

Ours is a time of significant transformations and resulting challenges. We witness social conflicts over the distribution of wealth, unprecedented difficulties in the healthcare system caused by a pandemic, an aging population, mass migration and changes in attitudes towards ethnic diversity, and concerns with national security following Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. These developments impact individual and collective experiences, including people's perceptions of the future. How this impact operates, and with what consequences for individuals and social groups, are questions that the social sciences seek answers for. Our project will provide new scientific knowledge on the processes that shape Poles' visions of the future, that is, the threats and opportunities that women and men anticipate in various spheres of life. We propose explanations for visions of the future that consider individuals' position in the economic, political and cultural structures, and their biographies, including accumulated gains and losses. Biographies and their correlates influence social structures, and each affects future orientations. Since the future in one area of life frequently differs from the future in another, we use the term "future" in the plural. Hence, the project's title "Structures and Futures."

To understand how adults in Poland anticipate the future in light of current social developments and the extent to which these views depend on accumulated resources and experiences, this project will update the Polish Panel Survey, POLPAN (polpan.org) with a new survey wave in 2023. POLPAN is one of the most valuable empirical data collections in the social sciences in Poland and, with its time span of over 30 years, the longest study of its kind in the world. POLPAN's survey waves are carried out every five years since 1988, on samples of over 2000 respondents. We conduct personal interviews with selected adult residents of Poland, many of whom participated in this study for the first time before the fall of communism, and others later. To understand participants' biographies, experiences, attitudes and opinions, we ask the same questions in each survey wave. However, to keep the project up-to-date, POLPAN also includes new topics that correspond to important social issues. Its data have significantly enriched the knowledge about, among others, material and mental well-being, adaptation to social changes, and social, economic and political attitudes and behaviors in 1988-2018 Poland.

In the POLPAN 2023 survey, we add to the questionnaire new items about futures expected for oneself and the country. To ensure that the 2023 study includes respondents who are representative of the population of women and men over 21 years of age, we include in the sample – in addition to participants of previous POLPAN waves (i.e. panelists) – new persons, randomly chosen. We integrate information from the 2023 survey with POLPAN 1988-2018 into a single dataset spanning the period 1988-2023, to examine how respondents perceive threats and opportunities in the next five years in terms of wealth and living standards, health and health services, aging and social security, migration and multinationalism, and national security.

The project team's strong expertise in methodology for comparative social science research, including cooperation with studies devoted to the harmonization of survey data – financed by the US National Science Foundation (Survey Data Recycling, SDR), and Poland's NCN (Cross-National Biographies, CNB-Young) – ensure that the 2023 survey, and the integrated 1988-2023 POLPAN dataset, are of the highest quality. In line with our established tradition, after anonymization and following RODO/GDPR standards, we will place the 1988-2023 POLPAN dataset in public repositories.

We will disseminate research results via scientific publications in well-established journals open to the public (i.e. "open access" format) and POLPAN's online portal. Policy briefs summarizing key insights from the study will be shared with representatives of parliament, government agencies, political parties, non-governmental organizations, the media and the general public. At the same time, like in previous years, POLPAN 2023 will train the next generation of doctoral students and early career researchers in the field of survey research methodology and quantitative social sciences.