

# The life of Poles: From leaving the parental home to retirement

## Insights from the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS-PL)

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WARSAW SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
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The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), a questionnaire-based panel study, is a part of the international Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) launched in 2001. Since 2009 the programme has been coordinated by the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) <http://www.ggp-i.org/>.

The Institute of Statistics and Demography within the Collegium of Economic Analysis of the Warsaw School of Economics has joined the Generations and Gender Programme. The first wave of the survey was conducted at the turn of the years 2010/2011; the second, at the turn of the years 2014/2015, in cooperation with the Bureau of Research and Statistical Analyses of the Polish Statistical Association. This publication uses the results of analyses presented in articles and studies in which data from both waves of the study were used.



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# Introduction

In Poland, like in other European countries, we are experiencing a fundamental change in the process of generational replacement. Fertility, i.e. the number of children per woman aged 15-49, has fallen to a level that is far from ensuring replacement of generations (defined as slightly over two children per woman). More people reach advanced old age and migration is playing an increasingly large role in shaping the country's population size and its demographic structures. The consequences of this change in the form of declining population size, rapid growth of the number of people aged 65 and over, and shrinking size of the workforce (consisting of people aged 18-64) are constantly present in public debate. However, far less attention is paid to getting to the heart of the ongoing demographic transformation and discovering its causes even though increasingly rich empirical material is currently available.

Particularly valuable data, which may significantly contribute to a better understanding of the demographic changes in Poland, come from the two waves of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) conducted in Poland at the turns of the years 2010/2011 and 2014/2015 within the international Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). The aim of this programme is to provide knowledge concerning the transformation of family life with respect to family formation, childbearing, family dissolution and to the roles of men and women in the organisation of family life. Relations between generations as well as attitudes towards and opinions about the family are also in its scope of interest.

The uniqueness of the resulting database lies in the abundance of collected data about the life course of respondents aged 18-79, including information on leaving the parental home, partnership formation, conception difficulties, decisions concerning children, education, work and retiring. These data do not only make it possible to analyse behaviours of different generations, they also allow for international comparisons. This is because a standardised questionnaire is used across all countries participating in the Generations and Gender Programme. Moreover, it is the only empirical database in Poland that documents in great detail demographic behaviours concerning the family and simultaneously contains information about various aspects of the respondents' lives, e.g. professional and educational activity, economic situation, values, norms and health status, as well as about public and private transfers of services, goods and financial means to the household.

Both survey waves were financed by the National Science Centre under two research projects "Panel survey of changes in relationships between generations, in the family and between men and women: Generations, families and gender" (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> wave). We are grateful to the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute for the institutional support and to Professor Aart C. Liefbroer for sharing his knowledge and experience with us.

This publication aims to present selected results of analyses that use data from the Generations and Gender Survey in Poland (GGS-PL). Due to the large volume of the empirical material, it was impossible to present all of it. Therefore, we chose those findings that—in our opinion—are central for understanding how individual decisions concerning the family, education and work in Poland are shaped, and to shed light on the changes in the life course of the generations entering adulthood after 1989.

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# 1. The Generations and Gender Survey as a tool for explaining demographic change in Poland

The Generations and Gender Programme (hereafter: GGP) is a long-term international demographic research programme launched in 2001. It consists of two parts: a panel survey with standardised methodology (Generations and Gender Survey, hereafter: GGS) and a database of contextual country-level indices (the Contextual Data Base, hereafter: CDB).

The GGS is conducted in 3 to 5 waves carried out every 3 years on a random sample of 15 to 20 thousand respondents aged 18-79 in each of the countries participating in the GGP. The surveys are conducted using a questionnaire with standardized, compulsory modules and optional, additional modules. Moreover, individual countries can broaden the scope of information obtained in both types of modules depending on their specific research needs. However, the partners are obliged to maintain data comparability to the extent set by experts. The Contextual Data Base contains time series of macro-level indicators of economic, demographic and social processes and a description of legal regulations along with their changes over time (for 60 countries over the last 40 years). This dualistic, longitudinal and multi-level approach to studying demographic change is what makes this research concept an innovative step in social sciences. The demographic changes are analysed in connection with labour market changes and in parallel with social changes related to the family model, intergenerational relations and the gendered division of social roles. Moreover, the research programme integrates the micro- and the macro-level approaches (data from the GGS and the CDB).

Currently, 19 countries participate in the GGP. Up to now, the first wave of the survey has been conducted in all of them (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France,

Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Romania and Sweden), while 12 countries have conducted the second wave (Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Italy).

■ **The international GGS database is the only source of individual panel data in Europe that allows for in-depth analyses of family formation, development and dissolution and for exploring relationships between its members**

The international GGS database covers the detailed information on life courses of respondents aged 18-79, collected in subsequent waves of the survey. It is the only base of micro panel data in Europe that allows for comparative longitudinal analyses of family dynamics, intergenerational transfers and relationships in connection with professional activity and the evolution of men and women's social roles. Moreover, in Central and Eastern European countries it is the only source of panel data about demographic behaviours underlying the widely-debated population changes in the region. Thus, it is not surprising that among the 19 countries that have conducted the first wave of the Generations and Gender Survey, there are 8 countries from this region.

The scope of the questionnaire in Poland was determined by GGP methodological recommendations, but it also took into account the specific nature of local research needs. Importantly, it allows for interdisciplinary panel analyses of demographic change in the country, which have not been possible previously. The questionnaire contains questions about family history, the course of professional careers and education. It thus allows for revealing the important events in

the respondents' lives with respect to formation and dissolution of unions/the family as well as to parenthood. It allows for picturing the inter-relationships between these events, work and education. The economic situation of families, organisation of family life, health, social contacts, and relationships between parents, children and grandparents were also important foci in the survey. Data about values, intentions and expectations were collected together with information about difficulties in realisation of such intentions (e.g. related to health, insufficient state support or labour market expectations).

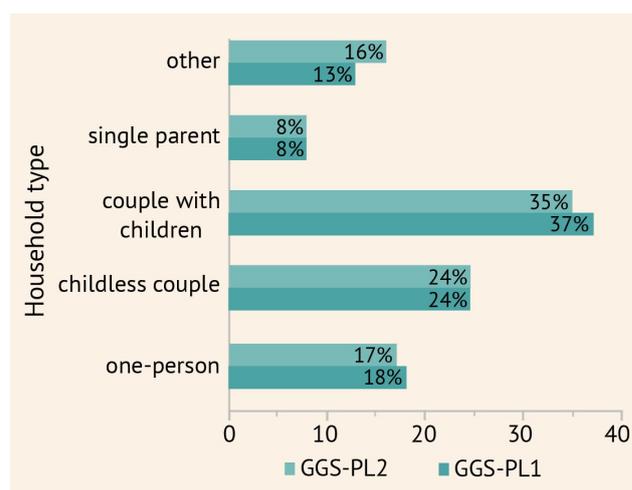
■ **The scope of the Polish GGS questionnaire was broadened to obtain information necessary for describing and understanding changes in demographic behaviours in Poland in the context of transformation happening on the labour market and ongoing cultural changes. The aim was to capture changes in lives of different generations**

According to the methodological recommendations for the panel survey of at least 3 waves, the sample in the first round should cover 17 to 20 thousand persons. This is to guarantee adequate numbers of respondents in specific subpopulations studied in subsequent waves. During the first wave in Poland (GGS-PL1), conducted at the turn of 2010 and 2011, nearly 20 thousand persons were interviewed. Respondents, aged 18-79, came from households living in randomly selected dwellings. In each household only one person was interviewed.

The results of the second wave (GGS-PL2), which took place at the turn of 2014 and 2015, confirmed that it had been indeed necessary to cover such a large sample in the first wave. Of the 19,987 respondents from the GGS-PL1, 15,272 persons expressed willingness to be interviewed again in 3 years' time, and 2,190 persons were undecided. Nevertheless, an effort was made to

contact all participants from the first wave. Eventually, interviews were conducted with 12,419 respondents, i.e. 62% of the initial sample. In the second wave, 1,477 persons aged 18-21 were additionally sampled and interviewed, in order to supplement the category of the youngest respondents. In total, the GGS-PL2 covered 13,896 individuals.

The most important reasons for attrition in GGS-PL2, identified in 5,198 cases, were refusals (44%), changes in the household's address of residence (15%), respondent's death (10%), respondent's move abroad (8%) or to another place in Poland (9%).



**Fig. 1.1 Respondents by household type GGS-PL1 (N=19,987) and GGS-PL2 (N=13,896).**

Participants who could not be interviewed due to an international migration were—in GGS-PL1—members of households formed by couples with children (41%), childless couples (23%) and one-person households (15%). Among respondents migrating abroad 57% were women and persons aged up to 44 accounted for 42%.

In both waves of the GGS-PL survey respondents were members of households composed mainly of couples with children and childless couples. The share of one-person households was also significant.

Despite a considerable sample attrition, detailed panel data on 12,419 respondents were collected in GGS-PL2. It is the only panel database in

Poland with such a broad range of information about family change, intergenerational relationships and gender dynamics. This publication presents only selected results of the analyses conducted by the GGS-PL team that document the extent of demographic changes in Poland. The inclusion of GGS-PL data from both waves into the international GGS database makes it also possible to discuss family changes in Poland in comparison to other countries. According to the

GGP recommendations, the third wave of the panel survey should be conducted 3 years after the preceding one. This data would allow for even more in-depth analyses, covering a longer time span. Therefore, despite concerns over a reduction in the panel sample size, the Polish team is currently preparing to conduct the third wave of the survey.

# THE CHANGING LIFE COURSE

## 2. Life course development of young adults. Entry to adulthood

The life course of every person may be described as a sequence of key events related to education, work and family life. Relatively many of these events are related to the specific stage in the individual's life called the “transition to adulthood”: finishing school, starting one's first job, leaving the parental home and forming one's own family.

The “Generations and Gender Survey in Poland” allowed us to study the life course developments in early adulthood of men and women born in the years 1950-1984. Observing the trajectories of Poles born after World War II we see that parenthood is invariably the last event of the transition to adulthood, but is occurring increasingly late in the course of young people's lives. Meanwhile events that precede parenthood—leaving parental home, finishing education, the first job—have changed order. We illustrate these changes with comparisons of two cohorts: respondents born between 1950 and 1954 and those born between 1975 and 1979, which we treat as proxies for a generation of parents and their children.

### ■ Young generations remain in education longer than their parents—also after starting work. They also form families increasingly late

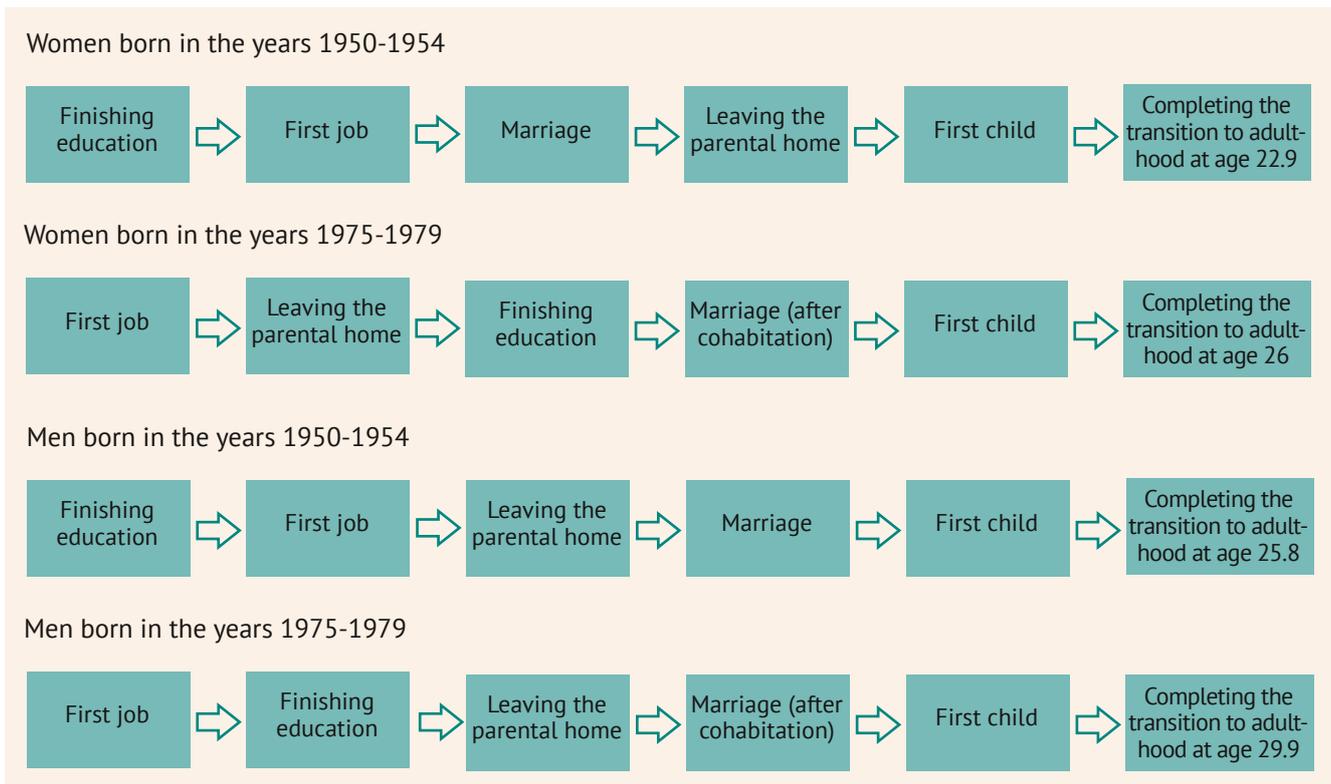
Women from the 1950-1954 cohort left their parental homes after finishing education, starting

work and getting married. They then had their first child—on average around their 23rd birthday, which ended their “transition to adulthood”. Women from the 1975-1979 cohort first started working, subsequently left their parental homes, and only then finished education (which lasted longer than for those of the 1950-1954 cohort) and got married. They gave birth to their first child on average three years later than their mothers' generation, at the age of 26.

In the case of men the process of delaying the transition to adulthood is even clearer. Men from the 1975-1979 cohort decided to get married and have a child far later than the generation of their fathers and for them, the “transition to adulthood” ended as late as around the age of 30. However, the sequence of events in their life course changed to a lesser degree than in the case of women. The only difference in the life course of men born between 1975 and 1979 and that of their fathers is that the younger cohort started working before finishing education while men from the older generation first finished education and only then started working. Men from the 1975-1979 cohort left the parental homes after school graduation—similarly to their fathers—while their female peers left the parental home before graduation, in contrast to their mothers' experiences.

What percentage of men and women born in the years:	Women		Men	
	1950-1954	1975-1979	1950-1954	1975-1979
Left the parental home before age 25	63%	65%	54%	46%
Finished education before age 25	91%	76%	91%	76%
Started their first job before age 25	90%	75%	95%	85%
Contracted a marriage before age 25	75%	53%	54%	28%
Became a parent before age 25	69%	51%	41%	23%

**Tab. 2.1. Transition to adulthood-related events experienced by men and women before their 25th birthday, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**



**Fig. 2.1. Sequence of events in the transition to adulthood of men and women born in the years 1950-54 and 1975-79, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

Prolonged spells of education and labour market entry before the end of the schooling process are the most characteristic changes in the “transition to adulthood” of young generations. Among persons born in the second half of the 1970s almost a quarter had not finished education before their 25th birthday. In their parents’ generation this was true for only every tenth person.

### ■ Men are leaving the parental home increasingly late, and they are doing so later than women

An analysis of the age at which young people in Poland experience events that constitute the “transition to adulthood” shows that all of them are occurring later and later. With one exception: leaving the parental home by women. Women from both analysed cohorts left the parental home predominantly before reaching the age of 25. Notably, women from the 1950-1954 cohort left home to reside with their husbands but women from the 1970-1979 cohort left home before marriage was contracted, to live alone or

cohabit. Men decided to leave their parental home far later. Over a half of men born in the years 1950-1954 left the parental home before their 25th birthday but the ratio dropped to 46% for men born in the years 1975-1979.

The life course trajectories described here present the typical order of events in the lives of young Poles. Notably, the life trajectories of younger generations are also becoming increasingly diverse. Marriage is increasingly preceded by a period of cohabitation. Young people remain in education longer and longer, often returning to school after a break. They start working before completing education, but at the same time they frequently experience unemployment. Their “transition to adulthood” contains a greater number of events and is stretched over a longer period of time. Subsequent generations extend the process even more – for many men born between 1980 and 1984 the transition to adulthood is still not finished even though they have entered their fourth decade of life.

Based on a report by Anna Rybińska

### 3. Later entry to parenthood. What about subsequent children?

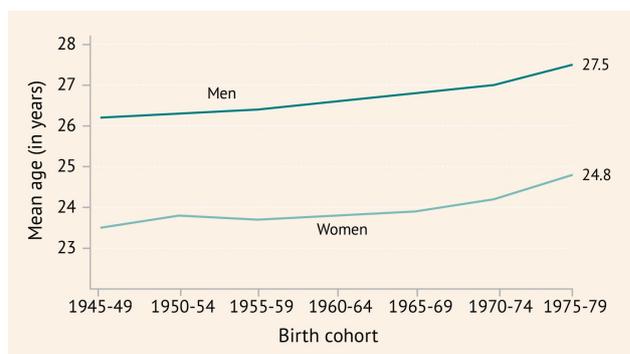
Since the 1990s, a marked childbearing postponement has been observed in Poland. Both men and women delay the transition to parenthood. This change in reproductive behaviours is reflected by the raising mean age at (first) birth. For women, the mean age at first birth rose from 23.3 in 1989 to 26.9 in 2015, while the mean age at birth increased from 26.3 to 29.1. This is related to the changing reproductive behaviours of women born after 1969. The GGS-PL study gives us an opportunity to show to what extent these behaviours differ from the behaviours of women born earlier. Importantly, the study also provides the possibility of comparing reproductive behaviours of subsequent generations of men.

Does parenthood postponement shorten the interval between the first and second child? This question is particularly important for women: as women age, the risk of infertility increases and the time of waiting for conception lengthens.

Later parenthood is primarily connected with the extension of the period in education. Differences in the timing of first birth due to varying educational attainment are thus expected.

#### ■ Both men and women delay parenthood

For women reaching the peak of their reproductive period in the years of the centrally-planned economy, the mean age at first birth was stable, slightly under 24 years. A distinct postponement of first childbirth was first observed for women born in the early 1970s and became more pronounced for women born in the years 1975-1979. The average age at first birth could increase even more for this youngest cohort, as some women born in the late 1970s might still decide to become mothers in their late 30s or 40s.

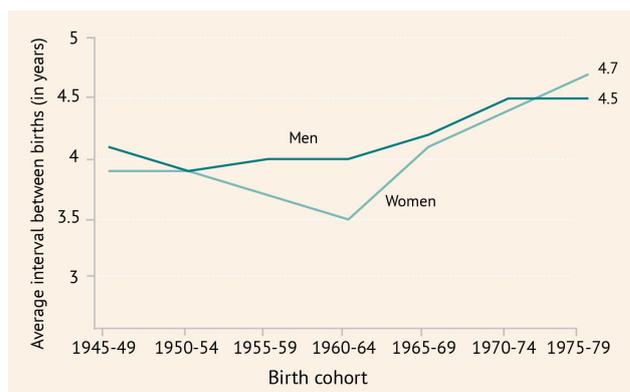


**Fig. 3.1 Mean age of parents at first birth by cohort and sex, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

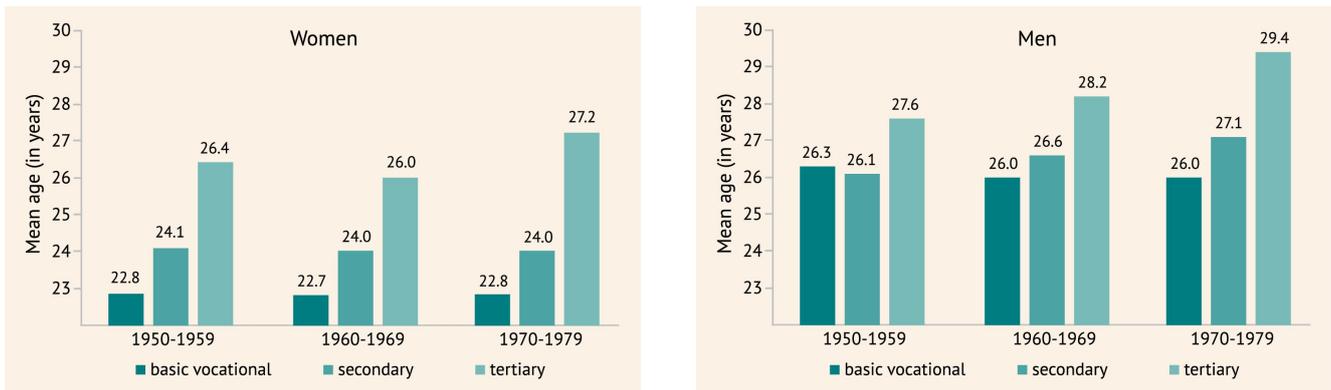
For men, the delay in the transition to fatherhood was gradual for subsequent cohorts therefore the trend for those born after 1969 is in line with changes observed for previous generations (Fig. 3.1).

#### ■ Second child comes also increasingly late

Although nowadays the decision to become a parent comes increasingly late, it does not shorten the interval between the births of the first and the second child. Women born in the years 1955-1969, who became mothers at younger ages, also had their second child within shorter intervals compared to previous cohorts.



**Fig. 3.2 Average interval between birth of first and second child by cohort and sex (in years), GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**



**Fig. 3.3 Mean age of parents at first birth by cohort, sex and education , GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

The interval was shortest for women born in the years 1960-1964 who bore their first and second child on average only 3.5 years apart.

The situation has changed for women born after 1969, who entered their most fecund years in late 1990 or later, thus after the political upheaval of 1989. For these women, two separate shifts are observed: motherhood postponement and the extension of the interval between first and second childbirth.

The changes for men are less pronounced: a stabilization of the first-second birth interval at around 4 years for cohorts born before 1969 was followed by a slow extension of the interval for those born in 1970 and later.

### ■ Tertiary education is an increasingly important determinant of parenthood postponement

Finally, we need to reflect upon the role of education in fertility postponement. Clearly, the longer a person stays in education, the later he or she becomes a parent. Importantly, the level of educational attainment matters more for the transition to parenthood for women compared to men. The importance of tertiary education becomes stronger for respondents born after 1969 (i.e., reaching adulthood after 1989), especially for women.

These results, in tandem with a shifting educational composition of younger generations, especially with the increasing university enrolment of women indicate that the process of postponing parenthood in Poland will continue.

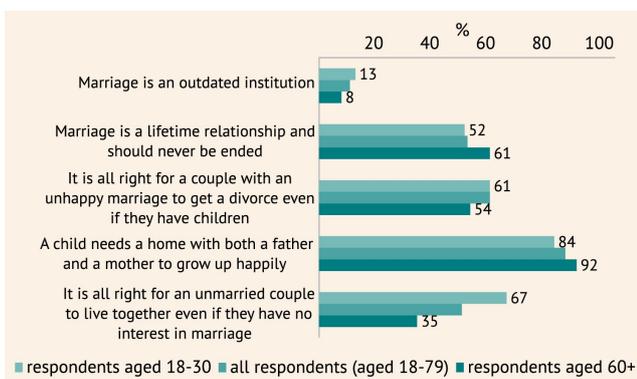
# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

## 4. Is marriage an outdated institution?

Over the last decades significant changes in family life have occurred in Poland. Young people delay marriage and increasingly often chose to cohabit before or instead of marriage. Parenthood postponement and divorce are common. Do these changes indicate a crisis of the institution of marriage? What do Poles think about marriage and divorce?

### ■ Marriage is valued, but only half of respondents believe it is unbreakable

Among GGS-PL respondents, only every one in ten agreed with the statement that “marriage is an outdated institution”. Clearly, most Poles value marriage but do not consider it unbreakable. Slightly over half of respondents believed that marriage is a lifetime relationship and should not be ended, but at the same time over 60% accept that an unhappy marriage could end in a divorce, even if the couple has children. Importantly, at the same time a vast majority (88%) of respondents admitted that a child should live with both parents in order to develop happily. The most traditional opinions about marriage and divorce were held by persons in the eldest age group (60+ years old) but the difference between eldest and youngest was not large.



**Fig. 4.1 Attitudes towards selected aspects of family life. Support for each statement in the whole sample and among the youngest and the eldest respondents, GGS-PL2.**

### ■ Over half of respondents accept cohabitation, but the views of the eldest and youngest respondents are markedly different

Half of respondents agreed with the statement that a couple has the right to live together even if they have no interest in marriage. Attitudes toward cohabitation divide the older and younger respondents: over two thirds of persons aged 18-30 were accepting a decision to cohabit but only 35% of respondents aged 60 had the same opinion.

All in all, the results indicate that Poles hold fairly traditional attitudes towards family issues. The respondents quite unequivocally indicate marriage as the basic form for family formation, even though some respondents—especially those under 30—agree a couple could cohabit and a marriage could dissolve. Notably, certain subpopulations are particularly liberal in their views. Younger or higher educated respondents and those residing in urban areas demonstrate positive attitudes towards less traditional family forms.

The results presented here are based on data collected in the second wave of the GGS-PL (2014/2015). Remarkably, these views do not differ much from those expressed four years earlier, in the first wave of the survey. These results, as well as a comparison of the GGS data with earlier studies of opinions and attitudes of Poles, indicate a slow change of views on family issues in Poland.

## 5. Gender role attitudes in Poland

People have different views on the social roles of men and women. Some believe that the woman's role is to look after children and the man's to provide income for the family. Such traditional views are expressed in opinions that mothers' involvement in the labour market is detrimental to children's development, that men are better suited for some professions than women (for example, they make better political leaders or managers) and consequently they should have priority access to jobs in case of unemployment. Other people have more egalitarian attitudes: they are more likely to think that both partners are responsible for childcare and providing income, and do not perceive women's involvement in the labour market as a threat to the welfare and development of children or their relationship with a male partner.

Gender role attitudes are an individual matter, but, as it turns out, traditional views dominate in some countries and egalitarian views in other countries. This is related to the historical past of the country and its numerous institutional, cultural, political and economic circumstances. For example, in Southern European countries gender role attitudes are more traditional, and in Scandinavian countries, more egalitarian. And what are the gender role attitudes in Poland?

We studied views on gender roles in three dimensions, measures of which were created based on the basis of respondents' reactions to the following statements:

### The role of men and women in public life:

- In general, men make better political leaders than women.
- In a situation where there are not enough jobs, men should have a greater right to work than women.

### The role of men and women in intimate relationships:

- In a relationship it is better for the man to be older than the woman.
- It is not good for a relationship when the woman earns more than the man.

### The woman's role as a mother versus an economically active person:

- A small child suffers when its mother works.

Persons who consistently agreed with statements in a given dimension were assumed to hold traditional views; persons who disagreed—egalitarian views; and persons who did not have a definite opinion were assumed to be undecided. The analyses were conducted for men and women aged 20-84 years.

### ■ Poles' views on gender roles in public life and intimate relationships are divided

Attitudes toward gender roles in public life expressed by women are more egalitarian than those expressed by men. Around 40% of men and 60% of women disagree with the view that men make better political leaders than women and that men should have priority access to jobs in case of widespread unemployment. A large share of both men and women (around 20-30%) are undecided on this issue, however, and nearly 20% of women and slightly over 30% of men express traditional attitudes. Attitudes toward gender roles in intimate relationships are even more polarised. The percentage of women expressing egalitarian views on gender roles in intimate relationships is 43% and is slightly over 15 percentage points higher than the percentage of women with traditional views. Among men this difference is somewhat smaller.

### ■ In Poland, attitudes to mothers' paid work are quite traditional

Over half of men and women agreed with the statement that a small child suffers if his/her mother works. Only one fourth of women (23%) and about one fifth of men (18%) do not share such a view. In sum, Poles are highly concerned about the well-being of children whose mothers work for pay.

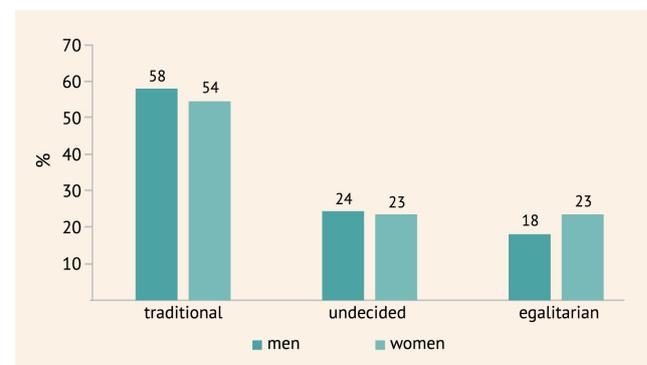
Such strong concerns depicted in the GGS data do not seem to be well justified given the most recent empirical findings on the effects of women's employment and childcare attendance on children's development. These findings show that mothers' employment may also have positive consequences for children, because it provides additional income. Further, studies increasingly indicate the positive influence of institutional care on the development of children aged 0-3 years, although obviously this effect depends on the amount of time spent in the care institution and the quality of care (e.g. Brill et al., 2015; Del Boca et al., 2016; Felfe and Lalive, 2014). Finally, it has been increasingly emphasised that children benefit from contact with both parents and greater father's involvement in child care would have positive effects for the child.



**Fig. 5.1 Views of men and women on gender roles in public life, GGS-PL2.**



**Fig. 5.2 Views of men and women on gender roles in intimate relationships, GGS-PL2.**



**Fig. 5.3 Views of men and women on mothers' professional work, GGS-PL2.**

## 6. Division of housework and childcare between women and men

Like in other developed countries, women in Poland are generally economically active. The percentage of professionally active women aged 25-49 is lower than that of men only by 10-12 percentage points. At the same time, women's level of education is constantly rising, and currently women graduate from higher education more often than men. In 2014, 2/3 of higher education graduates in Poland were women, which is even slightly higher than the European Union average (of almost 60%).

Despite universal and constantly growing activity of women in public life, the involvement of men in the household and care tasks is growing quite slowly. Results of the time use research indicate that on average men spend only half as much time as women on household duties and up to four times less on care tasks (Fisher and Robinson,

2011). What is the situation in Poland? And how does the division of household tasks between men and women change when children are born?

### ■ Economically active women in Poland still perform most household tasks

From 60 to 70% of employed women in couples with no children declare that they perform all or most of the household tasks. Only 10% of men in such couples do all or most of the housework, with the exception of such activities as repairs (almost 70%) and paying bills (20%). Women declare that they are usually responsible for cleaning, cooking, doing the dishes and shopping, which—unlike paying the bills and repairs—are practically done on a daily basis.

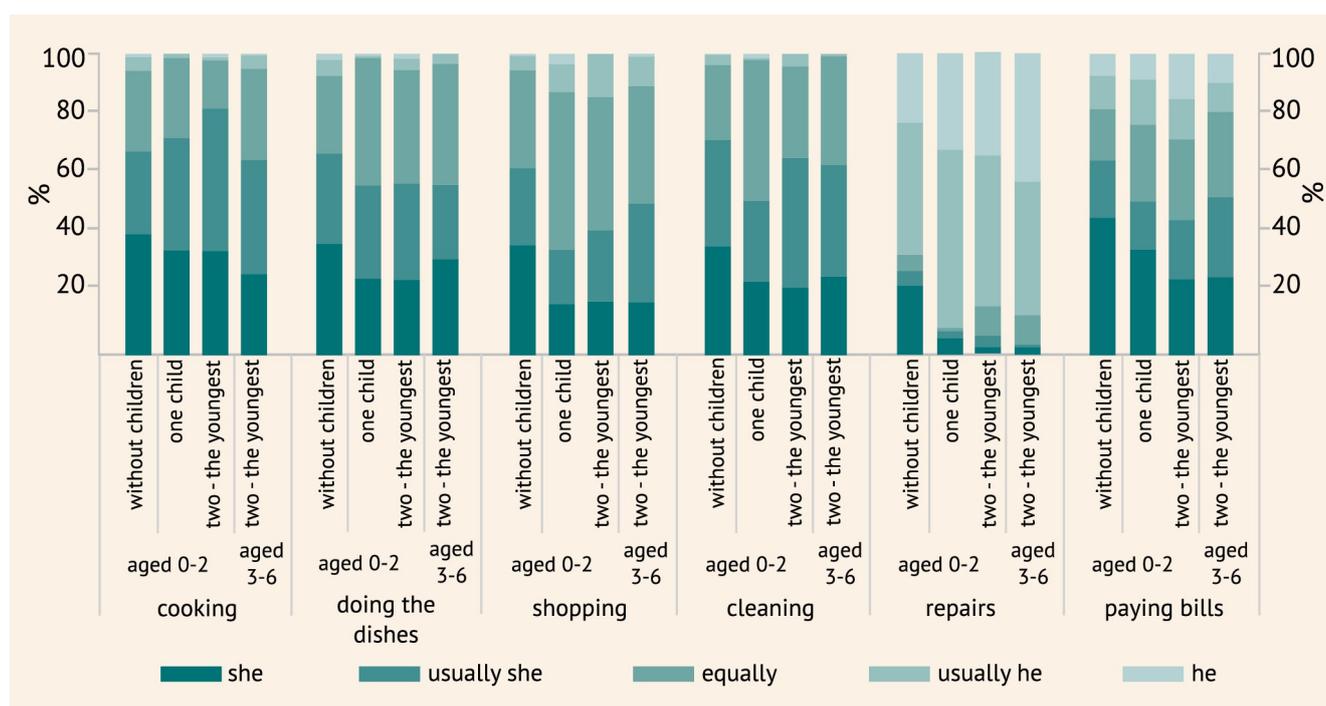
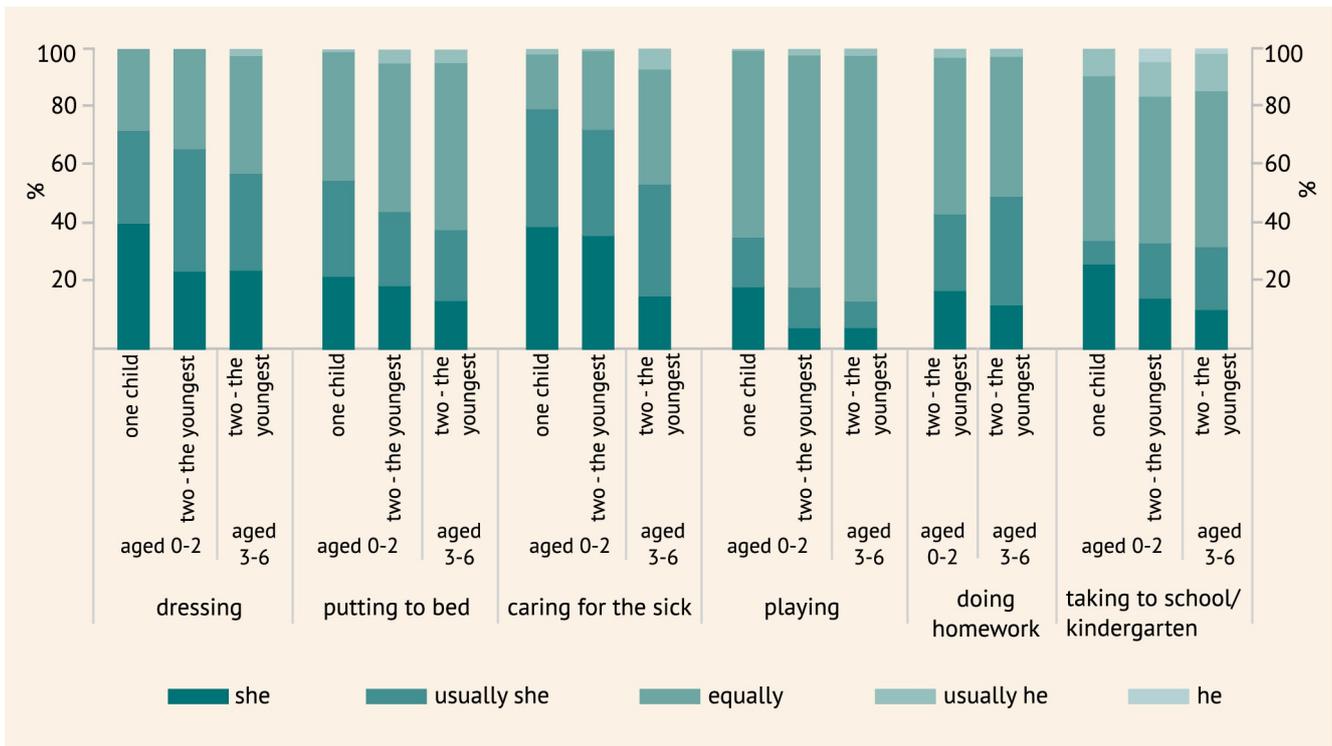


Fig. 6.1 Division of household tasks between partners by number of children and age of the youngest child according to women's declarations, working women, GGS-PL2.



**Fig. 6.2 Division of childcare between partners by number of children and age of the youngest child according to women's declarations, working women, GGS-PL2.**

### ■ Men's involvement in housework (cleaning, shopping, paying bills and repairs) rises slightly when children are born, but the change is temporary

Men's involvement in housework (cleaning, shopping, paying bills and repairs) rises slightly when children are born. However, this does not imply an increase in the proportion of couples in which men perform certain domestic duties more often than women. Instead, the share of couples which divide the housework equally rises. According to women's declarations, in around 40% of couples with two children (in which the youngest is 0-2 years old) it is still only or mostly the woman who is responsible for shopping and in around 60% for cleaning, while in less than 10% of couples it is the man who is only or mostly involved in these tasks. Moreover, women's declarations indicate that men's participation in household tasks relative to their female partners falls and often returns to the initial level when the youngest child achieves kindergarten age.

This suggests that men get involved in housework to a greater degree when their partner is strongly involved in taking care of a small child. However, when this involvement lessens, men's participation in housework also falls. Moreover, women's participation in certain household tasks (such as cooking) actually rises after the birth of a child and in others (doing the dishes) it practically does not change. It should be emphasized that the presented data refer to couples in which the mother is working for pay. Even despite her involvement in the labour market she declares to be more encumbered by household tasks than her partner.

### ■ Women in Poland declare that they are mainly responsible for childcare

According to women's declarations, childcare tasks are performed only or mainly by women in around 40-80% of couples in which the woman works for pay. It is mostly women who dress the children, put them to bed, help with homework or care for them in sickness, i.e. perform activities which need to be done regularly (or intensively in the case of caring

for a sick child). These activities often require large time investments or planning. From 30 to 50% of women declare that the contribution of their partners to the performance of these tasks is just the same as theirs, but the remaining 50-70% state that they perform these tasks only or mostly themselves. More frequently, couples equally share tasks such as taking children to school or kindergarten and playing, i.e. activities that either require small costs in terms of time (taking to school) or do not need to be performed regularly and can be postponed to the weekend or evening (playing). If we accept women's declarations as binding, couples in which only or mostly the man performs a given care task are in the extreme minority: only in around 10% of couples is the man usually responsible for taking children to school or kindergarten and putting them to bed.

■ **Women's participation in care decreases slightly with the age of the child, but is still far higher than that of men**

As children age, women's participation in care (dressing, putting to sleep, caring for a sick child) decreases and the share of couples in which partners share care equally rises. However, even in the case of kindergarten-aged children, in over half of the couples, women declare they are solely or mostly responsible for dressing children and caring for sick children, and in half, for doing homework.

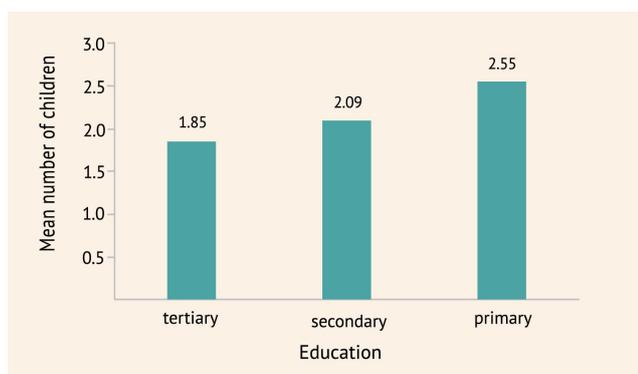
These results indicate that the family model with a double burden on women still dominates in Poland and its domination is especially visible in families with children. Although increasingly more partners share responsibility for providing income for the family, an increase in men's involvement in housework and childcare is occurring at a slow pace.

# CHILDREN

## 7. Do highly educated partners have fewer children than low educated partners?

The level of education is one of the most important determinants of socio-economic status. Persons with higher education generally have a more stable professional situation, have higher salaries, and find it easier to get a new job or change professions in the event of employment loss. The highly educated enjoy better health, live longer, and deal better with problem solving.

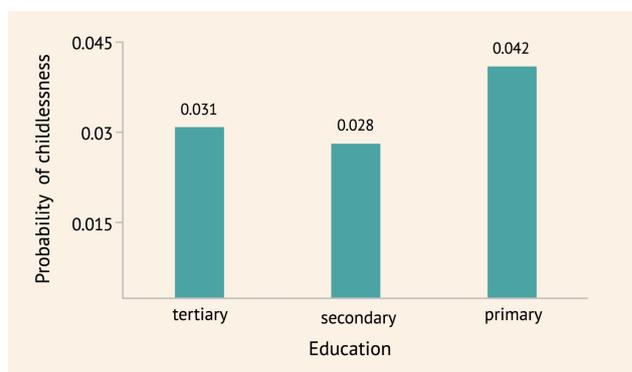
Education also differentiates reproductive behaviours. As a rule, those with higher levels of educational attainment postpone union formation and decide to have children later in life, as they stay in education longer and enter the labour market later. They thus have less time to realise their reproductive intentions. Moreover, persons with tertiary education may be more worried about the consequences that childbearing and childrearing could have on their professional careers. Finally, the highly educated tend to invest more in children and thus having children may be more costly for them both in terms of financial expenditures and time inputs. On the other hand couples with higher education have better economic resources and thus better financial conditions for family formation. Overall, are there differences in the family size of couples with higher and lower levels of educational attainment?



**Fig. 7.1 Mean number of children by both partners' education, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

### ■ The higher the education of both partners, the fewer children they have

Our analysis applies to couples in which the woman was at least 40 years old at the time of the survey (cohorts born 1932-1974), i.e. couples for which total achieved family size can be established. Partners with tertiary education have on average 1.8 children and partners with secondary education – 2.1. Couples of partners with lowest levels of educational attainment have the largest families (2.6 children on average). At the same time, however, they are characterised by the greatest incidence of childlessness. On average, 4% of them do not have children. This is around 1.5 times as many as among other couples.



**Fig. 7.2 Probability of childlessness by both partners' education, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

Our results do not inform us about the reasons for which couples with higher levels of educational attainment have fewer children than couples with lower levels of education. Therefore we do not know whether they prefer smaller families or for some reason cannot realise their childbearing intentions. We can only suspect that it is unlikely these decisions were made based on purely financial factors because usually couples with higher levels of education have higher incomes than less-educated couples.

## 8. Do couples with a better educated female partner have fewer children?

It may seem that couples in which the man obtained a higher level of education than his partner have favourable conditions for having children. Such a situation existed in the past in Western European countries and the United States, and was the result of the division of labour between partners within the breadwinner-home-maker family model. The husband's higher level of educational attainment was positively associated with family income as he was the sole provider of the family income. Thus, families in which husband's level of education surpassed the wife's attainment were potentially better off financially than families where the wife's attainment was higher than that of the husband.

The relationships observed in the past in highly developed Western countries were not ubiquitous in other socio-economic contexts. The division of labour between partners could also change over time. At present, women enrol in higher education increasingly often, they also remain professionally active after getting married and return to work shortly after the child birth. In Poland such changes started to take place far earlier than in Western Europe. Currently twice as many women as men successfully finish tertiary education and increasingly women have higher levels of educational attainment than their male partners. A woman's rising level of education improves her earning opportunities and may create good financial conditions for family formation. On the other hand, highly educated working women with good professional prospects may postpone or even eschew having children as they may be concerned that childbearing and childrearing may jeopardise their careers. This may be particularly the case if their male partners rarely participate in housework and would be reluctant to take up childcare tasks.

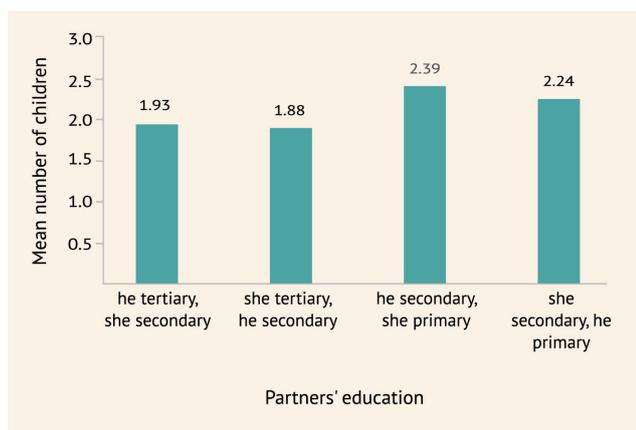
The question arises: what is the effect of the changing educational composition within the couples on their reproductive behaviour? Which couples have more children: those where the woman is higher educated than the man or those where the man's educational level is higher?

We answer these questions with respect to couples in which the woman was born in the years 1932-1974, i.e. was at least 40 years old at the time of the GGS-PL2 study. Only for such couples, in which the woman was close to the upper limit of reproductive age, it was possible to estimate the total realised family size. We compare four types of couples:

- Two types of couples in which the man holds higher degree than the woman, i.e., couples where the male partner has tertiary education and the female partner finished secondary education and couples in which the male partner finished secondary school and the female partner finished primary education.
- Two types of couples in which the woman holds higher degree than the man, i.e., couples where the female partner has a tertiary education and the male partner finished secondary education and couples in which the male partner finished secondary education and the male partner finished primary education.

### ■ **Couples in which the woman holds higher degree than the man have, on average, slightly fewer children than couples in which the man is higher educated**

This is particularly visible among couples with lower levels of educational attainment. Couples in which the woman completed primary education

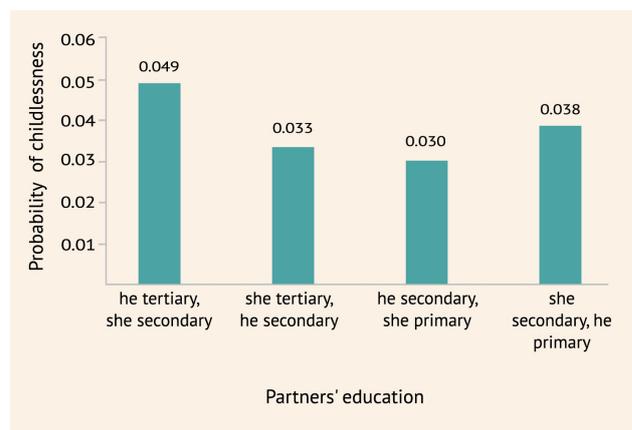


**Fig. 8.1 Mean number of children by both partners' educational levels, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2, couples with women born 1932-1974.**

and her partner completed secondary education have 2.4 children on average, while couples in which it is the man who finished primary education and the woman finished secondary education have only 2.2 children on average. Among couples in which one partner has tertiary education these differences are small and oscillate near the statistical error (1.93 for couples with a man with a tertiary education versus 1.88 for couples with a woman with tertiary education).

### ■ The lower the educational attainment of the partners, the larger their family size

Couples in which one of the partners has primary education and the other secondary education



**Fig. 8.2 Probability of childlessness by both partners' educational levels, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2, couples with women born 1932-1974.**

have 0.4 children more, on average, than couples in which one of the partners attained tertiary education. This indicates that the highest general level of educational attainment of the partners is more important for the realised family size than the gender of the more educated partner.

### ■ The relationship between partners' educational pairing and childlessness is weak

Couples are rather unlikely to remain childless and the incidence of childlessness hardly depends on partners' relative education. Couples in which the man attained tertiary education and the woman secondary education constitute an exception, as they remain childless more often than the remaining couples: around 5% of them do not have children.

## 9. Later or never? Childbearing intentions of childless men and women

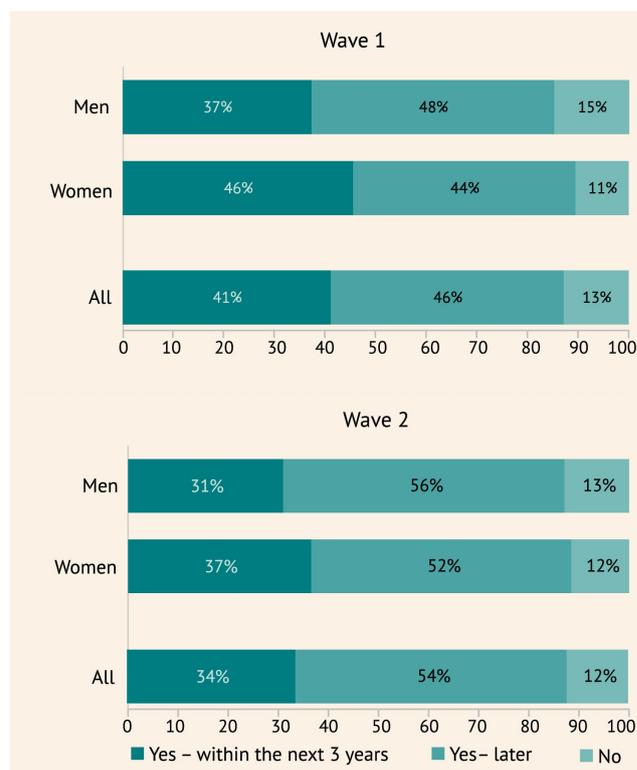
In the last decades we have witnessed a significant increase in childlessness in Poland. Among women born in 1945-1955 around 8% never became mothers, while this share rose more than twofold for women born around 1970. Nowadays, Polish men and women are deciding to have the first child increasingly late or never become parents.

Childlessness may be a result of various reasons. It can originate from various health problems, lack of a partner or financial limitations. It may also stem from a person's individual preferences. It is hard to define how many men and women do not have offspring due to various obstacles, and in how many cases it is the effect of a conscious and free choice. Nevertheless, the GGS-PL study makes it possible to establish how many childless individuals intend to become parents and how many do not have such plans, regardless of the reason.

### ■ In Poland, among childless people aged 18-39, one person in ten does not intend to become a parent

Childless GGS-PL respondents aged 18-39 were divided into three distinct categories. The first category was formed by persons who declared they planned to become parents within the next three years. The second group consisted of those who were planning parenthood in the more distant future. Individuals who did not intend to have any children at all fell into the third category.

As for intention to remain permanently childless, no meaningful change occurred between years 2010 and 2014. In the first wave of the survey, 15% of men and 11% of women in the childless group aged 18-39 did not intend to have any children at all. Four years later, the respective shares

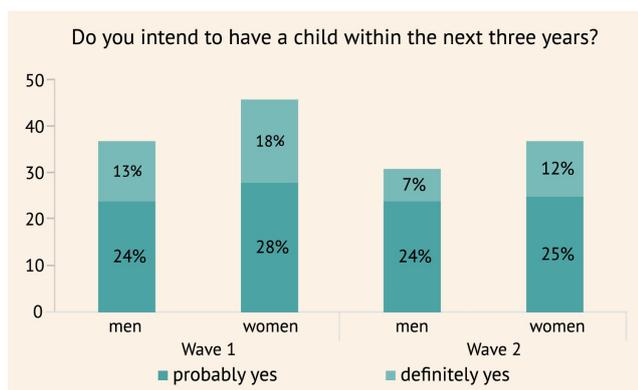


**Fig. 9.1** Childbearing intentions of childless men and women aged 18-39 in the first (GGS-PL1) and second (GGS-PL2) survey wave.

were 13% and 12%. In general, in the subpopulation of respondents aged 18-39 every tenth childless person intended to remain childless.

### ■ Childless respondents postpone parenthood increasingly often

At the same time, a change can be observed in relation to how soon childless people plan to have a child. The share of persons who are delaying the decision to become parents has grown distinctly between 2010 and 2014. In the first wave of the study, 48% of childless men and 44% of childless women (aged 18-39) planned to become parents later than in the next three years. In the second wave, the decision about parenthood was postponed by 56% of men and 52% of women.



**Fig. 9.2 Intention to have a child within the next three years among childless men and women aged 18-39 years in the first and second survey wave.**

Young Poles are delaying their reproductive decisions but they are also increasingly uncertain about their childbearing plans. In the first wave of the survey, 37% of childless men aged 18-39 intended to start a family within the next three years, with 13% answering “definitely yes” and a

further 24%, “probably yes”. In the second wave, the share of men intending to have a child in the near future fell and only 7% declared certainty of their plans. Similar changes can be observed for women. Not only did the share of childless Polish women planning motherhood within the next three years fall, the share of those who definitely had such intentions fell from 18% to 12%.

The lack of certainty in men’s and women’s childbearing intentions can be worrying. As we will show in the next article, an intention described as definite (“I definitely intend to have a child within the next three years”) has a relatively high chance of being realized. Less certain intentions (“I probably intend to have a child within the next three years”) are realised with a much lower probability.

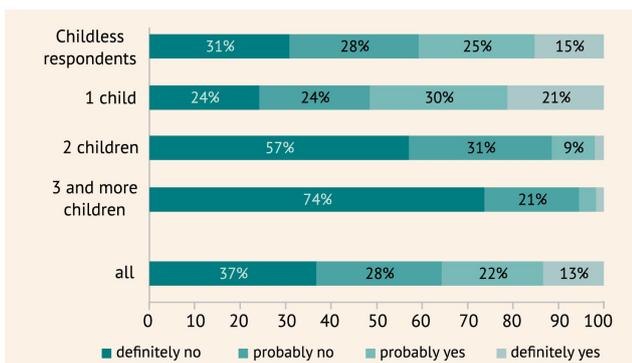
## 10. Childbearing intentions and their realisation

In the first wave of the survey at the turn of 2010 and 2011, over one third of men and women aged 18-39 gave a positive answer to the question on intention to have a child within the next three years: 13% said they definitely intended to have a child within this time period, 22% said that they probably had such an intention. The second wave of the survey allowed us to check whether these plans had been realised.

### ■ Persons who have two or more children rarely consider having a larger family

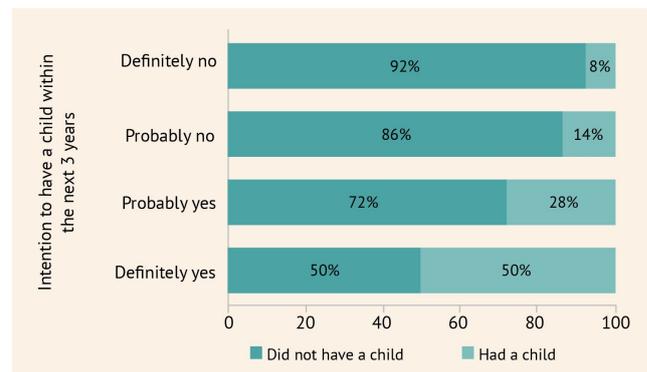
In the first wave of the survey, parenthood was mainly planned by childless persons (40% of them intended to become parents) and parents of one child (over half of them planned to enlarge their family). Among parents of two or more children only one person in ten planned to have another child.

The childbearing intentions were realized to a similar degree by childless respondents and parents (regardless of the number of children they already had). First, only 10% of respondents who at the first wave did not intend to have a child within the next three years actually had one by the second wave. Importantly, it does not necessa-



**Fig. 10.1 Intention to have a child within the next three years, men and women aged 18-39, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

rily mean that they became parents unintentionally since their childbearing intentions might have changed after the first survey was taken.



**Fig. 10.2 Intention to have a child within the next three years and its realisation, men and women aged 18-39, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

The consistency between intentions and behaviour was far lower among the respondents who declared they were planning to have a child within the next three years. Only half of those who definitely planned to become parents at wave one actually realised their intention. In the case of the respondents who declared such a plan with some uncertainty ("I probably intend to have a child within the next three years") less than one third had a child before the second wave of the survey.

In comparison with other European countries, the rate of the realisation of childbearing intentions in Poland is similar to that of, for instance, Bulgaria. This trend however differs substantially from e.g. Netherlands, where as many as 75% of respondents realized their reproductive intentions over the span of three years. Further, in-depth analyses are called for to better understand the obstacles to realisation of childbearing intentions in Poland.

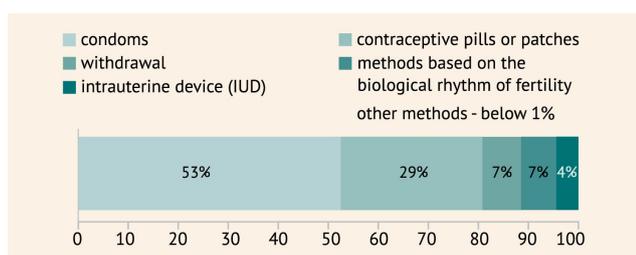
Based on a report by Monika Mynarska and Zuzanna Brzozowska

## 11. Birth control methods and the desire to have a child

Reproductive intentions and their realisation are very strongly connected to birth control. As a rule, individuals who do not want to become parents should—if they are sexually active—use some method of birth control. The GGS-PL study allows us to establish what methods are used by couples in Poland and whether using birth control is consistent with their childbearing desires.

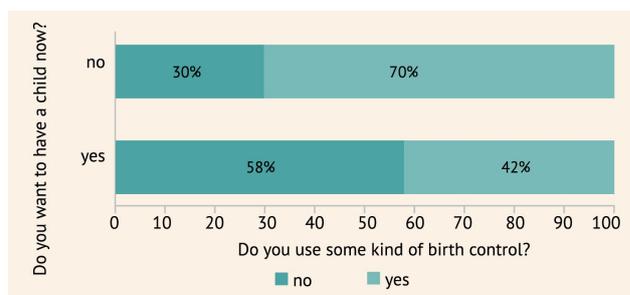
### ■ The respondents aged 18-39 most often use modern methods of birth control: condoms and hormonal contraceptives

Among respondents aged 18-39, over half declared that they or their partner were using some kind of birth control (55%). Respondents could indicate up to five methods used. If we consider the first choices of our respondents, they most often declared using (together with their partner) condoms (53%) and contraceptive pills or patches (29%).



**Fig. 11.1 Birth control methods used by respondents aged 18-39, first method indicated, GGS-PL1.**

Notably, every fifth respondent indicated at least two different methods of birth control. Most frequently, respondents declared combining condoms with hormonal contraception (almost 40% of persons who indicated at least two methods) or condoms with methods based on the biological rhythm of fertility or withdrawal (further 40% of this group).



**Fig. 11.2 Desire to have a child and birth control use, respondents aged 18-39 living together with a spouse or a partner, GGS-PL1.**

### ■ Among persons with a partner but not wanting to have a child, 70% used birth control

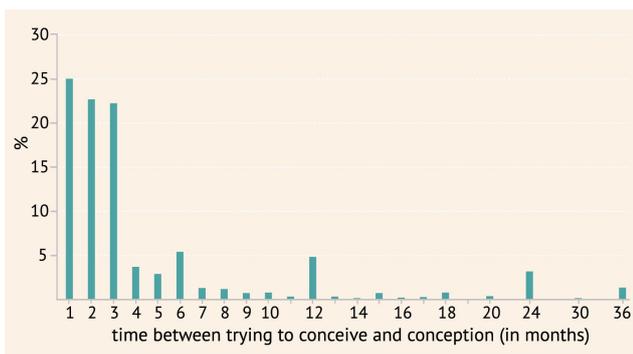
Using methods of birth control clearly correlates with a lack of desire to have a child, even though respondents' childbearing plans and contraceptive behaviours are not completely consistent. We considered the answers of the respondents aged 18-39, but only those living together with a partner (in a marital or non-marital relationship). Among those who declared they did not want to have a child at the moment of the survey, 70% used some method of birth control. Meanwhile, this share was 42% among respondents who wanted to become parents. Apparently, wanting to have a child does not mean that a person immediately stops using methods of birth control and starts attempting to conceive. All in all, the GGS-PL results suggest that a significant share of couples take advantage of various methods of birth control to have a child at the time they choose.

## 12. Postponing birth of the first child and the realisation of childbearing intentions

Postponing reproductive decisions, particularly the decision about the first child, may seriously hinder realisation of fertility intentions. First of all, fecundity declines with age, especially among women. Moreover, as individuals start their attempts to have a child at later age, their fecundity problems might be diagnosed too late, leaving little time for treatment or assisted reproduction techniques. The limitations of female fecundity have a key significance in this respect. Therefore researchers mostly focus on women's reproductive behaviours. However, increasing attention is being paid to men, since their age and lifestyle (smoking, alcohol or coffee consumption) also have a meaningful impact on the probability of conception.

The results of analyses cited earlier in this report document that Polish women born after 1969 delayed their decision to have the first child. Does this later decision to become a mother result in a longer time necessary to conceive? Is it possible to establish at what age the decrease in fecundity can have a significant impact on the realisation of childbearing intentions?

A quest for answers to these questions requires information about the waiting time to pregnancy, defined as the time span between the onset of intentional attempts to conceive (stopping using



**Fig. 12.1** Couples by time interval between trying to conceive and conception, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.

birth control and having regular intercourse) and conception. Such data—crucial to understand the relationship between parenthood postponement and fecundity—were collected in Poland for the first time using the Generations and Gender Survey. Unfortunately, unsuccessful attempts have not been documented as questions about the waiting time to pregnancy were only directed at those who subsequently became parents. Nevertheless, 1,754 respondents provided information about the waiting time to their first pregnancy—this makes the GGS sample the largest Polish sample that allows for studying Poles' reproductive potential.

### ■ Almost one couple in ten waits over 12 months for the first pregnancy

Analyses of waiting time to pregnancy show that for 70% of couples, conception of the first child occurs within the first three months of regular, unprotected intercourse. Meanwhile, around 9% of couples needed over a year to conceive their first child.

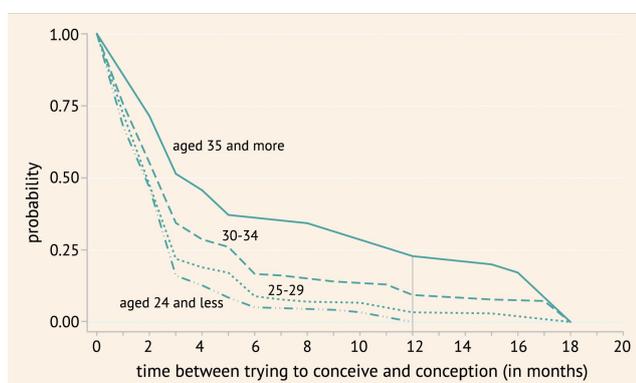
### ■ Couples postponing their decision to have the first child until the woman is 35 and over should be aware that the time between starting attempts to conceive and pregnancy may be longer

The influence of the woman's age on the waiting time to pregnancy is depicted in Fig. 12.2. The graph presents several Kaplan-Meier survival curves depending on the age of women. We can see that the risk of a longer waiting time for pregnancy rises with woman's age. It means that among women trying to conceive the share of those who need more time to get pregnant increases in older age groups.

Of women who gave birth to their first child at ages 25-29, only around 5% waited for pregnancy for a year or longer. Among women aged 30-34 the share doubled to 10%. The time needed to get pregnant lengthens significantly after women's 35th birthday. Around 25% of women who gave birth to their first child at age 35 or later had to wait a year or longer for pregnancy. This result is consistent with those of previous studies, which indicated that fecundity of women aged 35 is only 60% of the maximum value (Wood, 1989). Couples that postpone the decision to have the first child

until the woman is 35 years old or older must therefore be prepared for a significant increase of the waiting time to pregnancy. This may also impede realisation of their intentions regarding subsequent children. Moreover, a late diagnosis of infertility limits chances of a successful treatment.

Since low fertility in Poland concurs with postponement of the decision to have the first child, it is deemed necessary to take actions to increase people's awareness of bio-medical consequences of childbearing postponement. It seems equally important to assure appropriate medical support for couples trying to become parents.



**Fig. 12.2 Proportion of women by waiting time for pregnancy and the age of the mother at first birth, GGS-PL1 and GGS-PL2.**

## 13. Can health problems limit women's reproductive intentions?

As discussed in the previous article, women's age is highly important for their ability to conceive. It matters for women's reproductive health and fecundity but also for their overall physical condition. Generally, health deteriorates with age and that also might play a role in women's childbearing plans.

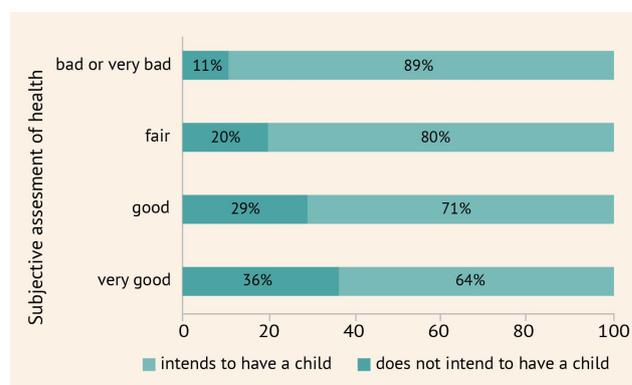
Using data from the Polish Generations and Gender Survey, we analysed how health influences childbearing plans of women aged 20-44. Do women who do not assess their health positively forgo having a child or at least postpone such a decision?

In the first wave of the survey—at the turn of 2010 and 2011—20% of female respondents aged 20-44 were not content with their general health (they assessed it as lower than “good”) and 15% had some type of long-term health problems or chronic illnesses. These values should not be dismissed if we consider health status of women in reproductive age and their ability to realise childbearing intentions.

**■ Among the respondents who assess their health as poor, only one woman in ten intends to bear a child within the next three years**

Analyses showed that women characterised by unsatisfactory health intended to have a child (first or subsequent) significantly less often than their healthy counterparts—at least in regards to plans for the next three years. Among women who assessed their health as very good, more than one third declared they intended to have a child in the near future. Among women describing their health as poor or very poor such an intention was expressed by only one respondent in ten.

The above results were verified taking into account women's age, their marital status, and number of children they already had. Irrespective of these factors, women who assessed their health as less than good were not inclined to make childbearing plans.



**Fig. 13.1 Intention to have a child (first or subsequent) within the next three years by subjective assessment of health, women aged 20-44 years, GGS-PL1.**

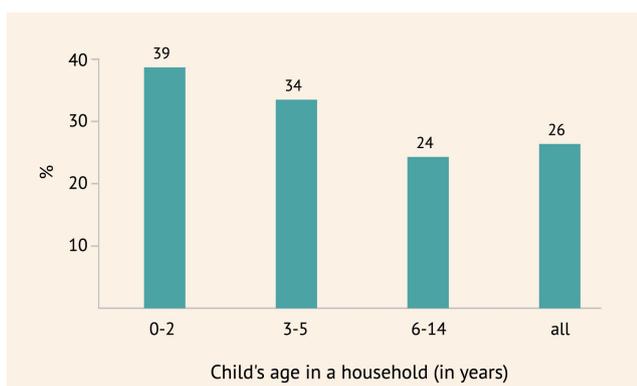
General health, i.e. overall physical condition, is therefore an important issue considered by women as they make their childbearing plans. Even for very young women it may be a factor that leads to delaying reproductive decisions. And the longer such a decision is postponed, the worse the state of health usually becomes.

## INTERGENERATIONAL CARE

## 14. What is the role of grandparents in caring for grandchildren?

In Poland, comparatively few small children are enrolled in institutionalized childcare, especially among the subpopulation of children aged 0-2. According to OECD data, in 2014 only 11% of Polish children aged under 2 were in institutionalised childcare (compared to 33% of children aged under 2 in other OECD countries). Significantly more, namely 75% of children aged 3-5 years, attended preschool (much closer to the OECD preschool enrolment average of 84%).

The relatively low enrolment in childcare institutions in Poland results from, among others, a lack of sufficient number of providers. As most parents work—80.5% of women and 92% of men aged 25-49 years are economically active—deficient supply of institutionalized childcare creates conflicts between work and care for many families. Such a situation generates demand for additional care, provided by relatives (including grandparents).



**Fig. 14.1 Percentage of households receiving help with childcare from grandparents by age, GGS-PL2.**

Indeed, around 32% of households with children aged 14 and under declared to receive regular help with childcare from relatives, friends and acquaintances. Among those who receive regular help, around 80% receive regular help from grandparents (usually the grandmother on the child’s mother’s side). Grandparents most often provide care for children aged 0-2 years (see Fig.

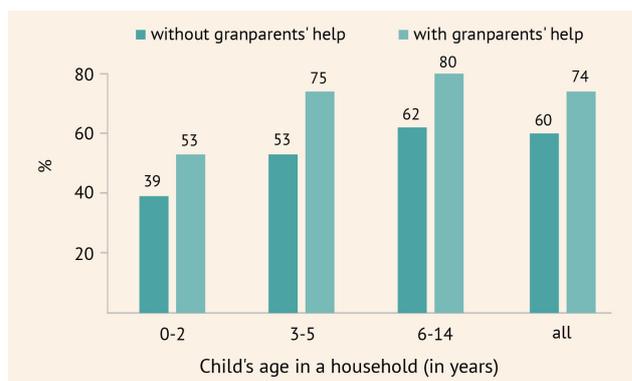
14.1) and are slightly less involved in caring for children aged 2-5 years. Rarely do they care for school-aged children.

**Care provided by grandparents is quite regular and not only does it supplement institutional care, it also often serves as a substitute for it**

On average, grandparents care for their grandchildren for 190 days a year and this number increases to 209 days a year for those who care for babies under 2. This is slightly above half of all the days in a year and around 75% of working days. Almost 90% of households that use grandparents’ childcare help use it more than once a week.

**Care provided by grandparents is very important for mothers’ economic activity**

In the households who receive help from the grandparents, 74% of the mothers work for pay. The number is markedly lower for mothers in the households who do not receive the grandparents’ help in childcare – only 60% of them work for pay. Grandparents’ help is most crucial for mothers’



**Fig. 14.2 Women’s employment rate by age of the youngest child in the household and the use of grandparents’ help, GGS-PL2.**

economic activity for households with children aged 3-5 years old. This result once again demonstrates that grandparents' help is an indispensable element supplementing or even substituting for institutional care.

### ■ **The extent of care for grandchildren provided by grandparents fell slightly in the years 2010-2014**

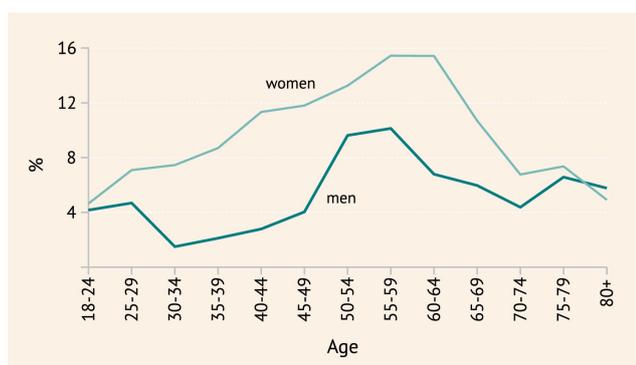
In 2010, 30% of households with children aged 14 or less declared receiving grandparents' help—4 percentage points more than in 2014. This slight decline in grandparental care over time may have resulted from two main reasons. On the one hand, it is possible that parents are more likely to enrol their children in institutionalized childcare as the supply increased markedly between 2011 and

2014. On the other hand, the early retirement possibilities were limited due to a pension system reform and so grandparents, who otherwise would have decided to retire and participate in care, are constrained to stay on the labor market. The latter explanation is quite likely, taking into account two facts. First, there exists scientific evidence that women of pre- and early retirement age are likely to retire specifically in order to provide care for their grandchildren. Second, GGS data shows that the number of grandmothers of pre-retirement or early retirement age dropped between 2010 and 2015. Yet, at the same time, the decreasing availability of the grandmothers of pre-retirement and early retirement age was mitigated by an uptake of childcare responsibilities observed among subpopulations of pre-retirement age men and women aged 45-55.

## 15. Who cares for adults in need?

Older people (especially those aged 70 and older), those chronically ill and the disabled often require support from their closest family and friends. This support may entail nursing and help in carrying out basic everyday tasks. Such help is most frequently provided by family members, acquaintances, friends and neighbours, although sometimes nursing of the elderly may also necessitate assistance from specialised institutions.

In Poland, around 8% of the population aged 18-84 years regularly take care of adults, helping them with daily tasks such as eating, getting up, dressing, bathing or using the toilet. Women provide care for adults twice as often as men do.



**Fig. 15.1** Share of persons caring for adults by sex and age, GGS-PL2.

### ■ Persons aged 45-69 years are the most involved in caring for adults

Among persons aged 45-69 years, around 11% (13.5% of women and 7.4% of men) provide care regularly, helping persons older than them (parents and parents-in-law), of the same age (spouses, acquaintances and friends) and also younger than them (adult children). Persons aged 45-69 years are said to belong to the so-called “sandwich generation”—a generation of persons who are potentially a source of support and care both for younger and for older people. They

usually take care of their mothers (35%), other unrelated persons (14.8%), parents-in-law (12.6%), spouses (11.2%), other relatives (9.9%), fathers (8.6), and children (8.1%). The situation of the sandwich generation is specific in that they are often still supporting their own children (over 71% have children), are professionally active (around 40%) and at the same time start to experience their own health problems (around 20% declared disability). Among women aged 45-69 years providing care for adults, almost 30% were in addition looking after a child that was not their own (e.g. a grandchild).

Younger persons (aged 18-44 years) and older persons (70-84 years) provide care for adults two times less frequently than persons aged 45-69 years do. The young mainly look after their grandparents; more rarely, after their mother and father; and least frequently, after other relatives, friends and acquaintances. The old, often needing support themselves, usually care for their spouses.

Our results indicate that currently the scale of involvement in care for adults is not large, also among persons aged 45-69 years. In the closest decade, however, we may expect that middle-aged persons will become more burdened by care, particularly the care for older adults. Two factors contribute to this. On the one hand, the large cohorts of post-war baby boomers will soon reach the age at which the risk of disability and old age diseases increases substantially. On the other hand, the population of persons who could provide such care is shrinking due to outmigration and increasing economic activity of persons of early and pre-retirement age.

## QUALITY OF LIFE AT ITS DIFFERENT STAGES

## 16. How often do Poles experience tensions between paid work and family?

Family and economic activity are two of the most important areas of life. However, combining them, especially when there are children, can be hard. Both working for pay and raising children require large amounts of time and energy, particularly when both partners have full time jobs, which often happens in Poland. Difficulties with combining the two activities give rise to a work-family conflict. A parent may experience a family-to-work conflict when an excess of family responsibilities does not allow for the appropriate fulfilment of professional duties—or a work-to-family conflict—when an excess of professional obligations makes it difficult to carry out family responsibilities.

**■ In Poland, a family-to-work conflict is experienced far less often than a work-to-family conflict**

Poles experience a far stronger work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict. This means that they frequently come home from work too tired or spend too much time at work to properly perform their domestic duties. Men experience a work-to-family conflict as often as women.

In contrast, Poles rarely declare that they experience difficulties with concentrating at work due to family responsibilities. They also rarely declare

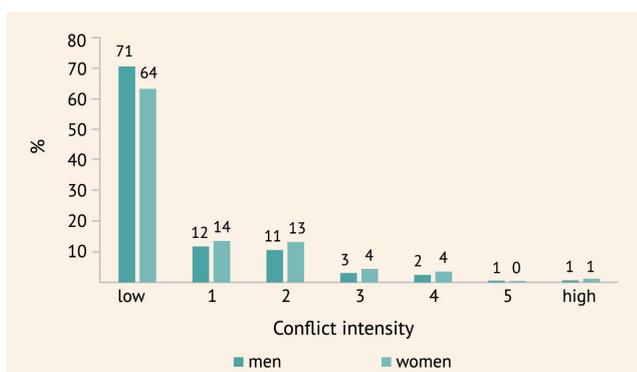
that excessive tiredness caused by family responsibilities does not allow them to function correctly at work. Men experience a family-to-work conflict slightly less often than women.

**■ Parents with three children and children of kindergarten age are most exposed to work-family conflict**

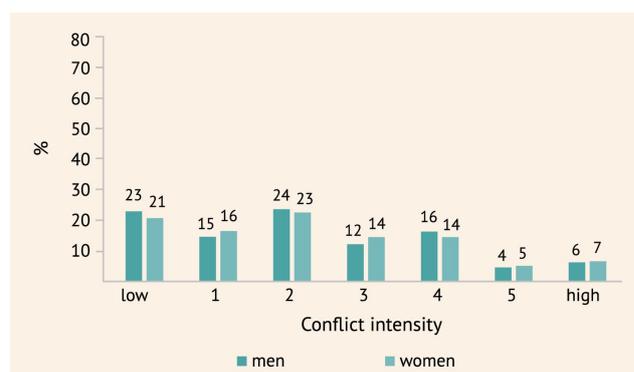
Work-family conflict is most noticeable among larger families and families with young children. Fathers of three children are most likely to admit that their work interferes with family obligations. Notably, the rare instances of family life interfering with professional career (family-to-work conflict) are most frequently reported by mothers of three children and by fathers of children of kindergarten age.

**■ Workplace characteristics differentiate mainly the intensity of the work-to-family conflict**

Supervising other employees strongly increases the work-to-family conflict. Indeed, supervising others often means working in managerial posts that require high availability and responsibility, and may also be the source of stress which makes



**Fig. 16.1 Experience of a family-to-work conflict, GGS-PL2.**



**Fig. 16.2 Experience of a work-to-family conflict, GGS-PL2.**

involvement in raising children difficult. Interestingly, time devoted to professional work does not differentiate the intensity of the work-to-family conflict for men, but does for women. Finally, the sense of employment stability is related to a weaker work-to-family conflict for both sexes.

Workplace characteristics hardly differentiate the intensity of the family-to-work conflict. Only in the public sector positions do men tend to experience weaker family-to-work conflict than women.

Interestingly, other workplace characteristics, often considered important for balancing family and work (flexible working time, possibility of working from home or necessity of working in different places outside the home) were not associated with the intensity of the work-family conflict.

## 17. Job satisfaction and reconciliation of work and family

As a rule, professional work takes up a large part of adult life. Over a year, persons working full-time spend around 250 days at work, carrying out professional duties during around 30% of the time not devoted to sleep. Having a satisfying job is therefore extremely important from the perspective of the general quality of life.

### ■ Poles are generally rather satisfied with their jobs

Asked to assess their satisfaction on a scale from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied), respondents most frequently chose values around 8 (about 25% of respondents). A quarter of respondents are even more satisfied with their jobs (indicated answers 9 and 10). Only under 10% of respondents are so unsatisfied with their jobs that they chose categories 0-3.

Men and women are satisfied with work similarly often. Moreover, no significant changes in satisfaction with work were noted in the survey of 2014/2015 as compared with the survey of 2010/2011.

Earlier studies show that job satisfaction strongly depends on the salary received, employment stability, working conditions, whether the job is

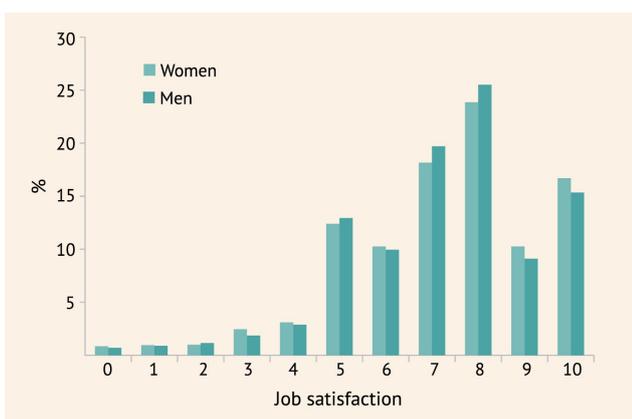


Fig. 17.1 Poles' satisfaction with paid work, GGS-PL2.

interesting and important, on interpersonal relationships in the workplace, and also on motivational factors such as being appreciated, receiving bonuses, possibility of promotion and personal development (Herzberg et al., 1956, Springer, 2011). However, little is known about how better possibilities of combining professional work with care are related to job satisfaction in Poland. Meanwhile, family life and professional work are two of the four most important conditions of a successful life for Poles, next to health and financial situation (Czapiński, 2015). Difficulty in reconciling paid work and the family may thus be a source of stress, particularly as professional work is also an important determinant of financial situation.

### ■ Working in different places outside the home lowers men's satisfaction with work

Difficulties in combining paid work with care are slightly negatively associated with job satisfaction. Interestingly, work characteristics which potentially affect work-and-family reconciliation are differently related to job satisfaction of men and of women. Men who often work in different places outside the home are significantly less satisfied with their jobs than those who work in one place outside the home. Different places of work outside the home may be related to frequent business trips, not only tiring for the employee, but also limiting his contact with family.

### ■ Among women satisfaction with work is lower if it entails excessive duties

The place of carrying out work does not differentiate women's satisfaction with their job. This may

result from the fact that women usually take fewer business trips than men. Women's satisfaction with work is decreased, however, by the experience of work-to-family conflict which is reflected in excessive tiredness from the performance of professional duties that makes it impossible to carry out household tasks after coming home.

Apart from these two characteristics of professional work (working in many places outside of the home and experience of tiredness from excessive professional duties) we also examined the relationship between job satisfaction and the possibility of working from home,

flexitime or employer-subsidized childcare. None of these features turned out to be significant for men and women's job satisfaction. It seems, however, that future studies should more closely examine the role of telework and employer-subsidized childcare. These factors may—particularly where professional responsibilities are combined with care—raise parents' satisfaction with professional activity.

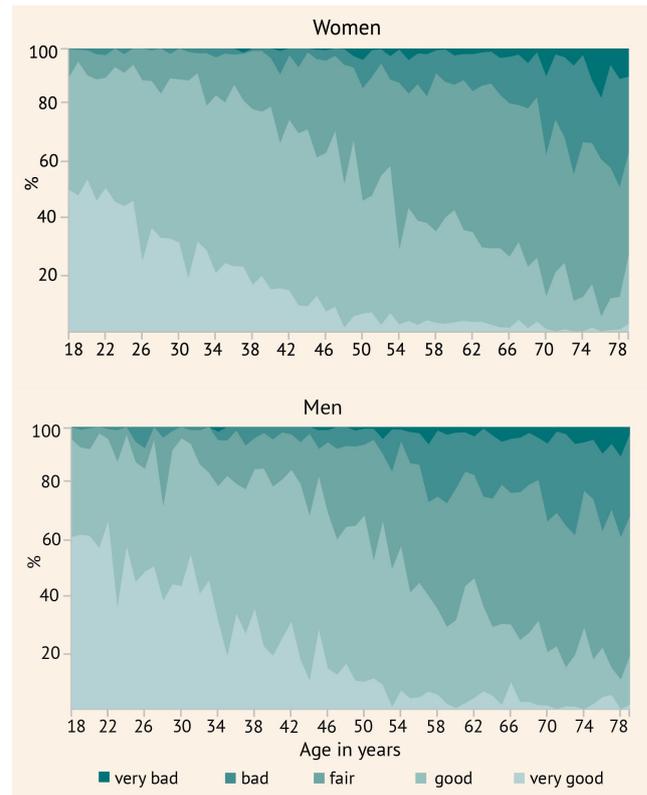
## 18. How does the health of Polish men and women change over the life course?

Health is one of the most important determinants of happy life. It impacts all areas of our functioning: professional work, income, family and private life. The “Generations and Gender Survey” (GGG-PL) contains a set of questions on respondents’ self-assessed health and thus makes it possible to examine selected aspects of Poles’ health status. As the study covers individuals aged 18-79, we are able to describe the physical condition of people at different ages and to explore relations between age and self-assessed health in more detail.

### ■ Half of respondents aged 18-79 assessed their health as good or very good. Age is the most important factor influencing these assessments

Around half of the respondents who took part in the study at the turn of 2014/2015 assessed their health as good or very good. However, while this share was as high as 90% among the respondents aged 20, only around one third of the individuals aged 60-64 assessed their health so positively. Overall, men rated their health better than women, although the nature of this difference changed with age. At young ages, men’s favourable position is visible in how they assessed their health as good and very good more frequently than women. At older ages, it is mainly about the frequency of poor and very poor ratings.

Similar age patterns in self-assessed health are depicted for multiple self-rated health indicators. For example, long-term health problems were reported by around 40% of all respondents, whereas in the 55-59 age group around half of the respondents declared suffering from such problems. Furthermore, 15% of all respondents declared they were disabled but among those

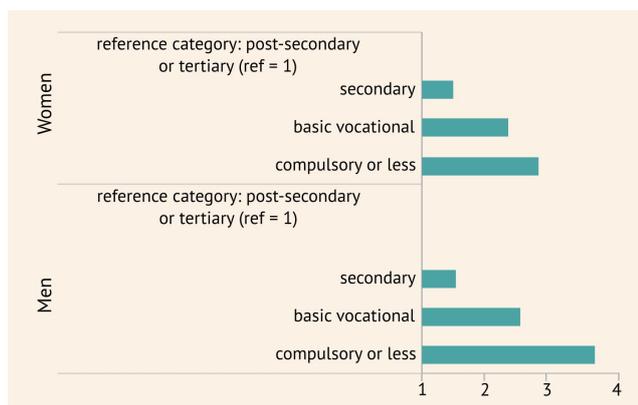


**Fig. 18.1 Subjective assessment of health in individual age groups, men and women, GGS-PL2.**

aged 55 and older one person in five declared such a condition. Importantly, women perform slightly worse than men regardless of which type of information on their health is considered. And the difference between men and women increases starting in the mid-thirties.

### ■ The worst health—irrespective of age—is observed for persons with low levels of educational attainment. This effect is stronger for men

Notably, age and sex are not the only factors that matter for self-assessment of health. Results from the GGS highlight the importance of educational attainment in the studies of health.



**Fig. 18.2 Risk of negative assessment of health among persons with lower levels of education compared with persons with post-secondary or higher education (reference category, ref.=1), men and women, 18-79 years, GGS-PL2.**

The results of a logistic regression model of a risk of assessing one's health as less than good by educational level, controlled for age.

Irrespective of age, persons with lower levels of education declare being of poorer health than their higher-educated counterparts. The lowest levels of educational attainment are associated with the worst reports of self-rated health. Moreover, the effect of education is stronger for men than for women. The lowest reports of self-assessed health were observed for men with no secondary education. The probability they would rate their health as less than good was almost four times higher than for men with at least post-secondary education. The risk that women with the lowest level of education would negatively assess their health was around three times higher than for women with at least post-secondary education.

## 19. Loneliness among persons aged 50+

People function within societies. Through social interactions they receive and provide support, satisfy their needs of safety, usefulness and belongingness, develop, and gain new knowledge. It is thus no wonder that the feeling of being a part of society, the belief that there is somebody one can count on in need, is an important determinant of quality of life.

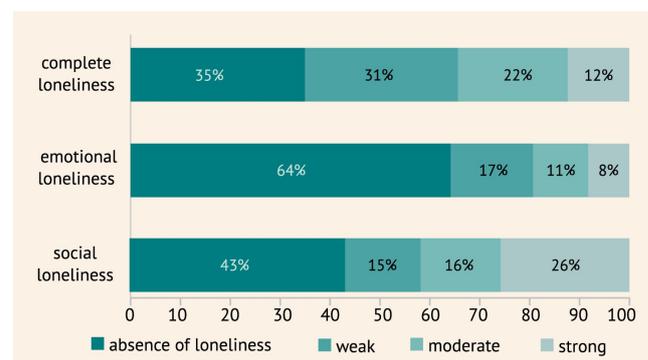
However, the feeling of being a part of society may weaken as a consequence of a combination of various circumstances, such as adult children moving out of the parental home, loss of a spouse through death or divorce, worsening health, job loss or retirement. These events usually cumulate after age 50. Consequently, persons aged 50+ are exposed to loneliness more than the younger population groups.

In Poland approximately 12% of Poles aged 50+ feel very lonely, and every fifth is quite lonely. Only 34% do not feel lonely.

### ■ Poles feel lonely due to the lack of social contacts more often than due to the lack of an intimate relationship

The feeling of loneliness may result from the lack of an intimate relationship (with such persons as a partner or a close friend) or due to the lack of more widely understood social contacts, e.g. with family, relatives and friends. In Poland, among persons aged 50 years and older the second type of loneliness, i.e. social loneliness, definitely dominates. Around 25% of respondents declared they do not have people they could rely on in case of trouble or to whom they feel close. Poles were far less likely to declare experiencing symptoms of emotional loneliness resulting from a lack of an intimate relationship with a close friend or a partner, resulting in a feeling of rejection and

“emotional emptiness”. Almost 9% declared they felt rejected, lacked people around themselves and felt a great emptiness, while almost 2/3 definitely denied experiencing such situations.



**Fig. 19.1 Loneliness in population aged 50+, indices proposed by de Jong Gierveld and Tilburg (2006), GGS-PL2.**

### ■ Having children weakens loneliness twofold

Women aged 50+ feel lonely around 25% less often than men in this age group. Those who have children experience the feeling of loneliness twice less often than the childless. Loneliness is also more prevalent in large towns, among persons with primary education and in a worse financial situation, the divorced, and also the disabled or with a chronic illness.

### ■ Loneliness significantly lowers satisfaction with life

Lonely persons are less satisfied with their lives. An increase in loneliness by one unit on the loneliness scale (from 0 to 3) causes a relative decline in life satisfaction by around 5%. In other words, very lonely people are approximately 15% less happy than persons with the same characteristics who do not feel lonely at all. Interestingly, our analyses show that the positive relationship

between satisfaction with life among persons aged 50 years and older and having children may be explained with loneliness. After accounting for loneliness in our analyses, the positive relationship between life satisfaction and number of children became insignificant. This means that childlessness is strongly related to loneliness, and it is loneliness and not number of children which

directly impacts satisfaction with life. Still open is the question whether childless people feel lonely because of the very fact of not having children, or whether other issues are the key here, such as the—often co-occurring with childlessness—lack of a partner and less extensive family or friendship networks.

## 20. Who retires earlier?

The advancing process of population ageing and the increases in life expectancy lead to the growth of the retired population and the lengthening of the period over which retirement pensions are collected. Such a situation may in the future cause pensions to be significantly reduced or lead to the bankruptcy of pension systems. The ongoing demographic changes thus generate pressure to limit the options of early retirement and to raise the retirement age.

Limiting the possibility of early retirement and raising the retirement age give rise to social protest. The reluctance to stay professionally active longer may result from various causes such as worsening health, dissatisfaction with working conditions, being burdened with domestic responsibilities performed in parallel to carrying out professional work or the wish or necessity of looking after grandchildren or older people. Persons with higher education often have better working conditions and higher incomes than persons with lower education, and their work may be more interesting to them. Thus it may be expected that they will be less willing to retire. It is also believed that persons who have flexible working hours or can shorten their working hours are more willing to continue professional activity than persons whose options in this scope are limited.

Using both waves of the GGS-PL, we checked who hastens the decision to retire, and who stays economically active longer. We studied persons born in the years 1935-1964 who were economically active during the first wave of the survey (i.e. the turn of the years 2010 and 2011). In this group, retirement age was reached by women born in the years 1950-1955 and men born in the years 1945-1950. Among persons born earlier, most had retired before 2010 and only few remained in the labour force. Among those born later, only persons with the relevant privileges could retire early.

### Factors speeding retirement among economically active persons born in the years 1935-1964

- poor health
- low education
- domestic responsibilities among men
- flexible working hours for women
- fixed working hours for men

Sex and health strongly differentiate the probability of retiring. In the period 2011-2014 women were approximately 70% more likely to retire than men. Persons in worse health also retired earlier. Level of education is another factor which turned out to differentiate the probability of retiring, but not as strongly as it may be expected. Persons with the lowest level of education retired earlier than persons with higher educational attainment. However, we observed no differences in the intensity of retiring between persons with secondary or post-secondary education and those with tertiary education. Men who felt too burdened by domestic responsibilities retired earlier than men who felt less burdened. Interestingly, however, having grandchildren did not differentiate the probability of retiring in the period 2010-2015. Finally, fixed working hours are related to earlier retirement among men and later retirement among women.

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The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) is part of the international Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). It is an innovative programme of demographic research founded to establish and explain the cause and consequence mechanisms underlying demographic transformations currently taking place in European countries. It was launched in 2001 as the scientific community's response to research needs generated by the demographic changes observed in these countries, whose determinants and various consequences are both widely discussed in the scientific community and increasingly often featured at the centre of political debates concerning perspectives for Europe's development. Currently, there are 17 European countries participating in the programme (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Romania and Sweden), as well as Australia and Japan.

Since 2009 the programme has been coordinated by the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) <http://www.ggp-i.org/>.



SGH

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<http://www.sgh.waw.pl/ggs-pl>



NARODOWE CENTRUM NAUKI

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