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TURNOVER MODELS FOR IT SPECIALISTS

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Abstract. The article discusses results of research on turnover among IT workers and indicates that the general frame of reference based on satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mobley model) creates a barrier for managerial and scientific understanding of turnover. Based on our qualitative research among IT professionals working in the financial services sectors in Poland in 2011, the standard patterns of turnover for IT workers in Poland are presented. Results are compared to the patterns of turnover identified basing on research done on Indian IT specialists. It is argued that motive-driven turnover patterns of IT specialists are determined by IT workers' motive profile and by social conditions on labour markets, rather than by cultural differences.

Keywords: IT specialist; turnover; models of turnover; IT workers; information technologies.

Jel classification: L86; L84; J63; M15; M12; M54

1. Introduction

Turnover of IT professionals remains one of the most persistent challenges facing organizations. Over consecutive years it has been mentioned as a first or second priority among issues which IT directors have to face (Agrawal *et al*. 2006). Yet the phenomenon of rotation is still not clearly understood. A meta-analysis (Hom *et al*. 1992) showed the prognostic value of current models to be low, and has been the impulse to seek new theoretical approaches and new interpretations of the framework within which all rotation research is conducted. This framework (March, Simon 1964) sees intention to leave to be the effect of two factors – ease with which the change can be made and desire to do so. This article proposes a different approach to the issue of job rotation among IT specialists, and discusses the specific rotation patterns in this environment. The empirical bases for our model are two qualitative studies – the authors' own research (the study, which focuses on motivation, was conducted from early 2011. It had two components – qualitative (questionnaires), and biographical interviews to give qualitative data. The results of these interviews allowed us to formulate generalizations concerning rotation patterns in Poland. Agrawal *et al*. (in print) describe the research methodology used in Indian studies. The rotation patterns we present below are our own analyses, based on descriptions from this work. Sections 3 and 5 are based on a Polish article (Łubieńska, Woźniak in print) and some fragments are translated without using quotation marks), conducted in Poland on a group of IT specialists developing software for financial institutions, and the results of research conducted by the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore by a team led by M.N. Agrawal.

The text is organized as follows. The first part presents an analysis of literature on the subject of turnover models, and the specifics of research carried out on the rotation of IT specialists. Basing on these results, we will propose a program for researching turnover, which focuses on context-based research on patterns of turnover that are caused by different drivers. Next we will describe initial results of studies on turnover patterns observed in Indian and Polish IT professionals conducted within the framework of this model. We conclude with generalizations concerning rotation patterns for the specific group of IT specialists.

2. General turnover models

In turnover studies, researchers focus on employees who quit voluntarily (the latest research into the differences between voluntary fluctuation and discharge by employer's returns to analyzing the functionality of dismissal. Analyses of call centers show that voluntary and total fluctuations are highly correlated (Batt *et al*. 2011). Our article is only concerned with voluntary rotation, hence when using the terms quitting, dismissal, etc. on their own, we are speaking of job termination on the

employee's initiative (i.e. voluntarily)), treating this as a greater threat to the interests of an enterprise, as the unpredictable rotation of good (results have shown that the rotation index is highest for best and worst employees (Steel *et al.* 2002)) employees is harmful.

March and Simon's theory (1964) are commonly accepted as the basis for thinking about turnover. This approach considers rotation to depend on two factors: the perceived ease with which the move to change jobs can be made, and the strength of the desire to change jobs.

From a managerial point of view, to decrease rotation of good workers the company needs to focus on curtailing forces that support changes of employers, as control over the latter is greater. This is why research has concentrated on this issue. The "desire to change work" variable is operationalized similarly by many researchers as factors responsible for decreased job satisfaction (Swider *et al.* 2011). This approach focuses on studying factors preceding the intention to quit (the intention is treated as the index for de facto rotation), and can be divided into emotional, cognitive or behavioral factors (Steel, Lounsbury 2009).

Most frequently researched are two emotional factors used in building Mobley's model: job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mobley *et al.* 1979). Since the beginning of research on organizational commitment it has been noted that this factor is a better predictor of the intention to quit than job satisfaction. Other emotional factors responsible for bonding employees with the company and preventing them from developing the intention to quit, are also sought. Numerous emotional variables that describe an employee's bond with the company have been researched: identification with the enterprise, value consistency (Maetrz, Griffeth 2004), but also a sense of obligation to an employer who behaves in a fair manner (keeping promises and abiding by psychological contracts) (Maetrz, Griffeth 2004).

In Mobley's classic 1979 model (Mobley et al. 1979), intention to quit is determined by only two emotional factors, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which correlate with the intention to quit at 0.42 and 0.31 respectively (Michaels, Spector 1982). Other factors used in this model precede the two emotional measures; their list is long and currently includes: expectations prior to employment (correlation with work satisfaction 0.23); five characteristics from the Job Characteristic Theory (correlation with work satisfaction 0.18 and organizational commitment 0.22); and relationship with direct superior (work satisfaction 0.45 and organizational involvement 0.23) (Michaels, Spector 1982). Such a model explains about 18% of turnover variability that is the result of intention to quit (Michaels, Spector 1982).

The second group comprises cognitive factors. In Hom-Griffeth's model turnover is directly related to comparing alternatives and thoughts about withdrawing (and the latter variable is determined by job satisfaction and whether requirements of the professional role are in conflict) (Hom, Kinicki 2001).

Studies of conditions determining the ease with which the move to change jobs can be made (March and Simon's second variable) are less well developed. It has been noted that the value of the alternative must take into consideration factors that increase the attractiveness of one's current job, but also the costs of quitting it (comprehended as investments and benefits which cannot be carried over to the new job). The measure of an individual's embeddedness in his/her current job (Mitchell *et al.* 2001) refers to the importance of all the bonds that counteract quitting by increasing its costs – from workplace loans to be returned, through losing the occasion to replace a superior who is to retire next year, losing colleagues, right up to emotional losses such as losing a pretty view out of the window or stable morning routines.

Job embeddedness theory (Mitchell *et al.* 2001) attempts to describe the reasons for which dissatisfied employees do not leave their jobs. The theory shows that behavioral indices of a lack of satisfaction, such as actively seeking and comparing job offers, will be a good prognostic for turnover only in the case of some employees (Swider *et al.* 2011).

The Unfolding Model of Turnover (Lee, Mitchell 1994) develops on the above economic theory, stating that employees' quitting behavior is not always based on a rational analysis of benefits and costs. The authors draw attention to another decision path (beside the rational, economic one) – the individual makes the decision to leave on the basis of a single event (shock). This event violates personal values and sense of integrity to such an extent that s/he quits regardless of any cognitive analysis of situation, job offers on the market or satisfaction with the current job.

These two complementary models show the limitations of the mainstream approach, which argues that a low level of satisfaction with work in the given company is the fundamental force behind an individual's decision to quit their current job.

This research on turnover shows some of its limitations. Firstly, apart from models of job turnover for nurses, research focuses on developing models predicting the intention to quit (as a stan-

dard index of quitting) for "typical" employees. These models do not take into consideration specific values or conditions in the place of work and hence may not be accurate for various professional groups. Secondly, they concentrate on predicting rotation (although their prognostic value is low, as concluded in a meta-analysis from 1992), and not on understanding sources of motivations and processes (Maertz, Griffeth 2004). Obviously the motivation for quitting and the course the decision takes will vary depending on context and specific personal situation. When the event is unacceptable (the case of "shock" – group layoffs, hostile takeover of the company, or an attack of fury on the part of a superior), these will be different than if the move to quit is planned ahead (e.g. when a partner reaches retirement age or after a child is born), and different yet again when an "ideal job offer" has been received. If we have three professionals, one who is a sole breadwinner will react differently to unjust treatment by a superior than one who is not a sole breadwinner, or one who is experiencing work-leisure conflict (who is for instance planning a three-month mountain trek).

If models of rotation are to be empirically-based descriptions of typical patterns of voluntary resignation from work, they should be tied to the values employees espouse, the standard ways in which they are treated at work, and job opportunities they currently have on the market. Even if we were to create a universal list of criteria which an employee may use to assess his current job, representatives of different professions will focus on different criteria. This may be because all the other criteria are commonly met (all employers treat them in a similar manner), or else because from a motivational perspective these criteria are significant (and the remainder are indifferent).

3. Results of research into factors favouring turnover of IT professionals

In one of the oldest review articles on the specifics of IT specialist management, Bartol and Martin noted that job satisfaction is valuable for predicting IT worker fluctuation (1982). The author stresses that although emotional factors (such as organizational involvement) were helpful for predicting various aspects of job satisfaction, most significantly correlated with job satisfaction were such organizational variables as professional remuneration systems (whether respondents consider that professional criteria are used for distributing rewards in the organization) and tenure. Perceiving the remuneration system to be based on professional criteria and length (negatively) of work experience are better indicators of resigning than emotional variables.

This result can be interpreted as specific for the IT professional group. Rotation in this group is determined for the most part by the breaking of promises related to substantive criteria (the only just rules for rewarding). Of course this does not mean that IT specialists will not leave an employer if they are denied the right to independent and autonomous problem solving work (Beecham *et al.* 2008; Sharp *et al.* 2009), but minimum hygienic conditions are most probably met by all employers (Łubieńska, Woźniak 2011) and their effect on rotation is imperceptible.

Meritocracy, a significant value for IT specialists, is frequently emphasized in the literature (Kunda 2006, Jemielniak 2008; Postuła 2010; Łubieńska, Woźniak 2011). From the perspective of fluctuation theory, not respecting this value may be interpreted in the terms of shock – this sets in motion a decision to quit which is not based on economic analyses of gains or losses. The second factor Bartol and Martin drawed attention to – work experience – can be explained by March and Simon's model. Older IT specialists frequently have difficulties in finding a new job as the job market considers their competencies to be outdated. Research indicates that lower job satisfaction is characteristic of older IT specialists (despite an opposite tendency in the general population), and a decrease in perceived alternatives to one's current job is related to longer job experience (Joseph *et al.* 2007), which is also contrary to the general opinion that intellectual capital increases with work experience. This suggests that competencies and experience become outdated far more quickly among IT specialists than in the population at large.

A recent review article on IT turnover (Joseph *et al.* 2007) notes that later studies (the authors found 51 publications describing factors that affect turnover in IT specialists. Out of these, 26 were included in a statistical meta-analysis and 33 were used in a narrative analysis. 18 conference papers were excluded; as they were first versions of later publications (Joseph *et al.* 2007) have focused above all on the intention to quit. We know from elsewhere that, in the general population, the predictive value for turnover of the intention to quit is in reality fairly low (Hom *et al.*'s meta-analysis (1992) yields a figure of 0.36), but there are no similar studies of IT specialists.

43 factors favouring IT specialists' intention to quit have been found (Joseph *et al.* 2007). Among these, part are common to all professional groups, but some are specific – e.g., boundary-spanning activities, work experience (in the job or in the

profession), and outdated professional competencies (Joseph *et al.* 2007).

A model based on this meta-analysis, using March and Simon's categorization of variables, and placing them into two groups (ease of making a move and desire for change), showed the following to be correlated with job satisfaction (desire for change):

- four preceding variables: role conflict (-0.44), lack of role clarity (-0.42), job quality (0.08), boundary-spanning activities (0.11);
- one organizational variable (remuneration – 0.37) ; and
- two demographic variables (age: -0.21; gender: 0.30).

Perceiving alternatives to currently performed work was influenced by education (-0.18) and (as mentioned above) remuneration (0.39), age (-0.1), and promotion opportunities (0.15).

Additional variables were found to directly influence intention to quit (i.e., unmediated by March and Simon's two variables). Salary (-0.61), promotion opportunities (-0.63), role conflict (0.13), job quality (-0.14) and education (0.57) were correlated with intention to quit.

This model indicates several significant variables which influence patterns of job termination by IT specialists. Consistently with the results of earlier research, the model emphasizes that a policy of high wages is fairly effective in preventing rotation among IT specialists (Agrawal *et al.* 2006; Schulz *et al.* 2008). Despite a common and justified belief that financial remuneration has a low influence on the motivation of knowledge workers (Bartol, Martin 1982; Beecham *et al.* 2008; Sharp *et al.* 2009; Wallgren, Hanse 2011; Woźniak 2010), offering higher wages and bonuses for remaining on the job for an agreed upon period has turned out to be an effective strategy in recruitment and retention practice (Schulz *et al.* 2008). Continuing the job does not however guarantee involvement in it; in this case comparative justice concerning wage value is a highly demotivating factor (Bartol, Martin 1982; Beecham *et al.* 2008; Woźniak 2010).

The feeling that you are making a career in the organization is another factor that strongly affects job satisfaction, although in the light of IT specialists' unwillingness to take on managerial posts, it may seem surprising that the presence of promotion opportunities can inhibit a tendency to quit the job (Jemielniak 2008; Łubieńska, Woźniak 2011). We may interpret this result either as a readiness to remain among others who are interested in similar career paths, or as consenting to a career for the wage increase it promises.

Quitting (or at least the intention to quit) is strongly favoured by conflict and ambiguities within the professional role. Role conflict has frequently been described as a factor responsible for causing stress, the long-term effects of which (if it is intense) may be burnout. Long working hours and an excess of work, which stand in the way of a normal non-professional life (at least during peak times), lead to conflict between meeting the expectations of professional role and other roles important from the perspective of identification – between work and home, or between work and pleasure-related activities (such as sport or meeting friends) (Zhao, Rashid 2010). Research based on respondent declarations seems to show that the work-home conflict affects the intention to leave above all when mediated by work-related exhaustion (Ahuja *et al.* 2007). Work-related exhaustion is in particular the effect of feeling overwhelmed by an excess of tasks (Ahuja *et al.* 2007), or having insufficient material or human resources to deal with the task (Moore 2000). It has been found that work-related exhaustion significantly decreases organizational involvement. Moreover, a model using only "work-related exhaustion" and "organizational involvement" as preceding variables helped explain almost half of the variability of the intention to quit in IT specialists working outside their hometowns (spending 4 nights in the week at clients for whom they administer systems) (Ahuja *et al.* 2007).

4. Is it necessary to research turnover patterns characteristic of IT specialists?

As is the case with general research into resigning from work, models explaining IT specialist fluctuation rarely focus on the specific employment features of the group studied. The diversity of IT professions (Łubieńska, Woźniak 2012) and forms in which their work is organized allow us to expect that at least the dominant stressors will differ between different situations.

With the high emotional involvement of IT specialists in the results of their work (Glen 2003), the situational effect of the same level of subjective overwork on job satisfaction will be dependent on the social environment, especially on the substantive and psychological support that colleagues and superiors offer in the workplace. With the workload equal, work environments that favour involvement will have a lower job rotation than those with an unfavourable climate. Measures of job involvement – a team characteristic which, when high, decreases turnover – are sought so that organizations can create supportive work environments, which in

turn decrease the negative effects of high expectations (Harter *et al.* 2009). The trend to develop universal models of a motivating work environment for IT specialists (Glen 2003; Łubieńska, Woźniak 2011) suggests that IT worker motivational profiles are sufficiently similar for us to consider seeking analogous similarities in motives for quitting – those leave, whose employers have not provided them with items considered requisite by the professional environment. Such reasoning however has its limitations – rational employers fulfill most of their employees' "natural" expectations. We should expect quitting patterns to be related not only to the specifics of the IT profession (the values they are particularly sensitive to), but also to the typical ways they are treated by their rationally-oriented employers. On different markets, companies choose different rational strategies of dealing with employees, which will lead to different patterns of quitting work caused by different events. The main requirements of a given employee group will most probably be respected in a fairly consistent manner, however the range of personnel-related policies on a varied market is broad and companies will differ as to style of treating employees. This signifies that IT rotation patterns will be differentiated depending on the conditions of a given job market; therefore analyzing the details of motives and paths IT specialists take requires taking into account the specifics of the local job market, and not only a universal pattern of IT workers' needs. We attempt to give grounds for this thesis below, referring to data from two significantly different IT job markets – in India and in Poland.

5. Resignation in IT specialists – Polish and Indian patterns

The Indian IT sector is responsible for 26 % of India's exports, and its value has increased five-fold over the past 10 years (Agrawal *et al*, in print). Following offshoring trends at the beginning of the 21st century, IT multinationals started to create their own branches in India. At the same time local companies started opening, frequently run by employees who had developed managerial and client-orientation skills while working for multinationals. There is a constant lack of qualified labour on the Indian employee market and companies develop extensive HR systems to recruit new employees and retain those they have recruited. At the same time the stress on lowering costs and cost flexibility results in contract-type employment, especially in the case of jobs which do not require high qualifications. Although abilities of young IT specialists in India are very high, the strong segmentation of types of work and development possibilities these provide leads in effect to a strong differentiation in employee competencies. A second factor characterizing the IT labour market is that salaries are highly differentiated. The market puts constant pressure on employers to increase salaries. At the same time, there are positions within a company which require employees to spend several months at a time in the client's country (mainly the US), which lets them put away a significant sum at the cost of being separated from their families.

Another feature of IT companies in India is that the turnover index is high and employees are unwilling to take on managerial positions (Agrawal 1999; Agrawal, Thite 2003).

The following patterns of job termination are characteristic of Indian IT specialists (Agrawal *et al.* in print, unless stated otherwise):

Model 1. Blind alley jobs:

- the project offers no new learning possibilities (routine work),
- promises are broken (the job was to be only temporary, or a more interesting job was offered and the promise not kept),
- status cannot be changed from contract worker to full employment (contract workers do not have the privileges of the employed; but repeated contract prolongation also leads to a loss of qualifications (the contract work is usually less demanding) and if contract workers have little chance of developing new skills, they lose the possibility of going to work in the US).

Model 2. Professional ambitions cannot be realized in the work environment (competent work according to the standards of the profession is impossible):

- carrying out tasks for which you are unprepared and do not have the right skills,
- the team is insufficiently prepared (lacks information, skills) and cannot carry out its tasks,
- excessive workload impedes thoroughness or accuracy at work.

Model 3. Technocrats as team managers (weak managers):

- bad relationships with managers,
- input and effort are not appreciated,
- insufficient suport from superiors.

Model 4. Salary:

- receiving a significantly better offer of a job,
- unclear criteria for access to jobs abroad.

Model 5. Entrepreneurship and self employment (Agrawal 1999):

- having a business idea and a network of client and colleague contacts,
- client-related competencies can be developed as there is a strong foundation of technical knowledge and network of colleagues.

Each of these five quitting patterns has its specific sequence and for each of them, management practices that prevent the employee from quitting will differ. In model 1 an increasing lack of satisfaction is accompanied by the expectation that the promise will be kept "in a moment". This scenario is therefore of a conditional nature: "If they don't start keeping their promises by the end of the next quarter, I'm leaving". This is accompanied by an active probing of the job market, especially towards the end of the "conditional period". Lower job satisfaction however only decreases involvement in everyday tasks, but has no effect on the decision itself or the time it is implemented. It is usually enough to take note of this pattern and renegotiate the promise, to prevent quitting.

Model 2 is usually associated with steep decreases in job satisfaction and may fairly easily lead to uncontrolled job termination, with no search for alternatives on the job market. Employees may wish to leave quickly, out of fear of being dismissed for shoddy work, or out of shame for work which does not meet their standards. Remaining in such conditions must lead to cynicism and burnout. Management needs to implement training of new competencies, and set precise standards of work quality and control them. Otherwise, employees will lose faith that this workplace is theirs out of choice (organizational involvement decreases) and will probably take on any job offer they come across (superficial surveys are made of the job market).

In model 3 job satisfaction on the dimension of relations with superiors is permanently low. There is a periodic threat of "shock" – employees leave without any analysis of alternatives as they feel that fundamental values are endangered (e.g. they feel humiliated by what a manager said). We should expect periodically intensified research of the job market, elicited by specific behaviors on the part of the manager, if other aspects of the work itself or the team do not provoke discontent. Employee satisfaction indicators are a sufficient source of information concerning whether any interventions (e.g. dividing up the project into several tasks, or changing teams after its termination) are necessary.

In model 4 the employee will quit after receiving a far better job offer. If this situation is diagnosed in time, the employer should – in principle – be able to negotiate a contract comparable to the competitor's, or draw attention to additional advantages s/he offers and which may have escaped the employee's attention in the course of comparing proposals. We should not expect signals of an emotional nature (the satisfaction level will remain stable).

Model 5 is an attempt to build one's future around a business idea. It begins with a group of friends who combine several resources: technical skills, contacts with potential clients, interpersonal skills necessary for sales and contacting clients, and finally the insight that they can start up a business on their own. The decision to embark on the risky career of an entrepreneur is usually preceded by an attempt to interest one's mother company with the new idea, or an attempt to set right the way in which the company meets the needs of its clients. Companies could use these two kinds of signals of the beginnings of innovative thinking to incorporate rebellious professionals into their own structures. On both these paths job dissatisfaction appears late or not at all, but indices of organizational involvement appear early on and are evidence of a lowered assent to how the company functions on an everyday basis.

These five models of employees voluntarily resigning from work evince – which is worthy of note – the relatively weak significance of variables related to balance between personal and professional life. Apart from the inconvenience of working abroad, long working hours and periodic pile ups are considered an intrinsic aspect of being an IT specialist – the costs of a prestigious professional role (which allows you to provide for your family according to upper middle class standards). A prestigious professional role is primarily associated with the expectation (personal and social) that professional development takes place within the role, rather than through advancing to a managerial position. Within this second role, technical skills – over which the specialist has greater control, having developed them over the years – are no longer a guarantee of security. Their place is taken by less predictable managerial competencies, which have to be developed at the cost of losing contact with constantly advancing technical knowledge. In effect, this changeover is a threat to a secure social position, if by chance one meets with failure.

The Polish IT market features different characteristics. Companies work mainly for the local market and have local clients. Distances within the country are small, so even longer working visits at clients let you keep in touch with your family on a more or less ongoing basis. Knowing the sector the company works in lets you predict the kinds of tasks to be performed, so a

potential candidate knows in advance what competencies will most probably be useful and developed in the course of work on a project. At the same time the job market is far more difficult than in India, although there is still practically no unemployment in the IT sector (especially among young people). Employers also expect a higher level of IT education, so employees with typical competencies are ready relatively soon to develop specialist skills for the job at hand. Common for both the Polish and Indian markets, however, is the exodus of trained professionals abroad, despite the smaller salary differences in the case of Polish IT specialists.

Qualitative research has revealed the following patterns of IT professionals resigning from work in Poland:

Model 1. The offer of a far better job:

- receiving the offer of a better job via informal channels – more secure, more prestigious, with more interesting technical problems requiring to be solved and, usually, much higher remuneration.

Model 2. Loss of will to work in the given team:

- conflicts with colleagues and superiors,
- feeling unable to deal with tasks that are one's responsibility,
- subjective feeling that authentic IT work in this team is impossible, which refers especially to working on projects in a way the employee terms "honest",
- a sense of increasing and insolvable conflict between work and other important life roles (family, care for parents).

Model 3. A feeling that the job does not provide the expected level of material security:

- higher financial needs due to increased family,
- unfulfilled expectation that other sources of income generation can be retained,
- career path differing from the one planned.

Model 1 is a typical shock-type model – an unplanned event changes the employee's situation regardless of previous job satisfaction.

Model 2 typifies the slow decrease of job satisfaction resulting from various sources – both the technical side of the job, as relations with others or with clients. Even if a single event does suddenly decrease job satisfaction, the relatively difficult job market and need to maintain family income on a stable level stand in the way of change (two-salary families in Poland live on a level requiring a steady flow of income). In this model, quitting one's job is always preceded by an analysis of the job market, comparing job offers and judicious choices (following rational decision models).

Model 3 refers to the case when a sense of increasing financial insecurity forces the employee to start researching the job market, despite satisfaction with his or her current job and workplace. This insecurity may have been caused by a partner losing their job; the growing costs of servicing credits (over 700 000 people In Poland (mostly professionals) have credits in Swiss francs); or it being impossible to reconcile one's current work with additional income-generating activities. Such a situation may lead to increasing job dissatisfaction caused by overwork, or by the inability to reconcile conflicting roles the employee must function in to support his or her family. We should expect a cursory research of the job market, with a rapid decision to take on an offer which either is financially superior or provides free time for additional paid work.

6. Conclusions

The article's goal is to take the latest tools for employee turnover analysis (Maertz, Campion 2004; Lee et al. 2008) and apply them to a specific segment of the job market – to IT specialists. It describes the varied theoretical approaches in turnover research and conclusions specific for analyzing the IT sector. It observes that theories of employee fluctuation described to date focus – with small exceptions – on developing universal models of quitting work, without giving consideration to the particulars of a specific profession or specific local market. We have formulated a general thesis that the specific way employees of a given branch are treated on the local job market should be mirrored in quitting patterns (motives and decision processes) that are characteristic of employees in this branch. We verified this hypothesis on two different IT job markets – the Indian and the Polish. Basing on a series of qualitative studies (Agrawal 1999; Agrawal and Thite 2003; Agrawal *et al.* in print), the article describes patterns of quitting work that may be observed among employees of the IT sector in India. Our own research has served to describe patterns observed on the Polish IT market. The differences in patterns can be an argument for the thesis that separate models should be developed for different professional groups embedded in different sectors of the economy, and an invitation for conducting further research. A necessary supplement to our research program are analogous qualitative studies with the use of data from other labour markets, and quantitative attempts to verify the prevalence of fluctuation patterns. It may turn out that a similarity of quitting

patterns on different markets does not rule out significant differences in their frequency.

It should be emphasized that, although the results described are based on qualitative data and hence constitute weak evidence for the prevalence of such patterns, the greatest limitation of our research is the IT segment, from which respondents were recruited. In Poland studies were conducted on IT specialists employed mainly in the financial sector, i.e. a sector of the economy which is relatively unthreatened by unemployment now and in the future, and whose products are relatively large and innovative. The need to service products even when technologies used to develop them become outdated stabilizes the job market. We may therefore state that in this sector, the threat of competencies becoming obsolete is less of a risk for individual career paths than in other sectors (such as that of computer game development). In a sense, respondents in the Indian studies were of a similar kind – they were employed in large and stable IT enterprises, earning a larger part of their income through offshore services and applying modern HR tools. The sense of threat that competencies may become obsolete was stronger than among Polish IT specialists, which may be the effect of younger age rather than of the market situation. Further research conducted on more differentiated segments of the market should help verify what effect the specifics of these groups have on rotation patterns.

The research has shown patterns which do not seem to be related to national culture, but rather to specific economic relationships on the product market and the situation in concrete segments of the job market (employee or employer markets). We may interpret this result as a step in the direction postulated by Joseph *et al.* (2007), but further research is needed to verify our hypotheses concerning glocalization, i.e. on how superficial is the influence of national cultures on the functioning – in this case – of professional cultures.

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