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Introduction

On September 21-22, 2015, 6th International Scientific Conference "Quality of Life 2015. Human and Ecosystems Well-being" was held in Wrocław.

The conference was a part of the cycle of the conferences on the topic of quality of life that have been organized by the Department of Statistics (Wrocław University of Economics) since 1999. The aim of the cycle is to participate in the still rising all over the word wave of scientific studies on quality of life: ethical background and definitions of quality of life, investigating (how to measure it), presenting the results of differences of quality of life over time and space, its interdependences with natural environment, mathematical methods useful for the methodology of measuring quality of life and finally – possible methods of improving it. The conferences are meant to integrate the Polish scientific community doing research on these topics as well as to make contacts with foreign scientists.

This year our honorary guest was Professor Filomena Maggino, past President of International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS), who presented a plenary lecture.

We hosted about 30 participants, among them scientists from Spain, Romania, Italy and Japan. We had 24 lectures on such a variety of topics as carbon footprint and mathematical properties of some estimators. The common background of all of them was to better comprehend, measure and possibly to improve the quality of humans' life.

The present volume contains the extended versions of some selected lectures presented during the conference. We wish to thank all of the participants of the conference for co-creating very inspiring character of this meeting, stimulating productive discussions and resulting in some potentially fruitful cooperation over new research problems. We wish also to thank the authors for their prolonged cooperation in preparing this volume, the reviewers for their hard work and for many valuable, although anonymous, suggestions that helped some of us to improve their works.

Finally, we wish to thank the members of the Editorial Office of Wrocław University of Economics for their hard work while preparing the edition of this volume, continuous kindness and helpfulness exceeding their duties of the job.

Katarzyna Ostasiewicz

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STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS ABOUT FUTURE JOBS AS A FACTOR INFLUENCING THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE

OCZEKIWANIA STUDENTÓW ODNOŚNIE PRZYSZŁEJ PRACY JAKO CZYNNIK WPŁYWAJĄCY NA JAKOŚĆ ŻYCIA

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Summary: Quality of life is a three-fold concept. Its two components – which are to a high degree independent one on another – are positive and negative effects. The third one is a perspective for future, that is, hopes and fears regarding future life. Among those, especially for young persons, that are to enter the job market, an important role is played by feelings connected with job and financial perspectives. The purpose of our research was to investigate the attitudes of students in Wroclaw. They were asked about the degree of being worried about job perspectives, with special regard to some particular aspects of the job market (e.g. kinds of contracts of employment). The results were examined in the context of social background of our respondents. It turned out that the level of fears among those potentially "well-situated (at the job market) persons" is very high, with significant differences between women and men. It is revealed that this high level of fear still holds despite the (common) expectation of better performance at job market as compared to the others.

Keywords: quality of life, hopes and fears, job perspectives.

Streszczenie: Jakość życia jest koncepcją trójwymiarową. Dwoma komponentami, w dużej mierze od siebie niezależnymi, są pozytywne i negatywne odczucia. Trzecią składową stanowią oczekiwania odnośnie przyszłości, czyli nadzieje i obawy dotyczące przyszłego życia. Pośród nich, szczególnie wśród młodych osób mających dopiero wejść na rynek pracy, ważną rolę odgrywają odczucia związane z perspektywami zawodowymi i finansowymi. Celem pracy było zbadanie tych postaw pośród wrocławskich studentów. Byli oni pytani o poziom obaw związanych z perspektywami zawodowymi, w szczególności z pewnymi ich aspektami, jak na przykład rodzaj kontraktu. Wyniki zestawiane były z zapleczem socjalnym respondentów. Okazuje się, iż poziom obaw jest bardzo wysoki, z istotnymi statystycznie różnicami pomiędzy płciami. Wysoki poziom obaw utrzymuje się również wśród tych, którzy są przekonani, że na rynku pracy poradzą sobie lepiej w porównaniu z rywalami.

Słowa kluczowe: jakość życia, nadzieje i obawy, perspektywy zawodowe.

1. Introduction

Developing the science of well-being revealed that this concept is very often oversimplified. Some time ago it was observed that it was not the one dimension, with being unhappy at one end and being happy at the other end. Rather, positive effects and negative effects are strongly independent one on another (see e.g. [Bradburn 1969; Harding 1982]), thus, the concept of well-being would be at least two-dimensional.

Recently, the third one has been added to this two-dimensional picture. As pointed out by some authors (see e.g. [Cantril 1965; Glatzer 2013]) the present quality of life of an individual is influenced not only by current positive well-being and negativewell-being, but hopes and fears concerning future perspectives as well. Individuals' worries may concern different objects and different domains. Following Boehnke et al. [1998] one may state that "[...] a worry is a cognition that a state of self/ingroup (micro objects) or society/world (macro objects) in one of the following domains: health, environment, social relations, meaning, work, economics or safety, will become (become more, or remain) discrepant from its desired state". On the other hand, hopes also play a significant role in the current well-being. One of the 8 statements to be responded of Psychological Well-Being Scale by Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener [Diener, 2009] is: "I am optimistic about my future".

According to Holmes and Rahe stress scale [Holmes, Rahe 1967] events connected with work and finances play a very important role in persons' lives. On the scale where the death of the spouse corresponds to the (maximum value) of 100 "life change units" and e.g. the death of a close friend to 37 units, dismissal from work relates to 47 "life change units" while change in financial state – 38 units.

There are many studies showing that unemployment negatively influences the quality of life and mental health of individuals (e.g. [Warr, 1987; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Dooley, Catalano, 1988]). Moreover, it has been observed that unemployment may have different (higher) impact on young people that are just leaving schools than on the persons who lose their jobs [Donovan, Oddy 1982]. This is suggested to be due to the additional burden connected with the lack of well-established occupational identity that young people seek for. Moreover, as for educational status of the unemployed who have just entered the job market, there are two competing hypotheses. One of them states that graduated young people having higher expectances will suffer more from unemployment (e.g. [Kaufman, 1982; Feather, Bond 1983]. On the other hand the other hypothesis states that graduated persons generally have greater environmental resources helping them to better cope with the stress (e.g. [Fryer, Payne 1984; Kjos 1988]). Both hypotheses are supported by some results.

It is less known how the quality of life is affected by expectations about future occupational status, instead of the current one. However, it is also knownthat people do worry about losing their job or not finding it. According to the latest World

Values Surveys [WVS 2015] for a question: "To what degree are you worried about losing a job or not finding a job?" 61.8% of people from all over the world answered "very much" or "a great deal" (while 32.3% "not much" or "not at all"). In Poland, there were 43.3% and 47.1%, respectively. Figure 1 presents the fractions of answers "very much", "a great deal", "not much" and "not at all" for Poland and some other chosen countries, including the ones with the largest fraction of answers "very much" (Mexico, almost 80%) and the ones with the lowest fraction of these answers (the Netherlands, 5.4%). Note, that the sum of fractions does not equal to 100% as there was also "don't know" as a possible answer.

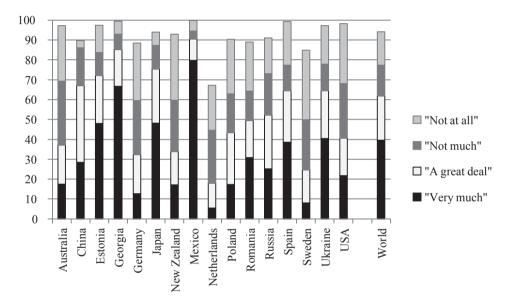


Figure 1. Fractions of answers "very much", "a great deal", "not much" and "not at all" for a question: "To what degree are you worried about losing job or not finding a job?" for Poland and some other chosen countries

Source: own work based on World Values Survey data [WVS 2015].

Students constitute a specific social environment. In the context of job market, they are generally supposed to have a better position than others of the same age but less educated. The aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes of students in Wrocław.

2. Labor market and the position of young people after graduation in Poland

Unemployment of the young graduated in Poland is a well-recognized problem, however, there are controversies about its sources and possible solution. In 2012 a conference at Lazarski University (Warsaw) took place, which gathered representatives of academia, business (potential employers) and government (Daria Nałęcz, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education). The conference was entitled: "The cheated generation of graduate. Is it possible to help them?". Different parties blamed the wrong system of education in Poland, the low level of education or the lack of innovation in business for the unemployment of young graduated.

It is rather obvious, that the situation of persons with higher education in Poland is worsening. In 1995 the unemployment rate for people with tertiary education was 0.23 of the rate for the whole population, in 2005 it was 0.34 while now it is 0.52 [GUS 2015]. The question is: Is this a result of education being underestimated in the last years, the worsening quality of the education or maybe the "inflation" of the education – the rapid increase of fraction of people with higher education in Poland, which makes the market "saturated" with high-educated people?

Still, many young people decide to continue education after secondary school to enhance their qualifications and chances at the job market. In spite of all concerns about the situation of educated people in Poland, it still seems to be a good strategy. Both at the country level and in particular voivodeships, the higher the educational level the lower unemployment rate and the higher the activity rate. Although it does not necessarily hold in each particular case (e.g. in some regions unemployment rate of the persons with post-secondary education may be higher than for the persons with general-secondary education), it always holds that for tertiary education the unemployment rate is the lowest of all educational groups. According to the Central Statistical Office of Poland [GUS 2015] in 2014 there were 7765 thousand people with higher education level in Poland, while only 225.4 thousand of them were unemployed.

According to the data from the sample of the labor force survey (LFS) conducted by the Central Statistical Office in the first quarter of 2015 [GUS 2015] the rate of unemployment for people with tertiary education was equal to 4.5% with activity rate 80.1% (as compared to 8.6% and 56%, respectively, for the whole population). In the Dolnoslaskie Voivodeship the unemployment rate was even lower than in whole Poland (2.6%) with activity rate nearly the same (80%).

Apart from the job issues there are also satisfactory payment issues. Many Polish specialists decide to work abroad, for both reasons.

According to the estimations of the Central Statistical Office of Poland [GUS 2015] based on the National Census in 2011, 6.8% of Polish citizens with higher educational level lived abroad for more than 3 months, while for the whole

population (for any educational level) it is about 5.4%. That means that the population of emigrants is better educated than the whole Polish population. Almost 64% of emigrants left Poland for the job reasons. Two main reasons for returning to Poland were: the end of contract abroad (first place) and family missing (second place). This second factor suggests that the quality of life of economic emigrants is lowered, as family and relationships are key issues in well-being.

3. The survey

Employment status and the family/close relationships are two factors that play important roles in human well-being, as do hopes and fears relating to those two factors. Taking those facts into consideration, we have investigated the attitudes of students towards those issues. Firstly, we wanted to know, how much (if at all) students were worried about their future jobs (and - what is related - about their future financial status). Questions we asked were as follows: "How much - on a scale of 0 to 10 – are you worried about your future job status?" and "How much – on a scale of 0 to 10 – are you worried about your future financial status?" We adopted here 0-10 scale, as having a better discriminant capacity than shorter scales [Maggino, D'Andrea 2003]. More specifically, we asked the students about the issues that are nowadays very frequent in public debates in Poland, that is, the form of employment. Namely, we asked them "How much – on a scale of 0 to 10 – are vou worried about the perspective of the so-called "junk contract"?" and, somewhat complementary, "How much – on a scale of 0 to 10 – do you care about the contract of employment for an indefinite period? "We also wanted to know what they were ready to sacrifice for the sake of security. Therefore, we asked the students a question: "What would be the lowest acceptable net pay to you?" and another one: "What initial "take home" salary would you consider fair?" If the answer to the second question gives a higher figure than the answer to the first question then it means that a person is willing to accept something that seems unfair to him/her. In the context of massive emigration we also wanted to study the attitudes of students towards the possibility of leaving Poland. We asked them questions: "How – on a scale of 0 to 10 - are you ready to leave for a temporary job abroad?", and "How - on a scale of 0 to 10 – are you ready to leave for a permanent job opportunity abroad?" Furthermore, we wanted to know how other values were related to the employment/financial status. We thus asked a question "To what degree – on a scale of 0 to 10 – will your financial status influence your decision about having children?". Additionally, we asked our respondents about their confidence in the availability of help from close friends/relatives in the case of need ("To what extent – on a scale of 0 to 10 – do you believe that people close to you (family/friends) will help you financially in case you need it?"). We also questioned about their confidence in humanity as a whole (the most frequent single question used to measure "social capital" is: "To what degree - on a scale of 0 to 10 - do you agree with the statement: Can most people be trusted

in general?). To examine possible relationships between the answers and the personal characteristics of the students we asked our respondents about their age, sex, the size of the city they had been born and raised in (for calculations, we divided answers into "large cities, above 100 thousand", coded as "1", and "smaller cities or villages", coded as "0"), as well as education levels of their parents and the importance of certain values in the respondents' lives ("What role - on a scale of to 10 - do following values play in your life: satisfaction of the basic material needs, living in luxury, family, close relationships (apart from family relationships), pursuit of own interests and passions, religion, patriotism, Polish culture and heritage, social status and power?") We also differentiated between the types of students: part-time students versus full-time ones. We also wanted to know how the students predicted their own future, asking the question: "If you had to predict, how would you rate your future performance at the job market: Significantly below average/below average/average/above average/significantly above average?" For the calculations we divided the answers for this last question into two groups: "average or below", coded as "0", and "above average", coded as "1".

Our investigations were based on the sample selected rather purposively among these who were thinking about getting a job, and from such a "population" there were selected randomly about 200 students. After removing incomplete data we got the sample of 147 persons. The main purpose of our research was to get any insight into this acute problem confronted by young, graduated people in Poland. The problem of expectation, and aspiration as well as fear of the future seems to remain outside scientific consideration.

4. The results

4.1. Payments

The average first net pay after graduating to be acceptable by investigated students is 2355.2 PLN, while averaged declared "fair" net pay is 2898.3 PLN. The averaged ratio acceptable net pay/fair net pay is equal to 0.85 which means that young people are ready to give up 15% of "fair" pay facing the reality of job market. There is a significant difference between women and men with respect to both acceptable and fair net pay. Also, between those who expect to perform on average or worse and those who expect to be better than on average. Both kinds of students (full-time and part-time) and in all ages regard the same net-pay as fair (not significant differences) but part-time and older would accept significantly higher sums.

For getting deeper insight into the problem one needs to test appropriate hypotheses requiring fulfilling conditions, which in our case are not fully satisfied. For this reason there are calculated p-values only for the informative reason.

To investigate these dependences more closely, we have calculated partial correlations of acceptable and fair net-pay with one of 5 features subsequently: age,

sex, city of raising, type of studies, predicted future performance at the job market–keeping the remaining 4 features constant.

Table 1. Averages of acceptable and fair pay as perceived by diffe	erent groups of survey
and significance of their differences	

		Acceptable	p-value	Fair	p-value
Sex	women	2115.5	0.0015	2578.3	0.0074
	men	2702.8		3362.4	
Type of students	full-time	2218.18	0.0418	2884.5	0.8783
	part-time	2646.8		2927.7	
Age	≤ 20	2086	0.0113	2683	0.1948
	> 20	2494		3009.3	
Predicted future	average or below	2112.3	0.0106	2565.1	0.0194
performance at	above average	2492.2		3086.2	
the job market					

Source: own calculations.

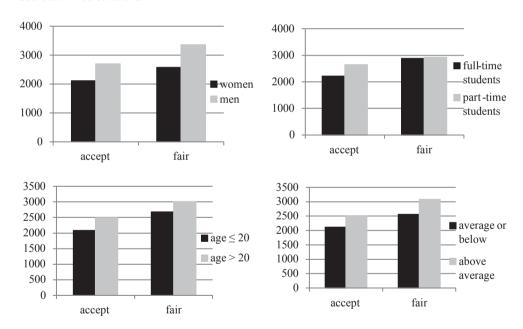


Figure 2. Acceptable and fair pay as perceived by different groups taking part in the survey Source: own construction.

Assuming that respondents have their "true" opinion about the payments they expected and the answers were deviated from this "true" opinion randomly, we tested these correlations for significance. The results for accepted payment are as follows:

Estimate t-statistic p-value 0.28 5*10⁻⁴ Age 3.58 -0.24-2.940.0038 Sex Citv -0.04-0.540.5915 Type of studies -0.01-0.100.9200 Predicted performance 0.08 0.92 0.3608

Table 2. Partial correlations of acceptable net-pay

Source: own calculations.

As one can see, as for the age, that older persons accept more, on average, and (as sex is coded here "0" = man, "1" = woman), women accept less than men, ceteris paribus.

The type of study and the predicted future performance at the job market did not appear to be significant, as both of these variables were strongly related to age (the type of study) and both age and sex (the predicted future performance). The relation between the type of studies and the age is quite obvious, as most of full-time students are just after college. More interesting is the relationship between predicted performance at the job market and age and sex. It turns out from a deeper analysis that being a woman means on average lowering the probability of predicting performance better than average by almost 14 percentage points, while increasing age relates to increasing self-confidence in predicting own performance at the job market.

As for fair net pay, again only age and sex of all our variables turned out to be significant, namely:

Table 3. Partial correlations of fair net-pay

	Estimate	t-statistic	p-value
Age	0.24	2.95	0.0037
Sex	-0.22	-2.73	0.0072
City	0.02	0.28	0.7837
Type of studies	0.14	1.69	0.0929
Predicted performance	0.07	0.81	0.4190

Source: own calculations.

4.2. The fears

Let us proceed now to the impact of job perspectives on the quality of life, that is, fears about future. The average level of fears about future job was about 5.5 (at 0 to 10 scale), and average level of fears about future financial status was 5.7 (at 0 to 10 scale). Noticing that the optimal point (no fears at all) is 0, that seems a quite high level of fears, especially that it concerns the persons of potentially beneficial high educational level. Again, the assumptions for the tests used here are not fully satisfied here and p-values are not to be treated too conclusive.

		Fears about job	p-value	Fears about finances	p-value
Sex	women	6.05	0.0002	6.24	0.0003
	men	4.67		4.85	
Type of students	full-time	5.55	0.6026	5.58	0.4754
	part-time	5.34		5.87	
Age	≤ 20	5.66	0.46001	5.94	0.2960
	> 20	5.39]	5.54	
Predicted future	average or below	6.42	4*10 ⁻⁵	6.21	0.0287
performance at the job market	above average	4.96		5.37	

Table 4. Averages of levels of fears by different groups of survey and the significance of their differences.

Source: own calculations.

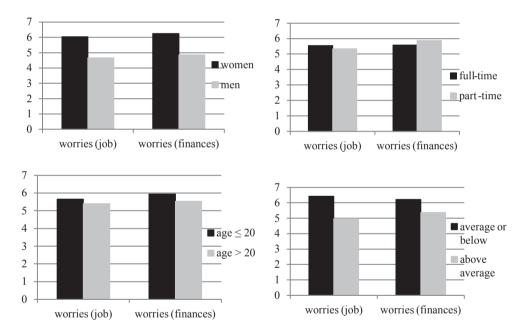


Figure 3. Averages of levels of fears by different groups of survey

Source: own construction.

Deepening the analysis, we investigate the relationships of level of fears with some chosen set of personal characteristics and other factors. To extract the sole relationship with a single one of these characteristics we calculate the partial correlation, while controlling for the rest of them.. For the fears of work perspectives we can observe what follows.

Table 5. Partial correlations of the fears of work perspectives

	Estimate	t-statistic	p-value
Age	0.07	0.87	0.3856
Sex	0.26	3.27	0.0013
City	0.08	0.97	0.3361
Type of studies	0.07	0.88	0.3805
Predicted performance	-0.38	-4.88	3*10-6
Basic material needs	0.24	2.97	0.0034
Believe in the potential help from others	0.07	0.85	0.3979
Level of trust in people as a whole	0.08	0.94	0.3508

Source: own calculations.

Thus it turns out that women are significantly more feared of future job, and the more self-confident about own performance investigated persons are the less feared they are (as always with partial correlations, excluding the influence of other features). Those who declare that satisfaction of the basic material needs plays more important roles in their lives also fear more. It is also striking, that neither belief in the potential help from others nor the level of trust in people as a whole correlate significantly with the level of fears about future job.

Sex, self-confidence about own performance and the declared level of importance of satisfying the basic material needs again turn out to correlate significantly with the levels of fears about financial status, and the effects are quite similar. (The correlation between the level of fears about job and the level of fears about finances is almost 0.73).

Table 6. Partial correlations of the fears of financial perspectives

	Estimate	t-statistic	p-value
Age	0.03	0.39	0.6999
Sex	0.29	3.65	0.0004
City	0.11	1.34	0.1835
Type of studies	-0.01	-0.17	0.8640
Predicted performance	-0.22	-2.75	0.0068
Basic material needs	0.29	3.67	0.0003
Belief in the potential	-0.03	-0.36	0.7178
help from others			
Level of trust in	0.12	1.47	0.1442
people as a whole			

Source: own calculations.

As for more specific fears – about the forms of contracts – the degree of fear of socalled "junk contract" increases significantly with age, and women are significantly more fearful than men. The mean level of this fear is equal to 6.2. The reverse of this fear is the degree of care for the contract for an indefinite period. A similar effect can be seen here in case of age increase. However, sex does not reveal to be significant in this case, instead; the degree of fears of future job status is significantly and positively related to the degree of caring about this form of contract. The mean level of this care is almost equal to 8.

4.3. Other features

As for other variables, the readiness for working temporarily abroad rises significantly with the level of father's education (the effect of mother's education is insignificant), with the declared importance of satisfying basic material needs, with expected performance on the job market, but also with the degree of fears about future job. These last two effects might be interpreted that for a decision of going abroad one needs some degree of self-confidence together with low expectations about the possibility of a career in Poland.

The readiness for permanent emigration increases with expected performance on the job market and with the degree of fears about future job – just like in the case of temporal work abroad. The difference is that it does not relate significantly to the declared importance of satisfying basic material needs, but, instead, it decreases significantly with the declared importance of the role of patriotism in one's life.

The mean degree of impact of the financial status on the decision of having children is equal to 6.7 and increases significantly with the fears of the future financial status. What is interesting, it significantly decreases with the declared importance of religion in one's life, while the declared importance of the family does not reveal to be significant. The fears of the future financial status have the influence about twice as strong as the importance of the religion.

5. Conclusions

Let us make here a few observations about the gained results.

The first striking conclusion is the overall high level of fears about job and financial status (5.5 and 5.7 on average, respectively) among young persons who are potentially in the best situation of all participants on the job market. If we regard answers 0-4 as corresponding to "not at all"/"not much" and answers 6-19 as corresponding to "a great deal"/"very much" while 5 to "don't know", the rates of fear would reveal higher for students than for the whole population (as reported by [WVS, 2015]) – fearing much is more than 1.7 times as many as fearing little among students, while for the whole population their fractions are almost the same. Moreover, we can observe that these fears would be probably much higher if the students realistically viewed their predicted performance at the job market. It is obviously not possible that 64% of students will perform better than others (while 31% like the others, and only 5% worse than others), as it is according to their own

expectations. This is a well-known effect, so-called "illusory superiority" (e.g. [Hoorens 1993]) or, more popular, "Lake Wobegon effect" (in this fictional town created by a humorist and writer Garrison Keillor "all the children were above average"). According to the model, women who would predict own performance as significantly below average would fear on average at the level of above 8.7 while men above 7.5. For those who would predict own performance as below average that would be 7.7 and 6.5, respectively. It is worth stressing, that the question of comparisons concerned only the student-colleagues, not all the job market participants. Noticing that the level of fear almost approaching the maximum possible level would surely significantly decrease the person's quality of life, our observation is in accordance with the conception that positive illusions promote mental health (see e.g. [Taylor, Brown 1994]). Namely, it has been observed that people suffering clinical depression evaluate themselves accurately rather than underestimate, while so-called healthy people rather overestimate themselves (so-called "depressive realism") (e.g. [Alloy, Abramson 1988]).

The second important observation is the statistically significant difference between sexes. It turns out that women are almost 30% more feared both about job and finances, estimating own chances at the job market lower than men do (57% of women compared to 73% of men predict own performance at the job market above or significantly above the average). That is a probable explanation of the fact that women are willing to accept 22% less net income than men do. That might be viewed as realistic, as it is indeed the fact that women in Poland have on average lower incomes, even occupying the same job. According to Central Statistical Office of Poland (data for 2012 year) [GUS 2015] in each main group of occupations women are paid less. For the group of managers it is on average 27% less, for the group of professionals it is 24% less, for the group of technicians and associate professionals it is 23% less while for the clerical support workers it is only 2% less. That is, the higher the position is, the greater the gap between the incomes of women and men. At the same time, persons with the higher degree of education are assumed to aspire for the highest positions at the job market. Thus, lower expectation of women might be regarded as realistic. However, women seem not to treat the situation as unjust, as they also regard 23% lower payments as fair. The question is, whether the women's concept of what is fair is really different from men's or that is a kind of psychological adaptation to the given situation. That leads to another interesting observation: the coefficients of variation for the accepted pay, fair pay and the fraction: (accepted pay)/(fair pay) are equal to 0.45, 0.56 and 0.22 respectively. The last one, for the fraction of fair pay that would be accepted, is significantly different (with for both cases) both from the coefficient of variation for the accepted pay and from the coefficient of variation for the fair pay. The meaning of this result remains to be explained.

Another interesting observation is the gap between the average belief in the help of the family/close friends (89% treating answers with score \geq 5 as a declaration of

belief) and the trust in others in general (33%). The former reveals to be almost 2.7 as strong as the latter. It is in accordance with the observations of the temporary Polish sociologists (e.g. [Czapiński 2008]) about so-called "society of molecules". That concept corresponds to high level and small radius of trust, according to the conception of Delhey et al. [Delhey et al. 2011]. The issue of the level of the trust among the students would be worth further investigations, especially in the context of the latest World Values Survey [WVS 2015], which amounted to 47% for Poland (compared with Denmark – 89%, at the top of the rank and 13% for Chile, at the bottom of the rank). Is the discrepancy between 47% from WVS and 33% from our survey due to the small size of our sample or to the specific character of students' population? However, that problem is beyond the scope of our investigations.

Summarizing, our investigation shows the high level of fear caused by job and financial perspectives, which not only decreases the subjective quality of life of students, but also an impact of their important life decisions of starting a family or emigration.

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