

Łukasz Haromszeki  
Tadeusz Listwan  
Wrocław University of Economics

## Cultural determinants of the organizational leadership succession – Poland compared to other countries in the world

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### **Preamble**

Analysis of scientific studies and research reports indicate that the organizational leadership succession planning was often executed in family businesses, in which usually the eldest male descendant of the family had to take over leadership of the company. The descriptions involve e.g. Rockefellers' and Fords Dynasty's [D. S. Landes, 2007] show that it usually was not an easy task. It happened that only third generation was as successful as the founders and the former CEOs. There are many reasons for this situation. Even for many years trained a successor could not inherit certain qualities of leadership. Besides, rules instilled them proved often inadequate to the new socio-economic conditions. Finally, an interference the outgoing leader in the actions of his successor could affect his professional development. The history of family businesses also shows other events that led to their downfall. These companies were created by innovators received by coworkers as a charismatic person. Their children didn't have that strength and they only were continuing routine tasks without implementing the necessary modifications. The third generation accustomed to luxury and reluctant to work threw assets away that resulted in a company's bankruptcy [J. Jeżak; 2003].

Larger concerns of succession planning relate to the organizational leadership not connected to ownership of a company or a part thereof. In here, the fundamental question is: if the person, who is not an owner of the company appreciates the investment in its shape and adapts to the requirements of organizational leadership in the company and will be loyal and remain in organization waiting for the planned position for him/her. Besides, if it can actually mold the organizational leader, maybe when he accedes the highest position, it will be shown to be only a first class manager, „craftsman” who will not be perceived by staff as a leader.

**The main objective of this article is to identify and analyze cultural factors influencing organizational leaders and other decision makers responsible for the preparation and implementation process of succession.**

The specific objectives of the article are answers to the questions:

- Is succession a phenomenon not concordant to the requirements of the modern world, or an essential part of HR strategy in modern organizations planning to reduce the risk of operation without a strong and effective leader?
- Is action taken to seek a successor to the President scheduled, based on talent management, process, or just fast reaction in the crisis?

### **Introduction of basic concepts**

If one treats the succession as a multi-step, deliberate and rational process it can be assumed that succession is „*scheduled assumption a certain position by another person, coming from the internal structures of the organization, carried out according to carefully developed succession plans*” [2011]. In the literature there are concepts of internal and external successor, so it needs to be clarified that **in this study the successor is a person employed with the organization, who during the selection or evaluation exposes the potential to occupy the highest positions in the company (including its role as organizational leader)**. In contradistinction to the succession, a staffing is „the process of enlistment a sufficient number of people with appropriate qualifications to vacant positions in the organization. Among the forms of staffing, there are e. g.: internal, open, closed, active, passive, niche, general” [T. Listwan, 2005; pp. 26-27].

For the purposes of this study it was assumed that cultural factors are a specific cultural elements characteristic of different cultures: national, global, regional, organizational shaping the formation of opinions, attitudes and behavior in the planning and implementation process of succession in organizations.

Organizational leadership, you can specify a relationship superordinate with subordinates (or co-workers, depending on the particular type of organizational leadership), aimed at achieving goals - a vision, dreams, plans, values - based on respect and trust the qualifications of the leaders, and often the fascination with him, rational or irrational commitment to the co-created vision of development [Ł. Haromszeki, 2010, p. 40]. There is a difference between the organizational leader and the manager, who does not create a relationship of the organizational leadership, and only carry out the tasks associated with their position within the formal organizational structure consisting of the management of its resources. Managers studies described in the article were the basis to assign the title of the organizational leaders in specific cultural circumstances. **The organizational leadership can exist on different levels and functional areas in the company, but in the article it pertains to CEO position.**

### **The cultural similarities and differences – Poland in the background of selected world cultures**

It can be assumed on the basis of previously conducted studies of various cultures and social organizations that a variety of important cultural elements (particularly value) play a crucial role in shaping opinions, attitudes and behaviors. B. Bjerke accepts, for example, that „*people develop a taste for it, which was accustomed to a certain social situation, gradually further elements of their knowledge are pushed into the unconscious ... the culture is subject to the continued strengthening... what is considered as natural, is often culturally conditioned*“ [B. Bjerke, 2004, p. 279].

Conducted i.a. by C. Kluckhohn [1961] study, also confirmed by other researchers over the last 50 years, shows that we can talk about cultural diversity between national societies and created by their citizens the organizational cultures in the business space.

T. Parsons also have done research on differences in national and regional cultures. He erected the basic conceptual scheme, so-called: system variables used to analyze the different spheres of reality (including the value systems), which included: affective vs. affective-neutrality, self-orientation vs. collectivity orientation, universalism and particularism, achievement vs. ascriptive role behavior, specificity vs. diffuseness [T. Parsons, E. A. Shils, 1962, pp. 47-243, T. Parsons, W. White, 1969, pp. 235-287]. According to T. Parsons in any society are different patterns of institutionalized values, but usually one is dominant. It constitutes the basis for a system of values preached by the majority of the society. Common system of values is in this sense a product of history and

culture. For example, the basic features of American society are determined by the formula: universal-achievement and the structure of traditional Chinese society most similar to the pattern: particular-achievement.

Similar views on the specifics of the American value system presents S. M. Lipset [1961, pp. 136-171; 1966, pp. 161-171], who believes that two fundamental American values are: equality in social relations and achievement in the career of the individual. The system of American values, according to him, is characterized by variables: egalitarianism, achievement, universalism, specificity and individualism. Whereas the British system of values is its opposite, because the characteristic features in it are: elitism, assignment, particularism, diffuseness and community orientation.

Presentation of data on American culture is important for Polish culture, because the cultural ideal of personality traits in Poland promoted in the early nineties of the twentieth century had cultural elements just borrowed from the U.S. It is true that the discrepancy between the promoted ideal personality and basic personality was so considerable that it is difficult in Polish society (outside of the business world) to find a lot of traces of it [J. Polakowska-Kujawa, 1999].

Studies on organizational cultures have been done by E. H. Schein and G. Hofstede. According to E. Schein [1992] - creator of the model for the analysis of organizational culture - culture groups can be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. He and other functionalists treated the organization as natural system that primarily pursues organizational survival by carrying out necessary functions. Organizational culture is viewed as a set of values and assumptions with the function of contributing to organizational survival.

As opposed to the functionalist school, there are researchers who are not interested in the possible relationship between corporate culture and organizational performance. The symbolic school (M. Alvesson, 2002; C. Geertz, 2000; M. Louis, 1985; M. Schultz, 1995; L. Smircich, 1983, 1985) has highlighted aspects that were completely ignored by E. H. Schein and his fellow researchers. This school of thought focused attention on the meanings and symbols that were created in an organization, which held it together, and which needed to be deciphered and interpreted.

G. Hofstede [2000], on the basis of conducted research in an international environment, proposed dimensions of organizational culture such as: power distance, individualism and collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity and masculinity.

B. Bjerke, using the achievements of their predecessors, analyzed five national and regional cultures, pointing to the differences occurring between them. B. Bjerke created the 14 dimensions on which analyzed the American, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Scandinavian cultures. To the dimensions of these qualify: 1. Power distance (small, large), 2. The tendency to avoid uncertainty (small, big), 3. Social orientation (individualistic, collectivist), 4. Approach to time (short-, long-term), 5. Attitude to change (the pursuit of stability, openness to change), 6. Trust in others (a lack of confidence, high level of confidence), 7. Goals (materialistic, idealistic), 8. The attitude to the environment (exploitation, adaptation), 9. The measure of success (self-realization, position in society), 10. Relationships (formal, informal), 11. Troubleshooting (traditional, scientific), 12. The method of governance (democratic, autocratic), 13. Communication (low context, high context), 14. Desirable skills (system, people) [B. Bjerke, 2004, p. 248].

Power distance is small in American Scandinavian cultures, and is characterized mainly by Arab culture (class structure, tribal society, the importance of rank, seniority and status symbols), but also the Chinese (the importance of status and seniority). The Japanese, despite respect for hierarchy and seniority do not pay attention to class, ethnic and religious divisions and involve subordinates in decision-making process within the company [B. Bjerke, 2004, pp. 249-250]. In Poland research showed similar results like in Japanese society – the power distance is average [B. Bjerke, C. Mesjasz, A. Hajdukiewicz, 2004, pp. 301-325].

The tendency to avoid uncertainty is most evident in Japanese culture (the principle of lifetime employment, promotions based on seniority) and Arabic (symbols and formal rules). Chinese are the opposite of the Japanese - they think in a direct, contextual and specific way. Americans and Scandinavians treat uncertainty as something natural. Poles, like Americans, tend to take average risk.

Americans are extremely individualistic. Japanese are extremely collectivist. In the Scandinavian culture, they tend to balance both approaches. Arabic and Chinese culture is collectivist. In China, the dominant collective is the family [B. Bjerke, 2004, pp. 250-251]. According to a study B. Bjerke, C. Mesjasz, A. Hajdukiewicz [2004, pp. 301-325] Poles are individualists. Similar results obtained in their research: F. Trompenaars [1995] G. Hofstede [2000], and the researchers conducting the study for the Talent Club [2008].

There are differences between described cultures in „approach to time”. Japanese culture is most long-term, There are procedures, a long way of promotion and evaluation of the results distributed in time. Arabs and Scandinavians prefer the action at the right time for this, appreciating the

somewhat longer-term approach. Americans are oriented on the future, but they expect the results in the short term. Chinese are flexible and versatile tactics. They think strategically in a lesser extent. Polish business culture is rather short term oriented.

Americans and Scandinavians are oriented to change. Japanese before the change analyze its potential effects. Arabs are opposed to making changes. In Chinese culture, at the same time commitment to the pursuit of stability and change is observed. Poles got on this issue an average score, which placed them between the Chinese and Japanese.

The issue of trust in others – the Japanese, Arabs and Chinese belong to cultures where the lack of trust is the norm. Americans and Scandinavians have a high level of confidence in others – nonconformist behaviors are tolerated. Poles behavior in this issue is between the Eastern and Western business world.

Americans are the most materialistic. Enrichment for them is almost as important as for the Chinese. The Japanese value material success and other needs such as belonging. Arabs manifest their religion in private and professional life. Status symbols are less important for Scandinavians. They value self-restraint. Polish business culture is clearly materialist.

When compared to the environment, Americans and Chinese are very exploitative and inner containment, Japanese, Scandinavians and some Arabs on the contrary. Poles are similarly exploitative as Americans.

The measure of success in the Scandinavian culture is a sense of accomplishment in the environment, obtaining the appropriate competence and the level of expertise. In Chinese culture the most important is the social position and recognition by others. Arab and Japanese cultures are close to approach of the Chinese. Americans, like Scandinavians, are closer to self-realization. Polish business culture rather promotes the pursuit of high social standing than self-realization.

Comparing behavior in interpersonal relationships, Americans are very informal and spontaneous. Scandinavians are not so extroverted, more serious and reserved, but direct and straightforward. They are the opposite to the Japanese - formal, traditional and consistent in dress and behavior. Arabs and Chinese are in between these extremes (they are more formal and expressive than Japanese). Polish business culture is more formalized than the Scandinavian and American culture and less formalized than Asian culture.

Arab culture is dominated by traditional ways of solving problems. In other cultures, new problems are solved by means of logic and scientific methods. Chinese and Japanese cultures are more traditional than the Western cultures. The Polish business problem solving is a combination of traditional and scientific approaches.

Governance is the most democratic in the Scandinavian and American culture. The most autocratic are Chinese and Arab cultures (subordinates appreciate strong organizational leadership). Japanese business culture is rather democratic. In Poland directing people in the organizational sphere is more autocratic [B. Bjerke, C. Mesjasz, A. Hajdukiewicz, 2004, pp. 301-325].

American, Scandinavian and Polish cultures are low context. Asian cultures (compared in the study) are high context (replete of rules, symbols and rituals).

Japanese more than Americans, Scandinavians, Chinese and Arabs appreciate the dependence on people skills. In America, the company is more oriented to control the results than employees' action. In this scope, Scandinavian and Polish culture are closer to Japanese, but Arab culture to American.

In addition, results of the Culture of Leadership Studies conducted in Poland under the Talent Club show that Poles are not attached to the division of tasks to a typical male or female, and they are also reluctant to submit to the supreme power, and make decisions individually rather than collectively [www.talentclub.pl; 2008]. These studies did not confirm the results previously obtained by G. Hofstede [2000] indicating that the culture of Poland is one of the male culture with a strong set of male and female roles. The Extended DISC research [2008] conducted in all sectors shows that the preferred culture of leadership in Poland was feminine. Studies have shown that in the Polish business culture rather low uncertainty avoidance is preferred, and the results of G. Hofstede [2000] characterize Poland as a country with a high power distance, confirmed only in the health sector. Other trades do not approve of too much privilege, is preferred in their equality and flat organizational structures. Results of Culture of Leadership Studies show that the leadership culture occurring in Poland has a lot of similarities with the cultures of Canada, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Great Britain, Ireland. However, it differs from Japanese, Brazilian, French, German, Italian, Singaporean cultures in a great extent.

A. Sitko-Lutek organizational culture studies [A. Sitko-Lutek, 2008] provide some different results. According to A. Sitko-Lutek, Poles are characterized by large power distance, focus on people more than on the task, high uncertainty avoidance, the passive nature of workers and high collectivistic orientation. The perception of Polish culture in the evaluation of Ukrainians, Germans and Britons overwhelmingly confirms the existing cultural values. In the three above mentioned countries, Polish organizational culture is assessed as individualistic [A. Sitko-Lutek, 2008]. This confirms the results obtained by other researchers, but is in contradiction to the diagnosis performed by A. Sitko-Lutek.

The dominant value system in Poland and the specificity of the Polish system of education prompt that the managerial interpersonal (leadership,

communication, negotiation and conflict resolution) and conceptual (creative, forward-thinking) skills are underdeveloped in comparison to the managers of Western Europe and USA [A. K. Kozminski, 2008; J. Mączyński, 2008]. Besides, as stated by J. Mączyński in Polish culture dominate larger business commitment to hierarchy and inflexible organizational structures. The West and North Europe managers are more oriented to achieve, place greater emphasis on setting long-term goals, are more focused on team work. They spend a lot of energy to reduce uncertainty among employees. Polish managers are reluctant to share power, do not deal with subordinates, do not use their intellectual capital. On the other hand, educated British, Americans and Frenchmen learn to work in a team from an early age. They willingly assume calculated risk by taking and delegating difficult tasks and carrying responsibility for them. Unlike men, Polish women are “*more participatory, have a higher regard for their subordinates, are deliberative, sensitive to contact with others, have greater empathy*” [J. Mączyński, 2008].

According to Target’s report prepared in collaboration with Henley Business School in London changing cultural conditions mean that Polish managers are becoming increasingly dynamic in action, hardworking, enterprising, flexible in solving current problems and willing to develop. Unfortunately, factors that inhibit the ability to implement programs of succession to the highest managerial positions in Poland might be having: lack of long-range planning skills, reluctance to innovative solutions that take up a large responsibility, a tendency to autocratic directing style and great devotion to the hierarchical structure [Target, 2009].

### **The selection of organizational leadership in the twenty-first century - the process of succession or ad hoc operation**

As indicated by the C. E. Arnoff and J. L. Ward [2002, pp. 35-36] study, the process of succession in enterprises is the education and preparation of a successor to take over the position. This action does not rely on one-time transfer of knowledge. It is a multistage, long-term implementation of the successor by the organizational leader, who has to be committed and has specific interpersonal skills (including teaching).

Carrying out the succession process should begin at least several years prior to the transfer of position. In the literature there are different concepts describing the steps necessary for the proper preparation of a successor to the highest executive position. Some of them stress the role of primary and secondary socialization, of the person subjected to the process of succession in its social environment [B. E. Cogswell, 1968, pp. 418-421, H. Levinson, 1963,

pp. 69-71]. Other link to the various phases of human resource management - selection of the successor, professional development, transfer of power [S. M. Davies, 1968].

Succession to the position of the organizational leader - a person occupying the highest position in the company, if it took place in different organizations, they were mainly family businesses. I. F. Kesner, T. C. Seboria realized detailed studies in this area [1994, pp. 327-372]. In succession planning in family businesses, in most cultures in the world dominate patriarchal, traditional pattern of inheritance of property and power. Such a situation takes place (according to studies by G. Hofstede, 2000) in countries with higher levels of male domination (MAS index) and higher power distance (PDI index) [Ł. Sulkowski, 2006]. This phenomenon has been confirmed in studies in Mexico [S. M. Davies, 1968, pp. 402-416], in other countries of Latin America [I. Landsberg, E. Perrow, 1991, pp. 127-147] and in China and Japan [B. Wong, S. McReynolds and W. Wong 1992, pp. 355-372]. A similar situation exists in Europe and the U.S. [S.D. Goldberg, B. Woolridge, 1993, pp. 55-73].

M. K. Fiegenger, B. M. Brown, R. A. Prince, K. M. File (1996) compared succession planning in family and non-family firms in North America. Using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), many differences were noted. CEOs of family firms preferred developing personal relations with their successors, and also between the successor and important stakeholders, such as customers and vendors. They were also, contrary to previous suggestions, not inclined to view experience in other firms as important to successor preparation. CEOs of non-family firms preferred external and less personal forms of successor preparation, such as executive development seminars and university-level coursework [M. K. Fiegenger, B. M. Brown, R. A. Prince, K. M. File; 1996, pp. 15-26].

In other companies than family firms also a male was subjected mostly to the process of succession to the highest managerial positions. There are no researches corroborating men higher effectiveness of decision-making than women. This opinion verify also D. Dawley, J. J. Hoffman and A. R. Smith [2004]. The research shows that the successors to the highest positions are often chosen among others on the basis of similarity of experience, gender, race and age of the departing CEOs [M. Frase-Blunt, 2003, pp. 95-98]. This situation, according to the forecasts, may be changed at least in the U.S., because it increases the number of women with higher (bachelor, master, doctoral) education [U.S. Department of Education, 2005].

Interviews with the managers in Poland show that there is reluctance of organizational leaders to provide power, so the succession time is mostly a tardy action, treated as a necessity in being unable to continue working through the

current President [Ł Sulkowski, 2004]. Such a situation occurs also in the U.S., where in Vodafone (2002) and Boeing (2003) companies the sudden departure of CEOs evoked an immediate hunting for the successor. There were selected some of top managers employed in those organizations. Vodafone have begun to develop succession plans since that time [W. Żółcińska, 2006]. Currently, the outgoing because of health reasons CEO – S. Jobs – has prepared a successor to his position [S. Jobs, 2011], not wanting to lead to a situation in which the health of the President causes anxiety about organizational leadership succession, as occurred in companies such as Disney and GE [T. R. King, 1994, W. M. Carley, 1995].

The possibility of implementing the process of succession also depends on the characteristic attributes of organizational leaders. According to the cultural factors shaping mold organizational managers and leaders, J. Sonnenfelt [1991] distinguishes 4 types of outgoing presidents: the monarchs - are not willing to leave voluntarily, the generals - who leave voluntarily, but plan to return to lead the organization, ambassadors - remaining in close relationships with employees after leaving the company, administrators - who are leaving after the scheduled time and taking challenges in the new location.

By analyzing the conditions that may determine the implementation of the succession program in Polish enterprises it should be considered whether the ad hoc selection for the position of president in a situation of demission or dismissal, can still be called a succession? Maybe the action assigned to headhunter companies, involving a candidate selection from outside of organization, is a specific, nonsuccession requirement of the twenty-first century.

Even if the programs of succession appear in organizations, there are still quite often treated as a pattern, not always implemented to achieve and non-integer with other elements of HR strategy. The basic element of the CEO succession program, if it does not have to be the immediate search for a successor in a crisis situation, can be continuously updated talent management implemented within the existing enterprise personnel function. Talent management is defined as: „*a set of actions relating to gifted individuals, undertaken with a view to their development and performance, as well as achieving objectives of the organization*” [T. Listwan, 2005]. Talent management moves beyond succession planning. Although the term has been variously defined, talent management is often defined as a process of „*attracting the best people, developing the best people, and retaining the best people*” [W. J. Rothwell, 2008, pp. 10-16]. It is that threefold, integrated focus that distinguishes talent management from succession planning. Leaderships talents, characterized by potential qualifications, pro-growth attitude and ease of learning can in the process of succession be steered

through the various stages of talent management: activities related to entry into the organization (talent acquisition), transition (in which the transformation takes place – career skills development, competence development), exit (exit talents, but also efforts to detain them in the organization).

Regarding the proposed division [T. Listwan, 2005] of the organizational leadership it can be assumed that in the first stage talents are identified through the use of selected methods (mainly qualitative) according to the updated qualification profile. The second stage realizes the development of talent in accordance with a plan of succession within the personnel strategy of the company. At this stage, the successor shall be subjected to a system of training, coaching and mentoring and this is an opportunity to make decisions within project teams. Phase „detain talent” concerns the person elected to the successors of the organizational leader, it should be to offer attractive motivation and development systems and to attach future successor to the organization during several years preparing him for the CEOs position.

If staff qualifications are a key resource of the organization, qualifications of candidates for organizational leaders should be the most important treasure. During the selection of managers at different levels, it can search for attitudes offering the opportunity for a creative and dynamic leadership the company in the future. Those candidates should be involved in training programs, which can verify their superior and leadership attitudes. Succession planning that develops talent level on the organization chart prepares for more challenging positions at higher levels of responsibility [W. J. Rothwell, 2011].

If the succession is to be real action and an opportunity for leadership success in the future it should include: gaining ownership and commitment from the top; clarifying the work done and the competency requirements for key people or key positions; integrating the performance management system with the work and competency requirements so that people are assessed based on the present expectations for their jobs; clarifying the work to be done in the future and competency requirements that will be needed in the future if the strategy is to be effectively implemented; comparing individual abilities presently to more highly demanding, higher-level work in the future; narrowing developmental gaps through planned action; and evaluating results of the program [W. J. Rothwell, 2010].

J. Beeson research [1998] shows that the discovery of persons who may be subjected to a process of succession does not occur until the middle of their careers, or later. Whether it would be important to have such information before, or the average stage of career development is the moment the most appropriate? Perhaps in this case, it's important to acquire already partly formed talent from outside the organization who during the process of succession will

know the specific of the company and acquire the necessary trust and respect of employees.

Organizations must consider whether they need leaders formed within the organization - who hold the CEOs position for many years or they assume a greater turnover in this position. The article shows a outcomes of research and analysis, which prove the importance of succession on the CEOs position. Other research and projections indicate, however, shortening the period of work as CEO from ten to five years or less (with extreme cases of work several months). The Investing in the future potential organizational leader is a sizable expense, which can never return to the organization. O.R. Cote [2004, pp. 55-68] notes that if organizations are looking for transformation into a more responsible and flexible individual must reckon with an increase in the size of spending on finding potential leaders elected in a system of promotion and succession. An interesting solution might be to integrate the actions taken by the committees of succession (or Supervisory Boards), and created in many companies (including Poland) departments for talent management, because early discovery of talents gives an opportunity to develop a wide range of experience necessary to perform the function at the highest managerial positions [M. W. McCall, 1998]. In the long-term it is easier to carry out the necessary actions in this field like coaching and mentoring, which can determine the success on the CEOs position.

The increasing pace of the business cycle, global competition for resources and customers imply the need to answer the question: Is the changing economic reality a good place for many years taking succession process (even for the most talented candidates for organizational leaders)? Is it possible that the forecasts of Development Dimensions International (2006) will be true and in the next few years, 40-50% of the managers will leave their companies and most of organizations will begin the search for talent and they suddenly will start preparing succession plans [W. Żółcińska, 2006]. Maybe, the answer to the demands of new times is, inter alia, the increasing implementation of succession plans in companies, especially in the U.S. in the last ten years [Anon., 2003; S. Fegley, 2006; W. Żółcińska, 2006; Anon., 2009; S. Collins, 2010, pp.12-13]. But, how research and experience global executive search firms and global training centers show, only half of large organizations have implemented succession plan [D. Lewczuk, M. Szlagor, 2009, pp. 29-34].

In Poland, the succession to the CEOs position is a marginal phenomenon occurring mainly in international concerns. B. Korczyńska (Business Unit Manager in HAYS) provide that there isn't plans of succession even in large joint stock companies, where it placed 3-month notice period in the contract makes the choice of successor rather ad hoc action [W. Żółcińska, 2006]. The

research in international organizations located in Poland [T. Listwan, M. Stor; 2008] shows that only 20% respondents frame plans of the succession (in 26% other companies exist only non-formal plans). Succession plans have been formally drawn up in 37% of organizations coming from North America and 18% of European companies, but they were not constructed in any of the Asian companies (which may arise the lack of trust in foreigners). Non-formal plans execute 12% of U.S, 32% European and 20% Asian companies.

In studies of CEOs career in 500 companies in the U.S. and Europe found that people from inside the company have a better chance of reaching the top position because they have company-specific skills – knowledge of employees, organizational procedures, the company's history and tacit knowledge – the know-how gives the advantage over person from outside. Cited study showed some differences between the U.S. and much of Europe and Eastern Europe (including Poland). In Eastern Europe, researchers were observed a greater commitment and loyalty to the organization then in the other part of study area [M. Hamori, M. Kakaika, 2009, pp. 355-378].

Similar results concerning preferences the choice of successor observed Y. Zhang and N. Rajagopalan [2006, pp. 96-105] in 184 leading research organizations in the U.S. Researchers differentiated three ways to obtain a successor (one of the top managers promotion, competition in the organization, employment of a person from the outside). Their outcomes show that the first way is the best, because the second way can for example cause many conflicts between winner and his competitors, who don't acknowledge his qualifications for this position. Choosing the third way, contrary to ordinary sensations, does not bring new insights into the organization, and lack of knowledge of the organizational culture creates difficulties for the leading company. From Booz Allen Hamilton study arised, however, that firms in crisis, often elect the CEO from outside the organization. Those selected from the outside, according to this study, are successful in the short term (up to 1 year), and those promoted better partake themselves in the long run [W.Żółcińska, 2006].

An opportunity to identify and develop leadership in the Polish property may be the solution conditions observed by A. Mariat [2008, p. 423] in the studied organizations. That company has developed a succession plan involving the creation in each section the three equally important leaders working on three positions: manager, strategist and coordinator. The main tasks of manager, it is to select tactics and control work of the department. Strategist has far-reaching tasks aimed at the development department and identifying the mission, goals and orientations. Coordinator conducts the current control of the acquisition and maintenance of adequate working resources and oversees organizational issues in the department. This form of management, called the System of

Triangles and Boards (STR), provides an opportunity for the implementation of the succession process in the organization through employee development and the possibility of promotion to the next position of coordinator, strategist and manager. If the presented solution does not cause chaos, is an opportunity to observe the properties of leadership in practice.

The way to change the ad hoc actions in a planned, rational, multi-step process of succession is applied in practice counsels for succession committees formulated by the National Association of Corporate Directors. NAOCD recommends that: the Supervisory Board should held regular meetings with the CEO and his Board of Management concern the succession planning and leadership development; have among their official duties inscribed the responsibility for succession to the CEO, was informed about the search for candidates for the new leaders of the company; check whether the succession of committee members are qualified to evaluate the potential of a new CEO. “[W. Żółcińska, 2006].

## Summary

The collected material of foreign studies conducted in different countries and transcultural analysis shows that the multistage process of succession takes place rather in family businesses. In other companies it comes to situational choice of a successor president forced a sudden event, such as resigning from the job, death or termination due to lack of organizational and financial success. This approach means that we no longer have to deal with the succession, but only with the promotion of one of the top managers or employing (mainly by the action of headhunting firms) person from outside the company, who does not know the prevailing organizational culture.

The analysis shows that the greatest effectiveness, identified with the leadership of the organization, accomplish managers subjecting the succession process in the companies, they work for years. In Poland succession plans are mostly in international corporations doing business in Poland. An increasing number of companies with the designated successor of CEO arises more form the turbulent environment (that forces the owners / boards of creating emergency plans) than implementation of multi-step programs of succession.

An interesting issue that will be analyzed in the future (based on a survey of enterprises in Poland) is the selection of persons for the succession. Important research area seems to be a talent management conception.

Probably helpful to decision makers in the selection of people to the process of succession and develop a plan of succession seems to be a tool to identify the properties of leadership suited to the different stages of career development.

Activities based on the use of scientific methods (and not only based on intuition and experience) may improve the selection of people to the process of succession and increase the chances of finding future organizational leaders.

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## Abstract

*The article is an attempt to answer the following questions:*

- whether the twenty-first century economic realities are conditions conducive to the implementation of succession programs, or inconstancy of environment, globalization processes and increase the qualifications of managers is in contradiction with the idea of succession?*
- whether the prevailing conditions of culture in Poland, it is possible to implement the succession process in Polish enterprises?*

*The first part of the article shows a review and an analysis of the Polish business culture in the background of selected world cultures. Cultural factors shaping the organizational leaders and managers and the results of their impact are presented in this section. The next part is a representation of the essence and importance of succession to the position of CEO with regard to shaping her national, regional, global and organizational cultures. There are analyzed research reports and scientific studies in this area. The article ends with the presentation conceptions about the integration of the succession process and talent management, valuation of chances of their implementation in a few predictable environment of the twenty-first century and the announcement of the planned research in this area.*