

Leszek Cichobłaziński

Department of Sociology and Psychology of Management  
Częstochowa University of Technology, Poland

# LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE FLATTENING WORLD ON THE EXAMPLE OF COLLECTIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN POLAND

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how flatness and the complexity of a modern economy hinder organisational conflict resolution, and how sometimes these are even the cause of conflict. The detailed research questions focus on the influence of cultural differences in decision-making to resolve labour conflicts, the influence of the flat world effect on the functioning of trade unions in international companies, and the role of conflicts of interest and value in companies operating on a global scale. The discussion is based on qualitative research with the application of case study methodology. The research was carried out using qualitative analysis based on grounded theory methodology. The author presents and discusses mediations held in international enterprises, where the global reach of the company caused significant problems in resolving conflicts between labour unions and management.

**Keywords:** flat world theory, human resources management, mediation in collective disputes, trade unions.

## 1. Introduction

The idea of the flattened world, introduced during the last decade by Thomas L. Friedman in *The World Is Flat* (2005) allows us to describe changes taking place in the modern world that were previously known as globalisation. Friedman identified three stages of *flattening*, which he also calls reduction, and numbered them in a way that is normally associated with computer programmes. Stage one is thus Globalisation 1.0, which began with Christopher Columbus's geographical discoveries and stage two is Globalisation 2.0, which lasted throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The third stage, Globalisation 3.0, began at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and continues today. In some aspects this typology is similar to Alvin Toffler's well-known three waves concept (1980). The first wave was about transforming the hunting society into the agricultural one, the second about the emergence of capitalism, which at its developed stage took the form of industrial production, and the third about the IT revolution. Toffler chose the mode of production as the supreme criterion of demarcation in his conception, while Friedman drew attention primarily to the influence technological changes have on modes of communication and to the unification of economic and social systems. This brought the world to the point encapsulated in Marshall McLuhan's (1962) term *the global village*. McLuhan, who also drew attention to the importance of communication by coining the term 'Gutenberg Galaxy', thought that the introduction of printing led to qualitative changes in civilisation. These changes have accelerated because the transmission of knowledge and information has become much easier and cheaper since Gutenberg's invention. A third observation of McLuhan's, *the medium is the message*, is also important. By this he meant that the medium itself contains a very important message, that is, a form of communication both *is* content and includes content.

McLuhan's insights offer a good description of the changes taking place in the modern world, which Thomas has termed the *flattening world*. The features of this world have an effect on a number of aspects of the economy and society, such as the supply chain, labour and capital flows, but their greatest influence is felt in ways of thinking. In this reading the *flat world* is primarily a state of mind determining the perception of the world and the formation of interpersonal relations. In this way it impacts the value system and, above all, the shaping and formation of identity. Friedman expresses a seeming paradox: Christopher Columbus, who when he discovered America thought he had reached India, provided irrefutable proof that the Earth is round. Yet according to the author of *The World Is Flat*, this incontrovertible demonstration of roundness was the very reason why the world became flattened, which is to say that the traditional hierarchy of values collapsed and even physical reference points, such as *up* and *down*, changed their meaning.

The flatness of the world, including that of capital and the labour market, gives the global economy much greater opportunities compared to those of isolated national economies (Malara 2013, Borowiecki 2011). But there are also negative aspects to this process. First of all, the new human resources management techniques, such as outsourcing or expatriatism,

have created problems of a cultural nature, such as managing multicultural teams of people, working away from the home country, cross-cultural communication and negotiation, and the distance between management centres and the specific company locations where problems have to be solved (Pocztowski 2012). All of this has meant that managers and employees are now facing new problems on an unprecedented scale.

This paper addresses the resolution of collective disputes against the background of the realities of a flat world. The globalised economy has created new difficulties in relations between labour unions and employers. In Friedman's reading the specific problems caused by the flattening of the world are cultural differences, the ease with which an entire company can be transferred to another country and the separation of management (the employer in formal terms) from the function of the trustee of the company's funds, who is often at the other side of the continent. The purpose of this paper is to show how globalisation and the *flattening of the world* influence industrial relations in the particularly sensitive aspect of collective disputes. The empirical section is based on case studies of mediation conducted by the author, who is a mediator in collective disputes on the list of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in the Polish branches of large international companies.

## **2. Collective Disputes in Poland**

The need to regulate labour conflicts in Poland appeared at the beginning of the transformation. The Act on collective disputes, which determined how conflict between labour unions and employers should be resolved, entered into force in 1991. It was designed to civilise industrial relations, but it had to do so in a way that would not endanger the process of transformation and, especially, the privatisation process. For this reason, for example, collective redundancies could not be the subject of a dispute. According to the Act, resolving collective disputes must be carried out according to a defined procedure and mediation is one of the stages. The following procedure for the resolution of collective disputes is offered by way of clarification:

1. Labour unions are to present a list of demands to the employer. The demands can only relate to the issues enumerated by the Act and are as follows: remuneration and working conditions, social benefits, trade union rights and freedoms. From the conflict dynamics point of view, it is extremely important to point out that there is a regulation which allows trade unions to initiate the dispute. Employers have no such power. The initiative

in collective disputes should always come from the employees, while the role and position of the employer is fundamentally a defensive one.

2. The further course of the dispute depends on the employer's response. There are only two scenarios:

- a) positive: all requests are fulfilled,
- b) negative: at least one request is not fulfilled.

3. If the employer's answer is negative the collective dispute (as defined by the Act) begins, and the employer is obliged to report it to the Regional Labour Inspectorate.

4. Negotiations are held in the form of bilateral talks between an employer and labour unions to solve the disputes.

There are four stages of the negotiations:

- accessing the negotiation process (parties to the conflict are familiarised with the other party's standpoint, conditions and the atmosphere of negotiations),

- consolidation: a thorough discussion on the merits of the conflict,

- finalisation: reaching an agreement or lack of an agreement,

- formalisation: signing the protocol of agreement or discrepancies.

5. Mediation – if negotiations have brought a solution to the conflict, the collective dispute comes to an end. If negotiations have not led to an agreement, mediation is the next mandatory step. Mediation is a separate institution and consist of several phases. The type and number of these phases depends on the path chosen by the parties to the dispute, who are given the latitude to proceed in this way by the terms of the Act.

Because mediation is mandatory in labour disputes it differs from that in other disputes, which are voluntary by definition. This ensures that when the parties cannot reach an agreement themselves, they must ask a mediator for help. If a mediator is not summoned any further action taken in the dispute, such as a strike, is illegal.

The idea of mediation in collective disputes is to solve labour conflicts in a controlled way. Mediation obliges the parties to use all possible means to find an amicable solution before the intensity of the conflict assumes proportions that make a strike inevitable (Cichobłaziński 2013).

### **3. Theoretical Assumptions**

The *flat world* is one of the most important concepts explaining and describing the processes in play in the modern world. It should be emphasised that the phenomena described by Friedman and the processes

of multi-level links between different subsystems of the global economic system are occurring particularly rapidly in the post-communist economies. Countries whose economies operated continuously under free market conditions entered the phase of globalisation and the flattening of the world gradually and relatively mildly, whereas the economies of the former Soviet bloc have been subjected to these processes much more rapidly. Having to function for nearly half a century under central management and with very limited global economic relations (in some periods these relations were almost completely severed) meant that their integration with the global marketplace of goods, services, capital and labour was extremely difficult. Their later inclusion in international economic cooperation has raised a number of previously unknown problems, one of which was the need to cooperate with international companies whose organisational culture was sometimes very different from what Polish employees were accustomed to<sup>1</sup>. It must be said that foreign companies do not pay attention to Polish culture and Polish historical experience. The case of Daewoo, which took over the Passenger Car Factory (FSO) in Żerań, Warsaw in the 1990s, offers the best evidence of this. The Korean leadership could not be dissuaded from displaying portraits of the most deserving employees, which the Poles associated with heroes of socialist labour, nor from starting work with a group gymnastics session (Jończyk 2009, p. 161). To the consternation of their Korean employers, the Polish workers simply laughed at these ideas.

The habits acquired by Polish workers under the centrally managed system are no longer such a big problem. Nevertheless, the ideas put forward by Daewoo would still not find favour with Polish employees today. Relationships in the labour market, including in the sphere of consciousness, have changed significantly after almost a quarter of a century operating under a free market. Unemployment, which in principle did not exist in the centrally managed economy (but not everywhere), has also had an influence on this process. In regions that have lost their only industry or company unemployment is structural and has brought about demoralisation.

Another theoretical approach informing this paper is that of the *risk society*, which was introduced by Ulrich Beck to describe the state of the economy and society. Decision makers are faced not only by high risks but also by an inability to estimate them (Beck 2012, p. 18). In *The Risk Society* (2006, p. 331) Ulrich Beck describes possible reactions to risk: “To the extent that risk is experienced as omnipresent, there are only three possible

<sup>1</sup> These problems are well described by Joanna Jończyk (2009).

reactions: denial, apathy or transformation. The first is largely inscribed in modern culture, the second resembles post-modern nihilism and the third is the ‘cosmopolitan moment’ of world risk society. And that is what I am going to talk about.” The third reaction involves a far more complex set of challenges for managers in their main function, which is decision making. It is here that the risk resulting from the flattened world has a very significant influence on management.

There is, however, one more perspective from which to analyse the phenomenon of the *flat world* and the uncertainty that it brings with it. I will call it the cognitive perspective. It has been well described by Radosław Sojak (2013), who pointed to the problems he had in selecting and organising incoming information when attempting to describe the complexity and diversity of the contemporary world and society. Modern man has no adequate tools with which to structure the outer world and often has difficulty finding a proper perspective from which to cognise himself.

This problem has been described by Zygmunt Bauman, who argues that the suffering of modern humans is caused by the lack of a coherent system of values. A diverse and globalised society cannot provide such a system, which means that every time we make a decision we do so “at our own risk”. Yet Bauman is positive about this state of affairs because he claims that the suffering caused by the lack of a system of values is better than that caused by the belief in such a system (2000b, p. 11). He also claims that tolerance should be the guiding social virtue. It is, however, difficult to agree with this standpoint. Tolerance pays its role as long as conflicting interests do not appear. When they do appear, the lack of a common system of values causes problems in resolving them.

It is the need to make decisions that previously seemed obvious (because you simply “don’t act this way”) that makes all values and aspirations appear in the same area – because there are “no distinctions in reasoning”, as Zbigniew Herbert aptly put it in his famous poem *The Power of Taste* (1985). It is the erosion of systems of values that makes decision-making a particularly difficult thing to do in an era that Bauman refers to as *liquid modernity*: “Fluids travel easily. They ‘flow’, ‘spill’, ‘run out’, ‘splash’, ‘pour over’, ‘leak’, ‘flood’, ‘spray’, ‘drip’, ‘seep’, ‘ooze’; unlike solids, they are not easily stopped – they pass around some obstacles, dissolve some others and bore or soak their way through others still. From the meeting with solids they emerge unscathed, while the solids they have met, if they stay solid, are changed – get moist or drenched. The extraordinary mobility of fluids

is what associates them with the idea of 'lightness'. There are liquids which, cubic inch for cubic inch, are heavier than many solids, but we are inclined nonetheless to visualize them all as lighter, less 'weighty' than everything solid. We associate 'lightness' or 'weightlessness' with mobility and inconstancy: we know from practice that the lighter we travel the easier and faster we move. These are some reasons to consider 'fluidity' or 'liquidity' as fitting metaphors when we wish to grasp the nature of the present in many ways *novel*, phase in the history of modernity" (Bauman 2000a, p. 2).

Such an understanding of the fluidity of contemporary societies makes it easier to exceed all limits, both in spatial and mental terms, so that mobility becomes their most important feature. In this context only the processes become real. Everything is in a constant state of becoming. Process-based approaches as a theoretical concept describing and explaining contemporary reality are displaced by structural approaches. Permanent rules and standards would seem to be completely irrelevant in this world, for which the liquidity encompassing it becomes the most adequate metaphor. Referring to a metaphor drawn from literature, it can be said that "being becomes unbearably light" (Kundera 1984), which means that even though the need for fixed values is so far from being satisfied in the contemporary postmodern world, it is now even more present.

It should be emphasised that process-based approaches and structural approaches that rest on a traditional understanding do not have to be mutually exclusive. Here, Karol Wojtyła's anthropological concept of man, in which existence is understood as a process of becoming-towards and as being in a particular direction, is a good example (Wojtyła 1978). This subject, however, is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

#### **4. Subject and Method of Analysis**

The subject will be mediation conducted by the author in collective disputes at international companies with their branches in Poland, which will be analysed by the case study method. In this instance, therefore, the author combines the roles of main informant and analyst, which goes against the strictly interpreted principles of case study methodology. However, the merging of roles may be justified in this particular case. The author has access to accurate records, and in some cases audio records, of the course of the mediation, which renders the collection and analysis of the qualitative data a good deal more objective. The following data were analysed by the case study method:

- 1) mediation at an Italian company operating in the automotive industry,
- 2) mediation at an American company operating in the automotive industry,
- 3) mediation at a German company operating in the energy industry (construction and renovation of machinery and power installations).

The sessions were conducted between 2006 and 2012. All of the above companies operate on the global market and have branches on all continents except Australia.

The purpose of the analysis is neither to present the whole course of the collective dispute nor to consider the role of mediation in these conflicts. The author will focus on those aspects of conflict resolution that relate to processes referred to as *the effect of a flattened world*. This largely concerns the internationalisation and global scale of operations of the companies where the disputes took place.

## 5. Analysis

### *Case I*

Mediation at an Italian car component manufacturer employing approximately 1000 people at its two Polish factories. The conflict arose when CNC operators (Computerised Numerical Control), who are highly qualified personnel trained at the company's Italian headquarters, demanded a pay increase. The HR manager is Polish, while the other managers are Italians. The chief negotiator with the board of the company in the dispute travelled to Poland from Italy. As the automotive market was then prospering, the company was in good financial shape. The CNC operators wanted a fair (in their opinion) distribution of the profits they earned for the company.

In this dispute the employer stated that production could be transferred to China if the union's demands were too high (in the employer's view). The employer used this argument to present his BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement). A favourable BATNA demonstrates negotiating power and is used for Framing in the process of influencing the other parties. Framing and BATNA are the key elements in the strategy and tactics of negotiation. The option to transfer production to places where you can find cheaper labour is one of the main features of the *flat world*. It is an argument regularly used by employers in negotiations with labour unions and is often, but not always, an effective one. In this case, the union members knew their BATNA as well. It turned out that, due to the experience they acquired when



training in Italy and to their relationships with trade unions operating in the company's Western branches, they were in possession of relevant information that they could exploit to good effect in negotiations with their employer. The author would like to point out two of the elements presented by the trade unions:

1. The high level of self-esteem of Polish employees resulting from the opportunity they had had to compare themselves with Italian employees during an internship at the company's headquarters. This chiefly concerns high versatility. The Italian employees were accustomed to act according to a formula, which meant, for example, that they would wait for a specialised service engineer even for the smallest malfunctions. The Polish employees, meanwhile, were able to remove many minor defects themselves. They were also able to appreciate the skills they had acquired in Poland, which they found equalled those of employees who had gained their qualifications at Western branches of the company. This meant that arguments such as "you earn less than the employees in the West because you are not as good as they are" were unconvincing. The Polish employees could see that they outdid their Western colleagues in terms of education and precision and were far better when it came to creativity and problem-solving. This awareness helped them greatly when holding negotiations with the Italian employer.

2. The Polish workers were well informed about the problems the company had with low production quality at its factories in China. Yet defective components were not the biggest problem as low labour costs offset the losses incurred in having to increase quality control. The main problem was machinery failure – especially that of CNC machine tools. These losses were never cancelled out by low labour costs.

3. Another element the unions used in the negotiations was the fact that the company had started to build a new production hall in Poland, which was immediately adjacent to the existing one. The unions argued that if the company had really wanted to move production to China, they would not have been investing in Poland.

These arguments made it possible for the union to shift its perspective on the conflict and on the possible ways of solving it. In the language of negotiation this procedure is known as Reframing. From the point of view of arguments 2 and 3 above the announcement of the possible transfer of production from Poland to China was a bluff. This example demonstrates how global processes affect the solutions that are found to local problems, which in this case was a labour dispute in a relatively small Polish branch of a global company. The parties to the dispute finally reached an agreement.

The employer was prepared to seek an amicable solution and the threat of transferring production quickly proved to have been a negotiating tactic. For their part, the employees were aware of the limitations imposed by the company's global scale of operations and so reduced their demands during mediation.

### *Case II*

The second case concerned a large US company which is also operating in the automotive industry. It has four branches in Poland. The branch we are concerned with employs approximately 600 people. The impact of *the flattened world* in this dispute was not felt in the negotiation strategies and tactics used by the parties to the conflict, but related rather to the cause of the conflict. It was not its main cause – only an additional one – but it showed how the effect of *the flattened world* can cause conflicts. The issue was a prosaic one about whether employees could make tea and coffee during designated breaks. The employees had access to electric kettles on the premises and could bring their own tea and coffee to work. However, there had been an accident in one of the company's branches on the other side of the globe. One of the workers had accidentally spilled boiling water on himself when brewing coffee and had sued the company for compensation. Fearing similar litigation, the company withdrew electric kettles from all of its branches around the world, which they replaced with vending machines for coffee and tea. In that way the company had sought to minimise the risk of similar accidents. The matter seems a trivial one, yet the Polish employees found the global company's change of policy incomprehensible. They interpreted it as an attempt by the company to limit their freedom – now the only source of tea and coffee was from the vending machines. More than that, the ritual aspects of making their own tea and coffee at lunchtime, when employees can offer and receive drinks, had now been removed. The employees could not understand why they had to be subjected to such a far-reaching standardisation of behaviour – one that even extended to breaks in their own time. In a country where the memory of a centrally controlled system is still alive measures such as this are associated with totalitarianism. The fact that one person on the other side of the world had made inept use of a kettle, had had an accident and had then sued the employer, did not hold sway with the Polish workers. It was no explanation. In their opinion, an employee who had done something like that would simply be ridiculed: *no one would even think of suing the company.*

This case demonstrates how important it is to take account of local characteristics when solving problems on a global scale and how ineffective the outcomes can be if this aspect is neglected. An attitude like this can also be the source of completely unnecessary conflicts. The interplay between the global and the local in this case shows that cultural differences can place limitations on the process of “flattening of the world”. These cultural factors are gaining in importance in the flat world and are bringing cross-cultural management (Capell *et al.* 1994) cross-cultural communication and dispute resolution (Goh 2005) into ever sharper focus.

### *Case III*

The third case involved a German company operating in the energy sector (construction and renovation of machinery and power installations) that has two branches in Poland. The branch concerned employs approximately 200 people. The cause of the collective dispute was pay. However, the phenomenon of the flattened world was present in a different way in this particular case. The biggest problem in this mediation was that the Polish management, which was representing the company in the dispute, had to consult all of their decisions with the top management tier at company headquarters abroad. The main problem was thus the ease and speed with which decisions could be made by the lower tier management at the local level and whether the local tier could shift responsibility to the top tier to gain advantage in the dispute. The employer tried to exert pressure on the employees by stating that the dispute had to be finished before an important meeting with the top-tier management of the whole group. It was a rare case in which an employer was willing to finish mediation fast – even if this meant no agreement. In general, employers try to prolong disputes because as long as mediation is in progress there is no risk the employees will go on strike. In this case the trade unions felt that not all of the issues had been clarified and that there was thus no reason to end mediation. In the first case we saw that managers either came to Poland from Italy with the authority to take decisions or else took part in mediation via videoconferencing. In the case of the German power company, however, the employer did not take advantage of this solution. For this reason it was not possible to determine to what extent the pressure to reach a swift conclusion was justified and to what extent it was only a negotiating tactic.

This case demonstrated how the complex ownership and management structures of large international companies can influence the resolution of collective disputes. According to Polish law, the manager of the Polish

branch is the employer. Usually, though, the people with the authority to make decisions are based abroad. Employers may attempt to take advantage of this dual structure of authority to exert time pressure, as in this case, or to delay taking decisions.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

It is justified in summing up the theoretical and empirical sections of the paper to state that HR management in *the flattening world* is encountering serious difficulties due to cultural diversity and discrepancies (Nogalski & Szpitter 2012). There are a number of ways in which they can be overcome, but the most common solution, imposing the culture of the organisation and sourcing from company headquarters, is also the easiest one. At first sight the purpose of these measures appears to be to seek analogies and similarities, but they often end with ignorance of the nature of a local culture. The best example of this kind of mechanism in our case study was presented by the American company, which introduced an order that can be termed “the Pax Americana” in its branches around the world. The cases presented in the theoretical part point to similar trends in companies from the Far East, that is, Korean ones, for whom the term “Pax Asiana” rather than “Pax Americana” should be applied. This solution, which is rather like flattening the world of organisation by steamroller, would appear to be flawed, as it is a cause of numerous conflicts. What should be pursued in its stead is a policy of diversity management with a dual focus on finding similarities (company mission) and preserving cultural diversity. If we use the following definition: “Diversity management refers to the voluntary organisational actions that are designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organisational structures through deliberate policies and programs” (Mor Barak 2011, p. 235), then the American and Korean cases we have examined are an exact denial of this understanding.

The case of the Italian company illustrates the potential benefits of transferring certain elements of the organisational culture of one country to another. The Italian employer, for example, had a deeper cultural rapport with the labour unions when compared to Polish managers, who had a hostile attitude to them. This can be explained by the longer history of the market economy in Italy and in other Western countries. That the countries of Central Europe set out on this path only 25 years ago may provide one explanation of the differences here.

The case of the German company revealed the mechanisms by which complex ownership and organisational structures hinder decision-making at local branches. The flattening of markets for labour and for goods and services has outpaced the organisational flattening (whose main strand is legal flattening).

The phenomenon of the flat world has particular consequences from the perspective of conflict management and resolution. On one hand, it may cause severe tension and conflicts, as the number of problems in communication, systems of values and customs multiplies. On the other hand, in the flat world almost everyone is “on the road” and therefore no one is at home. Almost everyone is a newcomer and almost everyone is looking for reference points to locate cultural and civilisational meaning. In his well-known book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), Thomas Friedman argued that countries with branches of McDonald’s do not go to war with each other. McDonald’s signage, which is installed on high pylons rather like church towers, has become a reference point in countries of various cultures and traditions. The implication is that if McDonald’s decides to operate restaurants there, a country is at an appropriate level of development for the company. It is worth recalling here the celebration at the opening of the first McDonald’s in Warsaw, whose importance ranked with that of Poland’s accession to the European Union or to NATO. The credibility of Friedman’s hypothesis was brief. It was reduced to charred ashes in 1999 when the United States bombed Serbia. McDonald’s restaurants were operating in both countries.

The relationship between the flat world and the outbreak of conflicts is thus more complex than that observed by Friedman in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. Moving from the macro scale to the micro scale, or from international relations to those in enterprises, it should be noted that the influence of the flat world effect is as complex as that in international relations. In this particular case we should distinguish two levels of analysis. The first is the level of conflicts of interests, which are the most common cause of collective disputes in companies. The second is the cultural sphere, in which conflicts, as illustrated by the Daewoo case or the seemingly insignificant “cup of tea” issue, are much more difficult to solve. There may be a serious role for trade unions at both levels (Pulignano & Doerflinger 2013). Most collective disputes, however, concern conflicts of interest, which are easier to settle than conflicts of values. Christopher Moore explained it quite well with his concept of the *wheel of conflict* (1996). In the case of

collective disputes in international companies attention should be paid to the following issues:

1. Conflicts between trade unions and employees may be intense, but if the company has resources to distribute then cultural differences fade into the background.

2. If managers consider local cultural specifics and systems of values then they can protect the company from unnecessary conflicts. In calculating that conflicts only arise based on conflicts of interests and not on conflicts of values, managers tend to underestimate the cultural dimension.

3. The extension of the decision-making chain due to the geographical remoteness of the headquarters from the branches may be the source of many conflicts. Employees may use certain negotiating techniques which allow them to shift responsibility to a company's central management to resolve conflicts. According to Polish law, however, this level of management is not the employer when it is abroad.

4. The flat world effect concerns both employers and employees. The way trade unions function is also subject to the process of the flattening world. Unions working in different branches communicate with each other and share information. This means that their perception of conflicts is broader than employers might think.

5. This knowledge of how other branches function significantly improves the bargaining power of trade unions. Employers often underestimate this fact.

## Bibliography

- Bauman, Z. (2000a) *Liquid Modernity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bauman, Z. (2000b) *Ponowoczesność jako źródło cierpień* [Postmodernity and its discontents]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sic!
- Beck, U. (2006) "Living in the World Risk Society". A Hobhouse Memorial Public Lecture given on Wednesday 15 February 2006 at the London School of Economics. *Economy and Society* 35 (3): 329–45, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03085140600844902>.
- Beck, U. (2012) *Spółczesność światowego ryzyka. W poszukiwaniu utraconego bezpieczeństwa* [World risk society]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Borowiecki, R. (2011) "Przedsiębiorstwo w obliczu wyzwań współczesnej gospodarki" [Business in the face of contemporary economy]. *Nierówności społeczne a wzrost gospodarczy. Uwarunkowania sprawnego działania w przedsiębiorstwie i regionie*. 20: 5–15.

- Capell, B., Canhilal, K. S., Alas, R., Sommer, L. and Ossenkop, C. (1994) "Mapping Values in Old vs New Members of the European Union: A Comparative Analysis of Public Sector Cultures". *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 20 (4): 503–27, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCM-02-2013-0030>.
- Cichobłaziński, L. (2013) "Resolving Collective Disputes in Poland: A Narrative Perspective" in A. P. Müller and L. Becker (eds) *Narrative and Innovation. New Ideas for Business Administration, Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Goh, B. C. (2005) "Ideas of Peace and Cross-cultural Dispute Resolution". *Bond Law Review* 17 (1), <http://epublications.bond.edu.au/blr/vol17/iss1/3>, date of access: 19 March 2014.
- Friedman, T. L. (1999) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree. Understanding Globalization*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005) *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Herbert, Z. (1985) "The Power of Taste" in *Report from the Besieged City*. New York: Ecco Press.
- Jończyk, J. (2009) "Koncepcja kultury organizacyjnej" [The concept of organisational culture] in W. Matwiejczuk (ed.) *Koncepcja i metody zarządzania* [The concept and methods of management]. Białystok: Białystok Polytechnic Press.
- Kundera, M. (1984) *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Malara, Z. (2013) *Przedsiębiorstwo w globalnej gospodarce. Wyzwania współczesności* [Business in the global economy. Contemporary challenges]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- McLuhan, M. (2011/1962) *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Mor Barak, M. E. (2011) *Managing Diversity. Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Moore, Ch. (1996) *The Mediation Process. Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Nogalski, B and Szpitter, A. (2012) "Kultura organizacyjna w zarządzaniu organizacją wielokulturową" [Organisational culture in the management of a multicultural organisation] in B. Mikuła (ed.) *Historia i perspektywy nauk o zarządzaniu* [History and future of management studies]. Kraków: Kraków University of Economics Foundation.
- Pocztowski, A. (2012) *Zarządzanie misjami zagranicznymi. Organizacyjne i indywidualne aspekty pracy expatriantów* [Foreign missions management. Organisational and individual aspects of the work of expatriates]. Warsaw: Wolters Kluwer.
- Pulignano, V. and Doerflinger, N. (2013) "A Head with Two Tales: Trade Unions' Influence on Temporary Agency Work in Belgian and German Workplaces". *The International Journal of Human Resources Management* 24 (22): 4149–65, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.845446>.
- Sojak, R. (2013) "Socjologiczny syndrom Münchhausena? Różnorodność w praktyce i teorii" [Sociology suffering from Munchausen syndrome? Diversity in theory and practice]. Paper to the plenary session entitled "Socjologia wobec złożoności współczesnego świata" [Sociology and the complexity of the modern world]. 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Polish Sociological Association, Szczecin, 11–14 September.

- Toffler, A. (1980) *The Third Wave. The Classic Study of Tomorrow*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Wojtyła, K. (1979) "The Acting Person: A Contribution to Phenomenological Anthropology". *Analecta Husserliana. The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research*, Vol. X. Dordrecht: Reidel.

## **Abstract**

### **Relacje pracownicze w „płaskim świecie” na przykładzie rozwiązywania sporów zbiorowych – przypadki polskie**

Celem prezentowanego artykułu jest ukazanie, w jaki sposób „spłaszczenie” i złożoność nowoczesnej gospodarki wpływają na rozwiązywanie konfliktów organizacyjnych, a nawet na jakiej zasadzie mogą stać się ich przyczynami. Badania koncentrują się na wpływie różnic kulturowych na podejmowanie decyzji podczas rozwiązywania konfliktów pracowniczych oraz na wpływie „spłaszczonego świata” na funkcjonowanie związków zawodowych w międzynarodowych firmach, jak również na roli konfliktu interesów i wartości w przedsiębiorstwach działających w globalnej skali. Opracowanie opiera się na badaniach jakościowych z zastosowaniem metody *case study* w ramach metodologii teorii ugruntowanej. Analizie zostały poddane mediacje prowadzone w międzynarodowych przedsiębiorstwach, których globalny zasięg powodował poważne problemy w rozwiązywaniu konfliktów między związkami zawodowymi i ich zarządem.

**Słowa kluczowe:** teoria płaskiego świata, zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi, mediacje w sporach zbiorowych, związki zawodowe.