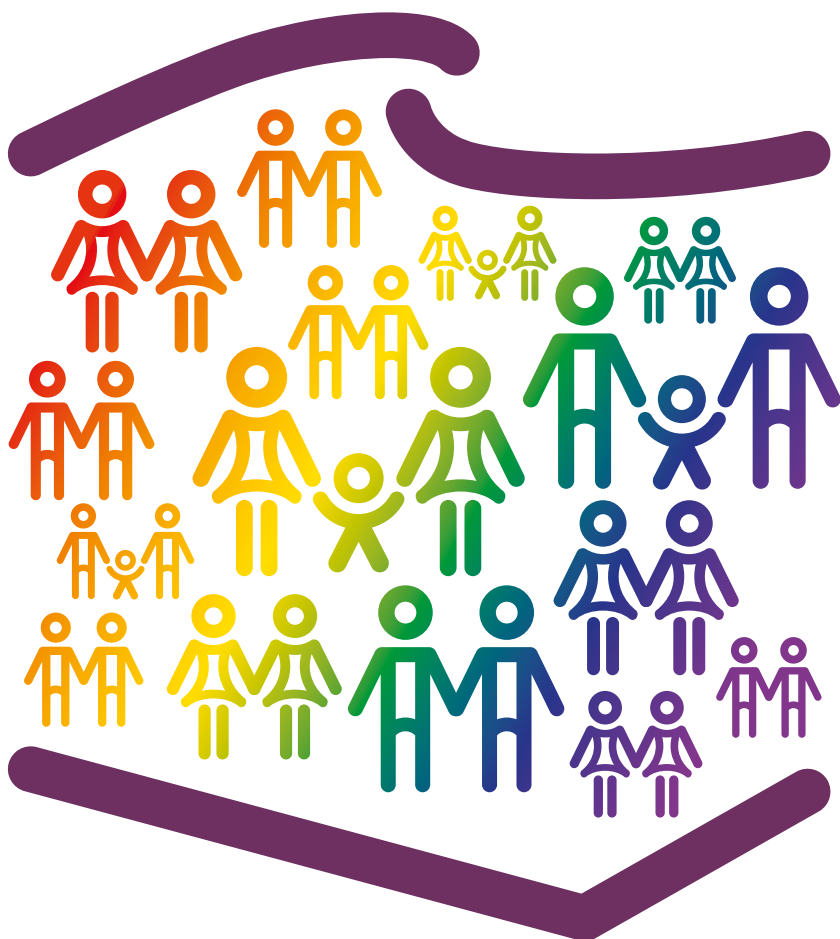


JOANNA MIZIELIŃSKA MARTA ABRAMOWICZ AGATA STASIŃSKA

# FAMILIES OF CHOICE IN POLAND

FAMILY LIFE  
OF NON-HETEROSEXUAL  
PEOPLE



FAMILIES  OF  
CHOICE 

I N P O L A N D

JOANNA **MIZIELIŃSKA** MARTA **ABRAMOWICZ** AGATA **STASIŃSKA**

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WARSAW 2015

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Joanna Mizielińska  
Marta Abramowicz  
Agata Stasińska

Collaboration: Aleksander Wasiak-Radoszewski

Statistical review: dr Maksymilian Bielecki, dr Sylwia Bedyńska

Translation: Krzysztof Fordoński

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## THE AUTHORS

**Prof. Joanna Mizielińska** – the principal investigator of the project and Associate Professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She worked for the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw from 2006-2013 as an Associate Professor at the Institute of Sociology (2009-2013) and the director of the Institute (2012). In 2009, the Institute of Applied Social Sciences of University of Warsaw granted her the degree of “doktor habilitowany” (double doctorate) in sociology. She had formerly completed her doctoral studies at the School of Social Sciences of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She was a Fullbright scholar at Princeton University, where she worked under the supervision of Professor Judith Butler. She also worked in Finland as a CIMO scholar as well as in Sweden (grant of the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, Stockholm), and has published two books: *Płeć/ciało/seksualność (Sex/Body/Sexuality)*, 2007) and *(De)konstrukcje kobiecości ((De)Constructions of Femininity)*, 2004). She is also a co-author of *Współpraca czy konflikt? Państwo, Unia i kobiety (Collaboration or Conflict? The State, the Union, and Women)*, with Małgorzata Fuszara, Magda Grabowska, and Joanna Regulska). She co-edited (with Robert Kulpa) *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspective* (2011), and has published numerous papers on gender sociology and sexuality, e.g. in *Studia Socjologiczne, Societas/Communitas, Czas Kultury, Dialogue and Universalis, Przegląd Kulturoznawczy*.

**Marta Abramowicz** – psychologist, expert on fighting discrimination. In the present project she is responsible for the quantitative part. She is the author of two of the widest research projects concerning the social position of LGB people so far. The results were published as the reports *Sytuacja społeczna osób biseksualnych i homoseksualnych w Polsce. Raport za lata 2005 i 2006 (Social Situation of Bisexual and Homosexual Persons in Poland. Report for 2005 and 2006)* and *Sytuacja społeczna osób LGBT. Raport za lata 2010 i 2011 (Social Situation of LGBT Persons in Poland. Report for 2010 and 2011)*. She is also the author of educational programmes, research projects, and opinions connected with antidiscrimination education (e.g. she was the editor of the report *Wielka nieobecna. O edukacji antydyskryminacyjnej w polskiej szkole – The Great Absent: Antidiscrimination Education in Polish Schools*). She collaborates with the Centre of Sociological Research at the University of Gdańsk where she concentrates on research in social exclusion, e.g. the situations of the handicapped and the unemployed, or health prophylactics. Her most recent book is entitled *Upragniona i nieznośna dorosłość. Sytuacja psychospołeczna usamodzielnionych wychowanków placówek opiekuńczo-wychowawczych (The Desired and Unbearable Adulthood: The Psychosocial Situation of Emancipated Charges of Forster Care Institutions)*. She is currently working on her Ph.D. dissertation on the experience of violence and discrimination against LGB persons.

**Agata Stasińska** – research officer in the project *Families of Choice in Poland*. Ph.D. student at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw, and graduate of the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (MA thesis *Functioning of Women in Intimate Relationships. Homosexual and Heterosexual Couples*). She has completed a postgraduate course on Gender Studies at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences. She co-organised the conferences *Queer Strategies: Cultural and Social Position of Non-Heterosexual and Trans-Gender Persons in Interdisciplinary Perspective and Non-Normative Family Practices*. Co-editor of the book *Strategie Queer. Od teorii do praktyki (Queer Strategies. From Theory to Practice, 2012)* and a special issue of the journal *InterAlia – Nienormatywne praktyki rodzinne (Non-normative Family Practices, 2013)*. She has also published several articles on the sociology of sexuality and gender, e.g. in *Studia Sociologiczne, Societas/Communitas*, and *Przegląd Filozoficzno-Literacki*. Currently working on her Ph.D. dissertation on love as a political strategy of the non-heterosexual community in Poland.



## DEFINITIONS OF BASIC TERMS

**Non-heterosexual persons** – all persons who engage in emotional and erotic relationships with persons of the same sex. The majority define themselves as gays, lesbians, or bisexuals; however, some do not apply any of these terms to themselves.

**LGBT** – acronym used in reference to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

**Transgender persons** – a person who defines their gender identity (perceiving oneself as a man or a woman) differently from their biological gender. Gender identity is independent of psychosexual orientation, which means that transgender persons may be both heterosexual and homosexual.

**Biological parent** – the person who is the father or the mother of a child in the biological sense. In the case of a mother it is the woman who gave birth to the baby. In the case of men it is the genetic father of the child. We use the terms “father” and “sperm donor” in the present report to differentiate the situation in which a man is exclusively a sperm donor and does not fulfil any paternal role.

**Social parent** – a person who participates in the upbringing of his/her partner’s children, although they are neither his/her biological nor adopted children.

**Families of choice** – families created by non-heterosexual persons. They often function without any social or legal support. Members of such families are not always connected by blood relations (e.g. the relations of a social parent and a child). Their decision to become a family and to be called as such is exclusively the question of their choice. The term was originally used in English literature on the subject.

**Family of origin** – the family of our origin, where we were born and brought up (i.e. mother, father, grandparents, siblings, and other blood relatives).

# INTRODUCTION



There are two million non-heterosexual persons (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people) in Poland. It is estimated that approximately half of them live in intimate relationships. Many raise children.<sup>1</sup> These families are known as “families of choice”. Why “of choice”? Because they are created without any social or legal support and their members are not bound by blood relations. Their decision to become a family and to be called as such, to support one another, provide love and care, is exclusively the matter of their choice.

The appearance of families of choice should be seen within the context of the deeper and broader changes to social life in Poland and in the world. Modern families tend to have less and less of an economic function. The relations between their members are the subject of individual and not formal agreements, which are more and more often agreements of equal partners as a result of the on-going emancipation of women (Kotowska, Sztanderska, Wóycicka, 2007; Sikorska, 2009). The idea that emotional ties (love, support, care) are the decisive factors in the formation of a family is still gaining ground. Family is more and more often considered not an institution but a private matter, which is why more open attempts at its definition are presented (Slany, 2005; Szlendak, 2011).

Families of same-sex couples, with or without children, are the tip of an iceberg of changes in family life, characterized (for example) by a change in relations between sexes, an increasing number of divorces, and the appearance of new models such as LAT (*living apart together*), DINKS (*double income no kids*), patchwork families, and singles. All of these changes and the appearance of a variety of family models, sometimes considered by conservatives as “the crisis of the family”, are also taking place in Poland. Consequently, knowledge concerning the functioning of families is crucial in order to fully understand their needs and adapt the legal system and social politics to them.

Research on intimacy and non-heterosexual relationships is carried out mostly in the Anglo-American context, which is the main point of reference for other studies. It may be divided into two main categories. The first one concerns relations in same-sex couples, often comparable to those concerning heterosexual couples (Duffy, Rusbult, 1986; Kurdek, Schmitt, 1986). The second category concerns children brought up by homosexual parents as compared to children of heterosexual parents (Patterson, 2000; Ryan-Flood, 2009). We shall concentrate below on a comparison of their most important results.

The first category concerns similarities and differences between the functioning of heterosexual and homosexual couples. The investigators were principally interested in whether same-sex couples base their relationships on the same values as heterosexual couples, how they share their duties, and what level of satisfaction with their relationships they declare. Most of the available results concerning the division of duties in same-sex couples show that these couples reject the traditional model with clearly defined masculine and feminine roles (such as “bread-winner” and “the angel of the

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<sup>1</sup> Most international sources on homosexuality claim that approximately 5% of every population are homosexual people. It means that there are approx. 2 million gays and lesbians in Poland. There are no statistical data concerning bisexual and transgender people in permanent same-sex relationships, which is why the present report estimates their joint number at “over 2 million”. Western polls estimate the number of gays in permanent relationships at 40 to 60%, with lesbians at 45 to 80% (conf. Patterson, 2000; Peplau, Spalding, 2000). These estimates are confirmed by Polish research on LGBT communities (Abramowicz, 2007, 2012; Krzemiński 2009).

house”). In his trailblazing study on the issue, Lawrence Kurdek (1993) compared heterosexual and homosexual couples living together and proved that the latter tend to share house chores to a much greater extent. The same equality was confirmed by other studies, e.g. on lesbian couples bringing up children (Dunne, 1999; Peplau, Spalding, 2000; Sullivan, 2004). Numerous studies have shown that same-sex couples are just as satisfied with their relationships as heterosexual couples (Duffy, Rusbult, 1986; Kurdek, Schmitt, 1986).

The second category of studies, concerning gay and lesbian parenthood, began in the 1980s with the debate on the so called homosexual baby boom: an increase in the number of same-sex couples who decided to raise children, partially caused by new reproductive technologies. A number of studies on the issue have been published since (e.g. Patterson, 1994; Dunne, 1999; Stacey, Biblarz, 2001; Strah, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Gabb, 2008). They initially aimed at confronting the myths and bias connected with the parenthood of homosexual persons, verifying its similarity to the parenthood of heterosexual parents (Patterson, 2000). By facing the most common social fears and bias, they show that as far as sexual orientation and gender roles are concerned there are no differences between children raised by same-sex and heterosexual couples (Patterson, 1994; Tomalski, 2007). Furthermore, recently published results of studies carried out since 1986 have indicated that children raised by lesbian couples are better socially adapted, more ambitious, and less aggressive towards children from heterosexual families (Gartrell, 2010). The most recent (2013) and largest study carried out so far by the University of Melbourne, Australia on over 500 children raised in families of choice proved that the children were healthier and enjoyed better relations with their parents than in the case of heterosexual families (Crouch et al., 2014).

Same-sex couples and their families are still the cause of public concern in Poland. It is partially caused by lack of knowledge about how they function and lack of official data, e.g. such families were not included in the general census, or the limited number of social studies concerning this social group. There has been no study in Poland concerning “families of choice” that would wholly encompass the practices and experiences connected with the creation of such families and their social functioning, as well as the situation of the children they raise.<sup>2</sup> This was why there was such a pressing need for a complex and detailed study in Poland. It is especially so as one of the arguments presented against children being raised by same-sex couples is that such children will have problems with their gender identity and sexual orientation. The argument is presented regardless of numerous foreign studies that clearly contradict it (Patterson, 1994; Tomalski, 2007), and scientific findings on the subject are absent from the Polish public discourse.

The research project *Families of Choice in Poland (Rodziny z wyboru w Polsce)*, of which the present report is a part, is the first greatly detailed and complex attempt

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2 Polish publications concerning same-sex families are either based on foreign studies that they mean to popularise (Slany, 2005; Prokopowicz, 2005; Tomalski, 2007) or belong to the few studies based on own research of limited scope and methodologies (none of them employed a combination of a number of methods) and, consequently, limited conclusions. Dorota Majka-Rostek’s book *Związki homoseksualne. Studium socjologiczne (Homosexual Relationships: A Sociological Study)*, 2008, in which the author interviewed 28 couples (12 lesbian and 16 gay couples), may serve as an example of the latter type.

at an analysis of the phenomenon. The studies consisted of several stages and techniques which were selected to present the various aspects of family and intimate lives of non-heterosexual persons as completely as possible. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed:

1. Analysis of academic and public discourse concerning “families of choice”: we paid special attention to the reconstruction of the voices of the most important actors who influence the shape of these discourses (state institutions, the Roman Catholic church, academia, and NGOs) as well as the applied arguments;
2. A detailed analysis of selected case studies: concerning crucial public debates on the situation of non-heterosexual persons in Poland, such as the debates concerning civil partnerships bills. We also analysed legal proceedings (e.g. at the European Court of Justice in Strasbourg and Polish High Court of Justice);
3. A quantitative study, the results of which are included in the present report: carried out throughout Poland with the use of an online poll consisting of questions concerning the needs and expectations of people living in families of choice;
4. Individual in-depth interviews with members of families of choice. The interviews were meant to provide detailed data concerning motives connected with the most crucial decisions made by the couple, the issues of social support, love and intimacy, strategies of coping with social invisibility, and attitudes towards basic institutional conditions;
5. An ethnographic study in which researchers accompanied selected families in their everyday life for 4 weeks, from September to November 2014. The researchers lived permanently in their homes, watched their behaviour, and talked with them about their life, problems, and joys;
6. Focused group interviews: carried out in groups of 6-10 people, allowing us to gather data concerning their opinions and positions in the situation of social contacts. They were also intended to allow us to get to know similarities and differences between the experiences and narrations of various members of families of choice, and to show an in-depth picture of their individual and common experiences.<sup>3</sup>

The main purpose of the present study is to show the variety of family and intimate arrangements of non-heterosexual persons in Poland and to understand the challenges they face in everyday life. Consequently, in our study we enquire on issues connected with the problems, needs, and expectations of representatives of non-heterosexual families living in contemporary Poland. It is especially important to present the family life of non-heterosexual people from their own perspective. Instead of assuming a priori how they live and that they do not form families – which has been the dominating tendency in Polish opinion polls and numerous works on the Polish sociology of family (e.g. Adamski, 2002; CBOS, 2006, 2008, 2013a, 2013b) – we ask members of such families how they define their family, how they make it, how they create its meaning through everyday activities, what they need, and how they want to be recognised by the society

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth mentioning here that five parts of the study have already been completed. Work on the analysis of the ethnographic study continues and focus groups will be conducted in the Spring of 2015.

and by law. Thus we assume that the people who best understand the specific conditions of such families are their members. It is of crucial importance when considering that publically presented opinions tend to present non-standard families as dysfunctional, worthless, and unnatural without any attempt at studying them. Such an attitude gets in the way of an in-depth understanding, pushing such families further to the social margin.

In a quantitative study including 3038 respondents living in non-heterosexual families, the results of which we present in this report, we attempted to reach families living throughout Poland. They vary in their education level and age, and they live in both big cities and small towns. Our aim was to present their diversity and the specific conditions of their lives in the best way possible. The respondents could express their opinions on various aspects of their own family lives. We were interested in topics such as:

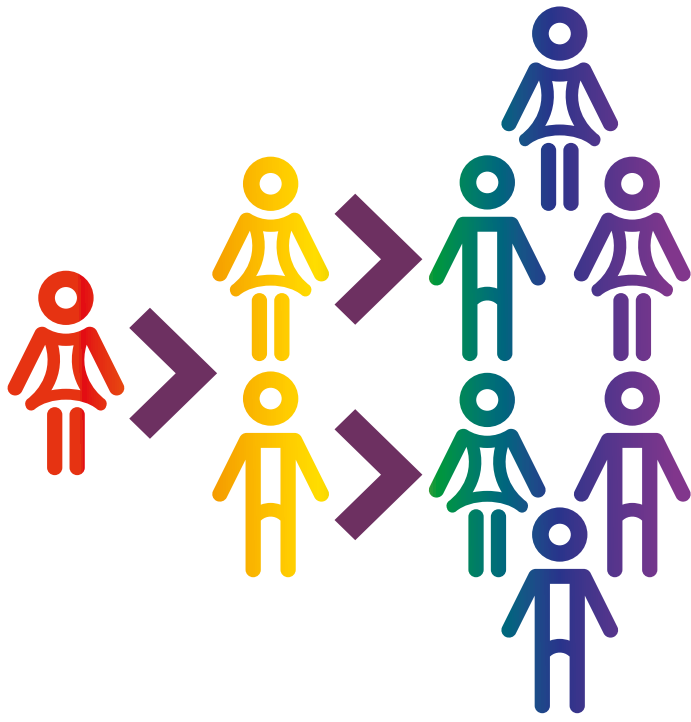
- How non-heterosexual people understand and define their relationships? How do their relationships function and are they satisfied with them?
- What do the households of families of choice look like? How do the partners share their duties, make decisions, solve conflicts?
- How do non-heterosexual persons present their relationships in the immediate surroundings (e.g. their families of origin)? How do they cope with social exclusion and marginalisation?
- What are the needs and expectations of members of families of choice? To what extent is social and legal recognition such as registration of civil partnerships, child care, education, healthcare, and social security necessary to meet these needs?
- How do non-heterosexual persons cope with issues connected with parenthood? What decisions do they make and how do they put them in practice? What are their possibilities of having children? How does having children alter the dynamics of a same-sex couple and how does it alter the relations with their families of origin? What is the role of a person who raises a child in such a family?

Answers to these and other questions are included in the present report. We hope that the included data will help to improve the social debate concerning the situation of non-heterosexual persons in Poland. It is especially important as plans to introduce legal regulations concerning same-sex relationships seem more and more realistic. The results of our report may be a valuable source of knowledge not only for academia but also for specialists dealing in social politics, helping them to shape politics in a way that would meet the needs of the discussed social group.

Furthermore, the results presented in the report may be the point of departure for further comparative studies and international and interdisciplinary projects of both Polish and European scientists. It should be noted here that the latter tends to present a simplified and stereotypical vision of Central-Eastern Europe, usually as an extremely homophobic region, mostly because they do not have access to credible data. This is why the need to understand the functioning of such families in a specific social and cultural context, as well as local studies, is of crucial importance.

Last but not least we hope that the presented results will be interesting for the families of choice themselves who were willing to tell us about their experiences of living in Poland.

# METHODOLOGY



## GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The aim of the project *Families of Choice* was to reach a large group of non-heterosexual persons living in same-sex relationships. There are no available data in Poland that would enable estimating the number and structure of the LGBT population. Furthermore, non-heterosexual people often protect their identity because they fear social rejection. As a result, the group is difficult to reach; we do not know how many non-heterosexual people live in cities and how many in the country, what the percentage of people with higher or elementary education among them is, etc. Consequently, it is impossible to state with any certainty what a representative sample should look like.<sup>1</sup>

In order to facilitate the study of social groups that are difficult to access, social studies apply a research method known as the “snowball method”. In its classic form the first respondent is randomly selected from a given population and he/she introduces his/her acquaintances as further respondents. They in turn provide access to their circles of acquaintances. Consequently, a chain of respondents is created thanks to which it is possible to trace many phenomena such as the structure of social networks. In difficult to access groups there is no possibility of random selection of the first respondent, which is why he/she is selected arbitrarily. Usually it is a person who can be approached easily.

Recently there have been attempts to modify the snowball method to enable representation of the studied population in a way more similar to a representative sample. As a result the RDS – *respondent driven sampling* – method was proposed. The basic assumptions of the method are as follows: a group of several respondents is selected from the studied population on the basis of selected criteria to participate in the study and recruit further respondents. These respondents not only participate in the study but they also suggest a further small, fixed number of new respondents. It is important to make sure that each member of such a chain indicates a similar number of further respondents for the chain to grow in a proportional way. Various motivational systems are employed so that every recruited respondent can receive some remuneration for each respondent they recruit. The RDS method has recently been discussed in several studies (conf. Handcock, Gile, 2011; Heckathorn, 2011). However, regardless of their enthusiasm, some scientists suggest great care in employing this method in studies concerning LGBT populations. In their opinion the RDS method works best in highly cohesive groups such as jazz musicians or Harley bikers. There are close ties among members of such groups that allow for the creation of a chain of respondents which will represent the whole population (it will look like a spider’s web entangling such a group). In the case of non-heterosexual persons, one can hardly speak of any cohesion; one is more likely to assume that the group should be as diversified as the rest of the population.

Bearing in mind the difficulties in access to LGBT people and doubts concerning the use of the RDS method in this particular group, for the purposes of the present study we created our own modification of the classic snowball method, inspired by the RDS method. A group of pollsters was selected from whom the chain of gathering data began. We

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<sup>1</sup> Scientists attempting to study this population face similar problems all over the world. Conf. Meyer, Wilson, 2009.



assumed that there should be at least two people in each of the 16 provinces: a man and a woman, both knowing the local LGBT population well, i.e. people whom non-heterosexual respondents would trust. The pollsters were expected to recruit respondents whom they personally knew and through such respondents reach further candidates, thus drawing ever larger circles. In order to diversify the sample we set limits for people in specific age groups and places of residence, i.e. living in the country or in big cities. There was no remuneration for the respondents in the study; they suggested further respondents voluntarily. Only the pollsters were paid. In order to further diversify the sources of respondents we employed additional methods of gathering data, such as recruitment via the Internet addressed to the users of various LGBT portals and discussion groups.

## TOOLS

Two versions of the questionnaire were prepared for the study:

1. A basic version for all the respondents meeting the criteria of the study;
2. An expanded version for the respondents who raised one or more children.

The basic version consisted of 89 questions concerning the functioning of the respondent's relationship in private and social contexts. Some of them were multiple choice questions where the respondents were expected to choose one answer and the remaining part consisted of open questions in which the respondents were asked for a brief description of events.

The questions dealt with the following issues

1. The social situation of the respondent and his/her partner (basic sociodemographic data of the respondent, his/her parents, and partner);
2. Cherished values, sense of happiness and satisfaction with the relationship;
3. Contacts of the couple with their families and social environment;
4. Definition of family;
5. Formalising the relationship;
6. Everyday life of the couple (free time, living together, division of chores, attitudes towards incomes);
7. Intimate life of the couple;
8. Conflicts and violence in the relationship;
9. Parenthood (having or planning to have children, opinions concerning raising children).

The expanded version consisted of the basic version and an additional questionnaire exclusively concerning issues connected with parenthood. The additional questionnaire consisted of 28 questions each of multiple choice and open questions. Each questionnaire dealt with the situation of one child. Consequently, respondents who had more children were asked to fill in an appropriate number of additional questionnaires – one for each of the children. We assumed that the maximum amount would be five children of a single respondent. However, the most numerous family in our study had only four children.

The questions dealt with the following issues:

1. The situation of the child (who they live with, who their parent is, what the relations of their biological parents are);
2. The division of duties and costs of raising the child among its parents / people who raise it;
3. The child's awareness of the fact that their parents (parent) are in a same-sex relationship and circumstances in which they learned of the fact or plans concerning informing the child of the fact;
4. Awareness and reaction of the social environment concerning the child's family situation;
5. Securing contacts of the child with its social parent<sup>2</sup>;
6. Regularity of contacts with parents and grandparents;
7. Problems connected with raising the child;
8. Contacts with other parents in same-sex relationships.

Original questions from the questionnaire are quoted in the descriptions of results and titles of tables whenever possible.

A questionnaire for single respondents was also prepared. It was arranged in the same way as the questionnaire for couples. In the case of questions concerning relationships the respondents were asked to reply using their last long-term relationship that lasted for at least six months as the point of reference. The data collected from single respondents will be analysed in a separate publication. In the present report we refer only to several selected questions which we asked both groups.

A number of questions were taken from polls such as those of CBOS (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej - Center for Public Opinion Research) (CBOS 2008, 2009, 2013a, 2013b) or the study *Diagnoza Społeczna (The Social Diagnosis, Czapiński, Panek, 2013)* and modified. The modifications were introduced because the original polls did not take into consideration specific conditions of the functioning of non-heterosexual people in the society (most questions connected with family are heteronormative, i.e. they are based on the assumption that the only recognized form of family is one consisting of a husband, a wife, and their children). Furthermore, questions from polls prepared by Professor Zbigniew Izdebski and concerned with issues connected with sexual life were used for comparative purposes.

Two types of questionnaire were used in the project: traditional paper based and an online questionnaire. Each respondent could choose the one that suited them best. In both cases the respondents filled in the questionnaires on their own and whenever they wanted.

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<sup>2</sup> The proper term for a person who co-raises a child of whom she/he is not a biological parent is still the subject of debates in the related literature. In the present study we used the term "social parent" ("rodzic społeczny") as the most appropriate. The term is often used in texts concerning LGBT parenthood and more generally parenthood as such, e.g. the entry "parent" in Encyclopedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/443459/parent>, access: 22.07.2014.

## RESPONDENTS

In an attempt to include in our study as broad as possible a group consisting of a variety of non-heterosexual relationships while, at the same time, paying special attention to the fact that we intended to study “family” relations, we adopted a number of basic criteria of selection for our sample. We assumed that our study should include adults who had been in a same-sex relationship for more than six months. In order to standardise the results we introduced limitations concerning the place of residence. As the situation of Polish same-sex couples living abroad, where there are registered civil partnerships and the rights of both parents are secure, differs greatly from that of similar couples living in Poland, the sample was limited to the latter group. However, we included respondents who had been abroad for less than a year, assuming that the majority of their life experience was connected with their country of origin.

As we use the terms “LGBT persons” (lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender persons) and “non-heterosexual persons” interchangeably in the present text, the inclusion of transgender persons in our study may require an explanation. We assumed that the decisive factor for the selection of our sample was being in a same-sex relationship. Consequently, transgender persons in a same-sex relationship could take part in our poll. Bisexual persons who were in a relationship with a person of the opposite sex when the poll was conducted were not included in the sample.

## PROCEDURE

The collection of data was divided into two parts: the first one was carried out by pollsters (September – November 2013) and the second via the Internet (December 2013 – January 2014). During the first part respondents were approached by pollsters with either paper or the digital version of the questionnaire. The aim was to collect 1100 questionnaires from people living in same-sex relationships.

In the second part information about the study was distributed via the Internet: portals addressed to non-heterosexual persons, NGOs working for the LGBT community, and social media such as Facebook. It was open to all respondents who were in a same-sex relationship at the time. At this stage we took advantage of the fact that the information about the study could reach a large number of people and collected data from single non-heterosexual persons for comparative purposes. Such respondents answered a separate custom made questionnaire.

In both parts of the study we controlled whether the poll was completed by one person from a couple or both, using a custom made data collecting system. In the case of paper questionnaires the pollsters coded the envelopes with questionnaires. In the case of online questionnaires respondents received individual links with the number of a couple, and their partners another link with the same number. In the first stage the process of matching responses from couples was controlled by pollsters. In the second stage when respondents were recruited via the Internet, respondents were asked to send the link to the questionnaire to their partners. They were later asked whether their partners completed the poll. Data from couples was separated from the sample on the basis of this information.

## The first part of data collection

The recruitment of pollsters began in May 2013. We intended to have at least one pollster in each of the 16 Polish provinces, and the best option would be to have a couple: a man and a woman. The only criterion was good knowledge of the local LGBT community, which should have made access to the target group easier. We did not manage to find two pollsters in all the provinces, although we had at least one in each. 37 people took part in this stage of the project. Some pollsters failed to reach the expected number of respondents, in which case an additional pollster was recruited in the province. The pollsters were trained and prepared for the study. They cooperated closely with the rest of the team during the first part of the study.

The task of the pollsters was to find respondents in their provinces meeting the criteria of the study and then, depending on the respondent's preferences, provide them with either a printed questionnaire or a link to its online version. The pollsters were assigned minimum quotas: they were supposed to reach a similar number of men and women, 6 to 8 people in the 40+ age group, and 6 to 8 people from a town with a population of less than 100.000 or living in the country.

The pollsters were asked to use their personal contacts in the local community or contacts of their acquaintances, and then the acquaintances of their acquaintances, as in the snowball method. If they should run out of contacts they could leave information about the study in LGBT meeting places (clubs, NGOs, etc.)

The first stage of the project began on September 1st, 2013 and went on for two months. Due to problems with reaching respondents in some provinces (Podlaskie, Warmian-Masurian, Subcarpathian, Świętokrzyskie, Opole, and Silesian) it was continued until mid-November, when the scheduled number of questionnaires was achieved.

## The second stage data collection

The second stage began when the first stage was completed; respondents were recruited only via the Internet. Information about the project was mailed twice (in December and January) to several hundred thousand registered users of LGBT portals: Queer.pl, Kobiety-kobietom.com, Kumpello.pl, Fellow.pl, and Fille.pl. Other LGBT portals did not respond to our offer concerning possible cooperation. The project was also advertised on a dedicated website, in discussion lists, and on the websites of various LGBT organisations (e.g. Lambda Warszawa, Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, Trans-Fuzja). Information about the project was distributed through social media among various people who passed it on to their acquaintances or through LGBT discussion groups on Facebook. From this moment on respondents could fill in the questionnaire via the project website *Families of choice* (familiesofchoice.pl).

The data at this stage of the project was collected from the beginning of December 2013 to the end of January 2014.

### Results

7028 questionnaires were collected: 1923 in the first stage and 5105 in the second stage, of which 2283 from couples and 2822 from singles. We proceed to remove largely incomplete, repeated (submitted twice by the same person) questionnaires as well as those that did not meet the criteria of the project. 3038 questionnaires submitted by couples and 2378 submitted by singles were used in the analysis.

# ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS



## TYPE OF THE PRESENTED ANALYSES

The present report includes basic analyses such as percentage distribution of variables (frequencies) and interrelations between variables, including differences resulting from sex, age, place of residence, etc.

Due to the specific character of the sample – the study was addressed to couples, however, in some cases both partners and in some cases only one partner completed the questionnaire – it was necessary to apply statistical procedures that accounted for these specifics. The analysed variables were divided into two groups: in the first one individual relations were analysed (one person was the unit) and the results for the entire sample were presented, and in the second group relations were analysed for couples (a couple was the unit). In questions concerning e.g. sex, age, the sense of happiness, and cherished values, the presented results refer to all the persons in the sample. However, questions concerning the lives of couples, e.g. “What holidays do you celebrate together?” or “Who in your relationship does the chores?” the average responses of couples were presented. On the level of statistical procedures this was reflected by sample weighting – respondents in a couple where both partners completed the questionnaire were weighted at 0.5 each and the respondents whose partners did not participate at 1. In other words, the results from two partners were averaged to obtain a more approximate representation of reality.

In order to make the text more accessible we decided against quoting the applied statistical tests and levels of statistical significance in detail in the present report. Due to the character of the obtained data we mainly used nonparametric tests (chi-squared, Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman’s rho). Parametric tests were applied wherever possible (t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient, one-way analysis of variance, Cronbach’s alpha). All the presented differences between groups and intercorrelations are statistically significant. One exception to this rule are the comparisons with external data from studies on representative samples of Poles that, due to differences in the applied methodology and construction of the sample, are only approximate

Most of the results are accompanied by information on how many respondents answered a given question (marked as n). The information is not provided, however, when a table presents combined answers to several questions, as in such cases it would have been necessary to provide over ten different figures and made the tables illegible.

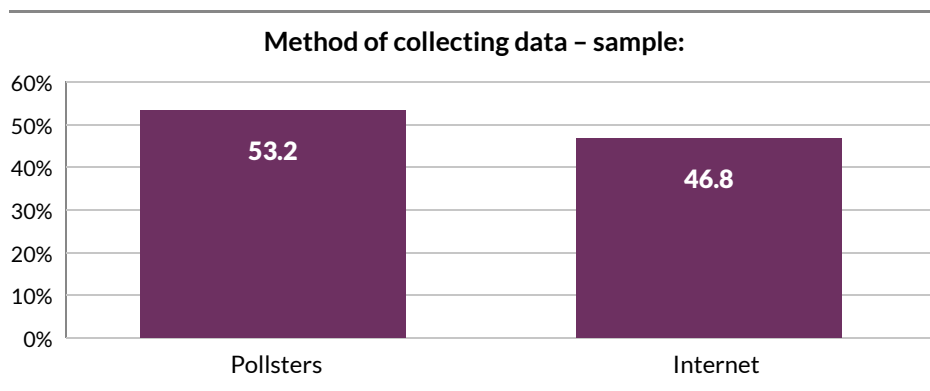
## BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

The data analysis included 3038 questionnaires. They were submitted by adults who had been in a same-sex relationship for at least six months and lived in Poland (several respondents who had lived abroad for less than a year were also included in the analysed sample).

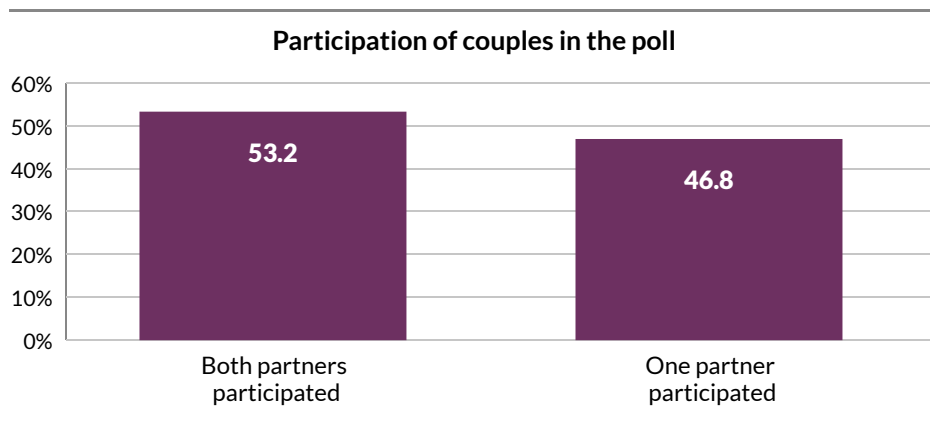
As described in the chapter on methodology, the data were collected in two ways – by pollsters in 16 Polish provinces and via the Internet mainly through LGBT portals. 1617 questionnaires from the first stage and 1421 questionnaires from the second stage were collected – the percentage is presented in chart 1.

As we controlled whether the poll was taken by one partner or both, we know that in the final sample there were 1616 people in couples (808 couples) and 1422 cases where only one partner took the poll. The percentage is presented in chart 2.

**Chart 1. Division of respondents according to data collection method (n=3038<sup>1</sup>)**



**Chart 2. Participation of couples in the study – whether both partners or only one took the poll (n=3038)**



There were slightly more women (56%) than men (44%) in the sample. The questionnaire included the option “other gender”, which was selected by 0.5% respondents (16 people in total). One can conclude from the descriptions that this option was usually selected by transgender persons. Due to the very small number of such respondents it was not possible to carry out separate analyses concerning this particular group. Conse-

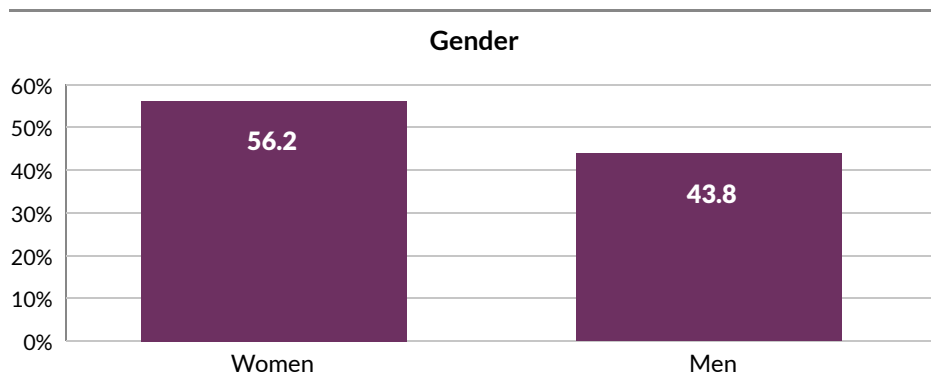
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<sup>1</sup> Symbol *n* used in titles of tables and charts (e.g. n=3038) stands for the number of respondents who answered the question or whom the question concerned (in the example given the question was answered by 3038 people).



quently, they were included in the general analyses on the basis of their selection of the questionnaire (it was available in two versions – male and female – persons who chose “other gender” option were forced to select the gender with which they identify best). This division is presented in chart 3.

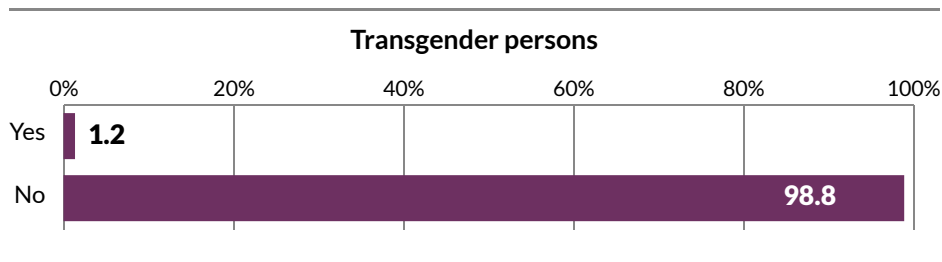
**Chart 3. Division of respondents by gender (n=3038)**



It is worth mentioning here that part of the transgender respondents did not describe their gender as “other” as it is indicated in chart 4, illustrating the number of transgender people or persons with a transgender past<sup>2</sup> in the sample (1.2%, 37 persons). This is likely because such persons identify with the gender they have always perceived as theirs and they do not describe themselves as belonging to the category of “other” gender.

The number of transgender people or persons with a transgender past who took the poll was too small for separate analyses. The only conclusion was that there was no gender difference in this group, and that the number of transgender men and transgender women in the sample was the same.

**Chart 4. Are you a transgender person or a person with a transgender past?<sup>3</sup> (n=2967)**

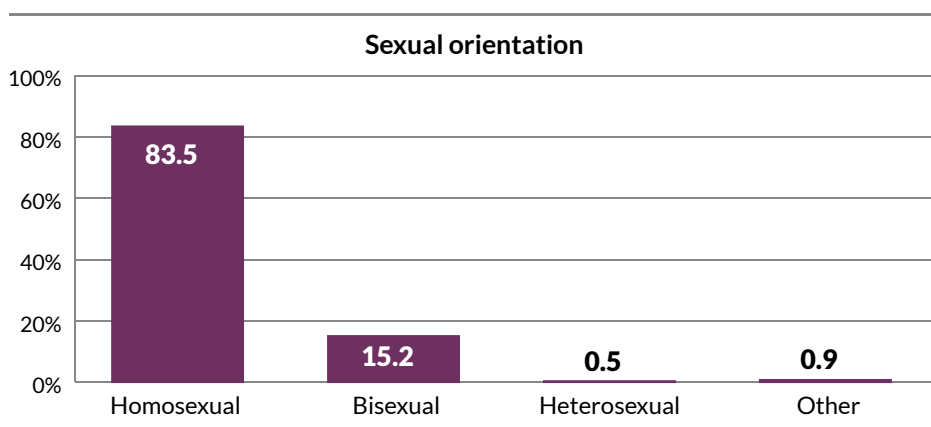


2 The term “with transgender past” („z transseksualną przeszłością”) was consulted with Łalka Podobińska from the Trans-Fuzja foundation.

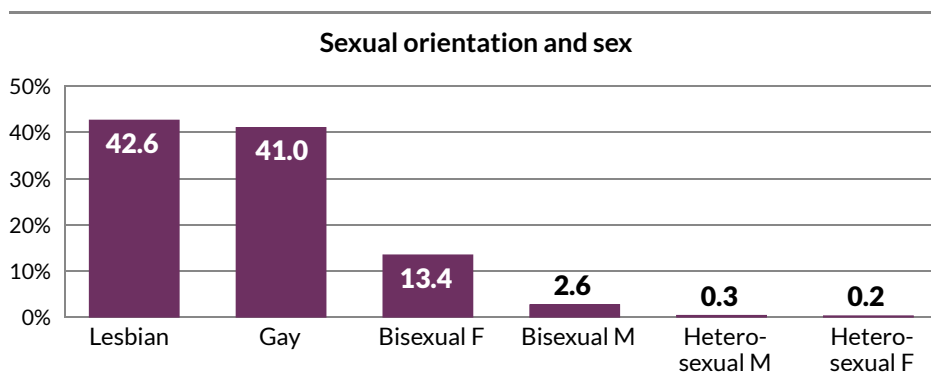
3 Inasmuch as it was possible in the titles of charts and tables we quoted appropriate questions from our questionnaire.

The respondents were also asked about their sexual orientation –charts 5 and 6 present the obtained data. The respondents proved to be predominantly homosexual (84%), while 15% defined themselves as bisexual. The smallest number of respondents were heterosexual (0.5%, 14 persons). Less than 1% (26 persons) opted for “other”; they were mostly women. Such respondents most often explained that they did not want to define their orientation in any way. 6 persons defined themselves as “queer”. Unfortunately, the group was too small to be included in the analyses. When gender was added as a criterion for further division we obtained the following results in our sample: 43% lesbians, 41% gays, 13% bisexual women, 3% bisexual men, and below 1% heterosexuals of either sex.

**Chart 5. Characteristic of respondents in relation to sexual orientation (n=3038)**



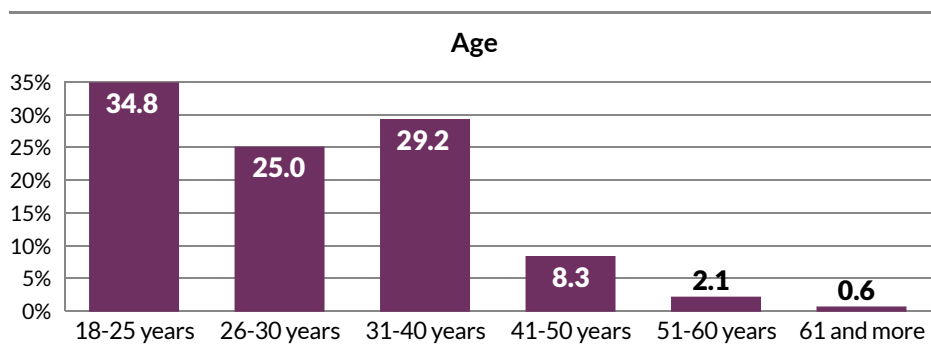
**Chart 6. Characteristic of respondents in relation to their sexual orientation including sex (n=3038)**



Most of the respondents were relatively young – 60% below 30 years of age and 29% below 40. These figures confirm a certain regularity noticed in earlier studies con-

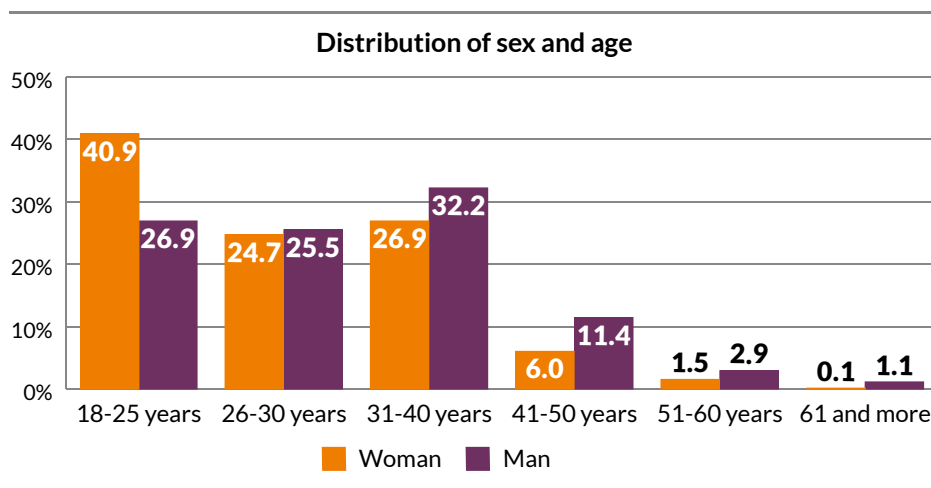
cerning non-heterosexual people – it is extremely difficult to reach respondents of 50 years of age or more (Abramowicz, 2007; 2012). The pollsters in the study *Families of choice* mentioned grave difficulties connected with reaching this group of respondents. Nevertheless, the respondents they managed to reach amount to 8% of all the respondents in the 41–50 age bracket and 2% of all the respondents in the 51–60 bracket.

**Chart 7. Characteristics of respondents in relation to their age (they were asked to provide their birth date) (n=3029)**



The relation of sex and age was uneven. There were more women in the 18-25 age group, while there were more men in the (not very numerous) 50+ group. As a result, the analyses which included age as a factor were carried out on the sample of respondents up to 50 years of age while the influence of age and sex on a given variable was controlled in every analysis.

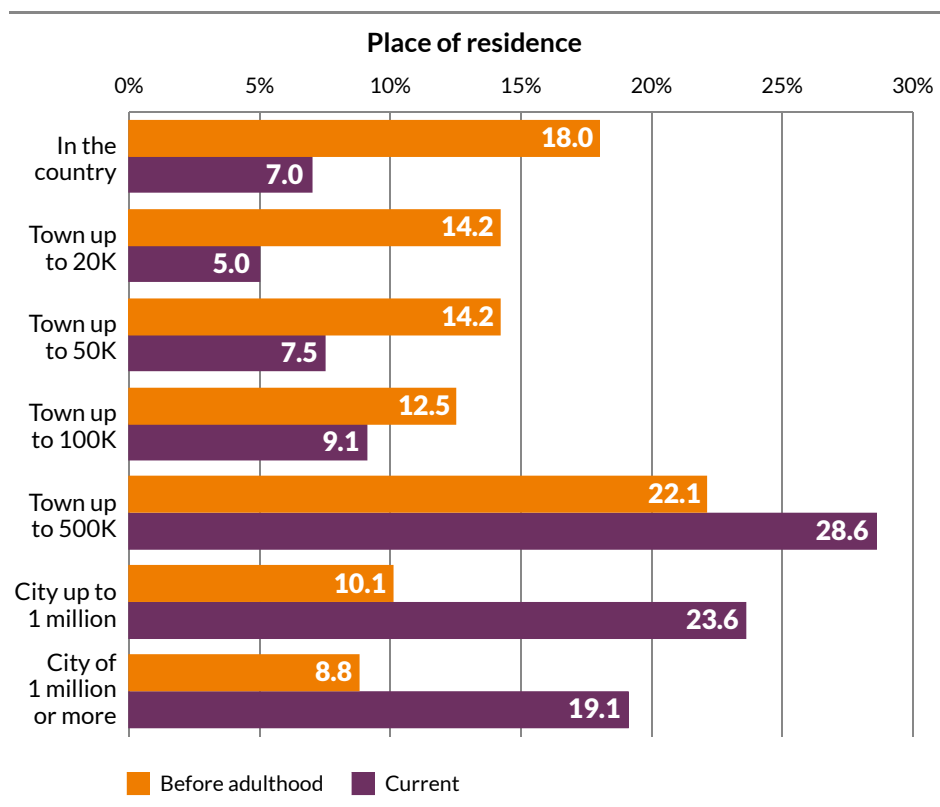
**Chart 8. Distribution of sex and age in the sample (n=3029)**



The greatest number of respondents lived in towns and cities (72%). 29% of respondents lived in cities of up to 500 thousand inhabitants, 24% lived in cities below 1 million inhabitants, while almost one respondent in five (19%) lived in a city exceeding 1 million inhabitants. The smallest number of respondents lived in the country (7%) and in small towns up to 50 thousand inhabitants (12.5%).

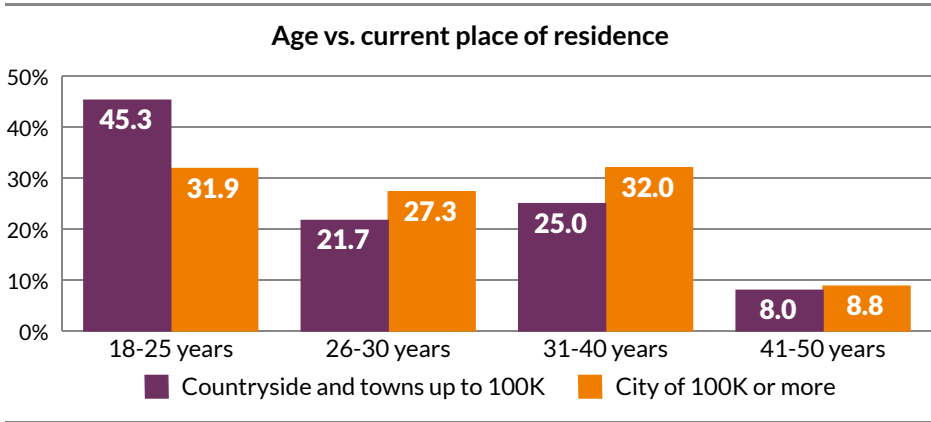
The respondents were also asked about the place where they had spent a major part of their lives before reaching adulthood. Almost one person in five came from the country (18%), and a further 28% used to live in a town below 50 thousand inhabitants. 22% of respondents lived in cities up to 500 thousand inhabitants before reaching maturity; only one person in ten lived in a city up to 1 million inhabitants, while only 9% hailed from a city of over 1 million inhabitants. The data clearly show that respondents migrated from the country and small towns towards larger agglomerations after reaching adulthood. Sex did not differentiate the choice of the place of residence of the respondents, which proves that there is a tendency to move from smaller to larger localities both among men and women.

**Chart 9. Place of residence where the respondents lived the longest before adulthood (n=3030) and live currently (n=3034)**



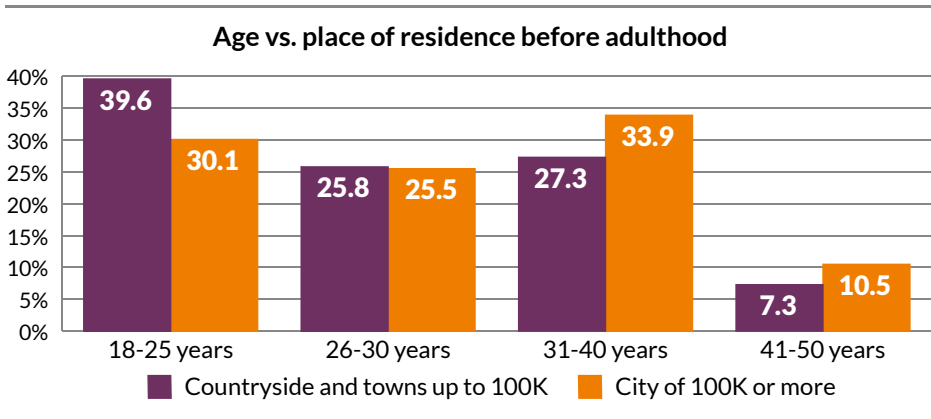
The youngest respondents (18-25 age bracket) were the most numerous (45%) among the respondents living in the country and in towns up to 100 thousand inhabitants. A somewhat bigger number of respondents of the 26-30 and 31-40 age brackets lived in cities of more than 100 thousand inhabitants than in smaller places. The number of respondents living in the country and in towns and cities was similar in the 40+ age bracket.

Chart 10. Age and current place of residence



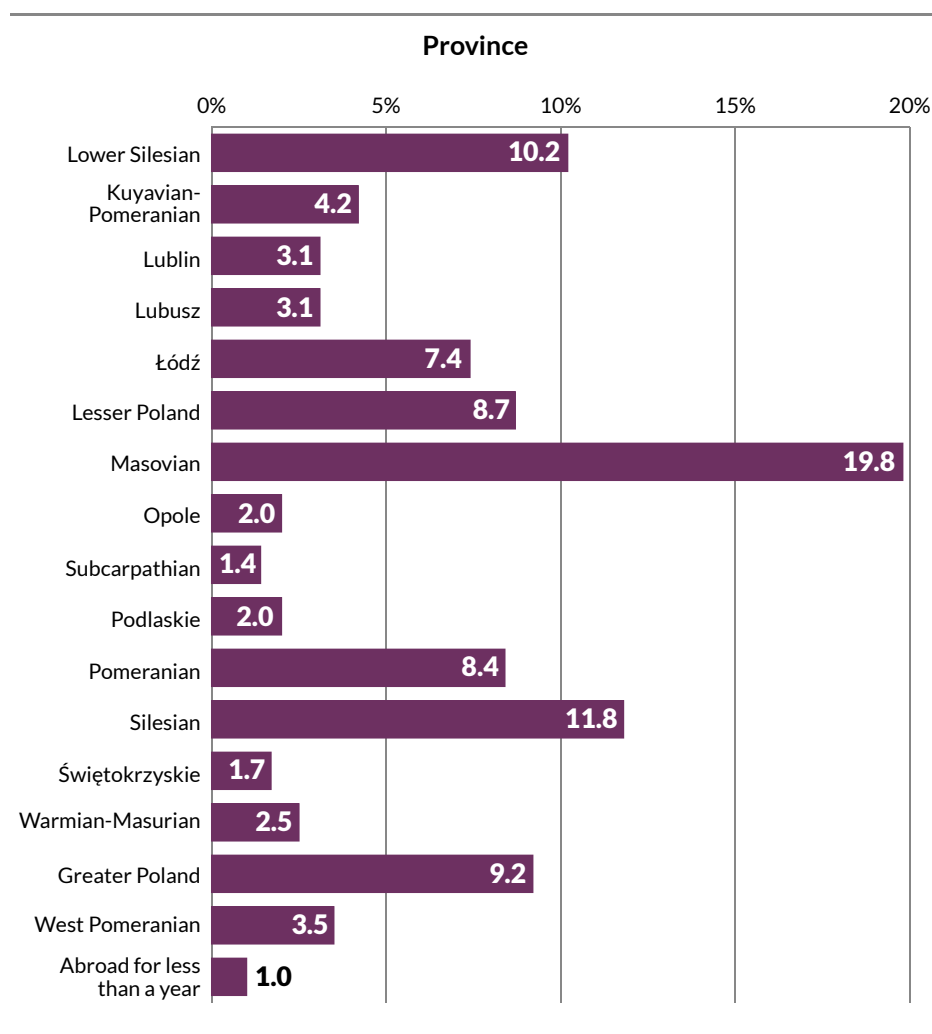
A similar, statistically significant difference appeared between age and place of residence up to adulthood. The youngest respondents (18-25 age bracket) were the largest group (40%) among the respondents living in the country and towns up to 100 thousand inhabitants. The difference most probably results from the fact that it is much easier for non-heterosexual persons to become independent and start a family in the more anonymous and less conservative big city environment.

Chart 11. Age and place of residence before adulthood (n=2944)



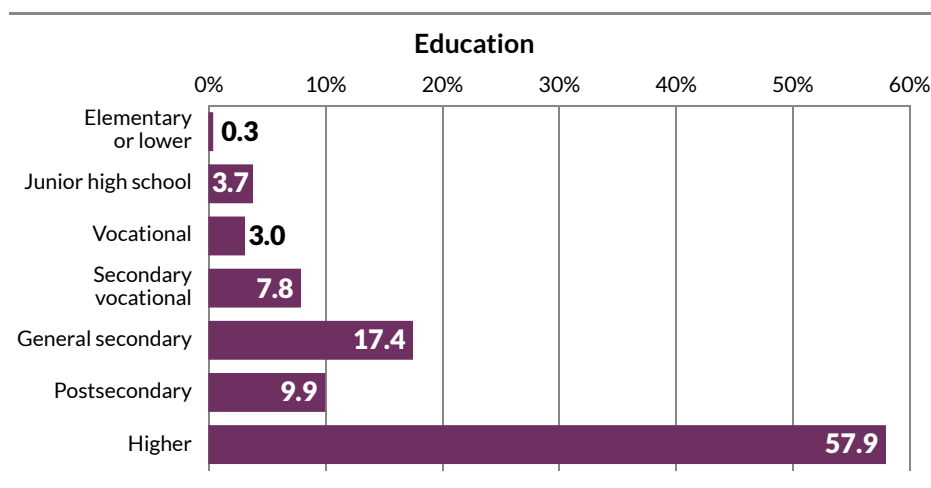
The study was addressed to people living in Poland, except for respondents who lived abroad during the poll but had spent less than a year outside Poland. The number of the latter in the sample was only 1%. The biggest number of respondents lived in the Masovian province (20%), the Silesian province (12%), Lower Silesian (10%), Greater Poland (9%), and Lesser Poland (9%) provinces. The smallest number of respondents lived in the Subcarpathian (1.4%), Świętokrzyskie (2%), Podlaskie (2%), and Opole (2%) provinces. This ratio is connected e.g. with the respective sizes and populations of the provinces; it generally reflects the proportions of Poland's population in those provinces.

**Chart 12. Province of residence of respondents (n=3034)**



People with higher education were a majority (58%) among the respondents. People with secondary education made up 17% of the sample, and one person in ten completed post-secondary education. The lower the education, the smaller the participation in our sample – 8% of respondents completed a secondary vocational school, 4% graduated from junior high school, and 3% had only vocational education.

**Chart 13. Characteristics of the respondents in reference to education (n=3037)**



Another variable that characterises our sample is involvement in various LGBT community activities. Involvement was understood very broadly, e.g. as participation in the Equality Parade or other demonstrations, signing a petition, working as a volunteer for an LGBT organisation, or providing financial support to such an organisation or any kind of action aimed at changing the current situation of non-heterosexual and transgender persons. As it turned out, 38% of respondents declared such involvement while 62% did not show any activity in the field. Women proved more involved than men: the difference was 8 percentage points.

**Chart 14. Do you support or participate in activities for LGBT persons (e.g. take part in the Equality Parade or other demonstrations, sign petitions, work as a volunteer for an LGBT organisation, or support such an organisation financially)? (n=3033)**

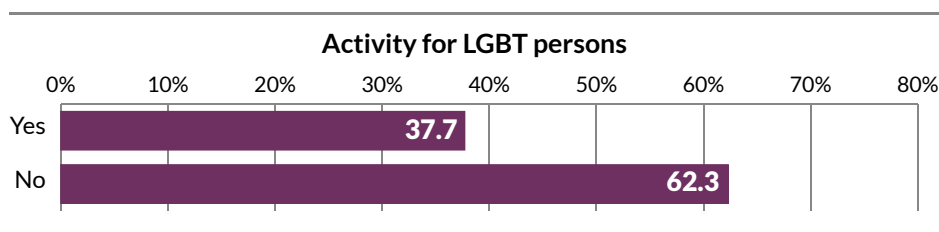
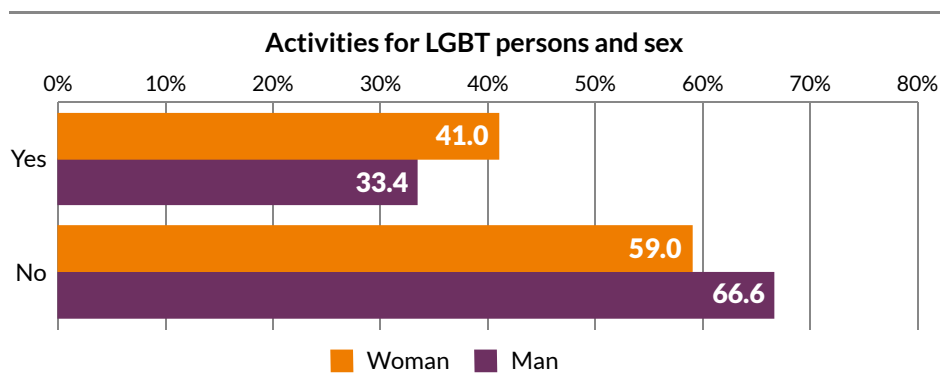
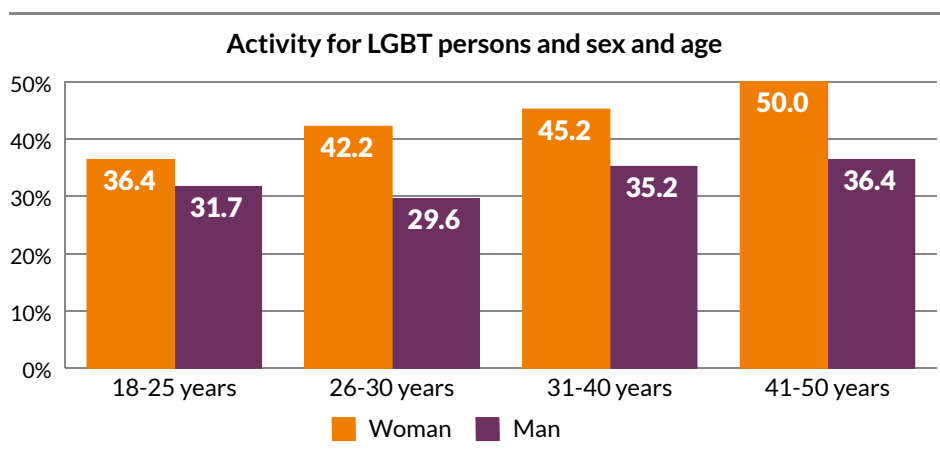


Chart 15. Support for activities for LGBT persons and sex (n=3033)



The age difference proved significant in this issue, but only in the case of women. Among the youngest female respondents 36% were involved in an activity for LGBT persons, among the oldest (age group 41-50) it was a half. There is a similar tendency among men – the older, the more involved – but it was statistically nonsignificant. The connection between activism and the declared material status proved to be nonsignificant.

Chart 16. Support of activities for LGBT persons and sex and age (only those involved) (n=2944)

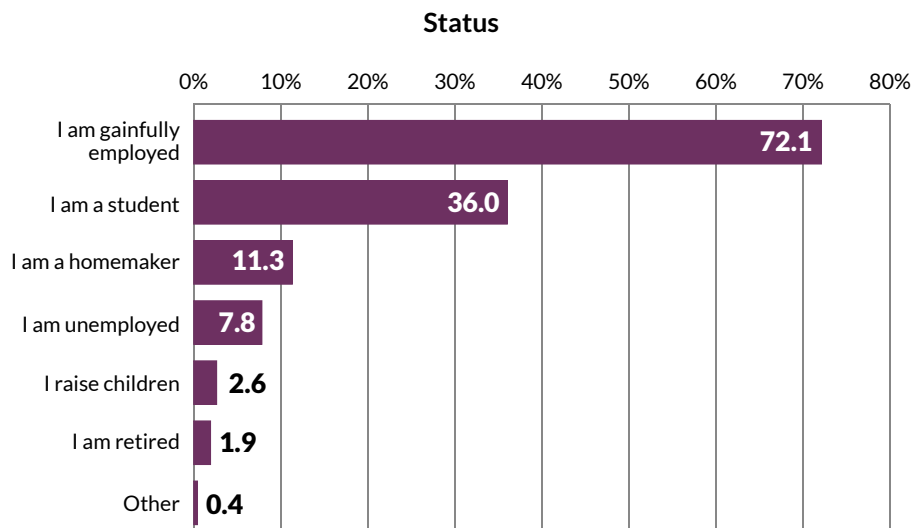


The respondents were asked to describe their status. The largest group of respondents worked (72%) while 36% were students. The number of respondents who both worked and studied was 13.8% of the whole sample. One person in ten was a homemaker (11%), while 8% were unemployed. A mere 3% looked after their children



fulltime. Work practice (internships) and voluntary service in NGO’s were among the minority of other answers (0.4%). More detailed data are presented in Chart 17.

**Chart 17. Which of the answers below best describes your status? The percentage does not add up to 100 as it was possible to provide several answers (n=3030)**



The influence of sex and age on the respondents’ status was assessed. In the youngest group – 18-25 – more men than women worked (the difference was 10 percentage points), while in the 26-40 age bracket more women than men raised children (the difference was 10 percentage points), which men did only sporadically (0.4%).

As far as the age of the respondents is concerned the youngest persons were more likely to continue their education and not work. A significant difference concerned raising children. Most women raising children belonged to the 30-40 age bracket.

Categories of professions were prepared on the basis of Polish classification of professions and specialities for the labour market.<sup>4</sup>

The largest of our categories was the group of specialists, including professions that require a high level of professional knowledge, practice, and experience in sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, arts, etc. 48% of the respondents qualified for this category, among whom the most numerous were: teachers and university professors,

<sup>4</sup> The classification is introduced by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and it is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-88, adapted to the requirements of the European Union. The structure of this classification includes ten so called major groups which were presented in Chart 18 as categories. Occupations provided in the poll by the respondents may be ascribed to the groups with the use of the Occupation Description Search Engine (Wyszukiwarka Opisów Zawodów) available at the web portal of the Public Employment Services (source: [http://psz.praca.gov.pl/klasyfikacja\\_zawodow/index.php](http://psz.praca.gov.pl/klasyfikacja_zawodow/index.php), access: 15.03.2014).

programmers, computer graphics designers, managers, doctors, nurses, psychologists, architects, lawyers, journalists, editors, sales representatives, designers, physiotherapists, and logisticians, as well as various specialists (IT, banking and finance, marketing and advertisement), artists (mainly actors and musicians), translators and interpreters, and people who declared themselves as freelancers.

The second largest category (21%) were the respondents employed in personal services and sales. The most common professions in this category were: salesperson, cook, waiter, bartender and barista, customer service, security guard, telemarketer, hairdresser, and caretaker.

The third category (12%) consists of technicians and other middle level personnel. The group includes professions that require knowledge, practice, and experience necessary mainly for technical and other similar work. The respondents in this category were mostly official and clerks, bookkeepers, librarians, photographers, technicians, and quality controllers.

The fourth category (6%) included representatives of public authorities, higher officials, and managers. They were mostly self-employed people, company owners, managers, and managerial staff.

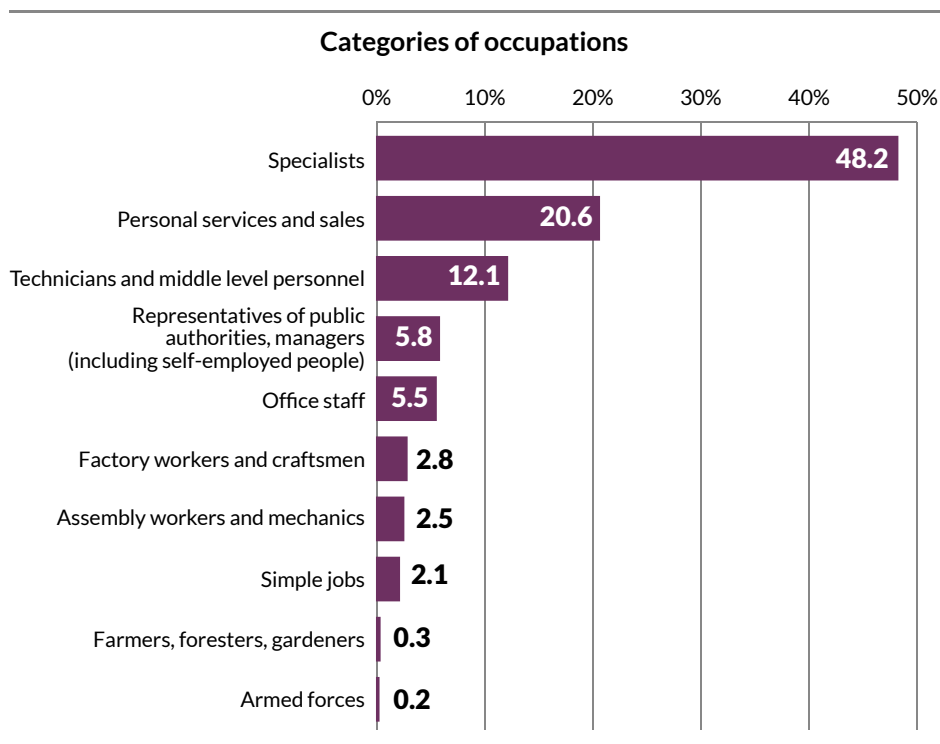
The fifth category (6%) were office staff. They were clerks, warehouse workers, receptionists, and personal assistants.

The sixth category (3%) were factory workers and craftsmen. The category included predominantly builders, fitters, electricians, carpenters, and confectioners.

The seventh most popular category (3%) consisted of assembly workers and mechanics. The most popular occupations in the category were drivers, machine operators, and workers.

The eighth category (2%) consisted of representatives of simple jobs. This group included physical and seasonal workers, domestic help, and part-time workers. The ninth category (0.3%) – farmers, foresters, gardeners – was represented exclusively by gardeners, while the tenth and smallest category (0.2%) consisted of respondents employed by the armed forces.

**Chart 18. Respondent occupations – only the respondents who provided their occupation (n=2141)**



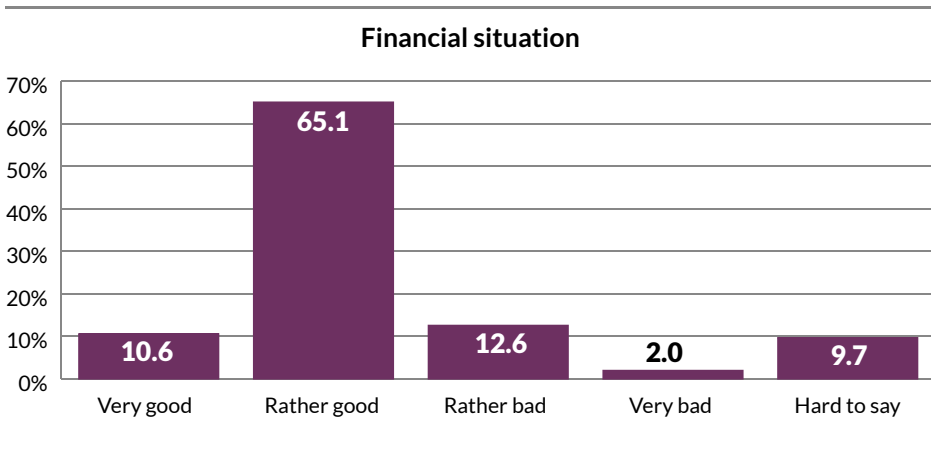
Consequently, the respondents represented all of the occupation categories, although due to overrepresentation of people with secondary and higher education the sample was dominated by specialists. We compared the results of our study to *Diagnoza Społeczna*. We drew respondents of the same sex, age, and place of residence from their representative sample. In this way we obtained two sets of data that could be compared. However, the samples are not fully comparable as our study was conducted differently than Czapiński and Panek's.

It turned out that there was also a majority of specialists (24.4%) and personal services and salespersons (18.4%) among the respondents of *Diagnoza Społeczna*. The third largest group were factory workers and craftsmen (12.4%), and the fourth and fifth, just as in our study, were technicians and middle level personnel (11.7%) and office staff (10.6%). The smallest groups were assembly workers and mechanics (6.3%), simple jobs employees (5.5%), representatives of public authorities, managers (including self-employed people) (5.3%), farmers, foresters, and gardeners (4.7%). The smallest group were respondents employed by the armed forces (0.6%). The results show that our study, regardless of the problems with access to the target group, reflects dominant tendencies in the representative sample.

The respondents were also asked to assess their financial situation. Their financial situation was good or very good in the opinion of three out of four respondents (76%). However, 15% of our respondents estimated their situation as rather bad or very bad. One respondent in ten was unable to evaluate their financial situation. The sex of the respondents did not influence the responses. However, it is worth noting that people in bad financial situations came mostly from smaller towns.

The vast majority of respondents believed themselves to be well off. This is likely the case because we managed to contact mostly respondents with secondary and higher education working as specialists in bigger towns and cities.

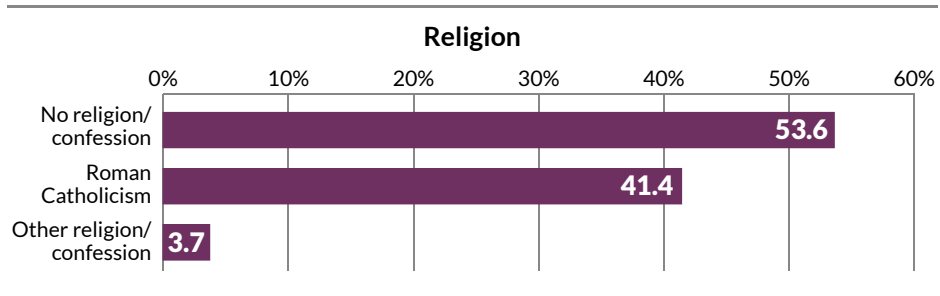
**Chart 19. What is your financial situation? (n=3003)**



Religiousness was yet another issue touched upon in the study. The respondents were asked to what religion, church, or faith they felt attached to. Over half of the respondents (54%) felt no connection with any religion or church. The greatest number among those who felt such a connection indicated Roman Catholicism (41%). Less than 4% of respondents declared another confession. Most of these respondents opted for other Christian denominations (1.8%), such as Protestantism (1%) or Russian Orthodox (0.4%). A similar number of respondents indicated other religions with Christian roots (i.e. Jehova’s Witnesses) or unspecified type of Christianity. 1.2% of respondents declared Buddhism as their religion while 0.3% chose Judaism. Other respondents opted for “other beliefs” (0.3%) or described themselves as non-denominational believers (0.2%). The sex of the respondents did not influence the answers to this question.

However, in the study prepared by CBOS (2012b) on a representative sample 91.3% of respondents claimed to be Roman Catholics and only 4.2% of respondents were “non-believers, agnostics, atheists”. Among the remaining respondents the most numerous were protestants (0.8%) and members of the Russian Orthodox Church (0.2%). 0.8% of respondents chose “other denomination”.

**Chart 20. What religion, church, faith do you feel attached to? (n=3031)**



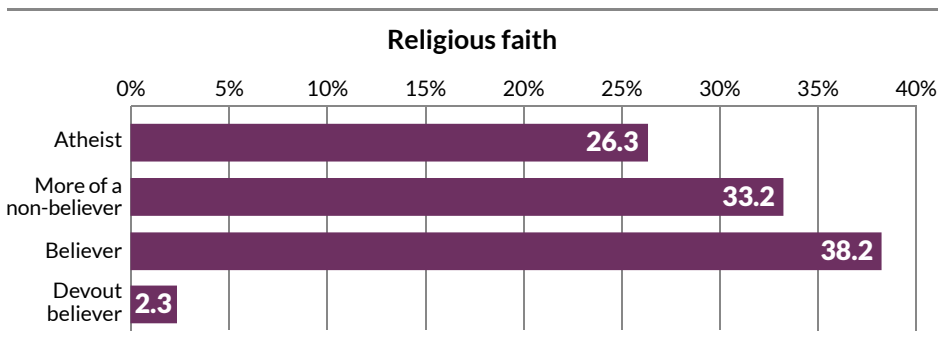
The respondents were also asked whether, regardless of their participation in religious practices, they considered themselves as believers (adopted from the poll of CBOS, 2012b). 40% of the respondents claimed they were believers, of whom 2% claimed they were devout believers. One person in three was more of a non-believer, while 26% claimed they were atheists. The sex of the respondents did not influence responses to this question.

The study by CBOS (2012b) concerning religiousness (quoted above) indicated that 94% of Poles consider themselves to be believers, of whom 9% were devout believers. 3% of respondents claimed to be more of non-believers, the number of atheists was also 3%.

These differences in results between the present study and that of CBOS most probably result from the exclusion of non-heterosexual persons from the Roman Catholic Church by Church authorities. As a result, a part of LGBT people do not see a place for themselves in the Church, while others question religion that stigmatizes homosexuality.

Respondents participating in religious practices went to mass an average of three times a month, while respondents who claimed to only feel a connection with Roman Catholicism attended religious practices once per month. This means that a certain portion of the respondents, regardless of their religious feelings, did not attend the holy mass.

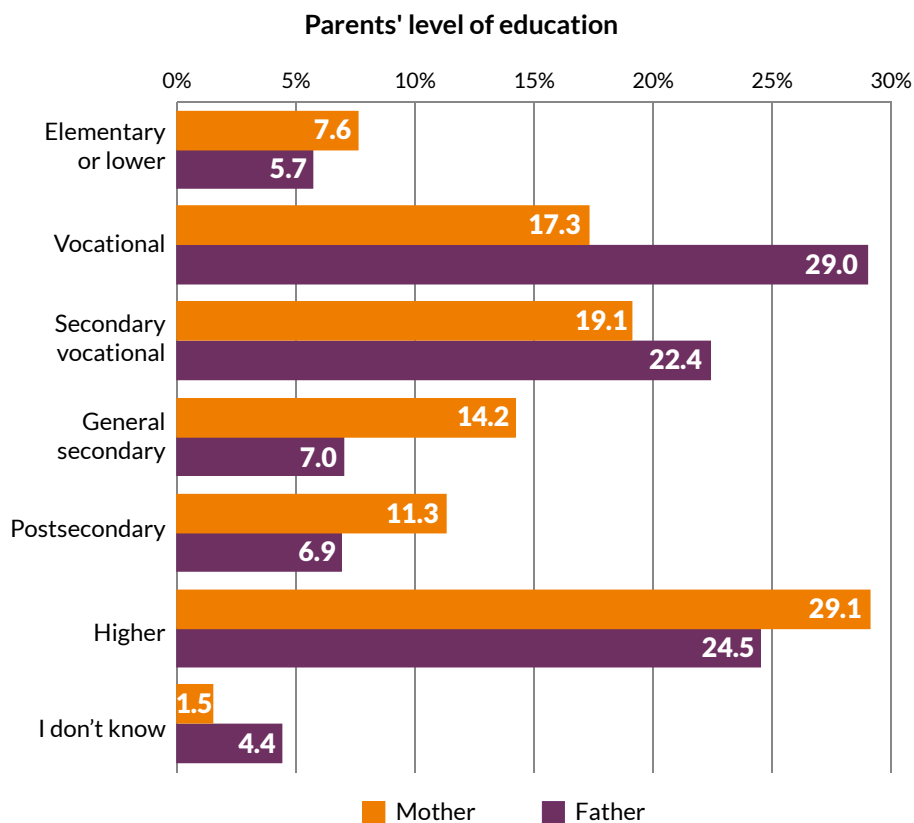
**Chart 21. Regardless of your participation in religious practices, do you consider yourself .... (n=3032)**



A sample of respondents with similar sex, age, and place of residence to those analysed in our study was drawn from the database of *Diagnoza Społeczna*. Average participation in religious practices was compared – in the present study it was 0.5 times monthly, while in Czapiński and Panka’s study it was twice a month. The level of religiousness among people living in same-sex couples is thus much lower.

In our study we were also interested in the level of education of the parents of our respondents. Their mothers were better educated than their fathers – 29% of mothers received university degrees as opposed to 25% of fathers, 11% of mothers and 7% of fathers completed postsecondary vocational education, while 14% of mothers 7% of fathers ended their education at the general secondary level. Most fathers received vocational education (29%) and an almost equally large group (22%) had secondary vocational education. The difference between the responses concerning their mothers’ and fathers’ level of education is quite telling –4.4% of the respondents answered “I don’t know” in the case of their fathers, while in the case of their mothers it was only 1.5%.

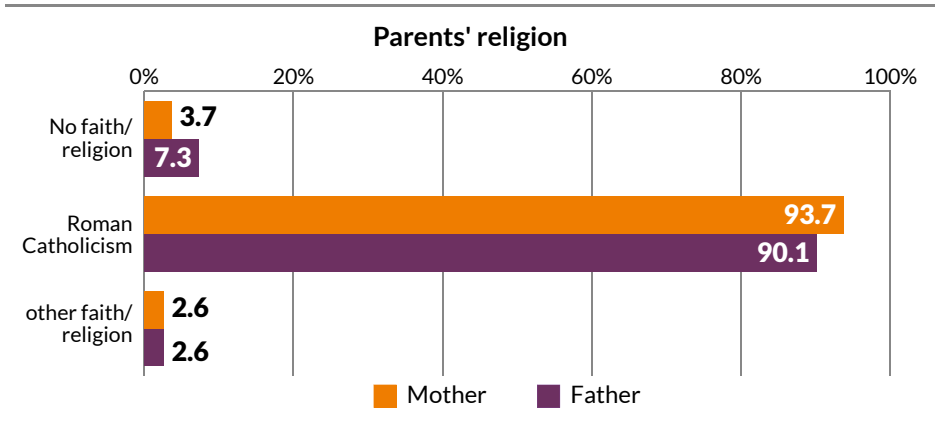
**Chart 22. Level of education of respondents’ mothers (n=3023) and fathers (n=2987)**



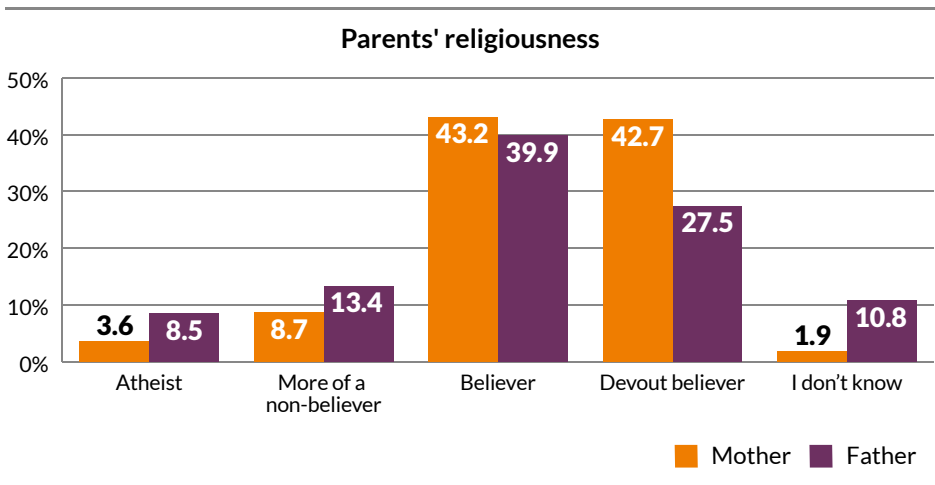
The majority of the respondents were raised in Roman Catholic families – when asked about their parents’ religion, 94% and 90% claimed that their mothers and fathers (respectively) were Roman Catholics.

Respondents were also asked to assess the attitude of their parents towards religion. As it turned out mothers were more likely to be practicing believers than fathers; they were also less likely than fathers to be non-believers or atheists. The respondents found it more difficult to provide this information about their fathers, as can be concluded from the difference in the ratio of “I don’t know” answers– 11% for fathers and 2% for mothers.

**Chart 23. What is the religion/Church/faith of your mother (n=3028) and your father (n=2999)**



**Chart 24. Which of the following descriptions fits your mother (n=3033) and your father (n=3026) best**

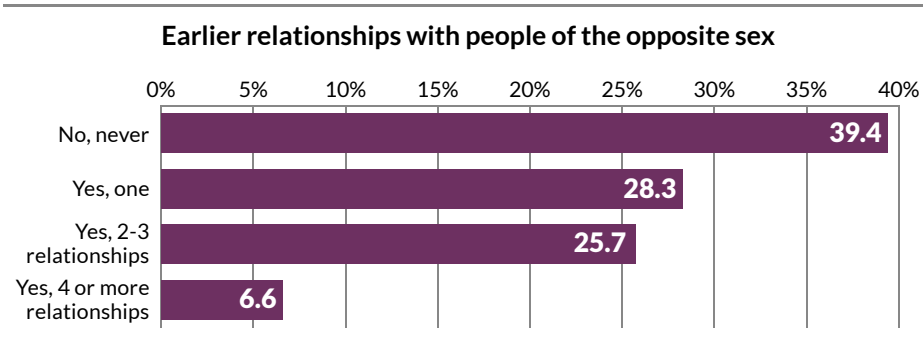


We also checked whether there was a relation between parents’ attitude towards religion (whether the parents were practicing believers) and that of the children (whether they were believers). A relation was apparent but it was nonsignificant: parents’ religiousness influenced their children’s religiousness to a very small degree (correlation 0.251).

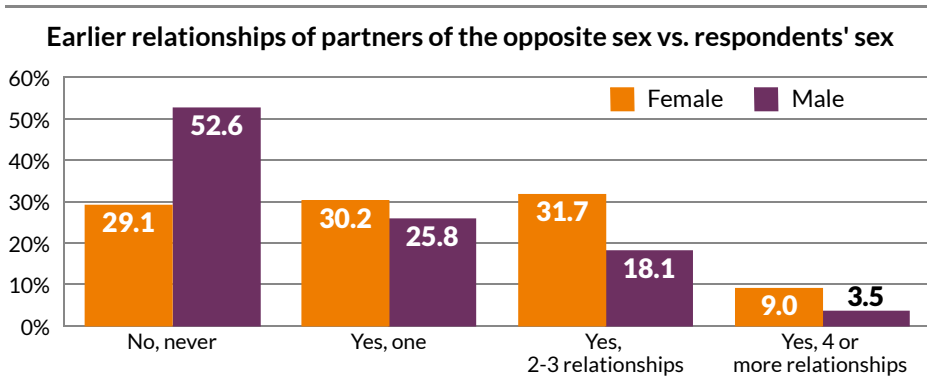
**BASIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE RESPONDENTS’ RELATIONSHIPS**

Although a major part of the questionnaire items concerned various issues connected to current relationships of the respondents, basic data concerning their earlier relationships was gathered as well. Non-heterosexual persons quite often had formerly been in relationships with partners of the opposite sex. 61% of respondents had been in such a relationship: 28% of respondents reported one such occurrence, 25% reported two or three, and almost 7% of the respondents reported having been in at least three such relationships.

**Chart 25. Have you ever been in a relationship with a partner of the opposite sex? (n=3034)**



**Chart 26. Earlier relationships with partners of the opposite sex vs. the sex of the respondent (n=3034)**

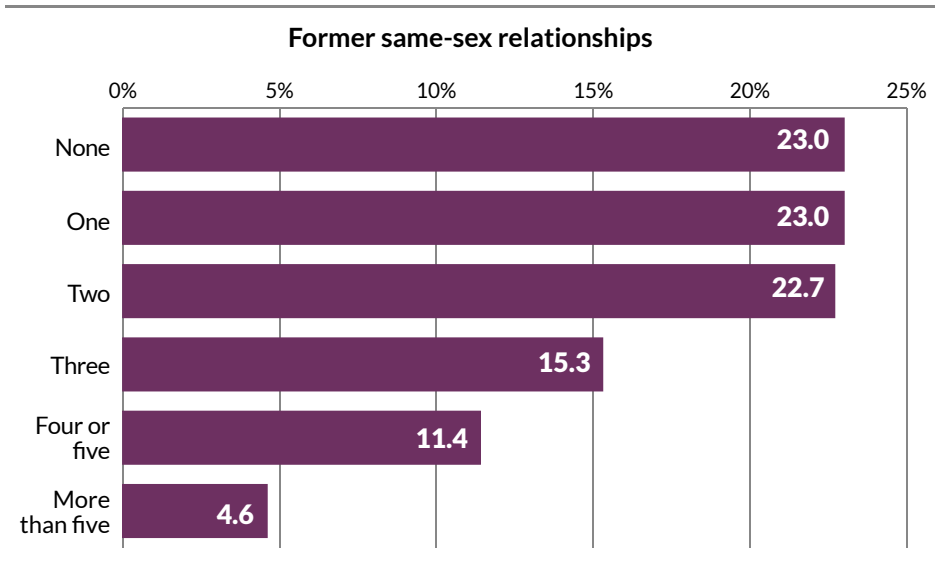




Women were in heterosexual relationships more often than men. 71% of women were in such a relationship compared to 47% of men. However, there is no correlation between the age of the respondents and their former relationships with members of the opposite sex.

The respondents were also asked about their earlier relationships with same sex persons. For 23% of respondents their current same-sex relationship was the first one in their life. Almost half of the respondents (46%) had previously been in either one or two same-sex relationships. Another 27% had formerly been in three, four, or five such relationships. The number of earlier same-sex relationships was not related to either the sex or age of the respondents.

**Chart 27. How many same-sex relationships did you have before your current relationship began? (n=3016)**



The average length of the current relationship was 4 years. Half of the respondents were in relationships lasting for more than 3 years. The longest relationship lasted 42 years, while the shortest that qualified for the study was 6 months. Almost one respondent in five (19%) was in a relationship lasting for 2 years and 17% of respondents were in a relationship for less than a year. 7% of respondents claimed that they had been in a relationship for over a decade.

The length of the relationship grew in proportion to the age of the respondents – the higher the age bracket, the longer the relationship. Men’s relationships were on the average longer than those of women. The difference was especially noticeable in the highest age bracket; one should bear in mind, however, that there were very few women in this particular group.

Chart 28. How long has your current relationship lasted? Variable calculated for couples<sup>5</sup> (n=2215)

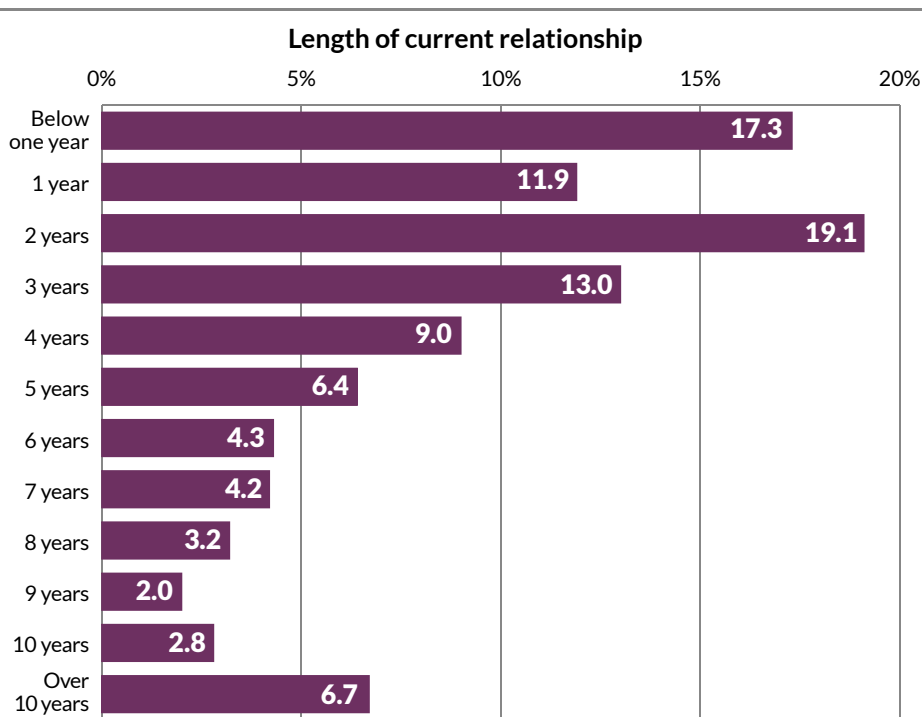
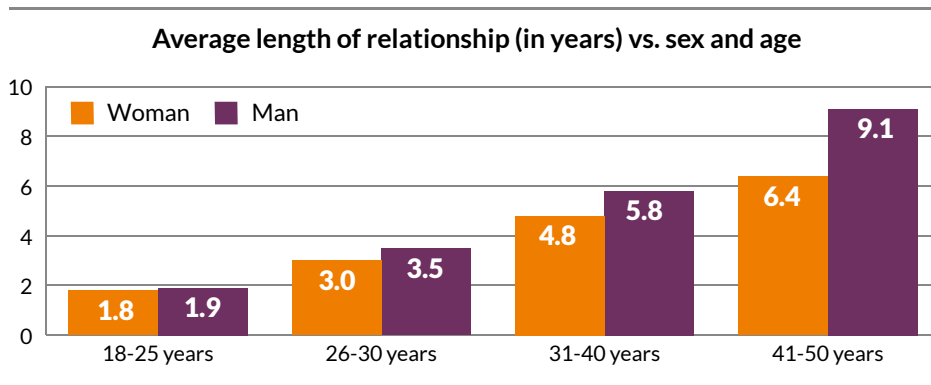


Chart 29. The average length of relationships vs. sex and age (n=2151)

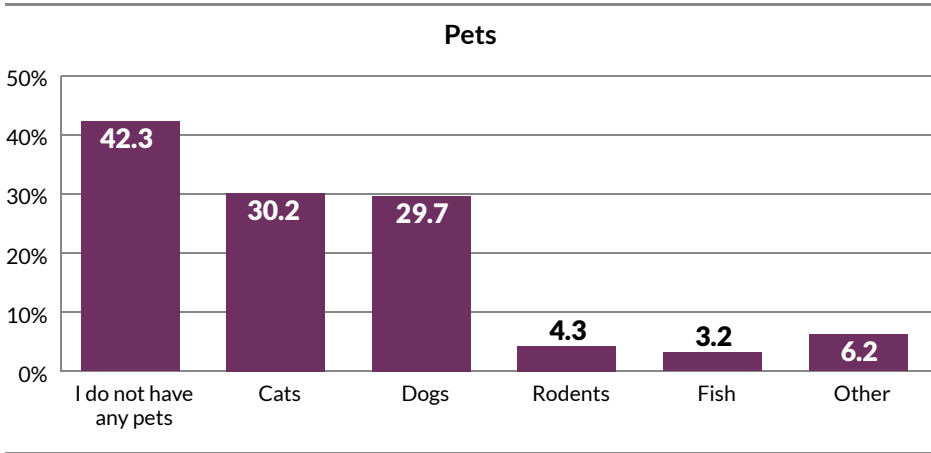


<sup>5</sup> As it was already stated in the Introduction, the variable calculated for couples gives the average of the responses of a couple so that they can be compared with the answers of people whose partners did not participate in the study.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

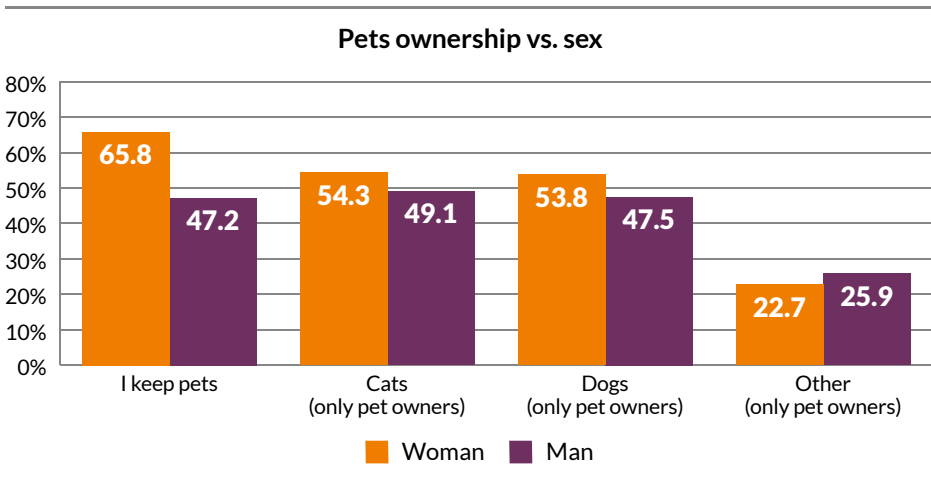
We decided to check whether the observed families kept pets. Over half of the respondents (58%) kept them. The pets in question were most often cats and dogs (30% of each). Approximately 13% of couples kept rodents, fish, or other small animals such as rabbits, birds, turtles, lizards, etc.

Chart 30. Do you keep a pet? Each respondent could declare ownership of many pets so the percentage does not add up to 100 (n=3025)



More women (66%) than men (47%) keep pets. Women were more likely to keep dogs or cats; there was no significant difference in the case of other pets (rodents, fish, other).

Chart 31. Pet ownership and sex (n=3025)



## CURRENT RELATIONSHIP AND ITS VARIOUS DIMENSIONS

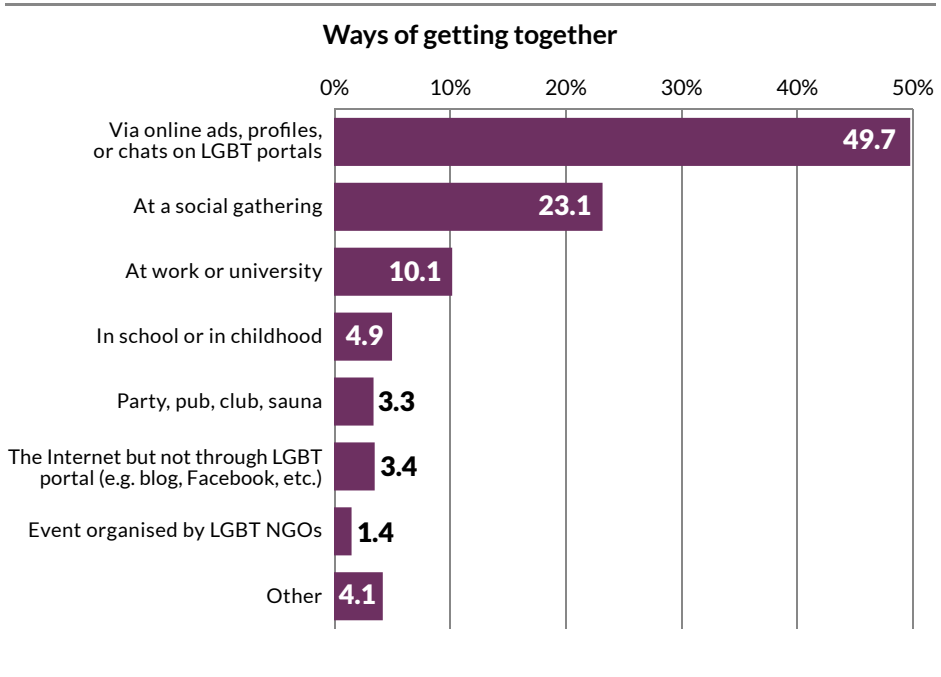
### How they met and spend their free time

The respondents were asked several questions concerning their current relationships. The first question was where they met their current partners.

Same-sex couples most often met on the internet. Half of the respondents got in touch via online ads, profiles, or chats on LGBT portals. The second most popular option was social gatherings or meeting “through friends” – 23% of the couples met this way. One respondent in ten met their partner at work or university and 5% (mostly women) met in secondary school or even earlier, in childhood. Pubs, clubs, and saunas turned out to be far less popular (3%), as were events organised by LGBT NGOs (1.4%).

As for “other” ways, it is possible to list several additional categories proposed by the respondents, such as: in the street, on a bus, in the neighbourhood (1%), during a trip, during holidays (0.6%), or while practicing sport (0.6%). Further responses did not fit any category, e.g. “in the choir”, “in church”, “at a scouts jamboree”, “by chance”, and “too intimate to tell”.

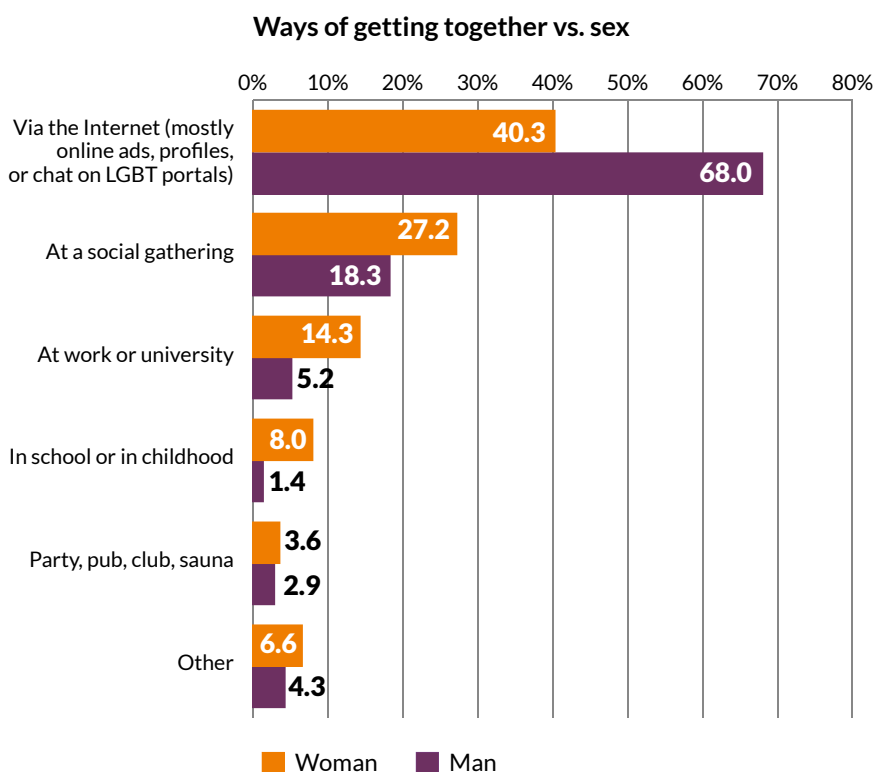
Chart 32. How did you meet your partner? Variable calculated for couples (n=2224)



In the further analyses we summed up less popular categories with the more popular ones: “an event organised by LGBT NGOs” (5.5%) was included in “other” while “the Internet, blog, Facebook” was added to “LGBT portals”, becoming a single category of meeting on the Internet (53.1%).

Men got to know each other via the Internet more often than women. 68% of men met via an online ad, profile, chat, or LGBT portal as opposed to 40% of women who did the same. Women clearly preferred meeting in person (“face to face”), a social gathering, at a university, at work, or in school.

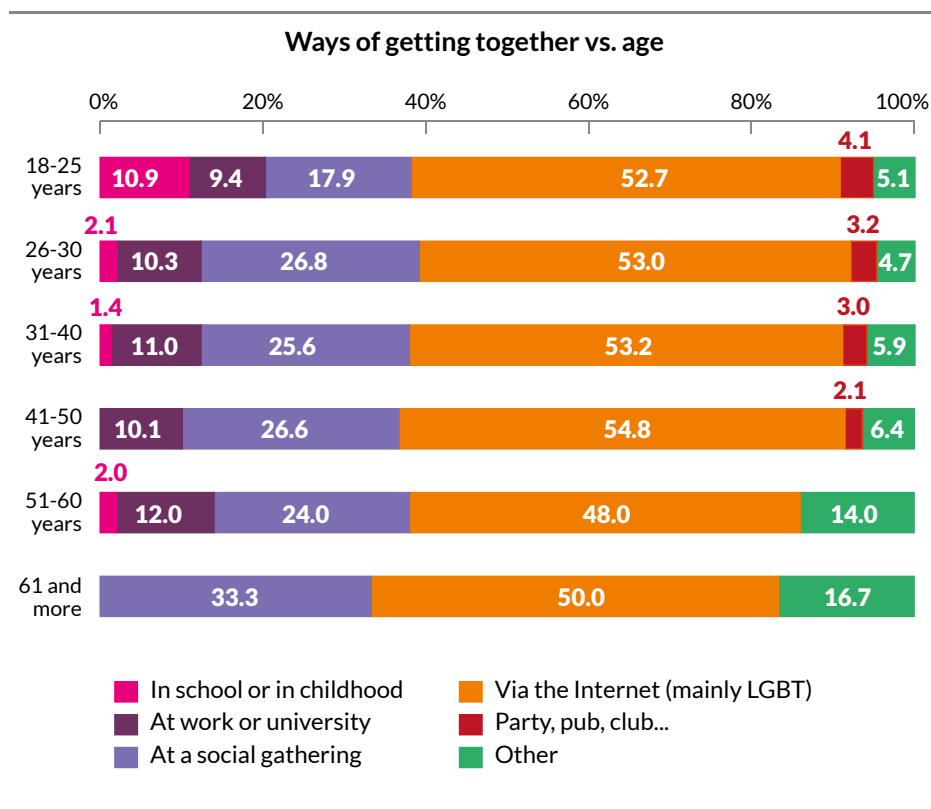
**Chart 33. Ways of getting together and sex. Variable calculated for couples (n=2224)**



The method of meeting partners depended on the age of the respondents, although it is important to state that this does not apply to the Internet which is almost as important for teenagers as it is for the people of 60 years or more. There are differences in the way people communicate outside of cyberspace. It is quite natural that the youngest respondents got to know each other at secondary school or in childhood. Meeting one’s significant other in a club appeared only in the responses of people up to 50 years of age. Respondents in the 60+ age bracket usually met at social gatherings.

The fact that over a half of the respondents met via the Internet may be read as a sign of the times: virtual reality forms an inseparable part of everyday life and has become the basis of building new relationships. It is worth noting that for non-heterosexual people the Internet may be a “safe space” where they can look for a partner without fear, which is not always quite so easy in real life where they often have to face hostile attitudes from the environment.

Chart 34. The way of getting together and age. Variable calculated for couples (n=2224)



The next question – ways of spending free time – was an open question. Respondents were free to answer it in the way they saw fit. Each respondent could provide up to three forms of spending free time. Analysis of their answers resulted in eight different categories. Chart 35 shows the distribution of frequency of different forms of spending free time organised in such a way as if it had been a multiple choice question.

Sport or tourism turned out to be the most popular pastimes (65%). The category also included other types of activities such as walks (also with a dog or child), trips, and voyages (usually not described in detail) as well as sports (biking was the most popular,

some respondents also listed jogging, fitness, or swimming). General and vague answers such as “active ways of spending free time” were also included in this category.

The second most popular category was what we described as “passive” pastimes (53%). This category included the forms of entertainment that did not require leaving the house and were not connected with any physical activity. The most popular answer was “watching” (TV, TV series, films). Respondents also mentioned “reading”, “listening to music”, and “games” (computer or board games such as Scrabble). These answers were the most common. Answers such as “surfing the net” or “solving crosswords” were much rarer.

The third most popular category (38%) included daily duties and chores connected to the household. The most often mentioned activity was cooking and eating together. Shopping together also proved quite popular. Some less often mentioned activities such as cleaning up, working in the garden, or looking after children or pets were also included in this category.

Activities connected with “going out” and various cultural forms of entertainment came as a close fourth (35%). This category includes going to the cinema, theatre, concerts, restaurants, cafés, pubs, clubs, discos, etc. “Partying”, unless described in closer detail, was also included.

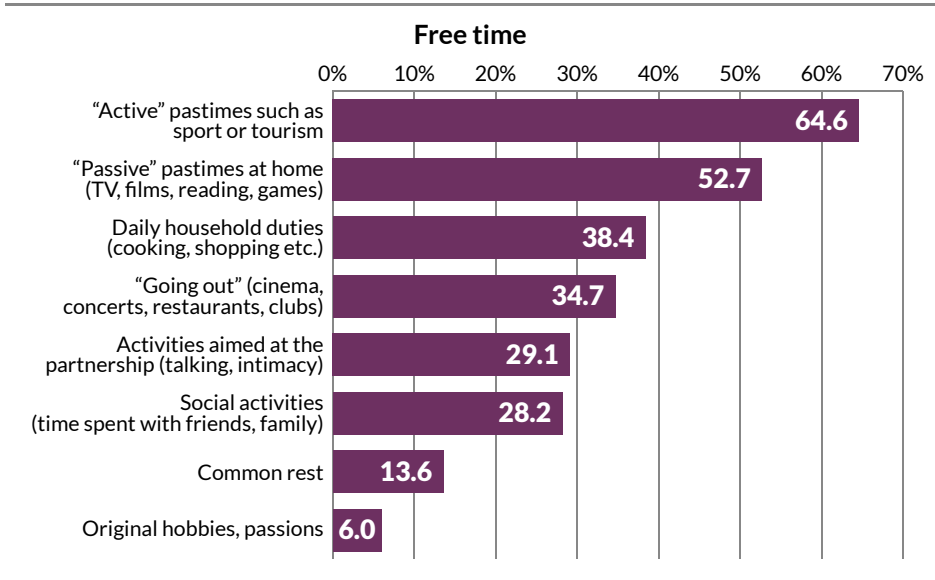
Almost one third of the responses (29%) concerned activities aimed at the partnership and direct contact with the other partner. One can mention here mainly two ways of spending time: talking and sexual intimacy. Other, less often mentioned “activities” included: hugging, kissing, jokes, and antics.

Answers classified as “social activities” made up 28% of responses. Meeting friends and acquaintances was listed the most often and meeting with the family (one’s own or that of the partner) much more seldom. The category also included partying or other activities in which participation of friends was clearly stated (i.e. “partying with friends”, “clubbing with acquaintances”, “travelling with friends”).

Another category was “common rest” (14%) – we included here such responses as “rest”, “sleeping”, “staying in bed”, or “lazing”, as well as answers suggesting free time spent together but without a clear definition (i.e. “we stay at home”).

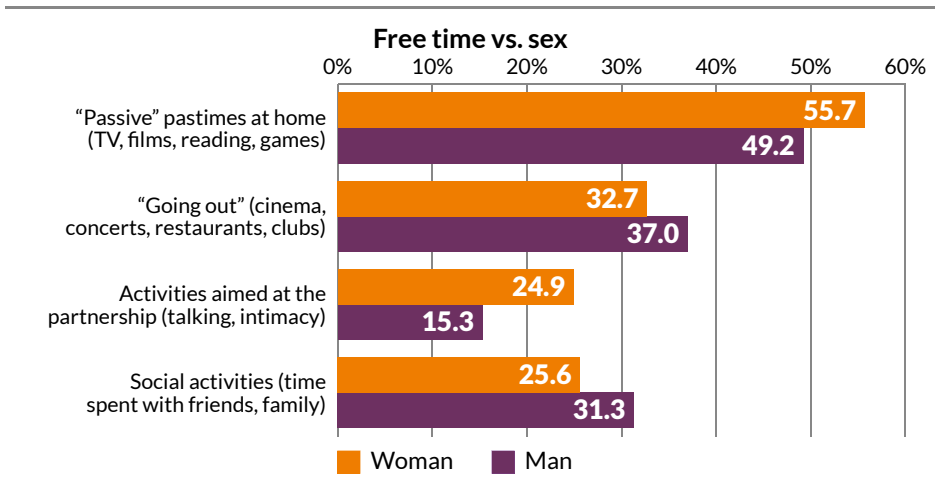
The last category was labelled “original hobbies, passions” (6%) and included unique activities not included in the above categories. The category included common activities of creative or artistic character (e.g. playing instruments, singing, dance, drawing, taking pictures, writing short stories or screenplays, DIY), more seldom of social character (e.g. common work for a foundation), and to a smaller degree common professional work.

**Chart 35. How do you spend time with your partner? 3 things you do together the most often. Variable calculated for couples (n=2186)**



Further analyses showed that women preferred forms of entertainment that would not require going out (“passive”) and activities connected with partnership, while for men “going out” and social activities were more important.

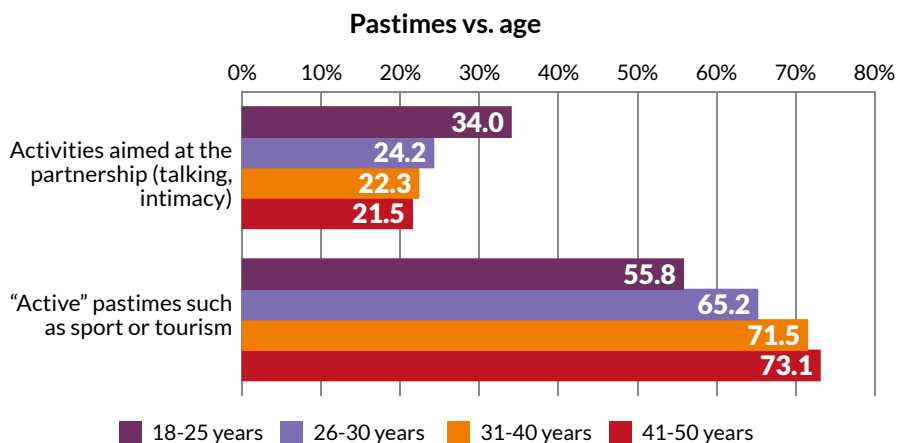
**Chart 36. Categories of free time and sex – only when statistically significant differences were registered (n=2187)**





We took a closer look at what kind of people preferred activities aimed at the relationship. This category was chosen most often by the youngest respondents (18-25 age bracket). After the 26th year the preference for these kinds of pastimes visibly decreased. The number of people opting for sport activities and tourism increased with the age of the respondents: people in the 18-29 age bracket spent their free time this way much less often (59%) than people of 30 or more years, among whom 72% travelled or practised sports together.

**Chart 37. Two categories of pastimes dependent on the age of the respondents**



## Values and sense of happiness

The respondents were asked what they considered to be a necessary condition for a happy life. The question was taken from *Diagnoza Społeczna*. For the greatest number of respondents it was a successful relationship (78%), with health coming second (51%) and friends third (28%). The respondents also listed cheerfulness (24%), work (21%), money (20%), freedom and liberty (20%), and honesty (20%). Respondents chose belief in God, providence least often (2%). The attitude towards such a value as children was an important issue from the point of view of the subjects of our study. As it turned out the value was indicated by merely 5% of the respondents. Among these 5%, the vast majority consisted of parents who are themselves a small minority among non-heterosexuals in same-sex relationships. However, as same-sex parenthood is still rare and unavailable for most homosexuals, the respondents did not consider this value as important.

In the category “other” 0.8% of respondents listed self-fulfilment and values connected with personal development (e.g. achieving a state of inner peace, distance, greater self-awareness), 0.4% chose “family” (we decided to treat it as a separate value from a successful relationship), and 0.3% chose love. Responses also mentioned other auto-

telic values (such as trust, tolerance, courage, perseverance, respect for others) and – in a few cases – highly specific values (a house of one’s own, voyages).

Women opted for successful relationship, strong character, and having children as values they considered important somewhat more often than men. Money, cheerfulness, and honesty proved more important for men than they were for women.

**Chart 38. What do you consider the most important condition of a happy, successful life (read all the options first and choose up to three values) (n=3032)**

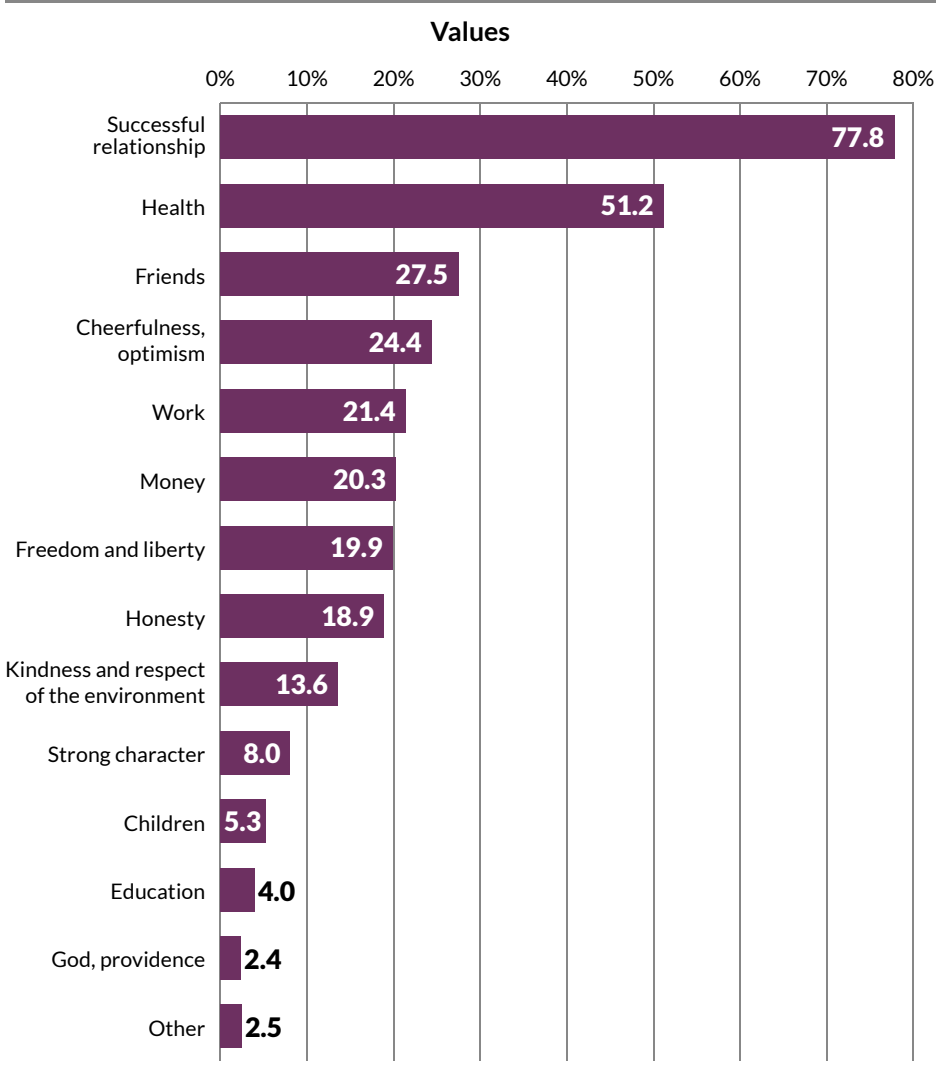
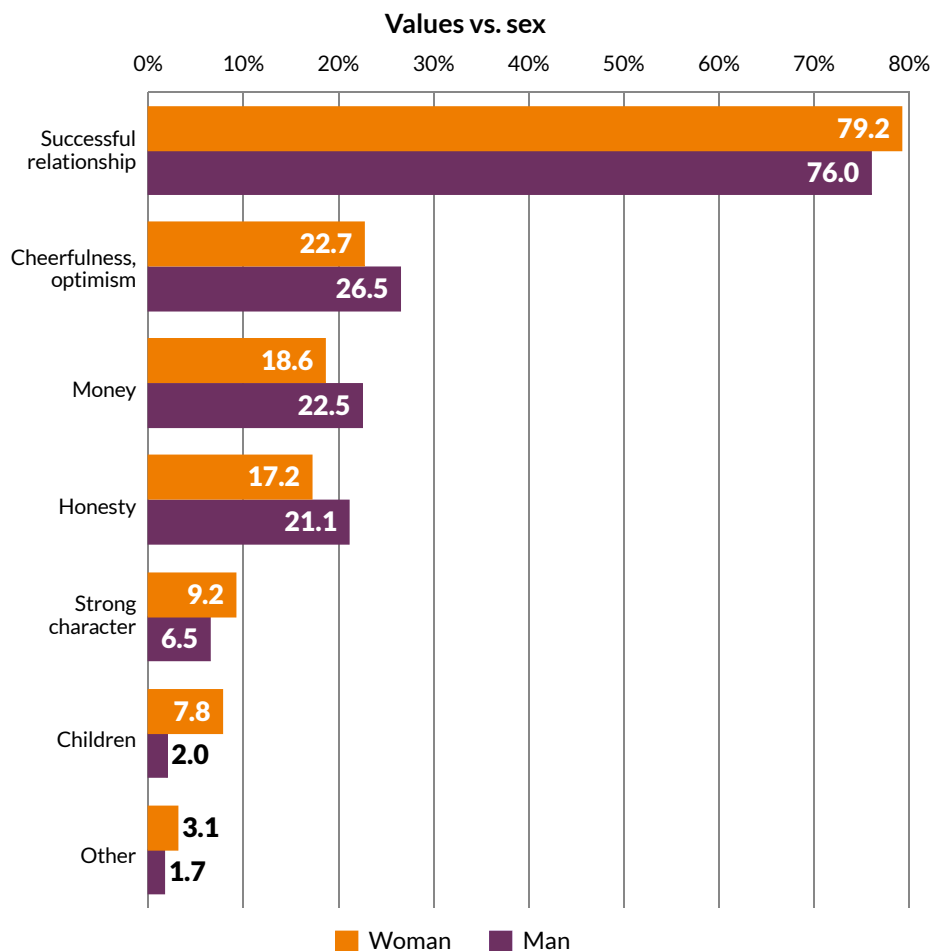


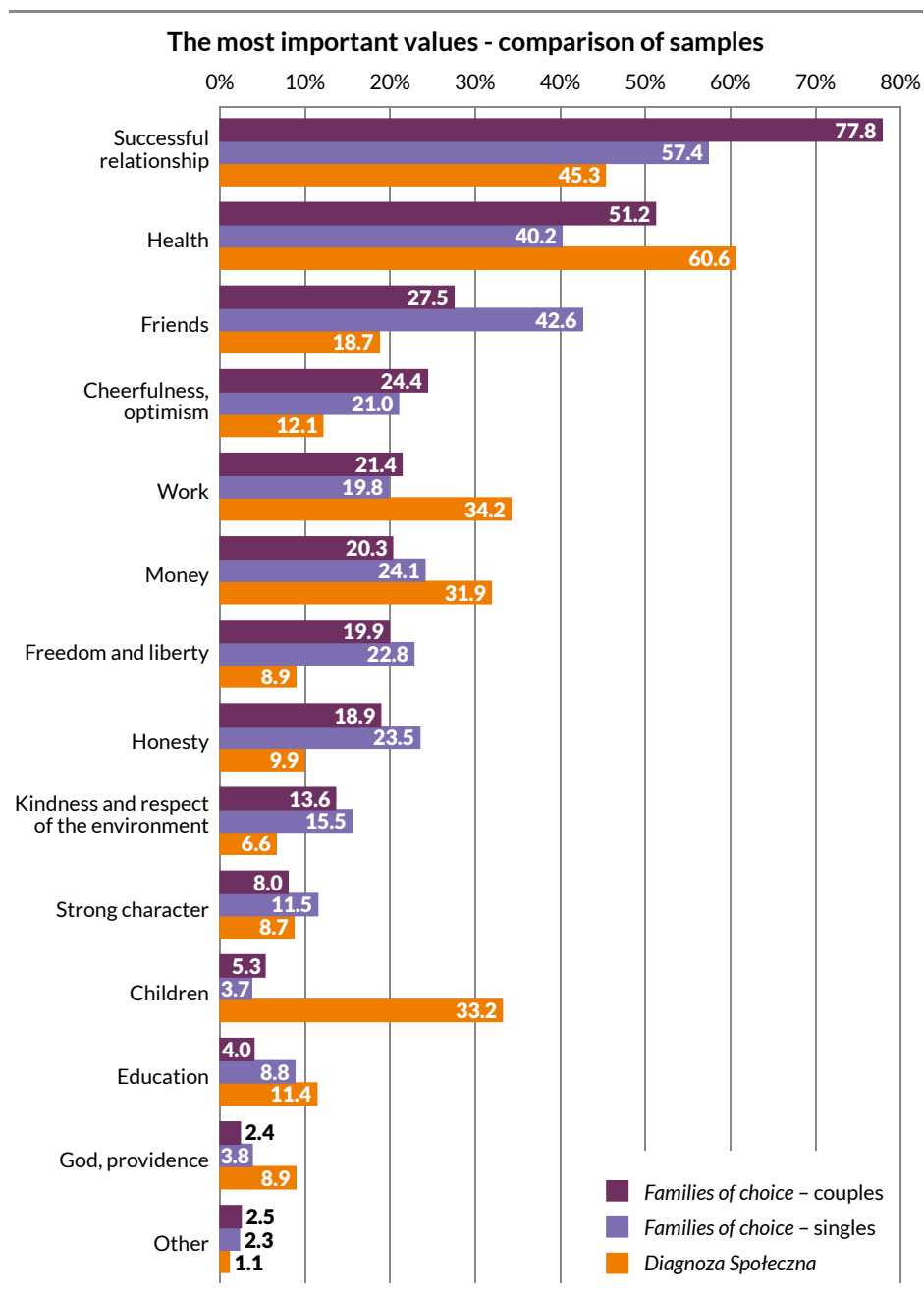
Chart 39. The most important values and sex (only these statistically important)



The hierarchy of values was compared with the results of *Diagnoza Społeczna*. We drew respondents of the same sex, age, and place of residence from the representative sample of Czapiński and Panek's study. Furthermore, we decided to compare the data with the results obtained in the second part of the study *Families of choice* concerning non-heterosexual singles who answered the question.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is a follow up to the quantitative part of the study *Families of choice*, in which non-heterosexual singles were asked analogous questions (detailed information on the study is to be found in the introduction). The results of the study will be available by the end of 2015.

Chart 40. Hierarchy of values – comparison of the results of the study *Families of choice* for couples and singles, and *Diagnoza Społeczna*



Comparison of the answers of singles and couples revealed a similar hierarchy of values. The largest differences can be seen in the categories “successful relationship” and “friends”. The former was more important for couples, the latter for singles. However, the most interesting differences can be noted when comparing our sample with that of *Diagnoza Społeczna*. The most important value for the respondents of Czapiński and Panek’s study was health, and for non-heterosexual persons it was a successful relationship. Such values as children, work, and money were by far more important for heterosexuals. There were also noticeable differences for such values as honesty, cheerfulness, freedom and liberty, as well as kindness and respect of the environment are concerned, all of these values turned out much more important for non-heterosexual people. These results indicate that the experience of living with a member of the same sex may be crucial for the formation of a different hierarchy of values than that of heterosexual persons (such persons dominated among the respondents of *Diagnoza Społeczna*).

The respondents were also asked a question about their perception of their own happiness. The question was taken from *Diagnoza Społeczna*. As many as 91% of the respondents considered themselves happy. Out of the group, 31% chose the answer “very happy” and 60% chose “quite happy”, while 8% of the respondents considered themselves “not too unhappy” and only 1% “unhappy”. Women turned out happier than men. Age, place of residence, and the length of the relationship did not influence these results.

**Chart 41. All things considered what is your estimate of your own life these days – can you say you are: (n=3025)**



The introductory results of the follow up of the study *Families of choice* including singles showed that couples were much happier than singles. Regardless of their sex, singles responded that they were very happy (6%), quite happy (44%), or rather unhappy (41%). 9% of the single respondents described themselves as unhappy.

Comparison of the samples clearly shows that non-heterosexual people in relationships are the most happy. The respondents of Czapiński and Panek’s study (both in relationships and singles) come second, while non-heterosexual singles were much less happy. Among the respondents of *Diagnoza Społeczna* (sample adjusted to our study in sex, age, and place of residence), 23% were very happy, 65% quite happy, 11% rather unhappy, and 1% very unhappy.

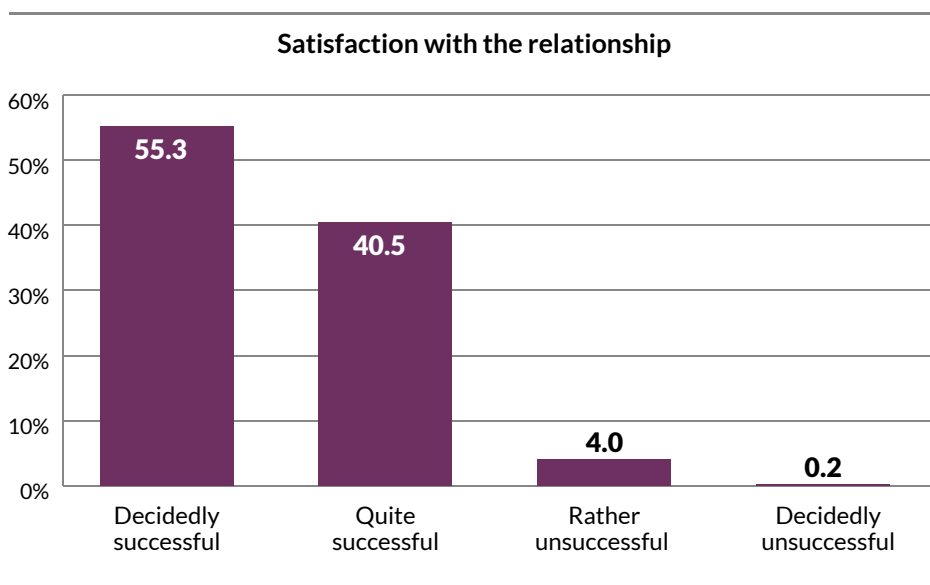
**Table 1. Comparison of the ratio of happy persons (responses very happy and quite happy) divided according to their sex in the studies *Families of choice* and *Diagnoza Społeczna***

	<i>Families of choice</i> - couples	<i>Families of choice</i> - singles	<i>Diagnoza Społeczna</i>
Women	91%	46%	88%
Men	90%	51%	87%

96% of respondents claimed that they were satisfied with their current relationship. For over half (55%) of the respondents it was decidedly successful, while 41% thought that their relationships were rather successful. 4% of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the relationship with their current partner.

Further analyses showed that women were more satisfied than men. There were no differences resulting from age or place of residence.

**Chart 42. When you think of your relationship, do you think it is: (n=2859)**



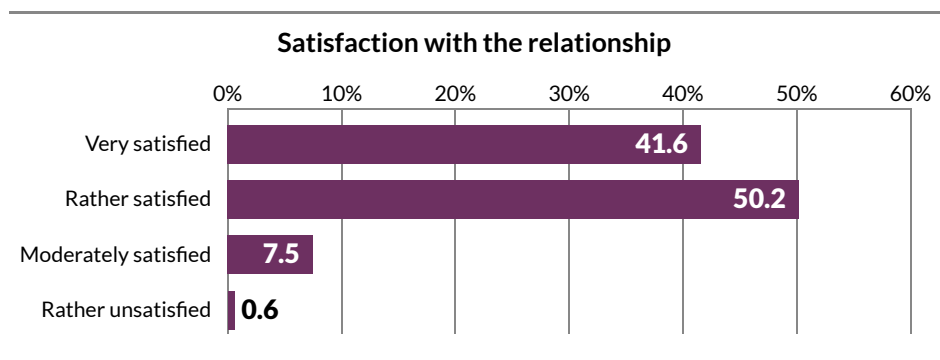
The respondents were also asked to answer a number of detailed questions concerning their feeling of satisfaction with their current relationship. They were asked the following questions<sup>7</sup>:

1. My partner and I understand each other perfectly.
2. I am pleased with my partner.
3. I am very happy with how we handle our responsibilities in our relationship.
4. I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship.
5. I am very pleased about how we express affections.
6. I am satisfied with our sex life.
7. I am happy with the way each of us deals with the matters of faith.
8. I am very happy with the way we make decisions.
9. I am satisfied with the relations of our relationship and my relatives.
10. I am satisfied with the relations of our relationship and our friends.
11. I am happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.

The respondents answered on a five level scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.<sup>8</sup> On this basis a satisfaction index was calculated.<sup>8</sup>

As it is visible in Chart 43, the overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) were satisfied with their relationship and the remaining 8% were either moderately happy or rather unhappy. The answer “very unhappy” was not given. As it was in the case of earlier questions connected with satisfaction and evaluation of the relationship, women were a little more satisfied with their relationships than men.

**Chart 43. Level of satisfaction with relationship. Variable calculated for couples (n=2010)**



<sup>7</sup> *ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale* adapted and translated by Agata Stasińska. The original in: Fowers, Olson 1993.

<sup>8</sup> The accuracy of the scale was tested with Cronbach’s alpha test. As it turned out it was necessary to remove the reversed item from the scale (4), probably because it was missed by the respondents; it lowered the reliability of the scale. After its removal, Cronbach’s alpha was 0.758, a high result which indicates that the scale coherently measures one variable: satisfaction with the relationship. Average values were calculated for ten levels and a relationship satisfaction index was created this way.

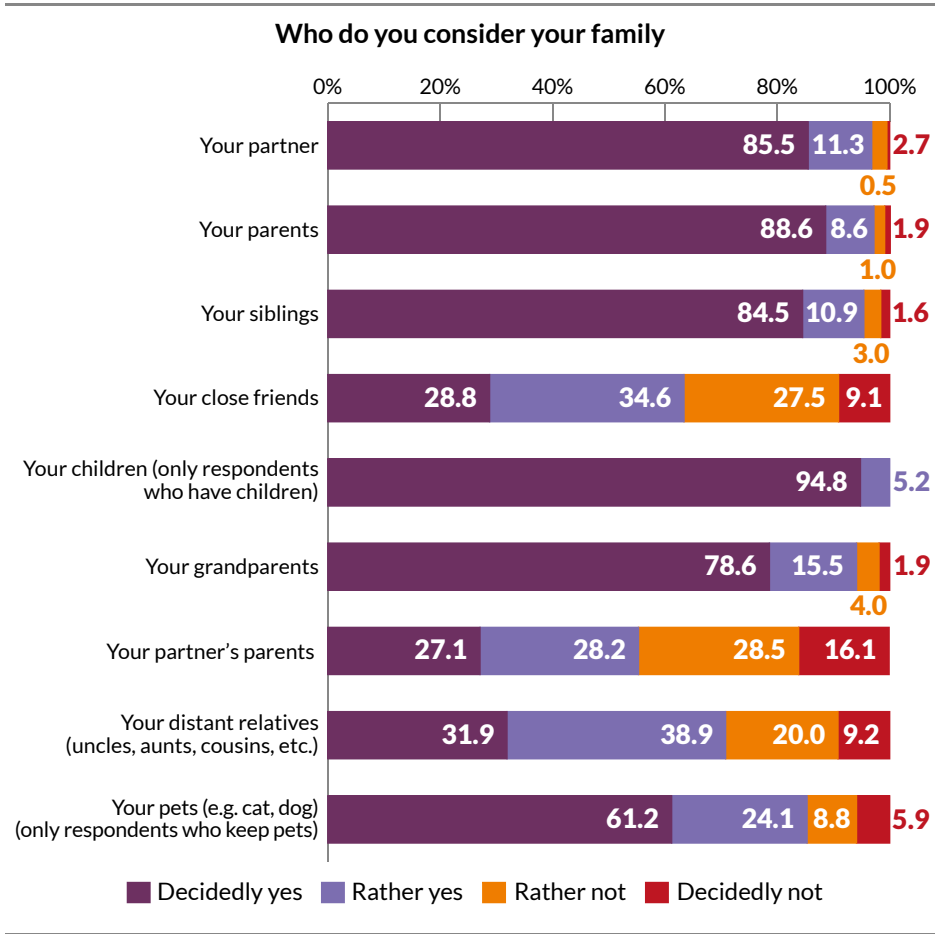
## Family and social environment

The respondents were asked whom they considered their family. They included in their family first of all their parents and partners (97% answers “decidedly yes” or “rather yes”). A similar number of the respondents included their siblings (96%) and grandparents (94%), although in the latter case the proportions of answers were slightly different: more answers “rather yes” than “decidedly yes”. The respondents were less willing to treat their more distant relatives as family. It is quite telling that two out three respondents considered their close friends as members of their family (29% answers “decidedly yes” and 35% “rather yes”), while only about half of them included their in-laws (27% answers “decidedly yes” and 28% “rather yes”). For the parents, children are certainly members of families (100% answers “decidedly yes” or “rather yes”). The vast majority (85%) of people who kept pets claimed that they were their family members. Women considered their partners, close friends, children, partner’s parents, and pets as their family more often than men. Men included their own parents in their families more often than women. The respondents from the country and small towns (up to 100K inhabitants) were more likely to consider their partner’s parents and their own distant relatives as their family. The age of the respondents had no bearing on the answers to this question.

The fact that almost all the respondents considered their partners as family may confirm that it is choice and not registration or having children that is the basis of “starting a family” for them. Facing a lack of institutional support for the relationships they start, they bring their families to life on their own. Sometimes it may happen in different circumstances and may be influenced by other conditions than in the case of heterosexual couples for whom – as it generally believed – marriage and the decision to have children are the basis of “starting a family”.



**Chart 44. Persons whom the respondents consider their family. The answer “does not apply” was excluded**



The respondents were also specifying what kind of relationships they consider families; the question was taken from a CBOS study (2013b) conducted on a representative samples of Poles. The respondents were presented with a variety of relationships and arrangements.<sup>9</sup>

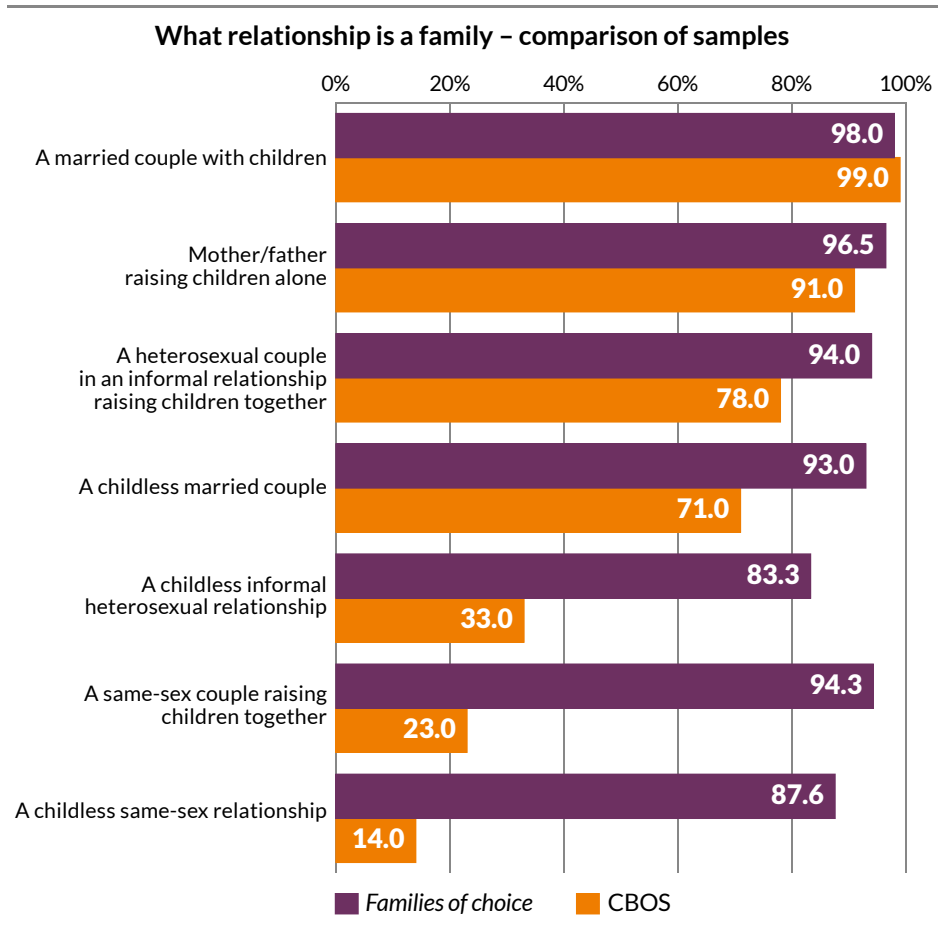
The greatest percentage of the respondents answered that family meant for them a married couple with children (98%), a parent and a child (97%), a same-sex couple raising children together (94%), or a heterosexual couple in an informal relationship raising children together (94%). A slightly smaller group of respondents (93%) claimed that a childless married couple was a family. A childless same-sex relationship was a family

<sup>9</sup> The questions “Who do you consider as family?” and “What relationship is a family?” were separated in the questionnaire so as to exclude any mutual influence.

for 88% of the respondents. The smallest number of respondents (83%) considered an informal heterosexual relationship a family.

As in the present study, for the respondents of the above quoted CBOS study family means foremostly marriage with children (99%), though their answers to other questions were different. A father/mother raising children alone was a family for 91% of CBOS respondents. Heterosexual couples in an informal relationship raising children together were a family for 78%, childless married couples for 71%, a childless informal heterosexual relationship for merely 33%, a same-sex couple raising children together for 23%, and finally a childless same-sex relationship was a family for 14% of the respondents. The huge difference in opinion concerning the idea of family between "families of choice" and an average Pole is thus clearly visible.

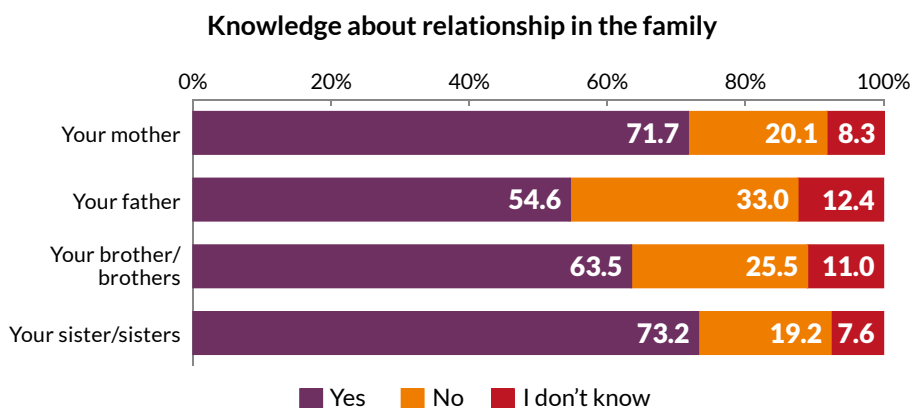
**Chart 45. What kind of relationship would you consider to be a family and what kind would you not? Do you think that .... are a family? (n=2995)**



Such a great disproportion in the opinion on whether a same-sex relationship is a family or not – 14% of average Poles and 88% of the interested party – is an obvious source of problems for non-heterosexuals. Their relationships are perceived as flippant, which influences the way they negotiate the value of their relationships themselves and the strategies they adopt to prove their “familyness” when they are not automatically accepted as families. In comparison with the much broader sample of CBOS (2013b), the respondents of our study exhibited the tendency towards a much broader and more open definition of family and lack of clear hierarchy defining what is not a family. Although a married couple with children is still at the top of the list, other forms of families are not noticeably “worse” as it in the case of the CBOS respondents, for whom the very term “family” seems reserved quite exclusively for the pattern of a heterosexual married couple raising children.

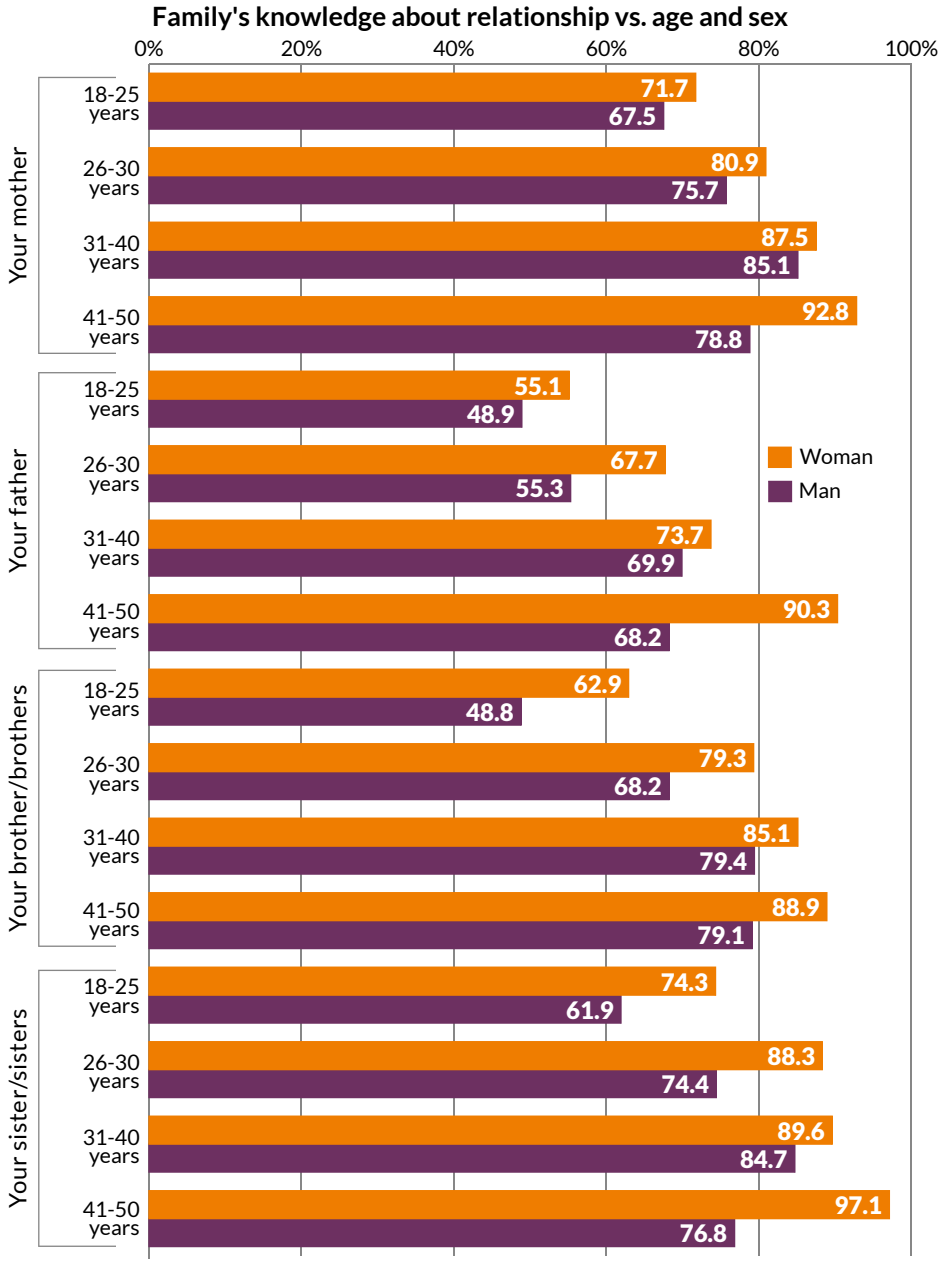
The questionnaire also included a question regarding who in the immediate family knows about the existence of the respondent’s relationship. According to our study, women (mothers or sisters) knew more often than men (brothers or fathers). Sisters knew about the non-heterosexual relationship of one of their siblings most often. The least often informed were fathers: a little more than one in two (55%) knew that their son or daughter was in a same-sex relationship. Earlier studies on non-heterosexual people (Abramowicz, 2007, 2012) that included the question “who of the family knows about the respondent’s sexual orientation” brought similar results.

**Chart 46. Do the following people know about your relationship? Choose „does not apply” only when there is no such person in your family, e.g. you have no siblings or the given person has died. Answers “does not apply” were excluded from the chart**



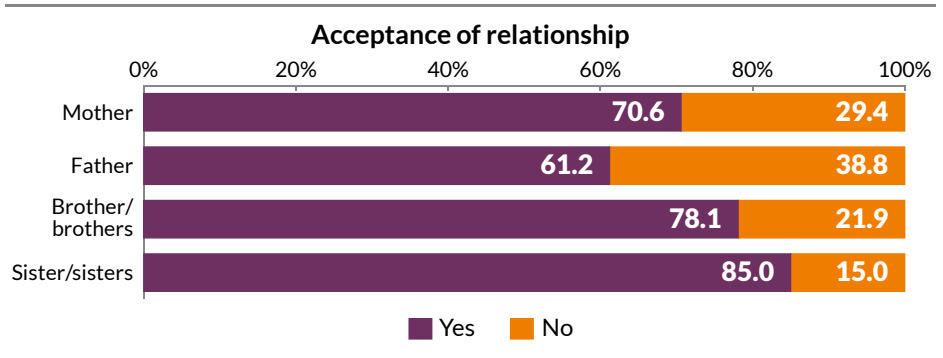
When we look at these results it is possible to notice that the relatives of daughters knew about their relationships much more often than the relatives of sons. This relation was not influenced by the age of the respondents. It is also worth noting that the higher the age of the respondent, the more relatives knew about their same-sex relationships.

Chart 47. The relation between the family’s knowledge about the relationship and age and sex. In the age bracket 18–25 years all statistically significant differences, in the 26–30 age bracket all except “mother”, and in the 41–50 age bracket all except “brother”

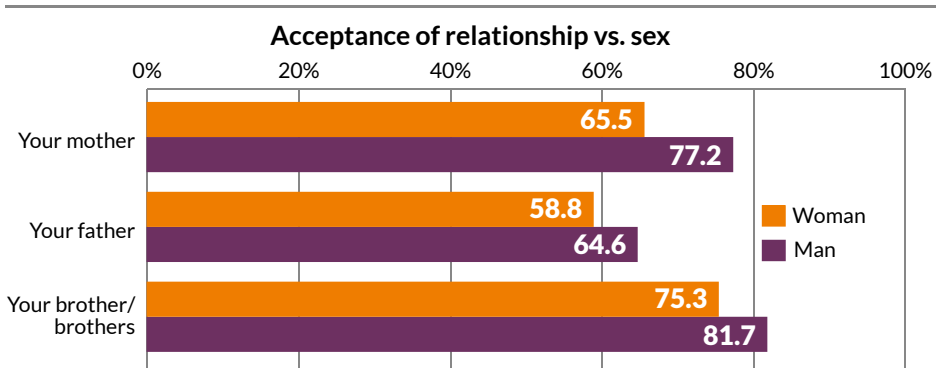


The respondents were also asked who unconditionally accepts their relationship. The respondents were more likely to expect acceptance from their siblings than from their parents. Sisters accepted same-sex relationships of their siblings the most often (85%), brothers in 78%, mothers in 71%, and fathers in 61%.

**Chart 48. Which of the following persons unconditionally accept your relationship? The chart includes answers of those respondents who stated that a given relative knows about their relationship**



**Chart 49. Acceptance of a relationship vs. sex. Only statistically significant data. Only respondents who stated that a given relative knew about their relationship**



There is a fairly general conviction that lesbian women are less socially stigmatized than gay men. The study, however, revealed a surprising reverse relation: same-sex relationships of men were more often accepted by their families (mothers, fathers, and brothers of the respondents) than same-sex relationships of women. It might be a result of the much stronger pressure and social expectations towards women to become mothers, the equation of womanhood with motherhood, and the resulting perception of a

lesbian woman mainly as a childless woman. Men are not expected to fulfil this singular role of a parent: they can choose from many others.

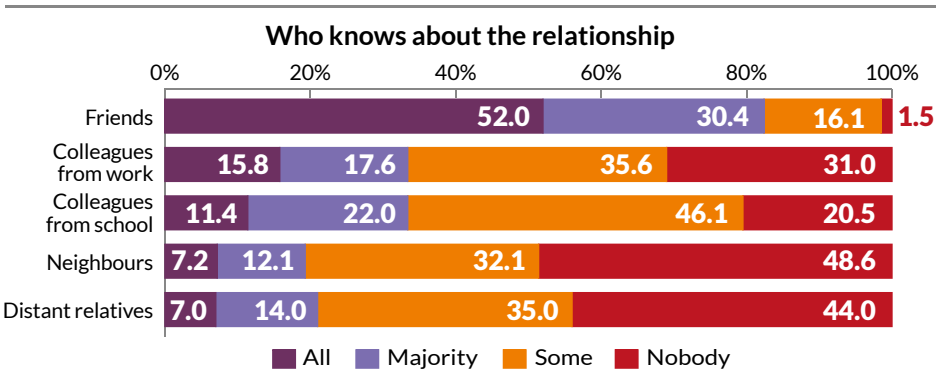
Another noticed relation concerned the age of the respondents. The younger persons in the 18-25 age bracket were less often accepted by their parents than the respondents older than 25. It may be explained by the fact that the younger the respondent the less the family is acquainted with their son’s or daughter’s psycholosexual orientation. The family may also have more extensive plans and expectations concerning their children’s future, not treat their decisions seriously, expect their same-sex relationships to be merely a transient stage, hoping that at some point they will find a partner of the opposite sex, marry, and have children. With the passage of time the level of acceptance increases.

As far as fathers and mothers were concerned they were more likely to accept their children’s relationships the longer they lasted. In the case of respondents’ brothers and sisters this relation did not occur. One may assume that with the passage of time parents get accustomed to their children’s relationships and the initial bias disappears.

It happens sometimes that only a very narrow group of the closest people knows about the relationship. Consequently, the respondents were asked to clarify who, except their immediate relatives, knew about their relationship and to what degree.

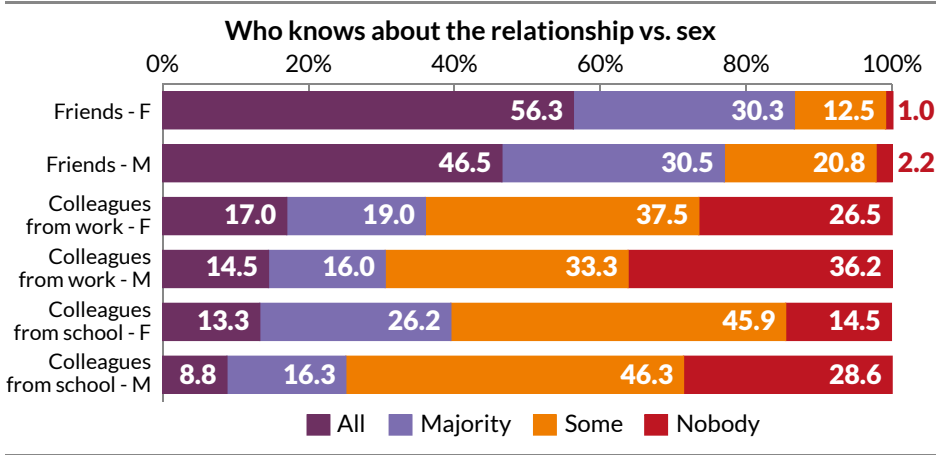
The respondents’ friends knew the most about their relationships. Almost a half of the respondents stated that all their friends knew about their relationships, and another 30% claimed that most of their friends know. The percentage of the respondents who did not tell any of their friends about their relationship proved very small (1.5%). Neighbours knew the least about the respondents: almost half of the respondents (49%) believed that their neighbours did not know about their relationship. Distant relatives also did not know much. As many as 44% of the respondents had relatives who did not know about their relationships. One in three respondents came out at work (34% - responses “all” and “majority” summed up). However, almost exactly the same number of respondents (31%) preferred not to reveal the fact that they were in a same-sex relationship at work. More people revealed their relationship at school: hiding their relationship there was probably more difficult, as “only” 20% stated that nobody knows about them in their schools.

Chart 50. How many of the following people know about your relationship?



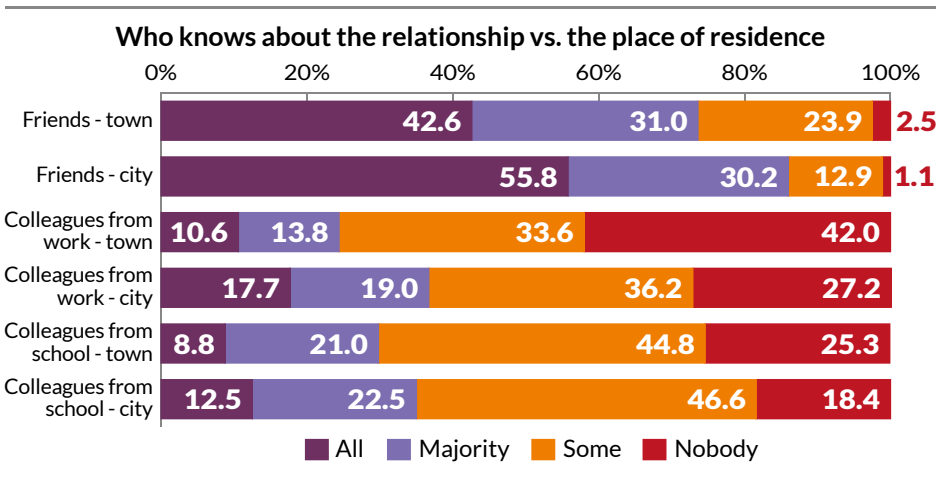
Women declared more that their environment knew about their relationships more often than men. It applied to three types of environment: friends, colleagues from work, and colleagues from school or university.

**Chart 51. How many people know about the respondents' relationship vs. sex. Only statistically significant differences**



As we expected, the place of residence differentiated responses to this question. People from cities were more likely to inform their friends, colleagues from work, and colleagues from school or university about their relationships than people from small towns.

**Chart 52. The number of people knowing about the respondents' relationship and their place of residence. Only statistically significant differences**



Another question concerned the social support network of the respondents. That is, who they can count on in a difficult situation. In the case of almost all problems the respondents most often sought the assistance of their partners. It was especially so when they were looking for solace and understanding (89%) or when they were ill (85%). Mothers turned out to be the second most helpful persons. Almost half of the respondents turned to them for financial assistance (48%) or during illness (44%). In situations when practical help was necessary and when the respondents needed someone to hear them out, understand, and offer solace, over half of them turned to friends (57% in both cases). The respondents turned to their fathers mostly for practical help (30%) or financial support (31%).

**Table 2. Who do you turn to first when you need help in the following situations? Multiple choice question (n=2991). Category partner calculated for couples (n=2187)**

Who do you turn to?	Partner	Mother	Father	Siblings	Friends	Another person	Nobody
When you need care during sickness	85.4%	44.5%	12.1%	12.6%	19.0%	2.6%	4.6%
When you need financial help	54.1%	48.5%	30.9%	19.1%	24.4%	5.7%	7.0%
When you need practical help (e.g. DIY, moving)	67.2%	18.5%	30.4%	26.0%	57.1%	9.8%	2.7%
When you seek understanding and comfort	88.8%	23.8%	4.6%	17.1%	57.4%	4.7%	2.6%

Women turned to their mothers during sickness, in search of understanding and comfort, and when in financial trouble more often than men. However, men were more likely to ask their friends for financial assistance; in practical matters they turned to their partners.

Celebrating important family events or holidays may be an important element of living with another person. The respondents were asked which holidays they celebrated with their partners. It was a multiple choice question and the respondents could choose more than one answer. The most popular celebration was birthday and name day, celebrated by 92% of respondents. The second most popular were celebrations connected with the relationship, e.g. anniversary of the first meeting, celebrated by 83% of re-



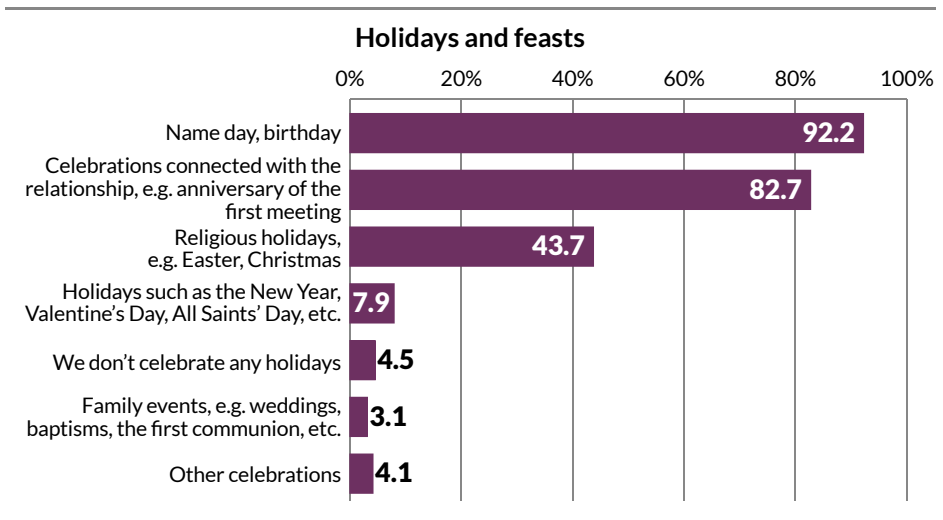
spondents. 44% of respondents celebrated Christmas and Easter together. 5% of them did not celebrate any holidays.

15% of respondents took advantage of the option to list holidays other than those mentioned in the questionnaire. Their answers are included in Chart 53. 8% of these respondents listed various popular holidays such as the New Year, All Saints’ Day, International Children’s Day, International Women’s Day, Valentine’s Day, St Andrew’s Night, and Independence Day. The category included also various other days which are usually free – for example the so called long May weekend (the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, respectively Labour Day and Constitution Day in Poland, are days off so many people take a day off on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May to have one long holiday). We included in this category “all possible holidays” answers because, when such an answer was expanded by the respondents they usually indicated holidays from the list provided above.

Another category consisted of family celebrations such as baptism, the first communion, wedding, or funeral, as well as the birthday and name day of other family members or other family celebrations. 3.1% of respondents listed this kind of celebration. Yet another 3% celebrated the holidays and feasts of their friends and acquaintances. Personal events, other than an anniversary of the relationship (e.g. graduation, promotion, purchase of a new apartment, pet’s birthday), were celebrated by 1.2% of the respondents.

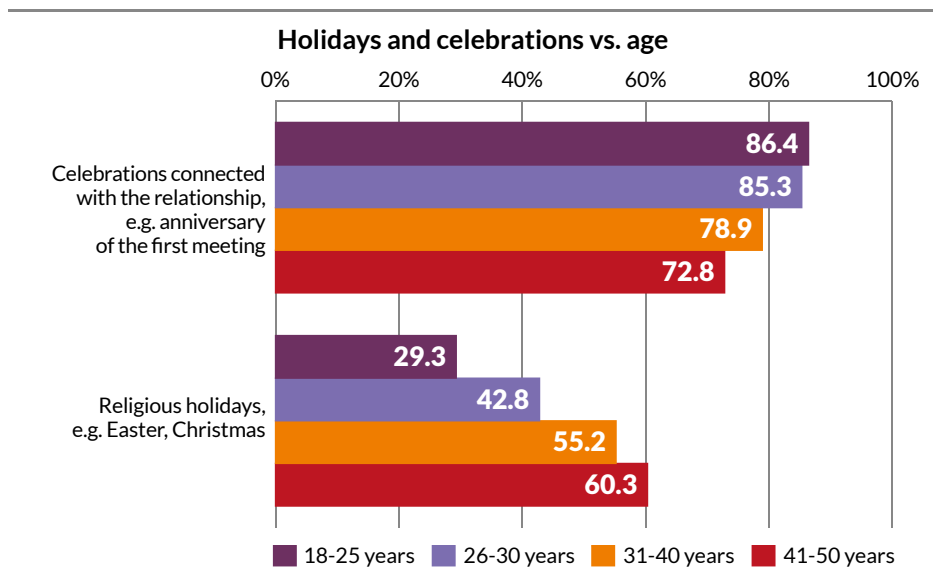
Very few respondents (0.8%) celebrated other feasts and holidays (e.g. Saint Patrick’s Day, Cat Day, Seamen’s Day, and the birth or death anniversaries of favourite poets or singers, occasional celebrations). Four persons stated that they celebrated LGBT feasts (Manifa, Equality Parades). Other respondents did not specify the holidays they celebrated (responses “other” or “various”).

**Chart 53. Which of the following feasts and holidays do you celebrate with your partner? Variable calculated for couples (n=2184)**



There were no differences related to sex except for the category “We don’t celebrate any holidays”, selected by 3.5% of women and 5.9% of men. Age, however, proved of importance. The younger respondents were more likely to celebrate events connected with their relationships (e.g. anniversaries). However, the older respondents celebrated rather religious holidays. 29% of couples in the 18-25 bracket celebrated Christmas or Easter together. Among couples in 30-40 bracket it was 55%, while among couples of the 40+ group it was 60%.

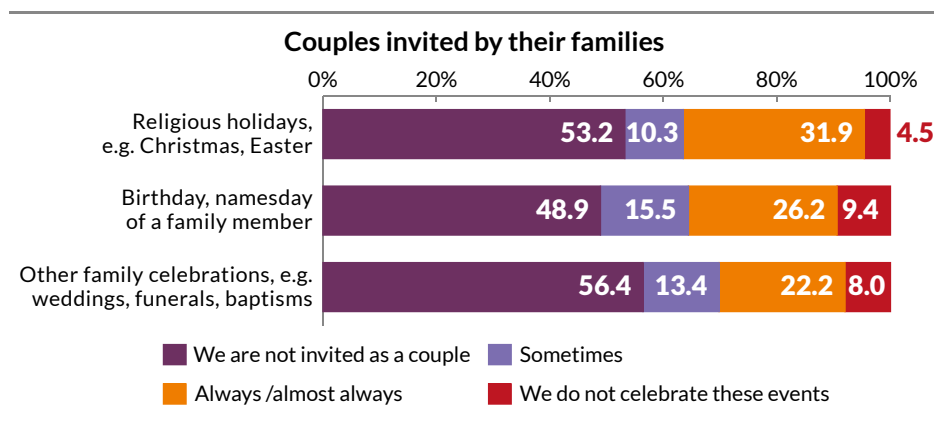
**Chart 54. Holidays and celebrations vs. age. Only statistically significant data. Variable calculated for couples (n=2117)**



Invitation to family celebrations with the partner may be an adequate measure of the recognition of a relationship by the family of origin. As it has been stated above, only 44% of respondents spend religious holidays with their partners. The answer to the following question shows that over half of the respondents were not invited to important family celebrations as a couple. Many of them must make the difficult choice to spend the religious holidays away from their significant others with the family of origin, with whom the relations may be strained.

Among those who declared that they are always invited together, 32% were invited for religious holidays and 26% to name days or birthdays of family members. Families invited same-sex couples to weddings, funerals, and baptisms least often (22%). It is probably caused by the fact that these events are often celebrated with distant relatives, and families fear revealing the character of the same-sex couple to such a wide environment. Let us remember that distant relatives were the last to know about the respondents’ same-sex relationships.

**Chart 55. Does your family invite the two of you as a couple to the following celebrations?**  
Variable calculated for couples

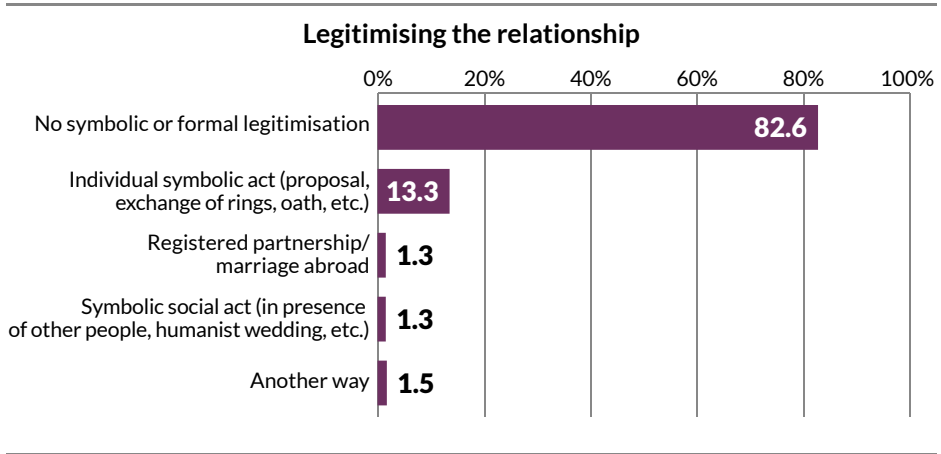


The sex of the respondents did not influence the answer: exactly as many women as men were invited as couples to family celebrations. The age of the respondents turned out to be a differentiating variable. Older couples were invited more often than the young ones. There was also a fairly small correlation connected to the length of the relationship. Respondents in long-term relationships were invited a little more often.

## Formalisation of relationships and legal issues

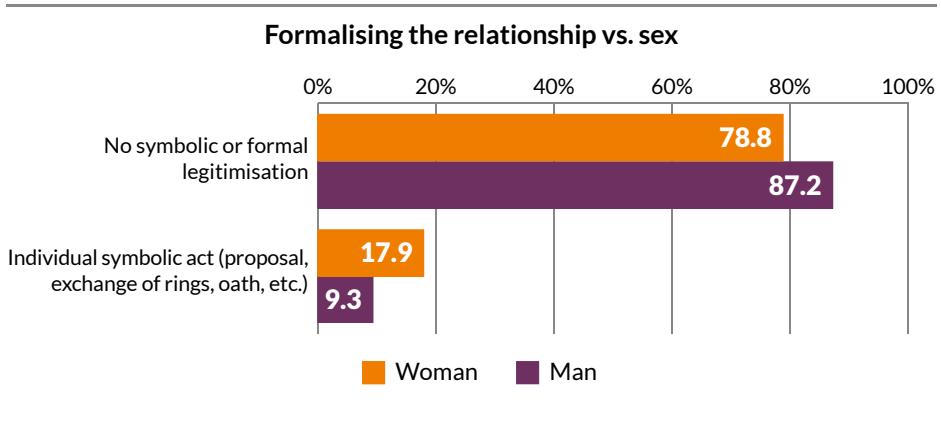
The vast majority of our respondents lived with their partners in relationships that were not formalised in any way (either legally or symbolically). 83% of respondents answered the question “Have you legitimised your relationship with your partner in any formal or symbolic way?” negatively. Among those who did it, the most mentioned are individual symbolic acts (13%) such as an oath, proposal, or exchanging rings symbolising the relationship. There was one couple that had each other’s names tattooed. There was a much smaller group (1%) of respondents who formalised their relationship with a symbolic social act, a ceremony of some sort, a declaration in the presence of family, friends, and acquaintances, a humanist wedding (ceremony organised by the Rationalists Society), or a religious wedding in a selected religious community. Publication of status change on social media e.g. on Facebook was also included in the category by respondents. A similar number of the respondents declared that they got married or entered a registered partnership (1%). These were the people who formalised their relationships abroad, in countries where the law recognises such unions. 1.5% of respondents chose another form of legitimizing their relationship. In most cases it was some sort of an agreement, such as an authenticated deed regulating the inheritance issues. A few people treated a long-term financial commitment such as a mortgage loan as a sort of formalisation of their relationship.

**Chart 56. Have you legitimised your relationship with your partner in any formal or symbolic way? Only statistically significant. Variable calculated for couples (n=2123)**



Men attempted to formalize their relationships less often than women. Women were more likely to take a vow, exchange rings, or propose. Neither the place of residence nor age differentiated these responses.

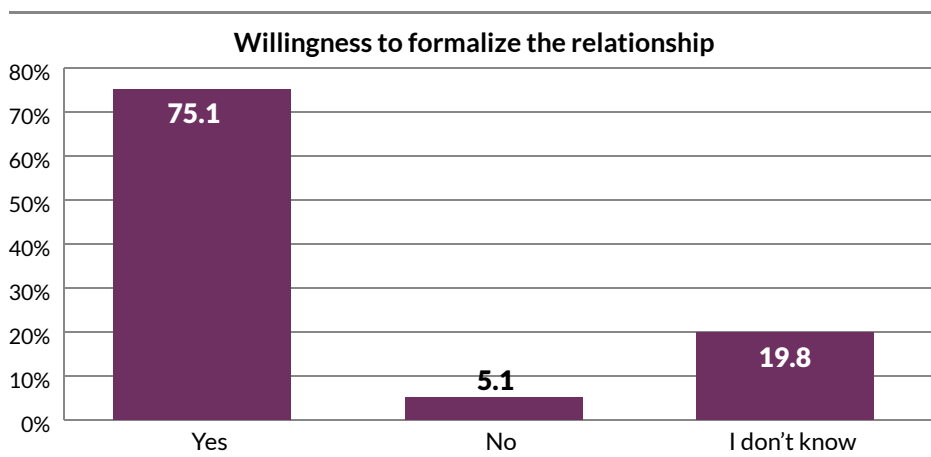
**Chart 57. Formalising the relationship by the respondents. Variable calculated for couples (n=2124)**



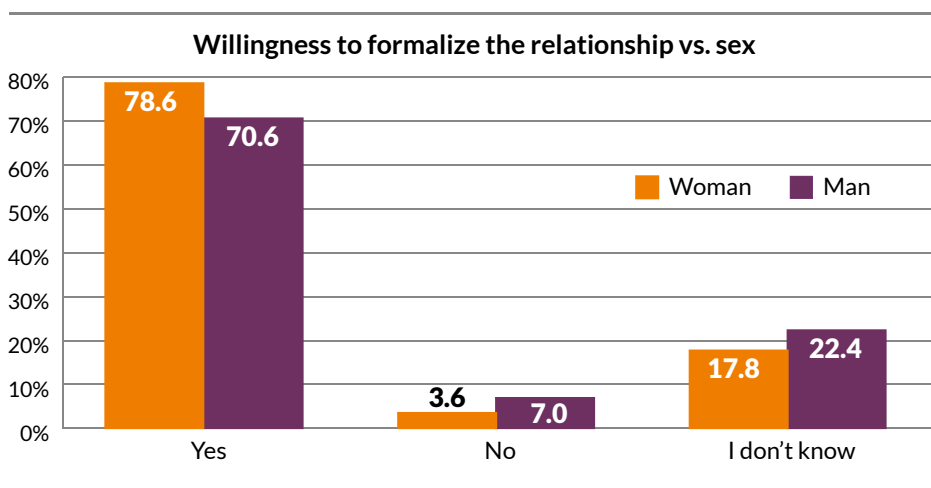
If there was such a possibility in Poland, as many as 75% of respondents would like to legitimize their current relationship. Only 5% of them were decidedly against any formalisation, and one respondent in five did not know yet what decision they would make. The results clearly indicate that there is a great need of some form of legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

Women declared their willingness to formalize their relationship more often than men. 79% of female respondents would like to legitimize their relationship as opposed to 71% of male respondents. The responses were equally distributed among the respondents living in smaller towns and those from bigger cities. They were not differentiated either by the age of the respondents or by the length of their relationships.

**Chart 58. If it was possible in Poland would you formalize (legitimize) your relationship? (n=2977)**



**Chart 59. Willingness to formalize the relationship vs. sex**

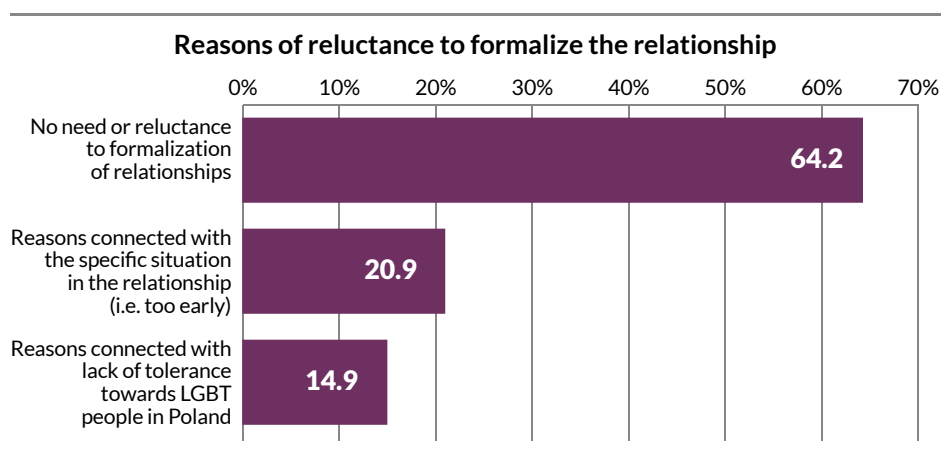


The respondents who declared a lack of willingness to legitimize their relationships were asked to provide the reasons for their decision (the answer to the open question

“Why wouldn’t you like to formalize your relationship?”). 4.4% of respondents answered the question. The majority of them (86 respondents, 64% of the group) stated that they did not feel such need. Both brief statements (such as “I don’t need it for anything”) and longer explanations, i.e. ideological (“I don’t need any documents, it is the feeling that really counts”) and pragmatic (“It wouldn’t change anything so it’s just a waste of time and effort”) were included in the category. There were also people in the group who declared their general reluctance toward any kind of formalisation (e.g. “I don’t like such things, I treasure my independence, sense of freedom”). Some respondents stressed the fact that their reluctance was not rooted in their personal situation (“I don’t think it is anything really necessary that would improve the lives of both LGBT and straight couples”).

The remaining responses may be divided into two groups. The first group included statements indicating that a given person does not object to formalisation as such but he/she is not interested in it at the moment (28 respondents, 21%). This group included both people who declared their dissatisfaction with their current relationship or uncertainty about its permanence (e.g. “I am not sure if he is the person I would like to spend the rest of my life with”), as well as the people who had not yet made such a decision because it was still too early for them (e.g. “We are at too early a stage of our relationship to make such decisions”). The other group consisted of respondents who motivated their reluctance towards legitimisation of their same-sex relationships with the particular situations of non-heterosexual people (20 persons, 15%). This category was dominated by fears connected with the consequences of formalising a non-heterosexual relationship, connected both with their relatives (“My family would never understand it, I would become an outcast”) and the wider environment (“I am not ready to challenge the whole world. I fell I would become the main subject of all rumours. I don’t want it. I’d like us to live our lives the way we want it, I don’t want to have to explain our decisions to anybody else”).

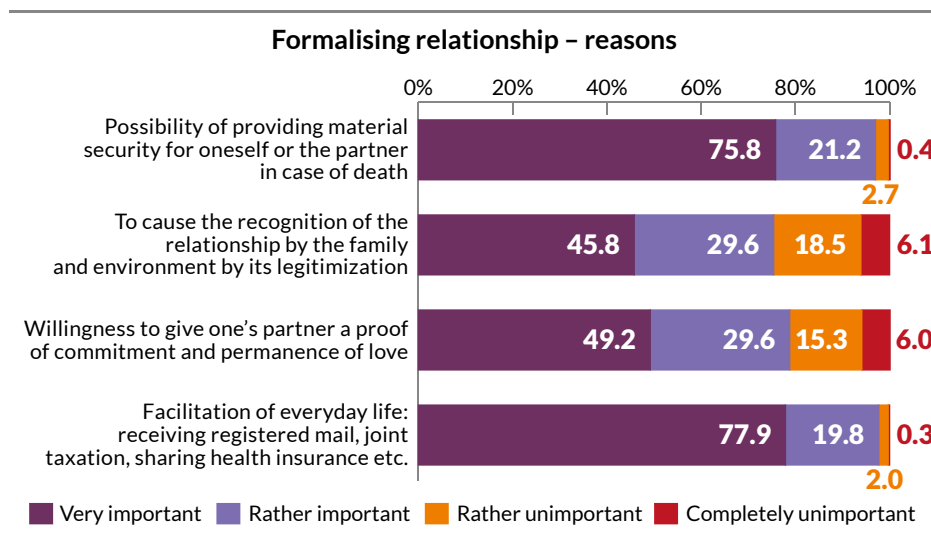
**Chart 60. Why wouldn’t you like to formalize your relationship? Open question. Only the respondents who stated that they did not want to formalize their relationship (n=140)**



Three out of four respondents declared their willingness to legitimize their relationship. The reasons why they wanted to do it concerned in most cases facilitation of everyday life: receiving registered mail addressed to the partner, joint taxation, sharing social security health insurance. These reasons were important for almost all those willing to legitimise their relationship (98%). An almost equally important reason why the respondents considered legitimising their relationship was the possibility of providing material security for oneself or the partner in case of death. It turned out important or very important for 97% of the respondents.

Two less important reasons were the willingness to give one’s partner a proof of commitment and permanence of love (79%), and the willingness to influence the recognition of the relationship by the family and environment by legitimization of the relationship (76%). The latter reason proved more important for women than for men.

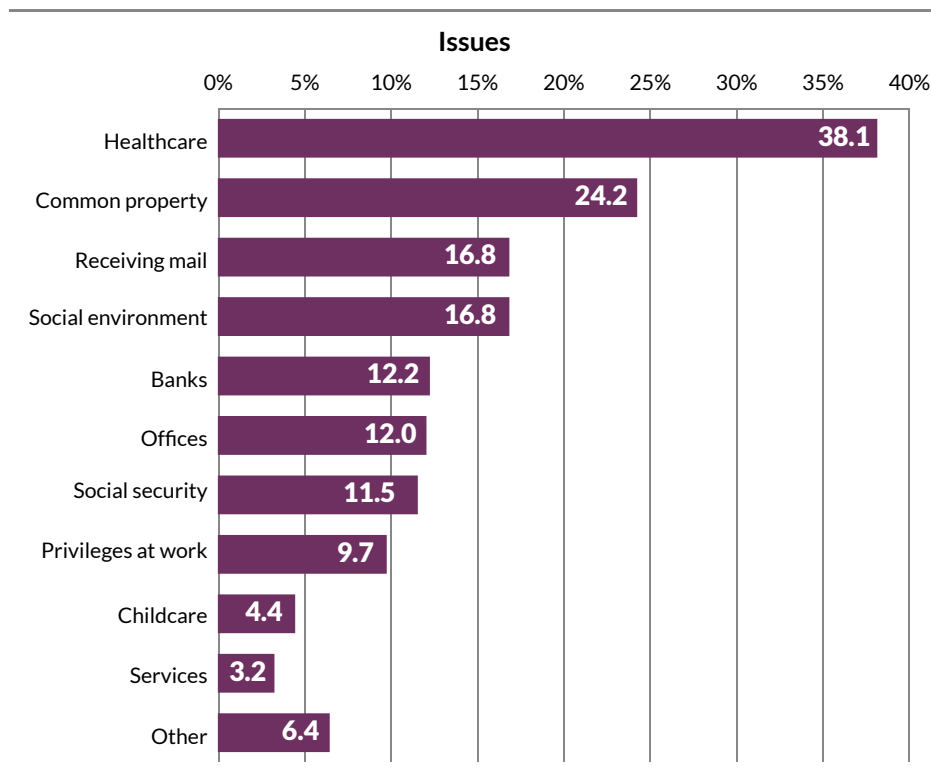
**Chart 61. There are various opinions why formalising same-sex relationships should be possible. From your point of view – how important are the following reasons?**



The respondents were also asked about issues they faced in their everyday life because they lived in unrecognised relationships. Consequently, only the people who had faced such issues responded to this question. The respondents often described several spheres of life.

The answers could be rather complex and elaborated. They were divided for the purposes of the present study into 11 categories. The most popular, mentioned by 38% of couples, touched upon one of the most delicate spheres of life, the health of the partner and contacts with healthcare. Many respondents had problems with access to information concerning the state of health of their significant others, visiting their partners in hospitals, making decisions concerning their partners’ health, or receiving medical test results.

**Chart 62. Have you experienced any problems due to the fact that you are not in a legally recognised relationship such as marriage? Open question. Variable calculated for couples (n=444)**



Many respondents described various, often quite dramatic situations:

My girlfriend had an accident, she was hit by a car while riding a bike. Open fracture of the shin bone. If her mother had not accepted me fully as her girlfriend I would not have the right to get to know anything about her condition. Or visit her until she regained consciousness. If she were killed on the spot, I would not have the right to bury her.

It was in the middle of the night, we drove to the hospital where [my partner] passed out. The longest three hours of my life. No information, no contact, which is quite comprehensible initially. They look after the patients, not their relatives. Gradually, however, I started to realise that after a while they let in some of the waiting relatives to visit those who were ill and conscious. I could see her through a window under a drip. It was not an Intensive Care Unit or an isolation unit. No medical procedures going on. And still I was told at the reception desk that I could not get in and the doctor would not tell me



what was going on because I was not a relative. It was OK that I brought her, “my colleague” they called her, on time. I don’t know what the regulations were, whether they shouldn’t have let anyone in according to the rules, whether they asked anyone but me some formal confirmation that I was “with that lady”. I overheard that the worried fiancé of one of the patients was allowed in. What document confirms the engagement? One of the conclusions from this event which then seemed so dramatic was the following one: lesbians and gays, if they want to be treated properly in such circumstances, in homophobic institutions, and by homophobes, must carry with them some documents, extra papers that are not demanded from straight people.

When after a car accident (in which we took part together) I was waiting with my mother and sister in the hospital to hear about the condition of my partner, it turned out to be very difficult even though he was conscious and the first thing he did was to authorize me to obtain such information. I was ultimately informed after I cited the authorization, but I could not help but notice the doctor’s reluctance.

I was taken to the hospital and my partner was not even allowed in, as they said she was not a family member. In order to obtain any information from the hospital she had to call my mother whom she had not seen for over a year. They allowed in a person who at the time knew nothing about me and my illness and refused to let in the person who knew everything.

Some of the respondents pointed out that the problems began as early as at the reception desk, the first contact with the healthcare sector. The necessity of explaining why one is the person authorized to talk to the doctors is highly uncomfortable in such a stressful situation as a visit to the ER. It is even more stressful when accompanied by fear that the medical secretary may refuse to put the name of a person who is not legally a relative in the papers. The respondents described such situations:

The hospital refused to agree to provide her [my partner] with information concerning my health, even when I asked for it explicitly. They claimed that “she was not a member of family”.

When she was taken to the hospital my partner authorised me as the person to be contacted in emergency. The medical secretary’s question concerning my status was rather embarrassing. As a “legal stranger” I was afraid of contacts with the doctors – I was afraid they would treat my partner differently because of her sexual orientation.

Problems with hospital visits were also described often. The stories usually concerned certain limitations that do not apply to heterosexual visitors (e.g. same-sex couple could not visit the mother of one of the partners together). Collection of test results or various formal matters could also be an issue:

I could not visit my partner after a surgery.

During [my] stay at the hospital my partner could visit me only during the extremely limited visiting hours for not related visitors.

We could not come up to the bed of an ill person together.

My partner could not obtain my test results for me, even though he was authorised.

There is no possibility of arranging matters in a single NHS office (available for families).

There were also difficult situations connected with raising children. They were included in the discussed category if they were connected with the health service.

Legally speaking, I am a complete stranger for my partner's biological child. As a result I could not get her vaccinated in my presence. They said they could only do it in the presence of a person with parental power.

When my partner's child was at the hospital I wasn't recognised as her other guardian and consequently I could not find out anything about her condition.

Another category of problems mentioned by 24% of the respondent's concerned problems connected with regulations applicable to shared property. This issue touched all non-heterosexual couples, especially those who had been together for a long time and lived together. The list included problems with joint purchase of an apartment, its deed of gift, or leaving it in the last will to the partner without the necessity of paying high inheritance tax and legitimate, i.e. the costs of treating the nearest person as a stranger, taxed in the so called 3<sup>rd</sup> (the highest) tax bracket. Some respondents mentioned the lack of possibility of joint taxation.

Transferring money from our joint account to my partner's account and paying the taxes involved.

My partner bought an apartment, we both paid the mortgage and financed the renovation together even though legally he is the sole owner.

An attempt to transfer the ownership of our apartment or transfer of a large amount of money without paying the 20% tax.

We need additional death insurance to be able to pay the inheritance tax and legitimate in case one of us dies. It is a major expense in our budget.

The purchase of our apartment was a rather complicated matter. I changed flats with my brother. In order to secure my partner's financial interest we had to transfer the ownership of half of the flat to her. Unfortunately, the deed of gift is highly taxed (the 3<sup>rd</sup> tax bracket). I sold her half of the flat for the money we had on our bank account (proof for

the tax authorities), and paid transaction tax – 2% instead of 20%. I am not happy with the way we did it. I would very much prefer to make a deed of gift instead of scheming with the authenticated deeds and taxes.

I am not satisfied with the legal arrangements concerning what is going to happen after my death. My siblings with whom I do not keep in touch will inherit my property. My partner will have to pay a very high inheritance tax and pay back my siblings. I think about it often. It gets on my nerves how the Roman Catholic church and my own state keeps on babbling that legal recognition of my relationship is a threat to the future of Poland.

The respondents also stressed the issues connected with lack of appropriate legal regulations concerning formalisation of same-sex relationships. They may be the cause of problems e.g. when a couple is under the scrutiny of the tax authorities:

There are difficult issues connected with finances, e.g. sharing the costs of keeping a flat together. My partner cannot transfer money to my bank account so that I can pay the bills when I do not have enough funds, as she is a stranger from the legal point of view and there is no legal basis for her to give me money. Should I sign a housing rental agreement with my own partner and pay taxes? It's absurd that even though I am the legal owner of our flat and we keep it up together my partner cannot pay the rent from her bank account. We found a way around, withdrawing from one account only to deposit on the other. The more we own, the more difficult such issues become.

Another important category is collection of registered official correspondence – it was mentioned by 17% of couples. It happens in everyday day life that one has to pick up registered mail from the post office that is addressed to one's partner. Unfortunately, it is often impossible in Poland without appropriate, paid authorization. Some of the respondents did not have such an authorization as they had not foreseen it might be needed one day and could not collect mail. Some of the respondents mentioned problems with the mail delivery by postmen or couriers. Married couples do not have to pay for the authorization, they do not have any such problems with postmen or couriers.

No possibility of collecting important mail. Naturally, the service is paid but it can be arranged. However, it happened once that my partner was away and I had to collect an important letter on which her work depended. As we had not arranged the authorization before, I could not collect the letter which caused serious consequences. Married couples or families are not subject to such "bureaucracy".

I have to lie that my partner is my cousin when I receive her letters or parcels.

The next category was equally numerous (17%), and includes all issues connected with the social functioning of a relationship. Problems with defining the status of a relationship were mentioned the most often, e.g. should we say "wife" when there is no same-

sex marriage in Poland or “partner”, which may be incomprehensible? Some people complained of reluctance to reveal being in a same-sex relationship or of being perceived as single when one prefers not to reveal their relationship for fear of rejection, aversion, or even violence.

Introducing her as “partner” is misunderstood – is she a business partner, a co-worker?

It seems insubstantial but it is actually quite fundamental. What can't be named doesn't exist or shouldn't exist. Who is she to me? How shall I call her? “My girlfriend”? It sounds crazy in reference to a person in her thirties (and I am not getting any younger myself). It may be acceptable, regardless of age, but generally when we are talking about a couple that has been seeing each other for two months and not in reference to a serious, long-term relationship. “My woman”? It sounds like a quotation from a caveman. “Concubine”? Like in a court of justice. “Partner”? Such as a “business partner”? Have we set up a company? “Fiancée”, “wife”? In the current legal situation it reveals resentment which I'd rather keep to myself. Imitation, we're playing home, pretending to be a family that we can't be, imagining something that does not exist.

A “single” woman without a wedding ring on her finger is perceived in the society as a weirdo.

Every year for my birthday or Christmas most people wish me “to find a girl at last” and I am perceived as a man who can't find a girl for himself, which is a major discomfort as I can't defend myself in any way.

I think that if my relationship could be recognised by law my family would not reject my partner as they do now because they would accept that if I can formalize the relationship it means that it is normal. I've been through difficult situations. I mean, they weren't serious but plain difficult. I was thrown away from home.

It is probably nothing specific, it is a kind of exclusion from the traditional rhythms, rituals, but it may become the reason of alienation. I often feel that it is not meant for me, I am not included, and that I'm never going to get it.

Another difficult issue indicated by 12% of the respondents was contacts with banks. They most often mentioned problems with mortgage loans. Banks refused to consider the incomes and property of unmarried customers together in calculating their credit-worthiness. Some banks also refused to open joint bank accounts for such customers. Some of the respondents pointed out that it is not possible to leave the money on the account to a same-sex partner to be at their disposal after the death of the owner of the account.

When we take a loan or mortgage loan for our apartment we are treated “separately”. Our incomes do not count as the income of a single household.

We had the greatest problems when we applied for a mortgage loan together. The banking analyst decided that two people of the same sex could not get a loan together as formally speaking they were not a family and, consequently, they could not have a common household. As a result, our incomes were not considered as joint income and we were refused the loan twice. The same bank gave a loan to me and my former partner (of the opposite sex) even though we were not married and we did not encounter any problems. It was only after an exchange of letters with the spokesman of the bank and presenting the correspondence to the bank analyst that he changed his mind and we were granted the loan.

Banking law does not allow leaving the funds of a deceased person to a non-related inheritor.

A similar number of respondents (12%) pointed out problems connected with various offices. The issue that they indicated the most often was the necessity of obtaining paid letters of authorization which in certain cases were insufficient anyway.

Picking up documents from the tax office and labour office for my partner. Even when I brought an appropriate authorization I had to pay an extra at the tax office because we're not a family. The labour office refused to hand the documents to me.

I had to drag a notary public to the hospital where my partner was at the time. Without a letter of authorization I could not take care of the house, the bills, etc.

Things turned the most difficult when my partner went abroad for half a year and I had to arrange official matters or take the kids to the doctor.

Vehicle registration (only married couples get the authorization for free!), many similar situations connected with various authorizations, husband or wife does not have to pay for them.

I had problems picking up a vehicle registration certificate without my partner's written authorization even though I was a co-owner plus additional costs as we were not related.

Another category included problems resulting from lack of health insurance, mentioned also by 12% of couples. It is possible for an unemployed husband to use his employed wife's health insurance (and vice versa). This option, however, does not apply to same-sex couples and it causes difficulties. The respondents also pointed that it was not possible to endow their partner in the event of death. Other types of insurance were also the source of problems.

My partner was taken to the hospital and she had to pay as she did not have health insurance. If we were married she would be covered by the insurance paid for by my employer and there would be no problem.

There is no possibility to protect my partner. Short term tourist insurance does not offer the option of endowing a non-related person. Only statutory heirs may be endowed in case of death.

My partner drove my company car and he had a minor accident. The company insurance policy excluded "strangers" from driving company cars. Proving that we were a couple was extremely embarrassing.

Another group of problems were those connected with work, profession, or running a company (10%). The respondents pointed out that regulations concerning running a company are different for married couples and for strangers. Some of the respondents faced pressure to enter a relationship with a person of the opposite sex. They had problems taking time off during holidays or going abroad for a training period or to another branch of the company with their partners, which is usually possible in the case of formally recognised relationships.

I was asked in a certain large corporation during the recruitment process to come with my PARTNER/WIFE, which was supposedly important for my assessment as a prospective employee. When I said I was in a relationship but with another man, the woman on the line exhaled nervously and said "well, that'll be it for today, we'll call you".

As I work as a teacher in a small town, it is unthinkable for me to be a childless bachelor. The headmaster and colleagues openly force me to present my prospective spouse to them.

I had to hire my partner when I was running a company. She could not help me in the business as it is in the case of wives/husbands.

When we set up a joint company I had to rent a room to my partner because legally she was a stranger to me.

I felt discriminated against at work during holidays, the period treated as "family time". I had less of a chance to get time off then.

I was offered a 2 year scholarship abroad. My partner, who worked at the same university, could not go with me. In the case of formalised relationship both people can go and they usually do.

Others (clients) treat me as a single thus an unstable person.

Yet another category included problems connected with raising children; they were important for 4% of couples. Some of them concerned health services and these have already been quoted above (treating one of the partners as a stranger by medical personnel). Some, however, involved contacts with schools.

Children are our main source of problems. We raise them together but my partner cannot, e.g., participate in parents' meetings at school.

The last indicated category included problems connected with various services (3%). Problems with companies delivering electricity, gas, and telecoms were included in the category. Limitations connected with not being a family from the formal point of view were also mentioned in this respect.

Purely formal issues, e.g. lack of possibility of paying telephone bill on behalf of the partner.

Difficult formal issues connected with electricity and gas companies, resulting from joint accounts in our household.

Buying tickets for certain events (family tickets are available only for straight couples).

Hostile looks and comments of the receptionists when we rented a room with a double bed.

Remaining issues were qualified as „other” (6%). This category included problems connected with the arrival of a same-sex partner in the United States. According to American regulations, if same-sex relationships were recognised by Poland they would have no problems obtaining a visa and entering the country. The respondents also mentioned problems with obtaining new Polish documents after taking a common name following wedding in Great Britain, or the refusal to issue certifying documents confirming that a prospective husband/wife is free to marry. Polish registry offices tend to refuse such a document if their prospective spouse is of the same sex. Such a document is required in the majority of countries from all citizens, regardless of their psychosexual orientation, who want to get married or enter a civil partnership. The official Polish form requires providing the name of the prospective spouse/civil partner. If the official in the registry office realises that the name belongs to a person of the same sex they most often refuse to issue the document.<sup>10</sup>

The issue of partners being treated as strangers by courts of justice was also raised.

I can't refuse to testify against my partner. Insults from the court of justice secretary when I wanted to enquire about my boyfriend's case.

Other issues included difficulties with obtaining a common room in a student dorm. Marriages do not face such problems.

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<sup>10</sup> The matter has been brought up repeatedly by various NGOs as discrimination against same-sex couples but it has not been resolved yet.

When I lived in a dorm during my studies my partner could not legally move in with me as rooms for couples are reserved for married couples only. According to the regulations, if one spouse qualifies for a place at the dorm because of their income or the distance from their fixed domicile, the other spouse is entitled to share a room regardless of their financial standing and domicile. As my partner lived in the city where the dorm was located she could not move in with me as she did not fulfil the conditions herself and was not in a legally recognised relationship with me. When I started my doctoral studies the situation was the same – doctoral students have the right to apply for a double room in the university hotel but only if they are married.

It is remarkable that a number of the respondents stressed the fact that they did not face such difficult situations too often, as they tried to foresee them and they took a lot of time and effort to protect themselves against potential problems. It is yet another extra cost paid by same-sex couples.

We try to foresee all possible problems and protect ourselves with appropriate authorisations. We both made wills endowing each other. Currently, our greatest problem is the necessity of foreseeing difficulties and looking for ways to avoid them.

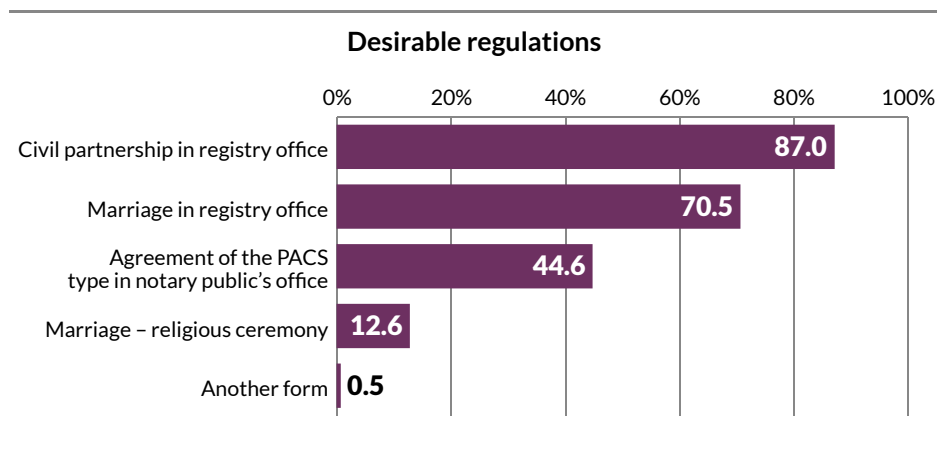
The above statements illustrate the range and breadth of difficulties resulting from the lack of possibility of formalizing relationships or taking advantage of legal regulations connected with parenthood. They prove that the institutions with which the respondents have contact on a daily basis do not treat all citizens equally. It happens sometimes that even if an appropriate regulation already exists, it is not applied: e.g., the refusal of granting partners access to medical documentation.

Several options were presented during the debate concerning the situation of people in same-sex relationships: civil partnership, marriage, and civil law agreement signed in a notary public office. The respondents were consequently asked how they would like to formalise their relationships. It was possible to select more than one answer. Civil partnership entered in a registry office proved to be the most preferred option, chosen by 87% of respondents. A large number of respondents (70%) selected civil marriage in registry office in the same form as civil marriage for heterosexual couples. A much smaller group of the respondents (44%) opted for the French solution, a civil law agreement signed at the notary public office, or a religious marriage ceremony (13%).

A very small percentage of the respondents (0.5%, 15 persons) chose another form of regulation, e.g. humanist wedding. There were also several other proposals of various declarations, agreements, recognition of civil unions contracted abroad, and “union by prescription”.

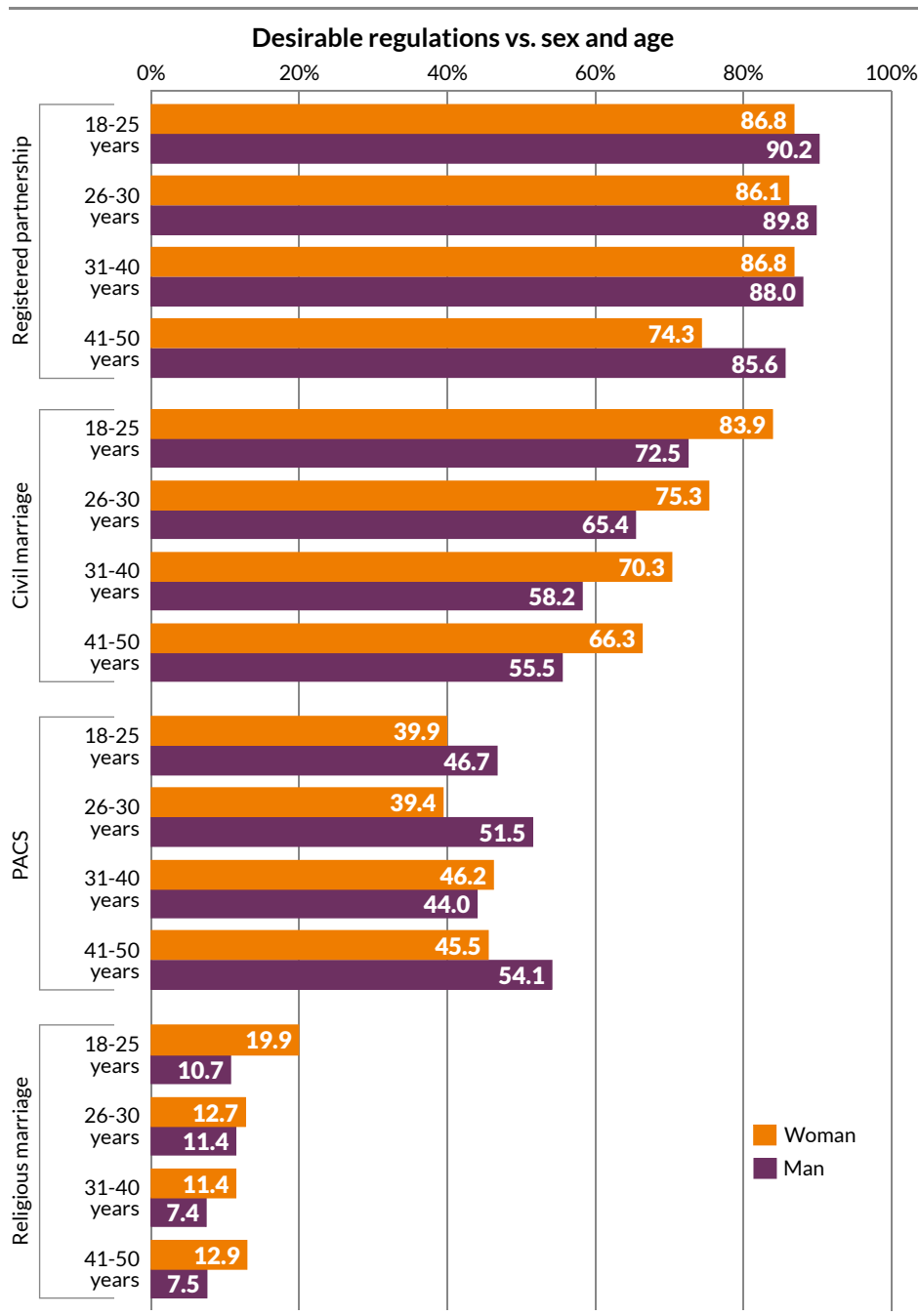


**Chart 63. What regulations concerning same-sex couples should be, in your opinion, introduced in Poland? Choose those options which you consider the most important (n=2940)**



On the whole, civil partnership was preferred regardless of sex and age of the respondents. Only the oldest group was less interested, especially elderly women. As opposed to men, they expected more permanent regulations, i.e. marriage. They were also less interested in a PACS-like agreement. Differences are noticeable in the case of religious marriage. In the youngest group women were decidedly more interested in such a solution than men. A civil wedding was also more appealing for women (76%) than for men (63%). The difference was noticeable in all age brackets, although the greatest support (80%) was in the 18-25 bracket. The preference for civil marriage decreased with age: among the 18-25 years old the support was at 80%, among those aged 26-30 it was 71%, among those aged 31-40 65%, and among those aged 41-50 60%. A similar tendency was noticeable in the case of those who preferred religious marriage. 17% of supporters were among the youngest residents, while in the older group (31-50) only 10%.

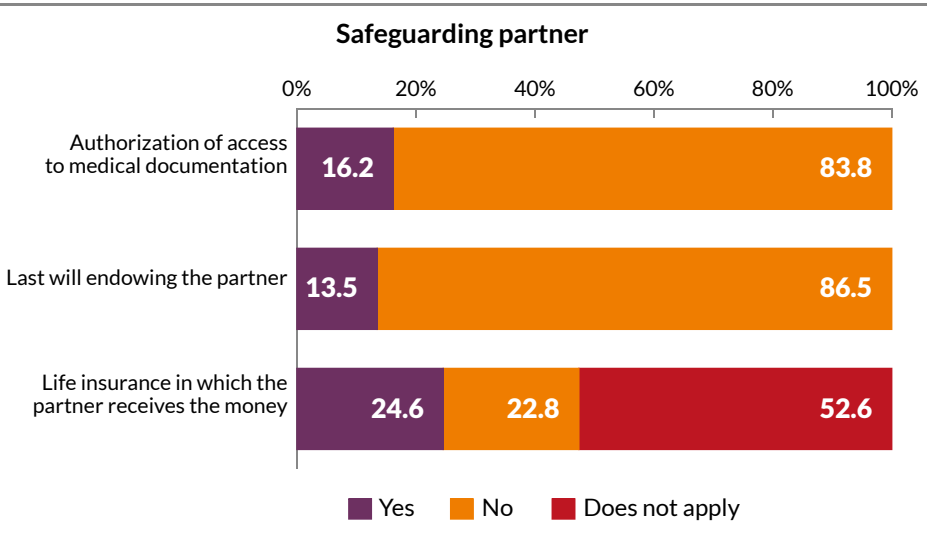
Chart 64. Desirable regulations vs. sex and age (n=2853)



As there is no possibility of formalising their relationship and consequently safeguarding the partner in case of death or serious illness, non-heterosexual persons are forced to undertake special actions that would protect them from fortuitous events. One respondent out of four (25%) endowed their partner in case of death. 16% of respondents authorised their partners to access medical documentation and 13% prepared a last will ending their partners.

There were no differences between women and men as far as form and frequency of safeguarding the partner in case of fortuitous events was concerned.

**Chart 65. Decisions safeguarding partner in the event of the respondent’s death. Variable calculated for couples (n=2133)**



**Living together or apart**

The majority of the respondents (65%) lived together in a single household during the study, the remaining part (35%) lived apart. Age was the most important factor influencing living together: among the youngest respondents 45% lived with their partner, in the 26-30 age bracket it was 72%, and 80% among the older respondents. No differences due to sex were noted. There was a very strong influence of the place of residence. As it turned out, people from cities of 100 thousand inhabitants or more lived together much more often (74%) than respondents from small towns and the country (45%).

Chart 66. Do live with your partner? Variable calculated for couples (n=2143)

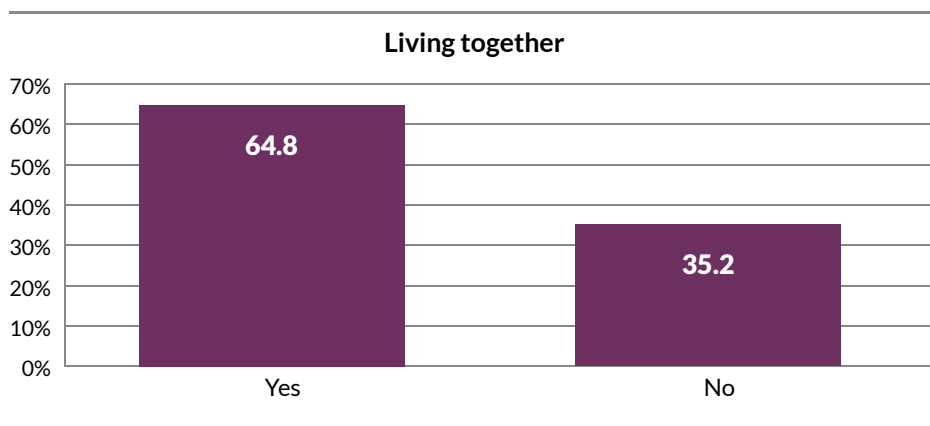
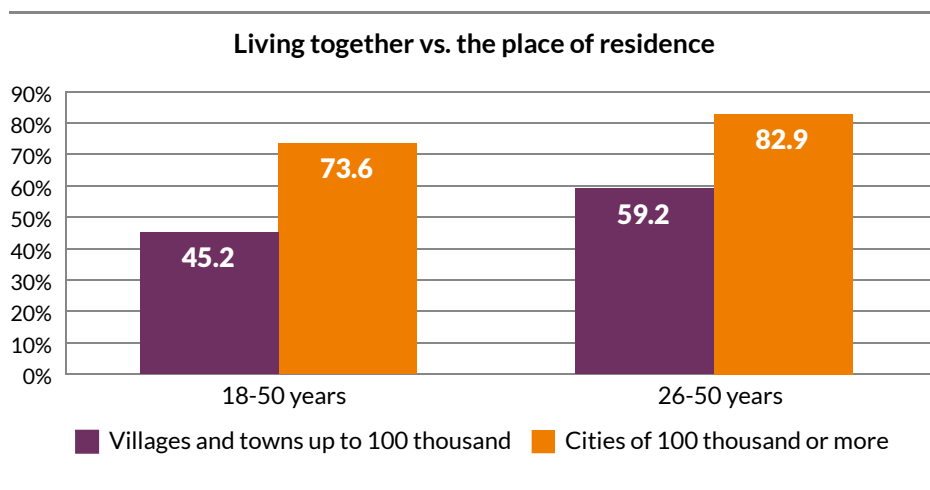


Chart 67. Living together and the place of residence. Variable calculated for couples



Those respondents who stated that they lived apart were asked the reasons of such an arrangement. 92% of them responded. As they could provide more than one reason, the presented percentages do not sum up to 100.

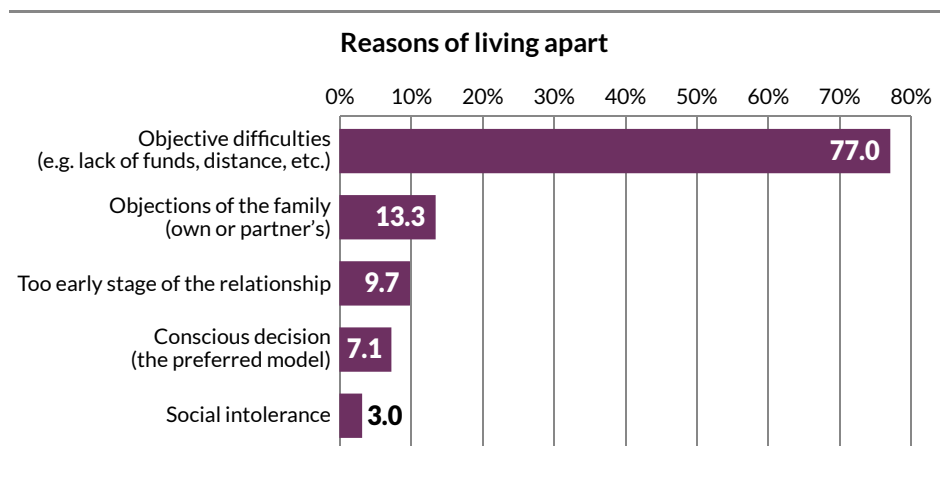
Various objective difficulties, not connected directly to psychosexual orientation, were listed as the reasons of living apart by 77% of the respondents. The most frequent responses quoted a range of problems including economic (shortage of money, financial dependence), logistic (distance, work or study in different cities), and legal (age). Other responses included in this category mentioned reasons connected with health (e.g. long stay in hospital) or obligations standing in the way of living together (e.g. taking care of an handicapped family member).

13% of the respondents quoted hostile attitude of the family (their own or that of their partners) to the relationship. The category included responses that indicated an actual conflict (e.g. “My partner’s family definitely and categorically refuses to accept our relationship, they threatened that they would stop supporting him if he would not refrain from homosexual behaviour”) as well as fears connected with revealing the relationship to the family and their consequent reaction (e.g. “My family doesn’t know about us. I know that my family doesn’t accept such relationships. I have a baby and my sister told me that if we moved in together she would make sure the baby would be taken away from me”).

Another reason, pointed out by 10% of the respondents, was a too short time of the relationship. Among the respondents who chose this particular reason, some stated that they intended to move in together in the future. However, 7% of the respondents stated that living apart was a conscious choice. They motivated their decision with the need for independence (e.g. “We want to keep our own free space”; “Each of us needs both closeness and privacy”), negative experience (e.g. “We lived together but it was beyond us, we didn’t get on well, we quarrelled for no reason”), or convenience (e.g. “Our studies require different conditions for learning (individually/in groups), anyway, it would be difficult for us to adapt to each other’s habits and customs”).

The last category included reasons resulting from fears of the reaction of the society. This motive was indicated by 3% of respondents. They were mostly people who hid their relationship from others. The fears concerned the respondents themselves (fear of rejection, lack of acceptance, possible loss of job) and also their children (e.g. “we don’t live together because our children would be stigmatized if the society knew about us”).

**Chart 68. Why do you and your partner live apart? Only the respondents who lived apart. The percentage does not add up to 100 as it was possible to give many responses. An open question (n=907)**



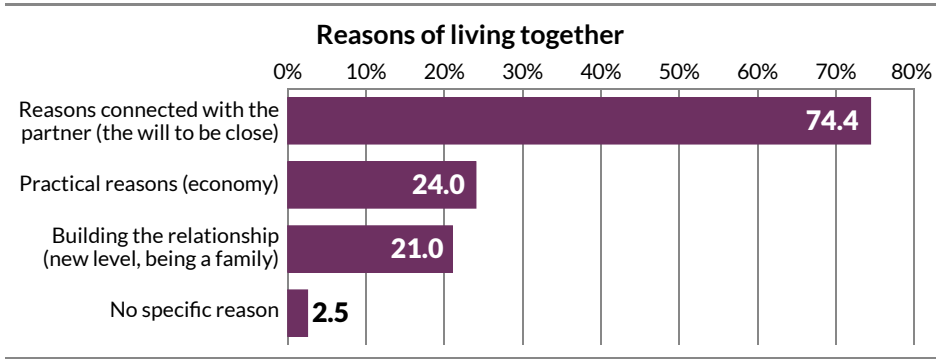
The following question was addressed to the respondents who lived with their partners and concerned the reason(s) of this decision: 91% of respondents answered this question. The most numerous group of reasons justifying the decision to live together was the emotional involvement and the need of partner's closeness: they were selected by 74% of the respondents. Declarations of the need/will of spending as much time as possible with the partner, sharing everyday life, having a common life (e.g. "We wanted to be close to each from the very beginning of our relationship so as soon as the opportunity arose we moved in together; the will to share life, falling asleep and waking up together, being close to each other") were included in this category as well as responses that explained the decision with feeling for the partner.

The second most often selected category included practical reasons, chosen by 24% of the respondents. They pointed out the economic issues, such as saving, the convenience of running a common household, and lower costs.

A somewhat smaller number of the respondents (21%) explained the decision of living together with their need to create a family and "normalize" their situation (e.g. "The will to create a "real home"; "Children and the will to become a family"; "We had enough of "trysts", hiding, we wanted a normal life"). Some of the responses included in this category referred to the need of developing the relationship (e.g. "the need to move on the next level and see if we really fit"; "living together gives an opportunity to get to know each other, adapt"), its stabilisation (e.g. "It's an obvious step if we want to be together for keeps"), long duration of the relationship (e.g. "After a few years of going out together we decided to take the next step and move in together as a family"), or even the very fact of being in a relationship (e.g. "If it is supposed to be a relationship, one must live together"; "We are a couple so we must live together ☺").

The last category which arose included responses that do not indicate any specific reason of living together (responses such as "hard to tell", "it just happened so", "it was obvious", "it happened naturally") or others which did not fit any of the categories above due to their vague character ("life") or specific situation ("it was an accident"). 2.5% of the respondents answer this way.

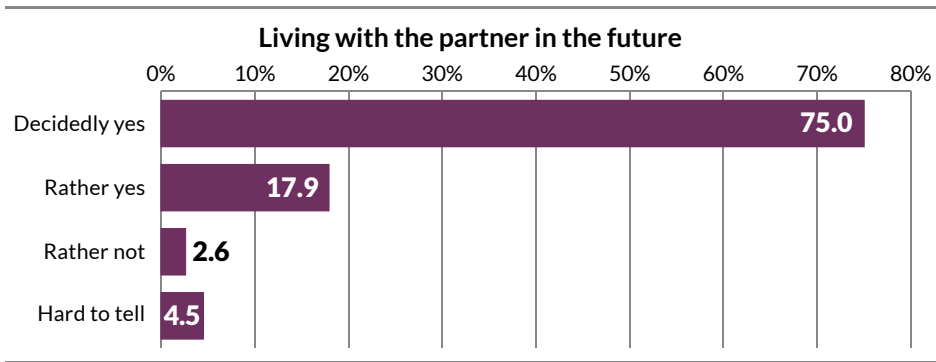
**Chart 69. What made you move in together? Only the respondents who claimed they lived together. The percentage does not add up to 100 as it was possible to choose more than one answer. Open question (n=1770)**



The respondents who did not live with their partners at the time of the study were additionally asked whether they intended to move in together in the future. From the analysis of their responses we may conclude that the vast majority of respondents would like to change their present situation and move in with their partners. 75% of the respondents were certain and another 18% chose “rather yes”. There were no answers which would indicate that the respondents are decidedly against living together.

Neither the sex of the respondents nor their place of residence influenced the will to live together with the partner.

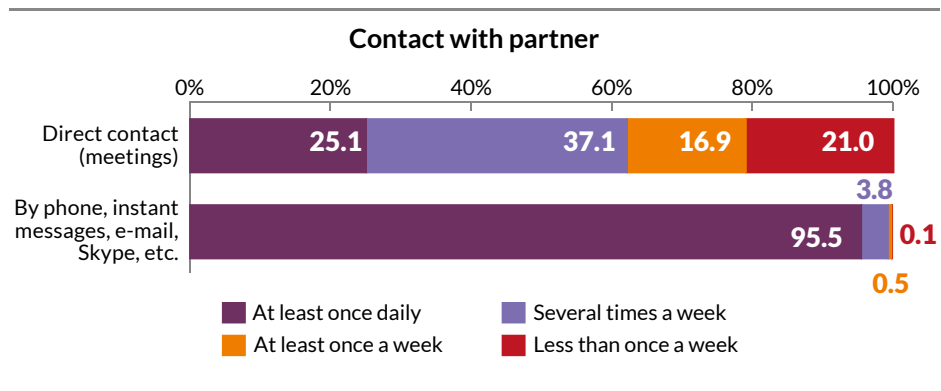
**Chart 70. Do you want to live with your partner in the future? Only the respondents who claimed they did not live with their partner. The answer “certainly not” was not given (n=983)**



Persons living apart were also asked about the form and frequency of their contacts with their partner. One couple in four saw each other daily, 37% met several times a week. Only one person in five (21%) met their partner more seldom than once a week.

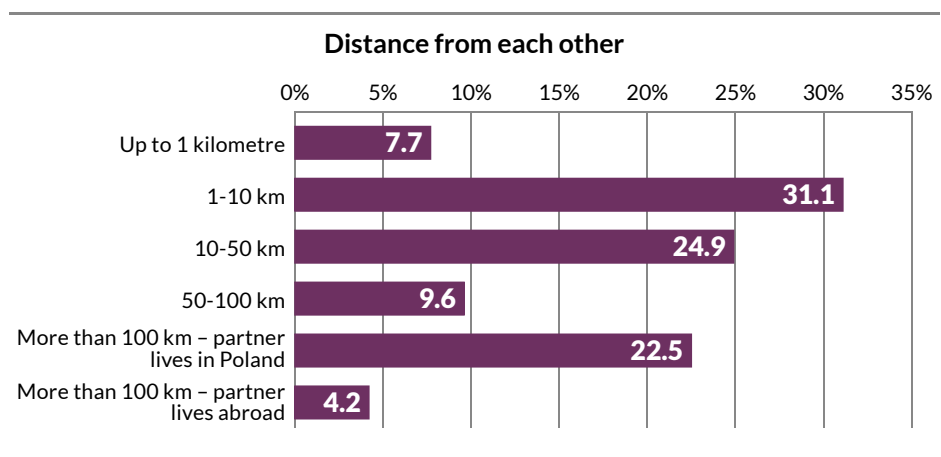
Lack of direct contact did not equal lack of contact at all; 95% of those who did not live together were in touch at least once daily via telephone or the Internet. The sex of the respondents did not influence the form and frequency of contacts.

**Chart 71. How often do you get in touch? Only the respondents who claimed they did not live with their partner. Variable calculated for couples (n=747)**



Couples living apart were asked to estimate the distance between their places of residence. A large number lived fairly close to one another, less than 10 kilometres (39%). In one case out of four the distance was between 10 and 50 kilometres and in another 10% it was between 50 and 100 kilometres. The remaining couples (27%) lived at least 100 kilometres away from one another and 4% of the respondents lived abroad. Sex did not influence the responses.

**Chart 72. How far away from each other do you live? Only the respondents who claimed they did not live with their partner. Variable calculated for couples (n=748)**





The respondents who lived together were asked after what time they had made the decision to move in together. In 38% of cases it happened after several months. One couple in five (20%) moved in together after a year, and 14% of couples did it 2 or 3 years after getting together. A relatively small number of respondents declared that they had moved in together after 4 years of the relationship (3%). A fairly large group of respondents (22%) was quite interesting as they had started living together soon after getting becoming a couple: 8% immediately or within a few days, another 14% within several weeks. In the case of 2% of the respondents the situation was different; they had lived together before they decided to become a couple..

**Chart 73. After what time in the relationship did you decide to live together? Only the respondents who claimed they lived with their partner. Variable calculated for couples (n=1384)**

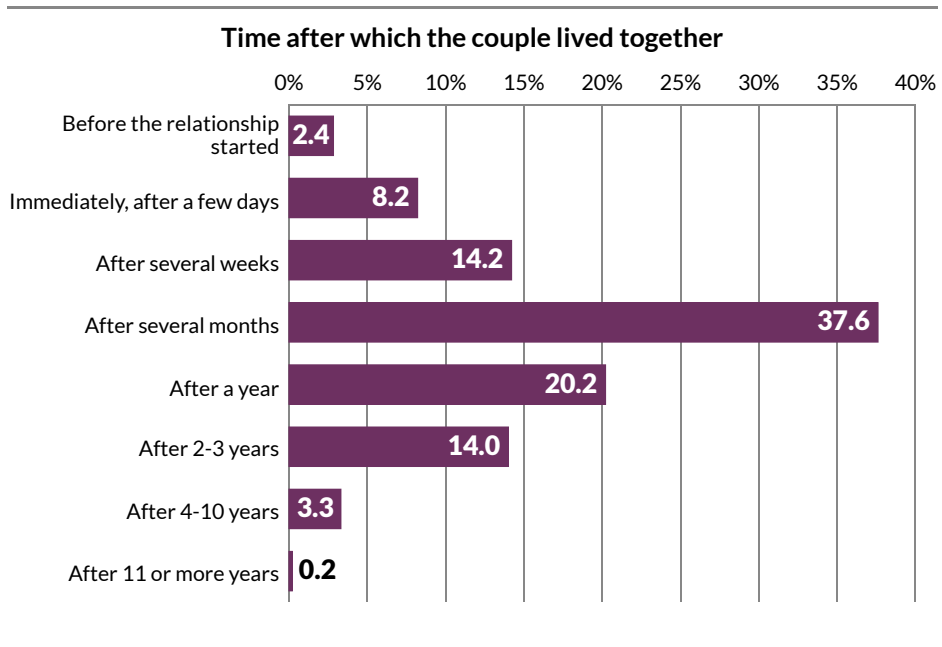
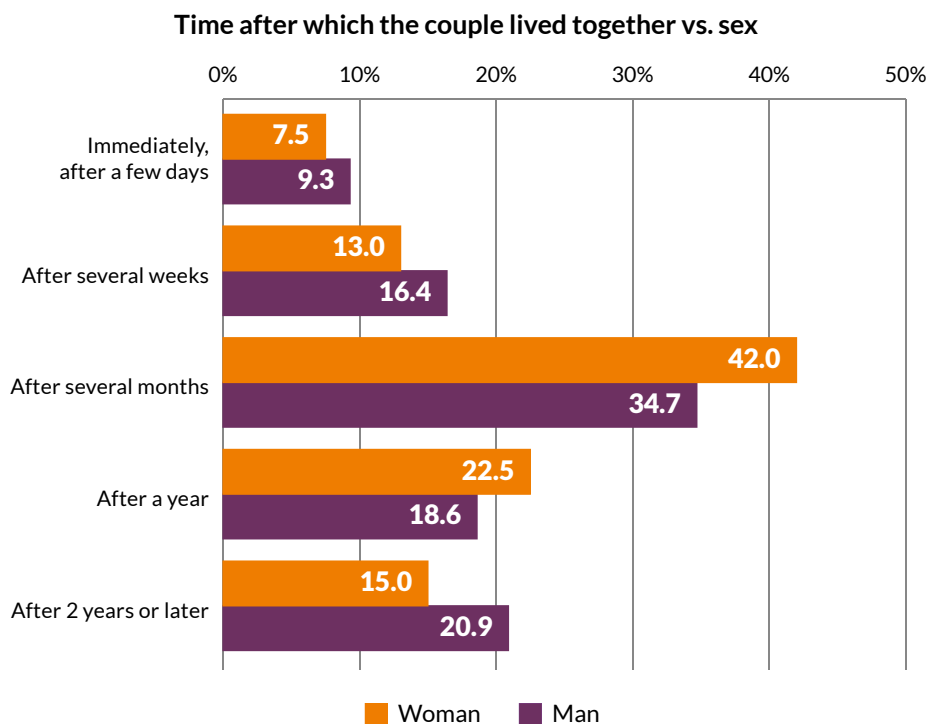


Chart 74 below clearly shows that if the time from the first encounter to moving in is short (a few days or weeks), men are more likely to start living together than women. If a relationship has lasted for several months up to a year, it was more probable that two women would start living together. Among the couples who have been in a relationship for over two years but still lived apart, men were more likely to move in together.

**Chart 74. The time after which couple moved in together vs. sex.** Category „before the relationship started” was excluded, due to small number of responses three final categories were taken together. Variable calculated for couples (n=1386)

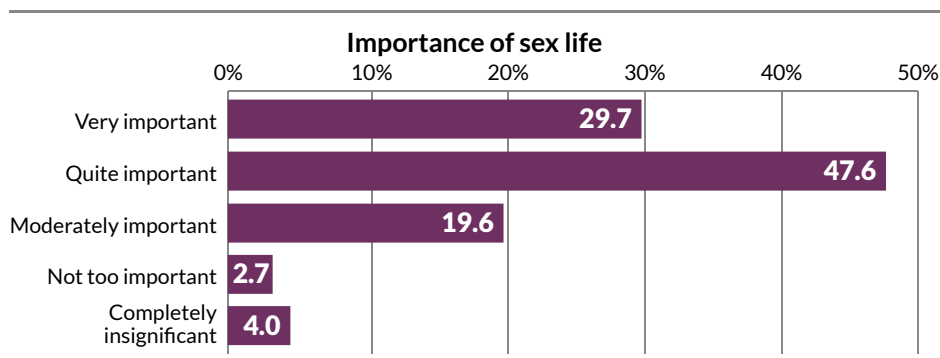


## Sex life

Sex life of the respondents was one of the important research problems in our study. The majority of the questions in this part of our questionnaire were taken from the studies of Zbigniew Izdebski<sup>11</sup> (2012) in order to facilitate comparison of the responses with those of a representative sample of Poles. The first question concerned the importance of sexual needs. As it turned out, they were very important for 30% of the respondents and rather important for another 48%. Only 7% of respondents considered sex as not too important or unimportant in their lives.

<sup>11</sup> The questions: „How important is sex in your life?”, „What is your opinion about your sex life?”, a „How often do you have sex?” were taken from the studies of Zbigniew Izdebski (2012). The study was carried out in 2011 on a representative sample of 3206 Poles. The population under research were inhabitants of Poland aged 15–59. Two techniques were employed in collecting data: personal interview with a trained pollster and questionnaire completed by the respondent.

Chart 75. How important is sex in your life? (n=2918)



Sex was somewhat more important for women than for men. No differences related to the duration of a relationship were noticed. Below we present the results divided according to sex and age for couples and single respondents of the study *Families of choice*, compared with the results of Izdebski's study conducted on a representative sample of Poles. Sexually active heterosexuals aged 18 to 59 were selected from Izdebski's sample. They were compared with the analogical sample from *Families of choice*. All further comparisons were calculated for these two samples.

The comparison shows that, generally speaking, it was a little more important for the respondents in *Families of choice* than for the representative group of heterosexuals. Among the non-heterosexual persons it was more important for women than for men. However, among heterosexual persons it was the other way round: sex was more important for men than for women.

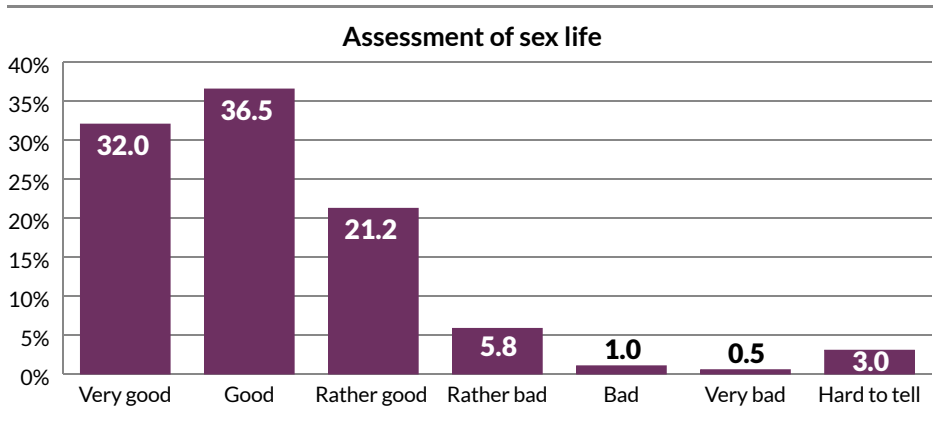
The comparison revealed a difference in attitude towards sex in relation to age. For an average Pole the importance of sex decreased with age (especially for women), while for non-heterosexual persons the tendency was exactly opposite – the importance of sex increased even if ever so slightly.

**Table 3. Comparison of average responses to the question concerning the importance of sex in life (answers to the question „How important is sex in your life?“) on a scale 1 to 6, where 1 stands for „completely insignificant“ and 6 for „very important“, between non-heterosexual persons (couples and singles) from the study *Families of choice* and heterosexual persons from the study by Zbigniew Izdebski. The results were divided according to sex and age**

Age	<i>Families of choice</i> – couples		<i>Families of choice</i> – singles		Izdebski's study – heterosexual persons	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
18–30 years	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.7	4.0
31–59 years	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9	3.2	3.6

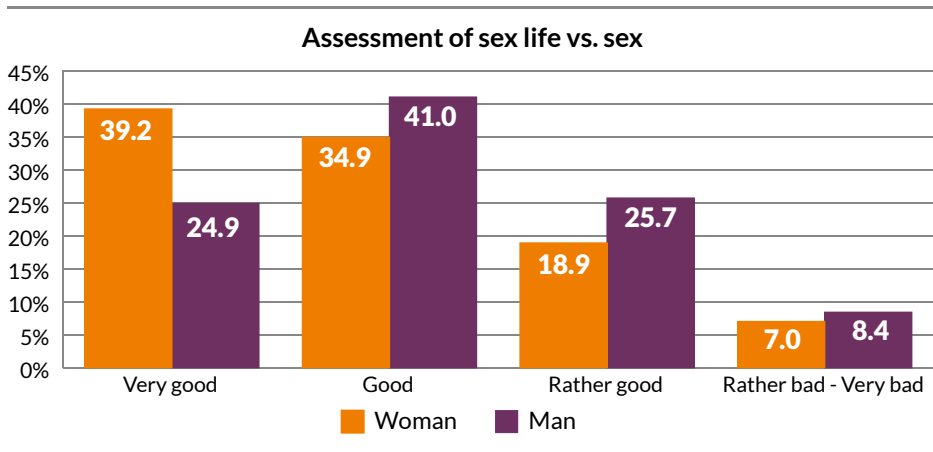
Another question concerning the intimate life in *Families of choice* dealt with satisfaction with sex life. The majority of people living in same-sex relationships assessed their sex life as good (36%) or very good (32%). One person in five (21%) assessed their sex life as less satisfactory but also positively, as rather good. The percentage of respondents dissatisfied with their sex life was 7%.

**Chart 76. What is your assessment of your sex life? (n=2908)**



The analyses have shown that women were a little more satisfied with their sex life than men.

**Chart 77. Assessment of sex life vs. sex. Responses „hard to tell” were excluded (n=2821)**



The answers to this question were compared with the results of the second part of the study *Families of choice* on non-heterosexual single persons and with the study on het-

erosexual persons by Izdebski. Unfortunately, we do not know the proportion of people living in couples and singles among the heterosexual respondents of Izdebski's study. Non-heterosexual women living in couples were the most satisfied with their erotic life. There is also a clear difference in the assessment of sex life among non-heterosexual persons living in couples and singles, whose assessment was the lowest. Satisfaction with own intimate life decreases slightly with age in all age brackets.

**Table 4. Comparison of average responses to the question concerning the satisfaction with sex life (answers to the question „What is your assessment of your sex life?”) on a scale 1 to 5, where 1 stands for „very bad” and 5 for „very good”<sup>12</sup>, between non-heterosexual persons (couples and singles) from the study *Families of choice* and heterosexual persons from the study by Zbigniew Izdebski. The results were divided according to sex and age**

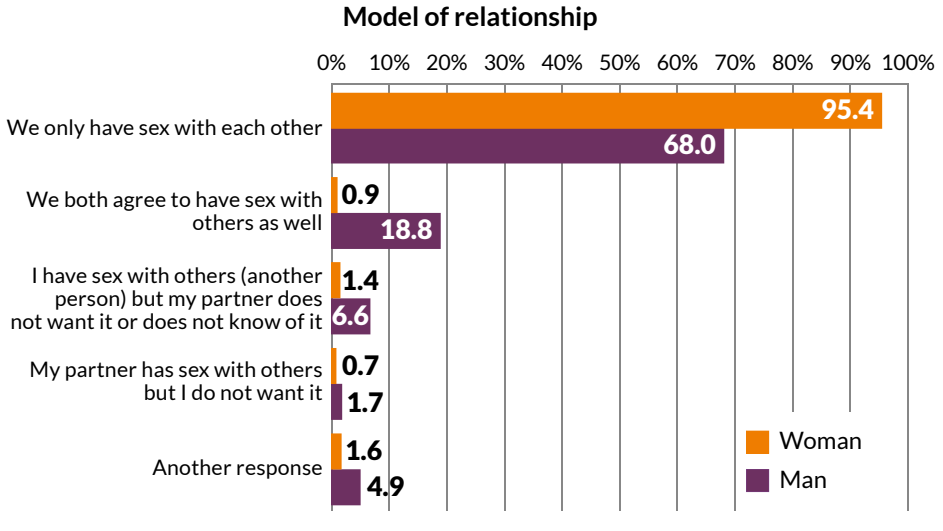
Age	<i>Families of choice</i> – couples		<i>Families of choice</i> – singles		Izdebski's study – heterosexual persons	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
18–30 years	4.3	4.1	3.0	3.0	4.1	4.2
31–59 years	4.1	4.0	2.8	2.9	3.8	3.9

The respondents were also asked to define the model of their relationship as far as exclusivity in sexual relations was concerned. Due to major differences resulting from the sex of the respondents, the results are presented separately for women and for men. The vast majority of female relationship were monogamous (95%). In the case of men it was a little more than two out of three relationships (68%). The remaining group had sex with other people, either with their partners' approval (19%) or without it (7%), or indicated sex with another person in partner's presence (threesome) as a separate form (this category was selected almost exclusively by men). The need to open their relationship increased with age and length of the relationship in the case of men. In case of women it was related only to the length of the relationship.

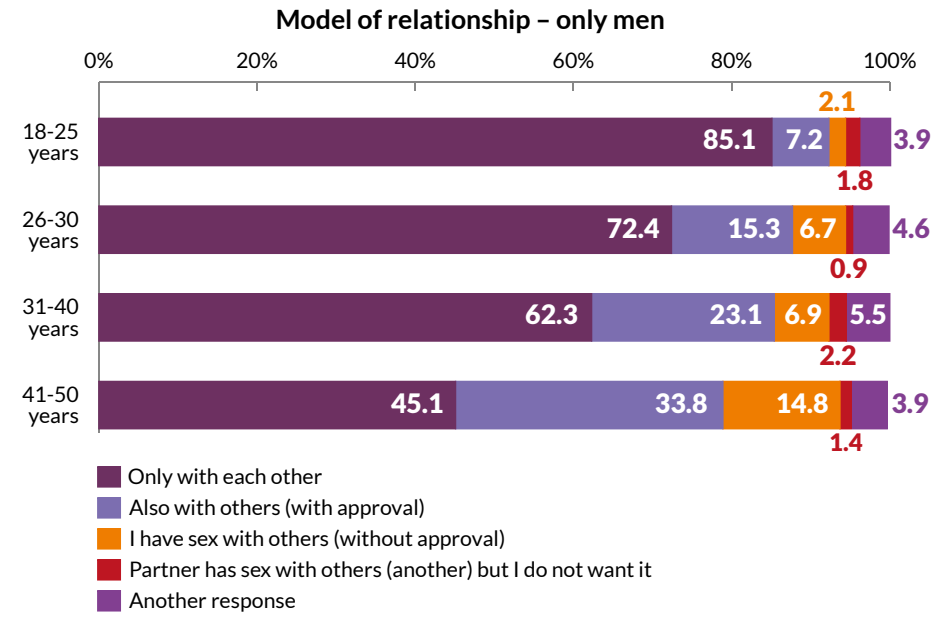
Apart from selecting an option from the questionnaire (as presented in chart 78) the respondents could also choose another answer and describe it. 3% of the respondents selected this solution. 1.4% of respondents opted for so called threesomes, that is a third partner participating in sexual contacts of a couple, usually on the condition that all three men participated in the sexual act. Several respondents (0.6%) pondered the possibility of sexual relations with other people and described it as a subject for discussion with their partner. An even smaller category included the respondents who did not have sexual relations at all and chose celibacy (0.4%). The last category included those respondents who had doubts as far as the fidelity of their partner was concerned (0.3%).

<sup>12</sup> The scales were standardised in order to compare the results of Izdebski's study and *Families of choice*.

**Chart 78. What is the model of your relationship as far as exclusivity in sexual relations is concerned? The division was required due to major differences between sexes (n=2913)**

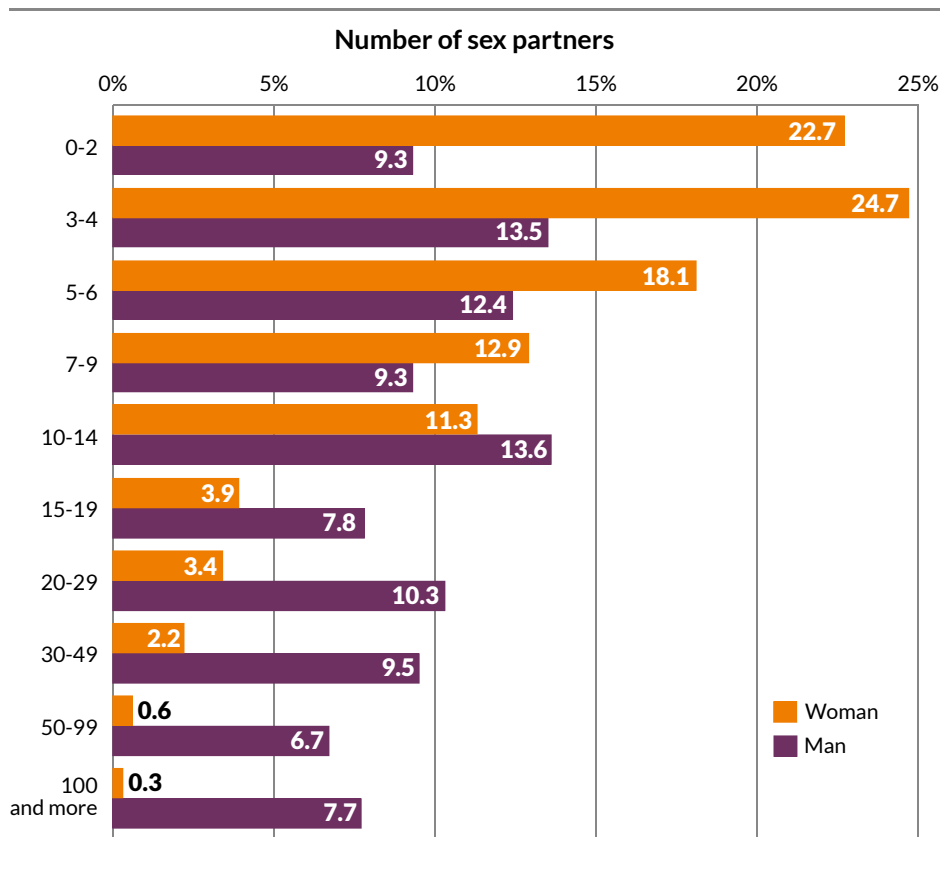


**Chart 79. Model of relationship as far as exclusivity in sexual relations is concerned – men only as there were no notable differences in the responses of women (n=1206)**



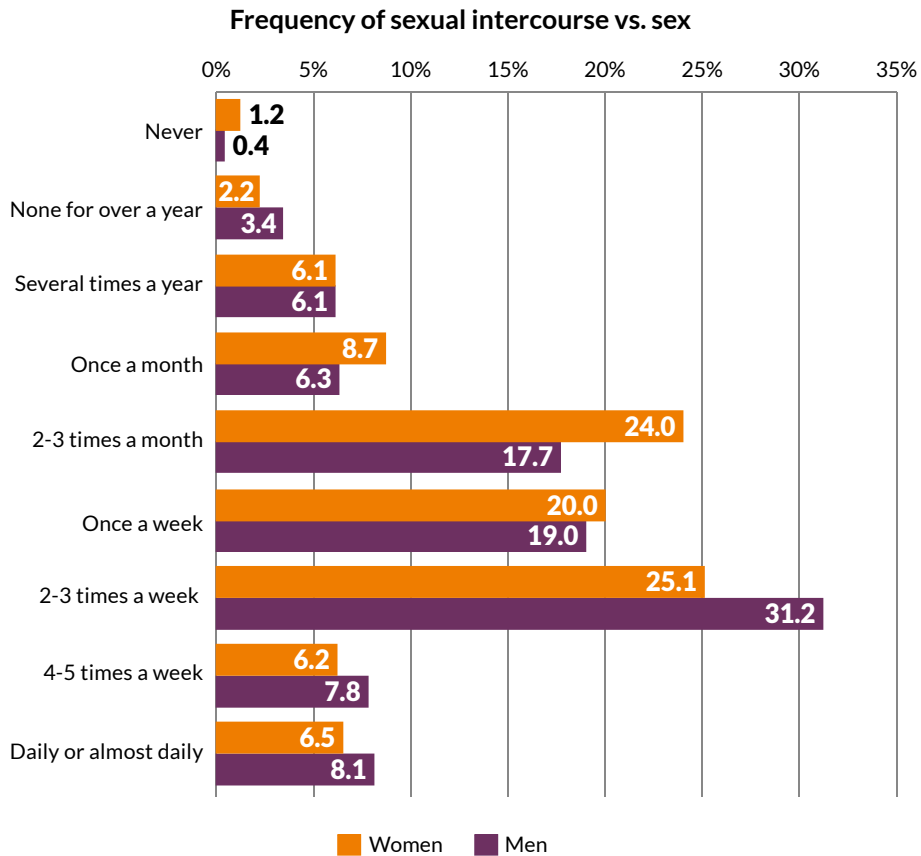
The respondents were asked to give the number of their sexual partners in their life-time. It is quite clear from the chart below that there is a major difference in the number of sexual partners among the sexes of the respondents. Half of the female respondents had up to 5 sexual partners of either sex in their lives, while half of the male respondents had up to 10 sexual partners of either sex.

**Chart 80. How many people have you had sex with in your life? Provide the number of all your partners regardless of their sex. Due to major differences between the sexes the results are presented with the division into sexes (n=2835)**



There is a popular conviction concerning the extraordinary frequency of sexual acts in gay relationships and the small number of sexual acts in lesbian relationships. The study confirmed the existence of a difference between the respective frequencies of sexual intercourse between men and women. Men were indeed more likely to have sex more often, but the difference did not exceed a few percentage points. The most often selected responses fell between 2 to 3 times a month and 2 to 3 times a week.

**Chart 81. How often do you have sex with your partner? Due to major differences between the sexes the results are presented with the division into sexes. Variable calculated for couples (n=2111)**



The responses were compared with the results of the study *Families of choice* on non-heterosexual singles and the results of Izdebski’s study on heterosexual people (however, we do not know the ratio of people in relationships and singles in the sample). Non-heterosexual singles declared they had sexual relations the least often. The majority both of single women (approx. 70%) and single men (approx. 60%) either did not have sex during last year or had sex a few times during the year. More heterosexual persons than non-heterosexual couples engaged in sex once a week or more often. On average, women had sex less often than men but heterosexual women did it more often than lesbians and bisexual women living in relationships. The frequency of sexual intercourse decreased with age in all groups.



**Table 5. Comparison of frequency of sexual acts (in case of couples of respondents of *Families of choice* the question concerned the number of intercourses with the partner. In case of homosexual singles and heterosexual persons all intercourses) between non-heterosexual persons (couples and singles) in the study *Families of choice* and heterosexual persons in the study by Zbigniew Izdebski. The results were divided according to sex and age**

		<i>Families of choice</i> – couples		<i>Families of choice</i> – singles		Izdebski's study – heterosexual persons	
Frequency	Age	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
None for over a year	18-30	0.8%	1.0%	32.6%	21.3%	4.5%	2.5%
	31-59	5.3%	6.5%	45.1%	22.4%	16.2%	8.4%
Several times a year	18-30	4.5%	3.1%	34.8%	39.4%	4.3%	5.1%
	31-59	10.2%	8.5%	29.3%	38.6%	7.9%	7.4%
2-3 times a month	18-30	24.1%	18.8%	9.9%	15.1%	8.8%	8.2%
	31-59	25.2%	15.7%	11.0%	16.2%	13.0%	9.6%
Once a month	18-30	7.7%	5.8%	13.4%	13.3%	6.5%	8.2%
	31-59	10.2%	6.5%	8.5%	12.3%	8.0%	7.7%
Once a week	18-30	21.2%	20.4%	2.6%	5.6%	23.0%	22.5%
	31-59	19.3%	19.8%	3.7%	4.4%	26.3%	29.1%
2-3 times a week	18-30	27.1%	32.2%	4.8%	3.8%	48.0%	48.4%
	31-59	22.8%	31.9%	1.2%	4.4%	26.5%	34.1%
Daily or almost daily	18-30	14.5%	18.8%	1.9%	1.5%	4.8%	5.1%
	31-59	6.9%	10.9%	1.2%	1.8%	2.0%	3.8%

## Domestic chores

The respondents were asked to describe their division of domestic chores. The question was adapted from a study by CBOS (2013a). The results indicate that the respondents do the chores together or take turns. The biggest degree of „specialization”, or delegating some duties to one partner only, concerned minor repairs and ordering services (plumber, etc.). The most egalitarian chores were daily shopping and looking after pets or people in need of care.

**Table 6. Who does the following chores on a daily basis in your relationship? The answers “does not apply” were omitted. Only the respondents who declared they lived together. Variable calculated for couples**

	Usually or always me	Usually or always my partner	Together or we take turns	Always or almost always we take turns
Preparation of meals	28.3%	20.9%	49.9%	0.8%
Washing the dishes	24.2%	17.2%	56.9%	1.7%
Cleaning up	19.5%	14.0%	64.0%	2.6%
Thorough cleanup (e.g. window cleaning, vacuuming)	22.0%	14.3%	59.1%	4.6%
Laundry	28.9%	23.3%	46.0%	1.9%
Ironing	30.6%	26.4%	38.7%	4.2%
Daily shopping	16.7%	8.2%	74.5%	0.6%
Ordering services (e.g. calling plumber, etc.)	35.4%	26.5%	35.7%	2.3%
Small repairs	37.8%	26.5%	30.5%	5.7%
Dealing with official matters	28.3%	18.4%	52.1%	1.2%
Putting out trash	15.9%	13.9%	68.1%	2.6%
Looking after people in need of care	14.0%	9.5%	75.2%	1.3%
Looking after pets	12.3%	9.3%	77.5%	1.0%

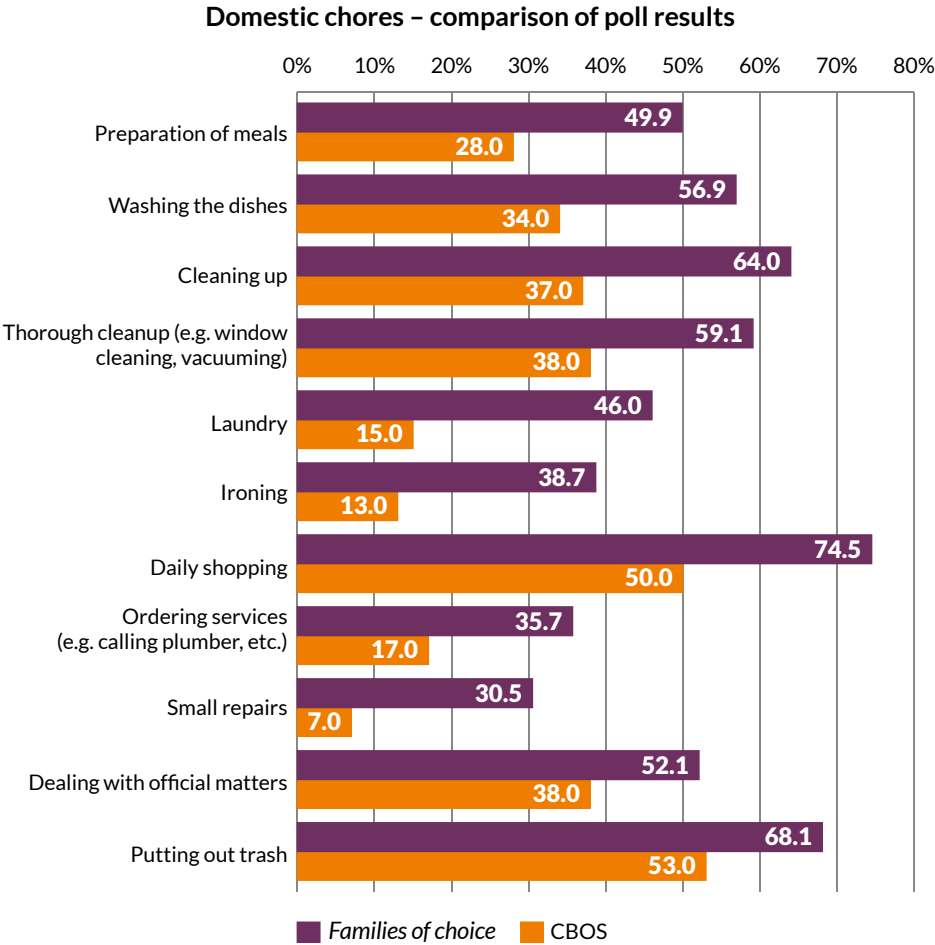
The differences resulting from sex in the frequency of doing domestic chores was also analysed. Relationships of women turned out more egalitarian; women were more likely to perform the majority of their domestic duties together, especially thorough cleanups, looking after pets, or dealing with official matters.

As the study collected data from couples, it was controlled whether there are statistically significant differences in overestimating one’s own input and underestimating that of the partner.

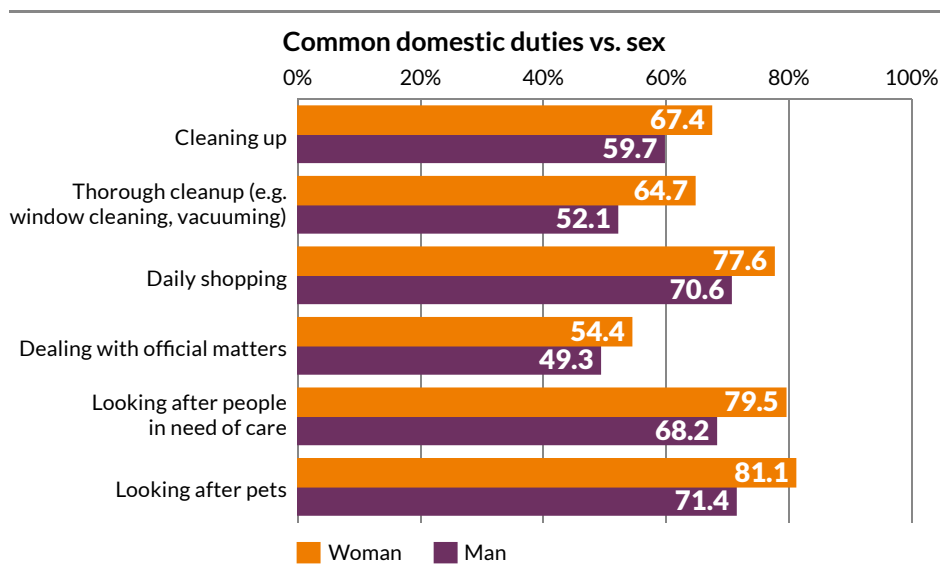
According to the CBOS study on a representative sample quoted above in which households (relationships as well as any other arrangements, e.g. single mothers with children) were under scrutiny, women did most domestic chores on their own (except for small repairs and ordering services). The duties done “together or variously” most

often were putting out trash (53%) and, just as in the present study, daily shopping (50%). They were followed by dealing with official matters (38%), thorough cleanup (38%), cleaning up (37%), washing the dishes (34%), and preparation of meals (28%). The chores least often done together were: ordering services (17%), laundry (15%), ironing (13%), and small repairs (7%). The differences between the sample analyses here and the sample in the CBOS study are very clear: same-sex relationships turned out much more equal as all the chores were done more often together than separately.

**Chart 82. Domestic chores done together – comparison with the study by CBOS (2013a)**



**Chart 83. Domestic chores vs. sex, the chart includes only the category „together or taking turns”, only for the statistically significant data. Variable calculated for couples**



The respondents were also asked about their opinion concerning the division of duties: what situation would be perfect for the relationship in their opinion.<sup>13</sup> The vast majority responded that the best option was when two people spent more or less the same time on their professional work and when they looked after their home to an equal degree (86%). 8% chose the model in which one partner worked more, and in consequence the other dealt more with the domestic chores. Only 2.5% opted for complete division, a model in which one partner worked professionally and the other looked after their home.

Only 3.3% of couples decided that none of the provided answers fit their preferred way of dividing chores and chose the option "another situation", which gave them an opportunity to describe their own best model. The majority of these responses (2.4% of all respondents) consisted of statements that the perfect division must fit the possibilities and needs of each partner and their current situation (e.g. "The best way is to develop a system that suits both partners and which does not necessarily have to be based on equal division of time and effort"; "There is no "ideal model", everything depends on preferences of the partners"). The category also included descriptions of the division of chores based on a variable, flexible attitude.

Each partner works as much as he/she has to and the partners share chores depending on how much spare time they have.

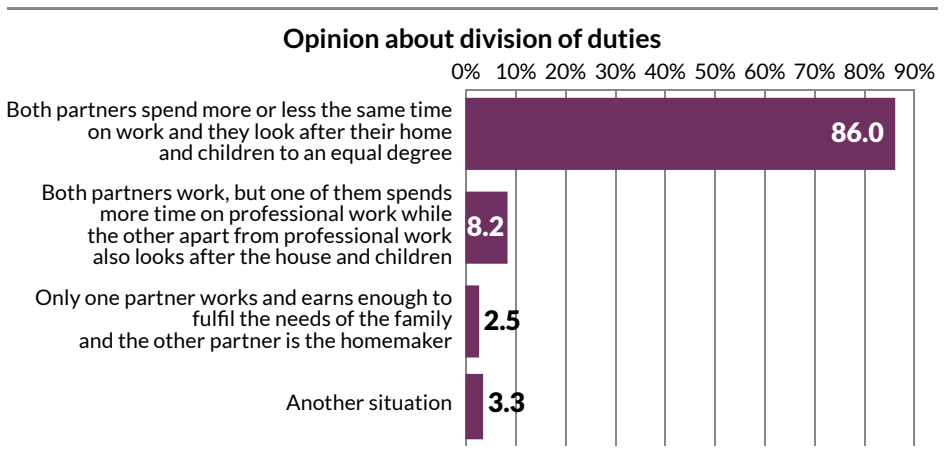
<sup>13</sup> This and the following two questions concerning traditional or equal models of family were adapted from the study by CBOS – in the original the questions referred only to the model husband–wife (CBOS, 2013a).

Each partner works as much as he/she wants to or how much is required at the moment. Whoever has spare time takes care of the apartment. If we're both busy we try to manage together. We adapt to the current situation.

The remaining 16 responses could not be easily classified. The respondents claimed they had not worked out a fixed model (due to their age or unemployment), and there were answers such as “None of the models is good” and “all the models are OK” without any further arguments, as well as statements not included in the categories above (e.g. “It’s the best when both partners don’t work”).

In the study by CBOS the quoted above 46% of respondents opted for an equal partnership model, a family in which both partners are equally involved in work and household chores including raising children. The traditional model in which the husband works and wife takes care of the home was preferred by 23% of the respondents while a reverse model, in which the wife works and the husband is the homemaker, was selected by 1% of the respondents. However, the model in which both spouses work but the wife spends more time on house chores was selected by 22% of respondents. The opposite model in which it is the husband who works more at home was chosen by 6% of respondents.<sup>14</sup>

**Chart 84. People variously approach the division of duties in relationships. Which of the models listed below do you consider the best for a relationship/family? Variable calculated for couples (n=2096)**

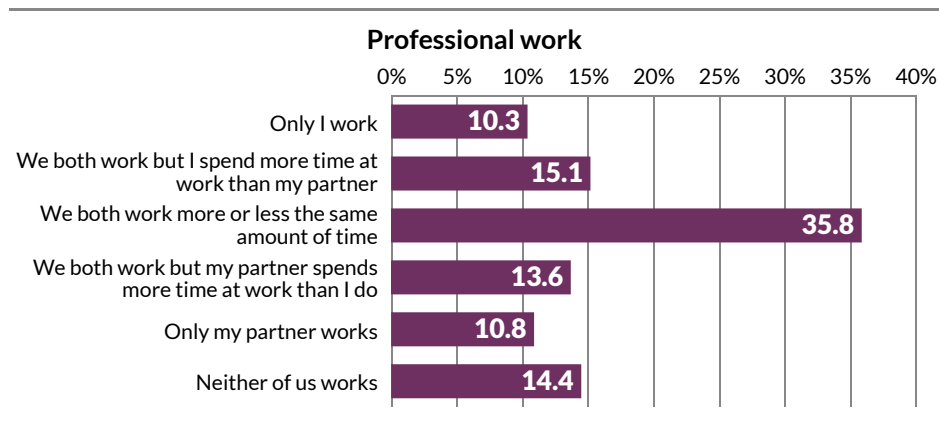


The respondents were asked about their personal situation – what the division of professional and home duties looked like in their relationships. A little more than one third of the respondents (36%) claimed that both partners worked the same amount of time. In the case of chores, 51% of the respondents answered they did them together.

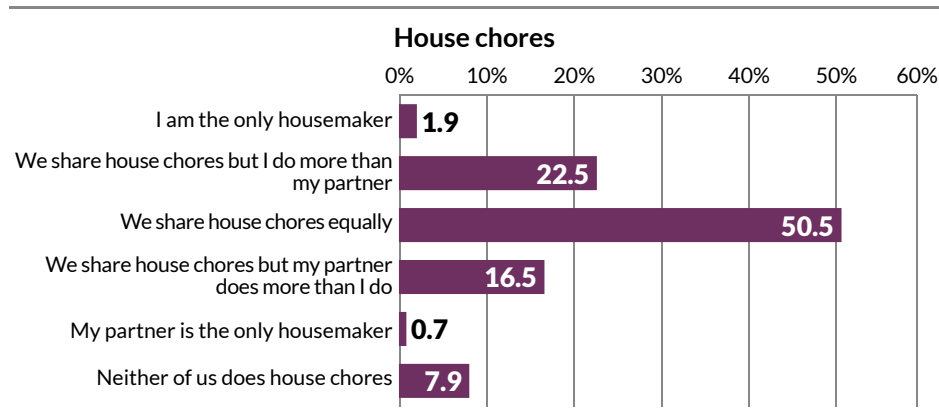
<sup>14</sup> It is quite telling that the CBOS study included in their questionnaire the model in which both partners work but it is the husband who is the homemaker only in 2013, while other models had been included since 1997.

Situations in which one of the partners dealt exclusively with all the chores were very few. There were no differences between female and male respondents on the question.

**Chart 85. Do you and your partner spend more or less the same time on professional work, or does one spend more time on work than the other? Variable calculated for couples (n=2085)**



**Chart 86. Do you and your partner spend approximately the same amount of time on house chores (including raising children if you have any), or does one of you spend more time than the other? Variable calculated for couples (n=2063)**



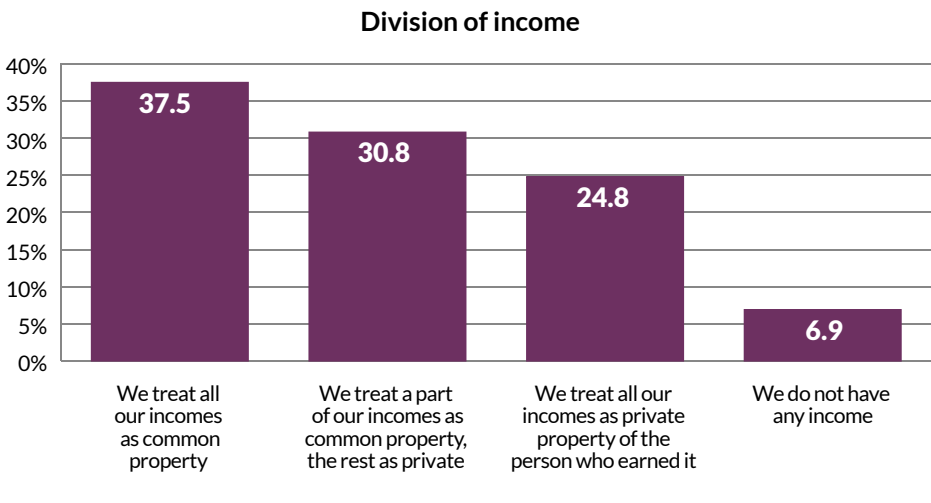
The respondents were asked about the division of income in their relationship. The questions concerning income were taken from the study of by Eurostat EU-SILC, 2010.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ad hoc module Management of family finances. Data used for comparison is available at Eurostat EU-SILC 2010. Data base (2010), [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income\\_social\\_inclusion\\_living\\_conditions/data/ad\\_hoc\\_modules](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/data/ad_hoc_modules), access: 15.06.2014.

38% of the respondents treated all their incomes as their common property and 31% as partly common and partly individual to the partner who earned the money. One person in four claimed that all the income belongs to the person who earned it. The option “we do not have any income” (7%) was selected exclusively by respondents from the 18-25 age bracket.

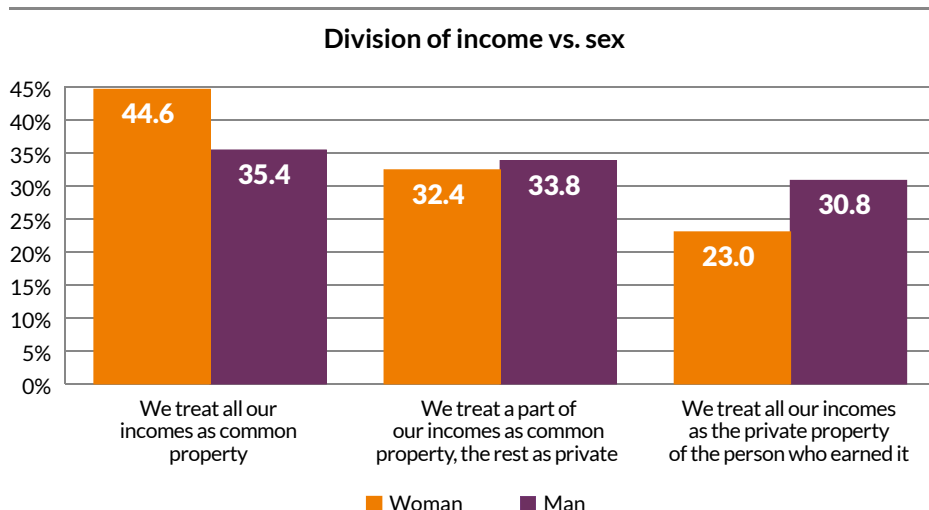
The same study by Eurostat (2010) on a representative Polish sample aged 18 to 64 brought the following results: 65.7% of respondents had common income, 31% partly common, 3.2% private, and 0.1% no income. Although the differences between our sample and the representative sample are very significant as far as the level of education, place of residence, and age are concerned, the huge difference in attitudes towards income is quite telling. In the representative sample of the Eurostat study all incomes were treated as common much more often, only sporadically as private, while in the present study as many as 25% of the respondents declared treating incomes as private. It is partly a result of the fact that the representative sample included households and in the present study a number of couples did not live together. It may also be explained by the overrepresentation of young people and the level of education in our sample. We believe, however, that the legal and social situation of non-heterosexual persons is also an important factor here. Same-sex couples do not have any possibility of formalising their relationships, which includes the rights of a married couple such as community property. As it has been described above, it is the cause of numerous problems with the division of property after separation or the death of one of the partners. The property of one of the parties is not protected. The law, especially the tax law, enforces the treatment of property as one’s own, as for the courts of justice and tax authorities same-sex couples are two strangers who do not have any rights resulting from common property.

Chart 87. How do you treat your income? Variable calculated for couples (n=2077)



Further analyses of this part of the present study have shown that lesbian relationships were more egalitarian – women treated a bigger part of their incomes as common. They were also a little more satisfied with the arrangement than men.

**Chart 88. Division of incomes vs. sex, category “we do not have any income” was excluded (n=1934)**



The following open question dealt with the reasons that influenced the decision concerning division of incomes in a given couple. Approximately three respondents in four (76%) answered this question.

The analysis revealed 9 categories of reasons. As some of the respondents chose two different motives, the percentage given for the categories does not add up to 100.

The biggest group (36%) motivated their decision with a sense of community with their partner. Some responses referred to the statement “what is mine is yours”, others indicated that the treatment of all incomes as common property was a natural consequence of being in a relationship (e.g. “We are together, we treat everything as common”; “We are a family and in a family everything is common”). Other statements included in this category stressed the emotional sphere as motivation (e.g. “We love and trust each other unconditionally. We have built our Home together and there are no reasons to separate anything”; “Ever since we fell for each other and moved in together it has been the natural course of events”), common needs and aims of both partner (e.g. “We have common life, dreams, plans, so the money is common as well”, “We are one team”), and the perspectives for a common future (e.g. “We believe that we will spend all our life together so all the property we have, everything we buy, we treat as common property”). A part of the respondents pointed out joint financial obligations (common household, company, or child) as the reason for a common budget.



The second category included reasons connected with the need to maintain independence and autonomy. Such responses came from 18% of the respondents. They quoted arguments referring to their outlook on life (e.g. “We think that each partner should keep a part of his money to keep a sense of “freedom”; “I don’t think I should claim any part of other people’s property even if the person in question is very close to me”), different needs and plans of the partners, habits, and even practical reasons (e.g. “One must have some funds for surprises”).

Yet another group of respondents (12%) pointed out that the division of incomes in their relationship was the result of two separate households.

A similar number of responses (12%) was included in the category of various rational motives. The answers in this category explained the accepted model of managing family budget with economic reasons (such as a better control of expenses or economizing), legal situation of same-sex relationships in Poland (no possibility of their formalisation), necessity, or experience from family home or earlier relationships. The category also included other responses which indicated that the decision of splitting incomes was the result of a well thought out, rational decision (e.g. “life experience, the willingness to establish clear rules in our relationship”; “It is the most logical solution”; “From the moment we got together we made this decision to keep everything clear and avoid quarrels on the matter”).

The fifth category included answers that justified the decisions in keeping the family budget with differences in the incomes of respective partners or their financial obligations. 11% of the respondents indicated such reasons. The category included responses such “my partner earns more and she pays the mortgage loan on her apartment”; “My partner makes much more than I do”; “We don’t earn equally so each of us have their own savings”.

10% of respondents stated that the basic reason that influenced the way they divided their incomes was convenience. The most recurrent arguments were: “it’s easier, simpler, and more convenient this way”.

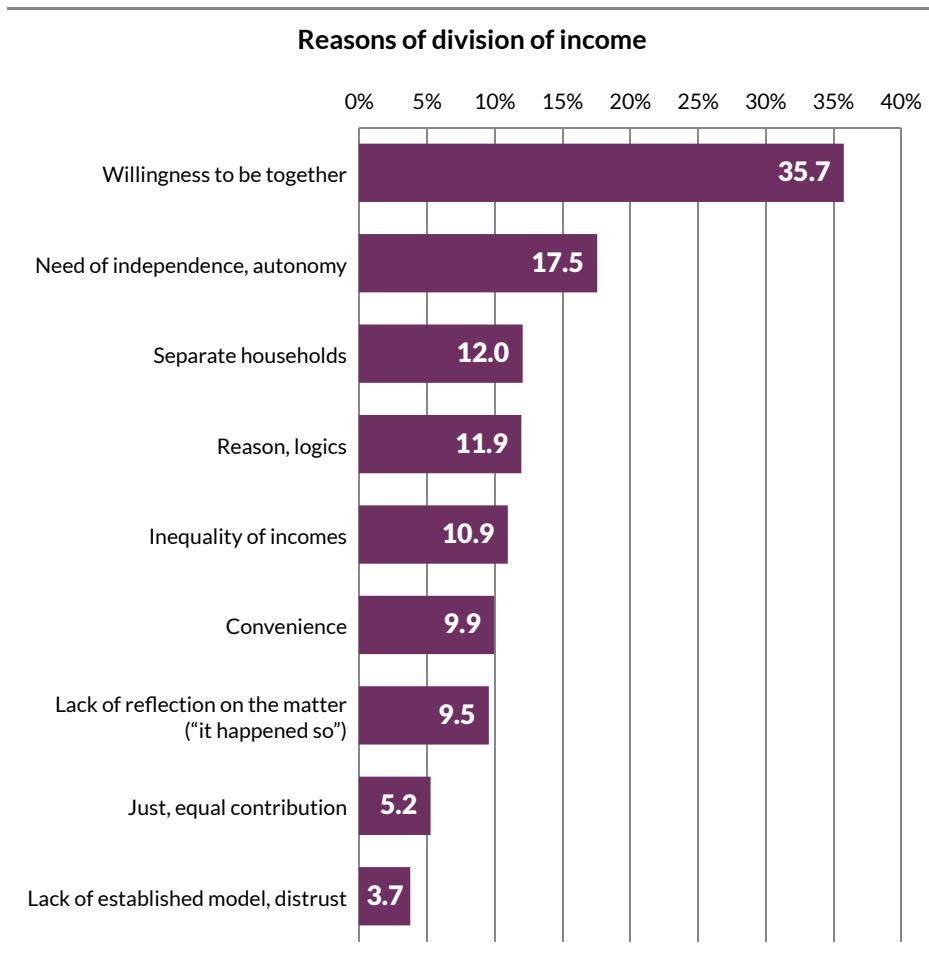
Another 10% of respondents could not provide a specific reason, and they answered “I don’t know” or “Hard to tell”. Other typical responses in this category were “That’s the way it is. We’ve never discussed it”, “It just happened this way, I guess it was the most natural situation”, “It’s always been like this”, “;”, “This is how it worked itself out!”, or “It’s just life. We didn’t talk much about it”. Respondents who declared that financial matters were not important for them were also included in this category.

5% of respondents claimed that their family budget was based on the rule of “equal contribution” (“We agreed that we divide the costs of the apartment and we share the costs of shopping, e.g. food”, “We chip in to pay the bills”, “It is the simple way – we pay common bills together, each one pays a half”). The answers on a more general level referred to the sense of equality and justice (“We decided that it is only fair to add an equal share to our joint “business”).

The last category includes responses from which one may conclude that the financial arrangement was not agreed upon by both partners. In a number of cases it was caused by too short of a time spent together (e.g. “We’ve known each for a short time, it’s too soon to “unite” financially”, “We haven’t yet reached this stage”, or “We haven’t even

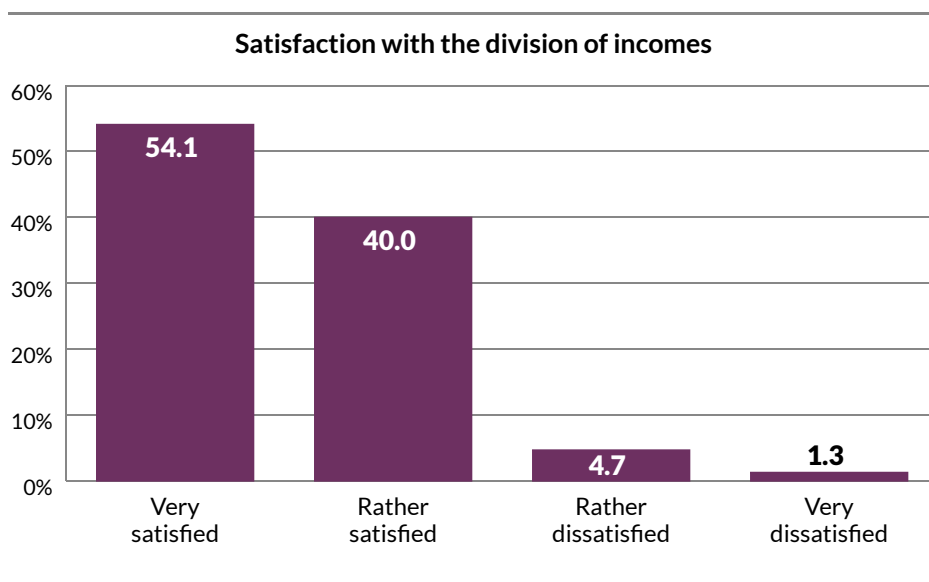
started talking about it yet”). Other described situations suggest conflicts and lack of understanding among partners in reference to financial issues (e.g. “Mistrust in financial matters”) or in a more general sense (e.g. “Lack of deeper relations and willingness to get involved in the relationship on the part of the partner”, “Risk of separation”). Some respondents stated that the accepted model was not their idea (e.g. “My partner made me agree to it”, “I guess the arrangement was imposed upon me when we moved in together”). This category was the least popular; it was selected by 4% of the respondents.

**Chart 89. What influenced the way you treat your incomes? (n=2306)**



At the end of the section concerned with division of incomes the respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with their arrangements. As many as 94% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the accepted model.

Chart 90. To what degree are you satisfied with the way you deal with your incomes?  
(n=2738)



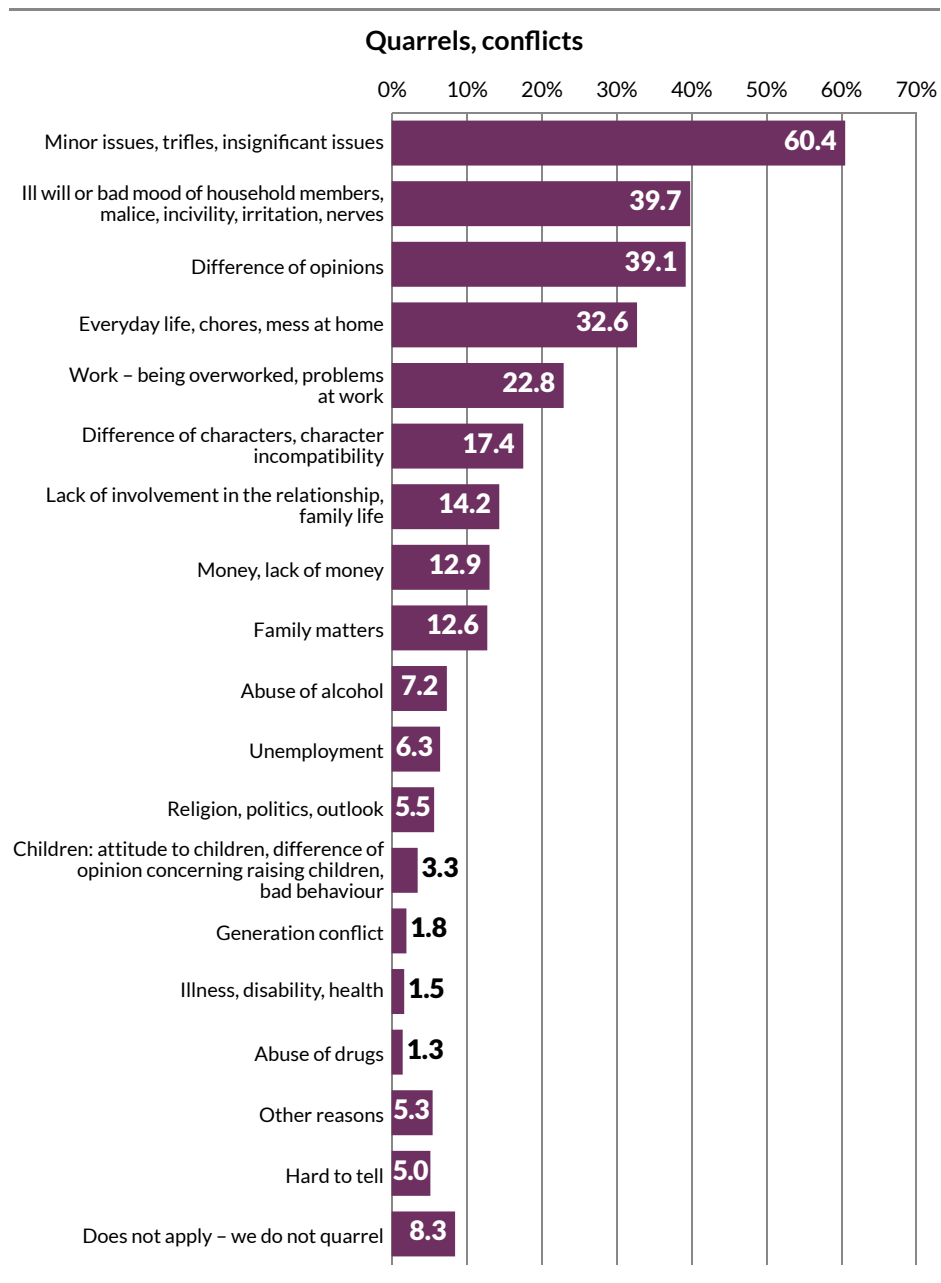
## Conflicts and violence

The respondents were asked a multiple choice question concerning the most common sources of misunderstandings and conflicts. The question was taken from the CBOS study (2012a) and adapted.<sup>16</sup> The most often mentioned reason were trifles, matters of no importance (60%), secondly ill will, irritation, and stress (40%), and almost as frequently (39%) differences of opinion, different views. The least often mentioned cause of fights was abuse of drugs (1.3%). 8% of the couples declared that they never quarrelled.

In the study by CBOS (2012a) on a representative sample the respondents were asked whether they quarrelled in a separate question. Because of that and due to differences in methods of calculating the results by CBOS we only quote the sequence of reasons of misunderstandings in the representative sample: money was the first, differences of opinion were second, trifles and minor matters came third, the fourth reason was everyday life, minor issues, and the fifth reason was children.

<sup>16</sup> The original questionnaire was modified, e.g. additional positions "abuse of drugs" and "does not apply – we do not fight" was added.

**Chart 91. Every now and then there are misunderstandings and conflicts. What are the most common reasons why you quarrel with your partner? Choose all that apply. Variable calculated for couples (n=2070)**



Only 5% of respondents in the *Families of choice* sample indicated reasons of quarrels and conflicts other than those indicated in the questionnaire. 2.8% of respondents mentioned jealousy; it was the most often represented category. It includes those responses that were literal (“jealousy”) as well as suspecting the partner of infidelity, his/her infidelity in the past, or indicating third parties as the reasons of conflicts (e.g. “other guys”, “former partners”, or “partner’s involvement in earlier relationships”). The second most important category was sexual life. 1.3% of the respondents listed such reasons as “lack of sex” or “different sexual temperaments”. On similarly low levels (0.2%) are the categories connected with smoking (e.g. “smokes too much”), relations with friends and acquaintances (e.g. “my partner’s irreverent attitude towards my friends”, “malicious pseudo-friends”), as well as matters connected with the past. 0.3% of respondents answered in a way that could not be included in any coherent category (“games”, “the looks of my partner”, “various”).

Another extensive question dealt with the issue of violence in relationships. The issue has so far been only seldom touched upon in studies on same-sex relationship. This was the first attempt to investigate the issue in depth. This part of the questionnaire concerned four different types of violence; it was an adapted fragment of the questionnaire prepared by Professor Catherine Donovan (University of Sunderland)<sup>17</sup> used in her studies on violence in same-sex relationships:

- Economic violence (questions 1–3), issues connected with finances, dispensing money, forcing partner to cover common expenses, taking money without the approval of the person it belongs to;
- Emotional violence (questions 4–8), such behaviours as cursing, insulting, humiliating, blackmail and threats, isolating from family and friends, groundless accusations of infidelity, reading private correspondence without the approval of the interested party;
- Physical violence (questions 9–12), such behaviours as slapping, pushing, shoving, beating, kicking, destroying objects, or attacking pets belonging to the partner;
- Sexual violence (questions 13–16), that is abuse of intimate relations, such as being ridiculed about your sexual performance, forcing to engage in sexual acts, persuading to sexual acts you find discomforting or frightening, making public photos of private sexual behaviour or taking them without partner’s approval.

The table below includes the questions and responses.

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17 The findings of her research are presented in the newly published book *Domestic violence and sexuality? What’s love got to do with this?* (Donovan and Hester 2014).

**Table 7A. Violence in relationships**

How often have you experienced the following behaviours from your partner within last 12 months?						
How often does your partner:	Never	1-2 a year	Less than once a month	Less than once a week	Daily or almost daily	
1. Limit your personal expenses, e.g. rationing money	92.0%	4.4%	2.1%	0.6%	0.9%	
2. Force you to account for all your joint expenses	93.3%	3.1%	2.1%	0.7%	0.7%	
3. Take your money without your approval	96.3%	2.1%	1.0%	0.3%	0.4%	
4. Yell at you, insult or humiliate you	73.0%	15.6%	7.7%	2.8%	1.0%	
5. Limit your contact with family, friends, acquaintances	81.1%	11.5%	5.2%	1.5%	0.7%	
6. Wrongly accuse you of being unfaithful	83.3%	10.5%	3.9%	1.5%	0.7%	
7. Check your mail or telephone without your approval	77.0%	13.5%	5.3%	2.5%	1.8%	
8. Threaten or blackmail you	91.1%	4.2%	1.6%	0.7%	0.4%	
9. Slap, push, shove you	91.0%	6.6%	1.7%	0.5%	0.2%	
10. Beat you up or kick you	97.0%	2.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	
11. Destroy your property	96.1%	3.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	
12. Abuse your pets	98.7%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	
13. Demand sex	94.9%	3.2%	1.2%	0.5%	0.2%	
14. Make love to you in a way that causes your fear or distress	96.0%	3.4%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	
15. Ridicule your sexual performance	95.6%	3.1%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	
16. Make public your intimate pictures or boast about your sex life without your approval	94.8%	4.2%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	

**Table 7B. Violence in relationships**

How often have you ... within last 12 months?						
How often do you:	Never	1-2 a year	Less than once a month	Less than once a week	Daily or almost daily	
1. Limit your partner's personal expenses, e.g. rationing money	90.3%	5.3%	3.0%	0.8%	0.5%	
2. Force your partner to account for all your joint expenses	94.1%	3.6%	1.4%	0.4%	0.5%	
3. Take your partner's money without their approval	96.6%	2.4%	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%	
4. Yell at your partner, insult or humiliate them	73.4%	15.8%	7.8%	2.5%	0.5%	
5. Limit your partner's contacts with family, friends, acquaintances	87.3%	9.4%	2.8%	0.4%	0.0%	
6. Wrongly accuse your partner of being unfaithful	85.0%	11.1%	2.9%	0.7%	0.2%	
7. Check your partner's mail or telephone without their approval	73.1%	17.6%	5.7%	2.4%	1.3%	
8. Threaten or blackmail your partner	94.3%	4.0%	1.2%	0.5%	0.0%	
9. Slap, push, or shove your partner	91.2%	6.8%	1.4%	0.5%	0.1%	
10. Beat your partner up or kick them	97.4%	2.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	
11. Destroy your partner's property	97.4%	2.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	
12. Abuse your pets	98.8%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	
13. Demand sex	93.8%	3.8%	1.8%	0.4%	0.3%	
14. Make love to your partner in a way that causes fear or distress	97.3%	2.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	
15. Ridicule your partner's sexual performance	96.5%	2.7%	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	
16. Make public your intimate pictures or boast about your sex life without your partner's approval	95.9%	3.2%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	

The respondents claimed that in their relationship violence did not appear or appeared only sporadically (a few percentage points on average). The most often encountered type was emotional violence: insults, humiliation, screaming, or checking mail and telephones on the sly (total number of such instances was 27%). Limiting contacts with family and friends was reported relatively often (19%), as well as accusing the partner of infidelity (17%). Other types of violence took place only sporadically although even such a low result must not be overlooked.

Sex turned out to be a very significant factor: in over half of the cases, men were decidedly more often both victims and perpetrators of violence.

- Economic violence: men were more often both victims and perpetrators in all the cases of financial extortion.
- Emotional violence: men were more likely to read their partners' mail. However, women more often limited their partners' contacts with family and friends (women as well were the victims of such violence). Furthermore, men declared that they had been slapped, pushed, or shoved by their partners more often; there was no such difference in the responses of the perpetrators in the second section.
- Physical violence: there were no differences between sexes except for the category "destroys your property", in which men were more often the perpetrators.
- Sexual violence: according to all of the responses in this section, men were more often the victims of violence. As perpetrators, men more often owned up to enforcing sexual acts and ridiculing partners' sexual performance. Women admitted more often to making love to their partners in a way that causes their fear or distress (although there was no such regularity among the victims of violence; on the contrary, men were more likely to admit to being the victims of such behaviour).



## Attitudes towards parenthood

The last group of questions addressed to all of the respondents concerned their parenthood or possible future plans involving parenthood. In the case of same-sex relationships, which cannot have children who are genetically related to both partners, there are two common situations in which they become parents. The first is when two female partners or – less often – male partners raise one of their biological children from an earlier heterosexual relationship. In such cases one of the parents – the biological father or mother of the child – is the legal guardian. The second situation is when a same-sex couple decides to have a baby when they are together. In the case of women there are various methods of insemination (e.g. in vitro); they can use a sperm bank or choose a man they know as the sperm donor. In the former case the donor remain anonymous and the woman who is the biological mother holds exclusive parental rights. In the latter situation when the father/donor is known, if he acknowledges paternity he holds the same parental rights as the biological mother. In each case the biological mother's same-sex partner (called the social mother), although she raises the child, is legally a stranger. She does not have any parental rights and cannot make any legally binding decisions concerning the child. The child does not inherit from her and will not obtain alimony should the partners separate.

As far as the situation of two men willing to raise a child is concerned, their situation in Poland is especially difficult. In Western Europe it is possible for such a couple to obtain parental rights if they can find a surrogate mother who gives birth to a biological child of one of the men (e.g. the case of Elton John and David Furnish). Polish law does not allow for such a solution.

Neither is there a possibility in Poland for a child to be adopted by two persons of the same sex. The regulations also apply to one partner's biological child: the social parent cannot obtain parental rights in such a situation.

In many European Union countries the legal situation of same-sex couples raising children is totally different. They enjoy the same rights as married couples, they can adopt children, and both partners automatically obtain parental rights if they are in a legally recognised relationship.

The present study was constructed in such a way as to record the diversity of experiences of non-heterosexual people raising children. We also included the experiences of people who raise children from their former heterosexual relationships where the third person involved in the process is the biological father or mother of the child.

It is the first comprehensive attempt at describing the parental experience of people in same-sex relationships. Consequently, we decided to include here all of the results, even those in which the number of responses was very small.

In the present sample 248 persons, i.e. 9% of all the respondents, declared that they had children.<sup>18</sup> The majority of the parents were women: 11.7% of women (191 respondents) as opposed to 4.6% men (57 respondents).

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<sup>18</sup> If the weighing procedure (described in the Methodology section) was introduced, the results for couples would be almost the same. Due to the lack of significant difference we decided to present individual experience of the respondents more precisely.

Chart 92. Do you have a child/children for whom you are a biological (or other) parent? (n=2853)

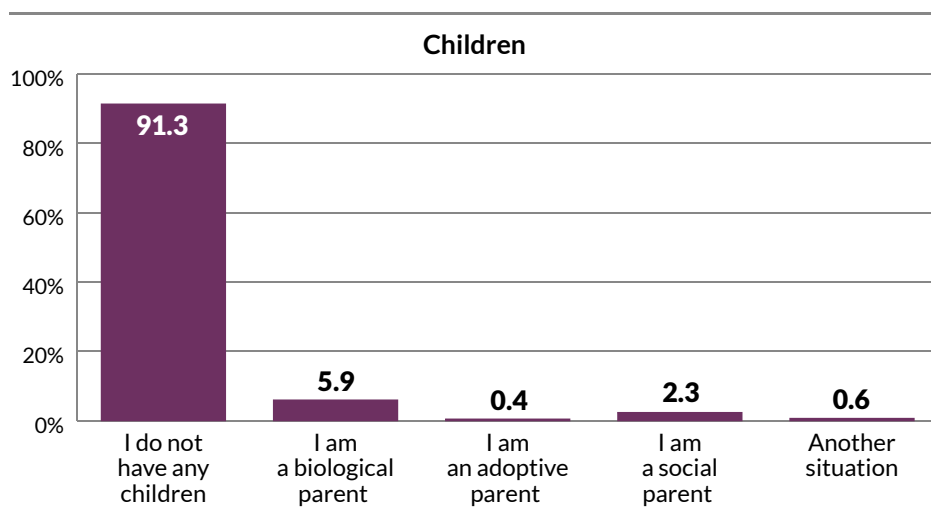
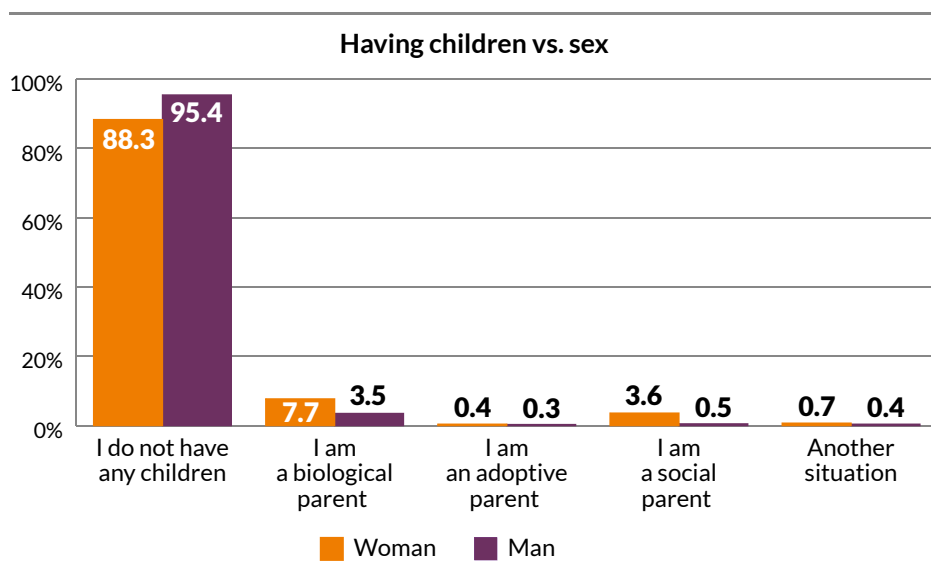


Chart 93. Having children vs. sex (n=2853)



6% of the respondents were biological parents of their children (169 persons) and 2.3% (65 persons) social parents. A little less than 1% (10 persons) declared that they raised an adopted child. A similar number of respondents (17 persons) chose “another situation”.

The biggest number of respondents had one child: 5.4% (154 persons). 2.6% of the respondents had two (73 persons), 0.6% (18 persons) had three, and 0.1% (3 persons) had four children.

The respondents who did not have children were asked to provide the reasons behind this situation. 71% answered the question. Analysis of the data resulted in six categories of presented causes.

The most often quoted reason for not having children was a conscious decision resulting from lack of such a need: 40% of respondents were included in this category. Their answer was usually "I don't want to have children". The respondents who expanded their answer argued that they did not need parenthood (e.g. "I don't want to have children, I have no maternal instinct", "I don't want to have children, I can't imagine myself as the father"), fear of responsibility (e.g. "Children mean a great responsibility, I don't know if I am ready for that", "I don't feel any need to have children. I am under the impression that they would limit my freedom of choice. Raising a child is a very demanding process and I am afraid I would not be a good parent. I could harm the child with my erroneous decisions"), comfortable lifestyle ("I can't imagine sacrificing myself or us as a couple for a child", "I don't want children as they would limit my freedom and independence. At the moment this issue seems more important than all the joys of parenthood"), aversion to children (e.g. "I don't want any children, I am not fit for them, I have no patience, I only like other people's children"), or existential-ideological considerations ("I don't want to be responsible for bringing to this world another human being who will die, will suffer, will be lonely. I wouldn't be able to cope with the pressure connected with his possibly unhappy life.")

The second most numerous category consisted of answers that may be summed up as "not now". The respondents (33%) justified their current decision with their young age and continued education. They pointed out the short time of their relationships, their own emotional immaturity, or a general lack of readiness. Answers such as "I don't want a child yet / for the time being" were also included in the category if the respondents made it clear that the situation is temporary and can change still.

The third category includes the responses of 19% of persons who justified lack of children with their own psychosexual orientation (e.g. "I'm gay/lesbian", "I am homosexual, I am in a homosexual relationship"). Usually such brief statements were not expanded. Arguments pointing out the biologically determined impossibility of having children were mentioned quite often, usually in a comic way (e.g. "We keep trying but so far neither of us has managed to get pregnant ;) "). A number of respondents stressed that the fact had a decisive influence on their decisions concerning parenthood ("I want to have children with my partner but it is biologically impossible", "If I could have children with my partner, I certainly would").

Other respondents claimed that they never had any sexual contacts with the opposite sex and they did not even consider such a possibility (e.g. "I am 100% homosexual, I've never made love to a woman", "Because I don't have sex with guys", "I am not interested in the opposite sex or procreation in such a relationship").

16% of the respondents justified their situation with objective issues: lack of financial security, uncertain situation (e.g. unemployment, conflicts in the relationship, fam-

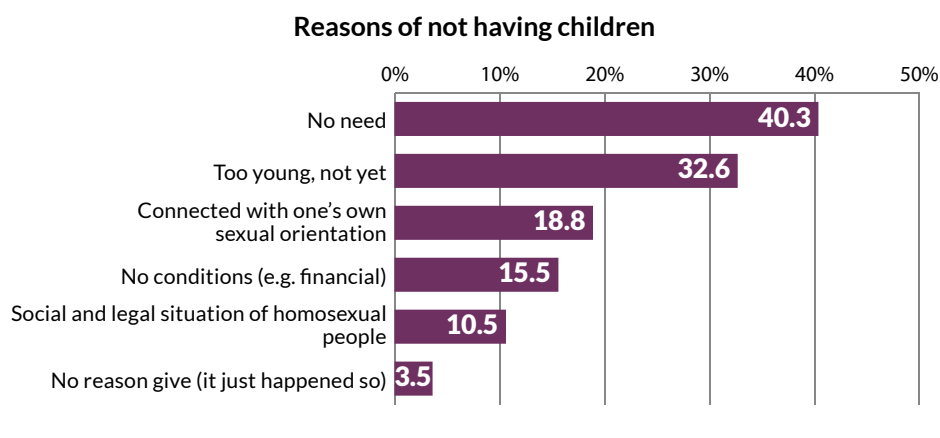
ily issues), lack of proper conditions to raise a child (e.g. lack of apartment), or lack of time. Health issues which made it difficult or impossible to have children (e.g. serious chronic illness, infertility) were also included in this category.

Another category resulted from the legal and social situation of LGBT people in Poland. Two issues dominated this category: the first was lack of legal possibility for a same-sex couple to adopt a child, and the second one concentrated on intolerance and discrimination (e.g. “I’d be afraid that my child would be discriminated against by the society in which we live because of our ‘non-standard family model’”). 11% of respondents were included in this category.

The last category included all of the respondents who could not provide a definite reason (answers such as “I don’t know”, “it just happened so”), or gave very general answers which could not be included in any of the above categories (e.g. “because I couldn’t”, “I decided against it even though I wanted it so badly”). 4% of the sample responded this way.

The fact that as many as 30% of the respondents do not want to have children because non-heterosexual relationships cannot have children as such (19%) or due to intolerance and discrimination (11%) seems to confirm the strength of the conservative discourse. The discourse stresses the fact that the only way for same-sex couples to have children is adoption (i.e. they cannot have biological children), which is illegal in Poland, and that raising a child in such a family would be harmful for the child. The respondents seem to make their decision more or less consciously, influenced by the fear of raising children in such an environment, and they do not see any chances of finding a solution in Poland.

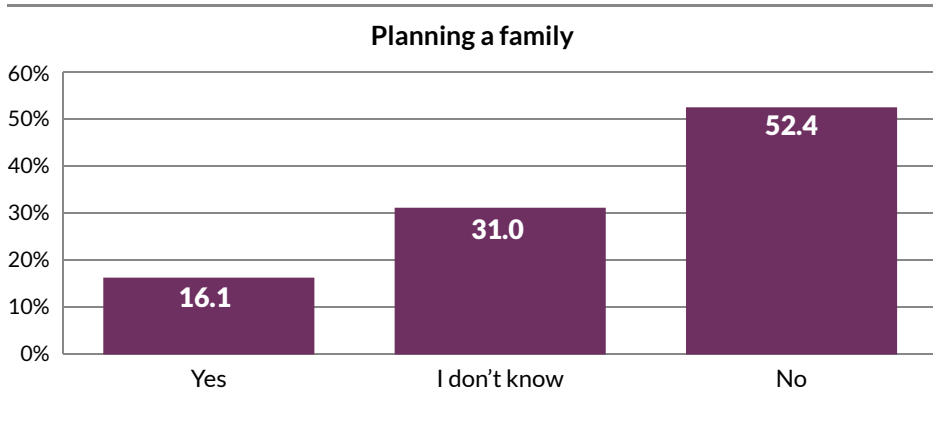
**Chart 94. Why don't you have children? Open question (n=2147)**



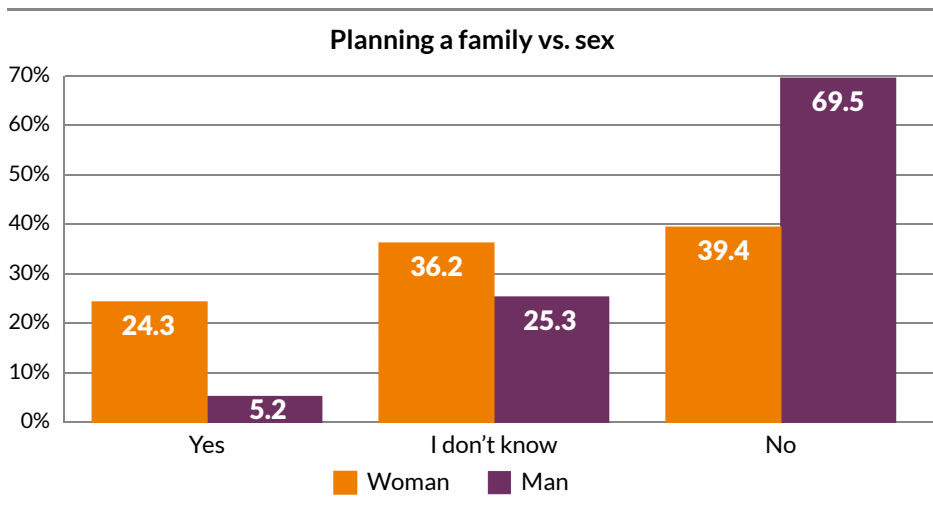
Over half of the respondents (52%) did not intend to have children within the coming 5 years, and approximately one in three (31%) did not know whether they were ever to make such a decision. 16% of the respondents wanted to have children soon:

women much more often than men (24% vs. 5%). It is quite comprehensible that due to limitations connected with procreation younger respondents were more likely to plan children. In the 18-25 age bracket 42% of respondents answered “I don’t intend to have children” while in the 41-50 age bracket it was 80%.

**Chart 95. Do you intend to have children with your partner in the coming 5 years? (n=2849)**



**Chart 96. Planning a family vs. sex (n=2849)**

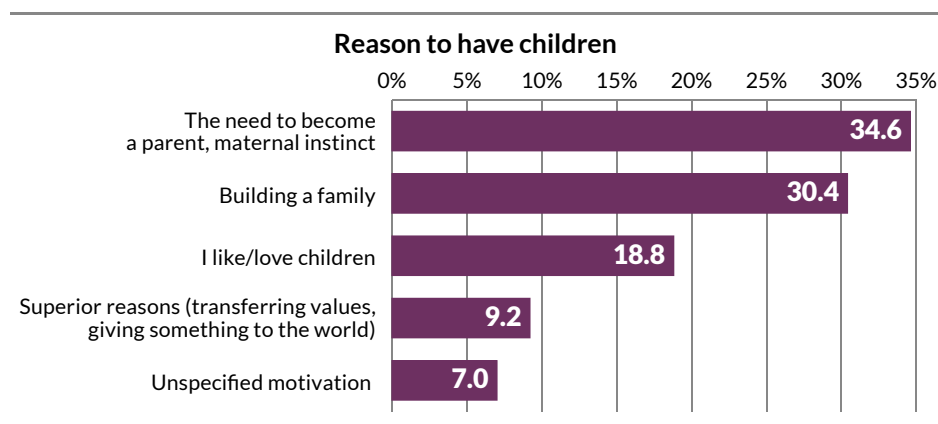


12% of respondents answered the open question concerning the reasons why they would like to have children. 35% of the responses concentrated on motives that stressed the clearly felt need to have children. The category included responses connected with the natural, in view of the respondents, biological and emotional need to pass down

one's genes, maternal instinct, and the influence of hormones, as well as the process of human development, the need to find fulfilment in motherhood or fatherhood, self-realisation, and making dreams come true. The category included answers such as "I have this inner need to have children", "because regardless of my orientation I still have feminine instincts", "to experience full realisation in all the aspects of humanity and give others something from me", "I feel and think that I will be a good mom", "it is a natural sequence of events for me", and "I want to find fulfilment".

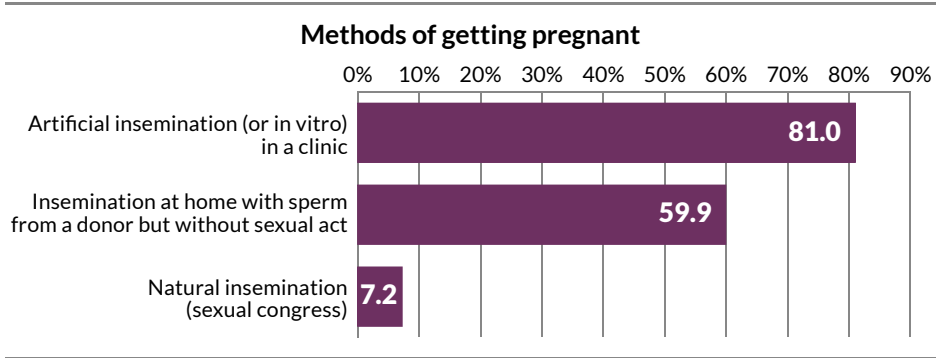
The second, comparably large (30%) category included the responses that indicated the willingness to create a complete family and deepen the relationship. The respondents wrote e.g. "a child would complement our relationship", "I love my girlfriend and I want to have a family", or "because 2+1=family". The third largest category (19%) included answers directed at the child, the relation between a parent and a child. The respondents spoke about providing the child with care, its education and parental care, e.g. "to ensure it has a home and safety", "to support another human being in development", "I would like to bring up a good, interesting man", "I know I can give a lot of love and warmth to some baby and offer it a happy childhood", and "for me a child is the greatest miracle of the world, a creature that must be loved unconditionally, against all odds". This category also included the answers of respondents who indicated as their motives joy, happiness, and pleasure derived from having a child, or referred to their own feelings towards children. The respondents wrote e.g. "because I love children", "children give me joy", and "out of love". Answers referring to the meaning of life, values, and inheritance that may be bequeathed to a child (9%) formed another category. There were responses such as e.g. "we have a lot of values to pass on" and "each should leave a part of oneself behind". The last, smallest category (7%) contained the answers from respondents for whom the reason to have children was for their company to fight off loneliness and their support in old age, e.g. "so as not be lonely in the old age", "I don't want to live alone", or another unspecified need.

**Chart 97. Why do you want to have children? Open question. Only the respondents who claimed they wanted children (n=382)**



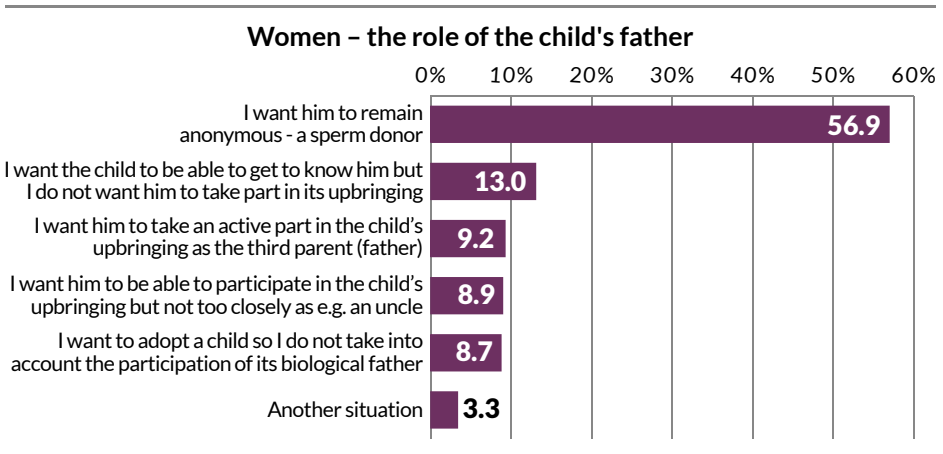
Women who intended to have children were also asked what method of getting pregnant they considered. Most of them would opt for an alternative insemination in a specialist clinic (81%) or insemination at home but without the active participation of a man (60%). Only 7% would consider sexual congress with a man in order to get pregnant.

**Chart 98. What methods of getting pregnant do you consider with your partner? Only women who stated the intent to have children (n=352)**



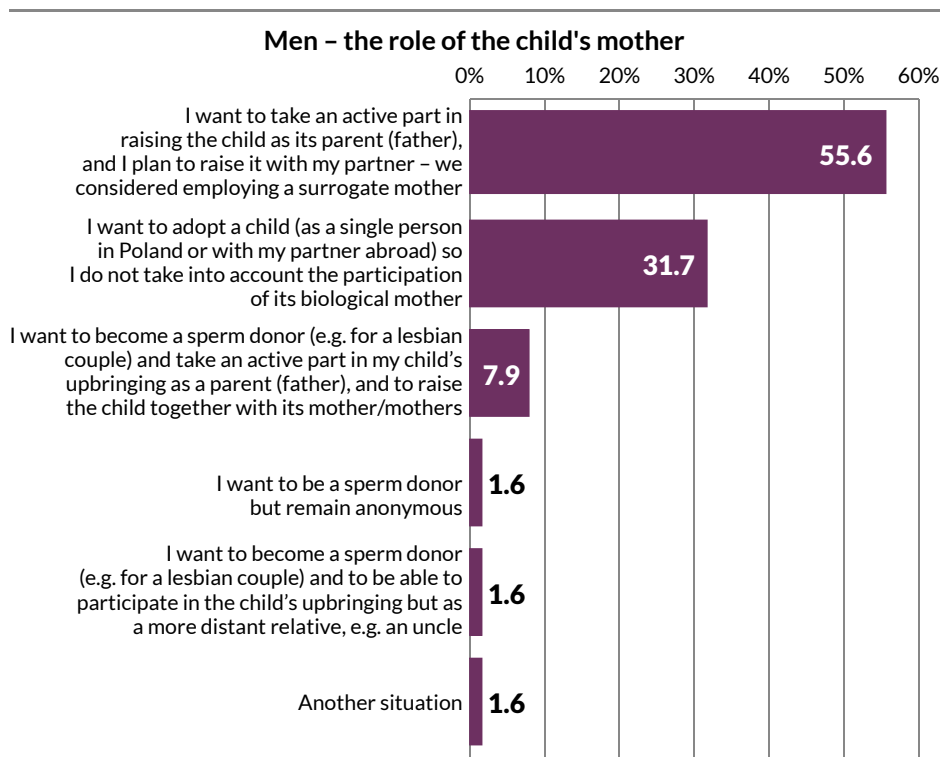
Most women would be rather against the biological father of the child/sperm donor participating in the raising of the child and the family life of the couple. More than half (57%) would like the father to remain anonymous, and another 13% would agree to let the father get to know the child but should not participate in its upbringing. 18% of women would be willing to raise the child together with the biological father, treated as a father or as an uncle. 9% of women considered adoption.

**Chart 99. How do you see the role of the person who will be the biological father of your and your partner's child? Only women who intend to have children (n=392)**



A similar tendency towards exclusivity in parenthood was revealed among men. The same percentage of men as women (57%) would like to raise a child with their partners, and 32% considered adoption. 8% of men would like to raise the child together with its mother/mothers (as a parent), and a mere 2% would accept a limited contact with the child (as an uncle). The same number of respondents would like to be an anonymous sperm donor.

**Chart 100. How would you like to become a parent and how do you see the role of the biological mother? Only men who intend to have children (n=63)**



The study also included a question concerning values that would be important in raising a child. The question was addressed to all of the respondents, not only those who declared they raised children.<sup>19</sup> The question was taken from the European Values Study (GESIS Data Archive, 2008).

Tolerance and respect for others were the first, they were chosen by as many 92% of respondents. Second place was sense of responsibility (80%) and diligence came third (58%). Good manners were the fourth (62%), imagination the fifth (49%), religiousness sixth (3%), and obedience (6%) proved the least important.

<sup>19</sup> The question was also included in the study by CBOS in 2009.



Some of the values were preferred more often by women than by men: tolerance, imagination, firmness, perseverance, and altruism. However, diligence and frugality were more important for men than for women.

In the study by CBOS from 2009 on a representative sample of Poles, the most important value for the respondents was also tolerance and respect for others (81%). Diligence was second (77%), and sense of responsibility was in the third (important for 69% of the respondents). Just as in the present sample good manners were the fourth (45%), and firmness, perseverance were fifth (33%) with independence at the same level (33%). Altruism (14%), obedience (16%), and imagination (19%) turned out to be the least important. Religiousness was the fourth from the end with 29%, a little less than frugality (30%).

Due to very significant differences in the level of education, age, and place of residence between the present sample and the representative sample, the results are difficult to compare. However, the differences between the place of imagination, altruism, and religiousness in the respective hierarchies are quite remarkable.

**Chart 101. Here is a list of qualities that should be encouraged in children at home. Which of them do you consider especially important? You can choose up to 5 qualities (n=2841)**

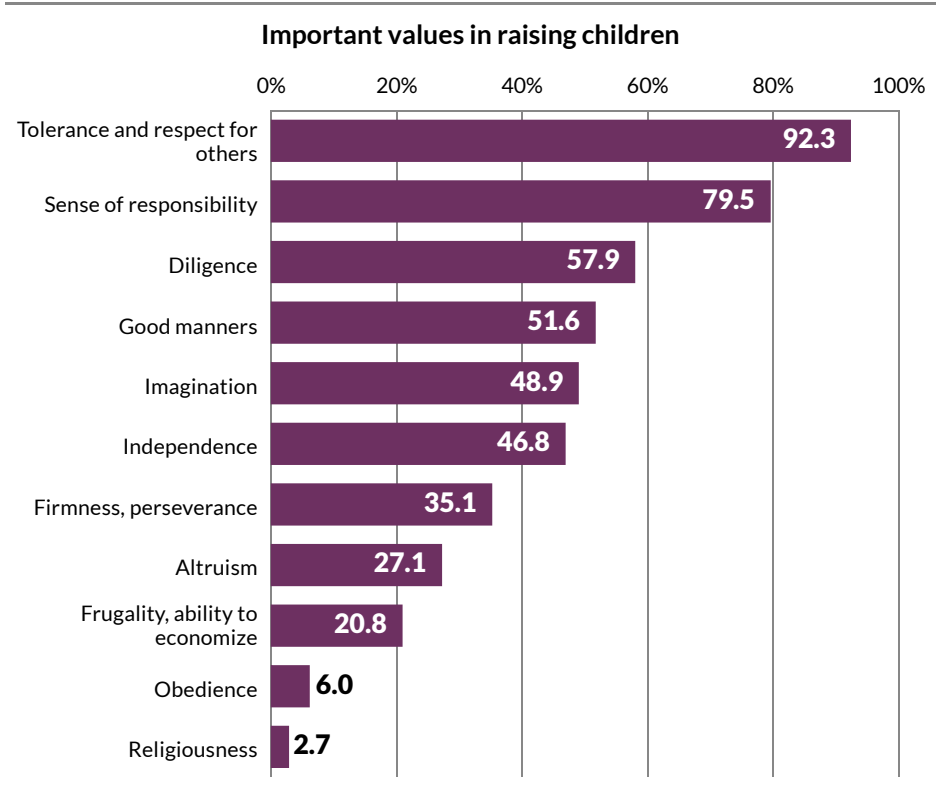
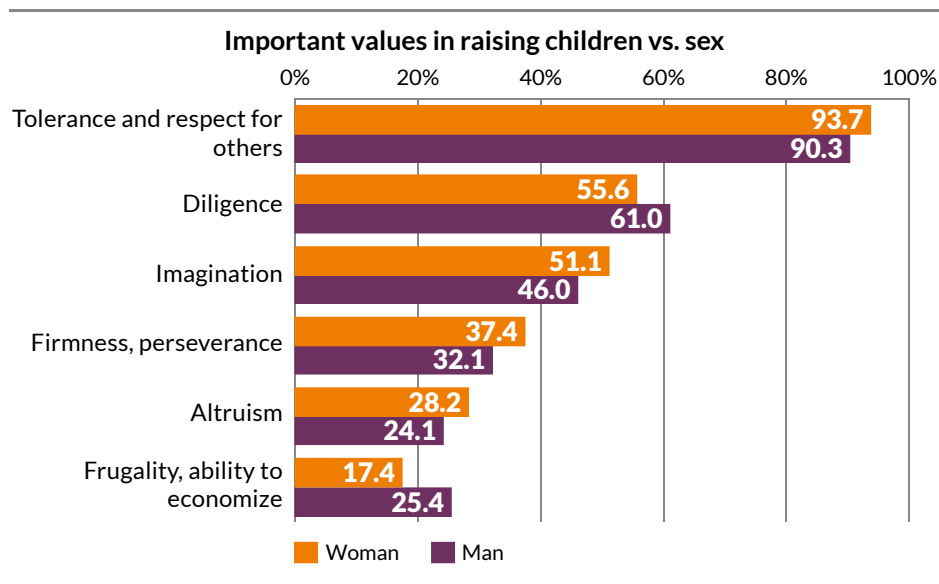


Chart 102. Important values in raising children vs. sex (n=2841)



The majority of the values were listed regardless of whether the respondent was a parent or not. Respondents with children were less likely to choose imagination. Mothers opted for independence and responsibility, while fathers opted for diligence.

### Parenthood of non-heterosexual persons

The final part of the study consisted of questions addressed only to persons who raised children. Among the respondents 9% claimed they had children; there were twice as many women in this group (11.7%) as men (4.6%)

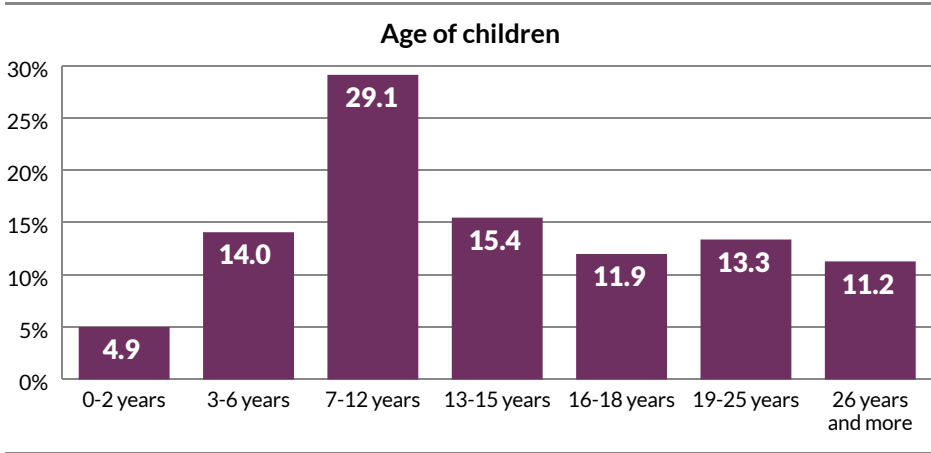
All of the respondents who declared they had children received an additional questionnaire in which they were asked for a description of their situation. Each individual questionnaire was used to present the situation of one child. We decided to exclude one respondent from the analysis who was an anonymous sperm donor and, consequently, could not provide any information concerning his children. He could only assume such children had been born. The obtained data describe 350 cases of children of non-heterosexual persons.

A number of these cases (62) concerned description of the same children from the points of view of both parents. In order to present their situation, bearing in mind the fact that in a number of cases the questionnaires were submitted by both parents and in a number of cases only by one parent, a weighing procedure such as the one described above was applied to get average results.

The sample included children aged 1 to 41. Half of the children were 13 years old or less. One in five was less than 6 years old, 45% of the children were either in the

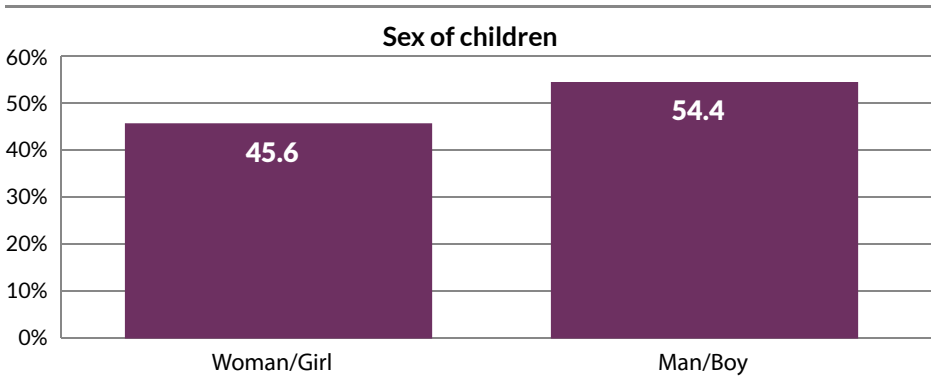
elementary school or in junior high school (up to 15 years), 12% were in the 16-18 age bracket, and one in four was over 18.

**Chart 103. The age of the respondent's children (n=285)**



Among the respondent's children there were slightly more boys (54%) than girls (45%). This ratio is identical to that of the general population, which is also characterised by a bigger number of boys.

**Chart 104. The sex of the respondents' children (n=283)**

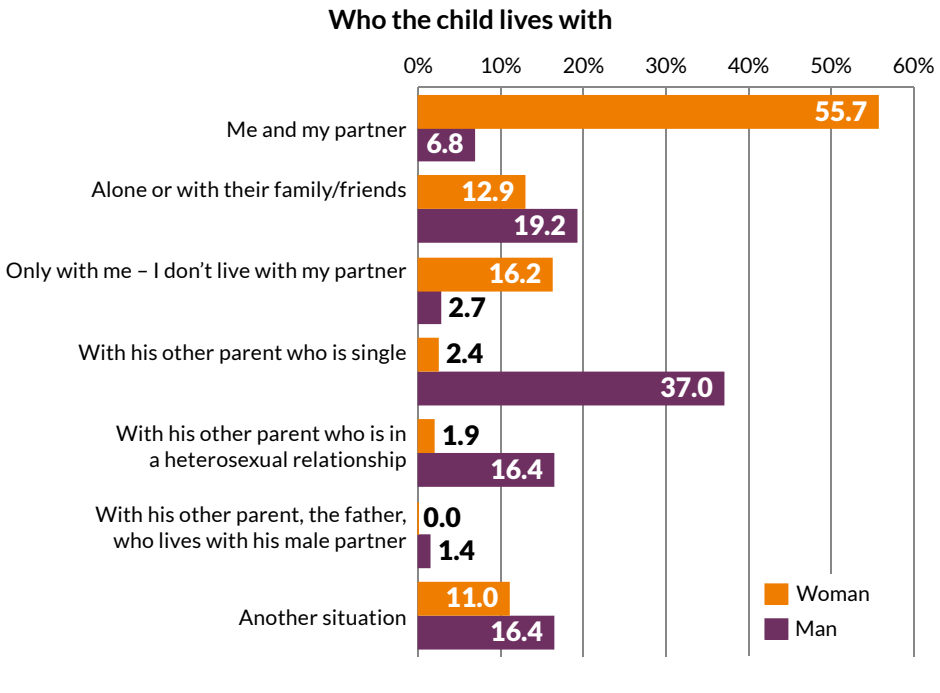


In order to get to know the situation of children raised by the respondents they were asked who the child lived with. There were significant differences resulting from the sex of the respondents and consequently the results will be discussed for each of the sexes separately.

Children most often lived with their mother and her female partner (58%). It happened much more seldom (7% of responses of men) that they lived with their father and his male partner. Part of the children lived with a single parent: 16% with their mother who was a respondent in our study and 3% with their father respondent. In the case of children of homosexual men, 37% of children lived only with their mothers or (16%) with their mothers and their current male partners. Parenthood of homosexual men and women is, consequently, very different: women are more likely to raise their children while men are more often fathers at a distance.

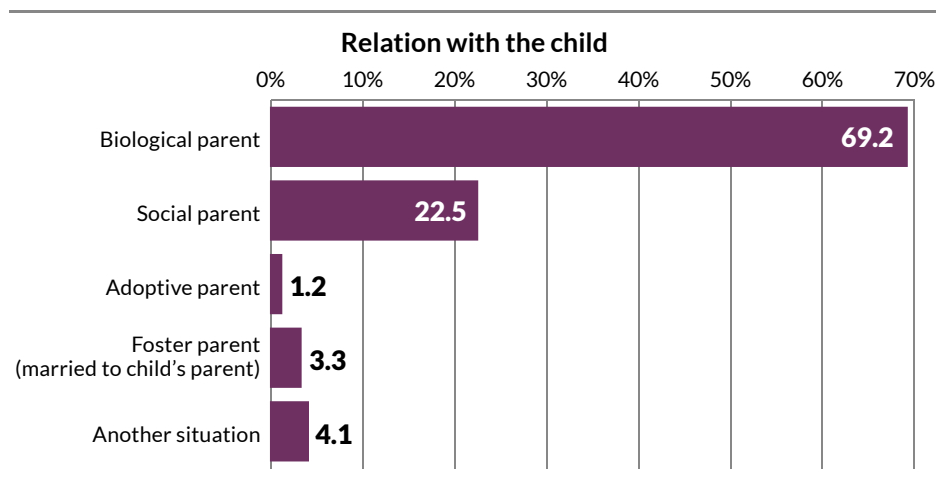
Almost 15% of the children lived on their own (they were of age) or with their own family. In 13% of cases the selected answer was “another situation”. We have indicated six categories on the basis of these 38 responses. 16 responses were included in the category “the child lives with its biological parent who is my partner but without me (e.g. “with parents, I live alone”, “it lives with my partner and her parents”); these answers were given from the point of view of a social parent. 13 responses in total were included in the second category, “the child lives with both its biological parents of whom the respondent is one (e.g. “I live with my wife all the time”, “with me and my husband””. The third category included 7 responses describing various systems according to which the child lives in turns with each of the parents (e.g. “more or less half a week with me, and half a week with its father who lives on his own”, “alternate care”).

Chart 105. Who does the child live with – results divided according to sex (n=284)



The next question dealt with the relation between the parent and the child, i.e. whether the respondent was the biological parent, the social parent, etc. A similar chart is presented above. Consequently, the results are the same. They are, however, presented from the point of view of the children (i.e. for how many children in the sample the respondent is a biological parent, social parent, etc.). For 73% of children the respondent was a biological parent and for 18% he/she was a social parent. Five respondents (1.6%) were married to the other parent of the child. Ten respondents were adoptive parents.

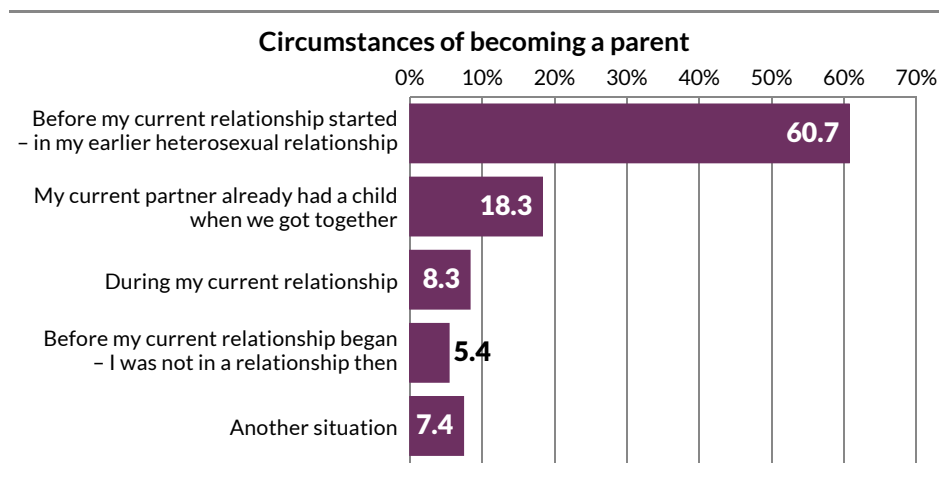
**Chart 106. What kind of parent are you to your child? (n=287)**



Fourteen responses were included in the category “another situation”. Most of the cases dealt with such a relation with a child in which the respondent who was in a relationship with the child’s parent formed an emotional bond with the child and yet for some reason refused to call oneself a social parent. The relation was described in a variety of ways: “uncle”, “child of my friend who raises it on her own”, “I am her mamma’s colleague and the coolest pal”, “informal adoption”, or “I treat it as my own child”. Six responses presented situations in which the respondent was not a parent but an actual uncle, sister, or godmother. As the term “social parent” is not very popular in Polish while social parents often fulfil a variety of roles in the lives of the children they raise, we decided to include these responses in the present analysis.

The next question dealt with the circumstances in which the respondents became parents. The biggest number of children whose situation was described in the study (61%) had been conceived in an earlier heterosexual relationship. In 18% of cases the respondents met a person who already had a child (the percentage is consistent with that of social parents in the sample); it happened more often in the case of women raising children on their own than men. 8% of children were conceived during the current same-sex relationship. 5% were conceived when their parents were not in a relationship, and 7% in other circumstances.

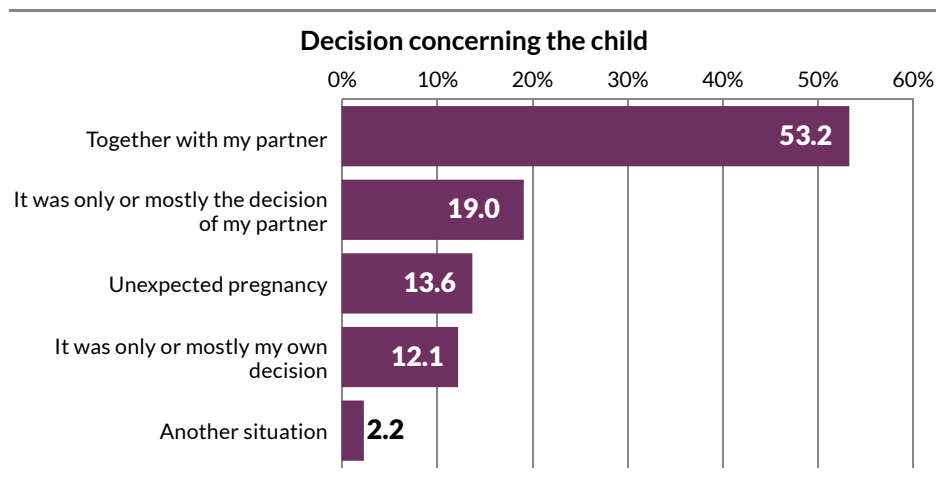
Chart 107. When did you become a parent? (n=279)



The study included 23 cases of situations different from the above. The category “adopted child” proved the largest with 8 responses such as “I decided to bring up a child as foster family”, “I raised an orphan”, and “my mother died so I adopted my brother”. 4 responses belonged to yet another category: the child had been conceived before the current relationship started but in another same-sex couple, e.g. “the decision to have a child was made in my former homosexual relationship”, “it was conceived during an earlier same-sex relationship”. Two responses mentioned children raised in current heterosexual relationship as the respondents were still married. Other cases could not be included in any categories, e.g. “I was asked”, “family problems”, “it was my choice”.

It happens that the decision to have a child is not taken jointly. Consequently, the respondents were asked who made the decision in their case. There was no statistically significant difference in the responses due to sex. In more than half of all cases (53%) the decision was made together with current or former partner and in almost one case out of five (19%) the decision depended not on the respondent but on the partner. In 14% the pregnancy was not planned and in 12% it was the exclusive decision of the respondent. In the remaining 2% (6 responses) the described circumstance differed from the options in the questionnaire, e.g. “after my mother’s death I became my brother’s legal guardian”, “the pregnancy was socially conditioned, it was the seemly thing to do”, or “my husband forced me to have sex”.

Chart 108. Who made the decision to have a baby? (n=277)

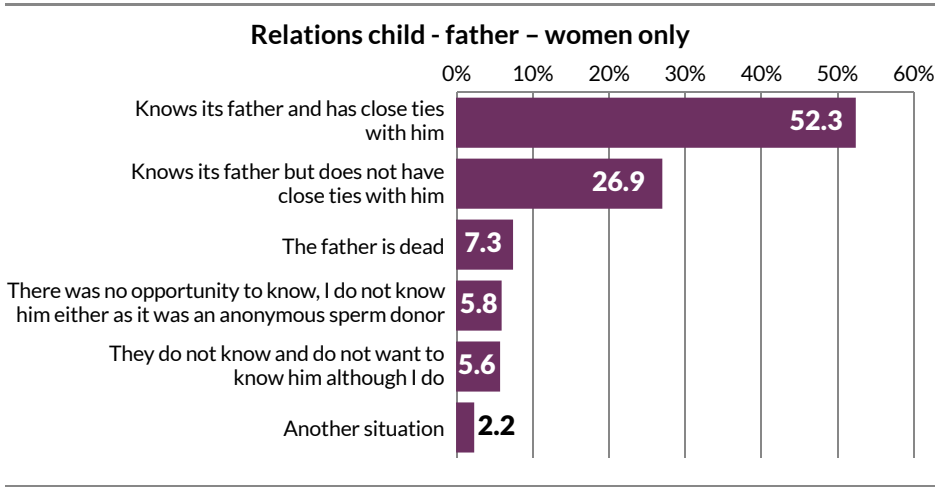


Parents were also asked about the child's relation with its other biological parent. As the question was phrased differently depending on the sex of the respondents, we present the results separately for women and men. The biggest number responded that their children knew their other biological parents and had close relations with them: among the children of the female respondents it was over a half (52%), and in the case of male respondents almost three quarters (72%). Over a quarter of the children of the female respondents (27%) knew their fathers but did not have close emotional ties with them. 11% of mothers responded that their children did not know their fathers as they were anonymous sperm donors or the mother did not want the child to stay in touch with them. In the case of 7% of children the father had died.

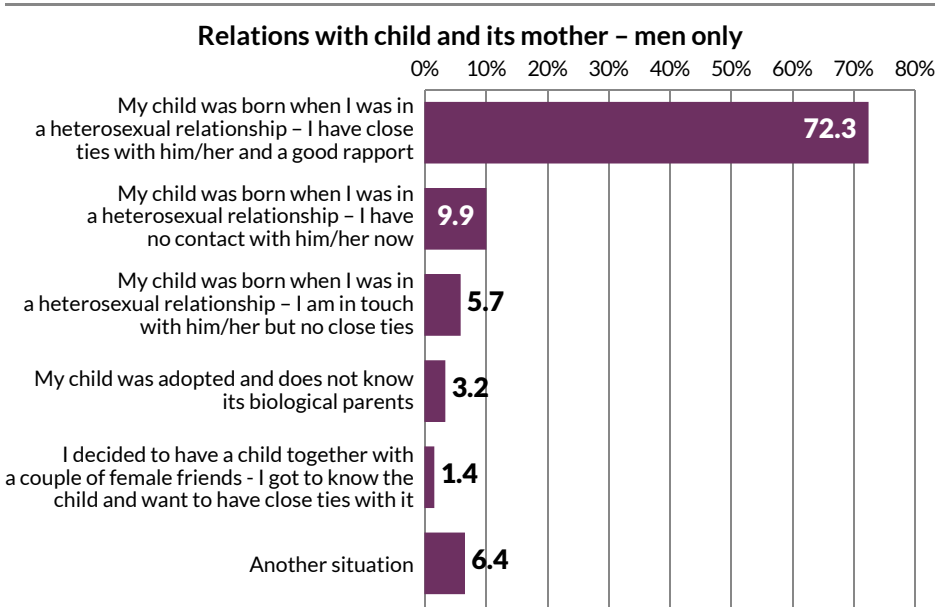
As far as male respondents were concerned, 10% of children did not stay in touch with them in any way and in another 6% of cases the father did not have any close emotional relations with their children. In the case of 3% of children the fathers answered that their child was adopted and it had not known its biological parents. One father decided to have a child together with a female couple, got to know his child, and wanted to have close emotional relations with it.

A fairly small number of respondents chose the option "another situation". Three persons indicated that they were not exactly parents but rather parent's partners. Two persons responded that the child to whom they felt emotionally attached was not their biological child (e.g. nephew). Four women wrote that although their children did not know their biological father when the study was made, it would have such an opportunity in the future if it wished so (at least to know the father's identity). In two cases the respondents were transgender persons, now women, who were the biological parents of their children. In other responses the character of "another situation" was not clarified.

**Chart 109. What are the relations of your child and its biological father? Only women (n=207)**



**Chart 110. What are your relations with your child and its biological mother? Only men (n=71)**



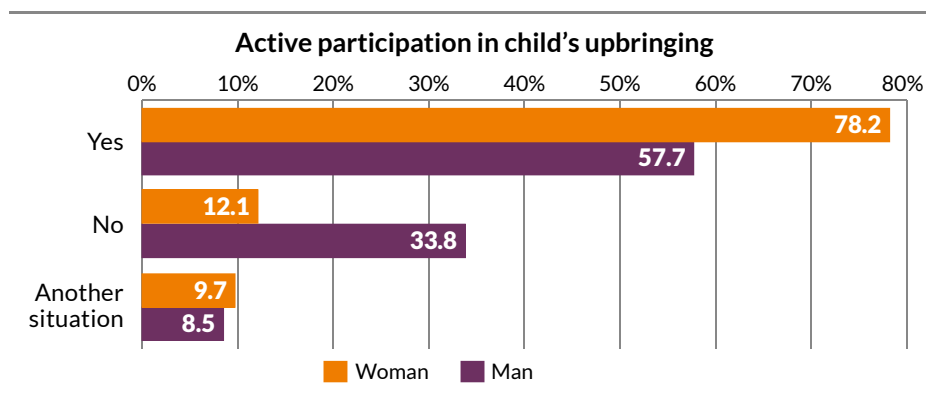
The following question concerned the respondent’s active participation in the child’s upbringing. It served as a kind of filter: only the persons involved in the process of



upbringing were asked the more detailed questions concerning the child (i.e. those who answered “yes” or “another situation”).

Over three out of four (78%) female respondents and 58% of male respondents participated in the upbringing of their children. In 9% of cases the respondents chose “another situation”. There were 26 responses that were divided into two categories. The bigger part (15 responses) was included in the category “the child is an adult”, e.g. “it is difficult to speak of upbringing any more, my daughter is an adult person”, “my child is adult and independent”. The second category described situations in which the respondent had little influence on their child’s upbringing. It included 11 responses, such as “she lives over 400km from us”, “from time to time”, and “in a way”.

**Chart 111. Do you take an active part in your child’s upbringing? (total n=276)**



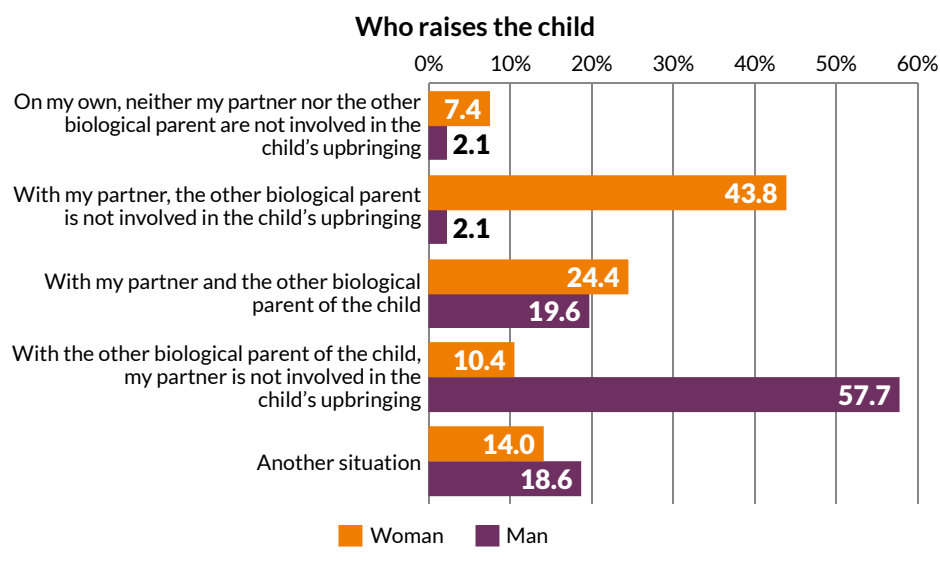
The respondents were asked who they raised the child with. Parenthood of women and men differed greatly. More than two out of three women (68%) raised their children with the active participation of their partner, a social mother; in 44% of cases without any participation of the biological father, and in 24% of cases with the biological father. 7% of children were raised only by their mothers. In the cases of 10% of children, although their mothers were in a same-sex relationship, they raised their children only with their fathers.

The parenthood of the male respondents looked completely different. In more than one in two cases (58%) their children were brought up by the respondent with the child’s mother, without the participation of his male partner, and in 20% of cases by three parents: the father, the mother, and the father’s male partner.

A few men declared that they raised the child on their own or with their partner, without any participation of its biological mother. The remaining 37 respondents described situations other than those proposed in the questionnaire. We divided them into five categories of which the most numerous was “the child is an adult”, including 22 responses such as e.g. “I don’t bring my child up as he is an adult, independent man”, “my daughter lives on her own in London”, and “my child is adult and independent”. Five responses were included in the category “the child is brought up mainly by my partner”,

e.g. “together with a friend although she makes the most important decision concerning our son”. The category “respondent has a very limited influence, the child is brought up mainly by its biological parent” included four responses, e.g. “the child is brought up mainly by its mother”. Three responses made up the category “the child is raised by somebody else”, such as “the child is brought by its grandparents”. Two responses were included in the category “the child is brought up by the respondent together with its family of origin” such as “the parents that I live with”. The remaining respondents did not justify their choice of “another situation” in any way.

**Chart 112. Who do you raise your child with? (women n=183, men n=49)**



Due to various situations of the children of the respondents, the latter were asked how they shared the duties connected with raising the child in their care. The question was adapted from the studies of Anna Titkow on unpaid women labour (Titkow, Duch-Krzyszczek, Budrowska, 2004).<sup>20</sup> The persons looking after the children do the majority of the activities together, especially taking walks, providing entertainment, playing with, and baby-sitting. Contacts with teachers in kindergarten/school were an exception; this duty always fell on one person, the biological parent. It was the same in case of any issues connected with the health of the child, and the biological parent was also more involved in issues connected with this sphere. These two spheres were the most often dealt with by the biological parent, probably because of their ability of legal representation of the child in contacts with educational or health care institutions as well as because of the difficulties involved in revealing the character of the family in contacts with such institutions.

<sup>20</sup> An entry concerning maintaining discipline was added.

**Table 8. Who in your relationship is responsible for the following matters when the child is in your care? Data calculated for couples (n=60). Answers “does not apply” were excluded**

	I	Partner	Together
Baby-sitting	23.5%	2.4%	74.1%
Dressing, bath etc.	27.1%	8.6%	64.3%
Organising care for the child	27.8%	7.5%	64.7%
Doing homework with the child	31.4%	15.5%	53.0%
Taking the child to kindergarten, school, extracurricular activities	30.5%	12.4%	57.1%
Walks with the child	15.3%	3.1%	81.6%
Entertainment (movies, events for children)	14.7%	4.0%	81.3%
Parties for the child’s friends	25.2%	8.6%	66.3%
Playing, spending time together, reading aloud	12.5%	0.8%	86.7%
Child's health (contact with doctor in cases of illness, regular check-up, care during illness)	39.1%	13.3%	47.7%
Contact with teachers in kindergarten/school	41.9%	20.1%	38.0%
Discipline, duties, punishment	30.9%	10.6%	58.4%

The results of the study were compared to those from Titkow’s study. The value of the comparison is quite limited because the authors of Titkow’s study worked on a representative sample of Poles. Furthermore, in a heterosexual couple it is easier to indicate differences in the division of house chores or child raising when responses of men and women are compared. In a same-sex couple there is no such possibility. The amount of “together” responses is still quite significant. The huge differences are visible at first glance. The respondents in Titkow’s study, both female and male, agreed that the vast majority of duties connected with child raising belonged to women. In 80-90% of cases it was the woman who tended to the children’s needs. Only such duties as taking the child to kindergarten/school or organising entertainment such as movies or visits to a fun-fair were left less often (approx. 60-70%) left to women.

However, if we compare the number of duties performed together we can see a fundamental difference between same-sex relationships and relationships in the representative sample of Poles studied by Titkow. The option “together” in all the questions in Titkow’s study did not exceed 5%, while in the present study in most questions it varies from 60% to 80%. Such a major discrepancy shows that there is a basic difference in the way same-sex relationships function: they are much more equal, and based on equal

participation of both partners in their duties. It is so even though the children raised by same-sex couples in the present sample were in most cases born in earlier relationships. Consequently, the social parent is not related to the child or legally obliged to take care of it. Furthermore, no amount of care could give the social parents any parental rights. In the study *Nieodplatna praca kobiet* the division of duties concerned both biological parents.

Another significant issue connected with raising a child is financial support. The questionnaire included a set of questions concerning who finances a number of expenses. Table 9 presents a detailed division of these expenses. The difference between the expenses of the biological parent and the social parent was calculated (it was possible only in the case of female respondents as there were only three social parents among male respondents). Generally speaking, biological and social mothers declared a similar level of financial involvement in the support of the child, although the costs paid by the biological mothers were a little higher. A significant difference was noticeable only in two groups of expenses: school utensils and extracurricular activities. The tendency described above is clearly visible here. Social mothers, to a great extent and voluntarily, supported the child financially although they have no parental rights. The child cannot inherit from her as it can from its biological parents; as a legal stranger they would have to pay a very high inheritance tax.

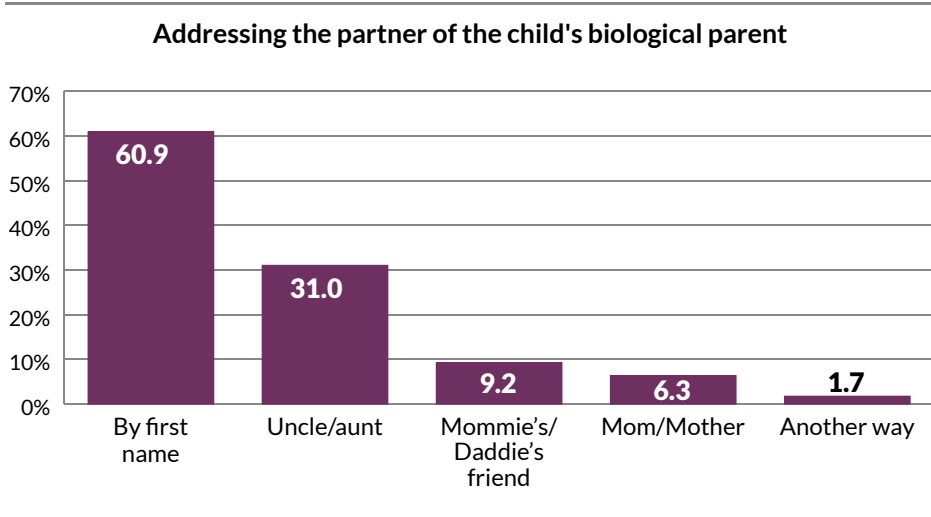
**Table 9. Who is responsible for covering the cost of the following expenses? If the costs are covered together check all the persons who cover them. The percentage does not add up to 100 as the respondents could choose more than one answer (n=223)**

	I	Partner	Biolog. father /mother	Another person	Does not apply
Fees at kindergarten/school	58.5%	34.1%	28.9%	1.6%	22.9%
Daily expenses (food, clothes)	74.7%	46.0%	30.5%	2.9%	12.1%
School/kindergarten utensils, (books, pencils etc.)	66.8%	39.7%	22.9%	3.1%	18.8%
Holidays	72.4%	45.3%	28.7%	4.9%	14.6%
Extracurricular activities	60.5%	36.8%	21.7%	2.7%	23.5%
Baby-sitter	26.7%	15.2%	3.6%	2.2%	61.2%
Drugs, health care	71.1%	44.8%	25.2%	2.2%	11.4%

Another issue analysed in the study was the way children addressed their social parents. In this question the responses of biological parents were analysed and the question was how their children addressed their parents' same-sex partners. Most often (61% of cases) children addressed their social parent by their first name. Almost one in three (31%) chose "aunt" or "uncle", 9% "mom's friend" or "dad's friend", and 6% „mom/

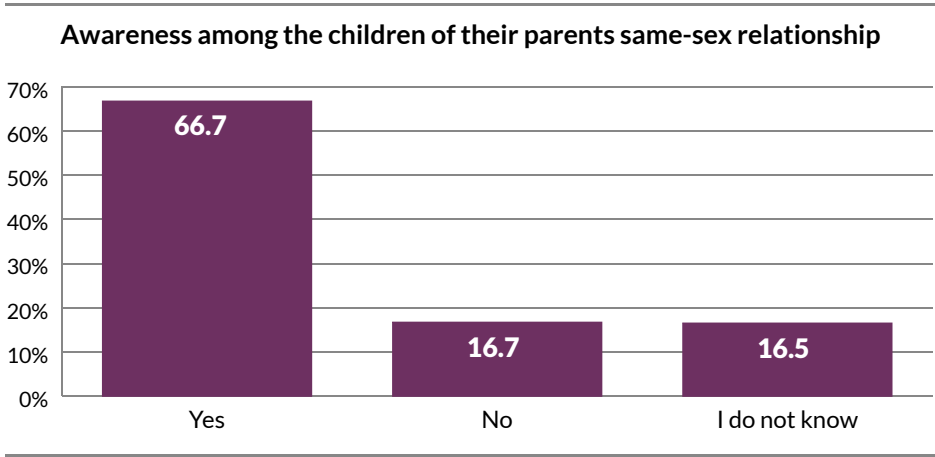
mother” (this type of answer only in case of female partners). The respondents who chose the option “another way” had in mind the official form of address “sir” (2 cases) or the status of another family member, “sister” (1 case). The difference caused by sex was significant. Children were more likely to address their father’s partner by his first name or call him “uncle” or “dad’s friend”. They would not, however, call him “dad”.

**Chart 113. What does your child call your partner when others are present? Only the answers of biological parents were included. Consequently, the sample was not weighted. The answer “does not apply” was excluded. The percentage does not add up to 100 as the respondents could choose more than one answer (n=174)**



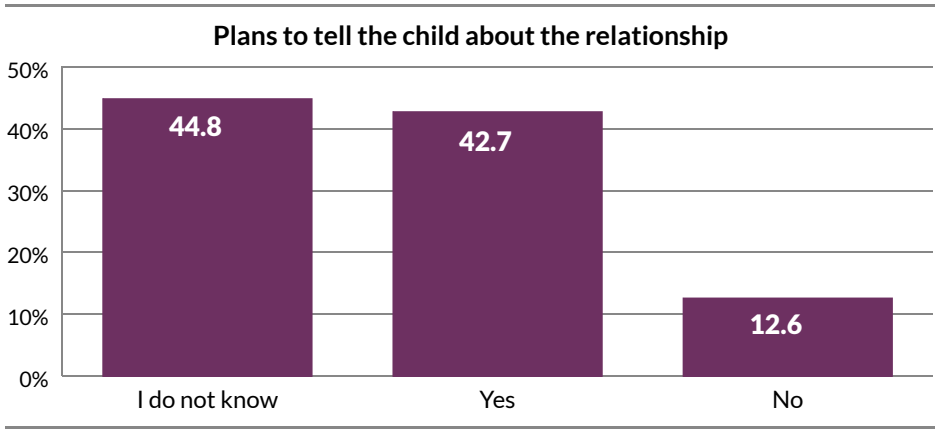
An important issue for children brought up by non-heterosexual persons was their knowledge concerning the fact that their mother or father was in a same-sex relationship. Consequently, the respondents were asked whether their children were aware of the fact. Two children out of three (67%) knew that their parent/s were in a same-sex relationship. In 17% of cases the respondents were not certain whether the child understood the character of their relationship. In the opinion of the respondents the same percentage of children did not know that their parent/s were in a non-heterosexual relationship. No differences due to sex of the respondents were recorded.

**Chart 114. Does your child know/understand that you and your partner are in a relationship? Responses “does not apply” were excluded (n=215)**



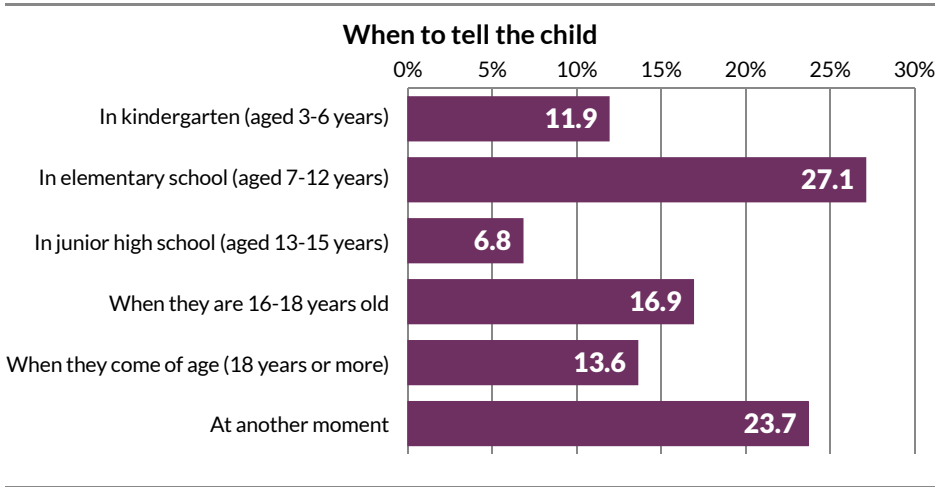
The persons who responded “no” or “I do not know” in the previous question were asked whether they intended to tell the child about their relationship. Only 13% of the respondents claimed that they had no such plans, 45% were not sure, and 43% claimed that they wanted to tell the child about their relationship.

**Chart 115. Do you intend to tell your child that you and your partner are in a relationship? Only the respondents who declared in previous question that their child did not know about their relationship or were not certain if it did (n=72)**



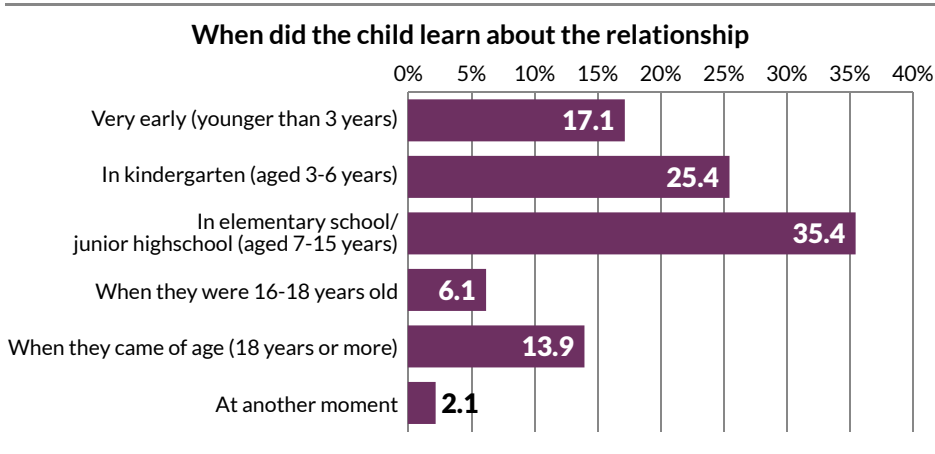
People who responded that they wanted their child to know the nature of the relationship were asked when they intended to initiate such a discussion. However, due to the very low number of respondents, the results are inconclusive.

**Chart 116. When do you intend to tell your child about your relationship? Attention! Very small sample (n=30)**



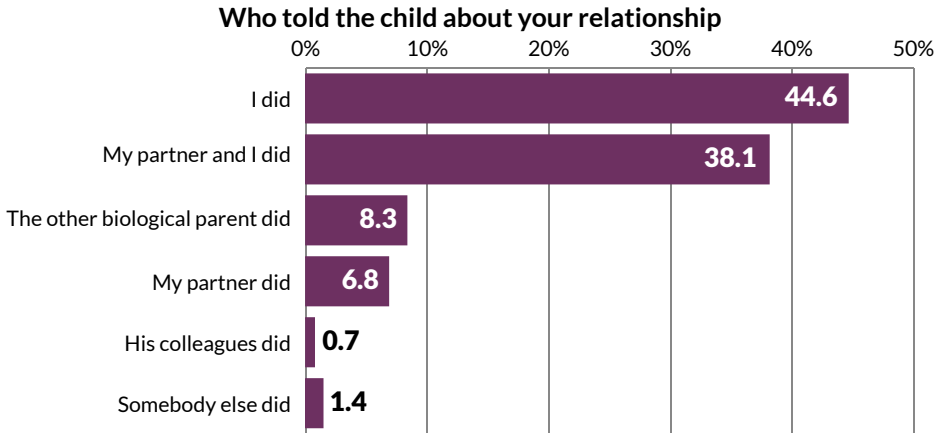
The respondents who claimed that their children knew about the character of their relationship were asked when they learned and from whom. In the majority of cases it happened when the children were in elementary/junior high school or kindergarten (61%). 17% of the children knew even earlier, before they turned 3. One in five learned of it late, after they turned 16. Only 4 respondents chose a response which was not included in the questionnaire. These answers referred to the length of the relationship, e.g. “when we decided to move in together”.

**Chart 117. When did your child learn about the specific situation of your relationship? (n=140)**

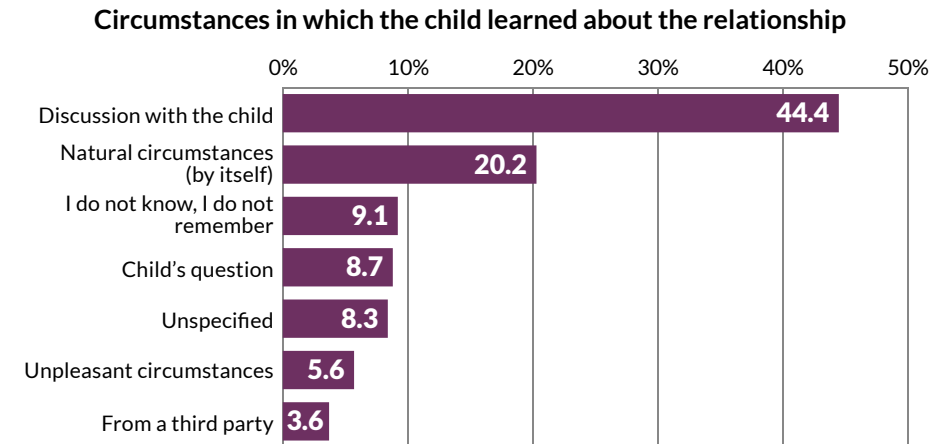


Children most often learned about their parents’ relationships from the respondents themselves (45%) or from both the respondent and their partner (38%). In 8% of cases the biological parent was the source of information. Only one person stated that their child learned from the gossip of colleagues. A grandmother was once listed as “somebody else”, and in another case the comment was “it’s hard to tell”.

**Chart 118. Who told your child that you and your partner were in a relationship? (n=139)**



**Chart 119. How did your child get to know that you and your partner were in a relationship? Describe the circumstances. Open question (n=126)**

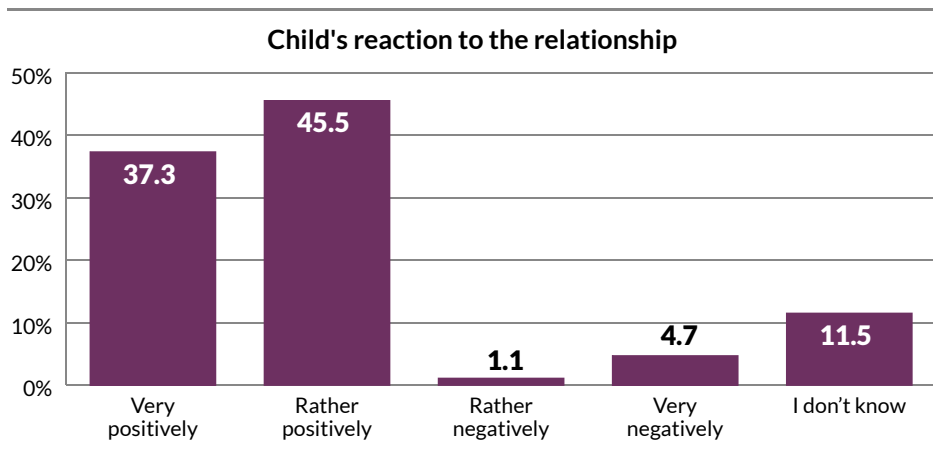




In order to get to know the circumstances in which the child learn about their parent/s relationship, the respondents were asked an additional open question. We received 163 responses which were divided into seven categories. The biggest number of responses (44%) belonged to the category of a discussion of the respondent with the child, e.g. “during a talk we had together with our child”, “I told him during an intimate talk about happiness”, “a talk during a walk”. One response in five (20%) was included in the category “natural circumstances”, e.g. the respondents did not attempt to hide their orientation and their feelings towards their partners, and the children worked everything out, e.g. “he/she guessed it all and called both of us “mom” as we bring him/her up together and my partner treats him/her as her own child”, “she guessed it, there was no need for special discussions”, “we just don’t hide”. 9% of the responses were included in the category “child’s question”, e.g. “my daughter came with her boyfriend and asked her biological mother what the situation was like”, “actually, she asked on her own accord during holidays”. The same number of responses was included in the category “I do not know or I do not remember”, and precisely these answers were given. Almost exactly the same number of responses was rather unpecific, e.g. “during holidays” and “after the divorce”. 6% of responses formed the category of unpleasant circumstances, e.g. “I don’t want to go back to that, it was a difficult period in my life”, “the circumstances were quite dramatic”. The last category – child learned from the third party – included 4% of responses such as “I guess it was the granny who told my brother” and “he learned it from his father”.

The following question concerned the child’s reaction to the news that its parent/s are in a non-heterosexual relationship. In the vast majority of cases the reaction was very positive or rather positive (83%), and in almost 12% of cases the respondents knew nothing about it. Children reacted negatively in only 6% of cases. Children were a little more likely to react positively to the relationships of their mothers than to those of their fathers.

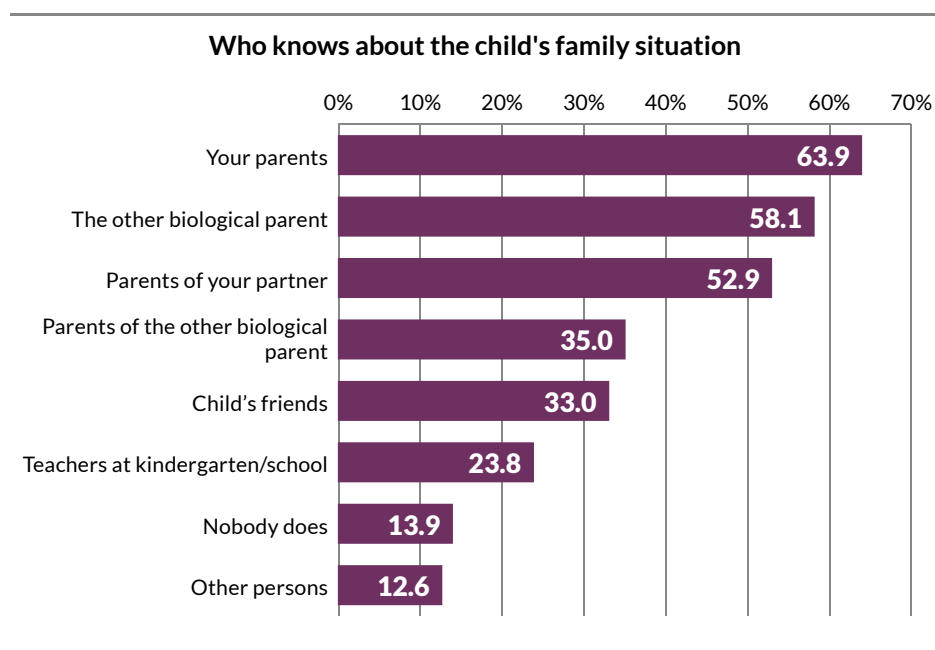
**Chart 120. How did your child react when it learned that you and your partner were in a relationship? (n=140)**



At the end of the sequence of questions concerning the children's awareness of their parents' relationships, the respondents were asked who in the child's environment knew about its family situation. Parents of the respondent knew the most often (64%), the other biological parent knew in 58% of cases, and the partner's parents in 53% of cases. Only 24% of teachers knew about the situation of children in kindergarten or elementary schools. In approximately one case in three the people knowing about the child's situation included the parents of the biological mother or father. In the case of 14% of children nobody knew about their family situation.

13% of responses included "other people". Eight responses indicated that more distant relatives were also aware of the situation. 23 responses quoted friends, acquaintances, and neighbours, i.e. people from the immediate environment. In three cases parents of the child's colleagues knew about its family. Two respondents mentioned specialists who examined the child (psychologist, GP). Three respondents stated that "everybody" knew the child's family situation.

**Chart 121. Who in your environment knows about your child's family situation? Value for "teachers at kindergarten/school" given for children aged 3 to 19. The percentage does not add up to 100 as the respondents could choose more than one answer (n=223)**

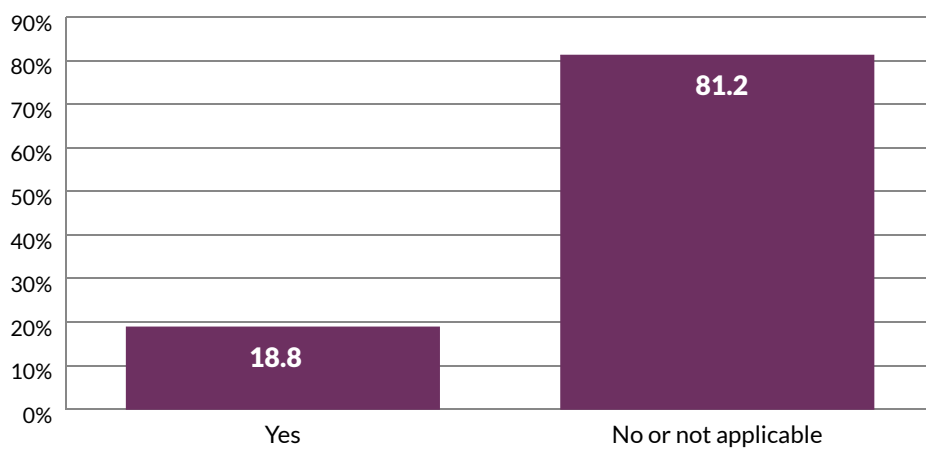


Families of choice in Poland do not have any legal possibility of securing the contacts of a social parent with a child. Formally, the former is a stranger and he/she cannot make any decisions concerning the child. The respondents were asked whether they had ever tried to arrange the issue of contacts of the child with the social parent in case of

the death of the biological parent or separation. In the case of 19% of children parents attempted to secure such contacts in the future. There was no difference due to the sex of the respondents. The respondents who answered in the affirmative were consequently asked to describe the solutions they found.

**Chart 122. Have you and your partner ever tried to deal with the issue of securing the contacts of the social parent and the child in case of the death of the biological parent or your separation? The term “social parent” means a person who participates in raising their partner’s children although they are not his biological or adopted children (n=234)**

**Securing contacts of social parent with child**



There were 42 responses to the open question. In 18 cases the respondents signed some form of a written agreement in which the social parent was authorised to take care of their partner’s child: deed or last will (e.g. “We are thinking about my partner including in her last will a clause in which I would be the person to adopt our child”). In 6 cases the respondents presented their plans which would result in the social partner obtaining parental rights within the existing legal system. These plans included the future marriage of the social and biological parents or adoption. In 8 cases the respondents declared they had a plan but it had not been formalised. A number of respondents quoted informal agreements with other relatives, such as “My Mother has all the information and instructions, I know she will do exactly as we want”. In 7 cases the respondents believed that keeping good relations with the child was more important than formal issues (e.g. “We shall stay in touch against all odds. The bond with another person is the most important thing”). Finally, three persons admitted that the matter was complicated and at the time of the study they did not know how to solve it.

Another issue included in the study was the frequency of the child’s contacts with various members of its family. Due to the structure of the question and utterly different

parental experiences of women and men, we decided to present the situation of children as described by father-respondents separately from that described by mothers. After the division it turned out, however, that there are not enough social parents in the sample, so the responses of biological parents were presented instead.

Children whose mothers lived in same-sex relationships in most cases had daily contact with their mothers’ partners, as well as regular contact with their biological fathers. The latter contact was rare or there was no such contact in only 17% of cases. The children would meet their maternal grandparents more often than their paternal grandparents or parents of their mother’s partner.

Children whose father lived in a non-heterosexual relationship were in a completely different situation. They had daily contact with their biological mothers (90%) and their maternal grandparents more often than with the paternal grandparents. They had little contact with their fathers’ partners; 24% of them did not have such contact at all. The majority of them (74%) had no contact with the parents of their fathers’ partners.

**Table 10. How often does your child get in touch with the following people? Only the responses of biological mothers. Responses “does not apply” were excluded (n=60)**

	With its biological father	With your parents	With its father’s parents	With your partner	With your partner’s parents
Every day or almost every day	13.6%	15.6%	4.1%	67.6%	5.7%
1-2 times a week	25.4%	20.3%	12.2%	8.1%	7.5%
2-3 times a week	6.8%	25.0%	8.2%	8.1%	17.0%
Once a month	27.3%	10.9%	14.3%	1.4%	11.3%
Once every few months	5.1%	23.4%	32.7%	4.1%	30.2%
Once a year or more rarely	5.1%	3.1%	10.2%	4.1%	5.7%
They do not keep in touch at all	11.8%	1.6%	18.4%	6.8%	22.6%

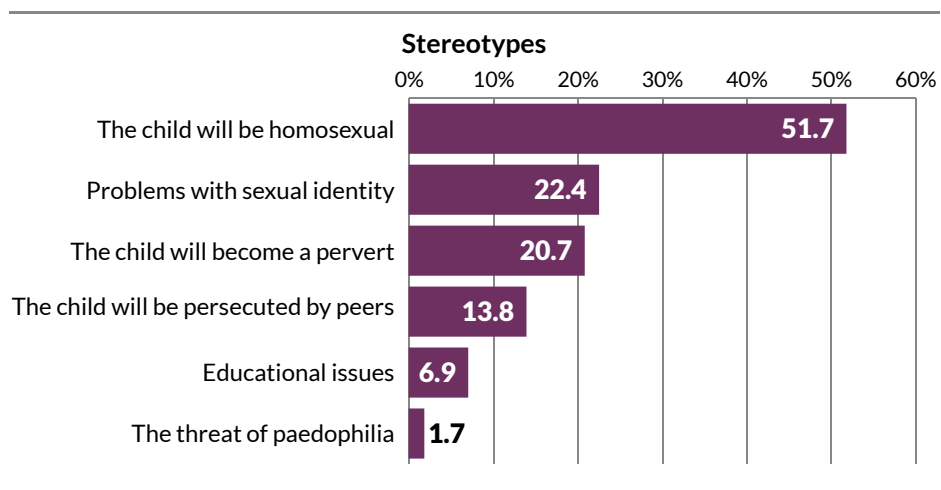
**Table 11. How often does your child get in touch with the following people? Only the responses of biological fathers. Responses “does not apply” were excluded. Very small sample (n=24)**

	With its biological mother	With your parents	With its mother's parents	With your partner	With your partner's parents
Every day or almost every day	89.7%	13.0%	30.8%	12.0%	0.0%
1-2 times a week	3.4%	17.4%	7.7%	16.0%	0.0%
2-3 times a week	3.4%	21.7%	23.1%	4.0%	5.3%
Once a month	3.4%	8.7%	7.7%	16.0%	0.0%
Once every few months	0.0%	8.7%	23.1%	24.0%	10.5%
Once a year or more rarely	0.0%	26.1%	7.9%	4.0%	10.5%
They do not keep in touch at all	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	24.0%	73.7%

The respondents were also asked whether they encountered stereotypes concerning raising a child by a same-sex couple, and how they coped with these stereotypes. We received 161 responses to this open question. A smaller part of them dealt with the stereotypes and a bigger part only with the way of coping with them. Actually, very few respondents specified the stereotypes they had encountered. The biggest number of respondents (52%) stated that they were told that their child would be homosexual because it was going to inherit their sexual orientation (e.g. “I heard that a girl brought up by two women would not be able to form a normal relationship with a man and it was very probable that she would end up as a lesbian”). The second stereotypical opinion mentioned by the respondents was that lack of a gender model for a child could result in problems with sexual identity (e.g. “I was told many a time that my son would be “feminine”, he absolutely had to stay in touch with a man, the father”). The respondents heard equally often the opinions that their child was going to be “perverted”, “twisted”, or “disturbed” (e.g. “We often hear that we are going to raise our children to be perverts as they think we are sick or perverted ourselves”, “I heard that a same-sex family would harm the child mentally”). The respondents also encountered the opinion that due to lack of a “real” family their child might have educational problems (e.g. “I will have to face educational issues”) or that it would be persecuted by its peers and the rest of the

society (e.g. “First of all it was the fear of exclusion and humiliation from the peers in kindergarten and elementary school”).

**Chart 123. There are many stereotypes concerning the possible influence of same-sex parents on a child. What such opinions have you encountered? How do you cope with them while raising your child? Open question. The percentage does not add up to 100 as the respondents could quote a number of stereotypes (n=58)**



The most common way of dealing with stereotypes was paying no attention to them, the way chosen by 43% of the respondents (e.g. “I am not interested in stereotypes, I don’t talk about such things”, “I don’t listen to other people’s opinions when they contradict my way of thinking”). Another strategy applied in the case of 30% of children was to raise them with the sense that their family was a happy one and deserved respect because of that (e.g. “I try to teach my child that the most important thing is to live in accordance with oneself”, “I believe that a child brought up in a happy family, knowing its value, respected and respecting others, will be happy”). In the case of 16% of children their parents confronted stereotypes directly: they joined the debates, explained, and quoted scientific data that contradict stereotypes.

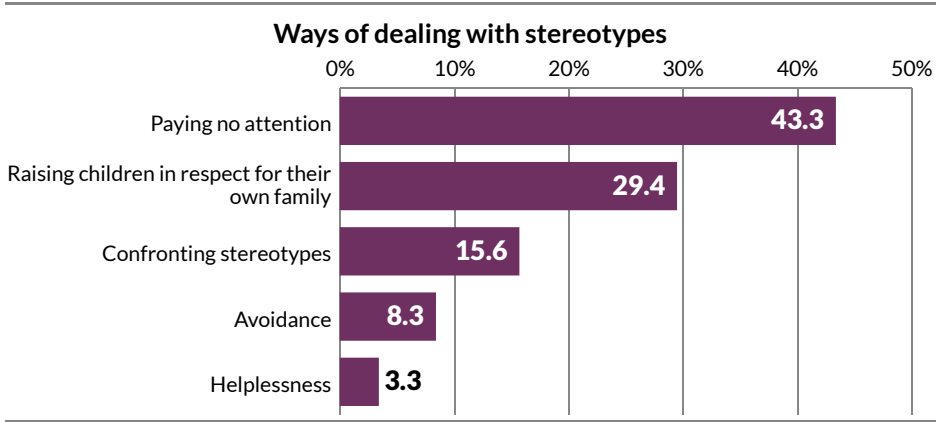
According to scientific studies that I found they are merely stereotypes and I hope we will manage to convince others. Our son is only a few months old and I’ve had an opportunity to explain it only a couple of times so far.

It happens very often that people claim that if the family is gay, the child will be gay. I always tell them that my family is (was) homophobic and they ended up with a lesbian daughter.

A small number of the respondents (8%) avoided people who expressed their stereotypical opinions (e.g. “If somebody openly expresses negative opinions I cut the person

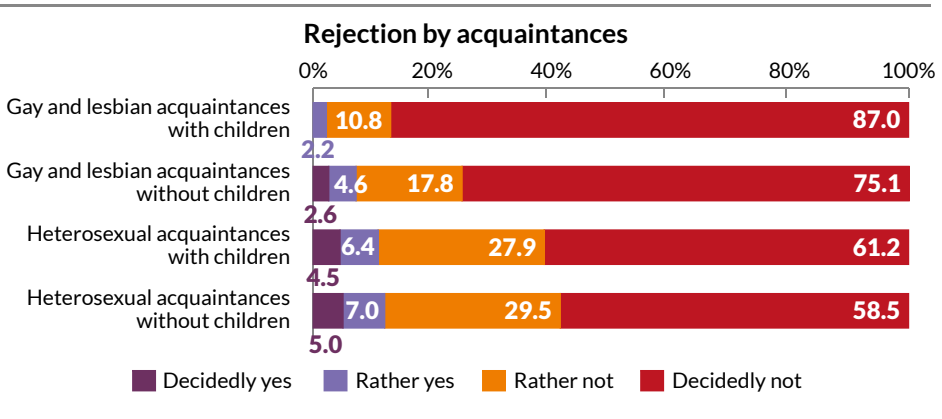
off”). Finally, 3% of respondents confessed their helplessness in the matter (e.g. I just don’t know what to do”).

**Chart 124. Ways of dealing with stereotypes. Open question (n=90)**



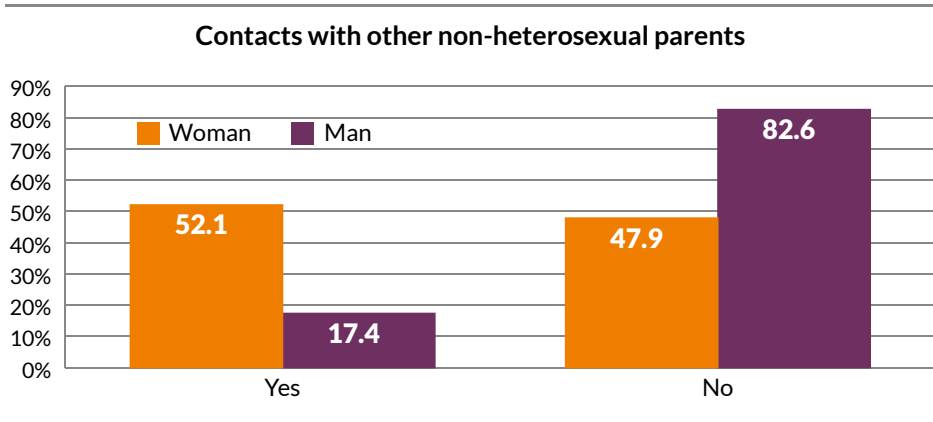
The respondents were also asked whether the fact of having children resulted in social exclusion or reluctance among their acquaintances. Generally speaking, the respondents did not have any such experiences. A small number of them experienced reluctance among their heterosexual acquaintances (in the case of approx. 11% of children), regardless of whether the acquaintances did or did not have children of their own. Even less often the respondents felt rejected by their childless homosexual acquaintances (7%), and they sporadically (2%) experienced rejection from their gay or lesbian acquaintances who had children of their own.

**Chart 125. Have you been rejected by your acquaintances because you raised a child? (n=174)**



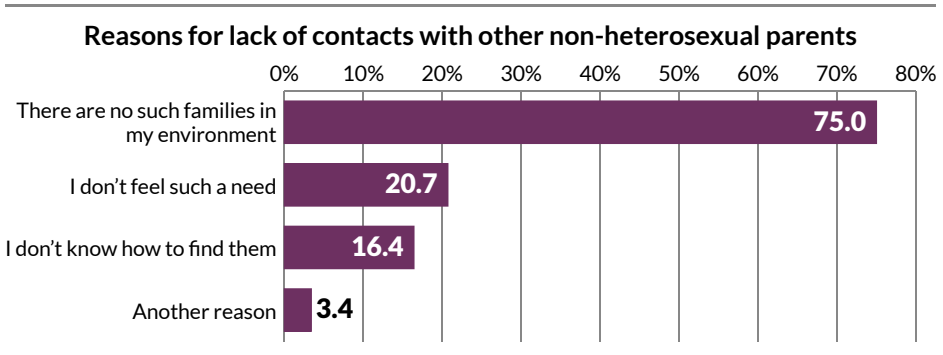
The final questions were concerned with the contacts of the respondents with other non-heterosexual families. Due to significant differences caused by the sex of the respondents, the results are presented separately for male and female respondents. Women were much more likely to keep in touch with other non-heterosexual parents than men. Among fathers only 17% claimed they had such contacts while the figure for mothers was 52%.

**Chart 126. Do you keep in touch with other parents who are non-heterosexual and raise their children? (n=213)**



The respondents were asked why they did not maintain such contacts. There were no differences between the responses of men and women. Three out of four (75%) stated that the lack of such families in their immediate environment was the biggest obstacle, one in five (21%) that they did not feel any such need, and 16% did not know how to look for such families. A small group pointed out to lack of time and failure of such attempts in the past.

**Chart 127. Why are you not in touch with other parents in same-sex relationships? Only the respondents who indicated they had no such contacts (n=116)**

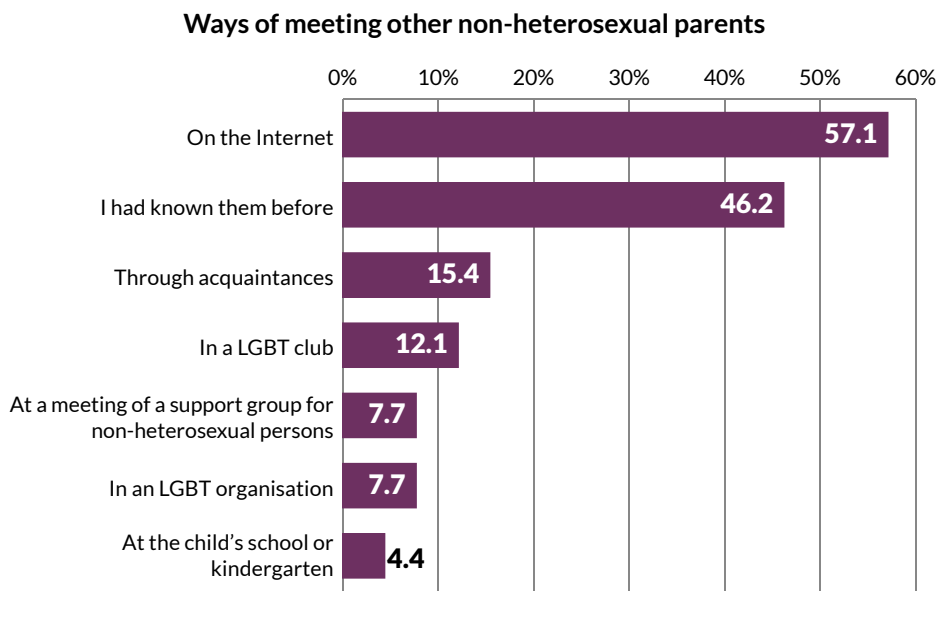




The last question dealt with the ways in which the respondents had met other non-heterosexual parents raising children. The Internet was the most common place of contact (57%), quite a few of the respondents had formerly known such families (46%), 27% met through activities in the LGBT environment, and 15% through common acquaintances.

The responses to these questions clearly reflect the need among non-heterosexual persons to stay in touch with other similar families, although it is not always possible. There is no organisation in Poland uniting such families, giving them the opportunity to speak freely about their problems and share their experience. Furthermore, these families are forced to hide their existence to a smaller or bigger extent which makes the possibility of a chance encounter quite small. Thus it is hardly surprising that the Internet is the most common place of getting to know other non-heterosexual parents, just as it is in the case of finding a partner.

**Chart 128. How did you get to know other parents who are gays or lesbians and raise children? Only the respondents who indicated they knew other non-heterosexual parents (n=91)**



# SUMMARY OF RESULTS



## RELATIONSHIPS

The presented results of our study show the variety of non-heterosexual families and the ways they function in the Polish social reality. They draw a picture of the relationships that form “families of choice”.

Our respondents were mainly people aged 18 to 40. The average length of their relationships was 4 years; the longest lasting relationship was 42 years. For most of the respondents their current relationship was not the first in their lives. Almost half of them (46%) had been in one or two same-sex relationships before. Almost two out of three respondents (61%) had formerly been in relationships with members of the opposite sex, women more often than men.

Same-sex couples meet most often on the Internet. More than half of the respondents met thanks to ads, profiles, or chats on LGBT portals. It is hardly surprising as the Internet plays an ever greater role in everybody’s life; it is there that a large part of social life takes place. In the case of non-heterosexual persons, especially those living in small towns, the Internet serves as a tool that offers much greater possibilities of encountering prospective partners.

Finding an appropriate partner is extremely important for the respondents: it is something of a guarantee of their future happiness. 91% of the respondents living in relationships considered themselves happy. Comparison of the results of the present study with the results of *Diagnoza Społeczna* and the introductory results of the study on homosexual singles proves that non-heterosexual respondents living in relationships are much happier (91%) than non-heterosexual singles (50%) and heterosexual people (both in relationships and single – 88%).

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (97%) consider their partners and parents their closest family. It is to their partners that they turn to in sickness, when they need financial or practical support, and when they seek understanding and solace. The respondents declared that they were very happy in their relationships. Over 90% were happy with various aspects of their relationships, e.g. the level of understanding from their partners, sharing duties, satisfying needs, expressing emotions, the way of taking decisions together, relations with the family of origin, and the way of spending spare time.

In view of these results it is hardly surprising that a successful relationship is the most cherished of values (78%), much higher on the list than health (51%) and friends (28%). For the respondents of *Diagnoza Społeczna*, a study comparable as far as the most important socio-demographic variables (sex, age, place of residence) are concerned, values such as children, work, and money proved far more important. Consequently, the results of our study indicate that non-heterosexual persons have a different hierarchy of values, probably largely influenced by their experience of social rejection. They attach a special value to their relations with partners and friends who offer a support network. In the case of persons raising children, the latter were also included as one of the most important values.

The belief that a successful relationship is the most important value in life combined with the respondents' satisfaction with their current relations is confirmed when we look closely at various aspects of the functioning of their relationships.

The majority of respondents (63%) lived together during the study in a single household or planned to move in together in the nearest future (93%). Most of the relationships were equal. The respondents believed that the best situation for a relationship was when both partners spent approximately the same time on their professional work and they both looked after their home to an equal degree (86%). Only 2.5% opted for the so called traditional model in which one partner works and the other stays at home. In a study prepared by CBOS on a representative sample of Poles, 46% of the respondents chose the equal model while the traditional model, a working husband and a housewife, was selected by 23% of respondents (CBOS, 2013a).

It is quite significant that the respondents adhere to the equal model of relationship in their everyday life as they shared their duties at work and at home equally. Three out of four respondents lived in relationships in which both partners worked, and only 10% of them declared that only one of the partners worked. In the case of house chores, over half of the respondents (51%) declared that they were done together. When we analysed them more closely we noticed that some of them, such as daily shopping, looking after pets, or cleaning up, are done together by approx. 70% of the respondents. Same-sex relationships proved much more egalitarian than heterosexual relationships. All chores were done more often by the two partners together rather than separately. In an average Polish couple from the study of CBOS (2013a) the situation was exactly the opposite: in the overwhelming majority of cases chores were done only by women. The present results confirm the findings of earlier Western studies (Kurdek, 1993; Dunne, 1999; Peplau, Spalding, 2000; Sullivan, 2004).

The respondents also declared satisfaction with other aspects of their relationships, e.g. the way of dividing income in the relationship (94%). There were significant differences between the results of the present study and a representative sample of Poles (Eurostat EU-SILC, 2010). More than one third (38%) of the non-heterosexual respondents stated that they treated all their incomes as common, while 66% of average Polish couples (Eurostat, 2010) treated their incomes as common property. This difference in attitude towards finances may be explained by the fact that same-sex couples do not have any possibility of formalising their relationships and consequently enjoy legal protection of common property.

The majority of respondents (89%) appraised their sex life highly. Furthermore, women assessed it more positively than men, although in studies on heterosexual persons (e.g. the studies of Zbigniew Izdebski) women were more likely to assess their sex life negatively. Same-sex relationships of women proved more monogamous (95%) than relationships of men (68%).

The respondents try to celebrate important holidays with their partners. The most popular holidays were birthdays and name days, celebrated by as many as 92% of the respondents. The second most often celebrated holidays (83%) were feasts connected with the relationship, such as anniversaries of the first meeting.

The most often quoted reason of conflicts and quarrels were trifles and minor issues (60%). The second most important were ill will, irritation, and stress (40%), followed by differences of opinion or views (39%). In the studies of CBOS - from which we took and modified the question - the sequence was different: money was the most important, difference of opinion or views came second, and trifles and minor issues were third. Violence related to conflicts was present in the same-sex relationships under scrutiny very rarely, only in a few percent of cases.

Most of the respondents did not have children (91%). However, 24% of women and 5% of men would like to have them in the foreseeable future. Women considered insemination in a fertility clinic (81%) or insemination at home but without the participation of a man (60%) the most often. They were not willing to accept the biological father or the sperm donor participating in the child's upbringing and the family life of their relationship. More than half (57%) would prefer the biological father to remain anonymous; another 13% would allow the child to get to know him, although they would prefer it if the father was not involved in its upbringing. Almost one in five women (18%) would be willing to raise the child with the biological father, treated as the father or as an uncle.

A similar tendency towards exclusivity was discovered among the male respondents. Over half of them (57%) would like to raise a child with their partner and one third (32%) considered adoption. 8% would like to bring up the child with its mother/s (as a parent), and only 2% would accept limited contact with the child (as an uncle). The same number of respondents would like to be anonymous sperm donors.

From the point of view of the respondents, the important values that they should share with their children were: tolerance and respect for other people (92%), sense of responsibility (80%), and diligence (58%). The least important were religiousness (3%) and obedience (6%). These results indicate yet again the influence of personal experience on the hierarchy of values as compared to that of a representative sample of Poles (CBOS, 2009), in which religiousness as a value important in the upbringing of children was included by almost one third of the respondents (29%).

Almost one in ten of our respondents (9%) had a child. Women were more likely to be parents (12%) than men (5%). They were much more involved in raising children. The child lived with its mother and her partner (58%) much more often than with the father (7%).

Data of 287 children were collected. Half of the children were below 13 years of age. In most families there was only one child; however, there were families with as many as four children.

The majority of the children (61%) were conceived in an earlier heterosexual relationship. 8% of children were conceived in a current same-sex relationship.

Parenthood of women and men differs greatly. The majority of children of the female respondents (68%) were raised with the active participation of the female partner (the social mother), in 44% without any participation of the biological father, and in the remaining 24% also with the participation of the biological father. Parenthood of the male respondents looked very much different: in 58% of cases the respondent raised his children with their mothers but without any participation of his male partner. In one case

out of five the child was raised by three parents: biological mother, the respondent, and his male partner.

The child usually knew its other biological parent and had close emotional ties with him/her; among the children of female respondents it was over half of the children (52%) and among the children of the male respondents almost three out of four (72%). Over a quarter (27%) of the children of female respondents knew their fathers but did not have close relations with them.

Children whose mothers lived in a same-sex relationship in most cases had quite regular contacts with their biological fathers; contacts were sporadic or non-existent in only 17% of cases. The children also maintained close and regular contacts with various other members of their families of origin. However, they were more likely to stay in touch with their maternal grandparents than the parental grandparents or parents of their mother's female partner.

These results also mirror the tendency demonstrated in earlier Western studies on lesbians, which proved that their children had better contact with the biological father than children of heterosexual women in new relationships (Tasker, Bigner, 2007). It was also found out that parents of social mothers found it more difficult to recognise such children as their grandparents, a fact that probably influenced the frequency of their contacts (Sullivan, 2004).

Children whose father lived in a same-sex relationship were in a completely different situation. They had daily contact with their biological mother (90%) and maternal grandparents. They had rather limited contact with their father's male partner; 24% had no such contact at all. The majority of them (74%) did not have any contact with the parents of their father's male partner.

The results of our study show that the children have contacts with various members of their families of origin (of both sexes) and that they usually also stay in touch with their other biological parent. Consequently, the accusation often repeated in Polish debates as an argument against same-sex couples raising children, that the children brought up by a same-sex couple do not have access to gender role models of the opposite sex is moot.

Children of same-sex couples were brought up in an atmosphere of openness. Two out three (67%) knew that their parent/s were in a same-sex relationship. Most of them learned of it directly from the parents. In the vast majority of cases (83%) children reacted positively to the news of their parents' relationship. In those cases in which the child did not know, the respondents intended to inform him/her of the fact. They waited for an appropriate moment. In most cases (61%) children addressed their social parents by their first names. Almost one in three (31%) chose "aunt" or "uncle", 9% opted for "mom's friend" or "dad's friend", and 6% for "mom/mother" (this form of address was used only in case of their parent's female partners). It is quite clear that there is no fixed Polish form of address for a social parent.

In over 50% of cases the parents of the respondent, the other biological parent, and the partner's parents knew about the child's family situation. In approximately one case in three the biological father's or mother's parents as well as the child's friends also knew. Only 24% of teachers in the children's kindergarten or school were aware of the

fact that their pupil was brought up by a same-sex couple. In 14% of cases nobody in the child's immediate environment knew about its situation. It is quite clear that parenthood of non-heterosexual persons remains largely hidden; the knowledge seldom leaves the circle of the immediate family. It is probably influenced by the still present stereotypes concerning parenthood and attempts at protecting the child from social homophobia. It seems that the models worked out by non-heterosexual parents must be based on a very selective revealing of the family situation (for the child's sake). They cannot be open to all and everywhere. The literature of the subject, mostly based on Western European studies, often stresses the fact that parenthood of non-heterosexual persons is exceptionally well thought-out. It also stresses consideration for the child's well-being (Sullivan, 2004; Tasker, Bigner, 2007; Gartrell, 2010).

The study showed a significant difference between same-sex and heterosexual relationships as far as the division of duties connected with raising children was concerned. In the case of same-sex relationships the majority of duties are done jointly. It was only in contacts with institutions (kindergarten/school, health care) that the majority of duties was taken over by the biological parent. One should note, however, that this situation was probably caused by the fact that the social parent does not have any legal standing in such situations and the fear of revealing the family situation to institutions. Consequently, this disproportion seems to stem from necessity rather than from choice. According to the studies on a representative sample (Titkow, 2004), in heterosexual relationships both men and women agreed that vast majority of educational duties belong to women. This discrepancy indicates that there is a major difference in the way same-sex relationships function: they are based much more on equality and equal sharing of parental duties, which also confirms the findings of Western studies (Dunne, 1999; Peplau and Spalding, 2000; Sullivan, 2004; Goldberg and Allen, 2013).

Social parents (in our study they were mostly social mothers) not only participated in child care, but also supported the children financially to an almost equal degree as the biological parents. Biological and social mothers declared fairly similar level of expenses, although with a tendency towards biological mothers covering a somewhat larger part of the involved expenses. It should again be stressed that both the involvement of the social parent in child care as providing financial support is fully voluntary and takes place in a situation where there is no legal support of the social partner's interests or securing contacts with the child, who may in many cases be the most important person in their life. The very fact of the involvement remains invisible socially (such institutions as schools or kindergartens are not informed about the specific family situation), which makes the position of a social parent in our country especially difficult.

## **FAMILIES OF CHOICE IN THEIR IMMEDIATE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

The study also concentrated on the relations of families of choice with their immediate social environment. Families of choice function in strong and significant relations with their families of origin. Although the respondents treat their partners as their closest relatives, they give the same status to their parents (97%), grandparents (97%), and

siblings (94%). Friends also have a specific role in such relations; for many respondents they are family members (29% “decidedly yes” and 35% “rather yes”), and over half of the respondents (64%) considered their partner’s parents as their family members.

The relations with immediate relatives differed as far as the kind of provided support and sex of various family members were concerned. Non-heterosexual persons had the best relations with the women from their family of origin. Mothers and sisters knew about the respondent’s relationship (72% and 73% respectively) and accepted it (71% and 85% respectively) most often. Mothers were the most important - after the partner - source of support in case of illness (44%) and financial straits (48%). Fathers were in turn the persons who were least often informed about the relationship (59%) and the least likely to accept it (62%). They were usually the source of practical (31%) or financial (30%) support.

It is quite interesting that women proved less willing to reveal their relationships to their families than men. In turn, men declared that their relationships are more likely to be accepted by their families than it was in the case of relationships of women. The acceptance increased with the length of a relationship: in time parents of non-heterosexual persons seemed to “get used to” the relationships of their children. Consequently, younger respondents felt less accepted than the older ones, although in this particular case one must also take into consideration other factors connected with the interaction of the respondents with their parents and its changes in time. The acceptance on the part of the family heavily influenced the decision to live together: for 13% of the respondents the lack of such acceptance was the reason why the couple lived apart. Women are more likely to feel the lack of acceptance on the part of their family members; their relationships are generally less often accepted by their families than the relationships of men. They are expected to become mothers and, consequently, were less often accepted when they reveal their homosexuality, especially if their family was convinced that a woman in a same-sex relationship cannot have children (either because of social homophobia or because of the imagined lack of possibility of conceiving and raising a child). Due to the greater social stigma, non-heterosexual men are wary to reveal their relationships to their families of origin. However, when they do they are more likely to be accepted. It is beyond any doubt that the differences between women and men in this respect should be the subject of further in-depth studies.

The practical dimension of relations with the family of origin becomes visible when we analyse the issue of celebrating holidays. Only 44% of respondents spent such religious holidays as Christmas or Easter with their partners. The same number of the respondents declared that they were invited by their family of origin as a couple. It means that same-sex relationships are in most cases not recognised as family relationships by the families of origin, even though the partners consider themselves a family. It would be quite interesting to look at the issue somewhat closer in order to see to what extent the partners need and seek their family’s acceptance, and to what extent they consider the fact of spending holidays away from their partner as insignificant. It is quite telling that although the length of the relationships resulted in couples being invited together more often, non-heterosexual couples still usually do not participate together in holidays and celebrations in which more distant family members also may participate (such as



birthdays, name days, weddings, funerals, etc.). It is probably caused by the fear of the more immediate relatives and of revealing the character of such relationships to more distant family, or even an “explosion” of their negative attitude.

Studies conducted abroad indicate that friends of non-heterosexual people are an important element of their families and an important source of support in everyday life (Weston, 1997; Weeks, Donovan, and Heaphy, 2001). Families of non-heterosexual persons are called “families of choice” exactly because it is choice and not blood relations that forms the basis of the bond. Two out of three of our respondents treated their friends as family. Friends knew the about the relationship most often, and in situations in which practical help was necessary or when the respondents needed to be heard out and consoled friends were the second most important source of support (57%) after the partner. Although it is difficult to discuss the issue without access to similar results concerning heterosexual persons, one may suppose that families of choice are much more willing to include friends in the family and seek support from them. It is especially so when they may not be able to count on their families of origin in this respect.

It is also quite remarkable that same-sex parents raising children hardly ever felt excluded by their friends and acquaintances. Only a small number of them experienced reluctance on the part of their heterosexual and, to a lesser degree, homosexual acquaintances.

If non-heterosexual parents knew more of other, similar families that also raise children, they would be able to form a support network as it is in the West. In Poland, a little more than half of the mothers in non-heterosexual relationships got in touch with other similar families. In the case of the small group of homosexual fathers, it was only one in five. The vast majority (75%) of people who do not have such contacts declared that it was not a matter of choice but rather lack of contact with such families. Families of choice with children function in separation, which is certainly at least to an extent caused by low social acceptance and often by lack of possibility of living in an open way.

Distant relatives (44%), neighbours (49%), and colleagues from work (34%) are the people who know the least about the relationships of the respondents. The fact that the respondents decided against revealing their relationships at work was probably caused by fear of being mobbed or even loss of employment, as well as by the character of the relations at work. In the case of distant relatives and neighbours, hiding relationships from them seems more related to a rather low tendency towards revealing oneself in general and not too close contacts with such persons, connected with general changes in human relations.

A large number of the respondents who were parents encountered many unjust opinions concerning same-sex couples raising children. However, the respondents did not concentrate on quoting such opinions but rather on their ways of coping with them. It seems the existence of such opinions is obvious to the respondents, probably because they seem ubiquitous in the social debate on the issue of parenthood of non-heterosexual persons. Half of the respondents decided to take a passive stand and ignore them, while the other half chose an active stand, raising their children with the conviction that their family was a value in itself and deserved respect, directly

confronting unjust stereotypes (e.g. in debate) or avoiding people who voice such stereotypical views. A small number of respondents stated that they were helpless on the issue. The result is significant as it shows once more that the parenthood of non-heterosexual persons requires a self-reflexive attitude and considering well thought-out strategies in their contacts with the external world.

The attitude of the respondents to the definition of family is also important to an understanding of their family life. We intended to compare two visions of family: that of our respondents and that of a representative sample of Poles. The differences turned out very significant. For the respondents of the present study there are many equally legitimate models of family. However, the representative sample of Poles support a hierarchy according to which they decide what a family is and what is not. The decisive factor is having children and legitimisation of the relationship.

The vision of family also changes for the representative sample of Poles. According to CBOS, a childless same-sex couple was considered a family by 6% of respondents in 2006 and by 14% of respondents in 2013. A same-sex couple with a child was considered a family by 9% in 2006 and 23% in 2013 (CBOS 2006, 2013b). These figures clearly reflect the slowly growing social tolerance towards such families.

## FORMALISATION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND LEGAL ISSUES

As there is no legal possibility of formalising a same-sex relationship in Poland, it is hardly surprising that the vast majority (83%) of the relationships in our study were not formalised in any way. Those who declared some type of formalisation usually had in mind some symbolic form. It was so in the case of 13% of the relationships, most often of women.

Regardless of the lack of existing legal arrangements, the respondents undertook various attempts to solve some of their problems with the use of the existing regulations or less formal agreements. A little more than 1% of the respondents signed an agreement regulating the issue of inheritance or took a mortgage loan together. However, one person in four authorised their partner to claim insurance benefits after their death, and one person in six authorised their partner's access to their medical documentation or made a will in which they bequeathed their property to their partner.

The vast majority of respondents (75%) would like to register their relationships in the future if there were such a possibility in Poland. For most of them the most important reasons were practical, everyday issues (e.g. possibility of receiving registered mail addressed to the partner, joint taxation, extending health insurance to cover the partner, possibility of securing the partner in case of death). The willingness to offer a proof of lasting love and emotional engagement (79%) and demonstrating the importance of the relationship to their family and the environment (76%) were also important for the respondents, especially for women. However, the discrepancy between practical and symbolic considerations seems significant and indicates that the lack of possibility of formalizing same-sex relationships, which would regulate such issues as common property or contacts with the health care sector, makes the lives of members of families of choice much more difficult.

The respondents listed a number of difficulties resulting from living in an unrecognised relationship. They were especially numerous in the health care sector. As many as 38% of respondents reported problems with access to information concerning the health of their partner, visiting partners at the hospital, or the possibility of making decisions concerning their health. The majority of the described situations were difficult or even dramatic. Regulations concerning common property also proved important (24%). The respondents quoted problems with buying an apartment together, deeds of gift, or bequeathing it to the partner without the necessity of paying the highest inheritance tax. A number of respondents brought up the issue of lack of possibility of joint taxation. Many respondents mentioned difficulties in receiving registered mail and problems with banks (e.g. lack of possibility of taking a mortgage loan together or opening a joint bank account). Official matters also proved troublesome (e.g. the necessity of obtaining paid written authorization which still may prove insufficient), as did the lack of possibility of arranging health insurance for the partner or making the partner the beneficiary of a life insurance.

The respondents encountered difficulties at work and in contacts with the service sector. The fact that their relationship is not recognised at work results in problems with taking time off during holidays, limits their possibilities of going abroad for a training period or to another branch of their company together, which is possible in the case of formally recognised relationships. It also influences the running of their own businesses: there are different regulations for married couples and different ones for strangers as far as running a company is concerned. The respondents also quoted problems connected with the service sector, such as dealing with formal issues or making payments resulting from agreements with companies delivering energy, gas, or telecoms.

It is quite significant that one respondent in five mentioned issues connected with the social functioning of their relationship. They quoted problems with naming the status of their relationship (e.g. whether to call the partner “wife” when there is no possibility of marriage in Poland, or rather “partner” which may be incomprehensible), the reluctance of the environment after the same-sex relationships is revealed, or being perceived as a single person when one does not tell the environment about the relationship.

According to their needs hierarchy connected with the registration of their relationship (practical considerations were more important than the symbolic ones), the respondents opted for a registered partnership in the registrar office (87%). The symbolic issues were still quite important though. For a majority of the respondents (70%) a civil marriage in the registrar office was preferable to an agreement signed in a notary public’s office (44%). However, for some of the respondents (13%) the most preferred option would be a church wedding.

Almost half of the non-heterosexual parents raising children quoted difficulties connected with contacts with the health care sector and education sector. Legal issues can be quite challenging for non-heterosexual parents in Poland. A social parent raising a child is formally speaking a stranger and cannot make any decisions concerning the child. Consequently, many respondents not only faced problems but developed various strategies connected with the issue of a social parent retaining contacts with the child after the death of the biological parent or separation. One fifth of the respondents shared

their experience with us. More than one in two parents attempted signing an agreement between the partners (last will or authenticated deed), although they were aware of its limited legal value. Others attempted to arrange the matter with other family members, counting on their understanding. Some do not see the need to sign more or less formal agreements as they trust their families on the matter.

The respondents often stressed the time and effort they invested in solving issues connected with all of these problems. They face problems in contacts with almost every public institution that they deal with. Many of these issues could be avoided within the existing legal regulations; however, many can be solved only through a registered partnerships act or some other form of formalisation of same-sex relationships. More empathy towards such families from representatives of state institutions would also make their everyday life much easier. The reflections of the respondents on the issues they face may serve as indications for the politicians responsible for the law-making process and for public institutions. From the point of view of the respondents, the Polish legal system and public institutions are heavily biased and discriminate against same-sex relationships.

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