

Youth

2011

Poland

Youth

2011

SCIENTIFIC EDITING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICIES:

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ARTWORK AND TYPESETTING:

Elżbieta Skrzypek – Brand New Idea

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At the end of 2009, already after the discussion surrounding the report "POLAND 2030", an idea arose to start a debate on the situation of the new generation. This idea was accompanied by an intuition that the young generation of Poles is undergoing a special period, experiencing numerous civilisation changes. For a number of reasons, understanding this phenomenon and the accompanying processes could prove useful. It was clear that the post-war baby boom played the role it was supposed to. On its own it created better conditions which facilitated the entry into an adult life and professional career, providing thereby an answer to new life, consumer and cultural needs. A new ruling generation, formed by the "Solidarity" mission, also had to face clear difficulties of defining what role their historical successors should assume, and of creating premises for an intergenerational solidarity.

We met at an unconventional seminar. An exchange of ideas between experts, enthusiasts, analysts and animators of civic activities was taking place at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. We were all interested in what could turn this intuitive picture of the young generation into reliable knowledge. So, we discussed job market and its educational problems but also ways of spending free time, new sexual patterns and love-sex relationship. We were interested in real behaviours and values. We debated both such features which can be combined and can create a common, generational picture of the youth, as well as features which clearly divide a broadly defined generation into various factions – depending on the parents' status, geographical location, sex, and even age: being in a younger or older group of a given generation.

From the very beginning we wanted our meetings and discussions to find an outlet in a report. We discussed the report's structure, the thematic scope of various fields, we discussed problems and the comparison of the youth in Poland and abroad. This discussion not only needed some time but also, in a positive sense, made us do an even deeper scientific and analytical work. We started with an intuition, but it had to find an outlet in knowledge which would be multidimensional, take into consideration both sociological features of the young generation as well as their educational and health situation, their opinion on family life and on building one's own position on the job market. We resorted to various sources and tried to come at the fullest picture of the youth and at the same time, while analysing generational problems, we tried to avoid simplistic comments of ideological or political nature. It is especially important for a real picture to emerge, which means showing the real, grand scale of the changes and the multitude of processes, which are on the one hand a result of changing world and Poland and on the other, a result of ever higher aspirations.

But at one point, we asked ourselves a question: What about the report, what role could it play in the public discussion about the future of the country? After all, since 2009 and the report "POLAND 2030", a great shift has taken place in the government, a change regarding programme works and the perspective of strategic thinking. Documents and relations were sorted out. Right now, in the summer of 2011, the works on the long term strategy "POLAND 2030. THE THIRD WAVE OF MODERNITY" are coming to an end. It is a medium-term document, reaching the year 2020, encompassing

nine integrated strategies focused on various fields, which are crucial to the development of Poland.

The presented report "YOUTH 2011" is a common part of this new strategic perspective. It shows how important intergenerational relations are for building and developing new Polish competitive edges, where energy and aspirations of the youth can create a kind of "turbocharger". But it also shows that public policy is made on the basis of knowledge and thus we have decided to attribute a special meaning to the report, to endow it with a mission. As a result of that, apart from a picture of the generation, we have come up also with practical recommendations for politics.

So we could say that while working on the report, we have gone through the following stages: from an intuitive sense, through knowledge, up to the practical solutions applicable in the policies for a young generation, every young generation. From this, the key message may be derived: we need a debate to make the right choices, to pinpoint development priorities and to create a good atmosphere for passing on from generation to generation not only what is called heritage but also what can be the attainments of open and effective administration.

7 August, 2011

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michał Boni". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the top of the first letter.

Michał Boni

Minister, Member of the Council of Ministers

Head of the Board of Strategic Advisors
to the Prime Minister of Poland

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Introduction

KRYSTYNA SZAFRANIEC

We want to present you a report which is an attempted diagnosis of the young generation of Poles. Challenges Poland is facing are the first and main reason for writing such a report. Our country has already gone through the key period of political system changes. But the real challenge consists in introducing the reforms which will bring us nearer to contemporary dimensions of modernity and of a good (well-functioning) society. Not only because we have built just the foundations of a new social order (which is in itself very imperfect), but also because the world around us has been constantly changing and has been imposing new standards, possibilities and challenges. Ambitious reforms demand reliable diagnoses, courageous visions and significant resources – human resources (intellectual, motivational) but also social and material ones. This report is the result of a conviction that the young generation is certainly one of the resources on which the strategy of building a modern society and country can rely. We have formulated a thesis about the youth's enormous potential. Karl Mannheim, a senior of thinking about the generations as agents of social change, emphasises that this potential is important especially when the society faces the challenges of conducting deep, complete reforms¹.

When preparing the report we counted on additional benefits resulting from a specific character of research and studies on the youth. The youth is a very good starting point for observing what is happening in the whole society. It is a lens which focuses various problems and system tensions. It also serves as a barometer of social changes and moods. The situation of the youth, their world perception, aspirations and ambitions for life reflect the changes which have occurred and the distance which is still left to be covered. In a natural way, youth diagnoses compel thinking about the future and introduce an intellectual practice which is indispensable for long-term and enlightened politics – they are a natural point of reference for any prognosis. It is not possible to talk about the youth without talking about the future and it is not possible to talk about the future without talking about the youth. We are convinced that understanding the specific nature of a young generation cannot only shed a different light on changes which took place in Poland after 1989 but can also, to an even greater degree, become a signpost for the way of conducting changes in the future.

Youth diagnoses are never kind, neither to the social system nor to the government. To some extent – it is obvious. The youth rarely positively assess reality because they occupy a marginal position in a social structure and their typically high ambitions are restrained by their own (unstable) position and by the limits of the social order. In the eyes of politicians, the youth usually turn out to be too impatient and too little understanding, perceiving the world only in black and white. The youth do not possess life wisdom – cannot see the "in-between" grey colour and "the other side". But they have another feature instead. Adults perceive the things as so complex that it makes them helpless (by the same token, depriving them of any initiative and meaning of acting). The youth, because they are young, keep the simplicity of their perspective and

1 K. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Times. Wartime Essays of a Sociologist*, Chapter III: *The Problem of Youth in Modern Society*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & CO., LTD, London 1943.

the ability to embark on enterprises seemingly impossible. As the philosopher writes, the youth's "stupidity" can be a leaven for various changes but what is really captivating is "the reality of infinity" – a feeling of life openness, the awareness that "nothing is decided or set by the fortune, the roads are still open and everything is possible"². Where there are not enough young people, a threat of stagnation arises, of an inability to take risks, a lack of will to spend one's own time and effort in the name of some uncertain intentions. Understanding the youth and giving voice to their needs and problems enforce a more critical perspective on the achievements to date and show different points of view. This disrupts the comfort of governing a country but has a salutary, corrective influence.

The report shows needs and problems as well as the inner potential of the young generation. It is an attempt to picture a big part of Polish society, a part which does not know the reality of communist Poland – young people who were born or who grew up at the time of political system changes. But this is not the only circumstance which makes them unique. The global context is also very important. In 1989, Poland became an open society and in 2004, a member of the European Union. As a result of political system changes, we have become the citizens of Europe and the world. Young Poles – who ever more often emphasise that they identify themselves as Europeans – were growing up in more complex conditions than just a political system change. They were growing up in the borderlands of various social and cultural worlds. Living "in-between" brings out a new quality and at the same time complicates things. But still, first and foremost, it stimulates society and culture, does not permit a dogmatic perception on the world and teaches the perspective of the "other". Life with the awareness of the borderland quality of the surrounding world means an incentive to study the changeability and multidimensionality of one's own Self. In the borderlands, individual experiences are always intertwined with those of the others, often transgressing imposed patterns and thinking schemes. Such borderlands should be perceived as places which encourage critical analysis, as potential sources of experiments, creativity and of stimulating initiative.

The world we are entering is a world of very expansive and dynamic democratic capitalism, which is however full of inner contradictions. This world is often described as being imperfect, but still the best of the worlds and the one which no alternative can equal. It is presented in schools, media, politics and marketing as constantly developing and guaranteeing a better future. This stimulates the young generation and provokes them into making more and more ambitious life plans. In the meantime however, this democratic and colourful capitalism, to which young people are socialized, has been undergoing a deep crisis and is a big test for young people's aspirations. Although it is the free market mechanisms which are the sources of the crisis, the claims are usually laid on the state, which is the only "visible" subject which can be burdened with the responsibility for a badly organised reality. However, state's intervention in the free market and correcting the effects of the free market game, even with the best intentions, is very difficult and, out of necessity, limited. Most of European countries' leaders face the same dilemma. In European Commission's documents and reports regarding the youth development strategy, the youth is treated as a natural reservoir of innovations and changes and at the same time as a social

2 L. Kotakowski, *Essays on Everyday Life*, Westview Press Krakow 1999.

category, the future of which – because of economic conditions – is very uncertain and can be a danger for the stability of an economic order. The greatest fears regard the possibility of the emergence, as a result of the crisis, of so-called “lost generation” – i.e. young, well educated people who are detached from the job market and who devote all their energy to solving their own problems. In order to reduce this threat, wealthy EU countries undertake systemic solutions regarding employment, family life policy and education, which would make it easier for young people to join the main stream of social life. Following the results of such actions makes it possible to draw a conclusion that they are profitable in an economic and political sense – *far-sighted leaders know that providing the youth with care is the investment in prosperity of the society.*

Poland makes use of various elements (tools) of the European Union’s policy towards the youth. Lots of activities are still being planned. Although we do realise their importance and urgency, not everything can be prepared immediately. We hope that thanks to the adopted long-term perspective, which shows the development goals that Poland should follow³, some of these activities will be perceived as measures to achieve the goals and will be realised by the following generations and governments.

The report organises the existing knowledge about the youth. We make a reference not only to Polish research and statistics. International works are also important for us because they let us compare the Polish youth with the European and global trends. Although so-called “hard data” was preferred, coming from large, representative research, we also referred to works of an analytical and descriptive nature. The report shows various points of view, but it is not deprived of personal references and theses. It touches on various issues, although certainly not on all which are worth touching. The Polish youth is both the product and an important resource and actor of the social change which shapes our perspective.

The report consists of eleven chapters. The first one constitutes an attempt to show the social change in a generational perspective. It tries to prove the thesis that the innovative potential of the middle (“solidarity”) generation, the potential of a generation which demolished socialism and laid down the foundations for a new order, is over. At the same time, the new generation is increasingly active, which provides a promising support for the next stage of changes. The next nine chapters provide a description of the young generation – from their aspirations, strivings, demography, education, job market, family, consumption and free time patterns, presence in the public sphere up to the state of their health and important social divisions. The report is crowned by a chapter devoted to the state’s policy towards the youth. We not only and not really present the current government’s policies (though they are also worth mentioning) but we rather concentrate on arising problems and new challenges.

The work on the report continued from the autumn of 2009, including regular meetings of the Workgroup on the Youth (consisting of persons representing various environments researching the youth, working with them and for them). In addition to the permanent personnel, the work of the Workgroup was supplemented by the work of experts dealing with specific problems (e.g. from the National Bureau for Drug Prevention, the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Warsaw, the National Police

3 We make a reference to the report “Poland 2030. Development Challenges” and to the document implementing thereof, “Long-term Development Strategy Poland 2030. The Third Wave of Modernity.”

Headquarters), ministry experts (Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) and the youth itself, with whom we held consultations regarding practical solutions of the youth problems (from high school, university, Voluntary Labour Corps). They all had a substantial part in preparing the report. The work of the Workgroup was led by Minister Michał Boni. He was the life of the whole enterprise, a diligent student, a demanding boss and an inspiring teacher at the same time. Without his engagement and insight the report would have been different – certainly more shallow, less inquiring and narrower in its scope. Mr Piotr Arak, the leader of the project, has a special contribution to the report. He is a young man who would, out of nothing, find the needed studies and materials, provide them with his own guiding comments, remind of every topic worth touching on and make sure every task is completed. We all worked *pro publico bono* and had a feeling we are a part to something very special. We not only wanted to describe and understand young people but also convey them and offer them some of our generational wisdom. We know how awkward this situation is. We wanted to be honest to them and to ourselves and so we could not make too many promises.

The diagnoses we have proposed show how complex the problems of the young generation are and deprive of the illusions that simple, administrative and excessively optimistic solutions are possible. They make aware of the fact that effective and real strategies of the state for the youth cannot bring quick results. Despite that, we decided to make an attempt to formulate recommendations, realising that nothing happens from one day to another, that many problems can be solved only with the involvement of various parties, with the assumption of good economic and social situation and in a longer term perspective.

We hope that the report will not only stimulate the politicians' imagination and open them for the youth's problems. We hope it will make the public opinion realise how helpful and profitable recognising the generational perspective can be for understanding the complexity of social processes. We especially hope that the ideas and theses included in the report will stimulate the reflexion and civic activity of the youth themselves, who should at various points and in various places be the voice of their generation. Our analyses would not make much sense if we treated the youth as an object and not as a subject. We count on the subjectivity and civic potential of the young generation. We do not want to unburden the government of the duty of undertaking numerous required initiatives and activities. But at the same time we do not want to point only at the government and by the same token support the theses we do not agree with – that the society is divided into the government and clients-citizens, the responsible-for-everything adults and the wronged by fate, awaiting perfect solutions young people. We do not turn a blind eye to the signs of generational injustice. But we do not share the opinion that young people are like children, that they have to wait for a solution proposed by the adults. And we do not think such a treatment would suit them anyway.

We presume that young people will look in the report first and foremost for so-called "concrete answers" ("what does the government have to offer?", "what can the government do for us?", "what problems will it solve?"). We do not want to underrate such expectations. We think the report has a wider and longer-term message which means that the continuity and generational change are preconditions for performing the undertaken social tasks. The middle generation currently ruling in Poland has

accomplished a lot – dismantled the communism and laid the foundations for a new social order. This generation was united (and divided) by the determination to accomplish the tasks resulting from some kind of social contract – we wanted a democratic, free Poland, built on solid economic foundations, with a strong European identity. We were a breakthrough generation, functioning as a “task community”, subordinating various problems, values, interests and individual perspectives to one goal – system transformation. We were convinced that it was changing the track of social development that really had to be done and so we were less sensitive to the bottom-up, critical voices, questioning the assumed rules. This task has been accomplished. But this is just the beginning of the journey. We are facing a new challenge, accompanied by a completely different idea – “community as a task”. We are conveying this idea to the new generation as a difficult and huge task. It is huge because it is about the choices defining the social system identity. It is difficult because *community has many faces*, it is not an entity which can naively and realistically be reduced to a common denominator; it demands a lot of consideration.

So what does it mean in our opinion? *Certainly this is not a “pseudo-generic”, “tribal” or “exclusive” community.* Such communities divide people into national, ideological and religious groups, which consider themselves better than others. Usually they relate to the same history, value system and tradition. Community identification always means a reference to those lacking some of the features and result in an internal solidarity of a given group and the policy of external exclusion. “Tribal” communities precede and determine the world-view and ethical choices of individuals. What people are like and who they are is not a result of their conscious choices and creations. Their identity matrices already exist and do not need to be created – and their nature is obvious because they are either found or imposed. “Pseudo-generic” communities declare themselves as model communities and this feeling of being special is on the one hand a source of the most noble and honest signs of heroism and loyalty, and on the other hand it pushes the group into mutual competition and destruction. For the sake of keeping their vision of being together, they are ready to die and to kill⁴.

Such “hot” communities create a very strong sense of identification, based on fraternity, and an emotional world-view, which equips them with simple tools of world description and helps them overcome the anxiety resulting from the lack of understanding of the changes occurring in the world. The greater the anxiety and the inner compulsion to identify oneself with the group, the greater the inclination to reject “others”. Openness to the “otherness” incites a crisis with which members of “hot” communities cannot function because they cannot constructively solve problems. It is safer to maintain superstitions and lack of trust. They make the unknown known and so they provide a sense of security.

“Pseudo generic” communities, based on imposing their own (group) point of view (considered as the only right one) and on superstitions bordering on hate towards the others are not only dangerous. They are also anachronistic. The modern world has been striving for the universality of identity – making identities more and more inclusive and anticipatory (being able to recognise new types of social sensitivity and new attempts of social interactions). Societies, in order to keep their vitality,

4 E.H. Erikson, *Identity, psychosocial*, “International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences” 1968, vol. 4, Mc Millan and Free Press, New York, p. 61-65.

must have at their disposal energy and identifications emerging from their own development processes and from the groups which embody them. When such resources are recognised and positively confirmed (absorbed by the system), societies regenerate themselves. The crisis becomes unavoidable when the system cannot decipher its own development processes and the resources which they carry.

The logic of changes occurring in Poland is that the vision of a tribal community – with its anthropological pessimism⁵, a tendency to impose loyalty and exclude the otherness – does not suit these changes. It is especially not suitable from the young generation's perspective, which appreciates the freedom of choice and the right to self-determination too much to resign from personal autonomy for the sake of community obligations, which sound moralistic (though they are in fact insensitive to real moral dilemma). What we need then, is *a new concept of community*, which would break with a tribal community and solidarity and would thus satisfy our hunger of fraternity and solidarity⁶. This kind of community is certainly less "hot" – it speaks more to the mind than to emotions, favours freedom and autonomy. Social solidarity is not achieved by an institutional solution and is not equal with social solidarism – it is a difficult social and political challenge. It is shaped by a painful and arduous process of creating the bonds from the basic, of taking into consideration various aims, values and overcoming the existing divisions. Such a community does not exclude anyone and does not make anyone unwanted. It is not against other communities and does not need an enemy to exist. It is an inclusive community – it tolerates an unconstrained choice of community, in accordance with the principle of informed confirmation of common values. In such a community, education and democratic procedures are a method of solving difficult problems. Teaching pluralism, otherness, diversity and tolerance makes an apparent chaos an inseparable part of a social world, which is inhabited by diverse people and cultures. However, the state's role, whose prerogatives are limited, cannot be omitted – it should be strong enough to guard the democratic constitution and it should respond with violence to any attempts of using violence. It should be also modern enough to be an ally of people's aspirations and social development.

The ideological sources of such a concept stem from the *ethos of (postmodern) liberalism*, which was born in a specific historical reality and which started in a community cherishing the ability to make autonomous choices of values and world-views. Such liberalism admits it nurtures a certain idea of good and does not pretend it is perfectly neutral to all other ideas of good. It does not make individualism an absolute value. It notices the value and even the necessity of existence of community bonds and altruistic attitudes, characterised by the feeling of *solidarity and responsibility for other people's fate*. So this liberalism does not glorify egoism and selfishness, *it is sensitive to human harm*. It seeks to eliminate it and tries to supplement the logics of free market with far-reaching social welfare. It is a liberalism fighting against hard economism, the tyranny of money and the rule of technocrats. Instead, it is fighting

5 A human being, evil by nature, can become better, if they resign from their freedom (which leads them astray) and subordinate to an external authority. This view was laid down clearly by T. Hobbes, the father of modern conservatives.

6 A. Szahaj, *Jednostka czy wspólnota. Spor liberatów z komunitarystami a „sprawa polska”*, Aletheia, Warsaw 2000, p. 168.

INTRODUCTION

for renewing civic virtues, for a real implementation of the idea of democracy – for an alliance of all forces within *one civic society*. Postmodern liberalism promotes personal patterns which *exceed narrowly understood consumption sphere*. Guided by the principles of *self-correction*, it does consider the form it assumes as the ultimate one, but remains open for criticism and changes. It permits state interventionism, but it closely observes its institutions to avoid excessive etatism⁷.

Therefore, it is not true that liberalism is poor in content, devoid of rational attitudes and motivationally weak or that the liberal society's ethos is a lack of ethos. There are lots of ideas, they are beautiful and mature. It is their biggest asset, not a defect, that they do not awaken collective passions, ideological conflicts and do not demand the greatest sacrifices. It would be great if they could release civic engagement of the young generation.

7 Ibidem, p. 327-328.

1.

1. Time for youth

On the necessity for generational change in Poland

1.1. The generation of great change

1.2. The new generation and relations between generations in the times of the great change

1.3. New generations and new challenges

Summary

1. Time for youth

On the necessity for generational change in Poland

CHAPTER ONE

Various factors instigate social change. Social change is also brought about by generations. Not only sociological theories and hypothesis¹, but also the conclusions of observers and analysts of social life – publicists, writers, and ordinary people show the significance of generational change. It is frequently stated that if generational change is not taking place, the world is not moving forward. What is characteristic of such moments are the expectations harboured by the society and the hopes connected with the rise of the younger generation. Also when society faces tasks of particular historical significance, we turn to the young and assume that their innovativeness will allow for tackling new challenges. They have more energy, are more open and critical towards the world, and more often formulate long-term life aims. However, the potential of a generation is not determined by the characteristic features of the young, but by attitudes and predispositions forged in youthhood under specific historical conditions.

Assuming the above, not every generation grows up to become historically significant and therefore, not every generation can set change in motion. The generation which engaged in Solidarity-led opposition in the 1980s was certainly such a generation in Poland. The time of the great political transformation, starting from the events of the Polish Summer and ending in the 1990s, was based on the political and intellectual potential of people brought up in the times of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL). It was those people, nowadays aged 50+, who triggered vast changes. It was they, at the time when they were in their thirties, who built democracy and the foundations of the free market economy in Poland. Currently, numerous problems occurring in social life and the new influx of challenges seem to suggest that the resources of the Solidarity generation are imminently coming to an end. This is clearly visible when compared to the youth growing up in the new Polish state, whose aims exceed reality, and the opportunities are beyond the current potential of the middle generation.

This is a good moment to take a closer look at both generations and assess their resources. At the same time, this is a hinge moment in Poland's history, as perhaps it will determine the fate of further political changes and the country's civilizational success for the next few decades. What is the outcome of twenty years of political transformation in Poland in terms of generational change? Is it possible to believe that the grey-haired generation of persons over 50 – the children of the Solidarity-led opposition and PRL – were the people who lay the foundations for the new political system in Poland? How did they cope with changes of unprecedented nature and scale? Did their children – nowadays referred to as the generation of historical hope and opportunities – take after their parents in terms of the capability to adapt and readiness to continue the process of change? The main focus of our report is youth,

1 Including the most acclaimed concept formulated by Karl Mannheim, [see:] K. Mannheim, *The problem of Generations*, [in:] *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1938; [Polish translation:] K. Mannheim, *Problem pokoleń*, "Colloquia Communia" 1992-1993, no. 1-12, p. 57-68.

and the crucial issue discussed in this paper is the young generation's potential to innovate. However, there are two reasons for which the discussion of the characteristic features of the young should be preceded by a characteristic of the previous generation. The previous generation instigated vast changes (fulfilling the aspirations and endeavours to attain a better life and well-organised society), and its achievements are a confirmation of the historical role of generations. The macro- and micro-world they created is the origin of today's youth.

1.1. The generation of great change

After 1989, the Solidarity generation did not raise high hopes for change in Poland. The burden of PRL heritage and ambivalent political attitudes, which were revealed in the first period of the political transformation, led to seeking factors accelerating change among young people. It was expected of youth that they will facilitate change and channel political transformation in a clear direction. However, research conducted among today's youth has not shown any radical generational change and did not reveal visible tendencies towards dynamic activity. Until approx. the end of the first half of the 1990s, the characteristic features of the new young generation were only slightly divergent from the characteristic features of youth of the late 1980s. Research conducted at the time consistently underlined the permanent focus of youth on "tried and tested" values and role models: stabilisation, happy family life, friendship, job satisfaction, and introvert approaches treasuring the egocentric Self². The second half of the 1990s brought change, and research noted new different characteristic features of youth. Educational and status aspirations of an unprecedented scale appeared, as well as the predilection for a pleasant, comfortable life and pragmatism. The young turned out to be strongly success-oriented and to experience ambivalent feelings concerning having children and a family.

What is interesting, in the same period of time there were only slight differences between the representatives of the Solidarity generation and youth. They were equally ambitious as the young, presented active attitudes towards the future, relied on their own capabilities, supported democracy and market solutions.³ Elements indicative of relations with PRL were rare or hardly present in their life orientations. This was not the result of introducing a new political system. The generation did not identify strongly with real socialism during PRL. This was the effect of socialisation, whose most significant elements occurred during the political thaw. First it was the liberalism introduced by Edward Gierek, and afterwards the events of the Solidarity revolution.⁴ Both factors had a major impact – though to various degrees – on expanding freedom and generating aspirations reaching beyond the political system.

2 H. Świda-Ziemia, *Wartości egzystencjalne młodzieży lat dziewięćdziesiątych*, ISNS UW, Warsaw, 1995.

3 K. Szafraniec, *Zmiana społeczna przez brak konfliktu pokoleń*, "Przegląd Socjologiczny" 1, 2001.

4 The biographies and lives of persons born in 1957 have been analysed by sociologists from Toruń since 1972. The population at the outset of the research amounted to almost 6,000 persons. In 1998 the biological children of this population (which at the time amounted only to under 1,200 persons) were included into the analysed population.

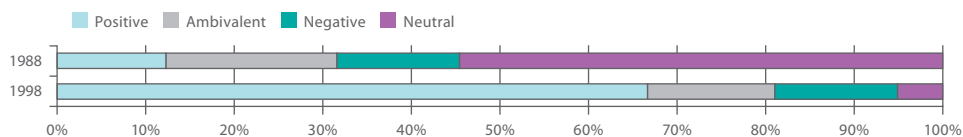
In 1989, Poles were generally ready to start living in a new system. The first years of the transformation only released and strengthened what had been formed earlier. First and foremost, it was the need for success, which was already clearly visible in PRL times, but was effectively blocked by the previous system.

In post-communist Poland this need was voiced with double force. The middle generation focused on catching up in the area of professional career development, in enhancing material status, completing education and celebrating the new lifestyle. Poles, who were encouraged to engage in consumption throughout the two decades of political change, achieved a life level incomparable to that at the beginning of the change process and learned to indulge in the lifestyle based on "having". One can say that the acceptance of a new political system was not entirely the consequence of the political experiences gained by the generation. It was rather the result of previously formed values and endeavours, for the realisation of which the new system provided a natural context. The central values were: happy family life and providing children with a stable future, job satisfaction and material wellbeing. These values sufficed to vent the energy resources of the society and involve citizens in social and political change.

Major political and social structure changes were possible thanks to "innovativeness supplies" and adapting capabilities of thirty-year-olds and then forty-year-olds. The group of entrepreneurs increased more than tenfold (from 1.3% to 11.8%). Other structural shifts also took place – cross-sector and status-related, which involved almost half of the representatives of the generation. Unemployment at the end of the 1990s was not high among forty-year-olds, and those who were employed felt relatively secure about their future. This was both the effect of economy, which was in quite good shape, and the generation effect – catching up on status and determination to maintain achieved social and professional positions.

Social and mental characteristic features of the middle-aged proved they were quite well prepared for functioning in the new political system. At the end of the first decade of the political transformation, most of them had a positive attitude towards the political changes (Fig. 1.1). Although it was not marked by enthusiasm, it might be assumed that it had significant influence on the success of the reforms in the initial period of the political transformation.

Fig. 1.1. Attitudes towards the social system in 1988 and 1998⁵ – persons born in 1957



Source: Research conducted among persons born in 1957: Research carried out in 1988. N = 4861, research carried out in 1998. N = 1197.

5 The variable is the resultant of answers to numerous questions (multiple-choice and open-ended) analysing attitudes towards the government, institutions, political rules and regulations and principles of social life, asked in studies of 1988 (the respondents were 30 at the time) and in the study of 1998 (when they were ten years older). The comparisons include data regarding persons who participated in the study twice.

This period – representing a new social, political and economic reality – produced adaptation problems for those who were not familiar with the rapidly changing conditions. New reality came into being, nevertheless, the middle generation coped relatively well with the change. Still, those who were in their element when the new reality set in constituted the minority (25%). Those who were determined to realise their own aspirations and plans constituted a majority (more than 60%). Less than 15% felt they had failed. Optimism and faith in their own capabilities was declared by 70% of the middle-aged, and only 14% exhibited a negative approach. More than 80% felt they had a happy and full life. Almost the entire group (85%) formulated long-term plans, connected with enhancing family life level (28%), investing in the future, especially in educating children (26%) or in their own professional career (23%). Sometimes these plans were accompanied by unfulfilled passions, mainly travelling. Consumption-orientedness, explicit also during PRL, became an unquestioned value in the 1990s, as well as the basic motive for the activity of the middle generation – the generation who delineated political transformation goals and influenced changes.

1.2. The new generation and relations between generations in the times of the great change

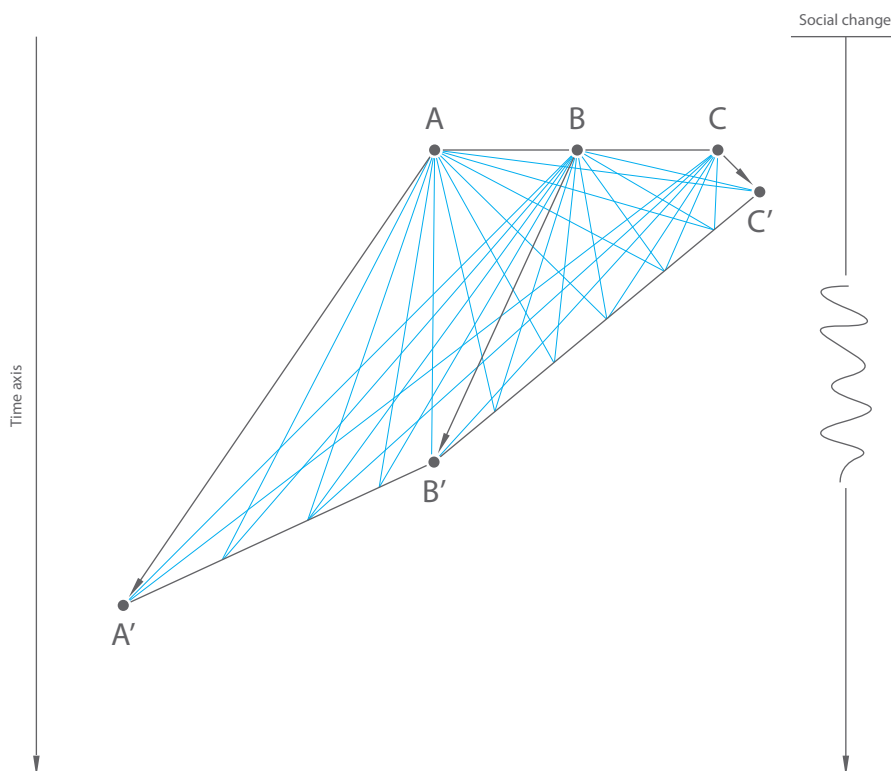
At the end of the 1990s, the presence of new generation representatives – youth shaped by the new system – became tangible. Publicists competing over more and more flamboyant descriptions of youth actively sought features which would allow for labelling it the breakthrough generation or the generation of hope. Sociological research, however, showed striking similarities between life orientations of adults and youth.⁶ What distinctly differentiated the young was the opinion that they adapted easily to the new political system, wider range of opportunities, stronger pragmatism and consumption-oriented attitudes. What constituted a link between the two generations was universally accepting success as a value, as well as similar beliefs regarding the most optimal conditions in which success might be attained. Proponents of market economy, which in their opinion guaranteed democracy and freedom, were dominant in both generations. The differences concerned the volume of agreement, which was influenced by status and level of education.

Although almost all respondents wanted to achieve success (in terms of status, material wellbeing, consumption), persons with high status or born into families with high status had the best chances for fulfilling their aspirations and endeavours. It was among this group that various significant factors determining success were evidently strengthened – both in the case of objective and subjective factors, among which material conditions and accumulated intellectual and cultural capital in the family were decisive. One can readily state that the higher the social status, the more positive the attitude to political change, the quicker the adaptation process, the greater the faith in one's own capacities, the better the material situation and the better the living conditions, the greater the political awareness, the bolder the plans regarding children and children-related investments. Due to diversification processes pending in the

6 This was visible not only in family units, but also in statistical units.

first decade of the political transformation, three major social segments were created. Each segment represented a different type of socialising environments and each exhibited different conditions for the development and functioning of youth (Fig. 1.2).

Fig. 1.2. Dynamics of the relations between generations during social change



Source: Graph compiled on the basis of own study.

The first point (A) designates families consisting of persons with high status and life aspirations (intellectual families, higher-rank white-collar employees), not only accepting the changes occurring in the country, but also disposing of personal capital (intellectual, mental, material), enabling the fulfilment of their own high life aspirations and goals. The “middle” group (B) denoted those with a slightly lower – medium – status (office employees, technical employees, employees rendering qualified services, wealthier farmers). Changes in the political system were accepted to a lesser degree, and their political affiliations were clearly of mixed nature. Life aspirations were not much lower, but contrary to the groups representing the first field, this group did not dispose of capital allowing for fulfilling life goals without greater difficulties. The third field (C) groups persons of lowest status (farmers, workers, pensioners, the unemployed). Their aspirations were notably lowest, and were connected mainly with social security and hopes for enhancing life standard. They were the only group not to accept the changes Poland was undergoing, and demonstrated a yearning for the previous socialist order or a specifically Polish liking for democracy (as the order ensuring

wellbeing and social security). They did not dispose of any capital which would enable transforming their aspirations into effective action.

Each of these fields stood for different social and cultural worlds, and affected different conditions and development opportunities for the young generation. Youth designated by the first field (A) displayed very high and unconventional life aspirations. Young people planned and realised long-term educational strategies, including graduating from universities. Their anticipation-oriented (innovative) parents, with high social status, supported their children with the whole capital they had at their disposal (intellectual, social, material, mental), and used it to perform anticipation procedures. Thanks to this their children made a leap ahead – in relation to their peers and in relation to their parents (line AA' in the figure).

In the central field (B), the aspirations of youth were equally high (or slightly lower), but more conventional. Youth belonging to the group planned long-term educational strategies, including higher education, however, in reality it realised shorter or simpler educational variants (secondary school, vocational schools, BAs, universities with less strict recruitment procedures). Parents, displaying an attitude open to change (white collar employees with secondary general education), instilled their life ambitions into their children, but did not have sufficient capital to translate their expectations and ambitions into their children's success. Their investments, mainly of educational nature, fed their children's optimism and faith in their own capabilities, however, they did not guarantee effective adaptation to the new reality and decreased chances for accomplishment in the world of success. This meant the possibility of climbing up the social ladder (in relation to parents, but also peers), though their opportunities were notably smaller than in the first group.

Youth denoted by the third field (C) had the lowest aspirations, though not as low as to prevent exhibiting the will to enhance their status and reveal the hidden capabilities of this group. Long-term educational strategies are generally not planned within this group (which might be the outcome of self-selection and self-stigmatisation processes); nevertheless aspirations of wealth were noted.

Parents (workers with low qualifications or unemployed), had difficulties in finding their way in the new reality, thus fell victim to the changes. They instilled mainly embitterment and pretensions into their children. They did not dispose of any capital (material, mental) which would provide their children with support in the process of social advancement. Passive and pessimistic parents effectively imprinted these traits onto their children. These processes, although only emphasising main trends, portended – on the one hand – a deepening divide between generations, and – on the other hand – widening gaps between groups forming the young generation. Disparities between opportunities and possibilities were increased by the thorough political change, which provided new stimuli and generated new challenges.

Various social groups and other generations exhibited varied levels of readiness to face these challenges. Those who were capable of tackling them were the winners. The persons who could tackle them were those who had assets, i.e. family capital. Those who did not have such capital at their disposal failed.

The winners increased their development resources, while the majority of losers did not have such opportunities. Consequently, the group of youth denoted by the A-A' field became the "trigger" of change and dealt with new challenges perfectly, as well as formulated new needs, aspirations, life aims more and more boldly.

Groups designated by the second field (B-B') performed the function of a power steering circuit, and group belonging to the third area (C-C') – denoting persons who did not feel they were the beneficiaries of change, began to take on the role of a braking circuit. At the beginning of the 1990s, it seemed that the processes of political transformation opened new vast possibilities of social advancement. At the end of the 1990s, many factors were indicative of the fact that the same processes created new social divisions, and had a strong tendency to consolidate them through mechanisms of generation reproduction. The crucial question about the role of the educational system as a factor leading to the diversification of the lives of the young generation arises. Was the determinism of primary socialisation not seeming? Does it not seem superficial in terms of the unresolved fate of the young (the stabilisation phase was still ahead of them and conclusions regarding the role of the school could not be drawn at the time)? Today we know that the education system – although it enabled young Poles to gain unprecedented access to knowledge and led to a very high saturation with secondary and higher school graduates, it did not eliminate environmental determinism.

Youth with more beneficial initial conditions won the race for better schools and better social positions. Youth with less beneficial social features had slimmer chances for good education. Nevertheless the comparison of simplest statistics – both of the number of students and enrolment ratios – produces very clear conclusions: In the first year of the transformation (1990/91), 330,800 young people studied, and the gross enrolment ratio amounted to 12.9%. In 2000/2001 the number of students equalled 1,584,800, and the enrolment ratio was 40.7% (30.6% net). Today, 1,930,000 young people are in the course of studies, and the enrolment ratio reached the level of 53.7% (41.2%). These data show that despite selection, self-selection and segmentation processes, the educational structure of the young generation is incomparable to the educational structure of the previous generation. In comparison to persons aged between 55 and 64, the participation of persons with higher education among youth increased by as much as 35 percentage points.⁷

This is indicative not only of massive social advancement of the young generation. It is first and foremost intellectual capital of new quality, which – irrespective of the disadvantages of the inaccessible education – the young have. This creates differences between both generations in terms of the capability to adapt to new challenges, which appeared after 2000, especially in connection with the intensifying globalisation processes and Poland's joining the EU. The generation gap has begun to grow wider also due to differences in the life cycle. The older Solidarity generation is becoming increasingly passive and tired⁸ and more and more often adopts the "shelter" strategy. Its representatives are more often concerned with good pensions and peace rather than with the rat race, competition and tackling new challenges. The young adopt contrary approaches – they are only just entering independent life, have far-reaching plans, and their life strategies more often resemble a "battle field". They wittingly or unwittingly engage in social changes.

7 *Society on its way to education. Report on the state of the educational system*, Educational Research Institute (IBE), Warsaw, 2010, p.11.

8 P. Sztompka, *Trauma wielkiej zmiany: społeczne koszty transformacji*, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, 2000.

The key discriminatory factor is the various nature of experiences accrued by the generations. The identity and activity perspectives of the middle-aged are delineated by the past, as they are partly influenced by experiences accumulated during PRL, and partly due to engaging in Solidarity-led opposition and experiencing martial law. Although the former type of experiences had long-term and regular effects (though selective), the latter type were hinge moments, experiences crucial for the entire generation, something extremely significant, which resembled initiation to a new dimension of morality, which cannot be erased from memory and which influenced the perception of all further social events. According to Jan Garewicz, a generational experience unites people even if they belonged to groups affiliated with different sides, creates a specific brotherhood of arms, which does not exclude hostility.⁹ At the same time, generational experiences can become fossilised. Fossilisation results in a veteran mentality, which inhibits dissociating oneself from one's experiences and inhibits understanding next generations.¹⁰

Mentalities of this sort are most vividly revealed among highest-ranking politicians, for whom the ethos of combat and references to the past clearly remain indispensable. The consequence of the abovementioned processes and phenomena was the formation of a communication divide. First – between the government and the society, and next – within highest-ranking authorities. The young generation, which has many every-day problems and has to come to terms with its own future, is naturally attracted to political groups which are not overcome by the veteran effect and do not exhibit a fossilised manner of perceiving the world or communicating.

1.3. New generations and new challenges

Young people raised after 1989, especially by parents born after 1989, are a different type of youth. Both create new generational quality, which is becoming visible nowadays. This new quality was forged by exceptional historical circumstances related with generational socialisation occurring during the "political transformation" and the opening of Poland to the West. The overlapping of changes and the vehement nature of the transition, often marked by a rapid "explosion" – demographic, cultural or civilizational – is of even greater significance.

All these factors created an exceptional situation which did not resemble the world of older generation. The reality shaped by the transformation, experienced more or less traumatically by the representatives of the older generation, was the natural environment of the young, for whom adapting was easier than for their parents. They respected values and norms. Liberty, pragmatism and success were most significant values. They provided new motivational codes and new behaviour models, and weakened the power of traditional messages, which stimulated the mind-set of the young in a completely new world.¹¹

Upon the onset of the political transformation, Poland "opened" itself to phenomena and trends present in the modern world. Processes and phenomena which

9 J. Garewicz, *Pokolenie jako kategoria socjofilozoficzna*, "Studia Socjologiczne" no. 3, 1938, p. 78.

10 Op.cit. p. 79.

11 Illustrates volume edited by M. Piasecki, *Młodzi końca wieku*, W.A.B Warsaw, 1999.

became dominant in Poland can be described by means of two keywords: globalisation and postmodernism.

Postmodernism, also referred to as late modernism (Giddens)¹², second/other modernism (Beck)¹³ or liquid-modern times (Bauman)¹⁴, is the generally accepted term for the developed society of the second half of the 20th century, which is also referred to as: information society, network society, technocratic society, risk society.

Today it is not speculated whether such a society will be formed, but in what direction it will evolve. This is due to the fact that this society already exists and defines the scope of our individual and collective life. Never before has a society been so satiated with and dependent on technology. It is also a society with an unprecedented level of complexity in life, unrivalled pace of introducing changes, and full of internal contradictions. Sociologists underline such features as fluidity, reflexivity, risk, in order to emphasise that our world ceased being structured, predictable and constant. This society does not have access to any certain solutions, stable reference points, ready patterns, obvious truths or role models. Life in postmodernity became a "coasted Moloch" – referring not only to the fact that changes are occurring unceasingly, but also to the fact that they are beyond any expectations and are out of control.

Postmodernity defines the specificity of late capitalism and culture diverging from ready-made models and practices which lead to increasing individualisation and elimination of traditions in social life.¹⁵ The crumbling of traditional institutions and role models, liquidity and lack of transparency have made the world less predictable – it has become a world "to-be-made", with the basic task of other, appropriate for new situations and challenges, strategies and life models. Traditional solutions and role models are not necessarily effective in the case of this task. At the same time the inevitability of these processes makes it impossible not to participate in the changes introduced by modernity.¹⁶ These circumstances are only seemingly "innocuous". They put both institutions, which are obliged to face new challenges, and people, in a difficult situation. Functioning in such an environment requires mastering numerous specific skills. Openness, reflexivity and effective action are the basic ones in everyday life (where the Self becomes the focal point of one's biography). In a world rushing forward and not steered by anyone, whose future is uncertain, the most logical option is to adopt the DIY strategy. As others do not know how, do not have the resources or are simply incapable of instigating action. Although it gives us the opportunity of taking independent decisions about our own life, it also burdens us with responsibility for our own fate. The effect of a "psycho-wave" is the consequence of this process – the psychological process giving vent to the tension and frustration resulting from the shortcomings of the surrounding world, in relation to which the individual remains alone. In a more metaphorical description, the "psycho-wave" effect expresses the drama of a lonely individual, when the direct and immature experience of social tensions and

12 A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. "Self" and society in the Late Modern Age*, PWN, Warsaw, 2002.

13 U. Beck, *Risk society. Towards a New Modernity*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw, 2002.

14 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow, 2004.

15 A. Giddens, *Late Modernity Framework*, [in:] *Współczesne teorie socjologiczne*, [eds]. A. Jasińska-Kania et al., Wydawnictwo Scholar, Warsaw, 2006.

16 A. Giddens, op. cit.

crises turns into psychological dispositions: into the feeling of lack of personal fulfilment, anxiety, depression, neurosis.

This is a global trend, but it is also visible in Poland. The young not only have problems with entering adulthood, but also the process of psychological maturing is becoming increasingly difficult. Although youth does not complain, the majority of young people are incapable of coping with disproportionately high social requirements, with the culture-based pressure to achieve success, with the non-transparent social norms, lack of adults' interest in their lives, dissolution of family ties and the burden consisting of their own parents' problems. Modern capitalism introduced the ideology and culture of consumptionism to Poland during the political transformation. Consumptionism promoted the moral obligation to lead a wealthy and pleasant life.¹⁷

The expansion of consumptionism in Poland, however, was not accompanied by an equally rapid development of capitalism – Poland had a poor society, with many deficiencies and difficulties taken over from the previous system, with distinct tendencies to reproduce imbalance in the macroeconomic sphere. The Polish society, entering the stage of post-industrial capitalism with delay, adapted to the new style of life in accelerated speed. For the young generation, this was a process of natural growing into the world of consumption, which was the first world encountered by them, the binding and normal world – without an alternative. Research shows that Polish youth was effectively lured by the cultural offer of consumptionism (colourful, wealthy and pleasant life) as early as in the 1990s. Although perfect life visions harboured by Polish youth are much more conventional than those of Western youth, the aspiration to make life more vivid and interesting is one of the most distinctly marked traits in this generation's profile.

Another significant circumstance specifying the conditions in which new generations of Polish youth grew up (and is growing up) is connected with demographic processes. The whole period of political transformation was marked by the "demographic boom", which first bettered the education system, and then the labour market. Poland, which was still trying to solve many pressing problems, had to tackle new difficulties posed by the demographic situation. Although baby booms were present in post-war Poland, various systems approached the issue differently – real socialism employed different solutions, and the market economy avails itself of different possibilities. The greatest challenge concerned the question of how to "manage" the influx of maturing youth.

The labour market became youth-friendly. It was highly likely that highly-qualified labour force will be employed. Therefore, the most rational strategy in the opinion of the young was to remain in the educational system for as long as possible and delay the moment of entering the labour market. These decisions had major impact on other events: the educational offers of universities, which were not prepared to educate so many young people, the disrupted life cycle and social and civil processes of entering adulthood. In the makeshift legal and institutional order, accompanied by the lack of necessary funds, universities often performed the role of "waiting rooms" for youth, and the difficulties connected with entering the labour market delayed attaining life stabilisation (leaving the family home and having one's own family).

17 D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, PWN, Warsaw, 1988.

The dissimilarity of young generations was the result of macro-structural processes and changes. However, also processes occurring within the family were of high significance. The functioning of the family reflected the results of deep social stratification changes, which were large-scale in the previous generation. Catching up on professional career and education, and attempts at achieving better life standard (or surviving) had far-reaching consequences for the microstructure and atmosphere of family life, including the essence and style of family education. Children observed parents who concentrated on increasing wealth, developing professional careers, and earning money. Owning things became a symbol of new status for the parents, and – apart from personal satisfaction – became the means of measuring the capability to function in the new world – a means of measuring one's worth. The aim was also to provide the children with an example, and accumulating material assets could not be ignored by the youth. The socialisation of youth most certainly had its origin in the family. However, the "having" orientation had a different justification in the previous generation than in the current generation (it was to confirm status and compensate for years of shortcomings and deficiencies). For the children it was simply the word they encountered. The influence of mass culture was only secondary.

The situation is similar in the case of the origins of another basic value adhered to by modern youth. The value of freedom, liberty and free choice was a significant element of the educational philosophy adhered to by the middle generation when they were very young parents.¹⁸ In families, especially intelligentsia families, self-creation and individualism were respected. Most families were paidocentric – children were the ultimate asset and were acutely aware of their position. Their needs were considered priorities and the children ascribed themselves the right to have their needs appeased first. Nowadays when we say that youth is too demanding and impatient, socialisation within the family cannot be put aside. It was within the family that youth was instilled with the belief that their needs were most important. The context of consumptionism put especially poorer families in a troublesome situation, as they were incapable of satisfying the needs of their children at a level comparable to their peers.

This led to specific educational problems and embitterment, and laid the foundation for behaviours violating social norms. Youth who did not have normal access to items considered status emblems attempted to obtain them by way of violence or illegally.

Parent's concentration on work and profitable activities became the fundamental reason for which they devoted less time to the family and let youth manage more of their free time. As parents placed trust on their children and encouraged them to seek inspiration on their own, the young spent the majority of their time with other young people.

Due to the intense development of electronic media and easier access to computer equipment, already in the 1990s the life of youth was filled (to a larger extent than ever before) with individually selected content and competences from the virtual world, with which adults are not very familiar. The term "global teenager", in reference to those times, is definitely over the top, but "socialisation under own supervision"¹⁹

18 K. Szafraniec et al., *Młodzi dorosli – paradoksy socjalizacji i rozwoju*, the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development (IRWiR), Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), Warsaw, 1990.

19 F.H. Tenbruck, *Jugend und Gesellschaft. Sociologische Perspektiven*, Freiburg i.B., Rombach, 1962.

is the appropriate term for the new context in which youth grew up. Globalisation of the cultural message and the IT boom in the next decade increased the gap between reality natural to the youth (World Wide Web) and the reality dominated by the older generation ("real life"). "Real life" proved unfriendly, incomprehensible and unauthentic. The Internet – to the contrary – although virtual, it seems tangible, authentic and familiar. It is an encyclopaedia, dating room and scene. It provides space for youth creativity and is an agora of young people. Youth are more confident in the Internet, and they create communication channels incomparable to those existing in "real life". These channels allow for accessing the most distant places on Earth and the most remote cultures at any given time. They eliminate distance and level out differences.

Due to the pace of changes in this area, most of the big-city youth in contemporary Poland already has the "global teenager" syndrome. Global teenagers can be encountered everywhere – in Warsaw, Poznań, Tokyo or London. Global teenagers listen to similar music, dress in similar clothes, watch similar TV channels and use the same computer programmes. The generation raised by the Internet displays far-reaching pragmatism, high tolerance and ease in mutual communication, though it does exhibit scepticism towards the idea of becoming more involved and committed – youth has no intention of rebelling or changing the world in the name of an alternative reality.²⁰

All these circumstances created exceptional conditions for the development of the young generation, and – as it might be expected – determined the uniqueness of their internal resources. The generation which initiated the process of political transformation was highly successful in facing the challenges of the new system, and today this generation is less and less capable of understanding new reality and problems of youth. Both the increasing divide and the scale of problems awaiting to be solved lead to the quite obvious conclusion that the time of the young has come. It is necessary to approach the problems of youth seriously. Also the generational change and giving the floor to the young is prerequisite. These processes are already underway, however, they still do not encompass all walks of life and are not present in the social awareness of Poles. In the next chapters of the report, we will look at various attributes and problems of young people in search of features which might be decisive for determining their uniqueness, allowing for classifying them as natural allies of accelerating Poland's civilizational development and detecting situations which inhibit full utilisation of youth's resources. This is the source of new problems and tensions.

Summary

The 1990s great political transformation created opportunities for successfully building on social resources and yielded the potential to innovate. The origins of these resources were located in life aspirations awakened during periods of political thaw under communist rule, and which were afterwards drastically blocked. The will to catch up in the area of education, life quality and professional career, as well as political aspirations to attain freedom provided powerful motivation for engaging in the

20 Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna jako czynnik socjalizacji*, [in:] Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwowski [ed.], *Pedagogika*, PWN, Warsaw, 2003, vol. 2.

process of change after 1989. The Solidarity generation, which took responsibility for crucial political changes, displayed well-developed adaptation skills and high potential to innovate, which sufficed to establish a new social order and new political system. The convergence of the period of highest activity in the life of the generation (and its aspirations and aims) with the opportunities created by the process of radical re-establishment of the state and the economy turned out to be crucial.

At the end of the second decade of changes, the resources of the Solidarity generation are withering and insufficient in the context of new problems and challenges. This is the result of both changes in the life cycle (and gradual extinguishing of life activity) and decapitalisation of accumulated resources. This divide becomes especially visible when compared to the young generation, who after the period of investing in education started exerting pressure on the labour market and revealing their resources. Globalisation of the cultural message and the IT boom in the next decade increased the gap between reality natural to the youth (World Wide Web) and the reality dominated by the older generation ("real life"). In this paper we formulate the thesis assuming youth's historical uniqueness. We believe young people are indispensable to Poland and further modernisation projects.

This thesis follows from – on the one hand – the exceptional historical circumstances in which youth became fully grown (the period of political transformation and Poland's opening itself to the world), and – on the other hand – the specific character of family socialisation. Due to the context of democracy, the free market, globalisation, the atmosphere of great expectations connected with the vision of a new Poland, and last but not least the parents, who accumulated exceptional historical experiences and were open to change, the young generation was stimulated in an exceptional way during the most susceptible period of their lives. Not only the scale and type of changes, but also the pace and force with which they were introduced was a determining factor. In many cases the changes could be compared to "booms" – unusual simultaneous occurrences of multiple phenomena of varied intensity and character. At first, the system itself "exploded", and right after that Poland abruptly opened itself to the world and other countries, experienced a baby and educational boom, welcomed the dot.com revolution, joined the European Union, and finally, unexpectedly, begun to experience the global economic crisis of unprecedented scale and character. Due to the rate and scale of changes leading to the eradication of traditional institutions and authorities, combined with the deficiencies of a country "making one's way", the DIY strategy was the strongest signal sent to young people.

The state withdrew many forms of aid, and the educational institutions resigned from guiding young people into the world. Parents abandoned the role of mentors. The living space and freedom of youth expanded, but at the same time responsibility was shifted to youth. The syndrome of the "abandoned generation" who relies only on its own choices and own decisions ensued. On the one hand, such pressures necessitate youth's independence and individualism, on the other hand create the risk of taking ill-advised decisions and disillusionments, frustrations – likely to occur especially where the readiness to face new challenges is low, while aspirations are high.

The vast influence of the consumptionist ideology and accepting success as a value by the previous generation encouraged the majority of youth to make a vibrant, wealthy and undisturbed life their goal. Such an approach was taken up as early as in the first decade of political changes. Uncertain future and the perspective of

taking opportunities offered by the consumer society became the leitmotif of youth's high educational aspirations. The rapidly changing educational system, and later on universities, catered for the fulfilment of these aspirations. Sizable support was provided by families and family capital. At some point, the strong family determinism which differentiated the youth's life chances began to weaken – under the influence of the educational offer and financial mobility of families. Enrolment ratios for the young generation exceed the same indices for their parents more than four-fold. The education acquired by youth – irrespective of the value of the obtained diploma – constitutes valuable intellectual capital (competences allowing for better understanding of the world and actively engaging in occurring changes), emotional capital (motivates to act, increases self-esteem, encourages to take bolder decisions and make bolder life plans), as well as social capital (positively influences the quality of social relations, stimulates natural interest in social structures and elicits civil involvement). The type of stimulation received by young people allows for assuming that they have numerous other assets (personality-related), which might indicate significant potential for change. Undoubtedly this group aspires to a better life and effectively functioning society, has faith in their capabilities and are self-reliant in decision-making processes. We will try to describe what young people are really like in further chapters of the report, in which we will confront the aspirations and aims of youth with reality and the problems encountered upon entering adulthood.

2.

2. How to describe youth?

Crucial life issues, aspirations, expectations

- 2.1.** Crucial issues and life preferences
- 2.2.** Self-characteristics and life orientations
- 2.3.** Aspirations connected with education and status, and plans for the nearest future
- 2.4.** Visions of and attitudes towards employment
- 2.5.** Privacy and intimacy – visions, expectations, changes
- 2.6.** The public domain – approaches and expectations

Summary

2. How to describe youth?

Crucial life issues, aspirations, expectations

CHAPTER TWO

The subject of this report is the analysis of characteristic traits of young people. Previous analyses did not succeed in presenting an unambiguous definition of youth. To the contrary, youth is defined in a number of ways. Society is divided into the young, the less young and the very young. In reports on youth, these categories are usually determined by age brackets. Previously, they overlapped with life phases or social roles, e.g. the term "youth" was applied to students. Nowadays, this criterion ceased to suffice, and classifications made in such papers often result from categorisations employed by centres and institutes collecting statistical data. As a consequence, the terms "youth"/"young people" refer respectively to the age groups 15-24 and 25-34. Our point of view is different, as it is connected with youth with specific experiences of socialism and young people who grew up in a particular historical context. Our interest is in young Poles born at the beginning of the 21st century – representatives of the first generation, whose intellectual maturing took place under the new system, which in a way is the common generational experience of this generation and differentiates it from the older generation. This group includes both very young people, who were born in the newly established Republic of Poland (and who are under 23) and "simply young people" – who only grew up in the newly formed state (and might even be between 30 and 35).

As a result, we are concerned not only persons who have accrued different experiences related to the reality they function in (different experiences in the first decade of changes and different after 2000), but also different types of life experiences resulting from differing life phases and psychological profiles. The category we are interested in is, on the one hand, maturing persons who are not independent (referred to as "youth" in this paper), and on the other hand – young adults, who have entered the phase of stabilisation in life (it is not necessary for them and very often their lives are not stable). This division has been adopted for the purpose of this paper and is by no means a binding division. The criteria differentiating young adults from youth are not clear, and what is worse – they cannot be clear. The phenomena of pluralisation and hybridisation of age categories taking place in current societies make it very difficult to precisely indicate the moment of transition from "youth" to so-called "adults" (similarly, it is difficult to point out the moment of transition from young adults to "simply" adults). The social, psychological and cultural characteristics ascribed formerly to particular life phases are no longer adequate in the case of modern societies.

Youth and adulthood first diverged from age categories, then from social roles and relevant lifestyles, and finally from psychological and development characteristics. Traditionally, youth refers to persons who have not become fully independent. Previously, the end of this life phase was marked by specific events and life situations such as commencing employment, marriage, having a family or an independent household. Adulthood was recognised after achieving full life stabilisation, which was usually possible around the age of 20. The transition from the phase of youth (denoting the status of a dependent person, not treated seriously and incapable of deciding about oneself) to adulthood (designating the status of a society member with full

rights, capable of taking independent decisions) is of great subjective importance to young people – it provides them with the feeling of independence and autonomy. It allows for living in agreement with oneself and realising one's own life concepts without looking back on the opinions of those on whom one formerly depended. Nowadays this transition is neither obvious nor easy. Today young people perform the role of students until reaching the age of 25, get married approximately at 30 (or do not get married at all). Having a child, similarly as owning a separate apartment or house occurs even later and less frequently. This results from the fact that the key to adulthood (autonomy) – employment – has become a scarce and unpredictable good.

In the case of particular generations, the transition from one life phase to another is heavily dependent on the opportunities provided by the social system (or determined by its condition) in which youth matures. When opportunities are slight or limited (within the scope of job openings, apartments, satisfying salaries), the risk of belated transition into adulthood arises – and this phenomenon is detrimental both to adults and youth. The conflict, characterised by features of a private generation conflict, in such situations acquires traits of a structural and generational conflict where youth (with their unfulfilled aspirations) are not confronted by adults, but by the social system. In the past, such conflicts gave rise to turbulent political events which radically changed society and culture.¹ Perhaps today such a perspective cannot be taken into account (according to Zygmunt Baumann, modern society with its consumptionist ideology proved itself to be the “perfect translating device”, which “translates diagnoses of social problems into the language of private concerns”, breaking down a possible collective protest²), nevertheless, it cannot be excluded.

Social and cultural difficulties experienced by youth prolong the adolescence crisis, which affects adulthood. The crisis reaches its peak at 25+ and from that moment on is referred to as the “quarter-life crisis”. It is experienced mainly by students close to graduation and graduates, who are still faced by troublesome life issues despite entering into adulthood. All they have is the age of 25, a diploma and the acute anxiety regarding their future life path. Decision deadlock, serious concerns about the future and the sense of isolation are the dominant feelings experienced by 20-year-olds upon being confronted with the “real world”. As adults they prove incapable of answering the question: “what do I want?”, “what do I want my future life to look like?”, “what sort of person do I want to be?” or “what do I want to achieve?”. Disillusionment in adulthood is common, as the transition from “youth” imposes the necessity to take binding life decisions. The pressure not to make a mistake results in fear of failure (which might turn out to be a “total” failure) and unwillingness to take crucial life decisions. The family home, where youth experiencing such problems is prone to stay longer, becomes the warranty of security and a type of asylum, relieving them from part of the burden of responsibility. Constant comparisons with peers who have already assumed the responsibilities ascribed to adulthood, have a family and commenced professional careers, make their situation even more difficult.³ Uncertain future and sense of hostile

1 To provide an example – youth contestation of the 1960s in the West and Solidarity-led opposition in Poland.

2 Z. Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*. PWN Warsaw, 1995, p. 317-318.

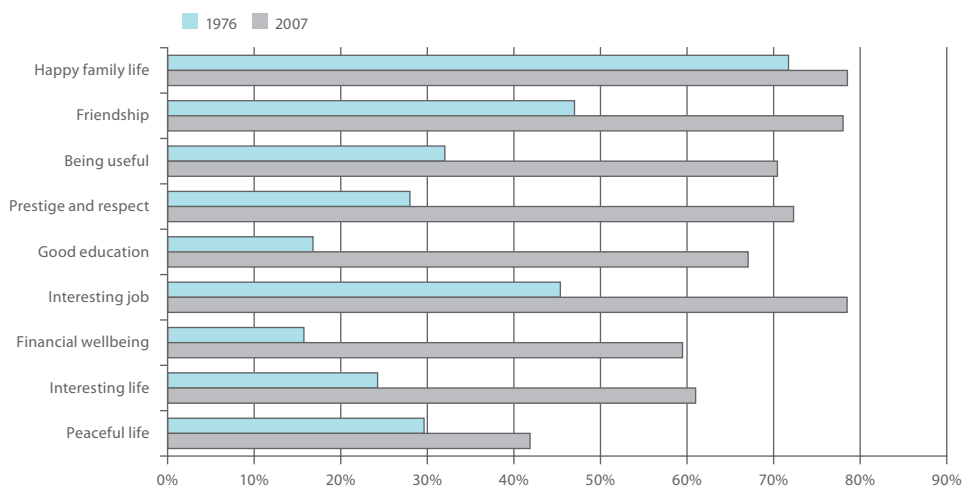
3 A. Robbins Wilner, *Quarterlife Crisis. The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties*, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2001, p. 4.

present induce youth to develop moratory life strategies (postpone or shirk assuming responsibility) and accept makeshift, temporary solutions or opt for solitude. This will be confirmed numerous times in the report on young adults and youth.

2.1. Crucial issues and life preferences

Numerous analyses confirm that contemporary youth is not a generation willing to introduce significant changes to the world, it is rather a generation willing to adapt to its rules. This is the outcome of existing circumstances. The time of great ideologies has passed. Nowadays even ideologies lack ideas and are of lesser political importance. They are incapable of entering the imagination and influencing the sensitivity of youth. They have been replaced with more down-to-earth personalised messages. The most alluring of them all – consumptionism – shifts emphasis from the common and public to the individual and private by identifying freedom with freedom of consumption. The thinking of youth is governed mainly by these categories. Is it possible to consider youth as a significant social resource whose energy could be employed in processes of Poland’s further modernisation? Definitely yes. Nowadays the innovative sense of youth is present not so much in the potential to rebel, more in the competences, aspirations and life aims of young people.

Fig. 2.1. *What is important in life?* Responses of 19-year-old youth collected in 1979 and 2008⁴



Source: Research carried out in Warsaw and Kielce by S. Nowak (1970s), own research: *Porzucona generacja* (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood (N = 1096).

They are well-educated, ambitious, responsible, their aspirations and willingness to achieve fits well into the logic of social changes. They are a large group, and as representatives of the baby boom they can trigger change more effectively. At the

⁴ Answers “very important” and “important” were taken into account.

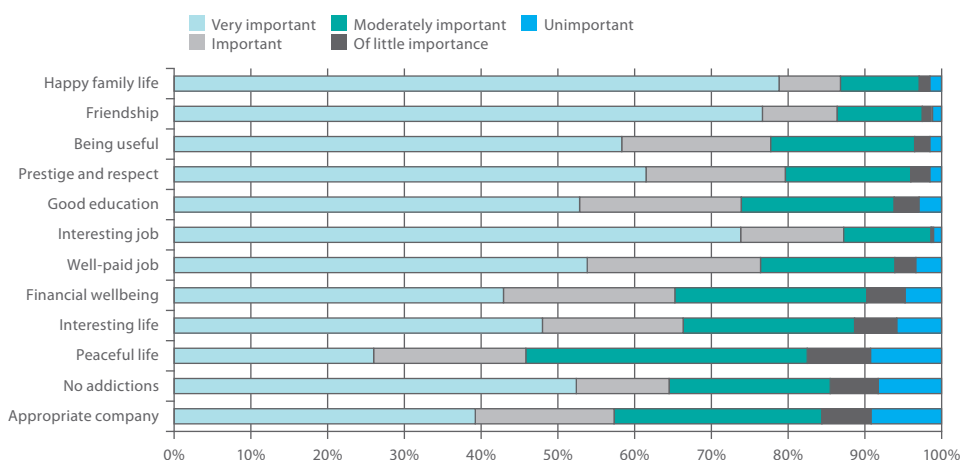
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same time, for the same reasons, this generation is paying a high price for its childhood, which took place among exceptional, yet difficult changes: Limited opportunities to enter adulthood, difficulties in attaining financial independence, risky future and dilemmas connected with starting their own families. Is it really a completely different generation? Is the world of values to which new youth adhere different than that of its peers in the past? (Fig. 2.1)

The most simple comparable data prove that the family remains highly significant – happy family life is believed to be important both by the previous and current young generation (the new young generation considers this aspect even crucial than the previous generation did). This “keyword” contains personal happiness and love – values rated highest by the youngest members of the young generation. The second similarity concerns the relatively low importance of leading a peaceful life. In the case of other issues, the opinions of previous and current young generations are clearly divergent. Nowadays youth holds in higher regard not only good education, interesting jobs, financial wellbeing or leading an interesting life (which are the values most often ascribed to youth), but also friendship, the need to feel useful and needed, prestige and respect (features less often associated with current youth).

The manner of describing key issues is characterised by the need for freedom (choice, self-creation) and self-affirmation. Comparisons with the previous generation show that nowadays youth is a more vibrant and expressive generation, intensely experiencing the world and their own life – with notably lower degrees of indifference. More issues are considered important by youth today, and more young people underline the importance of these issues in their lives. Almost all of these issues are highly rated (Fig. 2.2).

Fig. 2.2. *What is important in life?* Ratings – current 19-year-olds (2007)



Source: Own research: *Porzucona generacja* (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood.

The key values are, on the one hand, affiliate values (happy family life, personal happiness and friendship), and on the other hand, professional career as source of personal satisfaction, high income and a warranty of leading life on an appropriate level.

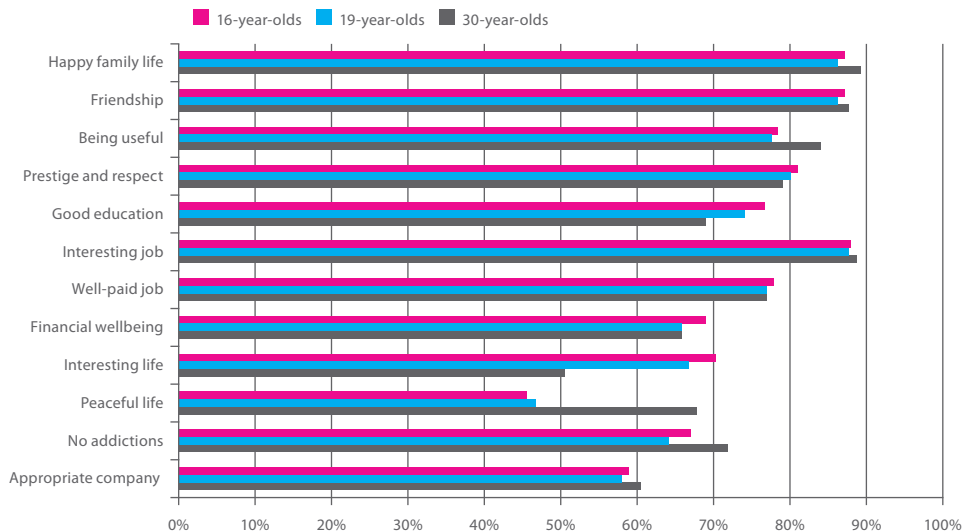
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Education is valued mainly due to the fact that it is expected to generate profit in the future – the young know that they will not find good jobs with high salaries without proper education. Well-paid employment not only makes life more secure, but also pleasant, interesting and socially respected. Employment is the key to three crucial areas of life and three types of needs: Security, life level and quality and prestige. Therefore it is not surprising that main efforts, investments and youth's emotional involvement take place within educational strategies. It is worth noting the distinguishing concern about no addictions or avoiding inappropriate company, which may be indicative of distancing oneself from risky behaviours and environments, which might lead youth astray or (as in the case of addictions) making one's way through new lifestyles within the young generation, which is focused on body care, fitness and health.

Differences between preferences among teenagers are not vast, but young adults differ from the young generation in the case of some issues (Fig. 2.3). This might be the result of being in a different life phase, as well as differing socialisation impact. Teenagers are to a larger extent the children of the new system and the new wave of influences, whereas young adults are rather representatives of the "middle generation".

They do not rate education, interesting lifestyle do highly, but they value the need to be useful and leading a peaceful and less demanding life, as well as lack of addictions. Their choices prove that they are more conventional and/or more rational. However, some of their selections confirm their belonging to the same axionormative order – the one treasuring family and personal happiness, employment and appropriate life standard.

Fig. 2.3. *What is important in life?* Preferences of various generations of youth (2007)

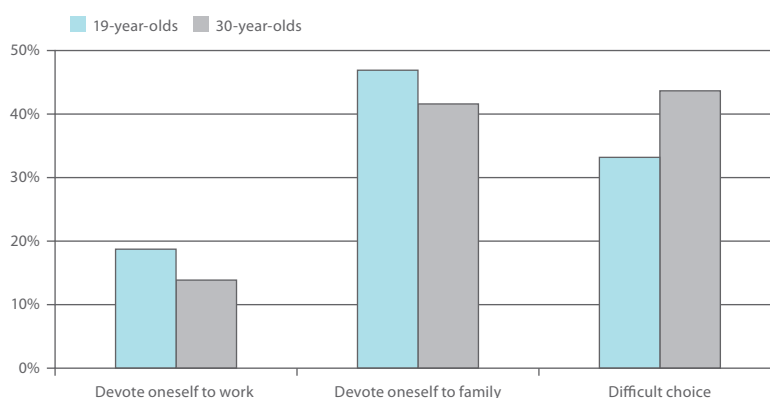


Source: Own research: *"Porzucona generacja"* (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood.

These preferences lead to obvious dilemmas – whether one should devote his time mainly to professional development or family (Fig. 2.4); try to obtain the best

possible education and acquire knowledge or aim at earning as much money as possible (Fig. 2.5); live modestly and economically or avail oneself of life's pleasures? (Fig. 2.6).

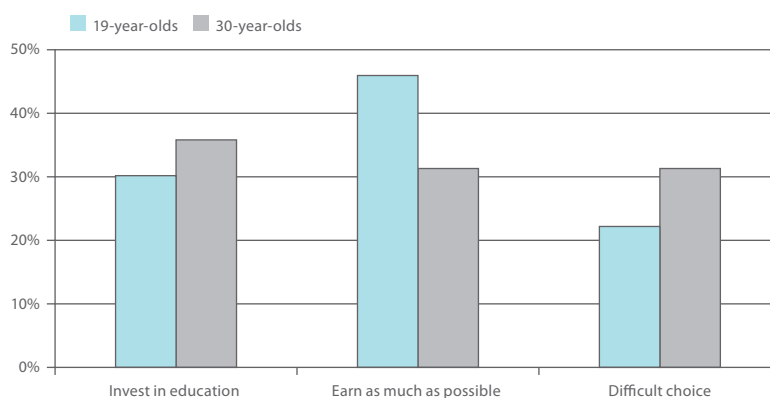
Fig. 2.4. Which is better: devote oneself mainly to work or to family? (2008)



Source: Own research: *"Porzucona generacja" (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood.*

The first dilemma is, as one can see, very difficult to solve – especially in the case of those for whom it is a real and existing problem, nevertheless, both the younger and older generation of youth takes decisions in favour of the family.

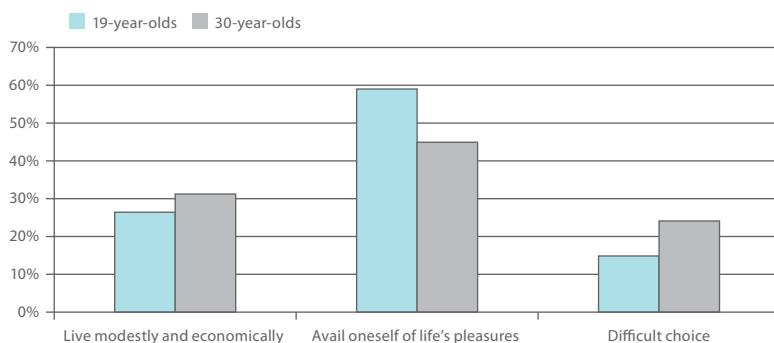
Fig. 2.5. Which is better: investing in education or earning as much as possible? (2008)



Source: Own research: *"Porzucona generacja" (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood.*

The second dilemma arouses fewer doubts – investing in education or earning as much as possible? Analyses of the situation on the labour market prove that education is a prerequisite for money. However, some – especially younger youth – do not link these two issues in an obvious manner, and the lower percentage of doubtful 19-year-olds might be indicative of polarisation in this area.

Fig. 2.6. Which is better: living modestly and economically or availing oneself of life's pleasures?



Source: Own research: *"Porzucona generacja" (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood.*

The third dilemma raises least doubts, especially among younger youth – barely 10% of 19-year-olds has difficulties with taking decisions regarding what aims to choose in life: whether to live modestly and economically or avail oneself of life's pleasures. More than 60% select the second option. At the same time, the advantage of pleasure visibly diminishes when confronted with attaining crucial life aims. 43% of Poles aged 18-29 indicated that availing oneself of life's pleasures are more important than concentrating on key life goals. However, the majority (57%) declared they perceived achieving life goals as more important.⁵ Although hedonistic preferences are still more visible among youth than in the case of average Poles (36.7%), they are not more important than achieving crucial life aims. First and foremost, they are not connected with special evaluation of material objects. 40% of youth aged 18-29 believe material goods are significant and usually believe them to be a marker of success (33%).⁶

2.2. Self-characteristics and life orientations

Self-characteristics of young people most often refer to various moral values and soft skills – they depict themselves as honest, respecting others, caring about family ties, decent, sensitive to current events and problems of others (Fig. 2.7). They underline their modesty, thriftiness, normalcy, and to a lesser degree (above 60%) their ambitions and determinedness in achieving goals, resourcefulness and competitiveness.

In the opinion of teenagers, they are honest and emotional people – sensitive to the world and others, perhaps slightly less concerned about family relations, respecting other people, acting in compliance with moral norms notably less often than young adults (difference – 28 points). Youth experiences the sense of commonness of one's own Self and the sense that they do not stand out from among other people notably less frequently. It is even less often that they declare religiousness or concern about their homeland. Ambition, determinedness in achieving goals,

⁵ *Social Diagnosis 2009.*

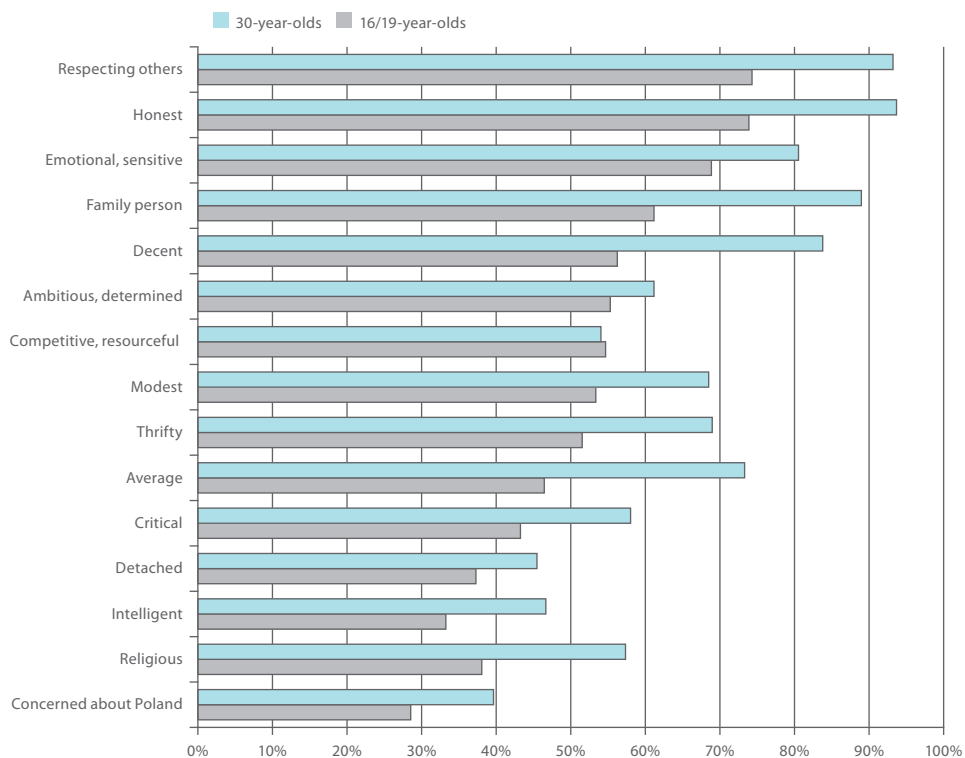
⁶ *Op. cit.*

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resourcefulness and competitiveness, as well as modesty and thriftiness are traits declared by more than half of youth, whereas intellectual values (good education, intelligence, criticism) are stated by less than half of respondents. The young and older youth are similarly determined to realise their life ambitions and plans, though they differ when it comes to the distribution of “ascetic”, “flamboyant”, “sentimental” and “pragmatic” features.

Irrespective of these differences, in the case of both generations more pragmatic “hard” skills are more often declared by youth of higher status – they are more prone to note intellectual values, active approach to life, weaker identification with communities as distinctive in their characteristics. Youth of lower status has a tendency to relate emotionally to the world, and more often mentions commonness and mimicry as their characteristic features. Self-characteristics pointing to moral values (decency, being a family person, religiousness, patriotism) are more common.

Fig. 2.7. Self-characteristics of young adults and youth (2007)

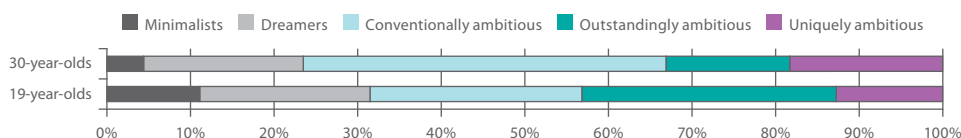


Source: Own research: *“Porzucona generacja” (Abandoned Generation) – education paths and entering adulthood.*

Passive approaches and low expectations of life are not the domain of youth. Sentimental (“virtuous”) minimalists, who do not have high aspirations, aim at peaceful and secure lives, are a minority (5% of young adults and 11.5% of youth). Dreamers – with high aspirations of wellbeing, interesting and comfortable lives, but with scarce opportunities for success – constitute 20% of youth.

Together with minimalists they are a minority, which is not very active and has difficulties in finding its place in the new market reality. The remaining young people represent ambitious and active types. They differ in terms of the level and type of life expectations. With orientations to middle-class and average statuses (“conventionally ambitious”) they constitute mainly elder youth in the young generation (43.2%). Younger people are usually tempted by unconventional life models: amusing, extraordinary, they also find unconventional careers and refined consumption highly significant (30.4%). The combination of high consumption- and status-related goals and concern for immaterial values are characteristic of every eighth 19-year-old and every fifth 30-year-old (“uniquely ambitious” 8.3% and 12.5%).

Fig. 2.8. Orientations to life displayed by youth (2008)



Source: Own research.

These trends suggest that younger youth are a very distinctive product of the consumptionist society – their consumption-related expectations are more common and more powerful (40% of young and 29% of adult Poles⁷ find material goods highly significant). The preferences they exhibit, however, do not always portend active life strategies leading to acquiring the desired goods. The economic situation and general condition of the society has great corrective significance here. Youth senses these changes and relates them to its preferences and expectations. Today – under the influence of tougher reality and unstable future – youth tends to eliminate dreams of a dashing career, vibrant life – style or prestige in favour of the “quieter” option involving a peaceful and secure life based on a stable job and good, warm relations with closest friends and family.⁸

Corrections of life aspirations made under the influence of the economic situation do not necessarily lead to resigning from previously formed (generational) aspirations and aims. The Solidarity generation mentioned in the previous chapter is an example of this.

2.3. Aspirations connected with education and status, and plans for the nearest future

Education – very highly rated by youth in the last two decades – has begun to lose significance. Although it increases chances of leading a better life and effectively counteracts degradation, nowadays it does not guarantee success. Some young people have started noticing the unprofitability of over-ambitious educational plans. The illusion

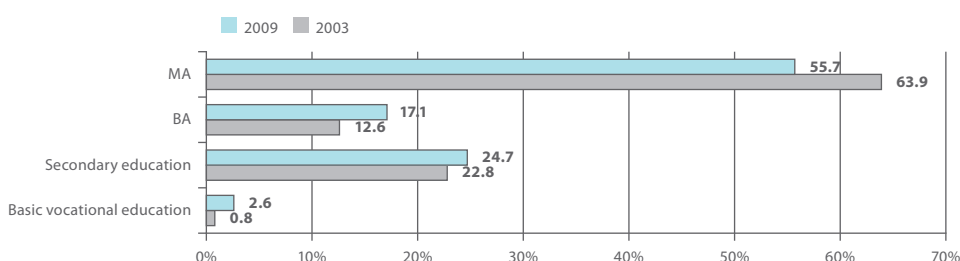
⁷ *Social Diagnosis 2009*

⁸ Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, Warsaw, 2011, p. 9.

that a diploma guarantees a good job, an educational offer not corresponding to the needs of the labour market, unemployment among university graduates, education-related difficulties and costs – all this leads to changes in educational preferences and alters approaches to education.

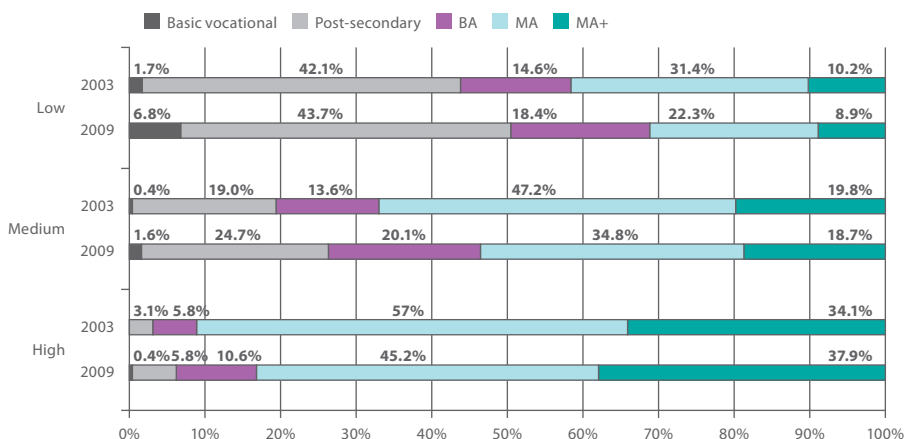
It is clearly visible that educational aspirations have been reduced (Fig. 2.9). More and more persons intend to finish their education at the level of general vocational schools or secondary schools with vocational profiles. Technology is approached with particular interest. Less and less youth plan to finish universities.

Fig. 2.9. Changes in educational aspirations in the years 2003-2009



Source: J. Domalewski, *Spoleczne, srodowiskowe i edukacyjne uwarunkowania drog szkolnych mlodzięz*; the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development (IRWiR), Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), Warsaw, 2010.

Fig. 2.10. Educational aspirations of youth and family status



Source: Studies carried out in post-secondary schools in Toruń, compiled by J. Domalewski.

Within six years, interest in obtaining MAs fell by 8.2 percentage points among youth commencing post-secondary schools.⁹ Interest in vocational training is on the

⁹ Data were collected within research conducted in 2003, and then in 2009 in all schools in the Toruń region. In both cases they concerned the whole population of youth engaged in education (in 2003 N = 4069, in 2009 N = 3019). An even greater drop was noted in studies on 19-year-olds, [see] Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS): *Youth 2010*, Warsaw, 2011, p. 14.

rise, as it is shorter and requires less investment. The level of educational aspirations of youth has dropped in all types of environments. However, among diligent rural youth from families of middle and higher status and among worse-educated city youth with low status the drop was most notable.

This process clearly influences expectations connected with social and professional positions. Youth – the majority of whom at the beginning of the decade still aspired to high life status – fulfil their goals and rationalise less ambitious plans. It is mainly those from families of middle and lower status who opt out of the race for higher positions – in their situation assessments of the situation on the labour market and education costs are decisive and lead to less attractive choices (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Planned social position and family status (%)

Planned status ↓	High family status		Middle family status		Low family status	
	2003	2010	2003	2010	2003	2010
high	80	80	44	39	31	25
middle	18	17	50	54	48	49
low	2	3	6	7	21	26
total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, Warsaw, 2011, p. 12.

Still, the majority of youth graduating from post-secondary schools plan to continue education. The majority of secondary school students (82%) intend to go to university, and the same plans are shared by 45% of vocational school students. Some of them (19%) intend to enrol at post-secondary schools. Also half of the students from basic vocational schools intend to continue their education – usually combining it with work. The majority of students who do not plan further education intend to commence employment. Establishing one’s own company is not a popular concept among youth not intending to continue education: 7-8% of vocational school students and 2% secondary school students have such plans.

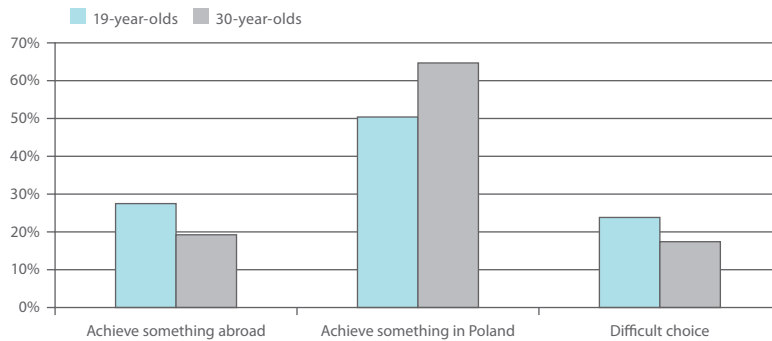
It is even less frequent to take decisions of working in agricultural holdings or running a household and raising children (after approximately 2% among graduates of vocational schools). Among those ending their education earlier, more or less every seventh vocational school graduates (14%) and four in one hundred secondary school students plan to move abroad.¹⁰ Generally the need to leave the country and perceiving it as a necessary solution for youth is lessening – in the years 2004-2007 this possibility was considered by two thirds of 19-year-olds. In the nearest future (2 years), 14.2% of young people aged 19-29 intent to seek work beyond Poland. The number of youth harbouring this intention is two and a half times as high as the number of older Poles with this aspiration. Nowadays the sense of necessity connected with leaving the country (in search of a job) remains high among youth worse prepared for making their way on the national labour market, and at the same time with sufficient qualifications to find a better-paid post abroad (mainly vocational school graduates and university graduates without special qualifications, who accept the offered terms and conditions of employment). Educational travel is considered by 3.2% of young people.¹¹

10 Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, Warsaw, 2011, p. 15.

11 *Social Diagnosis 2009*.

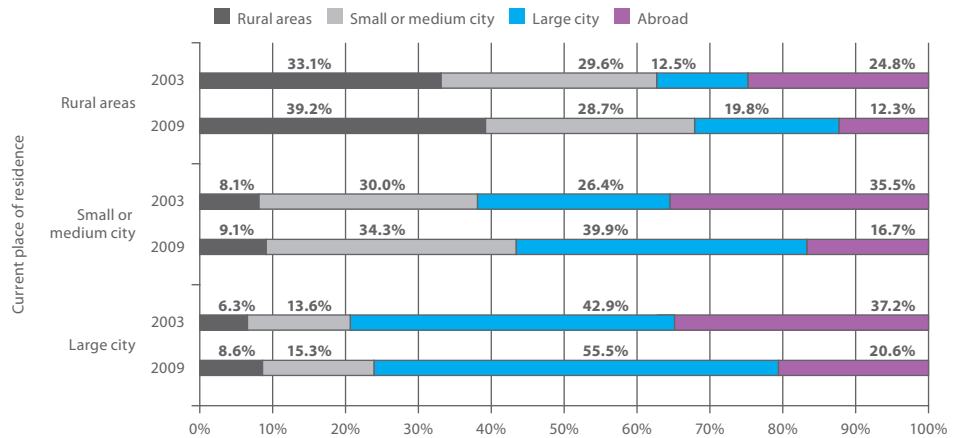
Interest in foreign countries as countries of residence is on the decrease (Fig. 2.12), though the allure of the foreign, offering better life opportunities is still present. Young Poles quite frequently think that wealthy EU countries might provide them with the opportunities their homeland does not dispose of. In 2008, 26% of 19-year-olds displayed such opinions. Older representatives of youth exhibited such tendencies notably less often, as they had accrued experiences of labour emigration (Fig. 2.11).

Fig. 2.11. Which is better: achieve something abroad or be successful in Poland?



Source: Own research, 2008.

Fig. 2.12. Plans of youth regarding place of residence – dynamics of change



Source: Studies carried out in post-secondary schools in Toruń, compiled by J. Domalewski.

Irrespective of what indices are analysed, travelling abroad ceased being such an attractive perspective for youth. Plans connected with travelling abroad are still present and fluctuate depending on the economic situation, mainly on the Polish labour market.

Generally, the perception of own life perspectives is positive. Two thirds of young people believe that they have the opportunity of leading a better life than their parents and express their satisfaction with perspectives for the future. Similar

satisfaction is expressed by 56% of older Poles.¹² More than three thirds (78.3%) of young adults are of the opinion that they have notable influence over their lives. Less than 70% of older Poles perceive themselves in the same way.

2.4. Visions of and attitudes towards employment

Awareness of the significance of employment is present in the life of youth from the moment they take decisions regarding their own education. Nowadays, schools are selected first and foremost with a view to ensure future employment and though long-term education postpones the moment of commencing employment, youth becomes well-versed in the requirements of the labour market very quickly and formulates its own opinions. These are not always accurate, however, they present the state of awareness delineating the area of attainable and unwillingly accepted future choices.

Table 2.2. Opinions regarding employment (2008)

Which of the following do you consider the best option nowadays?		19-year-olds	30-year-olds
A.	1. Commence employment as soon as possible, or	28.3	27.6
	2. First obtain high professional qualifications	62.1	56.9
	3. Difficult choice	9.6	15.5
B.	1. Be an employee, or	24.9	30.9
	2. Be an entrepreneur	62.3	53.5
	3. Difficult choice	12.8	15.6
C.	1. Be a rank-and-file employee, or	23.4	22.1
	2. be a managerial employee	68.2	60.1
	3. Difficult choice	8.4	17.5
D.	1. Seek employment in one's profession, or	36.1	29.9
	2. Try various activities and professions.	51.0	55.3
	3. Difficult choice	12.9	14.8
E.	1. Change places of employment, or	37.6	38.8
	2. Remain loyal to one employer	43.9	35.4
	3. Difficult choice	18.6	25.7
F.	1. Reside in one place, or	53.1	44.5
	2. Change places of residence depending on need	34.2	38.8
	3. Difficult choice	12.8	16.6

Source: Own research.

Despite the drop in educational aspirations of youth, it is generally widespread to believe that investing in education is more profitable than commencing employment early. This view is adopted more frequently by younger youth (62.1%), and arouses fewer doubts among this group (9.6%). More prominent professional positions (managerial positions, entrepreneurs) are perceived as definitely more attractive than rank-and-file posts or performing the role of hired employees, however, until now these opinions have not been reflected by results for preferences regarding future employment. Only a small percentage of youth decides to establish their own enterprises. Reasons underlying such choices are complex (objective and subjective – they will be referred to further on in the report), however, the last two years witnessed an interesting change

12 Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010* and *Social Diagnosis 2009*

in approaches to employment. According to Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), the percentage of youth excluding the possibility of establishing their own company recently fell (from 10% to 6%), and the percentage of undecided young people rose sizably (from 18% to 44%). Half of 19-year-olds considers the possibility of running their own company at some time in the future.¹³

The attitude towards entrepreneurship can be defined more clearly in the case of environments with good factual backgrounds for running and independent business. Studies carried out among students, doctoral students and scientific employees of universities (454 respondents from universities representing various regions, types, ranking positions, etc., 2009) showed that the will to use professional knowledge to such ends (establishing own companies) was declared by almost 50% of participants (8% within the next year, 40% in future).

Students were definitely more eager to express the intention of having their own company (51%) than scientific employees (31%). The main reason for which participants of the study preferred having their own company was the freedom to conduct independent activity – this reason accounted for 63% of provided justifications (79% – students, 51% of scientific personnel)¹⁴. 81% of respondents declared running a company would be connected with fulfilment and satisfaction, which are believed to be a significant form of gratification, similarly as the possibility to develop own skills and earn more money. Respondents interested in establishing their own enterprises were aware of the problems connected with running a company. These problems are stress, which they would like to avoid (51%); and problems which they would be incapable of countering on their own (30%) or lack of concept for the company. The greatest concerns are connected with the weak economic standing of Poland – only 19% of potential entrepreneurs were certain that they will be capable of tackling this problem. These opinions elucidate significant reasons for which the intention to establish one's own company will not translate into real decision in conditions of unstable economy and lack of external support.

The common feature of modern labour markets is the requirement of mobility – the readiness of employees to change employment positions, employers, or even the place of residence. Young Poles refer to these solutions with varied degrees of approval. They are least opposed to the necessity to undergo vocational retraining and attempting to perform various professions, especially among the older who already have work experience (55%). It is less obvious that changing employers is necessary (approx. 40%), and it seems least natural to change the place of residence (below 40%). Younger people do not exhibit high levels of readiness for professional mobility, which might be the result of lack of experience accrued on the labour market, or to strong commitment to family (values) or pessimistic outlooks concerning the capacity to keep an independent household.

The dominant opinion (Fig. 2.13) that appropriate income is the most important element of the job – this belief is shared by 78% of young people aged 18-29. For ever second person, lack of stress and tense relations is very important (50%). Employment stability is of no lesser importance (44%), as well as the opportunity for personal development (40%). Every fourth young person would like a job matching

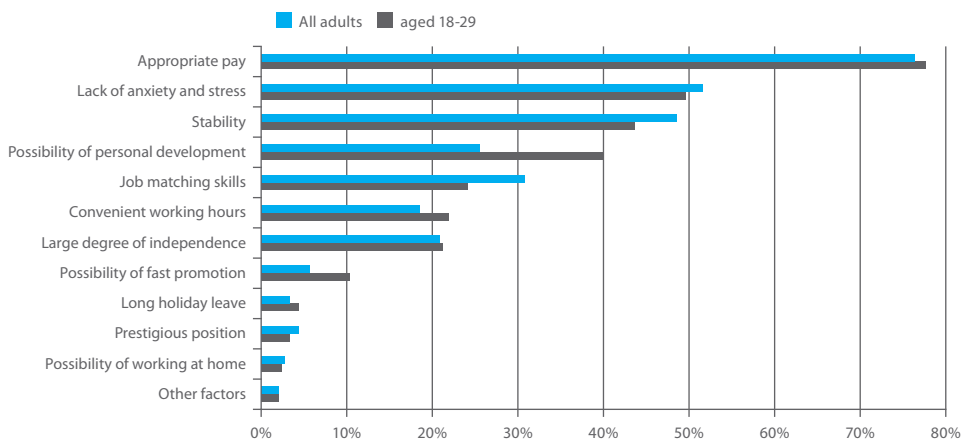
13 Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, p. 22.

14 G. Banderski et al., *Przedsiębiorczość akademicka*, Research report, PARP, Warsaw, 2009, pp. 10-12.

their skills, allowing for independence and with convenient working time. The young do not pay much attention to whether their employment positions will be prestigious and whether they will have a high number of free days – what is more important today is the how and where holidays are spent. In comparison to representatives of older generations, the young are more demanding, flexible, open and oriented to dynamically developing careers.

Undoubtedly employment – though it was not awarded the top rank in the value hierarchy – is very important for young people and consumes a large part of their life energy. At the same time, the high position of family and social life, as well as free time alters the way in which employment is perceived by youth. It is increasingly common that the young signal that in their opinion that work cannot be so time-consuming as to inhibit developing hobbies and interests, and take away their right to rest and spend quality time with their families. Although revenues (and the career path leading to higher income) are important, the income level is not the only marker of the value of work – apart from financial issues; the young also value opportunities for development, personal satisfaction, as well as good relations with other people. It has also been noted that in risky and uncertain times the value of security, stability and interpersonal relations is on the rise. The key principle – work-life-balance – is now a priority.

Fig. 2.13. What do you consider most important in the area of employment? (% of marked answers)



Source: Own compilation based on: *Social Diagnosis 2009*.

As such approaches are becoming more pronounced, modern Polish youth is referred to as the Y generation – the generation of people who have high requirements of their jobs, but do not revere employment and are not prone to make it to the top of the career ladder irrespective of the price. Still the amount of time and energy consumed in order to cater for professional development might lead to different conclusions; the emotional involvement in employment is much lower. This is a visible change in relation to the attitudes noted in the 1990s. In the 1990s work and professional careers were prioritised, and the yuppies (Young Urban Professionals) were the most characteristic group of the trends present in those times. Yuppies were young university graduates aiming at remarkable careers and obtaining high material status.

They preferred working for large prestigious companies offering very good financial outlooks and opportunities for rapid promotions.

Work was their tool – the means of accumulating increasing amounts of goods and boosting prestige, which was reflected by an unconventional lifestyle. Yuppies did not consider the job itself very important – it was not significant whether the work is interesting, provides opportunities for self-fulfilment, personal development and do not collide with personal happiness. Success, measured by means of social position and life level, was crucial. Noticing the negative consequences of such an approach (stress, sense of loneliness, physical exhaustion and emotional depletion), as well as the changes taking place on the labour market (greater flexibility and uncertainty), also the patterns of generational attitudes to employment changed. Increasingly often and more distinctly, the work-life balance principle is dominating the preferences of youth. This principle signals the need for greater control over one's professional activity, higher degree of relaxation and more balanced involvement.¹⁵

2.5. Privacy and intimacy – visions, expectations, changes

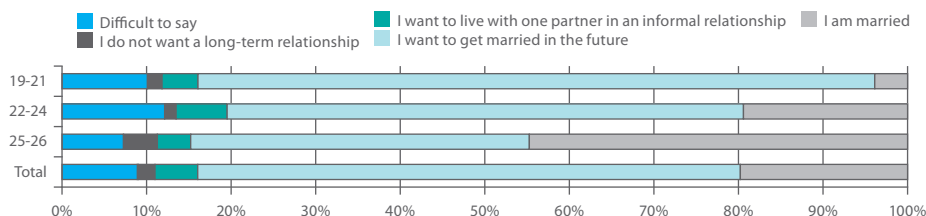
Research conducted among Polish youth has been consistently indicating fundamental changes in the perception of family, marriage and personal happiness. These values, for years considered inseparable and almost synonymous, are not becoming separate notions and are starting to shift in the hierarchy of values. The category of personal happiness has moved to the forefront, and in relation to this notion marriage, family (including procreation, having and raising children) are secondary values, and what is more have ceased to be the only forms and conditions of a happy life (every second Pole aged 18-29 states that a happy marriage is prerequisite for a happy life, children are mentioned by every fourth respondent¹⁶). Still marriage, family and having children remain life values often emphasised by young Poles. In 2005, as many as 85% of Poles aged 19-26 planned to get married (Fig. 2.14).

5-6% of youth declared the intention to enter into an informal relationship with one partner, and 2-4% declared the will to live in a long-term relationship. Recent studies (2009-2010) reveal increasing liberalisation of attitudes reflected mainly by weaker orientation to marriage (every fifth Pole claims it is an out-dated form of relationship), more frequent experiments with "temporary" forms of relationships (informal relationships as a test for partners) and employ divorce as a means of solving marriage and family problems.

15 All of these terms – the Y generation, Yuppies (together with the term "X generation" referring to youth born in the years 1961-1981 in the West) – have been introduced by the Western culture and lead to confusion in the area of terminology. The characteristics of the X generation – stemming from the reality of post-revolutionary America – might be applicable to Polish 30- and 40-year-olds: the transitional generation raised during the first years of the political transformation. If so, the concepts of the X and Y generations would provide an exhaustive description of the generations analysed in this paper – it is not a characteristic of a generation, but of a specific group of people who can be distinguished through their affirmative approach to employment and professional career.

16 *Social Diagnosis 2009*

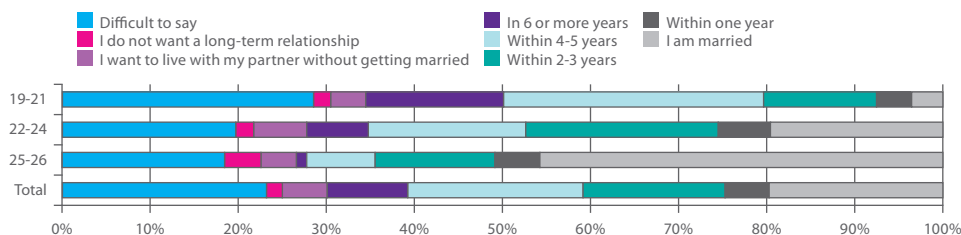
Fig. 2.14. Marriage plans of youth



Source: Survey carried out by SMG KRC 2005; N = 1 thou.

At the same time the trend consisting in radicalisation of traditional views – this is visible in rising tendencies to limit the definition of the family (and more distinct exclusion of single parent families or homosexual relationships from this definition) is reflected by the increasing disapproval for relationships out of wedlock and the decreasing level of acceptance for divorce. Less educated youth, which is strongly influenced by religion and the Church, usually expresses such views.¹⁷ The percentage of persons claiming that church weddings are necessary, or even more important than civil weddings is disproportionately high (82%)¹⁸. Nevertheless, this percentage has dropped by almost 10 percentage points as compared to a few years ago¹⁹. There are various clarifications for these inconsistencies: superficial perception of moral norms, ritualization of approaches to religion, thorough changes in morality of youth.²⁰

Fig. 2.15. Planned marriage date



Source: Own compilation based on: *Youth 2005* Survey carried out by SMG KRC, N = 1 thou.

Young people believe that marriage and starting a family cannot be a careless act – in the opinion of the majority²¹ plans of this sort are a serious challenge which requires minimum financial security (permanent job) and appropriate material status. This and other circumstances lead to the young commonly adopting the strategy of

17 CBOS, *Two decades of changes in religiousness in Poland, Research summary*, Warsaw, 2009, p. 6-14, [see also:] CBOS, *Attitudes to gays and lesbians, Research summary*, Warsaw, 2010.

18 T. Nieśpiał, *Polska młodzież stawia na rodzinę*, "Rzeczpospolita", 30.03.2010.

19 T. Biernat, P. Sobierajski, *Młodzież wobec małżeństwa i rodziny*, Research summary, Toruń, 2007, p. 30.

20 J. Mariański, *Religia w społeczeństwie ponowoczesnym. Studium socjologiczne*, Oficyna Wydawnicza, Warsaw, 2010.

21 *Youth 2005* Survey carried out by SMG KRC.

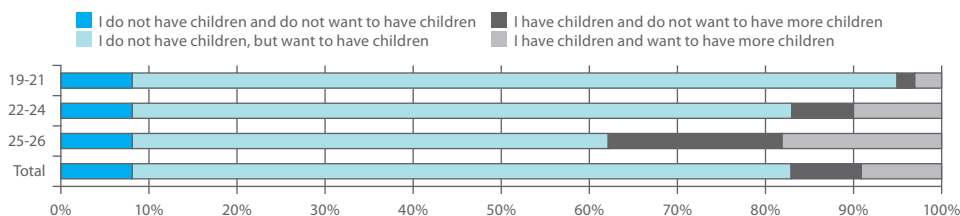
postponing the decision about getting married until the second decade of their lives or later (Fig. 2.15) and living in “trial” relationships (concubinate). Interestingly, they are accepted by youth mainly as a transitional form of relationship, a type of warranty against the risk of marriage. They are not approved of by youth when perceived as forms of long-term relationships (every tenth teenager has a positive attitude towards such a view)²² and every twentieth person aged 20-26).²³

Youth perceives marriage as a soft institution, which adapts to individual needs and expectations of partners than social functions and needs. Marriage should serve the purpose of engaging in intimacy, self-exploration and self-development, where the desire for a stable, faithful, close relationship between two persons becomes especially important. The basis of marriage should be constituted by: mutual respect and tolerance, emotional faithfulness, sexual faithfulness, mutual forgiveness, happy sexual life, common will to have children.

The vision of marriage harboured by youth is undoubtedly a vision of partnership. Its basis is constituted by expectations of relations based on good contacts and trust, sharing house works and duties connected with educating and raising children. Research exhibits youth’s tendencies to “expand” the role of the father to include areas traditionally reserved for women. Also the willingness of young males to engage in child care is especially visible. At the same time – on the other hand – marriage involves risk, and what follows from this – certain degrees of pragmatism. It is expressed by high approval for divorce, expressed in various studies by 73% to 78% of youth.²⁴

Children are included in the life plans of young Poles more often than perspectives of marriage. Just under 10% of persons aged 19-26 do not have children and do not intend to have children (Fig. 2.16) and such intentions prove long-term²⁵. Multi-children families are definitely not the model preferred by youth, though it is preferred to having one child, in younger categories even two-fold (Fig. 2.17). In time, the motivation to have children decreases, which might be – on the one hand – and expression of more effective adapting to consumptionism, or on the other hand – confrontation with the reality of the labour market, which is not conducive to procreation.

Fig. 2.16. Youth’s plans regarding children



Source: Own compilation on the basis of *Youth 2005* Survey carried out by SMG KRC, N = 1 thou.

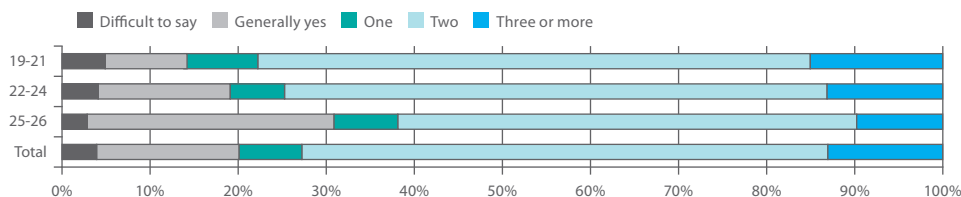
22 *Youth 2005*, op. cit., [see also:] T. Biernat, P. Sobierajski, op. cit.

23 *Youth 2005*, op. cit., [see also:] Illustration 2.1.

24 T. Biernat, P. Sobierajski, ... op. cit.

25 CBOS, *Attitudes to procreation displayed by Poles*, Warsaw, January 2010.

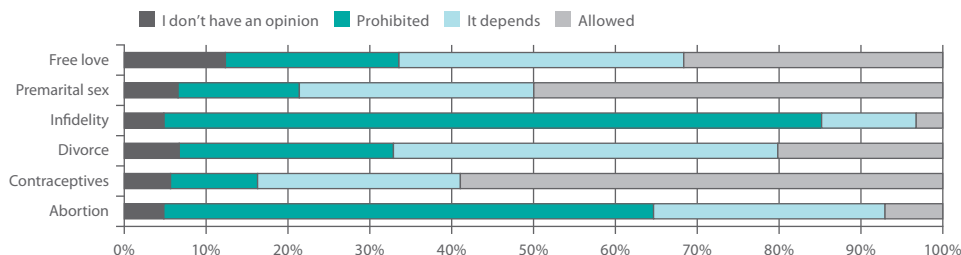
Fig. 2.17. Preferred number of children.



Source: Own compilation on the basis of *Youth 2005*. Survey carried out by SMG KRC, N = 1 thou.

The discussed trends are internally differentiated and usually have their status and environmental counterparts: rural youth is more traditional, urban and well-educated youth – definitely more liberal. Also other factors are present here. The crucial factor is that of gender. Women are more family-oriented than men, but also display a more liberal approach to alternative forms of married and family life. Also the factor of religion/worldview (connected with higher rating of family life and commitment to more traditional forms of relationships) and the evaluation of parents’ relationship (the higher the result of the evaluation, the more positive the approach to family issues). Changes in the area of intimacy are difficult to trace, though according to Anthony Giddens²⁶, it is in this domain that changes are of most revolutionary nature. Statistics show only part of the whole image. These fragments, maybe even of greater importance than the visible ones, obscure (a) changes difficult to trace by an external observer, (b) meanings ascribed to various behaviours and gestures. Various studies reveal the proceeding crisis of Catholic norms in Poland, especially distinct in the scope of morality connected with marriage, family and sex life. Generally, the norm assuming marital fidelity is accepted. The Catholic norm of preserving the life of unborn children is approved of to a lesser extent. The approval of norms connected with the inseparability of marriage is visible weaker, similarly as in the case of premarital sex and contraceptives (Fig. 2.18).

Fig. 2.18. Opinions of youth on selected behaviours prohibited in Catholic ethics regarding marriage and family



Source: Own compilation based on: J. Mariański, *Emigracja z Kościoła. Religijność młodzieży polskiej w warunkach zmian społecznych*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin, 2008, p. 357-360.

26 A. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy. Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2007.

The average index of full approval for six Catholic moral norms connected with marriage and family verified in the study amount to 35.7%, partial disapproval ("it depends") – 29.1%, full disapproval – 28.8%, undecided – 6.4%²⁷. In the years 1989-2005, the approval ration for Catholic moral norms connected with marriage and family dropped from 38.0% to 28.7%²⁸.

"Deviations from traditional morality regarding sexuality are so vast – writes Janusz Mariański – that one might talk of a specific revolution, maybe even a moral revolution. The moral awareness of young Catholics regarding marriage and family is undergoing processes of pluralisation and relativisation, and strictness in the domain of sexuality is visibly waning. The young believe themselves to be 'creators' rather than recipients of moral norms"²⁹. They not only reject (or disregard) binding moral norms, but also shape new sentimental order (B. Bawin-Legros)³⁰.

Such an order means that, on the one hand, releasing oneself from former principles, norms and behaviours regarding intimacy and sex, and on the other hand, the yearning for great, ideal love and traditional forms of confirming long-term relations (special proposal, expensive engagement ring, carefully planned wedding and wedding reception).

Young people now have the opportunity to perform emotional (erotic) experiments, which boil down to more or less successful attempts at levelling ambivalent feelings. And though youth is the time of romantic love – the one and only – the relationships formed by young people are two-fold: they seem eternal at first, but vanish into thin air when a new partner comes within sight. Relationships are entered into so as to appease emotional needs, but also under the pressure of mass culture which promotes the necessity to be with somebody, though not necessarily the necessity to be dating someone. This term, according to Tomasz Szlendak, does not refer to modern youth. "Dating", which in previous decades replaced "engagement", was the initial phase of a relationship and consistent in becoming acquainted with the partner and gradually building stronger relations and engaging in intimate relations. Today dating is the final stage of this process – young people date partners whom they know, who are close to them, and dates have become a form of building intimacy between well-acquainted partners.³¹

Until young people are not dating, they "pick up" partners. This peculiar term refers to a new manner of commencing relationships, acquiring a boyfriend/girlfriend not only so as to attract attention to oneself. Young people "pick up" other young people at parties, where they have fun and drink alcohol in order to disappear at an appropriate moment and have sex. This process does not include expressing interest in entering a relationship and continuing the relationship. It is rather an unobliging adventure, to which the norms regarding sin, indecency or morality do not apply. The

27 J. Mariański, *Emigracja z Kościoła. Religijność młodzieży polskiej w warunkach zmian społecznych*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin, 2008, p. 357-360.

28 H.S. Zaręba, *W kierunku jakiej religijności? Studia nad katolicyzmem polskiej młodzieży*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warsaw, 2008, p. 287-321.

29 J. Mariański, *Religia w społeczeństwie ponowoczesnym. Studium socjologiczne*, Oficyna Wydawnicza, Warsaw, 2010.

30 B. Bawin-Legros, *Intimacy and the New Sentimental Order*, "Current Sociology" 2004, vol. 52, no. 2, p. 241-250.

31 T. Szlendak, *Socjologia rodziny. Ewolucja, historia, zróżnicowanie*, PWN, Warsaw, 2010, p. 409.

group of closest friends accepts such practices, and at the same time – beyond parties – does not tolerate emphasising sexuality and eroticism by couples. “Group culture” functioning among teenagers, restrict couples from excessive concentration on one another, as “being together as a group” is more important than “being together as a couple”. Dating in the case of the youngest is divided into being “in the group” and “beyond the group” – at restaurants, streets, cinemas and shopping malls.³²

We do not have sufficient data to assess the range of these phenomena taking place in the emotional culture of Polish youth, though their presence is beyond doubt. It is undoubted that the area of intimacy and privacy is gradually ceasing to adhere to traditional visions and norms. However, maybe Janusz Mariański is right in stating that treating Polish youth as a group tempted by post-modernity is ungrounded. This would be confirmed not only by the visions of marriage and family life harboured by youth, but also by revitalised conservative attitudes to abortion, homosexuality and homosexual marriages. 24% of Polish young people approve of gay marriages – this percentage is three times lower than in Germany or Spain, but also lower than in previous years in Poland. Youth opposes granting homosexual couples the right to adopt children even more fiercely (63%). The degree of approval for these rights is lower than ten years ago, which might be indicative of an increasing – parallel to the liberal tendency – conservative trend in the morality of Polish youth.³³

There are various explanations for these phenomena: It is to some extent the function of divisions delineated by education. However, deep-rooted divisions in worldviews, so as not to say political views, fuelled by major politicians, the Catholic Church and the media are much more important. According to CBOS data, the conservatism of views in Poland begun to increase since the introduction of a more restrictive legal regulations regarding moral issues³⁴. These effects are explained by, among others, the principle of social conformism – the tendency to accept opinions prevalent in the society or those which are considered most common, especially among persons lacking knowledge and own opinions. The styles in which public debates are held are also important. The more demanding and dogmatic character is imposed on these issues by the public debate, the more acute social divisions become. Polarisation is always the function of the shrinking area of rationality and social consensus. The consequences of these phenomena are very worrying, especially when one notices that worldview-based divisions overlap with cultural, social and status divisions. It is easy to use them for political purposes.

2.6. The public domain – approaches and expectations

The world of politics and the public domain do not take up much of the life space of youth – these are issues they are not very engaged in. Needs and interests – those of their own and of those closest to them – are definitely of greatest importance. They

32 Op. cit. p. 408-409.

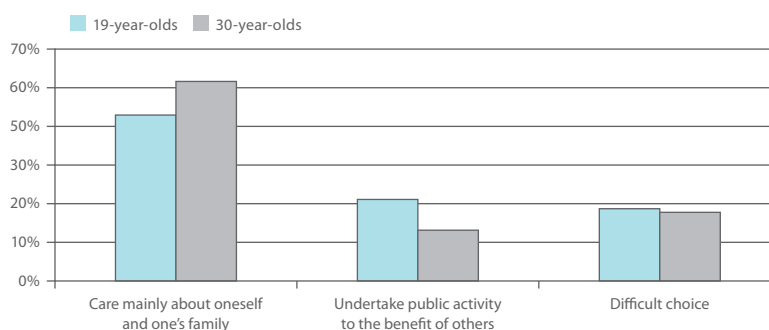
33 Id.

34 Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Opinions on the admissibility of abortion*, Warsaw, July 2010, p. 9.

HOW TO DESCRIBE YOUTH?

are undisputed priorities and could not be overshadowed by public involvement to the benefit of other members of the society. This is the opinion of 66% of young adults and 54% of 19-year-olds. The reverse, a pro-social view is held by 25% of 19-year-olds and 14% of 30-year-olds, which is contrary to stereotypes of more individualistic and egoistic orientations of young people. Such trends are visible, but not fully confirmed (Fig. 2.19).

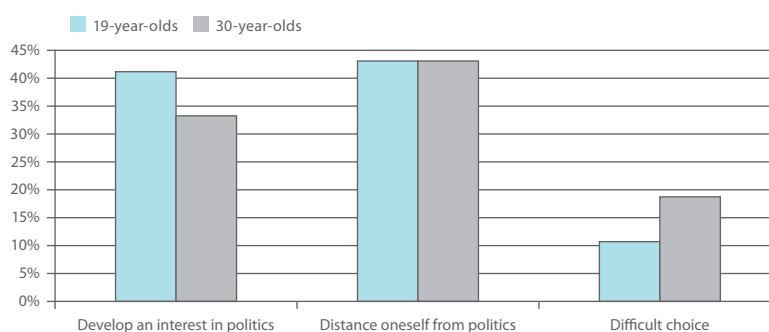
Fig. 2.19. Which is better: Care mainly about oneself and one's family or undertake public activity to the benefit of others?



Source: Own research, 2008.

Also the sense of duty to take an interest in politics is more robust among youth (43% on relation to 35% among young adults). Although both groups are predominantly of the opinion that politics should be shied away from (45%), younger people exhibit pro-social approaches also in this area (Fig. 2.20).

Fig. 2.20. Which is better: Develop an interest in politics, or distance oneself from politics?

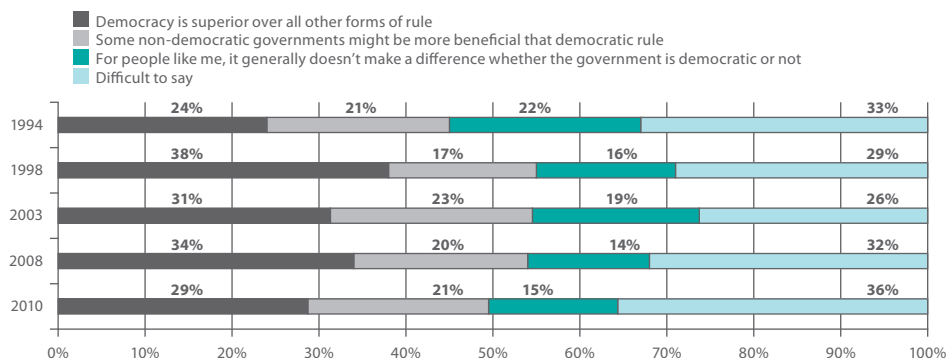


Source: Own research, 2008.

The level of interest in politics is usually medium (40%) or low (30%). 13% of respondents declare high interest in political issues. Politics does not lie within the interests of 17% of youth, which is not very different from data for the society in general, and does not provide bases for stating that youth are more distanced.³⁵

35 Data refer to persons aged 18-29 and the general adult society in Poland, *Social Diagnosis 2009*

Fig. 2.21. Youth's opinions on democracy – dynamics of change



Source: Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, p. 43.

Youth thinks very highly of freedom and democracy. In the first decade of political changes in Poland its approval for democratic solutions was more explicit than among representatives of older generations³⁶, though in recent years an increasing ambivalence towards this political system was noted among young people (Fig. 2.19). The percentage of persons sharing the view on the superiority of democracy over all other forms of rule decreased to 29%. The group incapable of expressing their opinion on democracy is even larger (36%). The percentage of persons who believe that non-democratic governments might be more beneficial than democratic rule has not dropped (21%). Similarly, the number of politically alienated youth remains constant (young people who disregard differences between democratic and non-democratic governments – 15% of total number of respondents).

The high percentage of young people who do not have well-defined views on democracy and the preferred form of rule, as well as the lowest since the beginning of the 1990s percentage of respondents declaring pro-democratic beliefs, is not a pleasant signal. It is possible to explain this phenomenon by – on the one hand – the hopes of youth connected with democracy (as a system effectively dealing with and solving social problems) and its disillusionment with the “aesthetics” of public life in Poland, and on the other hand – the presence of political groups using the weaknesses of democracy to promote authoritarian solutions.³⁷ This does not mean that negative evaluations of Polish democracy are tantamount to negative attitudes to democracy as such. Behaviours displayed by young people during the 2009 parliamentary elections prove this is not the case.

The surprisingly high turnout was best proof of faith in the power of democracy. Nevertheless, ignoring the strength of the authoritarian political message aimed at frustrated youth would be a serious mistake. One of the indicators of youth’s commitment to democracy is the unfavourable approach to the excessively powerful position of the Church in Poland. In the opinion of young people, the Church should be

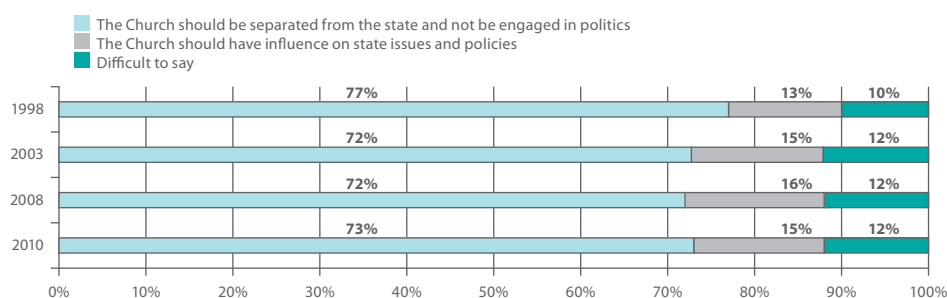
36 K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie a nowy ustrój*; the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development (IRWiR), Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), Warsaw, 2010.

37 E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1997; [see also] T. Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, PWN, Warsaw, 1972, p. 125-175.

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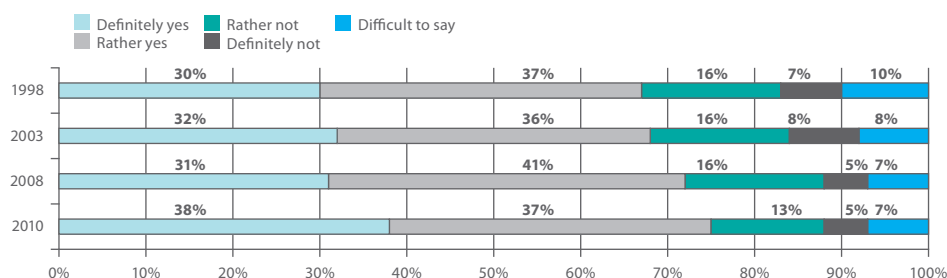
separated from the state and not be engaged in politics (Fig. 2.22). This view is shared by 73% of youth. Only 15% express different beliefs. Opinions on this issue are very clear-cut and have not undergone significant changes for years. Even those who declare being very religious and regularly attend mass generally express the notion that the Church should function separately from the state.³⁸ According to youth, the state should also be exempt from numerous social obligations (Fig. 2.23).

Fig. 2.22. Opinions of youth on the relation state-Church



Source: Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, p. 54.

Fig. 2.23. Do you agree with the opinion that currently too many people are dependent on state aid?



Source: Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, p. 58.

The majority is of the opinion that too many people are dependent on state aid (75% of 19-year-olds), moreover, some respondents claim these people do not deserve such assistance (58%). At the same time the state should pay more attention to reduce income disparities, which are unduly high in Poland (88% of young people). The government should decrease these differences (81%), guarantee minimal pay (86.4%), as well as provide every citizen with employment (84.3%).³⁹ It is believed to a lesser extent that it is necessary to maintain dispensable job positions in order to curb unemployment (45% – and this is 6 percentage points more than in 2008). One might get the impression that impressions of youth regarding well-designed societies and expectations concerning the state are inconsistent. On the one hand, they await the rationalisation of the system – not only in the area of political solutions. The negative

³⁸ Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Youth 2010*, p. 55.

³⁹ *Social Diagnosis 2009*

approach to the excessive number of social aid seekers is indicative of transferring such expectations to other domains. On the other hand, they expect something completely different – state interference in domains in which it does not have much to say (providing employment, salaries).

However, the opinions of youth might not be inconsistent at all. The state should discard liability towards those who cynically use public aid, but should not abandon those who – despite all efforts – are marginalised on the free market. If this is the logic underlying the varied opinions expressed by youth, then it is reasonable. Moreover, it would be consistent with the tendency which is becoming apparent in other countries – increase in expectations regarding the state, occurring at times of unfavourable events generated by modern capitalism. Youth, though they frequently adopt the course of thought present in the media, are vigilant observers of social life and are by all means independent thinkers drawing accurate conclusions and – despite their verbal declaration – ready to display civil commitment.

Summary

When we ask the question where youth's potential to innovate is vested, the answer is simple: it is vested in young people's aspirations and life aims, expectations and visions of future employment, personal happiness, well-designed (organised) society, as well as youth itself and its attributes. This paper concerns young people born after 1989 and young adults whose personalities were shaped during the political transformation. What are these young people like? Are they really as exceptional as the period in which they grew up?

In comparison to their parents (youth maturing in times of PRL), today's youth values education, interesting jobs, financial wellbeing and an interesting life more. Currently, young people also find friendship, the need to be useful, prestige and respect more significant – today's youth is definitely more pro-social and community-oriented. It is a more distinct generation, displaying greater "greed" for life – they are demanding, but not resentful. The key values are, on the one hand, personal and affiliate values (happiness, love, friendship and family life), and on the other hand, professional development, perceived as a condition of a satisfying life and source of personal happiness (i.e. financial wellbeing, happy and interesting life).

There are many similarities between youth and young adults which underline their belonging to the same axionormative order (with the trinity of values: family/personal happiness (I), live level, free time (II) and work (III), in accordance with the work-life balance principle), but there are also differences which underline the disparities between socialising factors. Younger people are a distinct product of the consumer society, and older representatives of the generation resemble a middle generation. The younger are not only more prone to underline the significance of money or wealth, but also represent the lifestyles recommended by consumptionism – they pay more attention to unconventionality, entertainment, individualism, and tend to value exceptionality. They are also a more pronounced product of post-modernity – with its ambivalences and contradictions. They are – to their own minds – more sensitive to the world and people, but also more pessimistic regarding social norms. They do not feel strongly linked to traditional communities (religion, nation), but feel the intense

need to create communities within their generation. They aim at wellbeing, but do not exhibit exaltation over ownership – objects are important, when they ensure pleasure and prevent from being excluded from the society. The differences between young adults and youth are visible in their attitudes and expectations regarding employment. The younger often dream of a more remarkable career, and would often like to have jobs which guarantee independence (managerial posts, own companies). Surprisingly, they display lower degrees of professional mobility, though almost 50% of students accept the requirements of the modern labour market. There are no generational differences in relations to professional expectations – both generations view salary volume, lack of stress and anxiety, opportunities for personal development and employment stability as most significant. Entrepreneurship, attractive especially for the younger, is rarely an element of life plans. Even students and university graduates, who welcome this option, state that it is burdened with high risk, and they would not be capable of coping with such difficulties on the Polish market. In recent years certain changes indicating rationalisation of previous preferences regarding life choices of youth have been noted. This concerns both dreams of remarkable careers and leading an interesting life (which are replaced with the “quieter” option) educational aspiration (which are “cooled down”), as well as professional plans (where a slight relative increase in interest in entrepreneurship can be observed). All this is indicative of youth’s readiness to verify former aspirations and plans under conditions of an unstable economy.

Although it is highly unlikely that an economic downturn would eliminate such approaches, it is possible that they will become dormant. Such a perspective would be synonymous to losing major motivations and competences and producing negative results inflicted upon youth, the economy and the whole social system. From this point of view, activities aimed at stepping up Poland’s development seem both necessary and indispensable. The momentum lost in micro scale and transferred to the micro level might lead to irreversible losses in energy and social capital, the re-establishment of which will be possible not earlier than in the next generation.

One of the basic questions formulated today with regard to youth concerns the future of marriage and family, which determine the fertility rate and demographic security of Poland. Although research notes a far-reaching liberalisation of moral norms among youth, marriage, family and the intention to have children is still vividly present and included in top life values. If the fertility rate was dependent only on declarations, the demographic future of Poland would be secure. The future regarding the stability of formed relationships and durability of marriages would also seem bright. Young people perceive marriage as a “soft” form of relationship founded on love, good communication, trust and partnership, discarding stereotypes concerning defining male and female roles.

At the same time the “new emotional order” is coming into being. Youth rejects traditional models and experiment with alternative forms of relationships. At the same time they long for great emotions, as well as ideal and long-term relationships. The long wait for such a relationship and the incapability of finding the perfect partner instigates temporary, brief and insignificant contacts, which leave no room for building deep relations and mutual cognition. There is no space for compromise, as the relationship – temporary in principle – simply falls apart. Lack of compromise and motivation to change oneself (and give the partner a Chance to change) is becoming a serious social problem, as the common life of people who are not ready to work out

agreements within a relationship or in marriage quickly comes to an end. The new “emotional order”, visible in the expectations and behaviours of youth, reveals this problem and suggests that initiatives aimed at increasing the sensitivity of youth and training social and emotional skills, whether within school education, mass culture or through the media, might prove important.

Personal and family issues are much more important for the young. Political and social problems have fallen to the bottom of the priority list. The declared level of interest in politics is usually medium or low. Despite generally accepted opinions, younger representatives of the generation are more willing to engage in issues crucial for others. Youth, more often than young adults, exhibit pro-social beliefs. They are demanding towards high-ranking politicians. They expect the state to be manager well. The predominant opinion is that the state should be secular. The state should also refuse providing aid to those who cynically use it to their own ends (such as beneficiaries of social care), however, Poland should guarantee social support to persons involuntarily excluded from society (victims of unfavourable conditions on the labour market).

Youth displays increasingly ambivalent attitudes towards democracy. On the one hand, this can be explained by its disillusionment with democracy in Poland, on the other hand, by the existing political offer and the situation on the political scene, which triggers the familiar mechanism of “escaping from freedom” to a more or less explicit support for radical solutions. Poland has been witnessing a perilous polarisation of social views for a couple of years. This concerns various issues (political, worldview, moral), and the fact that they overlap (also in the case of youth) is not consternating – it is connected with the radicalisation of the conservative, authoritarian and populist trend in public debates regarding social embitterment and divisions. Its continuation might lead to greater disparities and even greater tiredness of democracy, and authoritarianism might prove the socially approved alternative.

If it is so easy to “squander” the resources vested in youth (which are, however, usually invisible and treated as volatile and insignificant), how can one base the strategy of modernising the state and economy on them? This issue is in fact complex – similarly as working with youth is not simple. Still it is worth mentioning the wealth vested in young people: their youth and the will to introduce changes for the better, readiness to engage in unconventional events and the courage older people are devoid of. The potential of youth does not lie in great ideals. It is placed in their aspirations and aims connected with every-day life, the intention to avail themselves of the goods offered by the consumer society and freedom. Their soft spot for consumptionism does not seem “suspicious” in this context. Involvement channelled in such a manner constitutes not only the driving force of youth, but also stimulates economic development and exerts pressure on reforming the system. Consumptionism is not only about “having” and egoistically appeasing one’s own needs. It is also the glorification of a more individualised lifestyle, a different way of thinking about the Self and one’s place in the world, as well as enables creating space for building relations of new quality. The effects of this reorientation seem very explicit. Young Poles want better and more interesting lives, they invest in education, trustingly look into the future, and want to have creative jobs. Youth in Poland also want to have children, live life to the fullest and do not expect assistance from anyone (though they do expect support in situations, in which it is necessary and when they feel helpless – vide the labour market). Youth

HOW TO DESCRIBE YOUTH?

consider their own needs and goals most important. Still, the declared need of belonging to a community of peers is stronger than in the case of their parents. This might result from the fact that contrary to large traditional communities, their community has the opportunity to function in an independent domain (the Internet) according to its own rules. Values such as freedom, honesty and sensitivity are fundamental here. Moreover, they seem to be respected by youth (contrary to "real" life, in which young people do not feel obliged to observe such rules). Although young people declare low levels of interest in politics, they are far from indifferent to issues such as organisation of society and the state. Now this is a powerful resource, isn't it? It is very easy to squander this capital. Groups of youth who escape these characteristics, not necessarily on their own behalf, are evidence of this statement.

3.

3. Demography

- 3.1.** Youth within population structure
- 3.2.** Changes within the population structure due to the economic age
- 3.3.** Migration of youth
- 3.4.** Fertility rates

Summary

3. Demography

CHAPTER THREE

Demographic phenomena have long ceased to be politically and economically indifferent. It can be stated without significant inaccuracy that demography is today a key element of and social diagnosis forecasting. It is also a requirement for formulating effective programs as well as political decisions. It is nowadays impossible to comprehend numerous problems and social tensions without the use of demography and especially demography pertaining to generations. It is equally not possible to see many of the social potentials which are hidden deep within the human resources. Demography becomes significant whenever asymmetry or imbalance takes place within the population processes – when an unusually large or small number of people is born within a society or when the dynamics of growth or decrease in births assumes the form of excessive fluctuation. Each of such situations generates different individual problems. If there are “too many” young people within a society, it usually turns out that the system is not prepared for utilizing their potential as well as meeting their expectations. A baby boom first captures the attention of the child-care and educational institutions, later of the educational system and finally that of the labour market. Young people who constitute a baby boom age group become a “problem” for the system when it fails to demonstrate sufficient capabilities for their absorption. An excess number of youth always recalls, either the risk of contestation (displayed in different forms, not always constructive but also not always destructive for the system) or the perspective of thousands of young people migrating abroad. A demographic decline raises a significantly different set of issues. A prolonged maintaining of low birth rates result in a threat to population renewal, disappearance of a generational replacement on the job market while the economy must support itself by way of importing the required labour force. As a result, a new category of problems results, associated with presence of immigrants, deepening cultural hybridization of society and a generational imbalance.

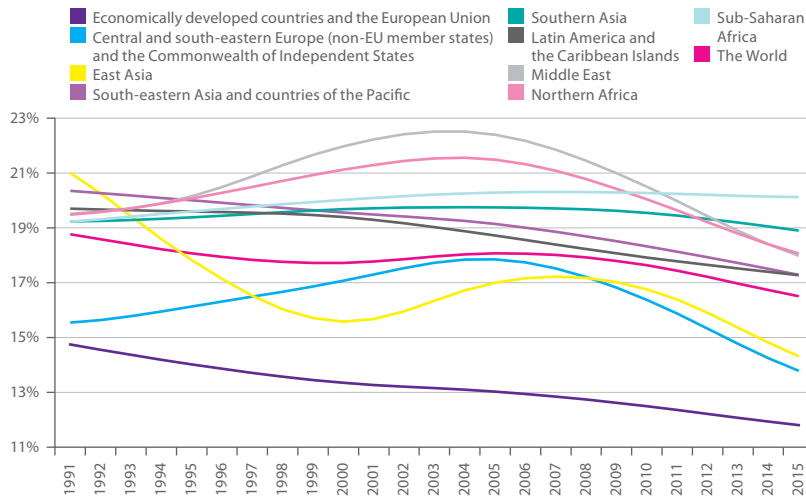
These are the issues for many years experienced by Europe’s developed countries where the average life expectancy continues to systematically increase with the simultaneous decrease in birth rates. However aging societies, age not only in the literal biological sense. Domination of older people results in a loss of dynamic for the economy, disappearance of natural mechanisms pressuring towards change, the expenditures designated for social purposes grow disproportionately to the income generated, (insurance, pensions, health care, system of care for elderly persons). The problem is becoming a strategic one in the international scope where the demographic processes become a form of assets in an economic world-wide rivalry and generate new changes on the map of civilizational partitioning (Pacific area states, so-called “demographic arc of instability” spread between Latin America, North and the Sub-Saharan Africa, India and Polynesia). It is in these partitionings that Europe (the EU) holds weak, if not to say the weakest, of all the demographic assets.

Share of youth in the general population of all regions (however not in all states) is currently dropping, which constitutes a clear signal of the developing world nearing its final stadium of demographic transition (Fig. 3.1a). The clearly visible trend of global convergence in terms of demographic behavioural patterns indicates that

a significant nearing of the hereby described processes is expected within the period of 2-3 decades, although they are most likely to occur much sooner in less developed countries (as suggested by observation of demographic processes in post-communist states, undergoing a system transformation).

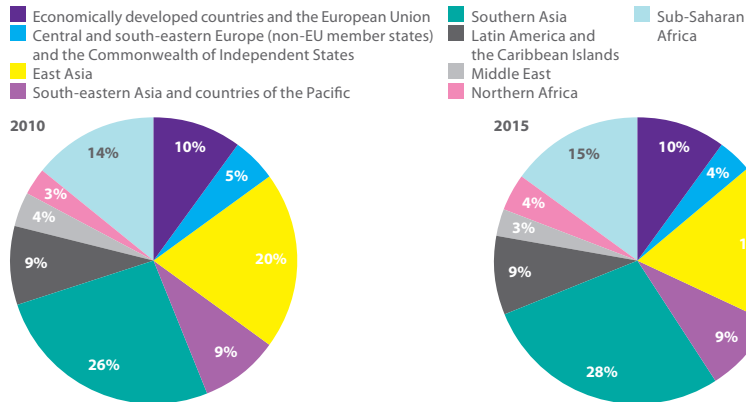
Special attention should be paid to the distinct demographic potential of a few of the world's regions – especially Southern Asia and the Sub-Saharan Africa (Fig. 3.1b). This potential has until now been more of a burden than opportunity, which may in the near future (with lack of appropriate economic conditions) prove a source of significant problems and forced political transformations. This has been shown by incidents of the Arabian Winter and Spring of 2011, during which young generations stood up to demand work, improved growth conditions and democratic solutions within their country.

Fig. 3.1a. Share of youth as part of overall population by world regions



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects 2008 Revision Database*.

Fig. 3.1b. Regional shares of youth population

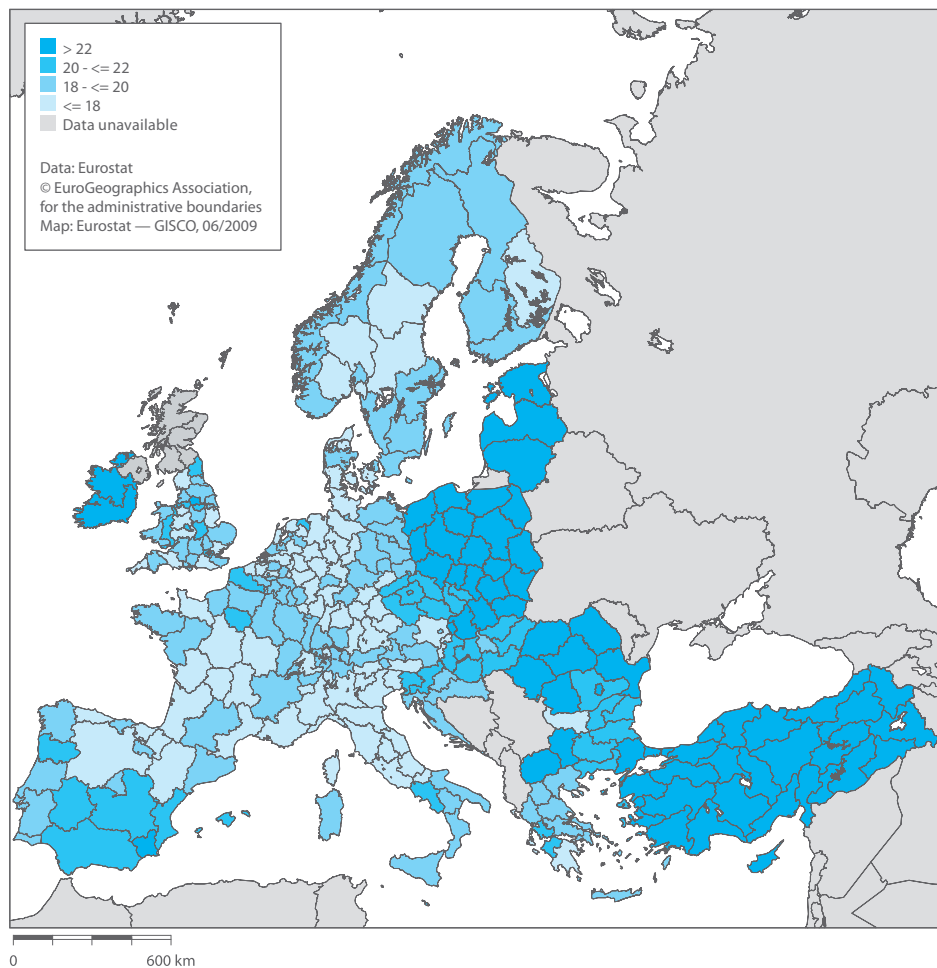


Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects 2008 Revision Database*.

3.1. Youth within population structure

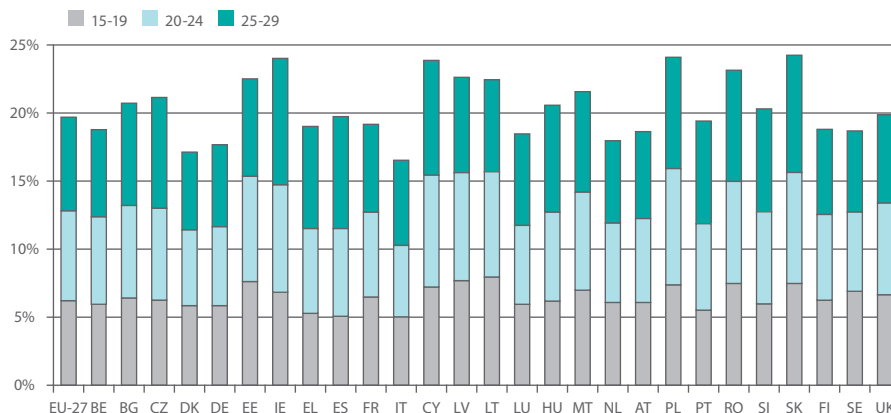
Poland has in the past usually experienced issues associated with an “excess” of young people. The surges of baby booms have however, for some time, given ground in to sudden falls in birth rates which caused us to share the fate of European Union’s other developed states. This trend seems irreversible while the specific characteristic of Poland (sudden transition from a baby boom to a demographic decline, generally lower social-economic development and lower scale of accumulation of capital) makes the scale of problems facing us to be even greater.

Fig. 3.2a. Youth map of EU states – share of youth aged 15-29



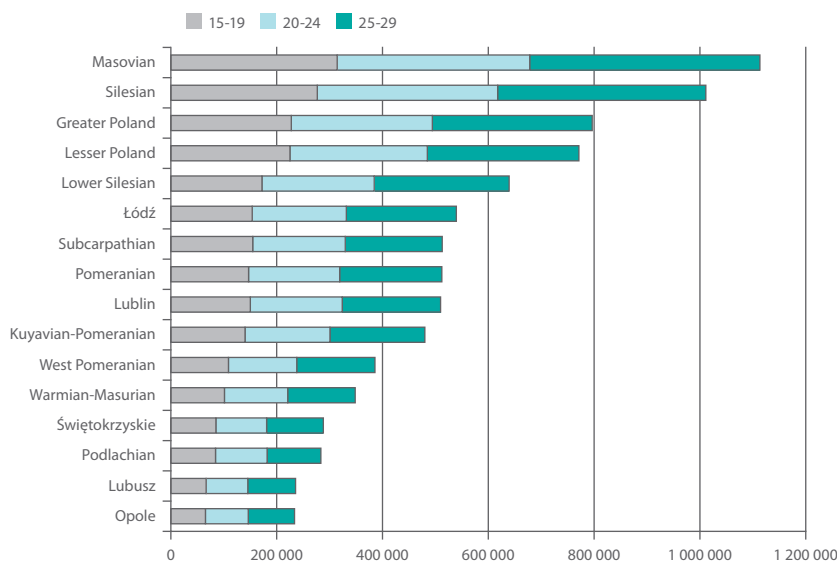
Source: *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, Eurostat, European Commission, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009.

Fig. 3.2b. Share of three youth age categories within population of EU-27 states¹



Source: Eurostat – Demographic data.

Fig. 3.3. Youth population (aged 15-29) by voivodeships



Source: Own calculations on basis of: *Population Status and structure as part of territorial cross-section*. Status for 30th VI 2010, Warsaw 2010: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

Poland has a residing population of 38 186 860 people from which, 8 661 540 being persons aged between 15-29². They constitute 22.7% of the county’s all inhabitants which placing us above the average for EU states (with the average share of persons aged 15-29 at 19.4%) as well as establishing us in series as one of Europe’s

1 Status for 1.01.2007: *EU Youth Report. An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering*, European Communities, Belgium 2009, p. 9.

2 Status for 30 VI 2010. Data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland.

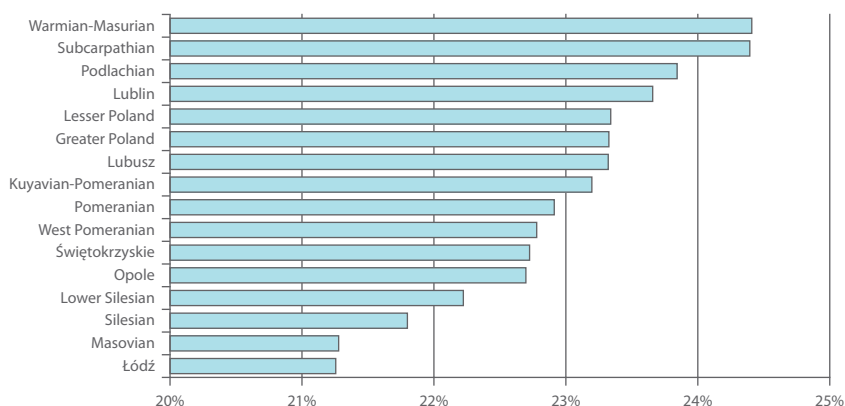
youngest societies (along with Slovakia, Ireland and Cyprus) – compare Figures 3.2a and 3.2b. In conjunction with 30-34 year-olds, young Poles form a community of nearly 12 million people (11,719,749), constituting nearly a third of the entire population (30.7%). At the same time, the segregation of the 15-29 age category into three sub-groups (Fig. 3.2b) reveals a relatively large share of persons aged 25-29 indicating further the progressing depletion of Poland’s demographic potential. Analogous data from the individual voivodeships (Fig. 3.3) yields confirmation of this fact.

All these combined age groups, representing both the older as well as the younger cohorts – are to a lesser or greater degree, children of the country’s new system. They grew up in the reality of post-1989 Poland, almost half of which (14.08%) was born already in the 1990’s or was only few years old at the time. Men tend to dominate slightly in numbers, across all age groups. They constitute 50.9% as part of the entire age group of 15 to 29-year-olds.

Although majority (58.7%) of young Poles reside in cities, their share in the population of rural regions is relatively greater. They constitute 24% of all inhabitants there (with 21.8% in urban centres). Majority of youth lives in the Masovian and Silesian voivodeships (Fig. 3.3), while these voivodeships have at the same time, the smallest percentage share of young people – under 22% (Fig. 3.4). The greatest percentage of young people falls to voivodeships, which have in recent times observed depopulation processes: Warmian-Masurian, Subcarpathian, (24.4%), Podlachian, Lublin (23.8%).

Differences between voivodeships characterized in lesser or larger scale by a favourable inhabitant age structure is to be associated with their rural rather than urban character, a factor which formulates different behavioural demographic patters. It is not question of chance that voivodeships having a relatively lowest share of young population are at the same time the voivodeships with such large urban agglomerates as Warsaw, Łódź, Katowice or Wrocław.

Fig. 3.4. Percentage of youth as part of the general population by Voivodeships

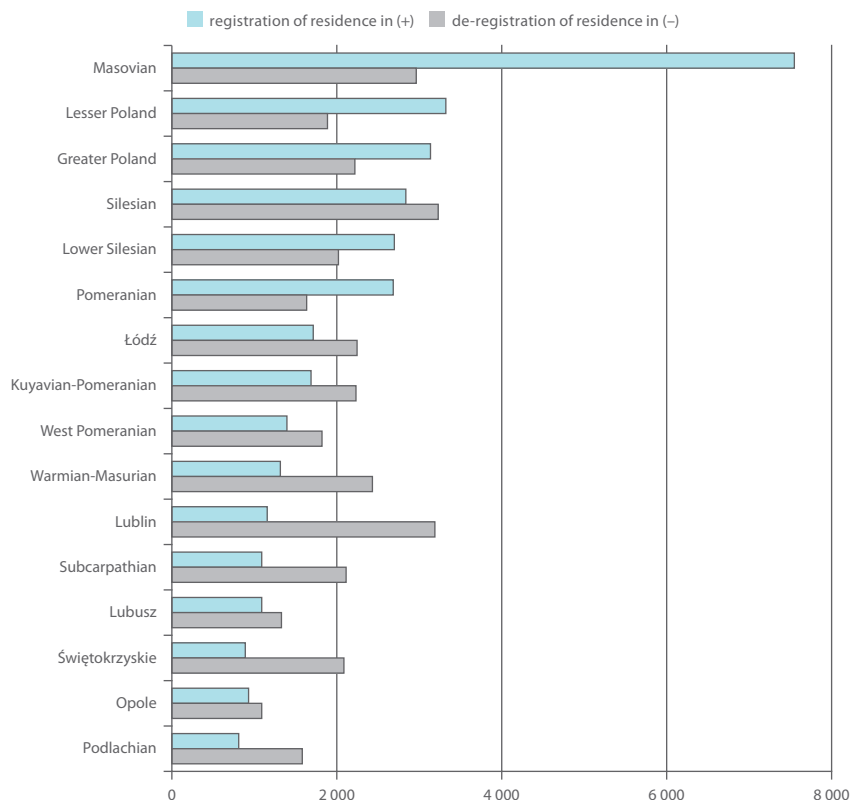


Source: Own calculations on basis of: *Population Status and structure as part of territorial cross-section*. Status for 30th VI 2010, Warsaw 2010: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

A factor additionally differentiating the demographic situation of voivodeships due to presence of young people, are the so-called permanent migrations (associated with permanent change of address including a reported de-registration). These

include both migration abroad as relocation within the territory of the state. The combining of indicators of reported de-registrations and reported registrations of residence (Fig. 3.5) reveals the drawing power of the voivodeships with large and dynamically developing urban centres. These include the Masovian voivodeship with Warsaw, Lesser Poland with Cracow, Lower Silesian with Wrocław, Greater Poland with Poznań and the Pomeranian voivodeship with Gdańsk. The voivodeships representing little drawing power for young people include: the Warmian-Masurian, Podlachian, Lublin, Subcarpathian and Świętokrzyskie. A relatively large percentage share of young people in these voivodeships stems from the age structure of their residing population and migration movements.

Fig. 3.5. The indicators of definite migration among youth by voivodeships



Source: Own calculations on basis of: *Population Status and structure within territorial cross-section*. Status for 30th VI 2010, Warsaw 2010: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

The situation is not favourable if looking from the perspective of the state's balanced development. The resultant specific economic effects (contrasts within civilizational growth, living standards), social (progressive polarization of social structure, conservative approach of the regions with overrepresentation of the elderly) as well as political (geographically assigned extremes of citizens' activation and passivity as well as acceptance and lack of acceptance for the changes). This situation may be

overcome, provided that appropriate instruments and solutions are applied resultant from implementation, by the state and local authorities, of specific regional policies and within its reach, of appropriate employment policy, opening not only the perspectives of jobs but also the perspective of interesting professional careers for young people.

3.2. Changes within the population structure due to the economic age

Similarly to the EU, Poland stands before two important demographic challenges. On one hand, they are ageing processes of society, while on the other, inevitable decrease of the population size which results both from increased average life expectancy as well as drop in fertility and births. As a consequence, the share of young people as part of the general population number will decrease successively while share of older people will continue increasing³. Our country has for many years had a certain safety buffer in comparison with European trends (mainly due to its baby booms but also higher mortality rates among the elderly⁴) and is now entering into a period of deepening demographic imbalance. Although the latest long-term population forecast does appear somewhat more optimistic in comparison with the prior completed in 2003⁵, it still leaves not doubts whatsoever: Poland is inevitably heading in direction of European trends with subsequent years poised to bring ever increasing problems. The demographic perspective in Poland paints itself in even darker colours than in many of the EU states. For us, the decreases in share of youth and the increase in number of seniors will be greater, among others, due to the coincidence of directly subsequent baby booms and demographic declines as well as the effects of cultural behaviours, changing attitudes towards procreation as well as current childbearing models. The above has its origin in Poland's opening onto the European influence as well as in cultural transformations and economic model of family caused by system transformation. Although the share of young people within our society is greater in comparison with the European average, we do at the same time have one of the lowest birth rates (1.38) in Europe, with a forecasted value of 1.45 for the period between 2030-2035 (with 2.1 being necessary for maintaining of generational renewal). Poland does however have, in contrast to developed EU states, numerous generations of ageing baby boomers, the mean life expectancy of which will continue to grow.

It stands today at the level of 71.4 years for men and 79.8 for women with a forecasted extension up to 77.1 for men and 82.3 for women in year 2035⁶. This translates into the number of persons within the productive age being subject to continuing

3 *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, Eurostat, European Commission, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009; see also: *EU Youth Report 2009*, European Communities, 2009.

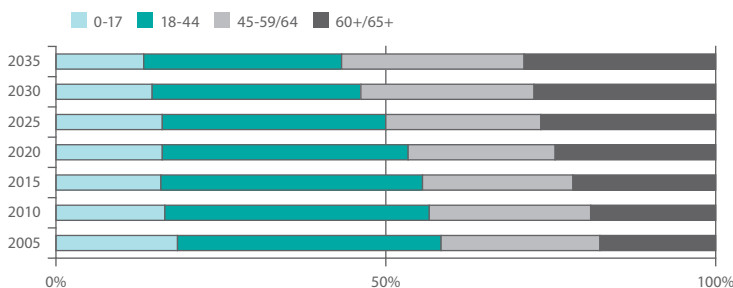
4 B. Wojtyński and others, *Długość życia i umieralność ludności Polski (Life span and death rate of Polish population)*, [in:] B. Wojtyński, P. Goryński (ed.), *Sytuacja zdrowotna ludności Polski (Health status of Poland's population)*, Warsaw 2008: National Institute of Public Health (PZH), p. 31-82.

5 That one assumes a decrease of population at the level of 2.5 million persons, while this one of 2.2 million – see *Poland's population forecast for period of 2008-2035*, status for 30 VI 2010, Demographic Studies Department of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS).

6 Equal to the current average life expectancy for men and women within EU states.

decreases (from 24 545 thousand in 2007 to 20 739 thousand in 2035, representing a drop of nearly 3.8 million, with the number of persons in their post-productive age growing systematically (from 6186.3 thousand up to 9.6217 million in 2008 and almost 3.5 million⁷ by 2035).

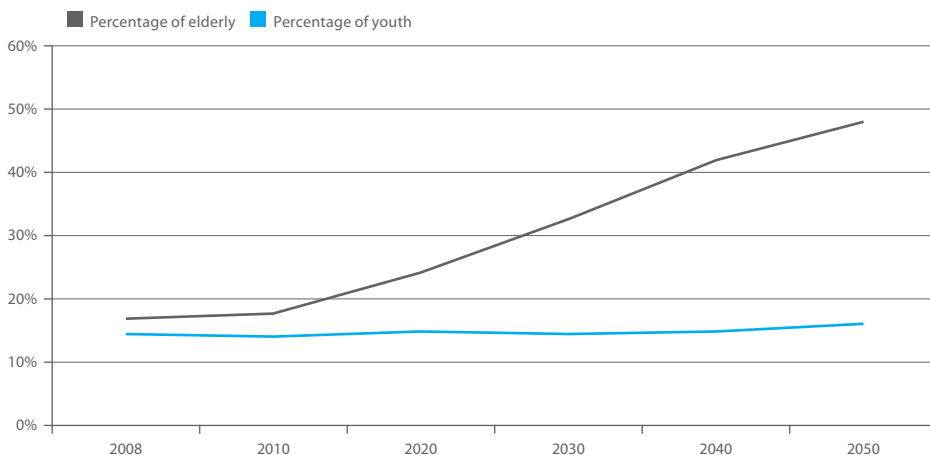
Fig. 3.6. Changes within population structure according to economic age groups



Source: Own calculations on basis of: the Central Statistical Office of Poland: *Population forecast for Poland for period of 2008-2035*.

The essence of the problem is associated with unfavourable burdens of the working age population by young persons (in the pre-productive age) and elderly persons (in the post-productive age). Forecasts for the EU and Poland are not optimistic (Fig. 3.7a and 3.7b), especially if (in the case of Poland) taking into account the socialized characteristic of the youth (a generation subjected to pressure of the consumptionism ideology, which is closer to ethics of liberty, joy and euphoria rather than heroism, moderation and asceticism).

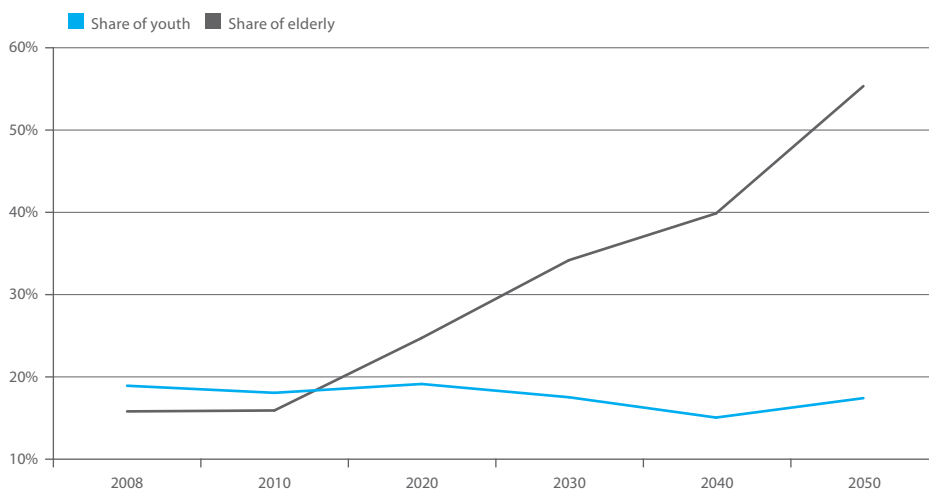
Fig. 3.7a. Share proportions of youth and elderly in reference to persons remaining within age of professional activity – forecast for 27 EU states for 2008-2050 period



Source: Own calculations on basis of: Eurostat data [in]: *Youth in Europe*, op. cit., p. 20.

⁷ *Population forecast for Poland* op. cit.

Fig. 3.7b. Proportions of the share of youth and elderly in reference to persons remaining within the age of professional activity – forecast for 27 EU states for period of 2008-2050



Source: Own calculations on basis of: Eurostat data [in]: Youth in Europe, op. cit., p. 20.

It is forecasted that the average demographic burden index⁸ will rise from 54 in 2009⁹ up to 73 in year 2035. This leap may seem unrealistic today while its consequences difficult to solve in the future. It is true that the current demographic changes may result in maintaining of the increasing birth-rate (now decided mainly by the fertility models in rural areas¹⁰, with the same function in the future being realized by way of a more friendly, pro-family institutional policy), however the period of the “baby boom” will, according to experts of the Central Statistical Office, last only until 2013. This will not alter the general trend of the rapidly growing burden on persons entering the labour market from those who remaining outside of it.

An especially difficult situation may occur in voivodeships, in which the population is subject to outflow processes (Podlachian, Lublin, Świętokrzyskie – Figure 3.8) and in places where the economic stagnation already continues to keep the professional activity indexes at a very low level (Fig. 3.9). This means the consolidation of work habits in the “grey area” or existence from unpaid labour sources – despite stimulating programs and even changes in the supply of work on the market. Greatest benefits will be drawn from the fastest possible interventions intended at stimulating the growth of these regions, however only in the long term when younger age groups will enter the job market. It can be assumed (taking the current behaviour of youths on the job market as a premise) that the earlier professional activation (which they

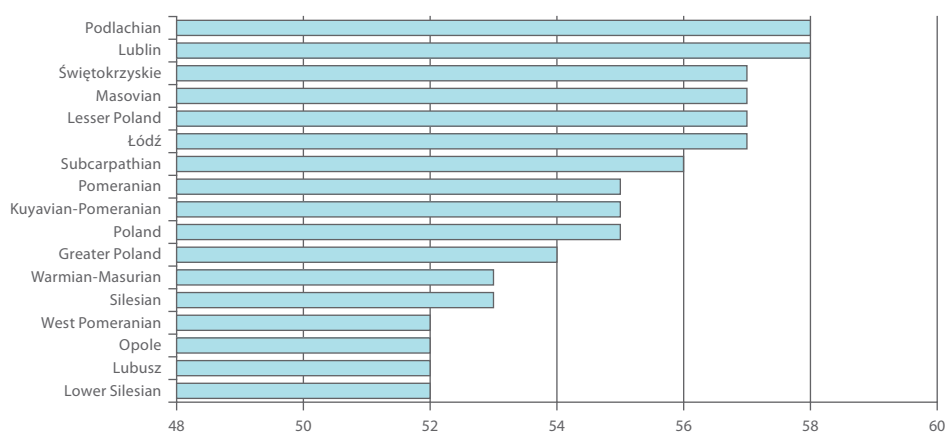
8 It indicates number of people of non-productive age (pre-productive and post-productive) per 100 persons within the productive age.

9 Data of Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS), Regional Data Bank, 2009.

10 It is however necessary to use caution as the latest data indicated a strong convergence of procreative behaviour, which can be a plain statistical artefact resultant from the fact that according to the definitions used by the Central Statistical Office, the rural areas also include the “housing areas” of Poland’s larger cities.

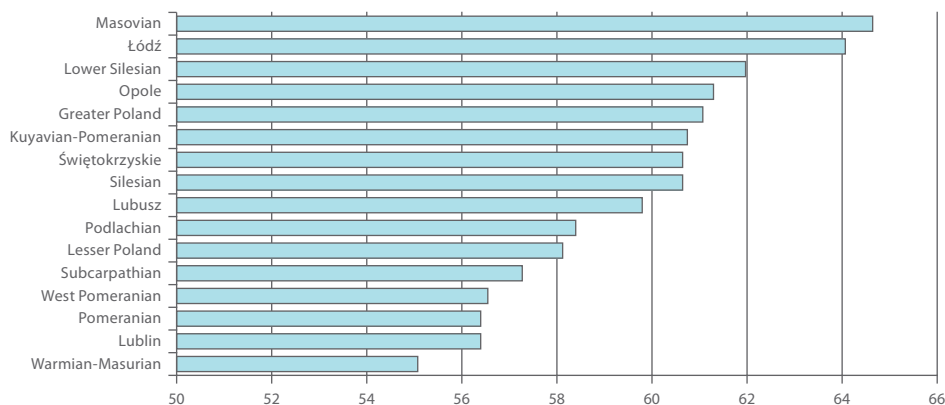
desire) and work experience (which they gain) will prevent them from turning to social benefits in a situation of low job supply and even during a requirement to search for employment very actively.

Fig. 3.8. The demographic burden index for Poland – by voivodeships (2009)



Source: Own analysis on basis of the Regional Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office data, 2009.

Fig. 3.9. The professional activity of persons aged 18-64 by voivodeships (2009)

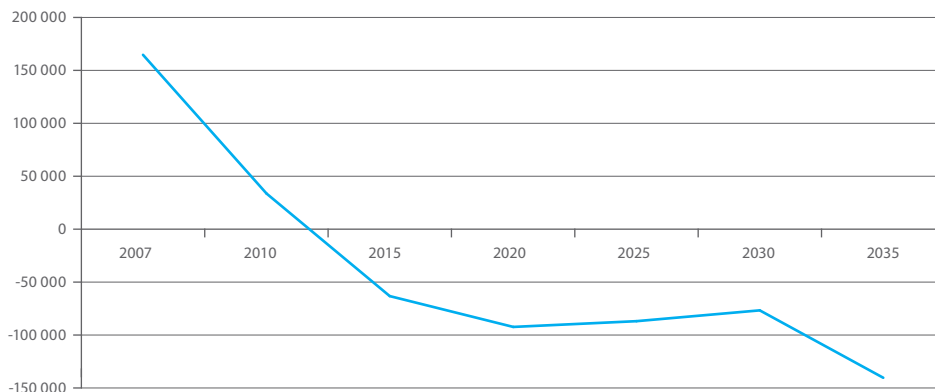


Source: Own analysis on basis of Central Statistical Office data – Regional Data Bank, 2009.

The critical moment can be expected as early as the upcoming years, when number of young people will decrease with each year and less persons being professionally active, which are to bear the cost of generating funds permitting social transfers to the sector of professionally inactive persons between the ages of 60/65 and over. It is forecasted, that the number of persons in the post-productive age within the current decade will increase on average, by 100 thousand per year and by 200 thousand per annum in the following decade¹¹ (Fig. 3.10).

11 *Population forecast for Poland*, op.cit, p. 4.

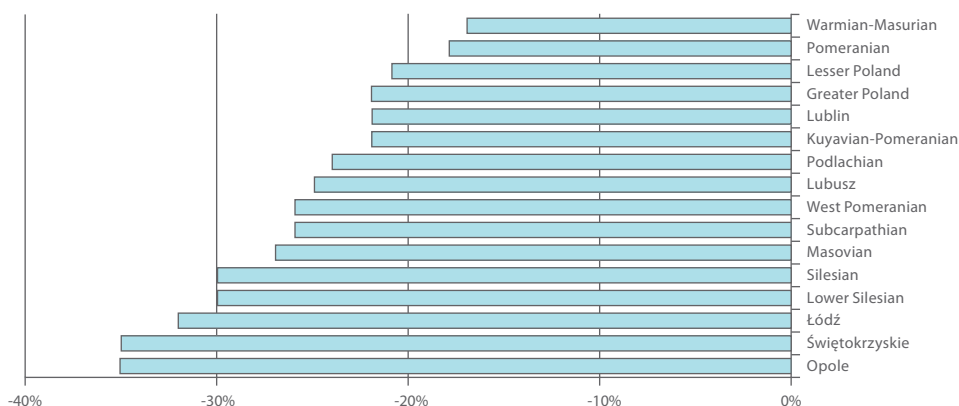
Fig. 3.10. Balance of persons entering and leaving the labour market during years of 2007-2035



Source: Own analysis on basis of Central Statistical Office data – Regional Data Bank, 2009.

The majority of voivodeships will begin, starting from year 2015, to experience a negative balance between persons entering and departing the labour market translating into a predominance of those retiring over those in age of professional activity. The Silesian, Lower Silesian, Łódź, Świętokrzyskie and Opole voivodeships are already subject to effects of this process. It is in these regions that the greatest disproportions occur, reaching levels of 35% (Fig. 3.11).

Fig. 3.11. The balance of persons entering and leaving the labour market by voivodeships (2009)



Source: Own analysis on basis of Central Statistical Office data – Regional Data Bank, 2009.

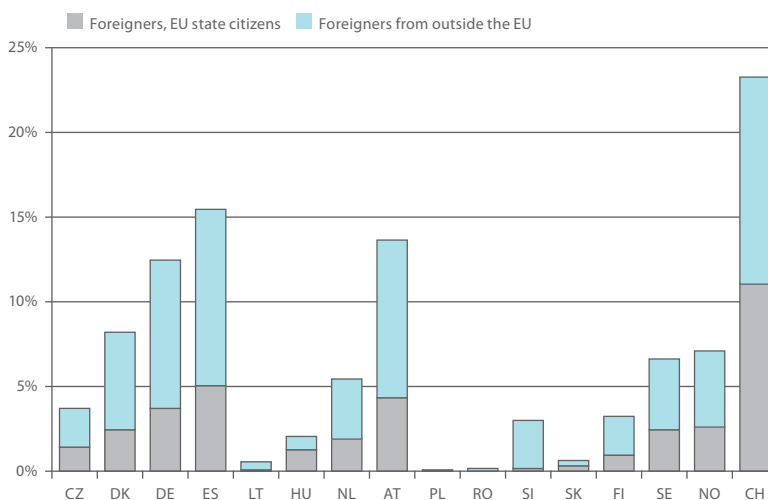
Aside from trends resulting from changes within population age structure (and having dangerous financial and economic consequences) it is important to also take into account the legal circumstances which these hazards increase even further. Despite our position as one of Europe’s youngest societies, we also fall into the trio of states with highest expenditure of the national product on retirement and disability pensions which pertain to ever younger age groups.

In general, tendencies and demographic forecasts stated herein are to be considered as being irreversible. Poland, much like all of Europe, is losing its young people, being the “demographic motor” without which it will prove much more difficult to face the challenges of the future, especially among mutually competing world economies or in terms of maintaining the present position of the EU. The demographic processes also make it difficult to solve many internal issues. However, we are still a relatively young society and the demographic crisis which is inevitably approaching, will for our economy and country – as a result of existing legal solutions, rising social expenditures and perspective of a world crisis – pose a significant problem, although proving in certain areas as a favourable factor facilitating implementation of required changes.

3.3. Migration of youth

Many EU states which prove attractive for newcomers may save themselves by means of immigrants, who not only provide them with increased population, but constitute also, a portion of the given state’s labour force. Their presence does however give rise to several problems in terms of ethnicity and religion. Nevertheless, the European Union would not be capable of functioning without their labour input. In order to sustain a functioning economy at time of an unfavourable population age structure, the EU is left reliant on immigration from outside its territory at the level of a minimum two million people annually (Murdoch 2008).

Fig. 3.12. Youth between 15-29 in EU states by citizenship, 2007



Source: *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, Eurostat, European commission, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009, p. 23.

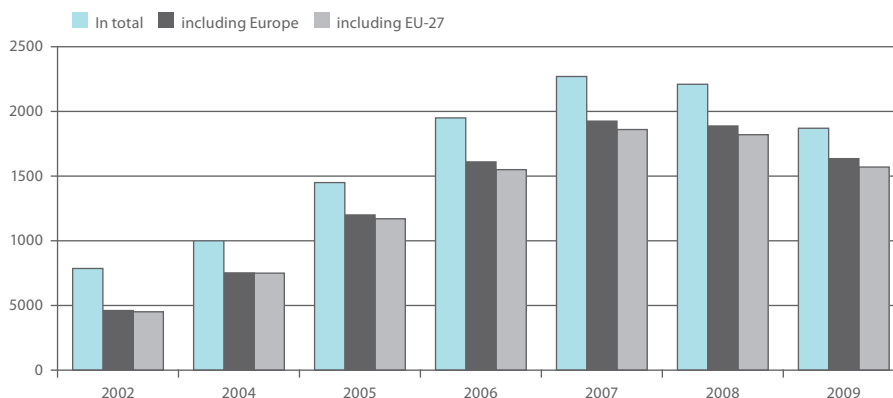
Young people constitute a significant portion of the migrating population, relocating not only in search of labour (this motive refers mainly to citizens of poorer states). An ever more frequent reason is education (studies) and the desire to change place of residence (these motives being characteristic of citizens of developed EU

states). Young Europeans moving abroad relatively more often settle in Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Sweden and in Great Britain. Nearly 40% of young people (aged 15-29) in Luxembourg, originate from other member states (this example being specific, also in terms of the population structure and its share of foreigners) while Great Britain and Spain are for a long period now the foremost states accepting youth as part of its immigration¹².

Poland has for many decades held a status of an emigrating country. The balance of migration is continuously negative – with definitely more of our citizens departing, than we gain new immigrants. Although the numbers of Poles migrating abroad has decreased within the past 2-3 years, number of permanent residents of Poland temporarily residing in EU states in 2009 was still much greater than during the initial phase of our membership – being estimated at 1.87 million (approximately 5% of the population).

For many years, the defining feature of the Polish emigration has been, contrary to majority of EU states, that our citizens emigrated not because they wished to do so but rather out of necessity. Both, the earlier as well as current departures are in majority (80-90%) employment-related¹³. Among the factors inclining to migrating abroad, are invariably; low wages, high costs of labour, formal and financial barriers in establishing economic entities or the atmosphere of public life. Comparison with the former waves of emigration, their modern equivalents are differentiated by departure of young people who emigrate not because they are incapable of finding employment (meaning “they must”) but rather because they aspire to better and higher paid employment (meaning, they “are willing and can”)¹⁴.

Fig. 3.13. Number of Poland’s permanent residents residing temporarily outside the nation’s borders, 2002-2009 (in thousands)



Source: Own calculations on basis of: *Information on the magnitudes and directions of emigration from Poland during the years of 2004-2009*, Central Statistical Office.

12 *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, op. cit.

13 *Information on magnitudes and directions of emigration from Poland during years of 2004-2009*, Central Statistical Office of Poland, p. 4.

14 see: Grabowska-Lusińska, I. i M. Okólski (2009). *Emigracja ostatnia? (Last emigration?)*, Warsaw: Scholar, see also Kaczmarczyk, P. (2010). *Poakcesyjne migracje Polaków – próba bilansu (Post-accession migrations of Poles – an attempt at balance)*, “Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny 4”.

Although the economic basis for today's emigration from Poland is nothing out of the ordinary in comparison with earlier migration outflows, exceptional however is its "youthful" nature. The main flow of migrants includes people between the ages of 18-30. While percentage of migrants between the ages of 18 and 34 in 1997 amounted to 48%, it stood in 2002 at already 63% and exceeded 70% within the third quarter of 2006¹⁵. According to the British Home Office, 83% of the migrant population having arrived from Poland after 2004 had not yet reached the age of 34, with half not even 24 years of age. The dominating group includes persons born between the years of 1980-1986, which constituted a baby boom. The following years have done little to alter these statistics significantly¹⁶.

During the period between 2006-2007, 37% of immigrants had a completed secondary education and with 20% having completed higher studies. The percentage of those with higher education had risen a year later to the level of 26% of immigrants seeking employment¹⁷. This indicator is much higher than calculated for of the overall population of Poles residing within Poland (14.7%)¹⁸. At the same time, only one tenth of those emigrating, have a completed higher education and actually work at the level of their qualifications, with others performing jobs below this level. The tendency towards employing immigrants from Poland in sectors not demanding qualifications is characteristic for majority of states accepting newcomers, with these types of works being performed in Great Britain by 80% of Polish immigrants¹⁹. Perceived from this perspective, migrations constitute both a "brain drain" as well as a "brain waste".

The perception of migration by young Poles within the post-accession period do not have to necessarily be pessimistic. These indicate both, the mind-sets as well as expectations of youth (goals, which they place before themselves when going abroad), subjective balance of emigration experiences (usually positive) as well as the benefits measured in a more objectively. The feeling of the majority of migrants on the idea of living abroad is, above all, a great life and educational opportunity, based on gaining professional experience, learning languages as well as getting to know circumstances favouring activation and operation of a business. It is the opportunity to gain a new type of cultural capital supporting the solution to various life problems, for which – as

15 P. Kaczmarczyk, J. Tyrowicz (ed.), *Współczesne procesy migracyjne w Polsce a aktywność organizacji pozarządowych w obszarach powiązanych z rynkiem pracy (Modern migration processes in Poland and activity of non-government organizations in labour-market areas)*, Warsaw 2008: Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives (FISE), p. 38.

16 *Accession Monitoring Report*. May 2004 – September 2008, Home Office, UK Border Agency 2008, p. 10-11.

17 As it results from data of the Migration Research Centre of the Warsaw University, persons emigrating in the 1990's with higher education constituted 10-11% of those moving abroad. During 2006-2007 (results from questionnaires and tests performed by PENTOR, CBOS, AISEC, Student News), the number of students considering possibility of emigration, going abroad specifically in order to work in the West, continued to maintain at the level of 60-66% [Public Opinion Research Centre – CBOS, *Polish Labour in European Union states*; research summary, Warsaw, November 2006]; as part of a study realized at the beginning of 2007 among 19-year-old youth from two voivodeships (Lower Silesian and Warmian-Masurian) readiness to emigrate was expressed by 80% of the respondents, including 13.5% wanting to emigrate permanently – see; 23 K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie i nowy ustrój (Young generation and new system)*, Warsaw 2010, p. 142 and other.

18 P. Kaczmarczyk, *Współczesne procesy migracyjne – stan wiedzy (Modern migration processes – state of knowledge)*, [in:] Przegląd Polonijny, Year XXXIII, Volume 2, Warsaw 2007, p. 63.

19 S. Drinkwater, J. Eade, M. Garapich, *Poles Apart? EU Enlargement and the Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrants in the UK*, University of Surrey Guildford 2007.

it appeared in Poland, not favourable circumstances existed, not only for objective reasons but also subjective ones (continuing in stagnant models, lack of pretext forcing one to re-evaluate one's life to date, etc.). This form of education is a priceless gain, allowing not only to perceive one's own abilities but also (in the event of those who will decide to return to their home country) have an influence on livening of the economy, change in the mentality and styles of living or participation in the social change. Confirmation of this can be found in specific studies²⁰.

Majority of Polish migrants are "pendulum migrants", who – most often as a result of failing on the local job market – having been threatened by marginalization in their home country, and undertake a type of partial migration which places them on the social margin also within the country they arrive in. This model of "here and there" dual residence, as well as a lack of permanent settlement in one place results in their perception as feeling belonging "at home" and can not count on continuing employment or professional advancement²¹. This situation may lead to an increasing effect of being "suspended in limbo" and mean exclusion from the main stream of the social existence²². One can however see the same situation from a different perspective and state that it yields not threats but rather a favourable circumstance – both in solving the most sensitive issues with which young people leave their country (achieving independence, "finding oneself" and one's idea for a living) as well as gaining experience, which constitutes an important life capital. Migration is a journey into the borderland and contact with new types of challenges which incline the migrant towards reflection, undertaking activities and formulating of previously unknown motivational vocabulary/glossaries²³.

Migrations abroad continue to constitute an element of the life plan of Polish youth²⁴ (however to a much lesser extent than in the pre-accession period), while becoming more common in the global and globalizing world of today. Not only because they no longer raise such emotions (emotions always being a result of something) but also because they positively include themselves within the life strategies of young people "leaping" between different cultures and different life roles. The risk resides elsewhere. During the period of the greatest inflow of the baby boom onto the labour market, the migrations abroad have dissipated the tensions associated with high unemployment constituting therefore a type of safety valve for the system. With the wave of the baby boom dropping and the low following in step, the perspective of high number of migrations of youth would not be favourable, especially as Poland is not

20 A. Weinar, *Reemigranci jako aktorzy zmiany społecznej (Re-emigrants as actuators of social change)*, [in:] K. Iglicka (ed.) *Migracje powrotne Polaków. Powroty sukcesu czy rozczarowania? (Returning migrations of Poles. Returns of success or disappointment?)*, Warsaw 2002: ISP; J. Czapiński, op. cit., p. 124.

21 W. Łukowski, *Społeczny sens ruchliwości niepełnej (biwalentnej) (Social sense of incomplete mobility)*, [in:] *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu (People on the swing. Migration between outskirts of Poland and the West)*, E. Jaźwińska, M. Okólski (ed.), Warsaw 2001: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, p. 125-138.

22 K. Iglicka, *Kontrasty migracyjne Polski. Wymiar transatlantycki (Poland's migration contrasts. Transatlantic scope)*, Warsaw 2008, p. 70.

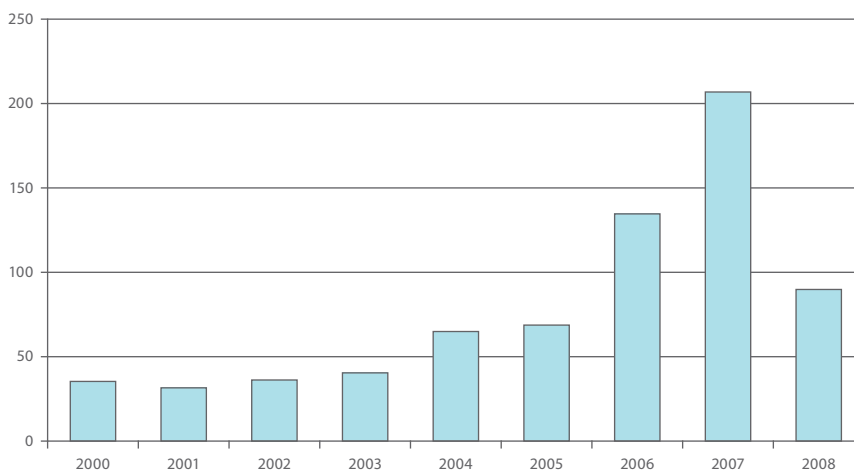
23 K. Szafranec, *Młode pokolenie i nowy ustrój (Young generation and a new system)*, Warsaw 2010: Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development Polish Academy of Science (IRWiR PAN).

24 A slight increase in migrating abroad has been noted as part of studies conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) – see: *Młodzież 2010*, Warsaw 2011, p. 13-14.

a state which attracts immigrants from other states (see Figure 3.12). Those currently interested in settling in Poland (citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, certain Asian countries) can not count on brilliant careers, additionally meeting prejudice and poor treatment on the part of Polish citizens.

Our state is also not attractive for those who wish to return to Poland from their emigration. Such returns have included after 1989 nearly 1.279 million people, with the highest number of 213 thousand having returned in 2007. Although returns have increased as result of the economic crisis in the West, they have until now not assumed the nature of a mass movement. All this results in the fact that we can not count on the improvement of the demographic balance in a manner being implemented by Western states. The obstacles are not only of the mental or economic nature. Although foreigners constitute no more than 1 percent of the entire population, migration in Poland is not a subject of a broad public debate, as in other EU states, which does not mean that it is not worth to ponder solutions allowing for control over such significant demographic processes.

Fig. 3.14. Numbers of Poles returning to Poland between 2000-2008 (in thousands)



Source: *Information on research into immigration resources in Poland for 2008*, Central Statistical Office, 2010.

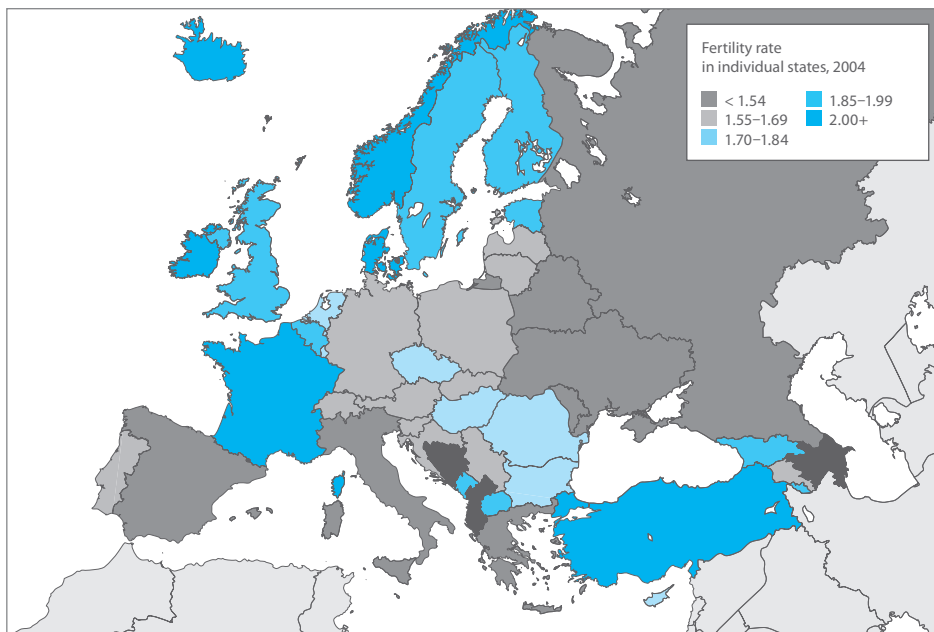
3.4. Fertility rates

The demographic balance of Poland – proves unfavourable, if extended from the current trends – becoming less favourable if referred to the expected demographic events. Of key importance among them are the forecasts pertaining to fertility. Europe is a continent with the lowest birth rates, while Poland belongs to those European states in which these values reach their absolutely lowest values. The social, economic and cultural factors are ones of key importance in this scope.

Of main significance in defining the procreative behaviours and fertility rates in Poland were the processes of the system transformation. They resulted in a violent shift from traditional reproduction (altruistic) as a result of which a woman subordinates

herself as well as her activity to the family and maternity, to a modern (individualistic) reproductive model where the woman does not wish to abandon herself and limit the scope of her activity to role of a mother and caregiver of the household. The structural processes associated with the economic reforms, as emphasized by demographers, had much greater significance for the transformations of the family than observed within countries of developed market economies. An equally important role was and still is presented as part of the transformation in the form of cultural factors associated with the ever broader opening of Poland onto globalization processes, new ideologies and new lifestyles. The offer of consumptionism and message of individualism are especially tempting for the young generation and especially competitive in comparison with the traditional forms of married and family life. The build-up of all these factors results in a clearly noticeable fertility level below that of the one guaranteeing generation renewal (amounting to 1.398 in 2009).

Fig. 3.15. Fertility in European states (2008)

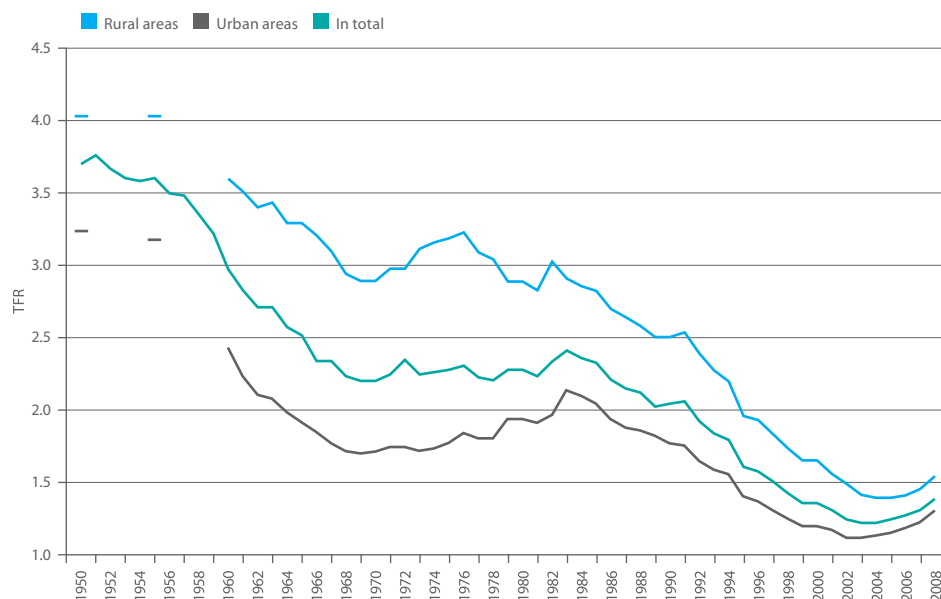


Source: Lutz W. at al., European Demographic Data Sheet 2008, 2008b; www.populationeurope.org; for: Europe the continent with the lowest fertility, "Human Reproduction Update", 2010, Vol. 16, No. 6, p. 592.

The decreased propensity towards forming formal unions and postponement of decision on concluding of marriages has been apparent since about the mid-1990's, yielding changes in the standards of fertility models. The amount of children being born since then is lesser (as illustrated by the fertility rates) with less women having less children (as illustrated by the growing percentages of child-less women – Figure 3.17) and with the number of children born being less per woman (having many children is a tendency in sharp decline).

Most importantly, a decline is observed in intensity of births within the age group of the highest fertility; between ages of 20-24 and a somewhat smaller reduction in fertility of women between ages of 25-29. Since the end of the 90's the age of maximum fertility has shifted towards the group aged 25-29. The frequency of births among women aged 25-34 has risen in recent years (Fig. 3.18) along with the general number of births. This is however, according to opinion of demographers, not so much a symptom of trend reversal, as an effect of postponement of decision on maternity by women of the older age group, which were earlier reinforcing their position on the labour market. The average age for a mother at time of birth stood in year 2009 at approximately 30 for the European Union and 28.6 years in Poland²⁵.

Fig. 3.16. Women's fertility rates in Poland between 1950-2008



Source: J. Józwiak, I. Kotowska, E. Matysiak, *Czy liczba dzieci w Polsce musi spadać? (Does the number of children in Poland have to fall?)*, Warsaw 31.03.2010: Central Statistical Office.

A characteristic effect of changes to the procreation patterns is the systematically increasing number of births outside of wedlock (from 5% in 1990 up to 20.2% in 2009 with the average for the EU standing at 40%) (Fig. 3.19). In truth, values of said indicators are not high, especially when compared with other states²⁶, however the rate of their increase (quadrupling) indicates a new quality of this phenomenon in Poland.

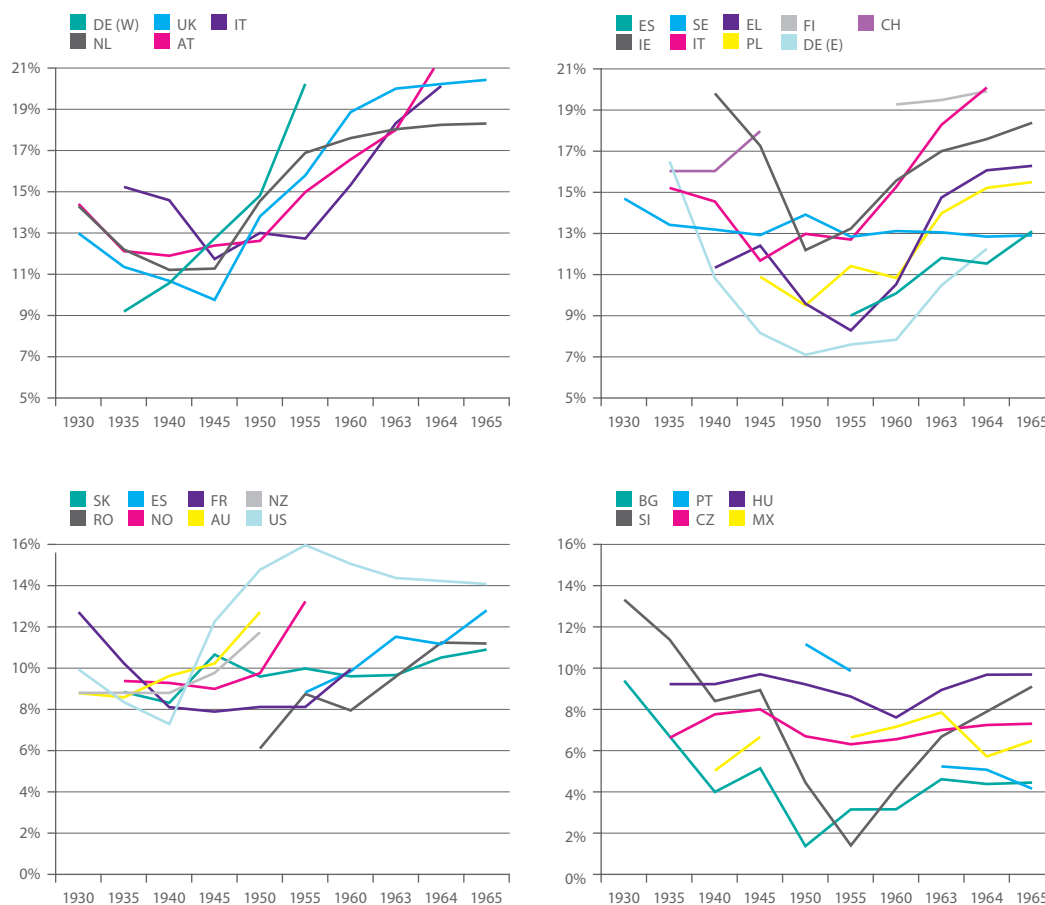
Out-of-wedlock births pertain in entirety to young women (under 30 years of age), which often remain in informal unions (teens constituting 16.3%) while women with education below the secondary level dominating the group (46%). The share of

²⁵ *Demography Report. Commission Staff Working Document*, European Commission, Brussels 2010.

²⁶ They constitute 50-60% of live births in Scandinavian states – *OECD Family Database 2010*.

those with secondary education stands at 36% with half as much with higher education (18%)²⁷. This suggests a poor living and material condition in half of all instances (for women with education level below secondary school). Failing to be competitive on the labour market, they do not usually undertake employment after giving birth, having no own income as a result and with the main source of their support being their partners or social benefits which unanimously defines the developmental conditions of the child as unfavourable)²⁸.

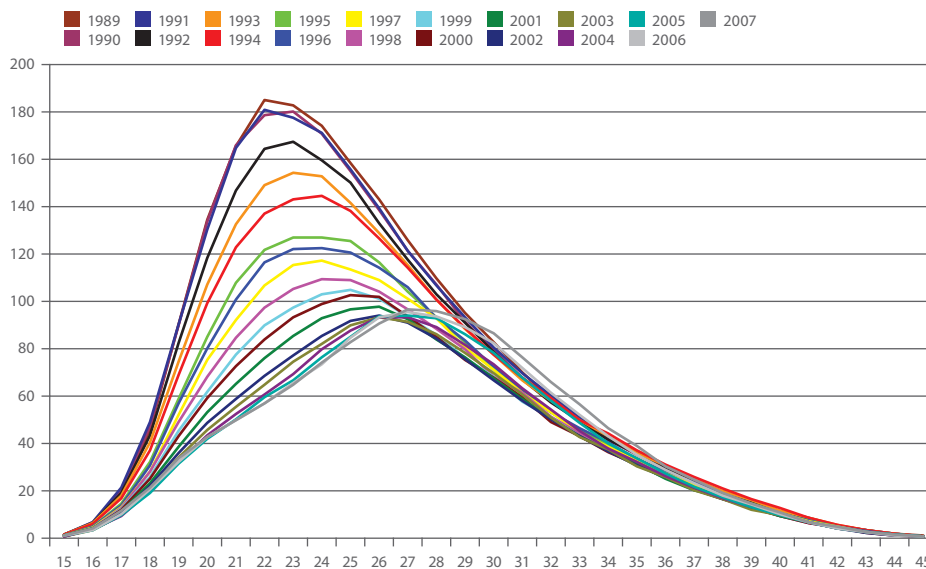
Fig. 3.17. Percentage of child-less women by age cohorts²⁹



Source: Observatoire Démographique Européen (Sardon, 2006) and Rowland (2007). Mexico: INEGI.

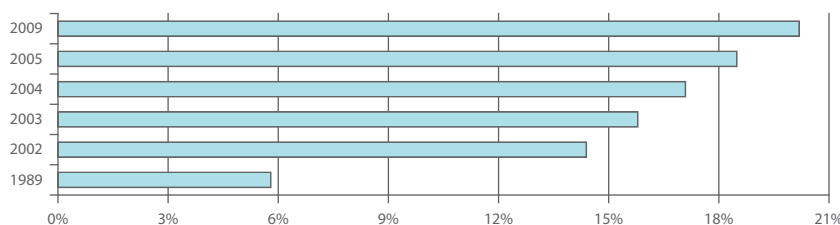
27 Own calculations on basis of: *Rocznik Demograficzny 2010*, Warsaw: Central Statistical Office of Poland.
 28 More on this subject in chapter 6, see also: *Situation of domestic households in 2009 in light of research results of domestic household budgets*, Central Statistical Office, 2010, also K.Slany (2002); *Alternative forms of marital-family life in a post-modern world*, Cracow: "Nomos", Publishing house p. 158 and other.
 29 Data includes women not beyond the age of 45. In 2007, women in Poland aged 25-29 without children constituted 30.4% of the female population, while among those aged 30-34, 14.6% (data from: *OECD Family Database 2010*).

Fig. 3.18. Changes in fertility in Poland between 1989-2007 (number of births per 1 thousand women)



Source: Tymicki K., 2008, *Przemiany wzorca dzietności w Polsce w latach 1985-2007* (Transformations of the fertility model in Poland between 1985-2007). Analysis and analysis of data from registration of births, report from research conducted, Institute of Statistics and Demography, Warsaw School of Economics.

Fig. 3.19. Percentage of out-of-wedlock births in Poland in selected years (1989-2009)



Source: Own calculations on basis of: the Central Statistical Office of Poland.

Summary

Young people constitute a natural reservoir of innovation and a factor favouring changes. The deepening shortage of young people and progressive ageing of societies causes them to lose momentum and presents a threat of stagnation. Poland continues to be one of the youngest EU states while the baby boom, represented by the first generation after the transformation is not only a source of defined social issues but might as well constitute a benefit (pressure for changes, innovative potential, dynamic force of living aspirations). At the same time, first clear symptoms of

the demographic decline are becoming clearly apparent, indicating that the process of the second demographic transition has begun in Poland. The noted indicators include not only the loss in prevalence of young people within society and loss in births, but also a deepening imbalance of those entering and leaving the labour market. The demographic forecasts assume that significant problems being a consequence of this will begin to appear in 2015.

The consequences of imbalances in demographic processes, involving young people are becoming apparent in different forms in different sectors. The wave of the baby boom of the 1990's has made the educational system and higher education take notice by forcing onto them various beneficial as well as unfavourable changes. For past few years now, the (already adult) age groups of the baby boom are powering onto the labour market and dreaming of establishing their own households. This means that it is exactly here, within the scope of issues connected with entering the job market and adulthood, that the main burden of problems will focus. These issues demand intervention and support for the youth, who have until recently managed well, without particular involvement of the state. They must now not only deal with the consequences of the baby boom (which is entering the adulthood phase) but also of the demographic decline (which includes the youngest citizens).

The rapid passage from a baby boom to a demographic decline has already begun to be felt by the institutions of higher learning (as an effect of the weakening high of older age groups of youth). This is going to affect the secondary and primary schools to an even greater degree (as result of the low tide of births within the following generation). Such sudden shift in organization of education from a mass onto a low forecasts the necessity of re-adapting the entire educational system and constitutes a significant challenge all in itself. At the same time, the fact that educational institutes will not be burdened by a large volume of youth should be utilized for purposes of introducing changes improving the quality of education.

The new type of problems resulting from women's fertility currently being in decline, dimensions of which further deepen the demographic imbalance, affecting the social security of the state. The question is therefore, how to improve the birth rate with the cultural message contradicting it (high emphasis on freedom, individualism, free time) and unfavourable conditions for start in life (trouble on the labour market, difficulties with achieving independence, inequality of the sexes)? The improvement in the birth rate observed within last few years is perceived as a transitional phenomenon which is incapable of reversing the downward trend, with attempts of pro-family policies in other countries indicating certain potential for halting this process.

The demographic processes, with significance for the dynamics of social changes are not discussed in Poland very often, include not only a generational but a spatial (geographic) scope as well. The least favourable demographic characteristics concern the voivodeships of the so-called "eastern wall" which stems mainly from the age structure of the residing population but also of the migration processes (negative migration balance). A certain group of voivodeships also does not have the best demographic characteristics in terms of population age structure such as the; Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Lower Silesian, Opole, Pomeranian, Western Pomeranian and Łódź voivodeships. Only a handful from among these may feel un-threatened by their demographic imbalance and lack of negative consequences from the local

development. Voivodeships falling into this category have strong urban centres with significant drawing power on young people. They will, thanks to the migration from other voivodeships enjoy most dynamic growth from all the regions. The most heavily affected voivodeships will include ones having least favourable characteristics of residing population demographic, negative indicators of definite migration of youth and perspectives of development showing little promise for the future. The regions of greatest focus of said phenomena include currently the voivodeships of the "eastern wall", which does not however mean that these areas are only ones facing problems.

4.

4. Education and new challenges

- 4.1.** Changes in the educational pattern
- 4.2.** Young people in upper-secondary schools
- 4.3.** Young people at universities
- 4.4.** Life-long learning
- 4.5.** Differentiation of young people's school and life paths
- 4.6.** Benefits of education
- 4.7.** Competences acquired in school and their quality

Summary

4. Education and new challenges

CHAPTER FOUR

Education is an area which is subject to very important developments bearing on the fate of Polish transformations. It is here that the major part of the intellectual capital, underlying our readiness to respond to the challenges generated by the modern times, is forged. It is also here that the fate of the young generation who sees education as an opportunity to fulfil their aspirations and life goals is determined. Today education is a factor which most intensely differentiates the level and quality of life, the style of functioning in the society, politics and culture as well as the health and psychological condition of people. Education is also a source of the lines of subsequent tensions and divisions stemming from the level of formal education. After 1989 the educational institutions became an object of pressure exerted by several parallel forces (processes), where the most significant ones were of socio-cultural nature and resulted from new developmental impulses. These impulses were generated by the political transformation: the system opened to global influences, the necessity to put the economy onto new track, to introduce a new system of social structures. These challenges met with the society lagging behind in higher and secondary education as well as the educational and status aspirations of the new generation. Under the pressure of social expectations the first changes in the education system were implemented, well before the system-wide reforms. The first and most prominent symptoms of these changes was to definitely reverse the proportion of schools offering vocational and general education which reflected the confidence of Poles in the magical power of education as a way of social advancement.

Over the years the lesser importance of vocational schools has been paralleled by increasing significance of schools providing an opportunity to continue education. A non-gradual change occurred in the mid-1990s. Young people, already aspiring at university education and high social status at that time, started to enrol en masse to secondary schools providing general education. Basic vocational schools, perceived to offer poor preparation for the demands of the new labour market and socially degrading, began to disappear as a result of grassroots initiatives, then as a consequence of the reforms. They were replaced by general secondary schools which were to give as many young people as possible a possibility of university education and good social standing. At that time it was a daunting challenge – general secondary schools took in young people from social circles that lacked experience of investing in education, although deeply believing in the magical power of a diploma. The surveys show that such schools have mostly offered “mirages” from the outset: illusions of a good school and good investment for the future.¹ Also the results of external examinations, organised from 2002 based on the same rules in each school, helped to bring to light this situation. It appeared that many secondary schools were closer in the level of knowledge demonstrated by their students to basic vocational schools than “typical” general

1 J. Domalewski, P. Mikiewicz, *Młodzież w zreformowanym systemie szkolnym* [Young people in the reformed school system], Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 2004.

secondary schools. Not only are there differences in grades, but the disparities go as far as the deeper foundations of the life in school. General secondary schools of lesser status resemble in many respects the social environment of basic vocational schools (based on the culture of resistance towards school, disregard for the reasonableness of the offered cultural message) and are to a significantly lesser extent compatible with the profile of a "typical" (elite) general secondary school which cultivates the acceptance of the mentoring role of school.²

Undoubtedly the expansion of secondary education brought Poland closer to the group of modern countries, however, the scale of the change gave rise to new problems. The reversal of the vocational-to-secondary education ratio caused a decline in the percentage of students attending vocational schools which has currently resulted in the shortage of people prepared to perform some simple jobs.³ At the same time large numbers of young people enrolling at secondary baccalaureate schools increased the group of people aspiring at university education, including average graduates from average secondary schools with non-crystallised interests and indefinite professional preferences. The situation of higher education schools became radically different as a result of the changes and under the broader circumstances (among which the economic transformations, changes on the labour market, increasing impact of globalisation processes should be considered the most significant ones). The schools had to face not only the influx of large numbers of students (originating from the old and new baby boom), but also the competition on the education market and new qualitative requirements (determined – on the one hand – by the expectations of students and their demands for greater pragmatism of the offered knowledge, and on the other hand by the educational standards and other normative regulations imposed by the authorities).

Poland became a country of people pursuing intensely education, and the education sector was the first one to experience the population surge. Since the beginning of the 1990s the enrolment rates at the top of the educational ladder have increased nearly four times. The social composition of students at private higher education schools shows the importance of education in our society – despite the high fees, most of young people attending such schools come from less well-to-do families living in the province⁴. However, popular consumption of higher education is not reflected in professional career. The educational system has lost its status-conferring

2 P. Mikiewicz, *Spoleczne swiaty szkół srednich* [Social environment in secondary schools], Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSWE TWP, Wrocław 2005.

3 See *Kwalifikacje dla potrzeb pracodawców* [Qualifications to meet the demands of employers] Final report prepared as part of the project implemented by the Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan (PKPP Lewiatan), Warsaw, June 2010.

4 I. Białecki, *Biedni płacą za studia, bogaci dostają się na uczelnie bezpłatnie* [The poor have to pay for higher education, the rich make it to public universities], *Gazeta Wyborcza* no. 156, 2003; E. Świerzbowska-Kowalik, Wykształcenie środowisk rodzinnych i miejsce zamieszkania jako wyznacznik szans na podjęcie studiów [Education of the family environment and place of residence as a determinant of an opportunity for entering university], *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe* no. 2/16, 2000; K. Wasielewski, *Spoleczne różnicowanie uniwersytetu* [Social diversity at university], *Studia Socjologiczne* 2006, no. 1; K. Szafranec, *Wartość wykształcenia na wsi – fakty, tendencje, konsekwencje. Wios i rolnictwo na przełomie wieków* [The value of education in the countryside – facts, trends, consequences. The country and agriculture at the turn of centuries], edited by I. Bukraba-Rylska and A. Rosner, Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 2001.

function. As a result of excessive supply of education, a diploma is subject to devaluation, and to revaluation – its value, in relation to the sudden market saturation with university graduates, has decreased, but at the same time it has become an indispensable requirement for starting professional career as a result of the market demands⁵. In other words, diplomas and qualifications are less and less sufficient, and at the same time they are more and more necessary to achieve an exceptional social and professional status which has become something of a rarity. Today, the same certificates (baccalaureate, vocational certificates), which in the 1980s created opportunities on the labour market, cannot ensure safe existence as they provide no guarantee of employment. This “downward elevator” effect, although mainly confined to socially challenged groups, more and more frequently affects those who have not been at such risk thus far – university graduates, including graduates of courses considered to have guaranteed employment (economics, law)⁶.

The professional future, awaited, and thus non-existent as yet, but anticipating the risk of unemployment, underlies the radical change in the educational system, and also in the approach of young people towards education. They become aware that although formal degree gives no guarantee of successful career, education which enables acquiring a diploma and minimum reflection about oneself has evolved into an indispensable measure counteracting degradation. This conclusion forms the sufficient basis for continuing interest in university studies. Educational strategies become the axis of life choices of young people. The approach to learning and studying style is changing. Education has grown into an instrumental value which serves to achieve a social and professional status. The learning and study period (including doctoral studies “just in case”) is growing longer, the education paths become more and more often individualised. It is more and more popular to study two subjects at the same time, to combine studies with early professional experience. New study culture (instrumental in achieving a CV) and a new category of expectations (focused on acquiring practical skills and knowledge) have appeared. Students have become demanding, but their demands have taken different shape.

Not all higher education schools and not all university courses can meet these expectations. Not infrequently many of them serve as preliminary stops for young people. “We could safely say – wrote German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, about the situation in his own country – that the educational areas affected by unemployment resemble to a greater and greater extent a phantom train station, with no timetable whatsoever. Nonetheless, old patterns remain in use. The person who wants to leave has to queue up for a train ticket, and trains are generally overcrowded or destined for a non-timetabled direction. As if nothing happened, civil servants in the education department sell at the stations – with high bureaucratic workload – tickets to nowhere. And under the threat – *you will not be able to take this train if you do not have a ticket* – they get the queue over a barrel. However, the worst thing is that they are right...!”⁷

This situation seems to characterise the reality in many European countries and illustrates one of the most difficult contemporary educational problems – non-

5 R. Collins, Randall, *The credential society*, Academic Press, New York, 1979.

6 U. Beck, *Spółeczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności* [Society at risk. On the way to different modernity], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw 2002, p. 132.

7 Op. cit., p. 222.

compatibility of the education sector and labour market demands. The solution to the problem is no mean challenge, just as the quality of education or development of a system-wide response which could make the advancement of young talents and school careers independent from financial standing, environment or status of the family of origin. Although the education reform was only commenced in 1999, the legal guarantees for the sector of non-public schools, undergoing particularly intense development in the area of higher education, were established as soon as 1990. These schools assumed major responsibility for satisfying outstanding and current educational aspirations of the baby boom generation. Poland has accepted the Bologna system to intensify the integration of Polish and European universities. Young people in Poland participate in scholarship programmes promoting mobility – learning, internships or studies in different countries. Every year Polish 15-year-olds take school competence tests in the international PISA survey, and their results provide an opportunity to keep a systematic track of the effects of school efforts and to take important decisions concerning the methodology, curriculum, educational system. The rivalry for predominance in the civilised world between the contemporary countries and economies, seen through the prism of the survey, activates educational policies in the specific countries, where international standards grow more and more often in importance. Gradual expansion of pre-school education in Poland, inclusion of six-year-olds in the compulsory education or restoring mathematics as an obligatory graduation subject in secondary schools, to name just a few examples.

All initiatives and changes referred to above show that Polish education, and thanks to it Polish young people, is in a completely different world in terms of cultural and intellectual aspects, and it opens up to a completely different world. Our educational reforms have been positively evaluated by international organisations and institutions, in particular the part providing young people with access to better and longer education. The quality of education, equal opportunities of education or mutual adjustment of education and labour market receive significantly worse assessments⁸. Lack of satisfactory solutions in this respect contributes to that the intellectual potential of young people is mostly wasted. Can we afford to ensure more extensive liberation of such potential? It is not only a matter of how to design further reforms, but also of the limitations existing on the labour market, obsolete economy, conservative character of many academic and school environments, mental blocks experienced by young people. Determination, time and substantial financial resources to introduce bold changes are needed to overcome such difficulties. Additional problems arise from numerous relations between the educational system and other social subsystem, in which it is not easy to interfere in the reality of market economy. As a result the role of education – such an important factor for the development of the social system – will remain ambivalent. On the one hand it gives a chance of advancement (personal, civilisation), and on the other hand it brings the inevitable risks (relative advancement and economic insecurity). All countries face these dilemmas.

Nonetheless education continues to be considered an indispensable investment in long-term development and an answer to the fundamental changes occurring in technology, population structure and on the labour markets. The criticism of

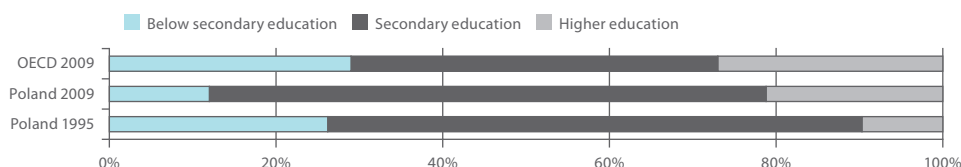
8 *The Impact of the 1999 Education Reform in Poland*, [in:] OECD Education Working Paper SERIES, no. 49, OECD Directorate for Education, 26 July 2010.

knowledge-based society brought about by the world crisis is mostly refuted with equally strong arguments. The crisis revealed that its negative effects can affect first and foremost people with low educational status – unemployment rate in this group reached 9%, while in the group of people with higher education qualifications it was less than 4%. Thus, hope related to better education proved to be justified – more than 75% people with university degree found their way on the labour market which is similar to the situation in 2003 and proves high absorptive power of the labour markets with regard to highly qualified labour force.⁹ In the context of global competition, this means that it is necessary for each country to develop policies encouraging for education at the highest possible level, and at the same time not neglecting the quality of education and work so that it is adequate to the acquired educational qualifications.

4.1. Changes in the educational pattern

After the Second World War the Communist leadership proudly advertised that “Poland is a country of learning people”. The elimination of illiteracy, and also a widespread uptake of primary and secondary education (at minimum 10 years of school education: 8 + 2), quite significant at that point in time, bear no comparison to the changes which have been observed in this area since the 1990s. Today, the time that Polish young people spent at school is among the greatest in Europe (it takes nearly ¼ of their lives)¹⁰, and they go to school because education is essential for life, not because it is compulsory.

Fig. 4.1. Level of education among adults aged 25-64 in Poland and OECD countries (2009)



Source: Own study based on the BAEL and OECD data, *Education at a Glance 2010*.

In 1995, the proportion of adults in Poland aged 25-64 with qualifications at the HE level was less than 10%, while in 2009 it was more than twice as high. This is well below the average rate for OECD countries (28%), however, the proportion of people in Poland with the most basic level of education (below secondary) is two and a half times lower compared to the average in the OECD area (Fig. 4.1).

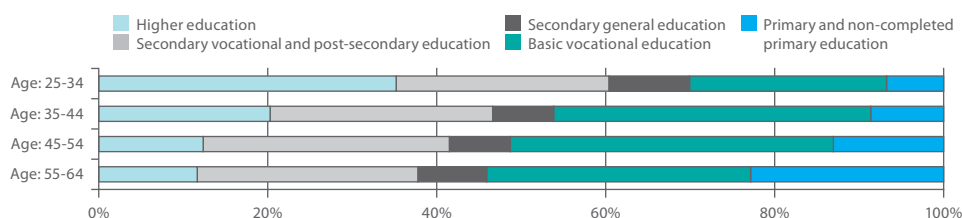
The younger generations are undoubtedly better educated. On average 35% of OECD citizens aged 25-34 have a university degree (in the oldest group: 20%). The leading countries are Japan, Korea, Canada and Russia where the higher education rate exceeds 50%. In Poland the proportion of people with higher education in this age group is 32% which is three times as high as in the oldest group. Together with

9 *Education at a Glance 2010*, OECD Indicators, p. 18 et seq.

10 *Youth in Europe 2009*, Eurostat Report, p. 71.

Portugal and Italy, Poland is one of the countries which have experienced the most dynamic increase in the higher education rate as a result of the educational activity of the youngest generation (Fig. 4.2).

Fig. 4.2. Level of education among different age groups in Poland



The educational activity of young people, significant to such an extent that it transformed the educational pattern of the Polish society, is particularly high among women. Even though for many decades girls have been described in studies as “statistically more intelligent” (with better grades and a more interesting school career),¹¹ in adult life they would usually perform functions not matching their potential. Their promotions were definitely less prevalent (the higher the level of professional career, the smaller the number of women), they were obviously paid less and undeniably their participation in public life was far less frequent. They accepted the role of “satisfied slaves”, making no issue of their double life burden – with work and house.¹² This situation still prevailed in the 1990s. Now young women are much more resolute in formulating their educational and status aspirations and much more determinedly demand their rights. The differentiation process related to educational paths chosen by both genders starts in secondary schools – boys more often tend to choose vocational schools (53.9%) which direct them to the labour market, while girls more often opt for general secondary schools (67%) which prepare them for studies.¹³ As a result, there is a growing prevalence of women among people with a university degree. In Poland this trend started to emerge at the end of the 1990s and it is becoming more explicit each year, liberating high social and intellectual potential of women (Fig. 4.3).

The changes in the educational pattern of people living in the country are most explicit. Here the educational activity of the new generation reduced the percentage of people with the lowest level of education in the total population (from over 60% in 1988 to 44% in 2002 and 33.6% in 2008), while it increased the percentage of university degree holders (from 1.8% in 1988 to 4.2% in 2002 and 8.1% in 2008¹⁴). As at the same time the level of education of the population in cities also improved, the educational gap between the city and the country has not changed (Fig. 4.4), nevertheless the dynamics of changes in the country is greater. Based on the observations of the

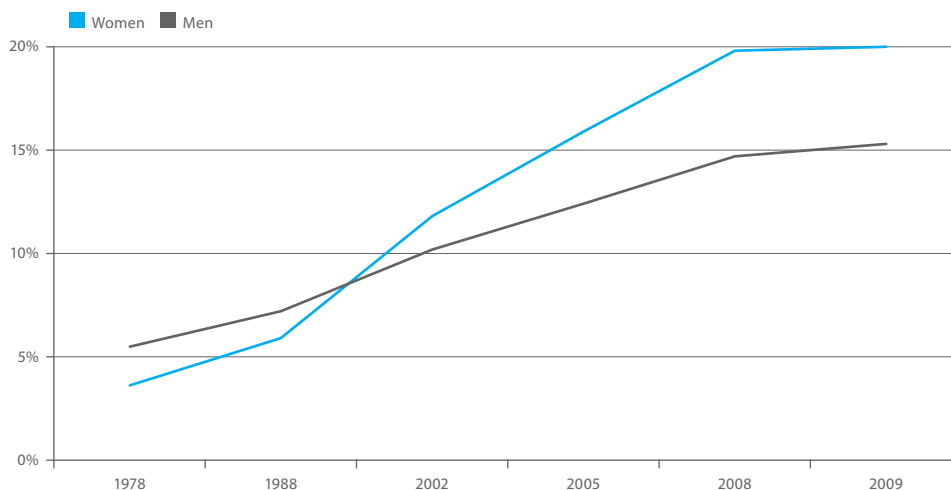
11 Z. Kwieciński, *Środowisko a wyniki pracy szkoły* [Social environment and the results of school efforts]. Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 1975.

12 H. Domański, *Zadowolony niewolnik? Studium o nierównościach między mężczyznami i kobietami w Polsce* [Satisfied slave? Study of the inequalities between men and women in Poland.] Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN), Warsaw 1992.

13 *Youth in Europe 2009*, Eurostat Report, p. 79.

14 Data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS).

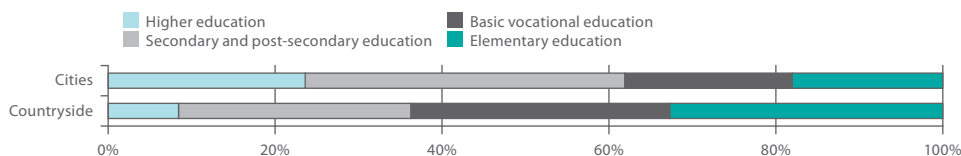
Fig. 4.3. Percentage of people with a university degree among the total population of men and women



Source: Own study based on *Rocznik Demograficzny 2010* [Demographic Yearbook 2010], Warsaw: Central Statistical Office (GUS).

educational decision of the successive generations of young people in the country, it should be expected that the educational gap between the cities and the country will continue to decrease. Despite the increasing costs of education and difficult financial standing of most families in the country, and despite the devaluation of a university diploma, which increases the risk of good employment and smaller than expected benefits from education. This results now in different readiness of the country dwellers in terms of their competences to take various kinds of jobs and is symptomatic of changes in the social structure, and in consequence changes in the quality of educational environment, which can help reduce the gap between the life opportunities of young people in the cities and in the country.

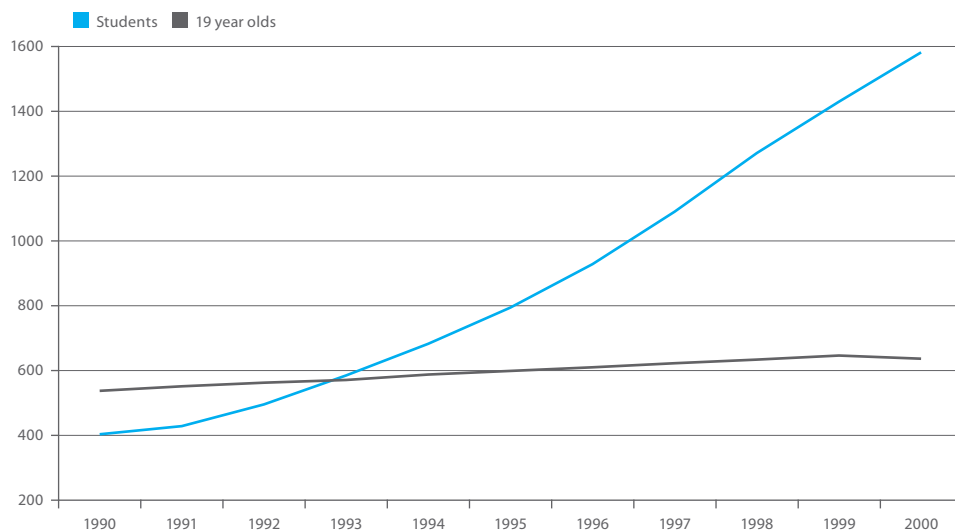
Fig. 4.4. Educational pattern among adults in the cities and in the country (2009)



Source: Own study based on *Rocznik Demograficzny* [Demographic Yearbook], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2009.

The discussed changes in the educational pattern are mainly due to the educational activity of the successive generations of young people, nevertheless – as mentioned above – the new quality of social reality, new challenges on the labour market as well as the new, previously non-existent, educational opportunities caused adults to return to the educational system to improve their educational level.

Fig. 4.5. Number of students and people at the age of 19 in Poland (1990-2000) (in thousands)



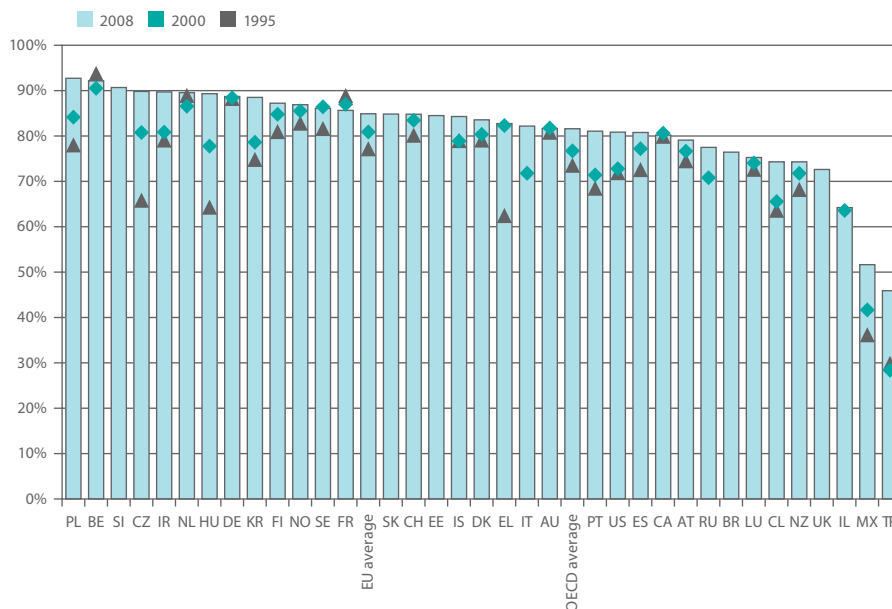
Source: *Analiza wpływu uwarunkowań demograficznych na rozwój szkolnictwa wyższego do 2020 roku* [Impact analysis of demographic conditions on the development of higher education to 2020], Expert assessment of the Socrates Intellectual Capital Development Institute, p. 33, based on the Central Statistical Office (GUS) data.

This situation is illustrated on Fig. 4.5, where it is possible to see the lack of correlation between very dynamic increase in the number of students and very moderate changes in the population aged 19. The number of students showed snowballing increase from more than 404 000 in 1990 to 1 580 000 in 2000, i.e. by 291%, while the number of 19 year olds increased by about 19%. This means that not only young people changed their educational status, and thus their life chances. Also the educational level of parents of these young people was subject to change – and thus the parents’ and their children’s life chances. The educational gap overcome by the Polish society, including in particular the educational activity of women and people living in the countryside, determines to a significant extent the new quality of socialisation conditions in which the successive cohorts of young people were (and are) brought up.

4.2. Young people in upper-secondary schools

Not only does the extension of the compulsory schooling period cause that the enrolment rates are going up. On average, 81% of the young people aged 15-19 participate in the education system in the OECD countries, 84% in the EU, and 92% in Poland (Fig. 4.6). Such enormous expansion of education in our country is – on the one hand – a result of the legal obligation to attend school up to the age of 18 years old, and on the other hand, of the high status of education as a result of its noticeable societal and life role.

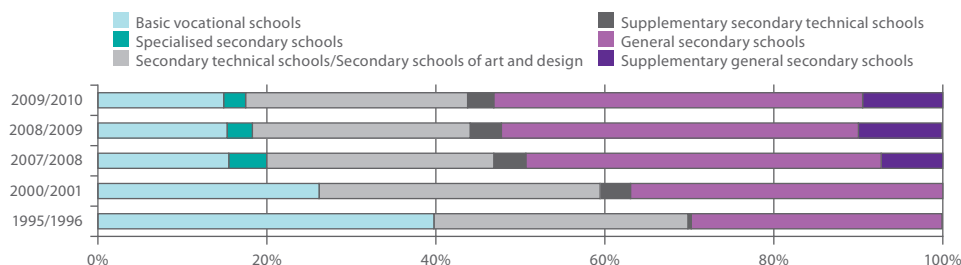
Fig. 4.6. Young people aged 15-19 participating in the education system – 2008



Source: *Education at a Glance 2010*. OECD Indicators. p. 298.

Since the beginning of the political changes, young people in Poland have been showing growing interest in general secondary schools (30% in the mid-nineties up to 44% in the school year 2009/2010). At the same time the interest in the vocational education – basic vocational schools, vocational and specialised secondary schools – has been declining (from 70% to 40%).

Fig. 4.7. Upper-secondary first class students – preference dynamics



Source: *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2009-2010* [Schooling and education in the school year 2009/2010], (GUS), Warsaw, 2010, p. 62.

In total, more than 80% of young people attend schools which formally allow them to take a university entrance examination, and 78% are awarded a secondary school diploma. General secondary schools have the highest pass rate – in the school year 2009/2010 the proportion of students who took the diploma examination was 91%, where 77.6% were successful (specialised secondary schools have a similar pass

rate). The certificate of professional competence was awarded to 87% of basic vocational school graduates and only 56% of vocational secondary school graduates.¹⁵ These results show that these schools are seen to have a similar function as general secondary schools – young people opt for such schools as a safer educational path (which does not determine further development), and not a way to learn profession.

Although not observed in general statistics (which demonstrate stable high interest in general secondary schools), there is an “implicit” trend showing that the preferences of young people, especially those from families with low and medium social status, are starting to change.

Table 4.1. Changes in school preferences and the social status of the family of origin

Type of school	Social status of the family					
	2003			2009		
	low	medium	high	low	medium	high
Basic vocational schools	22.2	6.8	1.7	20.0	8.3	2.3
Secondary specialised and technical schools	40.3	30.6	9.9	49.4	38.0	11.9
General secondary schools	37.5	62.5	88.4	30.6	53.7	85.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: J. Domalewski, *Spoleczne i środowiskowe uwarunkowania dróg szkolnych młodzieży – dynamika zmian*, Warsaw 2010: IRWiR PAN¹⁶.

As a result of the labour market demands, young people have started to rationally revise their educational decisions and more frequently compared to a few years ago apply to specialised and vocational secondary schools (Table 4.1). The curriculum offered by these schools gives cause for concern – by both employers and young people who verify the quality of the acquired qualifications against serious (although not so serious as those encountered by general secondary school graduates) difficulties in finding a job, primarily due to the mismatch of educational specialisation and labour market demands, but also insufficient knowledge of job practicalities, new technologies or foreign languages.¹⁷

The most often offered and preferred specialisation options are related to engineering and technology (more than 200 000 graduates), personal services (175 000), architecture and building (83 000), social services (70 000), business and administration (41 000), agriculture (32 000), environmental protection (10 000) and transport services (7 000).¹⁸ The traditional crafts have disappeared, while new options, generated by the new labour market (e.g. power engineering) have been introduced into the range of available options.¹⁹ Attempts are made to adjust the variety of professions taught at school to the requirements of the labour market, however, no system has been achieved thus far,

15 *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2009-2010* [Schooling and education in the school year 2009-2010]. (GUS). Warsaw, 2010. p. 66, 71, 77, 81-82, 101.

16 Results based on the complete population survey of young people in upper-secondary schools in Toruń (N = 4069 in 2003 and N = 3019 in 2009).

17 U. Sztanderska, [edited], *Edukacja dla pracy. Raport o rozwoju społecznym* [Education for work. Report on social development], Warsaw 2007, p. 86-87, 192 et seq.

18 For the school year 2009/2010 – *Oświata i wychowanie...*, [Schooling and education...] p. 66-69.

19 U. Sztanderska, [edited], *Kwalifikacje dla potrzeb pracodawców* [Qualifications to meet employers' demands]. Final report, Warsaw 2010.

and the existing one has attracted widespread criticism. Learning professions offered by schools involves more theory than practice, and additionally, there is no link between them as far as the curriculum is concerned. The classification of professions at schools does not correspond to the classification of professions in business. The core curriculum is developed without sufficient consultations with business representatives.²⁰ Teachers have little knowledge of the currently used modern technologies. Schools have poor technical and learning facilities (outdated textbooks, out-of-date technology). The lack of modern technical and learning facilities makes it impossible to change the specialisations offered at schools – adaptations to the market demands occur with a certain time lag. The students of lower secondary schools have no exhaustive information about the offered educational services and the situation on the labour market. Due to a low opinion of vocational education in the society, it is excluded from among the selected education paths. Vocational schools are characterised by a low level of education in foreign languages. In some of them (about 20%) such courses are not offered at all.²¹

As a result, the basic qualifications of vocational school graduates receive poor assessments. Equally low assessments apply to their attitudes and the so-called soft competences. Employers complain that work has no value for young people who do not want to learn and continue education, have demanding attitude and are not creative and capable of collecting and processing information, lack motivation to work, responsibility, flexibility.²² This situation is attributed to several factors. Young people who go to such schools are selected based on negative criteria – with relatively the worst socio-educational parameters. Due to the lifestyle promoted in the society (in affluence) and social glorification of success, they nurture demanding attitude. The stigma of “being worse” is a source of contempt for their own status, and at the same time dislike of those who have higher social standing. As a result of this mechanism – in combination with school education which is based on the preservation of the negative identity of “a prole”, and not the ethos of a specialist – students and graduates of vocational schools started forming a segment which defies social inclusion. Changing their attitudes towards themselves in the world where it is important to be the best seems to be a very difficult task, nevertheless there is no reason to discontinue various actions aimed at improving the prestige of simple jobs. The “simplest” and most natural response is to transform vocational education into a process based on state-of-the-art solutions in terms of school curriculum, technological facilities and human resources.

Another problem is related to the so-called early school-leavers. In Poland two thirds of vocational school graduates continue their education in supplementary technical or general secondary schools. The others leave the education system with very low qualifications, not attempting any other trainings or supplementary education. They constitute 5% of the young population aged 18-24, and this one of the lowest

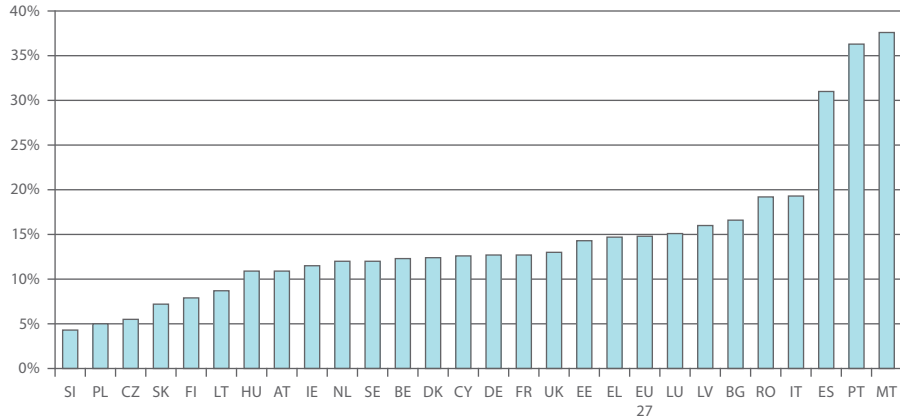
20 S. Taje, *Absolwenci szkolnictwa zawodowego a warszawski rynek pracy* [Graduates of vocational schools and the labour market in Warsaw]. Report on the qualitative study based on the focus group method, Warsaw 26 May 2010, p. 4-5. The survey comprised interviews with 3 headmasters of vocational schools, 2 educational and career consultants, 3 representatives of National Employment Agencies (PUP) (2 career consultants and 1 employment agent), 4 representatives of local employers, a representative of the Education Department at the City Office of Warsaw, and a representative of a private employment agency.

21 *Oświata i wychowanie...* [Schooling and education...], op. cit., p. 90.

22 Op. cit., p. 8.

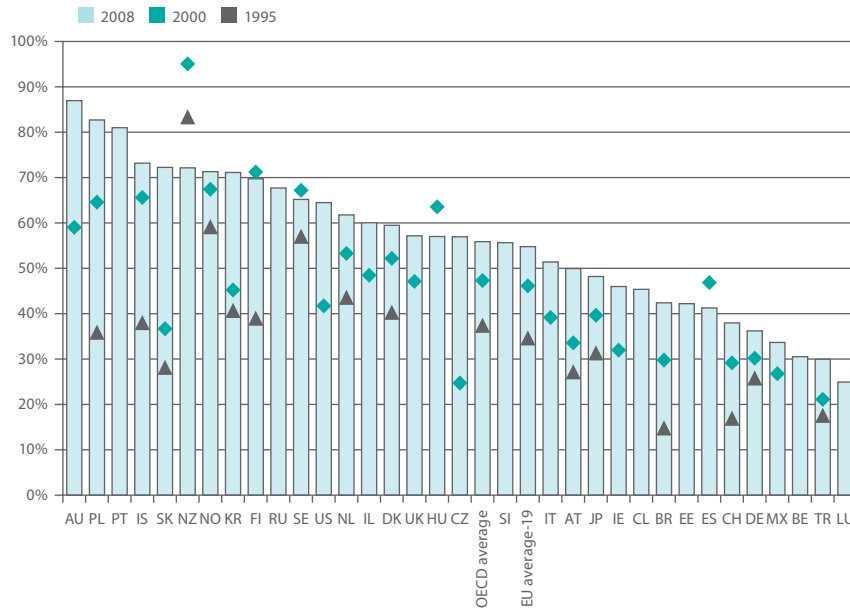
rates in the whole EU (Fig. 4.8). This group includes more men (6.4%) than women (3.6%), as it does in the most European countries.

Fig. 4.8. Early school-leavers – Poland in comparison with the EU (2007)



Source: Own study based on *Youth in Europe*, Eurostat Report 2009, p. 94.

Fig. 4.9. Percentage of secondary school graduates at universities²³



Source: *Education at a Glance*. OECD Indicators, 2010, p. 48.

The comparison with the other European countries shows how extensive the educational deficiencies can be. Although it is possible to have reservations about the

23 Mobile (foreign) students not included.

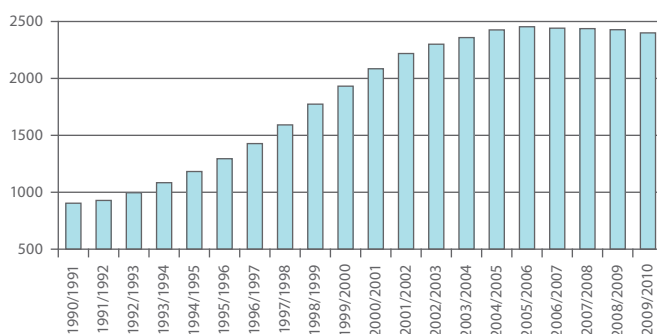
quality of education in many Polish schools, it is worth noting the low percentage of poorly qualified graduates who are not interested in continuing education. Most of the other secondary school graduates (82%) go to higher education institutions (Fig. 4.9). This is a new quality – only in 2000, the number of university applicants was higher in Poland than the number of offered places. For several years now, each secondary school graduate aspiring to higher education can achieve its goal, and the supply of place at universities is even higher than the number of applicants.²⁴

Providing greater access to higher education institutions has a considerable impact on the attitude of young people towards studying, relations at universities and the offered quality of education as well as the value of the university diploma. All of this is a novelty in the Polish culture, in the Polish social consciousness and on the labour market. However, it would be a large mistake to only point out the negative consequences of these phenomena.

4.3. Young people at universities

Before 1989 education certified with a university diploma had high cultural value in Poland and symbolised membership of the elite circle of intelligentsia (in the People’s Republic of Poland 16% of the employed worked outside the sphere of material production). Post-industrial model of economy brought about extensive demand for well-educated employees, and new requirements of the labour market has forced the higher education institutions to introduce quantitative (greater access to universities for adults and young people) and qualitative (diversification and individualisation of education) changes. Under the pressure of social needs the limits of admission to full-time studies were gradually increased, and the limits of admission to private evening and weekend studies were lifted. Large numbers of non-public higher education institutions started to be established – 326 from 1990. Although they are obviously orientated towards profits, they have coped with the majority of the society’s educational needs.

Fig. 4.10. Changes in the number of students in Poland (2000–2010) (in thousands)

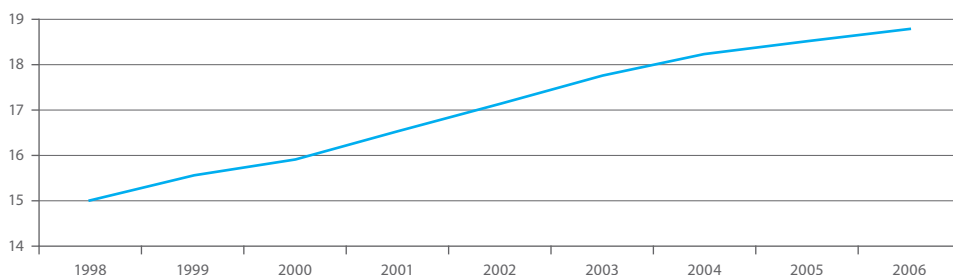


Source: *Analiza wpływu uwarunkowań demograficznych...* [Impact analysis of the demographic conditions...], p. 47.

24 R. Borowicz, *Nierówności społeczne w dostępie do wykształcenia* [Social inequalities and the accessibility of education], Wydawnictwo Wszechnicy Mazurskiej, Olecko 2000.

Between 1990 and 2010 the number of students in Poland grew by 370%. The main burden of providing education was borne by public education institutions (71.4% of the total number of students). They offer on a permanent basis about 820 000 places for full-time students, and 480 000 places for evening and weekend students. The non-public education institutions, and their number is three times greater, have 600 000 students, mostly weekend students (28.6% of the total number of students).²⁵

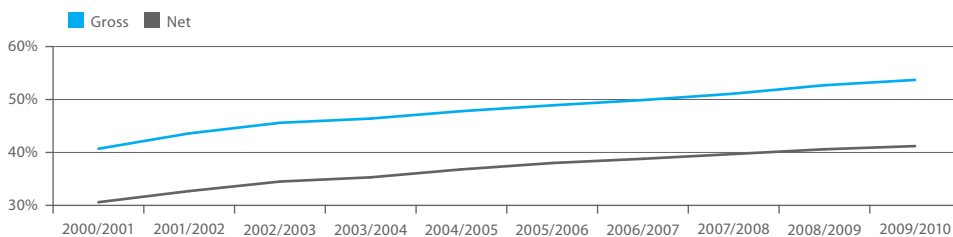
Fig. 4.11. Increase in the number of students in EU-27 (1998-2006) (in millions)



Source: *Youth in Europe*, Eurostat Report 2009, p. 83.

Even though the sudden increase in the number of students after 1990 is considered to be a specifically Polish phenomenon, the upward trends have also been recorded in the European countries with considerably higher saturation of the education market (Fig. 4.11) which suggests that the educational boom – despite the different growth rate and scale – has the same roots in the entire EU. These are new challenges of knowledge-based societies and economies competing for predominance on the world markets. In the context of these challenges not only are the labour market demands increasing, but also the risk of uncertain professional future, which stimulates young people’s interest in higher education, is growing more serious.

Fig. 4.12. Higher education enrolment rates



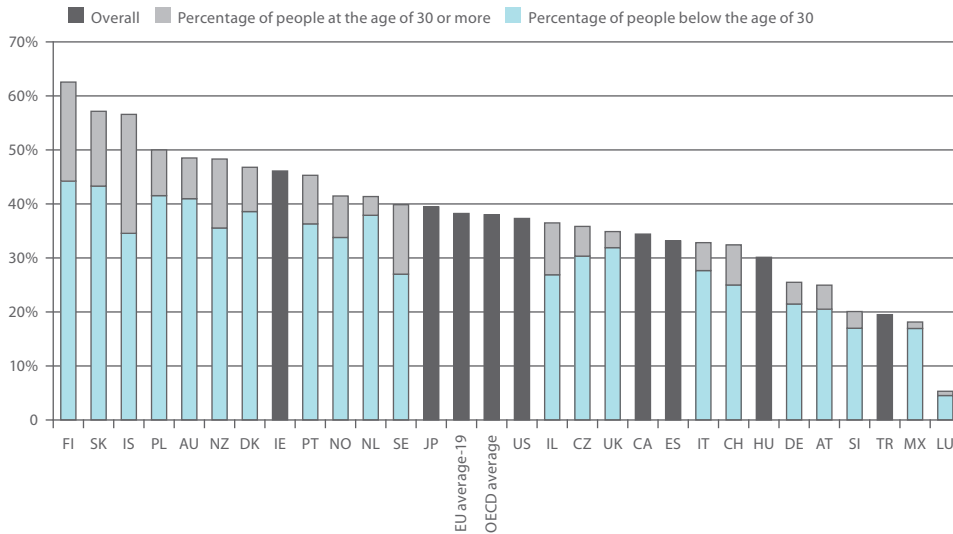
Source: *Analiza wpływu uwarunkowań demograficznych...* [Impact analysis of the demographic conditions...], p. 51.

In Poland, despite small, albeit systematic drops in the number of students observed from 2005/2006 (onset of the baby bust), the net enrolment rate (expansion of

²⁵ *Szkoły wyższe w 2009 roku* [Higher education institutions in 2009], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010, p. 47; see also: *Analiza wpływu uwarunkowań demograficznych...* [Impact analysis of the demographic conditions...], p. 47.

higher education among the cohorts at the typical studying age: 19-24 years old) is going up, and not down. And its level hovering at 41.2% is higher than the average for the EU and higher than the average for the OECD. Also the gross enrolment rate is on the increase (which additionally indicates that there are students at the non-typical age).

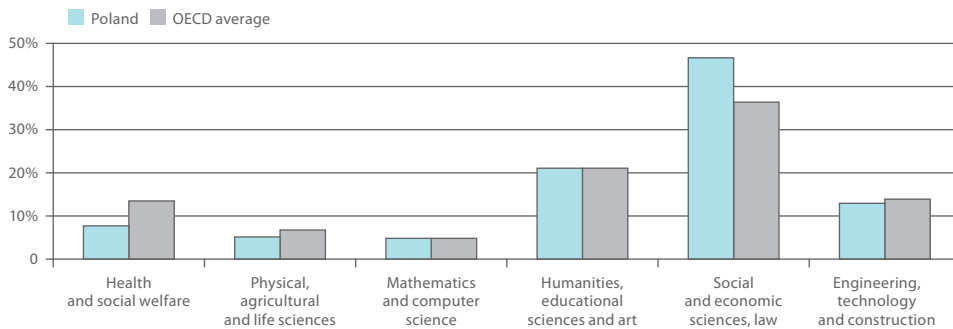
Fig. 4.13. Enrolment rates for the OECD (2007)



Source: *Education at a Glance 2010*. OECD Indicators, p. 58.

We are lagging behind both the EU and the OECD in combating stereotypes about what is studying (Fig. 4.14). Economics, marketing, administration, humanities as well as social and educational courses belong invariably to the most popular academic areas of study. The interest in studying law has declined, and exact sciences have failed as yet to capture more attention. The percentage of students enrolling on mathematics, computer science and related courses was at 5% of the total number of admitted students in 2009.

Fig. 4.14. Percentage of admitted students by the type of courses in the OECD and Poland

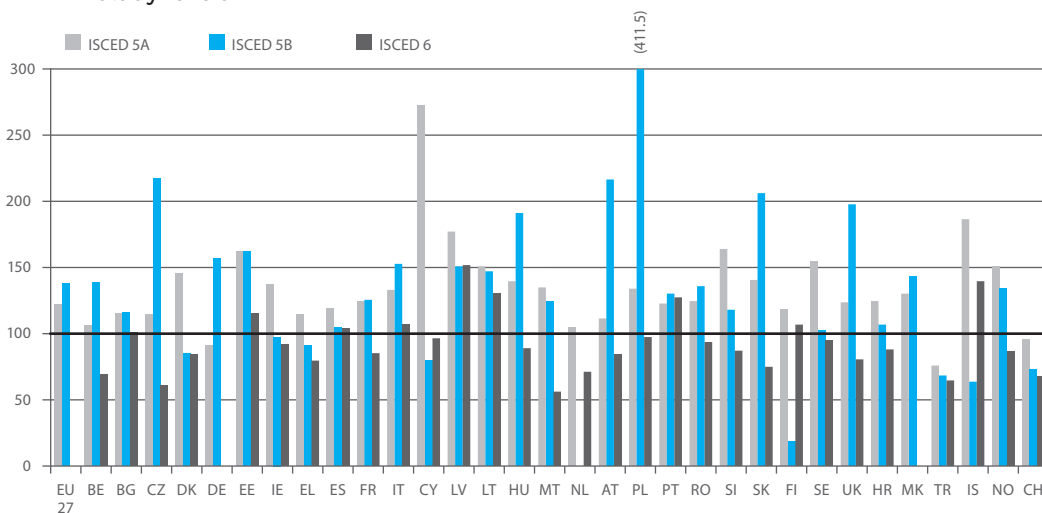


Source: Study based on *Education at a Glance*, OECD, 2010.

There is no doubt it is necessary to take actions aimed at increasing young people's interest in studying science. Some of them have already been implemented. Mathematics has been restored as a compulsory subject for the secondary school finals. At the same time preparations are underway for actions aimed at eliminating low achievements in the area of science subjects in elementary and secondary schools.²⁶ The higher education department has introduced scholarships encouraging to enrolling on so-called ordered (science) courses. A large-scale campaign was organised to popularise studying at technical universities. They resulted in a greater (for the first time for many years) number of students admitted to these courses²⁷ and above-average interest of female students.

Their high educational activity is one of the more and more pronounced symptoms of changes within the young generation. The prevalence of women among students is considered to be a pan-European trend (except for Switzerland and Turkey which have more male students). In Poland there were 112 women per 100 male students in 1998, and in 2006 as many as 123. In 2009, there were 1.1 female students (58%), where the total number of students was more than 1.9 million. During the greatest escalation of the educational boom their prevalence was exceptional in comparison with the whole EU (Fig. 4.15).

Fig. 4.15. Number of studying women per 100 male students – including different study levels



Source: *Youth in Europe* Eurostat Report 2009, p. 88.

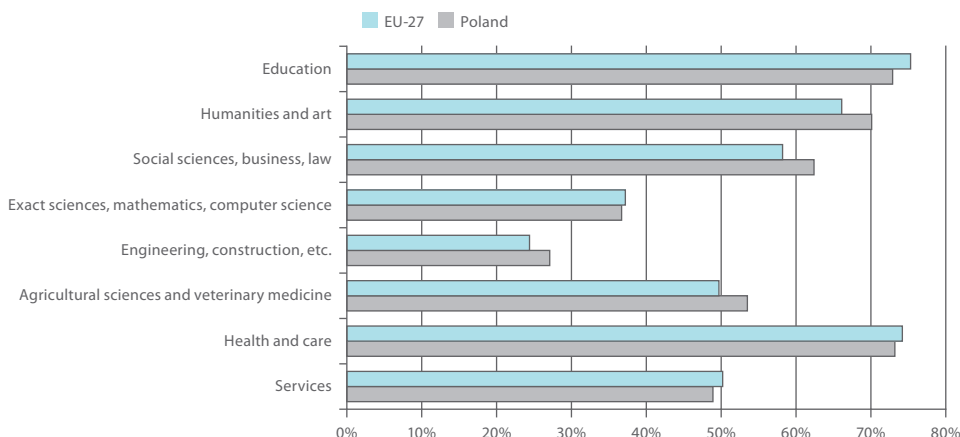
This trend, which demonstrates the clearly cultural awakening of women in the new generation, will be reflected in multiple areas of their life – professional, personal,

26 See: the most recent report on education: M. Federowicz and M. Sitek, [edited], *Spoleczeństwo w drodze do wiedzy* [Society en route to knowledge], Warsaw 2010.

27 *Informacja o wynikach rekrutacji na studia na rok akademicki 2010/2011* [Information on enrollment results for the academic year 2010/2011], Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW), Warsaw 22 December 2010.

public. When deciding what to study, they still – even though overcoming stereotypical models – prefer courses considered to be women’s domains, due to which such employment sectors as education, culture, health care, administration, and services become feminised and (*inter alia* on this account) maintain salaries at a lower level. This trend is pan-European, but Polish reality is in most cases overstated.

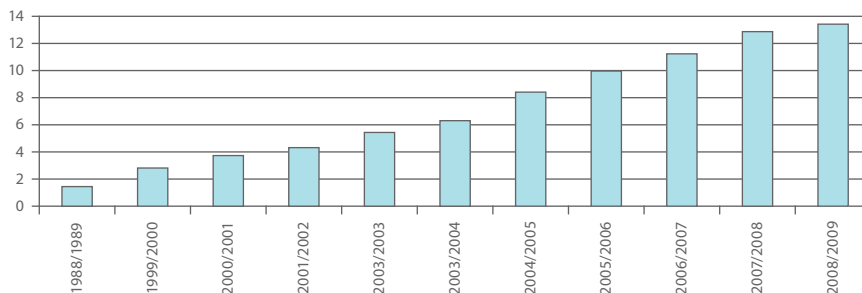
Fig. 4.16. Most feminised university courses – Poland in comparison with EU-27



Source: Own study based on *Youth in Europe 2009*, Eurostat Report, p. 89.

Studies in home country are more and more often complemented by studies abroad. Pursuant to the recommendations of the European Commission (“*Youth on the Move*” is one of the seven EU flagship initiatives included in the Europe 2020 Strategy) it is planned that at least 20% of students from each country will have experienced studying or acquired practical education in another country to 2020. It is an enormous challenge for Poland where the number of students participating in the 2009/2010 mobility programmes remained below 2%, although it was the year with the highest activity level²⁸.

Fig. 4.17. Polish students – beneficiaries of the Erasmus programme (in thousands)

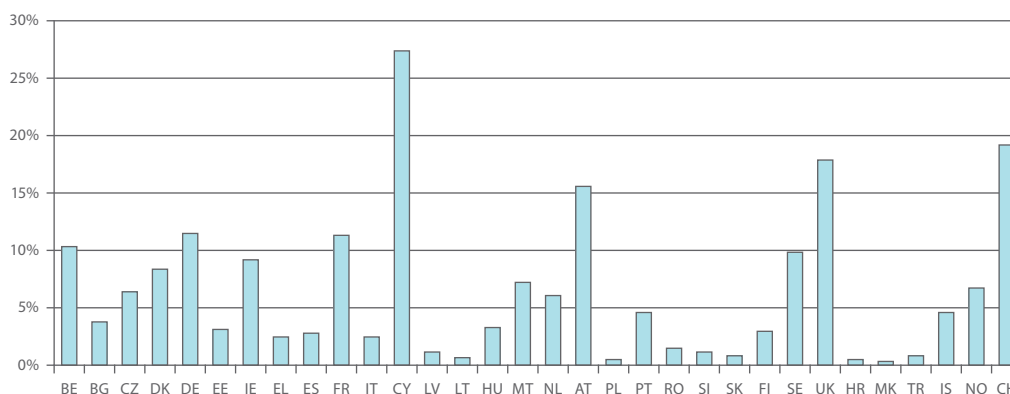


Source: Own study based on the statistics from the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE).

28 *Szkoły wyższe w 2009 roku* [Higher education institutions in 2009], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010, p. 44.

The number of students participating in the Erasmus programme was 13 402, i.e. nine times more than in the first year after its implementation. The total number of beneficiaries of European scholarships at that time was 79 786. Poland received four times fewer scholarship beneficiaries – 23 004 students, which is very small compared to other countries and shows lack of interest in studying in Poland.

Fig. 4.18. Foreign students in the EU



Source: *Youth in Europe*, Eurostat Report, 2009, p. 90.

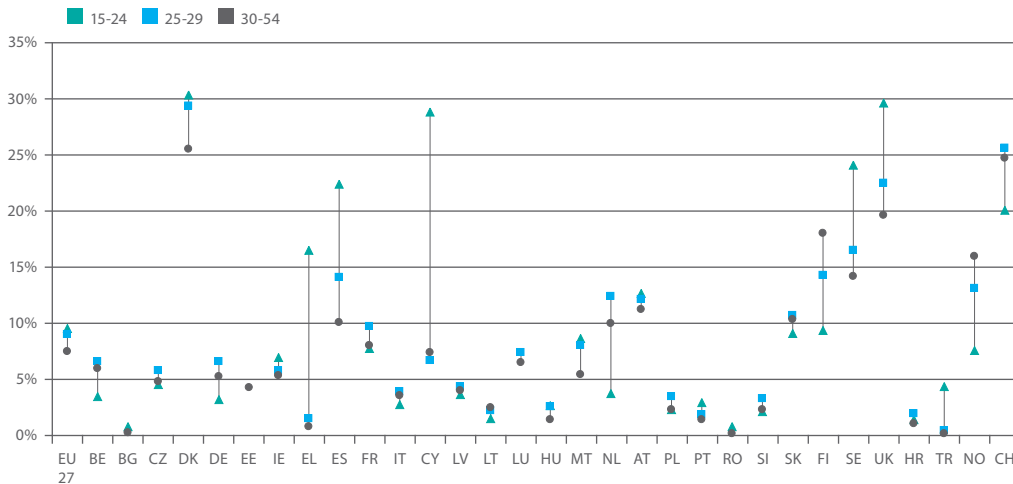
Foreign students who start and complete studies at Polish universities are even less numerous. In the academic year 2009/2010 they included 17 000 students (increase by 7.2% in comparison with the previous year) coming mainly from Ukraine, Belorussia, Norway and Sweden, frequently of Polish origin.²⁹ The growing numbers of beneficiaries of the Erasmus programme and the increasing number of foreign students in Poland cannot change the fact that in the international statistics Poland is barely noticeable both as a country sending and receiving students.

4.4. Life-long learning

Since the 1990s, Polish education was an area of revolutionary changes. Education has become one of the most valued social assets, and educational institutions has undergone a real impact of the population, new and earlier unknown challenges as well as new political solutions. Both adults and young people participated in education, mainly with the aim of satisfying their own status-related aspirations. It can be said that the educational saturation in Poland reached in a sense the socially satisfactory level. At the same time the civilisation changes in Poland and in the world (advancing competition on the labour markets, globalisation processes, changes in technology, work organisation, employment forms, aging labour forces, outdated job qualifications) cause that the knowledge once acquired and certified with a diploma needs to be replenished, improved.

²⁹ *Szkoły wyższe w 2009 roku* [Higher education institutions in 2009], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010, p. 31-32.

Fig. 4.19. Participation in informal and further education in different age categories – EU (2007)



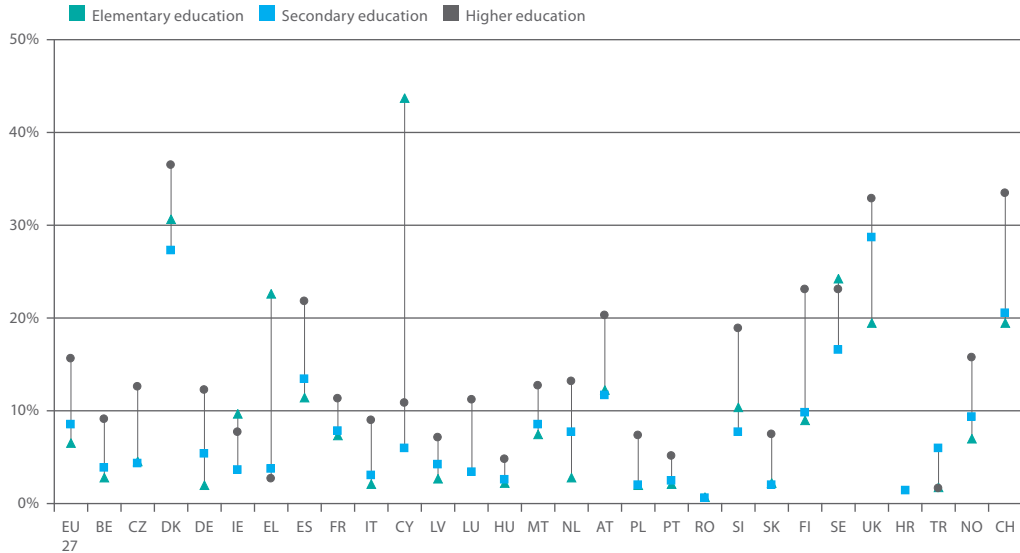
Source: *Youth in Europe*, Eurostat, 2009, p. 100.

The developed countries respond to this situation with strategies aiming at expanding life-long learning. Their objective is to enhance the flexibility of labour markets and work organisation – on the one hand – and security of employment and social support – on the other hand. The concept of life-long learning is implemented with different degrees of success in a number of countries. Most often it is used by the citizens of Northern Europe: Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Finland. In Poland it failed to attract greater interest – below 5% of the population participated in 2007 in different forms of informal education (Fig. 4.19). The highest activity is observed in the group of people with higher education (which means that the existing social differences in the area of education and labour market are increasing, and the gaps between social segments are not bridged), although this does not apply to some countries, e.g. Greece, Cyprus, Sweden or Ireland (Fig. 4.20). Poles who achieved a university diploma – despite the disappointment with its incompatibility with the labour market demands – generally return to universities to enhance their professional qualifications.

There are multifarious reasons for this phenomenon and they should not be reduced to mental aspects only. They involve such issues as e.g. willingness of universities to admit new tasks which provide an additional burden to their budgets and the first job experiences of the baby boom generation which are becoming aware that such solutions are necessary. Thus, it seems, when observing the progressing rationality of young people’s educational strategies that life-long learning is soon to become a reality in Poland. Now young people are eager to turn to these universities, which offer short educational cycles helping to expand one’s qualifications and knowledge, and observations of the educational market suggest that the greater barriers are created by a moderate educational services offered by many academic institutions than the interests of young people. The group potentially most interested seems to include numerous graduates of university courses which have not prepared them

to any specific profession and who after their first contact with the labour market have more specified views what course their professional career should take. They are the first to look for such educational services.

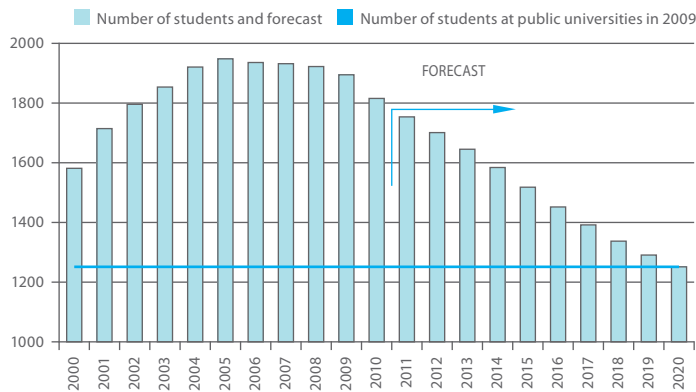
Fig. 4.20. Participation in informal and further education in different age categories – EU (2007)



Source: *Youth in Europe*, Eurostat, 2009, p. 101.

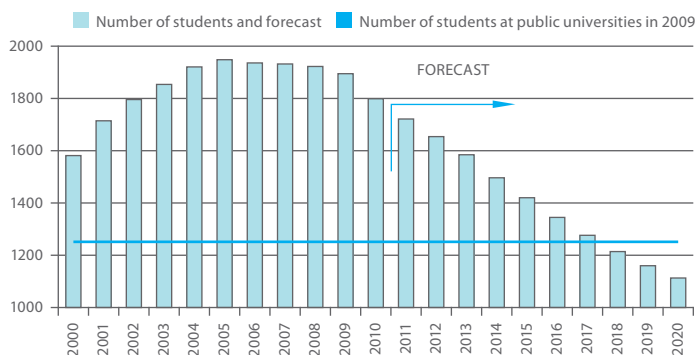
The growing impact of the baby bust, and as a result the decrease in the number of potential students in the “degree-driven” studying system, will act as a factor mobilising to provide such educational services (Fig. 4.21a-b).

Fig. 4.21a. Projected number of students in Poland (2011-2020) for the gross enrolment rate of 54% (for the year 2009/2010) (in thousands)



Source: *Analiza wpływu uwarunkowań demograficznych...* [Impact analysis of demographic conditions...], p. 58.

Fig. 4.21b. Projected number of students in Poland (2011-2020) for the gross enrolment rate reduced to 48% in 2020 (in thousands)



Source: *Analiza wpływu uwarunkowań demograficznych...* [Impact analysis of demographic conditions...], p. 62.

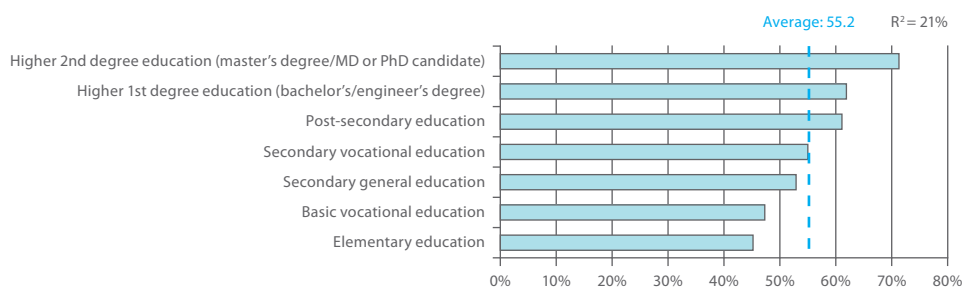
If it is assumed that the adjustments to aspirations and educational decisions of young people, as visible today, are not a temporary phenomenon, then it should be expected that not only will the baby bust have an impact on the number of students, but also the lesser interest in the basic academic education. It will help enhance the value of “population boom” students, returning to universities in search of educational services and compatible with the life-long learning formula, even more.

4.5. Differentiation of young people’s school and life paths

The changes occurring in the Polish educational system manifest – on the one hand – the socio-economic transformations and adaptation of education to new civilisation challenges, and on the other hand they stimulate such transformations and adaptation. One of the essential objectives of the educational reform was to accelerate the changes in the social structure by means of active participation of education in the advancement of the young generation. Unrestricted access to good schools and full-value education was to guarantee the release of the young people’s potential and support the modernisation of the country. For this purpose *inter alia* lower-secondary schools were created – a school aimed at compensating the educational chances of young people from families with lower social status. As it was made an element of the public schooling system where no pre-selection procedures are applied, and at the same time it is subject to external assessment (important from the perspective of school’s work and subsequent educational decisions of young people), it encouraged better educated parents to apply strategies aimed at locating children in such school (or class) which would guarantee better quality of teaching. As a result lower-secondary schools – especially in cities – began to undergo increasing social and educational differentiation which determines the opportunities

of young people at the further stages of education³⁰. Surveys confirm the strong impact of parents' status on the results of lower-secondary examinations and choice of upper-secondary schools by young people (Fig. 4.22 and 4.23).

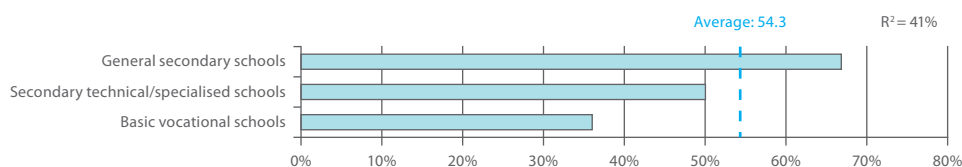
Fig. 4.22. Average lower-secondary examination results and the educational level of parents³¹



Source: PISA Survey 2006, after: *Spoleczeństwo w drodze do wiedzy* [Society en route to knowledge], Report on education, Warsaw 2010, IBE, p. 106.

This mechanism determines both the level and the social composition of secondary students and thus contributes to the preservation of the existing differences. The best students (most often coming from families with high educational status) go to general secondary schools, average students choose secondary vocational schools, while the low-achievers (from families with the lowest educational status) go to so-called vocational schools. Thus, schools are created with different cultural and social worlds which generate different standards of teaching, collective life, life aspirations.

Fig. 4.23. Average lower-secondary examinations for students at secondary schools³²



Source: PISA Survey 2006, after: *Spoleczeństwo w drodze do wiedzy* [Society en route to knowledge], Report on education, Warsaw 2010, IBE, p. 106.

The sharp polarisation of schools, typical of the first transformation period, turn into more complex stage. The more and more explicit homogenisation and elitism of the social composition of general secondary schools (especially explicit in the

30 J. Domalewski, *Zróźnicowanie gimnazjów – wymiary, uwarunkowania i konsekwencje* [Differentiation of lower-secondary schools – dimensions, conditions and consequences], [in:] A. Męczkowska-Christiansen, P. Milkiewicz, *Idee – Diagnoza – Nadzieje. Szkoła polska a idee nierówności* [Ideas – Diagnosis – Hope. Polish school and inequality concepts], Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW, Wrocław 2009.

31 Included data for 4416 students.

32 Included data for 5142 students.

case of secondary schools with the best teaching results, where the percentage of young people from families with the highest status reaches 60%) is accompanied by the heterogenisation and egalitarianism of the social composition of vocational schools (Table 4.2). It is also probably consequence of better education of parents and the changes in young people's school preferences (some of them are oriented towards vocational schools), nevertheless what matters here are not the reasons, but the consequences of the described phenomena. They cause polarisation of schools, and at the same time enhance the quality of the social world in each of them. They differentiate life chances of young people, but make them better than over the last decades.

Table 4.2. Changes in the social composition of upper-secondary students

Educational status of parents	School type						Total	
	Secondary general schools		Secondary technical/specialised schools		Basic vocational schools		2003	2009
	2003	2009	2003	2009	2003	2009		
Low	3.3	1.7	10.8	6.1	22.0	10.1	7.3	3.9
Below-medium	14.9	9.2	31.9	24.7	40.9	34.9	22.9	16.6
Medium	55.6	48.4	52.4	59.4	34.1	47.9	52.7	51.9
High	26.2	40.7	4.9	9.7	2.9	7.2	17.2	27.5
TOTAL		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0

Source: 2003 and 2009 Toruń survey³³, preparation by P. Mikiewicz.

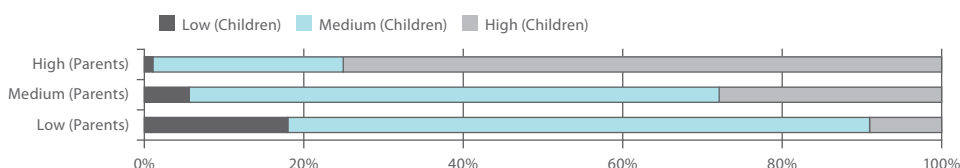
Today, there are at one end very good secondary general schools, preparing new elites, educating very ambitious and demanding young people, and at the other end – vocational schools which only assemble “unnecessary” people, coming from the poorest environments, but also representatives of the social centre, which essentially change the image of schools. This process has positive and negative aspects. The positive aspects include the transformation of the social composition of vocational schools, where such transformations should force the change of their image – as schools that are good, but “in a different way”. The negative aspects include segmentation and non-openness of secondary general schools: the better, the more inaccessible to young people from families which do not belong to intelligentsia.

This indicates that the mechanisms of identifying talents, which require greater effort and more work from teachers, are quite weak in Polish schools. School careers depend much more on the status of the family of origin, school itself has little impact. It is certainly much less significant than in the developed European countries, where parents' education does not determine to such an extent the school career and life chances of young people. Great Britain can be used as an example here (Fig. 4.24b). Although educational achievements of children from families with low status are as frequent as in Polish families (similar percentage of young people achieves university education), the careers of young people from families with medium, and especially with low status, are very different. In Poland the percentage of young people from

33 Survey based on the complete population of all upper-secondary schools in Toruń in 2003 (N = 4069) and 2009 (N = 3019).

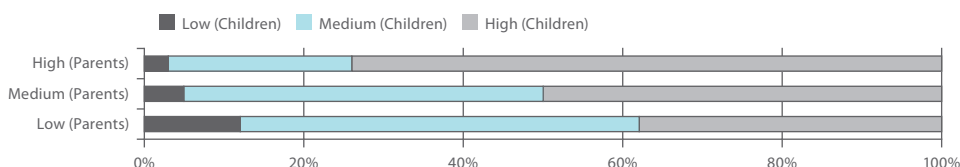
poor families, who completed studies, is very low (9%), in Great Britain it is 38% (more than four times as high).

Fig. 4.24a. Educational achievements of children (parents' age: 25-34) as a function of parents' education – Poland



Source: Eurostat 2005, own study based on *Youth in Europe 2009...*, p. 95-97.

Fig. 4.24b. Educational achievements of children (parents' age: 25-34) as a function of parents' education – Great Britain



Source: Eurostat 2005, own study based on *Youth in Europe 2009...*, p. 95-97.

The complexities of this process are very well illustrated by the academic careers of young people from the countryside. In reputable universities they make 21% of the students, in new low-ranking or not including in rankings – 35%. The greater competition during the admission, the lesser percentage of young people from the countryside among the students. This rule is also true for the selected university courses. Young people from the countryside more often choose to study traditional courses, which allow them to acquire a "specific" profession (e.g. become a teacher, catechist), where the enrolment procedure is simpler (easier admission examinations) and there is a smaller number of candidates (second enrolment cycle). When there are 8.4% of students from the countryside on the courses in renovation, and 13.5% on courses in sociology, then there are as many as 30% on the courses of Polish philology or mathematics, and 46% on the courses of theology. At the same time those who choose a good secondary general school and good universities are usually better students than their fellow students from cities. Progressive strategies are characteristic for young people from the countryside – they are more cautious and rational in their educational decision, but their successes give them greater optimism and determination, and encourage them to further action.³⁴

The example of young people from the countryside and the data presented above show how strong are the social determinants of educational career in Poland, and at the same time how much they change the mechanism of allocation in the so-

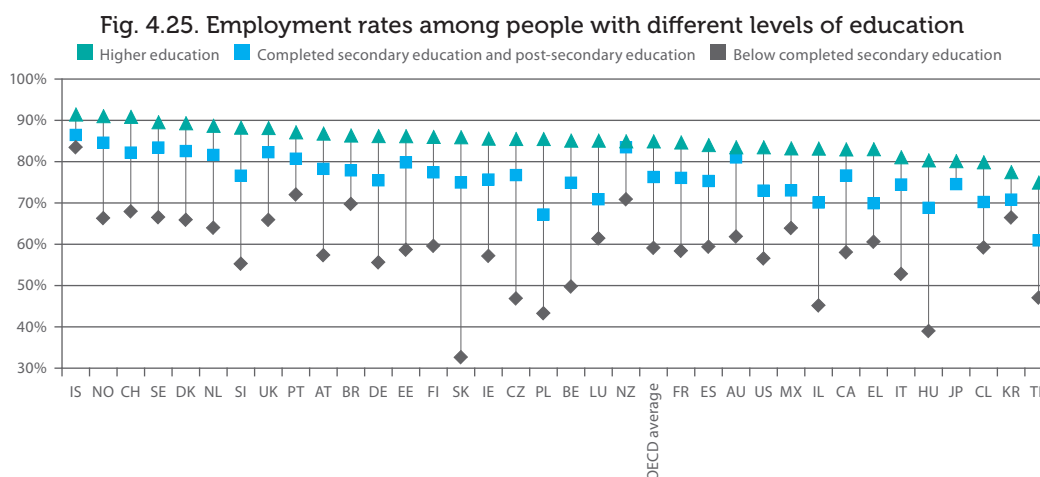
34 K. Wasielewski, *Drogi młodzieży wiejskiej na uniwersytet. Przykład UMK* [Routes of young people from the countryside to universities based on the Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK)], Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń (completed in 2010, in print).

cial structure, and how important are the individual factors in this respect. Thus, for a system-wide effect (greater contribution of education to stimulating individual and social development) it is necessary to provide system-wide solutions, stimulating the dormant potential of young people.

4.6. Benefits of education

Educational investments are long-term ventures, and the benefits are derived as a deferred reward. They can be variously categorised – as individual benefits (personal advancement, higher social status, more subjective existence in the society and culture) and social benefits (civilisation, economic and political advantages). Education is a medium through which people are introduced into the unknown world – it helps acquire the linguistic, emotional and cultural code which enables better understanding of oneself and others, teaches to perceive the complexities of the world, makes it easier to function in it, take more rational decisions. Good education immunises against demagoguery and manipulation, is conducive to subjectivity and openness to the diverse aspects. The society of educated people is a society with considerably bigger chances of a good and well-organised system as well as civilisation development.

In all countries people with academic degree have much greater opportunities for employment than people with lower educational status. On average 85% of people with university degree in the OECD countries find employment. Secondary education reduces the chances of finding employment down to 75%, while below-secondary education to 56%. In Poland the respective indicators are 88%, 68% and 43%, and indicate that education has much greater discriminating power (Fig. 4.25).

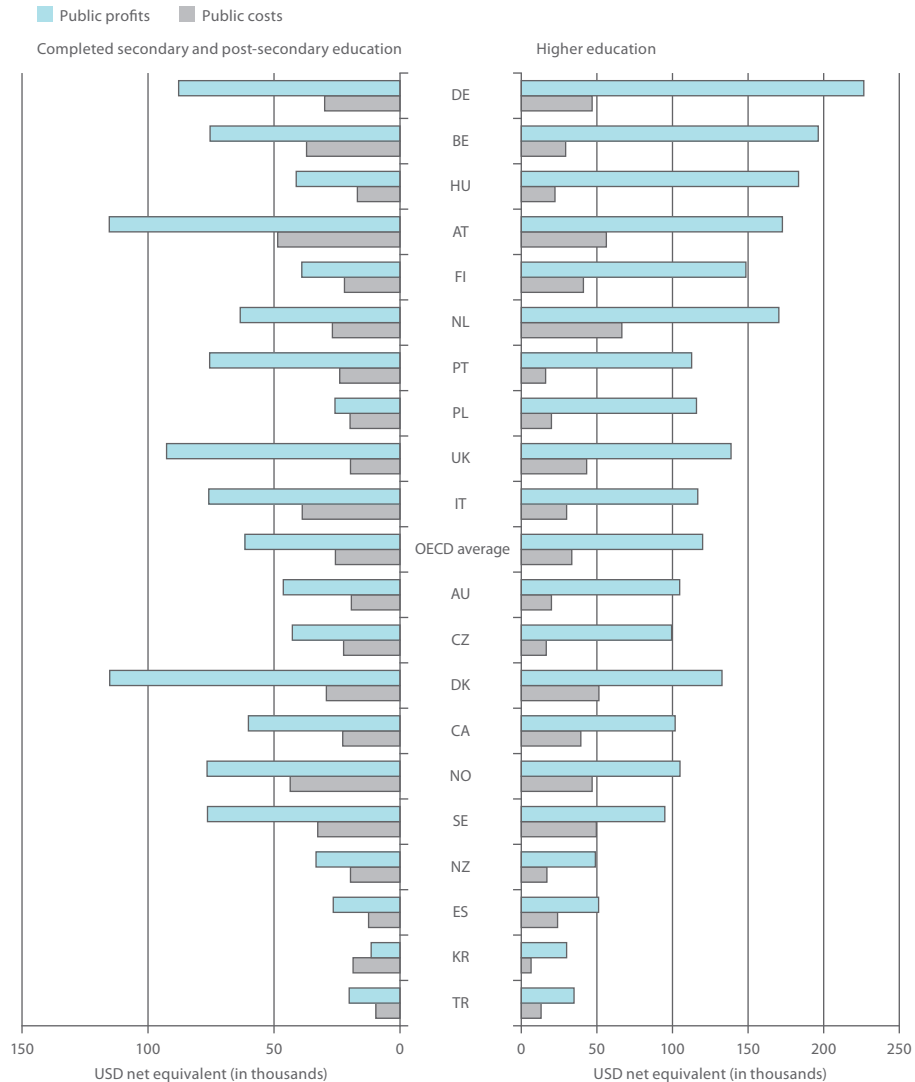


Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance. Indicators*, 2010, p. 102.

Education considerably reduces the employment gap between men and women. Although at the lower level of education the difference of chances is on average higher by 23 percentage points for men, at the higher level of education it

is significantly smaller and hovers at 10 percentage points. In Poland this means that only 33% of women and 58% of men with below-secondary education has a chance of finding employment, while women and men with university education have much greater and statistically closer employment opportunities (81% and 90%).

Fig. 4.26. Public costs and public profits from investments in secondary and higher education (2006)



Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance. Indicators*, 2010, p. 144.

Education considerably reduces the risk of unemployment. In Poland the rate of unemployment for people with higher education qualifications is slightly more than 4% (4.0% in the OECD), for people with secondary education qualifications

below 9% (7% in the OECD), for people with the lowest level of education 14% (10% in the OECD). In the event of young people these disproportions are greater, especially the risk of unemployment among people with the lowest educational status. The respective indicators are 4.3%, 9.1% and 20.9%.³⁵

Also the greater the level of education, the higher the earnings. In most OECD countries, the higher education bonus is greater than 50%. On average university diploma holders earn 153% of the salary paid to people with a low level of education, and the latter earn 78% of the salary paid to people with secondary education qualifications. In Poland the higher education bonus was growing systematically since the end of the 1990s until the downward trend starting 2006. On the one hand it resulted from the saturation of labour market with university graduates, on the other hand from still the low dynamics of the economic development which gave no chances of using the potential of young people. Nevertheless, the university degree bonus is still the highest one in Europe – it is 167% (second only to Portugal and Slovakia: 182 and 186%). In all countries women tend to have lower salaries than men, and this gap is not bridged by higher education. In Poland this gap is also large. While the higher education bonus for men is 188%, for women it is much lower – 161%; respective data for the OECD – 158% and 154%. The level of income inequalities is visible in particular in the case of young workers – annual income of women with university degree (aged 35-44) hovers on average about 66% of the income earned by men (OECD average: 71%). In the group of older workers (aged 55-64) this difference is smaller – 73% (OECD average: 71%).³⁶

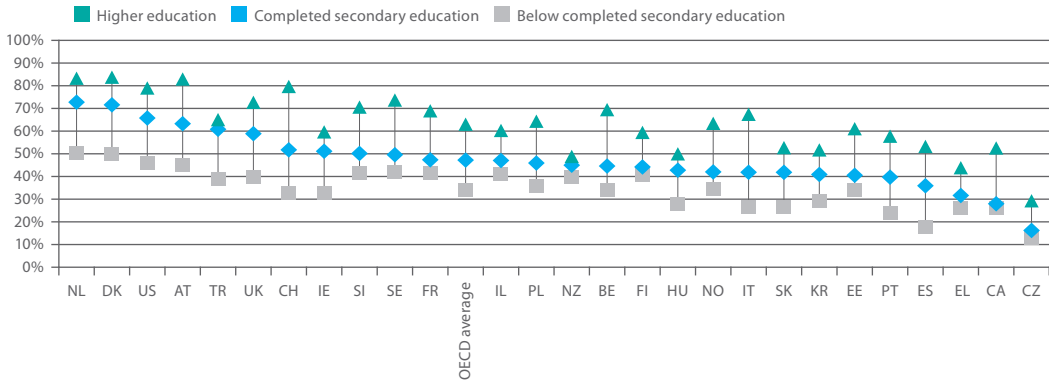
The expenses on education bring profits not only to individuals, but to the entire society by way of higher income, higher income taxes, social security contributions and other transfers. With some exceptions, public return on educational investments is always positive and amounts to – at the level of secondary education qualifications – USD 30 000 for men. In some countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Portugal and Great Britain) it is even higher – USD 50 000. The return on women's education is minimally (USD 7000) lower. The public return on the costs of higher education is even higher, as this level of education the share of private expenditures is greater. On average the public profits from investments in higher education in the OECD is USD 86 000, and it is three times higher than the relevant costs. Poland is slightly below the OECD average – with the returnability of USD 95 867 (four times more than the expenditures).

The level of education is positively related to health condition – the higher, the greater the percentage of people declaring good health condition. This trend is universal, but to a greater extent it is a specific feature of the post-communist countries. In Poland 80% of people with university degree, and 62% of people with secondary education qualifications, while only half of the population with below-secondary education qualifications, have a positive opinion about their health. People who complain about their health are less effective at work (tend to take sick leave more often, are less efficient), more often use medical services. For this reason they frequently present greater burden for public expenses than better educated people.

35 OECD, *Education at a Glance. Indicators*, 2010, p. 117.

36 Op. cit., p. 127-133.

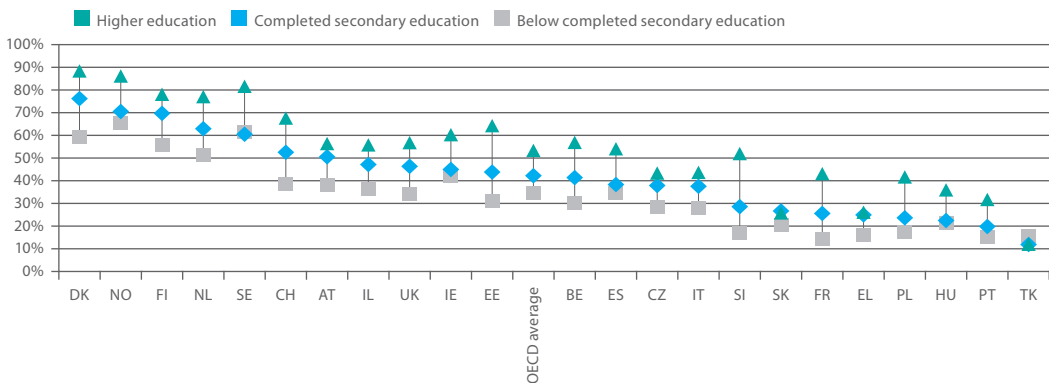
Fig. 4.27. Percentage of people with different level of education, declaring interest in politics (2008)



Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance. Indicators*, 2010, p. 157.

The level of education has both direct and indirect impact on the level of civic involvement and interest in politics (Fig. 4.27). It provides appropriate knowledge, competences and experience which determine the attitudes and convictions underlying the greater level of civic involvement. At the same time it contributes to the greater socio-economic status, determines the needs and interests, which stimulate their natural interest in the real impact on the authorities.

Fig. 4.28. Percentage of people with different level of education, declaring interpersonal trust (2008)



Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance. Indicators*, 2010, p. 157

People with higher education qualifications show also greater interpersonal trust, which is very important from the perspective of coherence and efficient functioning of the society. School education, which introduces people to the world of social and cultural values, teaches social differentiation and sensitises to diverse aspects. However, higher indicators of trust among people with higher education qualifications are also a secondary effect of their tendency to restrict their activities to similar work

and residential environments. Poland belongs to the countries with the lowest indicators of social trust (Fig. 4.28), even among people with higher education qualifications, although it is higher among young people compared to the rest of the society.

4.7. Competences acquired in school and their quality

The dispute over what is the role of school, what functions it should perform, what it should teach (and what it should provide besides education) is as typical as it is unsolvable. It is assumed here that the essential function of school is to provide education – impart to students knowledge and skills provided for in the teaching syllabus. These can be divided into four basic groups of competences taught to school and university students: firstly, the essential school competences such as the elements of humanities, life sciences, mathematics, and their practical application. Secondly, the specific skills related to modern communication technologies which enable young people to participate in the information society (digital competences/literacy). Thirdly, foreign language skills to enable participation in the multicultural world. Fourthly, so-called hard competences, necessary for future professional career. As a matter of principle a fifth group should be added to this list – so-called soft competences (emotional, social), extremely important in life and nowadays in great demand on the labour market. However, they are not included in the teaching syllabus, first of all there are no data which could form the basis for their description in the context of education and young people.

4.7.1. Essential school competences

According to a recent PISA³⁷ survey, the level of school competences of Polish students is higher than the average level in the OECD countries. The most recent PISA (2009) showed improvements in reading and science performance, while performance in mathematics has been well-developed and remained unchanged since 2006, and the reading and interpretation skills have slightly decreased.³⁸ Over the past nine years Polish students managed in some areas to reduce the gap with their peers in the other better-developed countries.

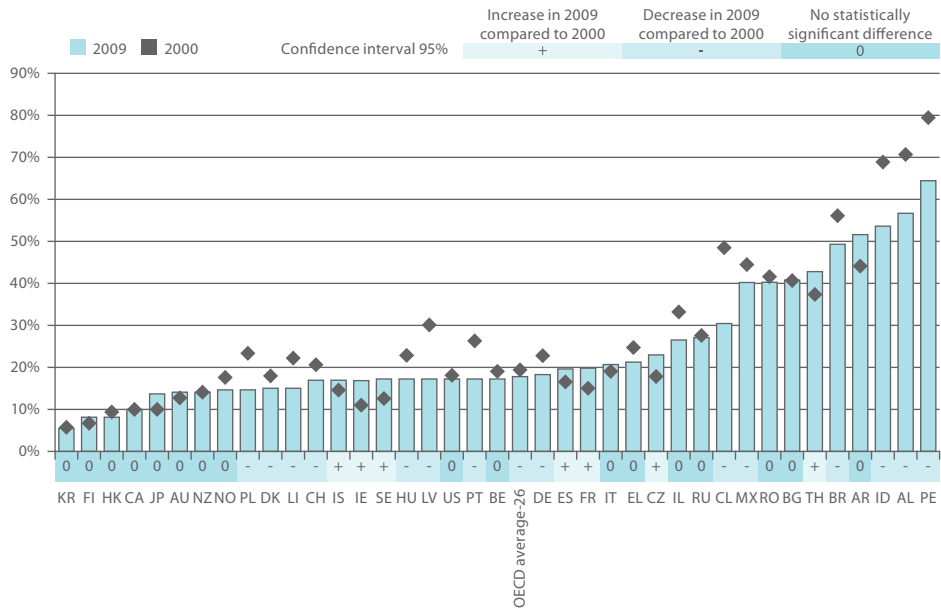
The percentages of students poorly performing (below Level 2) in reading and science (Fig. 4.29 and 4.30) are decreasing. At the moment they are among the lowest in Europe with respectively 15% in reading comprehension and 13.1% in science. Reducing this percentage in mathematics performance remains an important challenge to tackle. – 21.2% of Polish students belong to low-performers (Fig. 4.31).

37 PISA – *The Programme for International Student Assessment* It is one of the largest and most influential surveys in the world, coordinated by the OECD. PISA involves an assessment of 15 year olds in terms of their reading literacy, mathematics and science performance. Poland has participated in the study since the first assessment, i.e. since 2000.

38 *PISA 2009 Results: Learning Trends. Changes in Student Performance since 2000*. Volume V. OECD 2010. p. 39-40, p. 60-61, p. 64-65.

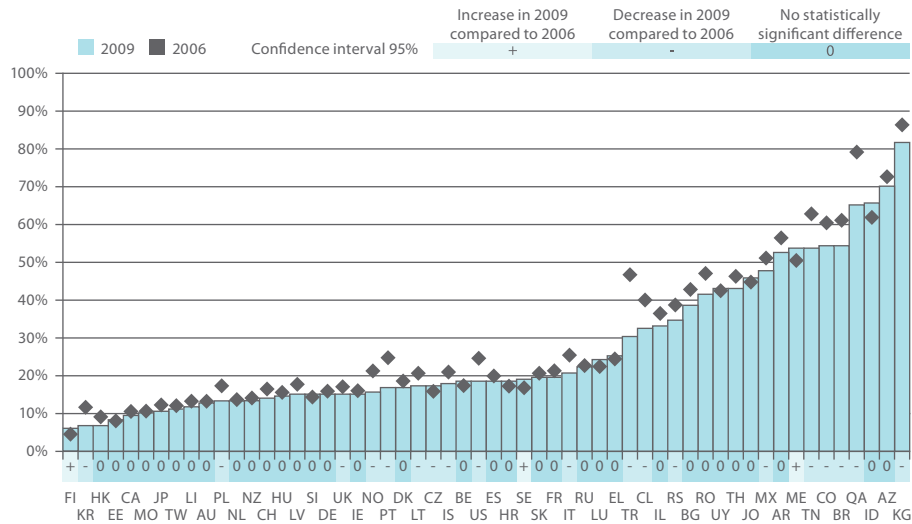
The percentages of students at Level 2 or below show that young people can encounter problems with not only further education or training (retraining), but also with the proper interpretation and understanding of the surrounding world.

Fig. 4.29. Reading and interpretation skills – percentage of students below Level 2 (2000 and 2009)



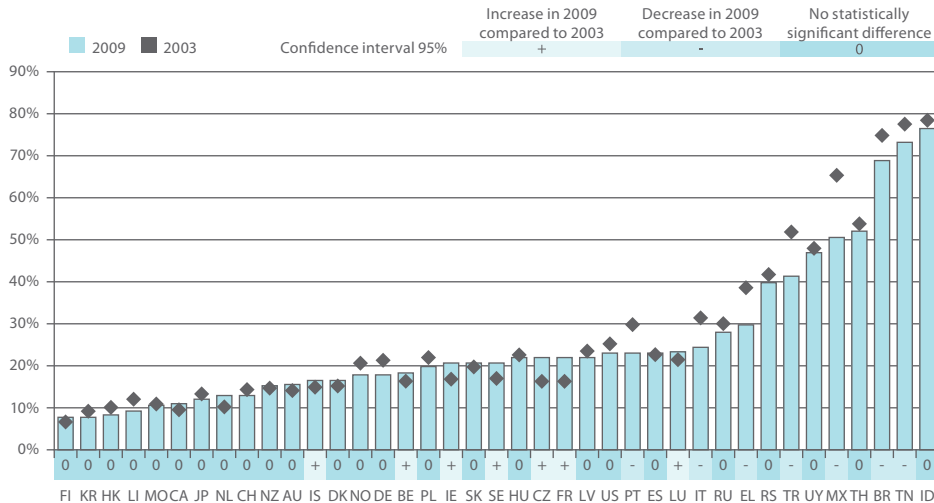
Source: PISA 2009 Results; OECD 2010, p. 43.

Fig. 4.30. Science – percentage of students at Level or below (2006 and 2009)



Source: PISA 2009 Results; OECD 2010, p. 66.

Fig. 4.31. Mathematics – percentage of students below Level 2 (2003 and 2009)



Source: PISA 2009 Results, OECD 2010, p. 62.

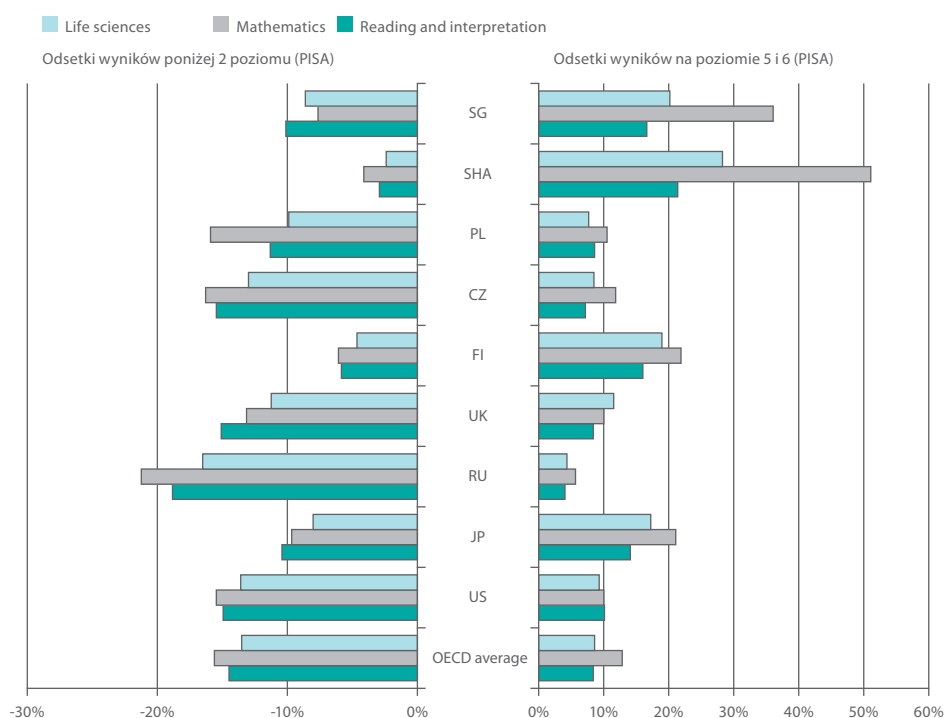
From the perspective of the EU members, Poland has 5th position in reading literacy, 7th in science performance, and further down, 11th in mathematics. It stands in total contrast to Poland’s significantly lower economic status in the EU measured according to e.g. GDP *per capita* and the lower level of parents’ education. On the other hand, Poland is far behind the countries boasting the highest-achievers – Shanghai, Singapore, Finland, South Korea. Polish students are good at solving tasks which require simple and routine operations (text and logical operations) associated with traditional situational and thinking exercises. Most difficulties are encountered with problems with no ready-to-use solution patterns, which require independent, creative and abstract thinking.³⁹ We have fewer students who solve tasks perfectly, at Level 5 and 6, than those who solve them at the lowest level, below Level 2. This is not the worst balance (Fig. 4.32), but it means that Polish schools produce weak individuals, probably prospective social welfare customers rather than geniuses, future leaders and innovators of changes.

There are a number of reasons for this situation, and one of them is the inability of Polish schools to overcome the mechanisms of social determination as a result of which the potential of young people is not discovered and cultivated. Today the results achieved by schools are first of all a function of its social composition – the more young people with advantageous cultural capital, the better the results of school’s efforts and vice versa. A large number of factors are involved – Polish school shows too little innovative methodology, uses traditional teaching routines, fails to see individual students’ needs and interests – it loses talents. Compared to the other EU countries it organises the smallest number of extracurricular classes for young people. Teachers work ineffectively and are unwilling to go beyond the routine, which is evidenced

39 PISA 2009 Results: *What Students Know and Can Do. Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science*, Volume I, OECD 2010, p. 70-86, 131-147, 149-151; (see also) PISA 2009 at a Glance, OECD 2010.

just by the amount of homework and the students' feeling of being overburdened with schoolwork. Polish teachers are poorly salaried, but they also have the smallest number of obligatory teaching hours compared to teachers in the OECD⁴⁰. The selection for the job is of negative nature. Young people dislike school – they consider it to be boring, oppressive, educationally-unfriendly (Table 4.3). The greatest satisfaction is derived from the possibility of contact with their peers.⁴¹ The OECD educational studies, in which these phenomena are systematically verified, confirm their durability in Polish schools⁴².

Fig. 4.32. Percentages of the worst and best results in 3 tests. Poland in comparison with some selected countries⁴³



Source: Own study based on PISA 2009 *Results: What Students Know and Can Do. Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science*, Volume I, OECD 2010.

40 OECD, *Education at a Glance. Indicators*, 2010, p. 393 and 411.

41 A. Małkowska-Szkućnik, *Środowisko psychospołeczne szkoły i przystosowanie do szkoły* [Psychosocial environment in school and adaptation to school]; [in:] A. Oblacińska, B. Woynarowska [edited], *Zdrowie subiektywne, zadowolenie z życia i zachowania zdrowotne uczniów szkół ponadgimnazjalnych w Polsce w kontekście czynników psychospołecznych i ekonomicznych* [Subjective health, satisfaction with life and behaviours promoting health among students of upper-secondary schools in Poland in the context of psychosocial and economic factors], ImiD, Warsaw 2006, p. 146-165.

42 PISA 2009 *Results: What Makes a School Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices*, Volume IV, OECD 2010, p. 87-102.

43 Percentages of the results below Level 2 are shown on the left, and percentages of the results at Level 5 and 6 are shown on the right.

Table 4.3. Perceived social support in the school environment (% of responses showing acceptance)

Support offered by teachers		Autonomy of students		School requirements		School satisfaction	
Teachers encourage to express my own views	48.8	Students participate in the works on the school regulations	22.7	I have too much schoolwork	73.0	I like my school	72.9
Teachers are good and fair	32.2	Students can work at their own pace	21.8	Schoolwork is difficult	64.8	I like classes at school	34.4
Teachers help me when I need it	51.6	Students can influence on how time during classes is used	24.3	Schoolwork is tedious	74.8	I like going to school	36.6
Teachers are interested in me as a human being	31.4	Homework is explained to students	59.1			My tutor thinks that my school results are (very) good	42.4

Source: Own study based on A. Małkowska-Szcutnik, *Środowisko psychospołeczne szkoły i przystosowanie do szkoły* [Psychosocial environment in school and adaptation to school], op. cit. 2006, p. 146-165.

As a result the educational added value is insignificant – results of school’s work still determine to a greater extent the economic status and cultural capital derived by children from their home environment, than teacher’s work with students at school. It has been confirmed in numerous Polish studies showing social durability of conditions underlying school’s work and educational careers of young people⁴⁴. It has also been confirmed by the PISA results (Fig. 4.33).

It is difficult to blame teachers for such situation. Overburdened school curricula, their inadequacy from the perspective of understanding the modern world is another causative factor and area in which we anticipate a genuine revolution. We should agree with the expert opinions that even the best textbooks cannot guarantee good education, nevertheless the “hidden agenda” in Polish textbooks, and in particular their anachronism, promoting traditionalism at the expense of modern ideas is not conducive to building successfulness of Poland in the incoming decades. The content analysis of textbooks shows that they are more often oriented towards tradition than modern reality. Tradition is described in the context of the homeland or family his-

44 See e.g.: Z. Kwieciński, *Środowisko a wyniki pracy szkoły* [Environment and results of school’s work], PWN, Warsaw 1975; *Dynamika funkcjonowania szkoły* [School dynamics], Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń 1995; *Wykluczanie* [Exclusion], Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń 2002; J. Domalewski, P. Mikiwicz, *Młodzież w zreformowanym systemie szkolnym* [Young people in the reformed school system], IRWiR PAN, Warsaw 2004; R. Dolata, *Procedury rekrutacji i dzielenia uczniów na oddziały w gimnazjach – próba ocena z perspektywy nierówności społecznych w edukacji* [Procedures for enrolment and division of students into lower-secondary units – attempt at assessment from the perspective of social inequalities in education], [in:] *Zmiany w systemie oświaty. Wyniki badań empirycznych* [Changes in the educational system. Results of empirical studies], ISP, Warsaw 2002; R. Borowicz, *Nierówności społeczne w dostępie do wykształcenia* [Social inequalities in the access to education], Olecko 2000.

tory, and it is guarded by the oldest generation. Belief in magic, supernatural forces, evil powers and ghosts is a frequent theme both in the selected extracts of the Polish classical literature and in various fairy-tales and legends. The social changes in the modern world are hardly noticeable. Based on the textbooks, one could believe that the most important problem of the modern world is the over-excessively dynamic development of science and technology which leads to the destruction and servitude of human beings. Democracy, equality, and tolerance are only mentioned in relation to history or as very general accounts. Most attention is paid to modern means of mass communication, which is nearly always accompanied by references to the threats entailed by such means – over-excessive appropriation of time which could be spent on other activities, addiction to those means, alienation, etc. Thus, the world shown in school textbooks is not only “antiquated”, but also remote from everyday experiences of young people “immersed” in the world created by media⁴⁵.

Fig. 4.33. Reading comprehension skills in relation to the socio-economic level of the family (2009)



Source: PISA survey 2009 [after] *PISA 2009 Results: Overcoming Social Background Equity Learning Opportunities and Outcomes*, Volume II, OECD 2010, p. 58.

45 B. Łaciak, *Obraz świata i dzieciństwa w podręcznikach szkolnych* [Picture of the world and childhood in school textbooks], Report for the Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2009.

4.7.2. Digital competences

The competence which is considered to be a sign of time and without which it is difficult to imagine building knowledge-based society is the capability of using computer devices and information and communication technology (ICT). Computers and Internet allow people to explore and get to know the world at home. In the same way it is possible to expand one's own participation in the social and cultural life. Internet changes mentality and relations between people. Adequate computer and Internet literacy are considered to be the key qualifications which can contribute to the successfulness in the modern society. These are not only technological skills, but also interdisciplinary, cognitive skills related to problem solving and understanding the basic elements of new communication strategies. Lack of such skills can create greater risk of exclusion. Digital competences are most often acquired at school (as admitted by 81% of young people aged 16-24), by way of unassisted exercises and experimenting (66%) and with the help of friends or family members (58%). They are most often combined by young people⁴⁶.

Young people belong to a great extent to the generation of "digital natives" – brought up from the youngest age in the presence of the digital life and world, although also this generation show distinct difference in the competences or the way of using them. Nevertheless, there exists at least nearly universal access on a regular basis (compared to the average of 58% for the total population), and 93% of the population uses Internet on a regular basis (compared to the average of 55%). Lack of any experience with computers or Internet is only declared by 0.5% of 15 year olds (OECD average is 1%). Computer use on an everyday or nearly every day basis was declared by 75% of young people aged 16-24, 58% of people aged 25-34 and 27% of people aged 45-54. Three times greater Internet use on an everyday basis is more often attributed to young people (aged 16-24) than to older generation (aged 45-54)⁴⁷.

At the same time these young people have much worse access to technologies in the educational system – Polish schools are not adequately equipped, and teachers cannot use digital technologies in the teaching process. 7% of elementary schools and 17% of lower-secondary schools have no access to Internet, and 10% and 21% respectively have no computer classrooms. Equipment is scarcely available: on average there is one computer per 10-11 students, and one multimedia projector per school. For schools in rural areas these statistics are even worse (Table 4.4).

First and foremost, however, computers are not used in the whole process of education – in most cases they are accessible to students only during specific classes in computer classrooms. Although there are no statistical data about computer competences of teachers as a professional group, nevertheless many experts points out the lack of teachers' preparation to digital education. Thus, school is a place of distinct differences, and perhaps even generational tensions related to the use of technology. Technologies absent in the formal educational process are used by students at home: homework is done using Skype, and educational materials (even notebooks) are scanned and sent via the Internet.⁴⁸ Wikipedia is the most popular educational

46 *ICT use and educational scores preliminary results from PISA*, 28-31, April 2010, OECD Headquarters Paris.

47 Eurostat: *Youth in Europe*, 2009, p. 140-142.

48 M. Fliciak, [edited], *Młodzi i media* [Young people and media], SWPS, Warsaw 2010.

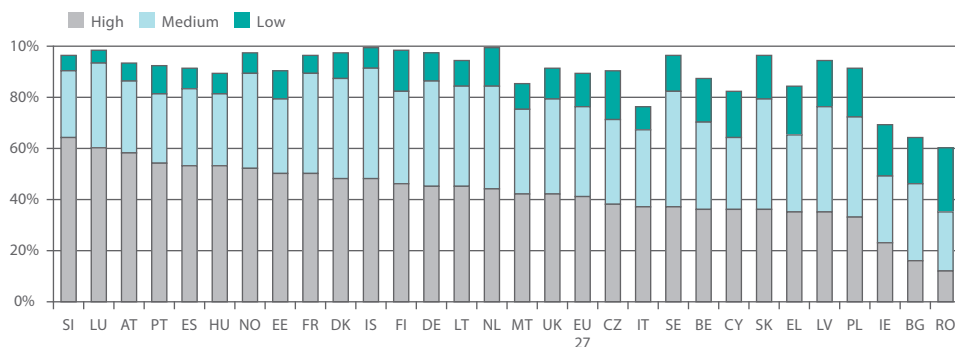
website (9 375 000 users in January 2011) – an encyclopaedia created by volunteers which is commonly used as a source of information by school and university students. The studies carried out by Mariusz Jędrzejko show that 54% of students at public institutions and 72% of students at non-public institutions admitted using Wikipedia as the main source of information when working on their bachelor’s and master’s theses.⁴⁹

Table 4.4. Computer equipment and Internet access in schools (2008/2009)

	Total	Cities	Countryside
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			
Number of computer classrooms per 1 school	1.05	1.29	0.96
Total number of computers (for students) per 1 school	16	21	14
Number of computers with broadband Internet per 1 school	8	13	5
LOWER-SECONDARY SCHOOLS			
Number of computer classrooms per 1 school	1.06	1.24	0.90
Total number of computers (for students) per 1 school	17	20	15
Number of computers with broadband Internet per 1 school	11	14	8

Source: Study by J. Domalewski based on the Central Statistical Office (GUS) data 2008/2009.

Fig. 4.34. Level of digital literacy of young people aged 16-24 (2008)



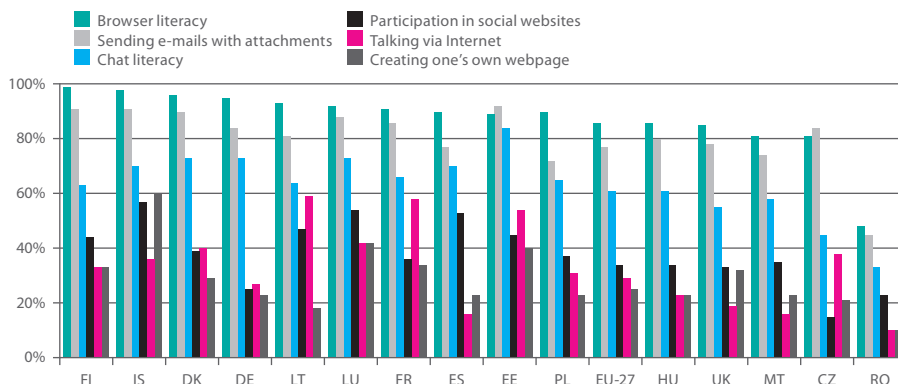
Source: Own study based on Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage households and by individuals, [after] *Youth in Europe...*, p. 148.

Due to the rather mediocre level of computer equipment in schools and homes high software costs and the level of computer science classes, young people in Poland go rather poorly in the surveys of computer literacy compared to young people in other European countries. In a three-level assessment, 33% of young people represent high

49 Internet Standard. Megapanel January 2011 – thematic website, URL.
http://www.internetstandard.pl/news/368513_2/Megapanel.styczen.2011.serwisy.tematyczne.html
<http://www.rp.pl/artykul/449751.html>

level skills, 39% medium level, and 19% low level (Fig. 4.34)⁵⁰. Similar picture emerges from the results of the “Study for Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels” – Polish young people have media competences at a level lower than the European average. With an average of 70%, Poland comes six from the last ranking position in the EU-27.

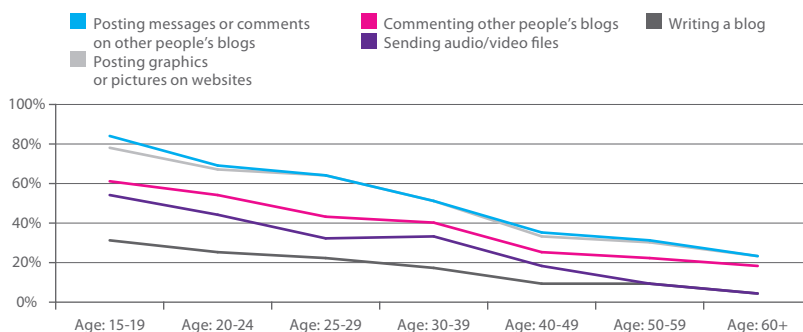
Fig. 4.35. Internet literacy – young people in the selected EU countries (2008)



Source: Own study based on Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage households and by individuals, [after] *Youth in Europe...*, p. 149.

On the other hand, Internet has become an element of everyday life for Polish young people as it did in the Western countries, and using Internet browsers is the most common activity (Fig. 4.35). In Poland, similarly to the North-West Europe, this skill is represented by 90% of young people aged 16-24.

Fig. 4.36. Frequency of using Internet for various activities by age groups



Source: *World Internet Project 2010 – Poland*.

Such high indicators suggest that in each case young people considerably more often undertake a given type of communication via Internet than older people

50 The skills include: 1) copying and moving files and directories, 2) copying, duplicating and transferring information within a document, 3) using basic arithmetic calculations in spreadsheets, 4) compressing files, 5) connecting and installing peripheral equipment, such as a printer or modem, 6) writing computer programmes. Low level refers to 1 or 2 types of skills. Medium level refers to 3 or 4 skills. High level refers to all the skills listed above. The levels reflect the number of skills selected for the Eurostat survey.

(e.g. in Poland 42% Internet users utilise some types of social forms, and the European average is 35%⁵¹ – Fig. 4.36). Thus, young people use digital technologies very intensely, although not entirely in a competent manner. Additionally, computers and Internet are not sufficiently used in schools and formal education which deviates in this respect from everyday life of young people (on average 2 hours and 12 minutes a week of using Internet in school, and the average for the age group 15-19 is 19.8 hours⁵²). However, the importance of school is indicated by the fact that it is the main place where digital competences are acquired.

4.7.3. Foreign languages competences

The group of important competences acquired at school includes the ability to use a foreign language, instrumental to open effectively to the world and function in other cultures. In most European countries young people are taught two foreign languages on a compulsory basis or with another language as an option subject. To 2009 Poland belonged to the third category – a group of four European countries where not every student is provided with a possibility of learning two languages. Today, it is obligatory to teach two modern foreign languages in secondary schools, and knowledge of one of them is included in the secondary school finals. English is the most often offered foreign language – learnt by more than 70% of lower-secondary students and nearly 90% of upper-secondary students. The second most frequently taught foreign language is German – learnt by 23% lower-secondary students and 62% upper-secondary students. Much lesser interest is observed in French, Russian, Spanish or Italian. The youngest generation has an opportunity to learn one compulsory foreign language in elementary schools⁵³.

The education in foreign languages education in Polish schools is assessed based on the Central Examination Commission (CKE) reports, where the results of examinations to lower-secondary schools and upper-secondary finals are reported. In 2010 the average result achieved by graduates of lower-secondary schools was hovering at 60% of the total possible score⁵⁴. Secondary school graduates solving the foreign language test at the basic level achieved 62-79%, and the examination results for the most often taught foreign languages (English, German, Russian) were at a lower level (60% on average) compared to less popular languages (French, Spanish, Italian – 80% on average), which should be referred to the voluntary selection of the latter.⁵⁵ The best results at the subsidiary level are achieved by secondary general

51 Special Eurobarometer 335, E-Communications Household Survey Fieldwork: November – December 2009 Publication: October 2010.

52 Agora, *World Internet Project 2010*, 2010.

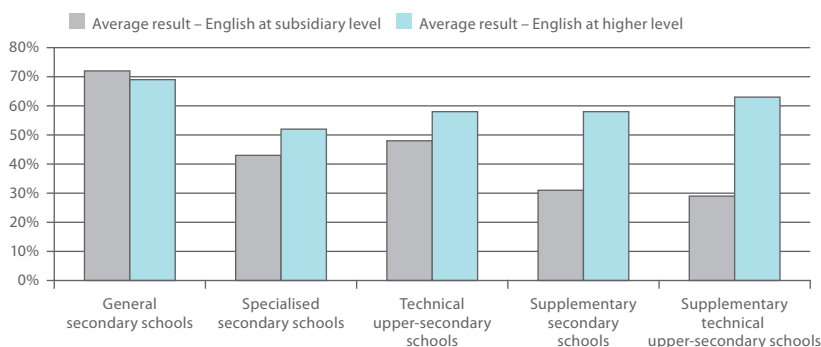
53 We have ignored the fact that from the perspective of cognitive processes starting classes of foreign language at the elementary level of public education is not the most optimum solution – children learn foreign languages most effectively at the stage of recognising the structures of their own language. Not only in the Polish reality (when only some of children attend pre-schools) such solution is impossible.

54 Central Examination Commission (CKE), *Osiągnięcia uczniów kończących gimnazja w roku 2010* [Achievements of 2010 graduates of lower-secondary schools], Report on the lower-secondary school examination in 2010, p. 50.

55 Central Examination Commission (CKE), *Osiągnięcia maturzystów w 2010 roku* [Achievements of secondary school graduates in 2010]. Report on the secondary school finals in 2010, p. 220.

schools. At the higher level the results are much more even, which should also be referred to a different type of learning motivation. Figure 4.37 shows the data related to English as the most popular foreign language taught in schools, but the regularities and differences apply also to other foreign languages.

Fig. 4.37. Average English examination results by school types – Secondary school finals 2010



Source: Central Examination Commission (CKE), *Osiągnięcia maturzystów w 2010 roku* [Achievements of secondary school graduates in 2010]. Report on the secondary school finals in 2010, p. 224.

Similarly as in the case of other skills, the level of teaching varies between schools and depends on the social composition of students, availability of teachers or presence of equipment for learning foreign languages. Many schools in the rural areas (and basic vocational schools) can offer only Russian, as they have teachers of Russian who have been educated a long time ago and thus, they – contrary to teachers of English or German – do not have to be enlisted “anew”. The differences in teaching foreign languages depend also on the infrastructure. Not every school has a language laboratory – according to the Central Statistical Office (GUS) data such laboratories can be found in nearly every lower-secondary school in cities (rate of saturation at 0.78) and every third in the rural areas (rate of saturation at 0.30)⁵⁶. There are no data concerning the applied teaching methods, although they probably cause the greatest losses of young people’s potential.

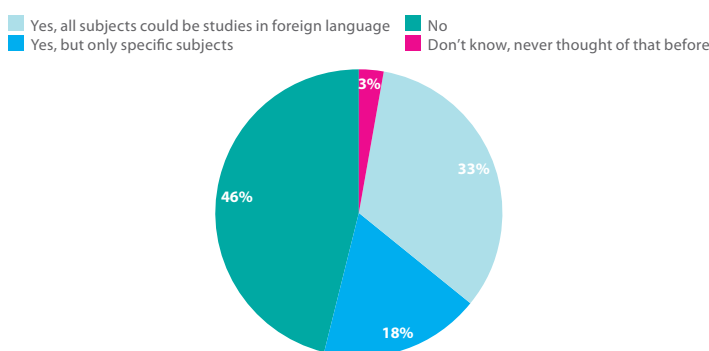
Apart from indicators related to the level of foreign language skills, the responses to two questions included in the Polish PISA survey could be used: whether and to what degree teaching a foreign language is non-existent and how often the teacher changes. Only one third of the students assessed positively the teaching of foreign languages as effective, the other assessed it as so-so or non-existent. Only 42% responded that throughout their lower-secondary education they had one and the same teacher. More than one fifth of young people take additional (private) classes in foreign languages⁵⁷. As a result the knowledge of foreign languages among young people in Poland reaches different levels – both in terms of its expansion in different

56 Data for the school year 2008/2009.

57 *Spółeczeństwo w drodze do wiedzy* [Society en route to knowledge], Report on education, op. cit., p. 318-319.

age cohorts, and the level of fluency. According the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) survey results, in 2004 every second Pole aged below 35 could speak a foreign language, and two thirds of students could speak English⁵⁸.

Fig. 4.38. Possibilities of studies with foreign language as a language of instruction



Source: Survey report under the project "Uczelnia przyjazna pracodawcom" [Employer-friendly universities]. IPISS, Warsaw 2010, p. 16.

From the perspective of employers the knowledge of foreign languages among the university graduates employed by them is not satisfactory, in particular as regards the job-related area. A good solution would be to enable students studying in foreign language, however, this is impossible – due to the lack of additional financial resources and adequate linguistic competence of lecturers at Polish universities.

Few students take advantage of the possibility of studying in foreign language – 33% studied at a university where all the subjects were lectured in foreign language, and 18% had a possibility of attending selected classes with a foreign language as a language of instruction. Nearly a half of them (46%) had no possibility of studying in foreign language (Fig. 4.38). It could be compensated by studies abroad, however – as shown above – only few students take advantage of such possibility.

Despite these shortcomings, the knowledge of foreign languages of young graduates is incomparable to the analogous competences of their parents' generation. The young people of today belong to the first generation with such universal access to foreign languages. The participation of schools which provides the first systematic (although different in terms of duration and quality in different groups of young people) contact with foreign languages is very important, but at the same time far from satisfactory.

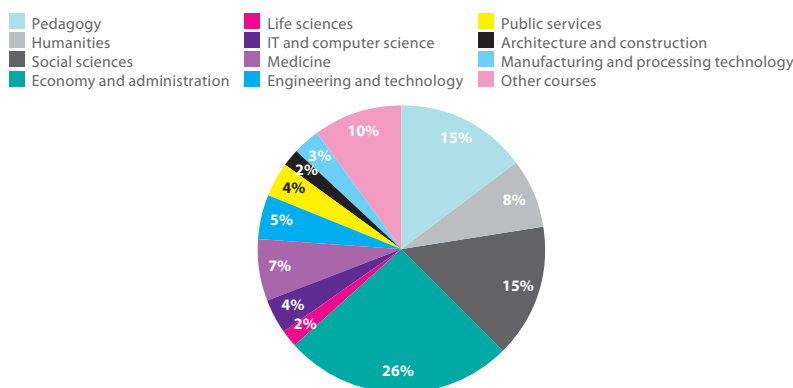
4.7.4. Professional competences

The knowledge and skills related to professional life tend to be increasingly highlighted as a priority in learning, including academic education. Numerous schools and

58 *Wyjazdy zagraniczne studentów i znajomość języków obcych* [International trips of students and knowledge of foreign languages], Communication on the survey, Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw, June 2004.

university departments are still struggling to tackle this issue. This is either due to the anachronistic curricula applicable thus far or the lack of a conceptual approach where education is not associated with a specific professional profile of the graduates. This problem concerns vocational schools as well as university education. Both vocational schools and universities experience adjustment difficulties to the same or greater extent than individuals. As mentioned earlier, school does not prepare for the labour market. Although it is not the only determinant of finding employment, the fact remains that it takes a long time for the graduates to integrate themselves into the labour market due to the lack of internship history, hands-on professional experience or as much as appropriate practical knowledge.

Fig. 4.39. University graduates by groups of third-level courses in the academic year 2008/2009



Source: *Szkoły wyższe i ich finanse w 2009 roku* [Universities and their finances in 2009], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010, p. 31.

There is a mismatch between fields and limits of education and the economic and labour market needs. It has been years since universities stopped paying attention to the market demands and started generating hosts of graduate students who complete courses which do not prepare them for any specific profession (humanities, social sciences and other – Fig. 4.39). The NQF⁵⁹ project aimed at limiting the negative effects of academic education, evident from its isolation from practical needs, forms an important step towards reducing this gap, however, there is concern that it could fail to achieve the set goals without appropriate financial and logistic support.

At the same time more and more often employers require the skills which are of little importance for schools and universities. The essential requirements for university graduates include – in addition to command of a foreign language (66%), digital literacy (56%) – professional experience (57%), high degree of autonomy in making decisions (33%), communication skills (29%), specific profession-related skills (29%), good organisational skills (28%), teamwork skills (24%), interpersonal skills (22%), work-

59 National Qualifications Framework (Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji).

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ing time flexibility (17%), analytical skills (15%), creativity (15%)⁶⁰. Most of these skills are not included in school curriculum, although majority of them – as shown by modern psychology – can be acquired by learning. University graduates are criticised for their inability to combine theory with practice, to solve new problems, lack of proper regard for experience.

Table 4.5. Expected competences and requirements for the educational system as formulated by employers (2009)⁶¹

Expected competences	Requirements for the educational system
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY	
<p>Non-management employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge of specific tools and raw materials ● Responsibility for the assigned works ● Attention to detail and good teamwork skills ● "Non-drinkers" ● Supervision: ● Cooperation in a team of specialists ● Understanding their "scope of responsibilities" ● Knowledge of law and economy ● Good teamwork skills ● Declarations of assistance in acquiring further qualifications ● Management candidates: ● University graduates are overburdened with theory showing no respect for practical knowledge ● Diploma itself means nothing, the name of the thesis supervisor is more important and meaningful ● CV, however "short", means more than a diploma awarded by a top-of-the-list university ● It is difficult to find a graduate who knows the theory and have the skills, and first of all wants to learn how to use them in practice ("modesty") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Considerably modernised educational curriculum in which greater importance is attached to practical skills – this applies to every level of education, including university education (basic vocational schools, secondary vocational schools, universities) ● Reduced red tape in the area of student internships and implemented greater range of student trainings in school curriculum ● Promotion of jobs related to construction industry so that students are willing to learn and take jobs not due to the lack of other possibilities, but out of their own choice ● Teaching attitudes towards working
IT&T	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development intensifies structural changes, i.e. transfer from hardware to software services – greater demand for higher class specialists, and not only people with university degree, but people with university education of adequately high quality, capable of creative work, and not only with imitative skills. Today, human resources are considered to be one of the weaknesses of the IT industry. ● The internal structure of employment changes – greater specialisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Most intense employment increase is observed in relation highly specialised professionals (3.5x) ◆ Less intense increase is observed in relation to less qualified specialists ◆ Reduced employment of people which are broadly defined as IT specialists ◆ Replacement of staff related to higher professionalisation in the industry – more people closely related to IT professions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater quality of education in computer science at universities, including elimination of low quality educational services from the market ● Promoting independence and creativity of students ● No sense in educating medium-level "IT specialists" ● Programmes based on the expectations about the required skills of graduates ● Prompt modernisation of educational programmes adapted to the changes in the industry

Source: Based on U. Sztanderska, *Kwalifikacje dla potrzeb pracodawców* [Qualifications to meet the needs of employers], Final report, Warsaw, June 2010.

60 Study of job advertisements placed by employers in Łódź and Warsaw in 2001 and 2003 – see: A. Dziedziczak-Fołtyn, *Młodzi adeptci zarządzania na rynku pracy. Oczekiwania pracodawców wobec wyższych uczelni* [Students of management on the labour market. Employers' expectations towards universities], [in:] A. Buchner-Jeziorska (edited), *Szkola sukcesu czy przetrwania. Szkolnictwo wyższe w Polsce* [School of success or survival. University education in Poland], Warsaw School of Economics (SGH), Warsaw 2005.

61 The studies have been carried out as part of the project „Qualifications to meet the needs of employers”. They consisted of desk research (data relating to the development of production, employment in 4 lines of business in Poland, educational programmes), company case studies (individual interviews and questionnaires with employers and employees), group interviews in schools and universities, analysis of the offered media services, telephone interviews with representatives of training institutions.

Vocational education in secondary schools is also far from being effective. While young people call for a more pragmatic approach to education, educational opportunities are re-oriented towards the so-called theoretical knowledge – usually anachronistic and intrinsically unstructured. Meanwhile vocational schools should offer both general competences, broad professional basics (to enable acquiring a related profession), and an ability to manage one's own professional career (job searching, adequate assessment of capabilities, developing a habit of learning)⁶². Table 4.5. shows how obvious are the qualities and attributes looked for in potential employees by employers and how obvious are their requirements for the educational system based on two examples – very traditional industry, and yet subject to continuous dynamic development (construction industry) and a state-of-the-art one (IT&T).

Sharing the view held by employers that school does not have to take on the obligation to provide all the competences desired on the labour market, the combination of the induction period, preparing to enter the labour market, with the training system, progressive professional consulting and training of social skills is not a need resulting from the changing economy, but also a civilisation necessity. Today, it is more and more obvious that there is a growing demand for life-long learning, but also for life-wide learning.

Summary

If the knowledge-based economy and development of the intellectual capital are assumed to be one of the primary Polish challenges, then the pace and sustainability of the convergence between Poland and the most developed countries in Europe and in the world will largely depend on whether and to what extent the convergence process is supported by the educational system aimed at developing the basis for the intellectual capital in the young generation. To ignore this challenge is to cause the intellectual capital gap between Poland and the developed world economies to widen even further⁶³.

Since 1989 the young generation have had high expectations of their education. As a result of the social pressure for changes in the educational system, it started to open up to young people's expectations even before the implementation of the educational reform. The overall balance of these adjustments is not entirely positive, especially if we consider the quality of education, nevertheless we have achieved quite a lot: unprecedentedly high enrolment rate, especially among young female students, high (although not so high as expected) employment rate among people with university education, low unemployment rate in comparison with other countries,⁶⁴ quite good (and improving) results in the measurements of the basic schools competences among young people. The changes achieved as a result of the educational activity of young people have not only led to the transformation of the social structure. They have enabled a new quality of the intellectual capital which not only facilitates the

62 *Edukacja dla pracy. Raport o rozwoju społecznym Polska 2007* [Education for work. Report on social development Poland 2007], Warsaw 2007, UNDP, p. 196.

63 *Polska 2030. Wyzwania dla Polski* [Challenges for Poland], M. Boni [edited], Warsaw, 2009, p. 204 et seq.

64 See the studies discussed in the next chapter of the report.

structural changes in economy, but also provides the country with greater opportunities for development in the future.

It is certain that many negative phenomena (oversupply of graduates whose qualifications do not match the labour market requirements, educational routine that leads to loss of a great amount of intellectual potential of young people, not enough effort of educational institutions to improve educational chances of students from various environments, lack of full controllability over the education market, in particular in relation to universities) were unavoidable. The consequences of the transformation, lack of experience, the necessity to experiment, deficit of resources and lack of consistent idea of the reform of the whole education system are visible. As the first decade of the transformation can be described as spontaneous adjustment (in particular to the social needs), the second one – as top-down regulated adjustment (mainly to European standards), today, when we are entering the third decade and the third phase of the transformation, we should expect well-thought-out adjustment of the education system to new challenges, emerging at the meeting point of social needs and global civilization challenges.

The basic problem of the Polish education lies in the inability to break the limitations of the society. School, which, as a result of the reforms, was supposed to have significant influence on the young generation's promotion and liberation of their hidden intellectual potential, has become a channel selecting and positioning the youth in the social structure. This process usually starts at the beginning of schooling, then activates at the upper-secondary level and, at the level of secondary and higher education, it becomes particularly intense. Young people from so called good families (of high cultural capital) choose prestigious schools, therefore they achieve spectacular educational successes. If the social makeup of a school is dominated by young people from families of an unfavourable social capital, the results are poor. The external examination system, ranking schools (and students), strengthens polarization processes, which decide about further educational path and lives of young people at a very early stage. In other countries, school plays a much more important role in breaking the limitations of the society and liberates loads of possibilities that are hidden in the youth. For example, there are countries that achieve the best results in PISA studies and, at the same time, are characterized by the least interrelation between school successes and the youth life environment (Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, new "Asian tigers").

Another problem of the Polish education, which influences professional careers and lives of the youth, is the mismatch between education and the changing labour market. It assumes different forms and its source is complicated. First of all, it is a matter of mismatch between university courses and limits and the existing industries and labour market needs (e.g. "oversupply" of humanists or graduates of law or marketing departments, with deficit of engineers, IT specialists, power engineers or carpenters, butchers and turners). Second of all, it is a matter of inadequate skills and knowledge in relation to those required by companies (outdated, too "theoretic" and unordered knowledge; lack of the ability to put it into practice; glaring shortage of so called soft competences – social, lack of professional skills, no familiarity with the work reality. Third of all, it is a matter of unclearness of educational offer of universities and schools (often making cynical promises-"mirages") and school certificates and diplomas (which have not only lost their value, but also their purpose is not clear). Obscurity of these matchings and interrelations causes that educational strategies and

decisions of the youth are characterized to a great extent by randomness and high level of risk. It lowers the effectiveness of educational investments, and the education process itself makes its aim chaotic and unclear.

The fact that reforms were not introduced early enough caused that older generation of young people had to deal with the consequences of the spontaneous adjustment themselves. The effects of randomness of many decisions (and solutions) have affected both the young and the whole society. The risk of being excluded from the market, lost careers and disillusionment are very important losses. They cannot affect the next generations of young people. Poland cannot afford such waste of human capital. We will not be able to overcome the next phase of civilization challenges and to encourage involvement of the youth if they will be doomed to random educational offer and not properly functioning schools.

Investments in education and concern for education should belong to the absolute national priorities in the forthcoming decade. Expenditures on education bring in Poland return with interest – four times as high in the case of expenditures on higher education, i.e. more than the EU and OECD average. Holders of university diplomas earn more, pay higher taxes, are active consumers – they form the secondary factor powering the flywheel of the economic development. Better educated people are characterised by greater determination in seeking employment, better health condition, higher trust indicators, greater political involvement and a sense of civic responsibility.

Such conclusions have appeared more than once. Everybody seems to understand that education is nowadays an indisputable medium of both individual and social development – not in terms of numbers or saturation rates, but in terms of high quality of educational services. Today, we need reforms oriented mainly towards universities and schools (related to programmes, methodology, changing rules for the selection of educationalists and research workers, which naturalise the requirement for creativity and non-conventional thinking). They should be complemented by activities aimed at supporting the establishment of professional and personal consulting institutions which could help young people to take optimal decisions with regard to their educational path, professional career and personal advancement. To achieve success it is necessary to depart from education stimulated primarily by low educational costs (both at the level of elementary, upper-secondary schools and universities) for the benefit of progressive and rational solutions, conceptually mature, i.e. expensive. The set objectives will not be achieved unless expenditures are explicitly increased. Otherwise, there will be another “lost” generation and Poland will be marginalised on the economic map of the world.

5.

5. Work and entering the labour market

- 5.1.** Entering the job market – preparation and barriers
- 5.2.** Indicators of activity and inactivity on the labour market
- 5.3.** First job – employment rates, incomes
- 5.4.** Unemployment rates
- 5.5.** Dual labour market – double regulations. Influence on the employment of young people
- 5.6.** Influence of global crisis on youth employment
- 5.7.** Direct and long-term consequences of the labour markets crisis for the youth
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Summary

5. Work and entering the labour market

CHAPTER FIVE

For a young person, the transition from education to work and employment is a very important process. Being successful in this field is essential not only in terms of liberation from parental control (leaving family house, financial independence) but also in terms of following one's life and professional aspirations, ambitions and plans (purchasing a flat, starting a family). Work is not only a source of income, which for some people means a way to survive, while for others a decent and comfortable life. Today, work is also a source of satisfaction and an opportunity for personal development. Above all, it is a condition for self-reliance and autonomy understood as a possibility to make independent life choices. The latter value is especially appreciated by the young, as it enables them to perceive themselves as adults. Remaining unemployed is, for the young, a source of dissatisfaction, because it makes them stick in a difficult state of suspension between dependency on adults and independence, hinders satisfaction of important life needs, and, in the end, leads to social exclusion.

A shift from education to employment is also a difficult process, influenced by complex and not youth-friendly demographic and macroeconomic trends. Although the process is different in different countries, the latest reports of international organisations and expert bodies present not very optimistic forecasts related to employment and labour markets for the young. Despite being increasingly well-educated and less in number, they are the group that is mostly affected by the consequences of the 2009-2011 recession. The unemployment and professional activity indicators are much more favourable for adults than for the young. Due to legal provisions and employers' preferences, even those young people who have already set their foot in the labour market cannot expect stable employment. This situation is caused by several factors. One of them is the disparity between skills acquired as a result of education and the requirements on the labour market or economic conditions. In the times of financial tensions, companies will most probably continue the reduction of employment programmes. Moreover, employers will prefer better qualified, more experienced and responsible professionals. Such features are more typical for among adults than young people.

Today, due to unstable economy, all these things contribute to the growing uncertainty regarding satisfactory transition to the labour market. The influence of the crisis is most of all reflected in unemployment and related dangers, including professional inactivity of the young. Numerous researches support the thesis that entering the job market in the times of recession may leave a permanent trace on the young generation. The biggest concerns relate to possible generation of a so called "lost generation" – young, well-educated people who cannot find their place on the labour market. Implementation of systemic instruments in order to motivate youth not to lose hope for a better future despite unfavourable conditions is a bold and expensive undertaking, yet, it is encouraged by international organisations and the European Commission. This idea stresses

that “doing nothing” is even more costly, because it may result in serious and dangerous social, economic, or even politic costs¹.

Young people are threatened by the consequences of economic turbulences for many reasons: lack of skills and professional experience may make them less attractive to employers. The young may lack knowledge of where and how to look for a job, financial means to go through the whole process of seeking a job, and sufficient family support. These threats occur regardless of society type or culture, in different forms in various world regions and economy types, and during the global crisis they become even more evident. While in developed countries, recession weakens the feeling of economic and social security as well as lowers the standard of living, in developing countries it may increase the already large work deficit, at the same time deepening the problem of poverty as well as slowing down the progress in limiting poverty attained in recent years, popularisation of education, health improvement. All these factors have negative influence on the development of present and future generations.

The situation of the “lost generation” is unfavourable globally. The more young people remain outside the labour market or have an uncertain employment status, the less hope that the youth will contribute to the civilisation progress, and the greater the fear that economic development will slow down. It is the young people that lay future foundations for societies – they bring energy, talent and creativity, make an important contribution as efficient employees, entrepreneurs, consumers, a change factor and members of the civil society. There is no doubt that it is the young, ambitious people that provide good and efficient work, upon which depends a better future. Taking away this hope and depriving them of any delusions by directing their life energy towards dealing with poverty or trying to enter the job market is wasting enormous economic potential.

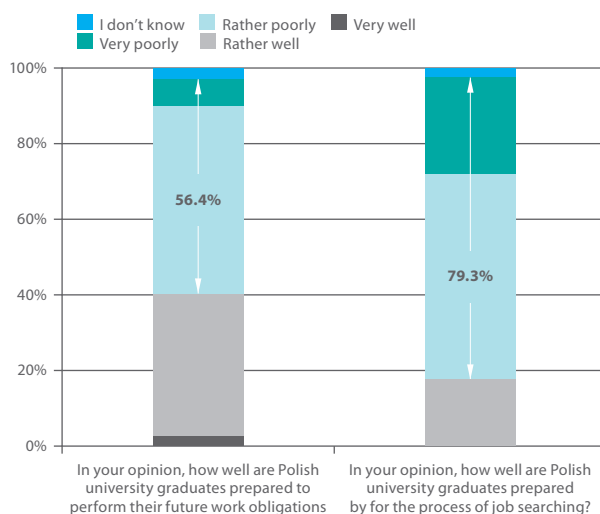
5.1. Entering the job market – preparation and barriers

Among many changes of the Polish system transformation, the ones concerning the system of education were most expected. This need was dictated not only by political reasons but also by those related to civilisation – the necessity to prepare highly qualified staff for the dynamically changing job market and its new demands. Polish educational boom of the 90s was the most spectacular one in Europe. We have educated a great number of young people, although the quality of this education leaves a lot to be desired – both in the eyes of employers and the young people themselves. A substantial number of young Poles received a diploma that was to guarantee not only certainty of employment but also a good social position. As it has turned out, it does not – primarily, because of the difficult economic situation (legacy of real socialism in the form of deficits, outcomes of the global crisis), but also because of education that is not adjusted to the labour market. Opinions of the young in this respect are very critical. It is very difficult for universities, especially public ones, to change their

1 *Global Employment Trends for Youth. Special issue on the impact of the global economic crisis on youth*, ILO Geneva, AuCSOt 2010, p. 1.

approach in favour of a more pragmatic education. There is a number of reasons for this situation: mental, related to the programme, financial ones, including shortage of trainings and lack of clear and comprehensive policy in the higher education sector, which would take into account future needs of the labour market. Secondary education also operates separately from the demand of the labour market. As a result of liquidation of a great number of vocational schools in the 90s, a lot of professions have disappeared from the area of education.

Fig. 5.1. Students and graduates on the universities' openness to the labour market



Source: *Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy. Ogólnopolskie badanie studentów i absolwentów*. [First steps on the labour market. A Polish nationwide research among students and graduates.], a report made by Deloitte and the Human Capital Development Department of the Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw 2010.

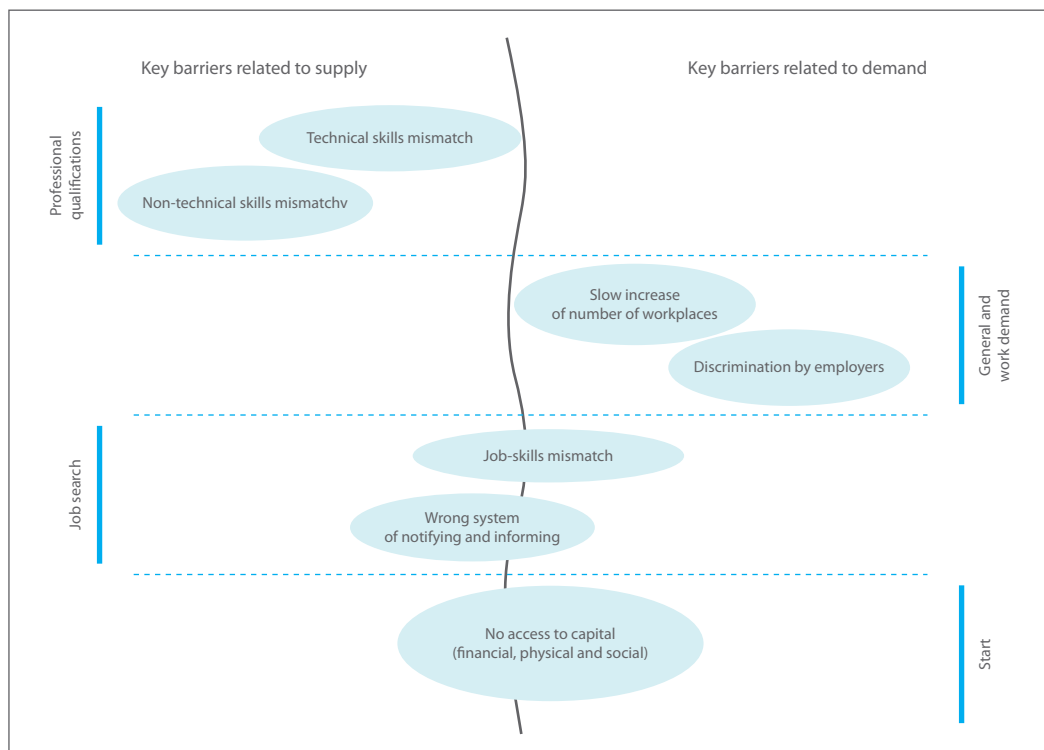
This problem occurs not only in Poland and there are many more reasons for this situation. Researches conducted within many projects by different international organizations (Youth Employment Network, Youth Employment Index, International Youth Foundation)² group them into several categories.

First, it is a matter of the difference between skills required by employers and those acquired by potential employees. This discrepancy occurs mainly between technical (so called "hard") and non-technical (so called "soft", i.e. emotional and social) skills. Today, both types of skills are considered very important, if not crucial, for one's career. Their shortage becomes especially evident among young people who grew up in difficult conditions and received lower quality education.

The second kind of barriers is related to expectations regarding a job and the situation on the labour market. They include reduction of workplaces, change of attitude to work, employers' discrimination of the young, who are punished with worse job offers and more frequent dismissals for lack of professional experience.

² *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, ILO Report 2010, p. 55 i n.

Fig. 5.2. Crucial barriers for the young on the labour market



Source: *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, ILO Report 2010, p. 54.

The third kind of barriers is related to a job search practice, and is caused by improper skills recognition systems in relations between employees and the labour market (employer). This results, on the one hand, from employers' inability to state their expectations (as a consequence, the young choose improper jobs and are inaccurately allocated on the labour market), while on the other hand, from a poor system providing employers with information on potential employee's qualifications. The most common sources of information (certificates, diplomas) are not much significant if they do not specify the acquired skills, which results in their devaluation and increased importance of non-substantive recruitment criteria.

The fourth kind of barriers indicates problems connected with creation of workplaces and starting a business activity, as an alternative to deficits in traditional employment. The most important are difficulties related to access to financial, physical and social capital. Young potential entrepreneurs face numerous barriers, especially when their actions are motivated dictated by necessity rather than choice. They are conceptually unprepared, lack material base (an office, necessary equipment), cannot count on their families' support and are not creditworthy bank customers.

The Polish youth quite accurately define all these barriers. Not only is it apparent in their pragmatic attitude to education, but also in their declaration of mobility and professional flexibility, the type of expectations concerning the first job and the

attitude to internships. Despite this area of education being neglected by the Polish education system, internships are becoming a number one “subject”, as seen by the young. They expect that it will provide them with a unique possibility, which cannot be achieved within the scope of traditional or formal education – new practical (including social) skills, first professional experience and contact with a new environment.

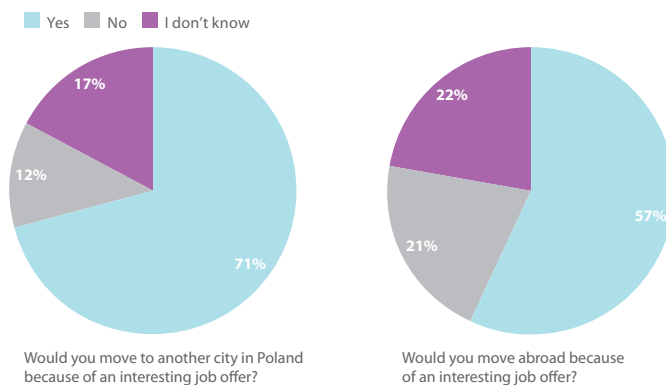
Table 5.1. The most important factors in the choice of internship

The most important factors in the choice of internship	
Opportunity to learn and acquire new skills	77%
Opportunity to acquire professional experience	62%
Chance of employment in a given organisation	54%
Employer's prestige	25%
Working hours flexibility	23%
Amount of remuneration	18%
Friendly working atmosphere	14%
Contact with an international environment	14%
Meeting people from the same industry	10%

Source: *Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy...* [First steps on the labour market.], Warsaw, May 2010.

The potential mobility of the young is also very high, with half of them declaring readiness to change their place of residence if need be. They also know that one should take up many different occupations (55%)³. Students are even more mobile, although the interest in migrating abroad diminished considerably (among teenagers it is twice as low as among the academic youth).

Fig. 5.3. Willingness of the academic youth to move because of a job offer

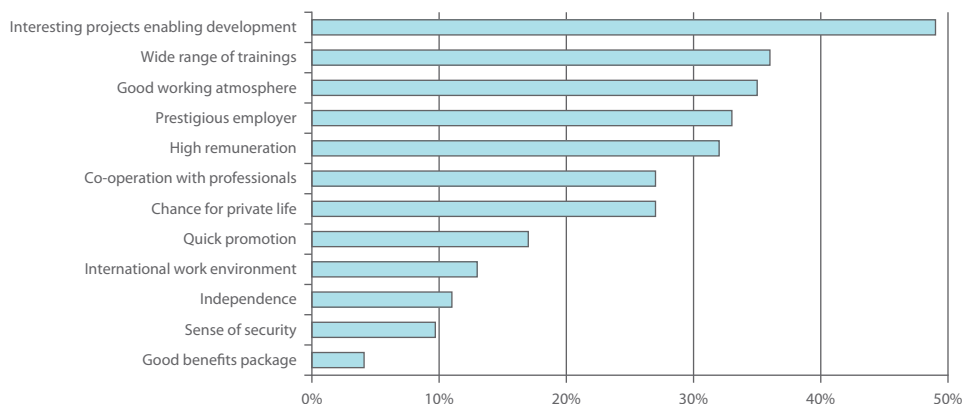


Source: *Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy...* [First steps on the labour market...], Warsaw, May 2010.

3 K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie a nowy ustrój* [The young generation and the new system], IRWiR PAN, Warsaw 2010.

The expectations regarding the first job are strongly varied. Better educated people pay attention to self-development, atmosphere in the team and income (Fig. 5.4), while less educated people are more focused on money, good working conditions and professional stability (Fig. 5.5). A comparison of job expectations in both categories shows two different preference types and two different groups of people.

Fig. 5.4. The most important factors in the choice of first job – academic youth



Source: Own work based on: *Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy...* [First steps on the labour market...], Deloitte and the Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw 2010.

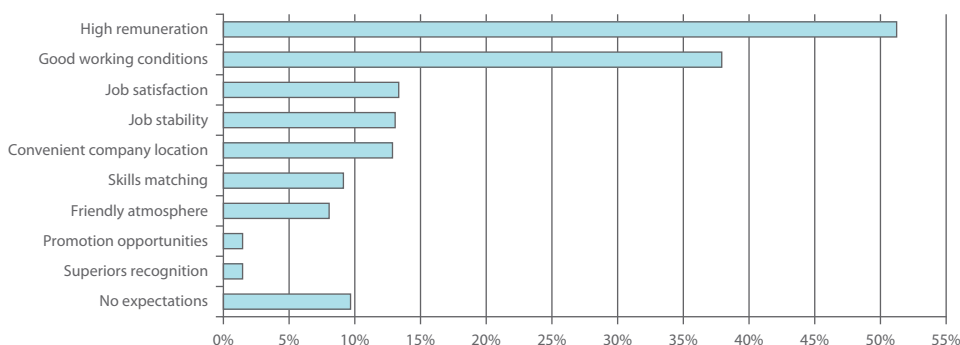
Although many elements are the same, they have a different level of importance for both of these groups. On the one hand, expectations of young people with a worse initial capital start, underline the importance of comfort, security and professional stability, but on the other hand, a need for job satisfaction. Better educated youth clearly evolves in their attitude to work – starting with the success-driven approach and a readiness to commit entirely to one’s professional career (which was typical for the young entering the labour market in the 90s), to the ones striving for work-life balance and looking for new kinds of gratification (job satisfaction, development). Work is very important to them – it is a source of income, which enables them to become financially independent of their parents and satisfy their needs. At the same time, their attitude to work does not mean that their private life is not equally important. This means that the contemporary, well-educated Polish youth is less restrictive in their approach to career than the youth entering the labour market in the past decade, and reveals the symbolic shift from the style of functioning characteristic for the Yuppie generation to the one represented by the Y generation.

In the West, yuppies were a symbol of success already in the 80s. In Poland, this approach to work emerged in the 90s, as western companies started to enter our market with their specific organisational culture and career patterns. Imitation of western patterns typical of Polish culture and new experiences with market economy sustained the attractiveness of such notion of success among Polish youth⁴. Longer

4 It is perfectly illustrated in a little volume entitled *“Młodzi końca wieku”* [The young at the end of the century], which is a collection of opinions of the generation representatives reaching adulthood in the first stage of Polish transformation.

contact with the free market and mass culture that stimulates consumer society is starting to make Polish youth more cautious about career and dedication that it requires. This subtle, but in a way substantial change of attitude is most perceptible among the academic youth, who have high expectations not only in relation to their career, but also to their private life (Fig. 5.6).

Fig. 5.5. What do young people without professional experience expect of their first job?



Source: *Wejście ludzi młodych na rynek pracy* [Young people entering the labour market], CSO, February 2010.

This process will not be easy. Dictating conditions to employers does not bring results at the time of jobs shortage. Forecasts for Poland are moderately optimistic. In recent years, the number of vacancies was systematically decreasing, just as the number of enterprises that planned to increase the number of jobs⁵. Within three years, the decrease amounted to more than 2.5%. The analyses made by *Manpower*⁶ showed a slight decline in employment growth rate. Yet, the forecasts of employer behaviour were optimistic⁷. Although the group of enterprises in which changes in labour force are not expected (71%) is still dominant, and another 8% are going to make employment cuts, one fifth of employers (19%) expect that the number of contract employees will rise.

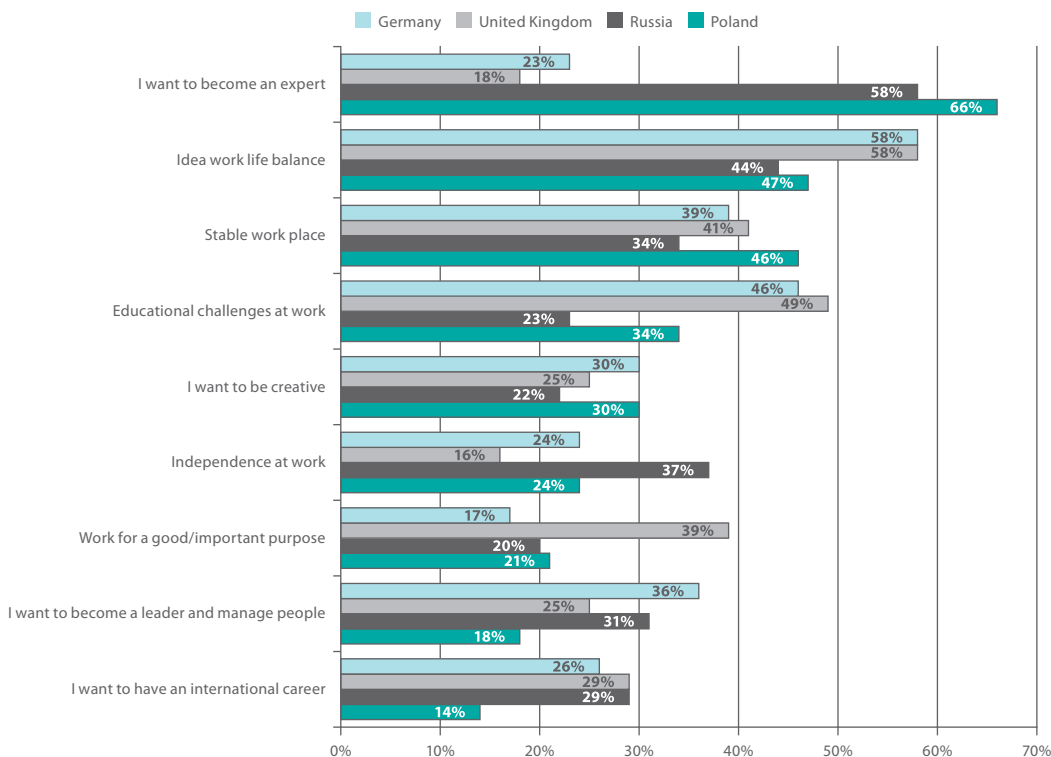
5 The research was conducted in the form of a panel and it involved a representative group of 1600 employers and 2000 unemployed. It was conducted at half-yearly intervals (2nd and 4th quarter) and are related to issues connected with economic situation of enterprises, including wages policy and employment – see W. Gumuła et al., *Rynek pracy w Polsce (wynagrodzenia i migracje w listopadzie 2009 r. na tle badań panelowych w latach 2006-2009)* [Labour market in Poland (remuneration and migration in November 2009 against panel studies in 2006-2009)], National Bank of Poland, Warsaw 2010.

6 The research was conducted on a representative group of employers from 36 countries (62,000 HR managers and other persons responsible for HR policy in enterprises). The research has been conducted for 47 years, Poland joined the research in 2008. The research *Barometr Manpower Perspektyw Zatrudnienia dla Polski* was carried out on a representative group of 750 employees. Statistical error for such a group comes to +/-3,6% - see *Badanie Barometr Manpower Perspektyw Zatrudnienia Polska. Raport z badania IV kwartał 2010 roku*. [Manpower barometer of employment prospects in Poland research. Research report IV quarter of 2010.]

7 Shown in National Bank of Poland's analyses. Partly confirmed by the Central Statistical Office's (CSO) analyses from October 2010 – see *Koniunktura gospodarcza. Usługi*. [Economic trend. Services.] no. 07/2010 CSO, see also <http://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/GUS-mozliwy-wzrost-zatrudnienia-w-finansach-i-komunikacji-2231543.html>

The forecast of net employment⁸ for the whole country amounted to +11%, which means that employers who plan to create new job offers have an advantage over those planning dismissals. It was 7 percentage points higher than the one in the previous year. Optimism regarding employment dominated over pessimism in all regions. The highest optimism was declared by companies from the Southern Region, where the net employment forecast reached +17% and indicated a threefold growth compared to the last year. Alarming small optimism was declared by companies from the Northern Region, where not only the net forecast was at the level of +2%, but also dynamics of change was the lowest (increase by 3 percentage points compared to 2009). The labour markets in that region have become less attractive, which is confirmed by migration rates and directions among young people, who, in order to pursue their careers, choose more attractive urban centres in other regions. This causes loss of development powers and deepening of existing differences⁹.

Fig. 5.6. Most important professional goals of academic youth (Student Survey 2010¹⁰)



Source: <http://www.kariera.com.pl/Publikacje/Idealny-Pracodawca>.

8 The “forecast of net employment” parameter is a difference in percents between the number of employers planning to increase employment and the number of employers declaring decrease in employment in their department in the next quarter.

9 See analyses in Chapter 3.

10 The research was conducted among almost 15,000 students of all birth years at 50 best universities in Poland – the research was coordinated by a research department Universum Polska, with the help of university Career Offices; the majority of questionnaires (95%) was filled in on-line.

Fig. 5.7. Vacancies in the years 2006-2009 Q4

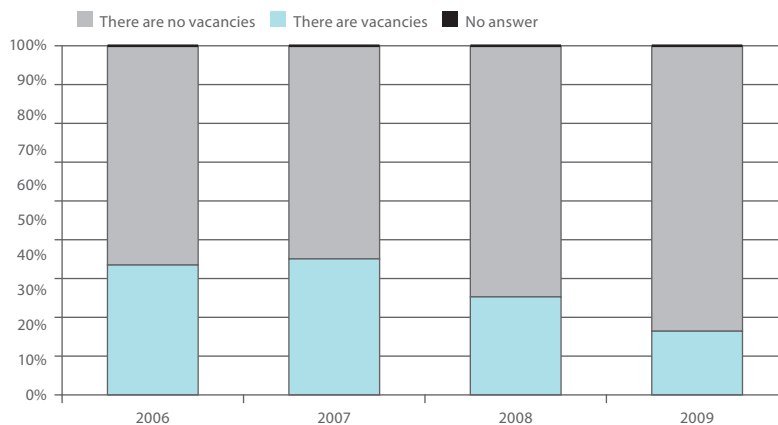
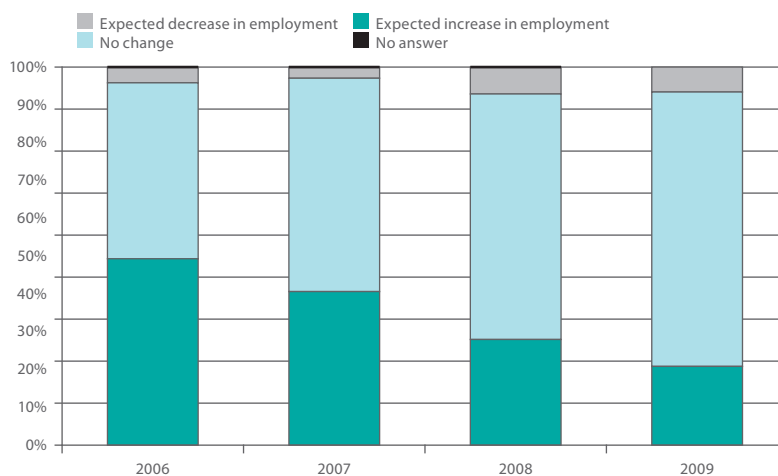


Fig. 5.8. Employment forecasts in the years 2006-2009 Q4

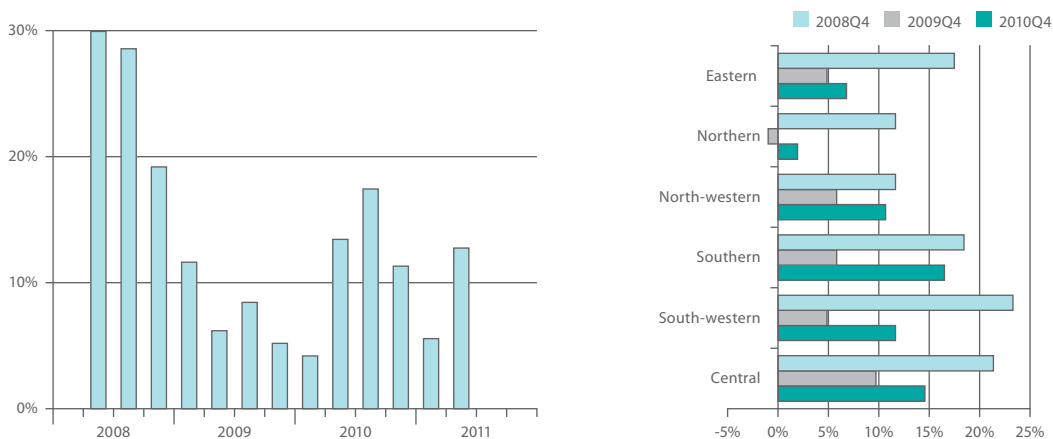


Source: Own work on the basis of W.Gumuta et al., *Rynek pracy w Polsce (wynagrodzenia i migracje w listopadzie 2009 r. na tle badań panelowych w latach 2006-2009)*, [Labour market in Poland (remuneration and migration in November 2009 against panel studies in 2006-2009), National Bank of Poland (NBP), Warsaw 2010.

Apart from forecasted employment problems (limited number of jobs), problems resulting from sector changes caused by economic transformations (Fig. 5.10) should be anticipated. Sectors, in which young people have easily found employment so far (trade, gastronomy, hotel industry, finance industry) show moderate saturation. Other – slightly popular among the young, but in a way absorptive (agriculture, mining, construction industry) – display stable or falling trend¹¹. Job offers will come mainly from the public sector and industrial manufacturing.

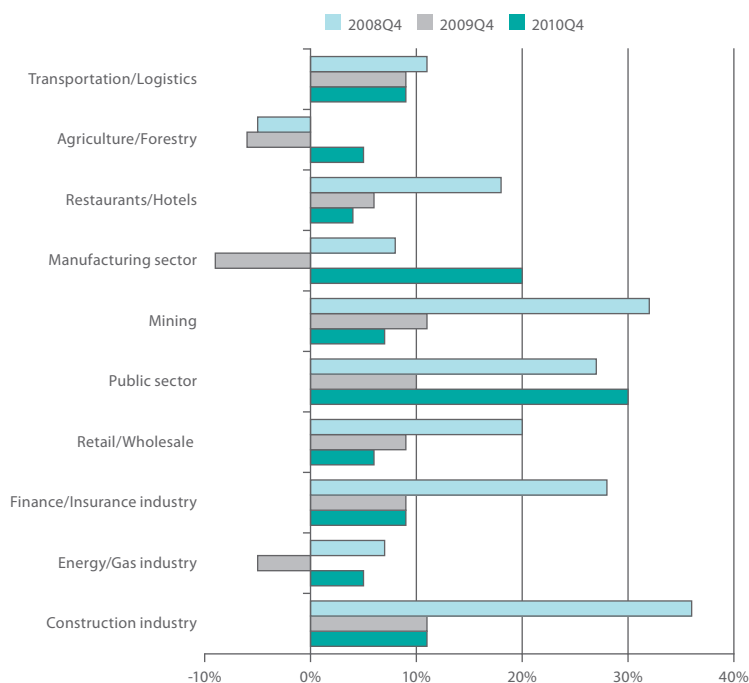
11 *Koniunktura Gospodarcza. Usługi*. [Economic trend. Services], CSO, July 2010.

Fig. 5.9. Net employment forecast and net employment forecast for regions¹²



Source: Own work on the basis of *Manpower 2010 and 2011* data.

Fig. 5.10. Net employment forecasts for sectors (2008-2010)



Source: Own work on the basis of *Manpower 2010* data.

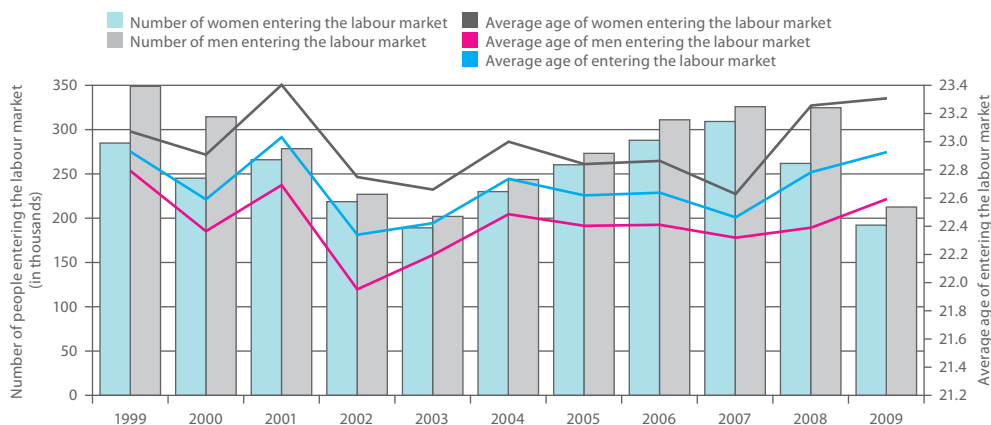
12 Regions according to Eurostat division: Central (Łódź Province, Masovian Province), South-western (Lower Silesian Province, Opole Province), Southern (Silesian Province, Lesser Poland Province), North-western (Greater Poland Province, West Pomeranian Province, Lubusz Province), Northern (Kuyavian-Pomeranian Province, Pomeranian Province, Warmian-Masurian Province), Eastern (Lublin Province,) Podkarpackie Province, Świętokrzyskie Province, Podlaskie Province).

Considering the trends, both cases are related to qualified employees, more and more sought-after on the market. It is an important piece of information for both the youth (who sometimes seem disappointed with the acquired education or who study easily accessible or popular majors), and the education sector (which, from the point of view of economic needs and market demands, balances on the verge of professional uselessness of most graduates). Such a great scale of mismatch, distinguishing Poland among OECD states, is not only a matter of inconsiderate educational choices of the young, but also of the educational industry's offer (especially that of universities), which is not prepared for appropriate reaction to changes in its environment.

5.2. Indicators of activity and inactivity on the labour market

In most EU countries, the transition from education to work is made at the age between 18 and 24. The average age in 27 countries is 20. It is calculated on the basis of the youngest age in which at least 50% of young people are present on the labour market.¹³ In Poland, in the years 2000-2007, the average age of entering the labour market, both for men and women, was 22.

Fig. 5.11. Average age of entering the labour market



Source: ZUS database, Warsaw 2010.

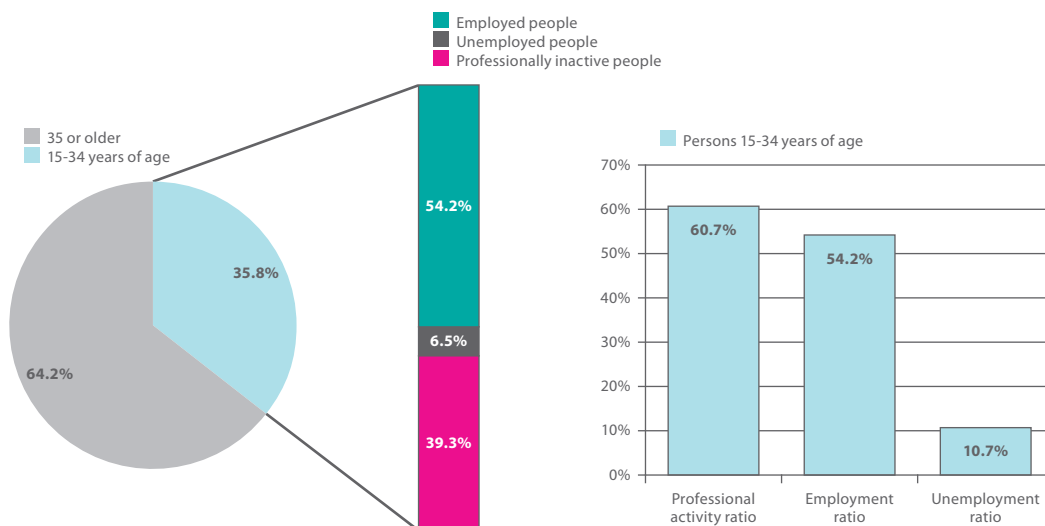
In the years 2008 and 2009, the average age started to rise, mainly due to worsening economic situation and poor offer on the labour market, which caused the youth to search for other strategies that would protect them from unemployment (continuation of study education, taking up family duties, waiting). Young women enter the labour market later than men. It is partly a result of their higher educational ambitions and more time spent in educational system, as well as partly of barriers in the labour market. Discriminating practices of employers are common, since they do

13 Youth in Europe, op. cit., s. 107.

not want to employ women, who may turn out to be “young mothers”, which are not worth to invest in. For many women, family and a child are often the most important in the hierarchy of importance. Lack of adequate institutional support in childcare prevents many women from taking up work. Those who enter the labour market change the order of life goals: they put financial stability in the first place and the child in the second. This choice is most often related to different education and career patterns – well-educated and ambitious women postpone the decision of having a child, while those with lower education or having lower career ambitions choose to become mothers earlier and usually remain professionally inactive.

The young who enter the labour market today constitute a very diverse group, not only in terms of professional expectations; they are also different in terms of type and level of education, experience on the labour market, age or family situation. They include both those who are still learning or studying, those who have already finished education as well as those who have worked before and those who have no work experience. There are people who are employed under temporary contracts and uncertain of their future, and people who have stable jobs and are able to follow their career paths smoothly. There are people who have already started their families and there are single people. They are all different from people from previous decades – they are usually older, much better educated, have greater social and intercultural experience as well as different attitudes to life and work.

Fig. 5.12. The young aged 13-34 according to their professional activity



Source: *Wejście młodych na rynek pracy* [Young people entering the labour market], CSO, luty 2010.

In Poland, the professional activity ratio of the young, related to the 15-34 age category¹⁴, is 60.7%. Professionally inactive people – not working and not searching for a job constitute 39.3% of people falling within this age category. Narrowing analyses

14 It indicated the percentage of population of this age that is at work or is searching for a job, therefore this category includes the unemployed.

to persons aged between 15 and 29 causes understatement of the activity ratio and overstatement of the professional inactivity rate¹⁵, thus levelling their proportions. This places professional activity of young Poles below the average of 27 EU states (Fig. 5.13) and presents our country as a place where high enrolment ratios clearly differentiate professional activity of younger and older youth.

Fig. 5.13. Average professional activity and inactivity ratios within the 15-29 population in the EU states (2007)

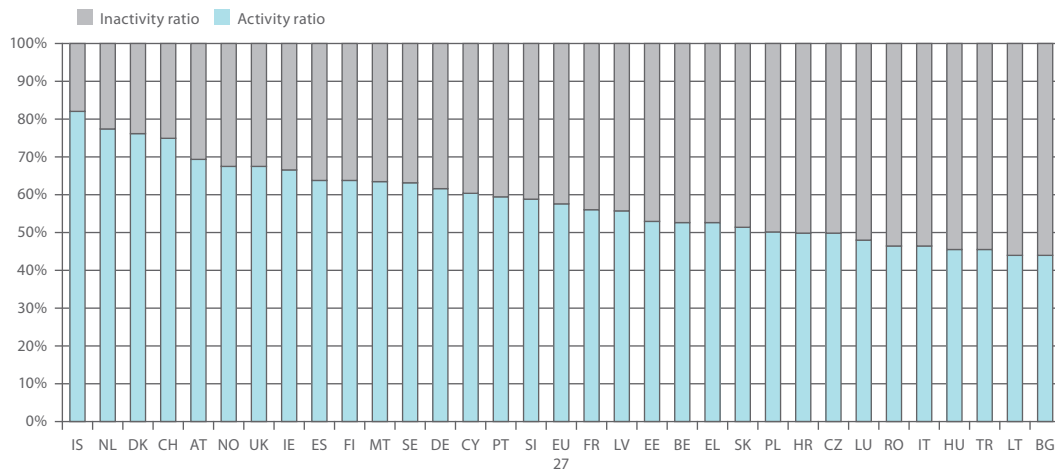
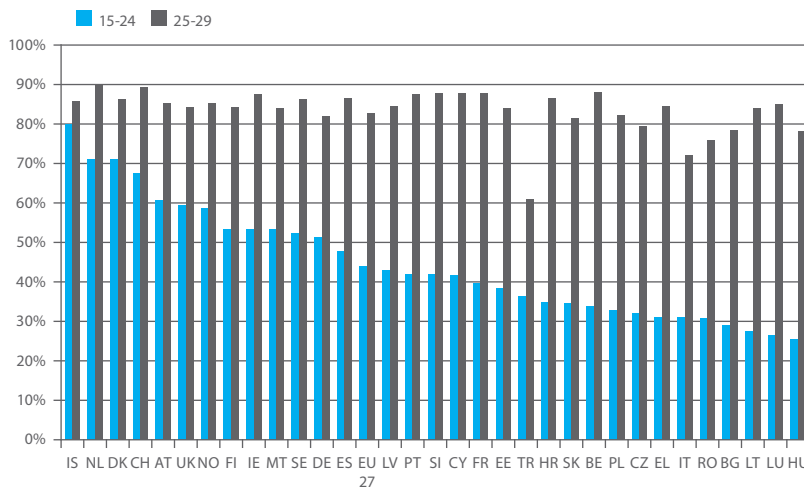


Fig. 5.14. Level of professional activity among younger and older age categories – EU countries (2007)

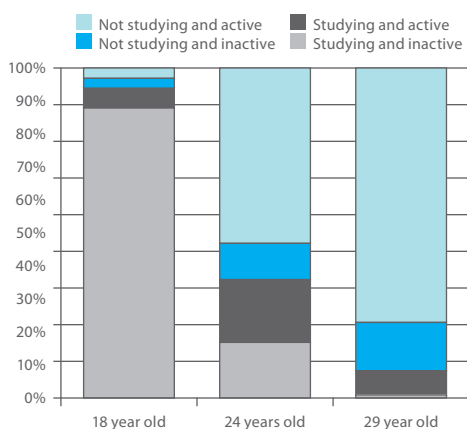


Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, [after:] *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait, 2009*, s. 104-105.

15 Many pieces of data – both in Polish and international analyses – include both ratios, yet, they rarely include both of them at the same time. That is why both ratios may appear in the report.

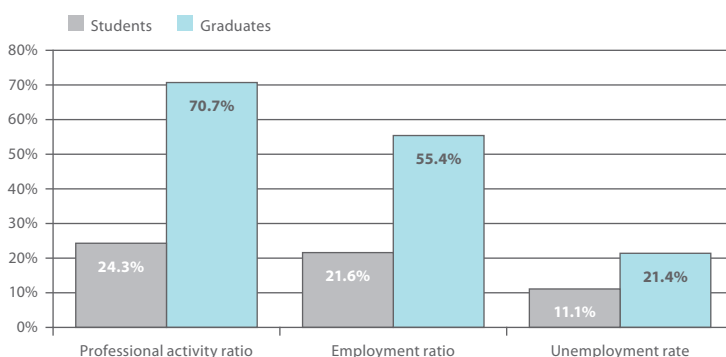
As a result of this situation, the labour market is entered gradually. While a vast majority of 18-year-old people is still at school or university (Fig. 5.15), more than a half of their 6-year-older peers work or look for a job. The situation of 29-year-old people is most of all characterised by their professional activity. The more advanced their age is, the more intensive professional activity and higher employment ratios are indicated. The less advanced their age is, the greater number of professionally inactive people is observed, although students, especially those at universities, indicate increasingly higher professional activity. One fourth of students are active on the labour market, and more than a half of them work (Fig. 5.16).

Fig. 5.15. Status of young Poles aged 18, 24 and 29 (2007)



Sources: own work based on: EU-LFS, after: *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, 2009, s. 108-110.

Fig. 5.16. Professional activity of students (at universities) and graduates

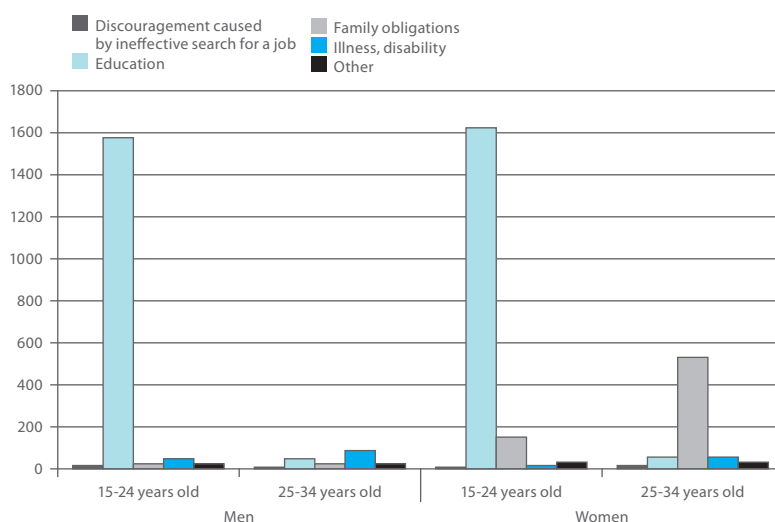


Source: *Wejście ludzi młodych na rynek w 2009* [Young people entering the labour market in 2009], CSO, 2010.

Better educated people are much more active on the labour market – they more often search for a job and get it. This is true both for Poland and for most European countries. The gap between those who are relatively the best and relatively the least educated is 30 percentage points, which is a lot. Yet, there is an even greater gap between

men and women entering the labour market. While the gap between young Polish men with relatively highest education and those with relatively lowest education is 19 percentage points, this rate is 47 percentage points among young Polish women. This kind of differences occurs not only in Poland, yet, they are more visible in our country than in the 27 EU states¹⁶. On the one hand, it is caused by higher enrolment ratios, yet, on the other hand, by cultural patterns related to professional activity, according to which the role of a woman is to take care of their home and family. Family obligations are the basic reason for professional inactivity of young women (Fig. 5.17).

Fig. 5.17. Causes of professional inactivity of young Poles (in thousands)



Source: *Wejście ludzi młodych na rynek w 2009* [Young people entering the labour market in 2009], CSO, 2011.

There is an alarming category (in all EU states) of young people classified as NEET – people currently not in education, employment, or training. The NEET indicator shows the percentage of young people, who are at risk of permanent loss of contact with the labour market. These rates are different for different countries and the phenomenon itself can occur in different forms. There are people who remain in this category temporarily, while others for too long. Generally, the NEET category indicates a tendency to be permanent, yet, analyses of this phenomenon related to the years 2004-2007 indicate its visible decrease.¹⁷ The most prone to remain in this category are people who give up education early, women and professionally inactive people (more than the unemployed).

According to the NEET indicator, Poland is in the middle of the scale, yet, it is also one of the countries in which NEET rates are growing with age, level of education and are higher for women. It may be related to job offers, which are below the skills

16 Eurostat, EU-LFS, [after:] *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, 2009, s. 106.

17 G. Quintini, S. Martin, "Starting well or losing their way? The position of youth in the labour market in OECD countries", OECD, *Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No 39, 2006.

of young people, to obstacles encountered by women entering the labour market or – simply – to lack of job offers, which would enable young people to gain their first professional experience, which is necessary to get further employment. Research carried out in the OECD states indicates that the transition from the state of continuous professional inactivity to employment and promising career prospects is much more difficult for the young than the transition from low to more favourable labour rates¹⁸. It has also been confirmed – in relation to Poland – by our ZUS analyses¹⁹.

To sum up, the Polish youth enter the labour market later than young people in the EU, slightly more often (at present) combine work and education and are characterized by higher number of people who do not study and are professionally inactive, including, in particular, women. The fact that NEET rate grows with age and level of education suggests that Poland has certain mechanisms that effectively demotivate people who are perfectly prepared for work. In this context, any solutions that eliminate the risk of permanent absence of young people from the labour market are crucial. The example of how important it is was introduction (as in many other states) of solutions that increase flexibility of employment. The fact that this kind of solutions have some weaknesses and generate other alarming tendencies (it will be covered further in this chapter) shows how difficult and complex the problem of ensuring work for the youth is today.

5.3. First job – employment rates, incomes

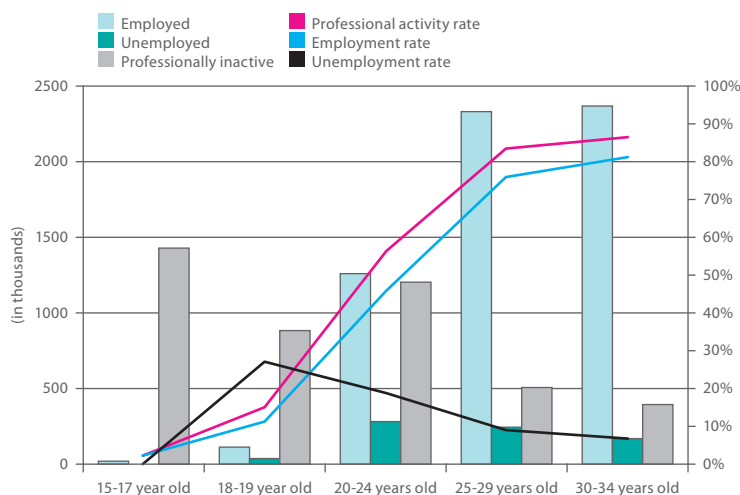
According to CSO data, the group of people aged between 15 and 34 who have already finished (or suspended) education included, in the second quarter of 2009, 6.721.000 people, of which 89.6% were at work for at least 3 months. The remaining group (10.4%, i.e. 602.000 persons) consists of people who did not take up work after graduation. This shows that vast majority of young people (86.5%) did not work during their education and, at the same time, had high expectations related to employment. The conclusion is that both lack of work experience during education and high expectations related to the first job are the reasons for a difficulty to find one. The employment rate among the young was 54.2% in 2009, which means that more than a half of people worked at that time. Professional activity of young Poles increases with the number of graduates. The greatest leap was observed in the 25-29 age group, in which employment rate increases from 50% to 80% and is higher than two years before, when it amounted to 74%. Nevertheless, these rates place Poland among countries without high or easily-available job opportunities.

The first job is usually acquired through direct contact with an employer (almost 40% of cases). The second effective way is finding a job with the help of family or friends (almost 30%). The third most effective source are press and Internet advertisements (about 10%), which are definitely underused, according to the youth. Institutional channels (employment offices, universities, schools) are extremely ineffective in supporting people in their search for a job. Young men more often ask for help their families or friends, while most of young women are self-reliant.

18 G. Quintini, S. Martin, "Starting well or losing their way? The position of youth in the labour market in OECD countries", OECD, *Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No 39, 2006.

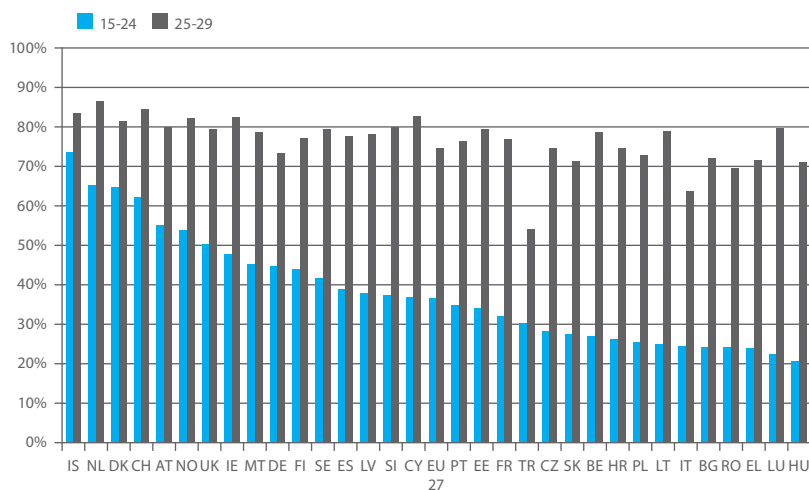
19 See chapter 4.3.

Fig. 5.18. Young people's professional activity according to age



Source: *Wejście ludzi młodych na rynek pracy 2009*, CSO, 2011.

Fig. 5.19. Young people's employment rate – Poland vs. EU



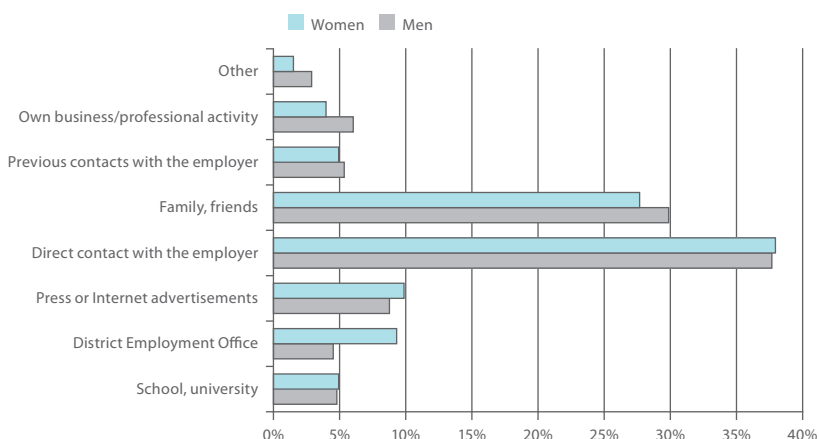
Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, [after:] *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, 2009, s. 116.

The most youth-friendly are markets in big urban areas and their surroundings. Top positions are occupied by Polish cities, which together provide job opportunities for 34% of young people at work. This shows significant differences between regions, since labour markets in rural provinces and districts, especially the Northern Region (Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Warmian-Masurian and Pomeranian provinces) and the Eastern Region (Lublin, Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie and Podlaskie provinces), are less attractive.

Although large urban areas are more attractive to young people, many of them would not mind working and living in the countryside. The situation in Poland in this

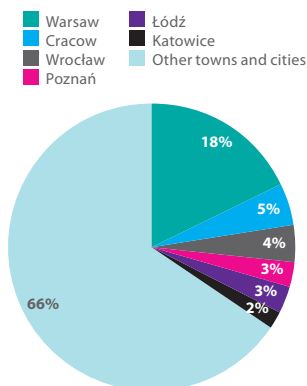
respect has changed significantly, therefore taking advantage of this fact, though expensive due to the necessity for regional investments, could bring about interesting transformation of the Polish civilization picture.

Fig. 5.20. Methods used by young people aged 15-34 to find the first job



Source: *Wejście ludzi młodych na rynek pracy* [Young people entering the labour market], CSO, February 2010.

Fig. 5.21. Share of big cities in creation of first jobs in the years 2000-2009



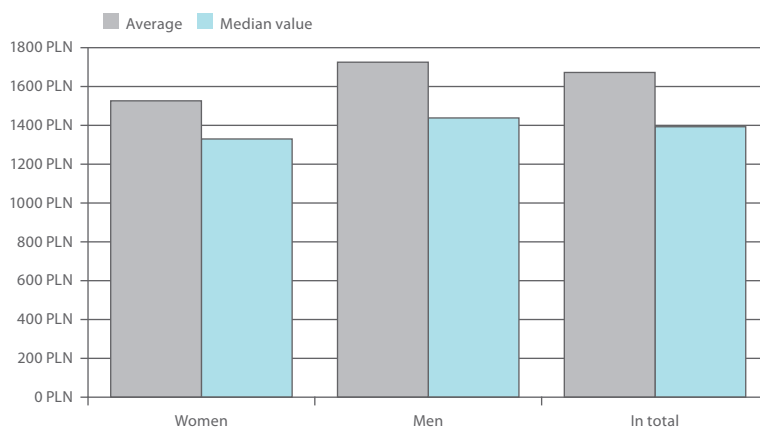
Source: ZUS database.

Apart from the difficulties in finding a job, young people entering the labour market must expect the lowest incomes. Although in the last decade, systematic increase of average incomes in this group has been observed, it is still very low (the average is PLN 1818, median value – PLN 1530) and usually come in the 2nd or 3rd quantile in the range of general public’s incomes. Women are definitely harmed in this respect from the very beginning of their career.

Salary, as well as first job offers, vary from region to region, which is visible from different points of view. There is a clear boundary between rural and urban

labour markets. The average difference between salaries is PLN 200, to the advantage of those working in a town or city. Large urban areas are definitely in the lead.

Fig. 5.22. Median value and the average first salary in 2009



Source: ZUS database.

Table 5.2. Comparison of the first salary in urban districts and in other districts (2008)

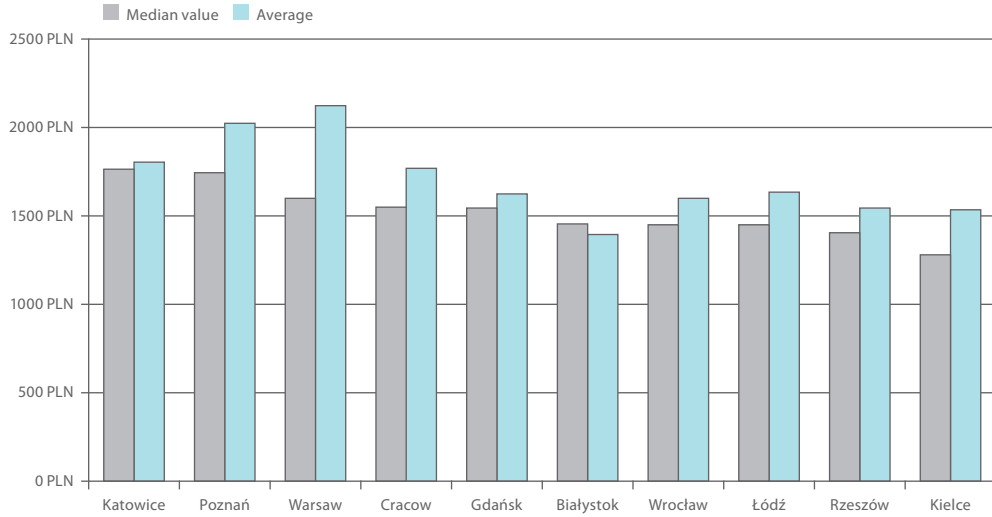
	Average	Median value	Average age	Percentage
Urban districts	1790.30	1600	23.0077739	63%
Other districts	1507.88	1300	22.8154049	37%

Source: ZUS database.

The highest average salary is observed in Warsaw, yet, this is also a city in which the largest differences (taking into account the median value, Warsaw comes with Katowice and Poznań) are observed. They result not only from different job offers, but also from the fact that they are applied for both by immigrants and original residents of the capital.

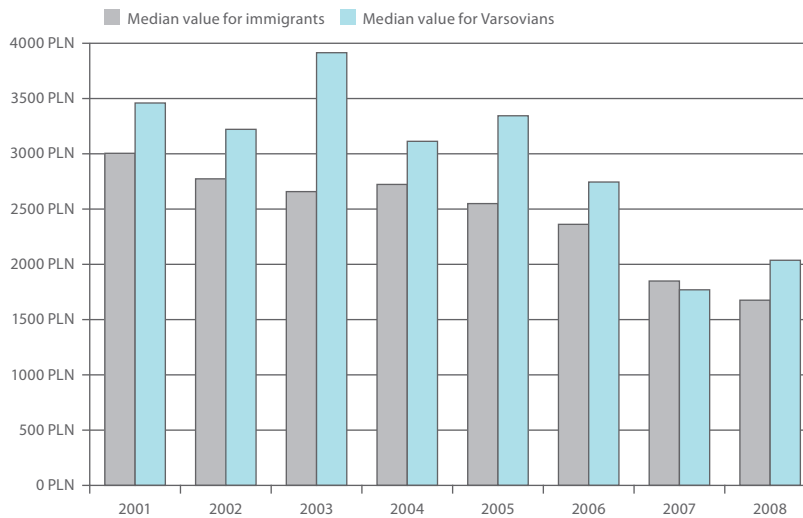
The analysis of careers of young people taking up their first jobs in comparison to all people at work indicates differences, which gradually abate. In 2008, the minimum salary or less was earned by 30% of working people in the first month (no more than 20% of all people at work). The greatest difference was observed in salaries that come in higher quadriles – the 7th quadrile in the group of working people earns the same salary as the 4th one, for the first time in the whole economy. The amount that is earned by 10% of newly employed people with the best salaries is earned by 40% of all people at work. This data indicates two phenomena: less experience of young people and unwillingness of employers to “overpay” new employees.

Fig. 5.23. Distribution of first salaries in the largest cities in 2009



Source: ZUS database.

Fig. 5.24. Median value of first salaries of Varsovians and immigrants

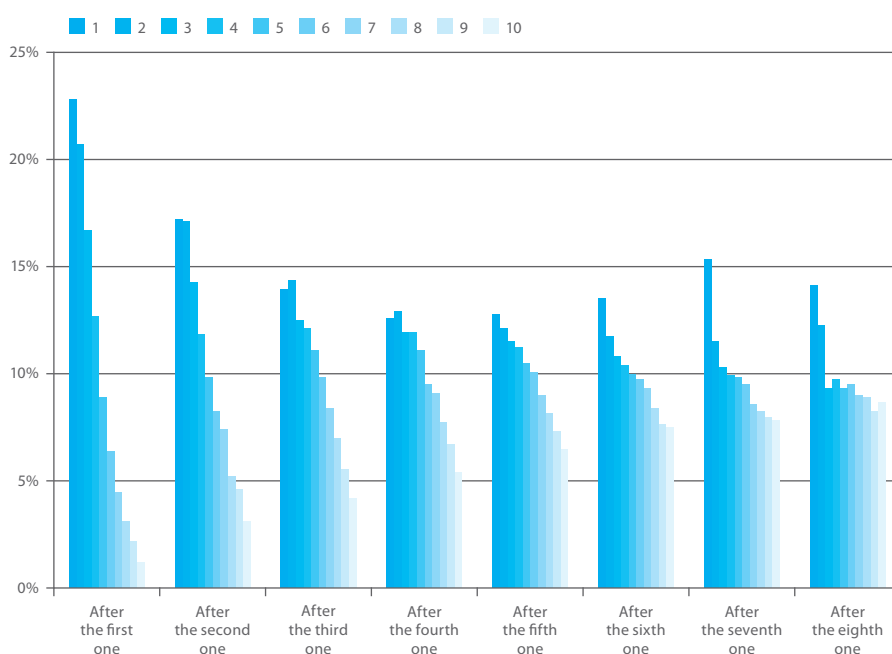


Source: ZUS database.

Professional difficulties of the recent years caused slowing down of the young people's salary growth dynamics. Groups that started work in 2008 and 2009 may be particularly affected. So far, it has usually taken 7 years for young workers to come out of the worst paid category. The transition from lower to higher quadriles is gradual, yet, the extending crisis on the labour market may not only slow down the dynamics of this transition, but also cause deepening of differences in salaries between the older and the younger generation.

After seven years, the relative situation of most people changes. Although the situation of one third of people from the first cohort does not change, the same number of them make progress (go to cohorts 3-5). Persons with higher qualifications are in a better position: they are rarely paid a relatively good salary at the very beginning. The optimistic estimates of ZUS indicate that if someone earns more than 50% of the average salary in the first year of their work, after a few years, they will probably come in the group of the best paid or in one of the slightly lower groups.

Fig. 5.25. Change of income quadriles in the course of career



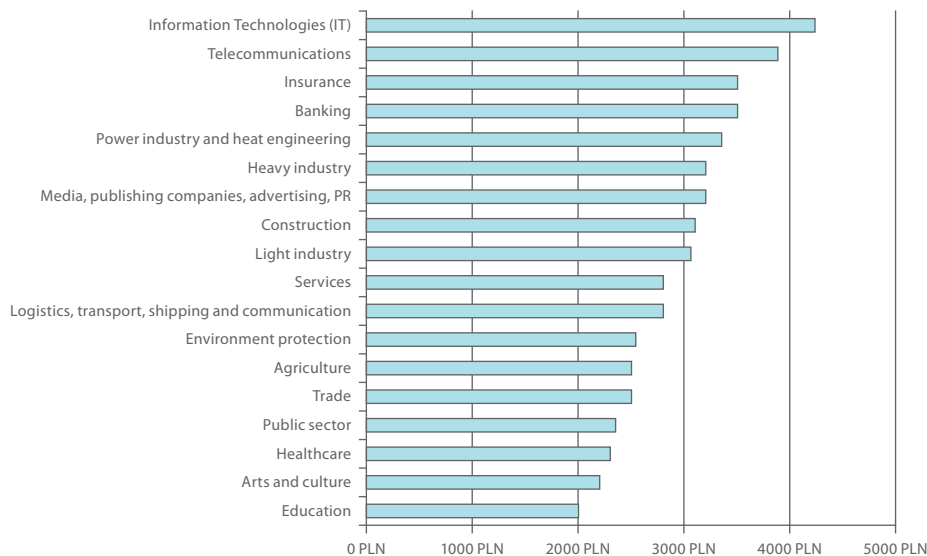
Source: ZUS database.

The factor that has a significant influence on incomes – already at the beginning of the career – is the industry, in which the young find employment. The best salaries are offered by the IT and telecommunication industries (almost gross PLN 4000). The second position is occupied by insurance and banking sectors (PLN 3500), which are followed by industrial branches (more than PLN 3000) and services – communication, trade (more than PLN 3000). The least attractive salaries are offered by the public sector (less than PLN 2500), in which education occupies the lowest position. A vast majority of 20-year-olds work as regular employees (44%) or specialists (41.6%). Only few are able to reach the level of management (1.3%) and are paid two or three times more than regular employees from the same age category (Fig. 5.27). In 2009, every tenth of them earned more than PLN 20.500 monthly.

A half of young people taking up work perform a job that fully or partially match their learned profession. Those who do not work in their learned profession

most often (in 2/3 of cases) did not decide about it themselves – it was caused by their failure to find a job that would match their qualifications. Other people either did not want to work in their profession or chose other offers, which were more beneficial financially or in another respect. One tenth of young Poles take up work not having any learned profession.

Fig. 5.26. Salaries of persons aged 20-29 from selected industries



Source: *Ogólnopolskie Badanie Wynagrodzeń, przeprowadzone przez Sedlak&Sedlak w 2009 roku* [Polish nationwide remuneration research conducted by Sedlak&Sedlak in 2009].

Fig. 5.27. Salaries for persons aged 20-29 on each level of management



Source: *Ogólnopolskie Badanie Wynagrodzeń, przeprowadzone przez Sedlak&Sedlak w 2009 roku* [Polish nationwide remuneration research conducted by Sedlak&Sedlak in 2009].

Fig. 5.28. Match between the first job and the learned profession

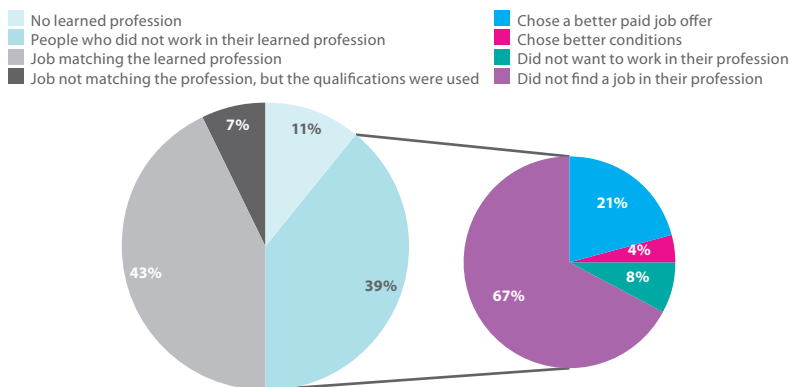
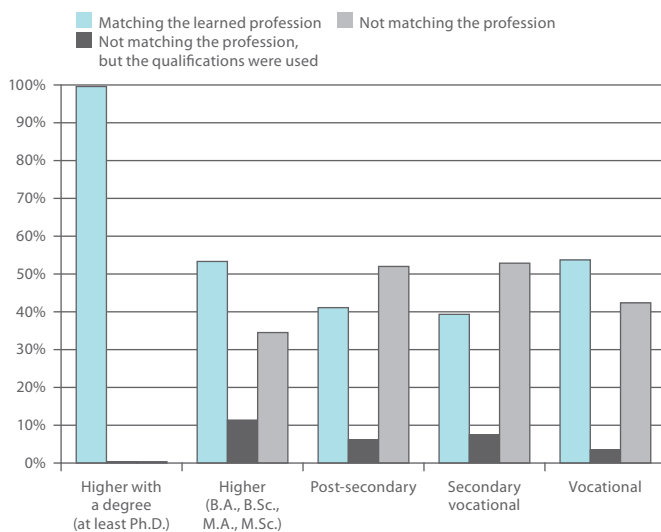


Fig. 5.29. Matching between the first job and the learned profession according to selected levels of education



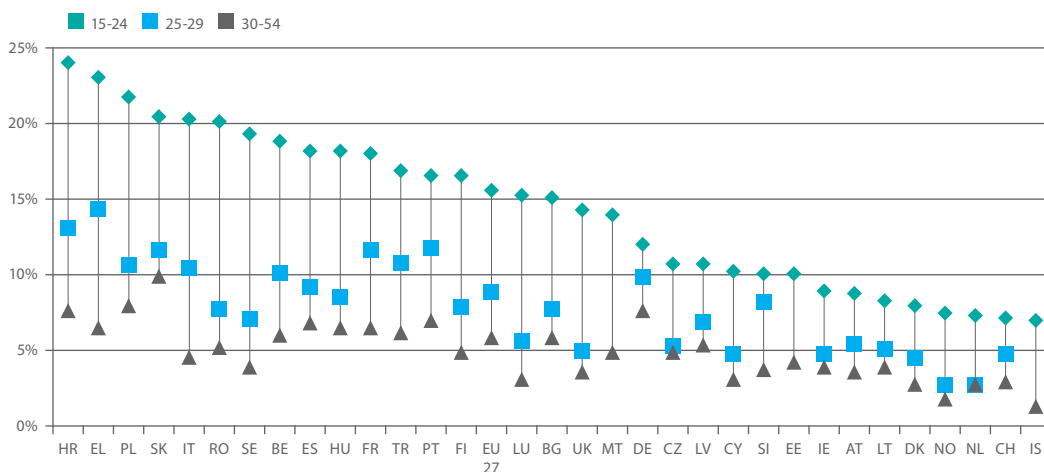
Source: *Wejście ludzi młodych na rynek pracy* [Young people entering the labour market], CSO, February 2010.

The greatest chance to find a job matching the learned profession is observed among people with high qualifications. Among people with the Ph.D. title it is almost 100%. A university diploma provides such a guarantee to only two thirds of young people. The least chance to perform the learned profession is observed among people with secondary education, especially general secondary and post-secondary education. Graduates of vocational schools, whose qualifications are in demand on the market, enjoy greater chances to find a job in their profession. There is no doubt that both secondary (upper-secondary) and higher education is totally unable to meet the labour market needs. Professional histories of graduates show the size of the gap between educational offer and labour market needs.

5.4. Unemployment rates

In today's societies, work and profession have become central elements of people's lives – their level, style and quality. Work and family are still the values that provide people with "internal stability" and naturally get them involved in broader social connections, therefore people losing their jobs are lose not only the foundations of their lives, but also their internal backbone and the possibility of wider social interaction²⁰. Destructive consequences of being out of work are widely known, and its frequent occurrence does not make it less significant.

Fig. 5.30a. Unemployment rate according to age – EU states (2007)



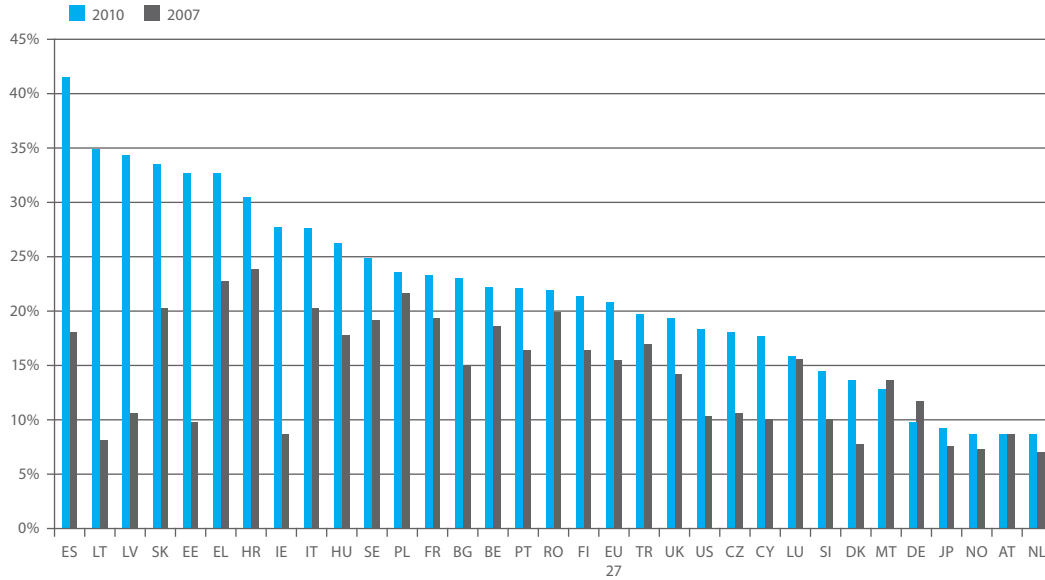
Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, [after:] *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, 2009, p. 111.

Unemployment, which was totally unknown to the generation of communist regime, today, is a natural element of the Polish social picture and is a situation, which almost everyone has experienced directly or indirectly. The risk of unemployment affects most of all young people. For many years, Poland has been one of the countries in which unemployment rates among the youth (numbers and indices) are high. Although we have reduced them significantly, we still occupy one of the top positions in Europe in this respect. However, it is not long-term unemployment (lasting more than 12 months), the level of which is decreasing in relation to the period before the recession.

The highest unemployment rates among the youth were observed at the end of the 90s and the first years of 2000. In the following period, they were decreasing gradually, which was caused by improvement of the economic situation, introduction of positive changes on the labour market (regulations related to different forms of employment) and, partially, by economic migration. The world crisis again endangered the situation of young people on the Polish labour market.

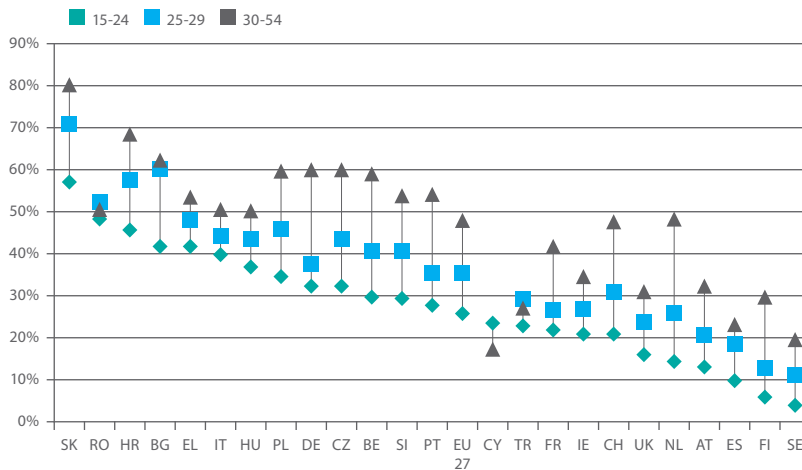
²⁰ U. Beck, *Spółeczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności* [Risk society. Towards different modernity], Wydawnictwo Scholar, Warszawa 2002, p. 207-208.

Fig. 5.30b. Unemployment rate in the 15-24 age group in EU states (2007 and 2010)



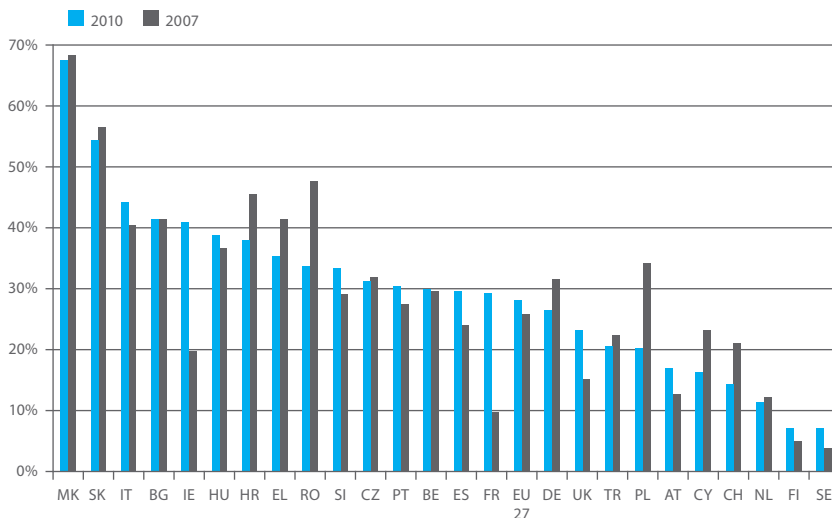
Source: Eurostat.

Fig. 5.31a. Share of young people unemployed for a long time among all the unemployed (2007)



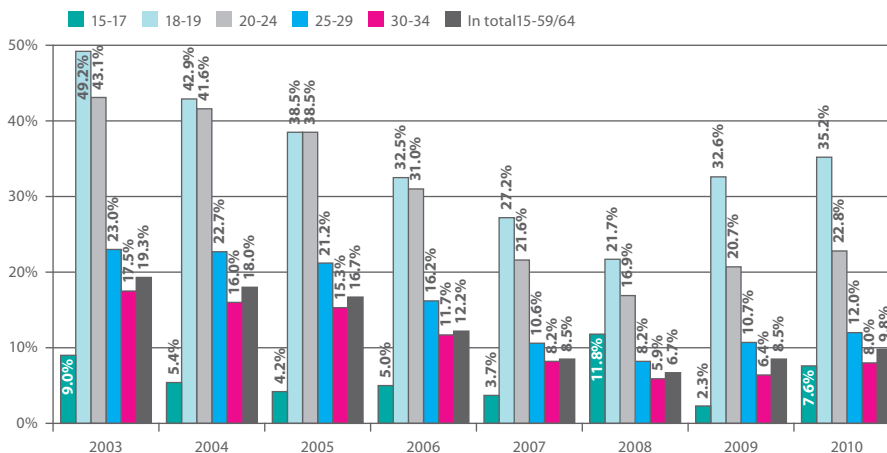
Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, [after:] *Youth in Europe. A Statistical Portrait*, 2009, p. 113.

Fig. 5.31b. Share of young people unemployed for a long time among all the unemployed (2007 and 2010)



Source: Eurostat.

Fig. 5.32. Unemployment rate in 5 age groups in Poland in 2003-2010



Source: DAS KPRM, *Wejście na rynek pracy i kryzys'25* [Entering the labour market and '25 crisis], based on the BAEL²¹ data.

21 Unemployment rates calculated according to BAEL (based on the declared professional activity during the research) are different from unemployment rates calculated on the basis of employment offices' data (which cover registered unemployed people), which causes that the BAEL indices "understate", i.e. show more real unemployment rates, while the office data overstate them. The register covers people who do not want to take up work or work illegally. According to the estimate by NBP and CBOS, they constitute ca. 30% of registered unemployed in Poland, while according to *Diagnoza Społeczna 2009* (Social Scrutiny 2009) – more than a half. The analyses indicate that "apparent unemployment" is most often the case among young people.

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In May 2010, young people aged 18-34 constituted over a half of registered unemployed, of which 21.4% were persons below 25 (408.1 thousand people) and 56.2% had no professional experience. From among 80.5 thousand deregistered people, 32.3% took up a job, 26.3% started training and internship and 0.5% took up socially useful jobs²². The most intense unemployment is observed among the youngest age categories, i.e. 18-19; it is slightly less among people aged 20-24. Both groups are dominated by graduates, who are mostly affected by unemployment (the aggregate unemployment rate for persons aged 18-24 is 21.4%). Graduates of secondary schools are twice more often exposed to unemployment than graduates of universities (table 5.4). From among the former group, the least chances on the labour market are observed among graduates of post-secondary schools (unemployment rate 21.5%) including graduates of bachelor degree studies (12.9%) and general profile secondary schools (unemployment rate 15.8%).

Table 5.3. Representatives of selected groups according to professional activity, including students and graduates – 2nd quarter of 2009

Detailed list	In total	Professionally active			Professionally inactive	Professional activity rate	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
		in total	employed	unemployed				
	in thousands					in %	in %	in %
General population aged 15 and above	31454	17202	15847	1355	14253	54.7	50.4	7.9
including population of working age								
working age	23806	16785	15438	1347	7021	70.5	64.8	8.0
15-17 year old	1452	21	27	—	1426	1.9	1.9	x
18-19	1045	157	115	43	888	15.0	11.0	27.4
20-24	2746	1540	1252	288	1207	56.1	45.6	18.7
25-29	3083	2570	2332	238	513	83.4	75.6	9.3
30-34 years old	2926	2534	2370	164	392	86.6	81.0	6.5
including general population								
People aged 15-34 years old	11253	6829	6095	732	4425	60.7	54.2	10.7
Graduates (15-30 year old)	655	463	363	99	192	70.7	55.4	21.4
Students (15-64 years old)	4383	1163	1045	118	3220	26.5	23.8	10.1
Students (15-34 years old)	4240	1030	916	114	3210	24.3	21.6	11.1

Source: *Aktywność Ekonomiczna Ludności Polski*, II kwartał 2009 [Professional activity of the Polish population, 2nd quarter of 2009], CSO, Warszawa 2009 oraz obliczenia własne na podstawie wyników BAEL.

A university diploma, which until recently provided good social opportunities, is becoming less and less valuable today and does not even provide a guarantee of getting a job. It is caused by many factors – high labour market saturation with graduates of universities, skills-market requirements mismatch (too many of students of arts and social sciences), mass character of education, which does not translate into its

22 A note prepared by DAS KPRM (Strategic Analysis Department at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister).

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good quality, education market segmentation (division into public and private schools, with the former issuing valued diplomas and the latter – less prestigious) or supply factors (lack of offers being a result of economic showdown, the yet unshaped profile of Polish economy and labour costs). Among people who cannot find a job, there are graduates of majors that are commonly recognized as the ones that guarantee finding a job (economy, marketing, law), graduates of arts and social sciences majors as well as graduates from promoted majors (social sciences) or those related to agriculture. Employers became more interested in graduates from majors related to health.

Table 5.4. Students aged 15-34 according to professional activity, the level and system of the continued education – 2nd quarter of 2009

Detailed list	In total	Professionally active		Professionally inactive	Professional activity rate	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
		employed	unemployed				
		in thousands			in %	in %	in %
In total	4240	916	114	3210	24.3	21.6	11.1
School:							
high	1776	724	82	970	45.4	40.8	10.2
doctoral studies	25	14	–	12	56.0	56.0	x
post-graduate studies	81	76			97.5	93.8	x
Master's studies	825	295	29	501	39.3	35.8	9.0
bachelor degree studies	844	340	50	455	46.1	40.3	12.9
post-secondary	157	63	17	77	50.3	40.1	21.5
secondary vocational	643	38		601	6.5	5.9	x
general profile secondary	729	47	9	672	7.8	6.4	15.8
vocational	244	41		202	17.2	16.8	x
lower-secondary	686			683	x	x	x
Including the general public in the system:							
full-time	3096	152	23	2921	5.7	4.9	13.1
weekend	1069	735	89	246	77.0	68.8	10.8
evening	69	28		39	43.5	40.6	x

A dot – means that the data is not representative

x – calculation of indices is impossible or pointless

Dash – no occurrence (representative test)

The number of university diploma holders registered in employment offices increased during the last year 2010 (CSO data) by almost 30%, while the unemployment rate increased from 8.23% to 11.45%. Offers targeted at graduates constituted only 0.7% of all job offers, of which almost one third was related to internship.

The negative tendencies on the market are more observable among young men (increase of the unemployment rate by 2.03 percentage points). Perhaps, the results of higher education rates among the gentle sex and the "safe" employment sector (administration, education, health service) become visible for the first time. The fact that there was a slight increase of the level of unemployment registered among

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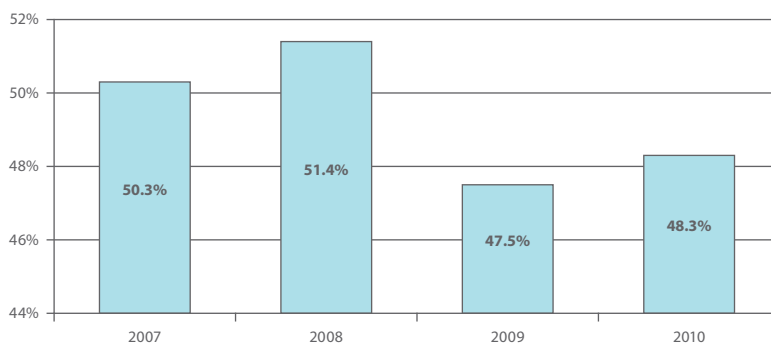
women between 2009 and 2010 may be the consequence of the general (after)crisis trend and may not be related to young women (Fig. 5.33). However, it is a piece of information that cannot be ignored while planning family-friendly policies.

Table 5.5. Employed, professionally inactive and unemployed graduates according to the kind of education²³

kind of education	period	Total percentage of population			
		employed	unemployed	inactive	unemployment rate
pedagogy	4th quarter 2008		12.40%	17.80%	15.09%
	4th quarter 2009	74.50%	14.50%	11.00%	16.29%
arts	4th quarter 2008	74.00%	10.90%	15.10%	12.84%
	4th quarter 2009	63.60%	16.30%	20.10%	20.40%
social sciences	4th quarter 2008	83.60%	5.30%	10.50%	6.59%
	4th quarter 2009	76.30%	9.40%	14.30%	10.97%
sciences	4th quarter 2008	81.70%	5.30%	13.00%	6.09%
	4th quarter 2009	47.10%	11.80%	41.20%	20.03%
engineering, construction	4th quarter 2008	88.80%	6.40%	4.80%	6.72%
	4th quarter 2009	85.50%	7.60%	6.30%	8.16%
agriculture, veterinary medicine	4th quarter 2008	74.00%	10.00%	16.00%	11.90%
	4th quarter 2009	80.30%	13.10%	0.00%	19.10%
health, social care	4th quarter 2008	74.10%	5.00%	20.90%	6.32%
	4th quarter 2009	82.00%	3.70%	14.30%	4.32%

Source: CSO.

Fig. 5.33. Percentage of women in the registered unemployment

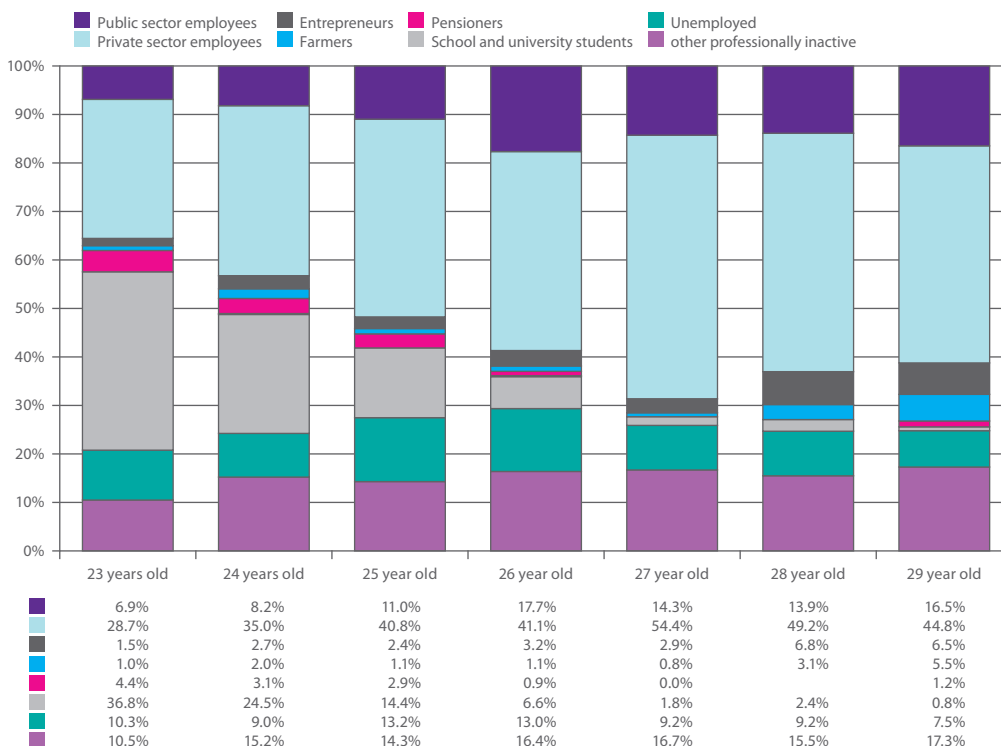


Source: Work of DAS KPRM (Strategic Analysis Department of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister).

23 Persons up to 29 years of age, with at least bachelor's degree.

Compared to the older generation, the structure of young professionally active people is changing (Fig. 5.34). Most of all, there was a significant shift of the employment centre of gravity towards the private sector, which has become the main provider of work to the young. On average, a half of people aged 25+ find employment there (and three times less in the public sector).

Fig. 5.34. Social and professional status of young people aged 23-29

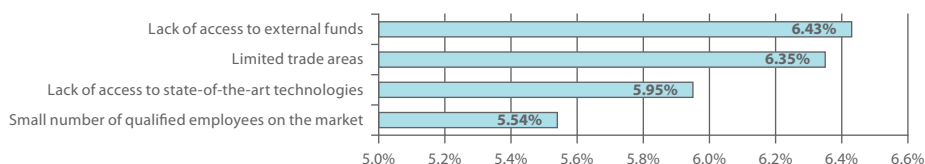


Source: DAS KPRM, *Wejście na rynek pracy i kryzys '25* [Entering the labour market and '25 crisis], work on the basis of BAEL data.

At the same time, few young people (6.5%) operate in the private sector as employers and, what is more, entrepreneurship becomes more rare among younger representatives of the youth (2 to 3%). It does not have to mean that the young are not interested in running their own business (for years, researches have been indicating the opposite trend), but it can be caused by lack of appropriate atmosphere, simplified procedures and starting capital. The importance of this phenomenon has been confirmed by a study conducted among representatives of the management in SME²⁴. They stated that lack of access to external funds has the greatest influence on reduced competitiveness of their companies (Fig. 5.35).

24 The research was conducted on a representative group of 600 managers and 1200 regular employees at SME, extended by 30 interviews with managers. The research was ordered by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) and conducted by the PSDB Sp. z o.o. and Quality Watch Sp. z o.o. consortium.

Fig. 5.35. Factors reducing competitiveness of SME²⁵



Source: *Determinanty innowacyjności i rozwoju przedsiębiorstwa* [Determinants of innovativeness and development of enterprises], PARP: Warsaw, December 2010.

Farmers, who constitute ca. 13% of the population and 15% of professionally active people in Poland, are represented two and a half times more rarely among the young. This means that this profession is increasingly less popular among the youth. In the context of declared life goals and aspirations, this trend is even more clear – only 0.2% in the 1990s and 0.4% of the currently studying youth declares willingness to work in agriculture²⁶. In fact, more young people return to the countryside to work on a farm. These are people who cannot find employment in the city, yet, these are not – in the first place – possible successors of prosperous farms. The majority of these people come from poor or average farms, for whom work on a farm creates an illusion of usefulness and secure existence. Presence of this trend is confirmed by hidden unemployment rates in the countryside²⁷.

The third trend that is worth mentioning is the high percentage of young professionally inactive people (from 25 to 30% of the population in different age categories) whose activity in the educational system is weakening with age. This alarming tendency, which negatively distinguishes us among other EU states, hides human resources that could change the structure of Polish society. This group – except for people that continue their education – consists mainly of young women, who remain outside the labour market due to their family and home duties (small children care). In the case of men, it is usually caused by disability and sickness, according to official data. However, these clarifications do not seem to be reliable (the data shows much higher values than the average rates for population) and they do not reveal data related to those living at the state's expense. Both the institutional support for women that would allow them to take up a job, adjustment of regulations and procedures related to financing medical services as well as other activities increasing the chances of young people to start their careers seem to be a matter of social importance in this context.

Due to globalisation, dynamic economic and social changes as well as returning economic recession, changes on the labour market and in forms of employment are more and more necessary. Although young people with university diplomas cannot find a job immediately after graduation, most of them finally find

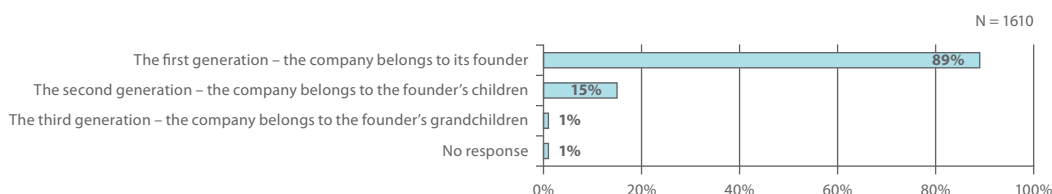
25 The assessment was made according to the 1-10 scale, where 10 means the highest influence possible.

26 K. Wasielewski, *Kształcenie w wyższych szkołach rolniczych. Funkcje społeczne i jednostkowe* [Education in high schools of agriculture. Social and individual functions], Annual Report of IRWiR PAN, Warsaw 2010.

27 K. Szafraniec, *Polskie residuum systemowe – pytanie o rolę wsi i chłopów w procesach przekształceń ustrojowych, Kultura i Społeczeństwo* [Polish system residue – a question of the role of the countryside and farmers in the system transformation processes, Culture and Society], 2002, no 4.

it. Less educated young people “support” themselves using social transfers more frequently, working illegally or looking for employment abroad (hidden unemployment is still observable on farms in the countryside). The forthcoming years may be even more difficult as far as finding employment is concerned. Starting one’s own business or involvement in a family business may prove to be the most certain ways of entering the labour market and the most effective preventive measures related to marginalisation (Fig. 5.36).

Fig. 5.36. Division of companies’ ownership between generations



Source: PARP, *Badanie firm rodzinnych. Raport końcowy*. [Research on family businesses. Final report.], Warsaw, December 2009.

Based on PARP’s data, one can suppose that within 20 years, generation shift will occur in companies, in which the children of their founders are currently being employed. However, the problem is more complicated and apart from support to already existing companies, a package of solutions for future companies is needed as well. Meanwhile, the same conditions that are favourable for self-employment create difficult conditions for entrepreneurs, who are not able to win with large well-grounded companies. This situation requires creation of favourable conditions, including financial conveniences, for the development of entrepreneurship as a solution that creates a hope for a satisfactory career path and helps to avoid exclusion. This issue is becoming an important challenge for the state’s policy related to the youth.

5.5. Dual labour market – double regulations.

Influence on the employment of young people

For decades, open unemployment constituted the reverse of the standardized full-time employment (permanent, related to a particular workplace, employer and incomes). Unemployment rates were the most meaningful proves of labour market irregularities and the most alarming indicators of social problems. However, as a result of civilization changes, this standardized system of full-time employment is becoming more and more fragile and fluid. As Ulrich Beck wrote (already in mid 1980s), “its three pillars are unstable: labour law, work place and working hours. Thus, the boundaries between work and lack of work become fluid. Changeable, pluralist forms of employment, which probably will not know the problem of unemployment (i.e. lack of gainful work). (...) Unemployment has been integrated with the system of partial employment. Thus, it was changed into generalization

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of employment uncertainty, which was unknown to the “old” system of industrial society with a unified, full employment. (...) Progress and pauperization are interconnected in a new way”²⁸.

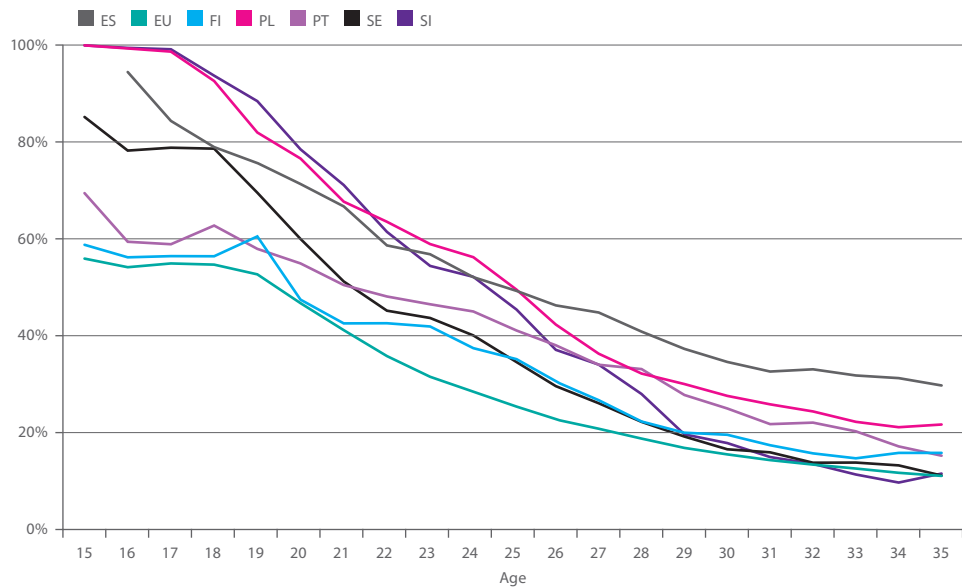
Table 5.6. Percentage of temporary contracts among employees of different age categories – EU countries (%)

Countries	15 to 24 years old		25 to 49 years old		50 to 64 years old		15 to 64 years old	
	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009
Austria	34.9	35.6	4.7	4.9	2.5	3.0	8.9	9.1
Belgium	31.6	33.2	6.9	6.8	4.3	3.3	8.6	8.2
Bulgaria	10.3	9.3	4.5	3.9	5.0	5.0	5.1	4.6
Cyprus	23.3	18.4	14.0	15.0	5.2	6.1	13.3	13.5
Czech Republic	17.4	18.7	5.8	5.5	9.5	9.2	7.8	7.5
Denmark	22.2	23.6	7.0	7.2	4.1	3.2	8.6	8.9
Estonia	na	na	na	2.2	na	na	2.2	2.5
Finland	42.4	39.0	14.1	13.4	7.6	7.1	15.9	14.5
France	52.5	51.2	11.4	10.4	5.9	6.4	14.4	13.5
Germany	57.5	57.2	9.9	10.2	4.7	4.7	14.6	14.5
Greece	27.0	28.4	10.5	11.9	6.1	6.7	10.9	12.1
Hungary	19.1	21.4	6.8	8.2	4.8	5.6	7.3	8.4
Ireland	19.2	25.0	4.8	6.4	4.2	5.1	7.2	8.5
Italy	42.3	44.4	12.2	11.6	6.3	5.7	13.2	12.1
Latvia	9.3	9.3	3.5	3.8	3.2	3.7	4.2	8.4
Lithuania	9.8	5.0	2.9	2.1	2.9	na	3.5	2.3
Luxembourg	34.1	39.3	5.6	5.3	na	na	6.8	7.2
Malta	11.0	11.0	3.8	3.8	na	na	5.1	4.7
Netherlands	45.1	46.5	14.1	14.1	6.8	6.9	17.9	18.0
Poland	65.7	62.0	25.1	23.6	18.2	18.4	28.2	26.4
Portugal	52.6	53.5	21.1	21.3	10.6	10.1	22.4	22.0
Romania	4.6	3.7	1.4	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.6	1.0
Slovakia	13.7	12.5	3.9	3.5	4.0	3.6	5.0	4.3
Slovenia	68.3	66.6	14.0	12.5	6.7	6.0	18.4	16.2
Spain	62.8	55.9	31.0	25.7	15.3	12.0	31.7	25.5
Sweden	57.1	53.4	14.0	12.0	7.3	5.5	17.2	14.9
United Kingdom	13.3	11.9	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.2	5.7	5.5
UE-27 states	41.1	40.2	12.3	11.5	6.8	6.5	14.5	13.4

Source: *Employment in Europe*, European Commission Report, 2010, p. 125.

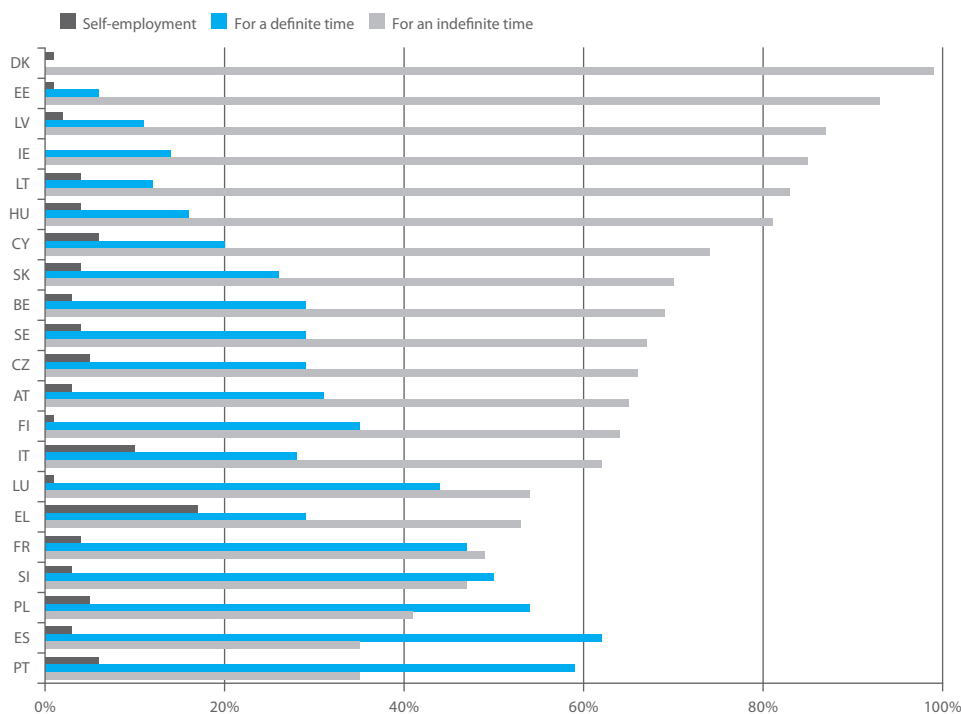
In the previous decade, many European countries observed great increase of stop-gap (limited in time, temporary) employment. It was mainly the result of legislation reforms, which protected full-time employment and introduced flexibility at the “margin” of the labour market. In practice, temporary contracts were not covered by regulations, while strict rules related to contracts for an indefinite time were maintained. As far as the range of changes is concerned, those introduced at the “margin” are prevailing. Although they were related to a relatively small area, they were of essential importance for the general changes on the labour market. According to European Commission experts, the authors of the „Employment in Europe 2010” report, these changes were not positive. They were introduced due to possible economic advantages, resulting from increased flexibility of labour markets. In the 1980s and 1990s, high and permanent unemployment rates observed in some EU states were often reasoned by too rigorous legislation protecting permanent employment. As a result, academic circles and international organisations more and more often supported the idea of increasing labour market flexibility. They suggested introducing an open (temporary) contracts model and, at the same time, maintaining strict regulations related to permanent employment. After some time, temporary employed people became a dominant group, consisting of the youngest employees. In some countries, this temporary form of employment exceeds 60% of all employees. Poland is one of them. Yet, it is not the only category in which we occupy one of the top positions. We have one of the highest rates of temporary contracts in relation to the total number of contracts in the country (Fig. 5.37). We are among countries, in which temporary contracts related to the first job are higher in number than those for an indefinite time (Fig. 5.38).

Fig. 5.37. Percentage of temporary contracts in the total number of contracts (average for selected EU states in the years 2005-2008)



Source: *Employment in Europe*, European Commission Report, 2010, p. 127.

Fig. 5.38. Type of contract related to the first job



Source: *Employment in Europe*, European Commission Report, 2010, p. 128.

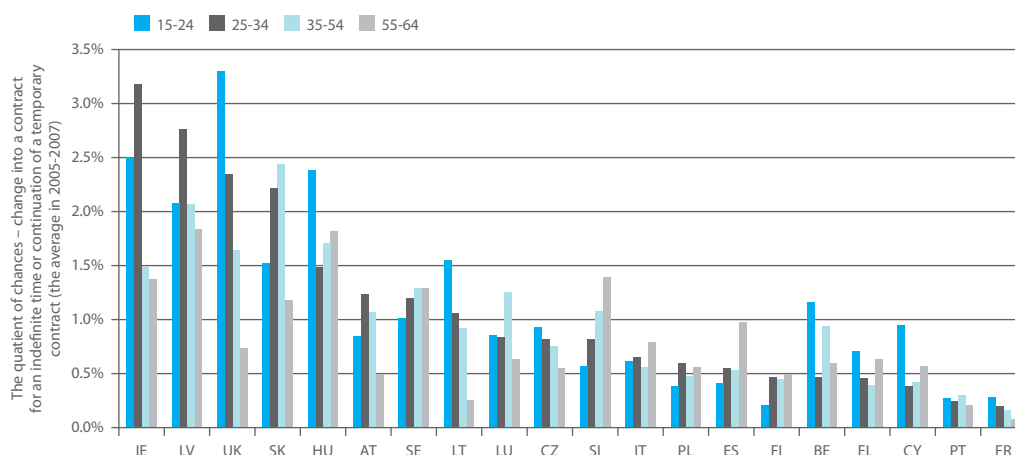
Temporary contracts – especially in the initial period – caused visible increase of the employment rate (honey moon effect). However, it soon led to the formation of a double (divided into segments) labour market. One of them (“internal”) is occupied by full-time employees oriented to permanent employment, as well as career offering promotion and increased incomes (so called *insiders*). The second one – by temporary employees, whose situation is unstable, they are threatened with unemployment and poor prospects for professional promotion (so called *outsiders*). Dual labour market is becoming a particularly serious problem to young people, since it can cause that they will be stuck in the role of permanent intern. This threat was proven during the last crisis in 2009-2011. In many countries, using temporary contracts on a large scale increased recurring instability of employment, or even its reduction.

Labour market segmentation, which causes that young people are treated as secondary employees, also means worse employment conditions and worse professional development prospects. According to the OECD calculations, working hours of temporary employees is much longer than those of full-time employees. Temporarily employed people have limited access to trainings funded by companies (short-term contract discourages employers to invest in “flowing” human capital). Segmentation is also important in terms of remuneration, and it differentiates the level of incomes of all people at work. High rates of temporary employment increase the level of full-time employees’ incomes, since their bargain

position has been reinforced by the presence of temporary employees, whose payment demands can be ignored or their employment can be discontinued.

The results of the *Labour Force Survey* show that the division into temporary and full-time employment is made on the basis of qualifications (as well as training possibilities) and the period from the completion of education. Temporary contracts are more and more often signed by graduates who leave school early and by unskilled youth. Usually, after five years from completion of school, the percentage of temporary jobs against the total number of employment contracts decreases. Despite this, in some countries, including Poland, their high rate is maintained. The rate of safe transition from temporary to full-time employment is lower than 1, which means that young people have been caught in a trap of temporary forms of employment (Fig. 5.39).

Fig. 5.39. Rates of transition from temporary to full-time forms of employment



Comments: average rates in 2006-2007 for AT, BE, CY, CZ, FI, HU, LT, LV, PL, SE, SI, SK i UK; average rates in 2005 and 2007 for PT, 2006 – only for IE.

Source: *Employment in Europe*, European Commission Report, 2010, p. 142.

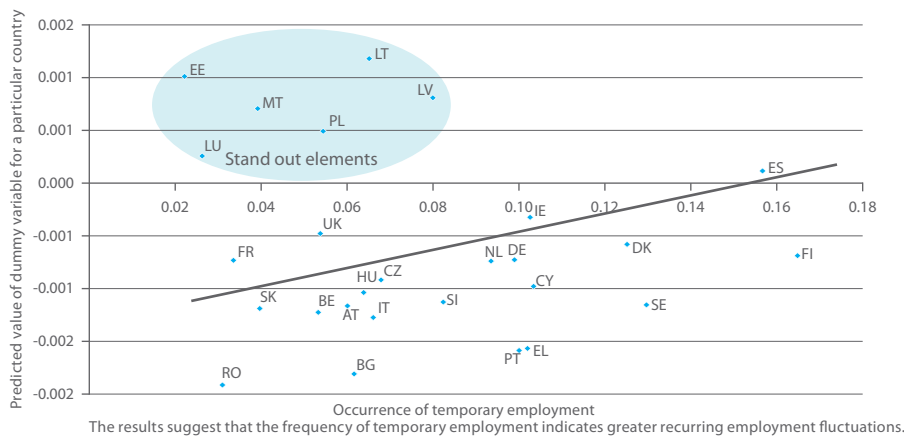
Low probability of transition from temporary to full-time employment may discourage from effort at work – i.e. lower motivation, loyalty to the employer and cause a demanding attitude. Examples of countries where such transitions are very difficult (Spain) show that total effects of reduced professional trainings and weaker motivation to work may cause significant slow down of the economic growth pace. In Poland, which does not share the situation of Spain related to economic growth, but has equally negative rates of transition from one form of employment to another, the success of companies depends most of all on more effective use of resources rather than on use of new technologies²⁹. This can negatively influence employment prospects of the youth – it indicates a style of running a business that does not care about

29 W. Gumuła et al., Rynek pracy w Polsce (wynagrodzenia, produktywność pracy i migracje w listopadzie 2009 – na tle badań panelowych w latach 2006-2009 [Laobur market in Poland (remunerations, work productivity and migration in November 2009 – against panel studies in 2006-2009)], „Materiały i Studia” zeszyt 245 [“Materials and studies”, issue 245], The National Bank of Poland (NBP), Warsaw, 2010.

innovative solutions (and consequently, a demand for a new type of skills and knowledge), since direct profit and employer’s economic safety are more important factors.

Are we therefore threatened with recurring employment instability? According to the European Commission experts, the situation in Poland is hard to predict, since it represents unusual labour market conditions (Fig. 5.40). At the turn of the 1990s and 2000, the unemployment level of almost 20% maintained in our country for a few years. Its later significant decreases could have result from various factors that are difficult to determine explicitly (economic and extra economic, such as economic migration abroad). The analysis of current trends is very important here and it can help us avoid oversimplified predictions.

Fig. 5.40. Does temporary employment increase recurring employment instability?



Source: *Employment in Europe*, European Commission Report, 2010, p. 151.

Studies carried out among Polish entrepreneurs in November 2009 do not predict any large problem on the labour market in the future, yet, they are not quite positive either. The results indicate slight growth of enterprises’ incomes, which, however, will not translate into employment growth (such plans were declared by 21% of entrepreneurs at the end of 2009, while in 2006-2007 – between 40% and 48%) or the level of remunerations offered (as stated by 71% entrepreneurs). Although dismissals are not predicted (only 6.7% of employers are planning to do so), resignations by employees are not expected either, e.g. in search for a better-paid job abroad. While in the past years, one fourth of unemployed people have experienced economic migration (successful which in most cases), at the end of 2009, only one tenth of unemployed people were thinking of looking for a job abroad³⁰.

These and other phenomena are symptoms of labour market stagnation rather than economic recovery. As a consequence, they predict another increase of unemployment rate – it was declared by 45% of employers at end of 2009, which was less than in May 2009 (55%), yet, a great deal more than in 2006-2007, when only 3.6%-4.7%

30 Studies repeated every six months since 2006 cover representative groups of 1600 employers and 2000 unemployed – see W. Gumuła et al., op. cit. p. 13-16.

of employers expected unemployment growth. All these factors still indicate a difficult situation on the labour market, which, according to the regularities presented above, will affect most of all young employees, especially those entering the labour market. They will obviously use the whole range of available institutional benefits and take up illegal work. This problem is observed by almost a half of unemployed (46.7%). Although certain behaviours indicate decline of employees' demands – e.g. the level of unemployed people's readiness to take up work right away (up to 87.5%) is growing. In districts with increased unemployment rate, people are inclined to accept lower salary, while job offers with too low remuneration are still rejected by one sixth of unemployed³¹.

Taking into account these and other trends, it is highly probable that economic recession may significantly worsen the situation of young people on the labour market, which even now is not very positive. Negligence on the part of the government in preventing such a situation would be a negative sign at the time when analyses of European economists indicate a need to prepare a cohesive strategy, based on the principles of "flexicurity". It is supposed to face the dangers on the labour market resulting from the duality of employment. According to the European Commission, such strategy should comprise a few political initiatives adjusted to specific conditions of a given country (as opposed to "one-size-fits-all" strategy). It is suggested to introduce a set of different solutions covered by one permanent "contract", which would replace the existing legal asymmetry between employment for a limited and unlimited time. In Italy, where high unemployment and temporary employment have remained for years, an attempt to create a path to stabilize the position on the labour market (after a 3-year period of full flexibility) was made. *Contracto Unico di Ingresso* is one of the attempts to create effective transition from education to the labour market. However, a single contract alone cannot solve the problem of labour market duality, especially in places where it is deep and clear. That is why other – additional – solutions are often mentioned in European projects. They include: introduction of minimum salary, a universal right to unemployment insurance regardless of the contract type, limiting temporary contract applicability to certain areas. In this context, very important are also economic development strategies (based on new technologies or labour force management), the social dialogue practice, human resources management policies of companies, etc.

5.6. Influence of global crisis on youth employment

Both the percentage of young people among labour force and employment rates of the youth are decreasing. Their percentage among the labour force between 1998 and 2008 decrease globally from 54.7% to 50.8%, which means that only a half of young people are active on the labour market. In 2008, the number of young unemployed people was 540 million, which meant a growth by 34 million compared to ten years ago. Yet, in 1998-2008 the employment rate fell from 47.9% to 44.7%³².

It happens mainly because of higher education rates among the youth (positive reason). However, the trend of lowering the professional activity rates may also be caused by negative circumstances. Professionally inactive youth is the opposite

31 W. Gumuła et al., op. cit., p. 77-78.

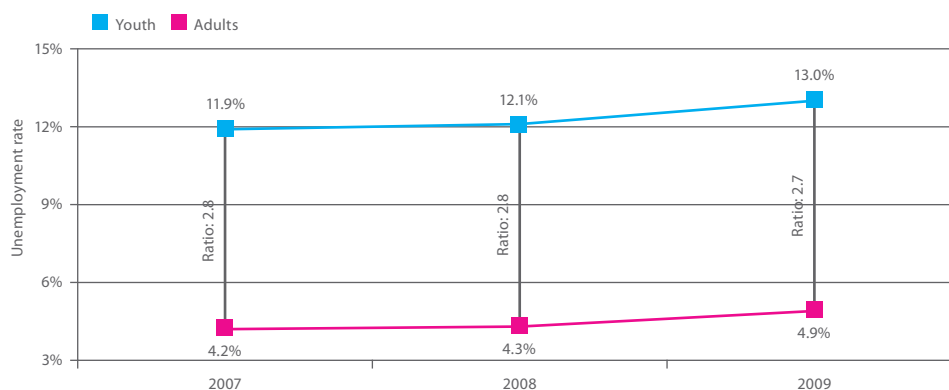
32 *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, ILO Report 2010, p. 15 and above.

of active youth and it includes people, who does not work and do not look for a job, not necessarily for educational reasons. This group may include people taking care of their families, sick or disabled persons being unfit for work or people who are so much irritated by lack of prospects that they gave up searching for a job and are idly waiting for better times.

Economic recession is reflected in the biggest since the time of the “big crisis” cohort of unemployed youth. In 2007-2009, youth unemployment increased by 7.8 million globally. In the pre-crisis decade (in 1996-97 and 2006-07), the number of unemployed youth increased on average by 192 000 each year. In 2009, there were 80.7 million young people striving to find a job. In the climax of the crisis (2007-2009), the unemployment rate among young people (globally) revealed its largest annual growth – from 11.9% to 13%, reversing the pre-crisis trends, based on systematic, since 2002, employment fall among the youth.

Its rates turned out to be more sensitive to economic shocks than unemployment rates among adults (Fig. 5.41). In 2008, the unemployment rate among the youth was 12.1% and 4.3% among adults. This means that young people have three time better chances of becoming unemployed. Moreover, unemployment rates are not the only indicators of “injustice between generations”. Young people much more often experience other negative consequences of the economic crisis: it is more probable that they will be among the group of workers employed on worse legal and financial conditions and, consequently, with the lowest incomes. The young constitute 24% of all poor employees and 18.1% of total global employment³³.

Fig. 5.41. Unemployment rate among adults and the youth – global indices



Source: *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, ILO Report 2010, p. 30.

Many young people, before they develop a stable position on the labour market, start with temporary employment. In developing countries, it is most often unpaid work in a family business. In developed countries, it is temporary work – unstable,

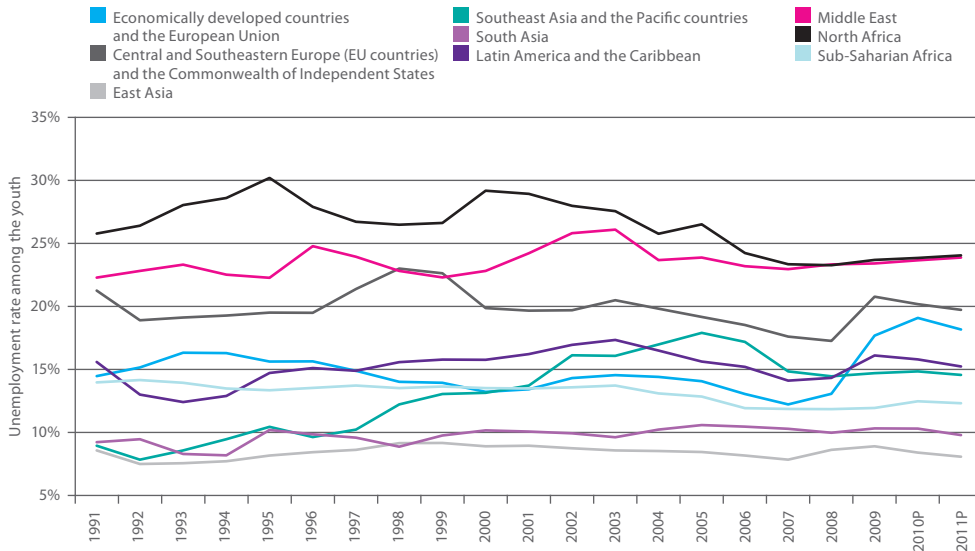
33 According to MOP, in 2008, 152 million of young employees lived in poor families (with per capita expenses less than US\$ 1.25 per day), while in 1998 there were 234 million employed young people. In 2008, the poverty rate among the employed youth – with incomes amounting to US\$ 1.25 – covered 28.1% of employed young people.

poorly-paid and less favourable for development³⁴. In both cases, the chance to move to full-time, stable employment is low. The crisis also causes increase of illegal employment and various forms of unstable employment.

Young women have greater difficulties in finding a job than young men. In 2009, the unemployment rate among young women reached 13.2%, and among young men 12.9%. The positive exceptions – except for the years of crisis – are developed countries and the EU region, which can, however, be misleading: women more often accept jobs that are less attractive in terms of prestige or remuneration (but also in other sectors of economy – high employment rate of women in the services sector) and more frequently agree to temporary (unstable) forms of employment, which were blooming during the crisis.

Every region is affected by the crisis in a different way, depending on a social and economic context as well as political reactions of particular countries (Fig. 5.42). In better developed countries (and EU), the climax of the crisis was observed in 2008-2009 – in this period, the youth from these countries were affected by the crisis the most (the unemployment rate was 17.1%). No other regions reached the unemployment growth of almost 4.6 and 3.5 percentage points, which was observed in 2008 and 2009 in Europe. In 2007, developed countries and the EU had the sixth (counting from the highest) unemployment rate among the youth, and in 2009, they occupied the fourth shameful position (after Eastern European, Middle Eastern and North African countries).

Fig. 5.42. Unemployment rate among the youth according to regions (1991-2011)



Source: *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, ILO Report, 2010, p. 18.

As a consequence of wealth spread being a result of development, the range of the so called instability curve is decreasing. It consists of countries with numerous young population from North America, through Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East to

34 *Employment 2010 in Europe*, European Commission Report.

Central and East and Central Asia. Problems of young people will be confronted with the problems of aging societies of the eastern world. The Arab Winter and Summer 2011 events, the actors of which were most of all young people demanding better development conditions and more employment opportunities, foreshadow serious political changes. As a result, a new kind of countries may emerge in this region. Generational youth, together with democratic needs and healthy administration principles, will merge with religious and cultural identity of Islam. This course of events may radically increase migration flows, yet, intercultural tensions as well³⁵.

Table 5.7. Youth in Arab countries

Country	Percentage of population aged less than 30	Percentage of employed people aged 15-24 (2008)	GDP per capita, according to the parity of buying power in thousands of dollars, 2010
Algeria	56%	31%	7.1
Saudi Arabia	61%	25%	23.7
Bahrain	48%	30%	26.8
Egypt	61%	23%	6.4
Yemen	73%	22%	2.6
Jordan	65%	20%	5.7
Libya	61%	27%	14.9
Morocco	56%	35%	4.8
Oman	64%	29%	26.2
Syria	67%	32%	5.1
Tunisia	51%	22%	9.5

Source: Financial Times 2-3 April 2011 [after:] US Census Bureau, World Bank and IMF.

Challenges faced by the youth, especially in Europe, as a result of the crisis are not motivating. People present on the labour market compete with the increasing number of persons looking for employment, while there are less and less job offers. Searching time is increasingly longer – in some countries, long-term unemployment affects one fifth of population. The shock deepens unemployment among well-educated youth, who, before the crisis, had a greater guarantee to enter the labour market easily. More and more young people claim that it is more probable that they will “get stuck” in a job that is unstable or does not match their education level or the desired career path.

5.7. Direct and long-term consequences of the labour markets crisis for the youth

Apparently, apart from changes on the labour market caused by the civilization changes (which the young should first benefit from), there appear the consequences of the global crisis (of which they are victims). We can discuss these consequences from the point of view of a short- and long-term perspective. One of more direct reactions of

35 ZDS PRM, *Polska 2030. Trzecia fala nowoczesności: Długookresowa Strategia Rozwoju Kraju*, [Poland 2030. The third wave of modernity. The country's long-term development strategy.] Warsaw, 2011.

the youth to the crisis is longer period of education, which seems to be more reasonable than the risk of failure on the labour market. Another phenomenon is increase of rates related to chaotic (not following any career path pattern) transition to the labour market – with greater number of unemployment periods or periods of temporary or non-optimal employment (as a result of smaller number of job offers and greater competitiveness among people searching for a job). Certain pathologies may occur here, mainly among the youth entering the market during the crisis (early use of unemployment benefits and other forms of governmental support). This, in turn, may cause spread of the opinion that a young person searching for a job can count on the government and that the role of the state is to mediate between potential employees and the labour market³⁶. From among more distant consequences, the most serious is youth unemployment. The predictions in this respect are not optimistic – it is expected that unemployment prospects are more probable than employment growth³⁷. Although one can suppose that the unemployed youth will reduce their payment demands and accept less attractive job offers, it can also be expected that they will be helpless in the face of new threats (e.g. chaotic transition syndrome). Long-term consequences of the crisis will most of all affect lower-educated youth entering the labour market. This does not necessarily mean that well-educated young people will not be affected by the consequences of the crisis³⁸. During economic prosperity, people do not have problems with employment. During the recession, the same youth category faces unavoidable longer unemployment periods, lower earnings and less perfect professional careers. Employers' preferences are also important here, since due to the less and less probable prospect of labour markets standardization, they prefer to employ new graduates, instead of older ones, affected by long-term unemployment and professional inactivity. However, the worst danger is that well-educated youth, who were supposed to be a drive for civilization development ("lost generation" effect), will recede into the background.

In the case of the unskilled youth, crisis situations mean longer queues to a limited number of works that do not require any qualifications, increased long-term unemployment and hosts of people discouraged by fruitless search for employment. The unskilled youth is threatened with permanent drop out of the market and dependency on the state for the rest of their lives. This group is also mostly associated with dangers such as crime growth, risk behaviours, physical and mental health problems, political exclusion. In order to prevent these risks, many countries implement numerous youth employment policy programmes, which include labour market activation elements aimed at this goal. Actions targeted at this particular age group has for ages constituted a challenge for the services of the labour market, proper mediation and vacancy notification.

36 P. Giuliano, *On the determinants of living arrangements in Western Europe: does cultural origin Matter?*, Mimeo International Monetary Fund, 2004.

37 L.M. Kahn, *Employment protection reforms, employment and the incidence of temporary jobs in Europe:1996–2001*, "Labour Economics", 2010, Vol. 17, p. 1-15.

38 These concerns were shared by OECD, which issued a document with political recommendations for Member States, related to prevention of long-term consequences of unemployment among the youth, in which two targets of influence are mentioned: less and better educated youth – see OECD (2004), *Employment Outlook, Chapter 2: Employment Protection, Regulation and Labour Market Performance*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

5.8. Prospects for labour market standardization in favour of the youth

Are there any indications of more optimistic predictions? The world economy is on a very early stage of standardization after the shock that occurred at the turn of 2008 and 2009. Experts point out that even if the forecasts will be optimistic, the situation on world labour markets will still be tense (table 5.8).

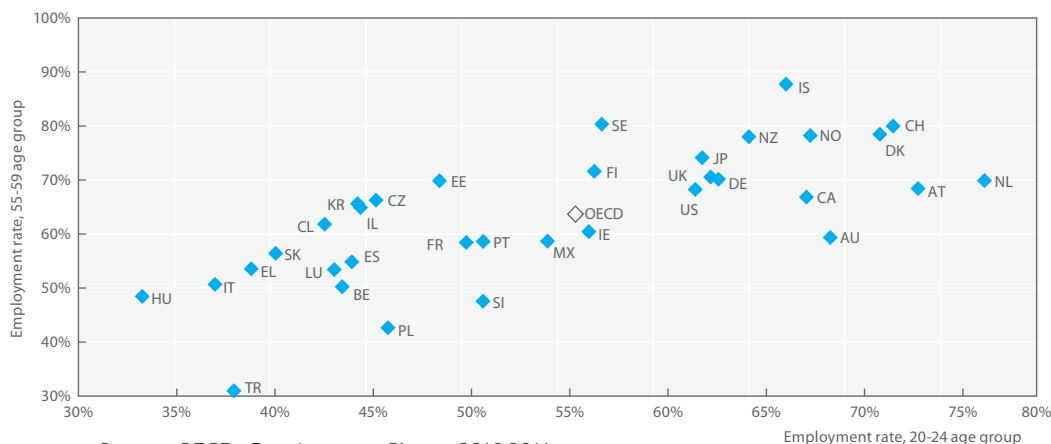
Despite economic growth expected in 2010 and 2011, global unemployment will be increasing, which makes us believe that labour market standardization will be made with delay. ILO predicted continuation of unemployment growth among young people throughout the world and its moderate fall in 2011 to the level of 12.7%. Ratios for developed and EU countries would observe a fall by 0.9 percentage point, yet, the expected ratio (18.2%) would be still higher than before the crisis. One can predict that labour markets improvement processes will be slower than in the case of adults as well as more uncertain, since greater flexibility of youth unemployment rates during the economic crisis weakens the basis for making predictions.

Table 5.8. Intended growth of GDP rates and unemployment rates among adults and young people – according to world regions

	GDP growth ratio (%)			Unemployment rate among the youth (%)			Unemployment rate among adults (%)		
	2010	2011	Change in relation to 2009	2010	2011	Change in relation to the year with the highest unemployment rate	2010	2011	Change in relation to the year with the highest unemployment rate
WORLD	4.2	4.3	4.9	13.1	12.7	-0.4 ('10)	4.8	4.7	-0.2 ('09)
Economically developed countries and the European Union	2.1	2.2	5.5	19.1	18.2	-0.9 ('10)	7.4	7.2	-0.2 ('10)
Central and Southeastern Europe (non-EU countries) and the Commonwealth of Independent States	4.1	3.5	9.6	20.2	19.7	-1.0 ('09)	8.2	8.0	-0.4 ('09)
East Asia	9.0	3.9	2.2	8.4	8.1	-0.8 ('09)	3.3	3.1	-0.3 ('09)
Southeastern Asia and the Pacific countries	5.4	5.6	4.1	14.8	14.6	-0.3 ('10)	2.9	2.8	-0.3 ('08)
South Asia	7.9	7.8	2.5	10.3	9.8	-0.5 ('09)	3.2	3.1	-0.3 ('07)
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.0	4.0	5.8	15.8	15.2	-0.9 ('09)	5.9	5.7	-0.2 ('09)
Middle East	4.3	4.4	2.8	23.7	23.9	0.2 ('10)	6.2	6.2	0.0 ('10)
North Africa	4.7	5.1	1.4	23.8	24.0	0.2 ('10)	6.5	6.5	0.1 ('10)
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.7	5.8	3.7	12.5	12.3	-0.2 ('10)	6.2	6.1	-0.1 ('09)

Source: *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, ILO Report, 2010.

Fig. 5.43. The relation between unemployment rates among 20-24 and 55-59 age groups



Source: OECD, *Pensions at a Glance 2010, 2011*.

It is expected that due to lack of experience (as well as survival strategies undertaken by companies), young people will be pushed towards the end of the queue that consists of people searching for employment. It is worth mentioning that the young will not compete for job positions directly with older people, since there is a direct correlation between employment rate of older and younger persons. Employment in these groups is not substitutional, but complementary (Fig. 5.43).

The situation will be particularly difficult in developed countries. An educated unemployed person has increasingly higher demands and during the crisis, there is a great chance that they will perform work that does not match their skills and desired career path. Young people prepared to develop the economy will have to fight for their survival within conditions in which there is a limited number of job offers and poor protection against poverty. The danger is that with the feeling of having fewer opportunities than the previous generation, the young may become convinced that the chance for a better life was wasted not by themselves, but by forces beyond their control. In such conditions, disrelishes and anxiety of the youth become a real threat, therefore the role of wise governing bodies is invaluable.

Undoubtedly, Poland is a developed country with its social curiosities visible in ambitious expectations of the youth and their great disappointment. Although during the times of the crisis everyone has learned humbleness, we never know for how long and whether effectively. It seem that we are at a very important, difficult and, at the same time, dangerous point. The young do not lose their hope yet, but the extending stagnation on the market may cause marasm, aggression and retreat that will be difficult to deal with and the first signs can be the "occupy" protests from Sydney to New York.

Summary

The transition from education to employment is a very important and difficult process. Work is not only a source of income or satisfaction. It is most of all the condition for gaining independence and autonomy – values that are the most important

for the youth. Finding a job and having regular incomes influence the possibility to realize other plans and life goals – starting a family, maintaining certain standard of life, arranging one's spare time and keeping good health. At the same time, demographic (baby boom) and macroeconomic (the context of modern capitalism and the global crisis) conditions cause that entering the labour market and finding employment are particularly difficult. The young are the main victims of this situation. The prospects are not very optimistic either. The greatest fear is related to the possibility of generating a so called "lost generation" of young, well-educated people, who were supposed to drive the development of the civilization, but due to the recession, they are not present on the labour market.

Young Poles enter the labour market later than the youth in other EU states, they slightly more often (at present) study and work simultaneously and they include more people who neither study, nor work, which is true particularly for women. This is caused, on the one hand, by their higher educational activity and, on the other hand, by traditional division of roles, according to which women are supposed to take care of the family home. The fact that the number of people who do not study, work or search for employment increases with age suggests not only presence of young people that are not properly prepared to take up a job (who left the education system earlier), but also the existence of mechanisms that effectively demotivate those who are well-prepared for work.

The greatest problems with employment affect unskilled persons or graduates (only a half of them are at work). The situation improves significantly among people above 25 – employment rates increase to 82% and to more than 90% among people with higher education. Young people most often find employment in the private sector, which operates mainly in large agglomerations. The young themselves rarely act as employers – their interest in entrepreneurship is falling significantly. For all of them, the first years of their career mean low incomes and promotion opportunities for few. This not a result of lack of proper qualifications (which must be constantly verified anyway, due to new requirements on the labour market), but of employers' preferences, who favour employees with greater job tenure.

For years, the number of unemployed people was the most meaningful indicator of social problems. Today, due to civilization changes, the traditional employment system is being replaced by various atypical forms, and the greatest threat is related to employment instability. Legal measures, which were supposed to make the labour market more flexible and decrease unemployment rates, lead to its segmentation. The first segment is intended for full-time employees, who develop their careers with great awareness of their advantages. The second one is intended for temporary employees, whose situation is uncertain, who are threatened with unemployment and have poor promotion prospects. Today, we are one of the countries in which temporary employment is dominant. This affects mainly young people, who are threatened with the prospect of continuous internship.

This situation is very complex. Temporary employment facilitates the transition from education to the world of work, yet, segmentation of the labour market increases the risk of uncertain start into adulthood. The young who take up temporary work more often live with parents, postpone the moment of reaching independence or starting their own families and are not credible borrowers. The attempts to apply systemic instruments to support young people turned out to be

very difficult in the conditions of market economy, and they need to be supplemented with institutional analyses.

The whole range of issues related to work and employment of young Poles is presented in our analyses as an area that requires actions that are absolutely necessary. They must take into account the situation of a very special generation – the first one that grew up in the conditions of market economy and which has not been a matter of particular importance to the state so far. They had a happy childhood, thanks to their parents and family support networks, which had to deal with the lack of nurseries and kindergartens. They realized their educational aspirations, which increased significantly in the 1990s, in an education system that started to undergo reformations when they were already leaving school. Those who decided to go to universities must have dealt with not well-thought-out and often poor quality offers of the education market. When they were trying to enter the labour market, they found out that their knowledge and qualifications are not helpful in finding employment. The prospect of “lost generation” may remain hypothetical if the most important problems of this generation (work) will become a subject of firm policies and actions. This time, they will not be able to do this themselves.

6.

6. Togetherness and intimacy: marriage, family, alternative choices

6.1. Prior to starting their own family

6.2. Marital status and models of private life

6.3. Intimacy and sexuality

6.4. Fertility, women's work, household duties and tensions between the roles

6.5. Two categories of young mothers and two different worlds

6.6. Existing and preferred forms of child-care

6.7. The quality of family life and relations within the family

6.8. Housing situation and living conditions of young people

Summary

6. Togetherness and intimacy: marriage, family, alternative choices

CHAPTER SIX

Changes to which today's family is subjected to are a result of precisely the same processes currently affecting work, education, life style or health. These are, on one hand, global and local transformations, of economic nature, while on the other, changes and pressures of global and local cultural standards, which alter people's awareness and behaviour. These can most generally be described as processes of de-institutionalism and destabilization of the family, leading to weakening of family bonds, diversification of family life models and increased number of single-parent families. As a result, fertility remains permanently at a level significantly below the simple generation renewal, a transition is taking place from a model of the ("king child with parents") to a family focused on the parents ("king pair with child model") where the child's needs are very important but not threatening to needs of the parents. Contraception, being formally a preventive measure becomes a tool of conscious procreation. The age of sexual initiation is decreasing. An individual's rhythm of life as well as the family life cycles are subjected to disorder.

Anthony Giddens, one of the more thorough observers and analysts of the modern age believes that there are no changes more significant and spectacular than changes taking place within the scope of the institution of marriage, family, personal life and emotional relations. His opinion is that a global life style revolution is taking place before our eyes with an epicentre in the area of privacy and intimacy. Its global character represents the fact that it is simply impossible not to partake in the changes which the modern age is causing¹. They resemble a hurricane which will, sooner or later, reach everywhere and affecting local arrangements in a manner making it impossible for them to return to their prior state². Characteristic is the fact that the later they arrive, the more intense and turbulent their course is.

That is precisely the case of Poland, while current generation of youth is first, which is experiencing these changes first-hand. Changes within the cultural models of sexuality, the high value placed on freedom and individuality in connection with new demands and problems (an undefined and uncertain future, structural limitations in achieving status of adult) result in the basic dilemma of a young Pole is the choice between existential independence (guaranteed by finding employment and care of one's professional career) and establishing a family (considered a requirement of life happiness). This choice becomes extremely difficult if one values the work-life-balance principle (balance between work and personal life) – influences

1 A. Giddens, *Przemiany intymności. Seksualność, miłość i erotyzm we współczesnych społeczeństwach* (Transformations of intimacy. Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies), Polish Scientific Publishers (PWN), Warsaw, 2007, p. 260.

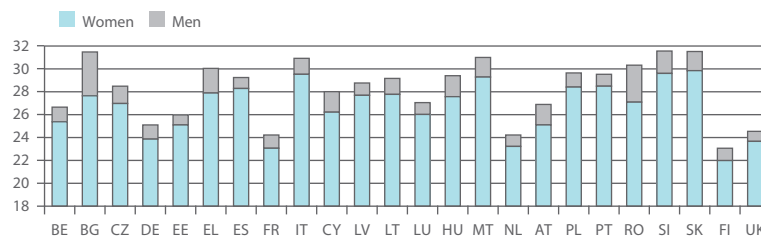
2 A. Giddens, *Ramy późnej nowoczesności, [in:] Współczesne teorie socjologiczne* (Framework of late modernity, Modern sociological theories), Selection and preparation Jasińska-Kania and others., "Scholar" Publishing House, Warszawa, 2006.

life independence and (ever more often) testing of alternative models of family life or of being a single (at own cost or at parent's expense).

6.1. Prior to starting their own family

Young people are becoming independent, leaving their family homes and establishing their own „nests” at an ever later age. This thesis has been identified in nearly all reports describing the processes of growing up for the modern youth (Fig. 6.1).

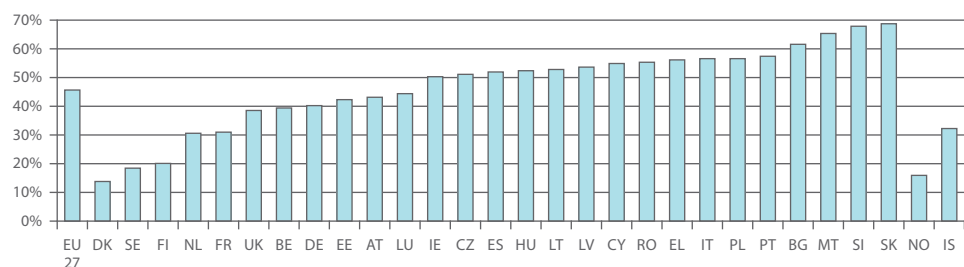
Fig. 6.1. Average age at which young people leave their family home (EU)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey [in:] Youth – Investing and Empowering, EU Youth Report 2009.

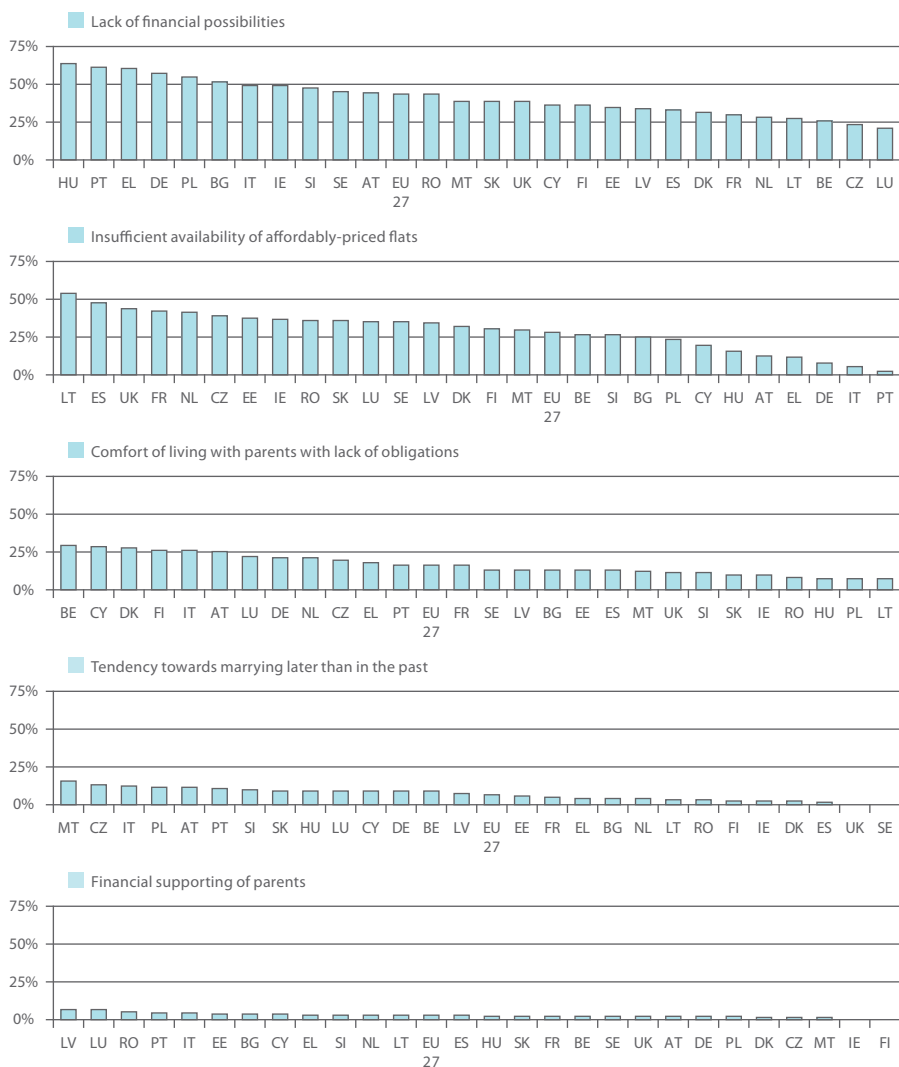
In 2008, nearly 51 million young adults in the EU were living with their parents (45.6% of the entire population aged 18-34), one third of which includes persons between 25-34 years of age. This phenomenon is quite rare in northern states, being up to four times more intense in southern as well as the new member states. Publicists are disseminating an imaginative thesis according to which a generation of “Peter Pans” is growing, constituting of persons being immature, frightful of responsibility and craving comfort. The problem is however more complex and rooted not in the psychological but rather social and cultural foundations. Poland is among the top ten EU states where adult children do not abandon the family home for a long period (this age for women currently stands at 28.5 and nearly 30 for men). Although a few countries surpass us in this aspect, we do belong to the forefront of states where the status of the basement dwellers (“bamboccioni” in Italy and “parasite single” in Japan) pertains to over half the population between ages of 18-34 (Fig. 6.2).

Fig. 6.2. The share of “basement dwellers” among population aged 18-34 in EU states (2008)



Source: M. Choroszewicz, P. Wolff, Population and social condition, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 50/2010, p. 1.

Fig. 6.3. Main reasons for which young people aged 18-34 fail to leave their family home



Source: Flash Eurobarometer, No 202, Young Europeans: A survey among young people aged between 15 and 30 in the European Union – Analytical Report, 2007.³

Women leave their family home more often and earlier than men, partially due to marrying at a younger age or having increased changes at living in informal relations with an older partner but also as being more socialized, with a tendency to handle better the realities of life. The difference between male and female “basement dwellers” in Poland between the ages of 25-29 stands at 15 percentage points (the

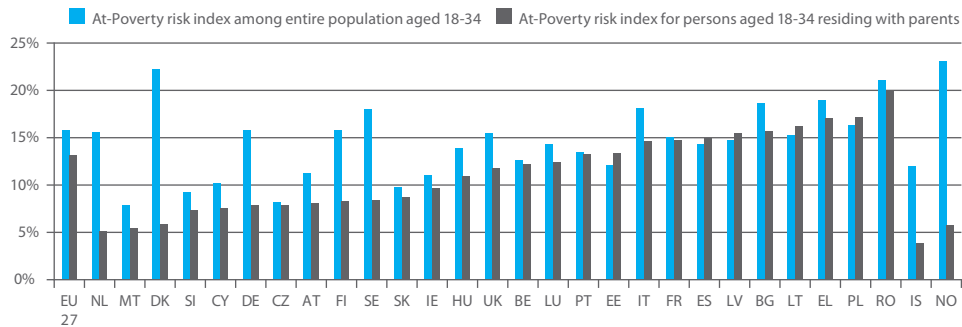
3 On basis of the following question: What do you think is the main reason that young adults live in their parents’ homes longer than they used to? Please select one from the list.

average for the EU being 12). „Crowded nest” type situations are most often formed by parents and children. It does however happen that children are sometimes taken into such “nests” together with their partners. This constituted in Denmark, Holland, Ireland and Luxembourg less than 1% of civil unions noted in these countries, with nearly 9% in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with highest numbers Romania (17.8%) and Bulgaria (19.3%)⁴. These differences result not only from the cultural and economic differences but also show the different situations of couples among which, some can afford the luxury of independence while others are forced to reside with their parents.

The main reason for a prolonged stay within the home is the extended term of youth’s education which is indicated in different states by several educational indexes and in the age differences of the “basement dwellers”. Those of younger age (18-24) are in majority still studying (54.8%) with the percentage among adults (aged 25-34) constituting only 13.4 percent. In Poland, as much as 83% of youth between the ages of 20-24 lives with parents, however the gross education indexes for this group amount to only close to 60%. Among those somewhat older (25-29), 58% lives with parents while those from the oldest group (30-34) represent 28% which still presents a rather significant amount.

The data displayed in Figure 6.3 indicates the various reasons for a prolonged stay within the family home. Young Poles (similarly to youth of the southern and central European states) point to most often to the lack of funds to move away from parents (53%), more seldom (23%) indicating the problem of availability of inexpensive flats. Every eighth person (12%) justifies their “basement dweller” status by reason of later marriage. Every tenth person may be considered a “Peter Pan-type”, with only every fiftieth supporting own parents (2%). These declarations suggest that the phenomenon of the “basement dwellers” in Poland is mainly rooted in the financial rather than mental aspects. These suggestions could be supported by other less declarative data, in light of which Poland belongs to the small group of states where risk of poverty among “family home dwellers” is greater than among the general youth of the same age category (Fig. 6.4).

Fig. 6.4. Risk of poverty among young adults residing with parents and among total population of young adults (2008)

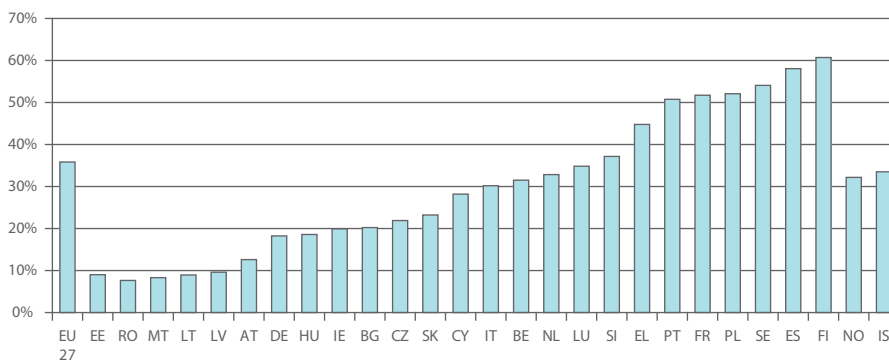


Source: M. Choroszewicz, P. Wolff, Population and social condition, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 50/2010, p. 7.

4 M. Choroszewicz, P. Wolff, Population and social condition, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 50/2010.

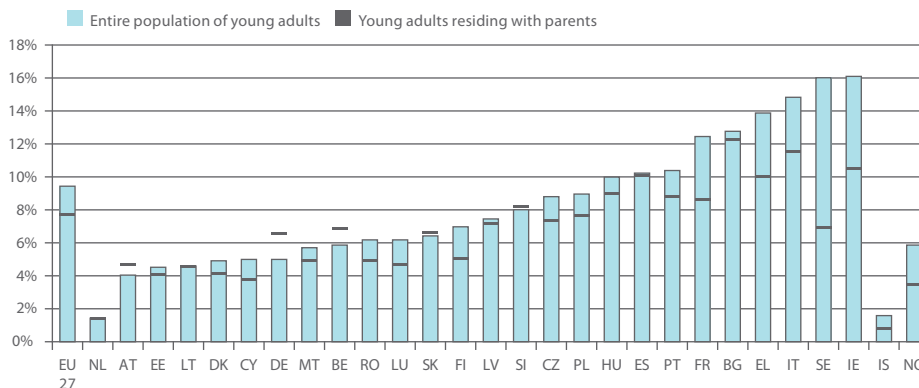
The group presents an excessive tendency of persons employed on temporary contracts (Fig. 6.5), remaining out of work, being unemployed (Fig. 6.6) or having difficulty finding a job. More often than among persons practically independent one finds graduates of traditional university educational profiles as well as persons starting their own economic activity. The nuclear family fulfils for them a role of a waiting room and buffer protecting from the sad consequences of a failed or difficult entry into the independent adult life.

Fig. 6.5. Share of persons employed on temporary contracts among “basement dweller” and overall population of young adults (2008)



Source: M. Choroszewicz, P. Wolff, Population and social condition, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 50/2010, p. 9.

Fig. 6.6. Unemployment rates among “basement dwellers” and total population of young adults



Source: M. Choroszewicz, P. Wolff, Population and social condition, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 50/2010, p. 9.

Co-residence of adult children with their parents carries a heavy emotional toll for both sides. Parents would wish to liberate themselves from the unwritten duty of baby-sitting adult children, while the children (excluding lazy individuals) would prefer to live their lives on their own terms.

6.2. Marital status and models of private life

According to the data of the Labour Force Survey (BAEL), the definite majority of young Poles up to the age of 35 remain single (61.5%). It should be kept in mind that the quantity of this category decreases with age and even in terms of the case of the oldest age group, still remains relatively large – nearly 25% for the group aged 30-35 (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Marital status of persons aged 15-35 in 2010 (%)

	Unmarried man, unmarried woman	Married man, married woman	Divorced, in separation	Widower, widow
15-20	98.7	1.2	0.0	0.0
21-25	81.7	17.9	0.3	0.0
26-30	45.4	52.5	1.9	0.2
31-35	22.1	73.2	4.3	0.4
Youth (15-35)	61.5	36.7	1.7	0.2
Total 15+	27.3	59.1	4.1	9.6

Source: Labour Force Survey – LFS (BAEL), 2010.

Two decades prior, every tenth thirty-year-old remained single⁵. Focus should be brought to the percentage of divorces within the 31-35 age category. It is significant and constitutes a significant novum based on the fact of people divorcing after just few years of living together as husband and wife. Women remaining in a single state are definitely better educated than unmarried men. While women prevail in the status of higher education (56.7% in comparison with 31.3% for men), men dominate in the lower levels with the lower the education level, the greater the difference in terms of the men's disadvantage (Table 6.2).

Despite such differences in education, unmarried men still earn more than unmarried women. The differences in earnings are not great but the remuneration structure is much more flattened than in the case of the education. What begs attention, is the percentage of unmarried men and women aged 25-30 who show no earnings. This amounts to 34.4% for unmarried women and 38% in case of unmarried men. These circumstances may result in remaining single not as an issue of choice by rather lack of trumps considered necessary on the dating scene. Uncomfortable situations in these aspects pertain to unmarried women with children as well as unmarried men residing in homesteads.

Status of unmarried man or woman does not always represent living a single life. It is known from studies conducted as part of the EU SILC⁶ in Poland, that civil unions involving persons below the age of 35 include 48.7% of women and 37.2% of men. A part of them form joint domestic households (official statistics indicated 2.2%

5 K. Szafraniec, *Młodzi dorośli – paradoksy socjalizacji i rozwoju* (Young adults – paradoxes of socialization and development), Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw, 1991.

6 European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions.

TOGETHERNESS AND INTIMACY

in the 15-35 age group and 3.2% for ages between 26-30⁷). Others (approximately 10%) live as part of a domestic partnership – together with parents. Those remaining form relationships based on emotional bonds without residing in a common household (Living Apart Together model).

Table 6.2. Selected characteristics of unmarried women and men aged 25-30 in 2010⁸ (%)

	Unmarried women	Unmarried men
Education level		
Higher	56.7	31.3
Secondary	29.3	39.5
Below secondary	14.0	29.2
Households		
Workers	64.2	61.0
Farmers	7.9	10.5
Entrepreneurs	7.2	8.7
Pensioners and disability pensioners	14.4	15.0
Others	6.3	4.8
Net incomes		
No income	34.4	38.0
Up to PLN 1400	22.9	15.8
PLN 1401-2000	17.3	18.2
PLN 2001 and more	25.4	28.1
Number of children		
none	77.7	86.2
one	16.6	10.0
two	4.1	3.1
more	1.6	0.6

Source: Calculations by the Strategic Analysis Department of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) on basis of Labour Force Survey (BAEL) 2010 data.

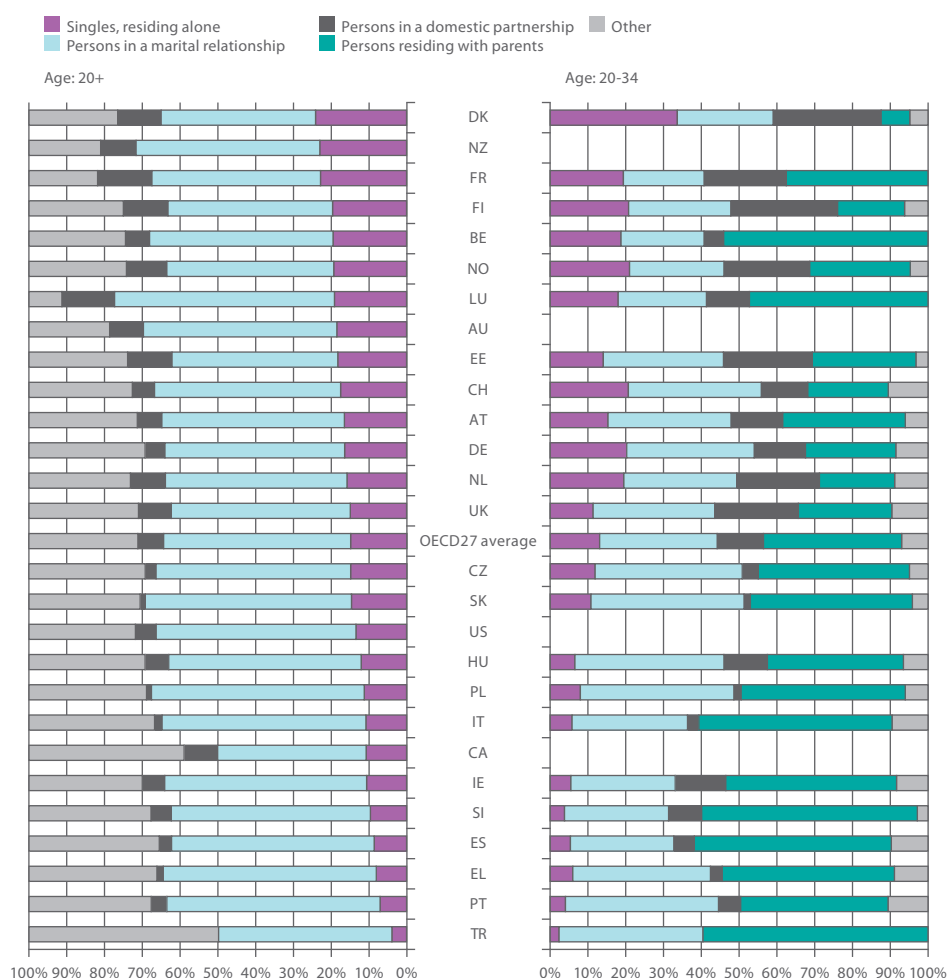
Cohabiting couples are more often formed by persons of relatively lower education, earning little or nothing and remaining on unemployment benefits. Many couples raise children from pensions or social benefits, living from employment within the shadow economy or by migrating abroad. Their status as well as residential conditions standard remains much to be desired (rented flats, most often in poor technical and living conditions). All these data permit the conclusion that the economic and living conditions of co-inhabitants are not favourable. Relationships

7 Labour Force Survey data (BAEL), Q1/2010.

8 It has been assumed, that persons refusing answer concerning income status earn in excess of PLN 2001 or more.

concluded by them are not lasting but rather open to a multitude of internal problems. Despite the increasing number of cohabitating persons (which include also persons with positive relational prognosis, marriage and family plans being mainly students and graduates of institutes of higher education living together on a “trial basis”), the main flow of young cohabitants presents itself as a group on society’s margin, incapable of meeting professional requirements or aspirations of the post-modernistic society⁹.

Fig. 6.7. Forms of co-existence – young people in comparison with the general population (2000-2007¹⁰)



Source: Doing Better for Families, OECD 2011, s. 25.

9 K. Slany, Alternatywne formy życia małżeńsko-rodzinnego (Alternative forms of marital and family life), "Nomos" Publishers, Cracow, 2002, p. 183-194.

10 Data concerning individual countries originating from different years – in case of Poland – from 2002.

The characteristics of single women and men decided to live as singles are very different from each other. According to data of Central Statistical Office (GUS) for 2009, 6724 thousand Poles lives in single-person domestic households (which constitutes 12.5% of all households). As part of this figure, over 4.662 million are households operated by young persons below the age of 35 (6.8% of total number of households). These numbers are however deceiving and do not adequately represent the specific characteristics of the group ever more often referred to as "singles", as they do not refer to the population, but to the households and are not relativized to the pertaining age category. They also fail to indicate one of the group's key characteristics; mainly, its residence in large urban centres. Singles most often live in large or very large cities, constituting an average of 1/3 of the population between the ages of 24 and 34¹¹. It would be difficult to refer to them as "lonely individuals". They are "singles", with certain connotations however being associated with the term. It refers to a small category of persons, who meet simultaneously several criteria including: being child-less, not having previous as well as current steady relationships, residing in large cities, being well educated and financially independent and leading a specific lifestyle¹². Singles are more frequently successful individuals than non-singles (holding positions of directors, representatives of freelance jobs) working for their careers, money and an unconventional lifestyle. They are fluent in foreign languages, spend their time actively, treat culture selectively, valuing their independence, being refined customers and satisfied with their life¹³. They differ significantly from unmarried men and women equivalent in age who live with their parents and who usually consider a lack of a life partner and perspective of living alone as frustrating¹⁴. The current data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland permits a declaration that today's young singles are in majority educated women, employed at white-collar posts. The number of male singles is lesser with the men representing a lower average education level than that of women¹⁵.

Women living alone wish to be independent, live their own lives which they can usually afford to sustain. They are singles as they have certain expectations of their life which are best fulfilled by the model of living as a single. The category of single men is being joined by men who can not afford to practice the lifestyle reserved for singles. They are less educated, more often employed at blue-collar jobs and are therefore also less attractive for women. Singles do not form permanent relationships but also do not dismiss the perspective of finding a partner. Their requirements in this aspect are however quite high. From the studies conducted on a group of young singles¹⁶, it appears that both women as well as men believe that they will someday

11 SMG/KRC, *Pokolenie wyżu* (The age group of the demographic high), Warsaw, 2008.

12 J. Czarnecka, *Polscy single jako konsumenci: dziś i jutro* (Polish singles as consumers, today and tomorrow), [in:] J. Kowalski, A. Rossa [ed.], *Przyszłość demograficzna Polski* (Demographic future of Poland), AUL, "Folia Oeconomica" 231.

13 R. Plaga, M.K. Zawacka, *Wielkomiejski singiel* (Big-city single), MB SMG KRC, 2005.

14 K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie a nowy ustrój* (Young generation and the new system), Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw, 2010.

15 *Budżety gospodarstw domowych w 2009 roku* (Household budgets in 2009), Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw, p. 62-63.

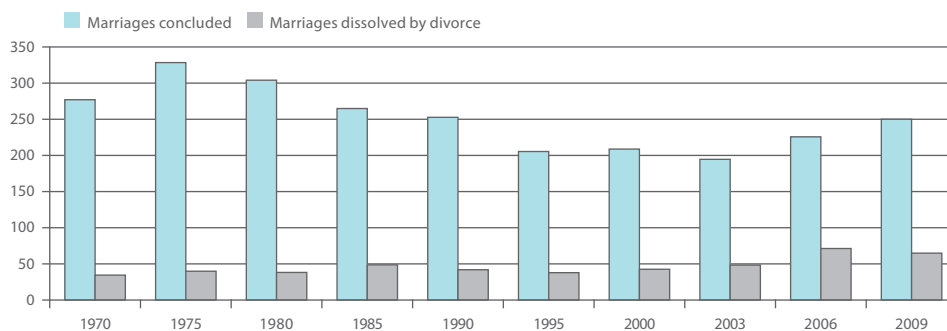
16 J. Czarnecka, *Cechy idealnego partnera i idealnego związku w opinii polskich singli i singielek* (Characteristics of an ideal partner and ideal relationship in the opinion of Polish male and female singles), Institute of Archaeology of the University of Lodz (AUL), "Folia Sociologica" 34, 2009, p. 139-155.

find a “soul mate” with which they will form the ideal relationship. Their preferences and expectations – consistent in aspects of similarity of economic status, education, life goals, are characterized by a certain discord of ideas concerning the ideal partner. Men require of their potential female partners to, first of all, provide them with psychological support, show them tenderness, gentleness and patience. Not many of them perceive a relation with a woman in the categories of an equal partner relation. On the other hand, women consider important for a partner to assure them a sense of security and stability, provide a psychological and material support, to have a responsible social position, professional aspirations and willingness towards self-development. The statements expressed by women in contrast to those of men, emphasize the importance of equal partnership and can not imagine a relationship other than with division of household chores between the couple. They also expect of men, a greater level of activeness and imaginativeness in their wooing of women. None of the sides mentions the effort which is necessary to construct lasting and deep relations with a partner. What is present, is the clearly formulated requirements without room for self-reflection or compromise.

The institutions of marriage and family still constitute a highly featured value declared and approved by the majority of young people. The married men and women constitute 34.8% of the population aged 15-35 and are the second group in terms of numbers after consensual unions as a form of living together.

Those with negative experiences of marriage, being divorced or remaining in separation, form a small margin of 1.4 percent. These statistics do differ in several age categories. While as part of the younger age group (26-30) married women and men represent less than half of the population, older adults (30-35) are in majority (71.5%) already married. It is safe to state that it is precisely that time (in one’s thirties) that the most important decisions concerning personal life are made – young people most often get married and have small children within this period. It is also the time of occurrence of first significant marital conflicts with percentages of divorces in the age category of 30-35 nearing the average within the entire population which was not as apparent in prior decades. The number of marriages concluded in Poland since 1975 has been continually decreasing until 2006 when the declining tendency began to turn (Fig. 6.8).

Fig. 6.8. Marriages concluded and dissolved by divorce in Poland between 1970-2009 (in thousands)



Source: Proprietary analysis on data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland.

The definite majority of newly-weds are young, married couples with neither of the partners being above 34 years of age, constituted in 2009 85.3% of all marriages concluded. A more typical model within this group is the union of an older man with a younger woman (66%). An inverted model with an older wife, pertains to 20% of all marriages. The relatively rarest is the incidence of marriage by two young people of the same age (16%). Marriages being concluded are also in majority first marriages (of previously unmarried men and women). In recent years, share in the overall number of marriages concluded is declining (from 87% in 2004 to 84.7% in 2009¹⁷), which signifies an increase in repeated marriages and a growing "secondary marriage market".

The clear quantitative predominance of well-educated women in relation to men and the equally clear pursuance by young women of hypergamy (selecting a life partner with status higher or at least similar to own) is causing a portion of them to fail in finding an appropriate partner. Marriages in which both spouses possess a higher education level amount to 21.6% of all young marriages. Much more numerous are instances in which a woman with a higher education diploma decides on marriage with a man of a lower educational status than her (28.2%). Cases in which the opposite is true: a man holding a higher education level while his female partner at least a secondary school diploma, are almost three times rarer (10.9% of marriages) and indicate how much the situation in Poland has changed within this scope.

Table 6.3. Homogamy, hypergamy and structures of divorce¹⁸

Education level	Marriages concluded	Marriages dissolved by divorce
Educational homogamy		
high	21.6	11.5
medium	29.7	16.6
low	11.0	31.3
Educational hypergamy		
Higher status of women	28.2	31.0
Higher status of men	10.9	9.6
In total	100.0	100.0

Source: Own analysis on basis of data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland.

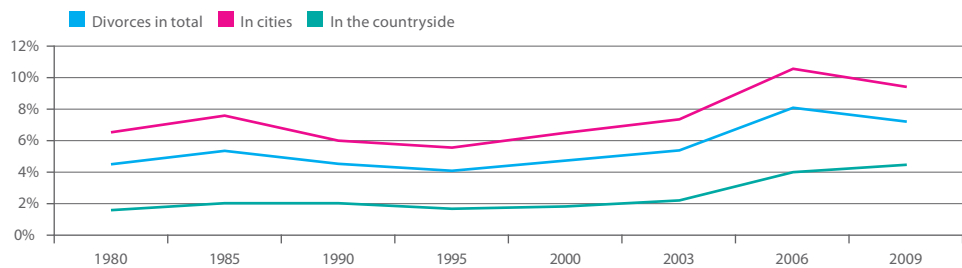
The decision on marrying a man with a lower educational status appears risky in the long-term perspective. Such marriages are subject to more frequent risk of conflict and breakup. The only marriages bearing a greater risk are ones concluded

17 Own calculations on the basis of data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland.

18 Data concerning persons below the age of 35.

by two partners of a low educational status (Table 6.3). The most often declared reasons for the decomposition of young marriages is the incompatibility of characters, failure to keep marital fidelity, abuse of alcohol but also excessive individualism which results in the spouses not being able to arrange their relations and abandon some of their personal pursuits. The most common consequences are children deprived of full parenthood; 60% of divorces concerns families with small children which usually means a child remaining with the mother and resulting difficult material living conditions associated with the effect of feminization of poverty.

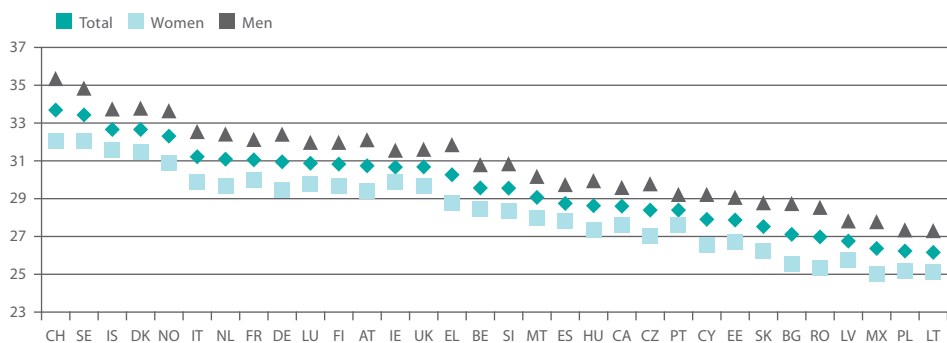
Fig. 6.9. Divorce rates during the years between 1980 and 2009¹⁹



Source: Own analysis on data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland.

The dynamics of divorce in Poland had up to 2006 including, a consistently increasing character. The numbers and the rates began to decline after this period. Slightly more than a third of divorces (40.3%) concerned young persons below the age of 35. They do still remain in a much greater aspect the issue of cities rather than rural areas (Fig. 6.9), with the percentage of divorces pronounced with regard to young marriages being greater in the rural areas than in cities (39.3% compared with 34.6%).

Fig. 6.10. Average age for entering into first marriage – Poland compared to other states (2008)



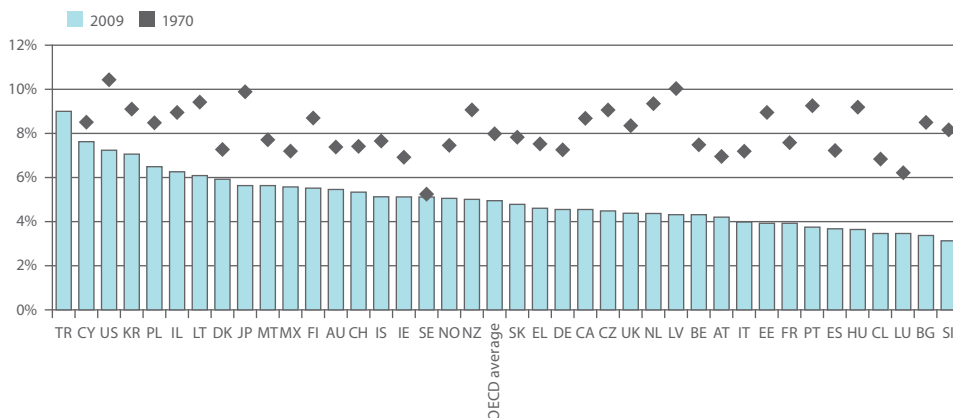
Source: Eurostat & National Statistical Offices, OECD Family Database 2010.

19 The indicator takes into account the number of marriages dissolved by divorce per 1000 existing marital unions.

It is these and other changes which cause many alarming comments in Poland while having a calmer course in other European states. The average age for marriage in Poland is still one of the lowest and stands at slightly above 25 years for women and above 29 years for men, with the norm in majority of other states being a few years later. This holds especially true in Scandinavian countries or Switzerland where young people are in no hurry to get married. Such decisions are usually undertaken between the ages of 31-32 for women and 33-35 for men (Fig. 6.10).

The numbers of marriages being concluded in Poland are also proof to the processes of second demographic transition beginning only just now. While the institution of marriage is clearly losing its significance in majority of European states (number of marriages is dropping sharply), number of marriages being concluded in Poland is considerably higher with decreases being relatively small (Fig. 6.11). While the national statistics do indicate significant changes, similar processes taking place in Poland in comparison with other states, still indicates a great gap between our country and trends characteristic for the western culture. This could mean that the fundamental process of diversification of marital and family models is still mainly before us but could also mean, that we may stand by our cultural characteristics maintaining the formal union of marriage as the principal reproductive institution²⁰.

Fig. 6.11. Changes in numbers of marriages concluded – Poland and other states (2009)²¹



Source: Eurostat & National Statistical Offices, OECD Family Database 2010.

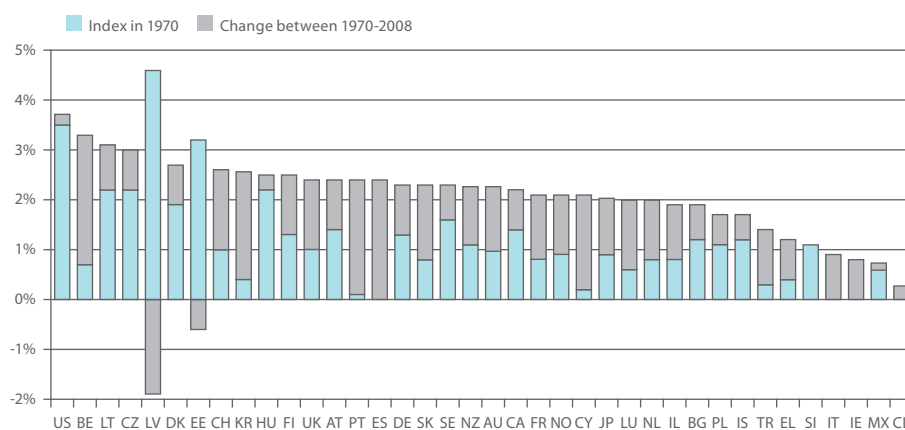
Such conclusions may be formulated based on comparisons of quantitative figures and divorce rate dynamics, both in Poland and around the world. In light of the OECD data, we are a state with a rather stabilized divorce rate indexes, with low dynamics, which testifies to Poles' strong attachment to the institution of marriage. We do in this aspect, belong to the less numerous group of states such as Bulgaria, Iceland, Mexico or Cyprus. For majority of these states, either the numbers of divorces

20 See T.Szlendak, Family Sociology. Evolution, history, differentiation. Polish Scientific Publishers (PWN), Warsaw, 2010.

21 Number of marriages per 1000 people.

are greater or their dynamics are growing rapidly or both these tendencies taking place simultaneously (Fig. 6.12).

Fig. 6.12. Divorce rate dynamics – Poland in comparison with other OECD countries (2008)²²



Source: Eurostat & National Statistical Offices, OECD Family Database 2010.

These and other comparisons suggest that the specifics of Poland's changes in terms of marital and family life is in significantly lesser degree based on the deconstruction of the institution of marriage and family as it is taking place in majority of European states. Despite multiple forms being alternatives to marriage, this institution is in Poland still exceptionally well (at least, if statistical figures are taken as proof). However, the true change taking place is emergent in character, less evident and concerns internal transformation of emotional relations between partners, sex, procreation models, division of household duties, tensions resultant from the family ties with the social system, the labour market as well as the changing status of women. All these factors form a "new sentimental order" within the family, which, as stated by Tomasz Szlendak – "(...) resulted from three processes of separation. First, sex became separated from marriage, next, marriage became separated from fertility and finally marriage became detached from family"²³.

6.3. Intimacy and sexuality

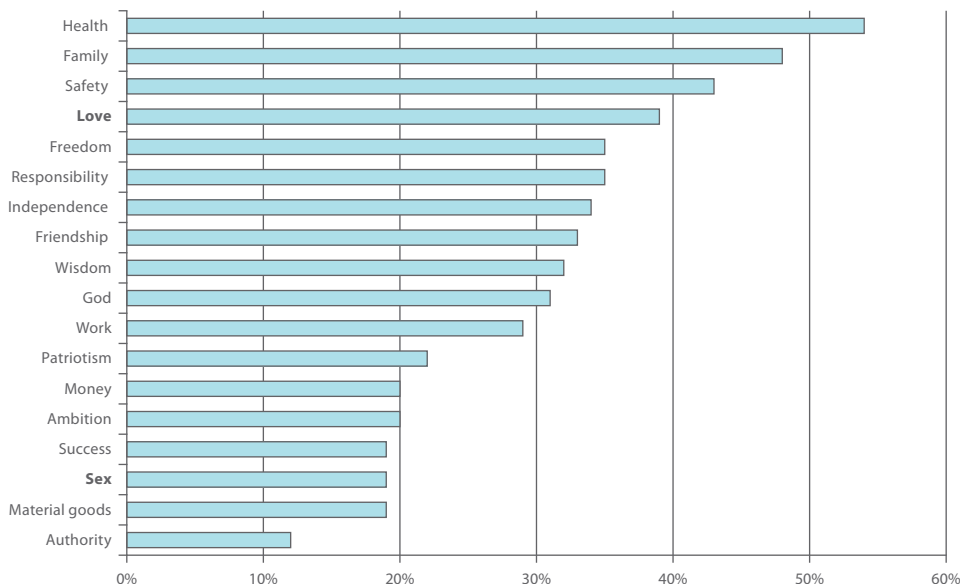
During the nineteen eighties, love was still considered an inseparable element of the category labelled "personal happiness and successful family life", which is nowadays separating from them, while remaining in the most clear association with intimacy. Whatever it means subjectively, it is considered as being of the highest importance by youth²⁴ and very important in general for all Poles.

²² Number of divorces per 1000 people.

²³ T. Szlendak, op. cit., p. 403.

²⁴ Youth (Młodzież) 2010, Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), Warsaw, January 2011, p. 11.

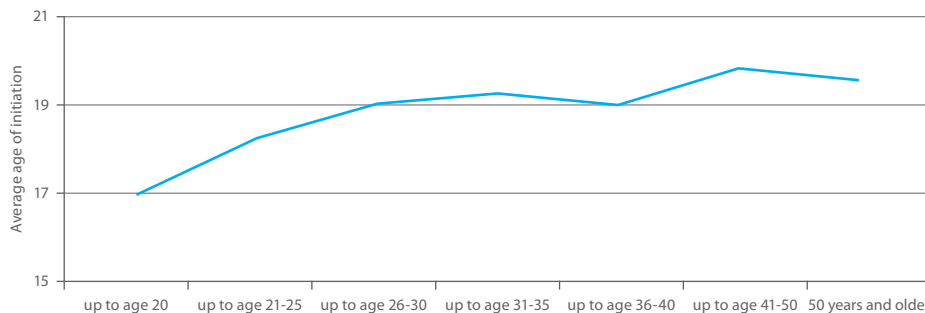
Fig. 6.13. Love and sex in comparison with other life values



Source: http://kobieta.gazeta.pl/kobieta/1,107880,9102603,Czym_dla_Polakow_jest_milosc_.html.

Such responses were collected from 39% of all respondents and as much as 47% of twenty-year-olds as part of a survey in 2010. More important than love is only health, safety and family. Love represents greater significance for women (42%) than men (35%). It is different in the case of love coupled with sex which is very important for 26% of men and only 12% of women, regardless of the education level²⁵.

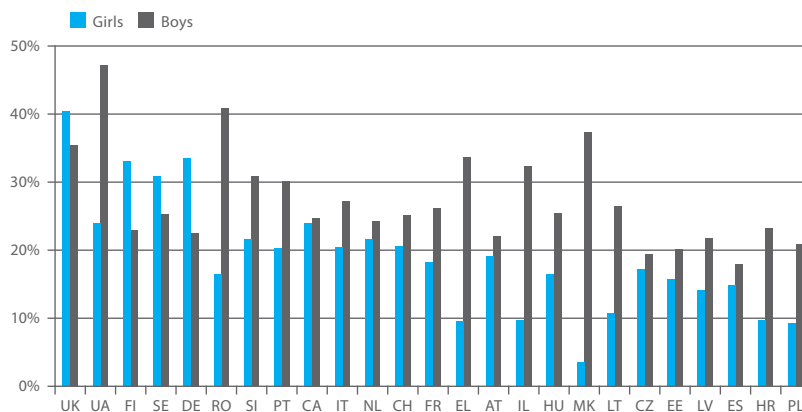
Fig. 6.14. Time of sexual initiation in various age categories



Source: Z. Izdebski, Seks Polaków w Internecie, (Sex and Internet in Poland), Research report, January 2010, p. 15.

25 A study realized by company 4P Research Mix on a 1000-person test group representative of the Polish population aged 15+. We do not unfortunately know what is included in the related studies under the term of "love and sex" with the low position of sex resultant from, for example a large share of respondents, love including sex, but with the emotional aspect. Sex alone does for some carry a negative association and deters from underlining it exceptional value (as often stated, i.e. by women). Casual sex, without feelings, does not have to be highly valued but proving successful within a relationship, may be assigned a very high value indeed.

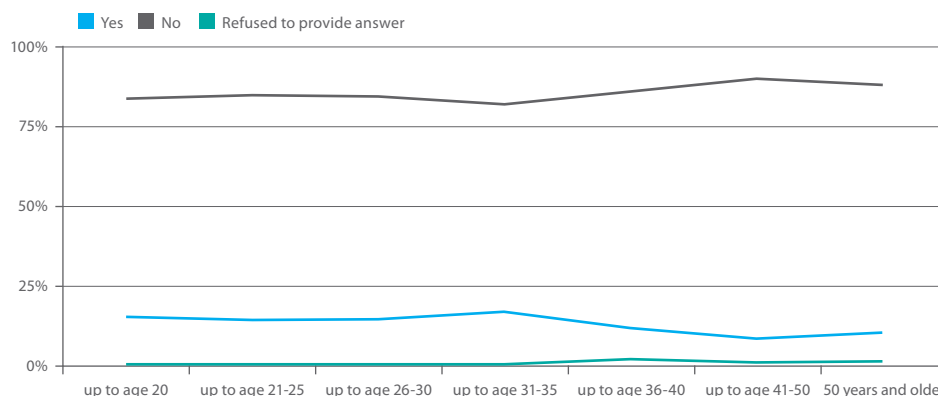
Fig. 6.15. Percentage of person aged 15 who had experience in terms of sexual initiation – international context



Source: Young people's health in context. HBSC Study: International Report from 2001/2002 Survey No. 1, 2004, p. 156.

The average age of sexual initiation in Poland stands at 18.8 in case of women and 18.7 for men with the gap between generations spanning 3 years, which means that representatives of the youngest generation enter into this important area of life experience being socially and emotionally immature (Fig. 6.14). When comparing with other states, Polish girls and boys are even so less sexually experienced (Fig. 6.15). While sexual initiation in Poland is experienced by every tenth girl and every fifth boy aged 15, the same is true in England for every third girl and nearly every other boy.

Fig. 6.16. Sexual contact with a person of same gender by age



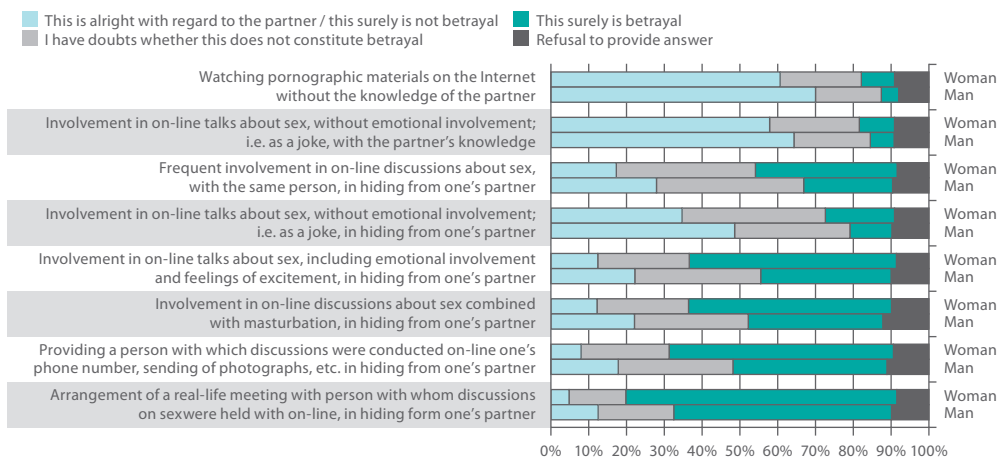
Source: Z. Izdebski, Seks Polaków w Internecie (Sex and the Internet in Poland), A research report, January 2010, p. 17.

In a study assuring complete anonymity, significance of sex in the life of Poles is displayed as being far greater than declared, while the erotic behaviours of young

people prove high openness to exploration and unconventional experiences²⁶. The most sexually active are persons between ages of 26 and 30 (with 61.6% declaring having sex at least once per week) and persons ages 31-35. Sexual contact with a person of the same gender is declared by more than 13% of Poles with a clearly greater number including youth (17%). Nearly 10% of people describing themselves as heterosexuals having had sexual contacts with a person of the same gender. Such sexual behaviours as masturbation or oral or anal sex correspond to age and suggest a greater need for erotic exploration in the younger generation which are variable in intensity among different social and status groups.

Less than half of women (42%) and nearly half of men (43.8%) admits to sexual contacts with someone from outside their relationship – much more than would be expected from the importance they assign to fidelity. The percentage of persons cheating on their partners increases with age – from 30% in the lowest age category to over 60% among persons over 50 years old. A portion of betrayals and relationship disloyalties takes place on the Internet and by means of the Internet. Nearly one third (28.7%) arranges meetings with a person contacted via Internet for sex in real life. This holds true most often for persons between 26-30 years of age. Many of these behaviours are not treated as unethical behaviour or infidelity.

Fig. 6.17. Erotic behaviour on the Internet and sense of betrayal



Source: Z. Izdebski, Seks Polaków w Internecie (Sex and the Internet in Poland), A research report, January 2010, p. 51.

All these data suggest that the Polish erotic customs are undergoing significant changes and entering into the sphere of processes characteristic for post-modernism. This is indicated by occurrence of “contradictory tendencies” (on one hand declarations are made on attachment to traditional values such as love, the object of

26 A study conducted by Zbigniew Izdebski, realized by the INDICATOR Centre for Marketing Research as contracted by the company Polpharma within the period from December 2009 to January 2010 including 10016 Internet users aged 18+ using the CAPI method. Persons between the ages of 18 and 35 constituted 62.7% of the test group.

which is to include one partner, with on the other hand, sexual activeness towards multiple sexual partners being clearly visible). It is possible to see, on the examples of youth how the processes of the subjective formation and reconstruction of one's own erotic "I" are beginning to take place. Less and less importance is focused on observing customs of tradition and cultural models reserved for genders or even the concentration of one's attention on a partner but instead on oneself and own experiences. Very clear is the trend based on weakening normativity of heterosexuality as the valid method of interaction between man and woman. Heterosexuality is losing its characteristic of norm not only within popular culture. What is taking place, is the factual naturalization of homosexual and bisexual orientation. It was not long ago that homosexuality and bisexuality was stigmatized, or in the best case, concealed and/or ignored. It is currently treated on an ever growing scale, as one of the permitted (and overt) forms of sexuality, occasionally considered as an attribute of those being rich, unconventional in nature and wanting to live "in style". This does not however change the fact that – on the other hand, a dislike is growing among the Polish youth with regard to homosexual persons.

6.4. Fertility, women's work, household duties and tensions between the roles

It may be that nothing is changing the characteristics of a modern family, as the cultural definition of womanhood and the social framework in which women are required to "find themselves". Family life in Poland, has for many years been based on the models of womanhood imposed by tradition, while the model of the "Polish Mother" has dominated perception of womanhood inseparably associated with readiness to "sacrifice oneself" for child and family²⁷. Since the beginning of the system transformation, this traditional family model (placing a double burden on the woman) is evolving more clearly than ever in the direction of a modern family (based on idea of equal partnership and joint responsibility in which the older definitions of roles are being displaced by new circumstances and new challenges). After twenty years of transformation, its acceptance is declared by 59% of all Poles²⁸. It is in fact much worse than that. Studies are showing the increased burdening of women with household duties, their employment rate decreasing and a drastic fall being noted in fertility. This is reflected on the household budgets and conditions of children's development, on the relations within the family and women's presence in the sphere of public life. In terms of the macroeconomic challenges and demographic threats, the simultaneous gaining of women on the job market and increasing of fertility is becoming one of the more serious challenges of social policy.

27 A. Titkow, *Tożsamość polskich kobiet. Ciągłość, zmiana, konteksty* (Identity of Polish women. Continuity, change, contexts), IFiS PAN (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences), Warsaw, 2007, p. 144-157.

28 A. Titkow, D. Duch-Krzysztożek, *Niejednoznaczny status pracy domowej kobiet* (The Inequivalence of Status of Women's Work in the Household [in:] *Raport Kobiety dla Polski. Polska dla kobiet. 20 lat transformacji 1989-2009* (Report of a woman for Poland. Poland for Women. 20 years of transformation, 1989-2009), *Feminoteka* Foundation, Warsaw, 2009.

Observation of the situation in countries with a high fertility rate and high levels of women's professional activity (Scandinavian states), allows to believe that key to the solution of this problem is the minimization of tensions resultant from failure to adjust the institutional solutions to the professional work of women (a so-called "structural conflict") as well as the presence of a traditional approach to social roles of women and men (a so-called "cultural conflict")²⁹. If this is in fact the key to solving, these two serious problems (demographic and economic) simultaneously, Poland may require much time in order to overcome them. Much points to the fact that we are essentially a country of a serious structural and cultural conflict³⁰. To state plainly, putting into practice experiences of the Scandinavian states, requires efforts of titanic proportions. The elimination of "buffers" in the form of rather unfavourable culture of employment of women (prejudices towards especially young women, as being potential mothers), requires new legal regulation and efforts at the structural level, influencing social awareness and both institutional as well as financial support.

6.4.1. Fertility

The importance of having children is falling among the Polish women, while any woman consciously renouncing motherhood is no longer subject to social condemnation. The lower birth rate is affected by few individual factors. Firstly, the emergence of effective contraception. Secondly, the increase in general prosperity and cultural changes. The perspective of freeing oneself from maternal and household duties associated with them, radically broadens the scope of freedom as well as leisure time which permits the opening onto a new lifestyle offered by consumer society. The third factor is the increase in the emancipational aspirations of women who crave education and wish to become independent. This increases their attractiveness as potential employees while the greater investments in education raise their determination in terms of undertaking gainful employment. The final factor is the increasing social acceptance for granting women full scope of rights (in terms of employment and earnings) which is becoming a standard of the social policy for many countries. In many societies however, in which these effects take place, no significant opposition exists between women's economic activity and fertility. The opposite is rather true with economically independent women, capable of handling both roles, usually deciding on a greater number of children. The fertility rate is however not aided by unemployment as well as significant differences in earnings between men and women. If a remuneration gap exists between men and women, having a child results in the women (as the ones with lower income) staying in the home. The potential involvement of men in caring for children is associated with too great a loss. If a woman earns much, her interrupting of employment decreases her income dramatically. The resultant losses may be equalized either by appropriately high social benefits (maternity, child care leave) or by facilitating access to outside

29 M. Muszyńska, Zróżnicowanie modeli rodziny w krajach europejskich w kontekście statusu kobiet w społeczeństwie, "Studia Demograficzne" 2/144 (Differentiation of family models in European states in terms of woman's status within society, "Demographic Studies" magazine, 2003, p. 55-77.

30 I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wóycicka, Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna kobiet a obowiązki rodzinne (Professional and educational activity of women and family duties), "Scholar" Publishers, Warsaw, 2007, p. 7.

child care or by way of combination of both. Studies conducted in different countries prove that benefits for families with children and tax reduction, although not indifferent from point of view of forming women's professional activity, bear less influence on the fertility rate than their chances for employment³¹.

A satisfactory level of solving the issue of the fertility rate has been achieved in countries where a rational pro-family policy has been practised for years, being based on complementary application of multiple solutions. This does consume enormous sums but also yields results not only in the form of eliminating negative demographic trends but also the professional activity of women. These policies include elements of social support for mothers (leave, child care benefits, pre-natal care) and solutions concerning work and employment (lack of practices discriminating women, flexible work time, friendly organization of work), as well as attention to access of good quality care services (nurseries, kindergartens, child care schools) or regulations concerning the overall health and social benefits. The campaigns and activities are organized and introduced simultaneously, intended to eliminate social prejudice and stereotypes concerning genders. That is precisely the approach of Scandinavian countries where prior to introduction of broad pro-family policy, the fertility rate was negatively correlated with professional activity of women. It was some time after its introduction that a status was reached when both these factors began to reinforce each other mutually (Fig. 6.18). Experience of other states observing an increase in fertility by educated and professionally active women, suggests that the fundamental importance may be the activities directed at raising the level of education and supporting employment of women³².

Resolving the problem of the birth rate in Poland is, in light of the cumulating influence of multiple economic, social and cultural factors, much more difficult, however definitely not impossible. The hasty withdrawal of the state as the employer and distributor of social benefits after 1989 increased responsibility of families for their material status and changes in participation on the job market have raised the risk and insecurity of employment³³. Those who had felt this most painfully were young women who could in an ever decreasing level count on the possibility of a trouble-free combination of professional and family duties. At the same time, education gained importance as a factor determining success in life, which inclined women to incredible educational activeness. The investments undertaken by them, not only change their professional careers and significance of work but also influence the decisions in terms of personal and family life. Dilemmas facing women are further intensified under influence from post-modernism, such as individualism and requirement of personal autonomy becoming for them increasingly more significant.

All these tendencies represent a situation of deep conflict of personal, family and professional roles with the ideal (desired) and the real fertility rates constituting two very separate values. The first of these values (2.45 in case of Polish women) sufficiently secures the process of natural generation renewal while the second (1.39) poses a drastic threat to it. Both values reveal the ambivalent approach of Polish

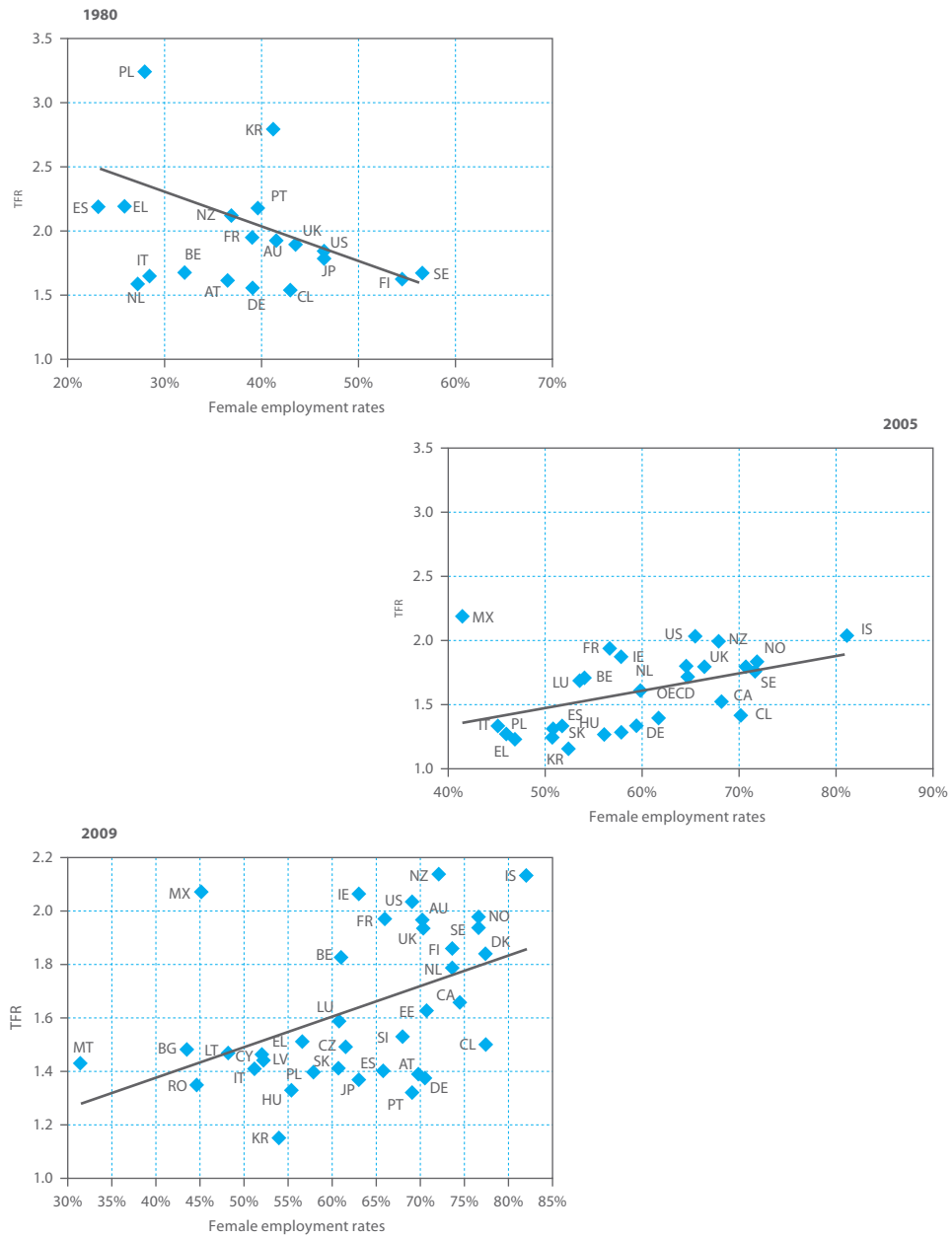
31 I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wójcicka, op. cit. p. 15.

32 Europe the continent with the lowest fertility, *Human Reproduction Update*, Vol. 16, No. 6, 2010, p. 600.

33 I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wójcicka, op. cit. p. 24-25.

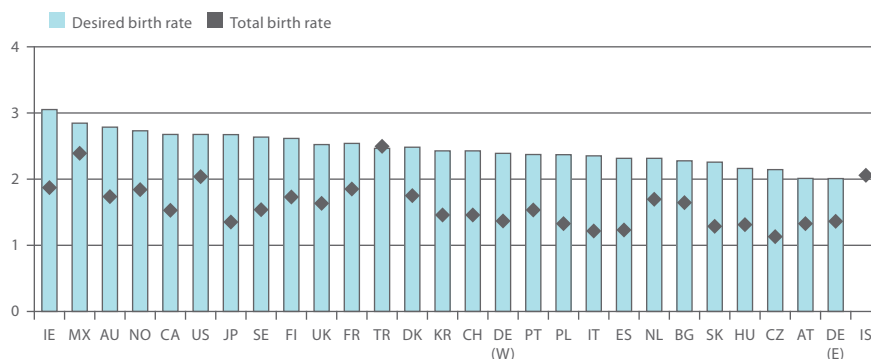
women towards motherhood. This ambivalence is most often solved by resignation from child-bearing or by delaying the decision of motherhood up to its biologically critical moment.

Fig. 6.18. Correlation levels between female employment rates and birth rates – comparison for: 1980 – 2005 – 2009



Source: OECD Family Database, 2005 and 2010.

Fig. 6.19. Desired and factual rate of women's child-bearing – Poland in comparison with OECD states



Source: World Value Survey, as in D'Addio A. and Mira d'Ercole M. 2005, [for:] OECD Family Database, 2010.

The delaying of the decision on procreation in combination with the stress resultant from pressure of roles and duties – both on the part of the men as well as the women, results in approximately 14% of young couples having problems with fertility³⁴. Testament to the scale of the problem is the broad social acceptance (73%) of in vitro insemination in the age group of 25-34 exceeding even this level. The factor significantly decreasing the level of acceptance for such treatments is a low education level, residence in small communities as well identification with the teachings of the Catholic Church. However, the in vitro method still finds prevalent favour even among this group, for use in case of married couples dealing with the issue of infertility³⁵.

6.4.2. Situation of young women on the labour market

The system transformation has caused a significant decrease in the professional activity and employment of women as well as a disturbing increase in their joblessness. The highest professional activity is presented by women with higher education (approximately 80%), lowest with education below secondary level (30-18%) All of them have paid for remaining on the job market, with much greater effort than men (by poorer employment conditions, 13% lower remunerations – on average in 2009 and much greater disproportions in terms of high-level incomes – Figure 6.20).

The rate of return on investments in education is higher for women, which reinforces their determination towards involvement in development of a professional career at the same time decreasing the motivation towards establishing a family³⁶.

Women entering into adulthood are subjected to contradictory pressures and requirements. They are on one hand expected to activate themselves professionally

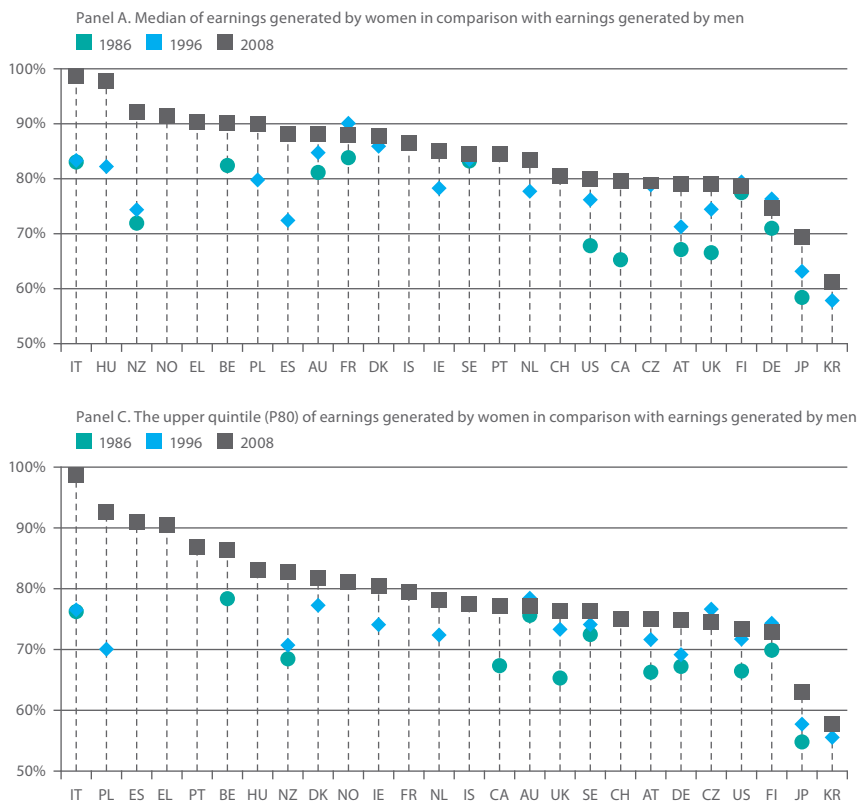
34 Estimates of the Polish Gynaecological Society.

35 Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), Etyczne aspekty zapłodnienia in vitro (Ethical aspects of in vitro insemination), Warsaw, 2010, p. 1-3.

36 I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wóycicka, op. cit. p. 39.

(many of them valuing a professional career) while on the other, entering maternal and family roles (majority of them do want to have children). The reconciliation of both these requirements in a situation of problems on the job market and lack of child-care institutions capable of taking on some of the household duties, proves very difficult. Whichever solution is chosen, it always presents a greater burden on the woman. Married men usually grow professionally (having higher employment rates and higher earnings), while the opposite being true for women – they are more susceptible to becoming professionally inactive (are more often found in the group of persons permanently unemployed or professionally inactive and having no own income at their disposal). Those who decide on a career, meet several obstacles in their path such as the effect of the “glass ceiling” or the “glass stairs” being quoted as most common.

Fig. 6.20. Differences in earnings of women and men – trends within OECD countries³⁷



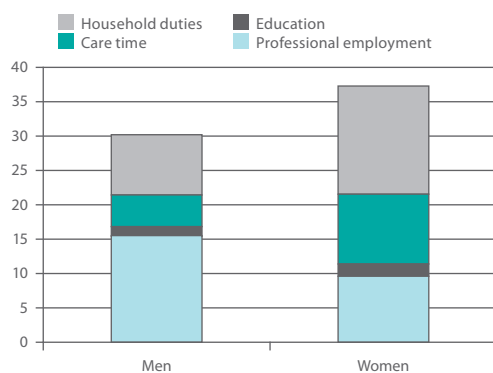
Source: Doing Better for Families, OECD 2011, p. 53.

37 Estimates pertain to the gross earnings of employees working at full-time posts and workers' earnings.

6.4.3. Time-related tensions and family models

Having a family generates an area in which new duties appear which someone is forced to take on, adjusting their time, current habits and other needs. The ones doing most of the adjustments are women with first being based on limiting their own professional activity. An exception to this are women with higher education who return to their jobs after a short break. Men do not become involved in household and child-care duties as much as women (even if they do not exercise gainful employment). In general, appearance of the first child does increase women' time load, while unloading the burden from men, although males in large cities do tend to dedicate more of their time to caring for children³⁸.

Fig. 6.21. The combined average time dedicated weekly for four types of activity³⁹ (in hours)



Source: I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wóycicka, Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna a obowiązki domowe w świetle badań empirycznych [Professional and educational activity and household duties in light of empirical studies, Gdańsk Institute for Market Economics (IBnGR)], Warsaw, 2006, p. 88.

The time of women who do not resign from professional employment is especially strained. They use the same amount of time on work as men but increase their care-giving activity more than fivefold. Even the use of outside child-care does not change these burdens as the time dedicated to the child only takes on a different function (ceases to be obligatory while becoming optional and providing satisfaction). As a result, the free time of women does definitely becomes shorter – constituting on average 7.3 hours per week (Fig. 6.21). The changes in this time along with the level of education (from 65% in case of persons with basic vocational education to 19% in the case of women with higher education). This does not however represent possibility of freeing the women with higher education from the care-giving and household duties.

38 M. Sikorska, Report on the study "Motherhood, day-to-day". For the purposes of the AXA programme "Supporting moms", p. 60 and other.

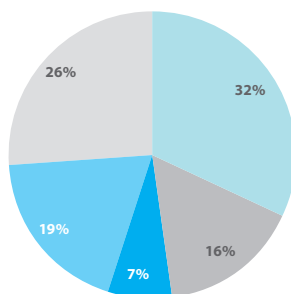
39 On the basis of a Study of Professional Activity of the Population (BAEL) and two accompanying module studies "Work and family duties" (a sub-group of the BAEL study – ages between 15-64) and "Professional, Educational and Family Activity" (based on a sub-group of BAEL for ages 18-64). Studies were conducted in the I and II quarter of 2005. Studies were conducted in cooperation with the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) – see: I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wóycicka, Professional and educational activity and household duties in light of empirical studies, Institute for Market Economics (IBnGR), Warsaw, 2006.

The higher education level increases their professional activity without reducing the amount of ungainful work time within the home.

The association of the family roles with the situation on the labour market and failure of other institutional solutions to adapt to the duties of women, results in the most anachronistic and most unfavourable family models being practised among the young generation (Fig. 6.22) – a traditional one (with the man being the main provider of the family and with the woman taking care of the household and children – 26%) and a mixed one (with two providers but also dual burden upon the women – both in the workplace and in the home – 32%).

Fig. 6.22. Marriage models (relationships) among Poles aged 18-39

- **Mixed model** (both spouses employed professionally with the managing of the household, raising children etc. involving mainly the wife)
- **Others**
- **Inverse model** (with only the wife employed, earning sufficiently to satisfy the needs of the family, while the husband handling the household and raising children, etc.)
- **Partnership model** (both spouses are active professionally and share equally the duties of managing the household and caring for children)
- **Traditional model** (only the husband works while the woman takes care of the household and raises children)



Source: Poles' attitudes towards procreation, Central Statistical Office, 2010, p. 8.

Partnership model – with both working parents responsible jointly for family duties – although it does ever more clearly appear in the perception of the young generation, it still stands little chance for being put into reality (implemented by 19% of married couples/couples aged 18-39).

6.5. Two categories of young mothers and two different worlds

Young women form a bipolar system with the level of education being the differentiating factor of its extremes. Those with not quite high education levels, much like representatives of the older generation, are not very active in the professional sphere. A few factors do add to this: they usually have children, are less attractive for employers and have chances for rather low-level remuneration. A small child lowers the probability of professional activity of women by 21 points while outside child-care raises it by 17⁴⁰. Young mothers without a good education are not inclined to activate professionally

40 I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wóycicka, op. cit., p. 138-162.

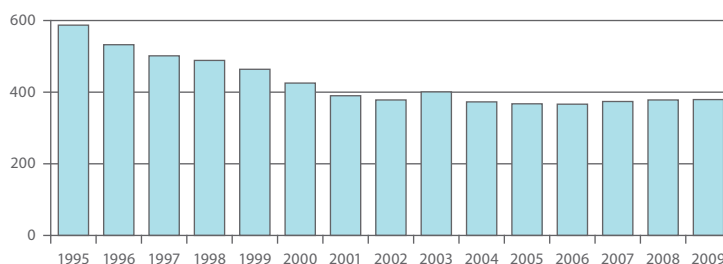
with the desire of activation being declared by only 17 percent. The reason is not so much the lack of available employment or its appropriate type but rather the behaviour of women dictated by their exclusion from professional activity as well as the status of the family. The first child is not so much a problem in this sense but providing care to subsequent children threatens with unemployment. The problem does not even reside in the discriminating practices of employers – important is the period of professional deactivation: the changes of employment decrease as the inactive period causes de-capitalization of the already somewhat limited professional skills.

The second group includes women with significantly different professional perspectives⁴¹. Their characteristics include a high level of education, low reproductiveness, better employment and higher remuneration. Women having lower education are characterised by a higher reproductiveness, lower employment and lower remuneration. This represents two different worlds, two different social areas and radically different conditions for development of children. Women who have invested in their own education have achieved strong stimuli towards professional activation but also a lower motivation towards having children. Educated women, having a job and a child, are not relieved of fulfilment of both household and child-care duties. As a result better educated women are attempting to combine the household and professional duties at the cost of their own time and living comfort. Women who are not educated, have much weaker motivation towards entering the job market while giving birth to a child cause their chances for undertaking employment to decrease the longer the period of professional deactivation lasts.

6.6. Existing and preferred forms of child-care

The institutional solutions currently existing in Poland are not satisfactory from the point of view of a family's functioning and growth. Working hours are fixed, employment is temporary, although flexible for the job market, it is not flexible for women and even more absorbing for women through the necessity of continuous job seeking. The child-care institutions (nurseries and kindergartens) have over the years been subjected to systematic reduction (Fig. 6.23-6.24-6.25).

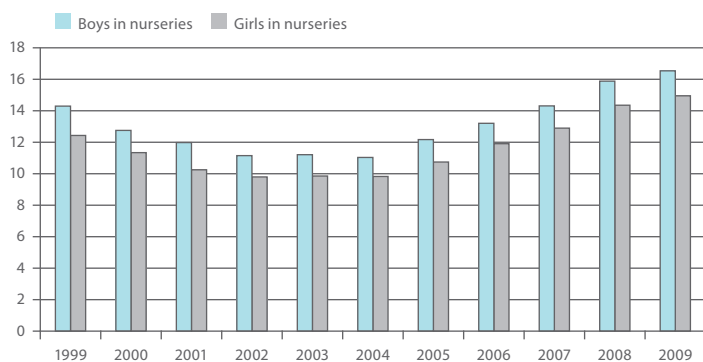
Fig. 6.23. Changes in quantity of nurseries between the years of 1995-2009



Source: Own study on the basis of Regional Data Bank, Central Statistical Office (GUS).

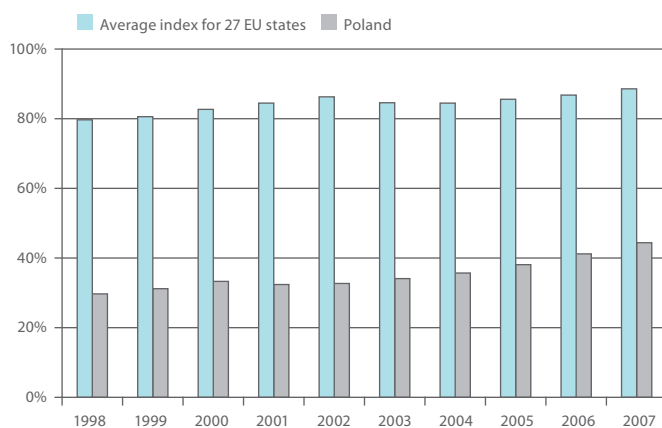
41 U. Sztanderska, G. Grotkowska, *Zatrudnienie i bezrobocie kobiet i mężczyzn (Employment and unemployment of men and women)*, [in:] I. Kotowska and others. [ed.], *Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna (Professional and educational activity)...*, p. 217.

Fig. 6.24. Children attending nurseries by gender (in thousands)



Source: Podstawowe dane z zakresu ochrony zdrowia w 2009 r. (Basic data on scope of healthcare in 2009), Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw, 2011, p. 81.

Fig. 6.25. Percentage of four-year-olds attending kindergartens – Poland and EU states



Source: Education System and Education in the 2008/2009 school year, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw, 2010.

Only 3.7% of children attend nurseries. The EU average stands at 26%. This index does in certain countries (i.e. in Denmark) reach 50% and exceeds this level in others. Less than half of four-year-olds makes use of kindergartens. The main burden of the child-care is taken on by women – mothers or supporting family members.

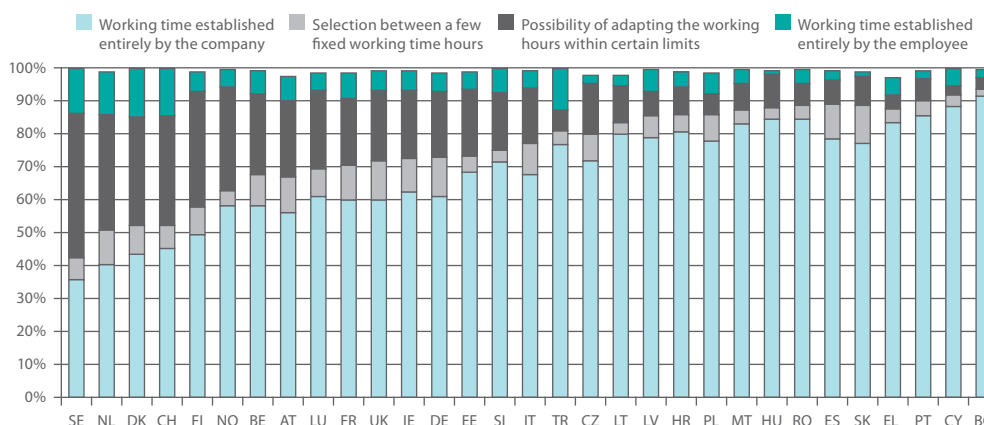
The most frequent method of solving the problems of child-care in Poland are parental leaves. They are most often used in full by less educated women (65% in comparison with 37% of those with higher education), additionally drawing maternity benefits and displaying no interest in undertaking employment⁴². In every third case, child-care is realized with the assistance of family members (mainly grandmothers) which generates another unfavourable trend – professional deactivation of women aged 50+. The impossibility of combining the professional and child-care duties is cit-

42 I. Kotowska, U. Sztanderska, I. Wóycicka, op. cit. p. 377.

ed as the main reason for professional inactivity by majority of young women. Among them, 44% includes mothers with children between the ages of 0 and 3. An optimal solution for them would include work which could be done from home, would be flexible in nature or within terms of part-time employment. Clearly visible is also interest in greater need of outside support on the part of care institutions with the problem being not so much their availability or quality but rather their cost.

An area very difficult in terms of regulations is the organization of work due to the additional burden on women having small children. Poland belongs to the group of countries where the employment offers are not very family-friendly in nature (Fig. 6.26). The working time is in nearly 80% of cases established by the employer as being inflexible. The possibility of a lesser or greater management of the working time by the employee reaches 5%. This pertains equally to men and women⁴³. A totally different situation is applied in Europe's northern states where the rigour of working time imposed by the employer is half as small with the possibility of the work calendar being customized by the employee being three times as great while intermediate forms of employment making working time more flexible being nearly ten times as frequent.

Fig. 6.26. Arrangement of working time – percentage of employees, who have time



Source: OECD, Family Database 2010.

Countries where the deinstitutionalization and destabilization of the family is more advanced (with less traditional elements and relationship models and greater number of indexes indicating the emergence of alternative models having strong outside support) also indicate higher fertility rates. Countries oriented towards the stability of traditional forms of family life and withdrawing from supporting initiatives, are paying for it with lower fertility indexes⁴⁴. Polish couples – oscillating between the prefer-

43 Equally insensitive towards family life are the Polish schools – including their organization of working time, possibilities of organizing children's time after lessons, etc. It should be noted that the second phase of the professional deactivation of women coincides with the period of the first few years of a child's school education.

44 I. Kotowska, Zmiany aktywności zawodowej kobiet a modele rodziny w Europie (Changes in the professional activity of women and family models in Europe), [in:] M. Sikorska [ed.], Być rodzicem we współczesnej Polsce (Parenting in modern Poland), WUW, Warsaw, 2009, p. 167-168.

ences of partnership and structural barriers forcing them into traditional models – have developed the “sequenced model” as one being the most optimal. The model is based on a selection of different solutions depending on the stage of the family’s life: in the situation of small children being present and requiring care, a less or more traditional family model is adopted, when no requirement is necessary of caring for children, a change of preference is shifted towards the direction of the partnership model⁴⁵.

6.7. The quality of family life and relations within the family

Having children more clearly contributes to the increase in satisfaction from life for men than for women (although it is women who wish to have children more often). This conclusion, which distinguishes Poland among other states⁴⁶, may indicate two issues: stimulation of men’s fatherhood and the overtiring of women with motherhood. Both these tendencies are more frequently an attribute of the younger generation. In more “traditional” times and in families formed by somewhat older generations, it was the woman/mother who constituted the family’s core. The lasting presence of such models within Polish realities is still proven by studies conducted among the youth. Mothers build stronger bonds with the children. Having a strong bond with the mother is declared by a third of the youth but only by a quarter for fathers. Weak bonds with a mother are a rarity (16%) while as much as 29% with a father. Mothers help children more often than fathers do when they require it (75% compared with 51%), are more often loving (85% compared with 63%) and also better understand problems and concerns of their children (47% compared with 26%). It is also easier to discuss with mothers issues which are worrying for youth – as declared by 80% of teenagers. Similar observations with regard to fathers are expressed by 58% of the youth⁴⁷.

Building and maintaining bonds requires separate competences and additional attention. Women being overloaded with numerous duties may be tired by maternity especially as they feel isolated in these duties. The full monitoring of the children’s activities during free time, where and with whom they have contact outside the home is most often possessed by mothers (50% compared with 26% of fathers). Insufficient knowledge in this area concerns 17% of mothers and 41% of fathers. Women – taking on the main part of the duties associated with upbringing within the family, are ever more often finding themselves in situations which they do not know from own experience, which they do not understand and fail to know how to react to. They additionally submit to pressures of new parenting models. According to the new ideology of raising children a mother should: treat her own child subjectively, eliciting its

45 A. Baranowska, Poglądy i preferencje dotyczące ekonomicznego modelu rodziny (Opinions and views on the economic model of the family), [in:] I. Kotowska and others, *Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna (Professional and educational activity)...*, op. cit. p. 404-417.

46 1999/2000 European Values Survey.

47 I. Tabak, *Relacje młodzieży z rodzicami i rodzeństwem (Relations of youth with parents and siblings)*, [in:] *Subjective health, satisfaction from life and health behaviours of post-gymnasium school pupils in Poland in terms of psychological, social and economic factors. Report from study*, A. Oblacińska, B. Woynarowska [ed.], Mother and Child Institute (IMiD), Warsaw, 2006.

own individuality, respect its choices, not hit it, not shout at it, not “stress” over it and not treat it as a “symbol of prestige” or own unfulfilled ambitions, realizing herself not “through” the children but “in” them. She should raise a person who is healthy, happy, fully developing their talents and who will hold their own in the world, which she herself does not yet know⁴⁸.

The model of the “new father”, who dedicates his time and attention to the child, feels responsible for it, keeps a close emotional contact with it, is caring, is an image promoted intensively in the mass media, finding – for obvious reasons – the full acceptance and understanding on the part of the women who wish to have children. The new ideas have been accepted unexpectedly well, with their supporters being above all, persons being young and better educated. Although opinions and preferences evolve faster than behaviours, the Polish family is becoming, in the impression of the youngest people, a “soft” institution, reflexively constructed, focussed around the expressive functions and based on partnership relations in issues until now not included in the partnership model: bringing-up and caring for children⁴⁹.

6.8. Housing situation and living conditions of young people

Young people are, during their step into adulthood, exposed to more tensions and deficiencies than any other social group. They are more often affected by material shortages, housing issues or poverty. Their incomes usually fit in general in the first, lowest decyls, which stems from the difficulty of finding full-time, stable employment and the fact that they are only beginning their professional careers. They also have great needs associated with becoming independent or starting a family.

The numbers of young families in Poland raising children aged 0-14 with both parents working on full-time employment, reach little over 50 percent. Over 30% include households with a single parent being employed. Every tenth family includes both parents without employment (Fig. 6.27). As a frequent consequence of this state of affairs is – despite the short period of professional activity – great internal differentiation of the earnings situation and the material conditions within families of young people. The factors most differentiating include the level of education, type of the biological family (presence and number of children) as well as the size of the living accommodation⁵⁰.

Those living in the most favourable situation are child-less married couples, persons living alone (so-called singles), families with a single child residing in large urban centres. Those in the most unfavourable conditions are those raising children

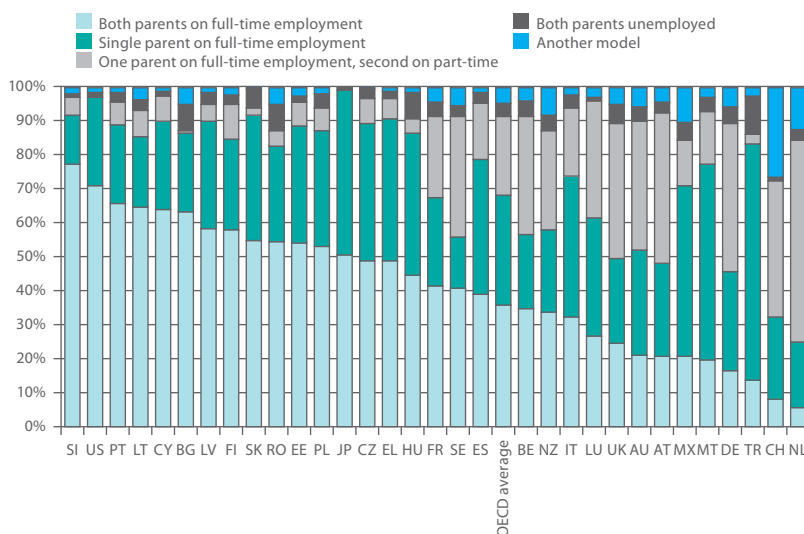
48 M. Sikorska, *Nowa matka, nowy ojciec, nowe dziecko*. (New mother, new father, new child). O nowym układzie sił w polskich rodzinach (Concerning the new configuration of powers within Polish families), Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne (Academic and Professional Publishers), Warsaw, 2009.

49 M. Sikorska [ed.], *Być rodzicem we współczesnej Polsce* (Parenting in modern Poland), Warsaw University Press Warsaw, 2006.

50 A. Olejniczuk-Merta [edited by], *Uwarunkowania rozwoju społeczno-zawodowej aktywności ludzi młodych* (Conditions of social and professional development of activity of young people), Institute for Market, Consumption and Business Cycles Research (IBRKiK), Warsaw, 2008, p. 32-43.

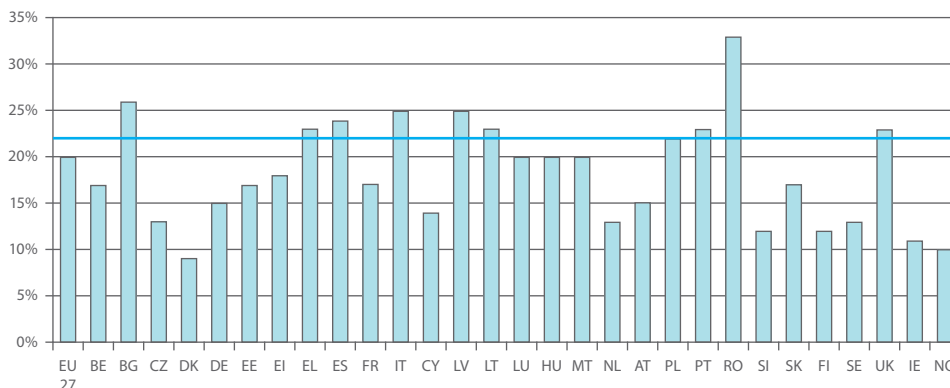
on their own, with low educational status, residing in rural areas and families with multiple children. If not for social benefits, the scope of poverty would be even greater (reaching 33% according to a Eurostat simulation)⁵¹.

Fig. 6.27. Employment characteristics of parents with children aged 0-14 (2007)



Source: Family Database 2010.

Fig. 6.28. Threat of relative poverty of children up to 18 years of age



Source: Poverty in Poland compared to EU states according to the EU Statistics on Income and Living Condition – EU-SILC 2008, Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS), Warsaw, 2010, p. 6.

The threat of poverty among these families is apparently greater than that of average for Poland. It concerns 22% of children (with 34% in multi-children families).

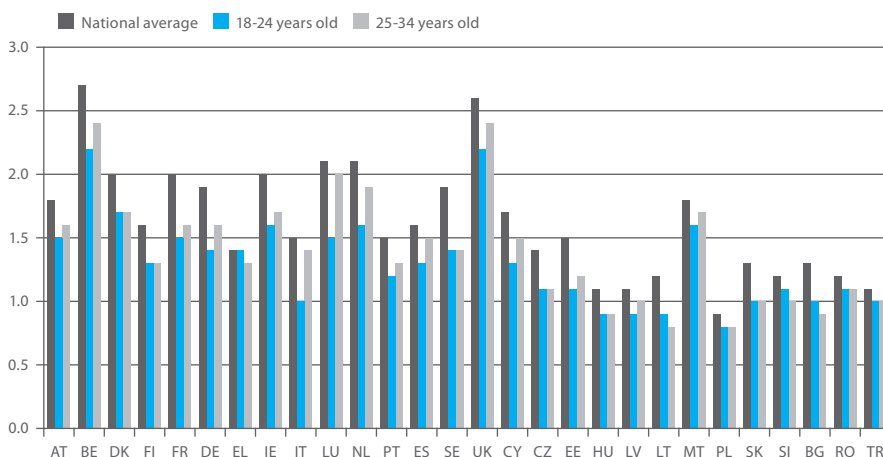
51 Ubóstwo w Polsce na tle krajów UE w świetle Europejskiego Badania Dochodów i Warunków Życia – EU-SILC 2008 (Poverty in Poland compared to EU states according to the EU Statistics on Income and Living Condition – EU-SILC 2008), Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw, 2010, p. 1-4.

Poland belongs to countries with the greatest risk of poverty not only among children but also among young people (21% in the 18-24 age group and 17% among those 25-34). This threat pertains even to those who are employed (12%). Similar situation concerns 11% of young working Germans, 14% of Italians and as many as 20% of Danes⁵².

The incomes of families of young people are however characterized by a clearly lower level of than those of remaining family groups (constituting on average 75% of incomes of families aged 35+), with the structure of their increasing significance of income from employment, while decreasing the role of ungainful sources of subsistence (which remain specific to persons supporting children). This is indicated by the increased chances in the recent years of young people to find employment, especially among those with higher education and influencing their outlook and optimism on life. This may be explained by the difference of subjective evaluations of income and material situation of young people (which are more favourable) in comparison with those performed according to economic criteria (being less favourable).

The issue being most painful in the case of young people is the lack of flats and their general availability. Young Poles place great emphasis on the living conditions, very similar to other citizens of the EU. Concluding from the first European lifestyle quality study, ownership of a satisfactory flat (including an independent flat or a flat in general) is at the top of the requirements for Europeans and constitutes a criterion of the quality of living along with employment. It is a paradox that these needs are not satisfied in terms of great numbers of people in so many countries. Poland does in this scope also belong to the "inferior" area of Europe.

Fig. 6.29. Average number of rooms per person – Poland in comparison with EU states



Source: Proprietary analysis on basis of: First European Quality of Life Survey: Social Dimensions of Housing, 2006, p. 23.

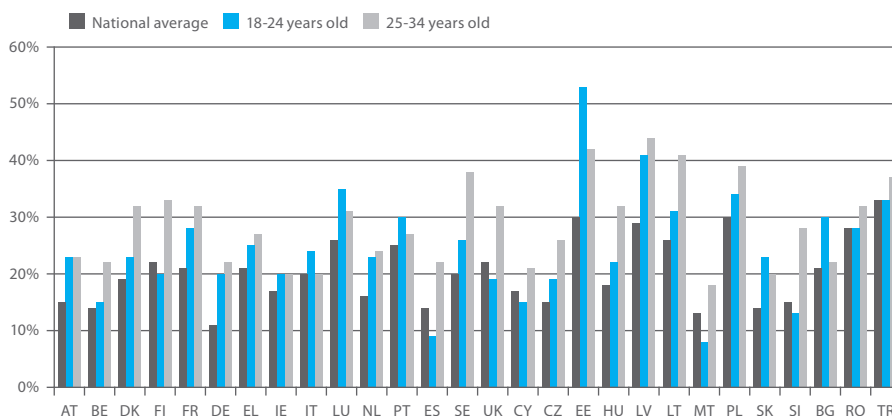
We live in conditions below the standards stipulated as part of the EU policy while taking the unquestionably worst place in terms of living situation of young people. We maintain these low ratings in terms of all indicators, including: surface area,

52 Data for 2007, [for:] Youth in Europe – Eurostat 2009, p. 42-44.

standards of the flats occupied, number of rooms per person and problems associated with operational costs. The only ratings which do not distinguish us negatively among other states are the surroundings in which we live in, including the level of safety in place of residence⁵³.

The average Polish family composing of three persons, lives in a flat with a surface area of 68 m², while a similar family in Austria occupies a flat with an area of 101 m² and 203 m² in Belgium. The minimum (as established by the EU) standard constitutes one room per person. We are the only country in which this norm is not being met and where the index of number of rooms per person is below the value of one (0.9). This value is even lower among the younger age categories amounting to 0.8 for persons aged 18-34. Other indexes confirm the very poor housing situation faced by young people. The percentage of those living alone (aged 18-24) is in our country at the level of 5% while reaching 46% in Austria, 46% in Great Britain and 62.3% in Sweden.

Fig. 6.30. Percentage of persons dissatisfied with the lack of space in the flats – Poland compared to EU states



Source: Own analysis on basis of: First European Quality of Life Survey: Social Dimensions of Housing, 2006, p. 33.

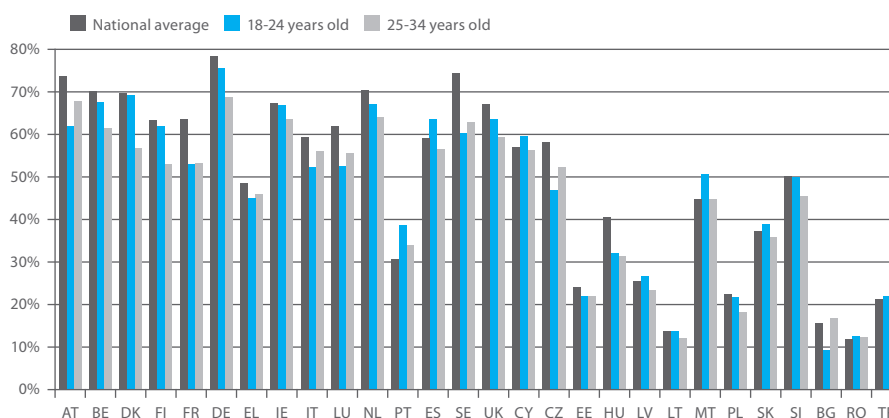
Another index utilized in studies pertaining to living conditions is the arrangement of the flats – number of rooms which it includes (the average includes the number of rooms, kitchen, sanitary facilities, as well as the wardrobe, pantry or the anteroom). This is another aspect in which we stand out in comparison with rest of Europe. The average flat in Poland is composed of 2.8 rooms with 3.5 being the standard in Portugal, 4.6 in Ireland and 5.5 in Belgium. The same indicator for young singles (aged 18-34) in Poland amounts to 1.7 and 2.3 for persons forming a joint household (and having a family)⁵⁴. Result of this, we note the highest percentage of persons criticizing the amount of room and lack of space in flats (Fig. 6.30).

53 H. Domański, A. Ostrowska and others., First European Quality of Life Survey: Social Dimensions of Housing, 2006.

54 Data from the First European Quality of Life Survey, op. cit., p. 30.

The situation in terms of the standard of the flats is no better. On average, every fourth flat inhabited by young people fails to meet the standard norms established by the EU. The same number of families faces problems with payment of costs for utilization of the flats. The housing conditions drop drastically in the case of people whose income is lowest and who are on the poverty line (38-42% of young people). The percentage of those having no significant housing problems and more specifically declaring that they have at their disposal at least a single room and no deficits stipulated as part of the Eurostat listing, equals 21.7% among the 18-34 age group and 18.2% for those aged 25-34. Worse conditions in this area are found only in Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania⁵⁵.

Fig. 6.31. Percentage of those living in flats where at least one room is available per person and no deficits are recorded – Poland in comparison with the EU



Source: Own analysis on basis of: First European Quality of Life Survey..., p. 50.

One of the reasons for this is the convergence of the still great housing needs (past and current, concerning the age groups of the demographic high) with a few reflexive moments on the real estate market. The last twenty years first saw the fall of the building sector base on large construction industrial complexes, afterwards a change in the system of financing the housing market (withdrawal of the state in light of a crediting system market) and finally the privatization of the communal and cooperative privatization of assets from which the profits had not been reallocated.

The next stage of this process is currently in place based on the speedy growth of the market system of financing the housing sector. Its result is the occurrence of cycles which are as inevitable as they are dangerous. According to experts of the National Bank of Poland, the role of the state should nowadays be primarily supporting the counter-cyclical policy based on the simultaneous initialization of numerous instruments stimulating the market mechanisms in the housing sector (more active taxation and pro-supply policy, stimulating the competition among construction companies, coordination of the monetary, supervisory and fiscal policy, freeing of

55 First European Quality of Life Survey, op. cit., p. 51.

the housing mass for commercial leasing by introducing changes in the excessively restrictive housing tenancy law). The solutions being utilized until now were modest (in terms of amounts and assortment), chaotic, did not fulfil their functions (i.e. the Social Construction Association), while certain ones [such as the program "Rodzina na swoim" (Family's own home)] operated pro-cyclically, generating significant costs for the budget⁵⁶.

Data collected by the Central Statistical Office and surveys indicate the stability and significant scale of the problem which the lack of an own flat constitutes among young people. This concerns on average 34% of the population aged 18-35. Others, having own flats in their possession intend to change them within the next few years (25%) or later (63%). Only 12% of the youth does not intend to do so⁵⁷.

The chances of solving own housing problems, young people see above all in the construction of a home (55.3%), purchasing of a new flat (19.5%) or used flat (11.4%) rather than trading it (3.8%) or making use of the Social Construction Association Programme (TBS) (2.3%). Less than 7% of young people does not see a perspective for solving their housing problem (including mainly families which are poor, multi-child, incomplete or having poor perspectives). The most frequent method for gaining the means which would permit a plan of purchasing a flat is the raising of a credit (with 71.4% young people willing to decide on this option). More than a third is ready to attempt to tackle the problem of getting a flat on their own (either already having set aside funds for this purpose or indicating future income from employment)⁵⁸.

A few years ago, young people often indicated a need for housing support on the part of the government or local governments while pointing nowadays most often to preferential credits (70%) and nearly every fifth person (17%) expecting no support from the state whatsoever⁵⁹. They say the most important is to have a job and perspective of secure employment and that the stable growth of the country is of greatest importance to them. These are however mainly the opinions of persons finishing their studies (and other preferences should be expected from persons with worse prognosis on the job market) with the readiness of majority of young Poles to become involved in solving their own housing problems is significant and shows the broad range of different possible actions.

All reports concerning the topic of housing in Poland warn of any short-term solutions. According to opinions of experts, the housing policy may not take the form of a rapid acceleration as its consequences may result in the occurrence of negative effects. The regulations best suited for a situation of demographic pressure and at the same time demographic imbalance, should be flexible, increase the number of flats for rent and reduce in the transactional costs⁶⁰. It is necessary to es-

56 Report of the Economic Institute of the National Bank of Poland: Situation on the housing real estate market in Poland during the years of 2002-2009, Warsaw, May 2010, p. 5.

57 A. Olejniczuk-Merta [ed.], *Uwarunkowania rozwoju społeczno-zawodowej aktywności ludzi młodych* (Conditions of social and professional development of activity of young people), Institute for Market, Consumption and Business Cycles Research (IBRKiK), Warsaw, 2008, p. 151-152.

58 Op. cit., p. 153.

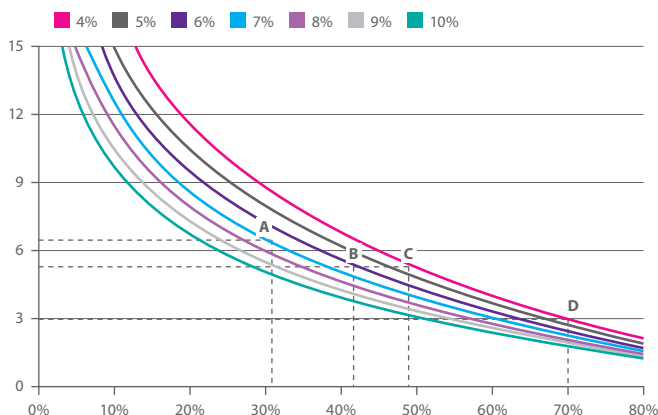
59 Op. cit. p. 159-161.

60 Situation on the housing real estate market in Poland between 2002-2009, op. cit., p. 34-35.

establish a system of subsidies to housing loans and means of freeing up the existing, damaged housing resources for purposes of leasing.

Subsidizing of housing credits would definitely increase the availability of flats on the market as illustrated in Figure 6.32. The Figure displays the aggregated curves of availability of an average flat in Poland's seven largest cities. They are a connection of the financial availability of credit and other banking parameters calculated for a flat with a surface area of 60 m² and determine the percentage of the households with financial capability of purchasing a flat by means of credit. In 2009, approximately 32% of households requiring a flat was capable of purchasing them on the market (point A). The implementation of the system of credit guarantees creates the possibilities of increasing availability of flats to a level described in point B. Due to the low credit ratings of young people, the interest subsidies and guarantees would make it possible to reach a status in which at least half of those interested could satisfy their needs on the basis of the available resources in owner-occupied flats (point C). The satisfying of needs of approximately 70% of the population (point D) would require therefore significant lowering of costs and standards of a flat as well as its size. The remaining portion of the population includes potential consumers of social housing and housing subsidies⁶¹.

Fig. 6.32. Estimate of maximum price of a flat available for a household depending on the mortgage loan interest rate (in thousands of PLN)



Source: Analysis of the National Bank of Poland on the basis of data of the Central Statistical Office, in: Status of the housing market, op. cit. p. 36.

The living standard of young families is not encouraging, with their subjective evaluations of the matter not being however so pessimistic. This stems from a few reasons, which include a generally better material situation, especially where no children or only a single child is present. Another reason is the feeling of a better perspective with young people more often expecting an improvement in their quality of living and material conditions than older persons, especially if they have promising professional perspectives. Young people are also less often afraid of poverty, especially such which

61 Sytuacja na rynku nieruchomości mieszkaniowych w Polsce w latach 2002-2009 (Situation on the housing real estate market in Poland in years 2002-2009, op. cit., p. 36.

they would not be able to deal with⁶². According to the data of the "Social Diagnosis 2009" the unequivocal satisfaction with the financial situation of one's own family is declared by a third of persons aged 18-29 and with 37% declaring moderate satisfaction. The housing conditions are perceived as satisfying by nearly half of young people (48.3%) with 29% expressing moderate satisfaction. In the first case, those unsatisfied constitute less than a third of the population (30.6%) and less than a quarter in the second (22.7%). The combining of these evaluations with earlier presented statistics declares the readiness of young Poles towards acceptance of worse conditions of living than would be indicated from the needs and expectations, and especially international norms, but also of their determination in pursuance of better standards which has its source in the highly valued element which the family constitutes and the willingness of living together. This living together, although not necessarily taking the form of marriage, is still important for majority of young people. Those who have arranged their life in such manner, declare being happy, satisfied with their marriage (88.9%) with their relations, with those closest to them (91%) and from the children (more often than in the older generation).

Summary

No more serious or more spectacular changes are taking place today, than those which are observed in the areas of marriage, personal life and emotional relations, with the young generation being the first to experience these changes first-hand. The high value placed on liberty and individuality in combination with an unspecified and uncertain future, along with structural limitations in achieving the status of an adult result in a fundamental dilemma of young people choosing between living independence (which is guaranteed by finding a job and caring about one's professional career) and starting a family (considered to be a condition for happiness in life). This dilemma has been settled in different ways which usually do not find understanding among representatives of older generations.

Above all, delayed is the moment in which the young people leave their family home. Counter to the publicist theories on the immaturity of youth, the phenomena of the crowded nest (adult children residing with the parents) has in Poland a social, cultural and economic and not a psychological basis (a longer period of educational activity, a difficult situation on the job market and the housing market, low availability of credits for young people). Living with the parents does not stop young people from living in loose, informal relationships with their partners. Marriage are a second form, after civil unions, of being together (decision on its conclusion is usually clearly increased among persons after the age of thirty, who have previously practiced "trial" relationships). The life of a single (choosing to living alone) is in contrast, becoming an ever more visible life-style choice. It is more often an attribute of women being better educated, high-earning and demanding with regard to their partner. The number of marriages in Poland is decreasing with the number of divorces remaining steady. The ones which do occur concern mostly marriages concluded by persons having the

62 Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS): Polacy o swojej sytuacji materialnej (Poles on the topic of their material status), Warsaw, 2008, p. 6.

lowest status of education or ones where the woman has a higher status in comparison with the husband. Despite these changes clearly visible from Poland's perspective, Poles appear to be much more traditional as appears in comparisons on the international scale. Far more visible changes are taking place in the erotic and sexual sphere which boldly fit into trends characteristic for post-modernism.

The greatest transformations are however caused by cultural changes in the definition of womanhood and the social frames in which they are required to "find themselves". Faced by the temptation of independence and assigned to the maternal and household duties, young Polish women live in a greater conflict of roles between a mother/care-giver of the family household and an independent, professionally active individual. This conflict, maintained structurally and culturally (the expression of which is sometimes the domination of traditional family models being reflected in the young generation) results in the situation of Poland having very low fertility rates and very low indicators of woman's professional activity. Both these phenomena are unfavourable for demographic and economic reasons and as such, constitute a significant challenge for the social policy.

The experiences of countries which have had similar problems, indicate that the most successful method of their resolution is motivating women to completing the best education possible which in turn facilitates their motivation towards professional activity and at the same time with the appropriate institutional and the system solutions, maintain the motivation of wanting to have children (in majority of the states, including Poland, the desired fertility rate greatly exceeds the factual fertility rate). Equally important are the social attitudes toward the models of family life and their release from gender stereotypes not only in reference to roles within the family.

A factor significantly restraining the decision concerning procreation are the material conditions of living. The declared dissatisfaction of youth in this scope is far lesser than indicated by objective data which is on another hand a positive signal. The scale of deficiency in this area is however so great, that every action undertaken to improve the quality of living in this sphere would be met with gratitude. This is a direct result of the rank given by young people to family life and family in general. For years invariably indicated as the highest life value (despite changes and problems it is experiencing), it is a source of much satisfaction, fulfilling many developmental and protective functions. Having children, although not being a requirement for a successful life in the opinion of young people, provides much joy, mobilizes towards greater gainful employment activity, increasing of the living standard, undertaking responsible and far-reaching decisions associated with investing in their future and development. It becomes in this manner a binding agent and one which livens the family union with greater social scope and a factor speeding up changes in the family model in direction of a "soft" institution, constructed reflexively and based on relations of a partnership.

Poland requires a mature pro-family policy based on rational premises. Solutions introduced temporarily, not seldom on basis of political motives, require rectification taking into account the social reality and specifics of the new generation. The "nurseries" act passed in 2010 is an important step forward but as a result of the cut in funding of the Sejm during its works, it remains unfinished. It is necessary to introduce a series of activities (requiring funding, if not to say being very costly,

disarming both the structural conflict (concerning institutional initiatives as well as the cultural, associated with the promotion of life models which weaken the stereotypes associated with genders).

The corrective and interferential measures should proceed simultaneously in several directions and cover multiple areas: the job market, care-giving institutions and social regulations. All these should serve first of all, the purpose of encouraging women from leaving the home and maintaining them on the job market in a manner permitting satisfactory combining of professional and family duties. Secondly, the overcoming of social stereotypes concerning gender and social roles associated with it (which is a task addressed mainly towards the media, educators and all of us while not necessarily the government).

Increasing the demand for employment of women with lower professional qualifications being the fundamental condition of success for the pro-family policy. Many niches exist within the social area which are for now, still not utilized. Aside from the increase of demand for employment, much is to be done in adapting the already existing professional roles and posts to different expectations and possibilities of women associated with different phases of the family life (when children are small, when they can attend kindergarten or school and when they become ever more independent). It is impossible to disregard the different types of facilitations in the women's return to employment and forming an atmosphere of social condemnation towards practices discriminating women in the workplace ("glass ceiling", "glass stairs"). These activities are difficult for reasons that they require not only "trilateral" agreements, tools which would not discourage employers, as well as the mental preparedness of society to notice the issues faced by women.

Equally significant is the labour market, as an area including initiatives concerning the outside support for the family. Ones of highest priority may include all solutions supporting the families in care of children such as: nurseries, kindergartens, different forms of managing children's free time at schools as part of after-hours activities, etc. The greatest neglects in this scope are noted in the rural areas – in villages and small towns where women do not have access to any kind of support, resulting in their inability to undertake employment.

The third important area of possible, as well as necessary activities, are social benefits. Their official and unofficial distribution in Poland forms a very tightly tangled network of internally incoherent solutions. The process of their un-tangling would therefore be a fundamental challenge. A solution would be such regulation of the levels and relations of remuneration and social benefits, which would result in the increased attractiveness of the first, motivating women to undertake professional employment. Another issue is the compilation of a benefits package and allocation of their providers, which would not discourage employers from employing women.

The fourth area is the scope of the persuasive action on social awareness by which the new models of unions, life-styles and perceptions of genders would be promoted. Many such activities are taking place (with the greatest contributions on the part of advertising and magazines dedicated for men and women), however it is easy to indicate areas which have until now not been utilized (the "unconquered bastion of silence" is, for example the school, school books and the attitude of the teachers themselves). Government initiatives and activities are equally important as the favourable disposition of employers or changes in regulations concerning employment.

7.

7. Consumption, free time, new media – areas for manifesting status and self-creation

7.1. Why consumption and free time?

7.2. Evolution and specificity of consumer behaviours of youth

7.3. Independent consumption
– households run by youth

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Summary

7. Consumption, free time, new media – areas for manifesting status and self-creation

CHAPTER SEVEN

In previous chapters, we did not dwell on consumption and leisure time. Meanwhile, these are the areas where individual preferences, pleasure and free choice, i.e. categories defined as fundamental needs and life values in modern culture, are superior to duties and obligations. One might risk putting forward the thesis that in order to lead a particular lifestyle, maintain the desired level of consumption, and experience pleasure (especially in leisure time), young people invest in education, professional development and particular solutions connected with their private lives.

This domain is significant due to the manner in which young people function in this area, the degree in which it meets their expectations, as well as its social function. This is where the second most important aspect (not connected with duties and obligations) of youth's self-created image manifests itself. It is also the source of their life's dynamics, which has important social consequences.

7.1. Why consumption and free time?

Consumption, which has practically already become a popular and familiar lifestyle, has become the stigma of modern culture and one of society's most important life needs. From the perspective of Poles, this unexpected change of orientation – from a life based on deprivation, restraint and shortages to a life concentrated on pleasure and wellbeing – might seem to be an issue connected with individual normative choices. This approach is often justified by the will to make up for the deficiencies of previous years. This explanation applies to the older generation, but does not suffice to elucidate the meaning of consumption in the lives of young people. The difference is substantial. In the case of older people, consumptionist orientations, similarly to ethical orientations, were determined by individual choices – one could "have" or one could "be". The dilemma whether to "have" or to "be"¹ was the dilemma of many people; it was also the dilemma of contestation generations. The famous youth revolutions in Western countries of the 1960s were a protest against life subordinated to money, careers, and ownership. "High" culture was rejected in favour of promoting artistic activity and developing new means of expression, though these did not necessarily lead to great achievements.² Currently, the young generation is socialised to fit the world of consumption, which has become their standard world – the world to which there is no alternative. Nowadays young people believe that one must "have" in order to "be". The will to own items and relish in material goods ceased to be a marker of materialistic orientation. The drive to

1 E. Fromm, *To have or to be?*, Rebis, Poznań 1997.

2 A. Jawłowska, *Drogi kontrkultury* (The Paths of Counterculture), PIW, Warsaw 1975; see also: W. Adamski, *Młode pokolenie Ameryki* (America's Young Generation), PWN, Warsaw 1977.

own items is not as important as the philosophy employed when using them, as well as the expressionism and symbolism connected with them. Such an approach has been characteristic of opulent Western societies³ for years, and has apparently become embedded in the awareness of modern Polish youth.

Why? The answer is simple: the political transformation paved the way to a new reality. We are living in a world of late or new (modern) capitalism, where consumption and high standards of living have not only been accepted as basic status and achievement markers, but have also become the legal and binding economic goal. What is more, they have also assumed the role of the fundamental driving force for its development. Under new capitalism, i.e. in the reality we are functioning in; creating individual needs and shaping new lifestyles through consumption is not a dysfunction, nor is it one of the options – it is the essential feature and condition of the survival of the whole system. Two decades of changes show that consumption and consumptionism have become powerful means of transforming the entire social system.⁴ The most significant changes took place in the area of work and in areas which constitute the opposite of the employment domain, i.e. leisure time. New capitalism “disenchanted work” and “enchanted consumption”. This still requires discipline and responsibility in the area of producing goods, and stimulates the need for pleasure and entertainment even more strongly.⁵ This is very important from the point of view of the circumstances in which young people are raised. Due to marketing and advertising activities, consumption has been transformed into a need. The appeasement of this need (or rather unceasing attempts to satisfy it) is becoming prerequisite for (the sense of) self-fulfilment. At the same time, various consumptionist pressures are not perceived as forms of oppression – as what they promise is mainly pleasure and joy.

In modern societies, due to the fact that consumptionist behavioural patterns have already colonised every-day life, cultural space available for an alternative concept of a “good life” is marginal. This alters the socialisation context for the young generation, as youth construct their life⁶ plans and their Self in the space dominated by consumption. This domain is defined by advertisers, who in response to individual needs for expressing the Self provide ready-to-use consumption packages. Mediated experience, as well as the substantial role of mass media, is crucial in these processes. These factors instil a lifestyle corresponding to social status and show life models to which everyone should aspire⁷. Guidelines concern not only behavioural patterns, fashion, likes and dislikes, and diet, but also models connected with basic life roles and pervade every walk of life, e.g. by defining what the perfect wedding looks like, what it means to be a modern mum, a modern dad, how one should behave at work. Certainly, the domain which provides most inspiration is leisure time. In contexts dominated by consumption, self-searching

3 R. Inglehart, Pojawienie się wartości postmaterialistycznych (The Rise of Postmodern Values) [in:] P. Sztompka i M. Kucia (ed.), *Sociology. Lektury*, Znak, Cracow 2005, p. 334-348.

4 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, Universitas, Cracow 2005, p. 125 and next.

5 D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, PWN, Warsaw 1988, p. 111.

6 J. Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism. A Critical Introduction*, Continuum International Publishing Group 1991, p. 163.

7 A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*. PWN, Warsaw 2002, p. 271.

begins to concentrate on the concept of “having” and transforms into aiming at the promoted lifestyle based on promoted needs. It is irrelevant whether these needs are “real” or “artificial” and “fake”. They are generated by advertising, which not only gives the illusion that life is beautiful, but also – by combining consumption behaviours with personal make-overs (“becoming different”) – teaches the acceptance of particular values⁸.

Situations of this sort frequently spark criticism, especially due to the context in which young people mature. Though critics are right, one cannot disregard other aspects. In principle, consumptionism and market influence are not harmful. Capitalism generally promotes freedom and individualism, and the market system is practically defined by its capacity to produce a wide range of available goods and services. This viewpoint was perfect for the expression of Poles’ detestation of socialism and their dreams of a “Western life”, which was synonymous to freedom, not only to wellbeing. The current role of the market has taken on even greater significance. As Z. Bauman notes, it has become the main opponent of society homogenisation, and the pressure exerted by lifestyle-oriented culture made succumbing to consumptionist addictions the *sine qua non* condition of all individualised freedom, mainly the right to be different, to have an identity based on own rules, meanings and senses. The sense of freedom – the fundamental value for young people – is ingrained in the possibility to choose and construct a “unique Self” on the basis of rank-and-file and independent determination of the significance of independent choices. Public (imposed) messages are not authentic until they are individualised. What is important is what people feel, and how they perceive and experience the imposed necessity to construct and reconstruct their own identities.

The possibility of constructing the Self, experimenting with it and “being on the move” are becoming symbols of freedom. In a postmodern society, choice is a value in itself – the sole fact of choosing is more important than what one eventually chooses.⁹ The consumptionist society caters for linking these choices mainly with lifestyle and not limiting them to the desire to own and use objects (consumption in the narrower sense), but involves treating them as a pretext for expressing the Self, developing imagination and achieving set goals (consumption in the broader sense).

According to the logic of consumptionism, purchasing items or using them for specific purposes does not have to be indicative of the “being” orientation (such as buying products of the same brand does not have to indicate the same style of dress, interior design or manner of spending leisure time), it is however highly stigmatising. Nowadays, consumption has become the main space for underlining differences (the Self) and social status. Previously, social position was determined by the type of work one carried out, level of income and amount of accumulated goods. Today, social status is determined by lifestyle. It is not important how much one earns, but how much and how one spends. Similarly, not work, but the manner in which one enjoys leisure time is significant. From this perspective, the consumptionist society and consumptionism – so friendly and attractive in terms of

8 D. Kellner, *Popular culture and the construction of postmodern identities* [in:] S. Lash, J. Friedman (ed.), *Modernity and Identity*, Oxford 1992, p. 163-164.

9 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow 2006, p. 129-135.

its cultural offer – proves ruthless in terms of social effects. The numerous and intensely promoted goods can only be accessed by those who can afford them. The social range of this group is difficult to determine. The basic condition of belonging to this group is connected with the general fact of having a job, which is slightly less important (but still very significant), with the fact of having the appropriate job (i.e. providing appropriate income). Unstable employment barely allowing for making two ends meet does not entitle to participate in the goods of the consumer society.

According to J. Seabrook, the poor do not inhabit a separate culture from the rich. They must live in the same world that has been contrived for the benefit of those with money.¹⁰ In societies where consumptionism is equally alluring to the rich and the poor, “the poor cannot avert their eyes; there is nowhere they could avert their eyes to. (...) The more choices the rich seem to have, the less bearable to all is a life without choosing”¹¹. This dramatic difference is not only a source of frustration and relative impairment of many groups of people. It is also reflected by various types of anomic behaviours violating social norms (either in order to attain desired goods, or vent aggression and anger)¹², by statistics indicating an increase in emotional disorders (depression and neuroses), by escaping into privacy and narcissism.¹³ Despite such consequences, consumptionism does not cease to tempt, and its pro-development power (it is the driving force of economic growth) – which has been discovered by the system and is being consistently confirmed by life – only strengthens market activities fuelling the habit of “shopmania”. One should have hope that the transforming power of consumptionism will not be limited to this habit. The young generation – in definition a generation engaged in searching and using meanings which are not literal – is already demonstrating behaviours exceeding the borders of consumption (in the narrow sense). This is visible in approaches to employment, leisure time, and the different attitudes to owning objects and having money. Currently, this refers mainly to best-educated and wealthiest groups which have the lowest sense of deprivation. Persons with lower cultural capital and of lower status will have to work harder to obtain material goods which they will treat as the marker of their own value.

We will begin our analysis by looking into the evolution and specificity of consumer behaviours of youth. Our discussion will concern consumption (in the narrower sense), and will move on to present broader references and meanings (leisure time and the space for self-searching and creating one’s Self).

10 J. Seabrook, *The Race for Riches: The Human Costs of Wealth*, Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke 1988, p. 168-169.

11 Z. Bauman, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

12 K. Szafraniec, *Anomia okresu transformacji a orientacje normatywne młodzieży. Perspektywa międzygeneracyjna (Anomie during political transformation and normative orientations of youth. Intergenerational perspective)* [in:] J. Mariański (ed.), *Kondycja moralna społeczeństwa polskiego (Moral condition of the Polish Society)*, Wyd. WAM i Komitetu Socjologii PAN, Cracow 2003.

13 Excessive concentration on oneself, unceasing search for one’s identity torment many young people in modern consumptionist societies. According to R. Sennett, this results from the fact that the public space is “dead” – see R. Sennett, *Fall of the Public Man*, Cambridge University Press 1997; see also: H.A. Giroux, *The Abandoned Generation. Democracy beyond the Culture of Fear*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2003. More in the next chapter on health.

7.2. Evolution and specificity of consumer behaviours of youth

The twenty years of market economy in Poland is not synonymous to having twenty years of consumptionist society. Nevertheless, Poles – especially young Poles – take to consumptionist behaviours very quickly. Numerous studies show that young people are becoming an increasingly influential group of purchasers. Economists should not be troubled by the mechanism of fuelling economic development through consumption, as the needs and behaviours of youth are conducive to this process. At the same time, these aspirations and needs and the purchasing capacity of young people allows only for drawing less optimistic conclusions. Social inequalities are revived and deepened in the young generation. The divide between those who have a job and are capable of obtaining consumptionist goods and those who do not have a job or have low income is becoming wider, as a result of which the participation of the latter group in consumption is very limited. This leads to a situation where social tensions – the source of numerous potential problems and problematic behaviours of young people – might occur. The reference point of youth's consumption-related needs and aspirations is not constituted by the standards of their own social group, but by the models promoted by the media and advertising. Therefore it is easy to generate the effect of "happiness" in the consumer society, and it is even easier to generate the sense of deprivation and impairment. A real increase in the life quality will always have smaller impact, as it will be compared with the artificial standards (promoted in an advertisement or TV series). One ought to take note of this mechanism prior to conducting an analysis of social impressions.

The category of young consumers with whom we are concerned includes both teenage youth, which is financially and decision-wise dependent on the financial capabilities of their parents, as well as young adults who nominally (though not always in practice) have their own income and run independent households. Such a wide age bracket suggests not only a vast variety of consumer behaviours, but also different consumer styles resulting from inhomogeneous experiences connected with the free market. Comparing consumer behaviours in youth in various periods of free market functioning in Poland show how vast the changes in this area are.¹⁴

In the initial period of the political transformation, consumer values were still faintly delineated, and the future and lifestyle of youth were expected to be a direct continuation of the paths chosen by their parents. This is the basic reason for which youth's market activity was limited. There were also other limitations – youth's low purchasing capacity (only few received pocket money, and paid employment was rarely undertaken), parents were the decision-makers (youth initiated the purchasing process and provided advice at most), the market offer was scarce and not aimed at youth. After a few years of the transformation process, the first visible signs determining the area of generational market activity appeared – the parents' role of decision-makers weakened, youth became more susceptible to increasingly expansive advertising, the

14 A. Olejniczuk-Merta, *Młodzi konsumenci w procesach transformacji rynkowej* (Young consumers during market transformation), Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warsaw 2009, p. 214.

role of young people as initiators and advisors in family purchasing processes was strengthened. Young consumers, gaining more and more market experiences every year, became more and more demanding. As a result, their market behaviours were characterised by higher levels of maturity, knowledge and experience.

Table 7.1. Evolution of young consumer behaviours after 1989

	Beginning of the transformation	10 years later	20 years later (present)
Financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » pocket money rather low and not very popular » wage labour, mainly during summer holidays, moreover very rarely (11/15-year olds – 11.5%, 16-19-year-olds – 5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the share of youth with own financial resources rose threefold (78%) – sources » pocket money (59%) » additional money for current expenses (40%) and targeted purchases (36%) » own income (19%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> similar diversity of sources, but amounts received more often and higher, though dependent on parents' financial situation – amounts from PLN 30 (17%) to more than PLN 130 (25%)
Ability to make decisions (role in purchasing process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » participating in shopping, starting to initiate and advise in selected areas ("high-tech" industry) » independent shopping or with peers rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » expanding product lines for the home and families under the influence of youth » greater role in initiating, advising, deciding about and financing purchases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » growing ability to make decisions about family purchases in various areas » independent shopping is becoming more and more common (clothes, shoes, cosmetics, ICT)
Area of consumer activity (product lines, branches)	sweets, books, CDs, clothes, audio and video devices	CDs, clothes, shoes, audio and video devices consumer electronic goods	audio and video equipment, ICT, sports, Tourism, clothes, shoes, cosmetics, cars
Purchase criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » price was an important factor only when own funds were spent » (nice, colourful) packaging » brand, renown producer » meaningless » searching for information prior to purchase was not common practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » products directed at youth » high quality » modern solutions » hit of the season, fashion » aesthetics » renown brand (especially in relations to products manufactured by means of cutting-edge technologies and directed at youth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » the brand became more significant, as well as rational arguments resulting from knowledge and experience » less wealthy youth opt for no-name products more often » all buyers tend to prefer renown brands of high-tech products
Preferred shopping locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » lack of particular preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » shops for youth » specialist shops » modern shopping malls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » specialist and brand shops » hypermarkets » specialised shops with no-name products » Internet (almost 40% of young clients)
Approaches towards advertisements and marketing communication	non-economic criteria, emotional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » increasingly demanding and critical » positive attitude towards new forms: the Internet, hoardings, mobile phones, promotions » significant role of peers as trend-setters 	interactive forms are perceived as most important
Sales offer and loyalty to given brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » lack of specific offer directed at youth » availability of goods was more important than their brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » availability of known and renown brands » varying loyalty: High degree of loyalty towards ICT brands, varied choices in sports equipment purchasing 	almost all important brands are available on the polish market – and Polish youth is familiar with all of them
Source of information about products	devoid of habit to obtain information about products prior to purchase	obtaining information about products prior to purchase is much more common (mainly in the shop – 67%, from peers – 53%, from TV – 41%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » commercials 68% » the Internet 53% » peers 49% » fliers, brochures, catalogues 30% » promotions 20%

Source: Compiled on the basis of: A. Olejniczuk-Merta, *Młodzi konsumenci w procesach transformacji systemowej (Young consumers during political transformation)*, Warsaw 2009.

After the first decade of political transformation, significant developments could be noted in market behaviours of youth. The percentage of young consumers with own financial resources rose threefold (to 78%). Their role became more significant not only in term of initiating or advising on purchasing, but also in deciding on and financing purchases (31-34% individual buyers). Approaches towards advertising

and marketing communication have become more demanding and critical, and the criteria for purchasing more rational. The level of knowledge of the market obtained by youth generally rose, and the behaviours of young people started adapting to behaviours displayed by their peers in countries with well-developed market economies.

Contrary to previous years, the tendency to prioritise brand and fashion weakened – it is slowly being replaced with the process of gradual consumer behaviour individualisation. Currently, youth are an active, creative, open to novelties and increasingly wealthy group of buyers. Not only have pocket money levels increased. Nowadays, the group of youth receiving pocket money also includes children from all family groups – both wealthy (69%) and average or poor (43%). Taking up part-time jobs has become standard practice. Every third teenager takes up an odd job during summer holidays.¹⁵ Every fourth young Pole uses his own bank account, and 45% would like to have one.

Consumer-related aspirations of youth are stimulated by advertising suited to their needs and sensitivity – more and more frequently advertisers resign from employing literal meanings, aggressive messages and obtrusive associations to the benefit of messages open to interpretation and assessment. Advertising is shifting from television and hoardings to the Internet, where young people are becoming co-creators of interactive marketing communication. Advertising is more effective due to the fact that it is not imposed on recipients. The offensive assumed by the market, greater financial independence of youth and wider market experience make young people more independent in the area of shopping. They have also gained influence on more areas connected with household purchases. Young buyers enter the market as experienced clients and consumers. Their behaviours are up-to-date, they are not easily intimidated and are open to innovation (youth provides advice and gains competences mainly in consumer areas such as high-tech equipment, tourism, motorisation, and takes independent decisions connected with purchasing clothes, shoes and cosmetics).¹⁶

Twenty years of changes have led to the replacement of imitative behaviours with independent decision-making processes, and have allowed for the development of specific new behaviours in youth. These behaviours indicate an effective expansion of consumptionism, passion for new technologies, domination of hedonistic motives, personalisation of youth's needs and aims. The source of this change lies in the values adhered to by young people, the preferred lifestyle and high level of readiness to invest in own development. If parents' wealth does not decline, young consumers will become more and more active on the market, especially on the Internet, and in mobile and educational services, as well as services connected with leisure time management.¹⁷

It is not evident whether the development of such behaviours should point to special commitment of youth to material goods and financial resources. The manner in which youth treats goods and money is not so much supportive of the thesis

15 B. Wciorka, *Wakacje uczniów* (Students' Holidays), Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw 2010, p. 9.

16 A. Olejniczuk-Merta, *op. cit.*, p. 237 and next; see also: J. Czarnecka, *Polscy single jako konsumenci: dziś i jutro*, (Polish singles as consumers: present and future) *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis*, Folia Oeconomica 231/2009.

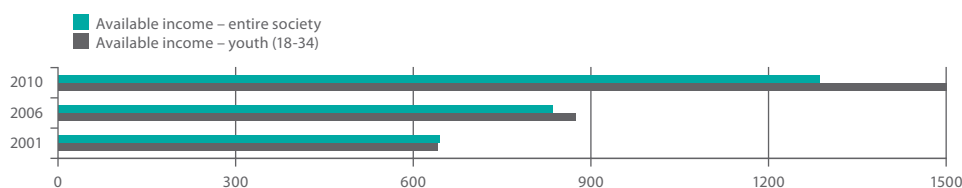
17 A. Olejniczuk-Merta, *op. cit.*, p. 208-247.

assuming that materialism and the “having” orientation is the cornerstone of modern youth’s consumer philosophy, as it is indicative of the special connection between consumptionism and lifestyle, which shapes a new type of orientation: “have, in order to be”. The highly motivating power of this orientation makes consumer aspirations the basic driving force of youth’s life activity. It is also the source of frustration which occurs when purchasing capabilities are incompliant with needs. The majority of Poles is in such a situation, nevertheless, young people experience it more acutely when they are growing up.

7.3. Independent consumption – households run by youth

As late as in 2006, the income of young Poles was lower than the average for the Polish society.¹⁸ In recent years, the income of young Poles is rising faster than the average (Fig. 7.1), which might be the result of the fact that a notably better educated generation entered the labour market and assumed better paid positions requiring higher qualifications, as well as of the wide variety of employment forms and locations yielding higher income, or of the better economic situation. Still, the financial standing of youth is unstable and necessitates numerous sacrifices. Young people are at the outset of their life – they are commence professional activity, have families, have greater aspirations and expectations, are more impatient, and at the same time the situation on the labour market is difficult, unstable and changeable.

Fig. 7.1. Available income¹⁹ – dynamics of change in the years 2001-2010 (PLN per month per capita)



Source: Compiled on the on the basis of CSO data on household budgets.

It is especially difficult in households with children. The data in Fig. 7.2 confirm the popular opinions of youth that having children is completely uneconomic in Poland. One child is enough to make a difference, and the more children one has, the more limited the financial freedom. Households run by one person or marriages without children are best off – their conversion income is thrice as high as that of families

18 A. Olejniczuk-Merta, Uwarunkowania rozwoju społeczno-zawodowej aktywności ludzi młodych (Conditionings for the development of social and professional activity of youth), IBRKiK, Warsaw 2008.

19 The total of current household income from various sources minus advance personal income tax payment and social and health insurance contributions. Available income includes financial and non-financial income (e.g. from own agricultural or non-agricultural activity).

with two children, and four times as high as that of families with three children. This might be dependent not only on the costs of children upbringing, but also various fertility models in families with lower and higher status.

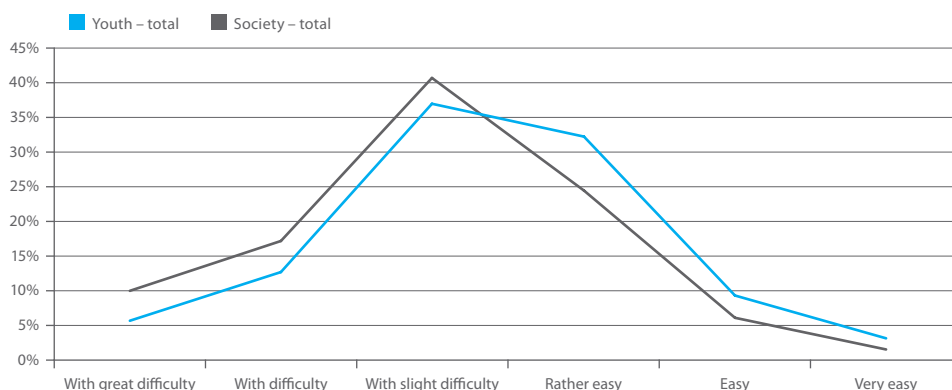
Fig. 7.2. Income in households run by youth as at 2010 (average amount in PLN per month per capita)



Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

The proverbial struggle to “make ends meet”, i.e. to cope with the challenge of satisfying basic needs, more often ends successfully in households run by youth (Fig. 7.3), not only due to income which is generally higher than average, but also thanks to greater resourcefulness and different, more optimistic and competitive approaches (as youth would say “the go-get-it attitude”).

Fig. 7.3. Is income sufficient to “make ends meet”? Households run by youth and average for entire society

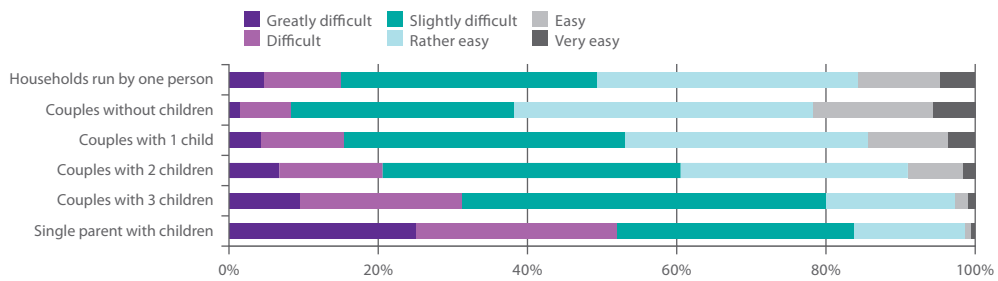


Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

However, more than half of young people find “making ends meet” difficult. It is especially difficult for single parents or multi-children families. Couples without children are in the best position. They find it easier to cope than singles running

households (Fig. 7.4). Only couples without children feel that their real (available) income is above insufficient level (Fig. 7.5).

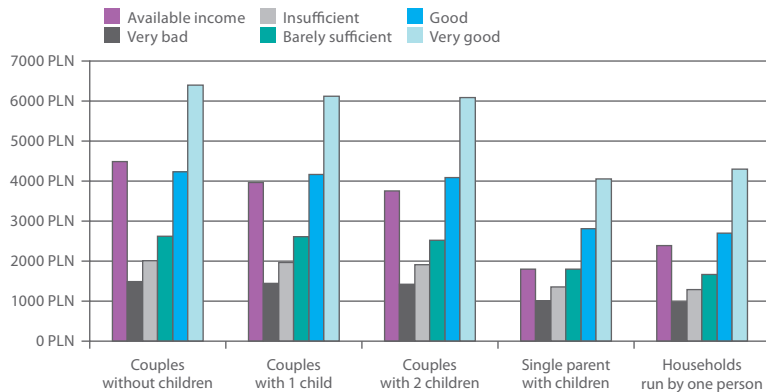
Fig. 7.4. *Is income sufficient to "make ends meet"?* Households run by youth according to biological family type



Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

All remaining households run by young people dispose of income below this threshold, however – except for single parents – of available income gradually increasing towards the sufficient level (> PLN 4,000). Most families – except for single parent households, whose expectations are most modest – indicate that PLN 6,000 is the fully satisfactory level of income.

Fig. 7.5. Available income in households run by youth compared to monthly net household income recognised as good/bad

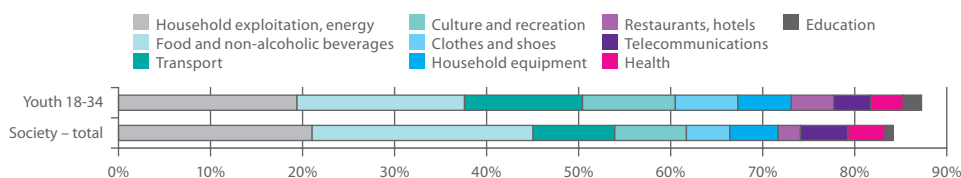


Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

The threshold determined at this level shows the discrepancy between the current standing of households run by youth and the desired situation. The difference is sizable, as monthly it amounts to PLN 2,000. This means that the income of young Poles would have to increase by PLN 1,000 net on average so as to be deemed satisfactory. The expectations of the Polish society are not much lower, as on average they differ by a few hundred zlotys. These comparisons show not only the level of frustration of Poles (since PLN 6,000 demarcates the level of "happiness"), but also the scale of aspirations and real consumer needs, which are high especially among

young people. Some of these needs can be limited (e.g. food), while others (high-tech equipment or leisure time) remain high on the agenda, whereas others (household exploitation, credit repayment) are fixed (Fig. 7.6).

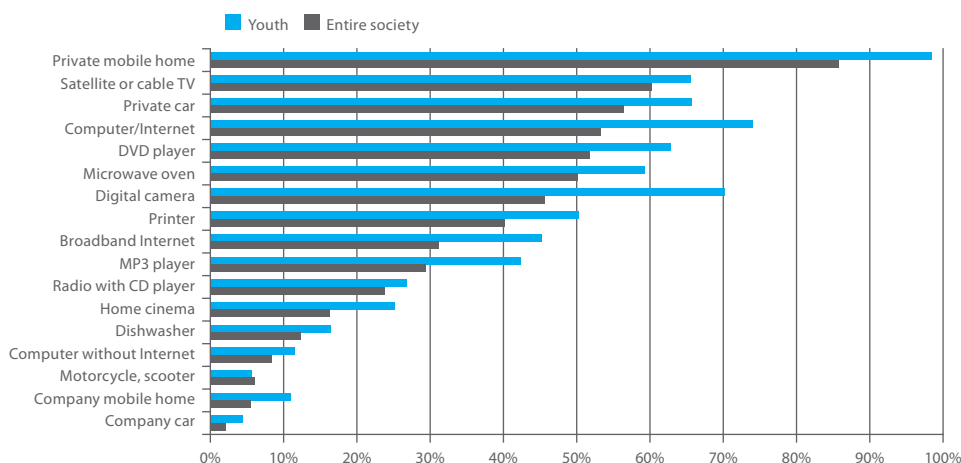
Fig. 7.6. Structure of selected household expenses – youth and total society



Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

The comparison of expenses in households run by youth and older Poles reveals a slightly different structure. The basic positions – household and food costs – are lower in households run by young people. On the one hand, this is the result of worse housing conditions (they opt for smaller apartments, slightly lower housing standards or live with parents). On the other hand, this results from savings on food (young people consume less, buy less varied products, purchase less costly products, and visit cheaper shops). They eat less and eat cheap, but – sometimes – eat more interestingly (are open to new cuisines). They also spend less on health, which is determined by age rather than saving habits. Young people spend more on all remaining needs – from those simplifying every-day life (transport and household equipment) through those which make life more pleasant (leisure time and branded clothes) to investments in their future (education).

Fig. 7.7. Durable household equipment – youth and entire society



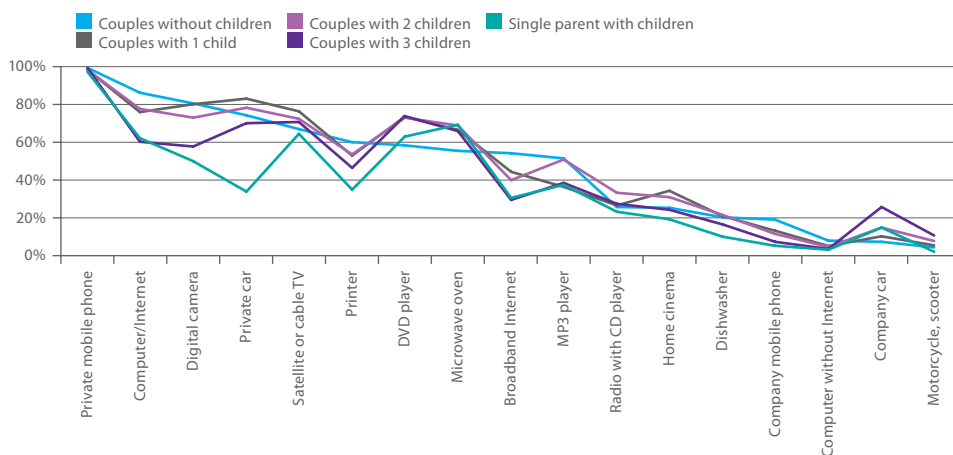
Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

Equipping households run by young people with high-tech devices, especially consumer electronic goods, confirms the particularly strong attitude of youth towards modern technologies. In the opinion of half of respondents, owning

cutting-edge consumer electronic goods is indicative of high living status and is very satisfactory for the family. In regard to household or audio-visual appliances, only 30% of respondents believe one should replace equipment in order to keep up with technological progress. Owning modern goods is thought to be a necessity in the modern world²⁰.

These needs are equally strong or maybe even stronger in households with children (Fig. 7.8). Their presence apparently increases consumer aspirations in families within the scope of electronic and audio-visual equipment, which are clearly not of collector nature. Although young people have numerous goods at home, they like owning items envied by others (according to Social Diagnosis 2009, this refers to 33% of Poles aged 18-29), and do not enjoy buying objects which have no practical use (87%). Their consumer decisions are adapted to the needs of the family. In households with small children the need for audio-visual equipment, high-quality cameras and video cameras arises, since the joy connected with having a child leads to the urge to document its development. When a child grows up, a television set or other visual aids become the first medium broadening its cognitive horizons and introduces it to a brand new world. Computers, together with the Internet and other devices for modern communication are the most often reported needs. Apart from that, appliances allowing for saving time, increasing household functionality and interior aesthetics are perceived as worthy of being purchased.

Fig. 7.8. Equipping households run by youth with durable goods – according to biological family type



Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

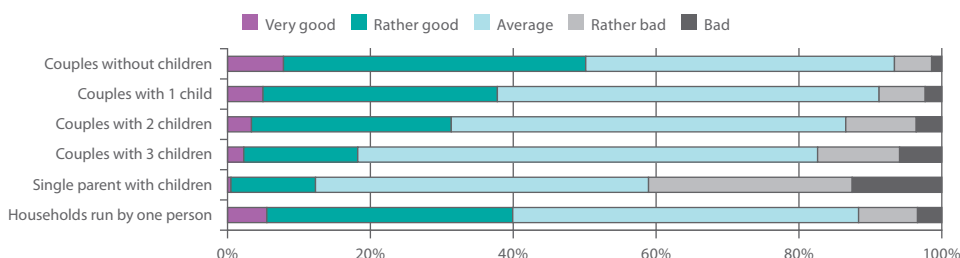
All this makes young people’s household budgets very tight. The general evaluation of the material situation varies depending on the social and economic status, education level and biological family type. The border of social divisions passes between those who own property and/or have higher education (entrepreneurs, specialists and managers, pensioners, and the self-employed) and those who do not have

20 A. Olejniczuk-Merta, Uwarunkowania rozwoju... (Conditionings for development...), p. 64-65.

high qualifications and whose position on the market is low (farmers, workers) or marginal (unemployed). The presence of children introduces even greater discrepancies and significantly decreases material living comfort (Fig. 7.9).

At the same time children stimulate parents to pursue activity on the labour market and engage in consumer activities, since parents are obliged to provide appropriate living conditions, health, education and leisure.

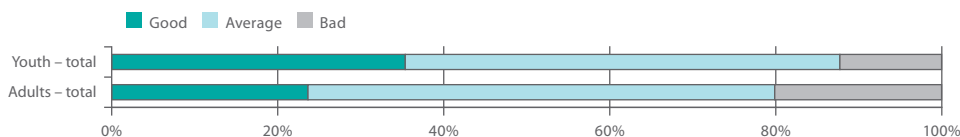
Fig. 7.9. General assessment of financial situation in households run by youth – according to biological family type



Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

Despite acute tensions occurring between needs and life aspirations, young people assess the financial standing of their households more favourably than older Poles (Fig. 7.10). Positive evaluations are voiced by more than every third young family (35.4%), and negative opinions by every eighth family (12%). Positive evaluations are voiced less frequently by older persons running households – by every fourth young family (24%), and negative opinions by every fifth family (20%).

Fig. 7.10. Assessment of financial situation of households – run by youth and entire society



Source: CSO, compiled on the on the basis of data on household budgets, 2010.

Therefore, the general picture is more beneficial for the young. Surely, parents providing more or less regular support to children who are becoming independent (however, CSO data did not note this, similarly as other studies monitoring the income situation of Poles). Despite the positive trend, average living conditions are dominant, as they are characteristic of half of the households run by youth. Consumer aspirations are equally high, but the fulfilment of many needs has to be limited or delayed. One of the ways of accelerating their appeasement (apart from saving) is the instalment and credit system. All Poles, including youth, readily avail themselves of this system. The form and amount of borrowed money is varied, in the case of banks they depend on the customer’s creditworthiness. Creditworthiness is attributed mainly to persons employed on “appropriate” conditions, i.e. with permanent jobs.

According to data collected by the National Bank of Poland (NBP), at the beginning of 2011 the total amount of consumer loans taken out by Poles amounted to PLN 141.3 billion. This signalled bringing a halt to the rising tendency to take out loans in relation to previous years. One exception is the so-called debit facility, the value of which rose after a drop (to PLN 11.5 billion, though it didn't exceed the level recorded as at the end of 2010, which also suggests cooling down Poles' enthusiasm for excessive consumption in unsteady times).²¹ At the same time, the number of debtors failing to timely repay their liabilities to banks is on the increase, similarly as the amount of due debt. In May 2011, due debt incurred by Poles equalled PLN 30,89 billion, i.e. more than one fifth of the total amount of debt.²²

Throughout the year, the due debt incurred by Poles rose by 62%, and the average due debt by 71% (to PLN 14,702). The number of clients with due liabilities equals 2,100,000 (increased by 87% throughout the year). They account for 5% of the total number of debtors. The highest risk is assigned to persons aged 30-39 (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2. High risk customers and age (%)

	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	> 60
2009	0.6	20.8	25.6	20.9	18.9	13.2
2010	0.02	17.8	25.6	20.4	19.8	16.3
2011	0.08	18.2	25.3	20.1	19.5	16.8

Source: compiled on the on the basis of 2009 – 2010 – 2011 InfoDług reports.

Small loans are the type of loans which are most frequently not repaid. Such loans amount to PLN 10,000 and are taken out in order to purchase various types of equipment. There are no such problems in the case of large credits, including housing loans which are usually secured by mortgages.²³ Due to high housing needs of youth, the government programme "Rodzina na swoim" ("Family's Own Home") triggered notable interest among young people. From 2007 to Q1 2011, 97,817 loans totalling PLN 17,400,000 were granted within the programme. Young people under 35 accounted for 77.2% of the programme's beneficiaries (Fig. 7.11).

Average credit value amounted to PLN 232,000 in provincial towns (where more than one fourth of debtors were recruited), and PLN 163,000 in large cities. More than half of credit value (53%) was allocated for purchasing apartments on the secondary market, and almost one third (30%) for purchasing homes on the primary market. Loans taken out in order to purchase single-family houses, which are the dream of 55% of young Poles, accounted for 15% of their total value.

At the outset, interest in the credit was low. It surged in 2009. 2010 saw a continued increase in programme activity (Fig. 7.12), which was related to including more

21 Zadłużenia i oszczędności Polaków w I 2011 (Debt and savings of Poles in H1 2011), NBP, Warsaw, 25 February 2011.

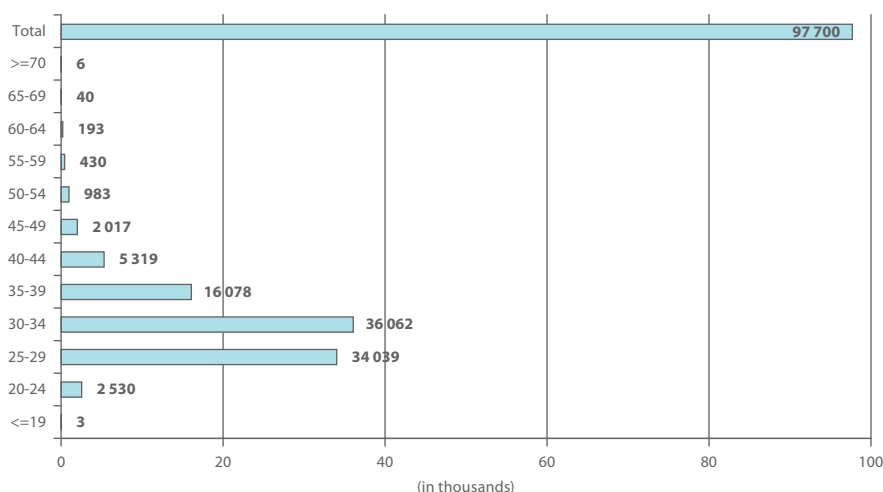
22 InfoDług 2011. Ogólnopolski raport o zaległym zadłużeniu i klientach podwyższonego ryzyka (Nation-wide report on due debt and high-risk clients in Poland), BIG InfoMonitor, Warsaw, May 2011.

23 Ibidem, p. 14.

debtors into the pool of granted credits, taking into account the conversion rate per square meter in the given region.

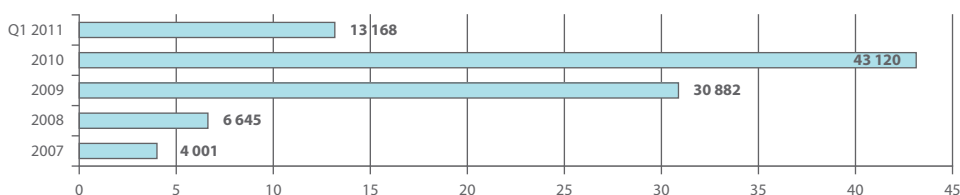
As a result, since 2009 more expensive apartments could be included in the programme. Announcing the withdrawal of the programme resulted in an increase in the number of granted loans, in which own contribution equals only 20% of property value. Consequently, more than half of mortgage loans are granted to persons with very low own contribution.²⁴ Also the number of credits with long crediting periods of 25-35 years account for approx. 60% of granted mortgage loans.²⁵ The slight increase in the value of credits for purchasing apartments beyond the programme "Rodzina na swoim" in 2010 and 2011 and the continued high demand for apartments among young people suggests that preferential credits are needed. However, the formal, legal and financial aspects of these loans are inhibiting both for the state and potential beneficiaries.

Fig. 7.11. Age of debtors participating in the programme "Rodzina na swoim"



Source: Statistical data of the programme "Rodzina na swoim", BGK, Warsaw, 31 March 2011.

Fig. 7.12. Number of loans granted within the programme "Rodzina na swoim" (in thousands)



Source: Statistical data of the programme "Rodzina na swoim", BGK, Warsaw, 31 March 2011.

24 H. Kochalska, Niski wkład coraz popularniejszy, ale drogi (Own contribution is still expensive, but is gaining popularity), Bankier.pl. Open Finance. <http://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Niski-wklad-coraz-popularniejszy-ale-drogi-2319861.html> (site accessed on 23 June 2011).

25 AMRON-SARFiN Report: Ogólnopolski raport o kredytach mieszkaniowych i cenach transakcyjnych nieruchomości 1/2011 (Nation-wide report on housing credits and real property transaction prices 1/2011) March 2011, The Polish Bank Association (ZBP), p. 12.

The principles for granting preferential credits do not take into account that in Poland, similarly as in Europe, formal marriages are not the dominant form of relationship among young people. Youth often chooses to live in informal relationships, remain single or share apartments with their parents.

Another issue is constituted by the housing problems experienced by youth who cannot afford bank assistance as they are not creditworthy due to performing part-time employment. It is difficult not to notice that the credit system designed in a modern, consumer-oriented capitalist system with the view to include also those whose current revenues do not allow for purchasing goods and services, practically excludes more than half of a very dynamic and consumer-oriented generation. From the point of view of banks, such an approach seems unduly prudent, and in the context of improving financial situation of youth even highly irrational.

This does not alter the fact that the goods and services market, which is developing very dynamically and is varied in Poland, creates a new socialisation context and influences the life of the young generation. It offers numerous possibilities, and undoubtedly serves one purpose – by promoting a consumer lifestyle, it first and foremost promotes purchasing offered goods and services. Owning things is – on the one hand – obvious and natural for young people, on the other hand, due to the culturally imposed valuation criteria – is of socially positioning nature. It releases the immense energy vested in young people, who first invest in education so as to ensure good employment, and then avail themselves of the vast consumer offer so as to find the sense in long-term investments in own development.

For various reasons, consumer activity of young Poles is greater than that of the older generation. It is not reckless consumption, though youth likes to engage in consumer activities for show. The fact that half of the generation cannot participate in consumption at a satisfactory level might be frustrating, but does not necessarily have to generate conflict. A lot depends on the context and development perspectives, including employment prospects and creating mechanisms stimulating youth to influence the process of shaping social life – a life they would co-create.

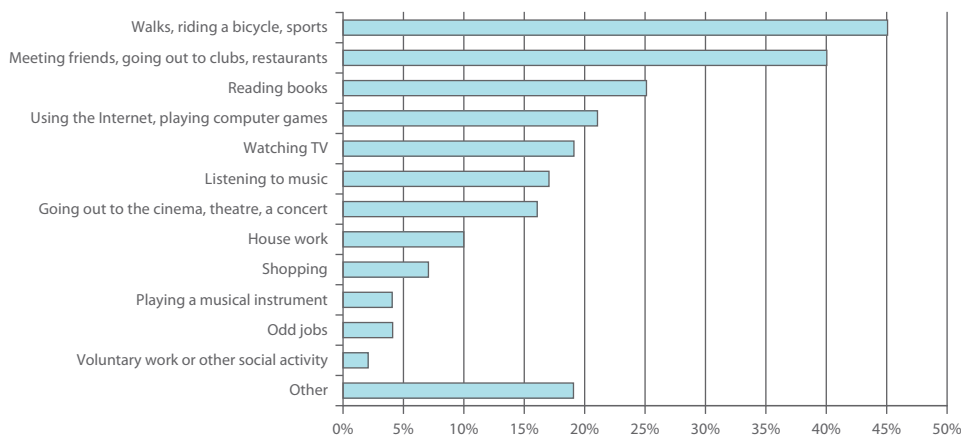
7.4. Leisure time – change of meaning and forms of activity

Leisure time, in relation to both the increasing significance of consumption as lifestyle and changes in the importance of employment (as a hardly available good, as well as an emotion- and time-consuming good), has become the area in which people not only relax and replenish their strength. It has become the space where people want to underline their uniqueness or belonging to a specific social and cultural world. It has become the tool for manifesting one's lifestyle as the space of unlimited freedom. Therefore, subjectively it is very important. It is difficult to judge whether it is more important for youth than for older generations. While older people use leisure time to seek respite from every-day chores or relish in their own status, young people value mainly opportunities of creating and manifesting the Self, irrespective of whether they spend leisure time with others or alone.

When speaking of leisure time, what we most often have in mind is the overall group of activities people engage in voluntarily (in order to relax, be entertained, develop interests and passions, or get involved in social issues) after fulfilling various duties (professional, school or home duties). Young people select differentiated options of spending leisure time. Nevertheless, they do not give it as much thought as adults, who assign special status to leisure time and perceive it as a special good (even if they waste it or “kill” it doing nothing much). For young people, leisure time is the natural and primary entity in which they grow up, develop, mature – and which they do not want to leave. Striving to remain in the phase of youth is tantamount to striving to retain time when one can seek for the best solutions for one’s future. It is in leisure time that one examines one’s interests, partners, tastes in music, talents, friends and various types of life activity. In order to tackle such a challenge, the way of spending leisure time cannot be imposed or controlled by others.

In leisure time, one voluntarily experiments with the Self, in a more or less reflexive manner. Different experiments, though not always desired, must take place then. Entering adulthood means assuming duties and experiencing a drastic lifestyle change – and a painful decrease in leisure time. According to the Eurobarometer study, in almost all EU countries the leisure time of young people aged 15-19 accounts for 20% of total time. After reaching the age of 30, the amount of leisure time notably decreases (by approx. one fourth), which results from the sudden increase in duties connected with home and family obligations.

Fig. 7.13. Types of activity undertaken in leisure time by persons aged 15-30²⁶



Source: Flash Eurobarometer 202, January 2007.

The main types of youth activity in leisure time are: doing sports (walks, riding a bicycle and other) and going out with friends – to dance, get some drinks or eat out (45% and 40% respectively). Reading for pleasure is notably less popular among youth

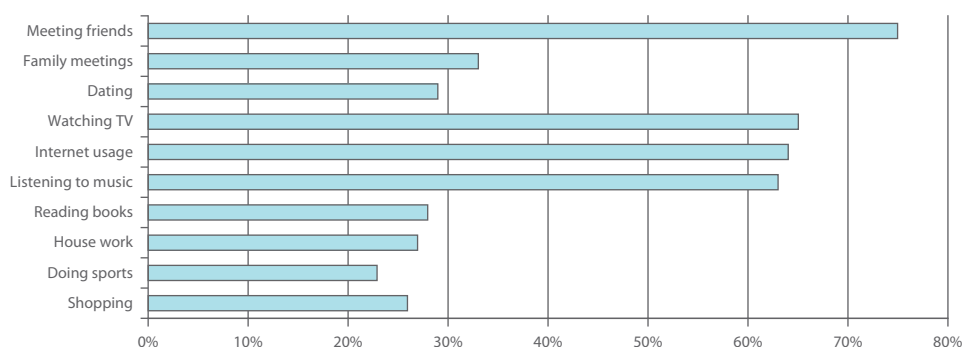
26 The question was phrased as follows: What do you regularly do in leisure time? All indications were noted.

(25%).²⁷ Using the Internet, video equipment and watching TV are the main activities one fifth of youth engage in during leisure time.

Listening to music and going to the cinema is a popular activity for 15% of young people. Helping out at home (10%) and shopping (7%), similarly as paid work (less than 5%) are activities undertaken only by a few. Regular and time-consuming involvement in the works of various organisations (sport, cultural, youth, local) is declared only by 2% of young people aged 15-30.²⁸

This leisure time profile involves also the behaviours of young Poles, whereas teenagers devote more time to social contacts, including especially meeting friends.²⁹ They spend more time watching television, listening to music and – especially – using the Internet. Reading books lags behind audio-visual entertainment (Fig. 7.14). In the times of electronic media and technicisation of culture this is a phenomenon which for justified reasons should be carefully monitored. No matter what new tools for gaining knowledge about the world are introduced, no matter what new means of stimulating imagination provide unlimited possibilities and prove more attractive for youth, reading maintains one’s relation with culture and the world more effectively than a computer mouse or remote control.

Fig. 7.14. Declared activities which absorb teenagers in leisure time



Source: J. Kurzępa, Raport Fanty Pokolenie nadziei, czyli współczesny nastolatek, sprawy, które są dla niego ważne, i świat, w którym się obraca (*Fanta Report: The Generation of Hope – Modern Teenagers: the Issues They Find Important and the World They Live In*), SWPS i Coca Cola Poland, Wrocław 2010.

The data in the next figure (Fig. 7.15) reveal that Poles read less frequently and less intensely than the average for the European Union. Poland belongs to the

27 This fact has been confirmed by the CBOS study (Balance of Poles’ cultural activity in 2009), in which 45% of all respondents indicated that they have read a book for pleasure numerous times or a few times. This is almost twice as much as in the case of preferences of persons aged 15-30. See: Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Społecznego 2011-2020. Diagnosis (draft), Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Warsaw 2011, p. 67.

28 EU Youth Report, European Communities 2009, p. 76-77. It is worth drawing attention to the social and political context of youth’s passive attitudes. More on this issue in Chapter 8.

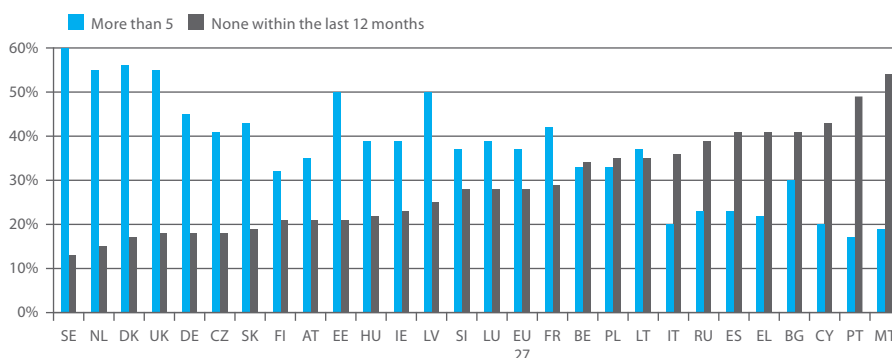
29 J. Kurzępa, Raport Fanty Pokolenie nadziei, czyli współczesny nastolatek, sprawy, które są dla niego ważne, i świat, w którym się obraca (*Fanta Report: The Generation of Hope – Modern Teenagers: the Issues They Find Important and the World They Live In*), SWPS and Coca Cola Poland, Wrocław 2010.

group of countries where the number of non-readers exceeded the number of readers in the last 12 months preceding the study.

The gap is not as wide as in South Eastern European countries, but there is a lot of room for improvement comparing to the majority of European countries, where reader ratios are twice or thrice as high, and of non-readers are twice or thrice as low. The habit of reading is connected with family status, and especially with the family's cultural capital. Lack of examples in the family is the basic factor determining reading habits among youth. The greater the role of education (pre-school, school) in stimulating and maintaining the urge to read. The greater the significance of school lectures, which should encourage to and not discourage from reading.

Meanwhile neither "The Knights of the Cross" nor "Upon the Niemen" nor "Homeless People" included in school lecture lists are not gripping books, nor books helping youth understand the world they are living in.

Fig. 7.15. Reading books and reading intensity in the European Union



Source: compiled on the on the basis of European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 278, European Cultural Values. Fieldwork February – March 2007, European Commission, Brussels 2007.

Participating in sport events and sports activity

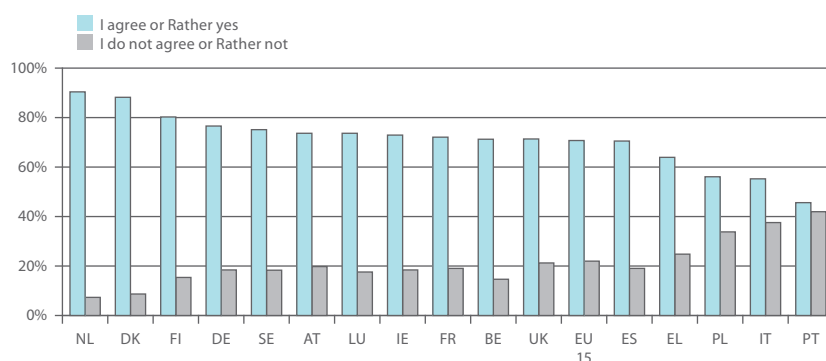
Nowadays, sport has become a ludic event involving mass emotions. However, more than half of EU citizens aged 16-24 has not participated in a sports event within the last year. In Poland and in a few other countries (among others in Sweden, Germany, Great Britain) this is commonplace (more than 20% of young people declare that they have participated in sports events in the last year). Direct participation in sports events is being replaced with TV coverage, which provides the feeling of closeness and safety, as well as being far from all the risks one might encounter at the stadium.

In relation to sports events, sports activity is becoming less significant. Young people more frequently opt for inactive forms of spending leisure time.³⁰ This is promoted both by the fascination with new digital media and the soft spot for large social gatherings, as well as lack of appropriate infrastructure. In the 2008 Eurobarometer study, Poland was last but three on the list of EU Member States in terms of sports and

30 Aktywność turystyczna młodzieży (Tourism-related Activity of Youth), Tourism Department, Warsaw, 28 July 2010.

recreational infrastructure (Fig. 7.16). If one were to assess the involvement of local authorities in creating conditions conducive to physical activity, it would be obvious that this goal was not high on their agenda.

Fig. 7.16. There are many opportunities for physical activity in my vicinity



Source: Data from CSO and Eurobarometer 183-6/58.2.

It is difficult to say what is the crucial factor here – lack of instilled needs and habits, or deficient infrastructure. Initiatives to construct “Orliki” (Eaglets) – football pitches for youth – and the high interest in them displayed by youth show how important access to such facilities, instructors and programmes promoting physical activity among children and youth are for shaping particular habits and needs. We do not have precise data on physical activity of youth.

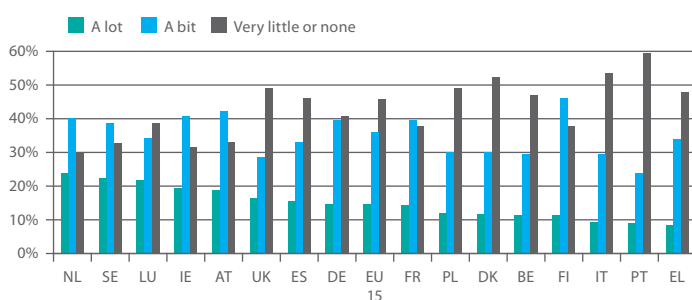
There are partial studies on physical activity, or (like CSO data) they concern the entire society. Youth, though they are mainly engaged in physical activity, are not a separate group in statistical studies. As a result, the specific features of youth are shrouded among general trends, though on the basis of these data it can be concluded that age (and education) are a significant factor influencing physical activity. Riding a bicycle is the most frequently selected form of sport activity. More than half of Poles (53.2%) declare more or less frequent activity of this sort. Other types of favoured activities are as follows: swimming (44.3%), playing ball (24%) and physical exercise.³¹ Such forms as jogging, walking, nordic walking and – especially – fitness centres are becoming more popular. Sailing, Eastern martial arts and athletics are back in. Regularly (every year) young people sign up for sailing camps (20%), martial arts (14%) and athletics (10%). This includes both men and women (sailing is even dominated by females).³² Most of the recreational and physical forms of activity do not require high monthly fees (except for camps and fitness clubs), but the majority requires infrastructure. Poles have managed to cope without appropriate infrastructure in many cases – although special routes are being built, they have to resort to riding their bicycles on sidewalks or roads and jogging off the beaten track. Swimming is most often limited to the holiday season when natural water reservoirs are available.

31 Uczestnictwo Polaków w sporcie i rekreacji ruchowej w 2008 roku (Participation of Poles in sports and physical recreation in 2008), CSO, Warsaw 2009, p. 42-45.

32 Ibidem, p. 52-53.

In terms of physical activity intensity, Poles rank below EU average, as their activity is low or non-existent (Fig. 7.17). We still need to catch up with many developed countries in this area. Respondents declared that the main barriers were: lack of leisure time, lack of interest (i.e. formed needs), subjective assessment of physical condition as inappropriate, lack of funds (significant only in the case of families with lowest income) and lack of infrastructure.³³

Fig. 7.17. Physical activity undertaken in leisure time by citizens of analysed countries



Source: Data from CSO and Eurobarometer 183-6/58.2.

Since 2008 the government programme for constructing the so-called “Orliki” (Eaglets) – small sports facilities built in the whole country – has been pending. They consist of a football pitch, a multi-functional basketball and volleyball court and a building which serves as a sanitary facility and changing room. 1,528 such pitches have been constructed in various communes. Since 2010 “Białe Orliki” (White Eaglets) – ice rinks built next to the “Orlik” (Eaglet) football pitches have been constructed. 38 such facilities have been built.

Pursuant to the regulation of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism of 23 August 2010 on financing tasks from the resources of the Physical Culture Development Fund, financing is provided for among others tasks within the scope of developing sports among children and youth. They involve training talented youth in public and private championship schools and other training facilities, as well as staff training (aspirants, junior juniors and juniors – at the level of provinces).

The lower number of sport facilities in Eastern provinces (connected with unwillingness of local authorities to participate in the costs) increases discrepancies between regions. The problem is not caused by the civilisation divide. “Orliki”, designed to offer quality leisure time for youth, at the same time enable testing talents and passions which might become the cornerstone of future development. For many young people, especially from neglected environments, a sports career is the chance of a lifetime. Withdrawing from the “Orliki” programme within the commune is synonymous to depriving youth residing in the region of sometimes the only chance for good leisure time management.

Continuing initiatives propagating physical activity among youth should be accompanied by the awareness that it is not the idea promoted by the consumer society that is being pursued, but the concept of leading a healthy lifestyle and promoting

33 Ibidem, p. 47-49.

health. After all, these are two different discourses and two separate issues, which are sometimes contradictory (pursuit of physical activity, stamina and a slender silhouette do not always indicate health, and the reverse also applies). What is astounding is the lack of social awareness of this problem, as well as the lack of didactic end educational activity undertaken by schools, the media, social and youth organisations.

Travel and Tourism

It is difficult to obtain reliable data on youth travel and tourism, as it is difficult to ascertain whether young people travel with their parents, on their own and whether they themselves finance their journeys. Usually the age structure of travellers corresponds to the age structure of the society in general. In most European countries, young people aged 15-24 account for 20% of the total number of tourists taking at least 5-day holidays. The Baltic States, Slovenia and Sweden, and especially Poland, are exceptions, as they exhibit high ratios of young travellers (30%). Poland is also distinguished by the notable increase in the percentage of people engaging in qualified tourism – specialised tourism requiring knowledge and passion (from 5 to 18% in the last few years)³⁴.

Generally, 1,800,000 young Poles aged 15-19 participate in various types of travelling (Table 7.3). This amounts to almost three fourths (73%) of the population within this age bracket. Youth most often opt for long-term travelling (at least 5 days) within the country – on average 1,200,000 persons select this type of travelling, which practically means this is the choice of every second Pole aged 15-19 (48%). Every fourth teenager participates in long-term foreign travelling (and only slightly less frequently in short-term travelling in Poland).

Table 7.3. Number of persons 15-19 participating in travelling (mln)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Travel and tourism – total	1.90	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80
Short-term travelling in Poland	1.30	1.40	1.20	1.10	1.20
Long-term travelling in Poland	1.00	0.70	0.90	0.90	0.70
Travelling abroad	0.40	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.65

Source: Study performed by the Institute for Tourism.

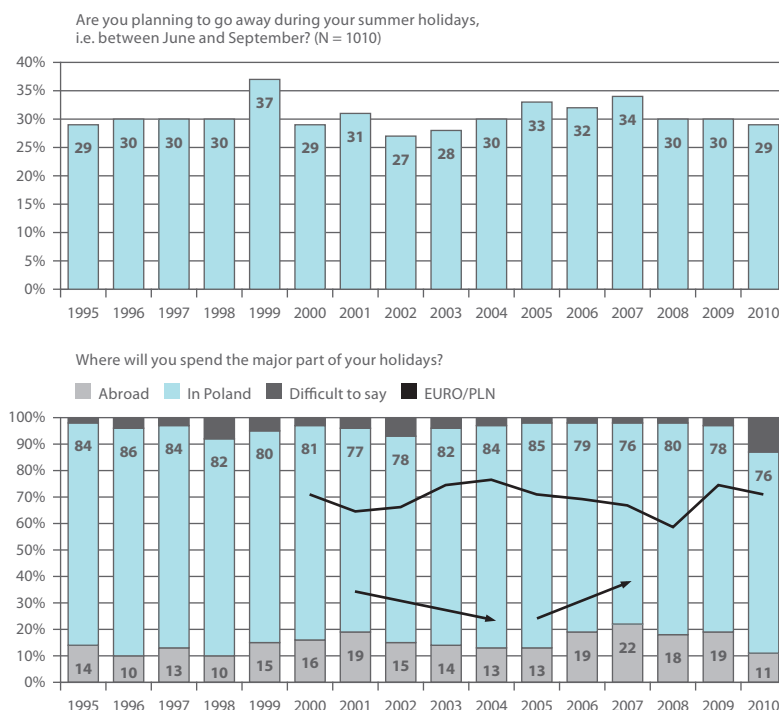
Travelling is the dream of the majority of youth, but it is not available for everyone. Youth residing in cities with more than 100,000 citizens is privileged, and participates in travelling abroad three and a half times more often than youth living in rural areas. Youth in families with good financial standing is especially privileged (travels four times as frequently). The main barriers in using tourist offers are constituted by economic factors (52%). This is partly also the problem of lack of developed needs (18%) or organisational barriers (there is no place to go to – 12%)³⁵. Trips are mainly organised individually by Poles (68%), notably less frequently by travel agents (12%).

34 EU Youth Report 2009, European Commission Report, p. 78-79.

35 Ibidem, p. 2-3. According to CBOS, the percentage of persons indicating financial resources as barriers to travelling is decreasing, though lack of funds is still the main reason for not travelling – see: B. Wciorka, Wyjazd na wypoczynek (Travel and Resting), CBOS, Warsaw 2009, p. 14.

Schools, employers, social organisations are abandoning the role of travel organiser, which reduces the chances of youth from poorer families to participate in travelling and organised trips. Still, even such trips are not less costly, and many families cannot afford them. According to data collected by CBOS, in 2009 33% of students did not travel during holidays at all.³⁶ Newest surveys produce alarming data showing that almost three fourths of children and youth will not leave their place of residence during holidays³⁷.

Fig. 7.18. Holiday plans of Poles in the years 1995-2010



Source: Wakacje Polaków (*Poles and Holidays*), Pentor RI, Warsaw, July 2010.

However, youth aged 15-19 and students are distinguished by highest touristic activity, in terms of both national and foreign trips. In the case of long-term national trips, this is 17 percentage points more than the average for all Polish citizens.³⁸ The difference is even larger in the case of trips abroad, where the decreasing tendency among the Polish society is accompanied by a rising trend among young people (see data in Fig. 7.18 and Table 7.3).

Longer far-away recreational stays are selected more and more frequently by young Poles, who find them useful for coping with stress related to work and allow for

36 B. Wciorka, Wakacje uczniów (Student Holidays), Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw 2009, p. 7.

37 Survey: The majority of children will spend holidays at home, <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/390760,Sondazwikszosc-dzieci-nie-wyjedzie-na-wakacje>.

38 Travel and tourism among youth.

demonstrating a certain lifestyle. Young families spending weekends in the countryside and young Poles travelling with their family or backpacking in Europe are an increasingly common sight. New ways of travelling, cheap flights, better developed accommodation facilities, social contact networks have made travelling easier and cheaper. Tourist information and travel agents are readily accessible via Internet, where one can purchase tickets. Due to increased competition, transportation costs are lowered. Less rigid provisions on crossing borders and foreign language skills are also factors making it possible for youth to better comprehend the world. Also the nature of youth tourism is changing. Nowadays, young people choose short trips more often – rather trips than all inclusive package holidays. They prefer experiencing the given country/region “first-hand” (by establishing direct contact with the local population) to visiting museums, galleries or churches. They also prefer to travel using new tools of finding and knowing different places like Couch Surfing which is a user-driven hospitality exchange and social networking service.

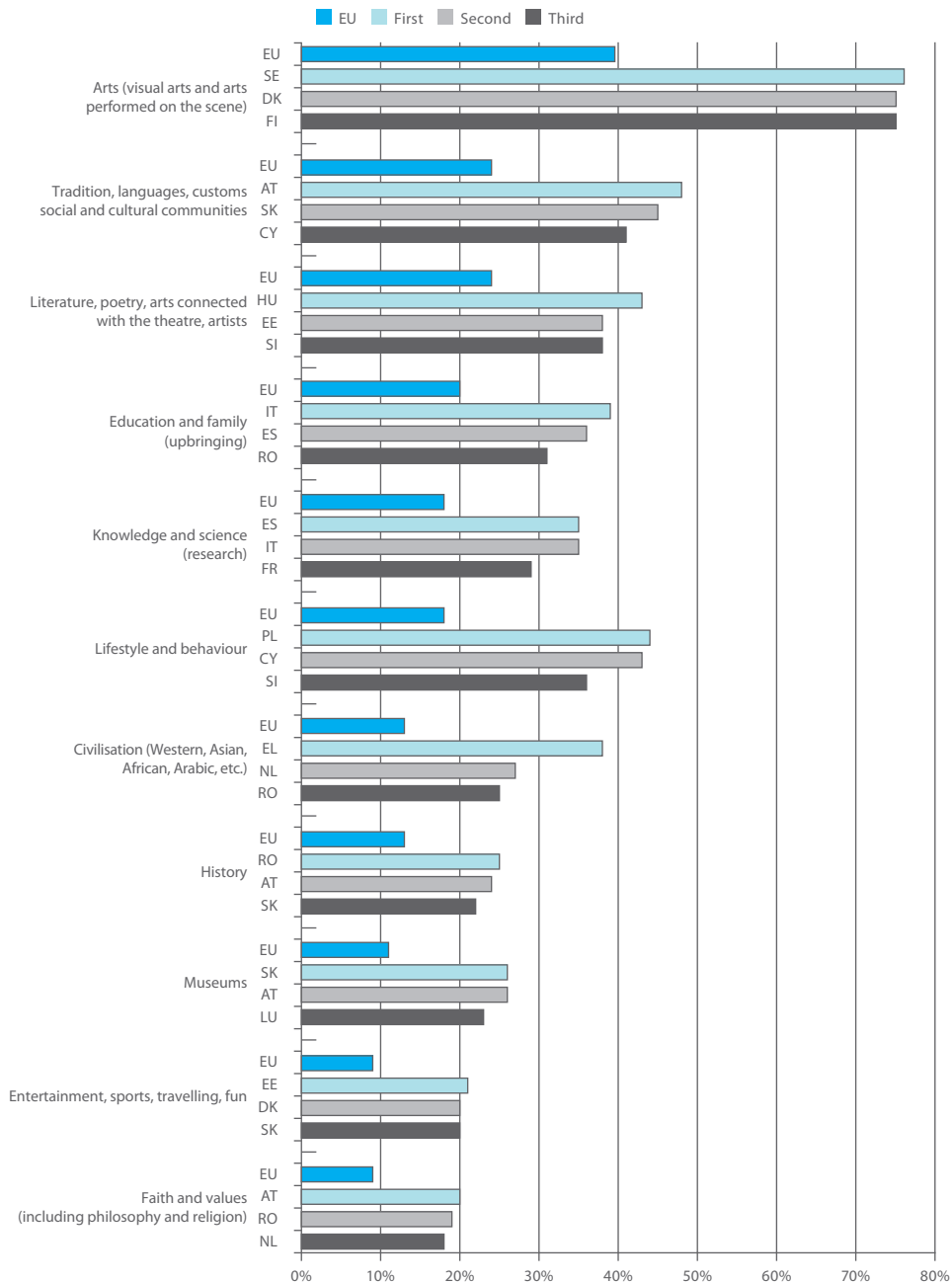
The intensity of educational processes, work and responsibility for every taken decision call for a respite. At the same time, cognitive issues frequently stimulate the need for travelling. Multiculturalism has become a symbol of the times we are living in. Learning about and embracing diversity cannot take one aback in adulthood. Tourism, understood not only as expanding one’s record of visits in historical facilities (museums, galleries) or nobilitating stays in renown tourist facilities and hotels, but also as being among “other living people”, is more effective for teaching diversity, teaching to understand it, and is more effective in opening people to changes in themselves and their own environment. Programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus perfectly fit into this type of mobility. However, Polish youth does not avail themselves of such opportunities often enough. We mentioned this in Chapter 4.

Participating in cultural events

The issue of participating in cultural events is the most difficult to assess, as one first has to define culture and its current meaning. When asked to define culture, most people point to so-called high culture (art, literature), and to well-behaved persons who often go to the theatre or opera (Fig. 7.19). Meanwhile, real life had long ago negated the division into high and low culture, as well as eliminated the distinction between recipients and creators of culture. Also the special and distinct areas where one searched for culture, participated in culture and created culture are long gone. The institutional offer does not always meet the tastes of potential recipients, however – according to authors of the report on culture – its price levels are first and foremost too high.³⁹ Nevertheless, the creators and recipients of non-institutional and autogenic culture are becoming more active. There are numerous examples of such activity: the dynamically developing brotherhood of knights’ movement, Live Action Role-Playing Game groups avant-garde theatre groups and online artistic activity. Many websites serve the purpose of uploading exhibitions, broadcasting plays, concerts, enable creating discussion groups, publishing reviews, finding groups willing to join forces in order to “create”, and so on.

39 Raport o stanie i zróznicowaniach kultury miejskiej w Polsce (Report on municipal culture in Poland: condition and various aspects), W. Burszta, B. Fatyga (ed.), Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Warsaw 2009.

Fig. 7.19. How we define culture in the EU – most common associations



Source: European Cultural Values, Special Eurobarometer 278, European Commission 2007, p. 11 (Field work February – March 2007), p. 7-8.

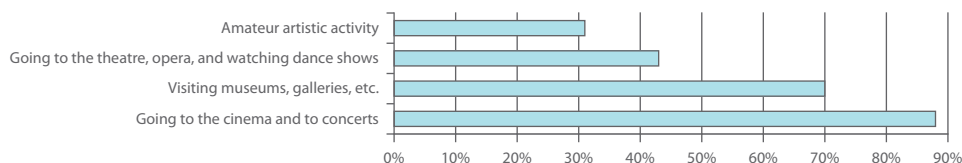
However, if we asked youth how important they find contributing to culture (this question was often asked in sociological studies); young people would find

the question itself odd and unusual. Participating in culture and in the process of creation is not an activity perceived as special or nobilitating by youth. The focus of cultural behaviours of young people have clearly shifted from culture to entertainment, seeking pleasure and providing others with pleasant experiences, as well as striving to have fun. Participating in culture is doing something “for fun”, alongside experimenting with one’s unrevealed talents. As youth aims at entertainment and fun (and opening themselves to all kinds of experiences), their aesthetic tasks are becoming multi-vector, blurred, random⁴⁰ and patchwork-like. Youth has also discarded the “seeking” approach. This does not mean that youth inconsiderately accepts the dominant culture, i.e. mass culture or culture available online. In some circles, it initiates intentional contestation which is manifested by ignoring “mass actions”, “mass gatherings”, TV series, being reserved towards “online trash” and sometimes results in resigning from having a TV at home.

These phenomena are rarely indicated in statistical data and sociological surveys, where traditional interviewing methods and cultural visits ratios are still employed to assess participation in culture (Fig. 7.20). Such research shows that although almost all households now have Internet access, DVD players and video equipment, young people still like going out and watching movies on the silver screen, and that cinemas are gaining importance in almost every European country.

In 2007 on average 82% of youth aged 16 and 24 visited a cinema at least once a year⁴¹, and in 2011 this number rose to 88%.⁴² Youngest viewers constitute the major part of cinema audiences. Slightly older viewers (25-29) declare such activity notably less frequently (58%), and viewers over 30 even less frequently (39%). These proportions vary depending on the country.

Fig. 7.20. Polish youth’s participation in culture (2011)



Source: Compiled on the basis of: Youth on the move. Analytical Report, Flash Eurobarometer – Gallup Organization 2011, p. 12-14.

The data for Poland oscillates around the EU average. Polish youth equals European youth in terms of going to the cinema, and surpasses European youth in terms of the number of visits to museums and galleries, which is not only an expression of own preferences, but also the cultural education provided by schools.⁴³

40 M. Duchowski, E.A. Sekuła, Gust estetyczny (Aesthetics) [in:] Raport o stanie i różnicowaniach... (Report on municipal culture in Poland: condition and various aspects), p. 20-26.

41 EU Youth, European Commission Report, Brussels 2009, p. 76-78.

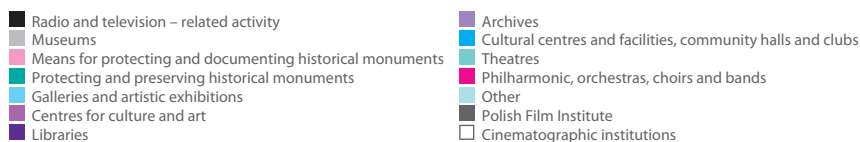
42 Youth on the move. Analytical Report, Flash Eurobarometer – Gallup Organization 2011, p. 12.

43 CSO data show that organised groups account for the majority of museum and exhibition visitors. Schoolchildren constitute one third of all visitors – see: Culture in 2008, CSO, Warsaw 2009, p. 185.

The number of young Poles enjoying visits to the theatre, philharmonic or opera is only slightly lower (by 1 percentage point). Polish youth also undertakes amateur artistic activity less often (difference of 2 percentage points). Statistics of this sort do not mention the frequency or regularity of participating in culture. They are limited to recording the number of such occurrences in the year covered by the study. As a result, the depiction of youth's cultural activity is exaggerated. In fact, the outlook is less optimistic and diverse. To provide an example, early school leaving, lack of employment or part-time work, as well as having small children is not conducive to participating in culture.⁴⁴ In Poland, participation in culture also varies between big cities and rural areas (where supra-local cultural initiatives are frowned upon). Regional differences stemming from historical events are still present and divide Poland into Eastern and Western provinces.⁴⁵

The presented data show visible neglect within the scope of cultural education of youngest generations. Needs connected with participating in culture are not stimulated, cared for or channelled actively enough. The institutional offer is not adapted either to the financial capacity of the young recipient, or to the new aesthetic tastes of youth. These, although they require subtle channelling, cannot be reduced to imposing a duty to acquaint oneself with cultural symbols of the past in museums or participate in mass culture.

Fig. 7.21. Structure of state budget expenditure on culture and national heritage in 2009



Source: Culture in 2009, CSO, Warsaw 2010, p. 125.

From this point of view, state expenditure on culture – not only in terms of funds, but also structure – did not take many needs into consideration. This includes both the artistic environment and the young recipients/co-creators of culture (Fig. 7.21). The highest amounts have been allocated for museums for years.

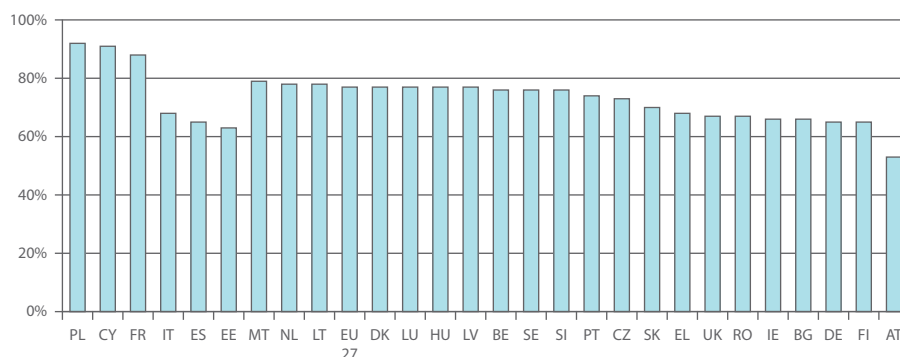
44 Youth on the move..., p. 15.

45 M. Duchowski, E.A. Sekuła, op. cit., p. 25.

The second position is taken by centres for culture and art, and third place goes to expenditure on protecting and preserving historical monuments, the majority of which are sacral buildings. The decisions which have been taken recently have spurred corrections. By 2015, the state shall annually disburse 1% of its budget to culture.⁴⁶ Moreover, more funds will be allocated for new investments and developing local cultural centres such as libraries or municipal cultural centres, which are often the only link to culture in smaller localities and are of utmost importance to shaping the relation to culture in local communities.

Irrespective of these activities, the manner in which funds earmarked for culture are disbursed needs to be revised. Investments are usually made in large facilities, whereas the diversity and niche nature of culture would thrive in smaller centres with flexible functions and goals. A high number of employees with permanent contracts is retained in the area of culture. Such employees often act routinely⁴⁷, whilst nowadays the optimal model – according to experts – is the mission and animation model: A dynamic model adapting to current conditions and needs, definitely more appropriate than the institutional model of cultural education⁴⁸.

Fig. 7.22. How important is culture? – Poles against the backdrop of other EU Member States (2007)



Source: European Cultural Values, Special Eurobarometer 278, European Commission 2007, p. 10.

Activities promoting culture are important not only due to the standards becoming enlightened states. The majority of Poles personally believe culture is important and underline its significance (Fig. 7.22). This opinion is especially harboured more often by educated and mature adults than youth, which suggests that either such a conclusion is arrived at in time, or that we are dealing with a generation divide. Whichever option is valid, there is room for improvement, and stimulating participation

46 Paragraph 2 of the Pact for Culture is as follows: „The Government, through appropriate activity undertaken in cooperation with the parties to the Pact, shall by 2015 allocate at least 1% of the state budget to culture, starting from 2012” see: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_1741_PLK_HTML.htm.

47 B. Fatyga on the basis of the text by J. Nowińskiego, Cultural Institutions [in:] Raport o stanie i różnicowaniach... (Report on...), p. 41-47.

48 B. Fatyga, Jakiej kultury Polacy potrzebują i czy edukacja kulturalna im ją zapewnia (What kind of culture do Poles need and does cultural education provide such culture), report for the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Warsaw 2009, p. 49.

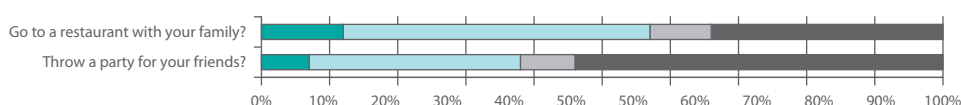
in culture, promoting the significance of culture is in a consumer society interested rather in purchasing goods and services an exceptionally difficult task.

Social life

Groups of youth are strongly drawn to each other, and socialising constitutes the major pastime of young people. Constant chatting – in person, on the phone and online – is the most common form of integrating with peers. Adults usually think that young people discuss insignificant issues. This is not the case. Although conversation topics are trivial, the act of talking is of key importance to youth – it serves the purpose of confirming that one is perceived by the society as an individual entity, and that one’s problems, joys and weaknesses are not disregarded. Adults generally do not have the time to hear their children out.

Functioning in a community of young people is primarily aimed at ensuring entertainment and socialising opportunities. Young people meet at home (at parties organised at home), clubs (and engage in clubbing) or in public places recognised as part of their “turf” (so-called “hang out spots”). Young people who cannot afford going to clubs go to house parties, and those who do not have the possibility of organising a house party or afford going to a club go to “hang out spots”. During such meetings, young people usually discuss issues of interest, listen to music, amuse themselves by telling jokes, drink alcohol, and – if possible – dances. They are attracted to the company of their peers, wish to forget about every-day life and experience something more exciting, and are driven by the need to be accepted and adored. Socialising also provides opportunities for “picking up” a boyfriend or girlfriend. Youth finances its social life from pocket money, financial support received from parents and/or own income.⁴⁹

Fig. 7.23. Social life of Poles in 2009 – *Last year, did you...*

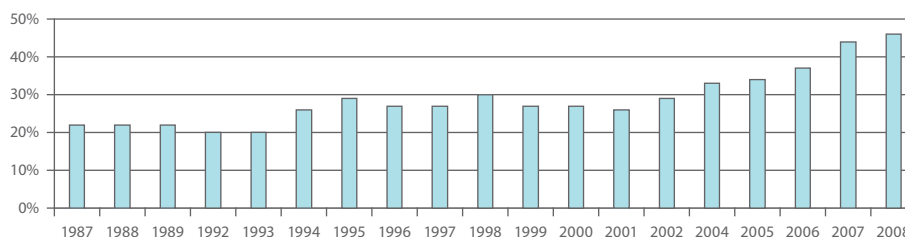


Source: What has changed in the lifestyle of Poles in the last twenty years? CBOS 2009, p. 4.

Young adults also find social life very important. Students establish and maintain the largest group of contacts. University students entertain themselves similarly to younger youth, but they can afford restaurants and clubs more often. Persons running households most often organise parties and social meetings at home (Fig. 7.23). In this respect, the habits of Poles have hardly changed in the last twenty years. What has changed is the model of spending leisure time with one’s family. First and foremost, the number of respondents taking their family out to restaurants is increasing (Fig. 7.24). In 2008, almost half of young adults (46%) spent leisure time in such a manner with their families, whereby most of them (31%) visited a restaurant at least a few times.

49 J. Kurzępa, Pokolenie nadziei, czyli współczesny nastolatek, sprawy, które są dla niego ważne i świat, w którym się obraca. (The Generation of Hope – Modern Teenagers: the Issues They Find Important and the World They Live In) Fanta Report 2010.

Fig. 7.24. Going out to restaurants with family – changes in the years 1987-2008



Source: Compiled on the basis of CBOS data.

Both organising parties for friends and going out to restaurants with family are almost a common habit among persons with high economic and social positions and young people. In 2001, expenditure on restaurants and hotels amounted to 2.1% of total expenses in households run by youth, and in 2010 it equalled as much as 4.6%. So as to compare, the average total sum allocated to this end in households is lower by almost 50% (2.4%).

7.5. New media and life on-line

The computer as the basic item of equipment in the room of a young person, the sight of young people glued to mobile phones, earphones plugged into electronic devices unknown to the average forty-year-old, constantly being online are only seemingly insignificant emblems of the young generation's separateness. On no condition can they be reduced to the role of technological gadgets. New communication tools not only make the life of young people different, they also make young people different and lead to a situation in which as a group they present a new social quality.

The speed and effectiveness with which new communication technologies take over the world are reflected by the data illustrating the dynamics of the Internet compared to other electronic media. It took the radio 38 years to attract its first 50,000,000 listeners, television managed to do that in 13 years, and the computer gained 50 million users in 16 years. The Internet needed barely 4 years. The invention of hypertext contributed significantly to its popularity, as it enabled the creation of the World Wide Web.⁵⁰ It is estimated that the global network attracts 2.2 billion users today⁵¹. The Internet is an entity unprecedented in density, and the first invention to enable global public contact.

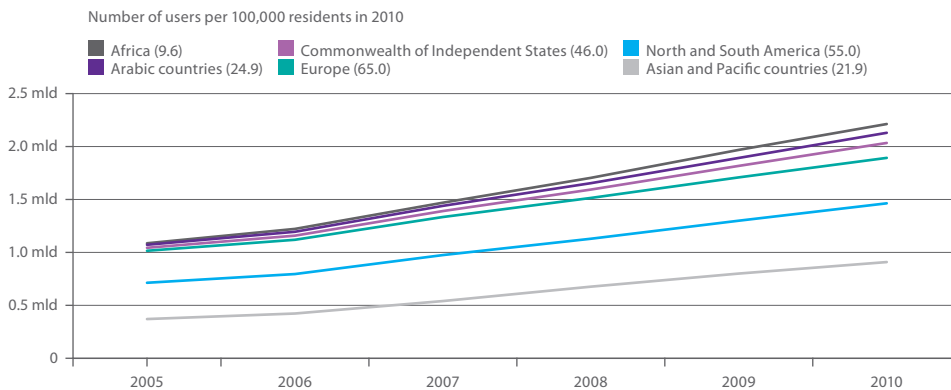
A great economic, social and political power is vested in the Internet. The final shape and outcome of its development is difficult to predict. The Internet leads to the destruction of time and physical space, as it introduces an intangible, yet existing entity – cyberspace. The World Wide Web is becoming an important correlative of the new social reality, which is increasingly immersed in communication technology and

50 K. Krzysztofek, M.S. Szczepański, *Zrozumieć rozwój. Od społeczeństw tradycyjnych do informacyjnych* (Understanding Development. From Traditional to Information Society), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2005, p. 184.

51 The World in 2010. ICT Trends and Facts, World Statistics Day 20.10.210.

after the implementation of which nothing remained the same. Until recently, people learned about the world mainly through books and contact with other people. The electronic media were introduced, and then came the Internet. Establishing interpersonal relations and creating communities required face-to-face contacts. Nowadays, this role is performed by Facebook. Previously the process of creating and disseminating messages required the presence of a sender and a recipient. Nowadays, the recipient is simultaneously the sender. Currently, senders have developed special characteristics. They value the possibility of voicing their opinions more than the quality of their opinions. This is the main reason for which the Internet, being a forum open to public discussion, is at the same time becoming a dumping ground visited by all network users.

Fig. 7.25. Internet users in the world



Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database.

The Internet and civilisation based on bytes and pixels provide ample opportunities, however, voices of warning are to be heard. One of the most frequently raised issues is connected with technicisation and technologisation of culture, which is received mainly through the media. Culture, once human-oriented, now turns to new tools and means. As a result, technology has become part of the processes of cognition, comprehending and sensing. Technology penetrates the spiritual areas of humanity and makes the human race shallower. Pluralism and freedom of choice in the media are also questioned – the wide variety of offers leads to the question, whether there is still a choice and what is the quality of that choice. Serious discussions are held on the possible effects of excessive expansion of images which supplant the word, as without words there can be no abstract thinking (according to psychologists). Watching – the attribute of the new media – is inconsiderate, and results in getting used to controlling mainly feelings and reflexes, and not engaging in rumination.⁵²

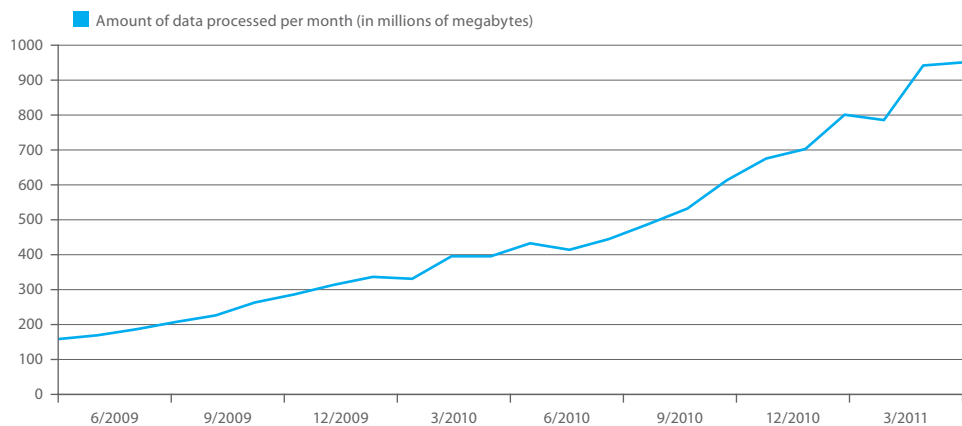
What does this mean for culture, education, social communication and the socialisation of the young generation? We do not know that yet. Maybe the alarming cries of specialists are unjustified. Maybe the audio-visual language will allow new generations to develop thought, art and emotions better than the linear alphabetic

52 K. Krzysztofek, M.S. Szczepański, op. cit., p. 198-205.

language, and multimedia networks will prove more effective in establishing interpersonal relations. The first truly digital generations (already dubbed the e-generation, the screen generation, and the “online nomads”) are only just entering adulthood. The majority of issues connected with determining the effects of the dot.com revolution has yet to be recognised. Currently, we seem to be benumbed by the civilisation shock and its successfulness in luring young people. We monitor the expansion of electronic equipment in homes and educational institutions, as well as computer literacy levels among young people. We also measure the time spent in front of computer screens. More advanced studies attempt at determining the social and emotional roles of the media in the lives of young people. Young people are not fully aware of neither the vast potential hidden in the new media nor of how treacherous a trap and how painful a disillusionment they might turn out to be. Youth simply starts using them in the best possible interesting and funny way.

They use the new media without seeking the assistance of guides or mentors, at the consent of adults, but without their participation. Online, youth pursue “socialisation without supervision”. The dynamic expansion of new media among the young generation is illustrated by data concerning the use of services provided by Opera Mini, one of the mobile Internet browsers for mobile devices, designed and developed by the Norwegian company Opera Software ASA. Opera Mini users are mainly aged 18-27 and reside in various locations around the globe. Only in April 2011, 107.1 million persons used Opera Mini in their mobile phones. The server enabled viewing 57.9 billion websites, as well as the compression and download of 95.4 billion MB of data.

Fig. 7.26. Monthly amounts of data processed and made available to users of the Internet search engine Opera Mini – dynamics of services in the years 2008-2010



Source: State of the Mobile Web, April 2010, Report Opera Software, May 24, 2011, p. 4.

Poland, which for years has been one of the most dynamic markets in this industry, has recently “given up” its high position in the ranking to countries with lower levels of technological saturation such as Kazakhstan, Belarus, Egypt or the Philippines. Nevertheless, it is still classed as one of the key areas, especially due to the high levels of youth’s online activity. Young Poles are among those who use their mobile phones

most frequently in the world. Similarly as youth in the United States of America, Great Britain and Brazil, youth is introduced to ICT equipment very early – 12% received their first phone when they were under 10, and 87% between 11 and 20.

It is similar in the case of first experiences with using the Internet – 22% of young Poles used Internet search engines before they turned ten, and 75% accrued this experience in the second decade of their lives.

Young Poles are always online – 87% have the habit of using the Internet while travelling via public transport (on buses, trams and trains) and posting their thoughts and creations. In relations to other behaviours, young Polish Internet users seem to take on a more traditional approach – they are more often intolerant of sending SMSes during meals, more often write traditional letters and send them by post. They are more critical of the influence online anonymity has on revealing private issues in the Internet. However, they more often draft articles and upload them to Wikipedia, although they are not very much into reading books or – especially – newspapers⁵³ (Fig. 7.27).

Fig. 7.27. Have you published a Wikipedia article?

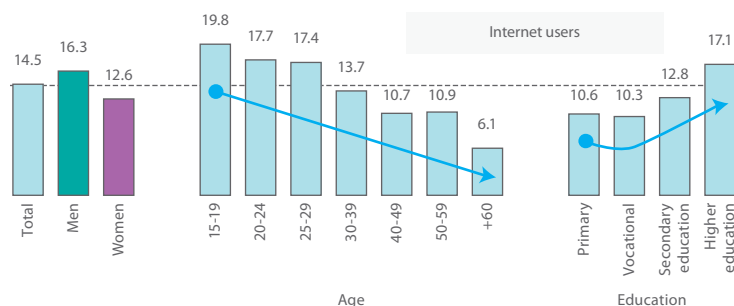


Source: State of the Mobile Web, October 2010, Report Opera Software, November 24, 2010, p. 40.

The average Polish teenager spends almost 20 hours a week online. This is twice as much as the average for the parent generation and more than thrice as much as the average for the grandparent generation. Secondary school students are the most active group here, and schoolboys spend more time online than schoolgirls (Fig. 7.28). Out of all the available media, young people would find it most difficult to resign from using the Internet. The lower the age, the greater the commitment to the Internet. The home telephone is a completely unnecessary means of communication for young people, as well as the radio and – to a lesser extent – television. What they find indispensable is the Internet and mobile phones (Fig. 7.29). This structure of preferences is different from that ascribed to the parent generation (which would find it most difficult to part with their mobile phones and TVs), and is substantially different from that of the grandparent generation (which values television and radio most, whilst view the Internet and mobile phones as unnecessary).

53 State of the Mobile Web, October 2010, Report Opera Software, November 24, 2010, p. 21-42. Study carried out in 2010 on 300,000 users of the Opera Mini users aged 18-27.

Fig. 7.28. How many hours a week do you spend online?



Source: World Internet Project Poland 2010, p. 34.

Fig. 7.29. Hierarchy of media compared to user age

Age	Television	Mobile	Radio	Internet	Home telephone
15-19	2.42	2.29	3.90	1.85	4.54
20-24	2.38	2.11	3.77	2.13	4.61
25-29	2.28	2.29	3.52	2.40	4.50
30-39	1.94	2.39	3.40	3.06	4.21
40-49	1.64	2.61	3.11	3.67	3.97
50-59	1.45	2.89	2.98	4.06	3.62
60+	1.36	3.49	2.43	4.48	3.23

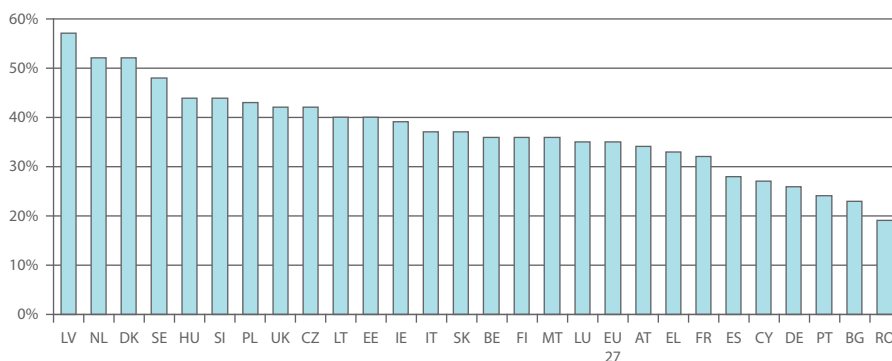
Source: World Internet Project Poland 2010, p. 36.

Teenagers spend most of their time contacting peers – even when they are doing homework, surfing the Internet in search of useful information or playing games. Polish youth is distinguished by high levels of participation in social networks. 43% of young Internet users declare using such websites. Only some European countries display higher intensity of social network usage (Fig. 7.30).

The dynamic expansion of new communication technologies aimed at young people is shaping a new generation. New media, which accompany youth in every walk of life, co-create the space where social networks have never been as dense as they are today. Never before have technologies eliminated barriers created by time and place, as well as social and cultural factors. Although the new media provide opportunities for promoting solidarity, love, deep and strong bonding, the will to cooperate or civil involvement, youth does not take these chances.⁵⁴

54 M. Krajewski, Stan czuwania (Sleep Mode) [in:] M. Filiciak et al, Młodzi i media, Nowe media a uczestnictwo w kulturze, Raport Centrum Badań nad Kulturą Popularną SWPS (Youth and Media. New media and participation in culture. Report of the Centre for Popular Culture Studies at Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw 2010, p. 35-41.

Fig. 7.30. Share of persons declaring usage of social networks



Source: DAS compilation based on: European Committee (2010), Special Eurobarometer 335, E-Communications Household Survey Fieldwork: November – December 2009, Brussels.

The new media are not only social tools. They allow for expressing and reflecting on one’s Self. Presenting the Self online – whether by means of pictures or via chat – evokes responses from others, and these reactions trigger the necessity to take a careful look at oneself. As a result, new communication technologies are becoming “techniques for learning about the Self”.

Social networks and social groups create new platforms for attracting the attention of those about young people they care. This forum became even more important when all social relations defining the feeling of belonging to the “we” group (which is crucial for shaping self-awareness) frayed and ceased to be a point of reference and support in real life. In this context, Facebook or Nasza Klasa (Polish social network) friends seem to be the only stable social backdrop against which one can evaluate one’s achievements and decisions⁵⁵.

One of the most important needs of young people – the need for living in agreement with oneself, voicing one’s own beliefs and values, as well as authentic and honest realising and fulfilling one’s interests – can be better realised online than in real life. Although pretending to be someone else is easier online, it is equally difficult to simply be oneself in real life. Contrary to what one might expect, youth detest falsity more than they despise lack of competence, and they are capable of opposing obscure social norms by establishing their own unambiguous rules online. This makes the World Wide Web not only very important, but also more familiar (as it is based on rules and norms established by youth).

The Internet makes youth more sociable, independent, and serves as a safe haven. It is also the space where a new type of culture is being created – the culture of participation. The online social contact space is also an area where cultural texts are exchanged. The influence of traditional institutions and role models on this cultural discourse is marginal. This cultural exchange is co-created by other web users and youth, as they share links to their creations, information, comments, and

55 M. Marody, *Poszukiwanie dowodu na własne istnienie (Searching for proof of one’s existence)* [in:] M. Filiciak et al., op. cit., p. 65-69.

evaluations or upload them to their own websites. This creates a certain universe of thought and language.⁵⁶

Such possibilities motivate youth to expand knowledge and encourage them to voice their opinions on issues they are well-versed in or which are important for them. Such local – within the group of persons concerned – activities might contribute to raising civil awareness. The need to confront one's views with web users strengthens the sense of belonging to a group and lets youth believe they are capable of making valuable contributions to pending social discussions, or even take decisions in certain issues.⁵⁷ These possibilities were perfectly illustrated by the behaviours of youth during the campaign preceding the 2007 and in the 2011 Sejm elections.

What the Internet is, what it sometimes is, and what it can be – all that is dependent solely on its technical capacity and the creativity of its users. It seems that the decisive factor determining the nature of the Internet, at least in the opinion of youth, is social life quality. The more hostile, boring and "extinct" public space is for youth, the less sensitive it is to the language of young people and their way of perceiving the world, the greater the temptation to escape into virtual reality and ignore real life. It is highly unlikely that the Internet will become less important for youth, as it offers too many attractions and opportunities. The perspective that it will establish constructive feedback with real life, although it is still barely outlined, is not out of the question.

Using computers, the Internet and mobile phones differs greatly depending on social status. The digital divide is widening in Poland, i.e. the differences between persons with access to the new media and digital devices – younger, better educated, residing in larger cities – and persons without access to such appliances, and first and foremost allowing them to use newest equipment, which might potentially lead to exclusion from the symbolic and communication universe populated by the young generation.⁵⁸

Summary

Together with the onset of market economy in Poland, consumption and consumptionism have become the main axis of the socialisation process of the young generation. Nowadays, 19- to 30-year-olds are the first generation which are under its influence. Striving for achieving the lifestyle defined by consumption is undoubtedly the basic factor stimulating the activity of youth who invests in education in order to find appropriate employment, as it guarantees the possibility of availing oneself of the goods offered by the consumer society.

It is important here to understand that the "having" orientation, or rather the "being" orientation is not an "choosing" orientation – is the orientation imposed on youth by the dominant culture. Consumptionism is generally treated as an attempt

56 The simultaneous occurrence of these phenomena, referred to as Web 2.0, is characteristic of the shift from "using" the web to actively using new media and filling it with own content. The fact that undertaking creative activity does not require costly software and highly specialist knowledge, as it is possible to participate in this process with free and intuitive, generally available applications is favourable for this situation – see Social Capital Development Strategy..., p. 43, after Report Poland 2030, p. 153.

57 H. Jenkins, *Nowe formy uczestnictwa w kulturze* (New Forms of Participating in Culture) [in:] M. Filiciak et al., op. cit., p. 136-137.

58 Social Capital Development Strategy..., p. 45, after Report Poland 2030, p. 152.

to own and use things which is not justified by real needs. It resembles hedonistic materialism, but substantially it is something more. This cultural offer is the result of combining social wealth with unbounded freedom promoted some time ago by certain contestation movements in the West. Today it is the offer available in the entire postmodern world. It promotes self-fulfilment, openness, seeking new life and identity models, propagates and provides numerous choices, and encourages ascribing any subjective meanings. This facet of consumptionism is noticed especially by young people, who did not experience the hardships of real socialism, and are familiar with the reality in which goods are generally available.

In practice (in Poland), consumptionism is visible mainly on the market – it encourages to purchase goods and services rather than to contemplate or look for alternative life models. Poles underwent socialisation in various historical conditions, which resulted in two types of consumption. The first type of consumption, which consists in greediness for goods irrespective of their quality, was shaped in times of deficiencies and shortages. The second type was shaped in the post-deficiency period and consists in celebrating the possibility of choosing from a wide variety of goods and “philosophies” regarding owning and using things). Nowadays, young Poles are active consumers who value mainly owning items and the lifestyle based on pleasures. They like to own goods which make life easier and more modern, and give satisfaction. They are often treated as a marker of status. Consumer aspirations of youth are very high and are not limited to material goods – they refer to lifestyle where particular functions and symbolic meanings are assigned to material goods. Branded clothes are not bought due to their stylishness, but in order to underline one’s taste, the capability of combining colours and fabrics, and sometimes manifest something. All-inclusive package tours are selected by the lazy, hard-working or those who need them to confirm their status. Those who are searching for interesting experiences and wish to manifest their unconventional approach, opt for qualified tourism. Young Poles are among the most active tourists in Europe. At the same time, the favourable averages disguise deep social divides, which reveal processes of inheriting specific lifestyles from parents (the poor do not travel).

Leisure time, which is very important for the young generation, is sometimes very limited, as young Poles work a lot. Usually they do not have the time to undertake sport, recreational or cultural activity beyond the household. This problem concerns mainly persons over 30 – professionally active and with families. As the habits passed down to the young generation involve lack of leisure time and the habit of spending time beyond the household, a specific Polish style of spending leisure time is being formed – spending leisure time at home and using the media. This is visible not only in declarations of youth, but also in money spending strategies. Funds are mainly allocated for purchasing audio-visual and ICT equipment, which enable establishing contact with the world and culture without disturbing one’s peace and quiet.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, youth running households spend more funds in restaurants, hotels; spending weekends away from home is becoming standard practice, and is more often aspired to. Young people earn more, and spend more. Both their income and revenues exceed the average for the entire society, which for the first time indicates a downturn in the previous tendency – higher income among representatives of the older generation. One might assume that a few different factors – higher and better paid qualifications of the better educated generation, flexible

employment forms (which do not give the sense of security and enable accumulating higher income), as well as the better economic situation. Thanks to higher income, youth can take the liberty of satisfying their consumer needs. Their homes are more often equipped with modern equipment. Youth enjoys purchasing items. Moreover, young people do not like purchasing items without a practical justification. They do not display excessive consumer behaviours. This is reflected both by the structures of expenses, income and lack of excessive debt.

Registers of due bank debt indicate only 5% of borrowers with due liabilities. Young people under 30 are subject to the risk of failure to repay credit to a lesser extent than others. This is not necessarily some special achievement of youth, rather the result of the simple fact that half of the population cannot use the bank offer (has part-time jobs or has no creditworthiness). Circumstances of this sort are a serious obstacle to meeting the most urgent need of young people – a home of their own. Taking into account that this need is common (40% of young people do not have an individual apartment), as well as the fact that they dispose of won income, banks are not sufficiently flexible and their procedures seem out-dated and irrational.

Nowadays, the share in consumption is more unequal than the income structure of youth. The differences are especially severe, as they concern a very important area and evoke the sense of inequality. With such a large part of the young generation lacking access to amenities which facilitate access to consumption, social divides might become greater. This process, nowadays not really advanced, will become more visible, parallel to the development (and diversification) of professional careers of the generation (diverse in the two-segment labour market). This would not be a good sign. Excessive social differences always trigger problems exceeding the political sphere. They translate into higher indices related to problems with health (also psychological health), lead to an increase in social pathologies and behaviours bordering on crime, do not contribute to social cohesion, rather evoke resentments and prejudices, and exclude large social segments from civil society influence.

Although the thesis assuming that young Poles are very active consumers on the goods and service market is well proven by empirical facts, no data indicating their private philosophies on consumption are available. It is therefore not possible to decide whether youth is oriented to postmodernism. It is likely that such orientations occur in groups with high levels of consumer needs satisfaction, and non-existent in groups which are deprived of basic goods and goods promoted by culture.

We are aware that approaches open to postmodernism are fostered by education, but also in this area we lack empirical data. Diagnoses of leisure time and participation in culture do not provide an answer to this question, as the conducted surveys are of institutional nature and are usually based on calculating the frequency of particular occurrences. The descriptions of lifestyles adopted by particular groups and environments are rather fragmentary, and focus on underlining pro-consumer approaches (as, e.g. in the case of studies on singles). We do not know to what extent the need for spirituality is fulfilled, similarly as in the case of social sensitivity of youth. We know that such needs are not fully satisfied by religion, as well as that they are individualized and divergent from institutional rules.

It is not clear if, who and how instils spirituality and sensitivity in youth. It is certain that this role is not performed by schools. It is rather unlikely that going to the cinema evokes such responses in youth. It might result from the influence of parents,

books, or most certainly from contacts with peers or self-searching. The Internet is the space where openness, authentic emotions, the need to react to global events and express oneself reveals itself with unbounded power. Nowadays, the World Wide Web performs numerous functions – it is a boundless source of information and knowledge co-created by youth.

The Internet is where the Self and one's creations can be exposed, where social contacts can be established and where intimate rendezvous can be organised. It is also an unending vanity fair and political forum. We know relatively much about youth online behaviours – enough to state that the Internet is notably altering the young generation. Adults do not have access to cyberspace, and the majority of grown-ups do not comprehend its inner workings. They perceive using the Internet as mindless "clicking". Although the Internet is often used inconsiderately, it is also favourable for many developments – it enables creating a new type of culture (the culture of participation), following one's passions (as the Internet has no institutional counterpart in real life in this respect), satisfies significant social needs (establishes relations and the sense of belonging, which the real social environment is incapable of offering), facilitates self-cognition and reflecting upon the Self, comprises priceless civil potential (no other media is capable of transmitting powerful emotions, overcoming physical, social and cultural barriers). What will become of the Internet is highly dependent on the level of self-regulation it will be capable to retain. The development of the Internet will be conditioned by whether it will be capable of adhering to ethical principles, redressing the balance between innovation and a critical approach to its technical capabilities, as well as Internet availability which does not exclude any youth group (currently 40% of youth from poorer families do not have access to the Internet).⁵⁹

The Internet works in mysterious ways. However, in an information society, cultural and media education is becoming increasingly important – if not crucial. This results from both the possibilities offered by and the risks related to the World Wide Web. Currently, we are providing children with education in computer literacy – such skills are very significant, as in the times of electronic media their lack is tantamount to exclusion from social life. Nevertheless, we should not forget that nowadays, perhaps more than ever before, other skills are also necessary. These skills include independent and critical searching for knowledge, formulating and expressing thoughts in a language comprehensible for various recipients, safe Internet usage and using the World Wide Web for constructive aims.

59 PISA 2009 Results: Students on Line. Digital technologies and performance, vol. VI, OECD 2011, p. 146.

8.

8. Young generation and the new system – beliefs, attitudes and presence in the public sphere of life

8.1. Political passivity: opposition or indifferentism?

8.2. Political revival among the youth in 2007 – the effect of social campaigns or political engagement?

8.3. “Deficit of citizenship” – Poland-specific, youth-specific or generation-specific?

8.4. Social involvement and civic education of the youth

8.5. Attitude towards changes and the system

Summary

8. Young generation and the new system – beliefs, attitudes and presence in the public sphere of life

CHAPTER EIGHT

Political affairs are not very important to young people. They are not part of their world. They evoke emotions in young people only occasionally, sometimes being a subject of their reflections or opinions. These issues are usually located at the outer edge of young people's consciousness, creating a latent image of the reality, difficult to access by the consciousness itself and by an investigator. However, it does not mean that this area is not important. Poland has undergone 20 years of historical changes, yet, the question whether they are accepted by the young generation seems to remain open.

Young Poles, fed up with the success ideology, told that they live in a society with great possibilities, have quickly begun to prove that they are children of the new system: unprecedented growth of educational and status aspirations, high expectations related to the level of life, optimism, pragmatism and active life attitudes have become true for a great portion of the young generation. At the same time, the system was undergoing less dynamic and obvious changes. Young people – told about the value of success, tempted with the consumer lifestyle – were becoming more and more disappointed with the inefficiency of the system – first, in the area of education and then, in the labour market. They were the first ones that started to experience the consequences of Poland's new, complex relations with the whole world. "Age of uncertainty" (K. Galbraith), "risk society" (U. Beck), "liquid modernity" (Z. Bauman) were becoming Polish metaphors as well. In this context, the rationality of decisions taken disappoints and causes frustrations, most of all due to the fact that within the first 20 years of the transition, Poland was also a country with social and material deficits. Are the young aware of these circumstances – do they understand the reasons why their decisions and life plans sometimes fail? Who or what do they blame for this – themselves, the times in which they live or the system? Do they think that they can create the society, or that it should be created by others?

There are a lot of opinions on that point – some of them suggest that the young generation is floating away from politics, that they are indifferent to public matters as well as politically absent and ignorant; other opinions suggest that they are hiding a rebellion potential. Basically, we have grown disaccustomed of looking at the young as potential rebels, intending to change the course of the history. Although the events in the Arab countries or the situation in Spain remind us of the still present spirit of rebellion among young people, they have not managed to invalidate the thesis, which is a result of many European diagnoses – that modern youth is not a generation that wants to change the world, but a generation that wants to adjust to it. However, we still think, gathering various arguments that support this thesis, that there are no exciting ideologies that would organize emotions and lay out political aims; that there are no alternative visions; that the today's most enchanting cultural message – the consumerism ideology – does not

encourage to make changes, but it plays a role of an effective lightning conductor, which absorbs the excess of energy from the system.

However, nothing is yet determined. Various scenarios of the future are possible, since the social tensions frontlines and group interests conflicts have not been eliminated so far. It is just the opposite – there are many more tensions and divisions, but their complexity and different character make them more difficult to notice, and, in particular, to solve. This also applies to the youth, who may turn to be a very serious problem and challenge, also in the political sense, in every continent (as we can see during the protests on Wall Street and around the world). Their different level of political engagement – most often leading to the conclusion about political apathy – can be both an argument in favour of the cumulative character of political participation, and of growth of readiness to active involvement in the process of transition. What kind of citizens are young Poles? Do they get involved in matters going beyond the sphere of privacy and their own life interests? What do they think about the system changes in Poland and to what extent are they involved in the creation of civil society?

8.1. Political passivity: opposition or indifferentism?

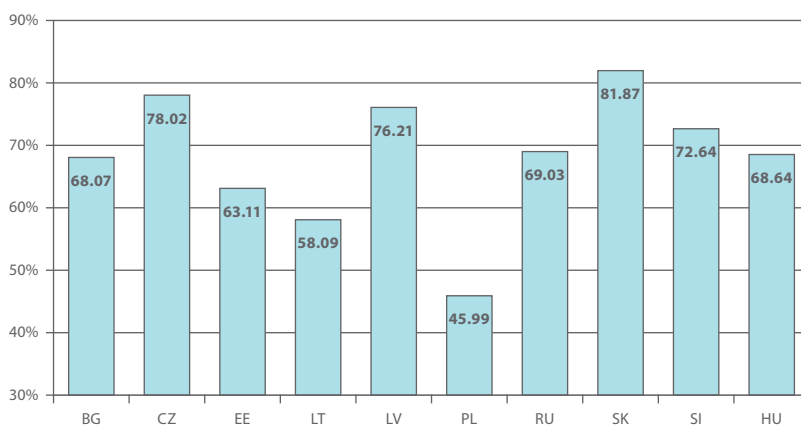
The expectation that recovery of political independence will cause involvement of the society and active participation of the Poles in the public life has not been confirmed. We observe "citizenship deficit" – the unwillingness to co-decide about the future of the country. Alienation, which seemed to be grown together with the previous political system, spreads far and wide in the new, post-communist Poland. Although it has a completely different structure today (it more often affects victims than beneficiaries of the system transformations), it is a clearly distinguishing element of Polish political picture¹. Young people are the group with a particularly low level of involvement and low political activity. But is it really so? What is political activity vs. passivity in general, and in relation to the youth? In a handbook of political psychology², it is defined as any form of an individual's engagement in exerting influence on rulers and their decisions at various levels of power. These are, therefore, both certain *behaviours* towards selected elements of the political system (institutions, parties, political options or the politicians themselves), a kind of *emotional involvement* as well as simple *interest* in political issues, which result in broad knowledge related to politics. The minimum level of political participation is expressed by voter turnout.

Among post-communist countries, Poland occupies the last position in this respect. The average turnout in parliamentary elections is 45.99% in our country, while in Slovakia it is 81.9%, in the Czech Republic – 78.02 %, in Latvia – 76.21% (Fig. 8.1).

1 K. Korzeniowski, Alienacja polityczna a uczestnictwo polityczne w warunkach transformacji systemu [Political alienation and political participation during system transformation] [in:] J. Reykowski (ed.), *Wartości i postawy społeczne a przemiany systemowe. Szkice z psychologii politycznej* [Values and political attitudes and system transformation. Sketches on political psychology] , IP PAN, Warsaw 1993.

2 K. Skarżyńska, *Aktywność i bierność polityczna* [Political activity and passivity] [in:] K. Skarżyńska (ed.), *Podstawy psychologii politycznej* [The basics of political psychology], IP PAN, Warszawa 2002.

Fig. 8.1. Average turnout in elections in post-communist countries³



Source: M. Cześniak, *Frekwencja wyborcza w Polsce. Perspektywa porównawcza*. [Voter turnout in Poland. A comparative perspective.], Scholar, Warsaw 2007.

Young Poles (aged 18-24) constitute the greatest percentage among politically passive people. For many years, their participation in elections did not exceed 40%. In the EU referendum, young people's "in favour" vote was poorer than expected (slightly over 1/3 of eligible voters). Parliamentary elections in 2007 were a breakthrough, since the turnout of the youth was unexpectedly high – 50-62.5% depending on the age. The level of interest in political issues remains low. In 2010, 14% of nineteen-year-olds declared interest in politics. More than one fourth (27%) admitted that they are practically uninterested in politics and another 17% – to a low extent. A great majority of young people invariably claim that entering a political party is out of the question. 12% of the youth does not exclude this possibility⁴. One fifth of young Polish students does not see anything wrong in non-democratic political system⁵ and perceive the political world as "dirty", as a "lark", "nonsense", "chaos", "quagmire" or a field of the fight for positions⁶.

Rejection of the world of politics and clear concentration of modern youth on themselves – their own aims and life aspirations – may suggest that this generation is egotistic and apolitical, as well as more devoted to professional career and free time pleasures than the willingness to influence the shape of social life. Low level of young people's interest and involvement in politics can also be explained by the fact that young people are more sensitive to political morality and by their critical attitude to politics. Maybe this means that the perception of politics by

3 It covers turnout in all parliamentary elections carried out after the collapse of communist regimes. In the case of Poland, turnout in 1898 elections was not taken account, since it was not fully democratic.

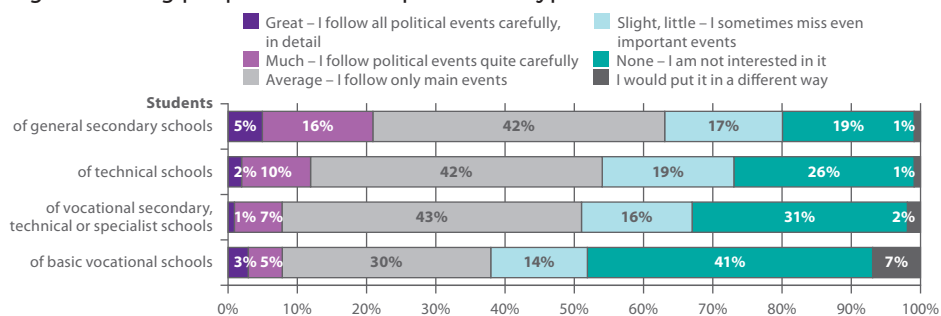
4 *Młodzież 2010* [Youth 2010], CBOS Report, Warsaw 2011, p. 60-61.

5 Ibidem, s. 43.

6 T. Biernat, *Spóeczno-kulturowe uwarunkowania światopoglądu młodzieży w okresie transformacji* [Social and cultural factors shaping young people's outlook in the period of transformation], UMK publishing house, Toruń 2006, p. 199.

young people and their attitude to political issues is changing. If so, political passivity may be a simple consequence not only of lack of interest in political affairs, but also of understanding that politics is a specific – and particularly important – sphere of social reality, in relation to which young people formulate well-thought-out judgements, demands and opinions, full of reflections, which they do not express in a conventional way. This point of view would substantially change the perception of young people as actors on the political scene – not necessarily as an indifferent, passive, (permanently) uninvolved mass, but carefully watching the social reality, thoughtful, with accumulated potential of a social group rebellion. Political indifferentism is characteristic for less educated young people, with no significant life prospects, while opposition is typical for young people who are better off in terms of social position and education – students of secondary schools and universities.

Fig. 8.2. Young people's interest in politics vs. type of school



Source: CBOS, *Youth 2010*, p. 60.

The analysis of political non-involvement of young people shows that they are able to think reflectively about politics, and their roles as citizens and their presence in the public sphere of life is something more than just passivity-involvement opposition, also reflected in the form of informal actions. Only political indifferentism is out of the question – an attitude of complete indifference, resulting from a conviction that politics is other people's job – it is not a business of a common man, since it will not change anything anyway. It is represented both by students of secondary and vocational schools, and this way of thinking is often socially inherited⁷.

Politics is a big mess. (...) I am totally uninterested in these things. I do not care, who is on the right, who is on the left and who is right. I do not read newspapers and I treat television as entertainment. I do not watch it for political arguments or accusations. Who is the minister and who is the prime minister – why should I care about it? Anyway, none of them will help me or find a job for me. THEY are not interested in me, so I am not going to

⁷ The quotations were extracted from: P. Bąk, Powody bierności politycznej młodzieży w jej własnych opiniach o sobie [The reasons for political passivity of the youth according to their own opinions about themselves], an MA thesis prepared at IS UMK, Toruń 2004.

be interested in them (...) I do not talk about politics neither with my friends nor with my family. I do not initiate conversations on such topics at home. (...) I do not have any specific preferences (...) I think I will be fine in any system. Democracy, communism – who cares? Some people say that those times were better, there was less poverty. Well, it is important to arrange your life somehow; then, everything will be all right.

This attitude is similar to citizens' escapism, which means intentional withdrawal from public life (as too big emotional burden, which requires responsibility) into their private world (treated as the only thing that matters and is worth to engage in). Escapism as such is demonstrated in different forms – sometimes it is a simple calculation of profits and losses, sometimes it reflects fear or cynicism. It is a choice, which is dictated by our personal needs and interests, which we rationalize in various ways. One of the options, which often occurs among young people, is *opposition by withdrawal* – demonstration of civil passivity, which is impossible to notice for an external observer and is a signal of political *status quo*. Another form political opposition is a behaviour that is based on the so called *protest voting*. Young people participate in elections, but their votes are invalid.

Participation in elections is very important. One has to go to elections and put their sign on a list or cast a vote. Everyone should vote – it is our obligation. However, my presence there has only raised the turnout rate. I casted an invalid vote, I checked a few names, some of them I did not know at all. Why did I do it? All this is a big advertising campaign. The whole town was covered with posters and big photos, but there was no information about the programme. I have to go to the elections, but I will not cast a valid vote unless I know a programme of a particular candidate. If I do not, I will cast an invalid vote. But I will go to the elections. (...) If there are more invalid votes, it is certainly a form of opposition. Maybe people want to communicate something, maybe they want to show that it is not so easy to get their vote, and that large posters, idle promises and incentives are not enough. One has to deserve my vote or at least make some effort to present a reasonable electoral programme, which appeals to me.

Such attitudes cannot be interpreted as lack of political involvement. Both withdrawal and negative voting are treated as young people's political manifest, expression of helplessness and disapproval of the world of politics, which is perceived as strange and evil. The youth do not use methods of radical opposition – they represent passive attitudes, which, however, are not emotionally indifferent. They have a significant symbolic meaning, but they are not constructive in terms of civil duties. However, such a situation does not generate "political demand" for the offer targeted at young people. Political groups do not treat young people as a social group with a specific situation, problems and political potential. The youth, who do not care about their presence in the public sphere of life, marginalize themselves on the political arena. Their civil silence causes that they become an element of a pre-elections game. An element that speaks with its own voice only about certain issues like the "Occupy" Protest around the world.

8.2. Political revival among the youth in 2007 – the effect of social campaigns or political engagement?

The years 2005-2007 were a period of clear civil revival among the Polish youth, which was demonstrated by protest actions (when improper decisions related to the education department were made⁸), intense discussions of young people in the Internet or, in particular, their unprecedented participation in parliamentary elections in autumn 2007. At the same time, these were years of good economic situation (GDP increased in 2005 by 3.4%, in 2006 by 5.8% and in 2007 by 6.6%). Despite this, young people, who did not see any prospects for themselves in the country, migrated abroad in large numbers. The greatest barriers included insufficiently absorptive market, hardly accessible housing market or relation of incomes to the costs of living. Equally important factors included political atmosphere in the country and public debate which was concentrated on the fight with the use of historical symbols. Bitterness, feeling of uselessness, uncertainty about one's future were the most common emotions that this situation evoked in the youth.

Opening of the European markets to Poles solved the problem not only of young people (for whom it was a hope for a better future), but also for politicians (who had got rid of the trouble and could sigh with relief). However, these were only half-measures for both groups, since most of the youth – despite positive balance of their experiences gained abroad – treated migration as lack of any alternative. The situation in the country caused increase of dissatisfaction, stimulating social activity and political involvement of young people. The decision about early elections was a breakthrough. Political issues became subjects of everyday conversations, started to evoke reflections and emotions among the youth. This could be observed on Internet portals, where they placed critical comments related to the world in general and to the world of politicians in particular.

The results of a study carried out at that time indicated change of political attitudes among young people. At the beginning of 2007, it was not a matter of a few or a dozen or so percent. More than a half of young people (53.3%) were talking about the duty of getting involved in politics. This was almost five times more than the number of negative opinions (11.5%). This duty was usually explained with the willingness to be familiar with current events and the possibility to influence the situation in the country (59%). Some of young people underlined the importance of the decisions taken by politicians for their future (16.4%). 42% of the young, that is more than the average among young voters, declared the intention to participate in elections (nobody knew at that time that they will be organized so fast). There were slightly more people who claimed that they would not use their right to vote (47%). Others (11%) said that their decision depends on circumstances. These declarations were tightly connected with the type of school – civil involvement was the strongest among high school students (table 8.1).

8 E.g. bezigiertycha.pl campaign which was a protest aimed at the former Minister of Education..

Table 8.1. Declaration of participation in elections vs. type of school

Will you take part in the next elections?	Vocational schools	Vocational secondary schools, Technical schools	General secondary schools	Total
Yes	26.9	33.7	52.2	41.6
No	62.7	54.2	36.9	47.0
It depends	10.4	12.1	10.9	11.4
In general	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own study: „Porzucona generacja” – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość [“Abandoned generation” – educational path and entering the adulthood], the group of 19-year-olds (N = 1096), January-February 2007.

The relation between civil approaches and life ambitions of young people is very clear. They are indicated, for example, by their expectations related to salary (table 8.2). The higher their expectations (and life plans related to them) are, the greater their interest in political issues is. This suggests that young people have realized what is the functional relation between decisions taken by politicians and their own civil approach, and their own future. Positive confirmation of this relation will be an interesting factor, stimulating civil involvement, while confirmation of lack of such relation will have the opposite effect.

Table 8.2. Declaration of participation in elections vs. ambitions related to salary

Will you take part in the next elections?	up to 2 thou	2 thou - 4 thou	4 thou and more	Total
Yes	32.6	36.6	55.2	41.6
No	55.9	54.0	31.9	47.0
It depends	11.5	5.4	12.9	11.4
In general	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own study: „Porzucona generacja” – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość [“Abandoned generation” – educational path and entering the adulthood], the group of 19-year-olds (N = 1096), January-February 2007.

After the announcement of early elections in 2007, political discussions broke out and civil initiatives emerged, and young people were more and more often participating in them. Primary elections organized among students from Warsaw revealed political preferences of young people: PO (Civic Platform) won (60.2%), the second position, with many less votes, was occupied by LiD (Left and Democrats) (16.5%), while PiS (Law and Justice) ranked in the third position (9.7%)⁹. Very interesting from

9 <http://www.dziennik.pl/Default.aspx?TabId=334BackToCategory=11&ShowArticl...> A great number of studies indicated that the democratic and liberal leanings of young people was dominating (see K. Szafraniec, *Pokoleniowe preferencje dotyczące ładu społecznego*. [Generations’ preferences related to social order.] [in:] B. Idzikowski et al. (ed.), *Młodzież polska w nowym składzie społecznym*, [New social makeup of the Polish youth], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego [University of Zielona Góra publishing house], Zielona Góra, 2003. In the presidential pre-elections held in 2005 by the Civil Education Centre (Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej) in secondary schools, more than 60% of young people voted Donald Tusk; In the presidential elections, the young confirmed their preferences – 53-56% of voters aged 18-29 voted Tusk, in particular students and highly educated persons – 60-62% of them voted the PO leader.

the point of view of this problem are justifications of (pre)electoral decisions of young people, which again undermine the thesis about their political indifferentism¹⁰.

Iwona: I wondered for a long time, which party to vote for (...). I do not like the politics of PiS. I think this party is too conservative and I do not like the way they govern the country. I also think that it will be very wrong if the situation from 2 years ago will recur: lack of parliamentary majority of one party, inability to create a solid coalition and to reach agreements. I think that first, we have to ensure internal stability of Poland and take care of our position in the world and then, try to deal, for example, with the issue of abortion. However, I think we should not delay it too long. That is why I will probably choose the lesser evil and I will vote the Civic Platform. Maybe I will not have to be ashamed of the government and its representatives.

Błażej: I wondered for a long time, who to vote for on 21 October. I was looking for differences, something that would attract me to one of the parties, something that would make LiD better than PO, something that would make PO better than PSL (Polish People's Party). I intentionally did not mention Self-Defence and LPR (LPR – League of Polish Families), as well as – most importantly – PiS in my deliberation (...) PiS, together with the political partners, has effectively put me off, due to the things they have been doing in the last 2 years. The rule of these three parties was characterized by things that I could not, cannot and will not accept: constant reference to the past, forgetting about the future, inclination towards creating artificial divisions and entering into conflicts, as well as equally artificial envenoming of already existing conflicts. I dream about the government that would talk to the opposition and citizens, the government of consensus, without conflicts or scandals; the government of administrators and innovators, instead of self-thought media stars of another conference. I dream about Poland, in which things that someone did twenty years ago and people with whom he made deals were in the background, while things he/she can offer us all, his/her attitude and positive things he can do for the country were in the foreground. Poland, in which it would be possible to reach compromise. Poland, in which one could lead a peaceful life.

The academic youth rarely declared liking for PiS. This party appeals to the young electorate with lower education level. This group also represent doubts related to the point of electoral procedures¹¹:

Krzysztof: Choosing Law and Justice is our only alternative. For example, arrestment of all those ministers, purges both within the police and among deputy prime ministers are to the credit of PiS. They can admit their own mistakes and are not afraid of the consequences. They have thrown away from the government those who deserved it.

10 Ibidem.

11 <http://gdansk.naszemiasto.pl/wydarzenia/776932.html>.

Szymon: *My vote will not change anything. I am sure it will not have influence on who will govern Poland. I took part in early elections. The party I voted did not win. I am fed up with this deceiving, deluding and making people believe that the fact that they will put a cross next to one of the names will influence the future of the country.*

Jakub and Magda: *We do not care who will win, because none of the candidate parties appeal to us. We only want to increase the turnout rate. Maybe it is not much, but we hope that this year it will be more than 50%. Maybe I will even draw something on the ballot paper. In the Internet, I saw a conversation with the head of the National Committee for Voting, who said that the most important is to put a cross next to one name. Whether you draw or write anything does not matter.*

This opinion shows that for young people who grew up in the social reality after 1989, the most important is freedom of choice and making use of procedural possibilities of democracy. A great role – in terms of propagation and creating bonds – in electoral (and political) mobilization of young people was played by media of the youth: the Internet and mobile telephony. Observance of views and emotions that were present there provides arguments against the thesis related to passivity and political non-involvement of young people. The most spectacular was the spot entitled *Change the world. Go to the elections*, a TV trailer of the *21pazdziernika.pl* campaign, which was joined by more than one hundred extra-governmental organisations that encouraged people to vote¹². Its initiators knew that many young people are “children of the free market”, for whom the possibility to have a choice is the most important value.

There were a lot of social campaigns related to the elections: *Vote without registration*¹³ (they were targeted at “mobile” people – students, people working and living abroad, who were informed about various formal issues enabling participation in the elections), *Glosujmy.org* [Let’s vote] (modelled on presidential elections held in France, where the turnout was more than 80%). This campaign suggested to voters, why they should take part in the elections: [*You vote, because...*] *you decide about the future of Poland and the Poles*, [*You vote, because...*] *you create a new political system*, [*You vote, because...*] *now, the power is in your hands*, [*You vote, because...*] *you are expressing your point of view*, [*You vote, because...*] *you do not have to feel helpless, you can change a lot*, [*You vote, because...*] *you do not pass your vote to your rival*¹⁴. The *Wybieram.pl* [I choose] campaign, which was participated by famous people from the world of pop culture, journalists, athletes, presented the elections in a very juvenile manner – it created a conviction that every reason to choose is good. There were also “individual campaigns”, taken up by individuals concerned about the situation in the country. For example, the *nieglosuj.pl* [don’t vote] campaign, the author of which encouraged people to vote by “discouraging” them. First, he mentioned frequent excuses of young people (“I study in another town”, “my vote

12 <http://serwisy.pl/wybory2007/1,85404,4613938.html>.

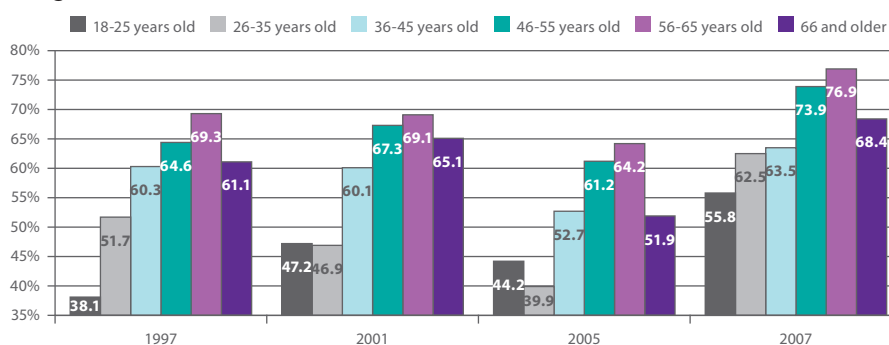
13 <http://www.glosujbezmeldunku.pl/>.

14 http://www.glosujmy.org/wybory2007/o_nas.php.

does not mean anything”, “I will be abroad on the elections day”, “there is no one I could vote for”) and then, he presented counterarguments, which were supposed to have an encouraging character (“Do not vote, since you will destroy the Wiejska circus”, “Do not vote, go abroad to work at the sink”)¹⁵. The most popular was the *Hide your granny’s ID card* campaign, the authors of which used a very politically effective weapon: humour. Almost everyone in Poland encountered, via the Internet, sms or other media, this humorous call: “Elections are coming up. We must save our country. Hide your granny’s ID card”¹⁶.

The most important sources of information aiming at increasing the turnout were television (85%) and the Internet (48%). Press, billboards and radio (39-30%) played a great role as well. A curiously low level of reception was observed in information transmission via mobile telephony (6%). However, on the other hand, they were immediately transferred to the Internet, where they spread widely and quickly, as is typical for this medium¹⁷. The www.21paздziernika.pl website alone had 51 250 entries. Even today, one can explore the numerous links related to those events. One of the comments to a turnout-increasing campaign says that *this is the beginning of young people’s political awareness*. Undoubtedly, this is a bit too far fetched thesis. Yet, the fact that both the turnout-increasing campaigns and reactions to them (in both cases the young were the main actors) are impressive is out of the question. Their comments are full of humour, very accurate observations and often touching. They prove that young people do care. Here, the future of the country – according to surveys, empty and unimportant – is no longer an abstract notion, but is perceived as something that has a significant influence on the ones life.

Fig. 8.3. Voter turnout of the Poles in parliamentary elections – differences according to age



Source: Polish General Elections Study.

One can put forward a thesis that modern technologies fulfilled a role that could be compared to the role of youth organizations from the times of great ideologies or *ad hoc* actions taken up for equally important causes. It is enough to mention

15 <http://nieglosuj.pl/wymowki.html>.

16 <http://www.rm24.pl/fakty/polska/news-premier-skrytykował-akcje-schowaj-babci-dowod,nld,202034>.

17 B. Odjas, *Kampanie społeczne a udział młodych w wyborach. Na przykładzie wyborów parlamentarnych 21 października 2007*, MA Thesis, IS UMK, Toruń 2009.

great marches of the American youth to Washington in 1963, the famous (organized even earlier) anti-war march of the British youth from Trafalgar Square to the atomic weapons research establishment in Aldermaston (joined by Bertrand Russel), students strikes at American universities known as sit-ins, or, finally, their Polish counterparts: stay-in strikes of industrial workers from the times of Solidarity. All those events created bonds, encouraged civil awareness of groups which did not share a sense of common fate before and which would not be associated with opposing behaviours. The reality turned out to be different: young people went to the elections and such turnout had not been observed for many years (Fig. 8.3.).

According to the data of the Polish General Elections Study, the parliamentary elections in 1997 were participated by 38% of young people aged 18-25, in 2001 – by 47.2% and in 2005 – by 44.2%. In the context of these numbers, the turnout form 2007 seems to be really exceptional. 55.8% of the youngest voters (aged 18-25) and 62.5% of slightly older ones (aged 26-35) went to the elections. However, not only numbers were exceptional in this case, but also the outcome of high frequency among the young. Votes of young people determined the result of the elections and the political change in Poland: the young caused that the PiS – Self-defence – LPR coalition (LPR – Liga Polskich Rodzin – League of Polish Families) was removed from power, which was taken over by the PO – PSL coalition (table 8.3).

Table 8.3. Electoral decisions and the age of voters – parliamentary elections 2007

Age:	PiS	PO	LiD	PSL	S	LPR
18-19	25.0	56.6	9.4	6.9	1.4	1.7
20-24	22.3	55.2	11.3	6.8	1.3	1.2
25-39	25.7	49.6	12.0	8.6	1.7	1.3
40-59	33.7	38.4	12.7	10.4	1.6	1.1
60+	43.4	28.4	17.3	7.7	1.7	1.5
Total	32.1	41.5	13.2	8.9	1.5	1.3

Source: <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/wybory2007/085056.html>.

PO was definitely a party mostly favoured by young people – it was chosen by more than a half of young voters. Although their political preferences were known, nobody believed in civil reactions of the youth and that they could have such a great influence on changes that occur on the political arena. This unexpected turn of events was reflected in post-electoral comments. On the one hand, the reactions included positive surprise with the civic maturity of young people, yet, on the other hand, outrage and indignation (J. Kaczyński: *Mobilization of young people was destructive to my party, which was greatly influenced by the campaign in TVP called "Change the country. Go to the elections!"*¹⁸).

18 A statement for "Sygnaty dnia" from 23 October 2007: <http://www.dziennik.pl/Default.aspx?TabId=334&BackToCategory+4&ShowArticleI...>; 7 November 2007.

This statement originated speculations related to the authenticity of political and electoral involvement of young people. The thesis about the manipulative influence of social campaigns was used not only by defeated politicians, but also by analysts of the Polish political arena. At the post-electoral session held by ZG PTS in Warsaw on 9 November 2007, one of the panellists claimed that *the 54% voter turnout is not an extraordinary mobilization of a civil society, but rather a social engineering manipulation organized by opponents of PiS. These elections were not the most important ones – more important were those held in 1993 and 2005. A more tough campaign was supposed to result in better turnout, but it is a negative sign for democracy. It was a harsh campaign, which appealed to undecided voters – young people are very receptive to harsh language*¹⁹. An argument in favour of the thesis about inauthenticity of the elections, used by other commentators, was the incompatibility of young people's liberal views, demonstrated in the elections, to their conservatism, which would reflect in the deeper layer of their spirituality – in their feeling of John Paul II's message²⁰.

The simplifications used by political analysts and commentators are amazing. First of all, their tendency to attach to media labels ("the JP II generation") is glaring. Studies carried out with great methodological accuracy do not provide for any empirical arguments confirming the existence of such phenomenon – certainly, the use of the generation category is not justified in this context²¹. Second of all, assuming that the behaviours of young people after the death of John Paul II, demonstrating their bond with his message, were not only an ephemera, it should not necessarily be connected with the pope's conservatism. John Paul II was not only a conservative – he was a multidimensional man, and the core of his message should not be read into his conservatism. The elements of the Pope's message that could appeal to them the most were the universal values (love, freedom, openness, wisdom, tolerance, truth, the right to be mistaken and to search) and his unshaken faithfulness to oneself and the values he preached. They were even more important due to the fact that they reflected one of the most important spiritual needs of the youth²², and it was even more appreciated, as it was absent in the modern world. Third of all, young people draw inspiration from a large number of sources, and, interpreting them in their own way, they develop themselves – their own personality – based on various, often contrary elements of identification. They themselves do not perceive it as contrary – it is a "logical" part of post-modern strategy of developing one's own self as a melange, patchwork, liquid and colourful structure, which is "random" by definition. As such, it does not have to be an argument in favour of inauthenticity or greater receptivity to manipulation.

However, the basic question is different – what is the status of social awakening of the youth observed during the electoral campaign related to the elections held

19 A. Dudek, a statement at the ZG PTS session, Warsaw, 9 November 2007.

20 T. Żukowski, a statement at the ZG PTS session, Warsaw, 9 November 2007.

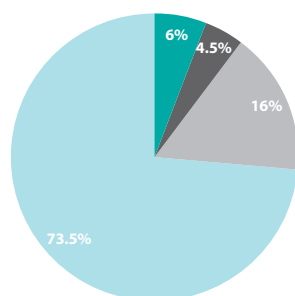
21 K. Kośeła, *Pokolenia młodzieży polskiej w badaniach ilościowych – tropy i rozczarowania socjologa* [Generation of the Polish youth in quantitative research – traces and disappointments of a sociologist (in:) K. Szafraniec (ed.), *Młodzież i oświata za burtą przemian* [Youth and education after the changes], Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2007.

22 E. Erikson talks about the need for faithfulness (to principles, values, ideals) as a basic – constituent in terms of development – need of the youth phase.

on 21 October 2007? Do the events from that time have any deeper sense? Do they provide for any arguments supporting the thesis of a more permanent engagement related to political behaviours of the youth? Did the young Poles go to the elections only because they were "mobilized" by turnout-increasing campaigns, or their decision was dictated by their need to express their beliefs during the elections? This question was verified in a special study initiated by the co-organizers of the *Change the country. Go to the elections*²³ campaign. It confirmed the wide social reception of the campaign – it reached 94% of respondents. 20.5% of voters were induced to take part in the elections, including 4.5% of those who were not going to do this before the campaign. According to most of them (73.5%), the campaigns had no influence on their decisions. Was it really so?

Fig 8.4. Declared influence of the *Change the world... Go to the elections* campaign on voters' decisions

■ I have never heard of these campaigns
■ They convinced me and influenced my decision about participation in the elections
■ They encouraged me to take part in the elections
■ They had no influence on my decision



Source: Polski Generalny Sondaż Wyborczy 2007 [Polish general elections opinion poll 2007].

The strongest influence was observed in the group of debuting voters – 46% of respondents aged 18-19 said that either convinced them and influenced their decision about going to the elections (14%) or discouraged them (32%). In the group of young adults (20-25), this influence was slightly lower – 6% and 29% respectively. In neither of the groups, even among older people, the percentage of those mobilized was lower than 15% (Fig. 8.5).

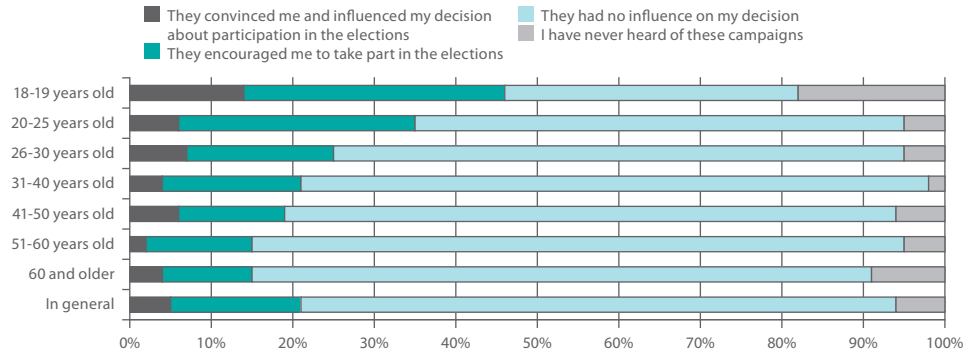
The reactions of voters to the *Change the world. Go to the elections* campaign within the two largest electorates indicate a quite similar situation (Fig. 8.6). The exception are young adults (aged 26-30), who were mobilized to the largest extent and who would not be attracted by PiS anyway. They were the strongest supporters of liberalism, and to the extent that alone could explain the advantage of PO. As part of the summary of the analyses, the authors of the study point out that the *Change the country... Go to the elections* campaign mobilized voters regardless of their political views²⁴. Today, we

23 A project including quantitative research and deepened qualitative research was conducted on a representative group of 1817 adult Poles between 8 November 2007 and 1 December 2007 – see M. Grzelak, M. Cześnik et al., *Kampania społeczna "Zmień kraj. Idź na wybory". Raport z przebiegu kampanii i rekomendacje na przyszłość* [“Change the country. Go to the elections.” social campaign. Report from the campaign and recommendations for the future.], Warsaw 2008.

24 Ibidem, p. 18.

can say that the feeling of civil duty did not but the protest voting (results of the Palikot Support Movement in 2011) did.

Fig. 8.5. Reaction to the Change the country... campaign in different age groups



Source: Polskie Generalne Studium Wyborcze [Polish General Elections Study].

Fig. 8.6. Reaction to the Change the country... campaign within PiS and PO electorates, divided into age groups



Source: Polskie Generalne Studium Wyborcze [Polish General Elections Study].

As Hanna Świda-Ziemba observed, *Young people went to the elections because, for the first time, politicians violated their basic values, of which, however, the*

young did not speak and talk too much – they valued them so much. My research proved that they are – I am talking about the secondary school and university students – are very much attached to values such as freedom, individualism, privacy, tact, tolerance and dignity. This attachment is very strong, yet, they would not put it on banners, because they do not tend to hang out any banners. However, they clearly observed that the reality of PiS was undermining these values²⁵.

Though important to young people, events related to parliamentary elections of 2007 do not let us talk about them in terms of generational experience. Undoubtedly, such an interpretation would be too far fetched. Although the experiences and events are important, or they are even a breakthrough (in young people's self-consciousness), neither their scale, nor their moral status cause that they constitute a breakthrough in young people's lives, which they will not be able to remove from their memory and through the prism of which they will perceive future events²⁶. Yet, one can certainly say that they roused the youth from apathy and political non-existence. However, opposition of this kind still does not explain, whether this was an ephemera, which disappears as quickly as the events that evoke it, or something more permanent. The problem seem to be more than just that. Civil experience evoked by the 2007 elections suggests that we are dealing with a latent involvement of young people, the intensity of which changes and which – more importantly – is accumulated in the biography of the generation. Postponed in time, the outcomes of these experiences of young people, together with other, more traumatic ones (forced economic migration, obstacles while entering the adulthood, the necessity to bear the consequences of the generational imbalance) may cause that even the slightest pretext (disappointment related to promises of politicians or difficult market economic conditions) will increase the importance of those events and again, will call young people to come to the political arena with greater involvement, maturity and determination (i.e. more rebellious).

After the elections, the Civic Platform, which is a party of the relatively greatest confidence, became an addressee of extremely serious expectations of the youth. Studies conducted in the first months of the PO – PSL coalition indicated that according to the youth, the problems, which should be addressed in the first place, include: internal reforms (of the health service, public finance, education system – 50%), increase of salaries and improvement of economic life conditions (34.4%), prevention of unemployment and young people's migration (31.2%), changes in the style of government (also in relation to foreign policy – 30.4%). Young people's statements reflect their longing for normality. They expect that the new government will provide stability, restore confidence and maintain their conviction that changes are possible and they can be achieved by means of a social-wide agreement²⁷. Expectations from the government were proportional to the support given to PO during the elections (Fig. 8.7).

Young people expected that the PO – PSL government will mean "stability and good atmosphere in the country" (39.3%), "a better external policy" (23.8%), "economic development and lower unemployment" (23%). For the young generation, it will mean

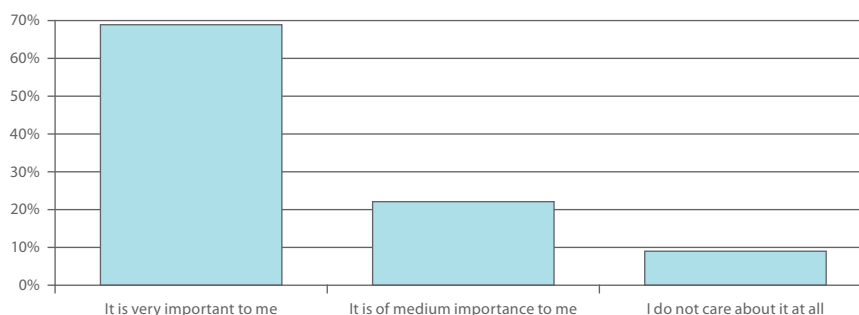
25 *Dlaczego młodzi wybrali Tuska* [Why did the young choose Tusk], an interview with Hanna Świada-Ziemba in "Gazeta Wyborcza" of 28 October 2007.

26 J. Garewicz, *Pokolenie jako kategoria socjofilozoficzna* [Generation as a socio-philosophical category], "Studia Socjologiczne" [Sociological studies] 1983, No 1 (88), p. 77.

27 B. Odjas, op. cit., p. 88-90.

greater “chance to find a job in Poland” (42.6%), “better prospects for the future” (32.8%). Scepticism (“nothing will change”) appeared very rarely (between 6% and 14%). Lack of success of Donald Tusk’s government (if the coalition created by him was removed from power) would be the worst scenario for the youth. In their opinion, it would cause “chaos and destabilization”, “deepening of the crisis in the country”, “internal split of the country”, “weakening of Poland’s position”, “regaining of power by PiS”, “return of a conservative government, a heavy hand government or even a dictatorship”. For the young generation, this can mean problems with finding a job and the necessity to leave the country, disappointment, political passivity, “loss of the hope that a young person can change Poland”²⁸. The quoted fragments of statements make one realize, how fragile the civil matter is and how easily political involvement can be transformed into deficit of citizenship attitude among the young.

Fig. 8.7. Expectations related to the success of the PO – PSL government (2007/2008)



Source: B. Odjas, *Kampanie społeczne a udział młodych w wyborach...* [Social campaigns vs. young people’s participation in elections], p. 90.

8.3. “Deficit of citizenship” – Poland-specific, youth-specific or generation-specific?

If the fact that we are dealing with a “deficit of citizenship” among the Polish youth is true, is it characteristic only for Poland, or is it a more general feature of the modern youth. Are we dealing with a temporary tendency resulting from a unique character of the youth period, or with a more permanent generational model of participation in politics? An attempt to analyze studies on the situation of youth in other countries results in the conclusion that political absence of young people is a common phenomenon. Most of studies conducted in EU countries indicate a clear diversion of the youth from ideologies and politics. They are more and more often referred to as “dissatisfied democrats”, who notice numerous disadvantages of the order created by adults, they do not trust the existing democratic institutions, they focus on their privacy and are

28 Ibidem, p. 94-95.

politically excluded²⁹. Young people of these countries avoid, most of all, conventional forms of political participation. They are departing from activity related to a permanent membership in formal political organizations, in favour of direct, spontaneous, short-term activity, referring to problems and slogans completely different from those that are subject to conventional politics. Young people express solidarity with victims of world wars, ecological catastrophes, by participating in campaigns such as gathering signatures, petitions, boycotting global economy and global politics³⁰, while the indicators of political participation of the young change. In 1997, the voter turnout at general elections in Great Britain was 71.4%. Turnout among the young was slightly lower (68%). In some regions of the country, it did not reach the 50% threshold. This result evoked a great deal of alarmist comments. In our country, it would be treated as success reflecting social revival of the young. At the same time – on the other hand – participation of the British youth in 1997 elections was much higher than the turnout of the whole American population in 1996 presidential elections³¹. In the elections to the European Parliament in 2009, 29% of eligible voters aged 18-24 went to the elections (14 percentage points more than the percentage for all age groups), although in the previous elections (in 2004) more young people cast their votes. It caused concern and critical comments related to political participation of the young citizens in the whole European Union³².

Are they justified? There are several questions that should be discussed in order to make judgements related to civil involvement more complete. First, is lack of interest in political issues an exceptional feature of today's young people or a permanent characteristic associated with youth? According to various – contemporary and historical – sources, young people have always displayed low interest in politics. They have always been criticized for insubordination, frivolity, being separated from real life and "real" problems, for simplified perception of the world and naivety. The young have always been associated with placing one's *ego* in the first place. It is a *phase* of life, which has its own rights and specific needs. Participation in politics is not one of them. One of the characteristic features of youth is greater concentration on oneself, one's own appearance, search for a partner or celebrating one's free time. With age, we learn responsibility, concentrate on our achievements, search for appreciation, assume civil roles. All studies reveal that young people are involved in politics the least, regardless of historical epoch or social circumstances.

However, studies conducted in western countries proved that deficit of citizenship among those young people is much greater than it could result from the specific nature of youth. It has been revealed by sociologists from America, Great

29 T. Bently, K. Oakley, *The Real Deal: What Young People Really Think about Government*, Politics and Social Exclusion, Demos, London 1999, p. 52-69.

30 R. Spanring, C. Wallace, Ch. Haerpfer, *Civic Participation among Youth People in Europe* [w:] H. Helve, C. Wallace (red.), *Youth, Citizenship and Empowerment*, Ashgate, Aldershot-Burlington-USA-Singapore-Sydney 1998.

31 R. Jowell, A. Park, *Young People, Politics and Citizenship: a disengaged generation?* The Citizenship Foundation, London 1998, p. 19-21.

32 K. Koseła, Study: *"International Civic and Citizenship Education Study" (ICCS) – źródło nowych danych o młodziży* [a source of new data related to the young] [in:] K. Szafraniec, M. Zielińska (ed.), *Zrozumieć społeczeństwo – zrozumieć pokolenia* [Understand society – understand generations], "Roczniki Lubuskie" 2011 (printed).

Britain, Germany, Austria and Finland. In their comments to these results, they underline that the distance of young people to politics and participation in public life is, most of all, a result of social changes that occur in these countries. These countries, due to, for example, globalization processes, have in large become unable to manage their own resources. They have become risk societies. This risk affects in particular young people. As they are better and better educated and mobile, it is difficult for them to find employment in their countries. They are constantly anxious about their future – problems connected with entering adulthood are more and more common. A clear relation was observed: the more difficult it is for young people to “grow up” (the more difficult it is to gain independence), the more rare is the conviction that political participation may bring satisfactory solution to social and their own life problems. The stronger the anxiety of young people about the future is, the more determined they are in rejecting a traditional political and economical system which is seen in the world wide street rebellion.

Despite this, there is no reason for overdramatizing, since... “deficit of citizenship” decreases with age. It is confirmed – indirectly – not only by always higher indicators of political participation among older age categories, but also by other data, e.g. decreasing indicators of political indifference. In the 1983 elections, 62% of young British were concerned about the result, while after 14 years, it was an important issue to 77% young people (there were no significant changes in the generation of their parents). Young people are not interested in elections and politics, but when they become more mature citizens, who are personally engaged in matters discussed by politicians, they become more active in the process of social changes³³. This occurred among young opposition in the West, the Solidarity generation as well as the young in the Maghreb countries. This data makes us formulate a thesis that there are slight changes in political non-involvement of the youth and they are rather an example of “life cycle differences” (i.e. it goes away with age) than a characteristic feature of the generation (i.e. a permanent feature of the young, which defines the style of their political participation in the future).

Is this situation also true for young Poles? Do people in Poland grow up to citizenship with age. A precise answer to this question is not easy. It is very difficult to estimate the importance of the civil experiences so far (we do not know, how important they were and whether they will turn out to have a wide range). It is even more difficult to assess their durability. Although a lot of data confirm the existence of “deficit of citizenship” among the Polish youth, the analysis of the situation connected with the elections held on 21 October 2007 reveals considerable amount of political involvement of young people. Undoubtedly, this amount is not very large, they are latent and active only in unusual situations, yet, they are also in places (in the case of the youngest representatives of youth), in which they were absent before: among girls and rural youth³⁴.

All these facts indicate a new phenomenon in the 20-year period of the Polish transformation. Yet, does this mean that the Polish youth is coming out of the “cub”, immature phase of civil attitude and is adopting a more mature one? A lot depends

33 Ibidem, p. 24-25.

34 K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie a nowy ustrój* [Young generation and the new system], IRWiR PAN, Warsaw 2010.

on the arrangement of situational factors, of which the most important is the economic situation. Permanent shortages in this area make it difficult for young people to become independent and assume adult life roles. The consumerism ideology, which has spread in modern culture and in minds of young Poles, is only an accompanying circumstance, raising the level of social frustration. The uncertain future, the constantly difficult situation on the labour and housing market prevent young people from fulfilment of their natural life needs and tasks. They are denied or postponed. Young people decide to get married and have children more and more rarely and at a later age. At the same time, family, life without significant conflicts or tensions, work, well-being and career come in the first place in the hierarchy of values appreciated by young people.

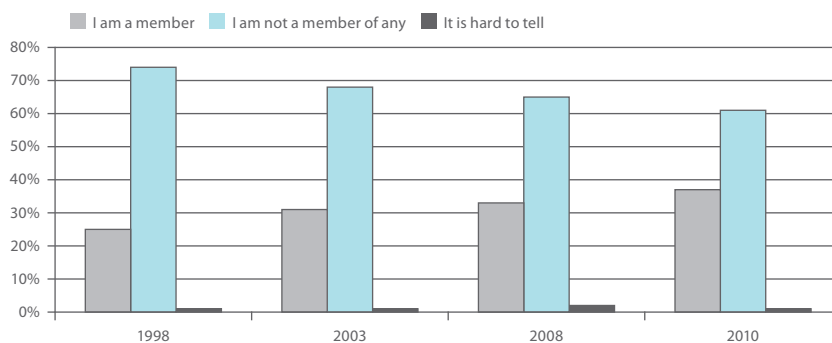
Work still seems to be an endangered value. Unemployment rates among young people still remain on the level that is unfavourable in relation to older age categories. It is somehow natural, yet, those graduates who cannot find a job are negatively affected by this situation and their future prospects are not positive. First negative experiences deprive them of hope to find employment, self-esteem, weaken their identification with the system and make them think of migration. Although employment statistics in Poland have greatly improved in the recent years, at the same time, some unemployment rates show regression trends (see analyses in chapter 5).

Permanent nature of these situations originates stronger frustrations in Poland than in the West. It results in further consequences and leads to apathy, passivity or – on the contrary – increased aggression towards the system (it can partially explain the phenomenon of “junk jobs”). While western researchers do not consider political withdrawal of young people as a sign of a crisis of their democracy, in Poland – despite significant changes in civil attitudes of the young and their perception of public life – the situation does not seem to be so obvious. This is caused by the fact that the phenomenon of “deficit of citizenship” has a long tradition in our country and is cultivated among older generations. Second of all, Polish democracy is definitely younger and less mature. Third of all, social situation and social costs of transformation are still perceived by the young as too harsh – the more so, the stronger their life ambitions and expectations are. As a result, despite optimistic trends in young people’s behaviour in the period of political revival in 2007, one should be careful in drawing conclusions related to civil maturity of the young. In the event of another disappointment, they may return to previous escapist strategies. Rebellion is also possible, especially taking into account international context.

8.4. Social involvement and civic education of the youth

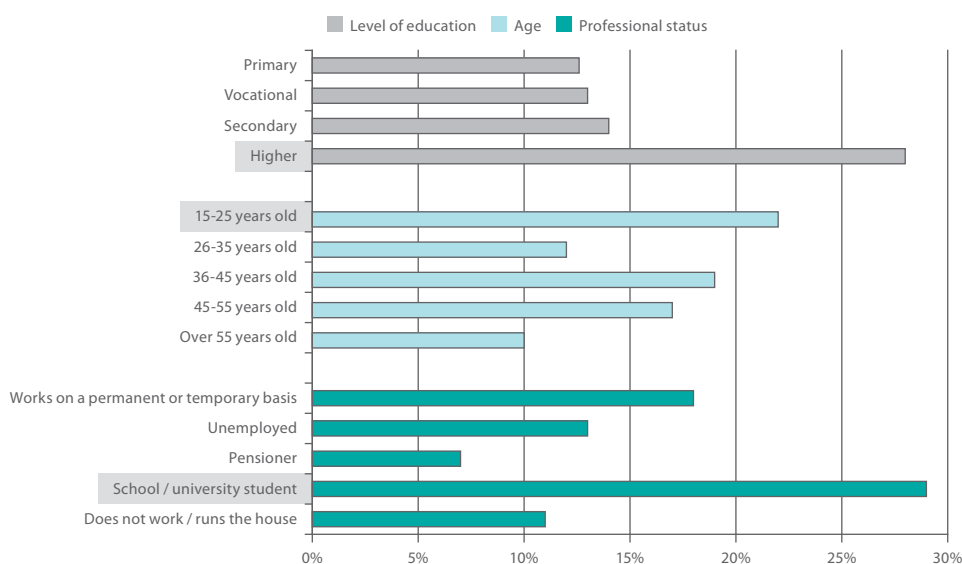
The idea of a civic society does not end with electoral behaviours or political attitudes of young people. It is also a matter of involvement in social or charity activity, joining various organizations and informal activities. Since the end of 1990s, there have been more and more young people declaring membership in informal groups, more or less formal associations, organizations or clubs (currently 37%). However, there are still more people who do not identify with any of them (61%).

Fig. 8.8. Young people's membership in various kinds of organizations, associations and clubs



Source: *Młodzież 2010 [Youth 2010]*, CBOS Report, Warsaw 2011, p. 103.

Fig. 8.9. Involvement of Poles in charity activity³⁵



Source: J. Przewłocka, *Zaangażowanie społeczne Polaków w roku 2010: Wolontariat, filantropia, 1%. Raport z badań* [Social involvement of the Poles in 2010: Voluntary service, philanthropy, 1%. Study report], Klon/Jawor association, Warsaw 2011, p. 15.

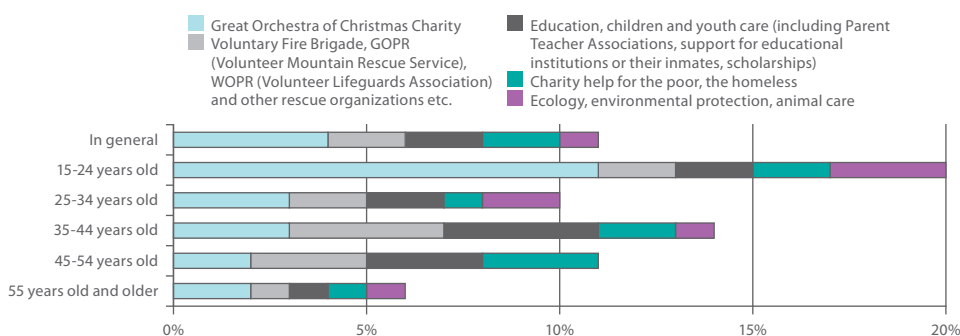
Most young people declare membership in sports clubs, unions and associations or fan groups (15% in total). Second most popular are cultural (e.g. choirs, dance teams, movie clubs) and hobby organizations and associations (10%). The third position is occupied by religious associations (8%), followed by (5%) public service organizations (OSP, PCK or WOPR). Interest in scouting or membership in political organizations

35 J. Przewłocka, *Zaangażowanie społeczne Polaków w roku 2010: Wolontariat, filantropia, 1%. Raport z badań* [Social involvement of the Poles in 2010: Voluntary service, philanthropy, 1%. Study report], Klon/Jawor association, Warsaw 2011.

is very low (1% in both cases). Similar level of interest is declared as far as membership in various kinds of subcultures is concerned³⁶.

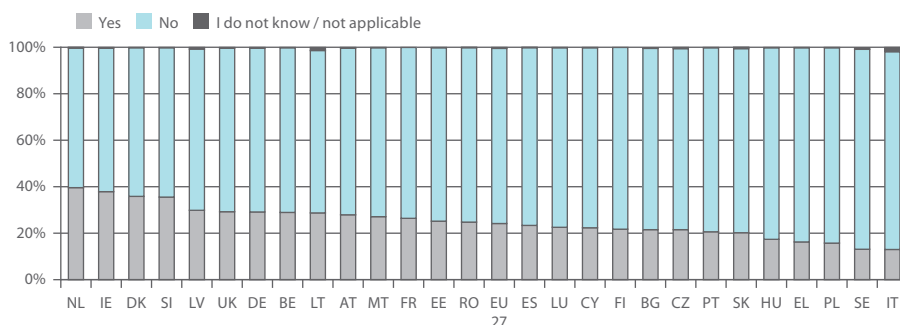
22% of young Poles are involved in voluntary service (Fig. 8.9). It is more than the average for the general public (16% in 2010), but still not enough from the point of view of empathy with other people's problems and needs. Volunteers are most often found among school and university students, people with higher education. The most common voluntary service organizations joined by young people are: WOŚP (Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy – Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity), partially activity of communions or organizations for education (Fig. 8.10).

Fig. 8.10. Places of voluntary service and age



Source: Own work: Jadwiga Przewtocka, based on the survey „Wolontariat, filantropia, 1%” [Voluntary service, philanthropy, 1%], conducted on a representative group of 1011 Poles aged 15 and over (execution: Millward Brown SMG/KRC, October 2010).

Fig. 8.11. Participation of young people in organized voluntary service³⁷



Source: *Youth on the move. Analytical Report*, Flash Eurobarometer 319a, Gallup Organisation, 2011, p. 19.

Half of people involved in social work dedicates maximum a dozen or so hours a year; only one twentieth of volunteers dedicates more than 150 hours a year and

36 *Młodzież 2010* [Youth 2010], CBOS Report, Warsaw 2011, p. 103 et seq.

37 The study (a European representative sample of 1000 people and 27029 interviews carried out by Gallup Organization among the 15-30 age group) was conducted between 31 January and 4 February 2011.

more than half of them – less than 15 hours a year. Even this level of involvement is worth noticing, since the popularity of voluntary service in Poland is very low. School and university students get involved in public activities and campaigns targeted at large groups of citizens.

Persons who devote their time to work in social organizations are more often than others convinced about the fact that “common citizens, in cooperation with others, can help people in need or solve problems of their own environment, district, village, town or city” (declared by 73% of volunteers and 64% of non-volunteers). Moreover, volunteers more often claim that “you can trust most people” (52% and 45% respectively). A contrary view that “if you have problems, you can only count on yourself and your family” is shared by 56% of volunteers and 73% of non-volunteers. Although the indicators are simple, they illustrate the significance of work for others in shaping pro-social attitudes (or managing the existing social capital by organizations adopting social aims). Volunteers, as they point out, do it for pleasure. They find this kind of work interesting, they think it creates opportunities to meet people, to spend time productively and to incorporate important values in their lives. Sometimes they hope that their involvement may pay off in the future. Non-volunteers most often talk about lack of time (49%), interest (“I have never thought about it” – 42%) or inspiration (“nobody has ever asked me that” – 20%). Compared to other European countries, young Poles are not very much engaged in voluntary service. In places with the greatest voluntary tradition, social activists constitute 30-40% of young people (Fig. 8.11).

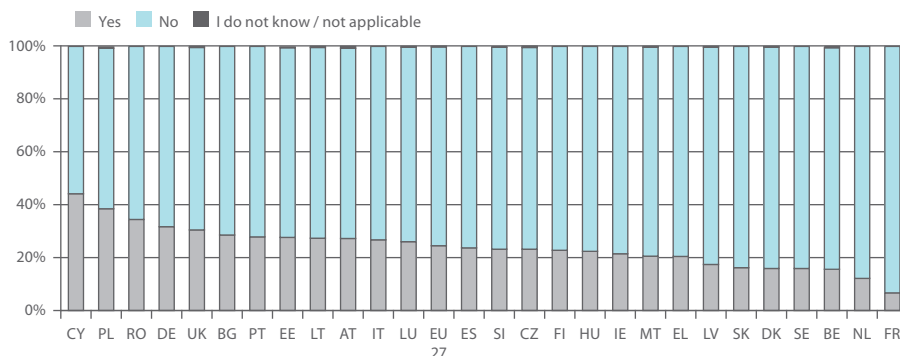
The reasons for low interest in voluntary service in Poland can be explained, on the one hand, by lack of tradition (and negative examples of “community service” from the communist period) and, on the other hand (which is not the basic factor), by educational omissions – at home and at school. In both cases, the focus is on individual success of a child (related to life and education) and there is no encouragement to act for other people. The young, concentrated on themselves, grow up with a feeling of deep ignorance as to the value and duty of getting involved in non-personal matters. Those who get involved in voluntary service often expect gratification. A study conducted by Eurobarometer this year revealed that young Poles (aged 15-30) collect certificates of their activity (Fig. 8.12) more often than young people in other countries. They do it almost six times more often than young French, three times more often than young citizens of Benelux countries and much more often than the average for EU countries. They are overtaken in this respect only by the Cypriots. These certificates are usually included in their resumes, since they hope that they will be helpful in their attempts to get admitted to a school, to find employment etc.

While low rates of young people’s membership in associations does not prove anything (their reason is rather to be found in organizations, which are not able to work out a strategy to attract young people), lack of social sensitivity and low involvement in other people’s problems is alarming. The organizational formula may be worked out much easier, yet, social capital cannot be worked out without social sensitivity and young people’s readiness to get involved in various causes. Is the situation equally negative in this respect?

One of the indicators of social sensitivity is readiness to get involved in charity. The Polish are known for mass impulses and money gathering as well as gifts for

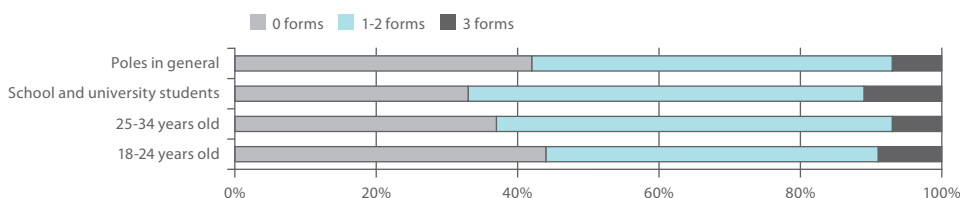
those in need, both in the context of disasters and regular charity campaigns, such as the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity or Polish Humanitarian Action (Polska Akcja Humanitarna). The ability to muster human kindness in Polish people is an unquestionable merit of leaders of such undertakings – Jerzy Owskiak and Janina Ochojska and the organizations they have created can serve as examples of accurate organizational and ideological formula. In 2009, most of the Poles (58%) tried to provide some kind of help to people in need. Almost half of them (49%) have donated for charity at least once, more than one third (37%) made in kind donations (by giving away clothes or books) and one eighth of adults (12%) performed work or service for others uninterestedly (Fig. 8.13).

Fig. 8.12. Receiving certificates for voluntary service



Source: *Youth on the move. Analytical Report*, Flash Eurobarometer 319a, Gallup Organisation, 2011, p. 20.

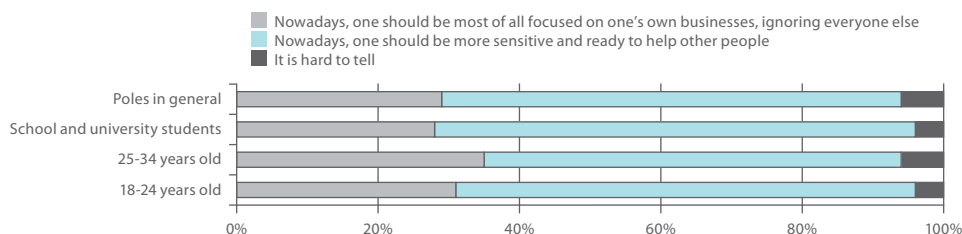
Fig. 8.13. Percentage of people involved in charity in 2009



Source: Own work based on: *Dobroczynność w Polsce* [Charity in Poland], CBOS BS/15, Warsaw 2010.

In general, young people displayed this kind of feelings more rarely (with the exception of school and university students), yet, a vast majority thinks that strengthening people’s solidarity is more important than fighting for one’s own interests (8.14). The view that “nowadays, one should be more sensitive and ready to help other people” is declared by 64% of the youngest and 59% of people aged 25-34. The opposite view that “nowadays, one should be most of all focused on one’s own businesses, ignoring everyone else” is a minority conviction, yet, young people think so more often than older ones (with the exception of school and university students and persons with higher education, most of whom do not agree with this point of view).

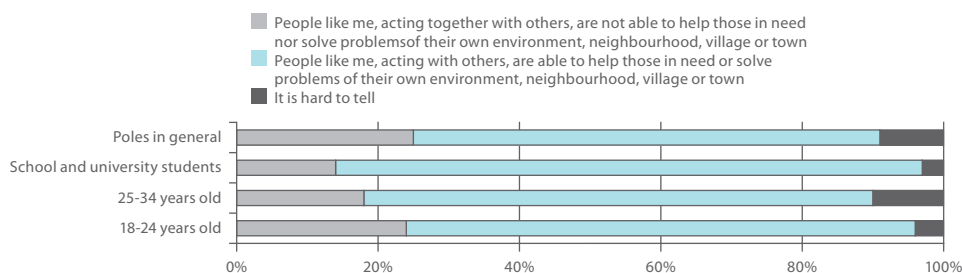
Fig. 8.14. Egoistic vs. altruist views of the Poles in general and the youth (2009)



Source: Own work based on: *Działalność społeczna Polaków* [Social activity of Poles], CBOS BS/10, 2010.

Youth at school and universities more often believe in effectiveness of common effort (Fig. 8.15). The view that "acting together with others, one can solve some problems and help people in need" is shared by 84% school and university students; it constitutes 71-72% of young people in general. While school and university students have for a long time agreed with the view about the significance of joint effort (since 2002 their number has increased by 13 percentage points), this way of thinking, as a characteristic of the general public, became dominant not long ago (in 2002, 44% of Poles shared this view, while today – 28% more). This reveals dynamic changes in social awareness among the youngest and suggests a different social quality of this generation – more open to the world, more sensitive and interested in creating the reality according to their own standards and beliefs. Time will show whether the social involvement potential of these young people will be used productively in the area of civil activity.

Fig. 8.15. Feeling of usefulness of a joint effort aiming at helping other people and one's own community

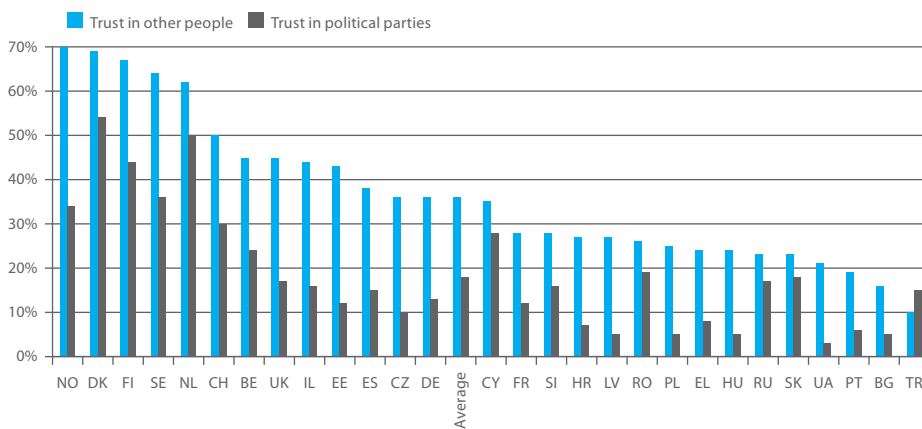


Source: Own work based on: *Działalność społeczna Polaków* [Social activity of the Poles], CBOS BS/10, 2010.

In general, each time we are dealing with social capital, there appears a difference between younger and older cohorts of young people, always in favour of the younger ones. This is true in the context of voluntary service, charity, feeling of usefulness of a joint effort, altruism, social activity experience. The young get involved in these activities more often and more intensely, or even for different (more often pro-social) reasons. Even in relation to such a delicate issue as social confidence, the youngest Poles turn out to be relatively more trustful, both in other people and in

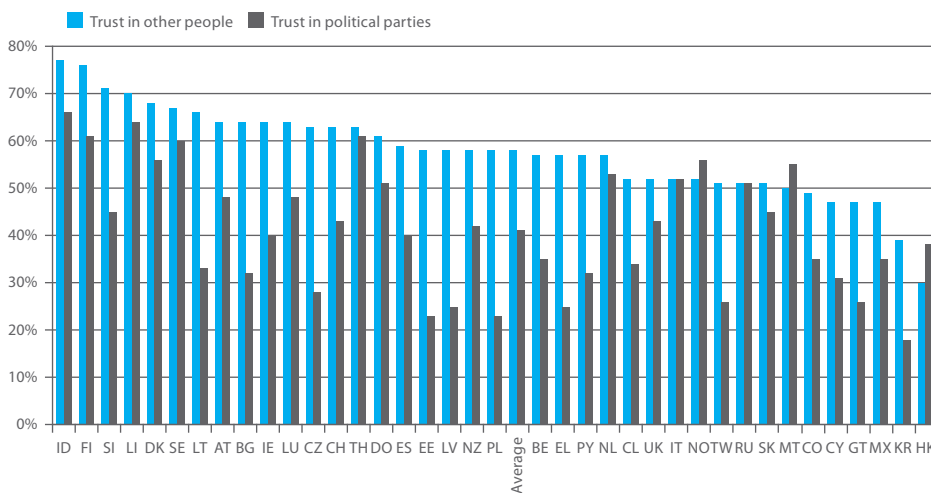
political parties. While 25% of young Poles declare trust in other people, this tendency is observed among 58% of teenagers. While one twentieth of adults declare trust in political parties, this view occurs among one fifth of the youth (23%) – see Fig. 8.16 and 8.17. All these factors suggest that despite poor organization and social passivity, younger representatives of the youth display a different kind of social involvement than the older ones – more trustful, open, emphatic and revealing greater social potential. This foreshadows a significant change in social characteristics of the youth, who have so far been judged on the basis of indicators related to formal organization or actions taken as part of existing organizations or associations.

Fig. 8.16. Percentage of people declaring trust in other people and political parties



Source: Own work based on: *European Social Survey 2008*.

Fig. 8.17. Percentage of 14-year-old young people declaring trust in other people and political parties



Source: *Initial Findings from the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2010*, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Amsterdam 2010.

Moreover, maybe for the first time, we are dealing with a significant discrepancy between social potential of young people and the formula of participation and activity offered by the network of traditionally functioning institutions. Maybe the social potential of young people – not included in the institutional framework – is being wasted (although one cannot forget about its informal trend). It does not change the fact that there are “black holes” in the social potential of young people – areas in which there is no, or almost no involvement. The clearest divisions are defined on the basis of education – young people investing in their education have the greatest social characteristics (hiding greater social potential); those who finish their education earlier, more often display egoist attitudes, low social activity and no feeling of usefulness of joint efforts. In addition, they more often demonstrate lack of trust as well as cynical and demanding attitudes.

Both the effect of unused social capital, and its lack in certain areas of young people’s world reveal shortages related to civic education, which is a significantly neglected area. In Poland, there exists an unreasonable conviction that social and civil attitudes can be taught by recommending greater doses of knowledge. In studies on civic education, in the part related to knowledge, Poland had quite good notes. However, in tests verifying practical use of this knowledge, it had one of the worst results³⁸. In most recent studies, these results are even worse (they are also worse in other developed European countries)³⁹, which causes that researchers and commentators use dramatic expressions, such as a “cut off” or “dormant” generation, “deficit of citizenship”, “collective civil escape”. They suggest low interest of the youth in social problems and their indifference to public matters.

At least a few of the factors presented in this part of the report does not prove accuracy of such opinions. Social involvement of young people is not lower. It is quite the reverse – it increased, although it was slightly wavering in the recent years. However, it does not fall within the framework to which politicians and older generations are used to. It represents a different kind of sensitivity and symbolism, uses different ground and carriers for social communication. They include the Internet and ICT technologies, by means of which the most significant changes are made. There are two types of citizenship – conventional and involved – of which the former is rejected by the youth most often. However, in exceptional situations or when their values are seriously threatened, as part of the conventional citizenship, they use their right to vote. They are much more attracted by “pure” forms – involved, to which, however, they are not properly prepared. At the same time, they possess a priceless, but fragile feature – involvement capital. It is priceless, since it is difficult to work it out and fragile, since it may be dematerialized due to negative experience related to participation in collective undertakings and disappointment with politics. Who will make the most of it and how? Since the fact that there is a capital to be used is out of the question.

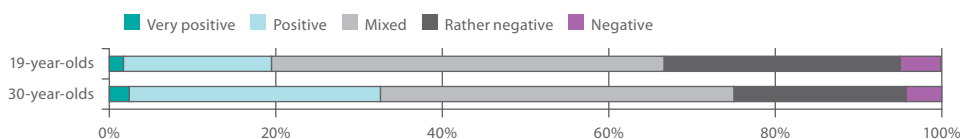
38 2005. *Młodzi Polacy jako obywatele* [Young Poles as citizens], Report of the Institute of the Third Republic of Poland, Gdańsk-Warsaw 2002.

39 K. Koseła, A study entitled “*International Civic and Citizenship Education Study*” (ICCS) – *źródło nowych danych o młodzieży* [a source of new data on youth], a paper at the 13th Sociological Convention, Cracow, September 2010.

8.5. Attitude towards changes and the system

According to CBOS studies, a vast majority of Poles, including young people (83%), claim that the change of system in 1989 was a good move, and since 2008, satisfaction with this fact has been expressed much more often. Few people (9%) are critical about the transformation⁴⁰. These opinions reflect general intuition, essential factors of judgement and they do not include many elements of the transformation process. They also do not show, how it is perceived by young people, for whom the new system is the only one they have experienced. Does this situation cause greater familiarity with the new system or results in more critical judgements? Answering this question, we will usually say: it depends. These changes are perceived differently by older generations, who can be defined as system borderers, compared to young people, who grow up in the new system. Both cohorts were influenced by different factors.

Fig. 8.18. Attitude towards changes occurring in the country



Source: Own study: *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational paths and the beginning of adulthood], 2008.

Data presented in Fig. 8.18 illustrate the attitude of young adults and the youth to changes occurring in Poland. They hide a few different dimensions (here, they have the form of statements, which one can agree or disagree with to a greater or lesser extent). Their indices form a range of opinions: from positive, through mixed, to negative ones:

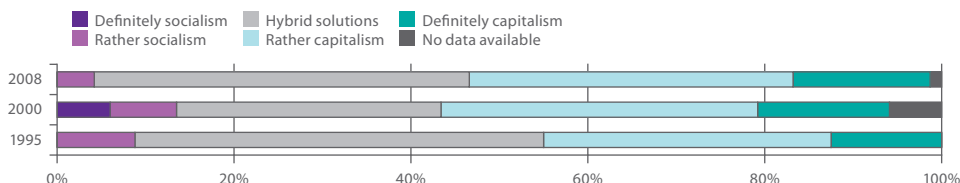
- A. *In the recent years, Poland has undergone changes, which will have positive consequences in the future.*
- B. *People like me do not have significant prospects for the future.*
- C. *Nowadays, almost everyone gets poorer and there are no signs that this situation is going to change.*
- D. *Situation of people like me will gradually improve.*

Evidently, the dominant attitude to changes occurring in the country constitutes a mix of judgements and feelings. Indifference occurs among two fifths of young adults and almost half of 19-year-olds. Young adults perceive the new reality more positively. Among them there are more citizens that are satisfied with the changes than those that are dissatisfied – more than among younger youth (a difference of 13 pp). Younger people are more critical – either because they are young (criticism

40 M. Feliksiak, *Postawy wobec transformacji systemowej i oceny jej skutków* [Attitudes towards system transformation and opinions on its results], CBOS BS/94, Warsaw 2010.

and perception of the world in the binary system is a natural characteristic of youth) or because the “new” youth adopts different standards.

Fig. 8.19. Young adults – system preferences: socialism vs. capitalism



Source: An IFiS PAN study: *Polacy '95 i Polacy 2000* [Poles '95 and Poles 2000]; own study: *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational path and entering the adulthood], 2008.

One of the pillars of the new system’s identity is the new economic order. Fig. 8.19 illustrates preferences of young Poles related to two contrary types of social and economic systems: socialism and capitalism. The first one is a thing of the past and the second one has been paving its way in Poland for the last two decades. Older generations do not agree as to the rightness of this course of transformation. Even in 2000, some people expressed their longing for socialism. Are supporters of this system also present in the young generation? Here, we will refer to study results covering a period of a dozen or so years. It uses a scale of statements reflecting common opinions on socialism and capitalism. Each of them can be more or less favoured, and the index of the whole reflects individual opinions.

- A. *In general, socialism enables better development of countries than capitalism.*
- B. *Socialism is always connected with poverty.*
- C. *Only capitalism can provide people with freedom and prosperity.*
- D. *Capitalism enable people to fully exploit their abilities.*

A comparison of data from various periods of time reveals systematic decrease of socialism’s attractiveness among young people. Today, slightly above 4% of young people, usually less educated and socially marginalized, express interest in socialist system solutions. Together with the weakening interest in socialism, one can observe clear increase in support for capitalism (up to 52.1%). Positive attitudes occur mainly among well-educated people, with significant personal achievements and/or with the feeling of life opportunities (80% of them prefer capitalism). After twenty years of system transformation, even people of unfavourable social status opt for capitalism (38% of people threatened with marginalization think that capitalism provides more opportunities than socialism. In previous years, they constituted slightly over 10%⁴¹).

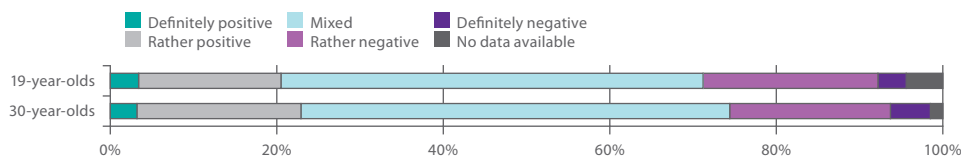
Evident presence of ambivalent attitudes (42%) reveals either lack of knowledge allowing for working out one’s own opinion, or demand for mixed (hybrid) system solutions, or lack of need for ideological country, which is equally probable. This trend

41 More precise analyses – see K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie...* [Young generation...].

should not be treated as a Polish peculiarity, since it occurs globally. Today, social expectations towards the country are growing in the whole world, as are equality aspirations. At the same time, modern social systems adopt solutions of many different origins. Nowadays, there are no countries that would represent “pure socialism” or “pure capitalism”. There are attempts to find a formula that would guarantee both economic growth and general social prosperity. The boundary between state control and market economy is defined not with the question of how much of the country there is in the economy, but what country⁴².

Privatization processes are a natural consequence of approval of capitalism in Poland. However, they evoked strong emotions during the whole period of transformation. Moreover, they have always been a pretext for underlining political differences and creating moral judgements of those, who supported privatization and those who were against it. The category of ownership is not only neutral in our culture and mentality, but it also evokes a kind of schizophrenia. It is visible not only in views and attitudes (which are internally contradictory rather than changeable), but also in the area of legal solutions. Are any changes occurring in this respect? Is the acceptance of privatization processes increasing or decreasing among young people?

Fig. 8.20. Attitude of young people towards privatization (2008)



Source: Own study: *“Porzucona generacja” – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* [“Abandoned generation” – educational path and entering the adulthood].

Attitude towards privatization reflected in Fig. 8.20 was determined with the use of a scale consisting of five statements:

- A. *Privatization of enterprises is beneficial for the economy.*
- B. *Privatization process is too slow.*
- C. *Privatization creates clear ownership relations.*
- D. *Privatization of enterprises is beneficial to few and threatens interests of the majority.*
- E. *Privatization means plunder of national wealth.*

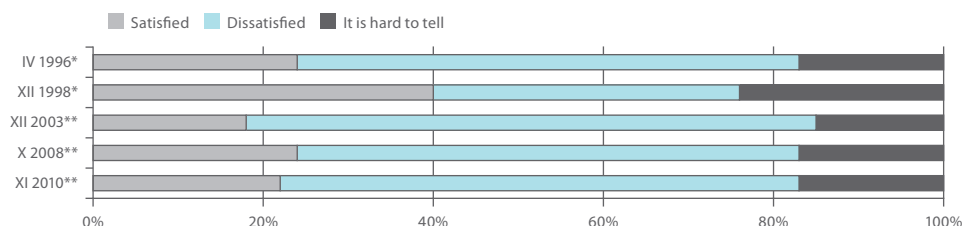
The results obtained suggest that young Poles are indecisive on this matter and most often (half of them) have mixed feelings. They accept some elements of the privatization process, and they are more or less doubtful about other ones. Older ones have a positive attitude to privatization processes slightly more often. The number of opponents of privatization is the same in both groups – one fourth of young Poles have a negative attitude to it. This does not match the much greater support of young people for capitalism, which is hard to imagine as a system without private ownership.

42 W. Morawski, *Socjologia ekonomiczna* [Economic sociology], PWN, Warsaw 1995, p. 145-167.

The probability of positive attitudes related to privatization grows with the indicators of personal success. While among people with negative past experiences (early ending of education, uncertain position on the labour market, low financial status), there are 13% of privatization supporters, among those who were successful, there are four times more of them (53%). The most negative attitude is observed among people in unfavourable life situation (jobless, with no permanent job, holding a low professional position with low salary) or having a sense of few life opportunities (mainly students of vocational schools).

What is the perception of political system changes in this context? Young Poles (aged 18-19), who often point out that freedom and choice are the most important values for them, are not convinced that democracy is the best form of government. As we have pointed out in chapter 2, where we described their expectations regarding the shape of a country and society, one fifth of teenagers agreed that undemocratic government is sometimes better than democratic one. At the same time, for more than one third of them, it was difficult to take a stand on this matter. This may be a sign of political immaturity of young people or, most probably, of problems with formulating an objective judgement on important issues. This is a result of every day observation of Polish democracy, which is strongly influenced by media, which use sensation and tabloidization of problems, and reduce the public life in Poland to "political salons". The opinion of the young on democracy in Poland is very critical (almost two thirds of them are dissatisfied) and it has been so since the second decade of the transformations (Fig. 8.21).

Fig. 8.21. Are you satisfied / dissatisfied with the way democracy is functioning in country altogether?



Source: CBOS* and KBPN** studies.

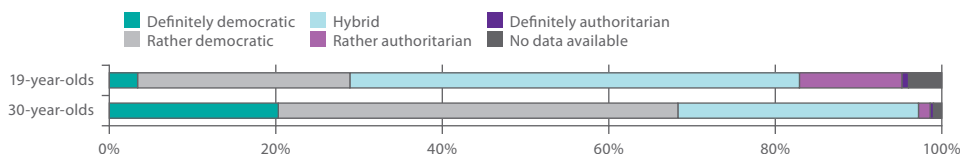
The consequence of these feelings is tiredness with democracy and willingness to escape from it towards authoritarian solutions, which would be accepted by 13% of the youngest citizens (Fig. 8.22). This figure reflects the number of 18/19-year-old Poles who stated that:

- A. *What our country needs is not democracy, but a strong leader.*
- B. *Opposition in the Sejm is not necessary for proper governing of the country.*
- C. *Press, radio and television should be controlled, in order to ensure that they do not threaten the democratically elected authorities.*
- D. *Protection of minorities' rights is not a duty of democratic authorities.*

To some extent, such views are shared by more than half of young people and they are rejected by 29%. Attitudes of young adults are completely different, since only

1.5% of them support authoritarian solutions, yet, their partial presence would be accepted by 28.9%. Others (68.3%) are strong supporters of democratic political solutions.

Fig. 8.22. Readiness to support democratic vs. authoritarian solutions



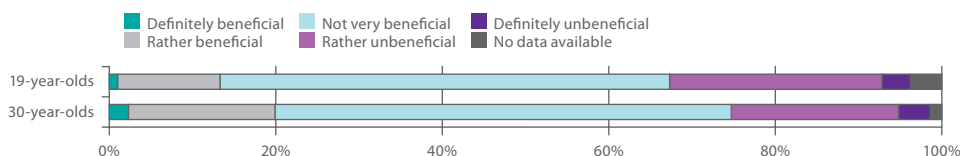
Source: Own work: *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational path and entering the adulthood], 2008.

While preferences for democratic order prevail among young Poles, it must be mentioned that there are more and more supporters of authoritarian and hybrid solutions (democracy mixed with the authoritarian government style) among young Poles. Escape from difficult choices towards a heavy hand government is a typical form of reaction to problems of a young democracy, which was described by Erich Fromm as a syndrome called "escape from freedom"⁴³. Such solutions are most often favoured by uneducated people. While 40% of students of vocational schools opt for democracy, there are 54% of students of general profile secondary schools who share this view. While 54% of students of vocational schools tend to accept "mixed" solutions, there are 30% of students of general profile secondary schools who share this view.

One of the most important elements of changes occurring in Poland is its reorientation in the international arrangement and opening towards influence from the West. After the wave of "euro enthusiasm" at the beginning of the 1990s (especially among young Poles), in the second decade, a significant cooling of attitudes was observed. Clear, explicit and, in particular, radical attitudes are not common (Fig. 8.23).

- A. *Faster inflow of foreign capital would bring more harm than good to Poland.*
- B. *Poland's openness to western influence will only be beneficial.*
- C. *Close relations with the West threaten good Polish traditions.*
- D. *Taking example of western countries causes decline of moral standards.*
- E. *Without tight relations with the West, Polish science will not develop.*

Fig. 8.23. Is opening Poland to cooperation with the West beneficial?



Source: Own work: *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational path and entering the adulthood], 2008.

43 E. Fromm, *Ucieczka od wolności* [Escape from freedom], Czytelnik, Warsaw 1997.

As far as the attitude towards the West is concerned, the most common is cautiousness and reasonable distance. Such an approach results, to some extent, from the fact that Poles have got used to the real western world since it became more available – through migrations, travelling, work. Today, these contacts are part of the experience of most young Poles. As a result, their emotional attitude towards the West becomes less enthusiastic, which is typical when one has a reasonable view of the world and uses several perspectives at the same time. The greatest concerns related to further opening of Poland to western influence occur among the less educated youth. Moreover, they are more intolerant of cultural differences (which is observable among Polish immigrants residing in the West) and reacts with ethnocentrism⁴⁴. Well-educated Poles are not afraid of openness, they do not mind tightening relations with the EU and do not think that it would be unfavourable for the Polish culture.

Evidently, in the eyes of young Poles, the system is legitimated in an unequal way – more on the basis of its general ideas and solutions (capitalism, democracy – “yes”) rather than strategies and policies (privatization, entering into too tight relationships with large supra-national political and economic organisms – “not so much”). At the same time, changes are more and more widely accepted among older youth. Coevals of the transformation are very critical towards it. It may result from characteristic features of their age or it may reflect the quality of social life and excessive burden of responsibility for one’s own future, imposed on younger cohorts.

Summary

According to indices related to active support and political participation, young citizens of many other countries achieve worse results than the Poles. In Poland, after 1989, these indicators were particularly low, which could lead to a thesis that political passivity of young people is a feature that is dangerous for democratization processes. In this context, the signals of wakening political involvement of the youth in 2006-2007, in particular civil initiatives of the young, undertaken in relation to parliamentary elections of 21 October 2007, should be treated as factors to formulate a more optimistic thesis about political vigilance of young people, which becomes visible always when the values that are important for them are threatened. Their participation in elections left no illusions: this is not a politically dormant generation. The young went to the elections and decided about the result of the elections, they led to a significant change on the political arena and moved the course of changes to a different track.

However, this conclusion cannot constitute a basis for too optimistic hypotheses. Public affairs, and politics in particular, are not part of young people’s lives nowadays. Involvement in social campaigns and participation in elections did not have a character of a generational event. According to the young, they were a necessary step taken in order to defend essential values: freedom and maintaining Poland in a civilization circle that guarantees effectiveness of the social system. It seems that this kind of experience, though short-lasting, will be a very important element of the collective memory, which shapes political awareness of young people. However, maybe political factors are less important than those that make us conclude that young people are

44 K. Szafranec, *Młode pokolenie...* [Young generation], chapt. 5-7.

ready to create civil society together. In this respect, the most important is the question related to the quality of social potential and its foundation – opinions related to the importance of involvement in other people's businesses and the usefulness of collective efforts. In media comments, most of adults and educationalists state that there is no such potential among the youth, due to their egoism, hedonism, unwillingness to join groups and associations. Yet, this seems to be more complex. First of all, one has to deny the rightness of assessing social potential of the youth on the basis of indicators related to their formal organization. They can be more reliable in relation to organisations and associations than to the youth, since the former have not worked out a proper formula, which would attract the young and stimulate their readiness to get involved in activities to the benefit of other people. Most of them use obsolete models and formulas, which do not take into account a different kind of sensitivity, different symbolism that they use and different methods of communication. Second of all, young people's involvement in matters of individuals and those of the general public. In different studies, one can find arguments in favour of the thesis that such involvement does exist, especially among younger cohorts of youth (which is an optimistic view). At the same time, it is only a deeply hidden potential – one of the essential social resources, which is neither extracted, nor processed, nor managed. That is why there is a risk that, due to negative experiences and lack of support, it will be wasted (which is a pessimistic view). The fact that this is possible is confirmed by observation related to a few simple tendencies.

First – *the general situation of the society and economy*: Most sociological studies confirm the thesis that since the beginning of system transformation, young Poles have not "sensed" political matters, are not willing to participate in the public sphere of life, yet, they are interested in changes that may lead to improvement of their living standard, in particular life prospects and cultural values. If this is true, improvement of general living conditions (as part of economic development of the country, including, in particular, creation of new jobs and life prospects for young people) is the key way to revive and strengthen civil attitudes. For a large number of young people, it is even now clear that fulfilment of one's own idea about a better life is the most possible in democratic system and market economy. It is only recently that this relation has started to be built with a democratic impulse – seeing the connection between one's own future and fulfilment of personal ambitions, and political involvement and participation in elections. That is why as long as social reality will be perceived by the young as pointless, unstable, devoid of ideology and reliable political elites, it will be difficult for them to fulfil their civil roles.

Another important sphere of life, which determines civil involvement of young people, is *political system and functioning of political elites*, which evoke negative emotions most often. One does not have to use the juvenile language to describe the range of negative phenomena that are criticized by the young. The style of discourse and social campaigns effectively discourage from constructive citizenship. There is no wonder that young people, watching the political arena, often choose the protest voting strategy. If they do not do it and go to the elections to cast a vote, it should be treated as a sign of unusual civil responsibility of the young generation.

Social education is definitely underestimated – it is ignored probably because of determinism that is deeply rooted in our mentality and which assumes that the shape of social reality is more influenced by hidden forces than by activity, everyday

work and people's visions of the future. This kind of education was given up by the media, parents and, apparently, school. Messages, based on sensation, sent by the media are strengthening the conviction that civil society consists of politicians constantly arguing with one other – often about things that are totally unimportant – who, for years, have been interviewed in the same way by the same journalists, and made the same statements. Young people are able to sense the artificial nature of this kind of media message and they more and more often turn to interactive forms, where one can be a sender and a recipient at the same time. Parents – who represent the middle generation – throw away from their memory the period of their own involvement in politics and try to protect their children against such experience. The democracy exam at schools does not go well. Teachers claim that stimulation of thinking about social or public matters seems to be not only outdated, but also pointless – that is why they execute a minimum scope of the programme: they give orals, while they treat the school self-government as a formal necessity. This fictional character of the school self-government is treated by students as a normal situation, never as a depraving one. More than half of student of the last grade of secondary school claim that the school self-government has no, or almost no power in their school. In 2010, for the first time, more than 50% of young people took part in self-government elections. However, family and school have a great power, although their efforts are always secondary in relation to events that occur in the society, politics and media. They have the possibility to influence young people's hearts and minds directly. This area, which is significantly neglected and to a large extent "dependent" on the so called objective reality or the media, does not have to be ignored. In order to prevent this situation and to reduce the effectiveness and influence of the "real life" on young people, the contemporary pedagogy and methods of work with the youth should be reoriented.

The map of possible and required activities would not be complete if we excluded the *youth* as a participant of social efforts. Young people, who often reason their passivity with the view that "we are not able to do anything" cannot be satisfied with the feeling that they have no influence on anything in their civil roles and in relation to many issues. It is simply not true. There are many situation in which giving up does not pay off. Democracy – despite being an imperfect system – provides tools that make us believe that we live in a controlled environment. These tools include civil society, which enables us to improve the reality without resorting to rebellion. The young Poles – despite their complaining – are on a good track – though meandering and rough – to achieve this goal.

The opinions presented, related to system solutions rarely reflect negative attitude to changes that occur in Poland. As regards almost all the issues – political, economic, international alliances – negative opinions are in the minority. However, it does not mean that positive attitudes are dominating. The most common are indifferent, mixed or moderate attitudes. Opinions on democracy are an exception here, since it seems to be an undeniable value here, though, at the same time, very troublesome. Its real shape, which involves constant tensions and paralysis of reforms, causes that young people are tired and want to escape from freedom towards solutions that remove the burden of responsibility for one's own choices. This burden is difficult to stand especially for the youngest (aged 18-19). Authoritarian solutions, which are not generally accepted by young people, are the most popular within the abovementioned group. Young Poles definitely favour capitalism, yet, indifference is a dominant

orientation among them. This can indicate a growth of interest in hybrid system solutions, which comprise elements typical for socialism and capitalism. One should not interpret this trend as an element of political heritage after the real socialism, but rather as a reflection of a more general tendency to build "capitalism with a human face".

"Legitimizing" opinions of older cohorts (young adults) are more consistent, mature and they seem to be more related to their life experiences. Opinions of 19-year-old young people are more hesitant, internally contradictory, receptive to a context – probably because of lack of possibility to confront them with the real life. This is caused by the fact that they are kept within educational institution, at the outer edge of the social system. In general, the system legitimizes itself on a quite good level in the eyes of the young – especially when we look at the range of negative opinions, which are in the minority. The system legitimizes itself on a moderate level if we take into account the fact that most of these attitudes are moderate or indifferent. From the point of view of consistency of the changes, legitimization is unequal in relation to different areas of the social system, different social groups and environments. The system is favoured among well-educated groups of people who are doing well and who feel that their future prospects are optimistic. Those who are doing badly and who are uncertain about their future do not support this course of changes. As long as they are threatened with marginalization, they will constitute a social base of dissatisfaction.

9.

9. Health and hazardous behaviours of youth

9.1. Youth's health – social and developmental context

9.2. Mental health and satisfaction from life

9.3. Risks to health and life

9.4. Long life expectancy as a health indicator

9.5. Alcohol consumption and smoking of cigarettes

9.6. Psychoactive substances

9.7. Reasons for hazardous behaviours of youth

Summary

9. Health and hazardous behaviours of youth

CHAPTER NINE

Health belongs to the least negated values in every society and culture. It represents a value all in itself. It is necessary in order to achieve one's life goals such as improved education or employment. According to the statement of the World Health Organization, everyone is entitled to enjoy the highest possible standard of health within their own society (WHO, 1946). It is at the same time well known that people enjoy health at very different levels. The differences are decided – on one hand – by inborn characteristics, gender, age, individual constitution, with the person's social status on the other end of the scale. While the earlier differences of the natural type, the latter are considered as a sign of inequality and social unfairness. Despite many successes, inequalities in terms of health still today constitute a challenge for majority of European states. The worse situated social groups are characterised everywhere by worse health indexes and a higher mortality. Differences between the poor and rich neighbourhoods of the same city are easy to observe as much as between blue collar and white collar workers, those educated and uneducated or less and more urbanized regions of the country¹. There are many other factors conditioning the social inequalities in terms of health such as access to medical services, treatment costs, mental and cultural barriers (Fig. 9.1). Significant problems constitute the everyday habits of people living in poverty. There are also additional risk factors at play such as economic stress resultant from low or unstable income, lack of residential housing or uncertain perspectives.

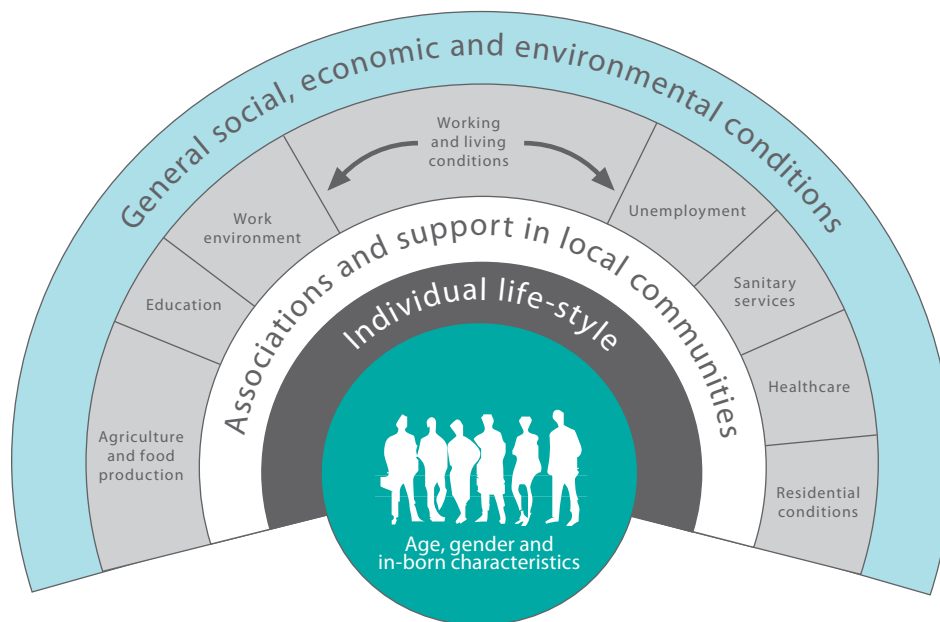
There are at the same time multiple health issues resulting not from limitations (institutional or financial) but from the conscious choice of life-style promoted by culture. An example are poor nutritional habits, reaching for condiments, psychoactive substances, lack of physical activity, a sedentary life-style, all of which have become an element of modern youth's lifestyle no longer perceived as problematic issues.

A poor health status may have many undesired consequences. For a person who is sick, this may mean the loss of a significant portion of their income, sometimes employment, social isolation or exclusion resultant from all these factors combined. Sick people constitute an additional financial burden for their own families as a result of high current costs for treatment. Their position is weakening economically while the life opportunities of their children decrease with it. They also pose a problem for their employers and a social problem, generating high costs for the healthcare system. All of this makes health one of the most critical aspects of social life and one of the most important areas of legislative regulations. The most difficult task causing serious problems for most governments is based on the skilful (therefore both just and rational) organization of the health assets of society. Political actions, as recommended by the World Health Organization, should on one hand head in the direction of improving the supporting and preventive systems, while on the other of effective "recycling" of the workforce resources (rehabilitation, professional requalification programs) in order

1 M. Whitehead, D. Dahlgren, Concepts and principles for tackling social inequities in health: Levelling up Part 1, WHO Europe, Liverpool – London, 2007, p. 4.

for sick persons to be able to return to professional activity, performing work of a different character ².

Fig. 9.1. Main factors conditioning the state of health



Source: M. Whitehead, G. Dahlgren, Tackling inequalities in health: what can we learn from what has been tried? Working paper prepared for the King's Fund International Seminar on Tackling Inequalities in Health, September 1993, Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire, London, King's Fund (mimeo).

9.1. Youth's health – social and developmental context

Today's youth is both the target of these activities as well as a link in a longer generational chain. Many studies have proven that different events from the early periods in life may explain health problems in a much greater extent than the social position achieved during adult years³. Poverty during childhood or the reckless behaviour of women during pregnancy may have to do with the poor health state of children in their future. The status and parent's living style influences health and educational achievement of their children while these in turn influence their future work and income. In

2 M. Whitehead, D. Dahlgren, Concepts and principles for tackling social inequities in health: Levelling up Part 1, WHO Europe, Liverpool – London, 2007, p. 8.

3 J.G. Eriksson et al, Catch-up growth in childhood and death from coronary heart disease: longitudinal study, *BMJ*, 1999, 318(7181):427-431; I. Lynch, G. Kaplan, Socioeconomic position, [in]: L. Berkman, I. Kawachi, eds., *Social epidemiology*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, 13-35.

Poland, where a third of children and youth live in unfavourable material conditions, the reduction of intergenerational transfers of poverty and illness (as well as the life styles associated with them) is a very serious challenge. Neglect and weak points of the healthcare system in the area of diagnostics and preventive treatment in the early stages of life, reflect later in the social costs which must be borne as a result of treating people with health problems or their professional absence.

The issue of youth's health is not only justified in such way (associated with social inequalities). It is also connected with the specific changes and developmental challenges which appear in the adolescent stage of life. They can be most generally characterized as the psychological growth of a person. It is during this period (occurring between the ages of 10 and 20) that a specific process takes place which is referred to as the maturing age crisis or a crisis of identity. It takes a different course in different individuals, which in the common understanding gives the impression of such crisis often having a very violent and troublesome course for the surrounding environment that it could be and should be avoided (which is neither possible nor desirable). As a result of the changes which take place in the psyche at such time, a young person feels compulsive (independent of one's own will) need of defining their own "Self" which usually takes place by a lesser or more severe confrontation with the adult world. The unrestricted experimenting with different roles, behaviours, identifications, often in spite of the established social norms, is one of the external expressions of such searches. For some of such experiments and searches, young people sometimes pay a price which turns out to be unexpectedly high. They are subject to accidents, injuries, die as a result of suicides or acquired diseases (i.e. HIV). Although being more intellectually skilled and more logical in their thinking, they do not yet possess the wisdom which comes with age. They only see fun and adventure where adults see danger. While perceiving the world in "all or nothing" categories, they are able to, at the same time disregard "everything" and see "nothing". This perspective should not be disregarded if one analyses the different aspects of health and risk behaviour of youth.

9.2. Mental health and satisfaction from life

Polish youth, similar to the rest of the European youth, rates their health status as very good or good (Table 9.1). Such opinions are provided by 91% of Poles aged 15-24 and slightly less (82.8%) by those aged 25-34. Profiles of the ratings of Polish youth (aged 15-24) fit it closely with opinions of the British or Swedish youth, while the young Brits and Swedes maintain their very positive opinions of their health also in later years (25-34), the Poles verify theirs to good or moderate. In total, a "mediocre" or poor status of health is indicated by 8.8% of Poles aged 15-24 and slightly more (17.2%) by those aged 25-34.

Polish studies on Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HSBC)⁴, realized among the younger school-aged youth (up to 18 years of age), indicate a clear differentiation in the grades depending on the status of the family, origin and living environment. Much worse evaluations of own health are those of young people from

4 Health Behaviours in School Children – international studies realized in EU states testing the emotional state, health status and healthy behaviours of the school-age youth, the institute realizing this in Poland is the Institute of Mother and Child in Warsaw.

poor families (this social gradient in Poland is one of the largest with a greater values occurring only in Lithuania, Latvia and Israel), youth living in environments with a high intensity of local problems⁵ evaluating their health as poor. The overall outlook is however favourable and better than in prior years.

Table 9.1. Opinion of own state of health among young Europeans (2006) (%)

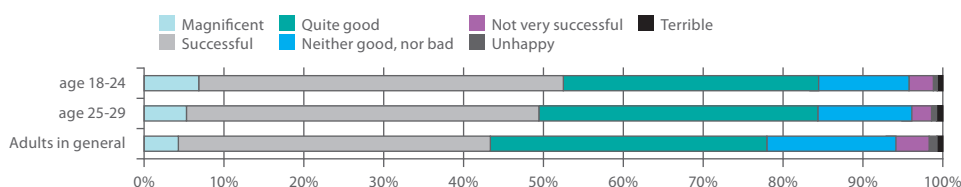
	15-24					25-34				
	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
EU-27	46.2	45.4	7.0	1.1	0.2	32.9	52.2	12.1	2.3	0.5
BE	54.9	38.4	4.9	1.1	0.6	42.0	47.2	8.2	2.3	0.3
BG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CZ	57.4	35.8	5.6	0.9	0.3	37.7	49.6	9.6	2.3	0.8
DK	57.8	32.2	7.6	1.7	0.6	54.2	34.4	8.2	2.4	0.8
DE	39.8	50.6	8.3	1.0	0.3	23.4	56.9	16.6	2.7	0.4
EE	19.7	66.0	12.2	1.7	0.4	14.0	67.2	15.6	2.8	0.4
IE	69.7	25.4	4.3	0.4	0.2	57.2	34.9	6.5	0.8	0.5
EL	90.4	7.7	1.3	0.4	0.2	82.2	13.5	2.4	1.3	0.6
ES	39.0	55.5	4.3	1.1	0.1	26.4	61.2	9.3	2.5	0.5
FR	57.5	36.1	5.3	0.9	0.2	40.5	46.5	10.7	2.0	0.4
IT	38.0	54.0	6.8	1.0	0.1	24.3	60.0	13.4	1.8	0.5
CY	84.8	11.4	2.5	0.9	0.3	73.5	21.2	4.0	0.9	0.3
LV	9.5	69.7	18.8	1.9	0.1	5.7	63.9	25.9	3.6	0.8
LT	20.7	61.5	15.9	1.7	0.1	9.5	62.2	25.0	2.8	0.5
LU	66.9	28.7	3.9	0.5	-	46.3	42.8	9.6	1.1	0.1
HU	38.8	50.0	9.1	1.7	0.5	23.4	54.4	18.4	3.0	0.7
MT	52.6	44.4	2.7	0.3	0.1	48.6	46.2	4.8	0.4	-
NL	32.7	60.5	6.2	0.6	-	27.7	58.8	10.0	2.6	0.8
AT	71.6	22.7	4.6	0.9	0.2	60.1	31.2	7.3	1.1	0.2
PL	44.9	46.2	6.9	1.7	0.2	25.4	57.4	13.7	3.1	0.3
PT	22.1	63.9	11.7	2.0	0.3	13.4	65.3	17.5	2.4	1.4
RO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SI	35.5	52.3	9.8	1.9	0.5	27.7	52.5	15.7	3.3	0.9
SK	60.9	28.8	8.3	1.5	0.4	37.7	43.8	15.6	2.2	0.7
FI	71.0	17.7	9.3	1.4	0.7	66.6	22.2	9.0	1.5	0.7
SE	48.8	40.8	9.1	1.2	0.2	45.5	41.3	10.1	2.2	0.9
UK	47.5	42.5	8.7	1.1	0.2	44.5	43.7	9.4	2.3	0.2
IS	58.4	31.7	7.6	2.2	-	60.1	29.1	9.3	0.4	1.1
NO	43.0	45.2	9.1	2.6	0.3	38.2	48.0	9.1	4.2	0.6

Source: Youth in Europe. A statistical Portrait, op. cit. p. 51.

5 J. Mazur [ed.], Status materialny rodziny i otoczenia a samopoczucie i styl życia 15-letniej młodzieży. Wyniki badań HBSC w ujęciu środowiskowym (Family and surrounding material status, mood and life style of 15-year-old youth. Results of Health Behaviour in School-aged Children studies in the environmental scope), Institute of Mother and Child (ImiD), Warsaw, 2007, p. 23; [see also:] A. Oblacińska, B. Woynarowska [ed.], Zdrowie subiektywne, zadowolenie z życia i zachowania zdrowotne uczniów szkół ponadgimnazjalnych w Polsce w kontekście czynników psychospołecznych i ekonomicznych (Subjective health, satisfaction from life and health habits of post-gymnasium school pupils in Poland in context of psychosocial and economic factors), Institute of Mother and Child (ImiD), Warsaw, 2006, p. 18.

An equally positive image emerges from the indexes of satisfaction with life. Only 21.2% of 15-year-olds and 15% of 18-year-old youth admits to being dissatisfied with their life⁶. The percentage of those dissatisfied, does not increase significantly in the case of young adults or older youth (aged 18-24 and 25-29). Those who do not present positive opinions of their own life constitute 16.6% (Fig. 9.2)⁷.

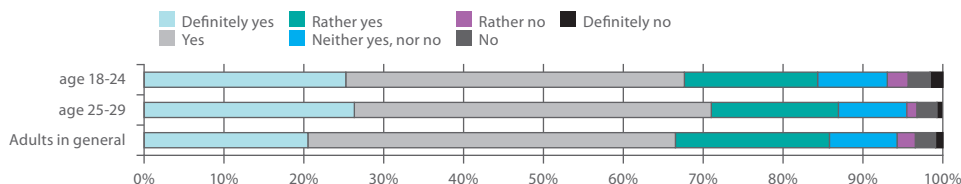
Fig. 9.2. Satisfaction from life – on the basis of the questions: *How do you evaluate your entire life until now? Could you state that it was...:*



Source: Own analysis on basis of data – Social Diagnosis 2009.

It is not subject to change even under influence of the control questions, excluding the perspective of painful life experiences (Fig. 9.3). Over 80% of both the young as well as older Poles consider their life to be of value and having sense even despite painful experiences, with majority of them providing firm responses on the issue. Opposite feelings are shared by 13.8% of the youth (not much more frequently representatives of older age categories).

Fig. 9.3. *Despite painful experiences my life has sense and is valuable*



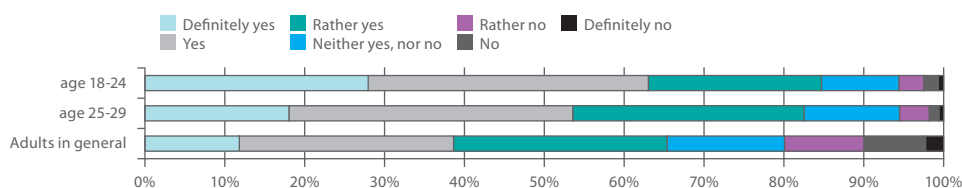
Source: Own analysis on the basis of data: Social Diagnosis 2009.

These data fall in line with the image of the European youth, being open to the world, satisfied with existing possibilities, focused on the joys of the present day but also hopeful of their own future, which may be in a greater sense the effect of placing trust within the lifestyles promoted by modern culture, as opposed to the realistic recognition of possibilities in life. Either way, the satisfaction with life is a significant attribute of young age which may not always be assigned to Polish youth. It is nowadays different as young people are enjoying life and having a lot of energy. This is stated by 84% of Poles aged 15-29 which is significantly more than representatives of older age categories (Fig. 9.4).

6 J. Mazur, H. Kołoto, Zadowolenie z życia (Satisfaction from life), [in:] A. Oblacińska, B. Woynarowska [ed.], op. cit. p. 25.

7 J. Czapiński, T. Panek [red.], Diagnoza Społeczna 2009 (Social Diagnosis 2009) Warsaw, 2009, p. 151.

Fig. 9.4. Feeling of vitality on the basis of the question: *I feel I have a lot of life energy*



Source: Own analysis on basis of data – Social Diagnosis 2009.

These results correspond with data obtained as part of the Eurobarometer surveys from March 2010 which have noted similar indexes of positive feelings among young Poles⁸. Poles much less often identify themselves with having negative feelings, especially those indicating severe emotional states or depression, but still more often than citizens of other developed EU states. They more often feel tense (53%), tired (70%) or worn out (54%) (Fig. 9.5)⁹. The relatively large percentage of adult Poles having the impression that as a result of own emotional problems, they achieve less than they are capable of or less than they desire (Fig. 9.6).

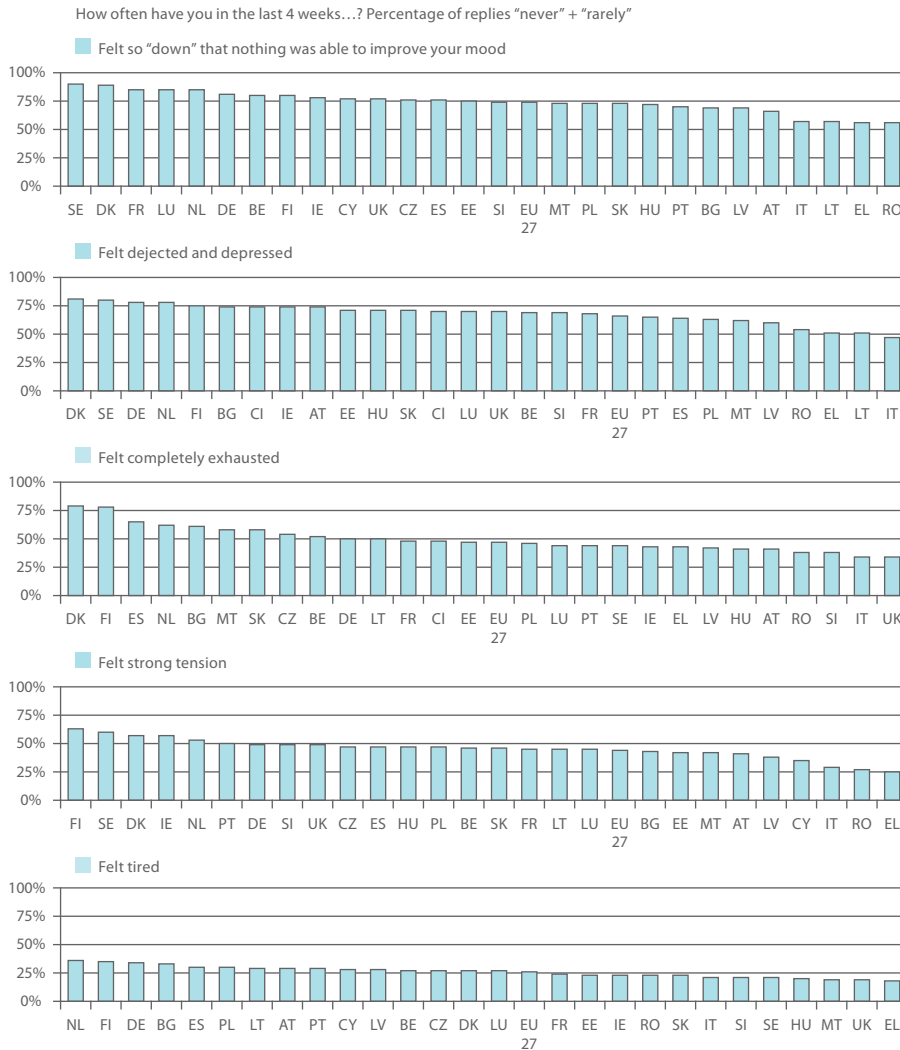
The mental health affects both, the attitude towards life as well as behaviour in the work place. People having mental health problems have more often the feeling of being unfulfilled, more often take leave from work, more often feel unappreciated in their professional achievements, are anxious about their job, more often feel that their job is threatened and that their skills do not fit their professional role. The greatest problems with mental health are experienced by the poorest, those who feel financial tensions and who find themselves at the bottom of the social ladder. On the other hand, one of the most recent problems is rising number of wealthy people living in the big cities and suffering from mental health issues.

Young people bear the inconveniences of life easier not only because of the fact that (maybe) they are acting with regard to the remains of their natural optimism, which is left from their age of development, but because of the fact that they are a product of a culture of optimism, forcing the belief that the world is constantly developing and creating unlimited possibilities for everyone who wishes to reach for them. It is due to this, that the result of statistics indicating a declarative "trouble free status" of the youth may be misleading. They are important, just as important is the strength of all subjective beliefs about oneself and the world, however only with a fraction of the truth on the psychological consequences of complications of the youth in the world which is not always friendly or understanding. Many studies have noted data which can be worrying from such perspective. Some of them are a result of age and specific tasks placed before young people (i.e. period of the secondary school exams or completion of studies, where one has to focus in terms of study but also necessity of undertaking

8 Mental Health Report, Special Eurobarometer 345, TNS Opinion & Social, October 2010, p. 15-19.

9 These data pertain to the general overall data and in contrast to the analysis of the positive feelings, do not take into account the specific characteristics of the youth.

Fig. 9.5. Exclusion of the currently negative emotional states among EU citizens

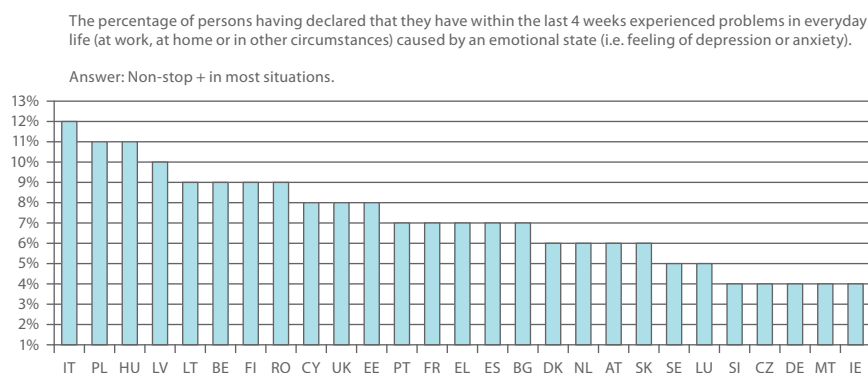


Source: Mental Health Report, Special Eurobarometer 345, TNS Opinion & Social, p. 23.

important decisions pertaining to the broader course of life. The source of others lies in the arrangement of the modern world which has developed mechanisms permitting the exchange of the reasons for external failures in life (unemployment, being caught within the society’s margin, unfulfilled dreams) as subjective faults and the problems with the system as own incompetence. The belief of “I must be able to get by”, typical for the modern youth as well as the “do it yourself” strategy, results in a situation of too great a strain and life problems being too great, and negative mental consequences: accumulation of severe emotional states, tensions, feelings of personal unfulfilment, loss of sense, fears, depressions and neurosis. The intensification of these phenomena in Western societies has been

defined as the “psycho-wave”¹⁰, with the psyche accepting the crises and tensions of the system as being too burdening and destructive.

Fig. 9.6. Do you feel that you achieve less than you wish you would as a result of your own emotional problems?



Source: Mental Health Report, Special Eurobarometer 345, TNS Opinion & Social, p. 37.

Does Polish youth remain within the area of influence of this phenomenon and problem? It is without doubt torn between many ambivalences. Although they do bear the fear about the future, it reveals the willingness towards maturing and readiness to undertake challenges resulting from the desire to participate in adult society. Although they are aware of the potential failure and opposition of social structures, they undertake the educational effort in order to come out on top and achieve success. Despite experiencing many absurdities, they build their fate and life experience which must see everything finding its sense under pain of insanity. These tensions are associated with the conviction that “life in these times is no game” and that emphasis is on “SELF or ME”. This philosophy has for a long time been an element of life strategy for many young Poles. The fact that a significant number of them still believes in themselves and in the favourable future, fills with optimism, although it can not be excluded that this is only a pretence being an expression of something which makes it difficult to find positives in. It can be that in reality the “staged privatization of life”¹¹, relieving the social system of many open conflicts and tensions, cumulating somewhere in the psyche (despite declarations that “it’s OK”, that “I will manage”) in order to reappear itself at later age as a mental problem, risky behaviour or a social dissatisfaction.

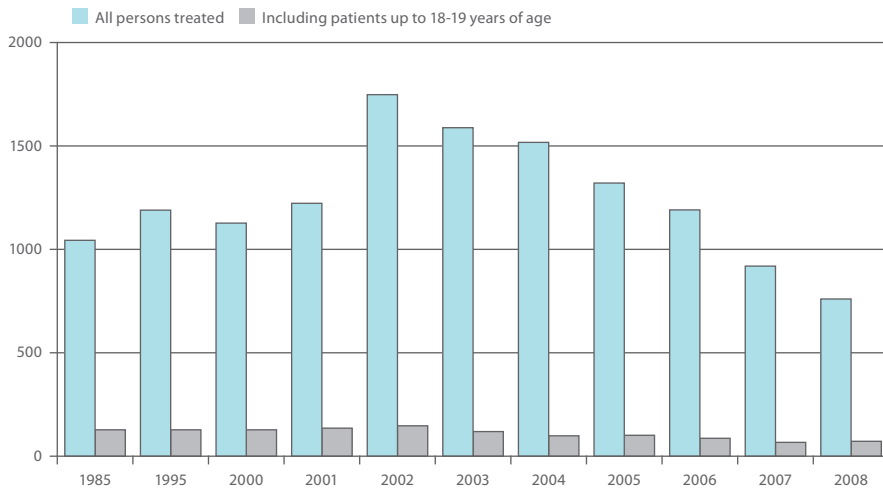
Data exists, which indicates many negative symptoms observed in youth which do not necessarily have to indicate its problems in managing self in the modern world. Increasing numbers of teenagers are suffering from higher level of psychological stress, frequent feeling of extreme tiredness and exhaustion, depression

10 U. Beck, Społeczeństwo ryzyka. (Society of risk.) W drodze do innej nowoczesności (On the path to a different modernity), Scholar Publishing House, Warsaw, 2002, p. 149.

11 Z. Bauman, Wieloznaczność nowoczesna. Nowoczesność wieloznaczna, (Modern ambiguity. Ambiguous modernity.) Polish Scientific Publishers (PWN) Warsaw, 1995, p. 317-318.

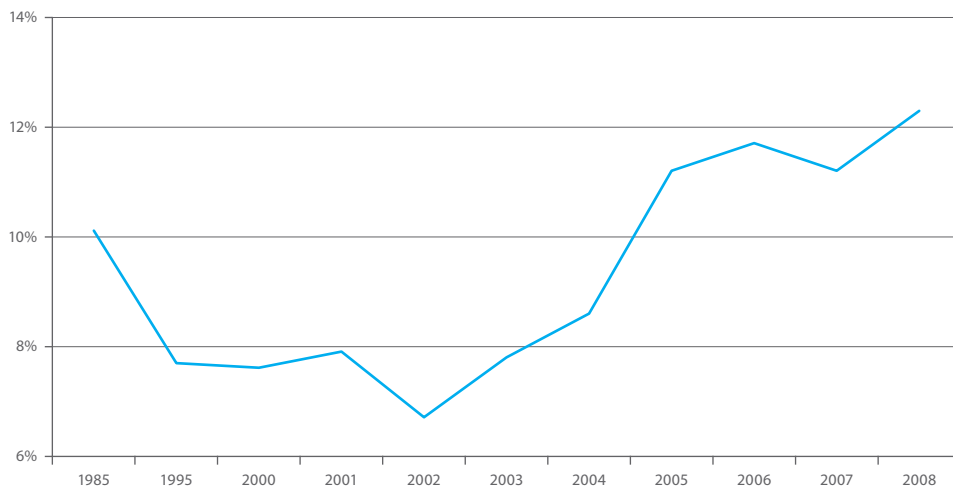
and headaches. A comparison of current data with data obtained several years ago shows alarming changes – in the past, teenagers complained about those ailments were a minority (30-40% of young people), now, only the minority is not complaining. There are serious grounds to believe that among teenagers in Poland the effect of “psycho-wave” is increased.

Fig. 9.7. Mentally ill patients in years 1985-2008 – number of patients with specification of those youngest (up to 18/19 years of age) (in thousands)



Source: Own analysis on basis of statistical age groups of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology in Warsaw.

Fig. 9.8. Changes in percentage of the youngest patients (up to 18/19 years old) treated in psychiatric treatment facilities during the years of 1985-2008



Source: Own analysis on basis of statistical age groups of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology in Warsaw.

According to the data of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology concerning psychiatric treatment in public healthcare facilities, the number of patients has begun to fall after its landslide increase during the period in years 2000-2004 (Fig. 9.7). This process concerned all age groups with the youth being affected in the smallest scope. While the numbers of those reporting for treatment had decreased, the percentage share of young patients continued to increase (Fig. 9.8). After the period of "calm" (first decade of changes) came a wave of a significantly lower mental resistance in youth (second decade of changes, including political, economic and emotional troubles – period after 2005)¹².

Problems with the mental health accumulate with age. In 2008, 128 322 young patients (up to 18 years of age) and 236 040 persons aged 19-29 were under treatment. A similar tendency was steady in the recent years (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2. Persons under psychological treatment in public health system facilities during the years of 2005-2008 (according to three age groups)

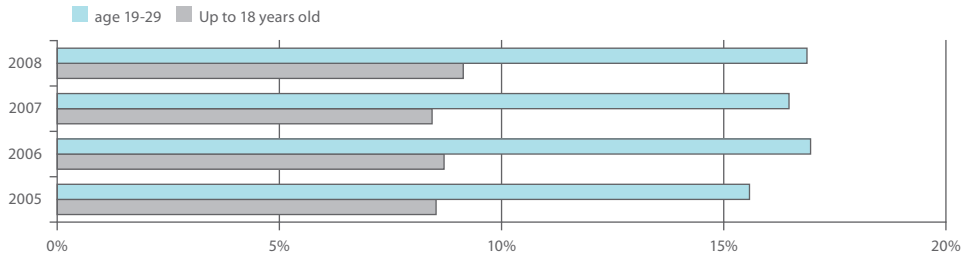
	Up to 18 years old	19-29	30+	In total
2005	136 308	248 731	1 221 620	1 606 659
2006	131 688	256 218	1 124 677	1 512 583
2007	132 697	258 086	1 183 099	1 573 882
2008	128 322	236 040	1 040 139	1 404 501

Source: Own calculations on basis of statistical age groups of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology in Warsaw.

We do not however have data permitting the formulation of similar reports for earlier periods. At the same time, data at our disposal have nearly double the frequency of psychological disturbances among young adults than among the youth (Fig. 9.9). Due to the population of young adults (19-29) being less numerous than those aged 0-18, it can be deduced that it is the young adults which are a group of considerable risk, which incidentally does not mean that current teenagers will not appear to be a such group in a few years.

12 The data collected by the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology include a very broad period (those to which I had access include years between 1975 and 2008), with however not all data being arranged according to the same criteria. What has changed during this time is not only the classifications of the disease entities but also those of institutions providing treatment (new medical centres, which have not existed previously) as well as the rules of assigning demographic variables (according to rules designated i.e. age categories, etc.) All this results in the fact that it is not possible to extract comparable data over time between the age groups and according to disease entities. The greatest loss is the inability to separate the category of young adults which has systematically begun to appear only after 2005.

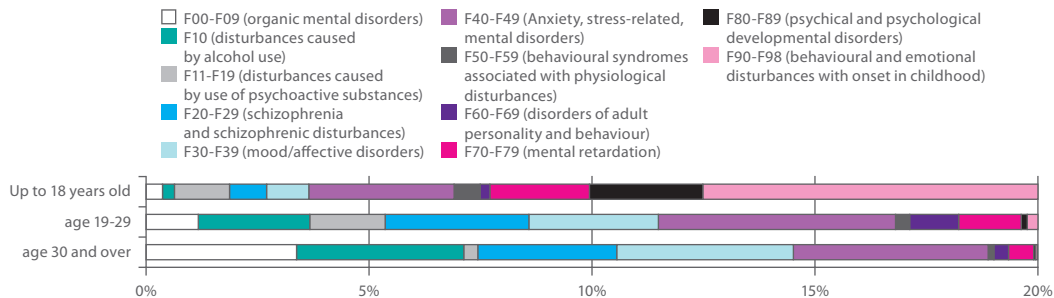
Fig. 9.9. Percentages of young patients treated in psychological counselling clinics and psychiatric hospitals during the years of 2005-2008



Source: Own analysis on basis of statistical age groups of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology.

While depressions and neurosis are diagnosed in every fourth teenage patient (24.2%) and every thirteenth (1.6%) suffers from psychological disorders being a consequence of addictions (mainly drug-related), the incidents of depression and neurosis in young adults concerns nearly half of patients (41%) while psychological disturbances related to drugs are diagnosed in 21% of cases (Fig. 9.10).

Fig. 9.10. Types of disorders treated in different patient age groups (2008)



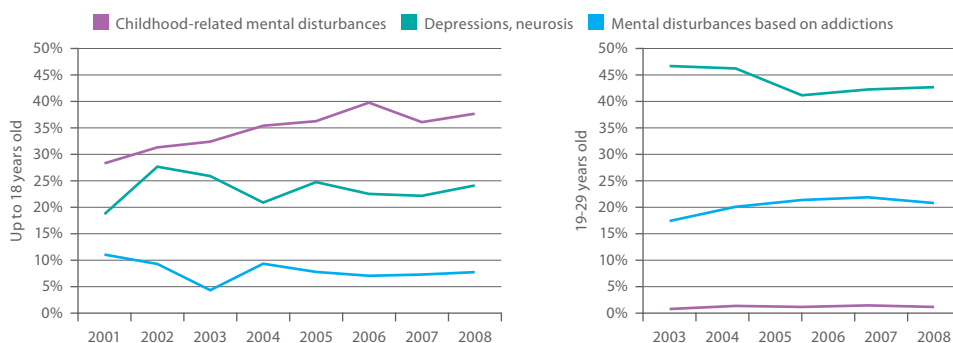
Source: Own analysis on basis of a statistical age group by the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology (2008).

Data analysis performed at different points in time reveals a correlation of two types of behaviours (categories of disturbances) – they are on one hand disturbances caused by use of psychoactive agents (substances) with the second being depression and neurosis. If the number of addiction cases (those treated) decreases, number of those treated for depression and neurosis rises (Fig. 9.11). Both these categories may be considered as strong indicators of problems with youth and their reactions to the outside world. Although young people do, in majority deal well with it psychologically, the group of those who does not, is as indicated by our analysis, not small while its share within the number of persons treated for psychical or psychological reasons is rising systematically.

We do not know how numerous the cases may be which the statistics of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology do not register. The data certainly does not include the patients making use of private ambulatory facilities (private psychologist

and therapist clinics) with no data being available on different types of arbitration advisors in courts and non-government organizations aiding in resolving family and school conflicts. Supplementation of our analysis with such data would show even more vividly the problem of rather insufficient psychological resistance of young people and an even more apparent effect of a “psycho-wave”.

Fig. 9.11. Youth and young adults – dynamics of 3 groups of mental disturbances¹³



Source: Own analysis on basis of statistical age groups of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology in Warsaw.

The mental problems more often appear in persons having a poor material status, problems with payment of bills and without secure employment. Such situations are perceived even more painfully by children and the youth. As part of studies being performed in Poland, more frequent cases of depression are noted in regions where the economic situation is poor, i.e. the Koszaliński region. Percentage of depression in children and youth was in this region almost twice as large as in other regions of Poland. It exceeded 50% while at the same time amounting to 30% in Gdańsk. Although the situation is that from among these 50 or 30% only 1/5 really suffers from depressive disorders requiring treatment, the other cases with disorders require absolutely preventive measures and psychological aid. Failure to provide them with such support means a high probability that their life will not take a good course that they will smoke and drink more, have children at too young an age and ruin their relationships¹⁴.

9.3. Risks to health and life

Young age, being a period when many developmental problems are subject to acceleration and culmination is subject to various health risks. In accordance with the definition of the World Health Organization, health is not only a lack of illness or decrepitude or the state of full, good physical, psychical and social mood. It constitutes the

13 Aside from those which have an organic base. Data concerning persons aged 19-29 register a shorter period because prior to 2003 the patients were combined into a single group with adults as part of the Polish Institute of Psychology and Neurology statistics.

14 J. Bomba, Smutny świat ludzi młodych (Sad world of young people), “Sprawy nauki”, article available at: http://www.sprawynauki.waw.pl/?section=article&art_id=2030.

potential facilitating a person the fulfilment of own needs, achievement of successes, feeling of joy and satisfaction from life, increasing the capability to grow, learn, deal with changes and overcoming of difficulties as well as favouring the establishment and maintenance of good relations with other persons as well as leading of a productive social and economic life¹⁵.

Although many studies indicate an improvement in the self-evaluation of health among Polish youth, the objective results do however generate lesser enthusiasm. On the other hand they do indicate a continuously improvement in the health condition of young Poles, decreasing their distance to representatives of the same age groups within the developed EU states¹⁶. The continuing not fully satisfactory health indexes are maintained as a result of the unsatisfactory behaviours of youth itself, conditions of living, family conditions as well as a highly imperfect healthcare system, including especially specialist and hospital treatments. Bad dietary habits, neglect in oral hygiene, sedentary (passive) life-style poverty and disorganization of family life, difficulty in access to specialized medical care resulting in a lack of diagnosis or late diagnosis are most often quoted factors¹⁷. A very significant disproportion in results exists between the regions. The worst situation is in the West Pomeranian, Pomeranian and the Lublin voivodeships and relatively better in the Lower Silesian and Opole¹⁸. Privileged is the status of the urban youth which as a result of availability of medical services, as well as other factors (associated with the family), takes advantage of doctor's consultations more often than youth from rural areas¹⁹.

Table 9.3. Percentage of young Poles being overweight or underweight (2003)²⁰

	Overweight			Underweight		
	15-24	25-34	45-54	15-24	25-34	45-54
Women	7.4	20.6	56.8	16.9	6.2	2.1
Men	15.7	44.0	64.3	6.1	0.3	1.1
In total	11.6	32.4	60.4	11.5	3.2	1.6

Source: EU Youth. A statistical Portrait, op. cit. 53.

As has been shown in HBSC studies, every eight teen (14%) suffers from a chronic disease. Over 17% per year is subject to injuries requiring medical aid. The excess of body mass occurs in 13% of school-age youth (more often in boys) with three times as many youths (mainly girls) perceiving themselves as being too fat, which

15 M. Sokołowska, Założenia ogólne, definicje. (General assumptions, definitions) [in]: C. Czabała, Zdrowie psychiczne. Zagrożenia i promocja (Mental health. Threats and promotion), IPN, Warsaw, 2000.

16 J. Mazur [ed.], op. cit., p. 163.

17 J. Szymborski, K. Jakóbiak, Zdrowie dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce (Health of children and youth in Poland), RPO Bulletin, Warsaw, 2008., p. 139-170.

18 J. Mazur [red.], op. cit., p. 167.

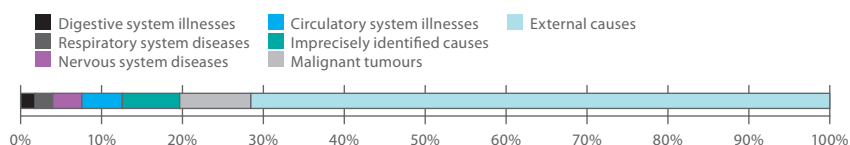
19 J. Szymborski, K. Jakóbiak [ed.], op. cit., p. 141-142.

20 According to measurements using the Body Mass Index (BMI).

means that the assessment of body image is a lot more rigorous than several years ago²¹. The percentage of persons being overweight falls to 11.6% within the 15-24 age group (Table 9.3). The situation of the Polish youth is in this sense much more favourable than in many other European states²², where obesity has been designated by the World Health Organization as a "global epidemic" leading to many serious illnesses of the heart, circulatory system as well as tumours.

The cult of the slim figure as an image insistently promoted as part of modern culture, is becoming on one hand a source of negative stereotypes and prejudice against those overweight, while on the other hand forces youth towards pro-health behaviours (physical activity, a healthy diet). It happens (more frequently in Poland) that it presses in the direction of risky behaviours, leading to dangerous diseases destructive for the body and psyche (anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa). In 1988 only three out of 100 girls arriving at a psychiatric clinic were being diagnosed with eating disorders while in 2002 the same diagnosis was made for every fourth. While persons with these types of disorders constituted a small percentage of all patients in clinics (16%), it currently stands at 45%²³. Aside from the cultural factors, indicated is also the significance of family factors (over-protectiveness impeding reaching autonomy during the period of growing up, overestimating social expectations, affective illnesses) and individual (disturbed image of self, strong need of achievement, difficulties in autonomic function, obesity and other physical illnesses). These types of extreme cases, however statistically marginal, bear a negative toll on the image of the status of Polish youth, similar to other statistics. According to the latest data of Central Statistical Office, malignant tumours are responsible for nearly 13% of deaths for youth aged 1-19. Another reason is in-born growth defects and ever more often, illnesses of the nervous system (approximately 7%)²⁴. On the rise are also undiagnosed cases, which may indicate new or previously undetermined illnesses or a poorly operating healthcare system. The later hypothesis is supported by the higher indexes of such incidents in voivodeships with weaker medical infrastructure (Lublin, Świętokrzyskie, West Pomeranian, Subcarpathian)²⁵.

Fig. 9.12. Causes of deaths for young people aged 15-24



Source: Own analysis on the basis of: B. Wojtyniak, P. Goryński (ed.), *Sytuacja zdrowotna ludności Polski* (Health status of the Polish population), Warsaw 2008, p. 45.

21 B. Woynarowska, *Problemy zdrowotne...* (Health problems...), op. cit. p. 165.

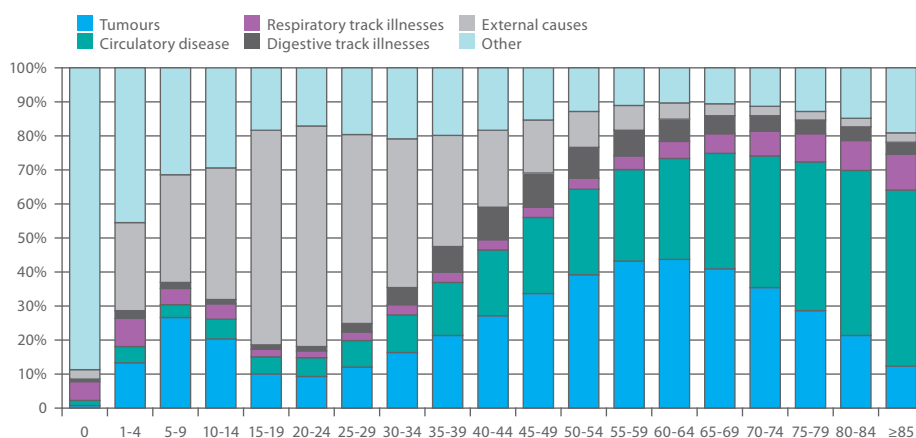
22 EU Youth. A statistical Portrait, op. cit. 53.

23 B. Józefik, *Anoreksja i bulimia psychiczna. Rozumienie i leczenie zaburzeń odżywiania się* (Understanding and treatment of nutritional disorders), Jagiellonian University, Cracow, 1999, p. 14-16.

24 *Children in Poland in 2008. Charakterystyka demograficzna* (Demographic characteristics), Central Statistical Office of Poland, Warsaw, 2010.

25 B. Wojtyniak, P. Goryński (ed.), *Sytuacja zdrowotna ludności Polski*, (Polish population health status) NIZP – PZH, Warszawa, 2008, p. 45 and others.

Fig. 9.13. Causes of deaths in the 27 European Union states (2006)



Source: Youth in Europe. A statistical Portrait, op. cit. p. 56.

The most frequent causes of deaths among children and youth (aged 1-19), constituting over half of deaths, are injuries and poisonings which most often happen to boys (in the group above 14 years of age, constitute over 60% of all deaths). These are primarily injuries caused in transportation (almost 50% of deaths as a result of injuries) as well as suicides – 23% (26% of which being boys and approximately 16% for girls)²⁶. These proportions are also maintained in reference to older youth making us similar in this aspect to the trends noted in all of the EU (Fig. 9.13).

Disturbing in this context is the increase in the number of suicides among youth. In EU states, suicides are first among the outside causes of deaths, listed before traffic accidents, poisonings, HIV infections, murders and narcotics (Table 9.4).

Table 9.4. Specific causes of death among young people in the EU-27 (including gender and age)

	In total			Women			Men			
	EU-27	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29
Suicide and intended aggression	58527	1478	2731	3132	326	433	544	1152	2298	2588
Traffic accidents	49688	4285	5821	4654	1003	1016	730	3282	4805	3924
Incidental poisoning	11010	188	621	816	71	112	113	117	509	703
AIDS	5833	122	74	222	49	31	81	73	43	141
Murders, acts of violence	5402	184	378	462	53	87	116	131	291	346
Drug addiction, substance dependence	2878	105	318	443	26	56	57	79	262	386

Source: EU Youth, op. cit. p. 69.

26 Children in Poland in 2008. Charakterystyka demograficzna (Demographic characteristics), Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw, 2010, p. 7.

Table 9.5. Number of suicide attempts by young people, Poland 2002-2009

	In total			Women			Men		
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29
2002	55	508	460	18	71	53	37	437	407
2003	349	470	437	86	55	69	263	415	368
2004	372	546	492	97	67	77	275	479	415
2005	349	501	496	98	54	71	251	447	425
2006	345	489	428	110	72	58	235	417	370
2007	344	456	414	87	65	110	257	391	345
2008	362	476	495	118	79	68	244	397	427
2009	356	538	493	107	74	73	249	464	420

Source: Own analysis on the basis of data of the National Police Headquarters (KGP).

During the 1990's in Poland, suicides constituted approximately 10% of deaths being the result of injuries and have by the turn of the century increased to over 20%²⁷. Since 1991, the number of suicide attempts among young people (aged 15-29) had doubled. They constituted on average 25% of the noted suicide attempts, with those ending in death numbering less than 20%. After a short period of a decrease in number of suicides (2006-2007) their numbers rose once again. Suicide attempts are noted usually after the age of 14, however they do happen among children which indicate exceptional cases of lack of willingness to live. The registration of suicides had begun in Poland from 2002. Suicide attempts – clearly as a phenomenon among teenagers, it is gaining in strength in ever older age groups with the critical point of the 25+ age group and men being the ones under greatest risk. They are the perpetrators of nearly 4/5 of all suicide attempts, both in Poland as well as in EU states. Reason for the determined majority of suicide attempts is depression – a state which characterises the individual feeling of helplessness, guilt, sadness and passiveness.

As the statistics indicate, no other mental illness ends in as frequent deaths as depression. In the public opinion exists the conviction that depression is conditioned by unsuccessful and sad events in a persons' life. Studies do however explain it in terms of other factors. Persons most endangered by depression are on one hand those having a successful life and on the other those who feel moral and social loneliness. The probability of such feelings grows in the conditions of social anomie when the activity of an individual begins to lack control potentially caused by suffering. Such situations are experienced in conditions of accelerated economic changes which the restructuring of the social organization and moral awareness does not keep up with²⁸. Analysis of the suicide statistics in Poland after 1989 permits the con-

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ E. Durkheim, *Samobójstwo (Suicide)*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warsaw, 2011; [see also:] K. Szafranec, *Anomia – przesilenie tożsamości. Jednostka i społeczeństwo wobec zmiany (Anomia – crisis of identity. A person and society in context of change.)*, Scientific Publisher UMK, Toruń, 1986.

clusion that such types of suicides also dominated in the scope of youth²⁹. Young people left on their own cease to see difference between the right and wrong, what is just and what they should not agree to. They know no boundaries before which they should keep because they have ceased to be clear. It is in such circumstances that young people lack the strength in order to endure even the slightest failure.

The suicide attempts of children and youth are not undertaken with the determination or premeditation but rather as a result of actions being spontaneous and impulsive in nature. Nearly everyone goes through a youthful depression between the ages of 13 and 16, however its intensification depends on such factors as a disorganized family or deeper problems of the emotional nature. Depression occurring in children and youth has different axis symptoms than depression in adults and is difficult to diagnose. A young person often suffers in solitude. Very characteristic is the paralysis of the will, incapability of doing anything. Adults tend to perceive this as a whim or laziness. Frequent are in such case family disputes with a depression growing in the background³⁰.

The factor depriving of the willingness to live for young people is a series of failures which they meet on the path towards independence. Lack of work, partner, a flat or lack of any success, psychical resistance which has been exhausted in overcoming of all possible obstacles combined with the sense of lacking perspective and questioning the sense of it, becomes too difficult to bear for a generation which has been raised in the belief that life should be easy and success is within hand's reach. Instead of this, young people have received gifts of questionable quality, an unfriendly job market, an unpredictable future and dog-eat-dog social relations. A situation of this type is for many of them not bearable. Suicide attempts – usually having their source in depression, are most often people who are disillusioned, helpless, incapable of finding themselves in a reality which is proving unfriendly towards them. The countries most spectacularly burdened by suicides are those which are undergoing social and cultural changes, effectively causing a break down in the current social order while the pressure of issues and tensions results in many needs going appropriately unfulfilled (Fig. 9.14). People feel abandoned, helpless and the will to live begins to weaken.

Much to the likeness of Central and Eastern Europe, Poland belongs to the group of states with high if not the highest rates of suicide. A disproportionally large share among them are suicides committed by young people. Knowledge of etiology of the phenomenon as well as known and well recognized predictors of suicide attempts should become the basis of preventive programs, the goal of which would include both the psychological as well as community and social support.

A very serious threat to life is the infection by AIDS being a global epidemic equally shocking for the young and the older generation. Poland has for many years now no longer been a "green island" in this sense. Despite the education and the information campaigns, Europe still notes significant numbers of new HIV cases. From the cases of diagnosed HIV in 2006, 28% concerned young people aged 15-29 years old (Fig. 9.15)³¹. The persons aged 25-29 among them constituted a majority (60%). The greatest percentages of youth (15-29 years old) among the newly diagnosed cases of

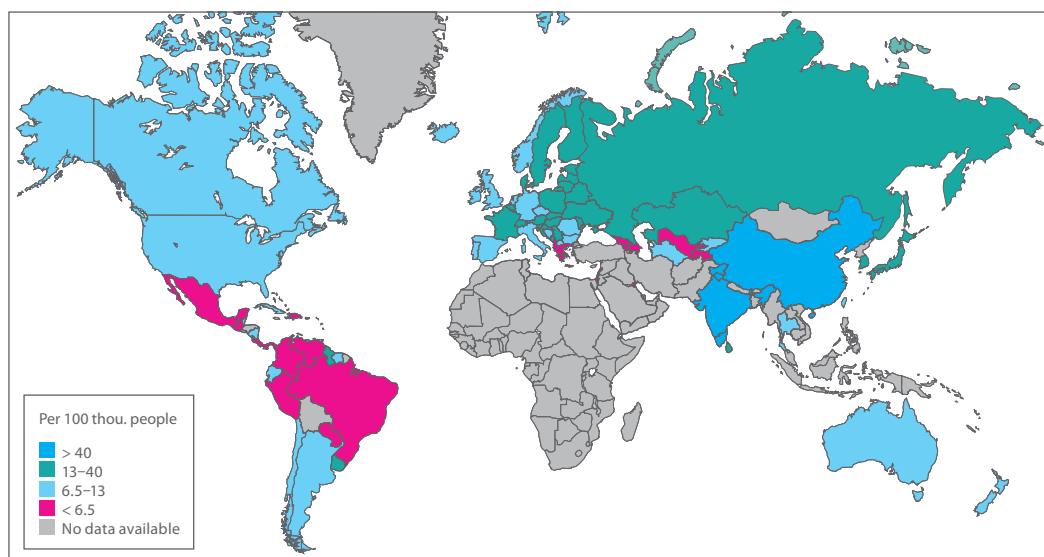
29 M. Jarosz, *Samobójstwa: ucieczka przegranych* (Suicides: escape of losers), PWN, Warsaw, 2004.

30 *Depresja młodzieńcza* (Youthful depression), Portal Psychologiczny (Psychology website).

31 Data concerns 27 EU states – *Youth in Europe...*, op. cit., p. 60.

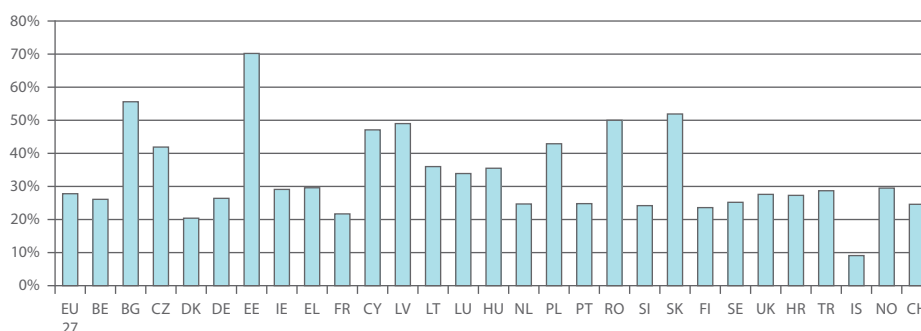
HIV have been noted in Estonia (more than 70%) and approximately 50% in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Rumania and Slovakia, with the lowest values of 9% being recorded in Iceland. The most numerous share in Bulgaria and Estonia includes very young people (aged 20-24).

Fig. 9.14. Geography of suicides – 2009



Source: WHO.

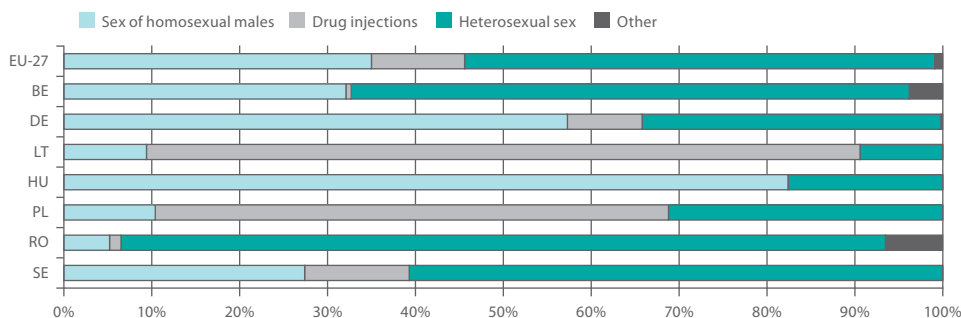
Fig. 9.15. Share of persons aged 15-29 among newly diagnosed cases of HIV – 2006



Source: Own analysis on the basis of: Youth in Europe, op. cit. p. 60.

Poland belongs to the group of states in which young people constitute a rather large percentage of newly diagnosed HIV cases (42.9%). The most numerous group (60.9%) from among them are those aged 25-29. With twenty to twenty-four-year-olds being nearly half as numerous (34.8%). Luckily, this illness concerns teenagers very seldom (4.3% among newly diagnosed HIV cases). The significantly worse situation has place in Romania (where 33.3% of newly diagnosed HIV cases are teenagers) with Estonia rate standing at 15% and Bulgaria at 14%.

Fig. 9.16. Newly diagnosed HIV cases by way of disease transmission – selected EU states, 2006



Source: Own analysis on the basis of: Youth in Europe, op. cit. p. 61.

The most common method of transmitting the disease (Fig. 9.16) is sex practiced by heterosexual persons (53.5% for 27 EU states), sex practiced by homosexual males (53.5%) and use of syringes by drug addicts. The group with greatest risk in Poland are drug addicts constituting 58.4% of newly diagnosed HIV cases among young people. Second in sequence is the sex practiced by heterosexual persons (31.2%). Only every tenth person infected with HIV is a male of homosexual orientation. The social hysteria around AIDS, an illness associated primarily with the homosexual community, fails to find justification in Poland. Homosexuals have the smallest share in spreading of the disease. In reality, its potential carriers are all people undertaking casual sex without protection. Organizations promoting the effective prevention had over many years a great adversary in the institution of the Catholic Church which did not approve the use of condoms. The change of position in this manner – perhaps not having too great of a practical consequence, has however a symbolic meaning, introduces into the people’s awareness the issue of risk and threats from sexually transmitted diseases.

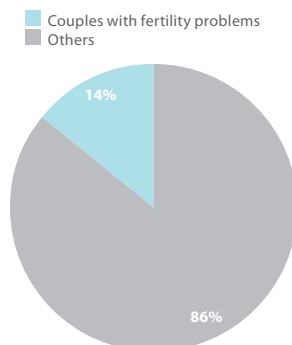
An ever greater problem concerning young people is infertility which aside from its most basic and most dramatic, individual scope, also bears a social aspect. It is estimated that infertility pertains to 10-15% of couples in the reproductive age. The estimates in Europe indicate a value of 14%. If assumed that the situation in Poland is similar, than infertility may affect 1.26 million couples from among the 9 million living in our country (Fig. 9.17)³².

Men are responsible for 50% of cases of infertility while women 35%. In remaining cases, the issue concerns both partners³³. Reasons for infertility are complex, organic and civilizational (environmental) with the individual living style also playing a significant role. The large presence of chemical substances used in production of plastics, pesticides used in agriculture, radiation, systemic diseases experienced and cancers being important factors which, in contrast to the style of living, are not subject to individual control. Analysis of cases of infertility indicates a clear dependency on diet and obesity, everyday smoking, drinking of alcohol, excessive use of medications, stress, etc.

32 [For:] Rafał Kurzawa, chairman of Section of Fertility and Infertility of the Polish Society of Gynaecology.

33 [For:] Sławomir Wołczyński, president of the Polish Society of Reproductive Medicine.

Fig. 9.17. The percentage of couples facing the infertility problem in Poland – estimates on basis of EU data



Source: Data of the Section of Fertility and Infertility of the Polish Society of Gynaecology (PTG).

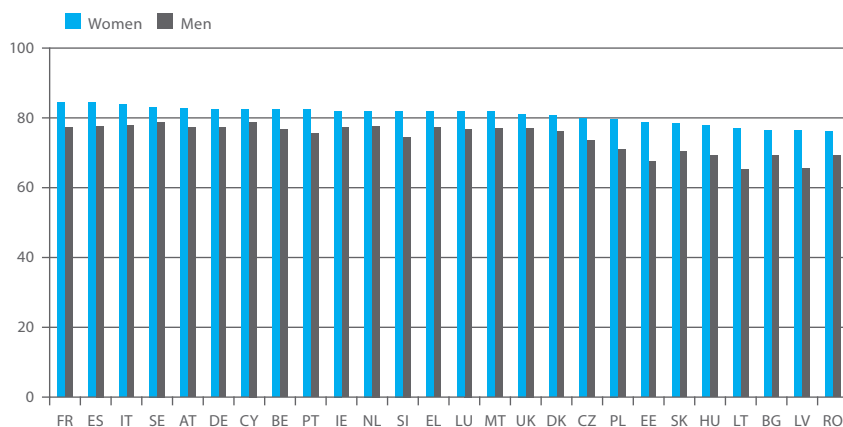
The civilizational progress as well as poor habits resulting in infertility are factors which prove difficult to manage. All of this results in the World Health Organization regularly decreasing the norms of the quality of semen. It had initially in 1987 and next in 2010 lowered the required number of sperm to 20 million/ml and further to 15 million/ml. At the same time, governments of many European states designate large financial resources to treatment of infertility. A European program of monitoring the results of In Vitro Fertilization (European IVF Monitoring) has been under way since 1999, the goal of which is the collection and publication of data concerning results and side-effects of infertility treatments. For the past few years the program is participated in by 25 clinics in Poland.

While the discussions surrounding the treatment of infertility raise strong ideological controversies and are dominated by the political factor, medical achievements in this scope are receiving highest praise. The British national Robert Edwards, has in 2010 received the Noble Prize for his pioneering contribution in research on treatment of infertility using the in vitro method. It is in this context that the Polish act concerning the obligations of the state in treatment of infertility passed in October 2010 should undoubtedly be treated as a success. It provides not so much hope for the improvement of Poland's demographic balance (medically supported reproductiveness is successful in approximately 10% of cases), as much as giving a chance at happiness to over one million young people for whom the lack of an own child is a personal drama taking away the sense of a successful life.

9.4. Long life expectancy as a health indicator

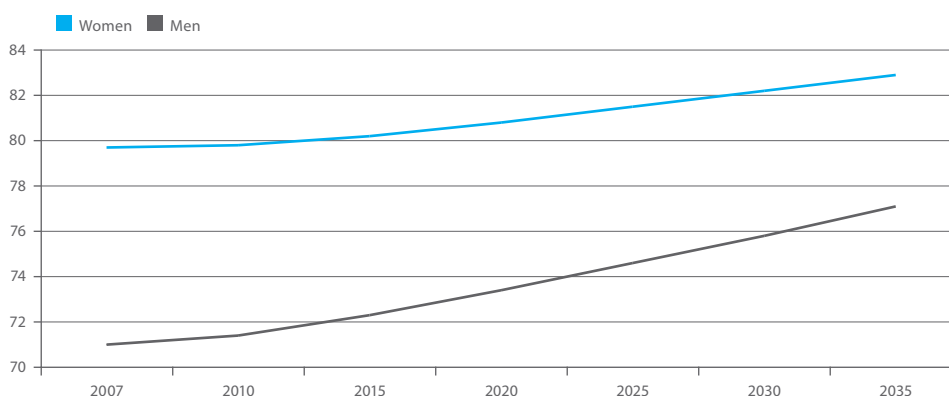
A synthetic index of health and quality of life is the average life expectancy. An increase in the wealth of the society and a greater, despite the social and regional differences, availability of healthcare cause the life expectancy to grow systematically not only in the developed EU states (Fig. 9.18) but in Poland as well (Fig. 9.19).

Fig. 9.18. Average life expectancy in EU states (2006)



Source: Own analysis on the basis of data in: Youth in Europe, op. cit. p. 54.

Fig. 9.19. Average life expectancy in Poland in years 2007-2035



Source: Poland population forecast..., Central Statistical Office (GUS), op. cit. p. 9.

The decade of the 90's had initiated an uninterrupted increase in the average not only with regard to women but also men who generally tend to live shorter lives. This means that the currently developing age groups will reach old age which had never before taken place on such a large scale. Despite the unfavourable health habits (smoking of cigarettes, alcohol consumption, poor nutritional habits, inactivity during free time), the average duration of men's life will increase from 71 years (in 2007) to 77.1 in 2035 while rising for women from 79.7 (in 2007) up to 82.9 in 2035. The difference thereby between the average future duration of women's and men's lives will decrease from the current 8.7 years down to 5.8³⁴. This will still maintain our distance to many EU states, the overcoming of which Poland will require many years³⁵ (in Spain, France

34 Prognoza ludności Polski... (Polish population forecast), op. cit. p. 9.

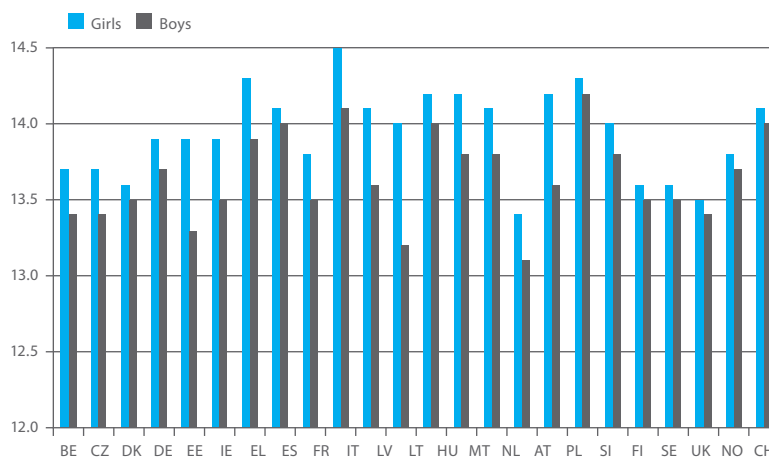
35 B. Wojtyniak, P. Goryński [ed.], Sytuacja zdrowotna ludności Polski (Health status of Polish population) NIZP – PZH, Warsaw, 2008, p. 38-40.

or Switzerland the mean life expectancy in 2006 exceeded 84 years for women and nearly 78 years for men³⁶), which will do little to lessen the effect of the generation gap and lower the overall demographic burden index.

9.5. Alcohol consumption and smoking of cigarettes

The young age is a period of trials and experiments with social roles, with one's own image and many different risky behaviours. Young people wish to, not only find themselves amidst different possibilities of being "someone" and existence in the world. They want to represent something among their peers and wish to emphasize their independence from adults. Reaching for cigarettes and alcohol are to be the first such visible signs, allowing to impress peers, improve own position within the group, gain friends, experience exciting moments resultant even from the fact of committing a reprehensible act. The habits acquired at that time very often remain, becoming the cause for many dangerous illnesses or addictions. Data of the World Health Organization indicates that the first instance of intoxication with alcohol in all European states, takes place between the ages of 13 and 14 with the interesting fact that the initiation into alcohol for girls takes place only a little later than for boys (Fig. 9.20).

Fig. 9.20. First episode of alcoholic intoxication – WHO data for EU states



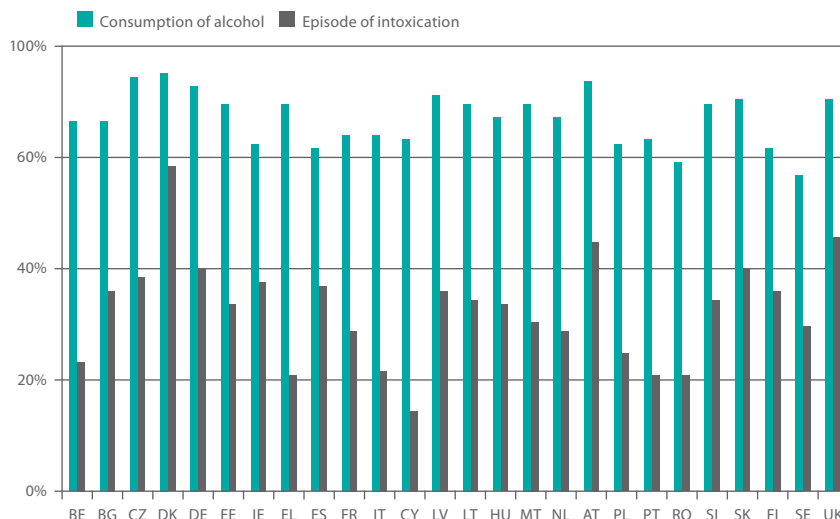
Source: EU Youth, op. cit. p. 73.

According to the European School Survey on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) report from 2007, in the 12 months preceding the survey, alcohol was consumed by an average of 70% of the European youth aged 15-16 (with certain countries having percentages exceeding 80 or 90%). The heaviest consumption of alcohol by young

36 Youth in Europe..., op. cit., p. 54.

people takes place in Denmark, Austria and Great Britain where the majority of instances of alcohol consumption ends with intoxication (Fig. 9.21).

Fig. 9.21. Incidents of alcohol consumption and intoxication within last 12 months



Source: Youth in Europe. Eurostat report, p. 65.

Polish youth does not stand out in light of this data, with alcohol being consumed by 78% of teenagers with every third admitting getting drunk. This is significantly less than in many European states but not at all little when considering their young age. Both the ESPAD as well as the HBSC indicate that our youth reaches for alcohol less frequently each week (Fig. 9.22) than their peers in other countries and, more importantly, is drinking less than in previous years.

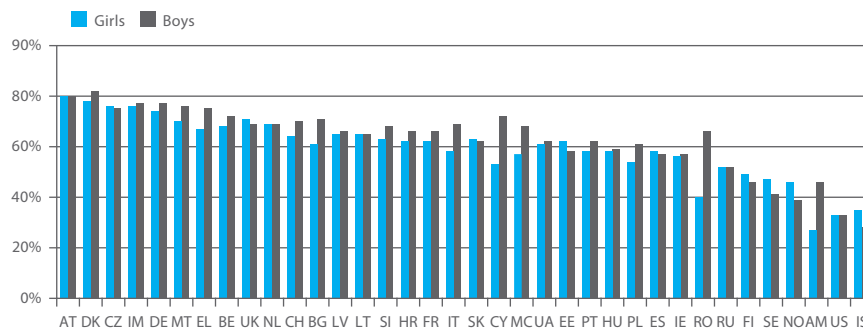
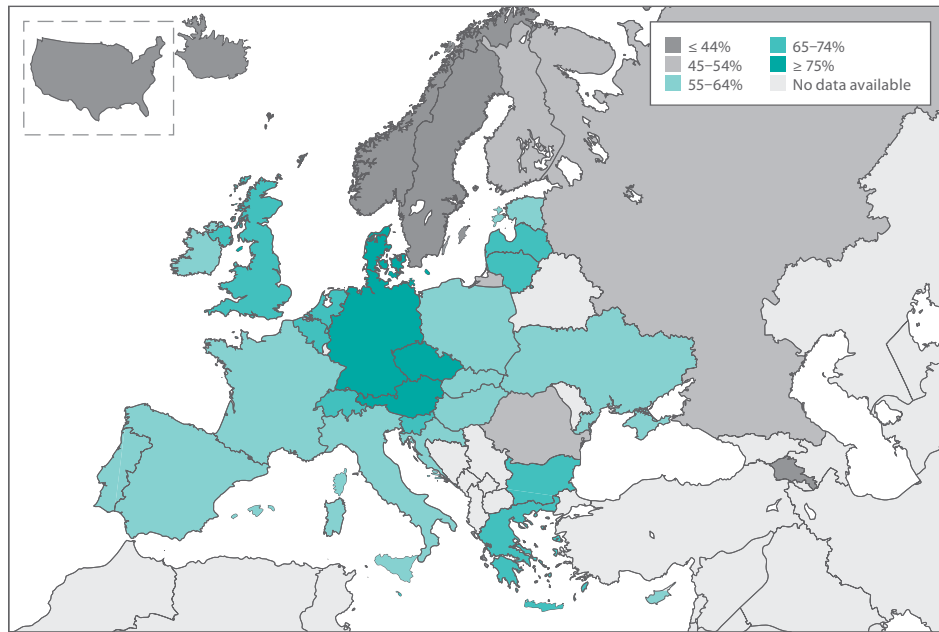
Alcohol is the cause of many illnesses and life tragedies, however the group of the most risky (and socially ignored) behaviours includes persons smoking of cigarettes. According to opinion of the WHO, it is responsible for over 14% of all deaths which occurred in 2005 in Europe. Smoking is the main risk factor in diagnosis of lung cancer, cardiac disease and many others, as well as being hazardous to pregnant women and their unborn children. The habit of smoking reinforced during youth easily transforms into an addiction. According to opinions of experts, quitting the habit requires an average of 16 years for a male and 20 years for a female smoker³⁷. The harmfulness of so-called passive smoking has become the basis for introducing bans on smoking in public places in most EU states.

The cigarette smoking indicators grow with age, although there are states, including Hungary and Ireland (Fig. 9.23), where a reverse tendency is being noted. Poland is a state with one of the lowest smoker indexes among youth (16.8% within the 15-24 age category). This favourable situation does disappear in context of older age groups (habit of everyday smoking concerning 40% of adults aged 25-34). Girls smoke almost half as often as boys (10.2% in comparison with 23.4% in the age group

37 WHO – Europe Health report – 2005.

of 15-24). The differences among the older groups (aged 25-34) are still more vivid (29.1% in comparison with 50.9%).

Fig. 9.22. Alcohol consumption within last 30 days prior to the survey – Polish youth in comparison with European youth

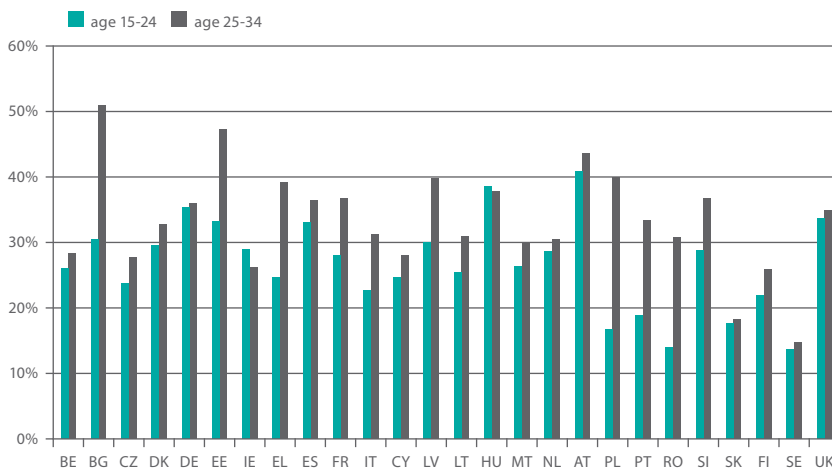


Source: The 2007 ESPAD report, Substance Use among Students in 35 European Countries, p. 67.

Researchers in Poland have in year 2000 noted a clear decrease in the percentage of youth smoking cigarettes daily, both among the younger as well as older age categories. This could be construed as positive news, similarly as in the case of alcohol, if not for the fact that the averages conceal the social differentiation associated with different environmental and cultural models of health behaviours and diverse living styles. The daily smoking of cigarettes and reaching for inexpensive liquors, aside from their attractiveness for different youth groups, students including, is in the major scope an attribute of youth originating from poorer communities. These differences

do not yet have a drastic effect in the Polish reality, however the culture of smoking and drinking including such elements as what is being smoked and drunk, where and how, is subject to clear social differentiation. The poorer youth drinks on a daily basis inexpensive beer manufactured in Poland while beer and vodka in more specific circumstances, while in exceptional cases using a mixture of the two along with “designer drugs”. Youth capable of affording brand name beer (Carlsberg, Heineken) drinks more of such beer in special situations while in exceptional cases, supplements their needs with stronger, more refined drinks and sometimes with alco-pops (“ready to drink” type beverages) or marijuana.

Fig. 9.23. Everyday smokers – EU states



Source: Eurostat, Health Interview Surveys, data from period of 1996-2003; on basis of: Youth in Europe, p. 63.

All of them have their own “hang out spots”, go out to clubs or attend “house parties”. Alcohol and parties become not only a method for relieving the stress of everyday life and a pretext for meeting but become a hub around which different population styles are being constructed. While some only count on a fast and strong effect (drinking cheap alcohols purchased in retails stores or illegally, prior to entering the locale) others pay attention to the type of alcohol and the place in which it is consumed)³⁸. These differences have not only a cultural sense. They also carry health consequences translating into different levels of addiction. The introduction of rigid environmental partitioning is very conventional. The parents’ level of education is not a highly differentiating factor, especially due to the standardization of the modern pop culture which emphasizes the need for a colourful, pleasant life and encourages behaviours raising the level of sensations experienced. The drinking culture does however reveal two worlds, a better educated youth (high school, university) which usually tends to have more money and other social habits (greater emphasis is on the form of

38 http://www.logo24.pl/Logo24/1,86375,8392605,Lekko_na_gazie.html; <http://www.browar.biz/forum/archive/index.php/t-1027.html>.

"fun", craziness, imagination, feeling a part of the group) and the "uneducated" youth (which likes to get drunk and in a serious manner declare their usually negative attitude towards the world)³⁹.

9.6. Psychoactive substances

Many analyses concerning psychoactive substances assumes that alcohol and cigarettes "open doors" and "pave the way" for attempting marijuana and other narcotics later on⁴⁰. The attempts of dividing so-called "soft" (such as marijuana) and "hard" drugs (such as cocaine, heroin or amphetamine)⁴¹ and evaluating the level of their threat depending on their assignment to one of these groups have as many advocates as they have opponents. The first claim that marijuana is no more harmful than cigarettes and alcohol and that a restrictive narcotics policy of the state brings more damages than the use of the narcotic itself⁴². Opponents on the other hand, not without reason, present arguments indicating that the social consequences abandoning of the present restrictions would form a new (more dangerous than ever before) scale of the phenomenon or indicate the doubtful methodological basis for such recommendations. The problem is meanwhile not trifling and quite delicate in nature. The main users of psychoactive substances, especially narcotics, are young people in the developmental stage of life who are, on one hand controlled by their impulses, fashion, being immature, while on the other, remaining under pressure of two great influences. These include the developmental principles (which force them in this stage of life to search and experiment) and culture (which in the name of entirely different goals – inclines to do the same) with the youth being on one hand susceptible to persuasion and on the other easily causing a "boomerang effect".

According to the data of EMCDDA⁴³ approximately 23 million (7%) of adult Europeans had used Cannabis in 2008. Such behaviours are more frequent among young people (aged 15-34) and concern 13% of the group with differences between states ranging from 2 to 20%. More than 1% of adults (approximately 4 million) uses the cannabis indica on a daily basis or nearly every day. Majority of them (approximately 3 million) are young people (aged 15-34) which constitute 2 to 2.5% of this age category. The leading countries in this area include: Czech Republic, Spain, France, Italy and Great Britain. Poland did in 2002 still belong to the group of countries below the average (8th place from the bottom with a level

39 CBOS, Młodość 2010, Raport z badań (Youth 2010, Report from studies), p. 145.

40 J.C. Merrill, H.D. Kleber, M. Schwartz, Cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, other risky behaviours, and American youth, "Drug and Alcohol Dependence", Vol. 56 (3), 1999, p. 56, 205-212.

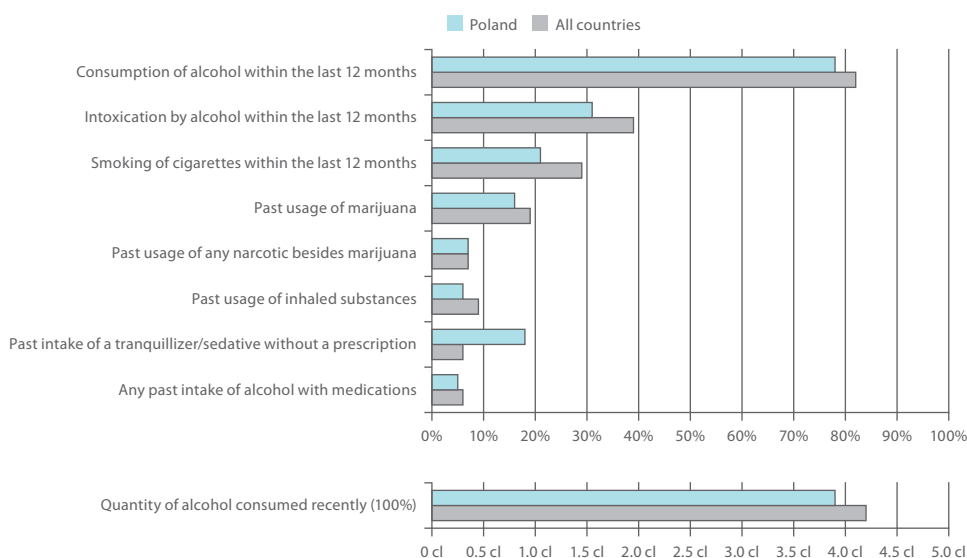
41 In the opinions of youth "soft drugs" do not cause addictions while the "hard" ones do – [see] B. Fatyga and others., Warsaw study of the youth's life styles "Narcotics among urban youth". Concept and research results, Youth Research Centre of the University of Warsaw, Warsaw, 2008, p. 57.

42 As claimed by, among others, the authors of The Global Cannabis Commission Report, commissioned by the WHO in 1995.

43 The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction – formulated in 1993, located in Lisbon, it collects data concerning narcotics in Europe while at the same time performing own research studies.

of 7%)⁴⁴. The latest research does however indicate much higher indexes at the level of 16%. They have for last few years indicated a stabilizing tendency but still maintain Poland's position below the European norm.

Fig. 9.24. The use of psychoactive substances among Polish youth, 2007 (%)



Source: The ESPAD Report 2009, p. 113.

The narcotics market is growing constantly. Mephedron has since 2008 been at the top of the psychoactive substance listings. Effects of its intake resemble the effect of amphetamine or ecstasy but also cocaine. It is a substance being relatively new and the effects of its use are not entirely known. What is known is that it is highly addictive. The noted cases of deaths resultant from its use have caused mephedron to be made illegal in many European states.⁴⁵

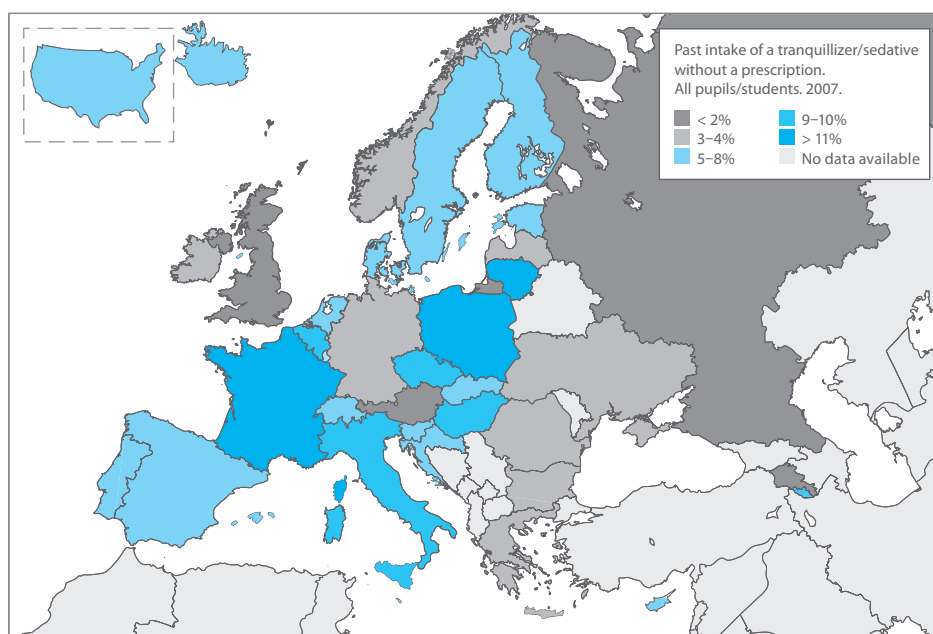
The second most popular drug in Europe after the cannabis indica is cocaine. It is estimated that 7.5 million young adults had used it at least once in their life including 4 million within the last year. Differences between countries are in this aspect significant. The greatest use has been noted in Spain and Great Britain (approximately 5%) with 1.3% in Poland and 0.7% in Belgium. The third drug in order of popularity is ecstasy. It is estimated that 7.5 million young Europeans (5.6%) has tried ecstasy, with 2.5 million (1.8%) having used it within the last year (with greatest consumption noted in the Czech Republic and Great Britain). The use of amphetamine is admitted by 0.2% to 16.5% of young people aged 15-34 (European average being approximately 5%). In terms of using all such substances, Poland is found within the group of states below the average (10th place from the bottom).

44 EU Youth Report, op. cit. p. 73-74.

45 Z. Fijatek, National Medicines Institute: Designer drugs – collecting items or a new generation of synthetic drugs, presentation at the meeting of the Sub-team for Youth Issues at the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers, 22.10.2010.

Certain medications are being treated as psychoactive agents. High interest is noted in the scope of nootropic medications, aiding in the cognitive processes (cough syrup, asthma and ADHD treatment medications) and ones containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine (appetite reducing, increasing concentration). Their intake in high doses is damaging to health and may even result in death⁴⁶, while being in one or another form available in pharmacies without a prescription. Their popularity among Polish youth assures us an inglorious first position in their use in Europe (Fig. 9.25).

Fig. 9.25. Use of over-the-counter psychoactive medications – Polish youth compared with other European states



Source: The 2007 ESPAD report, Substance Use among Students in 35 European Countries, p. 91.

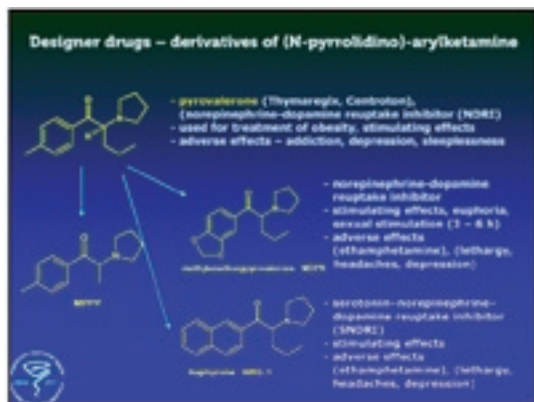
For the past few years, the market has been expansively being dominated by a new generation of psychoactive substances commonly referred to as “designer drugs”. One of their definitions states that a “designer drug” is a commercial product of different compositions, containing as part of its make-up substances declared (usually on the basis of psychoactive effects) and substances undeclared as such (suspected of psychoactive effects or having psychoactive effects)⁴⁷. They stimulate the body as foreign substances, becoming a factor increasing in a non-physiological way

46 Ephedrine, which stimulates the sympathetic nervous system and releases noradrenaline, increasing simultaneously the blood pressure and heart rate. Its single-use permissible dose is 75 mg while it is being used in doses ranging between 150-300 mg – [see] Z. Fijałek, National Medicines Institute, Designer drugs – collecting items or a new generation of synthetic drugs, presentation at the meeting of the Sub-team for Youth Issues at the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers, 22.10.2010.

47 P. Burda, National Clinical Toxicology Consultant, Designer Drugs, presentation at the meeting of the Sub-team for Youth Issues at the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers, 22.10.2010.

its effective efficiency. Their intake is intended to cause the most realistic narcotic-like effect within the body similar to those substances which have been definitely delegalized⁴⁸. The name "designer drugs" refers to the specific nature of the narcotics being modified and formed on the basis of amphetamine, ecstasy, hallucinogenic and other substances (Fig. 9.26).

Fig. 9.26. Sample structural modification of one of the components of a designer drug



Source: Z. Fijałek, Designer drugs – collector's items or a new generation of synthetic drugs?

Substances being a part of the designer drugs' composition are in majority poorly analysed in terms of their pharmacological aspects while their content as part of the products offered may differ significantly. This results in the effect of their action becoming difficult to predict. It is also popular to combine designer drugs with one another and other psychoactive substances, i.e. alcohol or marijuana. The mechanism of their functioning is simple. When a given person improves his or her mood with their help, it is highly probable that he/she will attempt to repeat the experience. This presents an easy path to addiction, especially since the abandoning of the drug will result in a drop in the positive mood and sometimes even end in depression. Much similar to the use of narcotics, after the use of designer drugs, comes a mental low, a state of anxiety may appear and even narcotic hunger, capable of ending in attempts of suicide⁴⁹.

The age of designer drug users is falling continuously, with the threat of their popularity rising unsafely among the youth, among others due to their availability, legality and entirely new methods of their introduction onto the market (Fig. 9.27). This issue is one of worldwide scope. The United States, Canada, Australia and most EU states have been struggling with it for many years. The problem had accelerated in Poland after the identification by hospitals of a wave of deaths and poisonings with severe complications. Toxicology centres had in 2008 and 2009 noted less than ten cases of poisoning similar to amphetamine. After the first half of 2010, such reports amounted to nearly 200. The record fell in September and at end of August, with

48 Z. Fijałek, National Medicines Institute, presentation at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 22.10.2010.

49 Z. Fijałek, Ibid.

a further 200 persons being hospitalized in that period alone and in October resulting in further 200 cases with an unambiguous identification of substances found in designer drugs. The greatest number of cases (89%) concerned young people up to 35 years of age, including over half being pupils from the Masovian, Łódź, Greater Poland and Lower Silesian voivodeships⁵⁰. As a result of these events, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland had passed an act thanks to which the manufacture and sale of designer drugs is subject to a penalty of one million złoty. Whether something is a designer drug is not to be decided by its chemical composition but the effects of its use (symptoms which it triggers upon intake).

Fig. 9.27. Example of "designer drugs" sold as collector's items.



Source: Z. Fijatek, Designer drugs – collector's items or a new generation of synthetic drugs?

In the opinions of doctors and therapists, the prior availability of designer drugs had caused a significant drop of youth's interest with so-called hard drugs⁵¹. These observations seem to confirm results of surveys conducted among the youth. Systematically repeated surveys of the Warsaw youth⁵² have noted a drop in indexes of a few risk behaviours although this victory is a pyrrhic one. Increasing trend in narcotics use by youth during the period between 1988-2000 slowed and a stabilization of the indexes had taken place at the levels of 16-17%. The percentages of youth participating in parties "with drugs" (which have definitely most often included marijuana and hashish) have decreased. The drugs are reached for more often for by boys with the percentage of girls from affluent families smoking tobacco and marijuana having increased in the recent years (despite the general lack of a growing tendency). The highest indexes of turning to drugs concern youth during the secondary school. The indexes among lower secondary schools and young adults (including students) are clearly lower which means that the group of high risk includes only a portion of youth with majority only experimenting (keeping

50 [see:] P. Burda, Designer drugs..., op.cit.

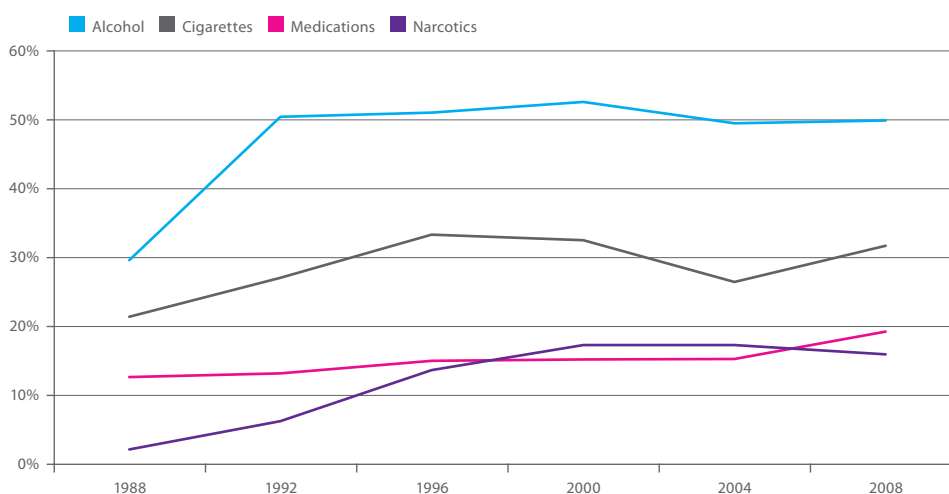
51 Ibid.

52 Including the youth from secondary schools in three Warsaw districts: Mokotów, Ursynów and Wilanów. They have for many years now been realized by the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology.

however to equally risky practices of alcohol consumption) although the future implication of such experiments may appear different. These phenomena differ both in social and regional aspects with the greatest risk of undertaking experiments with narcotics taking place in large urban centres (Fig. 9.28). However, also here, similarly as across the state, an initial downward trend and subsequently one of stabilization had been noted.

This has been confirmed by the latest studies of the National Bureau for Drug Prevention⁵³. Their results reveal a lower activity of the drug dealer community among youth, including also in schools and stabilization in the use of narcotics at the level of 16%. An exception is posed by designer drugs being highly available as stated by 36% of 19-year-olds (formerly 16% in 2008) and with 13% admitting their use (4% in 2008). An increase was also identified in use of marijuana products (from 31% in 2008 up to 36% in 2010). Disturbing signals have also appeared indicating that after the period of decrease in the consumption of alcoholic beverages, an increase may once again occur⁵⁴.

Fig. 9.28. Trend in use of psychoactive substances among Warsaw youth



Source: Analysis on the basis of the Mokotów surveys, "Pro-M" Workshop, Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology (IPiN).

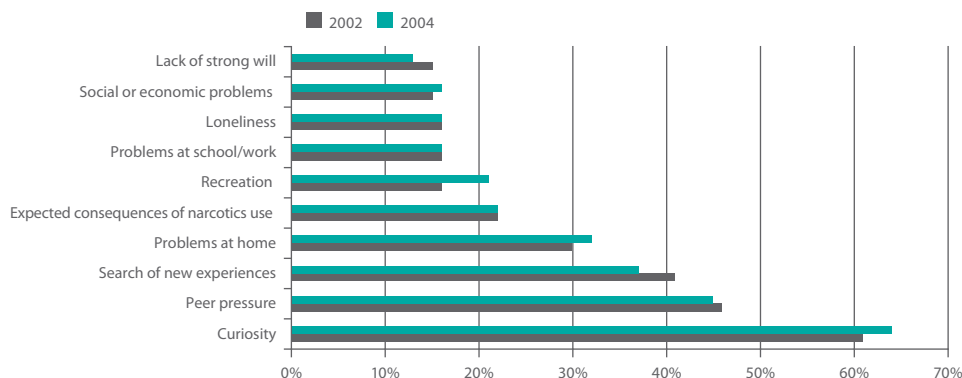
9.7. Reasons for hazardous behaviours of youth

Why do young people reach for narcotics? They declared various reasons. The most often among them (and ever more often) indicated is curiosity and pleasant experiences, peer pressure, seeking intense experiences, with problems in the home, school or loneliness or broader social and economic problems being quoted less often (Fig. 9.29).

53 Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Młodzież 2010 (Youth 2010)*, Warsaw, 2011.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Fig. 9.29. Reasons, for which young persons aged 15-24 try narcotics



Source: Youth in Europe, op. cit. p. 68.

The researchers are discovering additional causes. They underline that the increase in risk behaviours is supported by the low status of the local environment and deprivation of the needs of the local community⁵⁵. Of very high significance is the availability of narcotics. In the opinion of youth (Eurobarometer 2004 surveys), their purchase is possible everywhere where young people go out at night: at parties (79% confirmations), in pubs and clubs (76%), near the home (63%) and even near school (57%). This is also confirmed by research conducted in Poland⁵⁶.

The use of psychoactive substances is correlated with status factors, inequality in education and social position as well as in material status of families, with however not simple, especially linear dependencies existing in this scope. Narcotics use is intensified by poverty, however, an equally determinant factor of initiation into narcotics is the status of family's wealth. Of far greater importance is the subjective evaluation of the youth's living conditions, its sense of living in comfort or poverty instead of objectively bad or good material situation of the family⁵⁷.

Although families from rural areas are less well-off than urban ones, many negative phenomena are observed in cities. This is decided both by a greater level of family disorganization (greater number of incomplete families), as well as the poorer quality of a family relations (lack of sense of support on the part of those closest, lack of understanding of a child's problems, etc.). An equally strong predictor is the amount of time spent in the evenings outside the home with four times per week being a value which is definitely alarming⁵⁸.

55 J. Mazur [ed.], Status materialny rodziny i otoczenia a samopoczucie i styl życia 15-letniej młodzieży. (Material status of the family, environment and life-style of 15-year-old youth), Institute of Mother and Child (IMiD), Warsaw, 2007.

56 B. Fatyga, J. Sierosławski, Pupils and teacher on the life styles of youth and narcotics, Institute of Public Affairs (ISP), Warsaw, 1999, p. 89.

57 J. Mazur [ed.], op. cit.

58 J. Mazur, op. cit.; A. Oblacińska, B. Woynarowska [ed.] Zdrowie subiektywne, zadowolenie z życia i zachowania zdrowotne uczniów szkół ponadgimnazjalnych w Polsce w kontekście czynników psychospołecznych i ekonomicznych (Subjective health, satisfaction from life and health habits of post-gymnasium school pupils in Poland in the context of psychosocial and economic factors), Institute of Mother and Child (IMiD), Warsaw, 2006.

These two methods of explaining the risk behaviours of youth by the reasons provided by themselves as well as the reasons discovered by the researchers, provide two different etiologies of the phenomenon. The complex of a person's beliefs on condiments, narcotics and their use or opinions of important individuals recommending their use, do not have to be the key reasons. At the same time, researches using often correlative analysis are making an error in assigning excessive significance to the statistical dependencies. It does happen that the mentioned variables are strongly correlated with the consumption of alcohol or narcotics use, are not so much the cause as rather an effect of factors more distant, influencing the person over a longer period or indirectly. The differentiation is important in the context of preventive and therapeutic programs, which may miss the real basis for the risk behaviours of the designated group of youth⁵⁹.

The distinctness of the paths leading towards risk behaviours recalls the necessity of noticing a certain hierarchy of factors. The factors to be placed as first in order should be the distant marginal factors: civilizational and socio-cultural. They do on one hand promote specific models of values and life styles to which youth is being socialized (liberty, value of personal experiences and sensations, consumptionism) while on the other a complex and not very hospitable for the youth, social reality (fluid, anomic, unpredictable), in which not every young person can "find themselves". Second are the factors of indirect influence associated with the person's position within social structure: status, education, environment, deciding on the chances for joining the main flow of the social life or about exclusion from it. Third place is reserved for factors closer to the direct influence, associated with the quality of the family life and functioning as part of peer groups. Finally, at the end of the hierarchy are the direct factors which should include: subjective feeling of the person concerning its situation and life perspectives, individual rationalizations of life decisions, personal predispositions, etc.

There are in this scope two modes of behaviour from risk behaviour (short-term experiments and trials as well as longer practices and addiction) are possible to explain by the activity of factors from different levels of the hierarchy: psychological features of the given age and subjectively unfavourable perception of the world (in the case of the first module) as well as – additionally the acting of more distant factors (in the case of the second module). In general, the strong psychotropic substances reached for nowadays are not associated with any specific life philosophy. It would be difficult to assign today's drug using or drinking youth a label of "protestors" while drinking and "drug use" or to be considered an expression of conflict with life or "pain of existence". It is at times a form of escapism for those excluded or feeling lonely, most often the escapism of hedonists and thrill-seekers, for whom drinking and drug use becomes an element of everyday life style intended to give it a taste of uniqueness and deliver pleasant sensations. Protection from such destructive factors (behaviours) may come in the form of a strong, emotionally mature family and a social system minimizing the risk of the cultural alienation, sense of uselessness and exclusion among youth. The role of the state seems impossible to overemphasize, not only in the context of

59 J. Rogala-Obtękowska, *Przyczyny narkomanii. Wyjaśnienia teoretyczne* (Causes of drug habits. Theoretical explanations.), Institute of Applied Social Sciences (ISNS) of the University of Warsaw, Warsaw, 1999, p. 133-137.

legislative regulations but also in the propagation of different ideologies of the greater sense which becomes a source for alternative models and criterion of valuing life. This includes the entire area of educational activities by which a distance can be promoted (taking into quotation marks) the consumptive models of life, social pressure for success, while promoting values such as building relationships and aiding those in need. Without neglecting these types of activities, it is still important to not forget that the fundamental importance is not persuasion but efforts undertaken on behalf of a more dynamic and harmonious socio-economic growth of the state as the better perspectives of work and life are the best method of restoring the will to live, preventing the auto-destructive behaviours and escapism of youth.

Summary

The subsequent chapters of the report have analysed the spheres of young people's lives raising different issues concerning them and important to them. The value of health is so obvious that recalling any particular justification may seem rather superfluous. It is however not so. We are not always aware how much the society we live in constitutes a system of tightly connected vessels. How much the objective ties in with the subjective, the personal with the social, and biological with the cultural or the economic. Issues concerning health illustrate these connections perfectly.

Health has both an individual as well as a social value. It is a required of a successful life which permits to feel useful and independent, to achieve successes and not be a burden to others. A healthy society is not only a better functioning collective organism, but also a quality of life measured by the level of satisfaction, happiness of people and their feeling of fulfilment. All of this makes health one of the most critical aspects of social life and one of the more important areas of legislative regulations.

Health is dependent on multiple factors including especially the material conditions of living, is an asset to which not everyone has an equal access. If neglected in the early stages of life, it has repercussions later in poorer life opportunities, social position, a recurring problem for employers and as a social problem generating high costs for the healthcare system. One third of Poland's children and youth live in unfavourable material conditions. It is them that we find in later statistics registering incidents of different types of illnesses requiring treatment, social support or participation in preventive or therapeutic programs helping to bring back fitness and health. It is they who have more often problems with finding or maintaining employment, a partner of a flat. They also statistically more often escape into risky behaviours and have problems in generally coping with themselves.

Young people deal with the inconveniences of life and are clearly more satisfied and have more energy. This is caused by a youthful optimism endowed onto them by nature but also the fact that they are a product of an optimistic consumptive society, forcing the belief in the unending economic growth and bright future. Being children of post-modernism, they are socialized to the culture of risk and practiced in the "do it yourself" strategy, being able to skilfully navigate their surrounding reality. This being the general case, the percentage of youth which can not handle their own problems is becoming ever greater. While the general number of patients in the psychiatric and psychological treatment in Poland is decreasing, the number of young

patients in them is growing systematically. Increases have also been noted in the recent years in the case of suicides and certain indexes of reaching for psychoactive substances, especially for so-called "designer drugs". The specific Polish characteristic differentiating us in comparison with rest of Europe – is the level of use by youth of certain medications as a substitute of psychoactive substances. There are signals that after the noted period of decrease, the consumption of alcohol among the poorer youth is once again increasing. All this permits the statement that we are dealing in Poland with a phenomenon known for many years in the West as the "psycho-wave" effect, which illustrates clearly the great existential and adaptation problems of young people around the world in which the realization of life's needs is very difficult and which burdens them with responsibility for their own fate and life.

Unfavourable are also the indexes concerning youth's physical health. Poor dietary habits, neglect in oral hygiene, a sitting, inactive model of living, deformations of the figure, overweight are among those diagnosed most frequently. They are the source of many serious illnesses (of the heart, circulatory system, diabetes, tumours), which knock life off its normal balance. The cause of this state of affairs lies both in the poor health behaviours of the youth itself, bad living conditions of their families as well as the greatly imperfect medical care. Worrying in this context is the increase in the death rates of children and youth from undetermined causes. It is important to note the issue of activities being undertaken simultaneously in three directions. Firstly, it is necessary to broaden the activities of health prevention, youth's or rather the children's pro-health education in order to eliminate many negative health phenomena of the young generation. Secondly, to constantly make efforts to equip healthcare institutions with equipment permitting fast and high-quality medical diagnostics. The initiatives of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (WOŚP) and involvement of Jurek Owsiak can not be overemphasized in this aspect. An equally serious challenge is the reduction of inter-generational transfers of poverty and illness as well as the lifestyles associated with them.

The health status of young people in Poland and the health problems do have their own social topography. They also have a geographic aspect as the least favourable conditions being located in the north-western voivodeships and the Lublin voivodeships and best in the Masovian, Lower Silesian and Opole. These regions are differentiated by a general civilizational level of development and perspective for growth, social structure of the population, status of the medical infrastructure and many other factors which result in the fact that both the physical health as well as psychological condition of youth is very different within these regions. Of key importance is however, as in many other issues, the economic factor being the key to both the level as well as the quality of people's lives. The rejuvenation of life in the regions which seem to waste away (the eastern wall but also more vividly the north western) gain an additional strong premise in the form of an argument of threats to the life of children and youth.

A very difficult area of regulation is the risk behaviours of youth, especially those concerning the use of illegal psychoactive substances (narcotics). There are two contrasting opinions on the issue – those of the proponents of the punitive approach (strict enforcement of law) and the permissive approach (a position of consent, soft and tolerant). There are just arguments on both sides. On one hand, it is not possible to turn a blind eye on the practice of selling substances with destructive effects, especially if their main consumers are the youth. On the other hand, for the same

reason, one can not implement these restrictions too nonchalantly with the omission of elementary psychological and sociological knowledge. Young age is a time of defiance and experimentation. This occasion is especially well known to specialists in social influence who have on occasion of different types of influences warned of the possibility of a reverse effect from the one intended. This takes place both when inclining people towards certain behaviours (in this case: avoidance of narcotics) taking place in an excessively impudent manner, drastically limiting their freedom of choice (which gives spark to psychical opposition and willingness to demonstrate behaviours counter to those expected) as well as when these activities present irrelevant (external) justification (threat of penalty, life problems, etc.). In the case of youth, these initiatives have smaller chances of success as they "attack" the principles of nature (the need for experimentation, liberty and autonomy which is compulsive within the youthful phase of life) and the promoted life models (emphasizing elements of pleasure, exceptionality and strong sensations).

10.

10. Young people and social cohesion

- 10.1.** The rich and the poor – with and without opportunities: early social differentiation among young people
- 10.2.** Illegal behaviours
- 10.3.** Disabled people – breaking stereotypes and integration barriers
- 10.4.** Rural – urban, central – peripheral: durability of civilisation divides
- 10.5.** Living abroad: young people's migrations and emigrations
- 10.6.** Ideological, political and philosophical divides
- 10.7.** Instead of an ending: adults and young people – generational solidarity

10. Young people and social cohesion

CHAPTER TEN

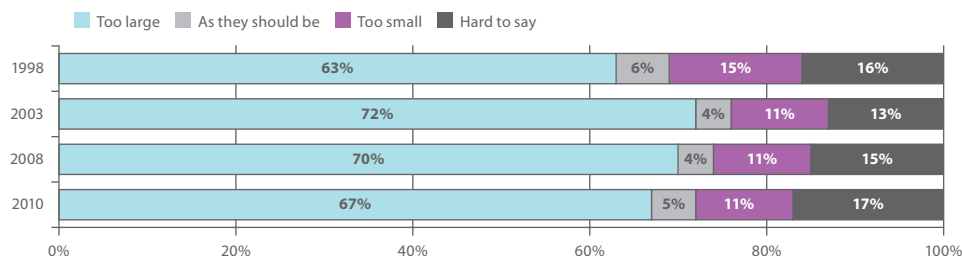
The idea of community “planted” on young people is a demanding vision and a very difficult one to be fulfilled. It requires solidarity within society (not only solidarism), open-mindedness, tolerance, empathy. It requires an ability to listen, maintain dialogue, respond to changes, also through institutional transformations, and the ability to improve oneself. In fact, it is not only an enormous challenge, but also a serious social problem. Meanwhile, our society is divided, sometimes very deeply, and we have many negative traits. We have high aspirations, but our thinking is parochial and we are hardly tolerant. We prefer to cast spells on the reality than to observe, learn and change it. We are very down-to-earth people, but we cannot afford realism and logical thinking. We are nit-picking, but not critical. We want to be liked, but we cannot bring ourselves to show good will and kindness. We would like to live in a better country, but we assume beforehand that it is impossible. We often look into the future, but we hardly ever see future social processes and opportunities offered by history. Will we be able to overcome our weaknesses and to achieve inter-generational solidarity?

We have described in this report many situations and problems experienced by young people as well as referred to their potential and innovativeness, as we feel they are a great opportunity for Poland – which once again has found itself at a special point in its history. The substantial political transformation is over, and now the time has come for a great modernisation project to prevent marginalisation and disparagement of social aspirations. We have linked the project with the idea of an inclusive community which we consider a value in itself, and which will be very difficult to realise under conditions in the Polish environment. This chapter presents only some selected divisions in society and indicates the problems seen as serious impediments on the road to social inclusion.

10.1. The rich and the poor – with and without opportunities: early social differentiation among young people

Poles – both young and old – are anxious to improve their financial standard of living, and most of the young people aspire to achieve an appropriate social status. At the same time we are a society which sets great store by social egalitarianism and we dislike social inequalities. Perhaps this should not be attributable to our history (during the Polish People’s Republic we were used to equality of poverty, today we want equality of wealth), as much as to more contemporary fears for an uncertain future, lack of stabilisation and exclusion. Pro-egalitarian approach is observed both among the elderly and among the young brought up at the time of the market economy. Nearly two thirds of them consider that the differences between the highest and lowest incomes in Poland are too large (Fig. 10.1).

Fig. 10.1. Do you think that the differences between the highest and the lowest incomes in Poland are:



Source: *Młodzież 2010* [Youth 2010], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw 2011, p. 57.

Fig. 10.2. Income differentials among young households – group averages by the main means of livelihood



Source: Own study based on the Strategic Analysis Department (DAS) of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) after *Badanie budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Household Budget Survey], Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2010.

Fig. 10.3. Income differentials among all households – group averages by the main means of livelihood



Source: Own study based on the Strategic Analysis Department (DAS) of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) after *Badanie budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Household Budget Survey], Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2010.

Although these perceptions can be considered to reflect reactions of people accustomed to egalitarianism, they can also illustrate the “elevator effect”¹ – a distinctive feature of dynamic changes. This means that as a society we have taken the elevator to one or two floors higher – despite all previous and new differences we have more and our situation is better as far as our earnings, education, mobility, law, schooling, mass consumption are considered, but social inequalities have not disappeared – they have emerged at another level. In Poland the level of education is the primary determinant of such differences. The return on investments in education is higher in Poland than in other countries at a comparable level of development. The return on bachelor’s degree is nearly three times as low as that on master’s degree (17% in relation to 57%), and a PhD increases this return by further 19% compared to that on master’s degree.² Due to the educational boom which started in Poland at an early stage of the transformation and comprised mainly the young generation, the average incomes of young Poles have for some years been greater than the general average incomes in the society.³ At the same time – and for the same reasons – the earnings and living standards started to vary among the young generation. Even though the income differentials are not – as it is the onset of professional careers – large, they are clearly visible and indicate that the trends will intensify to such a degree as to create greater inequalities compared to those existent in the older generation (Fig. 10.2 and 10.3). The dynamism of the young generation (with their growing life aspirations) is only one of the reasons; others include the wide spectrum of new possibilities to be offered on the labour market (available to individuals better prepared to responding to changes on the labour market, holding an advantage over others) and new mechanisms of social differentiation and positioning. The differences related to lifestyle, tastes and culture, which will become the essential determinants of social status, cannot be eliminated as a result of generally higher standard of living and greater access to various consumer goods (which continue to determine social position today – Fig. 10.4 and 10.5).

In the future people with good and poor education will undoubtedly be set even further apart, and formal certificates will not be the most important criterion. The ability to actualise their own professional competences and mobility in the broadest sense of the term will be the most important factors. The still distinctly recognisable (although decreasing) urban-rural differences (Fig. 10.6 and 10.7), the differences between the developing regions and those with weaker or zero potential (regions with cumulated disadvantageous development parameters⁴) will be another factor which might contribute to the intensification of this process.

The disposable income of young households has been consistently growing as from 2006 (and even more dynamically from 2009 compared to the total of households), but at the same time it has been subject to strong diversification. The highest incomes are achieved by young people in the largest cities – in 2010 they amounted to 123% of the average incomes of the total households and 133%

1 An expression borrowed from U. Beck – see. U. Beck, *Spoleczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności* [Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity], Scholar, Warsaw 2002, p. 117.

2 J. Czapiński, T. Panek, *Diagnoza społeczna 2009. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków* [Social diagnosis 2009. Standards of living and quality of life in Poland], Warsaw 2009, p. 184.

3 See the study results in Chapter 7.

4 See the studies in Chapter 10.4.

of young people's households in small cities. At that time the situation of small towns was the worst, worse even compared to rural areas, which could be ascribed to different reasons: positive migration balance in rural areas indicating the presence of well-to-do residents, better income-related situation of farmers as a result of structural subsidies, and last but not least, particularly advantageous situation of residents in suburban rural areas which are the richest and undergo the most dynamic development. Overall, however, the fundamental division into the rich and the poor corresponds to the division into residents of large cities and the rest of Poland.

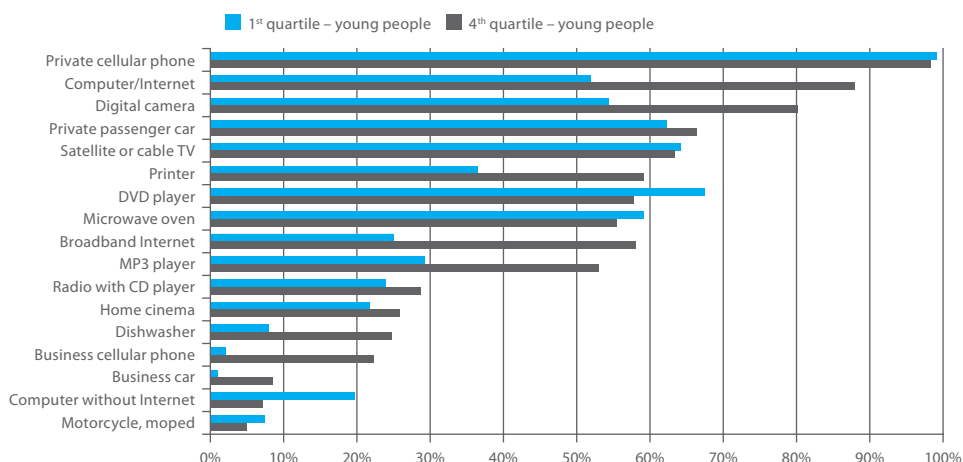
Nevertheless the satisfaction with financial situation is not always reflected in the level of income. It is proportional to the size of the place of residence – it is the greatest in large cities and the smallest in rural areas (Fig. 10.6). Large cities have a population of the highest cultural capital, and provide a wide variety of possibilities for earning one's living. Residents of smaller towns, especially rural areas, are worse-educated, and moreover provincial labour markets do not provide too many employment possibilities. This generates the risk of deprivation of vital human needs, which in Poland affects nearly 17% of households, mostly young people below the age of 24. Young adults who live independently experience deprivation on a slightly smaller scale⁵ (Fig. 10.8).

In the Polish reality it often means inherited poverty, following life scenarios of one's own parents, and also solidifying regional and community divides. At the same time, it is not the prospects of achieving a lower social status, and not even the fact that this status is inherited that seems to be the essential problem. Indeed, in every society there are always some better and worse "dens to let", lower and higher social positions to be achieved. In principle, everything that makes an individual different from the others may affect or contribute to his or her status and determine their social rank. Today, these happen to include first and foremost money, standard of living, education, professional status and consumerist lifestyle. It is their accessibility that arouses the greatest social emotions – on the one hand, it helps fuel life activity, becomes the goal of people's aspirations, and on the other hand, it is a source of many negative emotions and social problems. In a society where the desirable goods are only accessible to a limited number of people, the pressure "to have" in order "to be important" provokes negative emotions more frequently as there are more people who fail than those who succeed. Thus, the preservation of social stigmas and judgements where the value of an individual is solely associated with material successfulness, high social status and extensive consumerism, the stimulation of social desires as if they had no alternatives, is the first serious problem which – especially in the context of the creeping crisis – should be thoroughly considered. It holds hidden threats: social divide (into the better and the worse), resentments and claims, political alienation,

5 **Severe material deprivation rate** – in the international material deprivation surveys it is defined as the enforced inability to pay unexpected expenses (equal to a monthly amount recognised in a given country as the relative poverty line in the year preceding the survey), afford a one-week annual holiday away from home, a meal involving meat or fish (or their vegetarian equivalent) every second day, the adequate heating of a dwelling, durable goods like a washing machine, colour television, telephone (desktop or mobile) or car, being confronted with payment arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments).

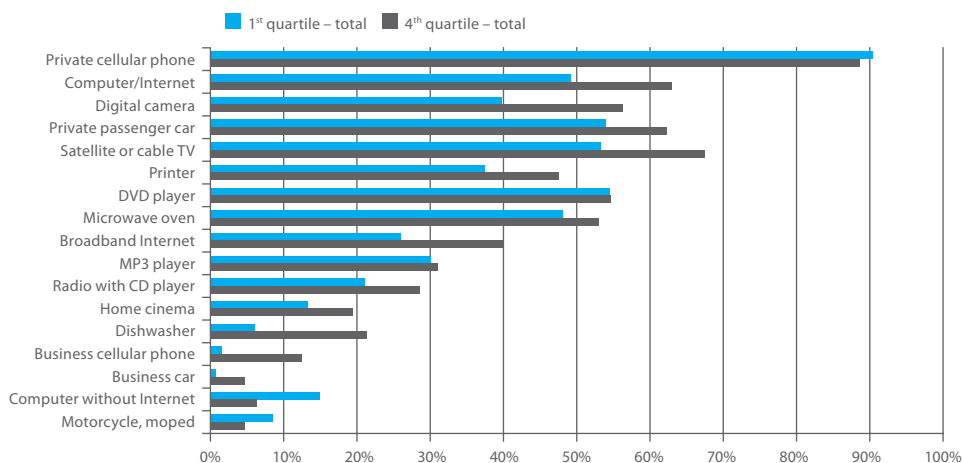
breeding ground for “conspiracy theories”, authoritarian political solutions, growing crime rate and pathological behaviours, exacerbating health condition of the society, difficulties in choosing an adequate political model, etc.

Fig. 10.4. Durable goods in young households by groups according to the extreme income quartiles – young people



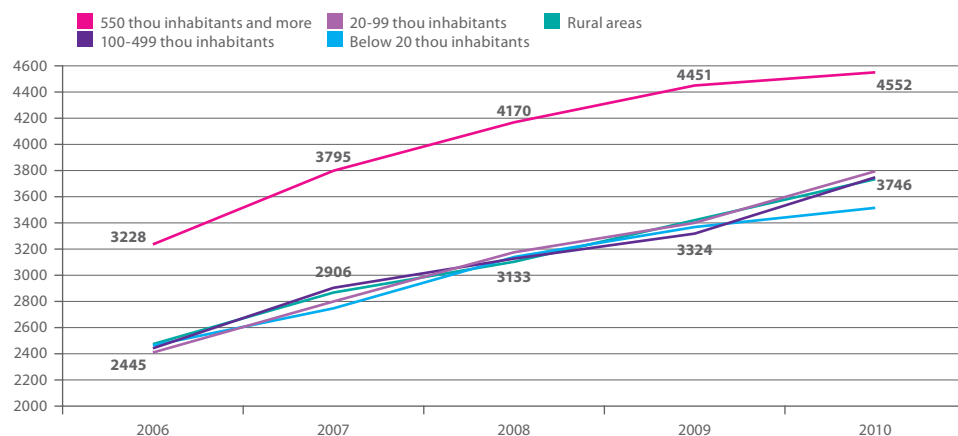
Source: Own study based on the Strategic Analysis Department (DAS) of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) after *Badanie budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Household Budget Survey], Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2010.

Fig. 10.5. Durable goods in all households by groups according to the extreme income quartiles – total



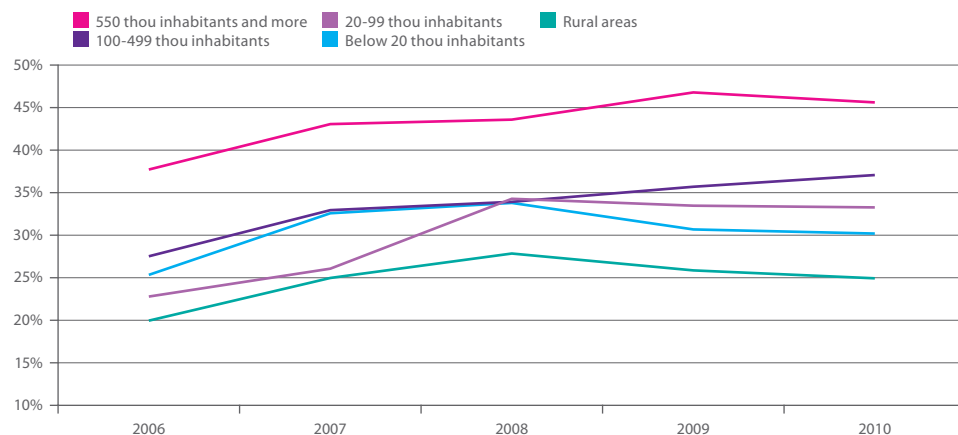
Source: Own study based on the Strategic Analysis Department (DAS) of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) after *Badanie budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Household Budget Survey], Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2010.

Fig. 10.6. Changes in the disposable income (PLN) of young households by the size of localities



Source: Based on the Strategic Analysis Department (DAS) of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) after *Badanie budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Household Budget Survey], Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2010.

Fig. 10.7. Positive assessment of the financial situation of young households by the size of localities

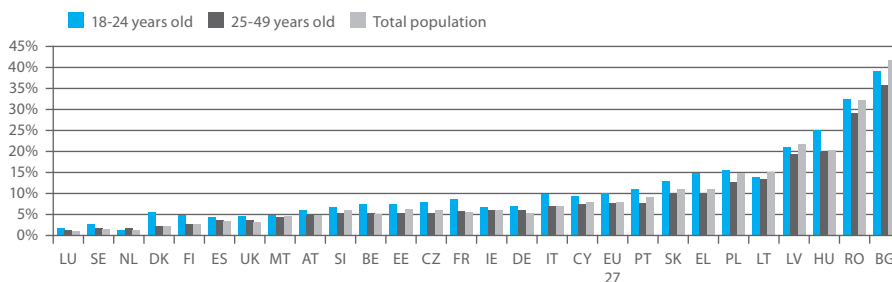


Source: Based on the Strategic Analysis Department (DAS) of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM) after *Badanie budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Household Budget Survey], Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2010.

Is it possible to take any actions? It is, although it is not simple and does not bring immediate effects. However, there is no reason why it should be dismissed at the starting point. Apart from the expansion of the specific sensu largo ideology (building up the importance of specialists, people who are knowledgeable in a specific area, more often referring to simple people), it would also involve certain modifications of the existing solutions in the institutional education system – restoring the balance between general and vocational education, making the latter not a leper among the

healthy general education secondary schools, but an equally valuable educational path which boosts the self-esteem of persons applying to such schools by offering at least a certain level of architectural solutions or innovativeness of school workshops. This entails continuous encouraging investors who would refrain from taking the production process to cheaper economic zones in Asia, but would create employment opportunities at home where the social consequences of economic globalisation are more and more painful.

Fig. 10.8. Deprivation index in selected age groups – EU-27 in 2009



Source: Own study based on: Eurostat, (EU-SILC).

10.2. Illegal behaviours

Another dimension of social rifts and divides originates from behaviours at the edge of the law and illegal behaviours, including aggression and violence – phenomena which are more and more often discussed and feared. Do we understand them? Only two decades ago aggression and violence in Poland were to the greatest extent attributed mostly to law enforcement officers and with some exceptional (political) situations, “hard violence” rarely took to the streets. Street gangs, drug mobs, armed assaults, sophisticated murders and youth killings constituted at that time mainly virtual reality. We all, or almost all, often saw it on cinema screens or TV in mostly American films (adored by Polish young people). Today aggression is no more a solely virtual phenomenon as it penetrated other domains of life in which it has not been seen thus far (school, politics, mass media). Savagery has become a distinguishing behavioural feature of many ordinary and less ordinary people. Today, those who behave against social rules and flout the law make a highly diverse and truly polymorphic world. We are more and more often under the impression that aggression has many faces, it is a tangible and ubiquitous occurrence.

Pathological phenomena in the broadest sense of the term (crimes, aggression, vandalism, rude behaviour) give Poles serious cause for concern. Will youth aggression take a special place in this respect? From the 1990s onwards the police statistics have year in, year out recorded an increasing number of crimes and acts of violence, growing in brutality and cruelty, law infringement at younger and younger age, greater susceptibility of young people to aggressive behaviour. Today, youth aggression goes out into streets, sports halls and stadiums, young people are originators (not only victims) of domestic violence. Aggressiveness and hatred among young

people is particularly noticeable in the Internet – full of harsh and crude statements, comments, judgments which for some reasons cannot dispense with vulgar words, spite, and contempt for others. This phenomenon is considered common among all young people who in view of many adults (and law enforcement officers) have become the number one public enemy. Is it fair? Is the trend related to this phenomenon irreversible and unalterable?

10.2.1. Culturally evolved deviant behaviour and criminal inclination

The inclination to act against social norms and law regulations is not rooted in ontogenetic traits, institutional weakness or the dwindling prestige of the state. The interest taken in deviance and deviant behaviour, stronger focus on pragmatism than on moral attributes as well as greater social permission for normative “ease” are the effects of political changes happening in Poland which are inevitably accompanied by anomie – a situation when social norms have no longer impact on human behaviour due to weaker social control, greater relaxation of norms and lack of self-inhibition, or the incompatibility between the culturally promoted goals and values, and the social conditions for their achievement.⁶

Starting from the 1990s we have begun to resemble in many respects the western societies at the initial stage of capitalism. Just as there and then, the main motive of our early-capitalist culture at the end of the century was the value of success universally associated with social advancement and “making money”. Due to the fact that it is deeply embedded in the Polish system of values as a result of the social pressure for material wealth and a life of luxury, and while there are large obstacles to achieving this using socially accepted methods, the achievement of the goal most important of all induces behaviours that are effective, though not necessarily ethical or as much as proper. The more effective socialisation into the value of success and the more difficult its achievement by socially recommended means, the greater the probability of deviant behaviours in defiance of social norms.

Orientation towards material success is not an attribute of only young people,⁷ nevertheless it is young people that have yield to the fetish of consumption and goods to the greatest extent. And not only is it important that we are a society that is “still getting itself established” (resembling the western societies at the initial stage of capitalism), but also that as a result of system-wide changes and Poland’s opening up to the global impact, the rate of our cultural transformation has doubled. These processes have more rapidly pervaded culture (life patterns) and social expectations (aspirations) than any other, and due to the incommensurability of their rate of happening, we experience not only tensions that exist in early-capitalist societies (functioning in chronic economic depression), but we also adopt those generated by rich consumer societies. As a country at the stage of self-establishment we have to face – on the one hand – general economic wants and many shortages,

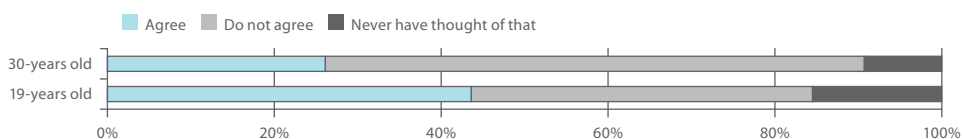
6 K. Szafraniec, *Anomia okresu transformacji a orientacji normatywne młodzieży* [Anomie in transformation and normative orientations among young people], [in:] J. Mariański (ed.), *Kondycja moralna społeczeństwa polskiego* [Moral condition of the Polish society], Committee on Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and WAM, Warsaw-Cracow 2004.

7 See Chapter 1 of the Report.

and on the other hand a society with a variety of unsatisfied needs and high material aspirations, ready – in the name of the value of success – to take unlawful institutional measures.

It is also important that people are exposed to two different, although mixed at most times, messages – poor ethos of early capitalism and refined consumerism at its present-day stage. The first one puts emphasis on the moral duties of success (*there is nothing wrong in aspiring to wealth and high social status, if you have earned it yourself*), the other one – mainly its celebration (*enjoy life, live up to your imagination – “be cool”, “be inspired”*). Set in the reality of Poland under transformation, covering a crash course in capitalism, these messages can generate an unconditional pursuit of success as a socially recommended and attractive lifestyle. Every person is to some extent exposed to this process, however, first and foremost young people for whom this situation forms the natural context of socialisation, and many young people (in particular those without appropriate mental preparation) can fail to distance themselves to it appropriately.

Fig. 10.9. You can go around regulations, if only you can get away with it...



Source: Own study *“Porzucona generacja” – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* [“Abandoned generation” – educational paths and reaching adulthood], 2007/2008 (N/19 = 1096, N/30 = 749).

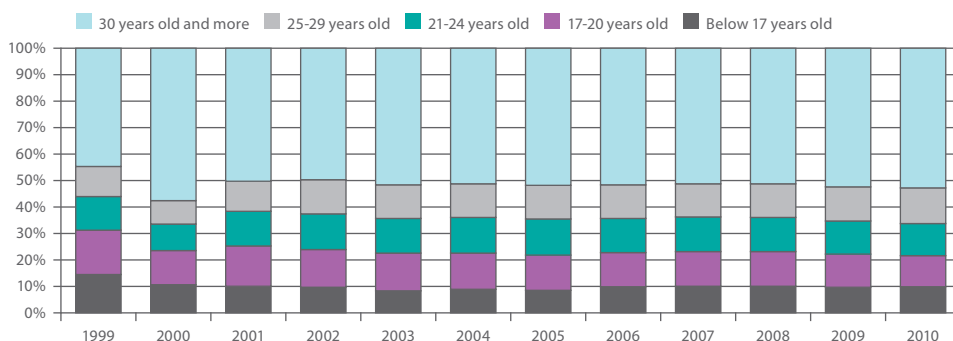
Figure 10.9 illustrates the inclination of young Poles to infringe rules of law, if only there is a chance of getting away with it. This inclination is clearly greater among younger respondents (it is declared by nearly every second teenager; among young adults more often by every fourth person). Readiness to ignore rules of law is declared in particular by those teenagers who attend worse schools – basic vocational schools or non-reputable secondary schools. Highly-valued colourful life, risky behaviours, big money are common to all of them, and to a lesser extent the status of the family of origin (poor families) and gender (boys). Also the place of residence is of significance. Young adults who approve of circumventing rules of law have similar profiles. These are most often people who did not make it in life – poorly educated, poorly salaried, with low employment status, and who do not even dream of big money. Those who have fulfilled their aspirations, achieved something in life (education, high social status, satisfactory material status and successful lifestyle), rarely declare their readiness for law infringement.

It can be assumed that more intense disregard for rules of law by teenagers can be attributed to the peculiarities of being young as a period which intrinsically involves breaking all types of bans, restrictions, imposed social norms. It can also be explained by the intensity and type of socialising impacts. Younger people experience anomie more intensely – more effectively socialised into the world of consumerism, they are more sensitive to social obstacles to achieving the desirable goods, and hence their more dismissive approach to rules of law.

10.2.2. Youth crime and crime in Poland

Readiness to circumvent or break rules of law, in particular if a person involved can do it with impunity, shows only the mental attitude of people. Nevertheless an analysis of crime data⁸ shows an astonishingly similar percentage of criminal acts of which young people are suspected. Their participation in the general number of criminal offenses was in the recent decade about 48-49% (Fig. 10.10).

Fig. 10.10. Percentage of suspects in criminal offenses in all age groups



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Police Headquarters.

These statistics comprise several dozens of various crimes – starting from murders, through thefts and robberies, economic and fiscal crimes, to aggression and acts of violence resulting in temporary damage to bodily functions, disability or death. Not all criminal offenses can be explained by effective socialisation into the world of consumerism. In criminology the sources of criminal behaviours are categorised into three groups: failure at achieving positive, highly-valued goals, loss of positive stimuli and presence of negative stimulation.⁹ The goals subject to social pressure that can easily transform into the cause of crime include money, status, respect and personal autonomy. Dreams about achieving these three goals can engender strong frustration when they are difficult to attain or unachievable. Men who want to prove their masculinity and strength achieve the desirable goods to gain respect and emphasise their position in a group. Others use force and break law to raise their self-esteem in a world where everyone means something.

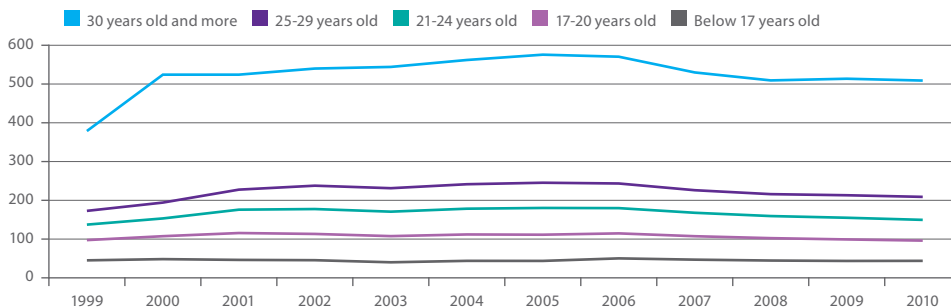
However, it is not always that illegal actions and law infringement to achieve a goal which is not readily accessible stem from not being sufficiently rich or being deprived of opportunities. In some cases law is broken by young well-to-do people, and such cases are recorded more and more often. Since the end of the

8 Data of the Police Headquarters concerning the number of suspects in various crimes. The statistics of the Ministry of Justice concerning criminal convictions could not be included here as they do not apply the age criterion.

9 R. Agnew, *Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency*, "Criminology" 1992, no. 30 (1), p. 47.

1990s probation officers have had more and more people from so-called normal non-pathological families among their wards. These people show criminal behaviours because they want more than they have, they want to have enough to feel independent, they want to have what is in their opinion due to them and does not clash with their sense of justice or they want to demonstrate something.

Fig. 10.11. Number of suspects in criminal offences by age groups



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Police Headquarters.

Another category includes criminal behaviours due to the blocked need for autonomy. This is the main cause of juvenile delinquency. Young people have a high regard for independence and possibility of deciding about themselves. Some people need external attributes of adulthood for that purpose – money, going to adult places and doing adult things. Others need emotional support when they feel they are getting sidetracked in their life – when they do not know who they are, and they know they should be and can be different. Still, for others it would suffice to have more patience and understanding when taking various decisions that they are expected to take as part of their life obligations. Adults make a lot of mistakes in such situations – they show astonishing emotional ignorance, lack of tact and disregard for the essential needs of young people. They respond with excessive protectiveness, pushiness in forcing their own opinions or excessive dismissiveness.

In response to this young people often tend to rebel – they do things “out of spite” – and their illegal behaviours are frequently ostentatious – it is a signal sent to adults (parents, guardians, teachers) which shows that they have problems with themselves or bad relations with the world and adults. By taking on various negative identities – socially condemned models (chav, thief, hooligan, drug dealer or drug addict, a person from underworld), young people remind us about their existence and seek approval from people about whom they care most: adults. It is not true that young people want only to be accepted by the peer group with which they identify themselves. This desire for approval also, or perhaps first of all, aims at gaining respect and acceptance as an INDIVIDUAL in the adult world. It is a need for being non-anonymous and non-identifiable, for acquiring a status of someone important, someone who evokes response and has something to offer. If one cannot be a person who enjoys general respect, if one does not wish to be a person who seems trustworthy – then “being nobody” (i.e. condemned) defines one’s status. “Being

nobody” means “being someone”, in particular if one remains faithful to a group and its moral code.¹⁰ This means very often that behaviours meant only as retaliation against adults and a simulated rebellion against the world are often identified with young people and become part of their own Self.

This is often promoted by the loss of positive stimuli (death of a close person, being deceived in love, disappointed by people held in high esteem, lack of trust from parents or friends) or long-lasting negative situations (poverty, parents' unemployment, indifference of institutions, bad relations with parents, school failures), and also emotional illiteracy of parents who alternatively neglect their children and punish them severely for every little thing when they are tired or in bad mood. Children with such experiences develop a characteristic perception defect – they perceive insults, derision, sneer, injustice in other people's behaviour towards them, they imagine that others are more hostile than they really are. As a result they see neutral behaviour as a threat and respond with anger or aggression. They are quickly labelled by adults as “difficult” children, “failures”. Rejected by peers and alone they gravitate to other rejected individuals. Truancy, fights are the first symptoms of serious trouble with the police in the future. There is also an essential difference between boys and girls at this stage. Boys drifting towards the „social underworld” generally drop out of school, going more and more downhill, commit more and more minor offenses such as thefts, burglaries, drug dealing. Asocial teenage girls do not break law as often, but they get pregnant. Surveys have shown that 40% of girls with such problems have a child before they complete secondary school.¹¹

Women generally infringe law less frequently than men. The changes in their social status over the past several dozens of years have had no substantial impact on the content and specific details of court records. Women commit on average every tenth crime, which mostly include thefts, frauds, more infrequently murders or acts of violence. The same goes also – generally – for young people below the age of 30, i.e. young women considerably more infrequently commit crimes, nevertheless their percentage in criminal activities increased over the past decade from 7.2% in 1999 to 10.9 in 2010 for each crime group (Fig. 10.12).

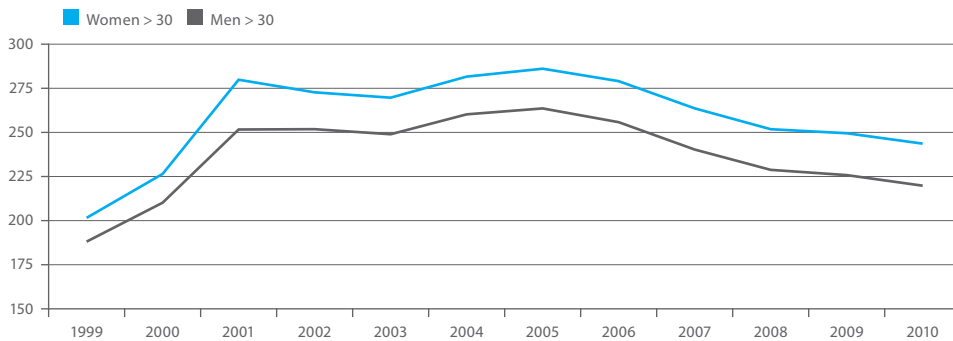
To some extent these differences stem from biological dissimilarities (male hormone testosterone is responsible for aggressive behaviour), from mentality (women are more resistant to stress and tensions, and they are better at relieving stress), and from different socialisation. Women have close relations with other people from the youngest age, which helps reduce tension and prevent violence. Men are focused on achieving material success and put greater store by money and power, even if they have to infringe social norms and rules of law. Women more often experience negative treatment (they are discriminated against, taught to respect exorbitant expectations of their families, their freedom is continuously subject to limitations). While men are brought up to dominate, participate in conflicts with peers, they are forgiven their disobedience. Insofar as women's failure in achieving

10 M. Opoczyńska, *Moratorium psychospołeczne – szansa czy zagrożenie dla rozwoju* [Psychosocial moratorium – an opportunity or threat to development] [in:] A. Gałdowa (ed.), *Klasyczne i współczesne koncepcje osobowości* [Classic and modern concepts of personality], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Cracow 1999, p. 135 et seq.

11 D. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, Media Rodzina, Poznań 1997, p. 367.

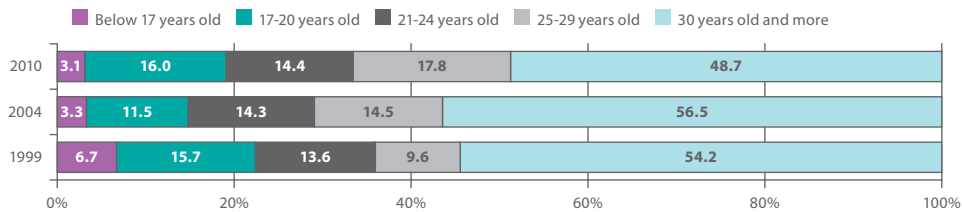
their goals can give rise to auto-destructive behaviours, in men it evokes an increased need for material possessions and power, even if acquired using violence and against the law. However, why do women commit crimes? Surveys show that they do so in situations when their important goals are difficult to achieve, and they are discriminated against and feel that the interpersonal relations they have always relied on are starting to break up. When they lose positive support, their inclination to break norms is greater.¹²

Fig. 10.12. Number of criminal suspects by gender (in thousands)



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Police Headquarters.

Fig. 10.13. Criminal suspects – percentage of young people versus all murder suspects



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Police Headquarters.

For further analyses we have chosen criminal acts which correspond to various levels of depravity. Murders are the gravest crimes. All kinds of murders: murder with robbery, sex and family murders, contracted murders, murders for non-determined, non-defined and other reasons, infanticides. The data in Fig. 10.13 show a sudden increase in the percentage of young murderers in 2010 to 51.3% of the total number of this type of criminal acts.¹³ At the same time there is a downward trend in the percentage of juvenile murderers – from 6.7% in 1999 to 3.1% in

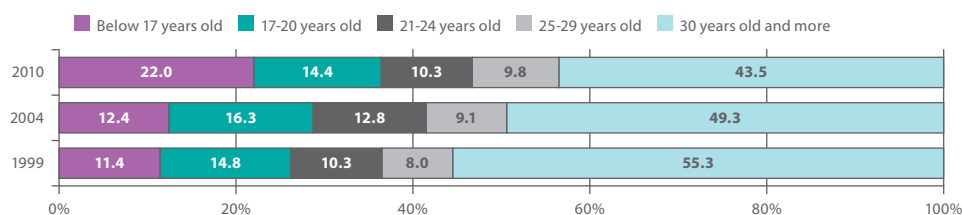
12 R. Agnew, L. Broidy, *Gender and crime: a general strain theory perspective*, *Journal of Research and Delinquency* 1997, no. 34 (3), p. 275-306.

13 Data for 2009 are similar to those for previous years, i.e. young murderers constituted less than half of murder suspects – 42.2%.

2010. While the absolute number and percentage of the youngest murderers have decreased, the percentage (but not the number) of murders committed by adults (24-29 years old) has increased (usually murders for non-determined, non-defined or other reasons).

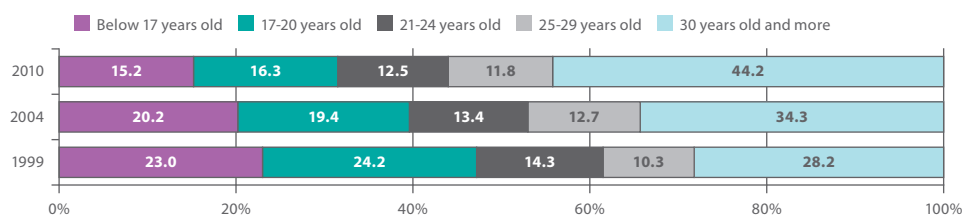
Crimes of violence and aggression (intentional bodily harm or inflicting disability, fights and assaults, rapes, physical and mental family abuse) show similar, i.e. growing dynamics (Fig. 10.14). More than (56.5%) perpetrators are young people, and in some cases (fights with life-threatening injuries, causing grievous bodily harm or death) even more than two thirds. The percentage of young people who are not victims, but originators of family violence (to 16%, and the youngest 4.3%) deserve special mention. The greatest increase in acts of violence is observed among young people below the age of 17 (doubled over ten years). It shows the scale of educational and emotional problems in the environment in which young people are nowadays brought up. Adults – both in families and in school – do not want or cannot interpret these problems. They are also critically helpless against them.

Fig. 10.14. Percentage of young suspects in acts of violence and aggression versus all suspects in this category



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Police Headquarters.

Fig. 10.15. Percentage of young suspects in thefts, robberies and criminal frauds versus all suspects in this category



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Police Headquarters.

Just as youth violence “flourishes”, there is a downward trend in thefts, robberies and criminal frauds committed by young people (Fig. 10.15). In 1999 they made nearly three fourths (71.8%) of the perpetrators in this category, in 2010 their number went down by 16 pp. (55.8%). The greatest downward dynamics was observed in the youngest age group. This may show that the dependence of young people on the desire for various goods is decreasing or such goods are more accessible, but also

that consumerism has lost its magic and changed character – became less focused on “to have to mean”, and more on “to have to be”.

10.2.3. Aetiology of difficult behaviours among youths

Crime and inclination to break law can be observed in every society, although their structure, escalation or dynamics are different. Periods of deep transformation always create a risk of such phenomena. The transition from one social regime to another invalidates some norms, but does not bring new ones. In such situation social reality is characterised by some vagueness, ambiguity, lack of orientation and fixed benchmarks. We are familiar with psychological reasons for which people, and in particular young people, do not tolerate such situations well. Confused symbols, instability and non-transparency of norms, inability to understand the world cause serious adaptation problems which give rise to various behaviours, e.g. crimes. Since the mid-1990s there has been a new trend underlying crime – explicitly promoted ideology of success and life patterns based on consumerism. However, mainly youths succumbed to it. The orientation “to have to mean” in conditions of a financial deficit and limited possibilities generates frustration and inclination to illegal behaviours. Their intensification has been confirmed by analyses of youth crimes in Poland, in particular with respect to such crimes as thefts, burglaries, robberies, murders with robbery. Since 2004 the number of such crimes has been on the decrease (which can be related to social well-being, but also to the different type of consumerism in post-modern society), while the number of acts of aggression and violence is on the increase, and at the same time law breakers are younger and younger. To explain this phenomenon we have to take into account, on the one hand, a different every-day reality (more complex and exposed to greater risks), on the other hand, the closest circles of young people – first of all their families, where adults, occupied with earning their living, pay less attention to the quality of life and mutual relations which causes emotion negligence of themselves and their children. Children who find no understanding (both in the family and in school) are not able to deal with their own problems and give vent to their frustration in aggression and violence.

Drifting towards crime starts at a remarkably early stage. Hostility observed in pre-school children, their inclination for quarrels and conflicts will translate in some years in more frequent, compared to others, law breaking (assaults, shop-lifting, car burglaries, heavy drinking). In primary schools their aggression escalates – they have problems with finding friends, they are rejected by peers, they start playing truant and look for others like them.¹⁴ If a child comes from a poor or broken family and lives in a district where there are a lot of problems, the risk that it will go astray is high. The sources for this type of problems are rooted both in the society and in the child’s closest neighbourhood – family, school where many pedagogical mistakes are made due to the lack of knowledge of the child’s mentality, emotional and social needs. Adults – both parents and teachers – rarely think critically about themselves and making them aware that their behaviours can also be a source of many youth problems is a big challenge.

14 R. Tremblay et al., Predicting Early Onset of Male Antisocial Behaviour from Preschool Behaviour, “Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry” 1992, no. 31.

10.3. Disabled people – breaking stereotypes and integration barriers

Disabled people belong to one of the socially discriminated groups about which the healthy and physically fit majority of the society is not willing to think. Nevertheless the disabled are more and more visible among us and are becoming awakened as citizens. We have already developed a reflex to repeat on various occasions assurances about special concern, sympathy, social welfare, transport facilities or numerous privileges for the disabled. However, the true test of society's maturity and openness is not only the elimination of legal and organisational obstacles, but also mental barriers and prejudices towards the disabled. Poland has a lot to do in this area. A disabled person is usually associated with noticeable impairment, infirmity, dependence on others, poor education and poverty. In the context of Polish mentality, poorly adapted to deal with non-typical and non-standard, the distinctness of the disabled perceived in such a way is in itself a barrier to their acceptance and understanding. Very slowly we become accustomed to define disability and to understand it differently. Today, we think that a disabled person is – simply – someone who cannot on their own, partially or wholly, ensure a normal individual and social life due to an inborn or acquired physical or mental impairment.¹⁵ Limited physical or mental abilities create multiple obstacles in life – they make it difficult to receive education, find work, make friends and acquaintances, fulfil marital and family roles, it restricts independence, restrains the desire for personal autonomy.¹⁶ Due to the prevalence and extent of the phenomenon as well as the pressure exerted by human rights organisations, disability has become one of the most important problems of the contemporary world.

10.3.1. Young people with disabilities

In Poland the problem of disability escalates at an alarming pace which – apart from natural reasons – originates from the rules of law and medical decisions. Only between 1988 and 1993 the number of valid certificates of disability increased by 22%. According to the forecasts of the Central Statistical Office (GUS) for 1993, the general number of the disabled was to reach 3 908 000 persons, and in the second half of the 1990s to exceed 4 million. Meanwhile, it reached 4.5 million already in 1993.¹⁷ According to a population health survey, 5 997.1 thousand disabled people were registered in 2004. "Luckily" young people aged 15-29 make only 6.5% of all the disabled (390.4 thousand) and 4.2% of all young people (15-29 years old). Youth disability is to a significant extent different from elderly disability. The latter involves mostly physical (76%) or sensory

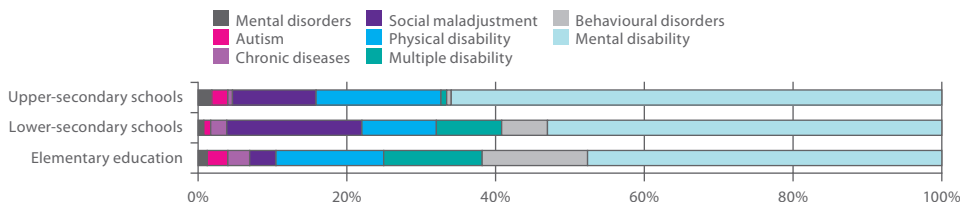
15 Definition by WHO.

16 I. Obuchowska, *O autonomii w wychowaniu niepełnosprawnych dzieci i młodzieży* [About autonomy in raising disabled children and young people] [in:] W. Dykcik (ed.), *Spółeczeństwo wobec autonomii osób niepełnosprawnych* [Society and the autonomy of the disabled], Eruditus, Poznań 1996, p. 15 et seq.

17 A. Ostrowska, J. Sikorska, Z. Sufin, *Sytuacja ludzi niepełnosprawnych w Polsce* [Situation of the disabled in Poland], Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN), Warsaw 1994, p. 120.

(50%), more seldom mental disability (16.5%).¹⁸ The percentage of mental disabilities is the largest (51-65%) among young people. Physical disability (deafness and impaired hearing, blindness and impaired vision, motor disabilities) concern 13.4%. Behavioural disorders which in time give way to social maladjustment come third in the ranking (Fig. 10.16).

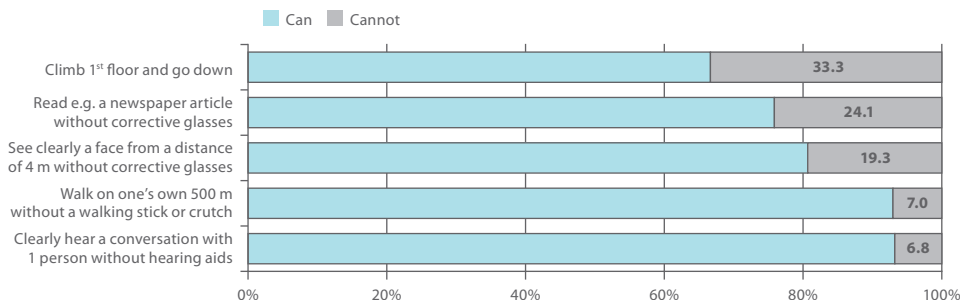
Fig. 10.16. Disabled students by the type of disability



Source: Own study based on: Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2009/2010 [Schooling and education in the school year 2009/2010], Central Statistical Office (GUS).

For some people disability means far-reaching restrictions on life activity and fundamental independence (Fig. 10.17 and 10.18). Every third disabled young person is unable to go up and down the 1st floor without help, every fifth cannot read without corrective glasses, 7% cannot walk 500 m without a walking stick or crutch. “Luckily” a very small percentage of young people (Fig. 10.18) are unable to perform simple activities related to hygiene, eating, in general – to self-sufficiency.

Fig. 10.17. People with disabilities aged 15-29 by the disability of specific organs



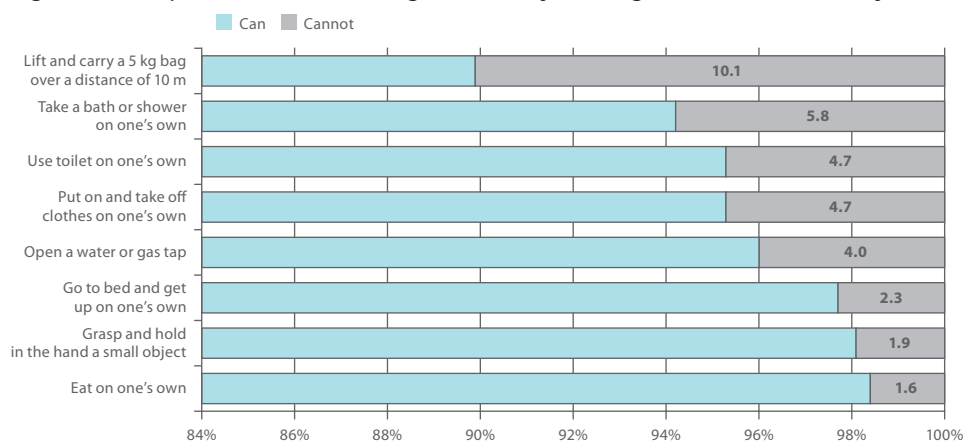
Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Central Statistical Office (GUS).

Such “optimistic” (compared to the elderly) statistics of disabilities among young people should not hush the voice of our conscience and put a stop to our efforts to do everything to enable disabled people to live with dignity – among other, healthy and physically able people – and feel responsible for themselves. Our society is still far from understanding that the disabled are citizens and thus have the same rights and obligations as any other people. The policy towards the disabled, based on the concepts of social assistance and charity, does not instil a sense of self-sufficiency, personal autonomy into the disabled, on the contrary – it objectifies and makes

18 Ibidem, p. 121.

them helpless. People with disabilities are considered unproductive and troublesome, and for this reason they are isolated and excluded from the mainstream of social life. The evolution of how we understand disability means that the crux of the disability problem is transferred from the affected person onto the social environment and its organisation.¹⁹ Overcoming architectural and legal barriers is the first step to invite the disabled to be together. Another one is opening educational institutions and labour market to such persons. At the same time it is necessary to take actions aimed at creating mental attitudes open to the prospect of the presence of people with disabilities in various places and roles.

Fig. 10.18. People with disabilities aged 15-29 by the degree of self-sufficiency



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Central Statistical Office (GUS).

10.3.2. People with disabilities in the educational system

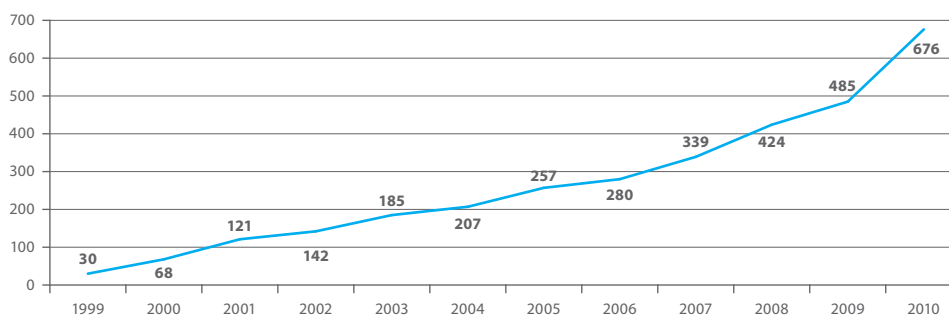
Today the presence of people with disabilities in schools together with other physically able and healthy children does not arouse astonishment. The integration processes have not penetrated only pre-school education as yet, although it – as taking place at the earliest stage – would offer the greatest chances of overcoming dysfunctions and barriers. In the school year 2009/2010 various types of schools (special schools as well as integration classes in standard schools) have had 141 887 students with disabilities, with 62 897 students in primary schools, 56 309 in lower-secondary schools, and 22 681 in upper-secondary schools, mostly vocational schools (general secondary schools had slightly less than 8% of students with disabilities at the relevant age). Students with disabilities make 3.4% of the total number of students in public (primary and lower-secondary) schools and only 1.5% of upper-secondary school students. Education is not continued mainly by people living in rural areas, as it is difficult to transport them to a city school and people are still convinced that a disabled

19 J. Kirenko, *Percepcja osób niepełnosprawnych* [Perception of people with disabilities] [in:] J. Plak (ed.), *Osoby niepełnosprawne. Szanse i zagrożenia godnego funkcjonowania w nowoczesnym społeczeństwie* [People with disabilities. Opportunities and threats for functioning in the modern society], WSP TWP, Warsaw 2011, p. 27.

person is a "cripple", totally dependent on the immediate family. Disabled students face greater difficulties in continuing education not only due to their health, limited education possibilities or place of residence. Bad financial situation of their families is the basic barrier. In the most recent complex survey carried out in Łódź²⁰, in a group of 4220 children granted a disability certificate (3.8% of children at that age), two thirds (2917) come from low-income families. The average income in such families hovered around PLN 278 – 299. The income threshold for children's disability benefit is defined as PLN 583 per family, but the effective financial situation in such families is much worse. Surveys have shown that a typical disabled student in Łódź is left on one's own resources (weakened or lack of peer relations), lives in poverty (difficult financial and residential conditions in most families, lack of institutional support), has limited career prospects (lack of places in integration centres, no possibility of professional training).

Universities have 27 975 students with disabilities. It is 5 thousand more compared to 2007. Although they make only 1.5% of all students, the recorded increase shows that barriers are disappearing, both on the part of universities as well as young people with disabilities. Every seventh disabled university student (15.2%) cannot see or hear (has impaired hearing), and 28.5% have physical impairments. The other (56.3%) have other impairments.²¹ There are no pan-Polish statistics to enable a more detailed description of the situation of university students with disabilities, but the experience of the Jagiellonian University is a very good example. Since 1999 the university has had a Disability Service Office which serves as the centre for educational support and ensures equal access to educational services offered by the university, regardless of the specific health difficulties. During the eleven years of the Office's operation, the number of students with disabilities and mental difficulties increased from 30 in 1999 to nearly 680 in 2010²² (Fig. 10.19).

Fig. 10.19. Number of Jagiellonian University students: with disabilities, mental disorders or disabilities (1999-2010)



Source: Disability Service Office, *Raport dotyczący liczby studentów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego z zaburzeniami psychicznymi oraz chorujących psychicznie* [Report on the number of Jagiellonian University students with mental disorders and mental disabilities], Cracow, 10 December 2010.

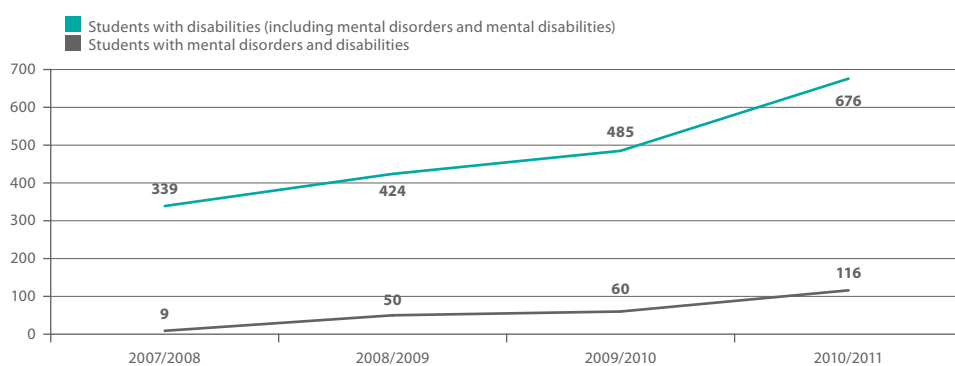
20 *Uczeń i student niepełnosprawny – warunki życia i nauki* [Disabled school and university students – living and education conditions], W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska and G. Mikołajczyk-Lerman (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2011.

21 They are not specified in detail – see: *Szkoły wyższe i ich finanse w 2009 r.* [Universities and their finances in 2009], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010.

22 Which is also related to the increase in the general number of students.

The number of students who applied to the Disability Service Office increased in the academic year 2008/2009 when the offered educational support was extended to include also students with mental disorders and mental disabilities. Over a period of one year, the number of supported students grew by more than 25%, and the number of students with mental disorders and disabilities increased more than five times (from 9 to 50). The greatest increase in this group of students was recorded in the academic year 2010/2011 in connection with the dedicated adaptation support programme titled "Constellation Leo" ("Konstelacja Lwa") and financed from the European Social Fund.

Fig. 10.20. Number of Jagiellonian University students with physical disabilities and mental disorders – growth dynamics in 2007/2008-2010/2011



Source: Disability Service Office, *Raport dotyczący liczby studentów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego z zaburzeniami psychicznymi oraz chorujących psychicznie* [Report on the number of Jagiellonian University students with mental disorders and mental diseases], Cracow, 10 December 2010.

Due to the launch of the programme the number of applicants for psychological support is much greater than expected (increase by 93% over one year), and students with such problems are no longer one of the most numerous groups which require academic support – they make 17% of all people recognised at the university as disabled people with mental disorders or mental diseases. The reasons for their problems include most often depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, addiction to psychoactive substances, personality disorders, neurosis.²³

As part of the programme students are offered individual psychological and (as necessary) psychiatric consultations oriented towards supporting them in satisfying academic requirements or equipping them in competences which can enhance their opportunities on the labour market. The University holds also a social-educational campaign aimed at overcoming taboos and stereotypes concerning mental diseases, people with mental disorders and studying. This programme would be well complemented with the concept implemented at British universities where healthy and physically able students take care – on a payable basis for money from a health fund man-

23 Disability Service Office, *Raport dotyczący liczby studentów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego z zaburzeniami psychicznymi oraz chorujących psychicznie* [Report on the number of Jagiellonian University students with mental disorders and mental disabilities], Cracow, 10 December 2010, see also www.KonstelacjaLwa.pl.

aged by university – of students with mental disorders and physical disabilities: they live together with them, do the shopping and washing, take them to classes, take notes during lectures, if necessary, make sure that they pass all examinations on time.²⁴

It seems that many of these problems are only a matter of imagination, good will and appropriate organisation of the environment.²⁵ Every year several thousand student with disabilities graduate from university. In the academic year 2008/2009 – 5837 students. These are different people – with a diploma in their pocket, which has first and foremost a symbolic meaning, they enter a new stage of life and new types of challenges: labour market. What do they find there?

10.3.3. People with disabilities, labour market and modern technology

Throughout the world, there are no disabled-friendly labour markets, and the implemented solutions (in Poland supported employment enterprises, tax reliefs for employers organising employment for people with disabilities) become on multiple occasions a source of financial abuse, envy and prejudice.²⁶ Other more modern forms of support (supported employment, networks of non-governmental organisations, the Friends of Integration Association, Integration Centres and other) are often confused in their own mission, and furthermore, they have to struggle with multiple obstacles resulting from non-coherent legal solutions and inertia of the disabled. Disability employment is not supported by the demographic process in Poland (generations of the baby boom that enter the labour market reduce the chances of people with disabilities). As a result the employment level of people with disabilities in Poland is still very low (in the mid-1990s it was 14%, in 2008 21.5%). This trend is the same in the case of young people (rate of employment for the age group 15-24 was 15.5% in 2008, for the age group 25-34 – 30.3%). Equally low rates of professional activity (21% and 35% respectively) mean that many graduates with disabilities find no employment after they complete their education, they decide to become pensioners and their effort put in education is wasted. The values, so often referred to in public discourse, which are to be derived by people with disabilities from work (sense of usefulness and active participation in life, acquisition of their own income, social relations, to a slightly lesser degree a possibility of personal development and respect of other people) have no chances when confronted with the dysfunctions of the institutional support system (first of all because institutions or individuals related to the system pursue their own interests using the services intended for people with disabilities instead of preparing such people to face the labour market and seek employment). They are also on a hiding to nothing when it comes to the calculations by families of people with disabilities

24 K. Szafraniec, *Młodzi i system społeczny* [Young people and social system], Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 2010, p. 207.

25 The measures taken at the University of Zielona Góra, awarded in 2008 for the whole of the actions for the benefit of people with disabilities, are another example – see M. Garbat, *Usługi społeczne i aktywizacja studentów z niepełnosprawnością na przykładzie działań podejmowanych na Uniwersytecie Zielonogórskim* [Social services and promoting active living of students with disabilities based on the University of Zielona Góra] [in:] J. Plak (ed.), op. cit., p. 131 et seq.

26 M. Gawińska, *Zakład pracy chronionej – stereotypy i uprzedzenia dotyczące niepełnosprawnych* [Supported employment enterprises – stereotypes and prejudices concerning people with disabilities], a master's thesis at the Institute of Sociology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University (IS UMK) in Toruń.

which adapt their actions to the dysfunctions of the system (instead of challenges, uncertain treatment and experimenting, they choose social disability pension).²⁷

Undoubtedly, teleworking and other less standard forms of employment are helpful for people with disabilities, they provide a greater pool of employment places, but it is modern technology that will have the greatest impact on their life that will enable greater independence and activity of people with disabilities. Thanks to the application of modern technology solutions, the range of helpful tools and apparatuses which compensate various impairments and dysfunctions is expanding, the detectability of different types of disabilities is increasing, expanding methods of modern diagnostics offer greater possibilities of surgical procedures using a wide range of prosthetics solutions, including genetic consultations. Even today the combination of the most recent achievements in medicine, technology and electronics generated a variety of unusual devices, such as endoprostheses, exoskeletons, hybrid assisted limbs (HAL), computerised/robotised prosthetic legs (C-leg), electronic text readers, artificial lenses which can restore a full range of vision, cochlear implants. The experiments are underway to develop a device enabling completely paralysed persons essential self-grooming and self-sufficiency, and normal use of Internet (BrainGate Neural Interface by Cyberkinetics).²⁸ These changes, which today sound perhaps like science-fiction, are closer than we might think – we are a technotronic society, and scientific achievements more and more intensely penetrate the areas which have resisted human interference thus far. On the one hand, this raises great hopes (for people with disabilities), on the other hand, ethical problems and professional challenges (for politicians and physicians who will have to face the problem of unequal access to new goods and medical services).

10.4. Rural – urban, central – peripheral: durability of civilisation divides

When we speak about a civilisation project for Poland and look for new social divides which must be taken into account, the rural issue apparently comes into the equation. In social consciousness a view is embedded that our rural and agrarian areas are our weakness which limits our developmental potential and social changes. Whatever the reasons (mostly historical) for this view, the divide into rural and urban areas, Poland A and Poland B, is frequently referred to and just as frequently exaggerated, supporting thus various stereotypes and prejudices.²⁹ Do they also concern the young generation?

Rural areas in Poland are subject to dynamic transformation, and villages more and more rarely call up associations with rusticity, agriculture or general civilisation backwardness. The image of rural areas and its reception across the society is chang-

27 E. Giermanowska, *Biografie zawodowe młodych niepełnosprawnych – dysfunkcje instytucjonalnego wsparcia* [Career biographies of young people with disabilities – dysfunctions of the institutional support] [in:] J. Plak (ed.), op. cit., p. 114.

28 S. Koczy, *Wykorzystanie nowoczesnej techniki w kompensacji niepełnosprawności* [Using modern technology to compensate disability] [in:] J. Plak (ed.), op. cit. p. 151 et seq.

29 See K. Szafraniec, *Polskie residuum systemowe czyli pytanie o rolę wsi i chłopów w procesach przekształceń ustrojowych* [Polish system residue – the role of rural areas and farmers in the political changes], "Kultura i Społeczeństwo" 2002, no. 4.

ing positively. The favourable balance of migration and growing interest among young people in the countryside as a future place of residence can be used as an example here. However, it does not mean that the problem of rural areas and regional differences in Poland has been resolved. Neither the changes happen as rapidly as one could have expected, nor do they happen in parallel in terms of geography and social structure. Not all of them are positive. The constant large number of small farms (although land concentration was expected in agriculture) is highly disturbing. The succession to economically weak farmsteads (which shows that in the face of no employment and non-agricultural life prospects an economically non-viable farm seems – from an individual perspective – the best possible solution). This phenomenon gives rise to many questions which could form the basis of a separate chapter. Here, we only want to discuss the questions concerning the young generation – whether their aspirations and life goals, educational decisions, places of residence can be conducive to changes (inside and outside rural areas) or rather impede them?

10.4.1. Rural areas as a living environment of young people – demographic and social changes

Rural areas have a population of 14 903 056 people, that is 39.2% of the country population, which has remained constant from the end of World War II. The number of young people living there is also greater – 21.4% aged 0-17 (17.2% in cities) and 19.6% aged 18-29 (18.5% in cities).³⁰ The social structure of rural areas undergoes visible changes (Table 10.1).

Table 10.1. Social structure in rural areas (2009)

Total structure of the rural population by social status and employment area		Structure of the employed population and jobs	
farmers	7.9	farmers, horticulturists, fishermen, forest officers	30.9
private entrepreneurs	2.3	parliament members, senior civil servants, managers	3.2
public sector employees	7.1	specialists	7.0
private sector employees	15.5	office workers	4.4
school and university students	21.6	technicians and middle-level personnel	5.9
pensioners	7.2	service providers (personal services and sellers)	9.2
retired people	15.3	blue collar workers and craftsmen	21.7
unemployed	4.6	machine operators and assemblers	9.3
other socially passive	16.5	non-qualified workers	8.1
no data	2.1	army	0.3

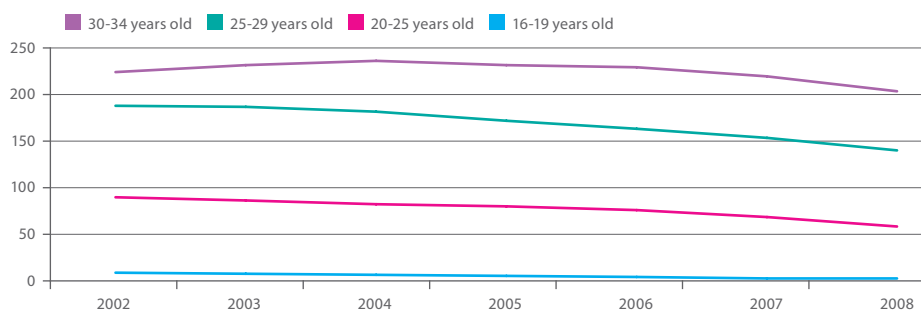
Source: Based on the survey *Diagnoza Społeczna 2009* [Social Diagnosis 2009] – M. Halamska, *Społeczna kondycja polskiej wsi* [Social condition in Polish rural areas] [in:] I. Nurzyńska, M. Drygas (ed.), *Rozwój obszarów wiejskich w Polsce – diagnozy, strategie i koncepcje polityki* [Development of rural areas in Poland – diagnoses, strategies and policy concepts], Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 2011.

30 Based on: *Ludność. Stan i struktura w przekroju terytorialnym. Stan w dniu 30.06.2010 r.* [Population. Territorial status and structure as at 30 June 2010], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010.

On the one hand, rural areas are dominated by professionally passive population (more than 60%), and people with low social status among the employed (80%), and on the other hand, groups non-specific to rural areas are more and more visible – specialists, higher officials, office workers, entrepreneurs (20.5%) and people with professional qualifications. Farmers make less than 8% of the rural population and (together with horticulturists, fishermen and forest officers) 30% of the employed population, and their percentage in the rural social structure is diminishing.

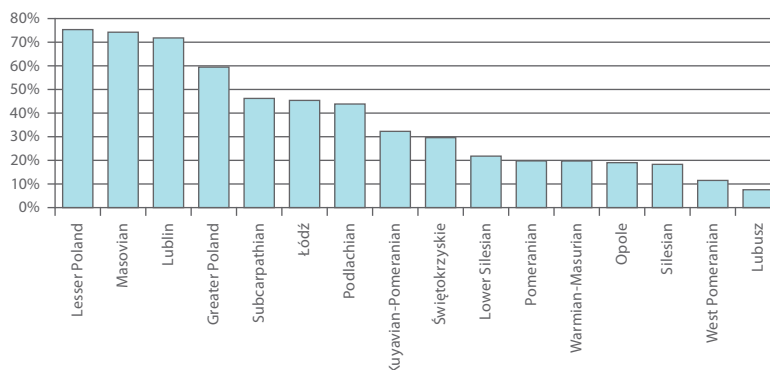
Young generation is clearly less interested in becoming farmers (Fig. 10.21). This process is consistent, although variably intensive in different regions (Fig. 10.22). Young people take over farmsteads mostly in the eastern and central regions and in the Wielkopolska Region, i.e. where – on the one hand – there is no better alternative to agriculture, and on the other hand – exists the tradition of good farming.

Fig. 10.21. Number of young farmers – changes after 2000 (in thousands)



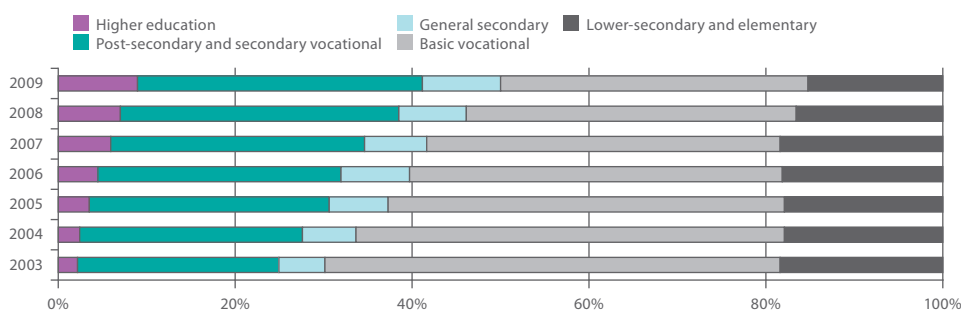
Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Labour Force Survey (BAEL) and Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS).

Fig. 10.22 Percentage of young farmers in the farming population by provinces (2009)



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Labour Force Survey (BAEL) and Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS).

Fig. 10.23. Changes in the educational status of young farmers (2009)



Source: Own study based on the statistics of the Labour Force Survey (BAEL) and Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS).

Table 10.2. Changes in the educational structure among the rural population

Level of education of the rural population	1998	2002	2008
Lower-secondary/elementary	60.9%	44.1%	33.6%
Basic vocational education	24.2%	29.2%	33.6%
Secondary education	13.1%	22.4%	25.3%
Higher education	1.8%	4.3%	7.5%
Total education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS).

Young successors to farmsteads are increasingly better educated, have professional knowledge. The number of people with higher education is on the increase (from 2.1% in 2003 to 8.9% in 2009), while the number of people with lower educational status is decreasing (basic vocational and lower – from 70% in 2003 to 50% in 2009). This reflects the qualitative changes in the agriculture, but also a more general trend – changes in the educational structure of the rural population (Table 10.2).

The educational profile among parents of young people in education has definitely improved (every 10th rural parent and every 4th urban parent have higher-education qualifications). This brings substantial changes to the socialising context and developmental conditions of rural children and young people, nevertheless there still is a wide rural-urban gap.³¹ Rural parents do not have sufficient competences to help navigate the development of their children and educational decisions. They believe that they do not have a good grasp of the modern world, access to the knowledge about new lifestyles, operating of the global markets, new forms of employment, new technological tools (Internet), etc.³²

Similar trends (of explicit changes, although still at a distance) can be observed in other areas. Material conditions of rural families are improving. The income per household is increasing (from PLN 1887 in 2003 to PLN 2399 in 2007). The greatest dynamics can be observed among farmers and young people. Nevertheless, the aver-

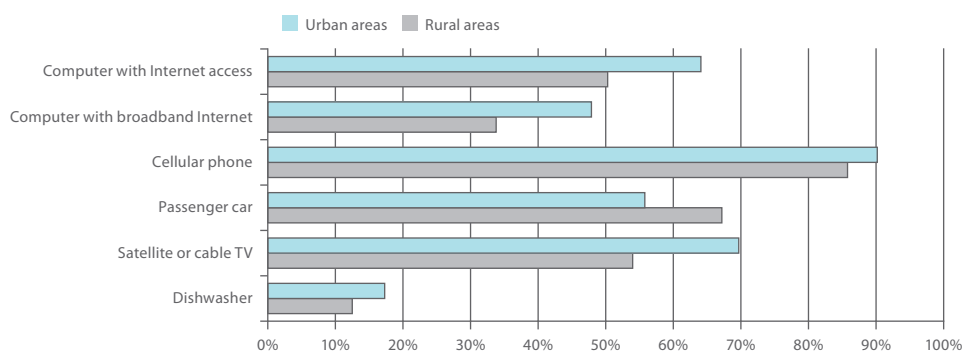
31 See Chapter 4, Fig. 4.4.

32 A. Strzemińska, M. Wiśnicka, *Młodość na wsi. Raport z badania* [Rural young people. Survey report], Pracownia Badań i Innowacji Stocznia, Warsaw 2011, p. 24.

age rural income is still lower than the average income in Poland (by 20%), the average urban income is higher by 12.5%.³³ These differences – as shown above – are even greater in the case of young people, and therefore the satisfaction with one’s material status, clearly on the increase in this group since 2006, decreased in 2010 and remains at a striking distance to most of the urban centres.³⁴

The greater number of durable goods in rural households (Fig. 10.24), better housing conditions (consistent with higher norms compared cities in terms of metric area³⁵) change the standards of living of rural young people.

Fig. 10.24. Durable goods in households by place of residence



Source: *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2010 w świetle wyników badania budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Households 2010 in view of the household budget survey results], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw, 25 May 2011, p. 12.

At the same time there are polarisation processes in rural areas. Families which belong to local elites (white-collar workers with higher education, state agents, rich farmers) have the best conditions. Families of blue-collar workers and non-salaried people have the least favourable conditions. The former invest in development and education of their children by sending them to good schools and universities, and thus enable their advancement. The latter are most often weak-willed, their children have short and basic education, following life roles observed in the closest environment.

The differences between regions do not disappear. It is – on the one hand – a division into eastern and western Poland, on the other hand into peripheral regions, where traditional agriculture prevails, and those located around large cities (Fig. 10.25). The divisions have been created to a great extent as a result of tradition and history, but also insufficient investments which could have activated non-agricultural labour markets and stopped the drain of young people from the specific regions.

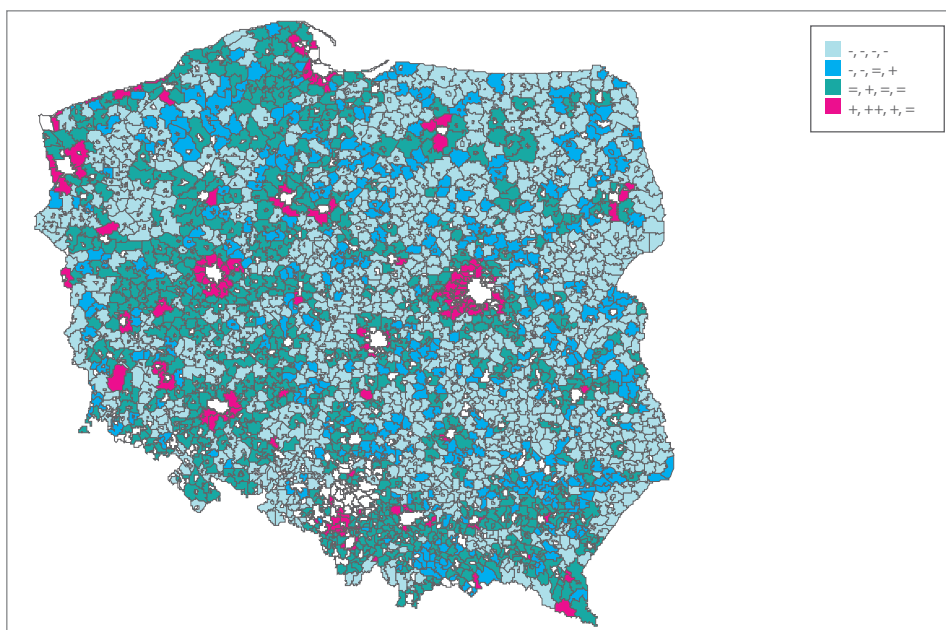
The regional divisions are paralleled by differences in status. Where traditional agriculture prevails, there are also more low-status families, and there also, to some

33 The greatest dynamics can be observed among families of farmers – see *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2010 w świetle wyników badania budżetów gospodarstw domowych* [Households 2010 in view of the household budget survey results], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw, 25 May 2011, p. 21 et seq.

34 See the analyses in Section 1 of this report.

35 An average metric area of an urban flat is 63.4 m², a rural flat – 93.9 m², in the case of farmers 116 m² – see *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych...* [Households...], p. 12.

Fig. 10.25. Level and dynamics of the socio-economic development of rural communes³⁶



Source: A. Rosner, M. Stanny, K. Heffner, *Zróżnicowanie poziomu rozwoju obszarów wiejskich* [Different levels of development in rural areas], Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 2008, p. 220.

extent automatically, symptoms of other harmful factors can be observed: hardly active labour market, high rate of registered and non-registered unemployment, low income level, poor infrastructure and non-expansive schools in terms of overcoming environmental barriers. Young people originating from such regions have much greater distance to cover – not only as a result of poorer environment, but also poorer family socialisation and educational support. The accumulation of these factors gives rise to problem areas which are unable to generate their own developmental opportunities. To overcome them, an external intervention is necessary – not so targeted at a micro level (the programmes Leader and Leader Plus are known to have been seriously criticised)³⁷, but at long-term development strategies for specific regions.³⁸

36 The description of the types of dynamics comprised four synthetic (multidimensional) indices: level of economic development, level of social development, dynamics of changes, activity of local authorities. Legend: (--) very low; (-) low; (=) average; (+) high; (++) very high in relation to economic development, social development, dynamics of changes, activity of local authorities respectively.

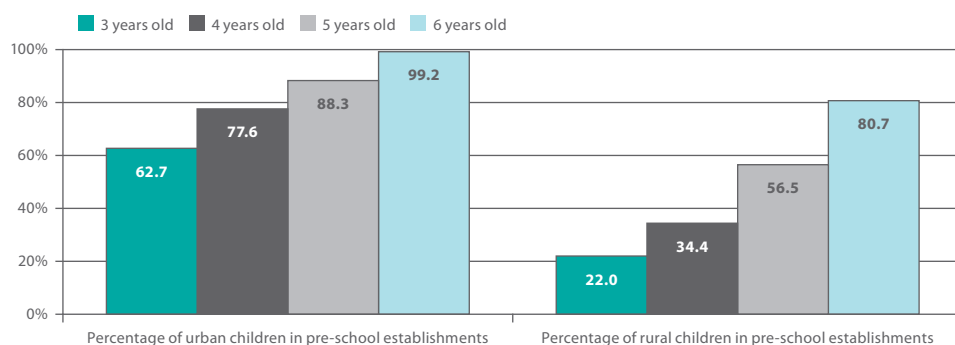
37 *Tworzenie partnerstw lokalnych i ich sieci na obszarach wiejskich. Doświadczenia z funkcjonowania programu LEADER w Polsce w latach 2004-2009* [Creating local partnerships and their networks in rural areas. Experience from the LEADER programme in Poland (2004-2009)], K. Wasielewski (ed.), University of Economy (WSG), Bydgoszcz 2009.

38 See Board of Strategic Advisors to the Prime Minister of Poland (ZDS PRM), 2011, *Polska 2030. Trzecia fala nowoczesności. Długookresowa Strategia Rozwoju Kraju* (wersja robocza) [Poland 2030. Third wave of modernity. National long-term development strategy (draft)], Chancellery of the Prime Minister (KPRM), Warsaw 2011, and *Krajowa Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego* [National Regional Development Strategy], Ministry of Regional Development (MRR), Warsaw 2010.

10.4.2. Educational opportunities for rural young people

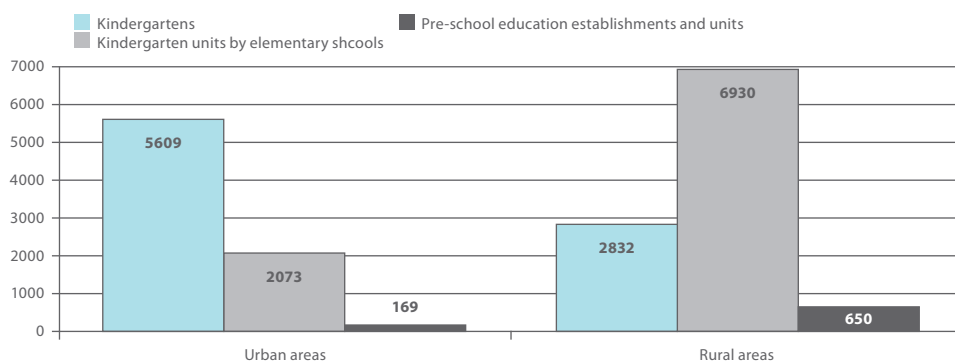
Pre-school education, which is the most important stage in creating equal educational opportunities as it covers an early developmental phase, is not common in rural areas. While in cities most 3-4 year olds attend pre-school establishments, in rural areas most of them stay at home (Fig. 10.26). Rural children are raised in familiar environment, far away from strangers, however they do not have stimulation providing them with new social relations, new types of experience or a different type of sensitivity. Furthermore, children attending pre-school institutions, in contrary to urban children, mostly attend kindergarten units by schools, not kindergartens (Fig. 10.27).

Fig. 10.26. Percentage of urban and rural children attending pre-school establishments



Source: *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2009/10* [Schooling and education in the school year 2009/2010], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010, p. 54.

Fig. 10.27. Urban and rural pre-school education establishments



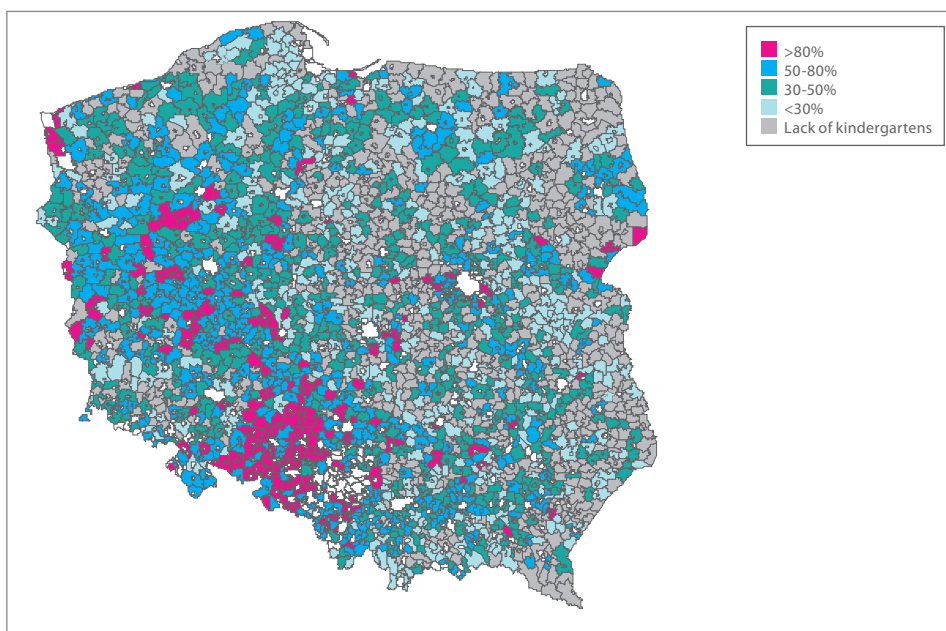
Source: *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2009/10* [Schooling and education in the school year 2009/2010], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010, p. 54.

The regional differences are substantial – the greatest percentage of children attending kindergartens can be found in the western provinces (Opole, Silesian and Greater Poland), the smallest – in central and eastern Poland as these regions are to a greater extent agricultural areas, and as a consequence have lower level of

professional activity among women. As a result, there are no institutional services of children care (“because women do not work either way”), and in this context they are secondarily related to the traditional roles, which reinforces differences between regions (Fig. 10.28).

Later started relations with extra-familial environment and education is the second – apart from poorer primary socialisation – factor which contributes to the distance between rural and urban young people. This is further fostered by the working conditions of rural schools, poorer in terms of infrastructure (four times as few laboratories, twice as few gym halls and more limited educational services in foreign languages as compared to urban schools), culture (due to the cultural capital brought to school and the quality of social support, rural schools start at a disadvantage and have greater distance to cover). Other factors which contribute to this distance is the institutional poverty of rural areas underlying the lack of cultural stimulation and meeting places where young people could spend their free time together, discover and develop their interests.³⁹ In practical terms, this means continuous presence of family- and environment-generated stigmas in the consciousness and self-assessments of young people, and as a consequence, in their educational decisions based on smaller risk.⁴⁰

Fig. 10.28. Percentage of children attending pre-school establishments by provinces



Source: Prepared by J. Domalewski based on the statistics of the Central Statistical Office (GUS) – Regional Data Bank (BDR), 2006.

39 A. Strzemińska, M. Wiśnicka, op. cit., p. 24-25, 52 et seq.

40 J. Domalewski, *Szkoła wiejska – katalizator czy inhibitor zmian systemowych?* [Rural school – a catalytic agent or inhibitor of system-wide changes?], doctoral thesis, Institute of Sociology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University (IS UMK), Toruń 2006.

Rural young people, as a majority of Polish young people aspiring to higher education, chooses mainly general secondary schools (56% of lower-secondary students), usually, however, these are schools with lower level of teaching and requirements. More and more often they choose technical upper-secondary schools. Over a period of 6 years, the interest in these schools have increased by 10 pp (from 24.4% in 2003 to 34.1% in 2009).⁴¹ For over a decade rural young people have been observed to show strong interest in higher education (up to nearly 70% of secondary school graduates at its peak). In the traditional academic establishments rural young people make on average 21% of the total number of students, in the new ones up to 35%. Rural young people usually choose those universities and courses which offer more lenient enrolment procedures – the smaller competition at the start, the greater percentage of rural young people. Another important factor underlying their preferences and educational decisions is the certainty of employment guaranteed by specific university studies – rural secondary school graduates more often enrol in traditional courses which enable acquiring a “specific” profession (e.g. teacher’s), imaginable to them. They also apply to those universities which have fewer applicants. They employ characteristic progressive strategies – gradually raise their standards and reach successive goals, which is greatly supported and promoted by the significant others, experienced successes and new challenges. Due to their exceptional motivation to learn combined with intellectual advantages, rural young people are frequently better students than their urban peers.⁴²

10.4.3. Rural young people – what and who do they want to be?

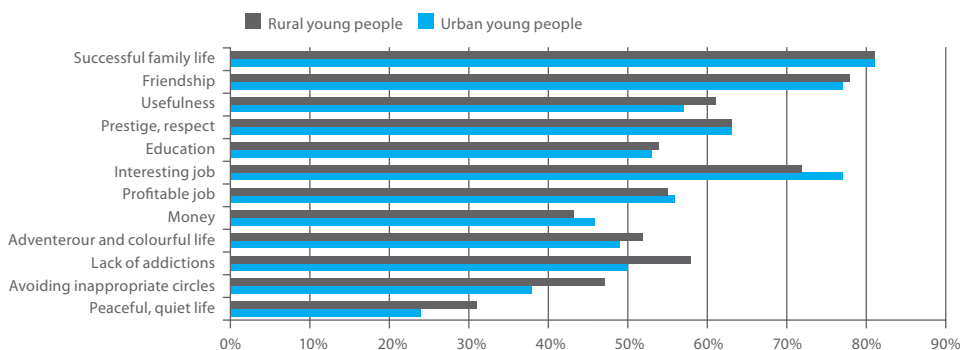
In the processes of system-wide transformation, and in particular in the era of great civilisation challenges, the question whether or not rural young people are sufficiently open-minded and whether or not they manage, will not stand out against urban young people, is an important issue. Undoubtedly, they cannot be considered life minimalists. Although more modest than urban young people, they intend to pursue various careers and lifestyles. 40% of rural (and nearly 60% of urban) young people aspire to high social status. Young people are entirely not interested in the prospect of being a farmer – 0.1% of young people⁴³ declared ready to work as farmers in 1998, while 0.2% (a few persons against a population of several thousand) ten years later. 30% of rural (and 50% of urban) young people aspire to high income (starting salary of PLN 3500). Rural young people slightly more frequently come to terms with rank and file job positions. Twice as often they accept the principle of living modestly (36% compared to 18% in cities). Nevertheless their idea about a successful life little deviates from the ideas held by (demanding) urban young people – they focus on affiliation values, interesting job, good social status, and a colourful life of luxury (Fig. 10.29).

41 J. Domalewski, *Wymiary i uwarunkowania zróżnicowania szkolnictwa ponadgimnazjalnego* [The context and conditions underlying the differences in upper-secondary schools] (in:) J. Domalewski, K. Wasielewski (edt.), *Zmiany w edukacji – szkoła i jej społeczne otoczenie* [Changes in education – school and its social environment], Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2011.

42 K. Wasielewski, *Drugi młodzieży wiejskiej na uniwersytet* [Educational paths of rural young people to university], Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń 2011.

43 Complete population survey comprising 15-year-old young people starting secondary school in the Toruńskie Province (N = 4651).

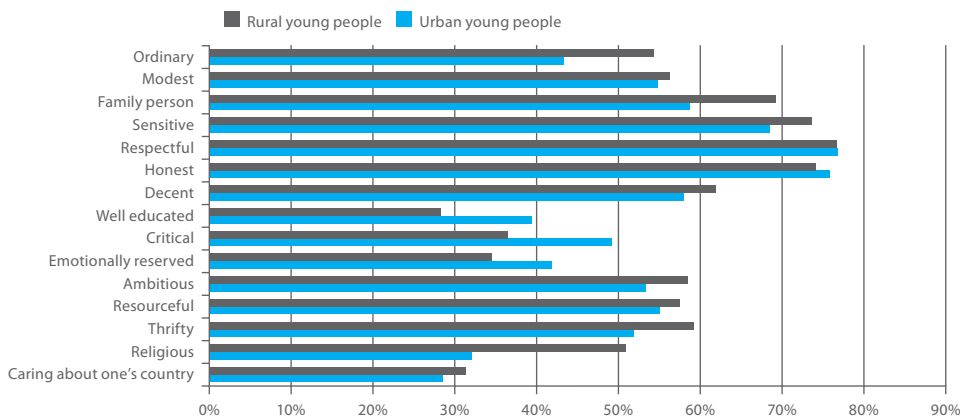
Fig. 10.29. Important matters for 19-year-old rural and urban young people



Source: Own study *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational paths and reaching adulthood], 2007.

Self-descriptions of rural and urban teenagers are similar, but rural youths more explicitly cultivate tradition-specific traits (attachment to family, religion, modesty, thriftiness, resourcefulness, artfulness), they are more conventional, ordinary, oriented towards the acceptance of their environment (Fig. 10.30). These traits are less prominent, as compared to the past (especially morals and opinions have changed⁴⁴), nevertheless, in terms of the tradition – (post)modernity axis, rural young people are closer to the first axis pole, which can be observed not as much in numbers as in their mentality.

Fig. 10.30. Self-descriptions of 19-year-old rural and urban young people



Source: Own study *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational paths and reaching adulthood], 2007.

The mobility of rural young people – their readiness to take on various jobs, change jobs, employers, place of residence – is in the declarative layer comparable to the mobility of urban young people (the greatest in the case of job changes – 52%, the

44 For more information see Section 6 in this chapter.

smallest in the case of place of residence changes – 30%) and to a greater extent it is a result of social and educational profiles of young people (family of origin, education, and capital) than environment.

10.4.4. Future of rural areas from the perspective of young people's life decisions

What future awaits rural area? Will it be teeming with life or become depopulated? At the end of the last decade it was still considered a worse place of living. Today, these views have significantly changed which is as much a result of positive changes in rural areas as of the increased risk of living elsewhere. The view that rural areas offer no prospects for young people is to a greater extent characteristic for the rural elderly (60%) than young people (45%) which is a considerable change in comparison with the past. 50% of rural and 13% of urban young people declare their willingness to live in the countryside. These are more often young people from families with relatively lower status, more often boys than girls, people with less successful educational career and less demanding towards life, but concerned about ecology, living far from city uproar, oriented towards life harmony.

However, who returns to live in rural areas having completed their education and why? On the one hand, these are people with lower-status education and less useful professional qualifications who cannot afford independent life in a city. In rural areas they most often fuel the ranks of the unemployed,⁴⁵ emigrants⁴⁶, members (or successors) of their father's farmstead. On the other hand, these are graduates of secondary schools and universities (also from cities) who find employment in self-government administration, NGO networks or local cultural and educational institutions.

Who does not return to live in rural areas? Most of university graduates (2/3) do not come back. They are attracted to urban agglomerations and regions with greater development dynamics. "Brain drain" processes start as soon as the selection of university – the best secondary school graduates leave their own regions and go to centres with greater dynamics and development (e.g. from Warmia-Masuria to Warsaw, Poznań or Gdańsk). There are more women among them. The reasons include the labour market, or rather the lack thereof in rural areas, also the aspiration of contemporary women for independence and life partners with a higher or at least comparable status and promising life prospects.

If in the second half of the 1990s we still wondered whether rural young people would be able to face the challenges of the transformation period – whether they would manage to integrate into the newly emerging series of changes and be able, with their (educational, life) decisions and choices, to overcome the social structure reproduction processes in rural areas, then these concerns have now disappeared. These young people are different than their peers from the past and represent the greatest mental similarities to urban young people. It does not mean that the specific features of rural young people are fading away. They are still more traditional, more conventional

45 In 2007 there were 59.1% unemployed people at the age of 34, in 2009 63.7%; in cities 51.3% and 52% respectively.

46 Young residents in rural areas make the greatest group of emigrants: 43.6% permanent emigrants and 85.6% temporary emigrants.

in their choices and less pampered by life. They more often accept such situation. At the same time their problem is that their awakened life aspirations can be expressed neither in rural areas nor elsewhere – the possibilities offered in rural areas are not sufficiently diversified and extensive, while large urban centres are too competitive and expensive for a start into an independent life. The decision to live in the countryside is still considered an emergency option, it guarantees safer survival for those who are not sufficiently ready to compete for a social position in a city.

The agricultural sector – although not entirely unattractive for young people – shows astonishing survival ability. The reasons for that include – on the one hand – positive changes in agriculture and management, while on the other hand the absorptive power of non-agricultural labour markets which narrow down the possibilities of rural young people. The processes of generational exchange accelerate the internal polarisation of rural areas which will contribute both to greater emergence of modern agriculture and rural entrepreneurship, and expansion (especially in some regions – where the modernisation processes are poorly advanced) of poverty margins serviced by social transfers. The reduced opportunities of economic migration to EU countries, affected in some respects with much more serious downturn in the economy than Poland, can intensify social problems in rural areas. The inertness in reviving labour markets in agricultural regions will deepen the existing differences between the centre and the peripheral areas. Therefore it is so important to develop management strategies for large investments which would prevent the establishment and extension of differences between regions – equally important as the investments in the development of the digital network and infrastructure in rural areas which could not only change the occupational prospects of the young generation, but also reduce the mental, social and civic exclusion thanks to the availability of such areas where the life of most urban young people happens.

10.5. Living abroad: young people's migrations and emigrations

Young people's migrations and emigrations are today no longer a political and media issue, although there have not been any significant changes in this respect. There are still a lot of young Poles who choose to live abroad. Going abroad is still an emergency plan for a majority of those who wait to start their independent adult life. Returns home are much more rare.⁴⁷ However, the context has changed. Firstly, the political situation in Poland, which a few years ago made migration a specifically emotional phenomenon. Secondly, the global economic crisis, which changed the philosophy of living abroad – both among emigrants and those planning to leave. However, it does not mean that the problem has disappeared.

Young Poles continue to go abroad searching for (better) jobs and better standard of living. Such factors as a desire to learn (curiosity of the world) and to have experience which their peers have, sometimes political reasons (young people speak of "bad atmosphere in Poland", "Polish hell", hopelessness). They seldom leave out of their own choice

47 See Chapter 3.

– it is rarely a positive choice. Many, especially earlier, surveys, attempted at showing that only highly talented and active – “better” – individuals leave Poland. But also other hypotheses start emerging, and according to them economic migration has become *an alternative for people who for various reasons had to a lesser or greater extent “suffered a failure” at home*.⁴⁸ These are mainly “shuttle” migrants who due to their failures on the national labour market are at risk of marginalisation, and by going into incomplete migration, they also condemn themselves to marginalisation in the host country. As they have double life and no roots here and there, they feel nowhere “at home”, in particular they can nowhere count on continued employment or promotion.⁴⁹ It is a very risky, and at the same time very probable hypothesis. Being a large scale phenomenon and with the spiralling feeling of suspension, it may be tantamount to the exclusion of a majority of the young generation from the mainstream of social life.

10.5.1. Migration and its life correlates

Economic migration is unquestionably one of the most distinguishing features of this generation. It can be estimated⁵⁰ that nearly two thirds of young Poles, currently living in Poland, have spent a longer period of time (two months and more) abroad. In the background of those who have not such experience they have better income, better education, higher consumerist aspirations. They have better standard of living (more often have their own houses, new flats). However, there is another category of people with migration experience – those whose visits abroad have brought little changes. They still live with their parents or in a rented room, they have uncertain professional situation and not good prospects of independent life. They come back home because they are disappointed with living abroad (25%) or because they have achieved their objectives and could see better prospects in Poland (35%) or because they missed their family (36%). Nevertheless, going again abroad still forms part of a life plan of most people with such experience (Table 10.3). The perspective of going abroad is also existent among those who thus far have not been away for a longer period (21.6%).

Among people who have migrated, but are not interested in going abroad again, there are first of all those who can say they have succeeded – they have good and very good education, good income, their own house or flat, dependable jobs (mostly specialists, civil servants, freelancers), they know foreign languages. They have returned because of their obligations at home and because they think they can have a better life in Poland.

The lack of migration experience and consistently negative attitude to economic migration is declared by 29.8% of young people, among whom prevail rural young people with low cultural capital, uncertain professional situation and low income. They are passive, unwilling to change their place of residence and professional qualifications.

48 D. Osipowicz, *Marginalizacja społeczna migrantów* [Social marginalisation of migrants] [in:] E. Jaźwińska, M. Okólski (ed.), *Ludzie na huśtawce* [People on a swing], Scholar, Warsaw 2001, p. 382-409.

49 W. Łukowski, *Społeczny sens mobilności niepełnej* (biwalentnej) [Social meaning of incomplete (bivalent) mobility] [in:] E. Jaźwińska, M. Okólski (ed.), op. cit., p. 125-138.

50 Based on the survey *“Porzucona generacja” – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* [“Abandoned generation” – educational paths and reaching adulthood], own study of a population of 30-year-olds (N = 781) in 2008.

Table 10.3. Migration experience and attitudes among young people

Migrant groups	%
1. Have not been and are not planning to go abroad	29.8
2. Have not been, but are planning to go abroad (for an indefinite period of time)	6.1
3. Would like to go abroad again (for an indefinite period of time)	13.4
4. Would like to go abroad again (on a permanent basis)	2.2
5. Have been abroad, but do not want to go abroad again	48.5
Total	100.0

Source: Own study: *"Porzucona generacja" – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* ["Abandoned generation" – educational paths and reaching adulthood], 2008, a population of 30-year-olds.

Those who declare they are willing to continue their migration experience (Items 3 and 4 in the Table) are mostly residents of larger cities with a different (but rarely low) level of education, without (dependable) jobs, their own house or family. They declare they are ready for mobility and professional flexibility, they believe "in going abroad" and they are convinced that they will be able to have an easier and better life there. They go abroad due to the lack of an appropriate job at home, to test themselves, to escape from marginalisation.

Social characteristics of the migrating generation are complemented by civic approach. The greatest deficits of civic attitudes (low interest in politics as declared, non-participation in elections) are seen among immobile persons who declare they would like to go abroad and stay there (Items 1 and 4). "Shuttle" migrants are distinguished by their average level of involvement. Most advantageous characteristics of civic attitudes are recorded among those who having lived abroad, decided that they want to live in Poland. They show both high rates of interest in politics, participation in parliamentary elections and very mature views on the state and economy.

Different attitudes to migration correspond to different political sympathies of young people. Those who have not gone abroad and are not planning to do so relatively more frequently vote for PiS [*Law and Justice*], LiD [*Left and Democrats*] and PSL [*Polish People's Party*], thus the parties which focus in their programmes on social solidarity and social issues. The respondents with uncertain migration attitudes show different political sympathies, slightly greater for PO [*Civic Platform*]. Those returning home most often sympathise with PO, next with LiD and PSL, most seldom with PiS.

Different migration attitudes correspond to various views on political solutions. Those who are not interested in migration and have no such experience are mostly not satisfied with political changes. Also, they mostly prefer socialist solutions and have negative attitude towards privatisation. They mostly approve of authoritarian political solutions and are more frequently xenophobic. They have to a greater extent than representatives of the other categories cognitive problems in finding themselves in the surrounding reality.

“Shuttle” migrants, which also have critical views of the changes in Poland, have preferences closer to capitalist regime or hybrid solutions (bordering on socialism). Their attitude to democracy could be described as ambiguous (as it permits authoritarian solutions). They are not xenophobic, but they have problems with finding themselves in the Polish reality (they feel unadjusted).

The political profiles of those who decided not to go abroad any more deviate from the others. Those who returned home and declare they do not wish to go abroad again are mostly satisfied with the changes. They prefer capitalism or hybrid political solutions. They rarely see any benefits in socialism. They are mostly in favour of privatisation. They are also pro-democratic and more favourably disposed towards the plan of opening Poland to the West. They find themselves and feel quite well in the new social reality.

Economic migration abroad have become an almost universal element of the life strategies of young Poles. This perspective is only rejected by people who have a minimalist attitude to their life, lower level of education, who are passive. Most of the others who have gained professional experience abroad do not want to continue it. These are usually people who think their life is successful and have prospects of career in Poland. Importantly, any further migration practices are not only rejected by active people with ambitions of higher professional and social status, but also those showing greater civic maturity.

10.5.2. Migration attitudes among young people in education – who thinks of going abroad and who stays in Poland?

Do the youngest youths have similar migration attitudes/plans? This is a difficult question. They are differently verified in surveys and thus empirical data are rather incomparable. In 2006/2007, the peak year of migration, a migration plan in an indefinite future was declared – depending on the survey – by 60 to 80% of young people.⁵¹ The survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) in 2010 recorded the smallest percentage (11%), however, the relevant question concerned the year following the year of secondary school graduation.⁵²

If earlier trends⁵³ were to be extrapolated (which is not totally justified), nearly a half of young people (60%), who usually have mediocre educational careers, are unsure of their personal assets and future in Poland, for whom it would be necessary to go abroad, would be interested in temporary migration. People who declare they are ready to leave Poland on a permanent basis (13%), similarly as their older counterparts, form two different groups. These are – on the one hand – young people from families with high cultural capital, interesting educational careers, aspiring to an attractive professional status, and on the other hand young people at a disadvantage at the start

51 Question (for 19-year-olds): *Nowadays a lot of young people go abroad in search of work. Would you also like to do so?* – see K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie i nowy ustrój* [Young generation and the new political system], Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN), Warsaw 2010, p. 127-143.

52 *Młodzież 2010* [Youth 2010], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw 2011, p. 13-14. Question (for 19-year-olds): *You are going to graduate from secondary school next year and face the problem: what's next? What do you think you are going to do after you finish your school?*

53 See K. Szafraniec, *Młode pokolenie...* [Young generation...], p. 137 et seq.

and poorer education, often with no precisely defined plans for future. They are clearly under the spell of abroad and intrigued by the perspective of living in another country. The lack of a life plan, and at the same time awakened consumerist and social status orientations, weak relations with families and country seem to “naturally” induce these young people to go abroad, seen as a promised land compared to Poland.

Young people from families with high social and cultural status, certain of their educational success, with interesting and ambitious life plans, neither want nor intend to go abroad. Why? Apart from the certainty delivered by personal investments and capital, the feeling of safety and the network of social support guaranteed by the closest family, this group shows clear civic involvement which provides incentive and other cognitive codes in interpreting opportunities and challenges in their own country. These are also young people who care about Poland.

10.5.3. Young people’s migrations – an attempt at a balance

Contemporary migrations belong to phenomena which cannot be unambiguously assessed. It applies to individual as well as social costs of young people’s migration. It is difficult not to be “optimistic” and not see that going abroad is an opportunity (a positive life test in social and cultural contexts), but it is also difficult not to be “pessimistic” (mass emigration, especially of young people, cause a variety of non-beneficial phenomena – as a consequence we have a disadvantageous demographic balance, brain drain and waste, broken families, identification and emotional problems of immigrants, loss of an important political component in Poland).

The seemingly obvious issue of “benefits” such as transfer of financial means is also controversial. On the one hand greater and greater amounts are recorded which are transferred by emigrants to their families’ accounts in Poland – they support domestic budgets and increase the amounts spent on consumption, initiate small investments, purchase and renovation of houses, children’s education.⁵⁴ However, on the other hand, it is emphasised that transfers have also disadvantages. First of all they preserve the passivity of the Polish labour market – they exploit people working abroad, and members of their families at home become even more helpless as they grow dependent on transfers.

A lot of young Poles have been forced to go abroad due to the lack of perspectives or employment in their country. Even more young people in education declare that they are ready to leave Poland when it would be impossible to achieve some or all of their life goals. These numbers are unprecedented in the history of Polish migrations and show that after 2004 going abroad has become an essential element of life strategies of the whole young generation. This means exporting of large reserves of innovativeness abroad and far smaller opportunities of modernising the country against the background of the decreasing pressure of the baby boom population. Although a majority of those who return home declare that they are willing to remain

54 There is also the so-called multiplier effect – expenses on consumption drive the national demand, but also (e.g. through expenses on renovation and construction of houses) they contribute to creating new employment and generating additional financial resources – see P. Kaczmarczyk, J. Tyrowicz (ed.), *Współczesne procesy migracyjne w Polsce a aktywność organizacji pozarządowych w obszarach powiązanych z rynkiem pracy* [Contemporary migration processes in Poland and the activity of NGOs in areas related to the labour market], FISE, Warsaw 2008, p. 54.

here on a permanent basis (these are usually people with life and professional stability, advantageous status parameters, showing civic involvement), then quite a significant number of them (about 20%) see themselves as “shuttle” migrants, exposed to lack of roots and double marginalisation – here, at home, and there – abroad.

The reasons for such frequently observed pro-migration attitudes among young people are their material needs related to the specific features of the early life stabilisation (need for financial independence, housing needs) and consumerist aspirations integrated into their lifestyle to which this generation is strongly attached (comfort, safety, pleasure, attractive leisure activities). The reasons include structural limitations of the system, its inability to satisfy these needs due to the civilisation backwardness and lack of bold reforms.

Before 2004 this clash could have generated a serious conflict. The opening of EU labour markets for Polish citizens, which is mostly taken advantage of by young people, saves the system from troubles, but at the same time it deprives it of natural young resources which could enable an effective modernisation of the system against the background of the baby boom. In a reverse situation – loss of the potential represented by the young generation – returning young people to Poland, their migration experience gained at the border of different cultures and social worlds, positively correlating with their personal, status and civic profiles, are even more significant. They represent an important potential for changes.

In this context we should also take a look at citizens of other countries who come to work in Poland. Today there are not many of them. At the end of 2009 92 574 foreigners had valid residence cards. Their number grew by more than 10% compared to 2008. The interest in the Polish labour market increased even more. The data gathered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy show that 29 340 work permits were issued to non-EEA and Swiss foreigners in 2009 – over 60% more than in 2008. This increase was definitely favoured by the liberalisation of foreigner employment regulations in 2009. Nevertheless the employment of foreigners in Poland is marginal. They make hardly 0.3% of the total employed population.⁵⁵ These are mostly citizens of the Eastern European countries, towards whom Poles do not have positive attitudes. However, the less and less advantageous demographic balance will force us to change our attitudes and have a migration policy,⁵⁶ also in relation to the fact that within a period of 20 years we can become a country of net immigration.⁵⁷

10.6. Ideological, political and philosophical divides

The political divides in the generation of “Solidarność” [“Solidarity”], when it was young, resulted from very simple and clear identification: either you were “for a change” or “against it”, and this divide was reflected in the membership in the “Solidarność” trade

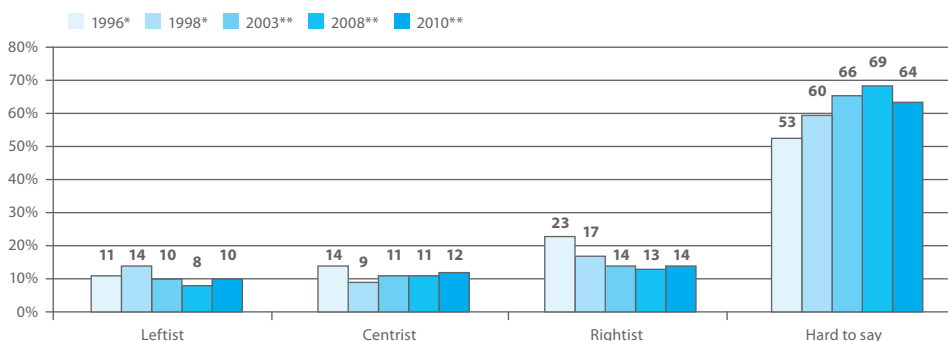
55 M. Szyłko-Skoczny, M. Duszczuk, *Polityka imigracyjna Polski. Szanse i wyzwania dla rynku pracy* [Polish immigration policy. Opportunities and challenges for the labour market], IPS UW, Warsaw 2011, p. 14-15.

56 Ibidem, p. 23-31.

57 Board of Strategic Advisors to the Prime Minister of Poland (ZDS PRM) (2011).

union or to industry unions (or to the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). Today, older Poles are equally strongly divided, and the lines of those divides are defined by nearly the same criterion – “for a change” (taking us away from the old statist solutions) or “against it” (towards traditional and statist solutions). On the one side there are religious traditionalists, poorly educated, economically delayed, living in provincial areas, showing rather emotional than rational attitude to politics, inclined to give in to stereotypes and susceptible to various sociological techniques, while on the other side there are educated people, relatively well-to-do, who mostly live in large cities and can be considered beneficiaries of changes, supporting the liberal-democratic option. A definite majority of the young generation largely lacks political clarity, is undecided, hesitant about its place on the political scene between anachronistic division into the left and right wings (Fig. 10.31).

Fig. 10.31. Political views declared by young people



Source: Surveys of the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS)* and the National Bureau for Drug Prevention (KBPN)**.

These ideas and identifications mean little to young people, as they do not have transparent connotations.⁵⁸ They originate from the old division of the world into the eastern and western camps. The political axis widely misused in the eastern camp was the opposition: Leftist – Rightist, where being leftist was referred to the “better” socialist East and identified with equality and social justice, progress, etc. Being the rightist was a label for the capitalist, imperialistic and exploiting West. From the point of view of the western world (its ideology and social sciences) a different political construction was more important. Democracy and totalitarianism, where the former means a bulwark of freedom, the latter is a synonym of economic and political slavery.⁵⁹ Today in Poland, these definitions are completely mixed, and

58 Different views are formulated in relation to one’s (political and cultural) identification, and in relation to economic solutions – see P. Boski, *O dwóch wymiarach Lewicy-Prawy na scenie politycznej i w wartościach politycznych polskich wyborców* [About the two dimensions of the Left and Right Wings on the political scene and in political values of Polish voters] [in:] J. Reykowski (ed.), *Wartości i postawy Polaków a zmiany systemowe. Szkice z psychologii politycznej* [Values and attitudes of Poles and system-wide changes. Sketches on political psychology], Institute of Psychology at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IP PAN), Warsaw 1993, p. 52.

59 Ibidem, p. 49 et seq.

their continual presence in the public discourse only impedes the crystallisation of political orientations of young citizens. The politically defined young people more often opt for the liberal and democratic project (more often support the continuation of political changes), but also the traditional and statist project have supporters among them.

The factors which cause the greatest differentiation between political orientations, philosophical and ideological views are education and religiousness, especially in terms of frequency of attendance. The role of education can already be seen at the stage of secondary school where young people, especially those in good general secondary schools, are clearly more interested in supporting the liberal-democratic project, and the clear gravitation of young people from basic vocational school to the traditional-statist project. In the case of young adults, the lines of divides run between university students and education drop-outs (employed and unemployed). In territorial terms, the substantial division can be found between the poorest, worse educated and more traditional province organised around local parishes, and the richer, better educated and more liberally oriented population of large cities. The strong involvement of the Church in politics, which is reflected in the views held by believers, unnecessarily project religious context onto the discussions and disputes in the democratic system, furthermore, instead of uniting, it creates deep divides. Although the religiousness of Polish young people and population of the largest agglomerations⁶⁰ changes, also of people with higher education, especially young population of Polish rural areas⁶¹ (surveys over the past 20 years show that the percentage of believers and regular church-goers is consistently decreasing, and in particular the number of people who go to church from time to time or have stopped going to church is on the increase, there are also more people who admit that they have their own way of being religious), however, rural young people, as compared to urban young people, are continue to show relatively greater devotion to religious practices – as a rule irrespective of their education⁶².

The greatest difference are observed in philosophical views and preferences concerning political solutions. The attitude towards the past, so exciting for the older generation, generates no emotions among young people – at most irritation because of the different priorities: for young people the future is important and all activities related thereto, the past is a burden which they mostly do not understand.⁶³ The legal regulation of abortion generates controversies. In 2010, for the first time, according to the survey of the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), the number of young anti-abortionists prevailed over the number of pro-abortionists. The in

60 From 2007 to 2009 the percentage of young population of the largest Polish cities, who did not go to church at all, was nearly identical to the number of those who went to church every Sunday – see *Dwie dekady przemian religijności w Polsce* [Two decades of religiousness changes in Poland], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw, BS/120/2009, p. 10-23.

61 Since the 1990s the percentage of those who go to church regularly has decreased by 21 points (from 86% to 65%) – *ibidem*.

62 *Ibidem*.

63 *Młodsze pokolenie o "Solidarności"* [Younger generation about the "Solidarity" movement], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw, BS/75/2010, see also: *Polacy o Magdalenie, okrągłym stole i o zdradzie* [Poles about Magdalenka, the round table and betrayal], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw, BS/101/2010.

vitro method is much more favourably viewed by young people, but it also has its opponents. The situation is similar with sexual relations (as described in previous chapters). All these issues are defined by the attitude towards religion, in particular the participation in services, as well as the place of residence and financial status of the family. Young residents of rural areas and people from families with lower financial status show the greatest restrictiveness in issues concerning morals and sex.⁶⁴

Significant differences in views among young people concern the political model which was to be implemented in Poland – the scope of acceptable impact of the Church on politics, development of European integration, rate of privatisation, Poland as a welfare state, etc.⁶⁵ However, young people rarely deny the reasonability of the changes in Poland, which does not mean that acceptance dominates. Just as in the case of political orientations, ambiguous, not precisely defined feelings prevail. The attitude to the Church is an exception – its over-excessive presence in the state (definitely critically assessed) – and democracy (it seems – on the one hand – unarguable value, on the other hand, a troublesome one). Its real form, representing constant tensions and paralysed reforms, causes in young people fatigue and declarative inactiveness. Such inclinations are in particular observed among younger people and people with lower level of education who participate in religious practices, live in smaller cities, and declare to have worse life prospects and difficulties with finding themselves in the reality, insecure and easily susceptible to political influences, if these refer to their resentments and promise better life.

The economic crisis, young immature democracy, open political conflict – all of them obscuring transparency of the world and its social rules – easily evoke the feeling of insecurity and being lost⁶⁶. They also generate strong social need for religious proselytism – new social faith which makes one free from the feeling of being lost and not redundant. In such situation strong leadership and membership in groups with strong *esprit de corps* gives hope for peace – a possibility of escape from difficult freedom into a sense of community which releases from independent thinking, decisions, relieves internal tensions and gives a soothing feeling of having found one's place in the world. As a result of social engineering, young people often provide favourable environment for authoritarian or fundamentalist groups and movements. They need integrating visions which not only help "understand" the world, point infallibly to a culprit or enemy, but also give hope for radically better future. As a memento we can quote the words spoken by one of the more insightful analysts of young people: *Old ideologists equipped with modern weapons could easily become torturers of mankind*⁶⁷.

Political correctness prevents (researchers, commentators) from speaking in plain words, nevertheless, both an analysis of the political situation in Poland and an analysis of the thinking structure (of some politicians and members of the society) should be a warning. Perhaps Poland is not at risk of authoritarianism, but certainly it

64 *Młodzież 2010. Raport z badań* [Youth 2010. Survey report], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), Warsaw, BS/120/2011, p. 123.

65 Detailed description in Chapter 8.

66 This is referred to as anomie in sociology.

67 E. Erikson, Identity, psychosocial [in:] *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Mc Millan & Free Press, New York 1968, s. 64.

is vulnerable in terms of its social-cultural and mental background, and the mechanism of its penetration of the political scene, observed in the quite recent past, advise particular caution. Authoritarianism is favoured by both macroeconomic factors, social traumas, risk of deprivation, loss of social status, and cognitive problems (inability to interpret the rules governing the society and politics – always strongly related to the level of cultural competences and education), feeling of social degradation, injustice in the world, insecurity. In Poland there are sufficiently many places where these features are accumulated to think about “playing it safe”. Provincial and rural areas are some of them.⁶⁸ Although they feature very explicit, positive generational changes, they still lack a sufficient system-wide support. The basic activities should, obviously, be targeted at the civilisation development of rural areas to change the life prospects of their residents. Notwithstanding, we would strive for urgent reduction of the rural areas subject to digital exclusion. Access to the Internet not only contributes to the accessibility of remote labour markets, but it also help open the mentality of young people and broadens their minds in terms of social participation. It should be noted that its lack corresponds to the exclusion from a certain symbolic universe which is jointly created by the other groups of young people – it prevents from being “up-to-date”, to understand what and how (using what language) speak the others, what they refer to, what they consider “trendy”, and what “lame”, why one party is “cool”, and the other is “crap”.

The use of ICT as an instrument to support the development of rural areas requires first of all an advanced telecommunications infrastructure, which changes over time, but is still underdeveloped compared to the requirements of a modern society.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, such investments in rural areas and smaller towns – due to their much smaller profitability, caused inter alia by low concentration of rural population and economic activities – are implemented more rarely and as a rule later compared to large urban agglomerations. As it would be difficult to expect large profits in short time, teleinformation corporations are not willing to invest in rural areas, which contributes to the limited accessibility of ICT to rural population. The most recent example of these negative practices in rural areas in nearly entire Europe⁷⁰ is the insufficient (limited by insufficient infrastructure) access to broadband Internet (whatever the access technology), the expansion of which would create new opportunities of solving problems related to the constantly limited access of rural population to employment (thanks to teleworking) and education (e-education), and also a variety of services (e.g. related to civic or cultural participation) which cannot be satisfied to a sufficient degree now.⁷¹

68 K. Szafraniec, *Autorytaryzm polskiej wsi. Perspektywa socjalizacyjna* [Authoritarianism in Polish rural areas. Socialising perspective], “Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 2005, no. 2.

69 *Raport o stanie rynku telekomunikacyjnego w Polsce w 2010 r.* [Report on the telecommunications market in Poland in 2010], Office of Electronic Communications (UKE), Warsaw 2011.

70 L. Laschewski, Boundless Opportunities? Visions and Setbacks to Digital Learning in Rural Areas, “Eastern European Countryside” 2008, no. 14, p. 79-91.

71 A. Kaleta, *Społeczeństwo informacyjne na obszarach wiejskich* [Information society in rural areas] [in:] M. Szczepkowska-Pustkowska, M. Lenartowska-Zychowicz, A. Kożyczkowska (ed.), *Przestrzenie teraźniejszości i ich społeczno-edukacyjne sensy* [Spaces of the present and their social and educational meanings], Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2010, p. 236-245.

10.7. Instead of an ending: adults and young people – generational solidarity

The analyses discussed in this report concern young people, nevertheless it is the idea of generationality, generational exchange that set the essential line of thinking. How do adults and young see themselves and know about each other? What are their mutual relations? This classic opposition (adults – young people) could as well be substituted with a wider one: young people versus society, and a question could be asked who presents a greater problem for whom. From the perspective of an average Joe Doe, there is only one way to answer this question: young people, of course! Why? It is simple, the habit of complaining about young people is so common and deeply rooted that it also concerns its victims. Because how can we not give in to the stereotypes which are expressed by everybody and which exist everywhere? One cannot be perfect enough for parents and teachers. One cannot be satisfied enough and patient enough for politicians. One is always shocking, helpless or dangerous for journalists. Everywhere – as far as the eye can see – is reinforced the negative stereotype of young people. Statistical records show an upward trend in aggression, emotional and behavioural disorders. The number of antisocial behaviours is growing, punishable acts committed by young people are growing more and more brutal. We have discussed these phenomena in our report. The list of complaints about young people does not end here. They are accused of being non-ideological, radically pragmatic and oriented towards selfish behaviour, of loving money and seeking pleasure, of avoiding responsibility and mature life obligations, of going away from religion, lack of morals, of drinking too much alcohol, thinking too little about future, abusing drugs, disregarding authority of adults, not caring two hoots about politics. The list of these complaints could be as well continued. All of them show unmistakably that young people **POSE a serious problem for the society.**

But let us take a look from a different perspective – is it not so that **the society POSES a problem for young people?** Such – reversed in relation to the previous – perspective seems to be quite sensible in the light of the information presented in this report. In various papers concerning young people we find descriptions referring to a lost, cheated or abandoned generation. It is an important fact that together with moralising labels, which accuse young people of isolation, consumerism and political inactivity, there are also such which accuse the society and culture of overburdening young people with too much responsibility for their own fate and biography. Earlier in the report we have indicated various important circumstances which are hardly exposed in public discourse and which cause unexpected problems for young people. The first one was related to the question what – values and models – are inculcated in young people. The second condition is related to the question whether the society, which promotes a definite system of values, guarantees young people a relatively easy and equal access to them. The third condition is related to the specific features of modern civilisation and their consequences for mental condition of young people. The fourth condition is related to the intergenerational dialogue and educational support for young people – do they really exist?

As we have many a time indicated the socialisation of contemporary young people happens in the world of success and consumerism which – differently as for the older generation – is already in existence, created, natural, has no alternatives. The cultural offer of the contemporary world (status, professional career, money, colourful lifestyle) has already effectively seduced Polish young people at the start of 1990s. Although their idea of success is far more conventional than that of western young people, the aspiration to a better and more colourful life as well as pressure on civilisation advancement are enormous. Polish young people conform to that model in terms of their educational career, educational investments, life strategies.

Good education is considered a prerequisite of success in most cases. The enrolment rates on top of the educational ladder have increased in Poland more than four times since the early 1990s. Even in the period of the greatest educational boom each secondary school graduate could have a chance of getting into a university. However, such extensive accessibility of higher education did not bring an era of happiness among students. Mass „consumption” of higher education is not reflected in the quality of education and professional career. Nevertheless, education continues to remain the most effective warranty of success. Early school leavers either employ the strategy of “sour grapes” or use socially condemned methods to achieve what they are persuaded to achieve by the culture of their own society – goods, enjoyable life. Only a few are minimalists and “let go”.

Very often representatives of the older generation hurl abuse at young people who “want too much” and who “have too much”. In their (adult) world young people had not created such problems – they listened to their parents, respected teachers, had much more modest requirements, did not take drugs and see psychologists.⁷² They forget that the world in which young people grow up, as a post-traditional, post-industrial, post-liberal, post-economic, post-modern, information, networked environment is much more “disordered” and much less transparent, unforeseeable than that in which they had grown up. It has also been left by the then people of authority – all who in years gone by educated (young people), today have made room for others.

These circumstances are trifling only on the surface. They put both generations in a difficult situation. Young people enter the new reality in their own opinion „without any problems” and do not over-dramatise. It is their everyday reality and their „normal conditions”. Having to rely on themselves (and the „do-it-yourself” strategy) they show astonishing determination in their desire to be included in the mainstream of changes and winning their life their own way. A substantial majority of them succeeds, but there are more and more people who pay an outrageous price. Many of them cannot cope with the exorbitant requirements of the society, cultural pressure to be successful, non-transparency of social norms, lack of interest and understanding on the adults’ part, weaker familial relations, and ballast of their parents’ problems. These problems are reflected in the statistics which unanimously record that young people abuse alcohol, drugs, are aggressive and violent, suffer from depression and neurosis. Therefore, before we take on a mentor’s tone, we should first notice that their situation is really not enviable.

Adults – although they do not understand most of the young people’s problems – do their best to support children in their aspirations to success, take care of material

72 It is an example of a priest’s response in a discussion about young people.

essentials, make every effort so that their children do not have worse clothes, meet with inappropriate people, so that they learn and do not have problems at school. Is it enough? How do intergenerational relations look like? Except for pathological cases (family abuse⁷³), for years their relations have been – as a rule – correct. At the end of the 1990s we have recorded a great compatibility between the assessments of mutual relations and understanding.⁷⁴ This compatibility concerned first of all the basic, mutually defined objectives, aspirations and life desires.⁷⁵ The list of complaints, resentments, comments was strikingly short. Adults were concerned about the increase in aggressive behaviours among young people, crisis of models of authority, low ambitions and excessive hedonism: young people suffered from lack of understanding and trust on the adults' part. Adults are jealous of young people's better opportunities in life, young people of adults' independence, self-sufficiency and life stabilisation. Adults sympathised with their children over the difficult start into life, burden of responsibility, decisions to be taken, unclear future; children sympathised with parents over the adult problems and age which in their opinion means the end (What can you do when you are 40?). The criticism of intergenerational relations was rare and more often among young people (but even then it comprised hardly 20% of the respondents). Today only 35% of young people have no critical comments about their parents. Young people are most annoyed by their parents' "lack of understanding", "excessive interference", "conflicts", "mentality and views", "excessive protectiveness", "belief that they are always right". More than half of young people complain about these attributes of parents. Even worse views are held of teachers – 70% of young people complain about a mental barrier in mutual contacts.⁷⁶

What is important, the deficit of „juventologic” competences are reflected not only in the views of young people or consciousness of their parents. Its lack is also confirmed by the analysis of media materials, statements of educationalists and representatives of environments working with and for juveniles, draft projects and proposed solutions. All of them are marked with „moral panic” and prevalence of therapeutic-training discourse (inclination of adults to moralise, „improve”, „rectify” young people allegedly at risk and unaware of dangers). At the same time the knowledge of adults about young people, their needs, problems, leisure activities is alarmingly discrepant with what young people really feel, where they spend time, what they need.⁷⁷ Adults have not the slightest idea of many problems. They prefer not to discuss the other. They see what they want to see, and they interpretations often avoid the perspective important for young people.

73 This issue has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

74 These are dynamic surveys, tracking the generation 1957 and biological children of the representatives of this generation. In 1998 they comprised 1028 individuals (parents and children) – see K. Szafraniec, *Zmiana społeczna i konflikt pokoleń. Refleksje po-Mannheimowskie* [Social change and generational conflict. Post-Mannheim reflections], „Przegląd Socjologiczny” 2001, no. 3.

75 See Chapter 1 of this report.

76 Own surveys of 19-year-old young people: *Porzucona generacja – ścieżki edukacyjne i wchodzenie w dorosłość* [“Abandoned generation” – educational paths and reaching adulthood] (N = 1096), 2007.

77 B. Fatyga, P. Zieliński, A. Hupa, *Warszawskie badanie stylów życia młodzieży. Narkotyki w kulturze młodzieży miejskiej. Koncepcja i wyniki badań* [Warsaw survey of young people's lifestyles. Drugs in the culture of urban young people. The concept and survey results], OBM UW, Warsaw, May 2008.

The example of such “discrepant” interpretation perspectives is young people’s language - which becomes more and more expressive not only due to the presence of vulgarisms (well-known “four words” with an infinite number of mutations), penetrating Anglicisms („power” [power], „sorki” [sorry], „biforka” [before party], „after” [after party], „lajtowo” [easy]) or short forms („sie ma” [hiya], „spoko” [chill], „pozdro” [take care], „oki” [all right], „nara” [cya]). It is a language full of various neologisms which give emphasis (things are: „super” [nice], „czadowe” [awesome], „full wypas” [full monty], „odjechane” [far-out] or: „lipne” [lame], „badziewiaste” [crap], „obciachowe” [cheesy]), to express irony („stary” [oldie], „wapniak” [fogie], „teletubiś” [teletubby], „pasztet” [fugly], „pokemon” [newfag]) or to give an original name („ogarnąć” [comprende], „wbijać” [hammer in], „palić Janka” [acting stupid], „palić Piotrka” [being cheeky], „też cię kocham” [and same to you too], „ciacho” [hot], „ściema” [bullshit]).⁷⁸ Young people’s language „takes shortcuts” not only in linguistic terms – syntax, style, syntactics copy the patterns functioning in the Internet and mass media. While adults complaint about this as they see them as a hazard to the culture of Polish language (which is full of weeds and mistakes)⁷⁹ and for young people themselves (which loses the ability of independent, clear expressing one’s thoughts,⁸⁰ becomes more and more obscene and grows linguistically wild⁸¹), young people think there is more to it. They use language to express themselves – their desire to be adult, their distinctive features, resourcefulness, attitude to the world, rebel. They are unconventional, non-stereotypical, they look for their own way of life and functioning in the world. *They do not want to ask adults about everything. They want to have something of their own, at least this language which is non-comprehensible for older people. And although sometimes it is incomprehensible, vulgar and sloppy, it is their showcase and supports mutual relations*⁸².

These two standpoints – represented by adults and young people – show two different ways of understanding one and the same phenomenon. The point is not to contrast one with the other, but to show that the perspectives represented by young people and adults do not overlap. Adults first assess something, give out a cry of despair and pin a label. Young people show that it is rooted in something and has a definite sense. They will say to one another or to their parents “see ya” or “bye”, but they will not talk this way in official situations in school, in an office or at university. They know that if they did, they would be considered ill-mannered or grotesque.

There are many other phenomena which evidence the discrepancy between the understanding of young people (the whole report illustrates in a sense this problem). In the public debate we observe a dangerous attempt of imposing on the society

78 <http://www.miejski.pl>.

79 A.I. Wróblewski, *Polszczyzna nam się kudli czyli Kaczor Donald z hamburgerem w dziobie* [Polish language is going to the dogs i.e. Donald Duck with a hamburger in its mouth] [in:] J. Miodek (ed.), *O zagrożeniach i bogactwie polszczyzny* [About the risks and richness of the Polish language], Towarzystwo Przyjaciółki Polonistyki Wrocławskiej, Wrocław 1996.

80 M. Kubowicz, *Współczesna edukacja a język młodzieży* [Contemporary education and young people’s language]. <http://www.jezykowedyematy.pl/2010/11/malgorzata-kubicz-edukacja-a-jezyk-mlodziezy/>, downloaded on 3 August 2011.

81 Interview with Piotr Fąka: *Uwaga przekleństw! Cztery słowa i rozmowa* [Attention: vulgar words! Four words and a conversation], Wyborcza.pl of 27 June 2011, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,9846793,Uwaga__przekleństwa__Cztery_słowa_i_rozmowa.html, downloaded on 3 August 2011.

82 Statement by a secondary school female graduate.

both their false representation (as threatened, unsure, "lost" and helpless), and a style of solving their problems (controlled by adults, including their perspective, their ideas of the world and as they consider appropriate). In the meanwhile young people seem to have a better grasp of the world in which they live and with which they must cope, take decisions relevant to their own future. They want to be responsible and independent. They can face their own problems and new challenges. They need support and good advice (perhaps even more than before), nevertheless it cannot be a one-way message, based on a "condominium" of the older with the older who know better, do not trust young people and are afraid of confronting their point of view. Today, the older should open to young people, as the sin of stereotypes and lack of knowledge is on their part.

The future, which will belong to young people, for the next several decades will still host representatives of both generations and will require not only mutual understanding, but also intergenerational solidarity, very difficult to realise in the conditions of a crawling economic crisis and demographic imbalance. The age of prefiguration – a world-to-be-created (by young people) – which in the 1970s was prophesied by an American anthropologist, Margaret Mead,⁸³ In Poland it is just coming, and this means both many challenges and many problems. Their burden cannot be carried by the older generation. It is not also obvious that it will be carried by the young generation. In the entire report we have shown them to be a strong and demanding, ambitious generation. However, it is also a normal generation, i.e. internally divided, differentiated, which comprises both innovators and those who drive changes, there are followers and conventional ones, but there are also dawdlers and those living on the margin of social pathologies. There are advocates of building a modern society based on democratic procedures and there are young people tired with democracy which is not working for them. The future seems to offer multiple opportunities, but also a variety of difficult problems which force us to redefine many essential issues, including the function and role of the state, economy, civic society, and presumably successful life and personal happiness.

83 M. Mead, *Kultura i tożsamość. Studium dystansu międzypokoleniowego* [Culture and identity. The study of intergenerational distance], PWN, Warsaw 1978.

Recommendations for public policies

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT THE YOUTH WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE AND IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT THE YOUTH.

1. For many reasons, it is worth to (and one should) notice the issues related to the youth in policy-making and public decisions, and also the issues related to conditions of the young generation's entering the adult life.

In the first period of transformation, broad possibilities related to development of professional career opened before the young, educated people. However, it was to an enormous extent related with the effect of entrepreneurship boom as well as educational boom created independently by the youth. The range of support of public institutions was limited (which forced independence and adaptiveness). Only in recent years, as a matter of fact already after the first stage of entering the market by the second post-war baby boom, state activities more widely covering various dimensions of the youth generation's functioning became visible.

Parental rights of employees were improved, a telework employment form was disseminated, maternal leaves were extended and the so-called paternity leaves were introduced, support for parents on parental leaves was increased, the model of establishment of nurseries and kindergartens was simplified, as well as their financing by work establishments, new forms of care of children up to three years old were admitted by supporting the employment of nannies – all with the aim of better combining obligations, family aspirations, and professional ambitions of young people. Childbirth standards and new-born healthcare conditions were improved, new regulations in the field of counteracting domestic violence were introduced. At the same time, a great offer for children and youth became the "Orliki" programme, thanks to which 1,500 new pitches have been already opened, which successfully result in dissemination of sports among the youngest. Better conditions for growth of participation in pre-school education were created, also in rural areas, new classes and education methods were prepared for 6-year-olds (children starting education), as well as conditions for combining education and fun under the "Radosna Szkoła" ("Cheerful School") programme. Equalisation of opportunities and minimisation of social differences is connected with meal sponsoring programmes (including also promotion of healthy food) and scholarship programmes. Effects of the education reform of 1999 brought about a significant improvement in quality of education, which is measured by PISA indices. The educational boom at the highest level was maintained, the scholarship system is undergoing rationalisation – also for PhD and DSc students, we already have made incentives for studying majors particularly important for development of the economy (scholarships on "ordered" studies). The possibility of studying abroad was created for young people thanks to the utilisation of European programmes, and there are special projects which are supposed to support the top 500 young scientists and managers. Programmes of various types support the professional start of graduates, and even in times of the downturn, the unemployment rate among young people is two times lower than 5-7 years ago.

The list of adopted initiatives and efforts is long, which does not mean that it exhausts all the possibilities of solving problems the young generation must face in

their life. Also, an important question arises, whether the approach to solving matters of young generation is of comprehensive character?

This report puts in order the state of knowledge related to the young generation in many dimensions of its functioning, which became possible thanks to the special seminar initiated by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister in 2010. The seminar was attended by representatives of various scientific fields, but also by activists – animators of youth movements. Discussions, analyses of individual topics, deepened research, comparisons of European and global data – resulted in remarkably rich characteristics of problems of the young generation. The reading of this report, coordinated in its full version by Professor Krystyna Szafraniec, leads to many conclusions. However, participants of this common enterprise considered advisable not to confine to conclusions. Thus, on the basis of characteristics of the situation of the young Poles' generation as well as conclusions stemming from the report, after exchanging remarks and opinions, assumptions were started to be formulated, and in consequence, recommendations for actions to be adopted were prepared. We wished to translate the result of reliable analysis and diagnosis into recommendations for public policies.

The document as a whole has also a practical dimension. It is even more important, and may prove to be more efficient in implementation, as there is a consistence visible between the recommendations of this report and the whole new comprehensive system of government's strategic programming. For the future of the country, if one thinks of a long-term development, what is important is a time horizon covering one generation ahead. A horizon such as in "POLAND 2030" document and in its new, implementation version, which is already a governmental project – "POLAND 2030. THIRD WAVE OF MODERNITY". A supplement is constituted by the Medium-term Country Development Strategy – 2020, as well as 9 integrated horizontal strategies. The actors of changes have a particular place in this programme as a whole. One of the strongest and most important generations of Poles is precisely the new one.

2. It is obvious, that from the point of view of developmental challenges of the world and Europe, addressing the demographic issue is of key importance. The reason is simple – the majority of highly developed societies are ageing, but also in many relatively poor countries the share of young generation in the whole population (which manifested itself during the Arab Spring) runs at the level of 50-65%. It seem therefore of key importance that the generational dimension become one of the basic dimensions in terms of development scenarios and strategies to be designed. Its essence must lay in concurrence of addressing and resolving problems of solidarity of a kind between generations, for the very purpose of strengthening the labour market by way of creating conditions for better entrance, but also for leaving the market later, which means longer professional activity. In result, a higher labour potential of various generations of Poles will be maintained, and at the same time, biggest civic and consumer potential.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Make the generational dimension a key one for the development strategies of the world, Europe, countries, and in our country, a key dimension of the

perspective “POLAND 2030. THIRD WAVE OF MODERNITY” – in order to provide, by means of comprehensive approach, a possibility for improvement of the life start conditions of the youth and at the same time to create conditions for old age activity and so-called silver economy.

3. Why the report “YOUTH 2011” prepared by us is so important? For what reasons the document about the Polish young, broadly understood generation, including various generational circles, is so important?

Sound knowledge about young generation, identification of its problems and policy focused on the youth are important for development of any country. It is confirmed by the OECD, European Commission, ILO, UNDP reports and suggestions of the World Bank, contained in many documents. In Polish case however, we deal with a phenomenon which is distinctively extraordinary and significant – we are a country from the group of developed countries, where paradoxes of demographic challenges concentrate in a possible clash or solidarity of the first and the second post-war baby boom. A clash or cooperation of the two booms reveals an additional dimension to the paradox – a possible trap of the two booms, identified a dozen or so years ago as a threat of pushing out “the old” from the labour market by “the young”, or blocking of “the young’s” place of development by “the old”, which may always pose a risk of a conflict. But it is already visible today, that from the demographic point of view, it is more important to find a positive, amicable solution – workplaces for the youth, but at the same time longer activity of the older. The “Solidarity” generation, which slowly leaves the labour market (a process that within a dozen or so years from now is going to get stronger), will be replaced by those who was born from the mid-70s to the second half of the 80s. In a broader perspective, also younger siblings of those who created the final group of the boom count here. These different generational circles of the young generation are characterised by a specific, unique experience.

It is an experience of change, or rather enormous explosion of changes of various types. The status and situation of their parents have been decomposed, the political system of the country has changed with all the consequences, from development of democracy up to the different character of public debate, shaped not only within the order of civil liberties, but also under pressure of the conflict induced in media for marketing purposes. The market and market economy were created, with strong consumer patterns, with its opportunities but also pathologies as well as impossibility to resolve all public problems. The transformation crashed and combined with modernisation, cultural changes crashed and combined with technological ones. The young Polish generation has been the first in the history of the country for hundreds of years, which in relation to the leaders of global changes should not have a feeling of educational or technological gap. The explosion of the great change opened opportunities before the youth, but it also generates problems. Young people of the present day change themselves under the influence of a changing world – and also change the world in order to further change themselves. Living in freedom (both political and market one) made “ME” the planning centre of one’s own biography. However, the individualism of the young generation has all the traits to meet the sense of community and to co-occur with cooperation skills, which is important for development of social capital.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

From the point of view of developmental strengths and the experience of change, it is indeed the young generation of Poles, who have all the traits to not only – as their predecessors – change the systemic model, but also to lead the country towards a future based on new competitive advantages, to manage a really radical civilizational leap (finally beyond all the world-view or political differences). In resolving various problems and taking challenges, we should bet on the youth.

4. The key achievement of the young generation is a revolutionary change in the structure of education of Polish people. Nearly 5 times more students than 20 years ago, and nearly 2.5 times more persons with higher education in productive age, are results of the educational boom.

Today, the education is a factor which differentiates socially much more than other factors determining the status and place in the social hierarchy.

On the one hand, it is an expression of growing social aspirations and a sense of opportunity to change one's own situation. On the other hand however, all barriers to bringing such intensions into existence become visible, related with low cultural and material capital of families of origin, and also with weaknesses of the educational system, clumsily levelling opportunities and not fully focused on head hunting.

It reveals then a field of possible, well thought-out intervention of the state. It is obvious that the contemporary development requires selective intervention, focused on certain areas, and first of all on efficiency, good addressing, and high rate of return from investments incurred with a view to the public welfare.

The young generation has smartly and adaptively chosen educational strategies. At the first stage it was connected with a conviction that higher education is "a ticket" to better professional career, and better professional career guarantees improvement of one's fortune and status (a profitability criterion combined with aspirational one!). In effect, there was a focus on fulfilling higher education requirements without any regard to quality, which in the first period was accepted on the labour market because of the need to obtain the energy of the youth with higher education. Presently, we witness negative consequences related with higher education of a low quality or education not actually adjusted do the requirements of the labour market (deficit of engineers, oversupply of management and marketing specialists, etc.). Besides, the weaknesses of educational preparation at early stages also tell on. A low level of participation of 3-5-year-olds in education does not allow faster levelling of differences in cultural capital inherited from the family of origin. There are still differences in terms of education between rural and municipal areas, especially between different types of schools. Poorly developed digital competences in education, and teachers unable to take up the role of mentors, masters for the emerging creative class¹ – does not allow building advantages for the future in changing economy. Lack of good connection between the school system and the economy weakens the professional preparation, however it may be already seen today that educational strategies of young people from families with lower cultural capital are more and more oriented towards vocational education. The youth invest in education for a long time, fulfilling their own aspiration, but weakening the professional

1 R. Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*, Penguin Group, New York 2004.

start in result. One should then consider – without any prejudice to aspirations and vocational education pursuers – how to improve the efficiency of obtaining vocational skills in relation to the bachelor's degree. In many occupations it would be desirable to lift limitations for entry into vocational practice.

Why the education, in economic and cultural terms, is so important now? Formerly, the symbol of entering the adult life was starting a family. Today – a condition for starting the adult life, achieving something, which is very important for the youth: the autonomy – is starting to work. What work it would be, in what way achieved and what course of professional career of a young man or woman it will provide, depends both on the result of education, as well as on gained skill of lifelong learning, in various ways, also with the use of models and informal techniques. In order to execute these tasks, it is necessary to make the modern offer of the educational system comprehensive.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

It is necessary to create conditions so that each young person have access to any educational path selected by them, which requires implementation of a policy for equalisation of opportunities by way of making it possible for each child from 3 years of age up to participate in obligatory education, and also personalisation of teaching processes in order to stimulate the development of persons filling in the gaps or highly talented.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

It is necessary to make it possible to obtain digital competences at school (digital educational revolution is connected with the “klasa laptopowa” (“notebook class”) project, which requires relevant preparation of teachers, equipment and access to fast, broadband Internet at schools).

RECOMMENDATION 5:

One should create efficient professional consultancy services at lower secondary school and substantially improve and modernise vocational education so that it collaborate with the economy, which will increase its quality and attractiveness for the youth.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Improvement of efficiency and quality of studies is important, as well as development of scholarship systems with a simple formula (a credit for student credit book), scholarships for eminent students (to make it also possible for the best students to study at foreign universities) and for post-doctoral scientists. Also greater support for foreign internships and for foreign students staying in Poland is necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

The essence of continuation of educational reforms is decreasing territorial differences, and thus lack of cohesion in the access to high quality education, and decreasing the role of burdens stemming from a weak stimulation on the part of the family. Polish schools should show fairly higher ability to work out educational added value.

5. An extraordinary important element for the young generation entering the adulthood is improvement of the education-labour market transfer. Until the middle of the first half of the 21st century, persons with higher education, who search for employment, easily gained an advantage over non-educated youth. Today, such relation still exists – in spite of all it is easier to find a job for a person with higher education, even if it takes much time (up to 1 year). But the problem of professional start of the youth means not only the unemployment risk (which is relatively at the same level in Poland, or even at a lower level, than in many other countries). The problem is first of all the uncertainty of the professional career path, evidently magnified by the educational system mismatch with the requirements of the ever-changing labour market.

The main source of uncertainty lays in such a large primacy of flexible employment forms, that they create all symptoms of a dual labour market. Temporary employment forms, contracts for specific work and mandate contracts, enforcing self-employment from time to time – give a chance to start in the profession (not always in line with the completed profile of education), but at the same time do not ensure satisfaction in the form of a consistent, profitable career path, participation in trainings, a relevant insurance or a guarantee of relevant revenues, or – which is often even more important – a guarantee of long-term revenue certainty, which would be a sign of creditability for the banks, especially important not in the case of consumer loans, but rather in the case of residential loans (a common phenomenon of loans from parents). Temporarily employed young people work longer (working time), for relatively lower remunerations, in uncertain conditions, with an interim period of employment and uncertainty to the future pension (low contribution).

What is worth underscoring in this context is the fact that the pension reform adopted in 1999 was an answer to challenges of the future and supported the sense of pension security of today's and future young people in the course of the whole professional career. If we understand the need of balancing the system (lower scale of explicit debt in the future) and burdening of different generations, we ought not to undermine and destruct this project any longer. It would be better to resolve it rationally, through higher efficiency and development of conditions for additional insurance within the 3rd Pillar, which would be profitable and available as early, as it is possible.

All phenomena conducive to the uncertainty are dangerous. They limit the type of professional start, within which achieving of financial independence is perceived as a sign of adulthood. The inability to adopt "the adult role" determines decisions about relationships and having children – postponing them significantly (it is not the only reason, of course).

But the strength of aspirations is big enough to make the strategies of adapting to any conditions only for the sake of a work and revenues stronger than temptations to withdraw, of frustration or defiance. Young people seeks refuge in the so-called NEETs (not in education, employment, or training; it is the case throughout the whole Europe). They withdraw into excessively prolonged living with parents, partially depend on them – so-called "basement dwellers" or "parasite single" (a phenomenon which intensifies also in Europe). There is a distinct correlation visible between "nesting" and temporary employment and poverty risk. However, in significant majority it is the strength of aspirations which generates the mobility towards searching for work: trips from rural to municipal areas, from small cities to agglomerations, or a great wave

of foreign migrations (especially intense after accession to the EU), which results in dualism of life and belonging and on the one hand, brings about opportunities stemming from the meeting of cultures and experiences (a positive result of cultural melting pot), while on the other, it brings about the risk of alienation.

A flexibility of the labour market is necessary for social development and economic growth, for productivity, macroeconomic effects. However, a question arises on the employment stabilisation path, on how to combine the necessary flexibility of the professional start with obtaining, after some time, ever higher employment stability (whereby what we have in mind here is not a fixed workplace at one workshop, but work stability and social protection).

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Programmes of Active Labour Market Policy financed from the Labour Fund should not be limited and should be made more flexible so that it would be possible to employ graduates in local governments in order to implement task projects, or to employ students during specialist vocational training periods. In parallel, also a compulsory employment for a longer period of time should be introduced, after the period of internship.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Legal conditions should be strengthened in order to make the seasonal employment (given the consent of both parties: the employee and the employer) cyclic and make it possible to treat it as an element of stability, which would result in an increase of creditworthiness of the employee in the eyes of creditors.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

Flexibility of requirements related with telework should be enhanced, so that this form of employment could be developed to a greater scale, also for mothers staying on maternal leave, with certain rights vested in them due to maternal leave retained.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

A model of promotion of innovative entrepreneurship should be created by increasing incentives for innovative start-ups by way of earmarking relevant grants for this purpose, which – when obtained by young micro-entrepreneurs – will allow them to order research projects and implement innovative solutions.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Conditions should be created to guarantee, without significant increase in labour costs, a relevant social security to persons employed within atypical employment forms.

6. A particularly important issue is noticing, in the characteristics of situation of the young generation, matters related with the changing role of women. Aspirations and ambitions of young women grow, which is visible in results of the PISA studies related

to reading literacy, stronger pressure on obtaining higher education and matching requirements related with the growth of economic significance of services. Already today, there are by 700-800 thousand women more with higher education than men. And despite limitations and barriers related with unequal treatment (lower average wages, promotion blocking, underestimation of professionalism, which result in creation of various types of discriminating practices), there are enormous achievements visible in the scope of improvement of social condition of women.

Patterns of searching for and selection of partners change, from such where material status was decisive, into patterns where the mutual cultural capital is more important (which indirectly increases the trend of being a single). Strong aspirations cause that mobility and adaptiveness of young women is higher than men, which shows itself in migrational choices (the main impact of relatively constant migration after 2004 included young women with higher education). In result, the demographical structure of population of rural and small municipal areas has changed, and there is strong competitiveness and professional competition in the group of young women.

On the other hand however, the biggest waves of inflows into the professional inactiveness area are visible in this very group. It is caused either by an excessive burden of household duties, excluding from the labour market, or by inability to find balance between work and family functions, or a low – due to low education – attractiveness for employer. The reverse of strong aspirations and brilliant careers of women may also be constituted by equally strong threats of exclusion from the social processes and labour market.

Growing independence of women on the labour market and in public life is a key developmental and modernising factor. Improvement of conditions to more equal placing of women in the education system and on the labour market, along with the support for positive combining of private aspirations with professional ambitions, should then bring a multiplied developmental effect.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

Promote equal treatment of women and men, which means consistent fulfilment of actually existing law, in accordance with provisions related to the relevant share of women in various agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 14:

Disseminate new patterns of employment and development of working women, more adjusted to the changeability of the family life cycle, and adjusted to various types of education and professional opportunities of women (including also support in acquiring new qualifications by women who decide to return after a break to the labour market or women without a professional start, by way of special activation programmes financed from the Labour Fund).

7. Poland's inclusion into the circulation of world's development and transformations in 1989 brought a number of cultural changes. One of them is the family's subordination to deinstitutionalisation processes, postponing of the family life start (related with the need to enter the adulthood by obtaining a stable work and material autonomy)

or building partnerships focused on having children. In Poland we still have however a relatively low age ratio of entering into first marriages, a relatively lower amount of divorces when compared to the EU as well as a lower average age of giving birth (in Poland it is approx. 28.5, while in the EU – 30 years of age). Studies show a willingness to have children, declared at a high level, but also reveal fears stemming from the uncertainty of material conditions necessary to bring children up. Family and procreation strategies are thus fairly more sensible today. Also the forms of relationships differentiate more and more. Due to the realisation of various patterns of the love-sex relationship, a multitude of types of sexual and emotional activity grows in significance. In the past, the category of “love” we associated in the society with personal happiness and successful family life, while what is stressed today is the connection of this category with individual searching for intimacy patterns.

It does not change however the fact that we are at such a stage of customary and economic transformations that the preferences for the traditional family model as well as for partnerships and reversed model are equal (26% each), with a slight domination of semi-partnership model (both partners work, but the burden of household functions rests on the woman – 32%).

The concern about better quality of life is easily understandable. It is not surprising then, that on the one hand households of young people are better equipped than households of the remaining part of society, and that young partnerships fairly better cope with closing family monthly budgets than older society groups. Also the structure of distribution of expenditures is different, more oriented on post-material values, related with leisure time spending and balance between work and life, even if it is obvious that this situation does not concern equally all young families.

It is beyond all doubt that housing parameters in Poland are among the worst in Europe (area, standard, number of rooms per person, exploitation costs) – and that they do not meet aspirations of young generation, especially when we talk about poorer paid groups, which cannot count on credit support from parents. Also conditions of combining work and childcare are grossly unsatisfying (including a low level of elasticity of employer behaviours in the scope of adjusting the work organisation to the cycle of family needs of employees) as well as availability (in institutional and price sense) of childcare. Given the assumption of prolonging activity of persons aged 50-55+ it may be difficult in the years to come to further use services of a retired grandmother by young families, within the formula of a very early leave from the labour market.

All described dimensions of starting the family and of its existence in Poland dramatically show the dilemma between choosing satisfying life independence and starting a family. Proposed solutions must delicately build up the balance between institutional improvement and acceptance for changing cultural patterns of sharing a life, chosen by young generation.

RECOMMENDATION 15:

Promote and disseminate application of new solutions supporting flexible combining of professional work of various types with care functions (which should concern both changes in the Labour Code, as well as new attitudes of employers, investing thereby in balance of work and life of the employees).

RECOMMENDATION 16:

Increase practical availability of care of children up to 3 years of age by way of equipping already adopted legal solutions with financial conditions of implemented programmes and develop the formula of support for family by the family assistance.

RECOMMENDATION 17:

Put in practice solutions in the education system which will disseminate pre-school education at the target level of at least 90% of children in all three generations from 3 to 5 years of age, which will be conducive to equalisation of educational opportunities of children and will lower alternative costs borne by parents.

RECOMMENDATION 18:

Work out a new model of health care support for children at schools, by making available nurse care and improving quality of health prophylaxis (dental and organs of locomotion check-ups and counteracting tendency to obesity among children, which requires an organised and strong promotion of health nutrition).

RECOMMENDATION 19:

Introduce changes in the family benefits system to increase their availability in the real situation of poverty risk, but in connection with a support for getting out of poverty (in order to avoid a permanent trap of dependence on social benefits) as well as with orientation of main actions towards families with many children.

RECOMMENDATION 20:

Analyse possibilities of more focused support in favour of an increase of fertility rate by way of tax reliefs due to children on a greater scale – from third child in the family on.

RECOMMENDATION 21:

Develop promotions of cultural and mental changes, to improve acceptance for solutions supporting children and relationships of persons upbringing children, irrespectively of the formal aspect of relationship between partners.

RECOMMENDATION 22:

Introduce radical changes in care of disabled children in order to strengthen their developmental potential by way of a efficient education system (from kindergarten to university), making it possible for them to have independent life thanks to obtaining work.

RECOMMENDATION 23:

In order to improve housing conditions of the young generation, prepare a new programme to develop a better flat rental offer, and to organise flexible forms of temporary flat allocation from the social residential development

pool for the life start of young people with lower wages. One of goals and tasks of the programme will be also rendering available long-term loans with improved trust in creditability of young customers as well as possible guarantee support of the state, or creating conditions for availability of debt instruments supporting mortgage loan and obtaining thereof.

8. Deciding upon many dilemmas of professional and life start of the young generation is of key importance in terms of utilisation of the innovative potential of young people. Analyses of life orientations show that in the group of 19-year-olds, as many as 30% are characterised by an unconventional approach to their own aspirations and aims, they focus on sophisticated consumption and intend to achieve superior goals. In the older age group (young adults), there are by half fewer of them. And to be sure, when viewing this from the sociological point of view, this is a normal phenomenon, reoccurring in the history and in various countries. Nevertheless it is worth defining what are the actual conditions of confrontation of such ambitious attitudes with the reality of entering the adulthood, as well as which of innovative traits and potentials are worth of being especially developed, even given limited conditions for support.

After 20 years of transformations it is also visible that innovation of behaviours of young people in Poland does not consist in bringing out and increasing the rebel potential. It is rather flexible and creative adaptation and building of strategies making it possible to “fill the sails” and realise one’s own aspirations, including those related to consumption. They are of key importance for relevant defining of one’s own, individual goals, focused on the improvement of the quality of life. At the same time, they are of fundamental significance for making the households a really important stimulator of economic development and growth. The individual sense and the social sense meet with the economic sense in the area of modernly understood consumption. Today’s young generation (in a slightly different way than the older generation and the young people entering the adulthood just after 1990, who search a compensation for time of deficiencies in consumer patterns), when fulfilling the needs of material possession – “to have” – do no longer want to compensate the deficiency in a simple way, as they more and more commonly live in conditions of the society and economy of post-deficiency (with a more complex philosophy of consumption style choices).

It means than more and more often “to have” is changed to “to be” – to be in line with spreading post-materialistic models, which shift the centre of gravity of dominating social behaviours (while obviously not in all groups – there are many of them where simple consumerist compensation is still dominating and where owning goods is treated as a main determinant of one’s own dignity and value).

Participation in consumption creates aspirational energies; data from analyses and statistics show that the material condition enabling fulfilment of life needs improves. The offer of contemporary market is general and all efforts are made in order to make it available – fashionable products do not necessarily have to be expensive and hard to obtain, as they are often available and fashionable due to their uniqueness, eccentricity, niche character or because they are an imitation of expensive originals. As in the case of education – which differentiates socially and at the same time opens possibilities for levelling of differences – the same may be said as regards consumer patters addressed to young people and emerging among them: they differentiate, but

also make it possible to equalise statuses and condition. The latter however takes place only when young people have access to revenues, availability of independence due to work. Inequalities in consumption are directly dependent upon inequalities in wages, even if the scale of this dependence is fairly lower today due to the specificity of the current marketing offer.

An additional side effect is the “teenagisation” of consumer and cultural patterns in the generation of parents. With time, it may enforce their higher readiness for longer professional activity, so that they not depart in consumer terms from the mainstream when “teenagising” themselves.

Therefore, if the young generation of Poles – through participation in educational boom, and in the future through even bigger improvement of educational parameters and participation in the process of the great “digital impact” – have all what is needed to build new competitive advantages (by way of appreciating, in life terms, the value of work and professional career), then the strength of their innovation which will depend also on inspirations for life and work, derived from the quality of life and conditions for growth of creativity potential.

It is why we notice, in the modern development model, such strength of metropolises and metropolitan areas: as by creating metropolitan styles of life, organisation of business and space, they generate economic value added. Therefore, it is not only modern forms of work organisation, with the use of cooperation and communication technologies with access to knowledge (in macrovicinomics models²), which creatively transform the surrounding culture in a convergent construct (messages of various media permeating themselves), but also the way of spending of free time may decide, and certainly will in the years to come, about the growth of the new type of productivity, that is effects of building of new competitive edges.

Knowledge economy and leisure time are two dimensions of the same development trend, given all the reservations in respect of limited character of leisure time in conditions of such a strong orientation towards work and professional career (while at the same time the importance of privacy and community meeting with other people such as “house parties”, etc. grows). The only problem here is a danger related to such a strong orientation towards work and professional career in young generation, that it often results (there are already signs of such tendencies visible) in detriment to health. The increase of emotional and psychological disorders in the age group of 25-35 years is a phenomenon which requires analysis and reaction.

However, an issue especially important for building the new competitive edges, relates to the growth of understanding of the role of the Internet and its functions (both in professional area as well as in the form of spending leisure time, participation in social networking services, where e.g. Poland scores high) in stimulation of creativity and cooperation as well as a traditional-modern manner of participation in culture. Both reading books from the early childhood as well as participation in audio-visual transmissions as both recipient and creator (a prosumer³: producer and consumer in the modern forms of cultural expression) increase the potential of imagination, which translates into the effect of a high economical rate of return from work as creation.

2 D Tapscott, A D Williams, *Wikinomics, How Mass Colaboration Changes Everything*, Penguin Group, New York 2006, *Macrowikinomics, Rebooting Business and the World* Penguin Group, New York 2010.

3 Por A Toffler, *The Third Wave Morrow*, New York 1980.

A feature of contemporary participation in culture is something, which sounds just terrible – “massclusivity”. Culture is of mass character, it is popular in various circulations and contents, but at the same time it is received in niche terms, with propagation of an individual, exclusive approach of its kind. Thus, the metropolitan cultural offer has something of a multi-industrial gallery to it, in the same way as the freedom of choosing presentations at “You Tube” has.

It is crucial that inhabitants of areas with lower population, lesser transportation accessibility, smaller volume of industry and services or possibilities to spend free time should not be excluded from the balance of work and life understood in such way. Diffusion processes, building up potentials of growth of territories with lower developmental parameters today, to put it short – the modern cohesion policy – should pay a particular attention to it. Therefore, from the point of view of the development of Poland, the cohesion policy needs a strongly emphasised generational and territorial dimension.

RECOMMENDATION 24:

Create conditions – mainly regulatory ones and those related with availability of services and content on the Internet (e-government/open government), with full opening of public resources, in order to use the overall possibilities stemming from digitisation factors as a carrier of innovation for the young generation innovators as well as the whole society.

RECOMMENDATION 25:

Prepare to implement programmes increasing the accessibility of culture (books, development of network of libraries, digitisation of cultural assets – a domestic and foreign canon) as well as programmes which will adequately introduce cultural education to schools, in order to increase the creativity potential of the society.

RECOMMENDATION 26:

Create legal and material conditions for realisation of a modern public mission in media, which should be conducive to the growth of participation in culture, world understanding, and participation in open public debates.

RECOMMENDATION 27:

Create a countrywide network of ŚWIETLIKI as social and cultural development centres making it possible to apply innovative methods of cultural inclusion, provide support for the misfit, to equalise civilizational opportunities, gain practical skills and competences useful on the labour market (characterised by domestic standards and local specificity, with leaders-animators of local development).

RECOMMENDATION 28:

Spread the idea of creation of regional and district COPERNICUS CENTRES, oriented towards the promotion of knowledge, attractive forms of explaining of natural processes and events, support in the field of innovative education.

RECOMMENDATION 29:

Create conditions (shall a need arise, by way of legislative requirements related with spatial development) for creation of more socialised public places in the public space of cities and residential estates so that to increase the network character of interpersonal relationships focused on building social capital, and at the same time to develop various forms of spending leisure time.

RECOMMENDATION 30:

Improve (within the transportation development strategy) transportation accessibility of peripheral areas with development centres in order to strengthen functional bonds and decrease civilizational differences of territorial nature.

9. What the civic life of young generation is like?

Many analyses, which nevertheless concern not only Poland, confirm that generational circles of young generation, when living in conditions of "risk society" (Beck⁴) or "liquid modernity" (Bauman⁵), do not create a distinct image which would be easy to describe. At the same time, they are characterised by the lack of an inherent "common generational experience". Could it be then that the multitude of possible identities limits the development and strength of the future influence onto reality, or maybe it may prove to be – in the time of open society and growing importance of "network society" – a benefit?

The Polish young generation – aside from a peculiar spurt to participate in 2007 elections, aside from distinct presence and affirmation of their own values and emotions in the period after the death of John Paul II in spring 2005 – is rather politically indifferent. And probably the indifference is stronger than conscious and organised contestation. The declared indifference of the youth does not mean however that they do not notice importance of political and public matters, it is not a symptom of the ultimate indifference. It only expresses a distance of the majority (and not the elite political groups of the young generation) towards certain manner of making politics, quality of public debate, institutionalised political scene. A reason for this distance may lay in focusing on their own matters, necessity to cope with difficult life challenges as well as a conviction, that their political choices may influence the reality only in a limited way. It is thus a light, but significant symptom of distrust to the institution of state government. And in that way, it shows the limited character of social capital. A chance for improvement and change of situation could be constituted by higher efficiency, effectiveness of the state in its operations, which would convince that the politics in its public dimension is efficient.

A supplementary question for the purpose of understanding of young generation is the matter of participation in civic life, a distinctive deficit of presence in this area. Relatively low number of Poles take up voluntary activities and those who do so (that is, young ones) a couple times more often than in other countries obtain various certifications which may be utilised later as a possible development carrier in their professional life. After all, the significance of participation in various types of informal civil activities, social groups, environments is growing – but in other form than the

4 U. Beck, *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, 1992.

5 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2000.

one capable of being diagnosed officially. The growth of participation in virtual reality brings about the improvement of the involvement, the more so that the youth found in this very area a value which focuses their expectations and needs from the sphere of values, underlining the role of freedom on the Internet.

The analysed data show that public indifference and civic deficits of young generation are a derivative of uncertainty as regards one's own future. It is the second dimension, second face of independence and adaptation strategies. This does not change however the fact that when viewing the reality in its public dimension, the youth indeed watches, indeed observes it.

What are conditions necessary to transfer from the position of "observer" to "actor", given the multitude of identities, individualised responsibility for oneself and one's own future, approbation for the sphere of freedom on the Internet? What is necessary is a scene, an audience and possibility of rehearsal, if we want to use this theatrical metaphor...

And it is one's own scene, one's own performance, which have to be concerned here...

RECOMMENDATION 31:

Create mechanisms of participation and consultations in preparation of public decisions for participatory democracy (develop initiatives in a small, local scale, related with participatory budgets) with the use of advanced communications technologies (network), building a model of open government – and at the same time conditions for the transition from the status of an observer to actor for the young generation.

RECOMMENDATION 32:

Create new conditions for freedom of action of the civil society and its institutions (among other things NGOs in various forms), strengthening them by a long-range project, building a many-year programme of financial support for "endowment" of these organisations (new Civil Initiatives Fund granted from the budget up to the same level, to which citizens, by way of the 1% tax write-off and finance operations of social initiatives).

RECOMMENDATION 33:

Work out a new manner of functioning of efficient youth representative organisations at various levels and in various areas, by providing them with real tasks to be performed and supporting thereby the governmental coordination of activities in favour of the young generation.

10. One of the most serious concerns related to the present day youth predicts that they may be a "lost generation". The young generation of Poles should not be lost. They have in itself a potential of innovativeness and creativity, and advantages, they are an opportunity and a hope in the perspective of the years to come. There are three most substantial and dangerous threats. First one concerns the area of uncertainty related with entering adulthood in all its dimensions. The point here are not "comfortable" conditions, as this generation never had such conditions and always achieved its goals, improvement of life quality, thanks to its own effort and aspirations. Nevertheless

it seems that today, for this generation and for the next generations, a comprehensive policy of life start is necessary (work, home, children), applying well-selected, selective and efficient tools.

The second threat is related with factors, which may weaken the community energy of this generation, as the range of inequalities and non-cohesion will be sensible to such an extent, that the accumulation of results of relatively balanced activity of the whole generation will not occur (and this is the second after-war population boom!). It requires actions aimed at equalisation of opportunities, overcoming civilizational differences between rural and municipal areas, a well-understood egalitarianism in aims and implementation of public policies, combined with responsibility of people for themselves. What is essential here is adding to the regional, territorial dimension of cohesion policy (both domestic one as well as with the use of external means) – a generational policy, also focused on inter-generational solidarity.

And the third area of barriers, whose existence may lead to the phenomenon of “lost generation” is constituted by barriers for participation in public life, both connected with low social capital and low level of trust to the state, as well as non-transparency of roles designated for citizens in the process of democratic rule, including for the young generation, blocked by their historic predecessors.

None of Polish generations had and none took a benefit in such an efficient manner, with all its weaknesses and mistakes, of its historical opportunity as the broadly understood “Solidarity” generation (in the sense of an age group, given all the differences of political provenance), with a place for Lech Wałęsa, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jarosław Kaczyński, Jerzy Buzek, but also Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Leszek Miller, and presently Donald Tusk – to mention only some of the living. The inheritance of Polish history has been retained and developed. Now, after more than 30 years, the time has come to convey inter-generational commitments – not only achievements, but first of all to create new free space for new generation, its energy and competences, its vision, its leadership. It would be truly patriotic and at the same time modern, efficient, and effective model of conveying knowledge in democracy, without “cultural patricide” of a kind.

In democracy, for which the generational dimension is important, as it creates an area of the community as a task and common responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION 34:

Introduce various types of generational dimension to public policies and create conditions for modernly understood growth of social cohesion, especially in territorial account, within the execution of goals of “POLAND 2030. THIRD WAVE OF MODERNITY”.

RECOMMENDATION 35:

Create political climate for a debate about solidarity and inter-generational exchange, and conduct it with appreciation of and respect for world-view and ideological differences, differences in political views, but in pursue for the aim constituted by common welfare and conveying leadership.

Warsaw, June 31, 2011,
Michał Boni

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