

**SINGLEHOOD
FROM INDIVIDUAL
AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES**

SINGLEHOOD FROM INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

EDITED BY KATARZYNA ADAMCZYK

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Reviewers

Anna Kwak

PhD, D.Litt., Professor ordinarius, Institute of Applied Social Sciences,
University of Warsaw, Poland

Salvatore D'Amore

PhD, Associate Professor of Systemic Clinic and Relational Psychopathology,
Faculty of Psychology, University of Liège, Belgium

Stéphanie Haxhe

PhD, Lecturer, Department of Psychology and Human Systems,
University of Liège, Belgium

Translation and language correction of texts in English

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Anna Golańska

Marta Kuczevska

Tomasz Kuraś

Marcin Lenkiewicz

Mark Muirhead

Małgorzata Zawilińska-Janaszek

Marta Turek

Madison Watt

Design of the cover

Magdalena Marchocka

student of the fourth year of Bachelor's Degree studies in the field
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Layout and typesetting

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Wydawnictwo LIBRON – Filip Lohner

al. Daszyńskiego 21/13

31–537 Kraków

tel. 12 628 05 12

e-mail: office@libron.pl

www.libron.pl

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Preface

In Poland there is a proverb which could be translated as “every monster will find its devotee”. Despite the optimism expressed in the saying, in Europe and the United States the number of single persons has risen substantially in the past decades, and this trend will likely continue in these regions (Poortman & Liefbroer, 2010). This trend is also clearly evident in Poland (Such-Pyrgiel, 2014). Naturally, neither the phenomenon of the single life nor the interest it arouses among researchers and journalists is anything new (Żurek, 2008). For instance in 1937 a biweekly entitled *The Lone Observer* (*Samotny Obserwator*) aimed at single people started being published in Poland. The magazine’s intention was not to promote single life, nor to counteract it by means of “matrimonial propaganda” as the editors believed such issues to be too private, in most cases independent of the individual’s own will, and for many – a necessary evil (Gajda, 1987). Instead, in their articles the editors encouraged the readers to share their observations and reflection concerning single people’s life, including the advantages and disadvantages of singlehood (Gajda, 1987).

The magazine does not exist anymore but the role of single life observers has been assumed by researchers representing various scientific disciplines. Those researchers, who are experts in the field of single life research, were invited to contribute texts devoted to different aspects of single life. And so, in Chapter 1 *From families to individuals, from spinsters to singles, from parents to childfree. Demographic and economic perspectives on changes in family formation patterns* Krzysztof Tymicki focuses on the presentation of the demographic and economic perspective on changes in family formation patterns. These changes are presented as a consequence of technological and social advancements resulting in a transformation of a society based on families, to a society based on individuals engaged in the labour market. The chapter addresses the issue of changes in family formation patterns by exploring such areas as: process of partner selection, union formation and childbearing. The conclusion contains discussion of future trends in family formation patterns and long-term social and economic consequences of the presented changes.

Chapter 2 *Being single as a result of failures in building a relationship?* by Julita Czernecka explains why young Polish people decide to be single. This

chapter is a part of qualitative research about social circumstances of singlehood in Poland. The main goal in those research was to identify the reasons for being alone, which the respondents were aware of. This article focuses on aspect of being single as a result of failures in building a nest. The author presents different problems: difficulties in relationships with the opposite sex, unequal involvement in building a relationship, high expectations of potential partners and infidelity and abandonment as a reasons to being single. Furthermore it describes other aspects of singlehood associated with unfulfilled love, not ready to set up home and a rest after living together as a couple. The article presents also a typology of singles based on those research.

In chapter 3 *Polish singles – between family life and independence* Aldona Źurek indicates that systematic studies dedicated to learning more about Polish singles have a short history. Therefore, among social scientists, there is no consensus on how to define this social category. There is a general agreement that the single is an unmarried person. But among other factors, such as age, household type, local environment, self-awareness of being single or voluntariness of being single aroused many disputes and polemics. In so far conducted empirical studies, a picture emerges in which the single is a person who value a personal freedom, independence, privacy and living alone. Polish singles are neither spoiled nor form tribal structures. They maintain, however, a wide variety of social ties, which have various strength and content. The most important social environments for them are friends and family circles. Each of these fields performs a different function to singles. Relatives fulfill the need for social security. Friends – emotional needs and the quality of spending free time. Life strategies of Polish singles combine two trends. Protection of the independence and the privacy, with desire to gain assistance from informal social structures.

In chapter 4 *Partnership market and partner's finding strategies. Matrimonial and procreational plans of singles in the light of economic theory of human behavior* by Gary Stanley Becker Małgorzata Such-Pyrgiel shows single lifestyle in the aspect of the theory of this famous noblest. The Becker's marriage conception, family and procreation treats about the possibility of usage the logic structures of modern economical theory to explain people's behavior and actions in marriage and family as the social institutions. In this chapter economical theory of partner choice was presented, in light of matrimonial market connected with matrimonial decisions of rational items considering economical conditions of modern singles. Theoretical consideration was proved also by the results of her own research. They concerning mainly creating decisions

of singles in matter of marriage and motherhood and other conditions such as the age, the sex, education, type of their place of living, accommodation status, income, political opinions. The source of this consideration was the book of mentioned previously nobelist entitled “Economics theory of human behavior” from 1990, translated by Helena and Krzysztof Hegemejer.

The purpose of the chapter 5 *Socio-cultural gender of single men and women as conditioning factor of attitude towards single life* Emilia Paprzycka was to have a closer look at Polish single men and women and characterising this group with the assumption of similarities and/or differences of experience among men and women living on their own. The results of qualitative and quantitative research in which the concept of socio-cultural gender constituted both specific research tool and analytical perspective have been referred to. The text preparation has been based on the thesis that changing patterns of femininity and masculinity favour making decisions about playing gender roles which differ from the traditional ones and creating one’s own biography dependent on current individual needs. The idea that diversity and variety of available femininity patterns encourages differentiation of biographical experience within groups determined by biological gender has also accompanied writing this text. It has been assumed that people whose socio-cultural gender is formed with reference to traditional models of femininity and masculinity are not so much interested in an alternative form of family life such as single life and are going to be satisfied with it more rarely than people with less traditional gender identity. Theoretical and methodological assumptions of research which the analyses come from have been presented in the first three subchapters. The contents of the following subchapters have been organised on the basis of dependence between the type of socio-cultural gender and the attitude towards single life. They show characteristics of single men and women through statistical data as well as individual biographical experience in the typological view.

In chapter 6 *Do you take this marriage? Perceived choice over marital status affects the stereotypes of single and married people*, Wendy L. Morris and Britany K. Osburn indicate that although remaining single is more common than it once was, singles continue to be perceived more negatively than their married peers (DePaulo & Morris, 2006). It has been argued that the negative stereotypes of singles are a result of a widely accepted ideology of marriage and family which depicts marriage as the key to a meaningful and fulfilling life (DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Morris, DePaulo, Hertel, & Taylor, 2008). This chapter presents the results of an experiment which tested whether singles are

perceived more positively if they embrace that ideology than if they reject it. Seventy-one participants (35 men and 36 women) rated descriptions of three different people – a married person, a single person who wanted to marry, and a single person who chose to remain single. As predicted, singles who chose to remain single were perceived as less well-adjusted and more self-centered than singles who wanted to marry or people who were already married. Although singles who supported the ideology of marriage and family by wanting to marry were perceived more positively than singles who did not, they were still not perceived quite as positively as married people. Singles who want to marry are perceived somewhat positively for sharing the highly valued goal of marriage but also somewhat negatively because they have not achieved that goal. People may assume that those who have failed to marry have personality flaws which make them less desirable to potential partners. However, making the choice to remain single brings with it even more negative impressions due to the rejection of the highly valued institution of marriage.

Chapter 7 *Do Polish never-married singles feel stigmatized?* by Dominika Ochnik and Eugenia Mandal underlines the meaning of stigmatization from psychological perspective. Singlehood is a very important social phenomenon. However the dissemination of single lifestyle is clearly noticeable, it is still related to stigmatization. Stigmatization can be described in two basic dimensions: external (public and structural stigma) and internal (self-stigma). There are given examples of public stigmatization (negative stereotypization) and strategic stigmatization (legitimization) of single people. In the chapter authors are analyzing the individual's perspective on stigmatization. The authors are proposing a new method "The Feeling of Stigmatization of Singles Questionnaire", that turn out to be highly reliably tool. The results show that Polish never-married singles feel stigmatized. The feeling of stigmatization is related to certain stigma conditions. Polish never-married singles after 30 years old who have had one or none previous long-term relationships, have been single for more than 2 years, have primary education, have lower self-esteem and do not perceive their singlehood as their own choice are exposed to the feeling of stigmatization the most.

Chapter 8 *Leisure activities of LGBT singles: tourist behavior in the context of individual attributes* by Adrian P. Lubowiecki-Vikuk presents leisure time behaviours of single people among whom tourism and active recreation play a vital role. It has previously been proven that the socio-demographic, spatial and economic factors essentially shape, and at the same time differentiate the level of participation in physical culture and tourism of people living alone

(Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011). The patterns of their sport behaviours generally do not differ from the overall Polish population, unlike in case of tourist behaviours. Male singles appreciate a lonely lifestyle even when undertaking tourist leisure activity. They travel alone and spend their free time in solitude more frequently than women who travel to learn about other cultures, customs, regions, so that when it comes to choosing a holiday destination, they take into account the wealth of attractions and tourist values that occur in a given spot. Aged singles travel alone mainly for health and work reasons, which is combined with active relaxation and making new friends. Meanwhile, younger singles spend their leisure time sailing, canoeing, horseback riding, windsurfing, paragliding, mountain climbing, scuba diving, skiing; they visit disco clubs and amusement parks. They organise their tourist trips independently, and their destinations are determined by the prevailing fad and the access to good for sports/recreational and tourist infrastructure. Frequent and long (domestic and foreign) tourist trips of better educated singles do not tend to be of solitary character. With a group of friends and acquaintances they actively spend their leisure time, and at the same time participate in various courses include learning foreign languages. In their free time, urban professionally active singles set on journeys abroad during which they practise water sports, horseback riding, paragliding, mountaineering, winter – skiing and in the summer – enjoy sunbathing. People living alone in smaller cities travel mainly to visit their families or do the shopping, whereas single individuals from the countryside travel on business. Of course, with the increase in their income, the rate of tourist activity increases. Considering singles with their attributes such as gender, age, education, socio-occupational group, place of residence, level of monthly net income allows us to gain better knowledge of Polish prosumer of free time services, which is far from the stereotypical image of a single. Sexual orientation is another factor which has been taken into account.

Many researchers (e.g., Boyd & Bee, 2008) indicate that contemporary research should include new phenomena in the area of affectionate bonds, including singlehood. Therefore, the present book constitutes a response to the pressing need for studies of the single life. The need for further research into and discussion of singlehood follows among others from the fact that most people want to find a life partner and most of them succeed. Thus, the question still stands why—to paraphrase the proverb quoted earlier—not every monster finds its devotee and what the consequences can be of the lack of such devotees in our lives. Answers to these and other questions can

be found in the book that you are now holding in your hands. Single life is conditioned by various factors and we can get to know only some of them, but I believe that a scientific exploration of the phenomenon of singlehood is extremely important and that it also has a practical aspect to it.

At this point I would like to express special appreciation to our reviewers – Prof. dr hab. Anna Kwak, Professor Salvatore D’Amore, and Dr. Stéphanie Haxhe for their reviews. Their constructive comments and suggestions have helped improve the quality of the texts. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their kindness and support they provided during the preparation of the manuscript.

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Katarzyna Adamczyk

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CONTRIBUTORS

KATARZYNA ADAMCZYK

Institute of Psychology
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
ul. A. Szamarzewskiego 89/AB
60-568 Poznań, Poland
e-mail: Katarzyna.Adamczyk@amu.edu.pl

JULITA CZERNECKA

University of Lodz, Poland
Faculty of Economics and Sociology, Institute of Sociology
Department of Sociology of Gender and Social Movements
ul. Rewolucji 1905 r. 41/43
90-214 Łódź, Poland
email: jczernecka@uni.lodz.pl

EUGENIA MANDAL

Department of Social and Environmental Psychology
University of Silesia in Katowice
ul. M. Grażyńskiego 53
40-126 Katowice, Poland
email: Eugenia.Mandal@us.edu.pl

WENDY L. MORRIS

Department of Psychology, McDaniel College
2 College Hill, Westminster, MD, USA 21157
email: wmorris@mcdaniel.edu

DOMINIKA OCHNIK

Psychology Department
Katowice School of Economics
ul. Harcerzy Września Nr 3
40-659 Katowice, Poland
email: Dominika.Ochnik@gwsh.pl

BRITTANY OSBURN

OB Navigator/Case Management, Carroll Hospital
200 Memorial Avenue
Westminster, MD, USA, 21157
e-mail: bosburn@carrollhospitalcenter.org

ADRIAN P. LUBOWIECKI-VIKUK

Faculty of Physical Education, Health and Tourism
Kazimierz Wielki University
ul. Mińska 15,
85-428 Bydgoszcz, Poland
e-mail: lubowiecki@ukw.edu.pl

EMILIA PAPRZYCKA

Department of Sociology,
Faculty of Social Sciences
Warsaw University of Life Sciences
ul. Nowoursynowska 166
02-787 Warszawa
e-mail: emilia_paprzycka@sggw.pl

MAŁGORZATA SUCH-PYRGIEL

Faculty of Social Science
Alcide De Gasperi University of Eureregional Economy in Józefów
ul. Sienkiewicza 4, 05-410 Józefów, Poland.
e-mail: m.such@op.pl

KRZYSZTOF TYMICKI

Institute of Statistics and Demography
Warsaw School of Economics
ul. Madalińskiego 6/8, 02-513, Warsaw, Poland
e-mail: krzysztof.tymicki@sgh.waw.pl

ALDONA ŻUREK

Institute of Sociology
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
ul. A. Szamarzewskiego 89/C
60-568 Poznań, Poland
e-mail: alzurek@amu.edu.pl

CHAPTER 1

From Families to Individuals, from Spinsters to Singles, from Parents to Childfree. Demographic and Economic Perspectives on Changes in Family Formation Patterns

Introduction

One of the most profound societal changes, which has occurred over the past 200 years of history in Europe, is related to the pattern of family formation. The transformation has changed family from so-called “traditional”, characterized by universal marriage, high fertility, and strict gender specialization of roles within families to “modern”, characterised by a decrease in propensity to marry, increase in share of informal unions, significantly lower fertility, late age at entering parenthood as well as interchangeable gender roles. These changes have had an immense impact on the present shape of society in economic, social and demographic aspects.

In 18th century Europe the average number of children oscillated around 6,5 (as measured with Total Fertility Rate – TFR) and the proportion of children born outside of marriage constituted a minor fraction of all births (Goody, 1983; Laslett, 1972; Laslett, 1977; Laslett, Oosterveen & Smith, 1980, Coale & Cotts-Watkins, 1986). Marriage has been a universal institution and therefore, being a single person outside of marriage has been something exceptional and usually negatively sanctioned by society (Hajnal, 1953; Hajnal, 1965; Hajnal, 1983; Cotts-Watkins, 1984). Due to lack of technological advancement in pro-

duction of goods most households were living on a subsistence level, which in conjunction with poor hygienic conditions and lack of medical care, caused excessive mortality and short overall life span. For instance, in 18th century England the average lifespan varied between 40 and 45 years. Infants, children and women in their reproductive age were the groups particularly exposed to risk of premature death (Carey & Judge 2000; Omran, 1971; Scott, Duncan & Duncan, 1995; Wrigley, Davies, Oeppen & Schofield, 1997).

From the contemporary perspective these basic demographic measures indicate dramatic societal and economic changes that lead to the “modern” family pattern. Shortly after WWII, almost in every European country, the total fertility rate was above 2 and in some countries even reached a level of 3,5 (Poland, Ireland, Spain). In the early 1970s, the total fertility rate in almost every European country was 1,7 or more (Frejka & Sobotka, 2008). Gradual changes in the period from 1970 to 2010, lead to circumstances in which only a minor fraction of countries that had a TFR above 1,7 (France, Sweden, Norway) and the majority had a TFR below 1,5 or even below 1,3 (Austria, Romania, Hungary, Portugal). Taking into account that simple replacement of two consecutive generations requires a TFR of around 2,1 observed fertility levels in most European countries reflect scale of changes in family formation patterns and childbearing. At the same time Europe had witnessed a decrease in marriage rate, an increase of single and childless individuals in population and finally a sharp increase in average lifespan, which, as measured by life expectancy at birth, reached a level of more than 80 years.

These two contrasting pictures from past and present pose an explanatory challenge not only because of individual level changes but also because of negative social and economic consequences, which most European societies will have to face in the near future. Therefore, the present chapter aims at providing an explanation for the shift in family formation patterns with the use of demographic and economic theories of population change as well as addressing the questions about possible consequences of patterns observed nowadays.

Demographic Transitions: Family Formation Patterns in Macro Perspective

Change in family formation pattern from “traditional” to “modern” has been accompanied by changes in population size: from initial equilibrium at low level (low or no increase in population growth rate), through dynamic increase (high rate of population increase) followed by second equilibrium at a higher

level (low or no increase in population growth rate). These fluctuations were related to shifts in levels of fertility and mortality that reflected the level of adaptation to environment and mode of economic production with available technology (Galor & Well, 1999).

In population studies, changes of population size along the process of “modernization” are called demographic transition (Caldwell, 1981; Friedlander, Okun, & Segal, 1999). Within the framework of demographic transition, it is assumed that widely understood external conditions are shaping individual decisions concerning family formation and childbearing that in turn translate into observed levels of fertility and mortality. Demographers distinguish between first and second transition in order to stress the distinctive causes behind turnovers in observed patterns. First demographic transition has been mostly related to overall changes in living conditions whereas second demographic transition has been related to changes in the sphere of norms and values (Szreter, 1993). Using the framework of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, first demographic transition allowed individuals to satisfy lower order needs and second demographic transition provided for satisfaction of higher order needs (Maslow, 1934). From this perspective, changes in mortality might be recognized as the main factor triggering first demographic transition since they are directly related to environmental adaptation and improvement in living conditions. On the contrary, growing individualism, consumerism and the pursuit of self-fulfilment might be seen as typical factors fuelling second demographic transition. Thus, from the perspective of mortality the story of first demographic transition could be re-written in terms of how well humans were able to cope with an unstable environment in order to reduce mortality (Omran, 1971). First demographic transition has been preceded by a long stable phase in which population growth rate was close to zero or slightly positive. In this phase, fluctuations of population size were of a short-term nature and were caused mostly by the high mortality rate related to natural factors such as epidemics, wars, famines or an insufficient supply of goods. This phase has been comprehensively described in the seminal work of Thomas Malthus entitled “On the principle of population” (Malthus, 1789). In the “Malthusian” phase population growth has been limited by the mode of economic production of goods since the potential growth of population has been always higher than the economic capacity to produce goods. Therefore, these two contradictory forces were responsible for excess mortality, since unrestricted growth of population was opposed by insufficient supply of goods. Famines, wars and plagues were natural forces, which balanced out population growth

through increase in mortality. In other words, humans did not have adequate technology allowing for an increase in the supply of goods that could maintain a growing population (Galor & Weil, 1999). This 'pre-transitional' phase is often called 'subsistence phase' since humans were mostly preoccupied in securing lower order needs such as shelter, food, warmth and safety with no prospect for improvement in living conditions. Escape from the 'Malthusian trap' of repeatable mortality disasters and close to zero population growth could only be achieved via technological improvements and changes in the mode of production.

There were two path-breaking improvements, which created a possibility for demographic transition by significant reduction in mortality rates. Firstly, a reduction in mortality has been related to overall improvement of living conditions through better provision of resources associated with changes in the modes of economic production. This change detached societies from unstable conditions (droughts, floods, plagues, famines), which were temporarily shifting down population size and, in the long-term, leading to stagnation in population size. Secondly, a decrease in mortality has been achieved by progress in medical technologies, which lowers mortality mainly due to internal causes of death such as infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and childbirth related mortality.

These ways to escape the 'Malthusian trap' lead led to the transitional phase, which started approximately with the Industrial Revolution and lasted up to the second half of the 20th century. This phase has been marked by a rapid increase in population size (Okólski, 1990). Both progress in the technology of producing goods and advancements in the technology of health protection were key factors, which stimulated demographic transition. Reduction in mortality due to technological improvements and no changes in fertility rates have triggered increase in population size. The major breakdown has been related to the Industrial Revolution, which introduced a technological change allowing for a higher supply of goods and detachment from instability of food production related to the agricultural production mode (Friedlander et al., 1999; Levine, 1977). Technological change introduced by the Industrial Revolution gave the possibility to support population growth caused by the surplus of births over deaths.

The interaction between number of births and deaths through demographic transition is of crucial importance since it sets the pace of population growth. The most commonly used theory in analysis of mortality/fertility interactions over the course of demographic transition is based on the supply

and demand framework (Coale & Cotts-Watkins, 1986; Easterlin & Crimmins, 1985). Within this framework the individual demand for children is highly sensitive to supply. The latter is defined through factors determining how many children it is possible for a couple to have such as: overall mortality conditions, biological fecundity, age at entering marriage and frequency of intercourse. Among these factors, overall mortality conditions are the most important in shaping the supply of children since they directly influence infant and child mortality (Bideau, Desjardins, & Brignoli, 1997; Tymicki, 2009; Scott et al., 1995). Taking into account the fact that in the past only around 60% of children survived up to the age of 5 (Tymicki, 2009), an increase in survival rate for infants and children as a result of technological and medical progress created an additional supply of children. It has to be stressed that in the “Malthusian” phase, demand for children has been always higher than supply of children. The demand for children was high since in pre-transitional economy they were often used as a labour force therefore and high infant and child mortality greatly reduced supply (Easterlin & Crimmins, 1985).

Demand for children has substantially changed along with technological change (Industrial Revolution) and medical progress. Lower mortality increased supply of children since there was neither access nor willingness to use contraception and to a smaller extent children were used as a labour force within families as well as in the external labour market.

As the demographic transition progressed, the supply of children had been higher than the demand for children, which created a need to control fertility (Knodel, 1979). In fact, researchers attribute the end of first demographic transition to the onset of a permanent drop in marital fertility (Knodel, 1979; Easterlin & Crimmins, 1985; Coale & Cotts-Watkins, 1986; Friedlander et al., 1999). It has to be noted that Europe has been very heterogeneous with respect to a permanent drop in marital fertility (Okólski, 1990). In some parts of France fertility limitation as a result of contraception use occurred before 1830, which was presumably related to social and political factors which enforced technological changes (Binion, 2001). Whereas in countries like England or Germany permanent fertility reduction dates back to 1830–1870. In an extreme case, fertility had not been controlled in some parts of Italy or Spain even after 1930 (Okólski, 1990). As a result of first demographic transition, in most European countries fertility stabilizes around the replacement level (TFR oscillating around value of 2,1).

A permanent drop in marital fertility has been possible due to a proliferation of effective contraception associated with a diffusion of social acceptance

for artificial methods of fertility regulation. The Spread of contraception and growing acceptance, as well as need, for birth control reflect the qualitative dimension of demographic transition related to a shift from natural to controlled fertility.

The notion of a natural fertility regime refers to a pattern without any form of deliberate control over the process of reproduction (Henry, 1961; Knodel, 1979). Natural fertility has been present throughout the whole pre-transitional (“Malthusian”) and most of the transitional phase of demographic change. In the natural fertility population number of children in the family is determined only by biological factors such as fecundity, frequency of intercourse and age at marriage. Reversely, controlled reproduction refers to a pattern without the presence of any form of control or limitation imposed on the process of reproduction. Therefore, it is predicted that in a population characterised by controlled fertility, the number of children should be significantly lower than in a natural fertility population. However, it has to be noted that both concepts are ‘ideal types’ virtually not existing in a pure form. This is due to the fact that even natural fertility societies, which do not use contraception, exhibit some forms of fertility limitations such as, for instance, sexual abstinence or *coitus interruptus*. Controlled fertility societies might also not have perfect control over the procreation due to, for instance, contraceptive failure. Thus, it seems that the difference between the natural and controlled fertility regimes is far from being clear-cut and it is closer to continuum. We are not able to speak of an absolute lack of control neither about an absolute control over the process of reproduction. Although, introduction of hormonal contraception (the Pill) allowed, in theory, for perfect control over the reproductive cycle and gave women a means to adjust the supply of children to their demand.

Finally, at the end of first demographic transition fertility stabilizes around 2,1 in most European countries after WWII. This moment was characterized by slightly positive or near to zero population growth rate marks by the end of first demographic transition. It has to be stressed that demographic transition in Europe, which lead to drop in fertility to a level around 2,1, has not changed significantly patterns of family formation and partner selection. Early marriage, low proportion of singles, low divorce rate and low rates of extramarital births were predominant in most of the European societies at the end of first demographic transition.

Further decline of fertility to below replacement level and profound change in family formation patterns were related to changes that occurred around the mid-1960s. Scientists following population trends have labelled

these changes as second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe, 1992; van de Kaa, 1987). In contrast to first demographic transition, driving factors behind second demographic transition were not so extensively related to technological improvements. Emergence of new patterns of family formation, partner selection and life cycle were fuelled by a change in values and norms (van de Kaa, 1987). That in turn, gave way to increased individualism, the pursuit of self-fulfilment and a priority of professional career over family life. Moreover, changes in the labour market and structure of opportunities for females created a new type of family based on consumption rather than production. This has also been related to an emergence of a new individualistic society composed of economically independent consumers rather than families aimed at production and subsistence.

As a result of second demographic transition and a proliferation of an individualistic lifestyle, new demographic patterns have emerged characterised by a decrease in marriage rate, a higher rate of union disruption, a high number of informal unions, a high age at birth of first child, high rates of childlessness and high rates of extramarital childbearing. Such new patterns were possible due to an economic independence of males and females and interchangeable gender roles. At this same time an increasing individual well-being secured lower order needs and, according to Maslow's theory, individuals started to pursue higher order needs such as individual self-expression, improvements in quality of life, and increased investments in human capital. Thus, satisfaction of lower order needs such as shelter, food, water, safety, freedom from fear, stability, and security were not so important as a satisfaction of needs related to self-esteem, achievements, recognition, respect to self-actualization, fulfilment, individualization, or the pursuit of dreams. These higher order needs appeared to be important since the development of technology and efficient and effective modes of production allowed for the constant provision of lower order needs. The individual pursuit of satisfaction of higher order needs brought about the aforementioned changes in individual behaviour related to the emergence of the "modern" family.

The change in trends over the course of first and second demographic transition, reflect how well individuals and societies were able to adapt to the environmental conditions and how this adaptation has been improving throughout the process of so called "modernization". The small population size and low pace of growth were related to a poor adaptation to the changes in the environment. Very frequently a sudden decrease and increase in population size were related to a societal vulnerability to unforeseen changes in

the environment. That caused, on average, the excess of deaths over births and no population growth. Increase in population size during the first demographic transition has been related to improvements in environmental adaptation mostly due to an increase in supply of goods, better control over environmental resources and improvements in technology of health protection. This situation translated into rapid growth of population since the decrease in mortality rates had created a surplus of births over deaths. Finally, second demographic transition gave way to another population equilibrium in which most societies secured individual well-being which allowed striving for self-fulfilment. Population stagnation or decline after second demographic transition has been related to the fact that individuals consciously refrain from establishing families and childbearing.

Above described changes in population size in historical Europe, as changes in the number of births and deaths in response to the level of adaptation to environmental conditions, has had a profound effect on the societal level. These effects were primarily related to individual decisions concerning family formation and number of children in the context of shifts in economics and modes of production through the process of modernization (Laslett, Wall, & Robin, 1983; Laslett, 1972; Levine, 1977). It might be argued that one of the most remarkable effects of these changes was a conversion of the household from being a production unit to being a consumption unit and a gradual shift from using individual human capital in household production to a use of individual human capital in industrial production on the external labour market. In other words, the contemporary family is no longer an economic necessity and might be rather seen as one of the possible ways in which individuals might structure their lives.

From “Familialism” To “Individualism”: Microeconomic Perspective on Changes in Family Formation Patterns

An explanation of changes in patterns of family formation during first and second demographic transition comes down to the question of why a certain type of societal organization has been advantageous at particular stages of the historical timeline. From that point of view it is important to explore why during the early stages of population history, a society oriented around families has been more advantageous and why in later phases it has transformed to a society oriented around individuals. Subsequently, it would be

important to explore the consequences of modern, individualistic family formation pattern.

During the pre-transitional ('Malthusian phase') the basic mode and technology of production has been related to agriculture. This mode of production demanded close cooperation of family members in a form of extended family, thus the traditional family has been a fundamental unit of 'production and reproduction' (Lasslet, 1972; Lasslet et al., 1983; Hajnal, 1983). In economic terms, family has been a socially recognized production and reproduction unit between genetically unrelated individuals. Thus, it demanded strong social norms, which were aimed at protection of the social and economic order. Interestingly, these norms were reflected in the Ten Commandments, which were aimed at keeping the integrity of family as a basic unit of economic production and biological procreation (Lasslet, 1972). Taking into account the mode of economic production based on agriculture, families were extensively focused on production and economic subsistence, where exchange on the external market had been relatively weak and did not contribute substantially to the home budget.

Since social organization of production and reproduction had been based on family, entering marriage was universal and there were very few individuals not marrying in the population. Although there were regional differences in the age at entering marriage across the division line between the east and west of Europe called the Hajnal line (Hajnal, 1953; Hajnal 1965; Hajnal, 1983), marriage had been quite universal and there was a strong norm against remaining single. Marriage seemed to be a natural form through which individuals structured their lives and being a wife or husband were the main roles sanctioned by society. These norms have been reflected in the very strong negative stereotype of singles that played a crucial role in enforcing individuals entering into marriage. Single individuals were often called "spinsters" or "bachelors" which has clearly negative connotations (Fink & Holden, 1999; Cargan, 1986; Kiernan, 1988; Cotts-Watkins, 1984).

These negative connotations were not equally strong for males and females. Single males were presented as those who have more time to 'settle down', and being single was nothing to be ashamed of (Cargan, 1986, p. 201). On the contrary, single females were often subjected to jokes and were mocked about their age and physical appearance. "Spinsters" were portrayed as unattractive with 'large feet, thick glasses, flat chests, thin hair and pale skin' (Cotts-Watkins, 1984: 313). Age has been another sensitive dimension since after reaching a certain age limit, family and women themselves, started to

worry about the chances for successful marriage. Usually single women who had reached a certain age (around mean or median age at marriage) were perceived as unattractive and therefore unable to find a spouse despite their intense efforts. Those women were described as those who did not miss 'any single wedding apart of their own' (Fink & Holden, 1999, p.240). On the contrary single men were usually considered to be attractive despite their age and had many potential brides waiting 'around the corner'.

Opposite stereotypes reflect diverse social expectations towards males and females with respect to family formation: females were expected to enter marriage much earlier than males. Not surprisingly, this has been reflected in observed age at marriage in the pre-transitional period. Usually the mean age at marriage for females used to be much lower for females than for males. For instance, according to an analysis of English parish registers in the 17th and 18th century the mean age at marriage for females fluctuated around 23–24 years old whereas for males around 28 years old (Wrigley et al., 1997, p. 134). Such differences were strongly related to the economic situation and the modes of economic production. In an agricultural economy, predominant in that period, males were usually supposed to inherit wealth (a farm) from their fathers whereas there was no such an obstacle for females. These relations have dramatically changed during the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the 19th century. Due to a high demand for the labour force during the process of industrialization, young individuals could relatively early in their lives gain an access to financial resources and thus became independent from the traditional inheritance system that had been present in the peasant economy (Levine, 1977).

Another important features of pre-transitional and transitional European societies were high fertility (large average number of children per family) and non-flexible division of gender roles within families (Laslett et al., 1983). Both of these dimensions changed during the first and second demographic transition leading to below replacement fertility and interchangeable gender roles in most contemporary European countries. The commonly used theoretical framework used for explanation of aforementioned changes is based on the so-called 'Columbia-Chicago' or 'price-time' model which laid the foundations for micro-economic analysis of fertility and family formation (Becker 1965; Mincer 1963). The model assumes that there should be an optimal allocation of resources (time and other material assets) between home production and paid work. This allocation should be optimal with respect to parental consumption (standard of living) and the trade-off between quality and quantity of children

(Becker, 1993). The formulation of such a model allows for predictions both with respect to a division of duties between home production (care and household duties) and an activity on the labour market related to an acquisition of goods and monetary resources (Becker, 1973; Becker, 1974). This model also has clear predictions concerning the division of roles within the household and parental choice with respect to the number of children (quantity) and investments in children per capita (quality) (Becker & Lewis, 1973). Hence, when the external market is valuing males' work higher (exclusion of females from labour market) the model predicts that women should devote all their time to household work (including care for children) and males should devote all their time exclusively for producing goods or acquiring monetary resources to support the household. Thus, when the market wage of females is approaching zero (social exclusion of females from the labour market) the rule of optimal allocation should favour "traditional" division of work reserving housekeeping activities for females and a role of 'bread winner' for males.

In a world where women are excluded from paid-work, the 'rational choice' for the household should follow the traditional division of gender roles and "traditional" pattern of family formation. This division of roles within the household is labelled as "specialization" since women are specialized in household work whereas men are specialized in acquisition of resources on the external market (or production of goods and provision of monetary resources). As predicted by the microeconomic theory of marriage (Becker, 1973; Becker, 1974), such strict specialization should increase benefits from marriage for both spouses. Therefore, sharp differences in earning potential between males and females should contribute to increased benefits from marriage and support strict specialization in gender roles.

The microeconomic framework partially explains why marriage and family has been, for many centuries, a predominant form of social organization of production and reproduction. Exclusion of women from the labour market and a lack of technological progress has enhanced "familialistic" type of society based on strong norms about entering marriage and the inflexible division of gender roles. This outcome seems to be true, in most cases, for pre-transitional and partly in transitional stage in historical Europe and, as we shall describe it later, should decline with an increased demand for labour force during transitional stage and particularly during the second demographic transition.

The presented microeconomic model also has clear predictions concerning fertility outcomes. In the "traditional" division of gender roles, those roles

should be primarily related to an increase in earning potential for females leading to a higher value of time (Galor & Well, 1996). However, at pre-transitional stage, the “traditional” pattern should be predominant taking into account the insignificant activity of females in the labour market. In the “traditional” set-up, as predicted by the ‘Columbia-Chicago’ model any increase in household income should also lead to an increase in the number of children which is also in line with the Malthusian theory of population and reproduction where it is assumed that any increase in wages should ultimately lead to increased fertility (Galor & Well, 1999). In the original formulation of Becker’s theory of fertility, demand for children depends inversely on their costs, also called the price of children (Becker & Lewis, 1973). In the microeconomic approach to fertility decisions about number of children involve direct costs (financial expenditures) and indirect costs (time of parents devoted to childcare, which are defined by, for instance, forgone wages. In the pre-transitional stage children were usually a productive good (low costs) since they contributed to the household income and parents did not bear any additional costs of children like schooling or increasing the quality of children. In a traditional family, women were not active in the labour market (no wages) so the prediction is that they should be prime caretakers since paternal involvement in childcare would generate high indirect costs.

As long as women were not active in the labour market any increase in household income should lead to an increase in number of children. Subsequently, any increase in the earning potential of females (or wages) should lead to a decrease in number of children and an increase in investments in the quality of children¹. Therefore, the shift from high to low fertility observed during first and second demographic transition reflects the idea of so-called ‘quality-quantity’ trade-off, where optimal choice with respect to number of children should be a product of wage structure for males and females and labour force participation rates for females. An additional factor here is also the usefulness of pursuing one of the strategies with respect to external conditions defined as the potential social success of low and high quality children (Bulato, 1982). These predictions seem to be coherent with observed demographic trends where fertility has been gradually shifting from high level to replacement level and finally to fertility on below-replacement level at the end of second demographic transition.

¹ In fact increase in female wage would have an ambiguous effect depending on the interaction between increase in wage and increase in overall household budget.

The above described trends and theories referring to changes in family formation patterns are important pieces in the explanation of demographic changes over the first and second demographic transition. From the perspective of these theories, second demographic transition seems to be a continuation of these changes, which started during first demographic transition. What is crucial with respect to the explanation of current trends in partner selection, family formation and childbearing is to find out the turning point, which contributed to the observed situation nowadays. One of the main candidates here are the aforementioned advancements in technology and changes in the mode of production from agricultural to industrial. Invention and use of the steam engine both in agriculture and in manufacturing allowed increasing production and thus supply of goods. It also allowed for a decrease in the price of goods, which were more affordable than in the pre-transitional period. These inventions, along with advancements in medicine and hygiene, allowed for a significant reduction in mortality (Omran, 1971).

These technological advancements (both in terms of production and medical care) have changed the context of individual decision-making with respect to the family formation process. As already mentioned, increased demand for labour force related to rapid industrialization made marriage more accessible than in the pre-industrial stage, which has been reflected in the decreasing age at first marriage. It also created a possibility for females to work outside the household and at the same time increased earning potential of females which had those consequences predicted by the microeconomic theory of fertility.

The described processes had an important impact on the transition from “familialism” to “individualism” making an individual, instead of family, a basic production unit as it was in the pre-transitional period. From that time onwards an individual worker and individual skills were of crucial importance with respect to the provision of resources for the household rather than the joint production and effort of a household (Goody, 1983). Therefore, the emergence of salaried workers was of crucial importance for the development of economies rather than families working in agriculture. At this same time, increasing demand for labour force had created a demand for services that were usually provided and created by households such as childcare. There was a growing sphere of public and private institutions, which began offering services that allowed parents to spend more time in the labour market. Gradually, households were not only offered childcare but also the provision of other goods and services, which were traditionally produced by households in the pre-transitional phase.

This had severe consequences with respect to benefits from marriage both in terms of specialization and production within the household (Becker, 1973; Becker, 1974). Basic functions of the household began changing from production of goods and services (often related to subsistence) towards consumption and satisfaction of higher order needs such as emotional support, stabilization, diversification of risk related to activity in the labour market, diversification of income sources, shared costs of living (economy of scale), and a lower degree or even lack of specialization within unions. The latter gave rise to a new type of family called a 'dual earner model' that is characterised by equal or interchangeable engagement in household duties and activity of both partners on the labour market. This new type of family caused an increase in the value of household budget and the possibility of satisfying higher order needs and not only maintaining minimum living standards. Moreover, households with both spouses active in the labour market might enjoy greater financial security taking into account possible loss of job.

Therefore, the household and its functions changed from being a production unit (in terms of material goods) to being a consumption unit which only produces children and other "soft" goods such as emotional support or protection against instability in the labour market. That also translates into different expectation towards marriage than in the past. Contemporary marriages and unions were expected to provide a high quality of relationship, emotional support and security rather than simple economic production and a means of subsistence.

As already mentioned an increase in demand for labour force during first and second demographic transition had tremendous effects especially for women. The rise in labour force participation of females significantly decreased asymmetry in opportunity costs between spouses, which also lead to lower benefits from marriage (Becker 1973; Becker 1974; Galor & Well, 1996). Thus, entering into marriage became no longer a prerequisite for good life but was only one of the possible ways in which an individual could structure their lives. The opening of the labour market and the change from a "familialistic" to "individualistic" mode of production created an increasing demand for education, which served as a tool for improvements in human capital. Education, skills and human capital were of crucial importance with respect to being competitive on the labour market.

Development of the external labour market based on industry, also had consequences with respect to childbearing. Increases in earning potential of females have raised opportunity costs and contributed to a decline in the

number of children in the household (Becker & Lewis, 1973). Additionally, an increase in the costs of children (investments in quality) has been necessary with respect to the aforementioned growing competitiveness of the labour market and the rising importance of human capital.

The interrelations between female employment, family formation and childbearing are of a complicated and dynamic nature (Matysiak, 2008). The rising employment of females in Europe since the end of WWII has been necessary when taking into account severe human losses. Although there were significant regional differences, the process of reduction in asymmetry in the share of employed males and females around Europe has been almost universal. As already noted, these changes were related to rising demand for the labour force as well as a growing pursuit for education. These changes were also accompanied by a growing acceptance for female activity in the labour market (Kotowska, 2005). The rising share of employed females has been advantageous both from an economic and social perspective. After WWII, differences in the educational structure for males and females were gradually disappearing which increased the share of employed females since they could easily compete with males (Pissarides, Garibaldi, Olivetti, Petrongolo, & Wasmer, 2005). Taking into account the growing human capital of females as well as a social acceptance for female activity in the labour market, leaving valuable human capital out of the labour market could have negative economic consequences. Moreover, improvements in the household production function (introduction of domestic appliances, availability of institutional childcare) reduced the amount of household workload and free up additional time that could be spent on work outside the household.

Changes in the female labour force participation rate (LFPR) had severe consequences with respect to childbearing and observed levels of fertility. These changes were not straightforward and often contradicted standard prediction of microeconomic theory (Ahn & Mira, 2002; Engelhardt, Kögel, & Prskawetz, 2004; Engelhardt & Prskawetz, 2004). Shortly after WWII on the eve of second demographic transition, fertility measured by TFR remained on a relatively high level (above replacement) in most European countries and was accompanied by a low level of LFPR (Ahn & Mira, 2002). Such a situation partially supports predictions from microeconomic theory of fertility that the exclusion of females from the labour market contributes to high fertility. Rising employment of females in the OECD countries caused an initial decline in fertility (Nordic countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland). Those countries with relative low LFPR still had relatively high

fertility (Greece, Italy, Spain, Ireland). However, as many researchers have noticed in the mid-1980s the sign of correlation between LFPR and TFR had changed its sign from negative to positive (Ahn & Mira 2002, Engelhardt & Prskawetz, 2004; Engelhardt et al. 2004). This important finding could be related to the fact that women have a strong preference towards reconciling work and family life and involvement in the labour market does not necessarily mean no children especially when the labour market is flexible (part-time employment) and state policy allows combining work and childbearing.

Certainly, changes with respect to the labour market activity of females would not be possible without effective control over procreation. Developments in medicine and a proliferation of hormonal contraception played a crucial role in changes leading to the individualistic society. This form of contraception gave women freedom to decide about timing and quantum of their procreation. In fact, hormonal contraception, to a great extent, detached sexual life from procreation and at the same time there was a weaker social pressure and expectation that having children should be a necessary part of one's life (Leridon, 2006).

The discussed changes related to activity in the labour market along with the social and medical possibility to structure life according to individual preferences, had consequences for family formation, partner selection and childbearing patterns. Increasing symmetry in earning potential for males and females, growing economic independence of females and societal individualization gave rise to a new life cycle which could be characterized as non-deterministic where social roles were not ascribed and socially defined. Moreover, individualistic society produced a new family in which individuals are more concerned with their own interests and not subjecting their decisions with respect to family goals. These changes on the individual level were accompanied by aggregated social changes, which manifest in a lower level of involvement in social and political life and an overall lower level of social cohesion.

The aforementioned changes related to second demographic transition altered the way in which individuals structure their lives. This starts with transition to adulthood, leaving the parental home, partner selection and union formation. Taking into account the individual economic independence of both males and females the criteria for partner selection no longer rely solely on finding a person with economic resources or physical attractiveness. Nowadays, individuals look for traits related to quality of relationship such as mutual understanding, shared interests or similar social and educational

background. Moreover, there is no more social stigma related to individuals outside unions. It seems that the proper term to describe such persons now is single rather than “bachelor” or “spinster”. What seemed to be an exception in the past, now seems to be common. Being single nowadays has neither negative nor positive connotations and seems rather a natural state. This is also reflected in a growing share of informal unions where individuals engage without planning the future but rather to find out if the partner seems to be a good candidate (Mynarska & Bernardi, 2007). Thus the prevalent path of marriage formation happens through an informal union often called a ‘trial marriage’. Late engagement in long-term relationships often results in late marriage or no marriage at all, since the economic independence of both spouses greatly reduces benefits from marriage. This is reflected in the phrase ‘paperless marriage’ to describe the fact that the only difference between an informal union and marriage is related to the institutional aspect (Mynarska & Bernardi, 2007).

Prolonged search for a spouse and prolonged investments in human capital also lead to one of the two mechanisms behind a drop in fertility rates in the past 25 years. The observed lowest-low levels of fertility are caused by the postponement of the decision concerning childbearing and the lower number of children that couples ultimately have (Billari & Kohler, 2004; Sobotka, 2008). This is of course well-explained by the micro-economic theory of fertility with its main prediction related to ‘quality-quantity’ trade-off. Parents usually decide on a lower number of children for the sake of increasing investments per-capita, which seems to be beneficial with respect to the future earning potential of their children.

Last but not least, an important feature of contemporary demographic changes is voluntary childlessness. In many cases, individuals consciously decide to remain childless, which seems to be an ultimate example of how far second demographic transition can go in terms of the pursuit of self-fulfilment and individualism. This trend is clearly reflected in the description of such individuals as “childfree”, which underlines positive aspects of not having children (Basten, 2009a; Basten, 2009b; Tanturri & Mencarini, 2008; Paul, 2001). The EUROSTAT data shows great diversification in the percentage of childless women at the age of 40 in various European countries ranging from 28% in West Germany, 21% in Great Britain to only 7% in Iceland and Greece (Tanturri & Mencarini 2008). Of course it has to be noted that these numbers reflect not only those who are voluntarily childless but also women who cannot have children due to, for instance, biological reasons. How-

ever these figures show that in some countries there is much less interest in childbearing whereas other countries still have a relatively low share of those without children. Therefore, a delicate semantic difference between notions of “childless” and “childfree” is of crucial importance. The former implies that a couple or person is explicitly without something, which is, perhaps, naturally expected (Paul, 2001). The latter, however, is far more positive, and implies a kind of emancipation from something either by choice or by good fortune – e.g. carefree or disease-free. Thus, being childfree stresses a completely different way in which people want to structure their lives: maybe they want to be with a partner but not necessarily have children.

Future of Family and Childbearing: Why Have Children in the 21st Century

The issue of childfree individuals in contemporary Europe invokes the provocative question of why have children in the 21st century (Morgan & King, 2001). Although microeconomic theory, along with the theory of second demographic transition, correctly predicts changes in family formation patterns characterized by unstable unions, a large proportion of singles and fertility levels well below replacement, there is still a need to speculate about the shape of family and unions in the future. These speculations are largely positive, stating that a downward shift in fertility trends and an end of “traditional” family is of a rather temporal nature since there is an innate biological predisposition for childbearing and pair bonding (Borgerhoff-Mulder, 1998). During the process of evolution, humans have developed a predisposition and motivation for having children, and nurturing seems to be a kind of instinct, which has a certain emotional value. In an extreme form this need to “nurture” might be transformed into a substitution of children by pets (Basten, 2009b).

Moreover building family and having children could be seen as a tool for the creation of social networks (reproduction of kin), inheritance and wealth bequest. This might have important economic consequences taking into account threats caused by negative changes in the age structure, which might affect the labour market and pension system. Thus, children (similarly as it used to be in the past) might be perceived as an old age security taking into account the rapid ageing observed in most European countries.

Finally, family formation and having children, from the perspective of contemporary economy and demography, should be perceived in terms of externalities defined as social costs and benefits of individual actions. Nowadays,

individual decision concerning number of children might have far-reaching social consequences related to supply of labour force, threats related to the pension system and old age security. Therefore, those who decide to remain childless affect the national economy by not supplying youth, which ultimately changes the age structure of a population leading to all the consequences of a reversed age structure with a dominance of the elderly. This action, which might have a beneficial effect from the individual point of view, might have a negative effect on society as a whole. Individualistic perspective on life cycle and postponement of a decision concerning family formation and childbearing might bring certain individual benefits while generating at the same time considerable social costs.

A solution here might be an increase in social awareness of the asymmetry between individual benefits and social costs and an enforcement of individual actions, which are in line with social expectations. Such actions will necessarily generate benefits for the whole society. It creates a need to clearly state that individual level decisions regarding family and childbearing generates externalities and might generate unfavourable outcomes for all individuals in the long run. A possible solution here would be the introduction of governmental policies aimed at increasing fertility on an individual level such as tax preferences for families with children or a policy aimed at a reconciliation of work and family life for females, but also campaigns aimed at increasing social awareness and stimulation of intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion.

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CHAPTER 2

Being Single as a Result of Failures in Building a Relationship

Introduction

In postmodern concepts of love and relationships, “the here and now” seems most attractive for young people. It is not associated with any responsibility of being in a formalized relationship. A “here and now” relationship ends when it does not meet expectations – and popular guides teach not only how to lower the risk of failure, but also how to end a relationship with no harm or side-effects. The result of this superficial “skill acquisition” of love and new experiences in relationships is by no means a higher awareness of living together but “un-learning love” (Bauman, 2003). Such an interpretation can also be referred to singles that are trained in their inability to love.

Paradoxically, in a postmodern society the quality of marriage, relationships and family life have become one of the most important indicators of the quality of life. Since the 1960s, as sexual freedom grew, the level of satisfaction from the quality of relationships has decreased. It has resulted in higher expectations towards the partner and the relationship, which are supposed to provide, among other things, sexual satisfaction and a sense of a close emotional bond. These high expectations refer to the fact that people most often look for someone who would be an ideal soul-mate, i.e. someone who is emotionally close, gives a sense of unity, and someone who we could share our love, happiness and sadness with. At least on an ideological level, finding the “other half” has replaced all the previous reasons for getting married or being in long-term relationships (Trimberger, 2008). American studies

show that 94% of respondents aged 20–29 are searching for their soul-mate and 84% deeply believe that one day they will find them. The ideal of a soul-mate somehow legitimates single life, as searching for “the one” disqualifies the belief that you cannot live a satisfying life without a partner and that it is better to live with someone even if they are not ideal (Trimberger, 2008; DePaulo & Morris 2005). On the one hand, living without a partner means a lack of certain emotions, and is to some extent a symptom of failure in building a stable life (understood as marriage and family) and the inability to cope with the fear of loneliness. On the other hand, excessive concentration on oneself and your own needs, caring for your own satisfaction and safety, makes it impossible to compromise, something which is crucial for building stable intimate relationships (Bauman, 2003). Being active in building and keeping relationships has become a basic “skill” which we expect from our partners (Giddens, 2007). Behavior patterns and mental processes linked with sexual behaviors and emotional relationships have become volatile, and it has become difficult to identify what love actually is and is not. Men and women, to make a decision, must know in what relationships they want to participate, and which relationships will answer their emotional needs. When they subjectively stop feeling satisfied in a relationship (which is usually defined as degradation of quality of life), many people decide to leave their partner and to look for amusement in other, reconstructed relationship or on their own.

Living with someone means compromise and sacrifice and at least partially “surrendering yourself”. Therefore, whenever a new relationship begins, you must be absolutely positive that the relationship is worthwhile. In other words, people must make a conscientious analysis of the pros and cons. When such an investment in somebody is made, we mostly expect predictability, safety, support and other gains in return. If the value of a relationship begins to “decrease”, we end it, bearing in mind that contemporary promises of emotional involvement are of no meaning in the long-term. As long as people see an investment which is beneficial for them, and makes them feel safe and satisfied, they are willing to take the risk (Bauman, 2003). If not, they become singles.

Method

This article is a part of my research, which I’ve prepared for PhD dissertation. The first goal in my research it was to identify the reasons for being alone,

which the respondents were aware of. I was interested in which reasons they would state themselves.

Due to the ambiguous concept of “singlehood” I decided to define singles for this book as people who live in cities (of 500,000 citizens and more), who are not in stable relationships, do not have children and do not live alone due to an unexpected event (e.g. death of a spouse, disability). The selection of participants for the study was purposive. They were heterosexual people aged 25–40, because this is the age when people usually decide whether or not to set up home. This is also when they decide to pursue personal development, education and a professional career. The youngest respondents were 27 years old, the oldest was 41. There were 60 participants – 30 women and 30 men. The average age of those studied was close to 33. At the time of the interviews the respondents had not been in a relationship for at least two years (a stable relationship defined as being considered “serious” and “exclusive” by those involved), had never been married and had no children (but were not too old to potentially have them). The respondents were university or college graduates and were financially independent.

The participants of the study live in Poland, in cities of 500,000 people or more. The reason for choosing residents from big cities was that currently cities are the scene of many social and cultural changes, and because it was in big cities in the West that the biggest growth in the number of singles was noted. Studies conducted by van Hoorn show that the percentage of people who live alone is highest among people in metropolises, where they are generally well educated, with high incomes, and considered “achievers” (Hoorn, 2000).

The respondents were chosen based on the snowball method. This is a technique which is applied in studies on specific social categories, and singles can be counted as such. “The term snowball refers to the process of accumulation because every found person names the following ones” (Babbie, 2009). The analyzed material comes from 60 free-form interviews. Each interview lasted 40–90 minutes. The studies were finished in 2008.

In this article the quotations from respondents are signed with their name and age (e.g. Ewa, 30 – which means the respondent is 30 years old). I use also other symbols denote the experience the respondents have had in relationships: S – serious relationships, C – casual relationships, SC – serious and casual relationships, N – no experience in relationships.

Results

Unequal Involvement in Building a Relationship

When we spoke about reasons for living alone, singles often mentioned their unsuccessful attempts to find a partner, or negative experiences of living as a couple. Being in unsuccessful relationships, where the partners did not accept or understand each other's point of view, made some of the singles think that it was better to be alone than to be stuck in a relationship without a future. The participants of the study talked about their partners not being as involved in the relationship as they were. They admitted that their previous relationships had fallen apart because they had been the only ones to invest their time and emotions, and their partners at the time had been focused on their own needs. The respondents were convinced that they had often done everything they could to make their partners happy in the relationship but their partners were not satisfied with them wanting to build strong relationships.

The unequal involvement of the two parties in building their life together was, according to some of the singles, a result of different personalities and temperament. One of the men admitted that he had moved to a little town in a distant part of Poland for his fiancée at the time, and therefore he had had to give up a very good job which was a passion of his. He took a worse paid, uninteresting job just to make a living. Unfortunately his partner did not appreciate it; neither did she support him when times were hard. She had very high financial expectations of him: "She was an only-child, spoiled from the very beginning. When it was OK, it was fine, but when it got less OK, she didn't want to help me, she didn't want to go to work for lousy money (...). She was egocentric, maybe not egotistic, but she had to have it all and it had to be the best, and if she didn't get it, she felt bad. She didn't want to go to work for 1000 zlotys either, but for 3000, and she spent 1000 at the hair dresser's etc. I'm telling you, love is blind, and you only begin to notice such things after a while and you get annoyed with it. Partnership means doing something together. We have our plans and we make an effort. I was practically in a relationship with her parents, not her. I only shared my bed with her, and that's it" (Philip, 33, S).

Different personalities in a relationship with both people making an equal effort may also be a reason for not living in harmony. This was the case of one of the respondents. He claimed that his partner was too emotional, too hot-tempered, and too jealous of him. She could not trust him, even though he never gave her any reasons not to: "She always smelled a rat... and this is

not who I am (...). If I am constantly accused of things I haven't done, then there is no trust here. If two people love each other, they trust each other, unless something happens to destroy the trust. Trust and tolerance come above everything" (Mick, 41, SC). He also added that his girlfriend lived on his problems, and that is why his friends called her a "koala", because they believed she clung onto him instead of living her own life. The respondent could not tie the knot with her as she was too different from what he expected of a partner, and he knew that she would not change.

Unequal involvement in a relationship can also be the result of a big age difference, and therefore there are different needs or points of view: "I was in one serious relationship. She was my student. It hit me hard the last time and it ended (...). This was a matter of different needs, actually an age difference of eight years. (...) She once clearly told me that she needed to enjoy life, and enjoying life for her meant going away with her friends instead of going away with me. She needed them more than me. It was growing up time for her. One needs to grow mature, too" (Casper, 34, S). The young age of partners, according to those studied, often caused changes in their life plans, mood swings, searching for new life experiences and wanting to experiment sexually with other people. This immaturity of partners made the respondents who had had such experiences fear about the future of their relationships. Some of them thought that the age difference and different life priorities made it impossible for the relationships to last: "You expect something different, mature (...). She was not mature enough for such a relationship, as she told me a few times. It was true. You know, nobody is perfect. I'm sure that if I met her today (when she was older – J.C.), this would look completely different. That's obvious. When you are 18, you don't think of spending your life with someone" (Matthew, 30, S).

Big differences in age, personalities or opinions were also listed by the respondents as reasons for not being able to build more lasting relationships with people whom you have just met. This was also the case of the singles who had had no previous experience of being with someone. Two single women admitted that when they went on dates and they did not speak the same language with the other person, they did not pursue the friendship further: "It didn't click during the meeting. We were worlds apart" (Iris, 32, N); "We were from completely different planets. We talked about two different things all the time" (Agatha, 35, N). Even if the atmosphere was nice and friendly, big differences between the two people make the single not want to go out with the same person ever again.

The participants of the study were afraid that a difference that was too big – in age, personality, life priorities – could, sooner or later, result in an unsuccessful relationship. This is why the majority of them did not want to take the risk and preferred to remain single until they meet the right person.

Infidelity and Abandonment

One in four of the singles who participated in the study did not want to build a stable relationship in the future for two reasons. One group does not want to be hurt again when they are left or someone cheats on them, while the other does not want to hurt their partners this way. For the studied singles, the most traumatic experiences of adultery were those of long-term partners. One of the men admitted that after three years of a relationship he and his partner cheated on each other. He said it was “an accidental one-night stand”. They decided to talk it through to save their relationship. During the conversation his girlfriend admitted that she had already had one longer affair: “We had this serious conversation, to clear everything up and to be together forever, but it didn’t work (...). When she was living with me, she told me how much she loved me. She was sleeping with me and at the same time she had been sleeping with somebody else for six months. I couldn’t forgive her for that – permanent, planned, premeditated adultery” (Adam, 33, SC). One of the respondents came to the very same conclusion when she learned her partner had cheated on her with other women. He even went out with more than one woman at the same time. She said that she still felt humiliated and thought that being with someone made no sense, as men always, sooner or later, cheat on their partners (Sylvie, 32, SC). Another woman had been in a relationship with a man she thought she would marry. They had planned their future together and talked about building a house and having children. She really tried to show him how much she cared for him. She cleaned his house, ironed his clothes, and cooked him dinners – that is how she expressed her love. “From top manager to housewife” – she commented on her makeover (Joanna, 38, SC). Unfortunately, this relationship did not last, as her partner cheated on her with a random shopping assistant. He tried to explain it as something unimportant for their relationship, but the respondent felt deeply hurt. This experience was so strong that even after so many years she still has no intention of getting involved with another man.

Singles are not only cheated on, they are also the ones who cheat. One of the respondents admitted: “The end of this relationship was entirely my

fault, unfortunately. I drank too much at a party and how can I put it... I cheated on her. She didn't want to know me anymore. This was a sad story. I don't know how much an influence it had on me, but I decided not to get involved with women seriously anymore and enjoy life as long as I can. Of course, I've made some more attempts, but those relationships never lasted more than a few weeks" (Martin, 33, C). Another respondent said that he was fascinated with each of his partners at the very beginning. Later, every relationship became monotonous, the conversations were boring and none of the girls was as exciting as at the beginning: "I was in relationships but 90% of them were casual. There were maybe five or six more serious ones, which in my case means three to nine months. They were women who were very interesting, who fascinated me. But then these relationships fell apart and it was my fault" (Barry, 35, C). He admitted that he had cheated on his partners and told them about it, because he wanted to be honest. This obviously contributed to the breakdown of the relationship. Another participant said that he was very liberal and he knew that each of his relationships would end up in adultery. He admitted he admired his friends who never cheated on their partners: "When my peer tells me that he has been with one woman for over ten years I am polite enough to congratulate him and admire that. But on the other hand, I think that he is missing out on opportunities with other girls and women by being faithful to his love" (Paul, 30, C). He stated that he would like to be in a serious and lasting relationship, but at the same time he wouldn't feel free in it and could not discover new women then.

The experience of being left by "the other half" is yet another reason behind singlehood. Breaking up with a long-term partner hurts the most. The participants of the study often referred to them as their "one true love", and found it difficult to believe that this relationship did not exist anymore. In the cases of three women, their partners decided to leave them when they were about to get engaged or married. These singles admitted that they were very disappointed with serious relationships and that is why they preferred to be alone: "I was a fiancée once, with an engagement ring and I was dumped (...) I think I only loved one man in my life and I cannot be with him now (...). I would really like to find someone to share my joys and sorrows with. But it didn't happen. And I'm not making an effort to find one. I don't want to be with someone who will ruin the next few years of my life. I don't think I will live a happy life with a man so I am looking for the bright side of being single (...). I would like to be with a mature man, so I will always be single because they don't exist" (Ella, 30, SC). The other respondent who spoke

about it said that after 14 years she had been left by her partner because of children – she wanted to have them, he didn't. That is when the problems started. He convinced her that he wanted to have children with her, but at the same time he was already looking for his own flat. The woman said that they would probably still be together if they had formalized their relationship earlier. She wanted to get married and he postponed the decision and, she believes, it made it much easier for him to make the final decision (Isabelle, 41, S). One of the studied men said that he never initiated the end of his relationships, it was always his partners. He admitted that, even though he was also to blame, he was not sure whether he knew the real reasons for his partners leaving him, as he described it (Patrick, 28,C).

One of the single women, even though she had never experienced infidelity herself, is convinced that almost all men cheat on their wives, and those who do not are exceptions. Her opinion is based on her previous experience of having affairs with married men. She admitted that she would like to have a family in the future, but she is afraid that her husband or partner may at some stage not want her anymore and would start to lie and cheat on her. This fear stops her from looking for a stable relationship and from getting fully involved with a man (Hanna, 37, C).

In the case of some singles, the pain of adultery or abandonment by a partner was so strong that they do not want to be in another relationship. Living alone is a lifestyle which allows them to rebuild their sense of security and to feel certain that no one will ever hurt them again. Others live the single life because they are afraid they would cheat on their partners. In their case being single allows them to maintain many casual relationships and not hurt anyone.

High Expectations of Potential Partners

The female respondents required their previous partners to show initiative, be ambitious at work and earn a lot, as they have always had high aspirations when it comes to work and personal life themselves. They treat relationships as an opportunity to improve their living standards. And as their partners did not demonstrate any initiative to change their life, the respondents decided to leave them as they had no future anyway: "I think I'm quite demanding. I was always ambitious and realized I didn't want to drag a man behind me. I'm talking about economic and professional aspirations, but also personal ones. The man I was with stuttered and it turned out that there was no chance of

him losing the stutter, even if he worked hard and invested money to get rid of it, which he had done. (...) If you bear in mind that he was supposed to be the one to provide for the family too, you wouldn't like this prospect. But I am not narrow-minded. (...) I think it wouldn't have worked out anyway" (Maya, 30, SC). Another single woman admitted that her former partner, although he was a good man – caring, understanding and very much in love with her – was completely helpless. She thought he was a mummy's boy as he lived with his mother who did everything for him. She was afraid that she would have to nurse him, motivate him to act, and do most of the housework without his help. She did not feel like "pushing him and spurring him on" all the time, because she wanted to have a partner who would be responsible for his own life and could realize his own goals (Agnes, 34, SC). Another woman also admitted that her boyfriend, who she used to live with, was "a great guy" but "an unrealistic artist" who could not make a living from his work. She had to pay all the bills. Then she got involved with a married man who spoiled her with gifts and got her used to "a very comfortable lifestyle." This is why she no longer dates "losers" who, in her opinion, are simply a waste of time (Emily, 32, SC). The studied women stated that they had preferred to end these relationships instead of compromising and continuing to live with the wrong man.

Single women also expect their partners to understand their emotional needs. They believe that a man they could be in a relationship with should be responsible, caring, and know how to show feelings. As they had not found these traits with their partners, they ended the relationships. One of them is still afraid that she will never meet such a man, as her expectations are too high: "I was always the one to blame, because I think I expect too much from men, more than they can give and that causes trouble. Once, during a fight (...), I heard from one of my boyfriends (...) that I would like him to be my father, lover, brother, friend and God knows who else, a Prince Charming on a beautiful horse at the same time" (Ella, 30, SC). Another respondent noticed that she was never in a serious and happy relationship because the men who she went out with did not understand her emotional needs. Some of them were machos, and although she felt sexy and attractive with them, they did not know how to show that they loved her. Others, romantic poet-types, were, on the other hand, overprotective and effusive (Ewa, 30, PL).

Men who discussed the topic said that it was important for them that the woman was physically attractive, with high intellectual potential and eager to get involved. One of the men admitted that he had tried to build a relationship

with one woman for a year – he loved talking to her but she did not attract him physically. He finished the relationship because she did not react to his suggestions on her hair-do or clothes etc. (Adam, 33, SC).

The participants of the study – both men and women – noticed that it had been easier for them to be in a relationship when they were younger, because their expectations were lower. The respondents think that it is harder to accept the faults of others as we grow older. They also noted changes in their behavior – they are more authoritative and do not like compromise: “Once you’re on some level, you don’t want to go down and you won’t be satisfied with someone who is worse at something or can’t do it at all. This is so sad, because it’s a sort of emotional and intellectual deficiency (...) the more we want something, the more difficult it is to get it from life” (Luke, 33, SC).

Their previous relationships are not the only victims of the unrealistic expectations of the singles. They admit they are aware that an impression which someone makes on them during the first meeting or a date, even if not always positive, does not have to be true either. They often do not give a second chance to someone who could turn out to be a worthwhile and fascinating person. Many of the single people confirm that due to their very high expectations of their potential partners they immediately reject those who do not meet their requirements at first glance.

Not Ready to Set Up Home

Sometimes the singles are not looking for a stable partner because they do not feel ready to set up home, or to be a mother or a father. They say that they are emotionally immature and that it is too soon for them to make such an important decision. In some cases this was also the reason for breaking up previous relationships.

Some of the single women admitted they could not picture themselves as mothers, and did not feel a maternal instinct. They believe that if they feel the need to have a child at some point, they will think of looking for a steady partner: “Everyone was made to have children anyway, because the maternal instinct is well developed with women. I think that at some stage every woman feels that a child is exactly what she needs to be happy. I’m not saying definitely no to children, but not now, so I am not looking for a guy” (Anna, 29, C); “I want to have children and a family one day. I don’t know when, yet. If there is such an opportunity, I will use it for sure, because like every woman I want to have children – every woman feels a maternal instinct.

This is not a result of my financial situation, as I am a businesswoman, I am educated and have some money and I could provide for a child, but not now” (Blanca, 27, S).

The men also talked about not being ready to become fathers: “I don’t have such plans, no pressure to have a child. To have a child you need to be responsible and really want to have it. It makes no sense otherwise. And you have to grow into it and there is no sense of, ‘Oh I’m thirty so I have to have a child’. No. You need to reach this point in your life when you really want to have a child and to take this responsibility, and if I ever feel that with somebody then I will certainly have a child” (Ken, 29, SC).

Some of the participants of the study admitted that their previous relationships had ended because their partners at the time wanted to have families and children and they were against it or could not make up their minds yet. This was the case of a single woman who split up with her boyfriend after a few years also because of that. Her partner came from a traditional family and insisted on them getting married once they graduated. He also wanted her to get pregnant soon afterwards. The respondent had other life plans and she ended the relationship (Maya, 29, SC). Another participant of the study also admitted that one of the reasons which made him split up with his girlfriend at the time was that she wanted to have a child and he did not feel ready for it (Barney, 38, SC).

Some of the singles admitted that they did not want to have a family or children at all. One of the single women had the opportunity to observe her sister and her little son every day. She also took care of him. Yet she does not want a child of her own: “I’m almost 40. I look young, but I don’t feel the need to have a child. I look at my godson and I like what I see, but I don’t want to have children” (Joanna, 38, SC). The respondent is aware that it may be the last moment to decide to have a child, but she prefers to devote her energy to developing her career or having casual relationships rather than looking for a lifetime partner and getting pregnant. Moreover, she believes that having a child would not allow her to spend her time the way she is used to – travelling a lot, going out etc. Another participant admitted that he could not picture himself as a father and that he has always been skeptical towards having children: “I don’t know why but I’m not a fan of kids. People who watch me with dogs think that I would be a good father or guardian, but I don’t feel the instinct” (Mick, 41, SC). Only one of the respondents was 100% sure that he would never have children, because: “I know from my own experience that having children is just a necessary evil” (Robert, 38, C).

Some of the singles do not feel mature enough to set up home. They could not imagine how their friends who already have children can manage to raise them, combining a professional and family life, and having hobbies. It is a sort of admiration, because some of the respondents believe that this life activity – having a family – is beyond their imagination.

A Rest after Living Together As a Couple

Some of the singles admitted that they had got used to living without a partner, and they treat their lives as sort of a break after being in a relationship. One of the men explained that during the six years of his relationship he had focused on his partner's needs and lost himself. After the break-up he rediscovered his passions, preparing meals or listening to his favorite music (Arthur, 41, S). A single woman shared his opinion. She spent 12 years in a common-law marriage and now she felt free and independent. She added that she would never give up living alone to be part of a couple, as her relationship had become "too exhausting" for her (Joanna, 33, S). Another respondent was bored with his girlfriend wanting to spend all their free time together. She did not allow him to go out with his friends; he also did not have time for his passions. The last two out of the six years of their relationship were, in his opinion, unbearable because they did not love each other anymore, they were just used to being together. He feels alive now that he is single: he meets his friends, goes out, spends time on his hobbies and has no intention of getting involved with someone. Another man said: "I feel like relaxing after all those long relationships. I changed my strategy. I'm not being totally serious right now... I simply decided to rest for a while after two long relationships, which took over five years of my life" (Peter, 28, SC). One more respondent was also tired of "love adventures". As he had failed to build a stable relationship so many times, he decided he would always be single. Here is his story: "I have had really bad experiences with relationships. My first serious relationship was with a Japanese girl, M., in Canada. It lasted almost a year, and then she went back to Japan. This was a fatal attraction. I was 19 then. Another one was also in Canada and lasted three months. I had to find someone after M. Then there were flings more than relationships. But when I was in my third year of college, I met R. She was my friend's sister. We were together for over two years. Then I met J. She was Polish. We left for Amsterdam together. Our relationship lasted six months. Then lot of flings. The longest was with a Venezuelan girl, generally stable, we lived together. Then other

flings. Then I spent a year and a half with an Italian, very charming. She was a choreographer and worked in a theatre with me. Then nothing for a long time. In Hamburg, casual relationships. A relationship with B. in Warsaw. It lasted for over a year. During that relationship I was already with another woman in Lodz, and that was the last one. The relationship with B. ended because she wanted to be a mother and wanted me to do something about it. The relationship with R., my friend's sister, was one of the best but it ended because of him. He was my best friend and didn't know about it. We had a fight, I packed my bags and came back to Poland. I acted like an asshole. The relationship with J. didn't last because we were too fascinated with the possibilities Amsterdam gave us. She found herself a Dutch guy and I found the Venezuelan. The relationship with the Venezuelan was more of an erotic experience than feelings. It fluctuated" (Robert, 38, C). Currently, the man says that due to numerous failures which he had experienced, his relationships with woman are and always will be of a sexual nature only.

Some singles got used to being alone. They treat it as something natural and do not want to change or spoil it with attempts to build a relationship. One of the women admitted that some time ago she had had an affair for a few days which turned her world upside-down and she could not get back to normal for quite a while. She said she would never risk the comfort of living on her own again (Camille, 32, N). Another single woman said that she sometimes had "short relationships with men", which means that she goes out for a coffee or to the cinema with someone. She believes that there is no point interrupting an organized life for a relationship which, in her opinion, is bound to fail. Two other respondents also cannot imagine someone entering their perfectly organized lives and upsetting their stability: "I have never been in a stable relationship and I cannot imagine it right now. It would destroy my fantastic apartment, its harmony, which I have been building somehow" (Ashley, 30, C); "On the one hand, I would like to have someone, but on the other I cannot imagine a stranger in my house" (Iris, 32, N).

The above statements prove that some of the studied singles, despite their different previous life experience, are now happy about living on their own. They all have one thing in common – they think it is better to live alone than in an unhappy relationship with the wrong person.

Unfulfilled Love

An unhappy love, because it is unfulfilled, is another reason for which some of the singles had never lived in a stable relationship. Unrequited feeling discouraged them from deeper, more intimate relationships with other people for many years. One of the men said he had been unhappily in love with his friend for a few years. He always offered his help, just to be close to her. She told him about her problems and cried on his shoulder when her love life went wrong. When he decided to tell her about his feelings, she did not want to continue the relationship. He later tried to date other women but none of them seemed interesting enough to continue the friendship. He said he had never experienced the true and reciprocated love of a woman, just the love of his family (Karl, 33, N).

Some singles think that they are simply unlucky in love. They admit they sometimes feel like they're in a vicious circle: when they fall in love, the people do not love them back, and they are loved by people who they are not interested in. One of the single women admitted that she had only experienced casual relationships. She usually met men who did not treat her as a potential partner but as a person who they could spend a nice time with: "Sometimes men, I reckon, fill their time with me. Like my last boyfriend. He was waiting for a girl who was supposed to split up with another guy (...). Maybe it is me who chooses such relationships which are simply not good for me, because it later proves that this person is already involved with someone. And that's the way it goes... They want me when I don't want it and don't want me when I want it – it's so self-destructive of me" (Hanna, 37, C). Other female respondents believe that the men they fell in love with always treated them as friends, not potential partners, and that is why they never could have had a stable relationship: "I treated him (partner – J.C.) seriously, but unfortunately it wasn't reciprocated. I was very involved. Actually, I wouldn't even call it a relationship. I don't even know what it was." (Magdalene, 38, C); "I had such one-sided, unhappy loves, which is very upsetting. I had one little affair which in the end caused much more trouble than pleasure, as I needed a lot of time to move on" (Camille, 32, N). Another single woman said that she was alone because she only met men who liked her, but she did not want to date them, while those she likes do not want to go out with her: "After a date they usually do not want to go out with me again. They say they will call, but they never do. I don't know if there's an explanation for it" (Dorothy, 37, N).

“Getting back on their feet” and “healing the wounds” after an unfulfilled love was, in many cases, harmful. The singles are discouraged by love failures and want to avoid negative emotions. That is why they try not to get involved at all. They do not want to fall in love again, because they think that since they hadn’t managed to build a happy relationship with the right person so far, then it is very unlikely that they ever would.

Difficulties in Relationships with The Opposite Sex

Problems with starting up a conversation with the opposite sex is another reason for being single. Being tense and not spontaneous is, in their opinion, the first reason for their failures in male-female relationships. One of the studied women said that she could not get on with any man because, when she really likes someone, she becomes artificial and pretends to be someone who she really is not: “Actually, I can see a potential husband in any man. I know it’s silly but that’s the way it is. Sometimes I think that I’m acting so unnatural and fake that I can’t be with someone for longer, because I don’t feel like myself. I pretend to be someone I’m not. I don’t know, there may be something wrong with me, because it is sometimes so hard for me to tell the truth, as if I was going to scare the boy off. You know – I am not as cool as it seems” (Eva, 30, C). The respondent said that falling in love is “not her style” and that is why it may be hard for her to build relationships with men. The same person said that once, a boy who had been in love with her for some time said that she was “emotionally repulsive”. She commented on that: “I began to realize that I simply repulsed these guys with some attitude of mine. Many of them said that they were really in love, but then either I acted weird, because I knew this wouldn’t work, or I didn’t want to get involved, take a risk. There was always something I didn’t like (...). Sometimes I get this feeling that I was very egotistic and that I only entertained myself with them, so that life wouldn’t be boring, and deep down I didn’t want to be with any of them (...). Other than that, I really feel single, and I always have done” (Ewa, 30, C).

Sometimes singles expect the people they meet to be their partners for life. This makes them present themselves in the best possible light. One of the single women said that her relationships lasted up to a few months because she treats her partners as if they were to become her husbands. She believes that it would be better if she allowed the relationships to develop slowly: “Maybe I should take it slowly, relax... it just crossed my mind.

Why should I bother? Was anyone bothered when they left me or played tricks on me? I can have fun, too. Maybe men are hunters and they need to hunt. And they are afraid when a girl cares for them, and this does not necessarily mean that they want to drag him to the altar. They want freedom. Maybe I need to relax and be less serious, because I'm generally too serious. Maybe that's why I'm single" (Hanna, 37, C). A similar opinion was given by a man who said that if he really liked a girl on their first date, he told her straight away that he was looking for a wife at the moment. He talked about the qualities which she had to have, about building a house and having children. He admitted that they may not treat him seriously because of that and do not want to go out with him again, as they are afraid of early declarations (Conrad, 33, N).

Being shy and not able to communicate is another reason listed by the interviewees which makes it difficult for them to talk to the opposite sex. One of the women was convinced that men thought of her as if she was "a cold and distant princess", and she acted like that just when they were around. She admitted that she was afraid to get hurt or to be in a relationship and that is why she pretended she was not interested in men (Agatha, 35, N). Another woman said that she could not read the signals which men who are attracted to her sent her: "I have never been in a relationship which I thought was serious (...). I am shy and I would never pick up anybody. Someone could fall on my head and I wouldn't notice him, because I'm such a lost case. I go to so many places; I even go to Warsaw by the stupid train and a normal woman would have met like 50 guys already. There are women who can, but I can't. Men usually say that I give the impression that I'm unapproachable or involved. These are the signals I get from men. Maybe I make strange faces. There must be something. There must be a reason for my pose. I keep on thinking about it. I don't know how to change it (...) maybe I'm destined to be lonely. There are such people" (Iris, 32, N). Another respondent was very stressed by dates – he tries to cover this stress during meetings with women by talking all the time. He admitted he does not allow his partners to speak, by telling them stories which are not always suitable in the given circumstances. The man thinks that stress causes this high self-criticism and his unique sense of humor, sarcasm and rudeness. This is why he was usually negatively judged by women and as a result could not find a partner (Jacob, 34, S).

Problems in relating to the opposite sex are typical for singles who have no experience in serious relationships. Some of them observed some reservations or anxieties related to male-female relationships and therefore they could not

build true and deep relationships. These singles admit that the older they are, the more difficult it is to overcome these barriers and that is why they've lost faith in not being alone all their life.

Conclusions

An analysis of the reasons for singlehood opens a list of many negative experiences with attempts to build stable relationships. Some said they had failed to build relationships in the past because their partners had not been as involved, or because of different and contradictory personalities and different expectations from life as a couple. Others have painful memories of adultery or abandonment, or had been in love with somebody who did not love them back. There is also a group of people whose expectations were very high and those who did not feel mature enough to be in a stable relationship or to set up home. Some chose to live alone because they wanted to rest after a relationship.

The answers of all participants of the study made it possible to create a typology of singles based on the main (but not all mentioned) reasons for not having a partner.

The first type are the all-or-nothing singles who believe that "it is better to be alone than with just anybody". This category covers this singles who used to be before in unhappy relationships. This group has also very high expectations of their potential partners. Members of the group admit that currently they prefer to be alone than with a random person. The second type are the accustomed singles who say: "I'm used to being single". They have been alone for a while and treat it as their natural state – they do not want to destroy the harmony of their life, or give up their rituals and everyday pleasures for a partner. Being unattached is something "normal" for them, and being in a relationship is something "abnormal". The next group is the romantic type, those who wait for their great love: "I'm single because I'm waiting for my ideal". They are deeply convinced that their "soul mate" is out there somewhere. This group is composed mostly of people over thirty. Some of them are the so-called eternal singles, who have never been in a serious relationship. Others broke off their previous relationships because the partners did not meet their expectations. These people are strongly convinced that it is worth waiting for Prince or Princess Charming. Other type are the hurt singles – they follow this rule in their life: "I prefer to be alone than to

be hurt again”. Despite numerous attempts they have not managed to build a lasting relationship and they only got involved in unhappy relationships. The participants of the study do not think about intimate relationships, because they find it difficult to trust another person, as they are convinced that the events from the past could be repeated. They usually choose to be single to protect themselves from further love failures. The last type are the happy ones who fully accept their lifestyle: “I’m happy that I am not in a stable relationship”. They do not feel the need to be in a relationship and they prefer casual relationships. These singles treat being solo as a sort of a break or rest after serious relationships, and also as a possibility to develop their professional career and passions.

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CHAPTER 3

Polish Singles – Between Family Life and Independence

Introduction

Sociological research on the Polish singles have a relatively short history. As a result, the knowledge that we have about this social category is not complete. This relatively well described subcategory is represented by young, unmarried singles (mostly women), professionally active, living in big cities (Paprzycka, 2008; Ruszkiewicz, 2008; Kuklińska, 2012; Czernecka, 2014). Therefore, claims about their lifestyles, plans for the future or types of bonds are created taking into account the characteristics of this particular sub-category.

The singlehood phenomenon has occurred long before social life researchers began to be interested in it. The reason for this is the dominance of family lifestyle. Poles particularly value this social group due to the fact that it stabilizes the career life of its members. Looking at the history of Polish society over the past century, it is clear that the practice of family lifestyle was the only functional strategy against oppressive or weak social institutions (Żurek, 2008). A typical biography of Polish men and women is characterized by a transition from one to the next phase of family life.

Another reason for omitting singles in the description of Polish society resulted from established beliefs, which say that the status of being “unmarried” was acquired as it were against ones will. Spinster and bachelor (this status was given to those who have completed thirty years of age) were people who could not find a partner (Kocik, 2002). The probable reason for this situation could be the lack of characteristics cherished in the marriage market,

such as beauty, wealth, good character or virginity. Divorcee status indicated the inability to being married and was a feature discriminating an individual on the marriage market, which particularly affected women (Kluzowa, Kusz, Slany, 1991). Moreover, widowhood condemned men and women, especially if they were over 50 or 60 years of life, to loneliness represented by life without a partner, although surrounded by other relatives. Unmarried people were treated as person who have been convicted for a way to realize a certain unmarried lifestyle. Not their decisions, but circumstances, or unattractive features they had were considered the reason for not having a spouse. At the same time, since they had no socially appreciated statuses, it was considered that they cannot feel happy or completed. The category of people who live alone voluntarily did not exist in the social consciousness. In this way, the dominance of the ideology of marriage has determined the perception of people living alone.

To begin with, discussion among Polish sociologists on how to define singles and, consequently, study singles, has its origins in the fact that the term "single" has been promoted by journalists (Żurek, 2008). The interest in people living alone appeared as a result of the publication of newspaper articles, as well as broadcasting television series (mostly with an American origin) in which the main characters were singles. That led to acquiring certain approach to studying singles, based on those articles and series. Singles portrayed in the media were generally young, dynamic, living in big cities, wealthy and focused on their career (Kawula, 2005). Their distinguishing feature was the fact that they became singles as a result of conscious decision to leave their family home because of the desire to achieve important life goals. Orientation on individual goals (professional, hedonistic) by striving to widen the sphere of personal freedom were considered the main cause of becoming singles. As a result, the population of singles was narrowed to people who are under 35 years old, live in cities of over one hundred thousand inhabitants, are focused on their career, don't have a permanent sexual partner, are financially independent person (have good material and financial resources that go beyond the average standard), who formed a single-person households, and those who have taken a thought-through decision to stay outside of marriage (Paprzycka, 2008; Ruszkiewicz, 2008; Kuklińska, 2012; Czernecka, 2014).

Moreover, it should also be noted that in some social environments single status began to be transmitted to people who, for various reasons, did not want to be named a single parent, spinster or a widower. Staying single became

a fashionable term that has replaced the concept of a person without a spouse or partner. The use of the term was not only indicated by the knowledge of the new trends related to the behaviour and actions of Poles but also predefined the life situation of the person who said about himself: “single”, as one which resulted from decision made single-handedly.

Finally, the problem of how Polish sociologists define one being single, is also due to the lack of systematic research on this very topic. Exploring of the singles theme is conducted in Poland in only a few academic centres. In addition, Polish sociologists are lacking coherent research program, with which a certain standard would be determined to describe the population of singles, along with the typical methodology of the study of this social category. In a majority of the research singles are defined depending on the adopted research topic. For example, if the object of the study were young single women, living in large metropolitan areas, who accept the feminist ideology – those would be the features describing singles used in this particular study. If the studied group consisted of unmarried people this feature would become *the* distinctive one, isolating singles from other social categories.

Characteristics that emerge from the research on the Polish singles are used to determine their basic sociodemographic profile. Nevertheless it is not complete (Szlendak, 2010, p. 469). It lacks those elements that would show what explanatory power is held by variables such as gender, generational and the local environment. Sociodemographic singles profile has been complemented by certain lifestyle factors of this social category. Singles are economically active people having a stable financial and material situation. However, career only in some of the cases is their primary purpose in life. In contrary to popular singles are not abandoned and lonely. They maintain complex and multi-faceted social relations, including covering ones in the virtual world (Bujala, 2013). They do not treat living alone as a target point in their biography (Szlendak, 2010). They are ready for being involved in a casual relationship or marriage, provided, however, finding a partner with preferred characteristics. It should also be emphasized that they are seeking a potential partner on the principles adopted in their social environments, not accompanied by an obsessive thought of changing their social status (Ruszkiewicz, 2008; Czernecka, 2014). They arrange dates, but not very often. There is also no urge tendency to constantly connect with new sexual partners. Their activity on dating portals can be described as moderate.

Polish singles accept and sometimes even affirm the fact, that they are people living alone (Żurek, 2008; Czernecka 2014). Among many other ben-

efits coming out of their lifestyles they frequently point to freedom, financial independence, comfort in running single-person household and the ability to freely manage any free time. Paradoxically, the state of liberation and independence, which was recognized by singles as an asset, is also indicated as a factor causing discomfort. While speaking about the shortcomings of their status, they indicate the emerging sense of emptiness and loneliness (Żurek, 2008). They also point out that the environment dominated by married people, often stigmatizes them. The weakness of their situation are also problems associated with running a household – singles can neither share domestic responsibilities or financial obligations. Finally downside to them living alone is that in time of crisis or difficulties they have to ask for help. They do not receive it, in the same manner as members of the community who support the members of their groups receive unconditionally and without having to repay the favour (Żurek, 2008).

The imbalance between the expectation of safety and satisfaction with social relations maintained while striving to broaden the sphere of personal freedom and protect their own privacy is uneasy for singles (Czernecka, 2014). This discomfort is additionally reinforced by inconsistent assessment coming from the two most important groups: family and friends. Parents, though they accept that singles do not have their own families of procreation, would prefer that their offspring carries lifestyle similar to their own. As singles get older, their parents express such expectations more explicitly (Żurek, 2008). But for friends and colleagues living alone is equivalent to the family way of life, often considered more functional and with more respect to the activities associated with leisure time or time for the professional activities (Czernecka, 2013). Therefore, in this circle staying single is not stigmatized or inappropriate.

The ambivalence that singles present in assessing their own situation raises the question about the course of action they take to solve the emerging dilemmas in this regard. This includes specific strategies, both in long and short-term perspective. In other words this applies to potential and actual actions that single take in order to achieve certain benefits provided by the community, without being its participants. Activity undertaken by a person living alone may relate to their current situation. The show how singles deal with situations related to everyday life. They may also relate to the goals that they wish to achieve in the long term, including those related to the change of their social status. Marriage for a large part of the singles, especially those who are not yet 40 years of age, is a goal which achievement they do not exclude.

One can, with a high degree of probability, assume that the primary variable influencing the adoption of a specific time horizon associated with the implemented strategy of living alone is the singles' age. Firstly, prospective thinking characterizes singles in the phase of the middle adulthood. The key for them is to find a partner, or on the contrary, make a decision that they will remain single. These decisions are strategic because they affect the way singles build social capital. Whether they will strengthen ties with their families, friends, neighbours, or will they form new relationships, seek new friends, decide on their sense of well-being.

Secondly, young singles mostly take measures in a short-term perspective. For them, the important thing is how they live: here and now. Although they have a vision of their future, they do not earnestly seek for a partner. If, however, in their environment appeared person, having an optimal set of features they are willing to change the current status. They do not seek to collect resources, including material and social capital. They extend them, but in association with rising expectations of the current living.

Thirdly, the oldest singles seem to be reconciled with the fact that they live alone. Therefore, the majority of their effort is connected to the preparations related to their old age. The condition for them continually being able to live alone is having sufficient financial and material resources for the good life and the opportunity to request assistance of individuals, groups or informal social organizations, which are ready to provide such support. In their case, there is a tendency to reinforce existing social ties, rather than seeking new relationships. A sense of social and emotional security can be seen as a decisive factor in the constructed strategy to life.

Family and Social Strategies

The assumption that the family plays in significant role in the lives of children and adults, men and women, rich and poor, healthy and sick can be treated as an axiom. The influence of the family in the process of socialization, education, creating satisfying needs, transmitting axio-normative system, control the accumulation of capital which can be used by family members and finally ensuring social security – are several examples of the many duties that the family perform to its members. Inalienable role of the family can't be replaced by any other arrangements (including institutional ones) (Kocik, 2005). The realization that life is impossible without a family translates to locating it to the

in the chief place in the system hierarchy of values shared by the society. The modernization process of social change slightly changed the optics, but still, the need to have some family (regardless of its structural form and type of bond that connects people belonging to it) is treated as a duty and privilege of every man. Therefore, the emergence of trends involving the implementation of non-family lifestyles, the best example being singlehood, caused and still raises the question of the rationality of such choices.

The exceptional importance which the family has to Poles is reinforced by two basic circumstances. Firstly, it is the heritage of the existence of the familio-centric model, which was created at the turn of the twentieth century and took its final shape in the first half of the twentieth century. Thanks to families it was possible to defend national identity. The family was also the main institution that allowed individuals to adapt to the inefficient functioning of the public sphere. The problems of everyday life resulting from the shortcomings of market goods, assistance in child care, material assistance, housing for young couples and elderly care – all of these activities were undertaken by the one family member for the sake of the other. In this way it also stabilized the living situation of Poles (Warzywoda – Kruszyńska, 2004). Despite the existence of many social institutions, whose task was to implement social policy and social support, citizens were mostly left alone to take care of themselves.

Having large and complex family ties compensated the inefficiently functioning system. The concept of the family, as a series of mutual obligations between relatives, was not only limited to the family members forming one household. The strongest ties in the family united three generations (grandparents, parents and children), but they were supplemented by relationships with kin and other relatives (Giza – Poleszczuk, 2000). Referring to the theory of social ties by M. Granovetter, the strength of the Polish society were the strong ties.

Important role in strengthening the belief in the unusual role of marriage and the family was also played by the Catholic Church. In a society where more than ninety percent of the people claim to be people of faith and profess the Catholic faith, the impact of the Church cannot be underestimated. In the teaching of the Church family is the most important social institution and marriage is a destiny of every man and woman. Every individual is expected to subordinate his or hers individual goals to the good of the community. In return, the family has a number of obligations to its members, which should be completed regardless of the ones life stage. Even when support and as-

sistance cannot be reciprocated, relatives can always count on other family members. In Catholicism, the man is always a member of a community that takes responsibility for him (Dłubacz, 2012).

The modernization of social life, which has its source in the transformation of the economic, cultural, political and constitutional sphere contributed to the transformation of the Polish family. Some of its features remained almost unchanged. The family still is considered the most important social institution. It is still expected to carry out the functions associated with responding to individual's basic needs. Performing reproduction, socialization, control or economic functions of the family is considered to be so important that the way in which they are carried out is under the control of the state. At the same time, it provides support to families, through instruments included in social policy. Not only dysfunctional families are being Supported, but also those that properly perform tasks deemed socially significant. The question is whether the so-called family policy meets the real needs that Poles have.

The most important transformation of family life relates to the structure of the family, the emergence of a number of different form of family life, as well as the dissemination of the tendency to submit one's own purposes over the good of the family (Kwak, 2005). Contemporary Polish family is most often a small group consisting of a married couple and children. Poles are still likely to contain a formal marriage than to living with a partner without being married. However, the younger generation make the decision about marriage a few years later than their parents and that decision is more often preceded by having an informal relationship. In urban environments, this method of forming a marriage became so widespread that the older generations have begun to accept consensual union. Subsequent consequence of the postponing the marriage is a deferred decision to have a child. Statistical Pole gives birth at the age of 27–28 years old, and therefore about 5–6 years later than her mother. This is one of the reasons, in addition to the problems of women in the labor market, insufficient state aid involved in child care or financial problems, causing a decline in fertility of women. As a result, more and more couples are raising only one or two offspring. Families with three or more children are just as large a population of single parents.

Transformation of family life are also associated with the “fragility of the family”. Even a century ago, the family, based on marriage was falling apart mainly due to the death of one of the partners. Widow or widower rarely remained alone, mainly because the men were not prepared to undertake the duties associated with the housework and childcare. Widows on the other hand

did not have sufficient financial resources (usually not worked professionally), necessary for them to live independently. Today, the most common cause of marital breakdown is divorce. It has already ceased to be a stigma. The belief that it is better to be separated from a partner than to live unhappy is shared by a growing number of Poles. As a result of divorce there are several styles of life: single parenthood, which is carried mostly by women (accounting for a total of 90% of monoparental families), re-marriage, cohabitation and single life. While the first of these is practiced mostly by women, the last one is often chosen by men. Although the time in which they remain singles is only an interlude before entering into another relationship, formal or not (Szlendak, 2010).

Modernization of the family is also expressed in the fact a number of different types of families came to existence (Kwak, 2005). Most of them is considered to be equivalent to the parental type, which is a small family. Only communities, where parents are of the same sex, are denied by the majority of Poles the right to call themselves families. Also, lesbian and gay relationships are only tolerated, but without consent to its legal formalization. Moreover, more than half the population accepts cohabitation, including a prenuptial marriage phase. For Poles, it is not surprising that many parents are bringing up children. Poles are not irritated by a situation in which women decide to give birth and raise a child born out of wedlock (CBOS, 2013). What connects all these situations, is the treatment of the bond between parents and children and two heterosexual partners as the foundation upon which the family community is being built. Especially the relation connecting the mother and father of the child is of fundamental importance in the midst of the several bonds held by the Poles in their entire biography. These compounds are based on the principle of reciprocity, in which parents have a duty to care for their children, even if they have already achieved self-reliance. Then, when the parents, due to their age require help, children feel obliged to repay the debt incurred earlier. The financial aid, material gifts, help in the household, sharing resources resulting from the social capital and, finally, emotional support are resources provided from one generation to another (Szukalski, 2002).

The status of children includes the period of time during which young adults should have already become independent. Children should be helped as long as parents think it's appropriate. Intergenerational transfers based on loyalty between parents and children are deeply rooted in social norms, backed by customs and moral principles. The standard duty not only regulates and reinforces the belief in the necessity of having a family but, paradoxically, also

favours behaviour that rely on implementation of non-family lifestyles. Sources of decisions of men and women associated with leaving the family home without setting up their own family can be found in it. Awareness of the fact that in times of crisis, one can always ask for help from the mother or father dares one to make unconventional decisions. The crucial factor is especially the attitude of mother who is ready for a number of sacrifices for the good of her offspring. Attitude of this kind is called a behaviour of “Polish Mother”, for whom this role is the most important of all (Titkow, 2007). Strong ties which unite mother and child, regardless of whether it relates to the daughter or son often turn into a symbiotic attachment of two people.

It is worth noting, that two trends associated with entering into adulthood of the young generation appear in Poland. Both can be considered as the main source of the marriage being postponed. The first is related to the so-called “time – lag effect”, which comes from the fact that people in their thirties are still living with their parents and run joined household. They enjoy the rights of the child in the family, with guaranteed freedom of behaviour. Simultaneously, an increasing percent of young adults is leaving home and establishes a single household. Both strategies result from problems that young people have finding jobs commensurate with their skills and financial aspirations and with the desire to pursue hedonistic purposes.

Marriage is an appreciated social institution, however, it is increasingly being viewed as an obstacle to the achievement of other important goals in life. The same can be said about other important social role – parenthood. The child is a respected value, however, using an economic perspective it can be said that it competes less and less effectively with other values. Career, striving to achieve prosperity and hedonistic purposes are a few of the long list of goals in life that are more important for women and men than having a baby (Duch – Krzyszozek, 1995). Postponing the moment of taking parental roles or foregoing them all together also stems from the lack of a stable pro-natalist policies pursued by the state.

Also, for singles who are in their forties, their family of origin becomes a strategic group. This is due to two main reasons. Firstly, singles are slowly preparing for a new phase in their life, which is old age. They undertake actions to ensure not only their material and financial, but also social and societal safety. Therefore, they revitalize and strengthen ties with relatives, including their siblings and their families, as well as with children of their own (as long as you have them, of course). The strengthening of the place taken up by the family also stems from the need to assist their parents. Polish society has a very strong

norm saying, that actions supporting elderly people is an obligation primarily on their offspring. Only when such assistance is insufficient or inadequate in relation to the emerging needs of seniors, social institutions and social services enter. Therefore, singles who have previously benefited from various help from parents, repay debt incurred before by solving their problems.

Transformation of family life is also associated with the phenomenon of individualization. This is reflected in the change in expectations family members have towards it. That also applies to reorientation of position which family occupies in their lives. It still has a significant role, but increasingly individual interests are submitted over the collective good. Adults and children more often explicitly formulate their expectations directed at the entire community, assuming that they will be met. If an important goal of having professional career (this applies equally to men as women), the realization of a passion or hobby, meeting friends or business organizations occurs, it must be integrated into the whole family life.

Today family means for people seeking closeness, security and the ability to use family's social capital (Giza – Poleszczuk, 2000). Mutual obligations of family members forming one household are a result of strength of such construction bonds, not of structural coercion. Conviction that the aid should be given to more distant family members almost disappeared. When it occurs, it is a result of the strength of emotional ties rather than sense of duty. This mechanism does not apply only to social relations linking parents and children who help themselves, even if they live alone. The word "I have to" has been replaced by "I want".

Modern family ceased to be ready-made scheme, in which precisely and in detail would be determined such components as its structure, a method of its formation, the relationships between its members or the way in which one must fulfil family roles. Even the question who can be included as a member of the family is a subject to individual decisions. Modern family is becoming a project, ruled by intention, which arises as a result of negotiations between people who have decided to be together. Family has become a social process, rather than a permanent structure. Ability to decide on its attributes and forms broadens the sphere of human freedom. At the same time it is also a huge challenge, which must be undertaken by both men and women. Uncertainty about the consequences of their choices, especially since they must be reconciled with other family members, is causing problems and conflicts in relationships. Decisions on who and to what extent is responsible for the material standard of the family, whose career should be considered a priority,

whether and if so, when one decide to become a parent, how many children to have etc. will bring future consequences which cannot be presently estimated. In this way, not only non-family lifestyles, but also those related to family become a sphere of risky choices.

Singles and Their Characteristics

Discussion of Polish researchers of social life on the definition of the singles is not yet finished. Usage of both demographics and criteria of social nature remain an open question. Age, environment of inhabitation, self-awareness, and household type are examples of variables that continue to generate controversy related to the necessity of their use in the description of singles. They are also being studied via their lifestyle, which is different from those which are called family or community.

In the accepted ways of describing singles appears one constantly recurring feature. Science recognizes singles as those do not have a formal bond with a partner or spouse. The ideology of marriage, or, more broadly, the ideology of relationship of man and woman thus sets the standard perception of singles (De Paulo, 2005). According to this logic singles are brides and bachelors, the widowed and divorced. It is also tacitly assumed, that singles are not the ones who are in homosexual relationships.

Singlehood feature assumed above should be considered as insufficient. There are two basic reasons for that. First of all, in Polish sociology already exist the concepts describing the situation of people who are not connected in the conjugal bond. The single concept should not be just an antonym in relation to the concept of married person. The most important argument, however, is that singleness sets the boundaries of the singles category too broadly. This way in the category of singles would be included people who are raising children (single parent families), live in informal relationships (cohabitants), live with their parents (nuclear families) or remain in sexuality – emotional relationship with a partner of the same sex (homosexual couples).

It becomes necessary to adopt additional criteria by which single will be a more accurate term. Singularity of the singles signifies that they form a single household (Żurek, 2008; Bujala, 2013). Because they live alone and independently use collected financial and material resources, they can satisfy values essential for them, such as privacy, independence and autonomy. The decisions they take in matters of home interior, leisure activities or the way they spend money do not need to be reconciled with others.

The absence of such permanent commitments to family members allows singles to implement a specific lifestyle. Dissimilarity in single lifestyle is mainly connected with the fact it does not have a community character. Factors which are a singlehood determinant include privacy, independence, loneliness and playfulness.

These characteristics influence each other, but the direction of this interaction can vary depending on the individual preferences of singles. Protection against unwanted presence of other people, often condemns singles to the feeling of loneliness. The fear of social isolation causes singles to care about existing social relations. At the same time they benefit from the many opportunities to make new ones. Therefore, clearly defining the boundaries of their privacy, they, at the same time, lead a lively social life. This ambivalence, which consists on a quest to preserve the autonomy and the constant feeling of longing for the presence of loved ones is a permanent singles attitude (Levis & Moon, 1997).

Singles independence allows them to use material goods individually, but, at the same time prevents them from sharing domestic responsibilities with others. Freedom in the disposal of free time also means that they cannot delegate chores to their partner or relatives. They could use paid services, but the financial situation of the singles frequently does not allow this. What family members are getting as a gift from other relatives (in sickness care, help with life crises, use of social capital) singles must buy or reciprocate for someone else's (e.g. friends) support. Playfulness in the lives of singles is linked to their most valued aspect of life – free time. Single appreciate the activity, which they may indulge in leisure time. It is also important who they can relax or entertain with. And again a paradoxically choice they can make, changes into a coercion and commitment. Single people have to solicit for the company of other. Spending free time together is simply donated to family members. These are some general regularities. As the importance of what lifestyle features the singles have, change under the influence of the characteristics of singles status (age, sex, economic activity), the period in which they remain "single", as well as the local environment in which they live.

Dilemmas of extracting the category of "single", including the characteristics which describe the subjective nature or selected elements of lifestyle singles, raise a question about the facilities as for researchers is the usage of variables having an objective nature. The assumption that socio – economic criteria will be used to define singles, allows the usage of available data collected by national and international statistical centres. If one considers a single as a person who is unmarried and lead single household, it is easy to assess

the scale of the phenomenon based on partial censuses and demographic surveys. This definition also allows for a comparative research. What is even more important, in the design of empirical studies it accurately determines the frame sampling (Babinski, 2004, p. 157).

For the purpose of specific research it is possible to use additional assumptions related to the characteristics of the sub-category of singles. These include factors such as age, place of residence, decision about remaining single, feelings towards not having a partner, having a particular worldview or self-awareness. In this way, we can speak about the young and old singles, singles voluntary and involuntary or singles who live in large urban areas and singles living in rural areas or small towns. The introduction of the concept: the sub-category of singles, expand knowledge about the singlehood phenomenon, as it will allow to take the tests far to unexplored environments. It would also reduce arbitrary decisions that are taken by each new researcher while describing studied population. It is difficult to agree with the arguments that there are no singles living in small communities (Kuklińska, 2012). Leadership of the large cities or even the specific living conditions conducive to life alone must be challenged in the era of globalization, massification and ease of access to information offered by the Internet. Contemporary village modernizes as quickly as other environments, and the modern technology and equipment facilitate social interaction. The mention of the phenomenon semi urbanization should also be mentioned. Moving out into the countryside away from agglomerations with a few or a few dozen kilometres does not mean that the way of everyday life, the workplace and social activity are substantially changed.

Similar considerations apply to another feature taken into consideration when defining singles, namely age. In Polish research on singles, there are two main perspectives. The first, in which the concept of single is reserved for people who have not completed 40 years. And the second in which the single is a person who is not yet 55 years old (Paprzycka, 2013). In both cases, it is tacitly assumed in saying that singlehood is a phenomenon which is subject to conscious and rational choice. According to this logic, singles under the age of 40 or 50 instead of the compound with a partner, have made decisions to live alone. This is an unauthorized claim for two reasons. One can be single at the age of 30 years not because they want to it, but due to certain situations in life – the death of a partner, the need for a change of residence or divorce are examples of this. Secondly, Poles tend to come later and later in the age of seigniorial, characterized by such features as inactivity, reducing social

contacts, including social and loneliness. Moreover, marriage or cohabitation of people in their sixties and older are not so unusual nowadays.

It should be noted, however, that the single – seniors are specific subcategory. Their characteristic is determined by demographic factors. Singles over the age of 65 are mostly women. They represent more than 70% of singles in this age (GUS, 2011). Status which they have is often due to reasons of chance. It is associated with their widowhood. Coercion associated with their lifestyle realized stems from respecting the norms of behaviour, which require them not to seek a new partner. Equally strong are the pressures of their social environment, and above all, their children and grandchildren who do not want to join in their communities new family member family – grandmother's new partner. Normative coercive force is so strong that women who are single – seniors are trading loneliness only for settling with the families of their children or staying in institutions. Otherness of this category also includes the implementation of a lifestyle that to a large extent is the result of health, mental and social problems that accompany people in this age.

Assuming that singlehood includes person under the age of 60 years of age, without a permanent partner and forming a single household, their population in Poland can be estimated at more than two million people (GUS, 2011). This number would be higher by another million, if those who have completed sixty years were included. In contrast, if we apply a simplified definition of singles, as people who do not have a partner, we would be talking about more than four-millionth multitude of unmarried people. Over the last decade the number of singles did not fundamentally change, although long-term demographic projections assume that by 2030 every third Pole will be referred to as a single. This trend is characterized not only by Polish society, but by the most highly developed countries. Of course, in each of them the cause of increasing the number of people living alone is slightly different.

According to research (Żurek, 2008, pp. 215–217; Bujala, 2013 p. 107) The socio – demographic profile of the features of Polish singles, presents them as people who are economically active. Singles are also better educated than the statistical Pole. Both of these features are the result of efforts singles make to obtain financial security, which is a prerequisite for realizing non-family lifestyle. In most cases, singles are not wealthy people. However, obtained monthly income allows them not only to satisfy the basic needs of human existence, but also to the consumption of goods and services purchased, which cannot be afforded by an average family. Over 60% of singles are the owners of well-equipped houses and flats in which they live.

Among Polish unmarried people predominate those who live in large and medium-sized cities. An interesting phenomenon is that among singles living in cities there is overrepresentation of women. In contrast, the countryside is dominated by two subcategories of singles under the age of 60: bachelors and widows (Żurek, 2008). There must be added yet another significant feature to the social characteristics of the singles, namely that, contrary to popular belief they are not lonely people. Around them there are several people, including ones defined as close. Ties with the members of their families, friends, neighbours, colleagues are important for singles social capital.

The Quest For Independence and The Need For Security

The lifestyle of singles is defined as non-family. First of all, because at the time of their life they have neither partner nor children who are raised and that they live alone. The fact they lead single households indicates that in everyday life there are no other people around them, which they would have to take care of and take into account their expectations about daily existence. They also cannot count on the participation of other person in the conduct of the household or unselfish interest in the problems manifested when the need arises. The presence of a loved one in the area that we take up results in many moments of joy and happiness. In some situations, however, can cause problems, misunderstandings and quarrels. Both situations are being experienced by members of the community who are constantly balancing between deep commitment to family relationships and efforts to broaden the sphere of personal freedom.

Singles, especially if implemented lifestyle is the result of their decision, apparently do not need to solve this kind of dilemma. They paddle their own canoe. What they do in their free time, how they arrange the space of their dwellings, with whom, and for how long they meet and what they spend money earned by themselves depends only on their autonomous decisions. Such beliefs are expressed by singles themselves. This is also an image of them, which dominates the public opinion. Motives attributed to unmarried people are different because of the sex of such persons. According to the Poles, men are not interested in marriage, mainly because they fear the limitations of functioning in a relationship. Acting as a husband and father is associated with taking, financial, material and educational responsibility, not only for his partner but also for children. Singles, in the opinion of the respondents, want to avoid or at least postpone the moment at which undertake such obliga-

tions. In contrast, single's women attitude, is considered to be dominated by fear of a failed relationship or difficulties in finding a partner. At the same time, respondents form strong opinion (more than 60% of people) that married life is more attractive than being single (CBOS 32/2013). Such beliefs existing in the public opinion, become a factor that puts pressure on the singles' life plans. Most of them would like to find a partner, with whom they would make up a relationship, formal or not. This tendency especially applies to brides and grooms. There is also a correlation between the age of singles and a positive attitude towards marriage. The singles who are younger are more expected to change their social status (Ruszkiewicz, 2008, pp. 173–188). Singles have, however, the basic condition associated with marriage – they must find a partner with preferred characteristics. It turns out that the value for singles is not the very institution of marriage, but the relationship with the person who will satisfy their important needs: respect, love and being loved unconditionally, the joy of communing with emotionally close person, joy life as a couple (Ruszkiewicz, 2008, p 175). People living alone are willing to exchange freedom, independence and personal liberty for martial relationships and parenting, just as long as they can find their preferred partner.

Conducted in recent years, empirical studies devoted to singles show them as people who are in their actions trying to reconcile two inconsistent orientations. On the one hand, the implementation of the single lifestyle is a testament to how important are such values as autonomy, privacy, liberty, freedom and lack of commitment to others. On the other hand, singles constantly feel the longing for the daily presence of the other person. They are also aware that their need for social and emotional security can be met only through the support of the family. But they are not its members. Therefore, there is ambivalence concerning the conflicting expectations: those with respect to their current situation in life and those which will take place in the future.

The solution to the emerging dilemmas for singles is the use of two parallel strategies (Żurek, 2013). The first is to strengthen ties with their families of origin or members of their families of procreation. In the latter case, it's all about their adult children. This strategy is more complex. It involves the provision of an alternative to family sources of social support. These are provided by small groups and social networks, supplemented by assistance offered by social institutions. It is accompanied by measures that should expand economic capital held by singles. Achieving financial and material independence indicate not only unfettered use of accumulated wealth, but also possibility to purchase needed services.

The main advantage of singlehood according to people living alone is freedom and independence associated with making decisions (Ruszkiewicz, 2013). They relate them to their everyday life and important life goals. Behaviours and actions associated with this consist primarily in protecting their privacy. Singles often meet with friends or relatives, but mostly in the public or in the homes of these people. To their homes they invite only the people they have a close relationship with or when the situation requires it. It can be assumed that a reason for this is the awareness that hospitality is a significant effort, not only financially. Allowing other people to their own living space is also the issue of the evaluation and criticism, which many of the singles want to avoid.

The sense of freedom singles provide also in the manner in which they spend their free time. Preferences held by singles are associated with the choice of forms of rest and relaxation, but also the choice of the people they are willing to spend time with. Choosing the stay-at-home forms of a leisure time singles do not incorporate friends in those activities. In contrast, when they decide to leave home they often meet with friends and colleagues. Those activities serve to broaden the already held bonds and to socialize with new friends. What seems to be specific for the Polish singles, they are not willing to join in clubs and associations which aim would promote their interests (Bujala, 2013, p.185). Few clubs and associations for singles focus its activities on providing them with fun and entertainment.

While striving for independence in their lives, singles build around themselves a dense network of social ties, also of a virtual character. Participation in online communities helps singles to overcome a sense of social isolation. Important for them is also the fact that participation in online forums or social networks do not require full commitment or taking responsibility for other participants. It also gives the opportunity to preserve anonymity by hiding their identity under nicknames.

The choice of single people with whom they want to maintain social relationships also applies to their relatives. Singles leading single household, have the opportunity to proactively manage their social environment (Baltes & Carstensen, 1999). They use this possibility to maintain contacts with selected members of their families of origin. The selection factor they use is the quality of relationships. Social relations are maintained with those relatives whose presence in the lives of singles gives them satisfaction and happiness. In contrast, with those family members towards whom they have negative feelings, contacts are broken (Turner & Stets, 2009, p. 25). Singles

select the people they are in contact with, guided by the criterion of their usefulness. Social security, which is a prerequisite for implementation of living alone, requires a social capital, which can be reached in time of crisis. The reasons for singles' referral towards the family, in order to satisfy this need, should be sought in the fact that the debt incurred in this way, does not have to be immediately repaid. The Financial aid, which was given by relatives cannot be combined with absolute adherence to returning this loan in a specific period of time. There is no need to pay interest on it. For the support in time of their disease which relatives provide, singles can repay with the word: thank you. Although, when the situation demands it, singles will also support a person who gave them assistance. Seeking help from relatives or even the expectation that they will provide it comes from a sense that social institutions do not operate efficiently.

For singles, particularly important blood tie is the one that connects them with their parents. Especially young singles satisfy a sense of security thanks to a good relationship with their mother and father. Therefore, they care about the quality of relationships with parents, often meeting with them. This takes place both on a daily basics and on holidays. In the Polish tradition, the most important are calendar holidays, and these are Christmas and Easter (Łaciak, 2007), are spent with the closest people. Singles are not excluded from this principle. They celebrate holidays with their loved ones rather than going on vacation or meeting with friends. An idiosyncratic behaviours of Polish singles is that every fourth of them go on holiday together with their parents or families of their siblings (Żurek, 2008). Undoubtedly, it is an expression of the strong relationship that links living alone with their families. The uniqueness of vacation time binds to the fact that it is a time wanted to be spent in an attractive way. It can therefore be assumed that singles do not have better alternatives for a holiday trip. On the other hand, this would indicate a desire to save money by singles, because part of the cost of their trips are participated by parents.

The importance parents have in the lives of people living alone relates primarily to serving an instrumental functions. Financial assistance, provision of services, support in crises of life, help in dealing with administrative matters as well as sharing their own social capital is the type of benefits, which can be given by parents (Żurek, 2008). They give them more willingly, if they accept the lifestyle, that their offspring have.

Singles can count on the support and cooperation of another social environment: circles and networks of friends. Opportunity to meet with them,

sharing common interests and passions, next to the small favours, and above all social conversations are what friends offer to singles. Moments spent with them give singles more joy and satisfaction than contact with siblings or parents. Therefore they prefer to meet friends, while not neglecting the contacts with relatives. Both environments complement each other, however, the bases for maintaining ties are different. Friends offer singles meeting the social and emotional needs and also the sense of affiliation. In contrast, parents, siblings and other relatives give them social security.

Differences in the ways both environments have impact on singles are associated not only with the nature of their support. They are also linked to the standards that are used in those interactions. Help given by relatives is granted unconditionally and on the terms in which the norm of reciprocity does not have to be used. It can be postponed. Reciprocating to singles' parents for financial assistance may take place many years after the loan took place. It may take a form other than cash. In contrast, what singles get from their friends, they should compensate in a similar form and in the near term. Besides, to become a beneficiary of the aid obtained from friends, it is necessary to maintain an updated membership in networks and structures. From friends, about whom it is said that they are childhood friends, little can be required. However, the long-time-no-see brother or sister still can be expected from them to give support, help or at least interest in singles' problems. In case of groups and circles of friends it is necessary to constantly update ones membership in such structures. Relations in couples of friends also must be constantly maintained.

Freedom and independence, which is a feature of singles' lifestyle has its limitations. They are represented by the needs of singles, which they are not in a position to satisfy. It is also significant that as they get older, the more accustomed to the independence of living they become, and, paradoxically, they increasingly require the presence of another person in their daily life.

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CHAPTER 4

Partnership Market and Partner's Finding Strategies. Matrimonial and Procreational Plans of Singles in the Light of Economic Theory of Human Behavior by Gary Stanley Becker

Introduction

Human as a social being throughout his life comes into various mutual relations – social, family, professional. Therefore human functions in specific relations – temporary or constant – with friends, acquaintances, spouse, children, colleagues, boss. The results of these relations – both individual and social – are very important. The best example is marriage. A successful wedlock is not solely a realization of own expectations and a fulfillment of the need for love and appreciation, but also raising children, the future citizens of the country. The attitudes learned during childhood are realized in adult life. Still, sole creation of a successful relationship and family is not an easy task, because it requires a lot of effort and commitment. The first step in order to achieve this task is finding the right person on the partnership market.

Partnership market is a place where matrimonial transactions are performed. The term market is used intentionally to show that it comprises of a certain social space, in which people living alone can meet a potential partner and decided, whether to create a lasting relationship or not, as well as to what kind of relationship it will be – formal or informal. Therefore there is a resemblance to shopping – when we go to a market, we choose what pleases

us and we decide to buy those things at the best price. Partner selection is based on the same rules, because everybody has a specific list of characteristics that the partner should have and knows exactly what, or rather who, he is looking for. Naturally, there exist some general characteristics, which classify the candidates at the very beginning, without the need for thorough getting to know each other, such as: age or sex. The quoted here Becker's economic theory of marriage, family and fertility will be a benchmark for a strategy of searching for a partner, singles' matrimonial and procreational plans, as well as whether and when the marriage is profitable and what conditions decide about it, therefore how does the economic calculation of gains and losses arise in reference to aforementioned issues. The results of personal research realized in 2012 through an internet survey on a research sample of 898 individuals living alone in category "never married", who overstepped the average age of getting married in Poland – that is 26 years old in case of women and 28 years old in case of men – will also be presented in the further part of the chapter (see more Such-Pyrgiel 2015, pp.11–32). The manner the singles' decisions in the aspects of marriage and motherhood shape and what conditions they have also been analyzed. The benchmark for consideration were the main postulates of G. S. Becker's economic theory of human behaviors, particularly about the maximizing character of human activities, market and economic equilibrium and the consistency of human preferences.

Short Characteristic of Researched Singles in Poland

During the researches there has been performed a comparison between the phenomenon of singles in the countryside and in the city, the singles by necessity and by choice, living in single-person households and shared (family), younger and older, of different economic and social status. The performed analysis allowed to achieve a coherent picture of singles who take part in the internet surveys.

The dominant category is women, vast majority comes from big cities, has higher education, achieves average net earnings of 2.000–4.000 zloty a month, rates the material status as good, has siblings, values health, love, friends, as well as marriage and family. Most frequently they declare themselves as believing and practicing with liberal political views, with several years of living alone (Such-Pyrgiel, 2012; see also Such-Pyrgiel 2014, p.198–204; see also Such-Pyrgiel 2015:11–32). The main reason for the loneliness is the difficulty of finding the right partner, therefore they are singles by necessity.

They have an optimistic attitude toward future and believe that being single is a temporary state in their lives, thus, using the terminology of P. Stein and W. D. Hoorn, majority of them belongs to the category *involuntary temporary singles*.

Partner Selection in Marriage Market in The Light of Economic Theory

There exists a certain pool of available, potential partners on the marriage market. Taking into consideration the gains that can be achieved due to making a decision about marriage, it is important what characterizes the partner. Becker, who compares marriage to a two-person company, pays special attention to the fact that "(...) marriage market works in a way, as if it would maximize not the gains from marriage (in comparison with situation, in which the "sides" remained in a single state) for each particular marriage, but the average gain achieved in all marriages as a whole" (Becker, 1990, p. 368). Therefore we decide not only about which partner to choose, but also whether to get married at all.

Therefore while making a decision about marriage, we sum all pros and cons, gains and losses, comparing our future situation to other marriages – will our situation be better than that of other couples known to us, will the decision result in an existence on a similar level (in comparison with other couples), or maybe on a worse level? A woman will not marry *man X* if she will know that it will not improve her situation, while knowing at the same time that it might occur in case if she marries someone else. She must have a certainty that the chosen person will give her, at the level of preliminary estimations, most benefits and that, in her opinion, there is no better candidate. The same situation applies to men. Marriage market is characterized by a state of equilibrium only when the change of partner would not cause an improvement of the situation for whichever person in the relationship. If the change of partner improves individual benefits, then he or she will probably not make a decision to marry the current partner, but it can also lead to a decision about divorce with said partner, due to the same reason (in situation when they are married).

Marriage is supposed to improve the emotional and social-economic situation of each individual. Basing on economic theories, Slany lists gains that come from getting married. These are, among others: *having children* – family raising a child is better at coordinating the expenses connected with

upbringing towards their “quality”, *division of work* – family gives a possibility to divide work between spouses into vocational work and work at home, *mutual sharing/using of certain goods* – family members can mutually use both the material goods that they have produced and the non-material ones (consumption of commodities, spending free time, exchange of information), *loans and investments* – in family it is easier to reconcile plans coming from performed social roles, when one person is learning, the second one is responsible for providing the money, but regards it as a some kind of investment, from which he will benefit in future, the last one mentioned is *protection against risk* – the possibility to rely on the partner, shared savings in case of health or professional indisposition (Slany, 2002, p. 57).

Therefore on the basis of the law of inversion it is possible to list the advantages and disadvantages of remaining single. A person living alone can of course have offspring, but it is a much harder task to perform for a single parent than for both parents, who support and help each other. They have a mutual feeling of duty about raising children. It is important in case of wanting to have “high quality” offspring, as Becker puts it, where this process is strongly connected with increased financial and time investments of parents, let alone the number of children in the family (see Becker, 1990, p. 301; Bulatao, 1981; Bulatao, 1982). Various researches show that as the main disadvantage of being solo singles consider the possibility of not experiencing motherhood or fatherhood during their lives (see Sapieja, 2011). Upbringing children is closely connected with big financial investments, because offspring is a consumer goods, which on the stage of calculation, due to rationally working individuals compete with other attractive consumer goods (see Becker, 1990, p. 297–308; see also Giza-Poleszczuk, 2005, p. 192–197; Golinowska, 1994, p. 119–121; Leibenstein, 1976; Easterlin, 1987). Childless singles, who have no perspective of having children, can, accordingly to their financial possibilities, consume goods and services offered on the market in any number and time, which often defines their social status and gives them prestige.

Single person cannot count on specialization and division of work, because he single-handedly maintains the home and works professionally, which leads to development of significant encumbrance of individual and in reality a necessity to concentrate most of the time on one of the markets – professional or home. It is certainly a disadvantage, but on the other hand such person has to use the time and energy more effectively for cooperation on both in both projects. It might lead to a better and more effective use of precious time.

In loans and investments a single person is also on his own. If the person's plans include both improving qualifications by undertaking another studies and professional work, then bearing in mind the necessity of being involved in running a one-person household, in the long run it will be hard and might lead to a conflict between the roles, therefore such person will abandon part of plans for future, or forfeit them altogether. Such situation exists in case of getting engaged in education and professional work. Long time that an individual has to invest in acquiring good education and develop a position on the job market, leads to abandoning the decision about marriage and starting a family. The only advantage of living alone, in aspect of loans and investments, is that the person can single-handedly make decisions about where?, when?, how much? and what for? to invest the savings, or how to consume them, without the necessity to consider the preferences of other persons.

Another matter is the protection against risk. In case of professional or health indisposition of a single, due to not having a partner they cannot count on his or her support. It is without a doubt a disadvantage, but such situation forces persons who live alone to invest in various kinds of protections (e.g. social insurance in case of disease, accident etc.), which allow them to, to some extent, deal with them and endure in such situation. On the positive side, lack of protection in the form of a partner in case of a risk, forces them to perspective thinking, anticipating various life situations and possible events before they occur and most importantly allows to properly prepare themselves, if it is possible (see Żurek, 2008, p. 100).

In the economic theory of selection of marriage Becker considers various characteristics (*assortive mating*) and their combinations, which cause greater competitiveness on the partnership market of some candidates – differentiation of partners in market productiveness (intelligence, education, height etc.), and combinations of such differences (non-market productivity of a partner in connection with earnings – market productivity of another). There are certain rules functioning at this market. Sometimes the more stressed is the rule of combining similarities, sometimes differences. It is worth considering in which situations the motivation to choose a partner comes from similarities and in which from differences. This task has been undertaken by Becker, who wrote “my analysis leads to a conclusion that selection on the basis of similarity or differences occurs, when it maximizes the combined product of goods in households for all marriages, irrespectively whether given characteristic has a financial character (like wages or income from

property), genetic (like height or intelligence) or psychological (like aggressiveness or passiveness)” (Becker, 1990, p. 369). The author interpolates that each characteristic has some value and influences on the product of marriage, therefore higher values of these characteristics increase the product. Several possibilities are considered.

When single persons combine with each other, it leads to creation – increase or decrease of combined product (on the basis of value of all their characteristics).

1. This combined product can be equal to the sum of product growth achieved in a situation, where each of the characteristics is increased individually, then all selections of man and woman will give the same combined product. In such situation there is no motivation to make the decision about marriage, because due to combination of characteristics there is no increase of combined product (surplus), which would add up to more than the sum of their individual products, so not when $I+I = 2$, but when $I+I > 2$.

2. It can lead to a situation in which “individual increase of both characteristics increases the product by a sum higher than the sum of individual increases” (Becker, 1990, p. 369). then such selection will bring a higher combined product – a surplus.

3. It can also happen that increase of both characteristics will bring to the product less than the sum of individual increases. In effect, it will lead to a negative decision about marriage.

Becker referred to the assumptions of microeconomics, which explain the scenarios presented above. According to the economic definition of complementary and substitute goods/products – *complementary goods* are those, which complement each other, one needs the other to function properly, e.g. a lamp and a light bulb or a car and gasoline. The rule is that these goods are positively correlated – increase of demand (need) on one good leads to an increase of demand on the other one. And vice-versa, on the basis of negative correlation if e.g.: price increase of the first good will lead to lowering of its demand, then the demand on the second good will also lower¹. *Substitute goods* have similar or identical functions, characteristics, properties and application, therefore they substitute each other, e.g. in satisfying a certain

¹ It can be represented on the example of decision about marriage and having children. If some conditions and current situation of an individual cause an increase of marriage costs, then the demand for it lowers, therefore also lowering the demand for having children (assuming that having children is correlated with the need for having them in a marriage).

need. In this case price increase of one substitute results in an increase of demand for another product (substitute), which is cheaper (see Varian, 2003)².

According to the assumptions presented above, Becker claims that “combination of similarities will be optimal when characteristics are complementary, while combination of differences will be optimal when the characteristics are substitutes (...) because higher values of various characteristics enhance each other when they are complementary, “cancel” in case of their substitutability” (Becker, 1990, p. 370; Becker, 1991, p. 108; Becker, 1973, p. 820–821).

Becker claims that combining of similarities (positive selection) according to the rule of complementarity and combining of differences (negative selection) according to the rule of substitutability proceeds on the basis of characteristics that are almost always complementary, because even differences that attract each other complement one another. “Determinants of complementarity and substitutability can be best determined by maximization of household production function” (Becker 1990, p. 371). He presented it on an example of partner selection on the basis of professional work (professionally active), amount of earnings and disbursement of time on household and work. In case when two persons work professionally and their earnings are different, according to Becker’s rule of maximization of household production function (Becker claims that selection on the basis of similarity has application in reference to all characteristics of partners, except for earnings. Difference in this aspect is even recommended). Persons with higher earnings should disburse more time on professional work and persons with lower earnings on household work, because “because the value of time measured by quantity of abandoned earnings is lower for F with low earnings (...) in comparison with F with high earnings” (Becker 1990, p. 373). Therefore partners complement each other when one of them, with higher earnings, devotes more time to professional work, and the other one, with lower earnings, on home. However, the earnings will not matter in situation when one of the sides is from the beginning inactive professionally. In relation to the amount of earnings, the rule of selection on the basis of differences is applied (characteristics substitutes).

In case of non-market productivity, where differentiation is not a result of difference in earning, but of difference in candidate’s education, health,

² If in the opinion of the individual the price of marriage is too high, which leads to a decrease of demand of marriage, then the demand of alternatives, which for an individual might be living alone, will increase because it can turn out to be a cheaper investment.

intelligence etc., the optimal selection of characteristics influencing the non-market productivity is presented as follows. According to the rule of complementarity “perfectly positive selection according to characteristics has to turn out at optimal if the characteristics have mutually reinforcing combined effects” (Becker, 1990, p. 376; Becker, 1991, p. 120), “therefore between characteristics increasing the out-market productivity dominate the complementarity connections, (...)” (Becker, 1990, p. 377). Therefore person selection on the basis of similarity will be optimal when the possibility of exchangeable involvement in household works by men and women is not too high. Thus two persons who dominate with different (not always high) involvement engage in e.g. making decisions in the household. However person selection on the basis of differences will be optimal when in case of authoritarian decisions they will be made by the dominant person – then this person devotes more time on household and the compliant person increases his or her spare own time, when it comes to decisions that require compliance (see Becker, 1990, p. 378).

Where the case is the combination of differentiations of partners’ market and non-market productivity, applies the theorem according to which people combine on the principle of similarity, always when the non-market characteristics consolidate with level of material wealth and often, when these characteristics connect with money income. Such selection, according to Becker, leads to maximization of goods’ production in all marriages. “The salary of husband and education of wife are significantly correlated positively, even with constant level of husband’s education and wife’s salary. According to Benham the level of wife’s education influences the level of husband’s income in exactly the same way that the level of mother’s education influences her offspring’s level of income. An alternative interpretation, which arises from my theory, is that the level of wife’s education is a symptomatic variable for a number of characteristics influencing the non-market productivity, especially when the level of earnings is invariable and that women with higher non-market productivity marry men with higher earning capacity. (...) Benham acquired results suggesting a positive correlation between the husband’s number of work hours and the level of wife’s education and this is a necessary and sufficient condition of positive selection” (Becker, 1990, p. 381; Becker 1973, p. 833–834). Negative selection according to characteristics (on the principle of contrast) occurs when there are differences in earnings of man and woman, with a consistency of other factors, such as years of study, age or number of marriages.

On the partnership market the decisions connected with partner selection and whether to marry, or remain single will therefore depend positively upon the earnings of persons, particularly on the relative difference in earnings and the level of non-market characteristics, such as intelligence, beauty or education. "From this theory results that men who differ among each other in hold capital (in tangible meaning), education or intelligence (irrespectively of these characteristics' influence on earnings), height, race or other characteristics, will strive to marry women with similar values of these characteristics, while the correlation between partners will be negative (in tendency) because of their earnings, but also because of the men's and women's characteristics that are close substitutes in the process of household production" (Becker, 1990, p. 393–394). According to this, marriage will be chosen by persons who are similar in beauty, intelligence, interests, culture and origin, but differing in terms of earnings.

The economic marriage model (of household) is being compared to a company and assumes a division of roles in this household, thus it assumes a specialization in order to increase the productions of goods by this household. Market goods are needed for production of services in the household, and "produced goods, using in process market goods (...) acquire usefulness and become goods of direct consumption like *commodities*" (Golinowska, 1994, p. 127).

Optimal functioning between partners assumes a division of partners' market time – needed for earning at job market (acquiring earnings) and non-market – needed for production of household goods (e.g. preparation of meals). Furthermore, if one partner is engaged more in the domestic sphere, and the other one in the market sphere, they should act according to the principle that "everyone should engage in what he is more productive in from the point of final effect" (Giza-Poleszczuk, 2005, p. 209), as long as the involvement of one person in the market time, who earns more money, brings more benefits for the household than devoting the same amount of time to household work. The work division according to sex results from the earnings differentiation on the job market. Therefore, it leads to a *specialization and exchange of services*. Women are more often responsible for housekeeping, while men are oriented on paid employment (see Kwak, 2005, p. 146; Giza-Poleszczuk, 2005, p. 209–210). Because of the specialization, it often leads to arising of differentiation between sectors – household and professional (see Kwak, 2005, p. 146) and to significant differentiations in positions of woman and man, as well as the solidification of such differentiations and division of

roles (see Giza-Poleszczuk, 2005, p. 210). According to Becker, specialization implies complementary combining and exchange of activities between spouses in both sectors. Men are characterized by more effective productivity on the job market in comparison with women, who due to the nature of things (when children are the effect of marriage) realize themselves in keeping the household and looking after children. Therefore, if the man earns more due to the disproportions of women's and men's earnings at the job market, it would be irrational to deprive man of earning for the sake of involvement in household work, since the resignation of work by woman will bring less costs (Due to this postulate, Becker's theory has met with criticism from feminist community). "Therefore specialization allows for development of the most productive activity of individuals, each partner benefits from the specialized skills of the other and the household benefits from combining and exchange of services" (Kwak, 2005, p. 146–147).

This postulate seems to be inadequate to modern conditions of family functioning, because there has been a shift from specialization in household to an egalitarian combining of earning and household work. In modern family earnings of women are perceived as a significant source of income for the common budget, in a nearly equal level as the earnings of men, although usually they are lower. The position of women has changed in such a relevant manner that it is possible to talk about a better bargaining position of women in the process of dividing the responsibilities – "haggling". Women are able not only to search for a man with better earnings, but also one who will be more willing to involve himself in matters connected with housekeeping and raising children. "This better bargaining position of women is connected with the development of birth control technologies, it also partially results from the growth of their potential capabilities to achieve higher earnings in comparison with men" (Cherlin, 2000: citation by Kwak, 2005, p. 149). It is also connected with higher spatial mobility of women, who in order to receive better education more often than men migrate to cities. Education is a bargaining card in acquiring a good position on the job market. This postulate is supported in case of women who live alone in bigger cities, who are called *Single Professional Women*. Grzeszczyk wrote about them: individual professionals are characterized by very good education, high earnings and professional positions. They often occupy managerial positions and concentrate on professional career and self-improvement. In their case, lack of partner is usually connected with too high expectations towards the opposite sex, because it is hard for them to find a person with similar, or potentially

even higher capabilities and characteristics (Grzeszczyk, 2005). It seems that to decide on marriage, they would have to lower their expectations toward partner and themselves, but also toward marriage, but having in mind the postulate about consistency of human preferences, they will not do it and will continue to live alone, or eventually they will still be looking for the right partner, who, considered in categories of potential candidate for marriage, will contribute towards increase of expected benefits (from marriage) according to the maximization of human behavior principle. Abandonment of the search for “*the other half of an orange*” will occur when the time needed for finding it, perceived as a cost, will outmatch the potential benefit – gain from marriage.

Partner's Finding Strategies

Nowadays there exist much more possibilities of finding a candidate for a partner. Once arranging of such meetings was dealt with by the families of singles. Today, even though such situations still take place, although much less often, people much more often meet each other through their acquaintances, friends, in work, at meetings, courses, parties, through marriage bureaus, but also, possible most often, through Internet. It has a couple of advantages. The global computer network gives a possibility to make an acquaintance much faster and without territorial or geographical limitations. In each and every moment we can communicate with freely chosen persons, which are sought after by a certain key. One option is to visit websites, which gather people with specific interests, age, hobby or freely chosen subject. People who live alone are very visible on the web and due to that there exists a wide range of portals created for singles. From dating services, through tourist, to social, hobby and event services. In the research sample, 74.40% of respondents use the internet services for singles.

In the survey respondents were asked whether they, and in what way, attempt to meet a potential partner. They had a number of responses to choose from and the distribution of their choices is presented by Table 1.

Table 1. Ways of finding partner

Partner's finding strategies	Responses	
	Number of people	Percentage of observations
Matrimonial agency	22 2.30%	3.70%
Web portals for Singles	425 44.90%	71.80%
Meetings for Singles	40 4.20%	6.80%
Clubs and discos	126 13.30%	21.30%
Arranging meetings for family and friend	183 19.30%	30.90%
I don't do anything to meet new partners	151 15.90%	25.50%
Total	947 100%	160.00%

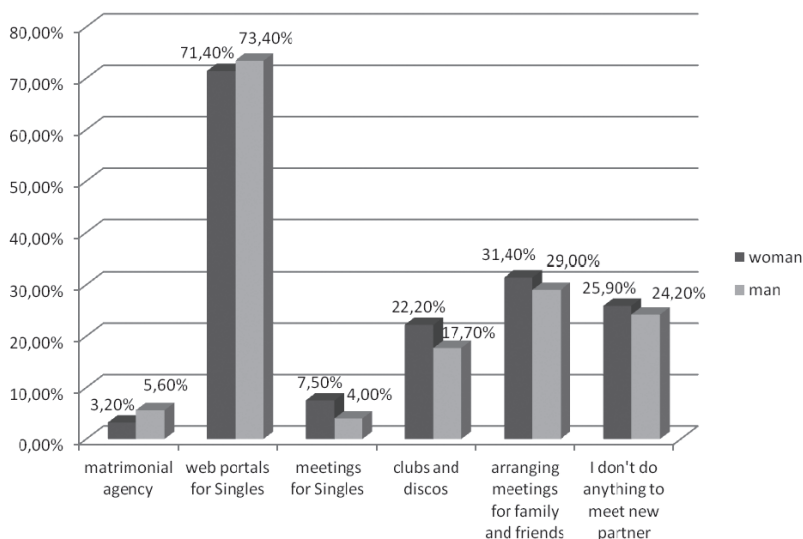
Seventy percentage of respondents search for the partner through Internet. The second most popular answer was that their friends and members of family arrange acquaintance meetings – 30.90%. Over ¼ of the respondents (25.50%) declared that they do nothing to find a future partner. Next places in the rank, although with much lower indication frequency, have been taken by: going to clubs and discotheques – 21.30%, taking part in meetings organized for singles – 6.80%. Less than 4% of respondents use marriage bureaus. It might be connected with the fact that the research has been performed through Internet, therefore the population itself contains only those persons who use Internet. About 16 respondents chose an answer “other, what” – all of them pointed to two options: attending extracurricular classes and course connected with interests and hobbies, to meet someone with similar interests, while the other option was attending to religious meetings and belonging to religious groups – mostly respondents from internet portal *przeznaczeni.pl*, which is devoted to Catholics.

Respondents were also asked whether it is possible to meet through Internet someone, with whom it is possible to build a steady relationship in real life. Over 70% answered that Internet gives a possibility to meet a close

person with whom it is possible to build a steady relationship, while only 9.10% respondents opposed this opinion. However, 20.40% expressed an opinion that through Internet it is only possible to meet a person for a fleeting acquaintance.

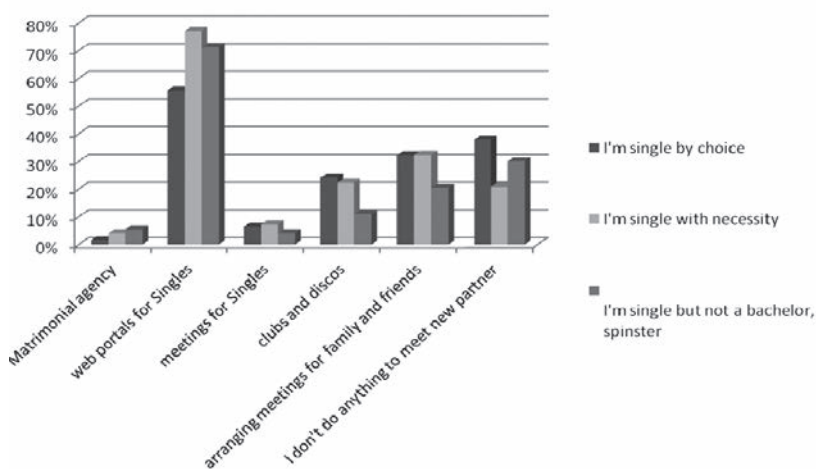
The strategies for partner searching were correlated with sex. Men use the Internet a bit more often in order to meet a close person, they also visit the marriage bureaus more often than women. Women on the other hand choose more active forms of meeting people and focus on direct contact – they go to clubs and parties. They are also more often introduced to other people through their acquaintances or family members. Look at Figure number 1.

Figure 1. Partner's finding strategies and sex of single



It seems interesting to compare this variable with typology of singles. Singles by choice use marriage bureaus least often and they do not search for partners via Internet. However, they more often go to the clubs, parties, discotheques, meetings and, what might have been expected, they usually do not take initiative to meet someone close – 37.10% compared to 20.80% of singles by necessity and 30.10% bachelors and spinsters, what is presented by the Figure number 2 below.

Figure 2. Partner's finding strategies and type of single



Singles by necessity predominantly use Internet and also are the most likely to take initiative. They seek for love and their other “*half of an orange*”. Old bachelors and spinsters, due to the fact that they are usually older persons, usually choose traditional forms of meeting people through marriage bureaus matching couples and least often take part in various kinds of parties in clubs.

In the age categories, the strategies of searching for a partner are as follows: all respondents irrespectively of their age most often use the Internet, however twenty-year-olds and thirty-year-olds also visit the clubs and discotheques, as well as meet potential partners through acquaintances or family. Persons older than forty years old use marriage bureaus and fifty-year-olds slightly more often than others do not do anything to meet somebody.

By analyzing the respondents' place of residence and their activities aimed at meeting a close person it is noticeable that almost all possible strategies dominate in big and biggest cities, in other words singles use the marriage bureaus, meetings at clubs, discotheques and parties in general, as well as those organized particularly for them. It is closely connected with an access to places devoted to entertainment, because there are many of those in the cities. In the cities there is also a higher rate of meeting through acquaintances and family and there are also no initiatives taken in this matter. Singles from the countryside and medium-sized cities, with a predominance of countryside,

have an access to the Internet and most often used this source, because it seems to be the only easily available option.

Another analyzed category is the education of respondents. Education is important in strategies of searching for partner, because marriage bureaus are used more often by persons with secondary education, they also go to clubs and discotheques as well as persons with higher education, but the second group more often than others make acquaintances through friends and family, or do nothing to meet somebody.

From the data presented above it is possible to make a couple of conclusions. Researched singles mainly search for acquaintances on the web, where they also exchange opinions on various subjects and inform each other about various meetings and parties. In the internet questionnaire in the question whether the respondent uses internet services for singles, after answer "yes" there was a follow up question which service and what for it is being used. Most often mentioned internet portals were: www.półkipomarańczy.pl, www.StrefaSingle.pl, www.mydwoje.pl, www.przeznaczeni.pl, www.AktywniSingle.pl, in other words those that cooperated during the implementation of research.

According to the respondents, Internet is the best strategy in searching for partner, especially since vast majority of them claims that acquaintances made via Internet "devirtualize" in the real life and can turn into stable relations. Still, they also use direct forms of contact, such as meetings in clubs, at parties, discotheques, therefore they lead a very rich social life, what increases the chance to meet their "*other half of an orange*". In modern world traditional forms of searching for partner through a marriage bureau lose their importance, while new technologies favor, although rather in an indirect than direct way, to meet new people. It is important not to forget about interpersonal contacts and not to get immersed in the virtual world of numerous acquaintances. Regardless, it can be said that it does not matter which method the singles choose, but that they choose the method that is the most effective one.

There is also one more factor, which tilts the balance in favor of Internet. Namely, Internet minimizes the efforts, which have to be made in order to make a new acquaintance. Getting prepared for the meetings, going on dates is very time consuming and undoubtedly stressful. What is more, there is no certainty whether we will like this person in terms of beauty, intellect, sense of humor, interests etc. At the same time, Internet allows us to perform an initial selection after a couple of first conversations (via means of internet communication) with a certain person and basing on it, there is a possibility to make a decision whether to continue the acquaintance or not. It is also

much easier to brake such acquaintances, which is far from easy in case of direct contacts. *Face-to-face* contacts happen usually when both persons know something about each other, when there is a “*thin thread of sympathy*” built upon something, like the fact that they enjoy their conversations. Therefore, we can say using the Becker’s nomenclature and referring to the assumptions of economic theory of marriage and partnership market that using internet services for singles is a strategy, which minimizes the costs and expenses, which have to be incurred in order to meet somebody. Moreover it maximizes the gains (usefulness), because in one place there are gathered thousands or even hundreds of thousands singles who search for a partner. Moreover, the assumption of economic theory stating that there exists a partnership market, which coordinates the actions of its individual participants has proved to be working. Internet, life on the web is a new dimension, the most modern form of partnership market and it controls and verifies human actions, allowing an individual to balance investments and effects – gains and losses from undertaken actions, whether to still continue an acquaintance, continue it solely in virtual manner or maybe in real-life and in the end, whether to get married.

Preferences of Singles in Terms of Potential Partner

The characteristics that the partner should have is a very important factor of marriage selection and exists in centers or matching couples, marriage bureaus and even on the Internet, where every user defines his profile according to various characteristics: from physical appearance to traits of character and interests. During the research, respondents were asked to write what characteristics should their partner have. On average the participants mentioned five characteristics which concerned both the psycho-physical and the social-economic spheres. That is: responsibility, caring, providing the sense of security, intelligence; sense of humor; attachment to tradition and family; integrity, sensitivity, thoughtfulness (women and men in equal measure); resourcefulness and financial independence, diligence; enterprising spirit; honesty, faithfulness, loyalty; education; physical attractiveness, beauty; forbearance, tolerance; wealth, material status – assets, earnings; age; hobby, passions; attitude towards faith – religious.

Women and men differ in terms of preferred characteristics of potential partner. The fact of the matter is that women more often choose sensitivity, thoughtfulness, responsibility, caring, sense of security and resourcefulness, earnings and education, attachment to tradition and family. They also much

more often paid attention to religiousness and age. Men expect from their ideal partners forbearance and tolerance, sense of humor, honesty and loyalty, intelligence and physical attractiveness. Therefore, it can be said that women at the same time value characteristics connected with personality, but also material status – in other words, their expectations are more pragmatic and multi-faceted. To a greater extent they crave a feeling of stability in life, which can be expressed also in earnings and wealth, not only in sensitivity, thoughtfulness and resourcefulness.

Meanwhile, men are more oriented to women's personality traits and physical appearance. Opinions connected with financial-economic situation were uncommon. They want the partner to be nice, understanding and loving.

The analysis of the data allows to claim that respondents were much more oriented towards selection based on similarities than differences. It means that if there were statements in this matter, then they concerned similar age, interests or sense of humor, religiousness. According to the economic theory of marriage selection by Becker, the best possible selection is complementary – the research has shown that single people want to match themselves in accordance with this principle. Singles search for their soul mates, although it is declared more often by women. Selection based on differences applies only to a number of chosen characteristics. Female singles expect from their partners higher earnings and state of possession. Male preferences concern the age of partner, they want them to be slightly younger. In both cases, the strategy corresponds with the selection of differences.

The research allows also for one more interesting conclusion, namely it seems that the characteristics declared by the respondents are very valuable and important, but at the same time also very excessive. Mentioned characteristics concerned the type of ideal partner, who in reality might be very hard to find, since the most common declared cause of loneliness was difficulty in finding an appropriate partner. Becker's theory of economic marriage selection says about it that there is a higher probability that individuals searching on the partnership market for an ideal partner will in the longer perspective sooner abandon their search than change their preferences about partner. As the time of searching for partner gets longer, also the price of marriage increases, moreover more effort has to be put into the searching, so the costs increase as well. That is why singles might abandon their pursuit, but in the same time marriage itself becomes a more valued good to them. This proves the thesis regarding the consistency of human preferences, because although so far the participants did not find their partner, while most of them are single by neces-

sity and remain single for at least couple of years, they are still not interested in lowering their expectations, because they are not interested in a relationship, but a high quality relationship. The information about what kind of relationship singles are hoping to create in the future will be presented in consecutive subchapters, which are at the same time a continuation of the matter concerned with economic balance of marriage and family among people living alone.

Matrimonial and Procreation Plans of Persons Living Alone

Family is the basic unit of society, which satisfies the need for love, belonging and appreciation. Yet, the decision about marriage and offspring is important not solely to the individuals who create them, but also to the society, because apart from the personal needs of family, they satisfy the collective needs of society, concerning ensuring its survival by bringing into the world the new members of the society.

Performed researches have shown that most singles are optimists, who plan to start a relationship in the future and declare that being single is just a temporary state in their lives. They were also asked whether and what kind of relationship they plan to create in the future and what are their maternity plans. 84% of participants plans to enter the state of matrimony. Informal relationships like cohabitation are not too popular among singles, as they have been chosen by only 14,5% of respondents. 1,5% of singles does not plan to have a relationship. The distribution of percentage and figures data is presented by the Table 2.

Table 2. What type of relationship do you plan to be in the future?

Type of relationship	Number of people	% of valid
Marriage	505	84.00
Informal relationship	87	14.50
I'm not going to be in a relationship	9	1.50
Total	601	100%
System missing data *	13	
Total	614	

The sex of respondents does not distinguish the population of singles in regards to their matrimonial plans. Both men and women in this research sample plan a marriage. A sparse group of men and women is interested in alternative relationships and further living alone.

Table 3. Planned type of relationship and the sex of singles

Type of relationship		Sex		Total
		Women	Man	
Marriage	Number of people	398	107	505
	% of sex	84.00%	84.30%	84.00%
	% of total	66.20%	17.80%	84.00%
Informal relationship	Number of people	70	17	87
	% of sex	14.80%	13.40%	14.50%
	% of total	11.60%	2.80%	14.50%
I'm not going to be in a relationship	Number of people	6	3	9
	% of sex	1.30%	2.40%	1.50%
	% of total	1.00%	.50%	1.50%
Total	Number of people	474	127	601
	% of sex	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	78.90%	21.10%	100%

Therefore, the assumptions saying that women will want the marriage more than men and that men will be more prone to alternative relationships has failed.

Age is variable upon which depend the procreation plans of singles. According to the assumption made before, younger persons will be more interested in starting a relationship than older persons. Additionally, the popularity of marriage lowers with increase of age, while at the same time, the increase of age, the popularity of informal relationships increases as well, what is presented on the Table 4.

Table 4. Planned type of relationship according to the age of singles

Type of relationship		Singles age					Total
		The twenties	The thirty-	The forties	The fifty-	The sixty	
Marriage	Number of people	185	272	41	5	2	505
	% of age	85.60%	84.50%	77.40%	71.40%	66.70%	84.00%
	% of total	30.80%	45.30%	6.80%	.80%	.30%	84.00%
Informal relationship	Number of people	28	48	9	2	0	87
	% of age	13.00%	14.90%	17.00%	28.60%	.00%	14.50%
	% of total	4.00%	8.00%	1.50%	.30%	.00%	14.50%
I'm not going to be in a relationship	Number of people	3	2	3	0	1	9
	% of age	1.40%	.60%	5.70%	.00%	33.30%	1.50%
	% of total	.50%	.30%	.50%	.00%	.02%	1.50%
Total	Number of people	216	322	53	7	3	601
	% of age	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100%
	% of total	35.90%	53.60%	8.80%	1.20%	.50%	100%

In case of the place of residence, it is possible to notice a certain pattern. Namely, while marriage is the most cherished type in all categories of place of residence among singles, the need to choose it is slightly more declared by persons living alone in the countryside than in the other categories, and it is also least popular in cities with a population of more than 500 thousand people. In cities there is also the biggest interest in informal relationships, what is presented on the Table 5.

Table 5. Type of planned relationship and the place of residence of singles

Type of planned relationship		Place of living		Total
		Village and town less than 100,000 inhabitants	Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants	
Marriage	Number of people	193	312	505
	% of place of living	88.50%	81.50%	84.00%
	% of total	32.10%	51.90%	84.00%
Informal relationship	Number of people	22	65	87
	% of place of living	10.10%	17.00%	14.50%
	% of total	3.70%	10.80%	14.50%
I'm not going to be in relationship	Number of people	3	6	9
	% of place of living	1.40%	1.60%	1.50%
	% of total	.50%	1.00%	1.50%
Total	Number of people	218	383	601
	% of place of living	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	36.30%	63.70%	100%

During the research of singles' procreation plans it has also been examined, whether they are dependent upon the education of singles. The researches have shown that education does not influence the type of relationship that singles plan to create in the future. While marriage is popular among all categories of education, alternative relationships are slightly more mentioned by persons with secondary education, whereas living as a single, without a relationship, is planned by persons with highest education. The assumptions of risk avoidance theory and economic theory concerned, among other things, the fact that education does not favor getting married. This thesis has been on one hand verified positively, but on the other on negatively. The postulate that the dominant category among singles is higher education and that higher education does not favor marriage has been substantiated (since they are alone), but the reluctance towards marriage is not the most chosen category by well-educated singles.

However, the procreation plans rely upon the residential status of singles. Singles who live with their parents or rent a house or apartment want to enter a formal relationship – get married. Such plans are much more rare among persons who live in their own home and they are also the persons who most often plan to live in a cohabitation, or in other words an informal partnership, which is shown by the Table 6.

Table 6. Planned type of relationship in the future and the residential status of singles

Type of relationship	Residential status			Total
	Living with parents and family	Living alone (single-person households)		
	Number of people	207	298	505
Marriage	% of residential status	88.10%	81.40%	84.00%
	% of total	34.40%	49.60%	84.00%

	Number of people	27	60	87
Informal relationship	% of residential status	11.50%	16.40%	14.50%
	% of total	4.50%	10.00%	14.50%
	Number of people	1	8	9
I'm not going to be in relationship	% of residential status	.40%	2.20%	1.50%
	% of total	.20%	1.30%	1.50%
	Number of people	235	366	601
Total	% of residential status	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	39.10%	60.90%	100%

According to the data above, it seems that the earnings will also have an effect on matrimonial plans. The results of researches allowed to state such dependency. People with lowest earnings, under 2 thousand zloty a month, are interested in getting married and are less frequently planning living in an informal relationship. Singles, who achieve earnings of at least 4 thousand zloty a month and more, less frequently want to get married, but more often want to be in an informal relationship. This dependency is shown by the Table 7.

Table 7. Planned type of relationship and income of singles

Type of relationship	Income		Total	
	Up to 2000 zlotych per month (net)	Over 2000 zlotych per month (net)		
	Number of people	184	312	496
Marriage	% of income	88.90%	81.50%	84.10%
	% of total	31.20%	52.90%	84.10%

Type of relationship	Income		Total	
	Up to 2000 zlotych per month (net)	Over 2000 zlotych per month (net)		
Informal relationship	Number of people	23	63	86
	% of income	11.10%	16.40%	14.60%
	% of total	3.90%	10.70%	14.60%
I'm not going to be in relationship	Number of people	0	8	8
	% of income	.00%	2.10%	1.40%
	% of total	.00%	1.40%	1.40%
Total	Number of people	207	383	590
	% of income	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	35.10%	64.90%	100%

This dependency can be explained as follows. According to the Becker's economic theory, while making a decision about marriage people calculate gains and losses, which the individual can achieve or suffer because of the decision. Therefore, it seems that a person with lower earnings, an unstable material situation, as well as residential situation, will be more interested in getting married, because such person expects that it will raise their financial-economic status. Having not much to offer to the other person, such person might come up with a conclusion that there is not much too lose, therefore there is a higher chance that such person will make a positive matrimonial decision. In their case, the economic calculation will give a result that marriage will be more beneficial than living alone.

It is different in case of people living in their one one-person households and having better earnings, who have a stable economic situation. It would seem that persons who have their own home and high earnings will be more interested in marriage, especially since, as researches have shown, the unanimous cause of delaying the weddings and maternity pointed out by respondents was the desire to achieve an adequate material situation, bearing in mind ensur-

ing appropriate conditions for the future family. Yet, these persons in case of deciding about marriage are afraid of deteriorating their conditions, that they worked for years to achieve. Moreover, own living space, arranged according to their own ideas and liking gives them a feeling of freedom and being accustomed to. Such persons find it much harder to change their lifestyle than persons who live with their parents, or rent a home and cannot wait till they finally move into their own home. This thesis is substantiated by the results of researches, which were presented earlier, saying that singles, who did not leave their families of origin, do not think that living with parents is better or more comfortable. The same opinion is expressed by persons living in one-person household and are also responsible for the housekeeping. Therefore, it can be said that singles make rational marital decisions in categories of gain and loss balance, thus before they make a decision about marriage, they have to be certain that this decision will bring them a measurable effect, or in other words it will increase their mental and material possessions, not decrease them. Marriage is supposed to cause a production of appropriately high "value", while using market and non-market good and services for the good of both partners.

The assertion of Becker's economic theory concerning lack of difference in human preference, but only in performed calculations, external conditions and means at the disposal of rational individuals will also be mentioned here. The assertion about universality of human preferences implies that actions towards finding a partner, getting married or continuing living alone should be consistent and equal for all, irrespectively of cultural-social and social-demographic differences. Therefore, explanation of motives of human actions and decisions must refer to the existence of differences in calculations of gains and losses in reference to an individual and the individual's limited capabilities to act. There are no differences in preferences. Therefore, it is not about who prefers marriage over cohabitation, but about what external conditions, calculations and possessed means to reach the aim, which is marriage, cause that the individual decided upon relationship or living alone.

The aforementioned example about singles of different residential status and earnings presents this postulate well. Each of them wants to get married – such conclusion comes from the general declarations of singles, but single who has more is afraid of decreasing own material capital, due to the lack of knowledge how the situation will look like after the wedding, even though it might seem that such person has everything that is needed for marriage in economic-financial terms. But in this person's opinion, even though that the capital is big, it is not big enough to feel comfortable irrespectively of the

decision. Maybe there this person has a plan to achieve a promotion, which demands a devotion of more time, and thus does not want to live with someone else; maybe such person expects a longer business travel or something entirely different and because of such external conditions, our capabilities, means and plans shape our decisions, calculations, in particular the marital ones, even if it might seem that they have no influence at all. At such stage the price of marriage might be too high. It does not mean however that in the future this decision will not change, because other conditions, means and calculations based on them – the economic calculation – might give a positive result. What is more, individuals strive toward getting married, with different dynamic and motivation, but always toward the decision to get married. As Becker assumes, it will happen when they achieve a state of “market balance”, in other words when other activities of the individual will not maximize, or increase the usefulness – gain (see Becker 1990), thus when such person gains certainty about finding the right partner and creating a household product bigger than the sum of individual contributions of partners.

Meanwhile, a person with scarce financial resources has nothing to lose and might earn somebody, who might not even increase the state of possession, but at least will be a companion in everyday life and perhaps such argument will tilt the scales in calculation of gains and losses. “Price and other market tools allocate available assets within given society, thus defining the conditions limiting the desires of particular individuals and coordinating their actions” (Becker, 1990, p. 22).

The participants were asked during the research not only about what type of relationship they plan to have, but also what are their procreation plans, because Becker’s economic theory asserts considering having children, as well as having marriage, in the light of the balance of costs and gains. According to his theory, people get married because, among other things, it gives them the highest probability to have offspring (experiencing motherhood and fatherhood) and that even because of this marriage has an advantage over living alone, especially if the economic status of individuals and families is decided by having children and their quality. The question concerned procreation plans and in what conditions such plans can be realized. The distribution of answers to this question is presented on the Table 8.

Table 8. Do you plan to have children in the future?

Matrimonial and procreational plans	Number of people	%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	373	60.70
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	160	26.10
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relation - formal or informal	68	11.10
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	13	2.10
Total	614	100%

60.70% of singles wants to have offspring in the future, but only in marriage. The desire to have children irrelevantly of relationship or even lack of it was expressed by over $\frac{1}{4}$ of respondents (26.10%). Slightly more than every tenth single (11.10%) has decided that they do not desire to have children, but want to live in a formal or informal relationship, and only 2.10% (thirteen persons out of 614) declared that they do not want to have children and plan to live alone.

The sex of respondents influences the desire to have children only in a slight manner, although the need to have children in the marriage is declared more often by men than women and at the same time more men declare to live alone and without children. Meanwhile, women chose a life in relationship without offspring, which is presented by the distribution of data in the Table 9.

Table 9. Matrimonial and procreation plans and the sex of singles

Matrimonial and procreational plans		Sex		Total
		Women	Man	
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	Number of people	289	84	373
	% of sex	59.80%	64.10%	60.70%
	% of total	47.10%	13.70%	60.70%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	Number of people	127	33	160
	% of sex	26.30%	25.20%	26.10%
	% of total	20.70%	5.40%	26.10%
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relation - formal or informal	Number of people	58	10	68
	% of sex	12.00%	7.60%	11.10%
	% of total	9.40%	1.60%	11.10%
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	Number of people	9	4	13
	% of sex	1.90%	3.10%	2.10%
	% of total	1.50%	.70%	2.10%
Total	Number of people	483	131	614
	% of sex	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	78,7%	21,3%	100,0%

The age of respondents is also important for the procreation plans of singles. Younger persons, twenty-year-olds and thirty-year-olds, want to have children in the future, in the marriage more often than singles from different age categories. The desire to have offspring decreases with age. What is more, decreases also the desire to have children, irrespectively whether somebody will be in a relationship or not, thus the reluctance to have children increases. See Table 10.

Table 10. Procreation plans and the age of singles

Procreational plans		Age			Total
		20	30	40+	
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	Number of people	148	192	33	373
	% of age	67.90%	58.20%	50.00%	60.70%
	% of total	24.10%	31.30%	5.40%	60.70%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	Number of people	52	101	7	160
	% of age	23.90%	30.60%	10.60%	26.10%
	% of total	8.50%	16.40%	1.10%	26.10%
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relation - formal or informal	Number of people	16	29	23	68
	% of age	7.30%	8.80%	34.80%	11.10%
	% of total	2.60%	4.70%	3.70%	11.10%
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	Number of people	2	8	3	13
	% of age	.90%	2.40%	4.50%	2.10%
	% of total	.30%	1.30%	.50%	2.10%
Total	Number of people	218	330	66	614
	% of age	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	35.50%	53.70%	10.70%	100%

Taking into account the category of education, it does not differentiate the procreation plans of singles. Therefore it does not substantiate the asserted hypothesis that according to the risk avoidance theory, singles with higher education will be more likely to declare a reluctance towards getting married and having children than singles with post-secondary education, secondary education and vocational education. It was not directly substantiated, but it must be added that over 80% of respondents have higher education and are single (so there is some correlation), therefore to check this correlation, a comparative survey should be performed in this cohort after some time to see how were their life plans verified. See Table 11 below.

Table 11. Procreation plans and the education of singles

Procreational plans		Education		Total
		Secondary school education or less	Higher education	
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	Number of people	55	318	373
	% of education	57.30%	61.40%	60.70%
	% of total	9.00%	51.80%	60.70%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	Number of people	29	131	160
	% of education	30.20%	25.30%	26.10%
	% of total	4.70%	21.30%	26.10%
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relation – formal or informal	Number of people	11	57	68
	% of education	11.50%	11.00%	11.10%
	% of total	1.80%	9.30%	11.10%
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	Number of people	1	12	13
	% of education	1.00%	2.30%	2.10%
	% of total	.20%	2.00%	2.10%

	Number of people	96	518	614
Total	% of education	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	15.60%	84.40%	100%

One of the hypothesis asserted in the research was concerned with what life do singles plan for the future and do these plans take into consideration having children in dependence with the size of the singles' place of residence. It turns out that the researches did not substantiate this hypothesis, although singles from the countryside and smaller cities more often decide to have children in the marriage, while singles from bigger and biggest cities, if they plan to have children at all, then usually irrespectively of whether in future they will be in a relationship; they also more often express negative procreation decisions than persons from smaller locations. Although this correlation was not confirmed by the Chi-squared test (see Table 12).

Table 12. Procreation plans of singles and their place of residence

	Place of living					Total	
	Procreational plans	Village	Small cities less than 50,000 inhabitants	Cities form 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants	Cities form 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants		Cities over 500,000 inhabitants
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	Number of people	52	71	29	70	151	373
	% of place of living	74.03%	68.30%	58.00%	63.10%	54.10%	60.70%
	% of total	8.50%	11.60%	4.70%	11.40%	24.60%	60.70%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	Number of people	12	19	17	26	86	160
	% of place of living	17.10%	18.30%	34.00%	23.40%	30.80%	26.10%
	% of total	2.00%	3.10%	2.80%	4.20%	14.00%	26.10%
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relationship	Number of people	4	12	2	14	36	68
	% of place of living	5.70%	11.50%	4.00%	12.60%	12.90%	11.10%
	% of total	.70%	2.00%	.30%	2.30%	5.90%	11.10%
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	Number of people	2	2	2	1	6	13
	% of place of living	2.90%	1.90%	4.00%	.90%	2.20%	2.10%
	% of total	.30%	.30%	.30%	.20%	1.00%	2.10%
Total	Number of people	70	104	50	111	279	614
	% of place of living	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	11.40%	16.90%	8.10%	18.10%	45.40%	100%

Another verified assertion was that the material situation, particularly the residential status and the amount of earnings, has an impact on the positive and negative matrimonial decisions. From the data included in the table it is possible to come up with following dependence. People from one-person households less frequently plan having children in marriage, with a dominance in favor of the owners of these households – 48.50% and 64.30% (renting home) in relation to 70.50% of singles living with their parents. But those living in one-person households are also more often planning to have children, irrespectively of whether they will be in both a formal or informal relationship. This tendency can be seen on the Table 13.

Table 13. Matrimonial and procreation plans and residential status

Matrimonial and procreational plans	Residential status			Total	
	Living with parents and family	Living in rented accommodation – flat or house	I living in my own flat or house		
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	Number of people	170	90	113	373
	% of residential status	70.50%	64.30%	48.50%	60.70%
	% of total	27.70%	14.70%	18.40%	60.70%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	Number of people	48	38	74	160
	% of residential status	19.90%	27.10%	31.80%	26.10%
	% of total	7.80%	6.20%	12.10%	26.10%
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relation - formal or informal	Number of people	17	11	40	68
	% of residential status	7.10%	7.90%	17.20%	11.10%
	% of total	2.80%	1.80%	6.50%	11.10%

Matrimonial and procreational plans		Residential status			Total
		Living with parents and family	Living in rented accommodation – flat or house	I living in my own flat or house	
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	Number of people	6	1	6	13
	% of residential status	2.50%	.70%	2.60%	2.10%
	% of total	1.00%	.20%	1.00%	2.10%
Total	Number of people	241	140	233	614
	% of residential status	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	39.30%	22.80%	37.90%	100%

The conclusion can be drawn without a problem. Just as Becker claimed, material conditions are an important aspect in making marital and parental decisions, therefore persons who have a differing residential status will perform different calculations, because they have at their disposal different means to reach their aim, which is marriage, in relation to the assets. After Giza-Poleszczuk, who in accordance with Becker claims that what differentiates us from each other is the orderliness in perspective of means and aims, as well as capability of their realization, we can say that it is a classical example of how different action measures – budget, in this case the state of material possession, influence the realization of marital and procreation goals and as a consequence end up with a different result – in case of those who own a home negative, in case of those who do not – positive. The validity of this thesis has been taken under another verification, connected with the amount of earnings.

Similarly as before, singles who earn more are less likely to make decisions about having children in marriage, while they also declare reluctance towards having them and having them irrespectively of whether they will be alone in the future, or not (see Table 14).

Table 14. Procreation plans and the monthly income of singles

Matrimonial and procreational plan		Income		Total
		Up to 2000 zlotych per month (net)	Over 2000 zlotych per month (net)	
Yes, I want to have children in the future, but only in marriage	Number of people	143	222	365
	% of income	68.80%	56.80%	60.90%
	% of total	23.90%	37.10%	60.90%
Yes, I want to have children in the future, regardless of whether I get married	Number of people	45	113	158
	% of income	21.60%	28.90%	26.40%
	% of total	7.50%	18.90%	26.40%
I do not want to have children, but I plan to be in relation - formal or informal	Number of people	19	48	67
	% of income	9.10%	12.30%	11.20%
	% of total	3.20%	8.00%	11.20%
I do not want to have children and I plan to live as a single	Number of people	1	8	9
	% of income	.50%	2.00%	1.50%
	% of total	.20%	1.30%	1.50%
Total	Number of people	208	391	599
	% of income dychotomia	100%	100%	100%
	% of total	34.70%	65.30%	100%

From the data above results that singles are a *homo oeconomicus* type when it goes to planning their own future in categories of marriage and offspring. A person who does not have an own house and achieves rather low earnings wants children in the marriage, because of the knowledge that they are connected with vast financial outlays and only together with another person it is possible to ensure the children with an appropriate quality of life. Alone it

would be nearly impossible for such person or at least much harder. It is also connected with the responsibility for the children, in marriage both partners are equally responsible for the offspring, because they form a family and according to the assertions of economic theory, even though persons bring their outlays to household in different proportions, they strive to create its maximal usefulness, or in other words to ensure adequate material, existential, emotional and spiritual being. Having offspring without the certainty that the other partner is completely oriented toward family does not give a sense of security and seems to be a very risky move – high cost, which will not be surpassed by the profits. An informal relationship can be formalized at any given moment, but it can also fall apart, as well as the marriage, but with a higher initial risk. While performing marital calculations, people do not take into account numerous factors, in fact so many that it is impossible to name all of them, therefore mentioned will only those that are being considered in the doctoral thesis. Important factors are the strategy that we choose to find the partner, as well as the partner's characteristics – whether they are selected complementarily to ours or their substitutability; another important factor is the expectations from relationship according to the situation in which the individual finds itself – what relationship will it be – marriage or cohabitation and whether this relationship will raise our status or lower, as well as whether it will be possible to have offspring and if so, how many children and of what quality.

The research verifies one more assertion, according to the assumptions of Inglehart's theory of postmaterialism. There occurs an evolution of the value system from material values towards postmaterial values. Because the material and social values are fairly well secured, human turns to values that are connected with self-fulfillment, investing in oneself, individualism, personal success. According to the universal postulate, liberal views are negatively correlated with procreation and marital decisions, although McDonald, who referred to this theory in his book, did not agree with it entirely. The verification of this assertion will be performed by correlating the matrimonial and procreation plans of singles with their views. Three categories of views will be examined: left-wing, liberal and right-wing.

Singles who declare liberal views almost half less frequently express the desire to have children in marriage than right-wing oriented people, but more often than the left-wing singles – 47.60% to 80.60% and 33.30%. Left-wing and liberal persons are able to decide about having offspring irrespectively of whether they will be married in the future, with a 24% advantage of left-wing

singles over the right-wing ones. Another validated assumption is that liberals and left-wings, in comparison to right-wings, more often declare negative procreation decisions with positive matrimonial decisions, therefore they plan a relationship, but without offspring.

Singles most often identify themselves with liberal views, thus it can be said that, according to the results above, it might have a connection with the marital and matrimonial decisions, although they more frequently declare positive decisions in this matter than persons with left-wing orientation, who represent only 8.80% of the population.

Summary

From the performed research we can conclude that in situation of searching for partner, making decisions about getting married and having offspring, singles have characteristics common for an individual of *homo oeconomicus* type, who makes a economic calculation in order to choose the best possible option and achieve maximal gain. It is understandable, because it is not a trivial choice of buying a shirt, but a choice that might change their entire life – for better or worse. Singles value marriage and family and that is why postponing the decision about marriage and maternity, as well as the limited time to search for the right partner, causes an increase of relative price of good that is marriage and family. At the same time the necessity of contributing more effort in starting the family leads to decreasing of consumption – giving up on relationship and having children. Results of the researches show that with age lowers the importance of such values as marriage and family, or rather the hope for them. Probably these persons rate their chances at partnership market much lower than before. Therefore the assumption of Becker's economic theory that the price increase of a good does not reduce the consumption is valid to the extent that people want this good, it is their goal, but they lack funds to achieve it. Therefore they do not mate, but hope that the state they are in is only temporary.

The postulate about maximizing character of human behavior has been proven to be valid and the marriage and family are perceived in the category of gain and losses. It is best expressed by the results or researches concerning matrimonial and marital plans correlated with the residential and earning statuses. People with higher state of possession are more reluctant to make positive matrimonial decisions – because marriage has a high cost, while at the

same time people with lower earnings are more prone to make such decision, because they can gain more.

According to the economic theory according to which the results of performed researches have been analyzed, it can be said that there is a partnership market, which is conditioned by human actions. They adopt different strategies of searching for partner. At the same time, every single person maximizes them, in order to ensure that the result of these strategies will be most effective, except for singles by choice. Therefore a useful tool in this aspect seems to be Internet, because it gives a wide range of possibilities, while minimizing the time costs.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the modern lifestyle of Polish society becomes more and more adapted to living alone. This whole phenomenon not only gained a name “single life”, but it is accompanied by a big commercial ambiance that supports single and promotes such life as equally valuable as life in marriage. There are numerous internet portals for singles, not only those that seek for their other “half”, clubs for singles, as well as travel agencies and a whole lot of other services. Favoring cultural and social reality for singles in Poland allows singles to live in a better, more comfortable way and according to their beliefs. It also seems that the quality of marital and family life is better in the situation where young people still give themselves time to find the right life partner, with whom they will create a steady and strong relation, based on own preferences.

The research material presented in this chapter presents only a fraction of the acquired data and relates to chosen aspects – marital market, strategies of searching for partner and the factors that it is determined by. Due to the existence of multi-faceted nature of this social phenomenon, it seem necessary and justified to continue the research of the phenomenon of singles, not only in Poland, but in the whole world.

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CHAPTER 5

Socio-cultural Gender of Single Men and Women as Conditioning Factor of Attitude towards Single Life

Introduction

Radical increase in the percentage of people living without a partner so-called singles is the sign of contemporary times or in other words second or liquid modernity (Szlendak, 2011). This increase is undoubtedly the result of transformation of lifestyle in the area of intimate relationships. According to Giddens (2007) these changes stem from three revolutions occurring collaterally – post-industrial revolution, revolution of lifecycle and revolution in psychological education. The first one is connected with women's growing independence from men owing to education, professional career, equality changes, having the first child later and lower number of children. The second concerns changes connected with longer lifespan. The third is connected with increase in reflexivity of individuals concerning intimate and family life and results from psychological education (Skolnick & Skolnick, 2007; compare with Szlendak, 2011).

These revolutions are an integral part of individualisation process, which according to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) is one of the characteristics of 'new era in intimate relationships'. In these authors' opinion individualisation is shown in three dimensions of changes: freeing from traditional, historically given social forms and bonds, losing stability as a consequence of rejecting traditional beliefs concerning proceedings, religion and norms, and reinte-

gration i.e. emerging of a new type of social bonds. These three changes are closely related to general life status and self-consciousness and may be shown by disintegration of past social forms or requirements towards individuals. Lowered influence on an individual's performance of such categories as social status, gender roles and family in favour of higher control level and requirements of job market and its institutions are significant for this situation (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Increase in opportunities and imperatives catered for an individual and connected with individualisation process undoubtedly contributed to changes in attitude towards an individual and alterations in individuals' own demeanour. Individuals were emancipated from traditional social bonds and duties and social class, gender and family ties stopped determining personal biographies. As a result of these changes the number of morally and practically accepted choices of lifestyles has increased and contemporary biographies are becoming 'self-reflexive' constructs.

Because of above reasons the characteristics of single men and women presented in this chapter reflect the changes in the area of male and female roles, experiences resulting from individual biographies and reflexivity of single people. Gender perspective has been used as a factor reflecting the alterations in social functioning of men and women. The concept of socio-cultural gender has been both a specific tool and analytical perspective. As Titkow (2001, 2011) notices the concept concerns all the female and male characteristics which vary depending on social context, therefore, it includes everything which is changeable and socially conditioned. It also seems to give the opportunity to capture the changes in the area of playing new gender roles and new forms of family life and gives the chance to broaden sociological research perspective.

The text preparation has been based on the thesis that changing patterns of femininity and masculinity favour making decisions about playing gender roles which differ from the traditional ones and creating one's own biography dependent on current individual needs. The idea that diversity and variety of available femininity patterns encourages differentiation of biographical experience within groups determined by biological gender has also accompanied writing this text. The purpose of the following paper is having a closer look at Polish single men and women and characterising this group with the assumption of similarities and/or differences of experience among men and women living on their own. The results of qualitative and quantitative research have been referred to in order to describe lives of Polish single men and women in the most precise way. A particular analytical triangulation has been conducted for that purpose. Distinctiveness of analyses of the researched

phenomenon defined by the methodology of the research achieved through different strategies will be remained.

Because of the assumed analytical separability the presented chapter consists of a few subchapters. Their aim is to characterise single men and women through statistical data as well as individual biographical experience. Theoretical and methodological assumptions of the research which the analyses come from have been presented in the first three subchapters. The contents of the following subchapters have been organised on the basis of dependence between the type of socio-cultural gender and the attitude to single life. Typology of single men and women providing for the type of socio-cultural gender and the attitude towards single living has been presented at the end.

Being a Single Person – Variability, Temporariness, Repeatability

For some people leading a single life may be a conscious withdrawal from family life in order to follow other forms of activities e.g. professional, artistic or political career. For others it is a certain type of coercion resulting from specific life situations such as divorce or a consequence of not finding a suitable partner at the right time. There are also people for whom it is a conscious choice because of their negative experience concerning family life or rejection of marriage as an institution. More and more often it is also a choice made at a certain stage of life connected with the need of being free, independent and able to pursue targets such as success in professional life or reaching higher standard of life. Especially young people, for whom living on their own has become a new stage of adult life before getting married, seem to be driven by such motivation.

Therefore it is hard to consider the choice of single life as permanent and invariable because different circumstances and social factors may modify a person's attitude towards single life. Its attractiveness changes with age, life experience, professional situation, relationships with long-term and short-term partners, availability of friends and gender identity. So the choice may become a compulsion as well as vice versa – the situation which was conditioned by life circumstances may become a conscious choice after some time either temporarily or permanently.

A human biography is at present 'a biography of choice'. It is different from the previously dominating biography determined by a lifecycle with stages distributed in time and happening successively throughout its

course. Life is no longer a cycle following the same pattern but it is more of a “spiral” enabling a human being to follow a few patterns. It differs from the traditional course of life, in which playing certain social roles and experience connected with them appeared and were solved at particular stages of life, in that sense it gives opportunity to change the roles. It allows to follow different patterns of adulthood treating them all equally. This way it is possible for a human being to participate in a certain stage e.g. married or single life repeatedly (Etzkowitz & Stein, 1978). Therefore single life may be not only a transitional stage, a moratorium to adulthood but also a situation experienced for the first time at the stage of ‘late adulthood’ after being in a long-term relationship. It may also be not a one-off situation happening a few times in the course of life sometimes as a conscious choice sometimes as a pure coincidence.

Because of all the above a single person is defined in this chapter as a person living without a partner, who decided not to start a family at that particular moment. Being single hence is a stage in one’s life characterised by giving up (temporarily or permanently, out of one’s own choice or under life circumstances) on being in a regular relationship (formal or informal) and setting one’s own family. This definition does not assume that being single means not having any experience with relationships, even formal ones, or not having any children because it is a possible stage at any time of one’s biography. It may occur once or many times in a course of life (Paprzycka, 2012).

Gender Perspective – The Adapted Concept of Socio-Cultural Gender

The concept of gender schema theory and forming gender identity by Bem (1974, 1981, 2000) were referred to while designing the research of both qualitative and quantitative nature. Bem’s theory includes certain aspects of cognitive-developmental theories and theory of social learning. The process of socio-cultural gender formulation is analysed here as a specific process of enculturation (assimilating with culture) or socialisation. Within this process institutionalised social practices programme individual’s everyday experience in the way they fit into scheduled social matrix in a particular society, time and place. At the same time this information defines and evaluates culturally meaningful differences among members of a given culture. Bem calls these pieces of information prisms of gender and defines them as hidden assump-

tions concerning gender and socio-cultural gender which are ingrained in social and cultural practices and norms as well as individual's psyche. She distinguishes among three prisms: gender polarisation, androcentrism and biological essentialism. The effect of gender polarisation is the fact that men and women in the social evaluation are perceived as fundamentally different from each other but also that this difference determines the main rule organising social life. Androcentrism sees women as inferior to men and strengthens still existing belief that it is the male behaviour which determines normative standards of evaluation, especially in public sphere, which used to be men's preserve. According to the assumptions of Bem's theory biological essentialism validates the first two prisms by treating them as a natural and unavoidable result of inborn differences between genders.

In her theory Bem negates the idea of gender as continuum with femininity and masculinity on the opposite ends and introduces a new definition of gender identity i.e. as two independent dimensions of identity. Under this theory femininity is not countertype of masculinity and vice versa but both dimensions are complementary. The author assumes that people learn cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity in the process of cultural socialisation. Associations connected directly with gender e.g. anatomy as well as the ones more indirect, metaphorical are part of these definitions. Cognitive gender schemata organising men's and women's individual styles of behaviour are the result. Gender schemes constitute the criterion of regulating individuals' behaviour and serve the purpose of evaluating and assimilating new information through classifying people, their characteristics and behaviour as typically feminine or masculine. They are also the base for evaluating one's own behaviour and using the dimension of femininity or masculinity with reference to personality traits.

There are four types of schemes: sex-typed – consistent with traditional model of femininity and masculinity. It is adopted by individuals who shaped their own image in accordance with traditional definitions of femininity and masculinity, and are characterised by readiness to fulfill traditional social expectations (male men and feminine women); cross-sex typed – people who formed their own image in opposition to traditional definitions of femininity and masculinity (feminine men and male women); androgynous – it assumes the existence of individuals who integrate and complement in their identity traits traditionally perceived as masculine or feminine; undifferentiated – characteristic for people who do not identify themselves strongly with cultural definitions of masculinity or femininity. The last two pose a specific alternative

to the traditional model – femininity is not a negation of masculinity and vice versa but they are complementary.

It needs to be stressed that Bem, in her assumptions, does not claim that cultural definitions are acquired in a passive way – gender identity or socio-cultural gender scheme in other words, is both a process and a product. Cultural definitions are not presented here in the form of norms but rather as cognitive types of activities. In this sense they are exteriorised by an individual in the form of active search for patterns in different social gender-marked contexts (Renzetti & Curran, 2005).

Although Bem's theory was created in the 80s and today is not considered to be very inspiring cognitively by some researchers (Hoffman & Borders, 2001), it seems to be legitimate to refer to it while describing contemporary Polish society. The concept of gender schemes and androgyny may be perceived as a specific form of adjustment of individuals to transforming system of gender roles (Skogeman 1995; Vedfelt, 1995) and this is exactly the situation that can be observed in Poland at present. The research shows that a mixed model (Chomczyńska-Miliszkievicz, 2002; Duch 2002; Fuszara, 2002), which combines traditional and equality patterns and gender roles contents in different proportions depending on the environment, social group or socio-professional category, is the dominating one contemporarily. This approach may also be seen as consistent with modern concepts of socio-cultural gender in which masculinity and femininity are described as processual.

Methodological Assumptions and Research Processing

The question which the conducted analyses tried to answer was whether socio-cultural gender is meaningful in case of living without a partner and which type of socio-cultural gender organises single men's and women's experience. The purpose of the presented research was the insight into how culturally shaped gender organises the attitude towards single life of people who, in the perspective of traditional pattern of femininity and masculinity, fulfill untypical social roles and, in the perspective of modern gender model, form a new role of a single person. The choice of such purpose was a result of conviction that the fulfillment of these roles may be different depending on the type of socio-cultural gender (gender identity). It was assumed that people whose socio-cultural gender type was based on more traditional model of femininity and masculinity pattern were going to be less interested in an

alternative form of family life such as single life and were going to be less satisfied with it than people characterised by not very traditional gender identity. The following questions were asked: 1) Do people with less traditional type of socio-cultural gender live on their own more often than people whose type of socio-cultural gender is based on traditional model of femininity and masculinity? 2) What type of socio-cultural gender is most often represented by single men and women? 3) How does socio-cultural gender diversify single people's attitude towards single life and being in a relationship? 4) How do single people representing different types of socio-cultural gender perceive being single – how do they define their situation and the reasons for it, how do they evaluate it and how do they plan their future?

The answers to these questions were looked for in analyses of research conducted in both qualitative and quantitative way. These analyses referred to the results of Izdebski's research called, *'Sexuality of Polish people'*, which were carried out in 2011 on a representative group of 3206 Polish people. The group consisted of inhabitants of Poland aged 15–59. The selection of subjects was both random and quota sampling. Two methods of data collection were used in the research i.e. direct (personal) interview conducted by a qualified interviewer and completing the survey on one's own¹. The results of the project included in the following research: Izdebski & Paprzycka called *Socio-cultural gender of Polish people* – studies of responses of 3206 interviewees aged 15–59 (Izdebski, Paprzycka & Mianowska, 2014) and studies of responses of 2036 interviewees aged 18–49 (Paprzycka, Mianowska & Izdebski, 2014) were consulted in the analyses presented in this chapter.

The results of qualitative research conducted on a group of single men and women by Paprzycka from 2004 to 2011 were also analysed: 1) Project called *Femininity and its shaping in women who do not follow traditional life scenario* (Paprzycka, 2008, 2011); 2) Project entitled *Single people – male perspective* (Paprzycka, 2012, 2013). The results came from two different research projects with similar methodological assumptions as for research methods and techniques – biographical method and technique of thematically determined autobiographical narrative interview were used. Thirty two single people were interviewed in total – twenty women and twelve men aged 25–40. The

¹ Level of prominence alpha = 0,01 was adapted in the quoted research. Statistically significant difference was ruled if p-value determined by statistical programme was lower than 0,01. The calculations were made with the use of IBM SPSS Statistic. Izdebski & POLFARMA's report (2011), contains detailed description of research methodology.

interviewees generally represented the characteristics of single people – living without a partner, having single person household and dwelling in a big city. The selected people varied as for the length of living on their own, the type of decision about being single and experience in relationships in order to recognise the distinctive experiences of representatives of this category.

The same tool, Inventory for Psychological Gender Determination created by Kuczyńska (1992), were used in both qualitative and quantitative research in order to recognise to what degree the researched women's self-image was influenced by cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Its development was based on the assumptions constituting theoretical base of inventory for determining gender-related mental characteristics created by Bem – Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). Inventory for Psychological Gender Determination allows to evaluate the degree to which self-image is influenced by cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Four main configurations of mental character traits determine four categories of socio-cultural gender: undifferentiated, androgynous, sex-typed (feminine women and male men) and cross-sex typed (male women and feminine men).

Socio-cultural Gender and Being in a Relationship or Being Single²

Is there a connection between socio-cultural gender and being in a regular relationship or living without a partner? The following subchapter is trying to answer this question by comparing the population of single people with the population of people being in relationships³. Data illustrating the structure of subjects by virtue of having a partner – being in a regular relationship or living on one's own – will be presented below.

There are more sex-typed and androgynous people among those being in relationships (formal or informal) and there are more cross-sex typed and undifferentiated representatives among single people. Among androgynous people 77% has a partner and 23% is single. Among sex-typed people 72% is

² Responses of subjects aged 15-59, N = 3206, were taken into consideration in the analyses below.

³ Adapted categories of socio-cultural gender among the subjects form the following structure: half of the subjects (47%) are androgynous, a quarter (25%) are sex-typed, every fifth person (19%) is undifferentiated and every tenth person (9%) is cross-sex typed. Insufficient data as for questions determining socio-cultural gender made its determination impossible for 11% of the subjects, who subsequently were excluded from further analyses.

in a relationship and 28% isn't. 62% of undifferentiated people declares being in a relationship and 38% living on their own. Among cross-gender typed people 60% is somebody's partner and 40% remains single.

The results of the research allow to conclude that both biological and socio-cultural gender are factors which diversify being in a relationship. Single men are most often undifferentiated (44%) and feminine men (40%). Male men are next in order (33%). Androgynous men are single the least often – 27% of all androgynous men. As for women the male ones are single the most often (40%), undifferentiated women (27%) and feminine women (24%) are next in a row. The same as with men androgynous women are the ones who are single the least often (20%).

The acquired results may provoke the conclusion that women characterised by traits untypical for their biological gender are single more often. Women showing characteristics typical for their biological gender, even if these traits co-occur with characteristics of the opposite sex, are more often in relationships. As for men those who are described by neither male nor female gender stereotypical characteristics are single most frequently. Being in a relationship, similarly to women's case, is typical for androgynous men who when defining themselves refer to both female and male traits.

Socio-cultural Gender of Single People and Their Attitude Towards Being in a Permanent Relationship and Marriage⁴

Almost three quarters of single people (76%) declare that they would like to be in a relationship in the future. Most of the people living without a partner (63%) would like to get married and an informal relationship would be satisfactory for 13% of them. Every fourth subject (24%) would not like to change their situation and is not interested in being in a regular relationship. Prospective view on the issue of relationship is different as for men and women. Men more frequently (68%) than women (59%) would like to establish a formal relationship. Women (14%) and men (12%) almost equally often declare readiness for being in an informal relationship. Over a quarter of women (27%) and a fifth of men (20%) not being in a regular relationship claim that they do not want to get involved in a relationship in the future.

⁴ Responses of subjects aged 15-49, N = 814, were taken into consideration in the analyses below.

The conducted analyses allowed to determine that it is socio-cultural gender which may be the factor responsible for diversifying single men's and women's attitude towards being in a relationship and possible future marriage. Male women are the ones who would like to get married most frequently. Almost four fifths of these women (80%) lodge such a declaration while among undifferentiated women declaring readiness for getting married this percentage is twice lower (40%). 19% of androgynous women prefers an informal relationship in the future. This is the highest number among all types of women. The undifferentiated women are the ones who want to remain single most often. Almost half of them (48%) made such choice whereas androgynous (16%) and male (12%) women chose this option the least frequently.

Among men the androgynous and feminine ones expressed their will to tie the knot most often. Four out of five (80%) chose this option. Undifferentiated men, in turn, demonstrated this desire the least often (50%). Percentage of men expecting an informal relationship in the future is similar among different types of socio-cultural gender. Undifferentiated men want to remain single in the future most frequently (36%) the other types declare it twice less often (the percentage oscillates between 10% to 17%). (Table 1.)

Table 1. Socio-cultural and biological gender vs. single people's attitude towards being in a relationship. Data as percentage.

	WOMEN				MEN				W	M	T
	FW	A	UD	MW	MM	A	UD	FM			
I would like to get married in the future	53	65	40	79	70	80	49	80	59	68	63
I would like to be in informal relationship in the future	12	19	12	9	13	10	15	7	14	12	13

I'm not interested in permanent relationship	35	16	48	12	17	10	36	13	27	20	24
	$p < .01 \chi^2 = 34, df = 6$				$p < .01 \chi^2 = 41, df = 6$				$p < .01 \chi^2 = 10, df = 2$		

Note. FW – feminine women; MW – male women; MM – male men; FM – feminine men; A – androgynous people; UD – undifferentiated people.

The above results indicate that most single men and women are interested in being in a regular relationship and more than a half of them is willing to get married. The analyses of particular age groups, however, show that this tendency decreases with the age of subjects. Cross-sex typed and androgynous people would like to get married most often both among women and men. It also needs to be pointed out that almost a quarter of subjects declares unwillingness to maintain a regular relationship in the future. Undifferentiated people would like to remain single most often.

Socio-cultural Gender of Single People and Their Attitude Towards Living on Their Own⁵

Almost a third of the subjects (29%) are people who live without a partner. Among them 27% are people aged 15–19 i.e. those who are at the beginning of the way of building a steady relationship with another person. This fact, however, does not exclude them from the category of single people in the light of adapted definition. The definitions of single people suggested in research on single life phenomenon do not usually include this age group because of economic criterion (living in one-person household) or the criterion of conscious decision about single life. Data including this age group has been used in the presented analyses because their main interest is not only the

⁵ Responses of subjects aged 15–59, $N = 814$, were taken into consideration in the analyses below. Among these people 27% were aged 15–19 that means they are at the beginning of establishing a permanent relationship with another person. Data including this age group has been used in the presented analyses because their main interest is not only the fact of living without a partner but also the attitude towards single life and getting married in the future.

fact of living without a partner but also the attitude towards single life and getting married in the future.

Every fifth man (20%) and every ninth woman (11%) declares lack of experience in having a regular, steady relationship, which lasted more than 6 months. The highest number of men who have never been in a regular relationship occurs among cross-sex typed – feminine (28%) and undifferentiated (24%) men. It seems to be similar in women's case – male (18%) and undifferentiated (14%) women claim they have not had any experience in having a regular relationship.

Single people very often have ambivalent attitude towards being single – sometimes they are content and sometimes they find it hard. Women (35%) more often than men (28%) express satisfaction with their situation. Undifferentiated women (48%) declare their contentment with single life most often and male women (28%) do it the least often. Among men these are also undifferentiated ones (34%) who are the most pleased with their situation and feminine men (10%) declare the lowest level of satisfaction.

For most subjects (57%) being single is the consequence of coincidence and different circumstances. However, 43% of them claim that living without a regular partner has been their own choice. Women and men lodge similar declarations about this issue. The results of analyses show that neither biological gender nor socio-cultural one diversifies single people's attitude towards the question of choice – coercion of being single. Men's and women's designations are on the similar level regardless of the represented type of femininity and masculinity.

Most single people consider living on their own to be temporary and "enforced". Among those leading single life 43% declare that doing so is the question of their own choice and 57% claim that it is the result of coincidence and different circumstances. Almost half of single men (49%) and single women (43%) state that their single life is a matter of coincidence and that they are not going to be single in the future. For about a third of single men (34%) and single women (28%) their life without a partner is a matter of choice but only for a limited period of time. Women (13%) more often than men (9%) declare that their single life is their own choice and they intend to live this way in the future. Women also, twice as often as men, claim that although living without a partner is not their own decision they are planning on continuing it this way in the future (respectively 16%:8%)

Male (47%) and androgynous (38%) men declare choosing single life, but only for a limited period of time, most often. Undifferentiated men (16%)

more frequently than any other group consider it to be a permanent option. Feminine men (59%) most often consider their single lives to be the consequence of coincidence and different circumstances and they do not intend to live without a partner in the future. Undifferentiated men (18%) most often declare to continue their lives without a partner although it is not a result of their conscious choice.

In case of single women androgynous and male ones indicate the choice of this situation most often but only temporarily – a third of subjects of each type claims so. Undifferentiated women (27%) choose single life as a permanent option more often than other types. Being single in a temporary and “enforced” way is most often declared by male women (49%), and feminine women (21%) consider their single life as “enforced” but permanent more frequently than any other type. (Table 2.)

Table 2. Socio-cultural and biological gender vs choice and planned length of single life. Data as percentage.

	WOMEN					MEN				
	FW	A	UD	MW	T	MM	A	UD	FM	T
It's my choice but only for some time	19	34	24	34	28	47	38	22	29	34
It's coincidence, I don't intend to live this way in the future	46	45	32	49	43	45	53	44	59	49
It's my choice, I intend to live this way in the future	14	9	27	3	13	7	4	16	9	9

	WOMEN					T	MEN				
	FW	A	UD	MW			MM	A	UD	FM	T
It's coincidence but I intend to live this way in the future	21	12	17	14	16	1	5	18	2	8	
	$p < .01 \chi^2 = 27, df = 9$						$p < 0,01 \chi^2 = 56, df = 9$				

Note. FW – feminine women; MW – male women; MM – male men; FM – feminine men; A – androgynous people; UD – undifferentiated people

Single People's Attitude Towards Their Single Lives – Typological Approach in The Perspective Of Socio-Cultural Gender. The Results of Qualitative Research

A profile of single people created on the basis of qualitative research has been presented below. It focuses on the description of subjects' attitude towards single life. It also takes into consideration the division connected with different types of socio-cultural gender. Only the data distinguishing representatives of particular types of socio-cultural gender⁶ has been used. It has been illustrated with original quotations.

Single women – typology based on the criterion of socio-cultural gender and attitude towards single life

Contemporary 'solitary women' are less and less often described in the context of marriage as unmarried women and more and more often in the context of a model of a new female role and new lifestyle as single women i.e. women living on their own. Today a change in social perception of an unmarried woman

⁶ The subjects of research were symbolically marked using acronyms: F/M – gender, a. – age, MM, FM, A, UD – symbol of the socio-cultural gender type.

can be seen – once a spinster unable to find a husband and today a single woman who does not need or does not want a husband and for whom, first of all, marriage is not necessary, as it happened earlier, for economic reasons but is rather connected with the need of intimacy and may have a form of domestic partnership at any moment in life. All female subjects adapt the model alternative to “spinster” i.e. the one of a single woman, which refers to the type of femininity including dynamic and active way of living, having a lot of ‘time for themselves’ and putting marriage and family in the shade.

The female subjects of research define single life in a distinctively ambivalent way, *It is more unrestrained, convenient, easier and harder at the same time for two different reasons. It is easier because it doesn't require compromising necessary if you share your life with someone. It's simply more convenient. On the other hand it is mentally more difficult in a critical situation in case of any crisis, for example, professional, emotional, personal or family crisis as well as health problems you are on your own and this in turn has got nothing to do with convenience* (W 20, a.33, UD). Independence in decision making, managing one's own free time and money, responsibility only for oneself, possibility of making decisions about one's own life without the imperative to adjust to somebody else, focusing on oneself only and one's own development were interpreted as both encouraging for and discouraging from single life. They were considered as both facilitations and impediments by the female subjects.

Most of the women participating in the research believed that single life has more disadvantages than advantages although it facilitates everyday activities. Among drawbacks they mentioned not having a close person who one can count on every day, anxiety concerning future in case of illness or unemployment, no prospects for starting one's own family and having children, lack of intimacy, warmth and tenderness, dissatisfying sexual life, everyday impediments, so called “technicalities”, activities requiring physical strength or technical skills e.g. small repairs at home, taking care of the car. Especially the early stage of organizing single life was seen as bothersome and difficult.

In case of female subjects of the research it is hard to talk unambiguously about choosing to live on their own. The women interpreted their situation rather as the result of other choices or various external circumstances than conscious life strategy, *It is not a matter of choice, it is the question of wrong choices* (W 18, a.30, A). *It is rather the consequence of some other choices, for example, that we choose to follow career and that's what happens next* (W 7, a. 32, UD). The women who consciously chose to be single assumed it was

a temporary situation, *Living on my own is my current choice* (W 10, a.30, MW). *As for now I think it is better to live alone and that's why I'm on 'emotional holidays'* (W 9, a. 31, A).

Single women of a feminine woman type are rather forced to live on their own. They want to be in a relationship and although they do not feel lonely, they have negative attitude towards being single and would like to have a partner in the future, *Single life is generally hopeless, you have to deal with everything on your own, you have nobody to count on and it's not very simple to rely on yourself all the time. There is no close person you can lean on if you need it. You can count on your friends in difficult situations but it's a bit different from having a special person on a regular basis (...) I have a lot of acquaintances, friends, my parents and in that sense I'm not lonely. This number of people is enough for me but not having a partner, not being loved, well, it just makes me feel bad* (W 1, a. 30, FW). *If I think of my life in the future as single life I don't like it, for me it's a grim prospect* (W 2, a.31, FW).

These women considered their experience in relationships with men and their need of independence to be the source of their living without a partner. They pointed out the following reasons for their decision about single life:

- reluctance to play the traditional role, which is still often imposed on women, *Social role of women has changed a lot. So far many women, even without thinking about it, have accepted this role, which was very often enforced on them. Right now this role as well as awareness are changing. I'm totally different from my mom and my mom was different from my grandma and for me my grandma's way of living is absolutely unacceptable* (W 2, a.31, FW),
- negative experience in relationships with men, *I have had affairs with married men and when I remember how they talked about how much they loved their wives lying in bed next to me then I guess I'm over with marriage for good* (W 3, a.32, FW).

Single women of this type do not actively look for a partner, *I'm a sociable person and I often go out with friends but I never do anything special to attract somebody I could be with. I've got 'princess' syndrome – I'm waiting for my prince to appear* (W 2, a.31, FW).

Single women of a male woman type see their single life as positive and are satisfied with their situation. They assume it may become permanent, *I'm happy with my life and I don't exaggerate at all. The fact that I have a house, a car, a good job and I'm well educated makes me say that I really enjoy my life even if I'm never going to be somebody's wife or mother* (W 11, a.32, MW). *I'm*

really glad that my life didn't go the predictable way I mean school, work, wedding, two children. I really like it this way and if anything interesting happens in my personal life I'll be happy but if it doesn't then I won't mind either (W 14, a.31, MW).

Among reasons for their single life situation they most often mentioned the following:

- difficulty in finding the right candidate, *Now when I meet a nice man he is either married or gay and the rest of them is not worth mentioning. Perhaps there still are some great men somewhere but how to find the right person in the right place at the right time* (W 11, a. 32, MW).
- missing the right moment for finding a partner, *It's about finding the right man at the right moment. I always laughed at my friends who started their studies to find a husband or at least it was one of their reasons for studying but it turns out that this stage in life really is suitable for doing so* (W 15, a.30, MW).
- lack of suitable candidates, *I always find emotionally immature types, men who are inept with real life, waste of space, I'm really unlucky to meet only such kind of men* (W 14, a.31, MW).
- excessive expectations towards a partner, *I realise that I have excessive expectations but I can't help it* (W 14, a.31, MW).
- their education and intelligence, *He told me that I was too intelligent and that intelligent women were fun to spend some time with but not to get married to* (W 15, a.30, MW).
- the need to be independent, *I can't imagine life when somebody imposes something on me* (W 11, a.32, MW).
- their uncompromising nature, *It's better to quit than to be stuck in a toxic, uncomfortable relationship. It's really naïve to believe that a man is going to change* (W 14, a.31, MW).

Active social life and participation in situations favourable for making new acquaintances e.g. post-graduate studies, trainings and workshops are all forms of activities aiming at finding a partner in case of this type of single women. However, they never initiate new acquaintances with men themselves.

Single women of androgynous type want to be on their own temporarily. They accept their single life but they are not happy with it, *I would swap loneliness for a good relationship but in time. Right now being single suits me although I sometimes feel bad about it (Lena). I'm doing just fine on my own but I realise how much fun a relationship can give so if I had a choice I would choose to be with somebody* (W8, a.31, A).

Among the reasons for their living without a partner they most often mentioned unfavourable circumstances and characteristics such as:

- economic independence and the need of professional development, *Finding a job and keeping it was the most important for me, then I wanted to reach certain professional status and earn enough money to buy a flat* (W 10, a.31, A).
- having personality traits that inhibit being in a relationship, *I'm a pedant and get irritated when somebody touches my stuff, when it is moved to a different place or when it's untidy or not properly arranged* (W 13, a.31, A).
- negative experience from previous relationships, *He changed his mind at least three times, sometimes he wanted to marry me and a week later he didn't and then he did again and when we were getting closer to the wedding day he said, 'I probably don't love you'. If somebody says something like that four months before the wedding then it's a little bit shocking* (W 12, a.30, A).

Single women of this type of socio-cultural gender show indirect initiative in looking for a potential partner by intensive social and professional life. They eagerly initiate acquaintances with men but only if they mean making friends. If they are interested in an intimate relationship with a man they behave in a more traditional way and wait for the man's initiative, *I believe that if a man likes a woman and he cares about this acquaintance then even if he is shy he'll try to initiate contact and if he isn't sure then it doesn't make sense to show him that he is attractive* (W 11, a.33, A).

Single women of undifferentiated type have positive attitude towards their single life. They want to have a partner but they stress their being accustomed to being single, *I really enjoy such life, it is rewarding in many ways and I feel happy. Although I would like to meet somebody special and fall in love and get satisfaction in this area as well it more and more often occurs to me that I'm not made for it* (W 18, a.33, UD).

They see the causes of their living without a partner first of all in their own previous experience such as:

- previous unsatisfactory relationships, *I couldn't be with him because he gave in to me and because of that all of his good features lost their appeal* (W 20, a.32, UD).
- being used to living on one's own, *I have an impression that my being single influenced my awareness and I start being afraid that if I come across somebody intriguing, I'll run away because if you are alone for a long time, it becomes more and more difficult to consider the possibility of being with somebody* (W 19, a.30, UD).

- no time for a relationship, *until this year I have worked a lot, I would take any job, I didn't care if I could or couldn't do it if I was afraid to do it or if it was hard. If there was a chance to earn I took the job. I didn't think if it meant commuting or not because I had some financial obligations – my flat and its decoration, so I accepted everything, I didn't have time for personal life* (W 16, a.31, UD).

Single women of this type have the least traditional approach to initiating relationships with men compared to other types of single women. They look for a partner not only in social situations or on the Internet but start studying or go on holidays for that reason among other things, *I began studying to meet new people among other things, I chose studies which were difficult and men-oriented because I counted on meeting wonderful men – businessmen but I failed* (W 19, a.30, UD).

To sum up, it can be deduced that most of the single women participating in the research want to consider their single life as a temporary situation although it is satisfactory and suitable for fulfilling the need of self-development and individual achievements. They would like to be single until they find a suitable candidate for a domestic partner. In such interpretation single life has a positive dimension even though it is difficult to talk about choosing this form of living. It seems to be the situation between a choice and a necessity – choosing life without a partner instead of compulsion of being in a relationship with somebody, who does not meet their requirements or necessity to live without a partner because of a limited choice caused by lack of suitable partners.

Single men – typology based on the criterion of socio-cultural gender and attitude towards single life

If it is assumed that a male role of socio-cultural gender includes among other things focusing on oneself (Bardwick & Douvan, 1982), domination, concentrating on a career and conquering the world (Gromkowska, 2002) as well as 'building one's own world' around this status resulting from achievements, power held and professional career (Strykowska, 1999), then being a single man enters into patriarchal masculinity concept. In this meaning single men seemed to pursue so called man's interest, which was 'not to get trapped' because if did it meant the obligation to support one's family (Szlendak, 2002). Playing a role of a single man may be perceived as a form of implementation of a hidden assumption that a man who gets married loses his independence

in favour of the obligation to support his family (Duch-Krzyszczek, 1995). On the other hand being the head and the provider of a family describes the male gender role in the traditional model (Titkow, 1993), and masculinity is, first of all, connected with heterosexuality and institution of marriage (Connel, 1987; Melosik 1999). In this view being a single man may be considered unmanly.

The single men participating in the research and representing four types of socio-cultural gender defined living on their own in different ways. The men who, while describing themselves, referred to cultural patterns of femininity and masculinity (male men and feminine men) pointed to such constituting elements as the lack of necessity to be in a regular relationship, difficulties in finding a suitable partner, the need of making short-term, non-committal acquaintances with women, personality traits such as the need of independence and selfishness, high material status. The men who, on the basis of the test, were qualified as redefining cultural patterns of femininity and masculinity (androgynous and undifferentiated men) mentioned the following components of the definition: choosing this form of life, temporary character of the single life situation, satisfaction with living on their own, features of character such as the need of freedom and independence. All of the subjects pointed to the difficulty in finding a suitable woman for a partner in a regular relationship as one of the main reasons for being single.

The single men participating in the research, regardless of the type of their socio-cultural gender, assumed that their single life is a temporary situation. However, the older men seem to understand that it may change into a permanent state, *Right now I don't want to get involved but I assume that it's a temporary situation* (M 5, a.39, A). *I don't think it will last forever* (M 7, a.34, MM); *I don't think I would like to be single for good* (M 10, a.29, NS). *The closer I got to the age of forty the more often I thought that it was going to stay that way* (M 11, a. 40, FM). Most of the subjects except for feminine men did not look for a partner in an active way.

Most of the men interpreted their 'becoming a single person' as a consequence of various life circumstances e.g. not finding a suitable partner, relationship breakdown, commitment to work, etc., *The simplest answer but maybe not entirely right is that I haven't found a suitable partner in my life. The truth is, that probably, I kind of wanted to be single* (M 3, a.37, A). *These potential fiancées are somewhere too far away in another town, they either give up or have some other reasons. This absolutely isn't my decision* (M 11, a. 40, FM).

Choosing the alternative form of family life such as single life was connected for some people with their motto 'there is still some time for stability'

and for others with their lifestyle and greater satisfaction derived from living without dependence and obligations. There is yet another group for whom it was the result of reluctance towards steady, exclusive relationships or the effect of disappointment with previous formal or informal relationships with women, *It's a choice... It's hard to explain. Somehow I have never arranged being with somebody for good* (M 12, a. 40, A). *There is nothing special going on with anybody so that I would like to stop being single. For a long time it has been this way that I can simply continue living on my own and I have plenty of time to get involved with somebody* (M 10, a.29, UD).

Single men of a male man type treat living on their own as a stage in life stemming from self-orientation, extensive need of independence and as a result dislike of limitations and obligations included in being in a regular relationship, *Being single is a stage... You can't define it precisely or assign to a particular moment of life* (M 8, a.29, MM). *I guess a single person is the one who doesn't feel the need for being in a relationship above all* (M 6, a.29, MM). *A single person is an independent one who doesn't need to live in a symbiosis with another person. (...) However, it is egoism (...) then you don't really care about what the other person may want from you* (M 8, a.29, MM).

Among the reasons for living on their own single men of a male man type mentioned, first of all, the ones which are connected with meeting their own needs, reaching their own goals and fulfilling their own plans. As the most important ones they listed:

- self-realisation, *It is connected with self-realisation. It occurred to me that the time when I'm alone is the moment when I achieve the most after all* (M 6, a.29, MM).
- the character of their job and focusing on professional career, *If my priorities change and I stop focusing on my work, and they can change any moment, then it's ok, maybe I'll decide to get involved in a relationship* (M 6, a.29, MM).
- the need for being independent, *I have unlimited need for being independent and can't stand any constraints for a longer period of time* (M 7, a.34, MM).
- the need of domination, *The need to dominate is one of my characteristics. If anybody showed up in my life I would push them to do whatever I want so I think it's difficult for another person, who could possibly appear in my life* (M 6, a.29, MM).
- greater satisfaction with being single, *I used to be in a longer, I would say serious relationship. I even got engaged. But looking at it from a per-*

spective I know that it was really constraining for me. Later I took a few short chances on relationships but I came to the conclusion that I'm happiest when I'm single (M 6, a.29, MM).

- reluctance to getting committed, *I don't really want to get committed (M 8, a.29, MM).*
- lifestyle, *My lifestyle is a lot of partying and little stability generally speaking, no permanent job, some odd jobs. It all causes that I don't feel the need for a longer relationship (M 8,a.29, MM).*
- sense of incomprehension, *I had a reserved attitude towards women, I rather didn't understand them more or less (M 9, a.30, MM).*

The single men of this type participating in the research claimed that they were not looking for a partner in an active way but they did not reject the possibility of getting involved if they found a suitable person, *I simply know right now that my professional development, my work are the most important for me. And if anything changes, somebody appears in my life and I get lovestruck then it's ok. I won't fight it (M 6, a.29, MM).*

Single men of a feminine man type perceive their single life as a form of managing the situation of not being able to find a partner or dealing with problems with building and maintaining a relationship. It is also the result of not being able to opt for a monogamous relationship – choosing only one partner, *A single person is the one who doesn't have a regular domestic partner and doesn't want to have one at that moment. They have to manage on their own (...). Sometimes it is about not being able to choose only one woman (M 11, a. 40, FM).*

Single men of a feminine man type considered their decision about not being in a steady relationship to be the consequence of not very positive experience in maintaining a permanent relationship as well as their friends' failures in the same area. They pointed to:

- difficulties in having an exclusive relationship, *Maybe I'm not able to choose only one woman. How to put it...? Kiepura said he loved all women and it's the same with me (M 11, a. 40, FM).*
- breakdowns of friends' relationships, *When I see modern couples or even my friends and acquaintances who are, for example married for the second time then I think it all goes in the wrong direction, that people can't match properly. I can't say it's encouraging (M 12, a. 36, FM).*
- unsuccessful relationships ended by women, *These potential fiancées are somewhere too far away in another town, they either give up or have some other reasons. It was always finally them who gave up on the relationship. It absolutely wasn't my decision (M 12.a. 40, FM).*

The single men of this type showed some activity in looking for a partner, *I'm not particularly happy about my single life but I'm still looking* (M 11, a. 40, FM).

Single men of androgynous type perceive living on their own as a choice and a sort of life experience important especially for a man with a strong need of freedom and independence, *A single person is the one who decides on their own about being single* (M 3, a.37, A). *If somebody is single it means they really need to feel independent, to do whatever they want at a given time without taking another person into consideration* (M 2, a.34, A), *I guess strong need of freedom defines a single person, that's the only thing* (M 3, a.37, A).

The single men of androgynous type pointed to women's inability to meet their expectations as the reason for their decision about being single. What is more, some of the subjects noticed that the feeling escalated with age and number of acquaintances made. They indicated the following determining factors:

- lack of a candidate for a partner suitable for a steady relationship, *I can't find anybody who would satisfy my criteria or who wouldn't disappoint me after some time* (M 3, a.37, A).
- increase of requirements for a partner parallel to aging and the length of single life, *I don't know but I also noticed that I become more fussy with age. If I don't like something then I don't like it and I don't wait till it changes during our life together* (M 2, a.34, A).

The men of this type did not look for a partner in an active way and declared temporary lack of need to be in a steady relationship, *No, I don't feel pressure, I don't look for anybody. At this moment in my life I don't want a relationship, I don't feel such need* (M 4, a.30, A).

Single men of undifferentiated type consider their single life to be the effect of not feeling the need for establishing a permanent relationship. However, lack of this need may have a temporary character, *I have an impression that this is often the way in which somebody becomes single for some time, they simply assume, I don't know...I'll enjoy myself, see how it is till I'm thirty and later I'll think about it, later I'll find something...*(M 10, a.29, UD). *It's not that they can't have a relationship but being single is often the result of a choice made here and now, nobody knows for how long* (M 10, a.29, UD).

Not believing in permanence of a relationship with a woman as well as their concerns about responsibility and constraints connected, in their opinion, with being in a permanent relationship motivated the single men of undifferentiated type for choosing life on their own.

- fear of responsibility for another person and limited independence, *Maybe I'm afraid of responsibility of some kind, to get involved, I don't know...give somebody some rights to me* (M 10, a.29, UD).
- doubts about permanence of feelings and relationship with a woman, *It is probably about the fact that there simply isn't such a person, a particular person I could really spend every moment with and it would still be ok and I would know that in ten years' time it is still going to be so great that I wouldn't have any doubts* (M 10, a.29, UD).

The single men of this type did not look for a partner actively although they stressed the fact that they noticed temporary increase of activity in this area aiming, however, at establishing relationships not requiring a lot of commitment, *There is nothing that would make me want to quit my single life. Sometimes I feel like looking around to find somebody, sometimes the feeling is quite intensive but I'm not looking for commitment* (M 10, a.29, UD).

On the basis of the reasons for choosing single life it may be deduced that the single men participating in the research can be divided into two categories: “now I want to be alone” and/or “now I don't want to be in a relationship”. The attitude towards being single in case of the subjects seems to be directly related to the kind of experience which they consider to be the reasons for living on their own. The men who “want to be alone” pointed rather to their own personality traits, current needs and priorities. Male and undifferentiated men belong to this category. The men who are single because they “don't want any relationships” considered their concerns about being in an exclusive relationship to be important. First of all they mentioned limitations and obligations connected with getting involved as well as negative experience from previous relationships with women. Feminine and androgynous men belong to this category.

Conclusion – Findings of The Research

The conducted analyses show that being in a relationship or being single as well as the attitude towards being single depend not only on biological gender but also on socio-cultural gender. People holding traditional opinions on femininity and masculinity (sex-typed) are in relationships more often than people who are non-stereotypical from the point of view of traditionally defined femininity and masculinity (cross-sex typed). Socio-cultural gender perspective reveals that male women are the ones who live on their own

most frequently and feminine and androgynous women have a partner most often. In case of men the undifferentiated ones do not establish permanent relationships most often and androgynous men most frequently have a partner. These findings may lead to the conclusion that women characterised by traits untypical for their biological gender and men not described by stereotypical characteristics of both genders are single more often. It may be deduced from the results of the research that androgynous and sex-typed people (feminine women and male men) fulfill the expectations of their potential partners more often than undifferentiated and cross-sex typed people (male women and feminine men). Characteristics which are considered to be stereotypical traits of biological gender and/or characteristics of the opposite sex seem to be a better prognostic for finding a partner than defining oneself in opposition to biological gender or in universal categories – gender assignment.

On the basis of the research findings it may also be assumed that being in a relationship is still valued higher than being single and having a partner seems to be more attractive than not having one despite higher and higher social acceptance for singlehood and lower social pressure on establishing formal relationships. People who define themselves referring to culturally determined patterns of femininity and masculinity (sex-typed and cross-sex typed) and androgynous people described as having high level of both feminine and masculine characteristics but who are not gender marked are the most eager to have a domestic partner. On the other hand undifferentiated people both men and women do not intend to be in a relationship or have a partner. People of this type of socio-cultural gender are also the most often satisfied with their single life and do not intend to develop a permanent relationship neither formal nor informal in the future. Therefore it occurs that lack of clear reference to gender stereotypes in defining oneself makes the decision about remaining single easier and aids the resignation from social expectations concerning building a relationship. Hence it can be assumed that the family roles traditionally assigned to men and women are not determinants in biographical project of people who are not willing to define themselves in categories of femininity and masculinity.

The analyses of qualitative research show that the attitude towards single life i.e. choice, satisfaction, perception of remaining single in the future, is seen in a different way by single men and women representing various types of socio-cultural gender. Single women of feminine women and androgynous type perceive their single life as enforced, they want to be in a relationship and although they do not feel lonely they have critical attitude towards

living on their own. Out of the two types androgynous women seem to better come to terms with their situation. Single women of male women and undifferentiated type see a lot of advantages in single life although it is not a result of their own choice, they are satisfied with their situation and even though they want to be single only temporarily they assume that living on their own may also be gratifying in the future. Single men of male man and androgynous type treat their singlehood as a stage in life resulting from focusing on themselves and strong need for independence. They consider it to be a choice, a kind of life experience important especially for men with strong need of freedom and independence. For single men of feminine man type living on their own is a form of dealing with the inability to find a partner or difficulties with building and maintaining a relationship. For single men of undifferentiated type single life comes from the lack of need for being in a steady relationship. However, they say that not feeling this need may be only temporary.

An overview of findings framed on the basis of the conducted research shows that almost all analysed issues are influenced by both biological and socio-cultural gender. Therefore it seems that including gender perspective in research may broaden and enrich the analysis without neglecting variety of attitudes, opinions and preferences occurring within one sex.

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CHAPTER 6

Do You Take This Marriage? Perceived Choice over Marital Status Affects the Stereotypes of Single and Married People

Introduction

Being a single (unmarried) adult is more common today than it once was (Klineberg, 2012). According to data from the United Nations and the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of total households comprised of married people has declined over the last 40 years. For example, the percentage of households comprised of married couples has dropped by 22% in the United States since 1970 (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider; 2013), by 16% in Germany and 11% in Poland since 1980, and by 12% in France since 1990 (United Nations, 2014). During this time, it has become more common for people in Europe and the United States to live alone or live with a romantic partner without being married (United Nations, 2014).

When singles are asked to explain why they are not married, some report that they have chosen to remain single, some report that they would like to marry but have not yet found the person they want to marry, and some report that they are not ready to be in a partnered relationship (Byrne, 2000; Lewis & Moon, 1997; Zajicek & Koski, 2003). People are remaining single later into adulthood. In just the last 20 years, the average age at first marriage has increased in the United States and in Europe by 4 to 6 years

(United Nations, 2014). Despite these demographic changes over time, there is a cultural lag in terms of attitudes towards singles which continue to be more negative than attitudes towards married people (Byrne & Carr, 2005; DePaulo & Morris, 2005).

The Ideology of Marriage and Family

Although the preceding statistics indicate that being single is now more common than it used to be, this does not mean that marriage is a crumbling institution. People continue to place a very high value on getting married (Klineberg, 2012; Willoughby, Carroll, Vitas, & Hill, 2012). Marriage is considered a highly desirable rite of passage in a person's life and it is assumed that most people will get married at some point in their lives (Cargan, 1986; Zajicek, & Koski, 2003). While marriage used to be perceived as a useful economic, political, or procreative union between two people who may or may not have been especially fond of each other, modern conceptions of marriage now include love, happiness, and personal fulfillment as important reasons for marrying (Coontz, 2005). In western cultures today, our spouse is expected to be our "soulmate", someone whom we are even closer to than our friends or biological family (Coontz, 2005; DePaulo, 2006; Gillis, 2004).

DePaulo and Morris (2005) have argued that there is a widely accepted ideology of marriage and family which glorifies marriage as the path to lifetime fulfillment. This ideology is based on the assumptions that we do not feel "complete" until we have found our soulmate and that we will be happier and lead more meaningful lives once we have married and had children. These rosy views of marriage are not just held by married people. Singles feel more positively about being married than being single (Poortman & Liefbroer, 2010) and they report more dissatisfaction with their own relationship status than married people do (Greitemeyer, 2009). While this dissatisfaction could be quite disheartening, most singles are optimistic that they, too, will marry at some point in their lives (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). In one study, single participants stated that their chances of marrying were around 100% (Fowers, Montel, Lyons, & Shaked, 2001). The ideology of marriage and family is widely accepted and unquestioned by married people and also singles who assume that the grass is greener on the other side (DePaulo & Morris, 2005). It has been argued that a negative consequence of the ideology of marriage and family is that singles are considered to be "less" than married people – less happy, less mature, and less well-adjusted – and that these negative perceptions

of singles can lead to discrimination against them in various contexts (DePaulo, 2006; DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Morris et al., 2008). Even during this time in history when the choice to marry is happening later in life and the choice to remain single is becoming more common, negative stereotypes of singles persist. Although the existence of negative stereotypes and discrimination against singles has been well documented, no past research has determined whether the negative perceptions of singles are in fact due to the ideology of marriage and family. If the negative stereotypes of singles are due to an ideology which glorifies marriage, then one would predict that singles would be perceived more positively if they support that ideology by expressing a desire to be married. This chapter will describe an experiment which tests that hypothesis by comparing people's perceptions of singles who do and do not choose to live their lives according to the ideology of marriage and family.

Discrimination against Singles

Why should we care about differential perceptions and treatment of singles? Marriage comes with not only romantic benefits but also institutionalized financial benefits. For instance, when couples marry in the United States, they are able to save money through spousal health insurance benefits, better insurance rates, and tax breaks simply because they are married (DePaulo & Morris, 2006; Motro, 2004). These financial benefits for married people amount to discriminatory practices towards singles who pay an economic price for being unmarried. Perhaps the most disturbing form of discrimination against singles is the "marriage bonus". Married men are paid higher salaries and are more likely to receive promotions than single men even when controlling for years of experience, level of seniority, and quality of performance (Antonovics & Town, 2004; Bellas, 1992; Budig & England, 2001; Keith, 1986; Toutkoushian, 1998). Singles face discrimination in the housing market as well. In a series of experiments, participants were asked to choose whom they would rather rent a property to: a married couple, a cohabiting romantic couple, or two friends (Morris, Sinclair, & DePaulo, 2007). Participants chose the married couple 60 to 80% of the time, often explaining that they chose the married couple simply because they were married. In a field study in Canada, landlords' real world decisions indicated discrimination against singles as well (Lauster & Easterbrook, 2011).

Based on data from a nationally representative dataset in the United States, Byrne and Carr (2005) found that singles who had never married

were more likely to report discriminatory treatment in informal settings than married people did. In comparison to married men, single men more often reported being treated rudely and being perceived as afraid, dishonest, and unintelligent. In comparison to married women, single women more often reported poor restaurant service, name calling, hassling from the police, and low levels of respect. Both single men and single women were more likely to report being threatened or harassed than their married counterparts. In a separate study in which singles were asked to describe a time they had been treated differently because they were single, they commonly mentioned experiences of social exclusion, unwanted pity, negative perceptions by others, and financial discrimination (Morris, 2005).

Negative Stereotypes of Singles

Some of the negative treatment and discrimination singles experience may be due to negative stereotypes about them. Given that marriage is considered an important developmental milestone and a signifier of reaching adulthood (DePaulo, 2006), adults who are single are perceived as lacking in some way. In comparison to married people, singles are thought to be more immature, irresponsible, insecure, self-centered, unhappy, lonely, incomplete, introverted, unattractive, unexciting and less well-adjusted (Byrne, 2000; Byrne & Carr, 2005; Cargan, 1986; DePaulo, 2008; DePaulo & Morris, 2006; DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Greitemeyer, 2009; Lewis & Moon, 1997; Morris, DePaulo, Hertel, & Taylor, 2008; Morris et al., 2007; Zajicek & Koski, 2003). While some studies have compared perceptions based on marital status (comparing legally single vs. legally married people) other studies have compared perceptions based on relationship status (comparing people who are not in a romantic relationship vs. people who are coupled or married). Across these different types of studies, the same pattern emerges; people who are the “most” single, that is neither married nor in a romantic relationship, are perceived more negatively than people who are coupled or married. However, people who are legally married are perceived more positively than coupled people who are in unmarried romantic relationships. While being in a romantic relationship improves the way people are perceived, the most positive perceptions are reserved for those who are married. These patterns have been replicated in multiple countries including the United States (Conley & Collins, 2002; Morris et al., 2008), Germany (Greitemeyer, 2009; Hertel et al., 2007), Israel (Slonim,

Gur-Yaish, & Katz, 2010; Slonim, Morris, & Osburn, 2012) and Singapore (Au & Lau, 2010).

Although there are some positive stereotypes of singles, such as the perception that singles have more freedom and independence while also being more open to new experiences than married people (Byrne, 2000; Cargan, 1986; Greitemeyer, 2009; Morris et al., 2008), it is the negative stereotypes that predominantly come to mind when people are asked to describe their thoughts about singles (Morris et al., 2008). The negative stereotypes of singles are such a robust finding that the stereotypes even remain statistically significant in experiments which have tested variables assumed to reduce those negative stereotypes. For example, because marriage is more typical as people age, we might expect that singles will not be perceived negatively until they have reached an age when most people are married. Although it is true that the negative stereotypes of singles are stronger for 40-year-olds than 25-year-olds, even 25-year-old singles are perceived negatively compared to married people of the same age (Morris et al., 2008). The negative perceptions apply to both single men and single women. Furthermore, even when singles are described as being highly successful in their careers, altruistic to others, or as having a lot of close friends – all descriptions which might mitigate the negative stereotypes based on marital status – still they are perceived more negatively than married people (DePaulo & Morris, 2004). The negative beliefs about singles are generally agreed upon by a wide range of participants regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, or even their own marital or relationship status (Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Greitemeyer, 2009; Hertel et al., 2007; Morris et al., 2007, 2008; Slonim et al., 2012). Given the widespread acceptance of the ideology of marriage and family and the fact that most singles want and expect to marry (Fowers et al., 2001), it is not surprising that single and married people alike have rosier views of married people than single people. Despite the statistically large effect sizes of these stereotypes (Greitemeyer, 2009; Morris et al., 2007, 2008), the actual differences between single and married people are either quite small or non-existent (DePaulo, 2005; Greitemeyer, 2009; Rook & Zettel, 2005). Regardless of how small the actual differences are though, the negative stereotypes of singles persist.

Potential Explanations of Why We Stereotype Singles

The negative stereotypes about singles may exist due to our need to explain other people's behavior (Heider, 1958), in this case, why someone is not married. Although there are many reasons why someone may not be married, including by choice and due to situational and dispositional reasons, people are most likely to make dispositional attributions when explaining someone else's behavior (Ross, 1977). Because it is assumed that most people want to marry, we may attribute someone's "failure" to marry to a flawed personality which makes them less desirable as a spouse. For example, we may assume that singles are self-centered or not well-adjusted because these stereotypes provide a simple explanation as to why they have not yet married.

In addition, the stereotypes of singles may exist due to people's perceptions of the transformative nature of marriage. For men in particular, marriage is touted as a path to maturity (Nock, 1998). Within marriage, men are expected to become more mature, successful, altruistic, and socially skilled (Nock, 1998). Thus negative stereotypes about singles could be based on assumptions about what happens as a consequence of *not* getting married.

Finally, the negative stereotypes of singles could also serve as a form of system justification – reinforcing both the importance of marriage and the government-supported advantages that come with marriage in many countries. In the United States, there are currently 1,138 federal benefits, rights, and protections given to married couples which allow them to save money on taxes and share important financial benefits with each other such as social security and employer-sponsored healthcare (Human Rights Campaign, 2014). Gay and lesbian couples have recently been granted these same rights as they are now allowed to marry as well.

According to system justification theories, the stability of a social system depends upon commonly held beliefs which support the legitimacy of that system (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Those commonly held beliefs include negative stereotypes about minority group members which can be used to explain why some people do not merit being in the dominant group or do not merit receiving the privileges that come with being in the dominant group. People who most strongly support the status quo tend to have the most negative stereotypes of minority group members (De Oliveira & Dambrun, 2007). Stereotypes which are commonly endorsed by both majority and minority group members are the most useful in maintaining the importance of a social system. As described earlier, negative stereotypes of singles are held

by both married and single people alike. Consistent with system justification theories, singles who are strong supporters of marriage, those who want to marry and believe it is legitimate that married people get certain advantages, are especially likely to hold negative stereotypes about singles (Branscombe, Cronin, Brinkley, & Nichols, 2012). If negative stereotypes of singles serve to enhance the importance of marriage, then stereotypes might be particularly strong when people feel that the institution of marriage is weakening. In fact, recent research has shown that singles are especially likely to derogate other singles when they feel anxiety that the institution of marriage is threatened (Cronin, 2011).

Do Stereotypes of Singles Depend upon Perceptions of Choice over Marital Status?

When we judge singles, we do not necessarily know if they have chosen to remain single or whether they would actually prefer to be married. To the extent that the negative stereotypes of singles serve as a form of system justification for the institution of marriage, perceptions of choice over marital status should be quite important in predicting stereotypes of singles. Singles who wish to be married hold values that are consistent with the widely accepted ideology of marriage and family. Given that people like others more if they share their beliefs and attitudes (Sachs, 1975), people are likely to feel more positively about others who choose to embrace the goal of marriage. Therefore, singles who adhere to the norm of marriage by at least wanting to marry may be perceived positively. By that same logic, singles who reject the ideology of marriage and family by choosing to remain single may be perceived as a threat to the institution of marriage and become the target of particularly negative stereotypes.

A second reason why perceptions of choice may be important is that past research has found that stigmatized people are perceived more negatively if their stigma is thought to be within their control. For example, when homosexuality is labeled as controllable, people hold more negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians than when homosexuality is labeled as uncontrollable (Whitley, 1990). Controllable stigmas are viewed with more anger, less pity, less liking, and result in less assistance than uncontrollable stigmas (Menec & Perry, 1995; Seacat, Hirschman, & Mickelson, 2007; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988). The perception that someone might choose to remain single implies that relationship status is something within a person's control

to some degree. Some research suggests that marital status is indeed viewed as controllable (Morris et al., 2007). Singles who express a preference to remain single are likely to be perceived as responsible for possessing a controllable stigma which in turn predicts more negative stereotypes. On the other hand, singles who want to be married may just be perceived as unlucky in love so far and having a stigma that is out of their control. For example, we might assume that singles who want to marry just have not met the “right” partner yet. Thus, singles who prefer to be married may be perceived more positively than those who choose singlehood.

Although it seems likely that singles who want to marry will be perceived more positively than singles who choose to remain single for the reasons described above, this does not mean that singles who want to marry will be perceived just as positively as married people. As described earlier, stereotypes can serve as explanations for people’s behavior. Although, singles who want to marry may be perceived somewhat positively if marital status is thought to be out of their control to some degree, the question still remains in people’s minds – why hasn’t this person gotten married yet? As decades of social psychological research show, we have a tendency to make dispositional attributions (Ross, 1977). Because singles who wish to marry have not “succeeded” in achieving a cultural valued goal, people may attribute at least part of their interpersonal “failure” to an undesirable personality.

Overview of Experiment and Hypotheses

Although past research has consistently shown that singles are perceived more negatively than married people, none of those studies have described the intentions of those singles. The current experiment tests whether singles are perceived differently depending upon whether they are described as choosing to be single or not. By manipulating perceived choice over marital status, this experiment will provide a test of the hypothesis that negative stereotypes of singles are, at least in part, due to acceptance of the ideology of marriage and family (DePaulo & Morris, 2005). Participants in this experiment rated three different targets – a married person, a single person who wanted to marry, and a single person who preferred to remain single. It is hypothesized that singles who prefer to remain single will be perceived negatively compared to both married people and singles who wish to be married because those who prefer to remain single have rejected the culturally valued institution of marriage. Although it is predicted that singles

who wish to marry will be perceived more positively than singles who reject marriage, it is hypothesized that even singles who want to marry will be perceived negatively compared to people who have already achieved the goal of marriage because perceivers will assume they have certain shortcomings preventing them from marrying.

Materials and Methods

Seventy-one participants, 35 men and 36 women, between the ages of 18 and 74 participated in this experiment. The majority of participants (86%) were Caucasian. Participants were categorized as either currently single (30%), romantically coupled but unmarried (25%), or married (45%). The experimenter approached participants in shopping malls in Maryland, asked them to participate in the study, and offered them a chance to win a \$100 gift card to a store of their choice through a lottery.

Each participant read descriptions of three target people. One of the targets was described as married, one as currently single but wanting to marry, and one as wanting to remain single. Participants either read about three men or three women. The experimental design was a 2 X 2 X 3 X 3 mixed-participants design. The between-participants variables were the targets' gender, the participants' gender, and the participants' relationship status (single, coupled but unmarried, married) while the within-participants variable was the targets' marital status choice (married, wanting to marry, wanting to remain single).

The order in which the participants rated the three targets was counterbalanced across participants. Each description included the gender and marital status choice of the targets as well as brief filler information describing the targets' hometown, occupation, and hobbies so that the main independent variable (marital status choice) was not the only thing mentioned. Three example descriptions are below:

Pamela lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and works as an accountant. She enjoys fishing and writing. She is married.

Samantha lives in Richmond, Virginia and works in retail. She likes to read and likes playing billiards. She is single and she would like one day to be married.

Nikki lives in Boston, Massachusetts and works in graphic design. She often takes long walks and enjoys skiing. She is single and would like to remain single.

The names and filler information were counterbalanced across all of the participants such that each target name and set of filler information was presented an equal number of times associated with the married person, the single person who wanted to marry, and the single person who wanted to remain single. For example, because the married targets were described 1/3 of the time as accountants, 1/3 of the time as graphic designers, and 1/3 of the time as retailers (and so were both types of single targets), the targets' profession was controlled for in this design. Therefore, any differences in people's perceptions (when collapsed across all participants in the study) would be due to marital status choice rather than to the targets' names or the filler information.

Following each of the three descriptions, the participants completed a multi-item questionnaire measuring to what degree on a 9-point scale that target person possessed certain traits (previously used by Morris et al., 2008). Participants completed the questionnaire about one target before reading the description of the next target.

Results

Based on a factor analysis and the factors used in past research using this same questionnaire (Morris et al., 2008), dependent variables were combined into the following factors. The "well-adjusted" factor consisted of the following variables: happiness, attractiveness, security, loves children, emotional closeness, spends time with friends, and fun loving ($\alpha = .73$). The "career-oriented" factor consisted of the following variables: career-oriented, independent, successful, motivated, and rational ($\alpha = .85$). The "exciting" factor consisted of the variables adventurous, spontaneous, and interesting ($\alpha = .76$). The "self-centered" variable did not load onto any of the other factors and was analyzed alone. The "socially immature" factor consisted of the variables immature, shy, lonely, and fearful of rejection, but this factor was not analyzed due to low reliability ($\alpha = .51$). Each of these factors were entered as dependent variables in a 2 X 2 X 3 X 3 ANCOVA with age of the participant entered as a covariate.

There were significant main effects of the targets' marital status choice on how well-adjusted and self-centered they were perceived to be (See Table 1). Single targets who wanted to remain single were perceived as less well-adjusted ($M = 5.26$) than single targets who wanted to get married ($M = 6.02$, $p < .001$) and both types of singles were thought to be less well-adjusted than married targets ($M = 6.45$, $p < .001$ and $p < .05$, respectively), $F(2, 114) = 9.09$, $p < .001$. Similarly, single targets who wanted to remain single were perceived as more self-centered ($M = 6.02$) than single targets who wanted to get married ($M = 4.87$, $p < .01$) and both types of singles were thought to be more self-centered than married targets ($M = 3.89$, $p < .001$ and $p < .01$, respectively), $F(2, 112) = 9.33$, $p < .001$. Although the overall main effects were not significant for the other dependent variables, Table 1 shows that the pattern was the same; across all four dependent variables, targets who wanted to remain single were thought to be somewhat different from married targets (and this pairwise comparison was also significant for the "exciting" variable, $p < .05$) while single targets who wanted to be married were in the middle.

Table 1. *The Effects of Marital Status Choice on Perceptions.* Marital Status Choice of Targets

Factor	Single choosing singlehood	Single wanting a relationship	Married	F
Well-adjusted	5.26 _a	6.02 _b	6.45 _c	9.09*
Self-centered	6.02 _a	4.87 _b	3.89 _c	9.33*1.13
Exciting	5.61 _a	6.20 _{ac}	6.45 _c	0.48
Career-Oriented	6.52	6.34	6.28	

Notes. * $p < .001$. Means in the same row with different subscript letters are statistically different from each other at $p < .05$.

Discussion

As predicted, singles who chose to remain single were perceived more negatively (more self-centered and less well-adjusted) than singles who wanted to marry. This result is consistent with DePaulo & Morris' (2005) proposition

that negative stereotypes of singles are due to the ideology of marriage and family in that singles who accepted that ideology were perceived relatively positively. It may seem contradictory that people who wish to remain single are stereotyped negatively even as the percentage of people who remain single has increased and people are marrying later than they used to. Although societal shifts can lead to reduced stereotyping and prejudice (Crandall & Warner, 2005), when those shifts are perceived as a threat to a highly valued institution such as marriage, the negative stereotypes may be especially likely to persist. This pattern was supported in our experiment in that singles who rejected marriage were perceived more negatively than married people and also more negatively than single people who wanted to be part of that institution. All three groups of participants (singles, coupled but unmarried participants, and married participants) consistently perceived singles who wished to remain single as more self-centered and less well-adjusted than married people. Notably, the fact that unmarried participants shared these perceptions speaks to the unquestioned nature of the ideology of marriage and family.

Our results may be due to perceptions of controllability as well. Describing some singles as choosing to remain single implies that marital status is controllable and that they are responsible for their own stigma. In a previous experiment conducted by Slonim et al. (2010), single targets who chose to be single elicited feelings of anger within participants and these singles were perceived as lonelier, more miserable, less warm, and less sociable than singles who did not choose to be single. On the other hand, singles who did not choose to be single elicited feelings of sympathy and were viewed as more successful than those choosing to be single. The fact that people who choose to be single elicit anger in others may explain why people hold particularly negative views of singles who reject marriage; the negative stereotypes could perhaps be a way to rationalize the gut feelings of anger towards those who reject the highly valued institution of marriage (Haidt, 2001).

Also as predicted, singles who wanted to marry were still not perceived as positively as people who already were married. Singles who wanted to marry were thought to be more self-centered and less well-adjusted than married people. This pattern could be due to the fundamental attribution error, our tendency to infer that people who exhibit negative behavior must have negative traits. Thus singles who want to marry are seen somewhat favorably because they support the institution of marriage but somewhat negatively because they have not managed to achieve that valued lifetime goal.

Given that perceived choice over marital status affects perceptions of singles, the same logic could potentially be applied to perceptions of married people; perhaps married people are perceived less positively if they do not wish to remain married. Some preliminary research we have done has shown this to be the case. In a similar experiment in which participants rated married and single people, married people who were perceived as *choosing* to remain married were viewed more positively (more socially mature and less self-centered) than married people who were perceived as having little choice in the matter (Kemp & Morris, 2010). People may remain married, not because they actively choose to, but simply because there are multiple barriers and complications involved in getting a divorce (Rusbult, 1980). This data suggests that married people are perceived most positively if they fully embrace their marriage by choice as opposed to feeling stuck in their marriage.

If the negative perceptions of singles are indeed due a commonly held ideology of marriage and family, it is likely that people who strongly value marriage will have more negative stereotypes of singles than people who do not place as much value on marriage. In a recent experiment examining perceptions based on romantic relationship status (rather than legal marital status), participants held more negative views of singles and more positive views of coupled people if the participants had a stronger desire to be in a romantic relationship themselves (Slonim et al., 2012). A future study could test the effect of participants' desire to get married on their perceptions of single and married people.

In a similar vein, there may also be cross-cultural differences in how negatively singles are perceived depending upon how much importance is placed on marriage or how common marriage is within a particular culture. The rates of cohabitation (romantic partners living together without being married) vary across cultures. For example, approximately 13% of French households consist of cohabiting couples but less than 3% of Polish households consist of cohabiting couples. Future research could explore whether these demographic patterns predict attitudes toward unmarried people.

Even within a single country, it is possible that perceptions of singles vary as a function of how highly valued or common marriage is within particular regions or ethnic groups. Eighty-six percent of the participants in the current experiment were Caucasian and marriage rates are higher in the U.S. for this ethnic group than for African-Americans. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2012, 51% of Caucasians were married while only 29% of African-Americans were married. Single parenting is also more common

among African-Americans. In 2012, the U. S. Census Bureau reported that among Caucasian families, 21% of families with children were single-parent households while among African-American families, 55% of families with children were single-parent households (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013). It may be the case that the negative stereotypes of singles are particularly strong among ethnic groups in which marriage is considered normative.

Now that gay men and lesbians have the right to marry in certain places, they may also be perceived more positively if they are married or if they want to be married than if they are single. However, that may also depend upon whether the perceiver's notion of marriage includes same-sex couples. As of this date, we know of no studies comparing perceptions of gay men and lesbians based on marital status, most likely because legalized marriage equality is still rather new. However, there was a recent cross-cultural study in the United States and Israel that compared perceptions based on relationship status rather than marital status (Slonim et al., 2012). In that experiment, heterosexual, gay, and lesbian participants made judgments about single and coupled heterosexual, gay, and lesbian targets. While participants consistently rated coupled people more positively than single people, the magnitude of that difference varied depending upon the sexual orientation of the participants and the people they rated. Participants were especially likely to perceive a large difference between coupled and single people when they rated people of the same sexual orientation as themselves. Thus heterosexual participants held negative stereotypes about heterosexual singles while homosexual participants held negative stereotypes about homosexual singles. It may be that people judge others based on relationship status especially if those romantic relationships are the same type they desire to experience themselves.

There was one potential limitation of the current experiment that should be acknowledged. In our experiment, the age of the targets was not mentioned. Because age was not explicitly held constant in the descriptions of the targets, it is possible that participants may have assumed that the three groups of targets (already married, wanting to be married, and preferring to remain single) were different ages. However, in other similar experiments in which single targets and married targets were described as being the same exact age, singles were still perceived as less well-adjusted, less mature, and more self-centered than married people and those effect sizes were quite large (Morris et al., 2007, 2008). In fact, it is possible that the differences found in our experiment would have been even larger had the three targets been explicitly described as the same age. If our participants did assume that the

single targets were younger than the married targets, they might not have taken a younger person's rejection of marriage as seriously as an older person who has lived that choice much longer.

Past research has shown that singles are not only the targets of negative stereotypes but also of discrimination (e.g., Antonovics & Town, 2004; Lauster & Easterbrook, 2011; Morris et al., 2007; Toutkoushian, 1998). In those studies, participants were not given any information regarding whether the single person wanted to marry or not. The results of this study lead to a question for future research – are singles discriminated against less if they make it clear that they support the institution of marriage and want to marry at some point themselves?

In conclusion, this research has extended past research on the negative stereotypes of singles by examining an important variable – perceptions of choice over marital status. Although both types of singles are perceived more negatively than married people, those singles who plan to live their life according to the ideology of marriage and family are perceived more positively than those who do not. Although being single later into adulthood has become more common, the act of remaining single, especially by choice, causes people to be perceived negatively.

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CHAPTER 7

Do Polish Never-married Singles Feel Stigmatized?

Introduction

Singles represent a growing percentage of the population in numerous societies. The trend has become global, easily noticeable in Europe, USA, and Asia (Klinenberg, 2013; Nemoto, Fuwa, Ishiguro 2013; Jameison, Wasoff & Simpson, 2009; Deml, 2009; Williams, Guest & Varagrat, 2006; DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Theborn, 2004). At the moment, we are experiencing cultural changes which entail a lifestyle change. A new book by Eric Klinenberg titled *Singleton Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone* (2013) depicts a vision of American society as one composed of drifting individuals. It is thought that an unorthodox way of life, including being single, constitutes not so much an alternative, but a norm.

Therefore, a question regarding changes on an individual's psychological level and their consequences in social organization arises. Bella DePaulo and Wendy Morris (2006) prove that singles are still discriminated against and stigmatized and their image is strongly stereotyped. The authors refer to such peculiar discrimination of singles as singlism. Despite the fact of the lifestyle becoming popular and growing social acceptance for it (Thorton & Young-DeMarco, 2001), the phenomenon is subject to group mechanisms characteristic for minorities.

Poland is a country where singles have grown in numbers. However, when compared with Western European countries, Poles seem to marry young and

become divorced after a short period of time. Majority of Poles declare being Catholic and despite the westernization of culture, Christian values are still prevalent. Both international and Polish studies indicate a similar trend as regards negative stereotyping of singles, which constitutes a stimulus for the stigmatization (DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Paprzycka, 2008; Slany, 2008; Athenstaedt, 2000; Pignotti & Abell, 2009). However, studies evaluating the process of stigmatization from the point of view of the stigmatized are rare. Taking into account the available literature on the subject of stigmatization of singles, the present study constitutes a new and original input into the development of psychological studies of singles.

The present chapter assumes a psychological perspective and attempts at depicting stigmatization from the point of view of the stigmatized individual and not from the group perspective. The research question is as follows: Whether and to what degree do singles feel stigmatized? The theoretical part of the chapter pertains to the term stigmatization and to singles as the stigmatized group. The empirical part constitutes answer to the research question on the basis of the developed tool measuring the feeling of stigmatization among singles. The issue of stigmatization arises in numerous qualitative studies (Eck, 2013; Sharp & Ganong, 2011; Reynolds & Taylor, 2005; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Paprzycka, 2006, 2008). However, in order to obtain a deeper insight into the issue, an attempt at developing a questionnaire allowing for the quantitative measurement of the feeling of stigmatization was made. Wendy Morris (2005) carried out an awareness study pertaining to the affinity with singles as the stigmatized group. However, the available Polish and international literature does not feature a tool for measuring stigmatization among singles. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the present study features the first such tool.

Stigmatization

Erving Goffman defines stigma as a significant discredit of an individual's feature or attribute, which leads to its severe depreciation (1963). Such attributes frequently encompass those which cannot be easily incorporated into a stereotypical perception of an individual in a particular social category. Stigmatization may influence the social identification of an individual. Goffman uses the term spoiled social identity. Jennifer Crocker, Brenda Major, and Claude Steele (1998) define stigma as a social identity which becomes depreciated in a particular social context. The interpersonal context is key for

stigmatization. Therefore, it is not the object of stigmatization but a particular situation and social interaction which constitute the source of stigmatization. As a consequence, the attribute of stigmatization defines the situational context, which gives it a relative character. In a particular situation and environment the same feature may be severely stigmatized, in others stigmatization may be minimal (Crocker et al., 1998). Stigmatization may manifest itself as an aversion and evasion of social interactions, social rejection, depreciation and dehumanization (Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000).

John B. Pryor and Glenn D. Reeder (2011) indicate four dimensions of stigmatization, in dynamically interconnected model. The dimensions are as follows: *self-stigma*, *stigma by association*, *structural stigma* and *public stigma*, which is perceived as the source of the remaining dimensions. Public stigma refers to the attitude of people towards an individual who is perceived as marked with a stigma. The attitudes manifest themselves in cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects, as social and psychological reactions towards the attributed stigma. Stigma by association reflects social and psychological reactions to people associated with the stigmatized individual (e.g., friends, family) and their reactions to being associated with the individual at the same time. Structural stigma is understood as legitimization and preservation of stigmatization by social institutions and ideologies. The *self-stigma* reflects the psychosocial influence of stigmatization upon the individual who is its object. It refers to the level of the individual's awareness of stigmatization processes and prospective internalization of negative convictions and feelings associated with the stigmatized attribute. Consequently, the dimension enables insight into the process of stigmatization from the point of view of the stigmatized. Despite the fact that the source of stigmatization is external, it is the internal perspective of the stigmatized that allows for a full grasp of the extent of stigmatization and its consequences for psychosocial functioning of the individual. From the psychological point of view, the perspective seems the most appropriate for the study and became the starting point for the consideration of stigmatization of singles.

Stigmatization of singles

A dynamic growth in the number of singles may suggest that they are fully accepted and their alternative lifestyle is regarded as a social norm. However, psychological analyses indicate that singles undergo stigmatization on structural, public and individual levels (Morris, Sinclair & DePaulo, 2007).

Structural Stigma

The source of the structural stigma of singles is the culture bound Marriage and Family Ideology and “the cult of the couple” (DePaulo & Morris, 2005). An example of legitimization of the Marriage and Family Ideology can be found in the tax system, which offers less favourable conditions to singles as compared with married couples (Fox, 2004; Morris et al., 2007). The reflection of the inequity can also be found at workplaces. On average, singles’ salaries are lower than those of the married (Antonovics & Town, 2004; Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981). Employees perception of marital status can be a source of inequality at work place, particularly for women (Jordan & Zitek, 2012).

Marriage and family remain the chief reference for social and cultural standards (Ogburn, Nimkoff, & Nave-Herz, 1997). Family life is highly valued and, in social perception, associated with emotional support and financial security. On the other hand, being single is perceived as devoid of those attributes (Hradil, 2003; Zajicek & Koski, 2003). Such phenomenon is called familicentrism, or familism, a term used with the negative connotation. Janusz Czapiński (2010) interprets the phenomenon of familism as the one which does not only focus standards and values around the family but also the one limiting opportunities and openness and dividing people into a narrow group of the familiar and the threatening others (Czapiński, 2010). The psychology of close relationships emphasises the fact that possessing a family constitutes a fundamental role by allowing for biological and social roles to be fulfilled (Mandal, 2008). The whole process of socialization of women and men prepares them to undertake the pre-defined social roles, including those of a husband and wife (Mandal, 2008, 1995) by the transfer of particular models constituting the reflection of the prevalent ideology or religion (Mandal, 1987, 1995). Therefore, failing to meet the expected social requirements may be a source of negative stereotyping and public stigma. De Paulo and Morris (2005) claim that the widespread cult of the couple preserves the negative image of singles and stigmatizes them as the unhappy and lacking the feeling of love.

Social expectations regarding family are required of both women and men, however, their character is different. The traditional role of a woman is more submissive, thus more conventional, while the male role is not submissive, thus may presuppose a degree of controversy. Therefore, on the basis of the above, one can assume that despite social expectations of starting a family and entering marriage for women and men being identical, ways of their realiza-

tion and reception may differ (DePaulo, 2006; Eck, 2013). In particular, the situation of women who fail to meet the criteria laid out by the cult of the couple because of their singleness and because of social favouritism as regards the traditional family model leads to the marginalization of women (Gordon, 1994; Reynolds & Wetherall, 2003).

Public Stigma

Public stigma refers to attitudes and social and psychological reactions towards the person perceived to have a stigma condition. It constitutes the source of the remaining stigmas and mainly manifests itself in negative stereotyping (Bos, Pryor, Reeder, & Stutterheim, 2013).

Stereotypes regarding singles are chiefly concerned with promiscuity, the feeling of loneliness (Cargan, 1981; DePaulo, 2006; Lewis, 2001) or being unattractive for potential partners (DePaulo, 2006; Lewis, 2001). Stereotypes as regards single men pertain to them being perceived as irresponsible, frivolous, gay, having alcohol problems and being more prone to committing crime (DePaulo, 2006). Disregard for married life in 1970s was even called a “social problem” (Davis & Strong, 1977). The stereotype of a single woman depicts her as incompetent, unhappy and lonely (DePaulo, 2006). Singles are also considered as “less likeable” (Krueger, Heckhausen, & Hundertmarkt, 1995). Both single women and men are regarded as ones engaging in risky sexual behavior, which was considered their character trait (Conley & Collins, 2002), and exhibiting promiscuity (DePaulo, 2006). In addition, a greater risk of transferring STDs as compared with the married was attributed with being single, the risk slightly lower for women than men. Respondents preferred to regard themselves as ones belonging to the group of the married (Conley & Collins, 2002). Promiscuity is more frequently ascribed to the divorced than those never-married (Cargan, 1981).

In the opinions of American students, singles are considered lonely, unhappy, self-centred, more independent, emotionally and socially immature, more shy and envious of the married. On the other hand, those being in a relationship were regarded by the students as happy, loving, loyal, able to make compromises, more self-confident and emotionally stable (Morris, DePaulo, Hertel, & Ritter, 2004). The married are generally perceived in a more positive light than singles, who are considered more lonely, less caring and warm. Studies by Hertel, Schütz, DePaulo, Morris, and Stucke (2007) indicate that women (especially young ones) perceive singles as more refined (intelligent,

independent, interesting, keen on adventure, career oriented) and sociable (having many friends, happy, attractive, loving life) as compared with the married. However, German studies prove that when alternative lifestyle vs. married life is concerned, young people are more traditional in their evaluations (Athenstaedt, 2000). Approximately 77% of women and 65% of men aged 12–25 are of the opinion that family is fundamental for being happy (Bodenmann, 2003). Poor experience as regards romantic relationships due to young age may influence the tendency to idealise marriage and exhibit intolerance towards other forms of intimate life. Among older people the trend is reversed (Hertel et al., 2007). Sex is also a factor when considering social roles. Men prefer more traditional roles whereas women drift towards more modern ones (Athenstaedt, 2000).

Leonard Cargan and Matthew Melko (1982) conducted a study among 400 households in Dayton, Ohio evaluating myths vs. the reality of singles' lifestyle. The researchers isolated five fundamental myths regarding singles, which in the authors' opinion proved ungrounded. The myths are the following: singles are more dependent on their parents, singles are more ego-centric, singles earn more, singles are happier, singles perceive the lifestyle as a lifetime alternative. Studies by Claire Etaugh and Joan Malstrom (1981) indicate that the married are perceived in more favourable categories than singles. Bachelors and spinsters are evaluated the harshest, next the divorced and then the widowed. The negative connotations were expressed by terms such as dependent, unreliable, less sociable, unhappy. The only positive aspect as regards singles was the assumption of a greater professional success than that of the married. However, professional achievements evoke ambivalent feelings joining positive aspects such as higher standard of living with negative ones such as stress and burnout. Despite the growing acceptance for singles' lifestyle (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001), the study repeated after 10 years gave similar results (Etaugh & Birdoes, 1991) proving that the married are indeed perceived in more positive categories than singles.

Polish studies indicate negative stereotyping of singles (Slany, 2002; Paprzycka, 2008). In studies by Slany, among 1500 students, 75% of them express negative attitude towards being single, indicating fate (45%), life failure (34%) and unattractiveness (15%) as the cause of being a singleton. The remaining students were ready to consider being single as an attractive way of life (61%) and an opportunity for self-fulfilment (39%). Therefore, young people regard being single in a negative way and do not consider the lifestyle as equivalent to married life. Studies by Paprzycka (2008) indicate that singles are viewed

in an inappropriate and unsatisfactory manner by the married. Frequently, they also strive to find partners for singles.

Self-stigma

Public stigma (Bos, et al., 2013) may affect the stigmatized by *enacted stigma*, *feeling of stigma* and *internalized stigma* (Herek, 2007). Enacted stigma may manifest itself by negative treatment of the person ascribed with a particular stigma; the feeling of stigma denotes the experience and anticipation of the stigmatization process, whereas internalized stigma manifests itself in depreciation of self-esteem in the stigmatized and experiencing negative psychological consequences such as depression, anxiety, isolation, decreased number of relationships and limited social support.

Internalization of stigma attributes and embracing negative depiction of self by singles is reflected in several studies (Hertel et al., 2007; Lewis, Moon, 1997; Berger & Luckman, 1996; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). The negative image may develop the picture of self as an unfulfilled person (Hradil, 2003, Hertel et al., 2007). The influence of internalization of stigma may be seen in stereotypical attributions as regards other members of the stigmatized group. It turns out that singles evaluate other singles more harshly than couples (Hertel et al., 2007). They view singles as more lonely and unhappy and less refined and sociable than do couples. The greatest disparity can be seen in the group of young singles. Single men also evaluate singles as less caring and warm than people in a relationship. In studies, single women viewed their married counterparts as more patient, less finicky, more willing to make compromises and having less serious problems (Lewis, Moon, 1997). These studies confirm the standpoint of Berger and Luckman (1966) indicating that individuals originating from the same culture usually share the same beliefs as regards particular social phenomena such as marriage and being single.

Even though it may not be straightforward (Crocker & Major, 1989), the relationship between the feeling of stigma and self-esteem is strongly grounded in theory (Goffman, 1963; Allport, 1954/1979) and psychological studies (Schmitt et al., 2014; Wirth & Williams, 2009). Allport (1954/1979) emphasizes the fact that group oppression “may destroy the integrity of the ego entirely and reverse its normal pride, and create a groveling self-image”. Self-concept is developed on the basis of the awareness of the way an individual is evaluated and their reaction to the evaluation. The feeling of exclusion as

a result of the negative external evaluation may pose threats for an individual's realization of the most basic need for acceptance and depreciate their psychological well-being (Wirth & Williams, 2009). By prejudice and discrimination of the negative assessment of self, the stigmatized may experience negative psychological effects such as lowering of their self-esteem. A meta-analysis on the basis of 328 independent studies carried out among 144,24 people indicates a significant negative relationship between the feeling of discrimination and self-esteem (Schmitt et al., 2014). However, Crocker and Major (1989) stress that the relationship between self-esteem and stigmatization process is not so straightforward. Comparisons of self-esteem in stigmatized groups as regards race did not indicate any significant differences. The explanation behind the lack of differentiation as regards self-esteem in strongly stigmatized groups may be found in the mechanism of stigmatization itself. Crocker and Major point to self-protective features of the stigma. If an individual in a stigmatized group possesses external attributes of failure and internal attributes of success, the influence of the stigma upon self-esteem is considerably lower.

Singles employ various strategies directed at controlling social interactions for developing a positive identity which facilitates resistance to the process of stigmatization (Zajicek & Koski, 2003). Anne Byrne (2003) states that single women frequently demonstrate excessive interest in finding a life partner in order to decrease stigmatization. The negative image of singles as incompetent is overcome by individuals developing strong support systems in their lives. Such tendency may bring about the change in singles' stereotyping into the positive acceptance of their lifestyle as an alternative to marriage (Schwartz & Wolf, 1976). Another characteristic for the mechanism of stigmatization is a kind of "fad" for original stigmatization of behavior (Czykwin, 2008). An attribute of stigma changes from unacceptable to an interesting alternative and ultimately a norm. Such attitude towards being single is often featured in literature and media promoting slightly idealized image of the single.

It is noteworthy that being single is a type of social stigma, which is called concealable stigma. The concealable stigma does not stigmatize in the same way as the visible stigma does (Stutterheim, Pryor, Bos, Hoogendijk, Muris, & Schaalma, 2009). This means that the visible signs of differentness, social mismatch will evoke a stronger and deeper feeling of stigmatization than the type of stigma which may be concealed. Therefore, a stigma associated with the interpersonal status may be experienced to a lesser extent than a stigma connected with e.g., visible deformation of the body. The feature which sparks off the social stigma and may be concealed, decreases the frequency of social

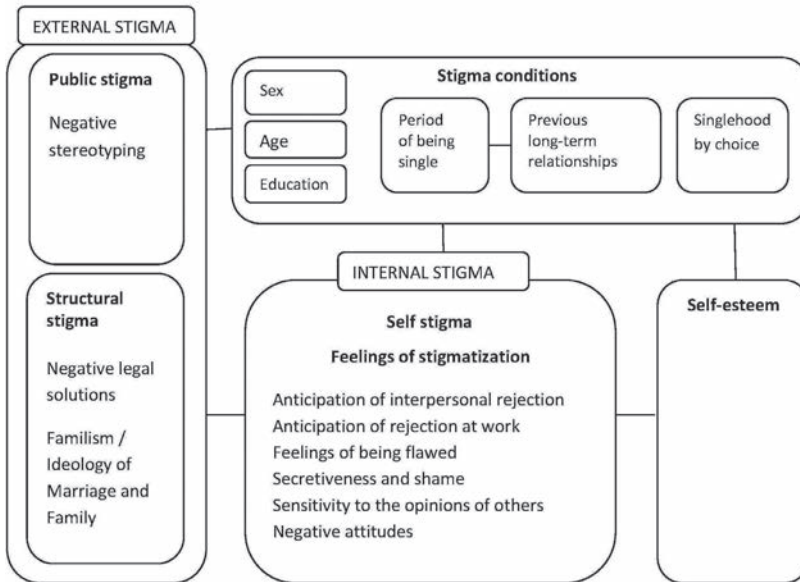
reactions. On the other hand, stigma is associated with secretiveness. People who are not confronted with direct reaction towards stigma may thus experience a decreased negative reaction of the surrounding environment. However, a stigma which remains concealed does not offer an opportunity to become familiar with the situation. As a consequence, paradoxically, people who may have not revealed their stigma, may cope less efficiently with negative social reception due to their lack of social training. It may also create a barrier in the process of internal acceptance of the stigmatized feature. In addition, concealing the stigmatizing factor, and as a consequence its influence, may decrease possible social support, thus limit the opportunity of utilising resources as regards coping with the self (Stutterheim, et al., 2009).

Materials and Methods

Research Model

The comparative model encompasses the division of stigmatization presented in the theoretical section (Pryor & Reeder, 2011), excluding stigma by association. Division into external stigma encompassing public stigma and structural stigma, and internal stigma was introduced. The internal stigma is understood as self-stigma and is operationalized as feelings of stigma comprising of 6 criteria: Anticipation of interpersonal rejection, Anticipation of rejection at work, Feelings of being flawed, Secretiveness and shame, Sensitivity to the opinions of others and Negative attitudes. It was agreed that External stigma is associated with Internal stigma and the following stigma conditions: sex, education, age, period of being single, previous long-term relationships and singlehood by choice. Place of residence became an additional condition. The study searched for the relationship between feelings of stigmatization and global self-esteem. The hypothesis that stigma conditions significantly differentiate feelings of stigmatization and self-esteem and that a relationship between feelings of stigmatization and self-esteem exists, was set.

Figure 1. Research model



Methods

In order to conduct an analysis of the feeling of stigmatization of singles, an original tool called “The Feeling of Stigmatization of Singles Questionnaire” was developed. The development of the tool was started with the identification of stigmatization criteria. Studies by Iona H. Ginsburg and Bruce G. Link from Columbia University (1989) were referred to. The authors formed the basic dimensions of stigmatization: Anticipation of rejection, Feelings of being flawed, Sensitivity to the opinions of others, Secretiveness, Guilt and shame, and Positive attitudes, all on the basis of their study of people with a visible stigma (psoriasis). The tool’s Anticipation of rejection subscale was expanded with Rejection at work scale, and Secretiveness subscale was joint with Guilt and shame scale (Secretiveness and shame), due to the fact that it pertains to a concealed stigma and not visible stigma as in the case of the original dimension. Positive attitude dimension, which evaluates the conviction regarding the attitude of others and own attitude towards being single, is associated with the lower feeling of stigmatization in the original tool, thus it

is the low results in the scale which give evidence to the feeling of stigmatization. For the sake of clarity of the dimension the name Negative Attitudes was introduced. The final version of “The Feeling of Stigmatization of Singles Questionnaire” consists of the main scale: Feelings of stigmatization and six subscales: Interpersonal rejection, Rejection at Work, Secretiveness and shame, Being flawed, Sensitivity to the opinions of others and Negative Attitudes.

On the basis of the analysis of literature discussing public and structural stigmatization in the qualitative and quantitative approach, items referring to particular categories were defined. On the basis of the analysis, an attempt was made to find examples of stigmatization in singles’ daily life. Thirty five statements were created, which were then sent for evaluation to 8 competent individuals—psychologists working at universities. As a result of their evaluation, qualitative changes in 15 of the statements were introduced and one statement was excluded from the study. In the end, 34 statements remained. The current version remains an experimental one with the need for further research. Participants expressed their opinions regarding the 34 statements on the 5 point scale—denoted from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Six items in the scale received reversed scoring. The sum of all scores denotes the scale results and results of individual subscales. The feeling of stigmatization scale lies within 34 to 170 points, where 34 denotes lack of stigmatization and 170 extreme stigmatization.

Reliability analysis for the feeling of stigmatization scale with the use of Cronbach’s alpha indicated high reliability of the whole scale ($\alpha = .94$) and subscales: Secretiveness and shame ($\alpha = .83$), Interpersonal rejection ($\alpha = .80$), Being flawed ($\alpha = .87$) Sensitivity to the opinions of others ($\alpha = .85$) and Negative attitudes ($\alpha = .72$). When the level of reliability is concerned, the Cronbach’s alpha is considered sufficient for $\alpha = .70$ (Cronbach, 1951). Rejection at work subscale gained Cronbach’s $\alpha = .69$ (standardized $\alpha = .70$).

Table 1. Psychometric properties of feelings of stigmatization of singles scale and subscales

	α	$M(SD)$ ($N = 852$)	N of Items
Feelings of stigmatization	.94	2.65 (0.66)	34
Secretiveness & shame	.83	2.38 (0.79)	6
Interpersonal rejection	.80	2.53 (0.80)	6
Rejection at work	.69	2.24 (0.74)	5
Being flawed	.89	2.68 (0.86)	7
Sensitivity to the opinions of others	.85	2.73 (0.95)	4
Negative attitudes	.72	3.16 (0.68)	6

The feelings of stigmatization correlate on a very high level of significance ($p < .001$) with all the stigmatization categories: Interpersonal rejection, $r(852) = .83$; Rejection at work, $r(852) = .72$; Secretiveness and shame, $r(852) = .73$; Sensitivity to the opinions of others, $r(852) = .86$ and Negative attitudes, $r(852) = .71$.

The second psychometric tool consisted of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES) as adapted by Mariola Łaguna, Kinga Lachowicz-Tabaczek and Irena Dzwonkowska (2007). The SES evaluates global self-esteem defined as the attitude towards oneself. This reliable tool (Cronbach's alpha from .81 to .83) consists of 10 statements evaluated by the respondent on a 4 point scale. The sum of the answers constitutes the scale result which is standardized and normalized.

In addition, the study made use of an own questionnaire while evaluating socio-demographic data and reasons for being single.

Sample

The study was carried out electronically by means of Sympatia.Onet dating website. Research shows that in case of issues considered as private and intimate, such approach may prove more successful than direct contact on the

researcher – subject line (Kraut, Olson, Banaji, Bruckman, Cohen, Couper, 2004). Completing an online questionnaire may also boost motivation for providing honest answers, which in case of the study of stigmatization, whose key criterion is secretiveness, is fundamental (Bos, Olson, Gergle, Olson, & Wright, 2002).

The definition of who the term single really encompasses is the source of controversy (Ochnik, 2012). For the purpose of the present study it was agreed that singles will be represented by people of 30 years of age onwards, having no children and never married. It is therefore a group which does not meet social requirements as regards starting a family, having children and disregarding the social clock. Such features allow for the essence of being single to be revealed.

The study encompassed 1,013 respondents. From among the group, people who met the requirements of being single were selected. The criteria were as follows: 30 years of age and older, not having children, never married, not being in a steady relationship (longer than 6 months). Ultimately, 852 respondents were selected, including 464 women (54%) and 388 men (46%) aged 30–60 (age, $M = 36$ years). More than half of respondents (58%; $n = 493$) were between 30–35 years of age, then 213 people (25%) aged 36–40, 76 people (9%) aged 41–45, 39 people (5%) aged 46–50, 19 people (2%) aged 51–55 and the least numerous group of 12 people (1%) aged 56–60. Nearly half of respondents boasted a university degree (49%; $n = 422$), then 18% of respondents ($n = 151$) complimented their degree with postgraduate studies and 0.5% ($n = 4$) graduated from doctoral studies. Secondary education level was declared by 26% of respondents ($n = 217$), vocational education by 6% ($n = 48$) and primary education by 0.5% ($n = 6$). Majority of singles reside in large cities (44%, $n = 377$), then in medium-sized cities (21%; $n = 178$), towns (18%; $n = 152$) and in villages (17%; $n = 145$).

The number of previous long-term relationships was also scrutinized. Twenty-three percent of respondents ($n = 190$) have never been in a steady relationship (longer than 6 months), 30% ($n = 285$) have been in a steady relationship once, and the most numerous group (47%, $n = 404$) have been in more than 1 long-term relationship. Among the respondents, 37% ($n = 319$) have been single (outside a long-term relationship for longer than 6 months) for more than 5 years, then 23% ($n = 197$) have been single for 2–5 years, 16% ($n = 133$) for 1–2 years, 13% ($n = 111$) for 6–12 months and the least numerous group (11%; $n = 92$) is represented by people who have been single for less than 6 months.

On average, the level of self-esteem among single women equals 30.34 ($SD = 4.8$). In case of men, it amounts to 29.77 ($SD = 5.23$), which in both cases can be evaluated as an average score.

Among respondents, 19.7% ($n = 168$) stated that singlehood is their own choice. Among women such declaration was made by 19.8% ($n = 92$) and among men by 19.6% ($n = 76$).

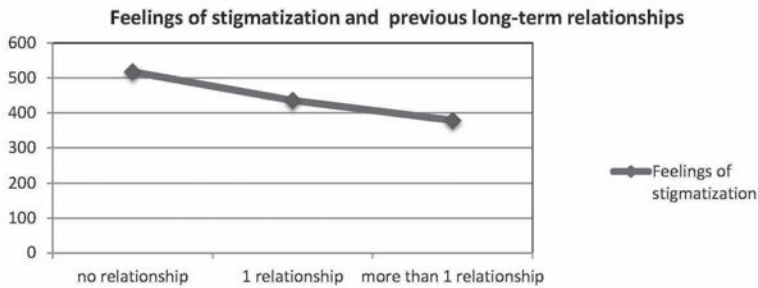
Results

The analysis of average answers indicated that all answers received scored more than 2 points on average. Questions in Being flawed and Negative attitudes subscales scored more than 3 points on average. As regards Being flawed, the following statements recurred: *Sometimes I feel less valuable because of the lack of a partner* and *It seems that people in a steady relationship are more fulfilled than I am*. As regards the Negative attitude (reversed scoring) the following recurred: *The fact that I am single has no influence over how others treat me*; *The majority of people are convinced that a single is as happy and fulfilled as a person in a relationship*; *The majority of people are convinced that being single is something natural* and *I believe that being single has positive reception*. The following statement received the highest average score (3.5): *I believe that being single has positive reception* (reversed scoring).

Statistical analysis indicated a significant relationship between independent variables: the period of being single and the number of previous long-term relationships. Spearman's *rho* correlation analysis indicated a double-sided high negative correlation of these variables, $r_s(852) = -.50, p < .001$. The greater the number of previous long-term relationships, the shorter the period of being single. Sex does not differentiate being single and the level of self-esteem. Kruskal-Wallis analysis revealed no significant differentiation of the period of being single and the number of previous long-term relationships as regards sex. In addition, the analysis did not reveal any significant differentiation of the feeling of stigmatization and the following subscales: interpersonal rejection, rejection at work, secretiveness and shame, being flawed and negative attitudes. On the other hand, the difference between women and men as regards sensitivity to the opinions of others, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 9.61, p = 0.002$, was statistically significant. Single women experience significantly greater feelings of stigmatization as regards sensitivity to the opinions of others than single men (see Table 2).

Kruskal-Wallis analysis indicated that the number of previous relationships significantly differentiates the feelings of stigmatization, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 41.93, p < .001$, and its subscales: interpersonal rejection, rejection at work, secretiveness and shame, being flawed, sensitivity to the opinions of others and negative attitudes (see Table 2). Differences between the presented dimensions are linear. As the number of partners increases the feeling of stigmatization decreases in all its aspects. The highest degree of stigmatization was experienced by people who have never been in a relationship. On the other hand, people who have been in at least one long-term relationship experience relatively the lowest degree of stigmatization.

Figure 2. Kruskal-Wallis differentiation analysis of the feelings of stigmatization of singles as regards the number of previous relationships.



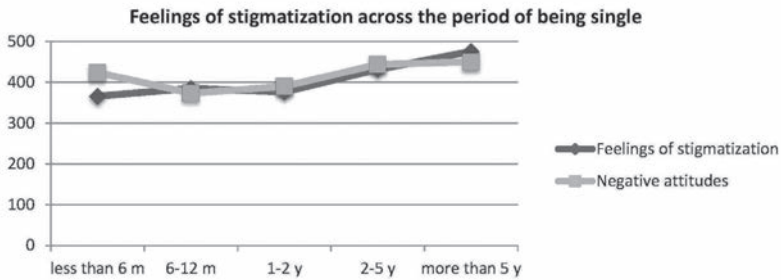
Moreover, self-esteem is also significantly differentiated by the number of long-term relationships, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 24.16, p < .001$. The greater the number of previous relationships, the higher the self-esteem among singles.

Kruskal-Wallis analysis reveals significant differences in terms of Feelings of stigmatization, Interpersonal rejection, Rejection at work, Secretiveness and shame, Being flawed, Sensitivity to the opinions of others, Negative attitude as regards the period of being single (see Table 2).

The feelings of stigmatization exhibit a growing trend over the period of being single. People who have been single for over 5 years feel stigmatized the most and those who have been single shorter than 6 months feel stigmatized the least. After two years of being single the feelings of stigmatization grow rapidly. A similar tendency can be observed in the remaining subscales. Only

in case of the negative attitude subscale do people who have been single shorter than 6 months experience a higher level of stigmatization as compared with those being single between 6 months and 2 years. After this period, the feelings of stigmatization as regards the attitude increase.

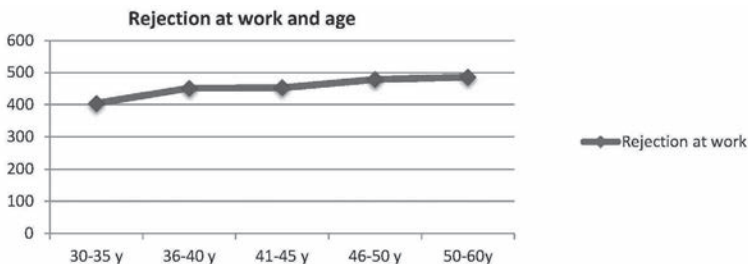
Figure 3. Kruskal-Wallis differentiation analysis of the feelings of stigmatization of singles as regards the period of being single



The analysis of self-esteem in relation to the period of being single indicates statistically significant differences, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 20.46, p < .001$. The longer the period, the lower the self-esteem.

Kruskal-Wallis analysis indicates no differentiation in terms of Feelings of stigmatization, Interpersonal rejection, Secretiveness and shame, Being flawed, Sensitivity to the opinions of others and Negative attitudes as regards age. However, age does significantly differentiate Rejection at work subscale, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 10.91, p = .028$.

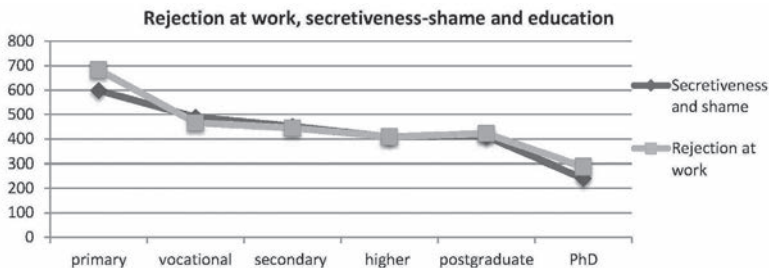
Figure 4. Kruskal-Wallis differentiation analysis of the anticipation of rejection at work as regards age



Singles aged 30–35 experience rejection at work the least. After this period, the Feelings of stigmatization gradually increases. Singles aged 50–60 experience rejection at work the most intensely. Kruskal-Wallis analysis indicated no differentiation in terms of Feelings of stigmatization and all subscales as regards the place of residence. The feeling of stigmatization and its components are independent of the place of residence (see Table 2).

Kruskal-Wallis differentiation analysis as regards the feeling of stigmatization and its subscales and the level of education was carried out. Results reveal that the differentiation in terms of Feelings of stigmatization, Interpersonal rejection, Being flawed, Sensitivity to the opinions of others, Negative attitude as regards education was statistically insignificant. However, rejection at work, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 12.43, p = .028$, and secretiveness and shame, $\chi^2 = 13.88, p = .016$, are significantly differentiated as regards education (see Table 2). In both scales, people with primary education experience stigmatization the most and people with university education and additional postgraduate studies the least. The relationship is linear. The higher the level of education, the lower the feeling of stigmatization at work and lower secretiveness and shame due to the fact of being single. The same relationship was revealed by the significance of differences analysis in terms of self-esteem as regards the level of education, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 29.35, p < .001$. The level of education significantly differentiates self-esteem. The higher the level of education, the higher the singles' self-esteem.

Figure 5. Kruskal-Wallis differentiation analysis of the feelings of stigmatization of singles in terms of rejection at work, secretiveness and shame as regards education



The significance of differences of the feeling of stigmatization and its categories as regards the choice of being single was analyzed statistically. The analysis revealed that Feelings of stigmatization, Interpersonal rejection, Rejection at work, Secretiveness and shame, Being flawed, Sensitivity to the opinions of others, Negative attitude are significantly differentiated as regards the choice of being single.

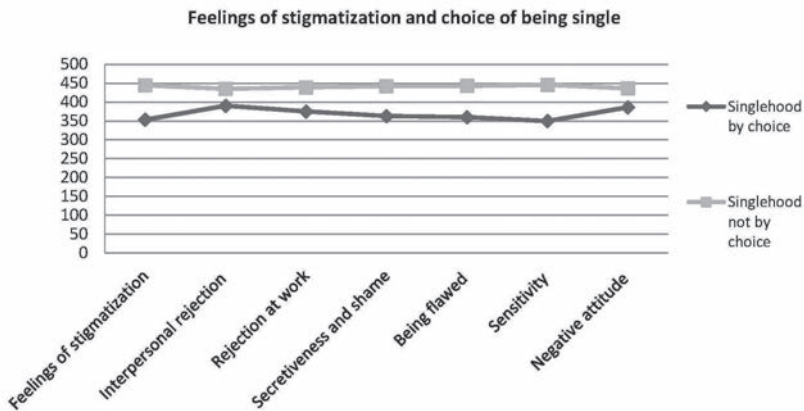
Table 2. Kruskal-Wallis significance of differences analysis of the feelings of stigmatization of singles and subscales as regards sex, previous long-term relationship, period of being single, age, place of residence, education and singlehood by choice

	Feelings of stigmatization	Interpersonal rejection	Rejection at work	Secretiveness & shame	Being flawed	Sensitivity to others' opinions	Negative attitudes
$\chi^2 (1, N = 852)$							
Sex	0.50	0.17	0.29	3.11	0.91	9.61**	3.4
Previous long-term relationship	41.93***	29.92***	13.11**	45.78***	36.91***	29.83***	9.34**
Period of being single	27.19***	30.30***	12.41*	17.73**	23.56***	24.57***	12.30**
Age	1.98	4.25	10.91*	2.79	1.29	4.14	3.16
Place of residence	2.40	1.81	1.05	3.79	1.98	1.95	1.17
Education	6.07	8.63	12.56*	13.88*	3.12	3.54	7.96
Singlehood by choice	18.58***	4.59*	9.26**	14.07***	15.39***	20.51***	5.71*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

People declaring that being single is their own decision have lower feeling of stigmatization along with all its categories than people who did not choose the lifestyle themselves. In addition, the analysis indicated a significant difference in self-esteem as regards the choice of being single, $\chi^2(1, N = 852) = 19.22, p < .001$. Those who declare singlehood was their own choice exhibit considerably higher self-esteem.

Figure 6. Kruskal-Wallis differentiation analysis of the feelings of stigmatization of singles as regards the choice of being single



Spearman's *rho* analysis of the relationship between self-esteem and the feelings of stigmatization and its categories indicated a significantly negative high correlation as regards Feelings of stigmatization and Being flawed and significantly negative average correlation in terms of Interpersonal rejection, Rejection at work, Secretiveness and shame, Sensitivity to the opinions of others and Negative attitudes on $p < .001$ significance level.

Table 3. Correlations (correlation coefficient Spearman's rho) between self-esteem and feelings of stigmatization of singles and subscales

	Self-esteem	Feelings of stigmatization	Interpersonal rejection	Rejection at work	Secretiveness & shame	Being flawed	Sensitivity to others' opinions	Negative attitude
	$r_s(852)$							
Self-esteem	1							
Feelings of stigmatization	-.54	1						
Interpersonal rejection	-.48	.83	1					
Rejection at work	-.37	.72	.61	1				
Secretiveness & shame	-.41	.73	.56	.48	1			
Being flawed	-.51	.92	.71	.58	.62	1		
Sensitivity to others' opinions	-.45	.86	.65	.56	.56	.79	1	
Negative attitudes	-.31	.71	.50	.42	.38	.65	.62	1

$p < .001$, two-tailed

Discussion

The qualitative analysis of the results indicates that Negative attitudes dimension, which evaluates the conviction of the negative attitude of others towards singles, is the most sensitive. As a consequence, it may be stated that singles feel they are treated differently and the fact of them being single influences their

perception and treatment. Therefore, singles feel their lifestyle is not received in a positive way. All questions scored more than 2 points which denotes that the study partly confirms the above claims and that they find reflection in reality. While interpreting the results, the particular character of the social stigma and buffer resistance supplied in order to maintain self-esteem ought to be taken into account. Reflections upon completing the questionnaire entailed negative undertones (*"I feel sad"*, *"It is not so bad"*, *"Maybe I will succeed someday"*, *"I have just become aware of stigmatization"*) which seems to confirm the fact that the object is often unaware of the stigma (Morris, et al., 2008). Becoming fully aware of the fact of belonging to a stigmatized group is a dynamic and difficult process. Consequently, it may evoke reluctance to confront the situation and lower results. The phenomenon may find its reflection in a higher number of answers given as regards statements containing positive undertones. However, two statements with relatively high scores pertained to being flawed dimension. The fact of singles focusing on this particular aspect of self-esteem seems immensely significant. Paradoxically, it reveals the most sensitive element of being single. Singles may subconsciously avoid them being classified as the stigmatized individual so as not to feel flawed. Therefore, it may be assumed that defence mechanisms regarding maintaining self-esteem will lead to lower scores as regards statements containing negative undertones. However, the process of stigmatization is quite delicate and in order to develop a reliable questionnaire, it was decided to include clear and decisive statements, which may have increased resistance to giving answers.

Single women feel stigmatized more than men as regards sensitivity to the opinions of others. The disparity may be explained by different socialization processes for women and men (Mandal, 2008). Apart from that, sex does not differentiate the feeling of stigmatization.

The number of previous relationships, which is associated with the level of self-esteem at the same time, turned out to be an important condition of stigma. The larger the number of previous relationships, the higher the self-esteem and lower the feeling of stigmatization in all dimensions. Therefore, more extensive experience in long-term relationships constitutes a condition which decreases the feeling of stigmatization. Despite the fact that respondents did not enter the traditional form of the long-term relationship i.e. marriage, they are still capable of entering and living in new long-term relationships. People who have never been in a relationship longer than 6 months feel stigmatized the most. It is the condition which lowers their self-esteem and perception of others (greater feeling of stigmatization).

The feeling of stigmatization is associated with the period of being single. The longer the period, the greater the feeling of stigmatization. Only in case of negative attitude, people who have just become single experience a stronger conviction about negative social perception of singles than people who have been single for up to 2 years. After 1,5 years the conviction decreases only to grow rapidly after the period of 2 years. The negative attitude towards being single in the initial period may be explained by adapting to the social role of the single and the feeling of uncertainty connected with it. Adaptation to the role leads to the negative conviction being decreased. The period of two years of being single is associated with the rapid growth of the feeling of stigmatization. This may be interpreted as a critical moment when the transition from perceiving the condition as temporary to permanent occurs. In accordance with contemporary studies, it may be said that adaptation to the temporary role of the single carries fewer negative experiences than adaptation to the permanent role (Stein, 1981; Hoorn, 1999; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). The period of being single is also connected with the level of self-esteem. People who have been single for longer than 5 years exhibit lower self-esteem than people who have been single for a shorter period of time.

Rejection at work dimension is dependent on age. Singles between 30 and 35 years old feel significantly less stigmatized at work than older age groups. The feeling of interpersonal rejection at work and the feeling of unfair treatment due to the interpersonal status increase after 35 years of age. The professional domain is a peculiar reflection of socio-cultural norms. Despite the fact that age is not connected with the feeling of stigmatization in personal life among people older than 30, in professional domain the difference is significant and may clearly indicate the moment of passing the requirements of the socio-cultural clock. In personal life, an individual may select their company, thus developing a support group, whereas at work this is troublesome. At the same time however, the fact that such operation may influence ageism, which can be observed in the literature of the issue and work pathology, is noteworthy. Rejection at work is also connected with the level of education. The lower the education, the higher the level of stigmatization. Singles with low level of education are more secretive and more ashamed of being single as compared to people with university education. The relationship can be additionally explained by the relationship between self-esteem and education. People with primary education exhibit the lowest self-esteem, which may indirectly influence their interpersonal functioning and the level of stigmatization experienced.

Despite expectations, the place of residence is not associated with the feeling of stigmatization. One may have expected that large cities will allow for a greater acceptance of the alternative lifestyle, thus lower the feeling of stigmatization, than towns or rural areas. However, the study indicated no differences in the feeling of stigmatization among urban singles and those residing in rural areas. This means that there exists a clearly defined system of social expectations in Poland. The system manifests itself in public stigmatization of singles. Therefore, the prevalent system of social norms can be characterized as a traditional one.

The choice of life as a single is a condition which significantly differentiates the level of stigmatization. The issue of choice and constraint of being single is discussed in literature (Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds & Wetherall, 2008). In accordance with expectations, the study revealed that people who choose being single feel less stigmatized than those for whom singlehood is not a matter of choice. The choice of being single is positively associated with global self-esteem. Singles who declared that the choice of the lifestyle was their own exhibit a significantly higher level of self-esteem. Defining oneself as the one choosing singlehood allows for the defence of one's own identity and increases the feeling of control, which in turn may improve self-esteem and lower the feeling of stigmatization.

The feeling of stigmatization among the never-married singles is associated with self-esteem. The more stigmatized they feel, the lower their self-esteem and the lower the self-esteem the stronger the feeling of stigmatization.

To sum up, it can be said that adult never-married singles feel stigmatized. The study does not allow for the intensity of the feeling of stigmatization to be defined. However, it can be emphasized that singles experience all the evaluated dimensions of stigmatization. External stigma, which may be defined as the traditional socio-cultural context manifested in the negative stereotyping and legitimization of Marriage and Family Ideology, contributes to the above. Among the studied singles, those who have had one or none previous long-term relationships, have been single for more than 2 years, have primary education, do not perceive their singlehood as their own choice and exhibit lower self-esteem, are exposed to the feeling of stigmatization the most.

The phenomenon of singlehood requires further research. The issue is vital as it pertains to social inequality, which is also reflected in the professional sphere of life. Therefore, further evaluation of the feeling of stigmatization in single people is required.

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CHAPTER 8

Leisure Activities of LGBT Singles: Tourist Behavior in the Context of Individual Attributes

Introduction

An expanding sphere of human activity, which can be described as free time constitutes a characteristic feature of global reality. The number of hours and days devoted to activities beyond mandatory ones is growing; thereby, the mass demand for leisure as well as forms and methods of its rational management is also on the increase. Nowadays, free time has become an important element of sport/recreational and tourist activity of every individual, including the singles. It is the result of a growing awareness of recreation outside the place of permanent residence, but also the desire to maintain good health, which in case of people living alone is of the most significant value (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2011).

People living alone enjoy the privilege to decide on their own how to spend free time. One of the elements of modern life is quality leisure time; individually tailored to the needs and expectations of a lonely person (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011). According to J. R. Kelly, leisure requires freedom and independence, because family life entails a number of commitments that restrict this freedom (Kelly, 2001, p.44).

Singles – who are they?

It should be clarified that in this article the author uses interchangeably the terms “person living alone”, “single”, or “lonely individual”. In the light of the teachings of praxeological sciences, which include, among others, the science of physical culture, it may be assumed that a lonely person (commonly called single) is a person who has never been married, or due to the death of a partner or dissolution of marriage or divorce – no longer remains married, or in any other relationship (e.g. hetero- or homosexual civil partnership, cohabiting) (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2013b).

The term “single”, although it is not a recognised definition, has found a permanent place in our native language, carrying positive connotations which successfully replaced the stereotypical, negative associations centered around spinsterhood and bachelorhood. Today, being a single woman is increasingly socially acceptable (Maeda & Hecht, 2012), while still being a spinster bears pejorative associations. Nowadays, a lonely individual (displacing negative connotations for the adjective “lonely”), is understood as an individual living alone, managing his/her own financial resources (own/one-person/independent) household (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2009, 2011, 2013b). Staying alone equals free disposal of your life energy and managing leisure time to one’s liking. The ability to stay in solitude is thus linked to the discovery of self and self-realization, with constantly increasing awareness of one’s own deepest needs, feelings and impulses (Storr, 2010, p.46).

In the light of numerous previous considerations of representatives of many different sciences with regards to singlism – a person living alone/single or a lonely individual can be male or female in various age groups, having mostly higher or secondary educational status and representing freelance professions; they are people in various civil status situations, running (own/one-person) urban, urban-rural or rural household (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011, 2013b). Their solitary lifestyle may be a consequence of their own choice¹, or be the result of random events. At the same time, this loneliness can be permanent or temporary, which is closely associated with an individuals coexistence with regard to various conditions, especially biological (including psychological), socio-cultural and economic factors (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2013b).

¹ Among women single by choice there is the desire to get married and have children (Dales, 2014).

One may come across a view that there is a significant difference between a lonely person and a single. Since singlism is considered a kind of lifestyle, it should in no way be associated with loneliness. These individuals, despite the fact that they stay alone should not feel lonely when they have a group of friends, acquaintances. An additional assumption that determines whether someone can be considered as a single or lonely individual, are his/her demographic, socio-cultural and economic characteristics. Disregarding the existing findings of foreign pioneers of research into the problems in question (Stein, 1976, 1981; DePaulo & Morris, 2005), a number of Polish sociologists narrowed the term “single” to denote people aged 25–40 (up to 50–55 years of age), mostly highly educated inhabitants of urban agglomerations who receive high incomes. Today, the topic is giving rise to controversy and still – in the opinion of the author – requires open discussion to develop a clear consensus reflecting reality.

Due to the present, consumer nature of the society, one might risk putting forward a thesis that single people constitute a heterogenous, conscious (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2011) segment of purchasers who, in terms of various factors perform their own, often individualized (sublime) consumer process. In other words, due to loneliness, mass consumer market has emerged. It caters for all the needs of this category of people paying particular attention (beyond the existential needs) to the nature of single people participation in undertaking sport/recreational and tourist activity in their spare time (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2011; Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2013b; Biernat & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2012, 2013; Lubowiecki-Vikuk & Sarnowski 2013).

Among the increasing number of people living alone, there are also people from the LGBT community (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011; Makuchowska & Pawłęga, 2012, p.67; *Being Trans in the...*, 2014). So far, no research aimed at analysing this group's leisure activity manifested in the form of tourist has been carried out. Thus, the objective of this work is to explore the tourist behavior of LGBT singles against the background of people with heterosexual bias who live alone (e.g. Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011).

Physical Activity vs. Health of Singles

Physical activity, promoted and supported through active participation in its various forms, such as in sports and active tourism, should be one of the manifestations of singles care about their own health and body, and

simultaneously the criteria of physical education. Promoting physical activity in a lonely lifestyle is a prerequisite. Many researchers have proved that a lower health status is characteristic of people leading solitary lives. Heart diseases, hypertension, cancer, pneumonia, weaker eyesight, bad mood, depression, insomnia, premature death (suicide), different levels of physical activity are more frequent among them; they are addicted to smoking and alcohol consumption, follow inappropriate diet and in case of aging singles growing social isolation, arthritis and Alzheimer's disease are commonplace. (Koskenvuo et. al., 1981; Lipowicz, 2001, Eng et. al., 2005, Lee et. al., 2005; Kharicha et. al., 2007, Mor et al., 2013). Single parenthood is also associated with detrimental consequences for health which lower the levels of physical activity (Dlugonski & Motl, 2013).

Despite the fact that both women and men living alone – more often than those who are married – have slim bodies (Lipowicz et al., 2002) the overall biological condition of bachelors indicates that they are far less physically and mentally fit than their married counterparts (Lipowicz, 2001). At the same time, non-heterosexual single male individuals require social support from family and group of friends, which is generally expected to improve the state of their well-being (Hostetler, 2012). The category of aging LGBT people more frequently notices the harmful effects of solitary lifestyle. First and foremost, it is the feeling of stress resulting from overall partner relations, and social bonds, health and self-esteem (Kuyper & Fokkema, 2010). As for health of this category of people, A. V. Wagenen, J. Driskell and J. Bradford (2013) reached different conclusions, stating that they demonstrate remarkable resilience in coping with the problems in the field of physical and mental health. The more so because it has been proved that being alone is not associated with the threat of physical activity among older people (Lim et. al., 2005). It is certainly encouraging for the future. However, public awareness campaigns to combat homophobia and enhancing the effectiveness of social and health policies in favour of LGBT (including singles) should improve the complex, and at the same time worrying situation.

Method

Participants and Procedure

To explore the examined phenomenon the method of induction alongside CAWI method (Computer Assisted Web Interview) were used. On the basis of

own research and review of the literature on the researched issues, an attempt has been made to formulate general conclusions on the (expected) behavior and tourist preferences of LGBT singles in Poland. Behaviors of this type are mostly performed in free time.

When choosing a CAWI method the author to a large extent wished to maintain intimate space of the researched environment. Due to the fact that non-heterosexual people are hard-to-reach research group, characteristics of post-modern society and globalisation – where the Internet plays an increasingly larger role in everyday life, while becoming a tool of modern, interdisciplinary research (Zajac & Batorski, 2009) were taken into account. Apart from that, more comfortable conditions, such as convenient for the respondent's time have an impact on the participation in the research project. Furthermore, the capitalintensiveness of the implementation of this type of research does not pose any major limitation. CAWI method is not an ideal research method. In Poland, still 33.1% of households do not have the Internet access (Batorski, 2013). It has been assumed that the LGBT community – including singles, for which e-services are a part of their lifestyle (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2011) – has a significant share in Internet penetration. The author developed an electronic questionnaire and assigned an ad address of a website to it. In the form of an invitation to participate in a study the site was then launched on specially dedicated online forums, social networking and dating sites and official websites of selected organisations and associations acting for the benefit of the LGBT community.

Two hundred and seventy people representing all four LGBT groups, i.e. gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people took part in a survey. It is worth noting that this is the first such study in Poland, including all members of the LGBT community. The research group is not a representative sample – despite the lack of reliable sociodemographic LGBT data², the author has attempted to carry out this type of study, bearing in mind its limitations, but also the awareness that the undertaken initiative may inspire further research in this area, if only due to increasingly numerous studies and research relating to socio-cultural gender identity which is referred to as “gender”. This study is not conclusive, it took an explanatory direction.

² In Poland there are only rough estimates with regard to the number of gays and lesbians. It has been assumed that they account for approx. 5% of the society which equals around 5 million people, most of whom are men.

The study was conducted over a period of three months (January – March 2014), it finished with the end of the winter tourist season. The Internet survey included questions relating to the participation in tourism over the last year. The respondents were asked about trips (participation in at least one tourist trip in the analysed period), the directions of trips (domestic, European, non-European trips), their duration (1 day, 2–4 days, 5 or more days), purpose (leisure or recreation, visits to relatives and/or friends, business, shopping, travel, health) and the level of tourism expenditure (less than 1000³, 1001–2000, 2001–3000, 3001–4000, 4001–5000, over PLN 5000). For further analysis ($n = 162$) has been adopted to refer to only those respondents who described their current civil situation as a single.

Results

Among the study group, men constituted 87.7% and women 12.3%. Over half of them are people aged 20–29 years, and every fifth person was aged 18–19 years. Other respondents were 30–39 years old (19.1%), 40–49 (4.3%) and 50+ (2.5%). Respondents received the following levels of education: tertiary (35.8%), secondary (55.6%), vocational (4.3%) and primary (4.3%). Most respondents (37.7%) lived in cities with the population of over 500 thousand. Every fifth respondent was a dweller of a city inhabited by 101–500 thousand or 21–100 thousand people. 11.1% of respondents were from small towns (population up to 20 thousand) while every tenth person surveyed lived in rural areas. Respondents belonged to certain socio-professional groups: pupils/students (52.5%), white-collar workers/blue-collar workers (37.7%), occasional workers (12.3%), the self-employed ones (4.9%), the unemployed (2.5%) and retirees/pensioners (1.2%). In terms of monthly net income, the surveyed people were classified into the following categories: ≤ PLN 2,500 (56.2%), PLN 2,501–3,500 (11.7%), > PLN 3,500 (16.1%) and lack of income (16.0%). Respondents sexual orientation was a key component of the research. Thus, among the subjects 81.5% were gay, 17.3% bisexual and 1.2% of transgender people.

Drawing from own research, a conclusion was reached that the rate of tourist activity among LGBT singles amounted to 82.7% – a significant percentage of respondents took part in at least one voluntary tourist trip over the last year in relation to the total number of subjects. The majority

³ PLN 1,000 ≈ \$248

of respondents (68.5%) undertook domestic tourism activities. They covered weekend trips (2–4 days) – 51.8%, and/or long trips (5 days or more) – 40.4%. Nearly 8% of respondents took day trips outside the place of permanent residence. 44.4% of respondents picked a European country during the analysed period. Most trips lasted five days or more (78.6%), and every fifth respondent participated in the so-called short trips lasting from 2 to 4 days. 2.9% of respondents were attracted by one-day tourist trips. 12.3% of the subjects set out on non-European journeys. They were long trips (90.9%), and less frequently, short-term (9.1%) ones.

More than half of respondents were accompanied by friends and/or acquaintances to on their tourist trips, while 14.8% went with families. This emphasises the importance of interpersonal relations for this community. Nevertheless, every third respondent went on a trip alone.

Respondents expenses related to the purchase of certain products and services (basic services [accommodation, food and transport], together with sports, recreational and semi-tourist services) were at a different level and depended on the income level ($p < .001$). Over half of the respondents has allocated an amount of less than PLN 2,000 (including 30.7% of respondents who have spent less than PLN 1,000) for that purpose. Every fifth respondent has spent PLN 2,001–4,000, and every third above PLN 4,000 (including 20.4% of subjects who have spent more than PLN 5,000). Respondents monthly net incomes had a significant impact on trips to European ($p < .001$) and non-European countries ($p < .001$).

The level of tourist expenditure is influenced by, among others, preferred standard of hotel services, means of transport the trip organisation. Respondents during their tourist trips were service users in a variety of accommodation facilities, such as:

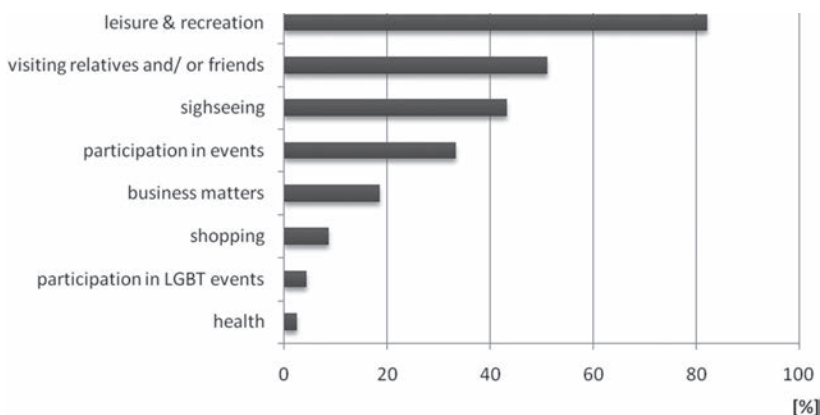
- hotel (52.5%),
- relatives and/or friend's apartment (48.1%),
- B&B/Inn (22.2%),
- hostel/shelter youth (11.7%),
- agri-tourism farm (10.5%),
- campsite/campground (5.6%),
- rented flat/house/apartment (5.6%),
- hostel (1.9%).

During the analysed period LGBT singles have chosen (own) car (47.5%) – which is the most commonly used means of road transport. In addition, coach/bus (45.1%), rail (38.3%) and air transport (31.5%) have been used. The

survey data indicates that the researched group of respondents appreciates the advantages of road transport (inexpensive, comfortable).

Just like the majority of the society nowadays, surveyed LGBT singles organised their trip/trips independently (88.3%). The services of professional organisers and travel agents have been used by 11.7% of respondents.

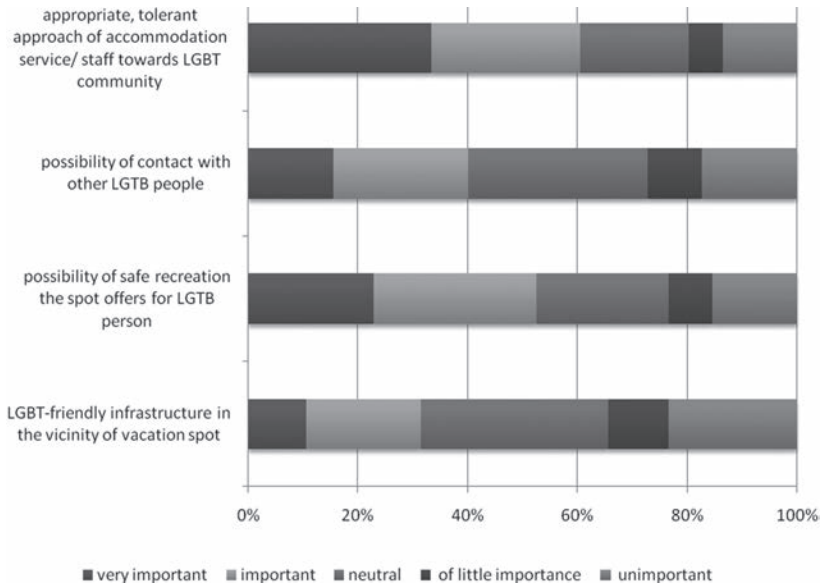
Figure 1. Purposes of respondents tourist trips



Source: own study based on research $n = 162$

A significant number of LGBT respondents (82.1%) travelled in the last year in order to rest and undertake active leisure activities – Figure 1. Additionally, their tourist trips were combined with the desire to visit relatives and/or friends (51.2%), explore the values and attractions of various tourist destinations (43.2%) and participate in cultural and entertainment events (33.3%). Apart from business matters (18.5%) and shopping (8.6%) respondents have travelled over this period in order to participate in the events dedicated to LGBT (4.3%). It is worth noting that this is (alongside health) a sporadic purpose of their trips. By far, the least frequent purpose of LGBT singles was health related (2.5%); primarily these were the trips for medical purposes, followed by spa and wellness centre and sanatoriums trips.

Figure 2. Level of significance of the factors affecting the choice of holiday destinations among the respondents



Source: own study based on research $n = 162$

Various factors affect the purposes and consequently the choice of tourist trips destinations among the surveyed respondents (Figure 2). According to the subjects, an appropriate, tolerant approach of accommodation service/ staff towards people from the LGBT community is among the most crucial aspects (very important and important 60.5%). Over half of the respondents, with a predominance of males ($p < .001$), expressed a need to take safe rest implement in a given location without having to hide their LGBT identity.

The existence of infrastructure reputed to be LGBT-friendly (bars, restaurants/hotel, discos, saunas, etc.) in the vicinity of the holiday spot turned out to be of little or no significance (11.0% and 23.5% respectively), and slightly more importance was attached to the possibility of contact with other people from the LGBT community (9.9% and 17.3% respectively). On average, nearly one third of the respondents showed a neutral attitude to the analysed factors.

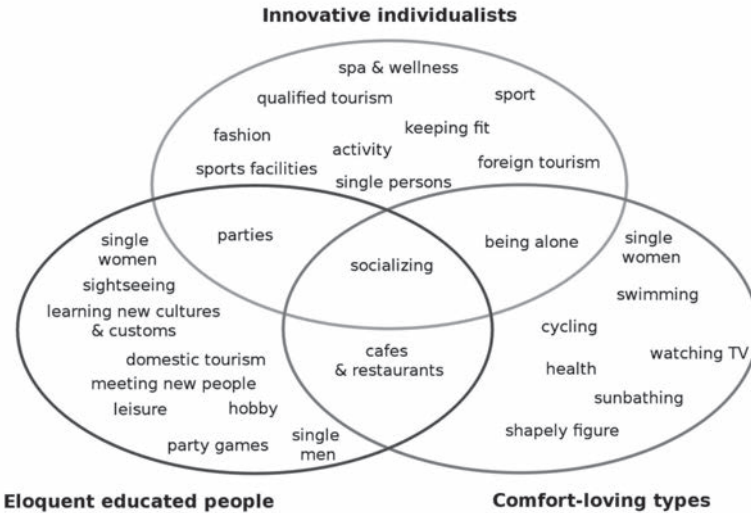
Discussion

The participation of LGBT singles in tourism is significant (82.7% of all respondents), although the rate of this activity against the background of travelling of seniors 50+ (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2012), and people living alone in big cities (Biernat & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2012) is lower by about 12% on average. It may be related to lower incomes of the group despite the fact that the LGBT segment is considered to be quite attractive on the tourist services market (Borzyszkowski, 2012).

Tourist trips generally foster the development of stronger social bonds, constitute suitable time to nurture friendships and family relationships. Studies have shown that non-heterosexual singles, just like others (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011) most frequently travel in the company of friends, acquaintances and family members. Interestingly, when undertaking tourist activities, female singles spend their free time in the company of friends more often than male singles (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2012). It may be due to the fact that they do not demonstrate preference to have their meals in solitude during holidays (Heimtun, 2010). There is no doubt that interpersonal contacts, including social gatherings are of vital importance for people living alone, both in everyday life (Such-Pyrgiel, 2014), especially at weekends (Whillans, 2014) and during a temporary stay outside their place of permanent residence for tourism purposes (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2013). However, every third LGBT single has travelled alone. There is reasoned concern that single gays in the absence of a companion may not want to take up tourist activity, hence the H. L. Hughes & R. Deutsch (2010) propose the activation of these people. In their opinion, a life of a non-heterosexual single is more likely than in case of heterosexual individuals. The tourist sector can try to encourage these people to decide on tourist trips whose purpose will be social meetings and/or sexual activity (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010). The latter travel motif raises a legitimate objection, because according to own research, no LGBT single pointed out to a tourist activity aimed at this type of tourism. LGBT people would rather expect offers based on active leisure opportunities, and participation in cultural events and entertainment, including cultural tourism (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło 2011; Niemczyk, 2012). Respondents expressed a need to take safe rest implement in a given location without having to hide their LGBT identity. Thus, they could be offered a product based on the typical free time behaviours of singles and appealing to three patterns: innovative intellectualists, eloquent educated people and comfort loving

types (Figure 3). Polish LGBT singles, as well as singles 50+ can present mixed types of behaviours in leisure time (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2013, 2014).

Figure 3. The typology of singles with respect to their attitudes and approach towards sport for all and tourism



Source: (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2013a).

However, it should be noted that only one in ten respondents bought a travel package from a travel agency. This fact should be taken into account while creating a range of services for non-heterosexual singles, and appropriate marketing activities – based on silver marketing & cocooning (Duliniec & Sznajder, 2010, p.55) and e-services and e-tourism (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2011) – should be undertaken by sole travel services wholesalers, i.e. representatives of the hospitality sector (hotels, guest houses/dormitories), catering and transport (especially road and rail transport)⁴. Currently, single

⁴ One example is airlines (American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, LOT, EasyJet, SAS), also European cities branding (Prague, Berlin, Vienna, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Zurich, Madrid, also

people, as active consumers, are not searching for ready travel packages, which has been confirmed, *inter alia*, in their opinion regarding no need for the presence of LGBT-friendly infrastructure in the vicinity of the holiday spot, or the fact of the lack of offers due to a poor products range and unattractive prices (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011). Singles engage in the process of product generation (travel service) as its co-creators, while becoming prosumers (Toffler, 2001). Conscious way of satisfying personalised tourism and sports desires is an important characteristic of people living alone (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011), including the LGBT community. Singles search for offer via the Internet, book accommodation, purchase transport tickets. It is a general trend emerging on today's services market (Lubowiecki-Vikuk & Paczyńska-Jędrycka, 2010).

One can not fail to agree with the thesis that singles – including non-heterosexual people and older – are a group: (1) oriented towards the sense of insecurity and inequality, (2) for which customised programmes are created, and (3) the inefficiency of policy towards this social environment (Portacolone, 2013; Binnie, 2014).

An increasing fraction of single people 50+ (also younger singles), unfortunately translates into an increase in the number of poor populations, forced to efficient management of their finances (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kreśło, 2011; Portacolone, 2013). Thus, the level of tourist expenditure of the analysed subjects is quite varied [for the record, every fifth respondent has allocated PLN 5,000 for tourist purposes, and a third less than PLN 1,000]. This is reflected in the choice of the tourist destinations, means of transport and the place of temporary stay.

The vast majority of LGBT singles have chose a short-term stay in the country. It seems that weekend trips are among popular forms of their activity, just like in case of all Poles and Europeans (Rosa, 2012). On the contrary, urban singles prefer long trips (Biernat & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2013). It seems that the diversity of tourist expenditure is related to the ways of spending leisure time in the visited places. Although LGBT singles mostly choose big cities, including Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań, Wrocław and the Tri-City – the level and accessibility of all of their attractions, including tourist ones, is so diverse that the expenditure there can actually be impulsive. Moreover, the choice of means of transport: car, bus, train allows to make savings in favour of good accommodation, which is a hotel, or a more intimate guest house. Meanwhile, those

Cracow) and hotel and catering industry: Kimpton Boutique Hotels & Restaurants, Sofitel and Sheraton hotel chains.

who went to visit relatives and/or friends and were accommodated by them, could save or spend higher amounts of money on leisure and entertainment.

One worrying fact is that a low percentage of respondents participate in health tourism. As mentioned in the introductory part of the study, the biological condition of people living alone is not satisfactory. It seems that the promotion of physical activity among this category of people is not only necessary, but also poses a challenge for many entities, including the highest public health sectors. The participation of singles in active forms of recreation (sport for all and active tourism) will allow them to cope with the negative effects of being “single”, thus affecting their life experience and level of satisfaction with their lifestyles (Kousha & Mohseni, 1997; Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011). Sport for all and tourism as a form of spending leisure time can prevent not only the poor physical condition of singles by resting in the bosom of nature or interpersonal contacts, but also help to improve their physical fitness and stress resistance (Lubowiecki-Vikuk & Basińska, 2008; Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011, 2013b).

The share of broad social category which is single people (elderly, LGBT, people with disabilities) in health tourism will allow to preserve (get) better health, and/or aesthetic appearance of the body, combined with relaxation, physical and mental regeneration, sightseeing and entertainment (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2010). In many cases, it will allow to eradicate various addictions: smoking, abuse of alcoholic beverages, workaholism (Lubowiecki-Vikuk & Paczyńska-Jędrycka, 2010), which is associated with the need to conduct health education classes.

In addition, a test of strength for social policy in many countries should be not only to minimise social inequality, and discrimination against singles (DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Binnie, 2014), for example, by increasing community involvement in order to decrease the negative aspects of senile loneliness (Luo & Waite, 2014), but also an attempt to create appropriate residential and organisational conditions for LGBT (Kusek, 2014). It is worth noting that this is not about creating the so-called ghettos intended for LGBT, including singles, but drawing attention to the acceptance of the needs and behaviors of the analysed social environment.

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AUTHORS' NOTES

KATARZYNA ADAMCZYK, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development Psychology and Family Studies at the Institute of Psychology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. Her Ph.D. thesis focused on psychological factors associated with singlehood in young adulthood. She has published several papers in the field of singlehood, including the book *Selected psychological circumstances of singlehood in young adulthood*, and articles, such as *Perceived social support and mental health among single vs. partnered Polish young adults* (with Chris Segrin), and *Why does not Polish psychology like the term 'single'?*. Her current primary areas of interest include subjective well-being, and mental and physical health of single young adults. She is currently carrying out a research project financed by the Polish National Science Centre which concerns attitudes towards marriage, love and sex among single and partnered young adults. Katarzyna Adamczyk is also the author of the Polish adaptation of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988), published in 2013 in *International Review of Social Psychology*.

JULITA CZERNECKA, Adiunct in Department of Sociology of Gender and Social Movements, Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz, Poland. The topics of publications and papers presented at conferences: reasons and social and cultural circumstances of being singles, life style of single people, discrimination women in the labour market, mothers in the labour market, diversity management, age management. She was a lecturer at the only seminar devoted to singles in Poland, held by the Polish Academy of Sciences and Collegium Civitas. She is an expert on singles and their lifestyle in the Polish media. She is a consultant of the biggest Polish online dating service – Sympatia.pl.

ADRIAN P. LUBOWIECKI-VIKUK, a PhD holder in physical culture, an assistant professor at the Faculty of Physical Education, Health and Tourism, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. His scientific interests include the search for factors affecting taking up sports/recreational and tourist activity by different social groups (e.g. children, school pupils, academic youth and people living alone, including persons 50+); contemporary sport and tourism trends; medical tourism. He is an author and co-author of thematic publications, and for the monograph titled "Determinants of recreational and tourism activity among single men and women from the Greater Poland Province" received J. Śniadecki Medal. He is a member of the Toruń Scientific Society, and Polish Society of Sport Social Sciences and was an expert on medical tourism in the Polish Association of Medical Tourism.

EUGENIA MANDAL is Professor of psychology, the head of the Department of Social and Environmental Psychology at the University of Silesia in Katowice in Poland. She is interested in psychology of gender differences, gender stereotypes, femininity and masculinity, body-image, attractiveness, close relationships, and she is also interested in social psychology such issues like power, social influence, and manipulation. She is an author of numerous researches and books such as: *Podmiotowe i interpersonalne konsekwencje stereotypów związanych z płcią* [Subjective and interpersonal consequences of the stereotypes related to gender] (2000; second revised edition, 2004), *Kobiecość i męskość. Popularne opinie a badania naukowe* [Femininity and masculinity. Popular opinions and scientific researches] (2003), *Miłość, władza i manipulacja w bliskich związkach* [Love, power, and manipulation in close relationships] (2008), collective works such as *W kręgu gender* [In gender circle] (2007) and over 150 scientific articles. She took part in creating many assessments related to psychological situation of women and men in Poland such as two reports for the World Bank: Gender and Economic Opportunities in Poland. Has Transition left Women Behind? Document of the World Bank (2004) and Growth, Employment and Living Standards in Pre-accession Poland. Document of the World Bank (2004). She is a member of many learned societies such as: Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne [Polish Psychology Society], Polskie Stowarzyszenie Psychologii Społecznej [Polish Social Psychology Association], Międzynarodowego Forum Kobiet [International Forum for Women], European Association of Social Psychology and European Network on Conflict, Gender, and Violence.

WENDY MORRIS earned her Ph. D. in Social Psychology from the University of Virginia in 2005. She is currently an Associate Professor and the Associate Dean of Faculty Development at McDaniel College in Maryland, U.S.A. Her two main areas of research include stereotyping and discrimination against single adults as well as lie detection and lying within friendships. In collaboration with doctors in the medical field, she has also studied patients' emotional reactions to stigmatizing health conditions. Wendy has received grants to support her research from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) and Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Some examples of her research contributions on the topic of singles include the following publications: (1) DePaulo, B. M., & Morris, W. L. (2005). Singles in society and in science. *Psychological Inquiry*, 16, 57–83, (2) DePaulo, B. M., & Morris, W. L. (2006). The unrecognized stereotyping and discrimination against singles. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15, 251–254, (3) Morris, W. L., Sinclair, S., & DePaulo, B. M. (2007). No shelter for singles: The perceived legitimacy of civil status discrimination. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 10, 457–470, (4) Morris, W. L., DePaulo, B. M., Hertel, J., & Taylor, L. C. (2008). Singlism – Another problem that has no name: Prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination against singles. In T. G. Morrison & M. A. Morrison (Eds.), *The Psychology of Modern Prejudice* (pp. 165–194). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

DOMINIKA OCHNIK is a psychologist, trainer and academic teacher in Psychology Department, Katowice School of Economics in Poland. She is preparing her dissertation under the guidance of prof. Eugenia Mandal in the subject of *'Living alone – psychosocial consequences of being single in men and women'* at University of Silesia. She completed postgraduate studies on Psychological Assistance in the Field of Sexology, with a project of training sessions referring to Women's Sexuality at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She has published a paper in the field of singlehood in *Psychological Studies: The conceptual and definition problems of the "single" notion in social science*. She is interested in psychological aspects of entrepreneurship as well. She is an author of chapters in three books on entrepreneurship such as: *Informacje medialne o kryzysie gospodarczym a postawa przedsiębiorcza* [Media information about economic crisis and entrepreneurial attitude] in Z. Ratajczak (ed.) *Przedsiębiorczość na czas kryzysu* [Entrepreneurship in times of crisis. Psychological sketches].

BRITTANY OSBURN received a B.A. in Psychology and Social Work from McDaniel College in 2011 where she earned the college-wide Award for Excellence in Scholarly Research, a Student Research and Creativity Grant, and a grant from Psi Chi. Brittany earned a Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work from the University of Maryland in 2012 and she is currently a practicing social worker at Carroll Hospital in Westminster, Maryland.

EMILIA PAPRZYCKA, an adjunct in Department of Sociology at Faculty of Social Sciences in Warsaw University of Life Sciences. Her range of scientific interests includes changes in habitual behaviour within contemporary societies; socio-cultural gender; alternative forms of family lives – single people; methodology of research; strategies of analysing and representing qualitative data; urban social space. She participated in the following research projects: Gender in course books (2013–2014), Socio-cultural gender of Polish people (2011), Single people and others living on their own (2011). Her individual research projects include: Single people – male perspective (2011); Femininity and its forming in women not following traditional life scenario. Biographical research on single women (2003–2007). She has also written a book entitled 'Kobiety żyjące w pojedynkę – między wyborem a przymusem' [Single women. Between choice and coercion] (2008) and has published many articles on single people and changes in intimate relationships. She is also an editor of articles on sociology, methodology and gender studies in scientific journal called 'Discourse of Young Andragogues'.

MAŁGORZATA SUCH-PYRGIEL, PhD, a Polish sociologist. She is the author of many articles about singles phenomenon and modern society conditions, the participant of many conferences and seminars devoted to this topic. She is very interested especially in such matters as singles phenomenon in Poland compared to countries such as USA and China, Canada. She also keeps research in singles lifestyles, their life aims and expectations and also changing models of marriages and families, considering economical theories of generative human behaviours and demographic theories. Published articles belong to four sociological specialities: modern societies sociology, freetime and lifestyle sociology, demographic processes sociology, family sociology. Many of described research problems are discussed in many aspects: culture – social, legal, economical, political and psychological. From 2013 she is a Dean of the Faculty of Social Science in Alcide De Gasperi University of Eureregional Economy in Józefów. She also work in Institute of Sociology on Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

KRZYSZTOF TYMICKI, an Assistant Professor in the Department Statistics and Demography at the Warsaw School of Economics in Warsaw, Poland. His Ph.D. thesis focused on analysis of long term demographic changes in family formation process with use of historical data from parish register reconstitution. His publications include papers on demographic measurement of fertility, family formation process, social and demographic consequences of delayed parenthood and social characteristic of never marrying. His current primary areas of interest include biological consequences of delayed parenthood, differentials in reproductive patterns and norms related to social class and interaction between union formation and procreation. He is currently carrying out a research project financed by the Polish National Science Centre focused on long term changes in fertility patterns in Poland from micro and macro perspective.

ALDONA ŻUREK, professor at the Institute of Sociology of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. Main interests and subjects of study: the modernization of the family, the contemporary Polish family, relationships between generations in the family, social relationships, loneliness and solitude, lifestyles, Polish singles, singlehood. She is the author of the first monograph published in Poland, devoted to singles – Żurek, A. (2008). *Single. Living alone [Singles. Going it alone]*. Poznan: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.

