

Paths to Reaching Adulthood of Contemporary Polish Young Adults

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Achieving adulthood is an essential stage in life. Since the modern age, reaching adulthood has not lasted long, and biographies were predictable and stabilised social order. The transition from a modern to a post-modern society has changed the patterns of entering adulthood due to individualisation, demographic tendencies and changes in the labour market. The aim of the paper is the transition into adulthood of young Poles, with attention on their educational and work experiences. The analysis also deals with Polish public policies for achieving adulthood of young adults. The investigation frameworks are several theoretical perspectives, including concepts of the life course, the institutionalisation of the life course, reaching adulthood as a new stage of life. The study is based on the qualitative research conducted in the project “Public policies for completed adulthood. The case of Poland”, funded by the Polish National Science Centre, carried out between 2015 and 2020 at the University of Lodz. The results of the research shows that Polish people at the stage of entering adulthood faced obstacles that made it difficult for them to achieve independence. Four transition paths to adulthood were distinguished and described. They document the divers experiences of young Poles in the phase of life and that the process of achieving adulthood is influenced by various systemic factors and individual opportunities and choices.