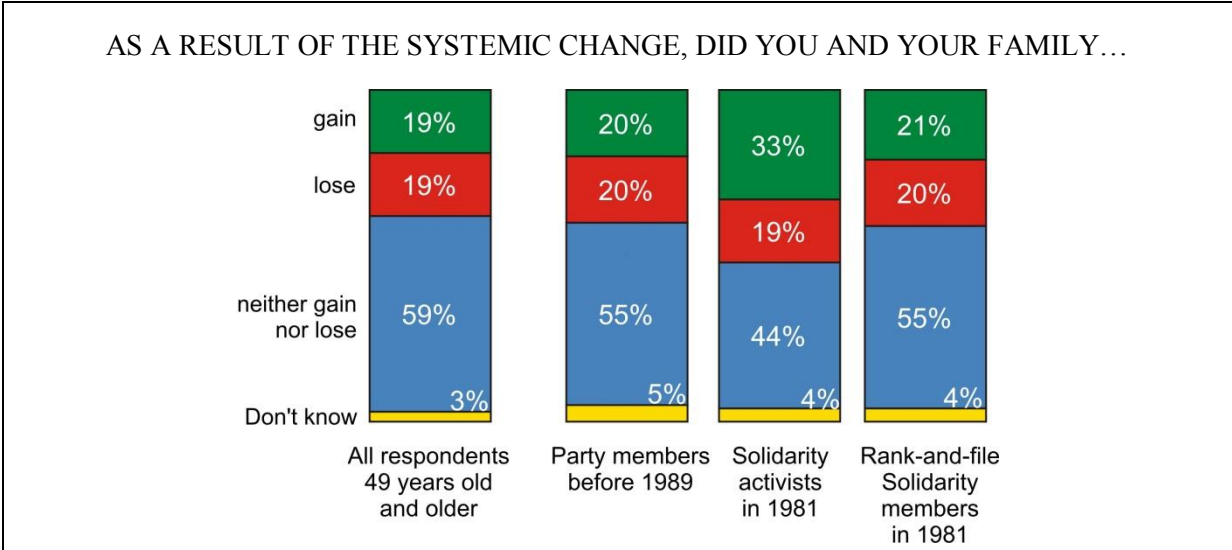


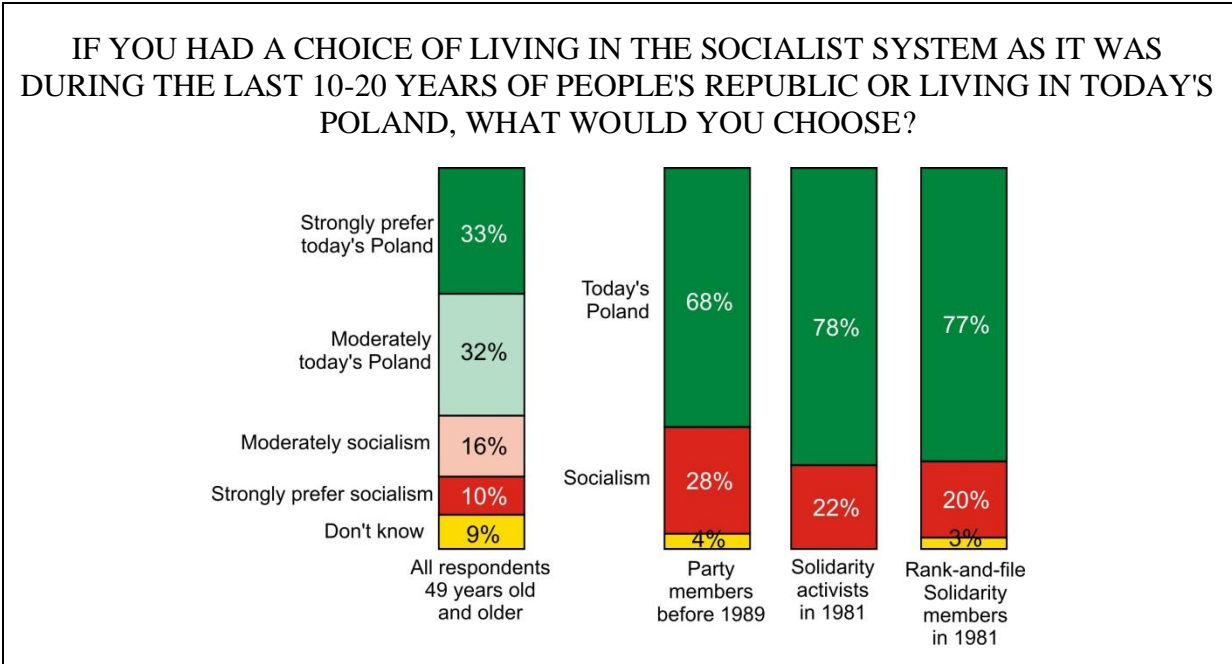
## **SYSTEMIC CHANGE: OPINIONS OF THE MIDDLE-AGED AND SENIORS**

The number of people who remember the times of the People's Republic (1944-89) not only from childhood memories, but who have consciously experienced it (professionally, starting a family, making political choices) is diminishing. The CBOS study on “Consequences of the great change: societal perception of the role of 'Solidarity' in the collapse of Communism in Poland”, conducted on the sample of people 49 and older, allows for showing systemic change from the perspective of such people.

Most middle-aged people and seniors have a feeling that they neither gained nor lost as a result of the systemic change. The others equally often see themselves as benefactors and losers of the change. The pre-1989 political affiliations influence the perceived balance of costs and benefits for the respondents and their families. The benefits from transformation are especially often appreciated by the activists of Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarność) from the year 1981. The opinions of rank-and-file Solidarity members, as well as opinions of members of pre-1989 parties (most of them are former members of the Polish United Workers' Party, PZPR) do not differ significantly from the opinion of the whole sample.

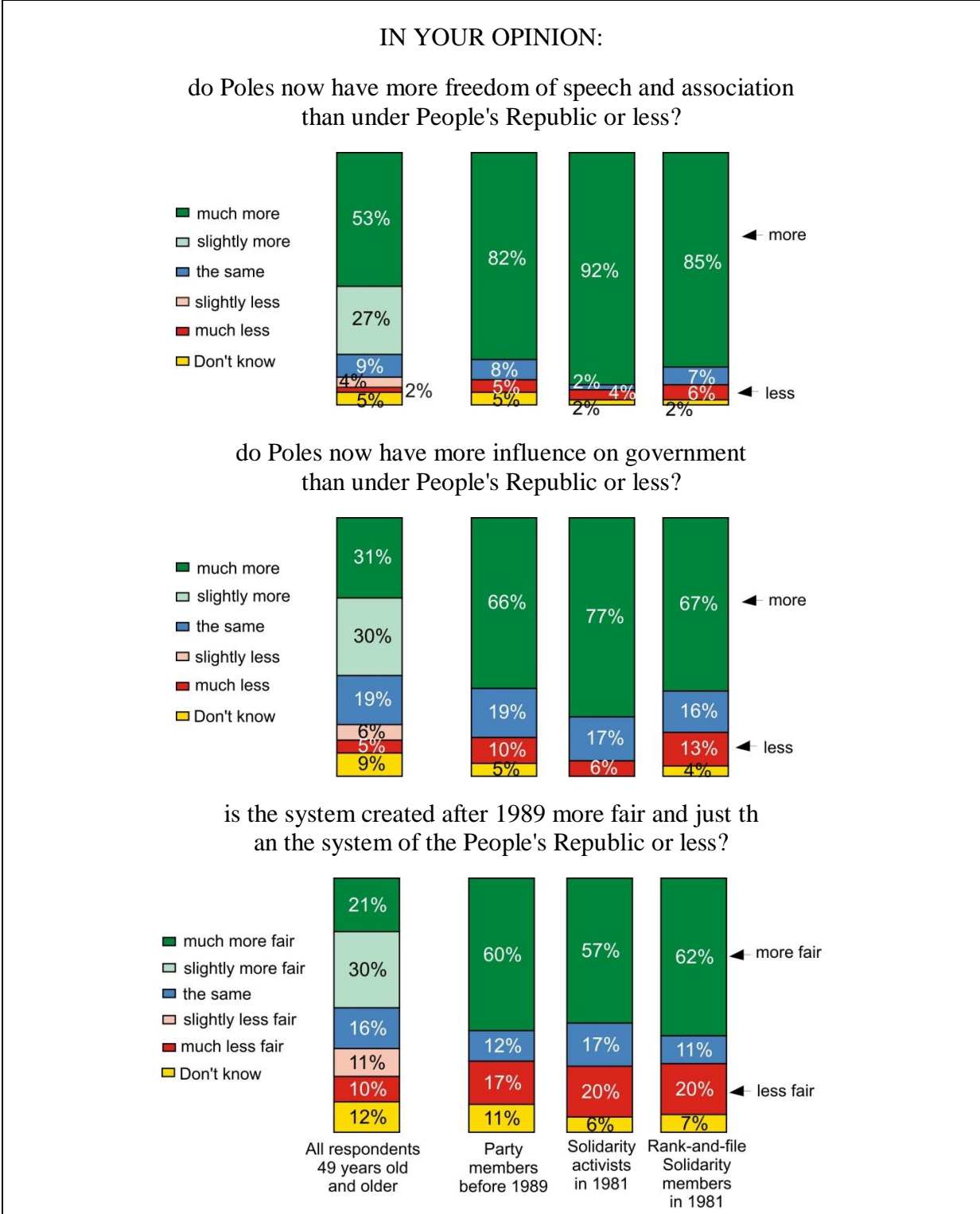


Although people who were adult and fully formed during systemic change usually do not think they gained any benefits from transformation, they would still choose living in current Poland (65%). Former Solidarity members disproportionately often prefer the current system.



Poles who experienced the last decade of People's Republic as adults appreciate the political effects of change. In the opinion of a vast majority (80%), Poles now have far more opportunities for organizing and expressing their views than under former system. The majority (61%) admit that citizens have more influence on government than before. Over half (51%) think that the new system after 1989 is more fair. The comparison between the current

and former political system is positive for the present-day Poland both in the opinions of Solidarity members from the early 1980s and former party members.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Pre-1989 political activity, the attitude to systemic change and perception of influence on public affairs", September 2012. Fieldwork for national sample: May-June 2012, N=982. The random address sample is representative for population of Poland aged 49 and more.