

At the same time, Cabinet of ministers believes, as it was said by the prime minister, that for the population of Ukraine 340 thousand tonnes of food grain per month is quite enough. Then proceeding from the given above rates of consumption, from 38,9 till 42,5 mln people might live in Ukraine, and in relevance to them all the other indexes, including demographic should be calculated: death rate, fertility, sickness rate and so on.

It follows that, if:

- in 2003 for the dwellers of the towns of Ukraine 2,25 mln tonnes of bread were baked, and according to the official data it doesn't exceed 60 % of the total quantity of bread baked in the country,
- having the official rate of average consumption of bread and grain products per capita which is 128,9 kg
- we can come to the grounded conclusion about the number of citizens of Ukraine living constantly abroad — not less than 5 mln people.

The official data gives the number which is much less, but it is necessary to remind that during many centuries just the data about the consumption of bread was in the Russian empire the basis for demographic statistics.

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REASONS FOR AND CONSEQUENCES OF DIVORCES AND SEPARATIONS OF MARRIAGE IN POLAND IN 1995—2001

1. Introduction

The article takes up the issue of divorce in Poland in 1995—2001 and separation of marriages³² in 2000—2001. The authors analyse the following: reasons for divorce and separation, age of divorced and separated spouses, structure of divorces and separations by duration of marriage, education of divorced and separated spouses, dissolution of marriage by number of children.

They rely on readily available data from *The Demographic Yearbooks* covering the 1996—2002 period, which have proven an invaluable source of information on the issue in question.

2. Divorce and Separation — Related Issues

From 1 January 1946 Polish courts have been declaring the cessation of conjugal relations²³ through divorce on condition that there has

³² See also M. Kuciarska — Ciesielska work of 2003.

been a total and irreparable break-down of marital life, and further that the well-being of minor children does not stand in the way of the dissolution of the marriage. Divorce in Poland has been, and continues to be, a typically urban phenomenon (see F. Adamski, 1994, p. 151).

Separation²⁴, existing alongside divorce, is also sought more often by city dwellers. In Poland courts have started declaring divorce in 2000. Where marital life has ceased altogether, each of the spouses may file a petition with the court for separation of marriage. Yet despite total cessation of marital life the court will refuse separation, if it were to cause harm to spouses' minor children.

The following figure prominently as spouse-engendered reasons for divorce and separation: infidelity, abuse of alcohol, objectionable relation towards the family (causing bodily harm), housing problems, financial misunderstandings, idleness, refusal to have sex, neglecting the family, discrepancy of characters, long absence, desertion by the spouse. Reasons, which are nobody's fault, include: life threatening illness of the spouse or his/her children, sexual deficiency, inability to have sex. Reasons that are either nobody's fault or spouse-engendered consist of infertility, objectionable conduct by spouse's family, age differences, irreconcilable philosophies of life, faulty statements of intent.

The reason for separation, which in European legal systems, including the Polish system, exists side by side with divorce is to prevent the dissolution of marriage. It constitutes an attempt at rescuing the bonds of marriage. Separation, in stark contrast to divorce, does not provide for re-marriage.

3. The picture of the 1995—2001 divorce front in Poland in terms of numbers and reasons in absolute numbers and in percentage terms is outlined in Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3.

Research into the phenomenon of divorce in Poland in 1995—2001 points out to a rise in their number. In order to determine the average increase in the number of divorces in Poland during the period in question, the authors estimated the following linear function of the trend:

²³ Marriage is a life-long union aimed at the pursuit of joint good. Marriage should be permanent and divorce should be allowed in exceptional circumstances only.

²⁴ In family law the institution of separation of marriage (separation of spouses at table and bed) is a legal institution enforceable on the strength of a court ruling, which allows for cancellation of the obligation to engage in marital life but falls short of dissolving the marriage. Thus, in stark contrast to divorce, separation does not allow for the dissolution of marriage but merely for partial voiding of its consequences.

Table 1

DIVORCE BY REASON IN 1995—2001 IN ABSOLUTE VALUE AND AS PERCENTAGE

| Description \ Year | 1995 | | 1996 | | 1997 | | 1998 | | 1999 | | 2000 | | 2001 | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | | In % | | In % | | In % | | In % | | In % | | In % | | In % |
| Total | 38,115 | | 39,449 | | 42,549 | | 45,230 | | 42,020 | | 42,770 | | 45,308 | |
| of which: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Infidelity | 6,695 | 23.67 | 6,462 | 22.66 | 6,552 | 22.50 | 6,780 | 21.93 | 6,058 | 21.50 | 5,815 | 21.09 | 5,910 | 20.23 |
| Alcohol abuse | 6,595 | 23.32 | 6,474 | 22.70 | 6,330 | 21.74 | 6,565 | 21.24 | 5,581 | 19.81 | 4,943 | 17.93 | 5,021 | 17.19 |
| Objectionable relation towards family | 2,977 | 10.53 | 2,878 | 10.09 | 2,794 | 9.59 | 2,817 | 9.11 | 2,399 | 8.52 | 2,253 | 8.17 | 2,458 | 8.42 |
| Housing problems | 147 | 0.52 | 153 | 0.54 | 165 | 0.57 | 117 | 0.38 | 132 | 0.47 | 124 | 0.45 | 132 | 0.45 |
| Financial misunderstandings | 761 | 2.69 | 877 | 3.07 | 962 | 3.30 | 923 | 2.99 | 980 | 3.48 | 1,050 | 3.81 | 1,147 | 3.93 |
| Discrepancy of characters | 9,595 | 33.92 | 10,144 | 35.57 | 11,047 | 37.93 | 12,448 | 40.27 | 11,866 | 42.12 | 12,224 | 44.33 | 13,386 | 45.83 |
| Sexual deficiency | 359 | 1.27 | 336 | 1.18 | 299 | 1.03 | 303 | 0.98 | 252 | 0.89 | 263 | 0.95 | 229 | 0.78 |
| Others | 676 | 2.39 | 644 | 2.26 | 538 | 1.85 | 584 | 1.89 | 506 | 1.80 | 554 | 2.01 | 584 | 2.00 |
| Long absence | 464 | 1.64 | 538 | 1.89 | 418 | 1.44 | 351 | 1.14 | 349 | 1.24 | 319 | 1.16 | 308 | 1.05 |
| Philosophy of life | 15 | 0.05 | 15 | 0.05 | 16 | 0.05 | 26 | 0.08 | 49 | 0.17 | 27 | 0.10 | 33 | 0.11 |

Source: Demographic Yearbook of Poland, GUS, Warsaw, 1996—2002.

$$y_t = 38,250 + \underset{(30.0637)}{989} \cdot t \quad (t = 1, \dots, n),$$

$$R^2 = 0.6285, \quad R = 0.7928, \quad (1)$$

where t is a coded value used to represent the year, and n denotes the number of observations (in this instance $n = 7$).

The parameter estimates contain the calculated t — statistics. Considering that parameter estimates are statistically significant²⁵, at the 5 per cent level, and further that some 62.9 % of the variation of the phenomenon in question was explained by the estimated trend line, one must conclude that the number of divorces in Poland in 1995—2001 grew by an average of nearly 1000 cases annually. The number of divorces and the estimated trend function are presented in Figure 1.

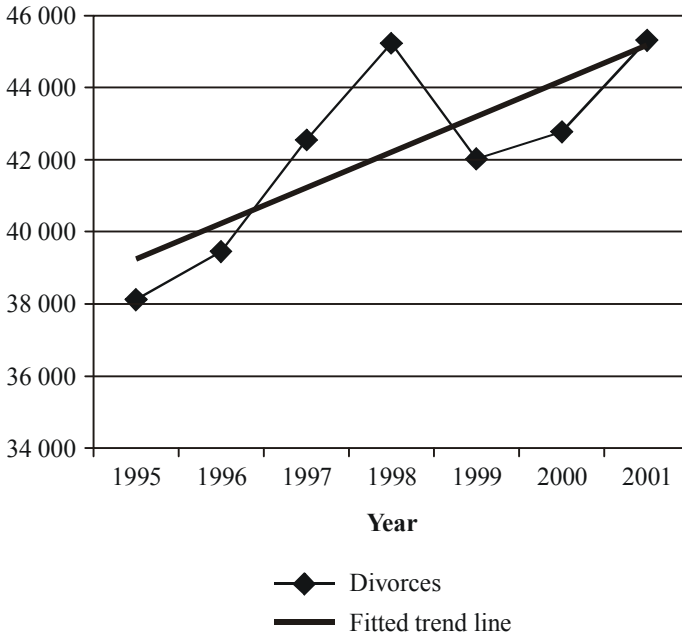


Fig. 1 Linear trend in number of divorces in Poland in 1995—2001

The obtained results confirm that the short term point forecasts can be calculated on the grounds of an estimated trend function.

²⁵ The critical value for a level of significance of $\alpha = 0.05$ and 6 degrees of freedom stands at 2.4469.

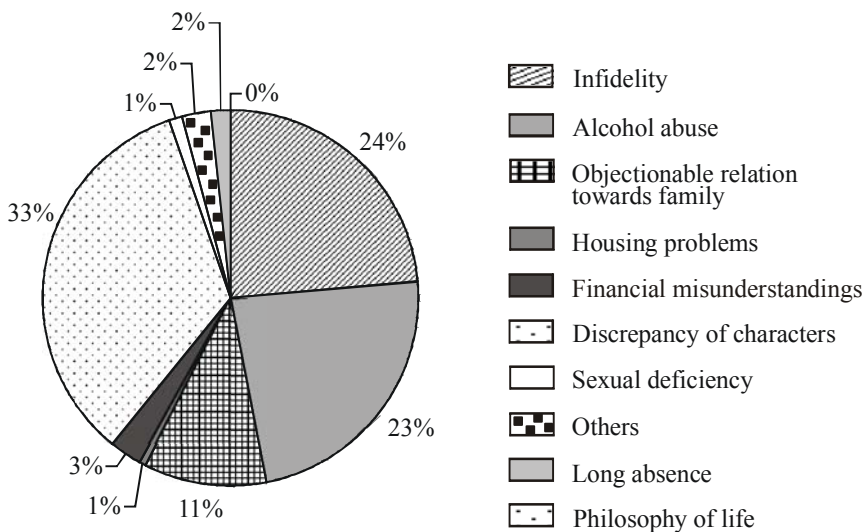


Fig. 2 Divorce by reason in 1995

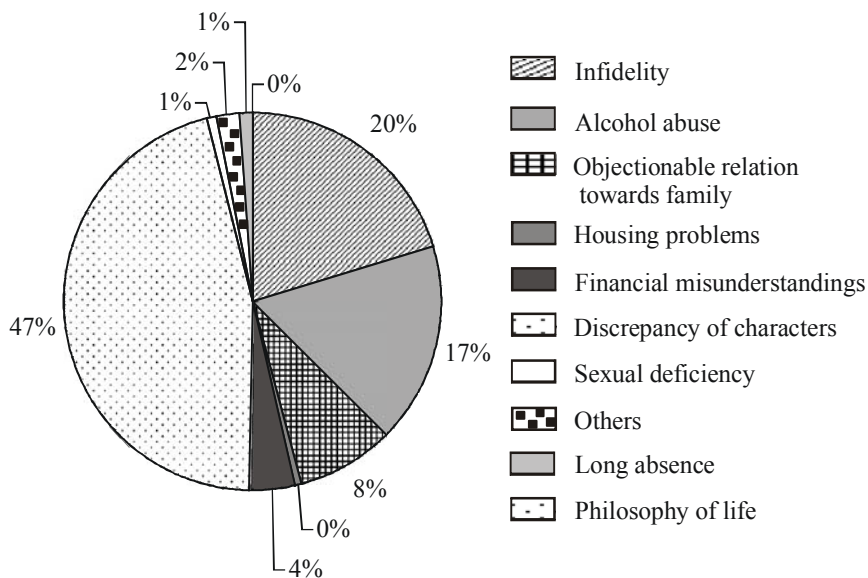


Fig. 3 Divorce by reason in 2001

Using Eq. (1) with $t = 8$, $t = 9$ and $t = 10$, we obtain extrapolation forecasts concerning the number of divorces for three years ahead. Thus we have:

| Year | y_T |
|------|--------|
| 2002 | 46,162 |
| 2003 | 47,151 |
| 2004 | 48,140 |

We note that the $T = n + 1$, $n + 2$, and $n + 3$.

The percent error of the calculated point forecast denoted by V_T in the prediction period T is given by

$$V_T = \frac{\sigma_T}{y_T} \text{ for } T = n + 1, n + 2, \dots \quad (2)$$

where y_T is a predicted value of the dependent variable Y_T in time T .

The standard error of the point forecast denoted by σ_T for a simple linear regression with a constant term is defined as

$$\sigma_T = \sigma_u \left[1 + \frac{1}{n} + \frac{(T - \bar{t})^2}{\sum_1^n (t - \bar{t})^2} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (3)$$

where t denotes time variable ($t = 1, \dots, n$) and \bar{t} is the average of the time variable t .

Replacing the unknown σ_u by its estimate

$$S_e = \left[\frac{1}{n-2} \sum_{t=1}^n (y_t - \hat{y}_t)^2 \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (4)$$

then gives²⁶

$$\sigma_T \approx S_e \left[1 + \frac{1}{n} + \frac{(T - \bar{t})^2}{\sum_1^n (t - \bar{t})^2} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (5)$$

For the data in Table 1, Eq. (2) for the $T = n + 1$, $n + 2$, $n + 3$ gives

²⁶ The values for the variable T are assumed to be accurate; i.e. there is no error in the value of T .

| Year | V_T in % |
|------|------------|
| 2002 | 5.10 |
| 2003 | 5.44 |
| 2004 | 5.82 |

4. Reasons for Divorce and Separation in Poland

As can be seen from the figures outlined in Table 1, infidelity, alcohol abuse, discrepancy of characters (disturbances of communication between spouses), failure to satisfy one's own psychological needs, and objectionable relation towards family (acute, recurrent distress) were the key reasons for divorce over the period in question. The audience should be reminded that infidelity, on numerous occasions, led to a stable relationship with another person and a keenly felt desire for a new marriage. Under such circumstances divorce alone can allow the party guilty of infidelity an opportunity to attain his/her life's goals.

It must be noted that financial misunderstandings, family's financial status, long absence, sexual deficiency, housing problems and philosophy of life figured relatively less prominently as the reason underlying the break-up of marriages during the period in question.

The reasons for separation of marriage in 2000—2001 are shown in Table 2 and Figure 4. These were the following: alcohol abuse, discrepancy of character, infidelity and financial misunderstandings. Interestingly enough, objectionable relation towards family and housing problems figure less prominently as reasons for separation.

Table 2

REASONS FOR SEPARATION IN 2000—2001 IN ABSOLUTE VALUES AND AS PERCENTAGE

| Description \ Year | 2000 | | 2001 | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | In % | | In % |
| Total | 1,340 | | 2,345 | |
| of which: | | | | |
| Infidelity | 119 | 12.11 | 242 | 14.91 |
| Alcohol abuse | 225 | 22.89 | 380 | 23.41 |
| Objectionable relation towards family | 64 | 6.51 | 121 | 7.46 |
| Housing problems | 5 | 0.51 | 14 | 0.86 |
| Financial misunderstandings | 85 | 8.65 | 140 | 8.63 |
| Discrepancy of characters | 444 | 45.17 | 665 | 40.97 |
| Others | 41 | 4.17 | 61 | 3.76 |

Source: Demographic Yearbook of Poland, GUS, Warsaw, 2001—2002.

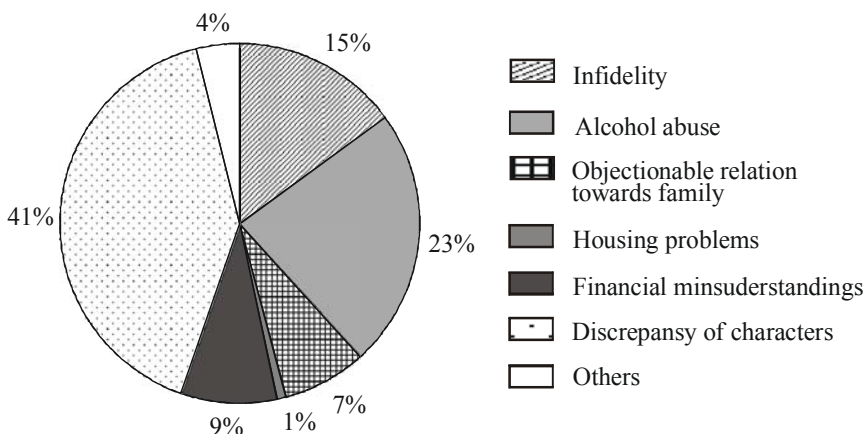


Fig. 4. Reasons for separation in 2001

5. Age Differences in Divorcees and Separated Spouses, Differences of Duration of Dissolved Marriage and Education

The break-down of marriage through divorce in the age group under 30 is frequent after a relatively short marriage. The principal reason for the break-down of a marriage is psychological and emotional immaturity of spouses and the perception that «one can turn a new leaf» which stems from the conviction that «if one fails in one marriage, then one gets the change to start something new». There is no shade of doubt that this breeds an attitude characterised by lack of responsibility for the marriage, spouse and children born during the relationship. It must be emphasised that the wide social attitude (liberal treatment of the inviolability of the marital bond) which unquestionably favours divorce, plays an important role in the emergence and perseverance of this crisis-spawning element of marriage and family. The phenomenon is taking all the guise of a social ailment: in a way, divorce has become chic.

Divorced couples more often than the total number of couples contracted marriage at a very young age, not being fully grown-up emotionally, very often expecting a baby. Table 3 contains figures on divorced and separated persons in 2001, by gender and age at the time of the contract of marriage and at dissolution of marriage²⁷. The data indicate that the structure of separated and divorced couples is similar in all age groups. It can also be seen that the percentage of separated persons who got married before 24 years of age was slightly smaller. Another striking fact which is the smaller proportion of males in the age group which gets

²⁷ The authors analyse the phenomenon on the basis of figures for 2001 alone due to negligible differences in structure between 2000 and 2001.

married the most often (24 and younger) and a higher percentage of persons getting married in the 25—29 and 30—34 age groups.

Table 3

DIVORCED AND SEPARATED PERSONS IN 2001 BY GENDER AND AGE AT THE TIME OF CONTRACTING MARRIAGE AND DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE (IN %)

| Description | Total | Age | | | | | |
|---|--------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| | | 24 or younger | 25—29 | 30—34 | 35—39 | 40—49 | 50 and over |
| Divorced | | | | | | | |
| Age at time of contracting the marriage | 90,616 | 68.71 % | 18.77 % | 5.95 % | 2.87 % | 2.45 % | 1.24 % |
| Male | 45,308 | 60.51 % | 24.47 % | 7.29 % | 3.41 % | 2.84 % | 1.48 % |
| Female | 45,308 | 76.90 % | 13.08 % | 4.61 % | 2.33 % | 2.07 % | 1.01 % |
| Age at time of filing for divorce | 90,616 | 7.80 % | 19.19 % | 17.52 % | 15.36 % | 28.26 % | 11.88 % |
| Male | 45,308 | 4.68 % | 17.59 % | 18.06 % | 15.96 % | 29.77 % | 13.94 % |
| Female | 45,308 | 10.92 % | 20.78 % | 16.97 % | 14.76 % | 26.75 % | 9.82 % |
| Separated | | | | | | | |
| Age at time of contracting the marriage | 4,690 | 64.01 % | 21.71 % | 7.01 % | 3.20 % | 2.73 % | 1.34 % |
| Male | 2,345 | 56.59 % | 26.70 % | 8.36 % | 3.54 % | 3.41 % | 1.41 % |
| Female | 2,345 | 71.43 % | 16.72 % | 5.67 % | 2.86 % | 2.05 % | 1.28 % |
| Age at time of filing for separation | 4,690 | 3.33 % | 10.96 % | 13.75 % | 15.05 % | 34.56 % | 22.35 % |
| Male | 2,345 | 2.09 % | 8.91 % | 13.77 % | 14.67 % | 35.86 % | 24.69 % |
| Female | 2,345 | 4.56 % | 13.01 % | 13.73 % | 15.44 % | 33.26 % | 20.00 % |

Source: Demographic Yearbook of Poland 2002.

It is also noteworthy that there are marked age differences in both of the above groups of divorced and separated spouses at the time of filing for dissolution of marriage. The age profile of separated persons is higher than that of divorcees. The percentage of separated spouses in the 24 or under, 25—29, 30—34 age groups is lower than that of divorcees, whilst the same is notably higher in the 40—49 age group and becomes much higher in the 50 and over group. In 2001 in the 50 and over age group, men seeking divorce accounted for 13.94 % of all divorcees, compared with 9.82 % of women, whilst persons taking recourse to separation accounted for 24.69 % and 20.00 % of all separated persons respectively. Such meaningful differences at the time of dissolution of marriage may result from the following: 1) persons seeking separation still cherish the hope of rescuing their marriage and

eliminating the factors which stand in the way of a happy marital and family life, 2) separated persons do not plan to remarry.

Let us now focus on differences in the duration of marriage amongst divorced couples. The data in Table 4 indicate that the sub-groups of divorcees and separated persons reveal striking differences in terms the duration of marriage. Divorce is most common amongst couples with 5—9 years of marriage experience, with couples of 5 years or under ranking number two (see Figure 5). Another notable trend indicates that the longer the duration of marriage the smaller the number of couples filing for divorce, although couples married 30 years or over reveal a higher rate of divorce.

Table 4

DIVORCED AND SEPARATED PERSONS IN 2001 BY DURATION OF MARRIAGE (in %)

| Description | Total | Duration of marriage | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|
| | | 5 years or under | 5—9 | 10—14 | 15—19 | 20—24 | 25—29 | 30 years or over |
| Divorced | 45,308 | 21.42 % | 22.65 % | 17.85 % | 15.12 % | 11.85 % | 6.67 % | 4.45 % |
| Separated | 2,345 | 12.54 % | 17.40 % | 16.08 % | 18.25 % | 14.75 % | 10.19 % | 10.79 % |
| Urban areas | 83.45 % | 12.11 % | 17.12 % | 15.48 % | 17.88 % | 15.59 % | 10.68 % | 11.14 % |
| Rural areas | 16.55 % | 14.69 % | 18.81 % | 19.07 % | 20.10 % | 10.57 % | 7.73 % | 9.02 % |

Source: Demographic Yearbook of Poland, GUS, Warsaw 2002.

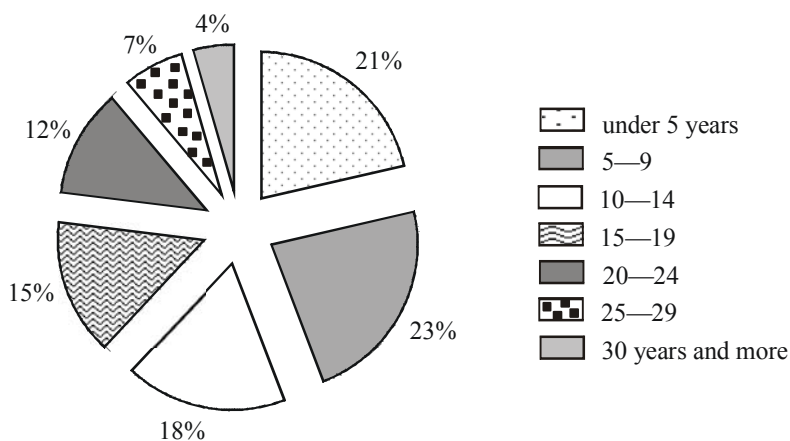


Fig. 5. Divorced in 2001 by duration of marriage

The structure of separations by duration of marriage looks different, though. Separated couples have a longer marriage behind them. Over a half (63.4 %) of separated persons had a married life of at least 19 years, and 10.8 % even of 30 years (see Figure 6). The rate of separation during the first 5 years of marriage is much smaller (12.5 %) compared to the number of divorces during the same period (21.4 %).

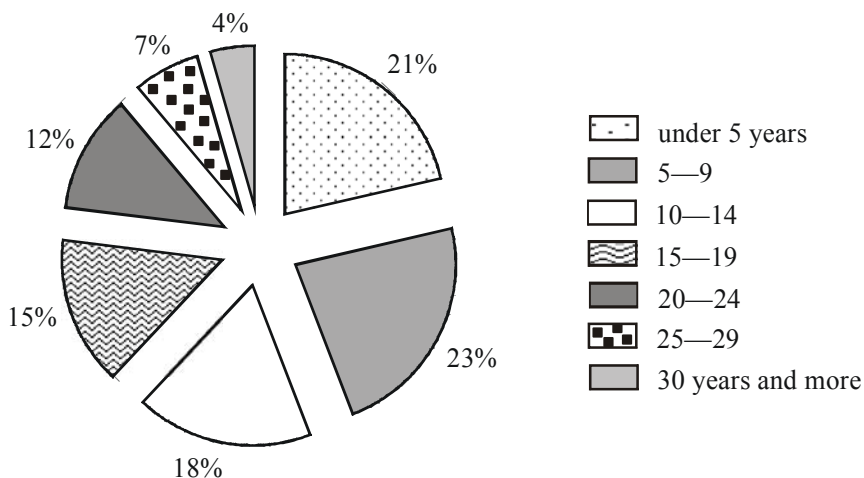


Fig. 6. Separated in 2001 by duration of marriage

In the case of separations the place of residence is a meaningful factor. Urban areas have a larger proportion of separated couples with 30 or more years of married life (11.14 %) than villages.

Let us have a look at the structure of divorced and separated couples in 2000—2001 by education (see Table 5). The structure of divorcees is similar to that of separated couples during the years in question. The rate of divorce and separation is high amongst people of higher, secondary and primary education. Thus education is meaningful in making a decision whether to break down a malfunctioning marriage and leave the spouse and it also has strong bearing on the type of solution taken (divorce, separation).

Table 5

**DIVORCED AND SEPARATED IN 2000—2001
BY EDUCATION LEVEL (in %)**

| Description | Total | Education | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|
| | | higher | post- sec- ondary | sec- ondary | primary | incomplete primary | unknown |
| 2000 | | | | | | | |
| Divorced | 85,540 | 12.50 % | 1.29 % | 69.04 % | 16.13 % | 0.23 % | 0.80 % |
| Male | 42,770 | 11.47 % | 0.67 % | 70.68 % | 15.81 % | 0.22 % | 1.15 % |
| Female | 42,770 | 13.53 % | 1.92 % | 67.41 % | 16.45 % | 0.24 % | 0.46 % |
| Separated | 2,680 | 17.35 % | 0.00 % | 67.87 % | 13.69 % | 1.08 % | 0.00 % |
| Male | 1,340 | 14.55 % | 0.00 % | 70.45 % | 13.81 % | 1.19 % | 0.00 % |
| Female | 1,340 | 20.15 % | 0.00 % | 65.30 % | 13.58 % | 0.97 % | 0.00 % |
| 2001 | | | | | | | |
| Divorced | 90,616 | 13.10 % | 1.20 % | 69.31 % | 15.42 % | 0.20 % | 0.78 % |
| Male | 45,308 | 11.72 % | 0.64 % | 71.02% | 15.28 % | 0.19 % | 1.14 % |
| Female | 45,308 | 14.47 % | 1.75 % | 67.59 % | 15.56 % | 0.20 % | 0.42 % |
| Separated | 4,690 | 14.61 % | 1.66 % | 68.14 % | 14.93 % | 0.66 % | 0.00 % |
| Male | 2,345 | 12.58 % | 0.90 % | 70.06 % | 15.35 % | 1.11 % | 0.00 % |
| Female | 2,345 | 16.63 % | 2.43 % | 66.23 % | 14.50 % | 0.21 % | 0.00 % |

Source: Demographic Yearbook of Poland, GUS, Warsaw 2001—2002.

It needs to be pointed out that the differences between divorce and separation are also gender related, especially in the secondary and higher education group (see Table 5).

6. Situation of Children From Dissolved Marriages

The authors now wish to dwell on the important issue of the fate of children of estranged parents. Before it declares a divorce or a separation of marriage, the court should take into consideration the impact of its decision on minor children of parents experiencing marital problems.

We should note that in Poland the rate of divorced marriages with minor children has remained traditionally high for many years. It must also be noted that despite a total break-down of marital life, divorce must not be declared if it were to hurt the well-being of the minor children born in wedlock (ability to ensure their peace and stability, psycho— somatic health).

Research into divorces where children are involved indicates that their number in Poland grew (see Table 6). In order to capture the divorce trend where children are involved the authors have estimated a

function of a polynomial trend of the 3rd grade. The results of the estimation are the following:

$$y_t = 22,093 + \underset{(7.4318)}{5,155.2 \cdot t} - \underset{(1.7188)}{1,215.7 t^2} + \underset{(-1.4413)}{87.2 t^3} \quad (t = 1, \dots, 7), \quad (6)$$

$$R^2 = 0.6355, \quad R = 0.7972,$$

where the values of t — *statistics*²⁸ are written under parameter estimates.

We note that this curvilinear trend explains 63.55 % the variance in the dependent variable. Figure 7 shows the trend equation fitted to the actual data.

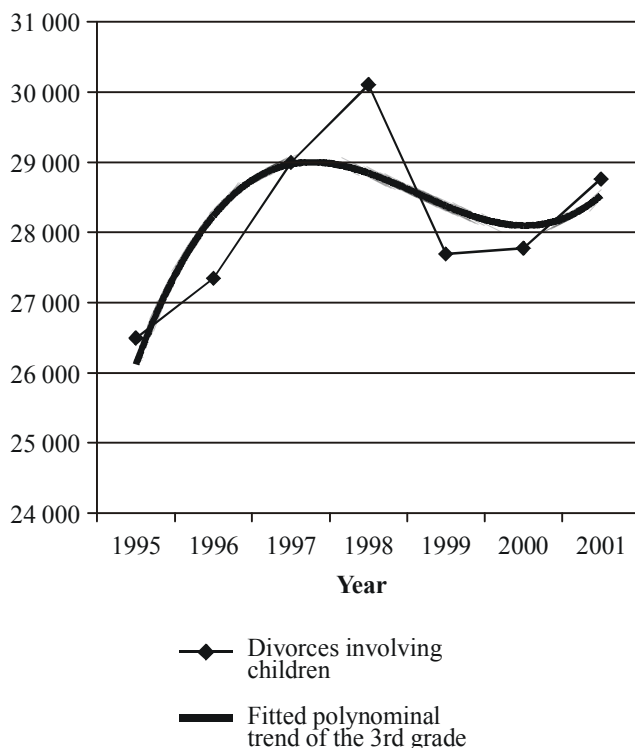


Fig. 7. Polynomial trend in the number of divorces involving children in Poland in 1995—2001

²⁸ The critical value of t — statistics for a significance degrees of $\alpha = 0.05$ and 3 levels of freedom stands at 3.182. Lack of significance of calculated values of estimate of parameters of the polynomial trend stems from the small number of observations. In this instance $n = 7$ where n denotes the number of observations.

We are now ready to use Eq. (6) to forecast for three years ahead. The results are:

| Year | y_T |
|------|--------|
| 2002 | 30,188 |
| 2003 | 33,604 |
| 2004 | 39,299 |

Finally, using Eq. (6) we need to obtain the percent of the point forecast for the case of three explanatory variables t , t^2 , and t^3 plus a constant term for $T = n + 1$, $n + 2$ and $n + 3$. They are

| Year | V_T in % |
|------|------------|
| 2002 | 12.76 |
| 2003 | 24.97 |
| 2004 | 39.70 |

Table 6

DISSOLVED MARRIAGE BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN 2001

| Description | Divorces | | | | | | | Sepa- rations |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|
| | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | |
| Year | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| Total | 38,115 | 39,449 | 42,549 | 45,230 | 42,020 | 42,770 | 45,308 | 2,345 |
| Without children (in %) | 30.48 | 30.67 | 31.85 | 33.44 | 34.09 | 35.06 | 36.52 | 35.48 |
| With children (in %) | 69.52 | 69.33 | 68.15 | 66.56 | 65.91 | 64.94 | 63.48 | 64.52 |
| With children | 26496 | 27349 | 28996 | 30104 | 27696 | 27776 | 28763 | 1513 |
| By number of children (in %): | | | | | | | | |
| 1 child | 40.67 | 40.52 | 40.28 | 39.98 | 40.06 | 40.11 | 40.00 | 33.05 |
| 2 children | 22.67 | 22.30 | 21.44 | 20.72 | 19.97 | 19.32 | 18.30 | 22.09 |
| 3 children | 4.69 | 4.94 | 4.77 | 4.36 | 4.41 | 4.15 | 3.96 | 6.82 |
| 4 and more children | 1.49 | 1.57 | 1.65 | 1.50 | 1.48 | 1.36 | 1.23 | 2.56 |

Source: Demographic Yearbook of Poland, GUS, Warsaw 1996—2002.

Dissolution of marriage by number of children in 2001 is illustrated in Table 6 and Figures 8 and 9. Nearly 64 % of divorced and separated persons have dependent children. They mostly have one

child²⁹, and interestingly enough, more rarely two children and sporadically more. Moreover, 2001 saw 45,308 divorced couples, which means 90,616 adults no longer have reasons for marital conflict, but at the same time bear a deeply-rooted grudge against their spouse for the failure of their marriage. Add to that another 2,345 separated couples in 2001, i.e. 4,690 separated adults. One must not overlook the fact that in 2001 as many as 95,306 adults in Poland experienced the break-down of their married life. As a result the children of divorced and separated parents pain at their parents' failure to live up to the marital vow of inviolability of marriage, as well as an inferiority complex resulting from the fact that their peers live in families with parents loving each other and loving their children.

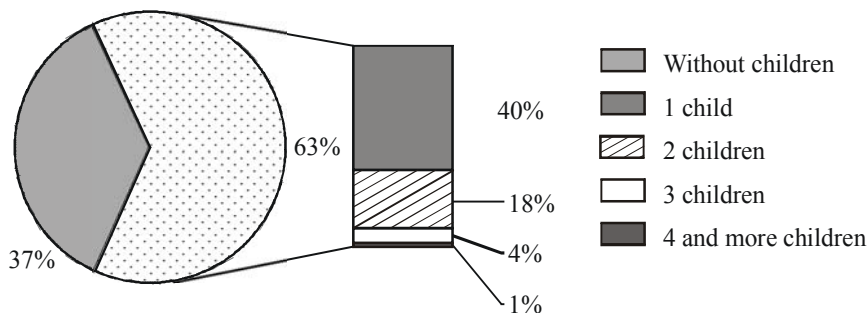


Fig. 8. Divorces by number of children in 2001

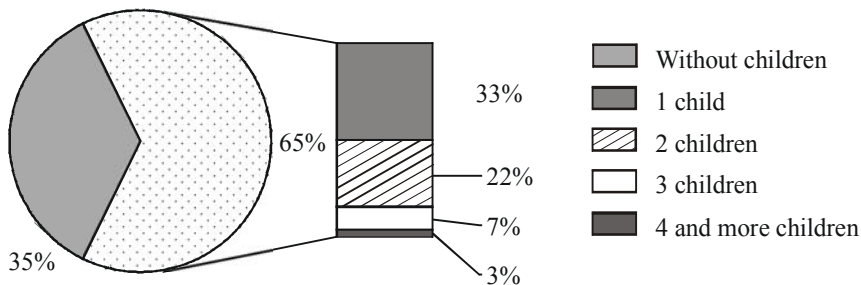


Fig. 9. Separations by number of children in 2001

²⁹ In Poland a family with a small number of children is typically connected with city life, but it is fast catching on in the countryside. All empirical research confirms the fact that the most widely accepted model is the one with one or two children (cf. a work by W. Ignatczyk, 2002). Consequently, Poland's demographics are in a sorry state. Since the beginning of the 1980s the rate of population growth has been dropping, and beginning in 1989 Poland has found itself saddled with a negative population growth rate. Currently, Poland is experiencing the lowest birth rate since World War II (cf. a work by A. Zeliaś, 2001).

7. Conclusions

The growing rate of break-down of marriage is a manifestation of a moral crisis of the Polish family, a unique union of people. A drop in the number of new marriages³⁰ in the 1990s is beyond dispute. Divorce in Poland is a phenomenon principally affecting urban areas. The growing number of marriages breaking down after 15 or more years of joint life is particularly disturbing. The break-down rate in this group stands at 38.1 % of all divorced persons (cf. Table 4). Equally disturbing is the growing number of divorced couples with minor children. These marriages account for 63.5 % of all marriages which broke down³¹ (cf. Table 6).

The list of motives spouses cite as reasons for seeking divorce is long. It features infidelity and spouse's drinking problem as the most common cause, with financial and housing problems ranked number two followed by sexual mismatch. The main reason however is spouses' psychological and emotional immaturity and their conviction that it is possible to «turn a new leaf». In a way, divorce has become something of a fad, especially amongst older couples. Given the long working hours of mothers and fathers, home ceases to be a place for family life³² and a stimulant of psychological and emotional bonds between the spouses. This factor has been recognised to be the key factor behind the strength of marital life. Perceiving married life as a place for taking, rather than giving, a place for receiving rather than for sharing or self-effacement have become the fate of a typical spouse and parent. Not to mention alcoholism, speed of life, the much talked about model of the «business — woman», and the peddling of anti-family models in mass media.

One must not turn a blind eye to the fact that divorce has serious implications for children. Empirical research shows that children who have grown up without fathers are more prone to suicide, flight from home, discipline problems and rape (this problem concerns mostly boys), walk-out on school and contracting the marriage more during their teenage years (this concerns girls), thus giving birth to children as teenagers, more often becoming single mothers, or taking refuge in

³⁰ The country's austere socio-economic situation has become a factor playing a role in delaying people's decision to get married.

³¹ It is worth noting that the relatively high cost of divorce proceedings alone cannot become a sufficient stop-gap against this socially adverse process.

³² In Poland, professional activity amongst women mothers became a distinguishing mark of the second half of the 20th century. Increasingly women seek employment for non-pecuniary reasons. These reasons are the most manifest amongst educated women, and their number in Poland has been growing, but it also reflects global trends underlying women's social and professional emancipation (cf. a work on the issue by A. Szuman, 2001).

divorce. It is essential to reduce the consequences of divorce or separation which lead to psychic deprivation of children, which in turn often results in psychological disturbances, loss of interest, activity and reduction in the degree of professional and family success.

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PROBLEMS OF MEASURING AGEING PROCESS OF POPULATION

1. Age structure of population as an illustration of ageing process

Ageing process is a consequence of demographic transition process in European countries, connected with industrialisation process and social modernisation of Euro-Atlantic civilisation³³. It also can be understood as a determinant of social maturity of population [Frączak (2002)].

Ageing process of population can be expressed by age structure (pyramid) of population. According to G. Sundbärg, three types of age structure can be distinguished: progressive, stable and regressive structure of population³⁴. Model structures of population are presented at fig. 1.

³³ More about it see: Okólski (ed) (1990).

³⁴ See for example: Cieślak (1992), Holzer (2003), Kurkiewicz (1992).