and for municipal self-

governments. There were still more antagonistic debates with Jewish politicians who unanimously demanded a separate legal status and national autonomy of Jews in Poland. The Jews did not want to agree to the fact that the Poles did not make available either dual citizenship or any separate national rights for minorities dispersed in the country's territory.

In this part of the book the author describes the discussions held in Poland with respect to the ratification of the peace treaty signed in Versailles on June 28, 1919 by Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Paderewski. The peace treaty with the Germans and the minority treaty have been largely criticized both by Polish and also by Jewish parties (except for the National Democracy). Eventually, both treaties were ratified with 286 members of Sejm voting for and 41 against. The author refers to the opinion by Roman Wapiński, who believes that the Jews were disinterested towards a re-emerging Polish state. Arguably they believed that the partitioning states were more friendly to them than was Poland. The extreme positions were held by the Jews in the United States and in Germany who were challenging the qualities of Poles to found their own state. This did not encourage better relations between Poles and Jews.

The First World War basically separates the periods under study. However, the author had to extend his description up to mid 1919 due to the peace conference in Paris and signing of the main treaty and the minority treaty which were then ratified by Legislative Sejm. The activity of the commission led by H. Morgenthau sent to Poland by the US President Wilson in order to examine alleged atrocities against Jews. All those events close the presentation of the problems during the First World War.

The author formulates many difficult questions and tries to answer them in an unbiased way. It is worth noting that those problems are not interpreted uniformly by the literature. The author put in order many concepts in his book. He interchangeably uses the terms *endecja* and National Democracy. However, he falsely reduces the term just to party organizations. In fact, the term ND encompasses also other organizations, e.g. the National League, the Union of Polish Youth ("Zet"), the Society of Tomasz Zan (TTZ), also the Sport Clubs ("Falcon") and other organizations. A balanced presentation required that also main Jewish parties and groups are shown and briefly characterized. We read about the Jewish organization later in the book (p. 159).

When analysing the political programs and actions of Jewish groupings, the author aims at understanding their intentions and rationales stemming from the war situation. He also asserts that the Jews were not judging current political events unanimously. He recalls Jews welcoming Germans in Warsaw, their neutral stance with respect to East Galicia, and sympathizes with assimilated and orthodox Jews, and, finally, emphasizes the loyalty of Folkists and Zionists, with all their differences of opinions. The author also points to the change of orientation of the Jewish population after the United States declared war on Germany, after the Russian revolutions and Russia's eventual alliance with the Central Powers. Polish

public opinion was surprised by the fact that in consequence of those events, the Jews stopped respecting the Poles, thus provoking criticism of all Polish groupings. The National Democracy alike was changing views of the Jewish question and was not monolithic as regards this stance. Though the National Democracy did count on the Central Powers, but during the war there was a shift from the position that all the Jews should be treated as foreigners to the inclination that the relations with the Jewish community should be normalized according to international standards. The condition however was that they gave up their national and political claims.

According to the National Democracy, the Jews were guaranteed equal civil rights, protection from discrimination on the basis of membership in a religious and ethnic minority, as in other democracies. At that time, the future of the Polish state depended on the decisions taken by the peace conference, therefore the ND did not want to exacerbate the relationships with Jewish groupings as it was against Poland's national interest. Such intentions were underlying a draft declaration of Poland's National Committee and speeches by S. Głąbiński, W. Korfanty in Sejm.

The author reminds us that notwithstanding the differences of opinions, there were a number of meetings between ND leaders and Jewish groupings. The above-mentioned R. Dmowski during his visit to the United States even agreed that a Jewish representative would have been a member of Poland's National Committee. The negotiations of S. Grabski were discussed earlier. The Jewish side presented a balanced stance by L. Wolf, N. Sokołow, and, to some extent, by I. Unszlicht and H. Lieberman.

The book by Sobczak also presents the issue of an economic boycott which was announced even before the First World War by R. Dmowski. The issue was discussed by him with the Jews during his visit to the United States. The ND leader did not agree to cancel the boycott, however, it did not actually affect the businesses, due to the merchandise rationing during war. The people had to buy essential goods with no freedom of choice where to buy: whether at Jewish or non-Jewish businesses. The statistics of the period between both world wars show that small business and trade dominated by Jewish owners did not decrease, although slogans "buy Polish" were in place and lists of Polish customers buying at Jewish shops were published.

At the end, it is worth emphasizing that the author used many diverse and representative sources. These are archives, memoirs, diaries, books and periodicals. The latter group may be slightly criticized as it is dominated by the Warsaw newspaper "Gazeta Poranna 2 grosze" which is cited by the author almost 90 times. This paper was edited by the mediocre ND journalists. However, the majority of Polish researchers on Jewish issues do not speak either Hebrew or Yiddish, therefore they must rely on the translations of Jewish texts which were provided by this newspaper.

The author also cites other ND periodicals: „Słowo Polskie”, „Sprawa Polska”, „Przegląd Narodowy”. There are no Poznań journals on this list, however,

particularly „Kurier Poznański” – the unofficial journal of Great Poland’s ND. Perhaps that is why there are just eight pages of the text dedicated to the Prussian partitioning.

To sum up, we have got a valuable and objective book presenting the complex relationships between the National Democracy and the Jewish parties during the First World War.

Zygmunt Kaczmarek

Jerzy Korczak, Helena Dudycz, Mirosław Dyczkowski (eds.): *ADVANCED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR MANAGEMENT AITM 2007*. WUW 2008, 128 pp.

There has been one book published yearly in a series on “Advanced Information Technologies” by the Publishing House of the University of Economics in Wrocław since 2001. The series presents the research findings in the field of business information systems. In 2002 it was combined with the national scientific conference in order to more widely present various viewpoints, perspectives, research results, and to promote the publication on a national scale.

The 2008 issue includes eleven chapters – papers by authors from the University of Economics in Wrocław, Warsaw University, Academy of Economics in Katowice, Polytechnics in Częstochowa and in Opole, University of Strasbourg, and Communigram company from Strasbourg. The papers have been evaluated in the context of their problems, methods, subject matters and formal aspects.

General remarks

There are many threads, terminologies, styles, research assumptions, and levels of details in the reviewed book. This is valuable for researchers who missed the conference. They are able to recognize some conceptual shorthand, recall previous works and reread the stances and positions of their colleagues. They value the precision of thought (specification of objectives and conclusions), the distribution of accents and proposals of future research.

A conference paper read by postgraduates working on their theses, by practitioners in informatics who are interested in one particular problem, by managers who feel responsible for informatization processes may become an inspiration for upcoming investigations. In such a context, the authors provide a bridge to readers by explicitly exposing the genesis of a problem after thorough literature studies, a bridge that I have been frequently using myself with appreciation of the author’s effort.

And finally, there is a need of an example, a metaphor, analysing boundary conditions, because as we were repeatedly browsing many volumes it appeared often that “*verba docent, exempla trahunt*”, that the greatest achievements of mankind are built of parables.

As regards the mentioned dimensions, the book is well-ordered. However, it did not fortunately reduce the satisfaction of the communion of creative individualities.

Detailed remarks

When I was reading a chapter on communigrams for the second time, my face was flushed. This is a text desired by any researcher to be written at least once. It is based on own, valuable essential thoughts, consistently implementing an informational tool, aptly presents rich source materials and mentions up-to-date state of knowledge by presenting growth perspectives (SOA and ERP-DSS integration). The first impressions were somewhat cautious. A problem of communication when managing a project is not new. Project management methods and supporting techniques define the importance of the problem. The usage of tools to support communication management during the project is important, because the achievement of the project’s goal depends, among other things, on communication. The author does not analyse deeply the meaning of communication in the project, focusing on the selected diagramming technique, i.e. making communigrams.

An asset of the book is also a chapter comparing the e-banking services for individual customers in Poland. I believe it will be appreciated by postgraduates dealing with those problems in their theses as are other books by Professor Witold Chmielarz. The main context is an analysis of subjectivity of experts’ evaluations. As regards the structure of the paper, from my perspective I would suggest more foreign literature references and the separation of conclusions.

A paper summarizing research into informatics by domestic business entities also reads well. The research considers the context of analytical solutions. At one point, following the author’s advice I reached for her earlier paper from SWO2007 and thus I gained a wider insight into the methodology of research and the results obtained.

Many earlier researches and analyses are contained in the chapter on ERP systems in the enterprise of Lower Silesian companies. A reader obtains a picture with an insightful interpretation. Arguably, an effort to search for rules by means of comparing the findings of this research with other domestic and foreign studies may be feasible.

A chapter dedicated to the life cycle of information has a distinctively different character. In its form, it is similar to a memorandum in which its author seeks to turn our attention to the emerging ILM technology.

Succeeding chapters refer to the recent discussions on the usage of new information technologies in an organization, with the following threads which are particularly valuable in my opinion:

The object-oriented approach dominating now has some recognizable weaknesses, thus calling for a need to further develop it, e.g. into an aspect-oriented approach presented in the next chapter or arguably, that is closer to my experience, into an agent-oriented approach.

A hybrid approach is implemented in business forecasting and we learn from the paper about selected methodological assumptions. As I put it in one previous review, “this is an important issue due to, among other things, a wider scope of hybrid models as compared to traditional models”.

The issues dealing with intellectual capital are very fragile, which generates concerns when contrasted with typically hard solutions in the field of computerization. In this context, the author correctly suggests a notation of supporting white-collar work instead of replacing it. However, marginally she reflects on a computer-aided paradigm which has been creatively developed for forty years now and proved successful in extending the scope of informatics applications.

The paper, authored by Małgorzata Pańkowska, merely shows the fascination with technologies as the author, as Bogusław Mec in his song “Her portrait”, aims at reaching the essence of a virtual organization. This intellectual and dialectic adventure may be supported by conventional wisdom of the steadiness of provisory solutions, which are useful – as Wikipedia is – but at the same time, everyone is opposed because apparently they are not satisfactory enough.

I wish to recommend the next paper to readers who would like to systemize and widen their knowledge about marketing in cyberspace. It relates to the global literature and refers to many own reflections by the author.

The last paper on group work discussing selected screenshots of phpGroupWare, eGroupWare and OpenGroupware may also systemize the knowledge of concerned readers.

Final remarks

The publication fits with the objectives of the entire publishing series, conforms with the latter’s premisses, and is carefully edited. Different papers reflect and develop research avenues of authors from diverse backgrounds and present major technologies within business informatics.

Stanisław Stanek

Bogusława Drelich-Skulska (ed.): PROCESY INTEGRACYJNE W REGIONIE AZJI I PACYFIKU [INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN ASIA-PACIFIC REGION]. WUW 2008, 328 pp.

The region of Southeast Asia and Pacific, as well as the entire Asian continent, have been a key part of the global economy for thousands of years. The linkages among regions in the past used to be as strong as they are today. The position of China has been also similar to what we witness now, with its economic hegemony in the region, occasionally punctuated. However, the awareness of those facts was somewhat absent within the Western culture area. The scientific research has been dealing with that region for a relatively short time, but nevertheless, there is now definite attention of the global science focused on Asia. The role of Asia-Pacific in the global economy has been consistently increasing for a long time, and the dynamic growth of emerging economies has been admired by the whole world, including the scholars for whom it is a very attractive research field.

Scholars in Poland launched their systematic and consistent research into this region even later than elsewhere in the world. One exception is E. Halizak from the University of Warsaw whose team has been carrying out regular studies of the region for a long time, with a focus on political and security issues. Similar is research by K. Gawlikowski from the Polish Academy of Sciences.

However, the topic has been marginal and incidental in the field of economic sciences. The Polish literature of the subject lacked a deeper analysis of causes, conditions, sources and consequences of such a dynamic socio-economic growth in this important subsystem of the global economy. The works carried out in this area by the scientific centre in Gdańsk and by a small group led by K. Starzyk from the Warsaw School of Economics are worth mentioning here.

Ongoing globalization, regionalism and integration processes, the ever increasing internationalization of the Asian economy, the unprecedented dynamic development of the Chinese economy and the growing significance of India stimulated a group of Polish academic economists.

The region of Asia-Pacific (its geographic, political and economic boundaries are defined very differently both in Polish and in foreign literature of subject matter) has become a focus of systematic and deepened studies within economic sciences in Poland for several years.

The most distinctive example, in my view, are many achievements, which are significant nationwide, by the University of Economics in Wrocław. The scientific research by a relatively large team of older and younger scholars (thus guaranteeing continuous studies) from this academic centre, led by B. Drelich-Skulska have diverse forms, namely, doctoral dissertations, conferences on the pertinent issues of the region, participation in scientific projects organized by other academic centres in Poland (whereas presentations by scholars from the Wrocław University of

Economics during various conferences nationwide are very highly evaluated) and abroad, and, finally, many significant publications.

In 2007, the Publishing House of the then Academy of Economics in Wrocław published a collection of papers edited by B. Drelich-Skulska, entitled *Asia-Pacific. An Economic Picture of the Region*. The authors approached economic issues under study on multiple levels, including historical and especially cultural factors which differ so much from the sphere of Western culture. The book is valuable on the merits, makes excellent use of research tools, its language is clear, and it is the first complex publication of this type in Polish literature of the subject matter.

The reviewed book accomplished by the University of Economics in Wrocław, entitled *Integration processes in Asia-Pacific region*, edited by B. Drelich-Skulska, is divided into four parts comprising individual papers ordered, if possible, according to criterion on the merits. Such an idea of the editor is fully justified because it systemizes, at least to some extent, the material provided by twenty-nine authors. The full cohesion of a collection of papers is difficult to achieve. It is completely impossible in the case of conference proceedings.

The titles of the four parts of the book are: Part One: *Specifics of the regional linkages in Asia-Pacific*; Part Two: *Levels and areas of regional cooperation in Asia-Pacific*; Part Three: *Macroeconomic dimension of integration processes in Asia-Pacific*; Part Four: *Social and cultural dimensions of integration processes*.

The individual papers ordered in the above-mentioned four parts of the book are very much differentiated both on the merits and formally, i.e. as regards their size and language. Such heterogeneity of the material presented in the book does not facilitate its evaluation. An integral part of the book is the English summary and most recent list of literature, mainly in English. This is an additional asset of the book.

A significant majority of papers fully deserve a positive assessment. Some of them are original, extremely accurate, very interesting both formally and on the merits, and – which happens seldom in the Polish economic literature, unfortunately – their language is just fine. Such are the papers included in Part Two which is dedicated to levels and areas of regional cooperation in Asia-Pacific, and actually all the papers in Part Three on macroeconomic dimension of integration processes in this region of the world.

I believe it is not accidental. All those papers which deserve the high assessment are mainly authored by academic staff of the University of Economics in Wrocław thus emphasizing a leading role of this academic centre in the research into the economic growth, regionalism and integration in Asia-Pacific.

The papers in Parts Two and Three have been written by authors from the Academy of Economics in Poznań, the Academy of Agriculture in Szczecin and Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń. A paper by S. Domżański from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents very interesting analytics, remarkable arguments, and scores of up-to-date 2008 data, dealing with foreign direct investments in Malaysia.

Also, the following papers are worth mentioning: by I. Pawlas from the Academy of Economics in Katowice (a very insightful analysis of unexplored as yet position of Asia from the viewpoint of transnational corporations functioning in the area of economy and development); by Sz. Mazurek from the University of Economics in Wrocław (a very instructive and logical presentation of the stock exchange in Asia-Pacific); by P. Łyszczak from the same academic centre and with similar merits, dealing with competition for natural energy resources in the basin of South China Sea.

A paper by B. Drelich-Skulska stands out in this part of the book, both as regards professional competence of the author, the way and depth of analysis, significance of conclusions and research tools, size and language. It is dedicated to network linkages of businesses in Asia-Pacific and offers an excellent instructive material of the subject matter.

Part Three of the book contains an outstanding paper by M. Domiter (also from the University of Economics in Wrocław) on Japan's trade policy as the main determinant of its supremacy in the region of Asia-Pacific. Likewise, a paper authored by A. Jankowiak (from the same academic centre) and focused on the economic position of Hong Kong is worth mentioning as its subject matter has been unexplored by the Polish literature so far.

As already mentioned, I also rate highly the authors of all remaining papers which are contained in Part Two and Part Three of the book. Please excuse me that their names are not explicitly specified here.

Likewise, I evaluate most of the papers from Part One of the book as very interesting. Particularly, the papers by scholars from the University of Gdańsk, University of Łódź, the Academy of Economics in Poznań, the University of Economics in Cracow, and the Warsaw School of Economics.

The majority of papers in Part One deal with the ASEAN (i.e. with its diverse component formations) which is the most distinctive integration grouping in Asia-Pacific. The analyses carried out by respective authors and their conclusions are mainly consistent. All emphasize the differentiation of ASEAN member countries, the achievements and barriers for the functioning of this grouping, without radically evaluating it or, in a wider sense, the integration processes in Asia-Pacific.

In my opinion, worth mentioning are the following papers: by M. Pietrasiak from the University of Łódź; by K. Klecha from the University of Economics in Cracow (a matter-of-fact analysis of the so-called East-Asian Growth Area as an example of regional cooperation); by two authors from the University of Gdańsk, i.e. by E. Oziewicz who precisely analysed the theory of new Asian regionalism, and by K. Żołądkiewicz who has been successfully specializing for many years in analysing integration processes in Australia and New Zealand.

On the other hand, I do not quite understand the premises which led to the construction of Part Four dedicated to social and cultural dimensions of integration processes. It is not about the merits of the three papers presented here. They are

valuable and do not give rise to any doubts as regards their subject-matter and formal aspects. However, I believe that their presentation in a separate part of the book is somewhat artificial because the contents of two papers are universal and do not relate just to Asia-Pacific. I mean here the paper entitled “Culture and a consumer in the light of integration processes”, and the one entitled “Social problems of the modern world – dilemmas of environmentalism”. Undoubtedly, the ecological hazards threatening the development of countries in the region are very serious (let us just exemplify the situation of China which has been long surpassed the U.S. as regards the emission of carbon dioxide), but the said paper hardly refers to Asia. The third paper entitled “Japanese *keiretsu* groups in the light of social capital concept”, in my opinion, corresponds very well with another paper situated in Part Two of the book, authored by the book’s editor, B. Drelich-Skulaska, and should have been also located there. In addition, these three articles do not “match” each other. I guess there have been other than scientific reasons to arrange the book.

The relevance and premisses to arrange Part Four of the book, however, are not that much important an issue as the decision on the order of the papers in Part One. Namely, the first paper is entitled “Integration in East Asia – origins, indicators, consequences, perspectives”, and the author’s approach has been very wide, impossible to actually accomplish on just a few pages. When compared to a high scientific level presented by a majority of other papers, this one is analytically weak, arbitrarily introducing topics unrelated to what could be expected from the title, vague theses and assessments, and bizarre language (terms, style). It is hard to acknowledge that the decision to place this paper as the introduction to the whole book was appropriate.

Likewise, the paper entitled “Organizational mechanism of integration processes in Southeast Asia” which is located as the second in Part One, does not match the contents of either the Part One or the entire book. Being a nonspecialist in information technologies I may be lacking competency to assess it, notwithstanding, I do not approve of the methodology applied in this paper. The language of the paper’s title, indiscriminate choice of examples in the second part of the paper aiming at the justification of its relevance to its topic and to the topic of the entire book, terminological inconsistency (including translations), casual and questionable analyses, titles, terms, construction of statistical tables, obsolete data and language cast doubt on whether this paper should be published in this form and located at this position.

By coincidence, the book under review is published during an interesting and important period, which perhaps will be converted into a turning point in world history and the formation of a new world order. We have been seeing the slow descent of a two-polar world with a supremacy of one superpower. A new system of geopolitical forces has been similarly slowly shaping the world with new rules and tools of the political game. In addition to old powers, we have now a score of new countries aiming to occupy significant places in a group of global players in the

emerging system. There are at least two Asian countries among them: China and India (perhaps Japan will overcome the deep economic crisis suffered for a long time and regain its previous economic rank in the region and globally).

Against this background, the political and economic position of Europe (or the European Union) or even of the entire Euro-Atlantic area starts crumbling. According to S. P. Huntington, the civilization of this area and the values of the European Union, although inactive so far, might radically change the rules of the global political and economic game when confronted with other civilizations, in particular with Asian ones, being so dramatically different. Indisputably, the foundations of those rules will be determined by sheer interests and the struggle for the further distribution of resources (exemplified by Africa where the fight for spheres of influence has been going on for some time, and where China has been quite firmly embedded).

Therefore, not only the reviewed book, but also other publications and studies carried out at the University of Economics in Wrocław and at other academic institutions in Poland, focused on politics and economics, in particular on diversity and advancement of integration processes in Asia-Pacific are utterly needed. They contribute to the reduction of the still existing knowledge gap as regards this significant and very sensitive subsystem of global economy and politics.

In order to finally summarize the aspects of yet another reviewed book from the University of Economics in Wrocław, dedicated to economy and integration processes in Asia-Pacific, I wish to emphasize the following assets:

1. Multi-level and interdisciplinary approach to the issues under study, in particular with consideration of cultural factors, which is infrequent in Polish literature.
2. Showing the rank of the region in world economy.
3. Emphasizing and precisely describing the distinction and peculiarity of Asian regionalism.
4. Highlighting the particularity of institutionalization process within integration trends in Asia-Pacific.
5. Stressing the role of China, India and Japan in the region and globally.
6. Trying to compare levels of institutionalization of those processes to conditions under which the European Union is functioning. N. B., it is worth mentioning however, that comparisons do not always lead to the desired scientific goal nor do they guarantee logical conclusions. I believe that it is not always necessary to compare everything, and some things must not be compared.
7. Closing, or at least reducing, a knowledge gap in the subject matter.
8. Providing an excellent teaching material.
9. Up-to-date and relevant statistical data.
10. Recent and carefully selected references (in English and in Polish).

Considering all the above reasons, one may conclude that scholars from the University of Economics in Wrocław definitely lead the research into economy and

social development of Southeast Asia and Pacific, and their rank remains unchallenged.

Krystyna Michałowska-Gorywoda

Małgorzata Domiter: EKSPORT W DOKTRYNIE I POLITYCE GOSPODARCZEJ NA TLE PROCESÓW LIBERALIZACYJNYCH I INTEGRACYJNYCH [EXPORT IN A DOCTRINE AND ECONOMIC POLICY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF LIBERALIZATION AND INTEGRATION PROCESSES]. WUW 2008, 476 pp.

The book deals with analysing the relationships between liberalization and integration processes and the foreign trade theory and policies, including a case of transition economies exemplified by Poland. Thus, it concerns two major processes shaping the modern global economy whose essence and significance have been extensively and credibly evidenced by the world economic literature, while the relationships between them are still seen by researchers as deeply controversial.

The book under review belongs to the second stream as the author makes her point regarding the implications of those relationships for a country's exports and also, conversely, as to how exports would possibly influence them.

Researching these issues is important both for theoretical and practical reasons. The Polish literature is deficient in scientific publications in this area, therefore the book properly responds to the market's needs.

The author took on an original and very complex task which she defined as "an attempt to answer the question whether a trade policy, in particular a pro-export policy, remains an independent thought and concept which underlies the country's development strategy, or whether it becomes hostage of economic needs and solutions from the country's environment (integration, liberalization)" (p. 12-13). Such a definition of the research task by the author reveals her innovativeness in combining theoretical deliberations with real processes, primarily as regards the Polish economy.

Against this background, the author formulates an original thesis of her book as an assertion that liberalization and integration processes result in an actual need to apply the pro-export policy, thus favouring an enhanced economic efficiency accompanied by a growing share in the global division of labour. The thesis, both general and referring to Poland, fully correlates with the theoretical stream of research and with empirical research carried out with data on selected economies, including Poland.

The theses of the book are reflected properly in its structure, thus providing an interesting scientific monograph. It has 475 pages and contains seven chapters, with

an introduction, conclusions, list of tables, list of graphs, annex and list of references. In addition, it has a summary in English. The book is carefully edited and its economic language is correct. The bibliography is extensive, with books, articles, international statistic tables, and so forth.

The first chapter presents the theory of international exchange and against this background, the location of foreign trade in economic policy. The chapter's strength among other things is a good description and evaluation of industrial policy and strategic trade policy. The author refers to the books by P. Krugman, the handbook by A. Budnikowski, T. Rymarzewski and A. Zielińska-Głębocka, and also an earlier work by T. Rymaszeński on the strategic policy of foreign trade. In the next chapter, the author defines the role played by pro-export strategy in economic development whereas the consistent case for a concept of pro-export strategy, occasionally identified – I believe – with economic policy, is a key issue not just for this chapter but also for the entire book.

The next issue addressed by the author is the WTO and its functions in shaping the global system of trade and trade policy. The respective chapter describes the WTO in the context of complex problems resulting from trade liberalization over the entire post-war period and of achievements by GATT in this area. One of the conclusions to this chapter is true as in fact, the 1990s have seen the growing volumes of trade in agreement with the Uruguay Round, however, another conclusion that the World Trade Organization did achieve its goal is arguable if we consider the developments in foreign trade of the current decade. Specifically, the Liberalization Round has failed, and in foreign trade we have recently seen protectionist pressures resulting from the global financial crisis.

Drawing on the first three chapters, the author presents comprehensively the theoretical premises and the relevance of the European integration for shaping trade policy in the EU's common foreign policy.

The next chapter is dominated by real and institutional processes as they occur in Poland's foreign trade. Its merit is an expert presentation of functions of trade policy tools in the process of market transformation of Poland's economy.

Chapter five is then effectively continued by the issues of a pro-export policy. Here, it is particularly worth emphasizing that a widespread analysis of tools of Poland's pro-export policy has been provided which is specially valuable to economic practice.

An excellent generalization of many prior theses is provided by the concluding chapter which is dedicated to a global coordination of trade policies and to its importance for Poland. The author first analyses its mechanisms on a global scale, and then they are referred to Poland.

In summary, the reviewed book represents an undoubtedly valuable and original contribution to studying the theory of global economic relations against the background of liberalization and integration processes, with a special emphasis on their impact on Poland's economy. The book has significant merits, both learning

and applicatory. It is also methodologically sound. Against this background, the author's contribution to the body of knowledge on global economic relations consists in criticism towards existing theories in the field of foreign trade, and also in systemization of existing scientific achievements in the field of trade policy and its exemplification by means of Poland's economy during the transition period.

Kazimierz Starzyk