

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.