

# The situation of generations on the labour market in Poland

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**Abstract:** A generational shift is perceived as a significant challenge to organisations, especially in the ongoing changes in contemporary labour market. Four generations meet in the workplace now, while until recently one could talk only about two. Given the growing significance of human capital as a substantial factor of economic growth, the knowledge about individual generations is gaining importance. The aim of this article is to assess the position of particular generations on the labour market in Poland. The statistical analysis was carried out using the individual data of Social Diagnosis 2015 and allows for a quantitative assessment of the working situation of employees from different generations. Basic statistical tests to compare the population, as well as the multifactorial analysis of variance were applied.

**Keywords:** generations, labour market, analysis of variance

**JEL codes:** J53, M54

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.25167/ees.2018.46.32>

## 1. Introduction

The modern labour market is evolving as a result of various processes, including globalisation, rapid technological development, but also demographic changes, especially those related to the ageing of populations. A generational shift is perceived as a significant challenge here. People from versatile generations usually interpret the same events differently, looking at them from their own point of view, from the perspective of their own experiences (Śledzińska, 2014: 27). This stems from the fact that they were brought up in dissimilar conditions – economic, social, cultural, etc., and therefore their approach to many matters, attitudes towards

work, values and expectations are usually diverse. Interestingly, an important feature of modern generations is the possibility of their faster identification – previously, the generations changed every 25-30 years, whereas nowadays this frequency is much larger (even a decade) (Kowalczyk-Anioł, Szafrńska and Włodarczyk, 2014: 42). This means that representatives of not two or three, but five or even six generations live side by side. It is therefore not surprising that the situation is reflected on and affects the labour market – currently, four generations meet in the workplace, while recently there were basically only two. Considering the growing significance of human capital as a substantial factor of economic growth (both on a macro- and micro-scale), knowledge about generations is gaining importance.

The aim of this article is to assess the position of particular generations on the labour market in Poland. This issue has therefore been analysed in a manner that differs slightly from the usual one – neither do the considerations focus on a comparison of values or attitudes towards work, nor on solutions that build engagement of employees belonging to different generations (these problems are discussed for example in: Murphy, 2007; Twenge et al., 2010; Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 2013; Joshi, Dencker and Franz, 2011; Parry, 2014; Wiktorowicz et al., 2017; Warwas, Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2016, Wojtaszczyk, 2016, Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2014). The term ‘position on the labour market’ is most often used interchangeably with the notion of ‘a situation on the labour market’ (cf., e.g., Graniewska, Balcerzak-Paradowska, 2016) and this is the meaning adopted in this work. It should be noted, however, that some of the authors (cf., e.g., Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2013) divide these two areas as dimensions of the professional situation, assuming that the economic activity and its components (including unemployment), structure of the employed according to the level of education and career paths (including type of work performed and professional mobility), and perceiving occupational position in terms of the form of employment, wages (including financial expectations) and non-wage benefits, positions occupied, employees’ development (including access to promotion and training). Some of the issues mentioned (such as the form of employment or access to promotion and training) can also be analysed from the occupational safety perspective and this is also the case dealt with in this article.

The present paper is predominantly empirical and serves to quantify the professional situation/position of workers from different generations. Of the above-mentioned areas, only issues related to remuneration for work – as they are closely related to motivating employees –

have been omitted since they require evaluation through the prism of employees' values, attitudes and expectations, which goes beyond the scope of this work. The statistical analysis was carried out with the application of the individual Social Diagnosis 2015 data.

## 2. Generation – a theoretical approach

The generation category, in the sense it was adopted to be used in economic and social sciences, was shaped at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly by Dilthey, Ortega y Gasset, Mannheim and Siemmel (Kunz, 2011: 13; Mannheim, 1992/1993). Usually associated with the concept of generation, this term is used to develop the typology of the population. As Szukalski writes (2012: 12-13), four approaches to defining a generation can be distinguished: (1) applied in anthropology, based on the family units ties and roles, (2) typical of social policy, including primarily (potential) economic activity, (3) close to demographic and economic analyses, treating a generation as a group of people of similar age, i.e. those born within the same period, usually analysed from a one-year or five-year-long perspective, and (4) referring to cultural similarity, based on common values and *Weltanschauung*, shaped by the socio-political context of the individuals' upbringing.

Ossowska (1963: 47-51) indicates that the generation can be defined in five ways: (1) as a link in a genealogical series – the generation is then determined by the biological relationship between parents and children and a place in the relationship that comes from the ancestors (allows describing a generation in the structure of family life); (2) as a link in the cultural sequence – distinguished by the division of social roles analogous to parents-children relationship, e.g. teacher-student; (3) as a set of people of similar age, defined in a third part of a century; therefore, the assumption is made that the father is on average 33 years older than children; (4) as a set of people at particular life stages, e.g. children, young adults, old people; this is, therefore, an a-historic approach, enabling comparisons of analogous age groups in diverse societies and periods; (5) as a community of attitudes and hierarchies of values attributed to common experiences – a historical approach, people are connected with the specific dates of the historical process.

Contemporary definitions of the term 'generation' are used to integrate the approaches discussed. Quoting Greise (1996: 80), "a generation is considered to be the sum of all people belonging to a given cultural circle of a more or less equal age, which, based on a common

historical and social situation, display a similarity of attitudes, motivations and value systems.” From the perspective of the subject of this paper, this approach is the most satisfactory. The most common reference made in the research on generational diversity, especially in the context of the employment, remains the following: G.I. generation, Traditionalists (veterans), *Baby boomers* (generation of the post-war baby boomers), Generation X, Generation Y and Generation C (also referred to as Z). Tab. 1 presents the frames of individual generations applied in this paper.

**Table 1. Generations in Poland**

Generation	Birth year	Age in 2018 (in years of age)
G.I.	1900 – 1921	97 or more
Traditionalists (T)	1922 – 1945	73 – 96
<i>Baby boomers</i> (BB)	1946 – 1964	54 – 72
X	1965 – 1979	39 – 53
Y	1980 – 1989	29 – 38
C	1990 –	28 or less

Source: own elaboration based on Kołodziejczyk-Olczak, 2014: 80; Woszczyk, 2013; Urbaniak, 2015

Generations Y and C are often treated collectively as the Millennial generation, whereby Generations Y and C are to be further set aside (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014). Howe and Strauss’ (1991) attitude towards defining generations should therefore be endorsed as they generally recommend caution in this matter mainly due to the different historical conditions in different countries and regions. Hence, these limits should be adapted to the conditions of a given country. Considering social, economic and cultural changes, the time frames suggested in Tab. 1 seem relevant in the case of Poland.

### 3. Data and methods

The employment analysis amongst the employees representing individual generations was performed with the application of the publicly available specific data of the Social Diagnosis 2015 ([www.diagnoza.com](http://www.diagnoza.com)). The survey was conducted periodically, at two-year-long intervals – the last edition took place in 2015. It comprises a nationwide survey, representative both nationally and in individual voivodeships. The sample covered a total of 22,220 people aged 16+, and its structure reflects that of the population in terms of age, sex, educational level, place of residence size and voivodeship. This article focuses primarily on the assessment of the

situation of employees (i.e. wage earners, private entrepreneurs and farmers), that is the sample of 11,443 respondents.

The statistical analysis was carried out using basic statistical tests applied to compare the populations, in particular the chi-square independence test (or alternatively Fisher's exact test) and a one-way analysis of variance. A multifactor analysis of variance was also used and it allowed quantitative phenomena to be assessed with a simultaneous consideration of several qualitative factors. This, then, enabled to make an assessment of both the simple effects of individual factors and the effects of their interaction (Walesiak and Gatnar, 2009: 112). The affiliation to particular generation has been considered an important stratification criterion.

For simplicity, the two-factor analysis of variance can be written as follows (Szymczak, 2010: 241):

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + \alpha_i + \beta_j + \gamma_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ijk} ,$$

$\alpha_i$  – the main effect of the first factor (with the hypotheses –  $H_0: \alpha_1 = \alpha_2 = \dots = \alpha_K$  to  $H_1: \sim H_0$ ),  $\beta_j$  – the main effect of the second factor ( $H_0: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \dots = \beta_J$  to  $H_1: \sim H_0$ ),  $\gamma_{ij}$  – the factors' interaction effect understood as the combined indissoluble influence of both factors on the dependent variable ( $H_0: \gamma_{11} = \gamma_{21} = \dots = \gamma_{KJ}$  to  $H_1: \sim H_0$ ),  $\varepsilon_{ijk}$  – experimental error,  $i$  – the number of the first factor variant,  $j$  – the number of the second factor variant,  $k$  – the number of observation. The partial eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) was used to evaluate the strength of the given effect. Eta-squared can be defined as the proportion of variance associated with or accounted for by each of the main effects, interactions, and error in an ANOVA study (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001: 54-55), and the partial eta-squared include can be defined as the ratio of variance accounted for by an effect and that effect plus its associated error variance within an ANOVA study. The closer to 1  $\eta^2$  is, the stronger the effect of a given variable. The study adopted the standard significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The calculations were performed in PS IMAGO SPSS.

#### 4. The case of the individual generations on the labour market in Poland

Referring to the Social Diagnosis 2015 data, it can be indicated that nearly 1/3 of the people in the 16+ age group (i.e. the population that can have its share in the labour market) come from *Baby boomers'* generation, and every fourth Pole belongs to Generation X (Tab. 2). Considering the lower (in comparison with women) average life expectancy of men over the 50 or 65 years of age, women quite clearly prevail in the three oldest generations.

**Table 2. Structure of the Polish population aged 16+ by generation in 2015 (in %, n = 22220)**

Sex	Generations						Total
	C	Y	X	BB	T	GI	
Men	7.3	9.2	11.9	14.1	4.4	0.0	46.9
Women	7.2	9.5	12.2	16.8	7.3	0.1	53.1
Total	14.4	18.7	24.0	30.9	11.7	0.1	100.0

Source: own calculations based on the individual data of the *Social Diagnosis 2015*

The vast majority of Poles from Generations X and Y are economically active, and the share of the unemployed is similar in their case (6.7 - 7.7%). On the other hand, over a half of *Baby boomers* are economically inactive, whereas, among those at working age, only slightly more than every third person from Generation C is economically active, still, with more or less every fifth being unemployed. Also considering the working population, the differences between generations are significant (in the statistical sense) – nearly 80% of the working people from Generation C remain employed in the private sector (compared to 2/3 of the Ys, roughly half of the Xs and 41% of the BBs). The public sector is the mainstay, especially for the BB generation – 1/3 of the workers from this generation (against only 11% of the people from Generation C). Agriculture, as well as running a business, are clearly more common in the case of older generations.

**Table 3. Economic activity of people aged 16+ by generations in 2015 (in %)**

Status on the labour market	C (n=3200)	Y (n=4153)	X (n=5322)	BB (n=6858)	T (n=2593)	Total (n=22126)
Workers – public sector	3.2	16.8	21.0	13.8	0.1	12.9
Workers – private sector	23.3	51.7	43.3	17.2	0.1	28.8
Entrepreneurs	1.1	5.8	8.0	4.9	0.1	4.7
Farmers	2.1	4.4	9.2	6.1	0.1	5.2
<b>Employed (total)</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>41.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>51.6</b>
Unemployed	7.3	7.7	6.7	4.4	0.0	5.5
<b>Economically active (total)</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>57.1</b>
<b>Economically inactive (total)</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>42.9</b>

Source: own calculations based on the individual data of the *Social Diagnosis 2015*

The low level of economic activity in Generation C is associated primarily with continuous education – 51.7% of the people aged 15-28. Additionally, last year, 28% of the representatives of this generation had difficulty in finding a job after graduation. In the case of 1/3 of the *Baby boomers*, the reason for inactivity is retirement, for 11.9% – annuity (similar proportion of pensioners can be found in the Traditionalist group). Due to their age, all the representatives of G.I. generation are economically inactive (hence the omission of the group in Tab. 3; the last two generations, since they are rare on the labour market, will be excluded from the analyses in the following considerations).

Analysing the occupational structure from the generations' perspective (Tab. 4), significant differences can be noticed. Specialists comprise the largest group in the labour market (nearly 20%) with an equal share (about 38%) of the representatives of Generation X (which is not surprising given the fact that this is the largest group on the labour market), as well as Generation Y (here, specialists constitute the most frequently occurring group of employees – over one-fourth). Generally speaking, the share of the representatives of Generations X and Y is similar not only in the case of specialists, but also office workers, and, though to a lesser extent, technicians and middle personnel, as well as employees of personal services and salespeople (about 30%). The second largest group encompasses industrial workers and craftsmen – in 2015, it included as many as 21.6% of the working people from Generation C compared with about 15% of the other generations (although within this professional group only one in ten is a representative of Generation C, and 40% – of Xs). People from the youngest generation work primarily as personal service employees and salespersons (23% of them, 15% of this professional group). In turn, a similar degree of employment in all professional groups can be noticed in the case of individuals from the oldest generation – except for the two least numerous, i.e. office workers and representatives of the authorities, senior officials and managers. It should be noted that when it comes to the last group, their share is still the highest compared with the other generations. On the other hand, amongst the population employed for the simple jobs, the *Baby boomers* generation constitutes 36.6% – every tenth *Baby boomers* representative works this way. Moreover, compared with the other generations, they oftener work as farmers, gardeners or fishermen (15.5%) – Tab. 4.

**Table 4. Structure of the employed by professional groups and generations in Poland in 2015 (% , n = 11443)<sup>a</sup>**

Specification	Professional group = 100 <sup>b</sup>				Generation =100 <sup>c</sup>				Total
	C	Y	X	BB	C	Y	X	BB	
Representatives of the authorities, senior officials and managers	2.3	25.1	43.2	29.5	1.4	4.5	5.8	6.0	5.1
Specialists	3.8	37.9	37.9	20.4	9.0	26.6	19.8	16.1	19.9
Technicians and other mid-level staff	7.0	31.8	36.4	24.8	9.6	12.6	10.7	11.1	11.3
Office workers	9.9	34.0	35.8	20.3	8.1	8.1	6.3	5.4	6.7
Personal service workers and salespeople	15.1	28.5	35.5	20.9	23.0	12.6	11.7	10.5	12.6
Farmers, gardeners and fishermen	5.5	16.7	41.5	36.3	7.2	6.3	11.7	15.5	10.8
Industrial workers and craftsmen	10.7	26.2	40.8	22.3	21.6	15.4	17.8	14.8	16.7
Machine and device operators and assemblers	10.2	25.8	37.6	26.4	12.2	8.9	9.7	10.3	9.8
Simple job workers	9.3	19.9	34.2	36.6	7.9	4.9	6.3	10.2	7.0

<sup>a</sup> The higher the saturation of the background colour, the greater the importance of the group (the higher share of Poles in the particular professional group/generation). <sup>b</sup> The overall size of the subpopulations of particular occupational groups was accepted as 100%. <sup>c</sup> The overall size of the subpopulations of particular generation was accepted as 100%. The relation between belonging to occupational groups and generations is statistically significant (in the chi-square independence test used here,  $p < 0.001^*$ ).

Source: own calculations based on the individual data of the *Social Diagnosis 2015*

Analysing in more detail the professions popular with particular generations, firstly, a significant concentration in some groups can be noticed (Tab. 5). Salespeople definitely comprise the largest category in the case of Generation C (15.2%) and Generation Y (however with a lower percentage – 9.2%). On the other hand, in the case of *Baby boomers* and Generation X, an extensive category of farmers in plant and animal production comes to the fore. Since a significant part of Generation C are still undergoing the process of education, professions not requiring specialist knowledge and higher education dominate here – apart from salespeople, more often than in the case of older generations they work as waiters, bartenders or stewards (4.3%), but also as simple jobs workers (5.4%) and electricians or electronic engineers (2.3%). In contrast, baby boomers attract attention with their high percentage employed in extremely different positions – as helpers and cleaners (5.2%), and managers (5.1%) (the highest



diversification related to the level of human capital). The *Baby boomers* generation is also the only one with such a high share of nurses and midwives (2.5%, the 10th among the most popular professions). In the case of Generation Y, certain consideration is given to the incomparably high proportion of those employed as engineers, architects, designers and similar (5.3%, ranking the 3rd) and marketing specialists (2.8%, the 7th position). For Generations Y and C, professions within the sphere of IT comprise an important group (2.6-2.8% of the employees). On the whole, lower IT competences found in older generations (especially those holding lower education) accompanied by a higher share of those with basic vocational education at the most (almost half of the working *Baby boomers*) (Wiktorowicz, 2016: 83-84, 89-105) result in BB representing only 8.5% of the total of this important professional group today.

**Table 5. Main occupations by generations in 2015 (in %, n = 11443)**

no.	C	Y	X	BB
1	salespeople (15.2%)	salespeople (9.2%)	farmers in plant and animal production (8.3%)	farmers in plant and animal production (10.6%)
2	farmers in plant and animal production (5.6%)	office workers (5.8%)	salespeople (7.7%)	cleaners and helpers (5.2%)
3	office workers (5.4%)	engineers, architects, designers and related (5.3%)	managers of various specialties (4.8%)	managers of various specialties (5.1%)
4	other simple jobs workers (5.4%)	farmers in plant and animal production (4.1%)	office workers (4.5%)	salespeople (4.7%)
5	operators of other machines and devices (4.9%)	managers of various specialties (4.0%)	primary school teachers (3.4%)	office workers (3.7%)
6	waiters, bartenders and stewards (4.3%)	operators of other machines and devices (3.1%)	construction workers (final outfitting) (2.9%)	farmers in plant production (3.6%)
7	construction workers (final outfitting) (4.3%)	marketing specialists (2.9%)	other simple jobs workers (2.9%)	other simple jobs workers (3.5%)
8	construction workers – shell building (3.2%)	primary school teachers (2.8%)	truck and bus drivers (2.5%)	mid-level financial personnel (3.2%)
9	record and transport employees (2.8%)	IT specialists and related (2.8%)	engineers, architects, designers and related (2.5%)	primary school teachers (2.8%)
10	blacksmiths and locksmiths (2.8%)	mid-level financial personnel (2.8%)	cleaners and helpers (2.4%)	nurses and midwives (2.5%)
11	mechanics of machines and devices (2.7%)	administration and management specialists (2.7%)	secondary school teachers (2.4%)	operators of other machines and devices (2.5%)
12	IT specialists and related (2.6%)	other healthcare specialists (2.5%)	construction workers – shell building (2.4%)	car and van drivers (2.3%)
13	other healthcare specialists (2.3%)	agents, trade and business agents (2.5%)	farmers in plant production (2.3%)	security service employees (firemen, police officers and related) (2.3%)
14	electricians and electronic engineers (2.3%)	record and transport employees (2.4%)	agents, trade and business agents (2.3%)	blacksmiths and locksmiths (2.2%)
15	woodworking workers, paper makers, carpenters	construction workers (final outfitting) (2.4%)	food processing workers (2.1%)	construction workers – shell building (2.1%)

	(2.3%)		
16	construction workers – shell building (2.3%)		truck and bus drivers (2.1%)
17	other simple jobs workers (2.3%)		
18	mechanics of machines and devices (2.3%)		
19	farmers in plant production (2.2%)		

The table lists professions with the share of employees within a given generation exceeding 2%.

Source: own calculations based on the individual data of the *Social Diagnosis 2015*

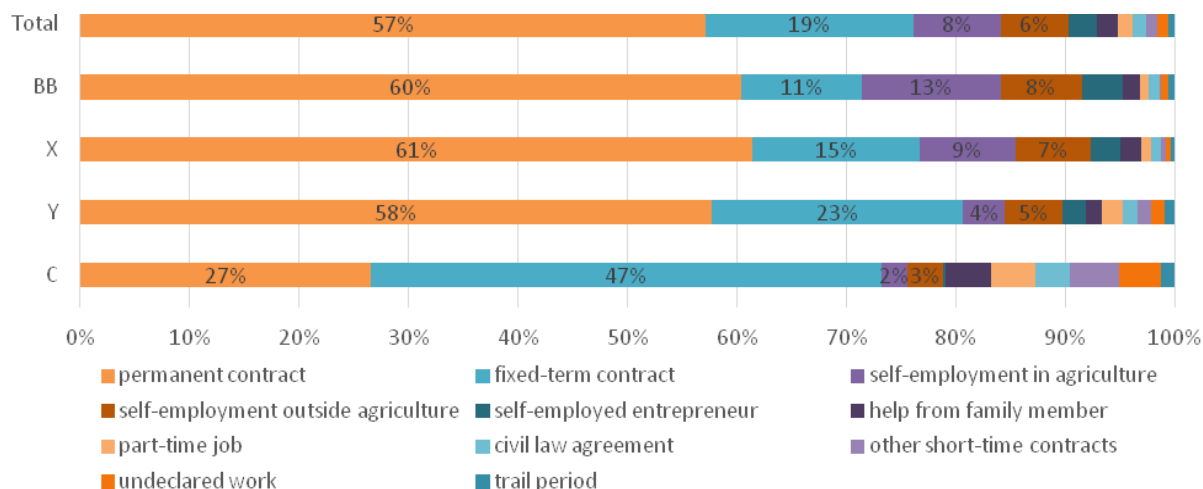
Analysing the generations' structure from the professional perspective and comparing the participation of individual generations within the realm of the specific occupations, it should be noted that soon the effects of failing to provide a generational balance will come to the fore and will be experienced with a great force. This applies in particular to nurses and midwives – as many as half of them belong to *Baby boomers*, 42% – to Generation X (3/4 are at least 45 years old), and barely 10% recruit from younger generations. Similar problems concern railway workers (54% of them are *Baby boomers*, 39% – Generation X) and chefs (respectively, 36% and 38%). Other difficulties will have to be faced amongst the 'other employees of personal services' group (2/3 are *Baby boomers*, only 15% - the Ys and the Cs), textile workers, drivers (cars, vans, trucks and buses), agricultural professions and craftsmen (only 20-25% of people belong to Generations Y or C). We are already witnessing the disappearance of some professions of not necessarily niche importance. In addition to systemic solutions encouraging interest in education in these fields, also at the organisation level, more intensive activities should be implemented to transfer the older employees' specialist knowledge to younger generations.

Generations Y and C differ significantly, especially from *Baby boomers*, but also from the Xs in terms of the workplace ownership sector. 89% of the employees from Generation C are employed in the private sector as compared with 79% of the Ys, 73% of the Xs and 66% of the BBs. The state and local government sector is definitely more important for the BBs (respectively, 27% and 5.6%) and the Xs (21% and 4.9%) than for the Ys (18% and 3.2%) and the Cs (7.5% and 3.2%).

## 5. Employment conditions by generation

Analysing the working conditions, features that from the employee's perspective determine employment security should be considered in the first place. In the traditional context, labour stability and employment conditions are first to be mentioned here, form of employment included (Szymańska-Brałkowska, Zieliński, 2012). A full time permanent contract is generally accepted as a guarantee of the employee's greatest security. From the perspective of the *flexicurity* model, in turn, employment security is understood as the ability to find a job quickly instead of a 'job security.' In individual terms, the flexible and predictable conditions of employment contracts and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies are the most important (MPiPS, 2009: 3). In studies on retaining the economic activity of the labour market oldest participants, flexible employment forms and work time arrangements comprise a vital and most often indicated instrument – although the employees in this group expect traditionally understood employment security, i.e. permanent contract of employment. As can be inferred from the data presented in Fig. 1, 60% of the *Baby boomers* (similarly to people from Generations X and Y) work under such a contract. A completely different situation is encountered in the case of Generation C – only 27% work under a permanent contract, and almost a half – under a fixed-term contract. In the case of the youngest generations (especially C) employment based on other short-term contracts is also significantly more important (4.5% for the Cs and 1.3% to 0.2-0.4% for the other ones) and civil law (3.1% for the Cs and 1.3% for the Ys to 0.7- 0.9% for the other ones), as well as part-time jobs (4.1% for the Cs and 1.5% for the Ys, respectively) and undeclared work (3.8% for the Cs, 1.2% for the Ys to 0.5-0.6% for the others). Considering *Baby boomers*, the share of self-employment in agriculture, and to a lesser extent also outside it, is clearly higher than in the case of the other generations.

**Figure 1. Form of employment by generations in 2015 – Poles (in %, n = 11443)**



Source: own calculations based on the individual data of the *Social Diagnosis 2015*

For the vast majority of employees from Generations BB, X and Y (93-96%), current work is a full-time job. In the case of Generation C, this percentage is lower, although still high (84%). Part-time work is more popular with women than men, and the largest differences between the sexes relate to Generation C (13 percentage points against 5 percentage points for the others). Yet, the main reasons for working part-time differentiate the groups. Difficulty in finding a full-time job has been pointed out by 30% of the people from Generation C (against 41-47% of people from the other generations) and for the Ys and the Xs it concerns men more often than women, whereas this is the opposite for the Cs and the BBs. For approximately 16% of the people from Generations Y and X (almost exclusively women) the main reason is the inability to provide adequate care for children (it is practically irrelevant for the Cs and the BBs), and for 3% the BBs and 1% of the Xs – lack of such care for ill people. In turn, 10% of Generation Y against 16-19% of the others express no intention to work full-time. As many as a half of the people from Generation C (against 21-31% of the others) pointed to other reasons. In addition, only 3-6% of people perform additional work (from 3% for Generation C to 6% for the Xs). Additional work is carried out (regardless of the generation), primarily in the private sector.

Over the last year, 3.2% of the employed from Generation C experienced a transfer to a worse position (a similar situation took place in the case of 1.5-1.8% from the other generations), and every tenth Millennial against 5% the Xs and less than 2% of the BBs won a professional promotion. On the other hand, representatives of Generation C more often experienced

discrimination on the grounds of their nationality, appearance or beliefs (3.2% compared to about 1.5% for the others).

As emphasised, from the *flexicurity* point of view, social security is understood as the ease of finding a new job supported by lifelong learning. When comparing generations from the point of view of improving qualifications in the period of the last two years, there has been a clear decline in the interest of raising competences in the succeeding, older generations. In the case of Generation C, the improvement of qualifications concerns 31.4% of the employed, for the Ys – 15.6%, for the Xs – 14.65, and for the BBs – only 8.4%. Considering Generation C, this is the result of a substantial number of people remaining in the school education system (1/3 are being educated in vocational and general schools, 44% – at universities, BA, MA or PhD). More or less every third person in this generation also participates in various forms of extracurricular education, but the percentage is much lower here than in the case of other generations. Approximately 60% of the workers from Generations X and BB and about 40% from Generation Y (against only 15% of the Cs) took part in training courses financed by the employer. In addition, roughly every tenth person in Generations Y, X and BB (and only 2% of the Cs) participated in courses financed from the ESF, and – respectively – 15-20% (against 6% of the Cs) – in self-financed courses. From this point of view, the employment security of all generations can therefore be assessed similarly. The lower share of Generation C in courses and trainings is associated, on the one hand, with remaining in the school education system (while developing an educational and professional career), on the other, lower level of education of those who have already left the educational system (and thus lower inclination to pursue education).

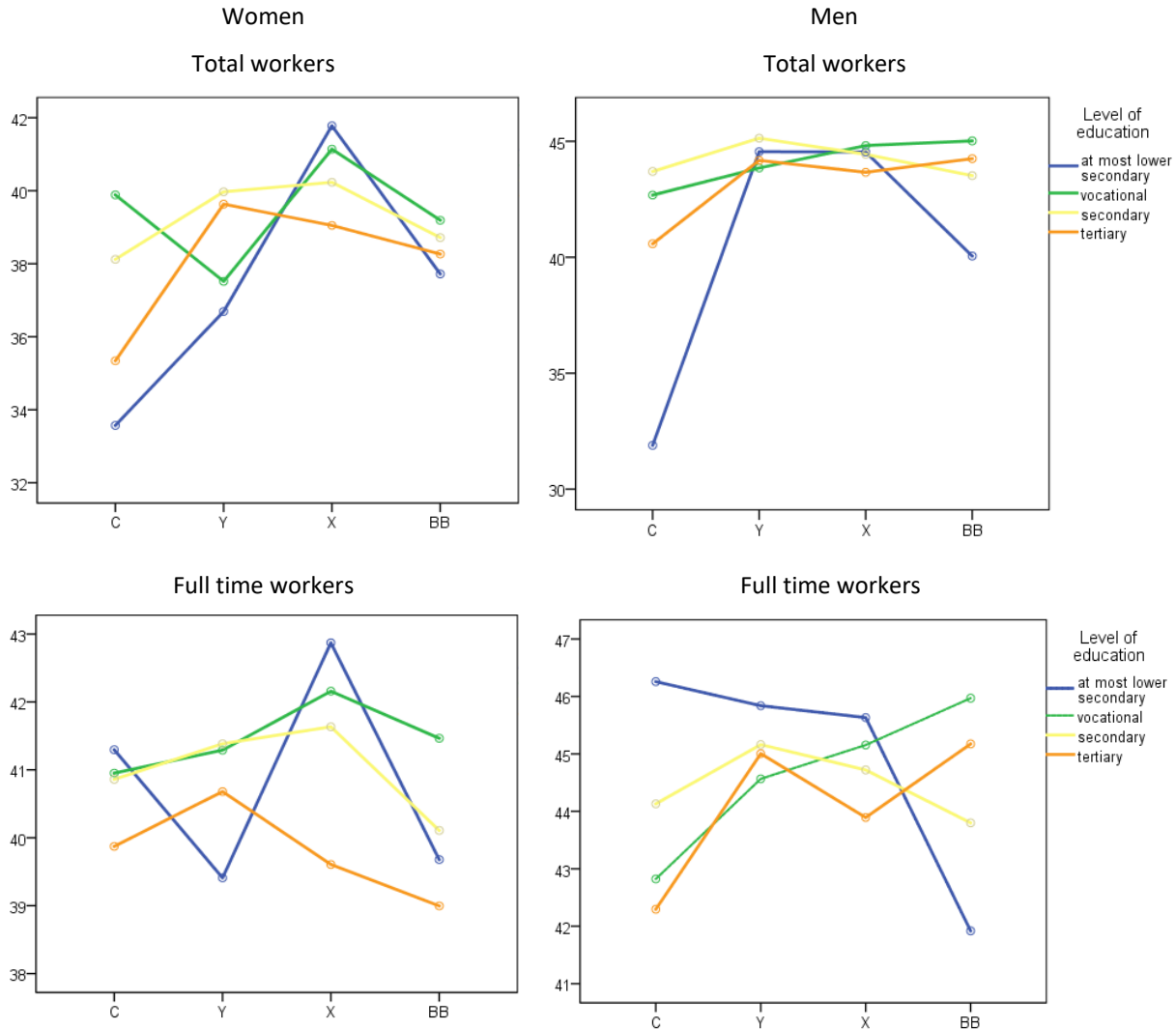
## **6. Generational workload and work-life balance**

The existing research on generations clearly indicates differences in the approach to reconciling work and private life. For many baby boomers, work is a value in itself (Wojtaszczyk, 2016). In Poland, representatives of this generation are people who first worked during socialism, then they participated in the systemic transformation and built a free market economy – work is an inherent element of life for them (Wiktorowicz, 2016: 73). They respect work because if they lose a job, they may have trouble finding it again (Urbaniak, 2018). In turn, Generation X identifies professional success with hard, goal-oriented work, which is why its

representatives can dedicate themselves to it, diligently performing their duties and subordinating their private lives to work. They are often workaholics, and they are also frequently burnt out professionally. They feel the need for work-life balance (WLB) but postpone it till retirement (Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013). Job security and stability are more important for them than for the next generations (Murphy, 2007: 15-17; Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 2013: 61-153). They derive their motivation from job satisfaction. People from Generation Y prefer private life to professional success, they do not want to sacrifice themselves for their jobs, and flexibility of working time is important for them. They are more mobile and it is easier for them to change jobs (Ng, Schweitzer, Lyons, 2010; Baran, Kłos, 2014). They are reluctant to take a job if it does not allow them to maintain a balance between work and personal life (Biesaga-Słomczewska, Kaczorowska, 2014; Twenge et al., 2010). Generation C people have many characteristics similar to Generation Y, although they are more socially oriented and open to diversity (Wiktorowicz et al., 2016: 101). Similarly to Generation Y, also in the case of Generation C, it is important for its representatives to have enough free time to follow their passion (Warwas, Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2016). They are not advocates of long-term career building. In professional life, they want to follow the same values as in their private life – both spheres form one whole for them (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014).

From the perspective of WLB, let us therefore make an attempt to quantify the involvement of individual generations in work. Workload, measured by the average number of working hours per week, is higher for Generations X (arithmetic mean  $M = 42.4$  hours and standard deviation  $STD = 10.1$ ) and Y ( $M = 42.2$ ,  $STD = 9.4$ ) than for BB ( $M = 41.6$ ,  $STD = 10.5$ ), and especially for Generation C ( $M = 39.6$ ,  $STD = 11.0$ ).

**Figure 2. Average working time per week broken down by generations in 2015 (in hours, n = 11443)**



Source: own calculations based on the individual data of the *Social Diagnosis 2015*

The constructed multi-factor model of variance analysis confirms a significant impact of generations, also assuming a stable (for all the employed) level of education and gender ( $p < 0.001^*$ ), although the strength of this effect is not too great (partial  $\eta^2$  amounts to only 0.009). The effect of generation and gender interaction is also significant ( $p = 0.008^*$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.001$ ), as well as the effect of generation and the level of education ( $p < 0.001^*$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.007$ ), and the effect of generation, gender and education interaction ( $p = 0.029^*$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.002$ ). Thus, the disparities existing between the generations from the point of view of working time are different for women and men, people with different levels of education, as well as for women/men with different

levels of education. In the case of men, the working time is the lowest compared to all the other generations for people with lower secondary or even lower level of education from Generation C (slightly over 30 hours), followed by BB representatives ( $M = 37.4$ ) (these differences are statistically significant). The average number of working hours per week of people with basic vocational, secondary and higher education is analogous for all generations – in the light of post hoc tests for simple effects, significant differences are recorded only between Generations Y and BB representatives holding secondary education (the latter generation is characterised by lesser workload), as well as Generation C representatives in relation to those belonging to Generations Y and BB (Generation C has less workload). Moreover, on average, working time exceeds 40 hours per week for them – even by up to 5 hours (Fig. 2). Larger differences are observed in the case of women – their average working time does not exceed 40 hours for most sub-populations. Women with basic vocational or lower secondary education from Generation X are characterised by the longest working hours (about 41-42 hours), the shortest – women from Generation C with the level of education no higher than lower secondary ( $M = 33.6$  hours) and higher (35.3 hours). If only full-time employees are taken into account (Fig. 2), then the interaction effect of all the three factors is not significant (only the effect of generation and education level interaction turns out to be significant) ( $p < 0.001^*$ ). Generation Y people have relatively rarely felt in recent months that their work is too burdensome, dirty or dangerous (46% indicated that it never happens). In turn, Generations BB and X representatives, more often than the Cs and the Ys, feel the burden of excessive work responsibilities, which they are unable to cope with – about 8% of the people thought that this happens often, 53% that this has happened in recent months, while for Millennials analogous percentages amount to 6.4-7.3% and 45-47% , respectively.

As for the preferred WLB instruments, the expectations of all generations are similar. When asked about the three most important solutions that would facilitate reconciliation of work and family responsibilities, including parental ones, the most frequently indicated was flexible working time (for approx. 60% of the people within each generation). Generation Y also clearly point to the possibility of external childcare for children under the age of 7 (33% vs. 25-29% for the others) and the opportunity to do part of the work at home (28% against 23-25% for the others), and along with Generation C – to a longer paid parental leave (27% for the Cs and 25% for the Ys compared to 20-23% for the BBs). More free days per week is the least significant element in the opinion of *Baby boomers* (16% vs. 21-23% for the others), while Generation Y



representatives more often (15%) indicate the possibility of sharing parental leave with the father of the child (11-13% for the others).

## 7. Discussion and final remarks

The generation-based approach to labour market resources has its supporters as well as opponents. Excessive generalisation, which can lead to stereotyping, is indicated as one of weaknesses of this approach. The indicated weaknesses of individual generations often constitute a barrier to entry into organisations, particularly when the level of management processes is not too high. This especially applies to the youngest and oldest generations. According to Jeran (2016), “descriptions of 'Generation Y' representatives seem focused on proving to employers that they will have difficult employees – disloyal, entitled, valuing themselves more than the company”. In turn, the stereotypical perception of an employee from the *Baby boomers* generation leads to such erroneous phrases as “it is not worth investing in BB employees, they will leave soon”, “older people should only do simple jobs”, “older workers are useless and should retire”, or “BB employees do not like changes, they are apathetic” (Stankiewicz, 2016: 66-72). Each employee is, however, an independent individual and does not necessarily fit in general descriptions of the generations. Nevertheless, one cannot say that the generational approach does not make sense. Sociologists are right in saying that the conditions that shaped us into becoming adults have their impact and leave an ‘imprint’ on our approach to many matters, including professional ones. What is rightly raised as a flaw of research on the generations is the fact that although such studies are often carried out on unrepresentative samples, limited to small populations, to only one generation, and are conducted among narrow populations (very often – students, both full-time and part-time) ), the results are generalised in a much broader sense. In this context, it should be emphasised that the results presented in this study have a representative character for all Poles from the analysed generations.

The obtained results have cognitive and applicative values. First of all, the assessment of the situation in the labour market confirms the existence of differences between generations, which may constitute a determinant of policy towards employees of different ages, both at the macro- and microeconomic level. It has been shown that different regularities are observed from the point of view of total professional activity and its components. It is not surprising, given the fact that the time devoted to school education has increased, which results in the later entry of

Generation C onto the labour market. The lack of sufficient financial resources means that there are fewer entrepreneurs among its representatives compared to older generations. In addition, jobs in the public sector are not readily available to them, as the positions are occupied by representatives of older generations (especially the BBs and the Xs). The empirical analyses allow only indicating the occurrence of this type of regularities, without explaining their causes. Considering the availability of Social Diagnosis data regarding professed values, propensity for risk, etc., it is certainly worth analysing this type of dependences in subsequent studies.

It should be noted that different regularities are observed not only in terms of economic activity but that the structure of the employed in terms of the type of work performed is also different. As mentioned earlier, this situation does not necessarily reflect discrimination against Generation C and *Baby boomers* on the labour market, and this was not the message conveyed by this thread of analysis. Let us emphasise once again that the results presented in the paper concern solely the employed. As shown earlier (Tab. 1), the youngest people are usually still studying – 2/3 of them are economically inactive, and a similarly high percentage of inactive people (this time due to retirement) is observed among *Baby boomers*. This limits the study population to the working population from these two generations, excluding the elderly in the first place, and among the youngest – narrowing the analysis of the employed primarily to people with education no higher than secondary (only 21% had higher education in 2015) compared to 51% for Generation Y, 31% for Generation X, and (comparable to the Cs) 20% for the BBs. Nearly 50% of people from Generation C have secondary education, although, surprisingly, only 26% of them were raising their qualifications at the same time. In general, at the time of the study, 31% of the working people of this generation were improving their qualifications. Contrary to what one might think while observing the economic life, the working representatives of Generation C are definitely not only students, persons participating in internships or working in a casual way (the proportion of such people is bigger than in the case of the other generations, although also small – 4%). It should be agreed, however, that the professional group dominant in this generation, i.e. salespersons, is the most frequently encountered among those working and at the same time attending upper secondary schools (especially secondary vocational schools), while in the case of university students, the diversification is much greater – no position is pointed to with a much higher frequency, and relatively more often the positions associated with the provision of office support are indicated.

Importantly, from this perspective, it can be seen that there clearly arises the problem of shortage occupations associated with generational change, which creates the need to take systemic actions and implement intergenerational solutions at the organisational level. From the point of view of job security, it can be said that the most difficult situation is experienced by Poles from the youngest generation (C), for whom an employment contract for an indefinite period is a rare occurrence. Nevertheless, their high professional mobility and willingness to prove themselves at work without having long-term obligations mean that for most of these people this kind of approach is not such a serious problem as for older generations (especially since they mostly still live with parents and/or are financially supported by them). On the other hand, representatives of this generation invest to a large extent in the further development of their competences, which will increase their chances of employment (it can be said that in a broader sense their job security in the labour market is not affected more than that of other generations). This can be confirmed by the generally good and similar for all generations assessment of job satisfaction – approx. 84% of the employees are satisfied with their work, although the very satisfied percentage is even higher for Millennials (10-12%) than Generations X and BB representatives (7-8%). This is probably related to the WLB approach, which means that younger generations attach much more importance to the sphere of private life.

Comparing individual generations from the point of view of their situation in the labour market, one cannot forget that they were raised in different environmental conditions, accompanied by different historical and cultural events, and that also other determinants shaped their professional paths at their very beginning. In the case of older generations, an educational career (understood in accordance with the approach used by demographers as a certain process in the life cycle (Szukalski, 2012: 83)) constituted a much shorter part of the entire life cycle than is currently the case. Attitudes towards education were different, and also the availability of adequate infrastructure was incomparably smaller. This obviously results in a lower level of education of older generations compared to younger ones, and taking into account the fact that it is a control factor for many phenomena characterising the occupational situation, it generates significant differences between generations.

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### ***Sytuacja pokoleń na rynku pracy w Polsce***

#### ***Streszczenie***

Współczesny rynek pracy zmienia się, a jako istotne wyzwanie dla organizacji postrzega się m.in. zmiany generacyjne. W miejscu pracy spotykają się obecnie cztery pokolenia, podczas gdy jeszcze niedawno były to dwie generacje. Biorąc pod uwagę rosnące znaczenie kapitału ludzkiego jako ważnego czynnika wzrostu gospodarczego, wiedza na temat generacji zyskuje na znaczeniu. Celem artykułu jest ocena pozycji poszczególnych pokoleń na rynku pracy w Polsce. Analiza statystyczna przeprowadzona została z wykorzystaniem indywidualnych danych Diagnozy Społecznej 2015 i pozwala na dokonanie ilościowej oceny sytuacji zawodowej pracujących z różnych generacji. Zastosowano podstawowe testy służące porównaniu populacji oraz wieloczynnikową analizę wariancji.

***Słowa kluczowe:*** pokolenia, rynek pracy, analiza wariancji