Summary

**ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC ATTITUDES OF THE INHABITANTS**

**OF THE WIELKOPOLSKA REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY**

**POPULATION TRENDS**

**Introduction**

Wielkopolska, as one of the key regions of Poland, plays an important role in shaping

national demographic trends. At the same time, the region has its demographic specificity,

resulting from both historical conditions and contemporary socio-economic factors.

Understanding the demographic attitudes of the Wielkopolska region’s inhabitants in the

context of contemporary population trends is crucial for effective planning of regional development

and shaping public policies that would respond to the challenges of the changes

taking place. Aim of the study: To analyze and identify factors that contribute to the decline

in the birth rate in Wielkopolska; to assess the socio-economic, cultural, environmental

and political aspects that may influence the decision to have children in the region; to assess

the impact of changes in the employment structure, availability of care and education

services, and the perception of parenthood in the context of contemporary social and economic

challenges. Respondents and methodology: The study covered 1510 inhabitants of

the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship aged 18-49, regardless of gender, educational level or occupational

status. A questionnaire method was used as a basic research tool. Results: Age significantly

influences the number of children the respondents would like to have, which is

confirmed by the Kruskal-Wallis test (p. 0.00000). The youngest group (18-20 years) would

like to have fewer children on average compared to the older groups. The number of people

who plan to have more than. children increases with age. These differences are statistically

significant between the different age groups, especially between the youngest and older

groups. Religious beliefs have a moderate influence on decisions to have children; however,

this influence decreases with age. The youngest groups are more likely to declare that religious

considerations matter (p. 0.00006), but overall the majority of respondents in each

age group do not believe that religion significantly influences family planning decisions.

Material situation and housing conditions are significant factors influencing the decision

to have offspring (p. 0.00000 for both factors). The importance of these factors increases

with age, especially in the over-40 group, where these issues are most important. Younger

groups also pay attention, but the differences are less pronounced. Career ambitions and

reluctance to change their current comfortable life are significant factors influencing decisions

to have children, especially in the younger age groups (p. 0.0018 and. = 0.0015). The

older the group, the less important these factors are, suggesting that life priorities change

with age. Fear of parenthood is a significant factor that influences decisions to have children,

especially in the younger age groups (p. 0.0000). Older age groups (over 40 years) are

less susceptible to this fear. The war in Ukraine has a moderate impact on decisions to have

children, with the proportion of people who acknowledge that the conflict influences their

decisions increasing with age. In the 40+ age group, up to 41.2% of respondents indicate

that the war influences their decisions (p. 0.00895). Life expectations, such as working in

an interesting profession, having the means to pursue passions, getting an education, and

wanting to start a family, change with age. The younger groups (18-30 years) are more

focused on education and pursuing their passions, while the older groups (31-40 years and

over 40 years) are more focused on life stability and having a family.

**Conclusions**

Financial stability, adequate housing, stable partner relationships and social support

are key determinants of the decision to have children in Wielkopolska. Changes in the

employment structure, including the growing importance of flexible forms of employment

and the increasing proportion of workers with fixed-term contracts, contribute to

increased insecurity among young people, which directly influences decisions to delay or

give up having children. Place of residence has a significant impact on the fertility rate of

families in Wielkopolska. Residents of large cities plan more children than residents of

small towns and villages, which may be a result of better living conditions, higher incomes

and better access to education and health services. In contrast, residents of rural areas

plan the fewest children, which may be related to limited professional opportunities and

less access to services. Family size has a significant impact on family fertility decisions in

Wielkopolska. Families with fewer children are more likely to plan for family enlargement,

while families with more children may limit further fertility due to increased financial and

logistical burdens. Social and political support plays a key role in shaping these decisions,

and differences in perceptions of quality of life depending on the number of children influence

families’ final decisions to have offspring. Changing societal values and norms, such

as the growing importance of individualism, career aspirations, and changing perceptions

of traditional gender roles, are leading to a reduction in the number of people who see parenthood

as a key part of their lives. The growing acceptance of alternative forms of family

life and a reduction in social pressure to form a traditional family are also contributing to

the decline in birth rates. The preferred form of relationship has a significant impact on

the fertility rate of families in Wielkopolska. Marriage is seen as a stable and secure form

of relationship, which is conducive to planning more children. Free relationships, although

more flexible, may be perceived as less stable, which may influence decisions to have fewer

children or delay parenthood. People who do not plan to start a family consciously opt out

of having children, which directly affects lower fertility rates. Religious considerations have

a significant impact on the fertility rate of families in Wielkopolska. Religion, especially

Catholic religion, promotes family values and openness to life, which encourages having

more children. Religious practitioners are more likely to have children because of Church

teachings, spiritual and social support and moral beliefs. However, the impact of religion

varies by generation, place of residence and other socio-economic factors. Career ambitions

have a significant impact on the fertility rate of families in Greater Poland. People

with high career ambitions may delay decisions to have children or limit the number of

children in order to focus on career development. Work-life balance and structural and

institutional support for working parents are crucial to enable combining career ambitions

with parenthood. Family-friendly policies, although in theory they should support fertility,

are in many cases perceived as insufficient or unsuitable for the needs of modern families.

Financial support, the availability of care services and flexible arrangements for combining

work and family life are crucial, but still insufficient. The war in Ukraine has had a multidimensional

impact on the fertility rate of families in Greater Poland. The sense of threat

and uncertainty associated with the conflict may lead to delayed decisions to have children,

especially among younger age groups. At the same time, social and governmental support

and a sense of solidarity can act as a counterbalance to these fears. Fear of parenthood

has a significant impact on the fertility rate of families in Wielkopolska. Concerns about

responsibility, finances, lifestyle changes and the possibility of failure as a parent can discourage

people from having children or lead them to delay the decision to parent. Social,

emotional and practical support is key to reducing these fears and enabling families to

realise their plans to have children.