

## Social Responsibility of Organizations and Temporary Workers. Manifestations and Dilemmas\*

### La responsabilitat social de les organitzacions i els treballadors temporals. Manifestacions i dilemes

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*Nowadays, the popularity of issues relating to social responsibility and business ethics that permeate all spheres of an organization, making it responsible for all of its subsystems, is increasing. Human resources, which is required to be flexible, or, in other words, willing and able to change, seems to be a particularly important issue. The manifestation of flexibility is, therefore, a response to the transformations made in the area of organization, especially in the context of a flexible labor market. In this situation, the emergence of a new category of employee in the organization, namely temporary workers, whose share in the total structure of the workforce is increasingly dominant, forces people to reflect on aspects of corporate social responsibility. On the one hand, the organization must be responsible for the development of appropriate and safe working conditions,*

*Continua creixent la repercussió de temes relacionats amb la responsabilitat social i ètica empresarial, que incumbeix totes les esferes de l'organització i la fan responsable de tots els subsistemes. Els recursos humans vénen a ser la pedra angular davant el desitjat concepte de flexibilitat com a motor de canvi. En conseqüència, la manifestació de flexibilitat representa una resposta a les transformacions pròpies de l'àrea d'organització, especialment en el context de la flexibilització del mercat laboral. En aquest punt, l'aparició dels treballadors temporals, com a nova categoria dintre les organitzacions, i amb una creixent participació numèrica en l'estructura de la força de treball, obliga a ser reflectida en aspectes de la responsabilitat social corporativa. D'una banda, l'organització ha de fer-se responsable del desenvolupament d'unes condicions de treball adequades*

\* The project was financed by The National Science Center granted based on the decision number DEC-2013/09 / B / HS4 / 02722.

*and it must observe high standards and ethical norms as well as promote desirable social patterns. The organization wanting to create a responsible organizational environment should take into account the interests of all its stakeholders and be responsible for its resources, including human resources. On the other hand, there are the dilemmas of whether it is possible to create a responsible and friendly environment for all employees, regardless of the form of employment, and whether temporary workers exhibit similar organizational values to permanent workers, especially in the context of transactional psychological contract. The purpose of the article is the reflection on the organization as a unit responsible for shaping the social subsystem, including answering the question regarding the possibility of being responsible for all categories of workers to the same extent as well as discovering whether temporary workers exhibit organizational values similar to those of permanent staff based on theoretical considerations of the example of Poland.*

**Key words:** CSR, organization, Poland, temporary employee.

*i segures, observant alts estàndards ètics i promovent patrons socials conuenients. L'organització que vulgui crear un entorn organitzatiu responsable ha de tenir en compte a tots els agents implicats i responsabilitzar-se de tots els recursos, incloent-hi els humans. D'altra banda, es presenta un dilema sobre si és possible crear un entorn responsable i amigable per a tots els treballadors, sense tenir en compte la forma de treball. També sobre si els treballadors temporals representen tenir uns valors d'organització similars als treballadors fixos, especialment en el context psicològic del seu contracte. L'objectiu d'aquest article és reflectir un model organitzatiu unitari per tal d'adaptar-se al subsistema laboral, i respondre així a la necessitat d'una responsabilitat igualitària en totes les categories de treballadors. Finalment, exposa, des d'un punt de vista general, si els treballadors temporals ocupen valors organitzatius similars als fixos, basant-se en les consideracions teòriques de l'exemple de Polònia.*

**Paraules clau:** RSC, organització, Polònia, empleats temporals.

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## THE ESSENCE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ORGANIZATIONS – THEORETICAL ASPECTS

The issue of social responsibility of organizations is an area of theoretical and practical reflection undertaken more and more often in the twenty-first century. There are many works that relate this concept to both the organization of the non-profit sector and the economic organizations. Thus, the issue is not new because, as emphasized by Stoner, Freeman and Gilberth, the first mention of corporate social responsibility was published in 1899 in a book called *The Gospel of Wealth* by A.

Carnegie (Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 1998: 112). However, its operationalization was made quickly and it began to be implemented into business practice. The impetus for this was a global economic crisis of the late twenties of the twentieth century, during which the unethical actions of owners of large companies, mainly aimed at maximizing profit in the absence of sufficient interest in the working conditions of their employees, and the indifference to the surrounding environment of the organization was increasingly discussed (Sudoł, 2013: 22). Since then, a number of definitions that try to answer the question of the social responsibility of the organization were developed. This is due to the fact that the boundaries of the concept are blurred and the consequence of this is the lack of development of a universally acceptable definition. The table below presents selected definitions of CSR.

**Table 1. Selected definitions of social responsibility of the organization**

Authors	Definitions of CSR
Bowen, 1953: 6	"the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those directions which are agreed in terms of values and objectives by our society"
Bazzichi, 2003: 496	"this is a voluntary pooling of social and economic issues in commercial activities and relations with stakeholders, who are employees, customers, suppliers, the community in which the company operates, the government and the media"
Werther and Chandler, 2006: 7	"the broad concept that businesses are more than just profit-seeking entities and, therefore, also have an obligation to benefit society"
Davis and R. Blomström, 1975	the responsibility of decision-makers, to take actions that will not only meet their own interests, but also to the protection and enhancement of public wealth

Source: an individual study based on the literature contained in the table.

In contrast, A. Dahlsrud, analyzing 37 definitions of CSR that occur most often in the search engine Google, pointed out the five dimensions that indicate the main components of this concept. These dimensions include: the social, economic, the organization's environment, the one associated with its stakeholders and beneficial (Dahlsrud, 2008: 1-13). They form the basis of this concept and should become a guideline for people taking such actions in the organization.

In 2011, with the publication of a new European strategy for 2011-2014, a new definition of the organization, highlighting the impact of the organization on society, was published to determine the social organization of companies. In addition, the same document shows how the organization should demonstrate respect for the rights and mutual cooperation between all its stakeholders. Moreover, for the full implementation of CSR in organizations, it should be based on social integration with the environment, comply with environmental and ethical issues as well as uphold human and consumers' rights (Mihalache, 2013: 35).

In Poland, however, the concept of CSR is a new phenomenon. This is mainly due to the different socio-economic conditions. Not without significance is the fact that Poland has changed the rules of business only since 1989 (due to the

political transformation). In the first place, the business aimed to maximize profits by reducing social spending. The result was the disappearance of pro-social activities. In addition, the lack of adequate regulation of the market in the nineties encouraged unethical behavior, such as acting to the detriment of workers and state authorities, corruption, bribery and overexploitation of the environment (Teneta-Skwiercz, 2013: 186). The increased interest in this concept in Poland can be observed from the beginning of the twenty-first century, and the increased activity in this area can be attributed to the Polish accession to the European Union. Additionally, the internationalization of many companies and observation of international organizations in the field of compliance with the norms and ethical standards, promoting social values and caring for the local and natural environment influenced the fact that the concept of CSR has begun to gain in popularity. A large role in the dissemination of this concept in Poland is attributed to academic centers and the institutions such as The Polish Chamber of Commerce, Responsible Business Forum, the Academy for Development of Philanthropy or Business Ethics Centre. (Teneta-Skwiercz, 2013: 187). These days, more and more business, public and non-profit organizations familiarize themselves with the basic tenets and principles of implementation of CSR and they reach for the CRS tools. All these activities are aimed at promoting ethical behavior among employees.

The activities centered around the concept of CSR, therefore, mean promoting and disseminating the ethical standards of performance in all areas of the organization, emphasizing the subjectivity of man and their role in shaping the environment involved in compliance with the standards and principles. CSR also regards measures directed at the local community, all stakeholders of the organization and its impact on the improvement of the environment. Activities associated with investing in social infrastructure such as construction of schools or playgrounds are also important. All these activities serve the local community. The organization wishing to become a socially responsible organization should, first of all, obey the law, international norms and standards as well as code of ethics, actively promote the local community, voluntarily respect the ecological and social values, and be responsible for their actions towards employees, consumers and all the people involved in the activities of the organization. These measures should not be one-off, but should be an integral part of the strategy of the organization as only such actions can ensure its survival and growth in the changing conditions.

Such actions aimed at the local community, the natural environment and social infrastructure are related to the external environment of the organization. It should not be forgotten that the activities of the organization focusing on social relations between employees and the entity responsible for their employment are equally important. That is why more and more companies wanting to take care of their market position take care of proper relations with employees. This affects the perception of the overall quality of life of the workers. They are, in fact, one of the most important parties "involved in the life of the organization, having attributes such as power and legitimacy. Thus, they take part in the most important processes for enterprises, such as the provision of adequate resources,

representing their interests to other stakeholders, action on its behalf or sharing their knowledge and skills” (Greenwood, 2007: 315-327 qtd. in Rudnicka, 2012: 141). Therefore, in the context of CSR, research focused on improving employee relations is also undertaken (Glavas and Piderit, 2009). What is more, social responsibility focused on the inner sphere is mandatory, and all the actions taken within it are designed to take care of the best possible functioning of the working environment.

## THE TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE IN THE WORK SITUATION

Along with the progressive processes of globalization, significant changes are occurring in the sphere of employment in the international arena. Temporary workers, replacing mainly permanent employees, are gaining an increasing share of the overall structure of the employment. This situation is associated with an increasing pressure to reduce costs of the current activities and uncertainty of international markets (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2007). In accordance with the concept of “shamrock organization”, these workers are employed part-time, depending on the needs of the organization. They are characterized by skills and competencies that are either easily replaceable or unique and hard to find (Handy, 1991: 87-115). Such employees may be employed by the organization, directed to it through temporary agencies, or as part of employee leasing. In Poland, temporary work was sanctioned in 2003 when a law on the employment of temporary workers was adopted.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages for both the organization and the person carrying out such work has been undertaken. Regardless of the type of entity involved in such employment, for example, a temporary agency, it has many advantages and disadvantages. For the employee, this job is an opportunity to gain work experience, develop their skills and competencies and, as a consequence, gain permanent employment as well as it is the chance for parallel reconciliation of professional and private spheres. In turn, thanks to the employment of temporary workers, the organization may focus on current operations, reduce the cost of operating their own business and it does not have to incur additional costs associated with recruitment and selection.

Nonetheless, the negative consequences of such a model of employment should not be forgotten. Using temporary forms of employment may result in the individual’s insecurity, deferring a decision about marriage and having children and the lack of establishing lasting relationships and ties in the organizational environment. Similarly, for the organization, hiring temporary workers primarily means a high staff turnover, reduced protection of information and reduced employee commitment and loyalty. On the other hand, according to the study conducted by ManpowerGroup (a world leader in innovative workforce solutions)<sup>2</sup> in Poland in 2012, the temporary employee is valuable, committed and loyal. In spite of being in formal employment relationship with the agency, they strongly identify with the employer for whom they work. The main attributes of the temporary worker include:<sup>3</sup>

- the vast majority (69.3% of the respondents) identified with the company for which they work,
- high or very high level of commitment to work (85.9%),
- two-thirds of the respondents (63.9%) are motivated to work for the employer,
- for only 23.4% of the respondents, temporary work is a rewarding form of employment, but for the vast majority of the respondents (61%), it is rather unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory,
- the prospect of direct employment in the company of the employer increases the temporary workers' motivation and commitment to perform the tasks (79%),
- the majority of the temporary workers (60%) noted the differences between their conditions of employment and the conditions of the permanent workers,
- by analyzing the degree of dissatisfaction with the work, two-thirds of the respondents indicated the uncertainty of employment (67.3%), salary (52.7%) and unclear rules of extending temporary employment contracts (41%).

However, as the studies by Davis-Blake, Broschak and George show, very often there are conflicts between managers and temporary workers within the staff environment as well as the use of temporary and contract staff has a negative impact on permanent employees' loyalty (Davis-Blake, Broschak and George, 2003).

## CSR ACTIONS AND TEMPORARY WORKERS – POLISH EXAMPLE

Analyzing the literature on CSR activities of Polish organizations, it may be noted that in the report published by the Responsible Business Forum in 2012 there is an impressive array of good practices undertaken by these organizations for CSR. The reference is made to equal treatment in hiring (gender, age, appearance, nationality or disability), the creation of appropriate conditions for work or ethical practices in human resources policy. This fits in with the cited earlier Article 15 paragraph 1 of the Act on the employment of temporary workers, which states that a temporary employee cannot be treated less favorably in terms of working conditions and other conditions of employment during the period of work for the employer (the user). It is also in line with the EU Directive 2008/104/EC on temporary agency work. It seems, however, that despite the use and presentation of good practices by many companies, they forget to take into account temporary workers in their programs. Analyzing the examples of programs in the field of CSR from the Report "Responsible Business in Poland. Good practices", they usually use the words "obeying ethical principles regarding employee", "CSR activities towards employees", "allowing employees", "integration of employees", "employees as the pillar of the stra-

tegy for sustainable development”, “an incentive program for employees” or “improving the general well-being and satisfaction among employees” (Responsible Business Forum, 2013). Nevertheless, phrases such as “allowing all employees regardless of a type of employment” are very rarely seen in these programs. Perhaps organizations feel that by using the word “employees” they refer to all employees. Therefore, it seems that it should be refined in the process of formulating CSR activities. This is particularly significant because, since the acceptance of temporary employment in Poland, it is a panacea for reducing unemployment and activating young people especially below 25 years of age and older people above 50.

This lack of clarification may result in the situation when temporary workers perceive their own work environment less favorably compared to permanent staff. The main manifestations of such perception could include: indecent (incorrect) wages, mistreatment of workers, poor working conditions, lack of care for the development of both personal and professional skills of employees, ethical rules violations or lack of social facilities. However, many organizations claim that they are socially responsible for their employees regardless of the type of their employment (Rudnicka, 2012: 34).

Nevertheless, as shown by studies associated with temporary work carried out in 2013 by the National Labour Inspectorate, there are still many irregularities. First of all, a temporary worker in Poland provides work for the same company for many years, which means that the agencies routinely exceed the maximum period of temporary work for one employer, that is 18 months. Secondly, more and more temporary work is done on the basis of civil law contracts, even though, in Poland, these should be concluded only in exceptional cases where the occupation does not have the character corresponding to the employment relationship. Finally, in many cases, organizations decide to dismiss salaried employees and hire them again by employment agencies or outsourcing companies (Adamkiewicz, 2013).

In contrast, the studies carried out among persons up to 25 years of age (study sample of 27 persons) by means of an individual questionnaire at the University of Łódź in September and October 2014 suggest that organizations employing temporary workers primarily care about their safety and working conditions. At the same time, the subjects (92%) indicate that the organization in which they work implemented the principles of social responsibility, and 95% of them claim that it adheres to the standards of social responsibility. The respondents also frequently pointed out that their employer: pays fairly (89%), treats them well (87%) and provides good working conditions (85%). Interesting is the fact that only two respondents indicated that the organization in which they work provides additional social care and only one person indicated that they are treated on the same basis as the staff employed on a permanent contract.

The results can be considered as particularly interesting, especially considering the report published by the Responsible Business Forum that presents the best practices of CSR in Poland and which shows up to 260 such practices carried out by 106 companies. These activities have been recognized, inter alia, in the field of the implementation of the code of ethics, the use of employee

volunteering, the implementation of social marketing or ecolabelling (Responsible Business Forum, 2012).

In this place, therefore, the question of the ways in which Polish companies should shape the environment for employees and employee behavior arises. It is quite an important issue, especially taking into consideration the fact that modern relationships between the employee and the organization are based on a different contract, namely a transactional contract. It identifies the worker as an individual who is very flexible and quickly adaptable to the current situation on the labor market. The transactional psychological contract is typical for both permanent and temporary staff and it is associated with a new way of understanding the professional success. In addition, phenomena such as virtualization of roles, confidence in the competence and not the role, multi-tasking, globalization of employment, increased employee mobility and employment density influence the fact that organizations should take care of the environment to promote the principles of social responsibility to a greater extent.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conducted considerations indicate that organizations try to be responsible for their employees. In formulating their programs and guidelines in terms of social responsibility, they do not orient them to the different categories of workers. As a result, some employees may be not aware of the implemented concept of CSR and not comply with it. Significantly, it will only make sense, as Craig Smith from INSEAD asserts, if all employees are involved in it without exception (Miśków, 2014). The organization can achieve it through precise wording of the rules, taking into account all employees regardless of the type of employment, sex, age or nationality. This can be done through the following solutions:

- creating socially responsible initiatives also aimed at temporary workers,
- putting more emphasis on flexicurity,
- introduction of ethical standards in the field of HR.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that although the obtained results show just a fragment associated with the role of corporate social responsibility among temporary workers, some common limitation of the empirical research must be pointed out. First of all, the study sample and its nonrepresentativeness seem problematic. In-depth studies characterized by heterogeneity and representativeness of the surveyed population in terms of distance should, therefore, be carried out. Furthermore, the study took into account only the selected areas of CSR. The above limitation may become an incentive for further work aimed at better understanding of the evolution of CSR among organizations employing temporary workers.



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Law of 9 July 2003 on employing temporary workers (Journal of Laws of 2003 No. 166, item 1608, of 2004 No. 96, item 959).

<sup>2</sup> The aim of the study was to get to know the opinion of temporary workers on their level of motivation and commitment and to examine which of the factors and benefits

used by employers have the greatest impact on the scale of motivation.

<sup>3</sup> Motywacja Pracownika Tymczasowego: wyzwania i korzyści (Temporary Employee Motivation: Challenges and Benefits) <<http://www.manpowergroup.pl/pl/raporty-rynku-pracy/trendy-rynku-pracy.html?year=2013>>.

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