

# (REVISITING) ALLOMORPHISMS IN CORPORATIONS AND HRM IN INFORMATIONAL SOCIETY

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## Abstract

The informational society is not innocuous for corporations and organizations. The assortment of allomorphic phenomenon that are taking place in corporations and on the implicit human resources management (i.e. persons) cannot set aside any indifference among entrepreneurs, workers or social partners. The corporation's frameworks, the structure and performance, the person's management, the labour relations and other new dimensions are analyzed on the present paper, trying to preview some tendencies. We make an attempt to shape the behaviors and forthcoming procedures of the social actors in order to forecast the management and the labour, with the certainty that the uncertainty is part of the future.

**Key-words:** *informational society; allomorphisms; changing; trends; organizations; corporations; globalization.*

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## Introduction

Seven years after the publication in late 2011 of “ Allomorphisms in Corporations and in Human Resources Management (HRM) in Informational Society” (Santos, 2011), as a Working Paper in Portuguese language, the speed of transformations and societal changes nowadays implies a review of that paper and its conversion into a contemporary article.

In that working paper (Santos, 2011), the allomorphy<sup>2</sup>, when applied to organizational frameworks, means the passage from one setup to another, without change the intrinsic value or significance. Therefore, in this framework, despite the tendency on management models and legal basis, the nature (or essence) of an organization does not change accordingly, nor does adulterate its symbolic-analytical meaningfulness (Ferreira, 2008).

The word “tendency” is defined in any thesaurus as an inclination towards a particular characteristic or type of behaviour. Understood as this, a tendency is not a trend or mode; is not the most frequent observation. A trend comes and goes and sooner or later will be replaced by other one. It is a natural organization; it is not compulsory (Caetano and Tavares, 2000). It is a propensity that organizational structures (i.e. firms, organizations) tend to jointly adopt a particular practice of working to handle with a new environment (Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011).

In the other hand there is the concept of “change”. Some dictionaries define this word as the act of transform or convert; to modify or to pass gradually into other thing. Until the 60’s this meaning of change was used exclusively in scientific frameworks. Currently is much more than only a concept, but it takes a meaning linked to the current socioeconomic paradigm, characterized by new industrial relations and new productive system, where flexibility in the main guideline (Jennings and Seaman, 1994; Marković, 2008).

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<sup>2</sup> Allomorphy is a word widely used in linguistics, geology and biology. It is defined as a change from one format to another one, without changing its core value or meaning. Therefore, contains two related concepts: change and tendency.

Despite the makeovers associated to the concept of change, the word “innovation” is nowadays used to describe what has been called “change” some decades ago (Rodrigues et al., 2004). In this analysis there are also the concepts of “change” and “innovation”. Both terms combine the factors that, in different historical frames, guarantee the capacity of economies to face external and internal constraints and limitations (European Commission, 2011).

The concept of innovation was proposed by Schumpeter (1934). This author identified innovation as the critical dimension of any economic change and argued that any economic change turns around innovation, entrepreneurial actions, and market control. He argued that innovation-originated market power can deliver better results than simple price competition. He discussed that technological innovation regularly produces temporary monopolies, allowing atypical profits that would soon be competed away by rivals and imitators. These temporary monopolies were essential to provide incentive for businesses to develop new products and processes. In the other hand, the European Commission (1995) argues that in a neoclassical economic theory framework, innovation was considered essentially as a technical change. According Schreyögg and Sydow (2011), innovation was understood as a change drive essentially towards the development of new production equipment and technical procedures.

However all innovations imply changes, but not all changes are innovative.

So, a change implies making either an essential difference often amounting to a loss of original identity or a substitution of one thing for another. In economic standings, a change can be defined as a process (and a way) to achieve entrepreneurial or organizational accomplishments, which goes through problem solving in a new way and encompassing the different aspects of management (technical, social and economic, organizational profiles and sociocultural perspectives).

Considered in this framework an enterprise is an “organizational compound”, made of workers, material and technological resources,

relations between individuals and groups and worldwide contexts. It is established by successions of strategic and operational decisions (Jennings, and Seaman, 1994) without changing the successive processes or its essence and aims.

Given these arguments and starting from the situation “before”, we try in this paper to gather the general and universal allomorphic phenomena that enterprises and human resources management could (or already can) face in the informational society.

## **1. Conceptual Framework**

The academic (and common sense) attempt to define the present society in which we find ourselves, has been the subject of countless studies and publications and has supported many academic analyses and journalistic interpretations.

Fourth Industrial Revolution? Information Age? Post-industrial Era? Knowledge Society? Informational Society? Several concepts are proposed in the extensive bibliography related to the subject. Perhaps it is because the definition itself has not yet stabilized, or perhaps because we do not yet have enough historical distance to typify this spatial-temporal setting. Or, perhaps, because is indeed a multi-paradigmatic and multi-dimensional Era. However, according to a significant number of authors the bibliography presents the expression: information society. Nevertheless, all definitions seem to be insufficient to display a clear-cut and complete description. According Castells (1996, 2009) the concept of “informational society” highlights the role of information and its tides in society. Nevertheless, the author postulates that information in a broader sense (e.g. the communication of knowledge) has been the critical point in all societies. In fact, the term “informational” indicates the attribute of a specific arrangement of social organization in which information production, processing and transmission (or flow) becomes the main source of productivity and power (Jensen and Sandström, 2011 ).

The informational economy is global (Castells, 1996, 2009). Thus, we consider that the word “informational society” clearly describes the period that we are currently experiencing because it includes the new technical-economic paradigm(s). It also covers (macro) changes that have occurred with: a) the beginning of electronics and the easiness of information dissemination (e.g. Internet, network technologies, mobiles, artificial intelligence); b) the nonstop findings in life technologies (e.g. genetic engineering, biotechnology); c) the spreading of networking work and structures, as well as d) the integration and interconnection of business structures (within a new business logic). In short, this society is characterized by the process of complexification (Kovács, 2002) in an attempt to de-complexification of the human being daily life.

The technological breakthrough of the 70s escorted a number of multilevel challenges to which companies are now facing off, mostly with several kinds of uncertainties: market segmentation and instability, intensified by threats of financial fragility (Esposito, 2011) global market competition (Jensen and Sandström, 2011), needs to improve strategies and structures flexibility (s) (Dolan, 2016; Forrester, 2016; Kovács and Chagas Lopes, 2010), human resources management (Boyer and Freyssenet, 1994; Castells, 1996, 2009; Chesnais, 2001; European Commission, 2011; Kovács, 2002; Santos, 2015; Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011) and the natural path of evolution and organizational development (Mintzberg, 1989; Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011).

In addition to the challenges, companies face new requirements: costs efficiency, better design and product quality, improved post-sale services, technical flexibility, organizational and human resources flexibility (Marković, 2008), continuous search for total productivity (Sakai, 1990) or even individual and organizational resilience in face of financial market uncertainties (Santos, 20115). In other words, multidimensional flexibilization of SME is inexorable (European Commission, 2011; Forrester, 2016).

However, restructuring of large companies is likewise vital, imperative and suitable: adopting new production models, new management methods (Jensen and Sandström, 2011), and new flexicurity measures (European Commission, 2011); promoting interconnection between companies and adopting new organizational behaviours (European Commission, 2011; Marković, 2008; World Economic Forum, 2016, 2017). It is the apology of organizational (or business) resilience.

An increasingly flexible, more fluid and decentralized organizational structure and management processes looks like a jazz orchestra (Trigo, 2006), where creativity and error are part of the innovation process. However, this fluidity must be based on internal and sustained human resources management policies, in order to foster the development of individual competences and professional stability (European Commission, 2011).

As a summary of the several authors checked, we can list a set of tendencies, or macro-trends (European Commission, 2011; Trigo, 2006) in companies and organizations, starting from a “before” (or predominant) situation, into an allomorphic status.

Moreover to the companies environment characterization, structure and functioning, we give some hints about human resources and labour relations as well taking a look on the new dimensions.

## 2. Companies Setting

| BEFORE                          | ALLOMORPHY                                                               |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Regional / National Competition | Global Competition                                                       |
| Product Oriented                | Solutions and customers oriented                                         |
| Simplicity                      | Complexity                                                               |
| Competition                     | Coopetition/Cooperation                                                  |
| Rigid Planning                  | Strategic Planning, Randomness / Continuous Change                       |
| Priority Setting                | Management of contradictions, paradoxes, and different cultures and laws |
| Major Geopolitical Stability    | Geopolitical instability                                                 |
| Environmental Ignorance         | Environmental Awareness                                                  |

Companies cannot only act locally or remain for ever in its comfort zone. Its limit is the planet. Its clients are all human beings. The market competition leaves the micro-centricity tending towards macro-dispersivity.

Economies of scale guide the action of managers (Friedman, 2007), so it is more important the tailored solution for customers (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002) than the standardized product. Complexity, variability and adjustment replaces the simplicity of products, services and processes, so those ones needs unceasing progress (Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011) to integrate local market differences (Friedman, 2007). In other words, those companies must to develop a nonstop R&D for total diversified productivity, optimizing organizational performance (Friedman, 2007) and be aware of new consumer concerns about ethical and privacy issues (World Economic Forum, 2016, 2017) to ensure the sustained operation of machines and equipment, reducing costs and interruptions, introducing continuous process developments (Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011) and methodologies enhancements (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002).

Independence with a competitive matrix has to be replaced by interdependent coepetition (Covey, 1989) and cooperation. This means that in order to survive in a global competition environment of cooperation between companies (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002) it is essential to cope with unforeseen events (Marković, 2008) and to manage multiculturalism, contradictions and diversities, as well with local regulation and legislation (Friedman, 2007).

Planning is no longer immutable and inexorable but undertakes a strategic plan framework, that is, it should be directed towards how to translate innovation into strategy: anticipating scenarios, discovering opportunities and creating value. In addition, the next decade will bring other new technological drivers of change (Forrester, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2016) - e.g. cloud technology, artificial intelligence, internet of things, crowd computing, the sharing economy and peer-to-peer platforms, virtual collaboration, advanced robotics and autonomous transport. This randomness of future must be introduced in the strategic planning scenarios.



The geopolitical landscape is constantly changing, with far-reaching implications for global trade and talent mobility, requiring companies to react and adapt faster than ever before (World Economic Forum, 2016, 2017). Many unexpected events will change course of action and effect large segments of the population (e.g. unexpected elections results, migrants crisis, epidemics, natural disasters, terrorism, over population); they will increase new sectors that did not exist before and will force society to be more creative.

The industrial society was driven only into the production, without paying attention to its physical environment. Industrial and energy plants, intensive farming and other forms of exhaustive production totally ignored the environment. Nevertheless, the emerging consciousness of the climate changes act as a major driver of innovation (World Economic Forum, 2016). Companies and organizations must search for measures to mitigate or help to adjust to climate changes that cause the transition to a greener economy (World Economic Forum, 2016).

### 3. The Organizational Structure and Framework

| BEFORE                                        | ALLOMORPHY                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hierarchical and pyramidal structures         | Agile and flat structures, flexible firm                                                      |
| Organization by Departments                   | Organization: by process, by product, by geography, matrix or mixed                           |
| Locally integrated companies (isolated)       | Globally integrated companies (network)                                                       |
| Company-owned services                        | Local and/or global Outsourcing                                                               |
| Individual work                               | Teamwork, Rotation, task enrichment and task widening, Semi-autonomous groups. Communication. |
| Work in the company                           | More work with customers, in customers premises and distance work/ Smartworking               |
| Reduced R&D and management by project ability | Intense R&D activity and high management by project skills                                    |
| Mass Production                               | Flexible production or more diversified mass production                                       |

The traditional pyramid organization by departments, directions and divisions, cannot be preserved. Inside companies some degree of mutual adjustment is needed, in addition to some kind of pressure for collaboration and processes internal organization. The interconnection of a few direct structures seems to be more responsive. There is a selective decentralization, giving rise to temporary project teams (Mintzberg, 1989) with specific objectives and with fairness in the accountability of the actors (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002). The logic of strategic centralization comes along with operational decentralization. (Castells 1996, 2000; Chesnais, 2001; Kovacs, 2002; Trigo, 2006; Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011). Flexibility and simplification seems to be the tendency.

The trend to change structures is perhaps the most substantive new organizational logic, since it foreseen the passage of stable and complex environments (e.g. Mintzberg's bureaucratic organization) for dynamic and variable geometry environments. This change is effective as long as it ensures and is able to pursue innovation (e.g. flexible organization or polycentric organization - similar to Mintzberg's adhocracy model). Whether it is emphasizing in the nature of the processes, the product type, on corporate demography (Santos, 2015) or partnerships, whether is based on matrix forms or a composite of these same solutions.

Networking can undertake several formats (European Commission, 2011), shifting over contents, commercial relations and (in)dependence (e.g. horizontal, informal, outsourcing or alliances). However, some paradigmatic features make the flexible company the best adapted to the challenges of the network society (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002) such as: communicative and synergistic efficiency, a drift towards "zero" error, as well an emphasis on the core business while struggling against dominant autocracy and technocracy. Thus, there is a trend to vanish of isolated companies towards into companies networks, including the networking of economic and social relations and intra and inter-organizational networks (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002). Simultaneously, links are generated through information networks of a large number of companies to self-employed workers (European Commission, 2011). The network structure

facilitates and promotes flexibility (Castells, 1996, 2009, Chesnais, 2001, Forrester, 2016; Kovács, 2002, Trigo, 2006). The national space is likely to be replaced by the emerging global space (Kovács, 2002). The national sphere remains of great importance, but it is no longer the main strategic layer for actors in the fields of scientific development, technological innovation and socio-economic growth (Grupo de Lisboa, 1994). According World Economic Forum (2016) the world's urban population is set to double between 2010 and 2050, from 2.6 billion to 5.2 billion. This rapid and unprecedented pace of urbanization and/or over population, especially in markets such as China and Sub-Saharan Africa, brings with it many opportunities as well as countless challenges.

Process-based organization entails the transition from a strong division of labour (resulting from industrial society) to a narrow division of labour (work is multifunctional with richer and more diversified contents). Low-skilled workers tend to disappear (Santos, 2014) and are replaced by highly qualified professionals (European Commission, 2011), turning their key soft skills the main drive for working, along with an underestimation of their technical skills. Teamwork and other new forms of work organization (e.g. task rotation/job rotation, task enrichment and task widening, semi-autonomous groups, Just in Time, Total Quality Management) arises as a quick and effective answer to customer's needs (Castells, 1996, 2009; Forrester, 2016; Handel, 2002; Jensen and Sandström, 2011; Kovács, 2002). More responsibility is demanded to the individuals the groups, to the leader and from all stakeholders<sup>3</sup> (Jensen and Sandström, 2011).

The traditional fixed and unchanging workplace is replaced by working with the clients, and/or by remote or flexible work (Kovács, 2002) thanks to ICT and new technologies in general (World Economic Forum, 2016). It encompasses only autonomy in work performance, allowing individualization (personalization) of products and services (Friedman, 2007; Kovács, 2002). The deadlines and timings are

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3 The Stakeholder Theory tries to describe the people or groups that act as "stakeholders" of a company or organization and proposes methods that managers must apply to meet their interests. In other words, it proposes a summative strategy of the economic point of views over resources and markets, while incorporating a sociological and political insight over society (Jensen & Sandström, 2011).

defined by the clients (Boyer and Freyssenet, 1994; Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002).

SmartWorking refers to an alternative way of working that is independent of time and place. This way of working entails new organizational and management methods, with the conduct of managers and staff being critical for its success. The support for operational processes also changes for this alternative way of working, both in terms of human resources management and information technology, as well as espace management (at work and elsewhere) and other facilities (Addeco, 2015).

Global competitiveness (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002) and the intrinsic capacity for adaptation are embodied in the quantity and peculiarity of R&D investments made by individual, by firms and/or by sectors (Chagas Lopes, 2011). The hetero-regulation of the labour market is a result of R&D innovation processes, although geographically asymmetric (Chagas Lopes, 2011; Kovács and Chagas Lopes, 2010). The competitive advantage is increasingly build upon centralization of high added value activities (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002): a) building multifunctional programmable machines (e. g. CAD, CAD/CAM, CIM, NCC); b) constantly innovating processes (Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011) and updating methods and techniques and c) combining efforts with the needs of customers (Forrester, 2016). The company should seek to solve problems that are not categorized and without pre-established solutions, investigating and developing new responses (Santos, 2010). R&D activity thus becomes the pillar of triumph.

The production massification (that was once the prime business objective) turns into flexible production (Kovács, 2002, 2005) and to the fading of rigid boundaries between small-scale and large-scale production. That is, small-scale production using flexible technologies allows increasing the design and planning sophistication (Friedman, 2007; Kovács, 2002, 2005; Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011). In conventional industrial environments (e.g. vehicles, textiles) the production in large series leans towards to become more diversified (Kovács, 2002, 2005) and can be personalized in a larger number of conceptual and

production details. This will be achieved by accelerating the automation; efficiency will be accomplished by robotized machines or computerized systems, while effectiveness will be on the rise, and will be performed by people (Dolan, 2016).

#### 4. People Management

| BEFORE                       | ALLOMORPHY                                                |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Low Skilled Workers          | Skilled Workers and in Life Long Learning                 |
| Sealed Skills                | Multi-Skilled                                             |
| Workers easy to satisfy      | Workers increasingly demanding                            |
| High hierarchical distance   | Less hierarchical levels                                  |
| Company chooses the employee | Worker chooses the company to work                        |
| National / uniqueness        | Global, multicultural, sensitivity and cultural diversity |
| Business Owners Interest     | Stakeholders Interest / CSR                               |

The taylorist vision of a universal and immutable qualifications acquisition (attained only once and valid for the whole productive working life) inevitably loses this assumption. Workers in addition to a basic qualifications needs to be constantly updated (re-training/re-skilled). Therefore, the competences that come from these qualifications cannot be sealed (Kovács, 2002, 2005; Kovács and Chagas Lopes, 2010; Trigo, 2006) but they inevitably be determined by a multiplicity of tasks (Santos, 2011, 2014).

The workers themselves demands for professional and family requirements (Porcellato, Carmichael *et al*, 2010), to enable them to harmonize these aspects with work (European Commission, 2011).

It is just because of these demands that the organizational structure sees hierarchical levels reduced, not only at the intermediate levels but also in top managers (Marković, 2008; Friedman, 2007). Companies cannot continue to stand high fixed costs. They have to focus on the core-business (Kovács, 2002; Trigo, 2006), and outsourcing the supply of some products and services, whether local, national

or global (e.g. tailored software, highly specialized components, call centres, data entry, health and safety services), integrating these companies into a network (Kovács, 2002). It is a path from a large units logic (usually also with higher stocks) to small units (with reduced stocks) (Castells, 1996, 2009; Kovács, 2002).

The easiness of displacement across all over the planet, as well the arising of e-work made possible by ICT (Castillo, 2009; Ferreira, 2008; Forrester, 2016) means that the globalized worker (Castillo, 2009) may select, within some limits, where, how and with whom to work (Santos, 2011). Moreover, multiculturalism, cross-cultural competencies linked to the multiplicity of nationalities become inevitable (and desirable) in companies and organizations. The workplace will be characterized by diversity (e.g. gender, age – Gen Y and Gen Z, ethnicity) and the workplace of relationships will goes beyond face-to-face collaborations to progressively more virtual ones (Dolan, 2016).

The interests of business holders do not unilaterally overlap with the general interests of stakeholders (or partners) because the range of actors that get involved in an organization is always broadening. Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR (allied with ethics) cannot be ignored as a basic element of organizations and may even become a competitive advantage.

## 5. Labour Relations

|                                |                                                                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BEFORE                         | ALLOMORPHY                                                                   |
| Living to work                 | Work, family, living and decent work                                         |
| A Society                      | A Society +B Society                                                         |
| Local / national labour market | Global labour market                                                         |
| Fixed salary                   | Payment indexed to outcomes                                                  |
| Legal contract relationship    | Added value relationship                                                     |
| Fixed Employment               | New Forms of Employment / Gig Economy                                        |
| Standards and regulations      | Vision, mission and values                                                   |
| Human resources Management     | Management of people with new methods of production and organization of work |

The taylorist division of labour/scientific management tends to fade, or at least to be largely changed and/or adapted. The concept of living for working is replaced by decent work<sup>4</sup>, placing personal, family and company interests (Hepple, 2001) in harmony, and were the incomes allows to enjoy this synergy (Van Dyne et al., 2007).

Stable, routine, and uncreative work gives place to non-routine, imaginative, creative and flexible tasks (Kovács, 2002; Kovács and Chagas Lopes, 2010). This means: an increasing diversification of working periods and conditions, the differentiation and individualization of labour relations (Kovács, 2002) as well the coordination of family life with individual work.

B Society<sup>5</sup> concept begins to take the first steps. In antagonism and complementarity to A society (which we now know and live in), the B society, created in 2006, is being officially and institutionally accepted in several countries of northern Europe. It aims to create an alternative society, which takes into account the different biological rhythms of individuals to introduce different hours of operation of schools, workplaces, universities, shops and organizations in general. This expansion of working hours would allow the labour market to take a larger and more extended functioning, which could generate a bigger offer of jobs and, therefore, more profits for the

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4 The concept of decent work, according ILO (2007), is based on the recognition that work is the source of several dimensions: personal dignity, family stability, peace in the community, democracies that Work for the benefit of all, economic growth, increased opportunities for productive work and companies development. Decent work reflects the priorities of the social, economic and political agenda of the countries and the international system. Over a short period of time this concept has brought together some of the social actors at work, in the sense that productive employment and decent work are key elements for: achieving a fair globalization, reducing poverty and achieving equitable, fair and sustainable development.

5 The “B Society” movement started in Denmark and then expanded to Norway, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It is based on scientific facts that indicate that each individual has its own biological rhythm, a kind of “internal clock” that is genetically determined. Thus, a “person B” has an internal rhythm of 25 to 27 hours, while that of a “person A” has a cycle of 23 hours. “B people” are more productive at the end of the day and have difficulty waking up in the morning, which is when “A people” are more active. One of the objectives of this movement is to end the rigid disciplines of the time of the industrial society, in which all arrive at the same time and leave at the same time (that is why the number of jobs available is limited). With the introduction of B Society concept, jobs theoretically would increase, companies and organizations would operate 24 hours a day, and productivity and competitiveness would accelerate. The introduction of more flexible hours would boost a better balance between work and leisure and a better quality of life (Rasmunssen, 2009). The first Swedish institution to implement the scheme is a secondary school in Göteborg, which provides since 2001 night shifts between 8 pm and 8 am.

companies and better salaries. At the same time, it contributes to decent work (ILO, 2007) by balancing work, family and leisure (Hepple, 2001; Rasmunssen, 2008). In fact, this broad flexibility (which has the maximum exponent in the 24-hour operation, with full use of spaces and investments) is in keeping with the premises of globalization and the informational society (Castells, 1996, 2009). Of course, this new paradigm would require substantial legal basis support, especially regarding labour law and labour relations.

The labour market becomes global. Companies display job offers to potential employees from all over the world. However, in this global labour market the regional or local economic environment may interfere. In situations of economic recession (even if local or regionally bounded), companies tend to favour internal flexibility (Kovács, 2005; Santos, 2011), adopting measures to adjust work organization and management processes (European Commission, 2011). In recessive economic periods, external flexibility will only be maintained in order to facilitate any structural (re)adjustment, allowing a greater efficient (re)allocation of resources (European Commission, 2011).

The traditional mass production of standardized products, inherited from fordist frameworks, is inevitably replaced by the production of high quality, individualized and diversified products (Castells, 1996, 2009; Forrester, 2016; Kovács, 2002). Thus, the salaries get an indexation to individual and organizational whole results. Competition capacity is no longer based on lower prices, but in quality. Quality also means the individualization of products and services with innovative design (and systematically refined, improved and attractive) that adds, or creates value for employers, employees and for products or services provided. It is inevitable to reduce the low adaptability to new situations, creating a swift adaptation to new and permanent requests (European Commission, 2011).

The “for ever” and secure employment is a concept that we inherited from our parents and grandparents. They lived the uncertainty, the insecurity and the unsafety, that were characteristics of the Great World Wars. Meanwhile this physical uncertainty and insecurity has vanished. Therefore, nowadays, the labour market demands for



other forms of employment: more agile, more adapted and more prepared to change. These features have a double sense, for employers and workers, and are the foundations of new employment relations, characterised by unconventional work patterns and places of work, or by the irregular provision of work (Eurofound, 2015). Eurofound (2015) has identified and described nine new forms of employment: employee sharing, job sharing, interim management, casual work, ICT-based mobile work, voucher-based work, portfolio work, crowd employment and collaborative employment. A related concept is the “Gig Economy”. A gig economy is an environment in which temporary positions are common and organizations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements (Torpey and Hogan, 2016). Gig workers are more likely in some professions than in others. Work that encompasses a single task (such as writing a business plan) lends itself well to this type of arrangement. Any profession in which workers may be hired for on-demand jobs has the potential for gig employment (*idem*, 2016).

Regarding companies’ features, the tayloristic point of view of defining standards and producing regulations; turns this inflexibility a major hamper to get into the informational society. Instead, the companies must clear define (Aithal, 2016) why the company exist (Mission), what and where (Vision) and what the enterprise stands for (Core Values). Vision and mission statements describe the organization’s goals and the core values and core principles represent the organization’s culture (Aithal, 2016).

In the current socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions, the crisis of the forms of organization of work is installed. The low level of productivity and the inability of companies to respond to changes, entails a greater interest for the adoption of new forms of work organization and new methods of management (Kovács, Ferreira and Santos, 1994). The search for new organizational forms of work aims a greater flexibility, greater involvement and more commitment of the workers (Kovács, Ferreira and Santos, 1994) and from the stakeholders in general. This framework must impose itself over the traditional Human Resources Management. The Taylorist (and Fordist) models have been giving rise to some more flexible models,

especially the so-called lean production. Initially developed in Japan, it has already served as a reference model for some European and American companies (Kovács and Castillo, 1998). However, other models are emerging: the neo-Taylorist (and moderate neo-Taylorist) models, adapted mainly in the large remaining industries in industrialized countries (e.g. Germany and Japan). On the other hand, the humanist/anthropocentric production models (APM) are evolving as a European alternative to the Japanese model of lean production. Despite the diversity of new forms of organization and production, Kovács and Castillo (1998) point out the coexistence of the several models, from the macro (country) level to the micro (enterprise) level. These authors even argue that there are no pure models, because companies can operate, with characteristics of several models simultaneously. The models serve only for study and to facilitate the identification of the model adopted by a certain organization or company. The simultaneous diversification and globalization of the consumer markets allows to combining and articulating the mass production strategy (logic of economies of scale) with the diversification strategy (Schreyögg and Sydow, 2011) and innovation (brand economy logic) within the same subcontracting networks (Kovács and Castillo, 1998). The diffusion of the lean production model or the coexistence of several models is not the single evolutionary trend, with other likely scenarios (Kovács and Castillo, 1998, Kovács, 2002).

## 6. New Dimensions

|                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| BEFORE                   | ALLOMORPHY                            |
| Control                  | Engagement and commitment             |
| Objective is profit      | Objective is profit with ethics (CSR) |
| Boss/Chief               | Leaders/Agents of Change              |
| Administration           | Management                            |
| Conformity               | Creativity - creative economy         |
| Inactivity               | Proactive Availability - CCO          |
| Low expectancy of living | Longevity and ageing societies        |
| Certainty                | Risk and Uncertainty                  |

The obsession with the processes, methods and working times control, sustained by effort and discipline (Kovács, 2002), inherited from Taylorist-Fordist thinking, will inevitably lead to a responsibility based on initiative, commitment and proactivity at work.

The profit-centred goal and a “social responsibility” centred in business holders, as Friedman (1970) argued, represented a burden too dense for the companies and must be definitely abandoned. Social responsibility is now a concept through which companies and organizations in a voluntary basis decide their degree of contribution to a fairer society and a cleaner environment (European Commission, 2001), taking into account the interests and idiosyncrasies of all stakeholders.

The traditional boss or chief cannot remain as a paradigm. The manual and routine skills (Chesnais, 2001; Kovács, 2002, 2005), with a minimum knowledge acquired only once (and supposed to be effective for the entire working life) are no longer valid. The trend is an employer that is a team leader (Trigo, 2006), which strives to keep updated on its qualifications and skills. It is someone that carries a mission, a vision and objectives (Castells, 2000; Kovács, 2005) and shares it with the employees. It is someone who inspires, directs, suggests and guides. It is above all the social actor who uses his own rational choices (Loasby, 2003) to deal with uncertainty. It creates patterns, select (and sometimes problematic) criteria and tries to give consistency (Loasby, 2003) among these elements to bounce stability to individuals and organizations. It has to be the trigger of change.

In this framework the concepts of “Administration” should be gradually replaced by those of “Management”. “Administration “ was a legacy of Taylor’s, Fayol’s and Weber’s points of views, being seen as something distinct and external to the company or organization. It encompasses concepts such as planning, direction and control. The “Management” goes further, because besides these characteristics, it shelters the broadest concepts. That is, the manager does nothing

different from the administrator, but has the responsibility to play the role with greater imagination, proactivity and talent.

Just here lies the opposition to traditional conformism: creativity and the use of the creative economy. These activities are the product of the development of the individual imagination and, if properly worked and implemented, get an economic value. Howkins (2001) defined the “Creative Economy” as the activities that encompass the creation, production and distribution of products and services, using knowledge, creativity and intellectual capital as main productive resources. This includes creative goods and services related to the cultural and creative industry and other more lively concepts: creative cities, creative ecosystems or even creative clusters.<sup>6</sup>

Related to conformism is inactivity, which often pushes corporations to emptiness by weakening them from goals and purposes. In the future, organizational actors must use their own proactive mental availability, which over time will become a characteristic inherent to their personality. It will be the softskill (European Commission, 2011; Kovács and Chagas Lopes, 2010) that will make a difference. At same time, if all employees adopt organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) they are suitable to go further together (Van Dyne et al., 2007).

Over the next decade, advanced economies will see the effects of a growing ageing population. Increasingly, people will work past age 65 to secure adequate resources for retirement. Simultaneously, attending the needs of an older society will create opportunities for new products, services and business models (World Economic Forum, 2016). On the opposite sense, much of the emerging countries that are undergoing quick population growth face a very different demographic challenge than advanced economies: devising appropriate education and training systems to prepare an overwhelmingly young population for the workplace. Leading emerging nations continue to

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<sup>6</sup> According the United Nations (UNCTAD, 2010), the creative economy encompasses the cycles of conception (or creation), production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as inputs. Although there are several typologies and there is no full agreement on the activities to be included in this definition. We can mention: advertising, architecture, the environment (green economy) the market of art and antiques, crafts, fashion design, film and video making, music, other performing arts, publishing houses, interactive entertainment software, radio and television, and sports as mass entertainment events.

move up the skills ladder and improve access to high-quality education, contributing to a dramatic rise in the number of the college-educated and a shift in the global distribution of talent models (World Economic Forum, 2016). As well, attending the needs of a younger society will also create opportunities for new products, services and business models.

From deterministic and stable certainty, companies and organizations are increasingly struggling with a myriad of Knightian uncertainties<sup>7</sup>. Company survival lies not only in the attempt to predict risk (Knight, 1957, 2006), since it is more likely to be calculated, but above all the degree of organizational, group and individual resilience and capacity to manage the uncertainty. Uncertainty is like a price to pay for imagination ability (Loasby, 2003). However, despite the imaginative ability, the human being in general, and the entrepreneurs in particular, have not learned yet to use the unforeseen results of the future, claiming the control of their possibilities (Esposito, 2011).

## Conclusions

This is not a finished script. It is bounded in time, because it is likely to be changed or completed in the future, due to new theories, paradigms or concepts that support another kind of analysis. It is the result of an inevitable effort of synthesis, so I am aware that much more could be said. It may also be understood into different interpretations and opinions, depending on the author. However, we can draw some conclusions.

Allomorphisms in the informational society enterprises are not fixed, detailed or formulated; neither is exempt of uncertainty. The only

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7 A classic distinction between risk and uncertainty was proposed by Frank Knight (1957, 2006). He associates risk with measurable uncertainty - a "false uncertainty." Thus, the risk of an event occurring is given by a distribution of probabilities, that is, the odds of the future are known. Uncertainty, however, refers to a situation in which these possibilities are not known. Knight (1957, 2006) thus distinguishes risky situations (in which the likely distribution of possible cases is not known) from uncertain situations (in which even the possible cases are not known). A Knightian uncertainty is, therefore, a situation in which the future is not and cannot be known.

certainty is the unavoidable changes within the companies. The only thing that changes is the acceleration of change.

The structure, social actors, processes and methods must be seen as an indivisible whole, which guides efforts, knowledge and resources towards the same aim or objective.

ICT are not a panacea for any and all problems in the structure and functioning of companies and organizations. They are indeed an element that has triggered a new socio-economic structure with an inner cultural matrix. They have advantages and weaknesses. Those who do not have information and knowledge will be excluded from the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of analytic-symbolic goods and services. This trend of globalization is structured by the increasing integration of science and technology in innovation and uninterrupted change.

Allomorphisms resulting from changes in the companies environment (i.e. globalization) are reflected at all levels: structure, functioning, human resources, labour relations and opens doors to new dimensions.

Organizational models are not waterproof and applied in one direction only. Characteristics of work organization models can exist simultaneously in the same organization or company. Further, at some point it may be required to adopt more features of one model and in the next moment direct efforts towards the characteristics of another model. However, according Kovács (1994, 1998), preference must be given to anthropocentric production systems (in order to contribute to the improvement of employment conditions) and to promote qualitative flexibility.

Organizations in general have to move over uncertainty, controlling risk. Creativity, proactivity and organizational citizenship must be firmly embedded in the lexicon of companies and in the spirit of organizations.

Companies must always lookout for the flexibility that they need to survive in the new concept of a global economy. The only certainty about the future is that uncertainty is part of it.

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