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## INFLUENCE OF FAMILY BENEFITS ON WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY. THE CASES OF POLAND, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND FRANCE

**Abstract:** Women show greater and greater activity on the job market, they obtain better positions, salaries, etc. However, the statistics concerning their professional activity differ from those of men. We should take into consideration the fact that women are the ones who give birth to children and, in majority, take care of their upbringing, especially in the first years of child's life. Policies of particular states are different in terms of the amount and availability of family benefits, and that can be reflected in women's willingness to return to work.

**Keywords:** professional activity, family benefits, job market, women

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### INTRODUCTION

The job market has been very dynamic recently, and the changes that took place in this area in the last three decades indicate clearly a continuous growth of active participation of women in employment. The process of entering the job market by women in various roles, is determined by their increasing ambitions, awareness, level of education and development of various kinds of childcare. It should be emphasized that there are still existing significant differences in the situation of women and men on the job market expressed both in the questions of positions taken, level of salaries, as well as in statistics concerning the coefficient of professional activity, coefficient of employment and level of unemployment (although

in this case the differences are smaller and smaller). These regularities, although to various extent, concern not only Poland, but also all other member states of the European Union.

The purpose of this text is to present the situation of women on the job market in Poland and in selected EU member states (due to the size of this elaboration it will be: the United Kingdom and France, as representatives of different models of social policy), with particular consideration of the coefficient of professional activity. For this purpose, the Author will briefly present the question of terminology related to the resources of the job market. Professional activity of women on the job market is determined by many factors, and one of the most important is the relation between expected level of salary and the level of benefits that they can count on for various reasons such as unemployment benefit, parental benefits (such as the program "Rodzina 500+" ["Family 500+"]), or family benefits such as e.g. care allowance. In the article, the Author will also take a look at the issues of the models of social policy realized in the analyzed states and the levels and availability of family benefits resulting from them in the United Kingdom, France and Poland.

Based on the aforementioned, the Author will carry out an analysis of statistical data in terms of basic coefficients of the job market, with particular emphasis on the coefficient of professional activity in various profiles. Important here will also be an attempt at indicating the causes of the occurring changes and differences in this regard between particular states and the influence of family benefits on professional activity of women.

## RESOURCES ON THE JOB MARKET

The job market is one of many markets next to the markets of commodities, services and capital. Its specificity, however, results from the "commodity" that it "trades". A person and their work are the values completely different than other goods, and because of that behavior towards this market – that is job market policy – should be constructed in a way which will not allow occurrence of any negative phenomena resulting from its imbalance, that is the phenomenon of unemployment or lack of labor force, or inequality between genders. The consequences of the imbalance on this market have both an economic character as well as also social and political, and because of the number and variety of determinants shaping the situation on the job market, all the activities undertaken by the

state should be preceded by a thorough, multi-faceted and in-depth analysis of them. Moreover, the activities directed to particular resources of the job market and the subject acting in it, should be different. Persons professionally active – working, expect concrete solutions of the labor law or tax, those not working (among others unemployed) count on effective job placement or benefits on appropriate level, and employers – incentives for hiring (e.g. tax reliefs).

The main resources of the job market include: professionally active (working and unemployed) and professionally passive. This division is in accordance both with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization, as well as of EUROSTAT, and is used in the Analysis of Economic Activity of the Population (BAEL). The used order of particular categories of population in such analysis guarantees classification of every person in only one category [*Zeszyt metodologiczny...* 2018: 22]. While analyzing particular categories, concrete coefficients of the job market related to the mentioned resources should be distinguished, that is: coefficient of professional activity, coefficient of employment, or the unemployment rate. The coefficient of professional activity is the percentage of professionally active (in total or of particular group, distinguished according to, among others, age, gender, level of education) in the number of population at the age of 15 or more (in total or of particular group) [*Zeszyt metodologiczny...* 2018: 22]. This coefficient serves for determination of the level of professional activity of a given group of population. As the coefficient of employment, we understand the percentage of working (in total or of a given group) in the number of population at the age of 15 and more (in total or of a given group) [*Zeszyt metodologiczny...* 2018: 23]. The unemployment rate, in turn, is the percentage of unemployed (in total or of a given group) in the number of professionally active population (in total or of a given group). The last of the mentioned resources is the resource of professionally passive population, that is those who remain outside of labor force [more broadly: *Zeszyt metodologiczny...* 2018: 23].

In this text, particular attention will be paid to the coefficient of professional activity but other coefficients will also be presented in various profiles for Poland, United Kingdom and France.

## FAMILY BENEFITS

Governments of all states aim at providing their societies with a certain level of prosperity through appropriate law, policy, and institutions realizing it. One of the policies which is related to the topic of this article, is social policy, another one is the policy of job market, and both of them should constitute a part of broadly understood economic policy of state. In this elaboration, the Author will analyze family benefits which are one of the elements of family policy which, in turn, is apart of social policy. In this aspect, we should, however, remember that social policy does not serve, or should not serve only solving the already existing social problems and reaching general prosperity, nor it should serve providing social security. Its realization should embody concrete vision of social order in accordance with particular values such as: liberty, equality, solidarity, which serve to provide human dignity [Zgliczyński W. S. 2017: 38]. Those visions of social order determine both the instruments as well as the scope of realized policy, and, based on them, particular models of social policy have been shaped over the years. They will be only synthetically presented in the further part, and they also determine the character of family policy and the level of benefits [see Durasiewicz A, 2009: 57-61, Rymsza M. 2015: 27-30]. This, naturally, cannot constitute the only criterion of distinguishing and classifying particular states. Multiplicity of factors of historical, political, economic, or cultural character, which shaped *welfare state*, makes the EU member states clearly differ between each other in the questions such as: the structure and level of benefits, sources of financing the benefits, frequency providing services, family policy, regulations concerning questions of employment, administrative structure of social security or industrial relations [Gabryszak R. 2011: 24]. Of course, we can indicate many similarities in the scope of social policy (resulting from e.g. activities and regulations undertaken on the EU level), but the existing differences resulted in distinguishing several models of social policy.

The most known is the division according to the conception of Gøsty Esping-Andersena [1990] who distinguishes three theoretical „regimes” of welfare state: liberal (United Kingdom and Ireland), conservative (Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, or Germany), and social-democratic (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark). In the liberal model, the scope of redistribution for social purposes is limited, social benefits are addressed to the most needy ones, and the main criterion is income. All other social interventions of the state are justified only when they cre-

ate conditions for self-reliance, activity and self-help. In the next model – conservative, redistribution is connected with risk protection which the state is trying to organize mostly in the form of social security. Entitlement for benefits is related to employment and regulated within the solidarity of employers and employees with participation of civil society. The last model – social-democratic, provides the broadest scope for welfare state, what, on the one hand requires application of high taxes, but on the other, guarantees common access to benefits, mostly social services. Right to benefits, which have universal character, is given to all the citizens but their basis is labor. The level of employment of women is high and services enabling women to combine care and professional functions are developing [Golinowska S. 2018: 19].

In the following years, conceptions broadening this typology to include the South-European model were created. This model encompasses the countries of the Mediterranean Sea basin [more in: Ferrera M. 1996: 17-37]. (Spain, Greece or Portugal) and Central-European, realized in the states of the former Eastern block (Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary) [more in: Fenger H. J. M. 2007: 1-30]. In the Mediterranean model (South-European), constitutional obligations concerning modern welfare state are not framed by legal nor institutional, nor social infrastructure. The states provide significant care for elderly people, pay high retirement benefits to them, but family policy and the system of benefits for unemployed are poorly developed. Broad protection of particular employees (for example state officials) is provided, but for instance young people, or long-term unemployed, are deprived of it. In this model, states engage to small degree in the activities in the field of social help. The next model, Central-European, described also as post-communist, is characterized by specific features grown on the ground of centrally managed economy. The necessity of fast market and legal transformations resulted in these states having a kind of systemic incoherence. We can say that currently we have here both the elements of the conservative model, welfare model and liberal model, with simultaneous presence of the features of centrally managed economy (e.g. in health care) [more in: Karpowicz E. 2010: 3-12].

The presented models of social policy are models and in reality social policy in any country does not correspond with them completely. Because of limited size of this elaboration, the Author will provide below a review of the kinds and level of family benefits only in selected states which are “representatives” of particular models: liberal – the United Kingdom, conservative – France and Central-European – Poland [more in: Dragan A., Woronowicz S. 2013].

## THE UNITED KINGDOM. BENEFITS AND MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVES

Women who worked at a given employer at least 26 weeks non stop before the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the birth of the child, and were not earning less than 125 euro weekly, are entitled to maternity leave (Statutory Maternity Pay; SMP). Its length is 52 weeks (39 paid). During the first 6 weeks, the employer pays 90% of the weekly wage, and through the next weeks (33) about 170 euro (148.68 GBP) weekly or 90% of weekly wages (depending on which amount is lower) (<https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/pay>, 13.10.2019). Women who do not meet these requirements get the benefit and maternity supplement (from public resources) so called Maternity Allowance (MA) of about 170 euro (148.68 GBP) or 90% of weekly wages (depending which amount is lower) weekly (it is conditioned on the fact of working through at least 26 weeks, with wages at least 30 GBP, that is about 34.5 euro).<sup>1</sup> Apart from this form, there is also a possibility of receiving the benefit of 27 GBP (about 31 euro) weekly through 39 or 14 weeks.<sup>2</sup> Other women can receive a kind of sick benefit, so called Incapacity Benefit, paid through maximum of 6 weeks before the birth of the child and 14 days after the birth (the amount and allowance is decided by the Office). The father of the child, in turn, is entitled to so called Statutory Paternity Leave – two week leave, paid in the amount of about 170 euro (148.68 GBP) or 90% of weekly wages.<sup>3</sup> Besides, each of the parents has a right to use, within 5 years from the birth, 13 weeks of unpaid leave (not more than 4 in a year). As results from the aforementioned, the benefits are, in major part, conditioned on the fact of working through a certain period of time and on the level of wages.

The most important benefit related to having children in the United Kingdom is so called Child Benefit. The amount of untaxed, valorized annually benefit related to upbringing of children is about 25 euro (20.70 GBP) weekly for the first child and about 16 euro (13.70 GBP) weekly for every next child.<sup>4</sup> After the birth, families are paid one-time benefit (Sure Start Maternity Grant) – an equivalent of the Polish „becikowe”, and its amount

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/what-youll-get>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>2</sup> More about the conditions: <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/eligibility>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>3</sup> More about the conditions: <https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave/pay>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit-rates>, 13.10.2019.

is about 690 euro (500 GBP).<sup>5</sup> It should be emphasized that concrete benefits are regulated more in detail in particular cases, and the Author only described the most basic regulations and conditions.

Until recently, there was also functioning (and is still functioning for those who obtained the right to it earlier, and new applications are not accepted<sup>6</sup>) a tax relief for a child, but it has been substituted by so called Universal Credit<sup>7</sup> available in general to the majority of people. It is a benefit for covering the costs of maintenance, paid monthly, but is not strictly connected to having children (so it is not included by the author to family benefits which are the subject of this analysis). There is also a benefit called Childcare Grant which is designed for full time students who have children below the age of 15 (or below the age of 17 if they have special educational needs). The funds are intended for covering the costs of child care and if the student meet certain requirements, they do not need to be returned. In the academic year of 2019/2020 it can be 85% of the costs of child care or the maximum amount (depending on which of the values is lower) up to 169.31 GBP (194.4 euro) weekly for 1 child, and up to 290.27 GBP (333.24 euro) weekly for 2 or more children.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, family benefits (related to giving birth or having children) are granted after meeting certain requirements, mostly related to work, wages, or learning, what is a part of the liberal model of social policy in the United Kingdom.

Below are presented the most important coefficients concerning the job market in the United Kingdom in 2008-2018, with gender and age division. The data mostly concern the coefficient of professional activity, the coefficient of employment and the unemployment rate.

The situation of the job market in the United Kingdom was beneficial in the analyzed period both for women as well as for men. Differences among genders decreased significantly what is definitely a result of improvement of the coefficients for women. Considering the coefficient of employment we should note that in 2018 it increased, in comparison with 2008, from 65.7% to 70.3%, that is in almost 5 percent, what contributed to the decrease of gender difference in this coefficient (men 2008 - 77.4%, 2018 - 79.1%). It is worth pointing out here a significant increase of self-employment among women (from 7.7% to 10.5%) and high percentage

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant/what-youll-get>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>6</sup> More about the conditions: <https://www.gov.uk/child-tax-credit>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>7</sup> More about the conditions: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-grant>, 13.10.2019.

Table 1. Selected indicators of the labour market including gender and age in the United Kingdom in 2008 - 2018

Selected indicators	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	75.8	75.7	75.4	75.5	76.1	76.4	76.7	76.9	77.3	77.6	77.9
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	61.2	59.2	58.4	58.2	58.6	58.3	57.8	58.5	58.4	57.6	57.1
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	71.5	69.9	69.4	69.3	69.9	70.5	71.9	72.7	73.5	74.1	74.7
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	5.6	7.6	7.8	8.1	7.9	7.5	6.1	5.3	4.8	4.3	4.0
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)	15.0	19.1	19.9	21.3	21.2	20.7	17.0	14.6	13.0	12.1	11.3
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	82.4	82.0	81.5	81.5	82.0	82.1	82.2	82.2	82.5	82.3	82.6
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	64.3	61.3	60.9	60.7	60.9	60.2	59.5	60.0	59.3	58.3	58.5
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	77.4	74.9	74.4	74.3	75.0	75.4	76.8	77.6	78.3	78.6	79.1
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	6.1	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.3	8.0	6.4	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.1
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)	17.1	21.9	22.0	23.8	23.9	23.0	18.9	16.2	14.8	13.5	12.2
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	69.3	69.5	69.3	69.6	70.2	70.9	71.3	71.7	72.2	72.9	73.2
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	58.2	57.1	55.9	55.7	56.3	56.4	56.1	57.0	57.5	56.9	55.6
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	65.7	64.9	64.5	64.4	64.9	65.8	67.1	67.9	68.8	69.7	70.3
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	5.1	6.4	6.9	7.4	7.4	7.1	5.8	5.1	4.7	4.2	4.0
Youth unemployment ratio (% population aged 15-24)	7.4 b	9.2	9.8	10.3	10.3	10.2	8.3	7.4	6.4	6.0	5.7

Source: *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019, Annual Report* [2019: 316-8].

Table 2. Selected indicators of the labour market including gender and age in France in 2008 - 2018

Selected indicators	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	69.4 e	69.8 e	69.8 e	69.7 e	70.3 e	70.7 e	71.0	71.3	71.4	71.5	71.9
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	38.5	39.6	38.9	37.9	37.4	37.4	36.6	37.3	37.2	37.2	38.0
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	64.9	64.1	64.0	63.9	64.0	64.0	64.1	64.3	64.6	65.2	65.9
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	7.4	9.1	9.3	9.2	9.8	10.3	10.3	10.4	10.1	9.4	9.1
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)	19.0	23.6	23.3	22.6	24.4	24.9	24.2	24.7	24.6	22.3	20.7
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	74.7	75.0	74.9	74.6	75.3	75.5	75.3	75.5	75.6	75.9	76.1
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	42.2	42.9	42.6	41.3	40.8	40.8	39.9	40.5	40.0	40.6	41.5
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	69.7	68.4	68.3	68.2	68.1	67.8	67.5	67.5	68.0	68.9	69.4
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	7.0	9.0	9.0	8.9	9.8	10.4	10.5	10.8	10.3	9.5	9.0
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)	19.2	24.7	22.9	22.0	24.8	24.6	25.1	25.8	25.1	23.1	21.4
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	34.7	36.2	35.2	34.5	34.0	33.9	33.4	34.2	34.3	33.7	34.4
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	65.2	65.7	65.8	65.7	66.3	66.9	67.4	67.6	67.9	67.9	68.5
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	60.3	59.9	59.8	59.7	60.1	60.4	60.8	61.1	61.4	61.7	62.5
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	7.9	9.2	9.5	9.6	9.8	10.2	10.0	9.9	9.9	9.3	9.1
Youth unemployment ratio (% population aged 15-24)	18.8	22.3	23.7	23.3	23.8	25.2	23.1	23.3	24.1	21.3	19.9

Source: *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019, Annual Report [2019: 262-4]*.

Tabela 3. Selected indicators of the labour market including gender and age in Poland in 2008 - 2018

Selected indicators	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	63.8	64.7	65.3 b	65.7	66.5	67.0	67.9	68.1	68.8	69.6	70.1
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	33.1	33.8	34.6 b	33.5	33.6	33.3	33.9	32.8	34.5	34.8	35.1
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	59.2	59.3	58.9 b	59.3	59.7	60.0	61.7	62.9	64.5	66.1	67.4
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	7.1	8.1 d	9.7	9.7	10.1	10.3	9.0	7.5	6.2	4.9	3.9
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)	17.2	20.6 d	23.7	25.8	26.5	27.3	23.9	20.8	17.7	14.8	11.7
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	70.9	71.8	72.1 b	72.6	73.3	73.9	74.6	74.8	75.7	76.6	77.0
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	36.5	38.1	39.3 b	38.7	38.5	38.4	38.8	38.4	39.8	39.7	39.2
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	66.3	66.1	65.3 b	66.0	66.3	66.6	68.2	69.2	71.0	72.8	74.0
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	6.4	7.8 d	9.4	9.0	9.4	9.7	8.5	7.3	6.1	4.9	3.9
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)	15.2	20.2 d	22.4	23.6	24.1	25.4	22.7	20.7	17.4	14.6	11.5
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	57.0	57.8	58.5 b	58.9	59.7	60.1	61.1	61.4	62.0	62.6	63.3
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	29.6	29.4	29.6 b	28.1	28.4	27.9	28.7	26.9	28.9	29.7	30.7
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	52.4	52.8	52.6 b	52.7	53.1	53.4	55.2	56.6	58.1	59.5	60.8
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	7.9	8.6 d	10.0	10.4	10.9	11.1	9.6	7.7	6.2	4.9	3.9
Youth unemployment ratio (% population aged 15-24)	19.7	21.1 d	25.4	28.8	30.0	30.1	25.5	20.9	18.0	15.1	12.1

Source: *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019, Annual Report [2019: 295-7]*.

of part-time employment (39.7%) [*Employment and Social...* 2019: 316-8]. Professional activity of women, which is the subject of analysis, also increased and is currently at 73.2% (69.3% in 2008), although it still remains significantly lower than for men (in their case it is 82.6%). We should also note that professional activity of young people decreased, both among men and women. The unemployment rate, in turn, was at lower level among women in the entire period presented in the table, which was in 2018 4% (4.1% for men).

Systematically improving situation of women on the job market is surely an effect of higher professional activity, or the increase of the coefficient of employment what, in turn, may result from, among others, the fact that staying on social benefits (including family benefits) is unprofitable, or impossible (see above – the requirements for receiving benefits). The author is aware that a number of other determinants, such as level of salaries, family model, etc., have an influence on the level of professional activity. They will be certainly taken into consideration in further research.

The analysis of the relationships between the number, level and availability of family benefits of one country does not give the desired image. Therefore, other states, France and Poland will be presented below. They represent models of social policy different from the liberal model occurring in the United Kingdom.

## FRANCE. BENEFITS AND MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVES

Maternity leave is in France obligatory and lasts 6 weeks before and 10 weeks after the birth of first two children<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, fathers are entitled to 10-day paternity leave which can be used within 4 months from the birth of the child. During this leave, father receives a benefit on similar rules as the mother on maternity leave. Each of the parents, if they worked through at least a year, is entitled to parental leave until the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday of the child, during which the parent staying with the child at home is entitled a care benefit at the level of 560.40 euro monthly – but in the case of birth of the first child, it is given only through 6 months from the end of maternity leave [*Wybrane zagadnienia...* 2013: 12]. During maternity leave,

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<sup>9</sup> 8 weeks before and 18 weeks after the birth of the third child, 34 weeks (12 before the delivery) for twins and 42 weeks (24 before the delivery) for multiple deliveries.

women are entitled to maternity benefit at the level of 100% of her salary, with a limit up to 2516 euro monthly (in the case of persons employed in the public sector and some private companies, this limit does not apply and the difference is covered by the employer).

Family benefits are paid to people living in France permanently and having real and permanent responsibility for at least one child. Some of them are dependent on the level of income. Real family supplements are paid beginning with the second dependent child based on age limits for the dependent child.

Parents who have two or more dependent children at the age up to 20, will received, regardless of their income, a family benefit (Allocations familiales) beginning with the second child they raise. The amount of the benefit is adjusted according to the number of children. So, the maximum amount for two children: 131.81 euro, for 3 children: 300.70 euro, and for 4 children: 469.59 euro. The amount increases with every following child in 168.89 euro. The benefit is granted automatically to the families which submit their tax returns in France. There is also a family supplement which is granted to a family which has 3 or more children at the age of more than 3, and whose income does not exceed a set, annually revalored, income threshold depending on the family's situation. The monthly amount of this supplement is 171,56 euro (automatically based on tax return). A lump sum monthly benefit is paid to the families which have at least 3 dependent children and which lose benefits of some family supplements because one or more children reached the age of 20. The maximum monthly amount of the lump sum is 83.35 euro. The monthly amount of benefit for support of a family is 154.47 euro (for orphans) or 115.87 euro (for half-orphans - without mother of father).<sup>10</sup>

## MONEY BENEFITS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD (PAJE)

In the period of early childhood, there are 4 types of benefits in France. In connection to the birth or adoption of a child, mother is entitled to one-time money benefit (Prime à la naissance ou à l'adoption - equivalent of Polish „becikowe”) in the amount of 946.39 euro at birth (on the condi-

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<sup>10</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&langId=en&intPageId=4532>, 13.10.2019.

tion that the woman was during pregnancy under medical control) and 1892.77 euro in the case of adoption.<sup>11</sup>

Another benefit is so called basic benefit (Allocation de base), that is a benefit for child's education up to the age of 3, which is granted up to that age on the condition of conducting regular medical examinations. The amount of that benefit is 171.56 euro monthly.<sup>12</sup>

Parents who decide to limit their activity in order to take care of children, can take advantage of another benefit – benefit for care and education of children up to the age of 3 (Prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant, PreParE). In the case of complete resignation from activity, the amount of this benefit is 398 euro monthly. It is lowered to 257.29 euro monthly if the beneficiary works shorter than 50% of time, and to 148.41 euro if s/he works between 50 and 80% of full time position. There is also a benefit connected to the possibility of choice of the type of care over children – the benefit due to the choice of care over a child (Complément de libre choix du mode de garde – CMG) up to the age of 6 (hiring child care or educational institution), which is maximum 467.41 euro, and minimum 176.82 euro, depending on the age of the child, type of care and income.<sup>13</sup>

## SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTS

The catalog of French benefits also includes five special supplements. One of them is the benefit for education of disabled children (Allocation d'éducation de l'enfant handicapé) paid regardless of income to every child below the age of 20 who is disabled and is placed in specialized school or have specialized home assistance. Basic amount of the benefit is 131.81 euro monthly. This amount can be increased for a single parent or depending on the need for assistance or the scope of child's disability. In France, there is also a benefit for school return (Allocation de rentrée scolaire), paid due to the beginning of a school year (school layette), dependent on the level of income of the family and the child's age. The benefit is granted automatically once a year, in August, for children at the age of 6 to 18.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&langId=en&intPageId=4532>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>12</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&langId=en&intPageId=4532>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>13</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&langId=en&intPageId=4532>, 13.10.2019.

The older children is, the higher the benefit's amount is, so: 368.84 euro (6 – 10 years), 389.19 euro (11 – 14 years) and 402.67 euro (15 – 18 years).<sup>14</sup> Every person responsible for a child at the age below 20 that is sick or has a disability of significant degree, what means a necessity of constant support and particular care, receives a daily parental benefit (*Allocation journalière de présence parentale*) in the amount of 43.79 euro if the beneficiary lives with a partner, and 52.03 if it concerns a single parent. The third special benefit is a benefit for family accommodation (*Allocation de logement familiale*) which is aimed at covering a part of the accommodation costs of the family, and its amount depends on the income, composition of the household, geographical location of the house and level of rent or loan installment. Families which have at least 3 dependent children and are entitled to accommodation supplements in a new apartment, may count on a pre-move-in benefit (*Prime de déménagement*) paid one-time, dependent on the income, equal to the expenses really incurred during a move in, maximum up to 988.61 euro for 3 dependent children (82.38 euro for each additional child).<sup>15</sup>

The described money benefits belong to the main instruments, but there are also few other solutions that family or single parents with low income can use. Another support are e.g. tax reliefs which, although do not belong to family benefits, constitute an important element of support for families with children.

With such a broad scope of benefits, interesting is the question of their possible influence on women's situation on the job market in France. Does it contribute to an increase of professional activity, or to the contrary, it deactivates them? Similarly to the United Kingdom, also in the case of the French model, the level of some benefits is dependent on income, but their scope is significantly bigger. In the next part of this elaboration, statistics concerning the French job market and position of women will be presented.

As we see in the table above, the situation on the job market in France is significantly worse than that in the UK, and it concerns both general data as well as those presented according to gender. Professional activity is also at a significantly lower level in France in all the profiles, the least favorable is the situation of men (82.6% in the UK compared to 76.1% in France). Women in France also indicate lower level of professional activity

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1878>, 13.10.2019.

<sup>15</sup> [ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&langId=en&intPageId=4532](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&langId=en&intPageId=4532), 13.10.2019.

that those in the UK, although in this case, the difference is smaller (73.2% to 68.5%). It should be emphasized that in France we deal with smaller disproportion of that coefficient between women and men (7.7%) that in the UK (9.4%). In the context of our earlier reflections, we should note that significant differences occur in the area of professional activity of young people, especially women. Professional activity of young French women was in 2018 only 34.4%, while in the UK 55.6%, so 21.2% more!<sup>16</sup>. In comparison to 2008, the coefficients of employment changed slightly and not necessarily for plus (in total 64.9% in 2008 and 65.9% in 2018). Increase of this coefficient occur in the analyzed period only in the group of women from 60.3% to 62.5%. The coefficient of employment of women in the UK was in 2018 70.3%, so almost 8% more. Most of particular coefficients has undoubtedly an influence on the level of unemployment which in France is much higher than in the UK and it is 9.0% for men (4.1%) and 9.1% for women (4%). It is difficult to unequivocally indicate the reason of such disproportions, it seems, however, that both the models of social policy (height and availability of benefits), as well as the family model and its value in France may be in this case very important. The results of presented comparison may suggest that larger social protection influenced professional deactivation of women. Conclusions will be undoubtedly enriched by the analysis of the situation of another state. Here it will be Poland, where in the last years the shape of family policy changed dramatically towards the development of instruments and increase of the height and scope of benefits.

## POLAND. BENEFITS AND MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVES

Maternity leave is an obligatory leave, granted to every employee who gave birth to a child regardless of the type of her job contract. Its length depends on the number of children from one delivery and it is: 20 weeks – in the case of one child; 31 weeks – two; 33 – three; 35 weeks – four; 37 weeks – five or more children at one delivery. Before delivery, woman can use no more than 6 weeks of the leave, and if the employee did not use maternity leave before delivery, maternity leave starts with the day of delivery. After delivery, the mother is obliged to use 14 weeks of the leave. She can

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<sup>16</sup> Among men 41,5% in France and 58,5% in the UK (difference 17 %).

resign from the remaining 6 weeks and return to work on the condition that the remaining part of the leave will be used by the father taking care of the child (or insured – father of the child who resigned from his gainful activity in order to take that care). During maternity leave, a maternity benefit is granted at the level of 100% of the basis for the benefit. If woman submits, no later than 21 days after delivery, a written application for a paternal leave after maternity leave, maternity leave for the period of both leaves will be 80% of the basis for the benefit. For paternal leave, and the first 6 weeks of parental leave, 100% of the basis for the benefit is granted. For the period set as the period of parental leave (over 6 weeks) – benefit is 60% of the basis for the benefit. The maternal benefit is subject to security dues (retirement and pension dues) calculated by the payers of the benefit (employer, Social Security).<sup>17</sup> Educational leave is unpaid and can be used in selected time until the end of the calendar year when the child reaches the age of 6. It lasts maximally 36 months and can be divided in parts (no more than 5), and the leave can be used by e.g. the father when the mother is on maternal or parental leave. Educational leave must be divided between the parents, one month must be taken by the other parent.

## MONEY BENEFITS

Family benefit is aimed at partial coverage of the living expenses for the child. It is granted to parents, one of the parents, or legal caregiver of the child; factual caregiver of the child; a person who is learning, who is of age and learning and is not dependent on their parents due to their death or court sentence or court settlement concerning right to alimony from them, until the age of 18 or completion of school education. The learning person is granted this benefit on the condition of continuing education at school or higher school, no longer than until the age of 24. The height of family benefit monthly is: 95 PLN (about 22.13 euro) for a child until the age of 5; 124 PLN (about 28.88 euro) for a child above the age of 5 and until the age of 18, and 135 PLN (about 31.45 euro) for a child at the age above 18 until the age of 24. The height of this benefit in comparison to the French benefit is significantly lower, and, in addition, right for this benefit is dependent on meeting the income criterion, what does not exist in

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/wysokosc-zasilku-macierzynskiego>, 14.10.2019.

France. In this case, the benefit is granted if the average monthly income of a family counted for one person, or the income of a learning person, does not exceed 674 PLN (about 157 euro), and in the case if a child has a disability decision, does not exceed 764 PLN (about 178 euro).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the person who has been granted the right to family benefit can apply for supplements to the benefit<sup>19</sup>.

Another money benefit is a one-time allowance for giving birth to a living child (so called "becikowe") which is 1000 PLN (about 233 euro) for one child, which is granted to the mother or father of the child, its legal caregiver or real caregiver, if the income of the family per one person does not exceed 1922,00 PLN net (about 448 euro). The allowance is granted if the mother of the child was under medical supervision no later than from the 10<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy until the day of delivery.

In the catalog of Polish benefits there are also: care benefit, special care allowance and care allowance. Care benefit is granted for partial coverage of the expenses resulting from the necessity of providing care and help of other person in connection to a disability of independent existence. Special care allowance is granted to people who have alimony obligation, as well as spouses, if: they do not undertake employment or other gainful work or resign from employment or other gainful work in order to take full time care of a person with a decision of high level of disability, or a decision of disability with recommendations, such as a need for full time or long term care or assistance of other person in connection to significantly limited possibility of independent existence, and a necessity for a daily cooperation of a caregiver for a child in the process of her/his medical treatment, rehabilitation and education. The income criterion is in this case 764 PLN net (about 178 euro),<sup>20</sup> and the height of the benefit is 620 PLN monthly (about 144,42 euro).<sup>21</sup> Care allowance due to resignation from employment or other gainful work is granted to: mother or father, real caregiver of the child, person being related foster family and other people (according to the regulations of the law from 25 February 1964 – Family and Guardianship Code), if they do not undertake or they resign from employment or oth-

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/zasilek-rodzinny>, 14.10.2019.

<sup>19</sup> Due to education and rehabilitation of a disabled child, due to undertaking school education outside of the place of residence of a child, due to beginning of a school year, due to education of a child as a single parent, due to education of a child in a large family.

<sup>20</sup> All the courses are established on the basis of average course of National Polish Bank from 14 October 2019.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/specjalny-zasilek-opiekunczy>, 14.10.2019.

er gainful work in order to take care of a person with a disability decision (requiring full time or long term care). The height of the care allowance is 1477 PLN (about 344 euro).<sup>22</sup>

Mother or father of the child, real caregiver of the child, foster family (with exception of professional family) and the person who adopted the child, is granted a parental benefit. Parental benefit of 1000 PLN (about 233 euro) monthly, untaxed and without income criterion, is granted for the period of: 52 weeks, if one child is born during delivery, 65 weeks, if two children are born, 67 for three, 69 weeks for four and 71 weeks for five and more children born during one delivery. An entitled person is granted one parental benefit at a time in connection to upbringing of the same child.<sup>23</sup>

These are, however, not all money benefits. In 2016, an educational benefit, within the program "Rodzina 500 plus" ["Family 500 plus"], has been introduced. In this program, the amount of 500 PLN monthly (about 116.47 euro) is granted for a child in a family (initially from the second child, and since 1 July 2019, already from the first one), regardless from the income. Also in 2016, a law concerning support of women during pregnancy and families "For life" was introduced. It assumes, among others, a complex offer of support for families taking care of disabled children. It provides a one-time allowance of 4000 PLN (932 euro) in the case of birth of a child with severe and irreversible disability or an incurable illness which pose a danger to his/her life. Also the offer of protected apartments, family assistants, etc. has been broadened.<sup>24</sup>

According to the earlier statement, the government in the years of 2015-2019 significantly broadened the scope of instruments and funds allocated for financing family policy. We can mention here the governmental program „MALUCH plus” (2017) which supports development of institutions providing care for children up to the age of 3 – nurseries, children’s clubs and day caregiver (interested subjects can receive a subsidy of up to 80% of costs of the project). There is also Program “Dobry Start” which means a one-time support paid to every students beginning a school year (similarly to France) in the amount of 300 PLN (about 70 euro) regardless of income. Other benefits, which may have an influence on the decision about broadening a family, are: governmental program “Mieszkanie+”

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/wiadczenie-pielegnacyjne>, 14.10.2019.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/wiadczenie-rodzicielskie>, 14.10.2019.

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.gov.pl/documents/1048151/1060973/Informator\\_Za\\_zyciem.pdf/d349b7d1-f7c9-ef8a-e91c-4bc80e0cc9c5](https://www.gov.pl/documents/1048151/1060973/Informator_Za_zyciem.pdf/d349b7d1-f7c9-ef8a-e91c-4bc80e0cc9c5), 14.10.2019.

from 2016 addressed to all citizens of Poland, but which first is supposed to help those who cannot apply for a mortgage on market terms, and Karta Dużej Rodziny – a system of discounts and additional rights for the families 3+ both in the public institutions as well as in private companies.

As we can see from the above discussion, the number and availability of family benefits is in Poland closer to the French solutions than the British ones. However, these benefits definitely differ in height (although they cannot be directly compared, but in relation to the minimum wage, average wage, or purchasing power parity) and are significantly lower in Poland than in France, or the UK. Taking this into consideration, we should here present the analysis of statistical data concerning the job market in Poland, especially professional activity of women.

Statistics of the job market in Poland in the analyzed period indicate a significant improvement of the situation of both women as well as men. As for professional activity, the situation is more favorable in the United Kingdom (in total – 77.9%, men – 82.6% and women – 73.2%), then for the Polish men – 77% and French men – 76.1%. However, particular attention was paid to professional activity of women which in this case is a reflection of a trend which differentiates the analyzed countries. The highest level of the coefficient of professional activity is showed by women in the UK – 73.2%, then French women – 68.5% and, as the last ones, Polish women – 63.3%. For the analyzed aspect, it is also important to take a look at the professional activity of young women (age of 15-24) and that was definitely lowest in Poland, with the score of only 30.7% and not a lot higher in France – 34.4%. A much higher coefficient was noted in the UK, where it is 55.6% (although it decreased in comparison to 2008 – 58.2%). Comparing the coefficients of employment we should emphasize that being in 2018 at the level of 67.4% total, it was slightly higher than in France (65.9%), but significantly lower than in the UK (74.7%). Taking into consideration gender, this relation looks a bit different. We deal here we bigger disproportions between the values of coefficients of employment among men (the United Kingdom – 79.1%, France – 69.4% and Poland – 74.0%). Among women, this disproportion is a bit different, but still in favor of the UK (70.3%, France – 62.5% and Poland – 60.8%). The smallest disproportion between genders occurs in France 6.9% and biggest in Poland (13.2%).

We should, however, pay attention not so to the height of particular coefficients but to the changes they underwent in the analyzed period. In this context, most optimistic are definitely the data for Poland which noted biggest increase of the analyzed coefficients [see also: *Informacja o*

rynku pracy... 2019, *Kobiety i mężczyźni...* 2018]. In the area of employment of women, the coefficient grew in 8.4% (52.4% - 2008 and 60.8% in 2018), and for men this increase was in 7.7% (66.3% - 2008 and 74.0% in 2018). The increase in France respectively was 2.2% for women, and in the UK 4.6%, among men a decrease in 0.3% and increase in 1.7%. Similar tendencies can be seen in the coefficient of professional activity which increased in 6.1% in Poland, and only 1.4% in France and 0.2% in the UK. Also in Poland, the fastest increase of this coefficient for women was noted, which in the analyzed period grew in 6.3% (57.0% - 2008 and 63.3% - 2018), while in the analyzed states the increase was respectively 3.3% and 3.9%. It is also worth noticing the fact that the unemployment rate in Poland was lowest among the compared countries and was in 2018 3.9%, in the UK 4% and 9.1% in France. Importantly, there is no difference here between women and men.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis conducted in this article allows us to draw concrete conclusions, although the Author is aware that they cannot be treated as certainties because the situation on the job market, as well as professional activity, especially of women, is influenced by a whole range of factors, and not only the scope, availability and height of family benefits. These are, however, the factors which, to a large extent, may have an effect on decisions of young parents, especially women, about return to the job market and their will and readiness for undertaking employment. It is often emphasized, in the discussions devoted to the Program Rodzina 500+, that it is an element causing deactivation of women on the job market. As the aforementioned data shows, however, such a statement is unfounded, as the professional activity of women throughout recent years increases every year and being 61.4% in 2015, 62% in 2016, 62.6% in 2017 and 63.3 in 2018. Moreover, it is not known what would be the shape of these coefficients if the Program had not been introduced. However, we should pay attention to the fact that the situation is different according to the place of residence, so women's professional activity is differentiated territorially. It is less remunerative to undertake employment in the rural areas and smaller towns, what is associated with a necessity of commuting and often lower level of salary than in bigger cities. There, women return to work and can afford hiring a babysitter what significantly increases both the co-

efficient of professional activity as well as the coefficient of employment [an increase in these areas - see *Informacja...* 2019]. Significant in shaping the coefficient of professional activity is also level of education. In this context, the highest level of the coefficient of professional activity is among people with higher education, among whom women are great majority.

Summarizing, we can say that the model of social policy, and what is related, of family policy, determining availability and height of family benefits has an important influence on the level of the coefficient of professional activity of women. In the already established models: liberal in the United Kingdom and conservative in France, there are visible differences in the situation on the job market, but, what is worth emphasizing, the situation is relatively stable (slight cyclical fluctuations). In Poland, classified to the new model – Central-Eastern-European, both the situation on the job market, as well as the area of family policy, are very dynamic. This should lead to creation of a model optimal from the point of view of economy and society.

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