

# EDUCATIONAL AND PARENTING DECISIONS IN THREE-GENERATION FAMILIES

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Parents, or in general families, strongly influence children's skills formation and life outcomes. Most prior research focused on two-parent families. We analyse educational and parenting decisions and children's outcomes in three-generation families. We find their parenting intensity is lower, but children in three-generation families fare as well as those living in two-parent families.

## BACKGROUND

Gaps in skills of children from various socioeconomic groups emerge at early ages and persist later in life (Frenesconi and Heckman, 2016) driving further inequalities. Parental (quality) time devoted to children largely affects the level of their skills. **We know that:**

- ✓ The amount of time spent with children is positively related to parents' education ([3], [4])
- ✓ Children of better educated parents spend more time in educational activities [2]
- ✓ Working status of parents also likely to influence the amount of time allotted to children ([1])

But **we know little** about the effect of **family arrangements** children live in on the amount of "quality" time they receive. Not much is also known about outcomes of children in various family arrangements. This study fills this gap by analysing **educational and parenting decisions**, and **children's outcomes** in various family arrangements in Poland, with particular attention being paid to **three-generation families**.

## MOTIVATION – WHY POLAND?

- ✓ Poland has one of the highest shares of multi-generational families (21%) among OECD countries
- ✓ As a post-transition economy Poland experienced ample structural changes & educational boom
- ✓ Relatively high female employment, high engagement in housekeeping and low coverage of day care
- ✓ Poland is one of the fastest ageing societies in OECD
- ✓ Poland struggles with lowest low fertility (1.34 in 2016)

## MAIN QUESTIONS WE ASK

1. Who are three-generations in Poland? How do they fare compared to other family types?
2. Do parenting styles differ between three-generation family households and other types of households?
3. How do children in three-generation family households fare compared to other family households?

## DATA

### Data - Determinants of Educational Decisions (UDE) for 2013

- ✓ Rich set of information on children, parents, grandparents (demographic & labour market characteristics), combined with a detailed information on educational activities with children & their outcomes at school
- ✓ 34 000 households, 88 000 individuals, our final sample consist only of households with children under 15 (7 000 households, 28 000 individuals)
- ✓ Possible panel dimension (not yet used)

We differentiate between four family types (with children):

Three generation family households	Two-parent family households	One-parent family households	Other extended family households
24.6%	68.4%	2.8%	4.2%

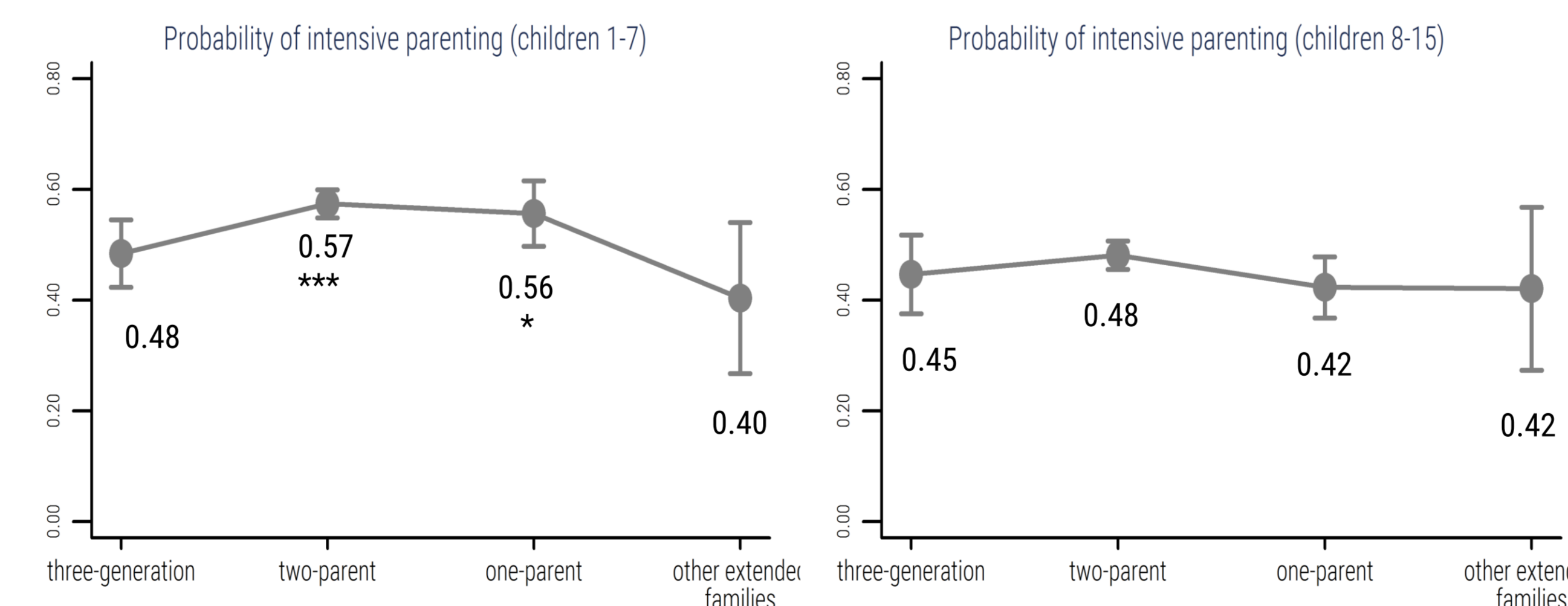
## WHO ARE THREE-GENERATION FAMILIES IN POLAND?

- ✓ Mostly rural households – 60% lived in rural areas (vs 45% for two-parent households)
- ✓ Less educated than two or one-parent family households – only 11% of their members attained tertiary education (vs 26% among two-parent families)
- ✓ Disadvantaged in terms of income – 55% were in the bottom two income deciles (equivalised)
- ✓ For 12% of them pension was the main source of income (vs 0.61% among two-parent families)
- ✓ Higher incidence of disability compared to other types of households - 8% vs average of 4%
- ✓ Lower mean number of children under 15 in the household – 1.65 vs 1.91 in two-parent households

## PARENTING STYLES IN VARIOUS FAMILY TYPES

### Strategy

- ✓ Parenting style – proxied by the incidence of time spent with children on educational and parenting activities (10 items for children aged less than 7, and 6 items for children aged 8-15)
- ✓ Each household is assigned a set of two dummies which are then our dependent variables (0 if below average of educational activities, 1 otherwise)
- ✓ Logit models – family type, income, degree of urbanization, education, age, labour market status, number of kids, importance of family, and one variable to capture the unobservable characteristics of household members – number of books parents had in their family homes at the age of 10



### Main messages

- Younger children in **three-generation** families are dedicated **less time** in educational activities than children in two-parent families
- But this no longer holds for older children – **no differences** between various family types (insignificant Wald tests)

## Main messages (continued)

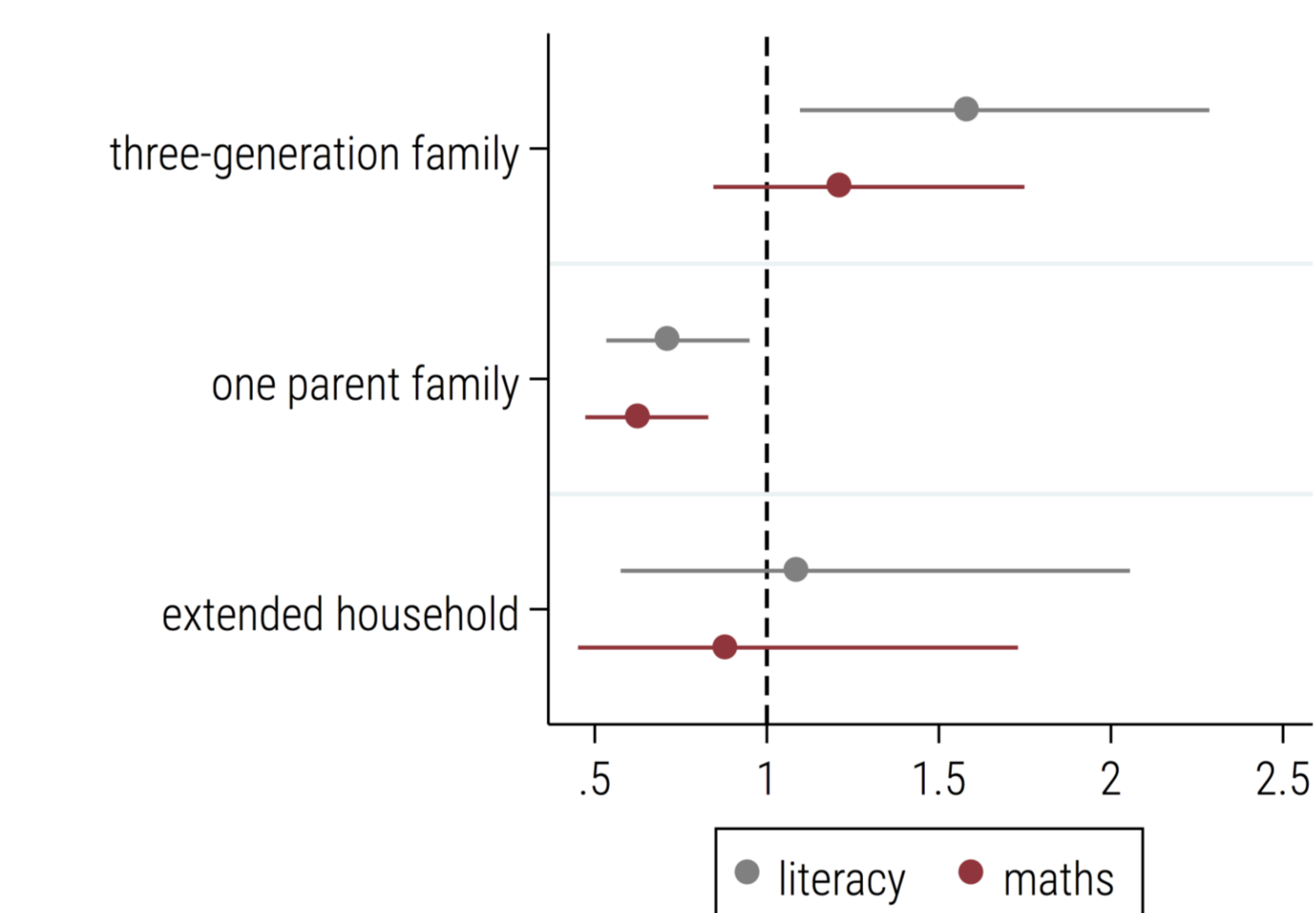
Family type affects parenting styles and educational decision, but:

- ✓ The effect of **education** is much stronger
- ✓ The **cultural background** of the household is much more important
- ✓ Family values, labour market status & age also affects parenting styles

## OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN IN THREE-GENERATION FAMILIES

- ✓ Schools grades (maths & Polish language) as proxies for child's outcomes
- ✓ Similar strategy as in previous logit models (+ additional variable on the time children spend learning)

ref. two-parent family, odds ratios for probability of high grades



### Main messages

- ✓ Children in **three-generation** families more likely to get **better** literacy grades than children from two-parent families
- ✓ **No difference** between three-generation and two-parent families wrt maths grades
- BUT...**
- ✓ The **education** attainment of household members is much more important for children outcomes at school
- ✓ And **income** (equivalised) also largely positively affects children grades
- ✓ Presence of **unemployed** people in the household lowers the odds for high grades

## MAIN TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Children in three-generation families aged 1-7 spend less time in educational activities than children in two-parent households, **but** these differences disappear when we consider children at the age of 8-15
- ✓ Children in three-generation families have higher odds of getting high grades in literacy than children in two-parent families, **but** there are no significant differences between children living in these two family arrangements with respect to the probability of having high grades in maths
- ✓ Type of family as such – **not so important**, what matters is **education, income, and cultural background** of the household

## REFERENCES

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