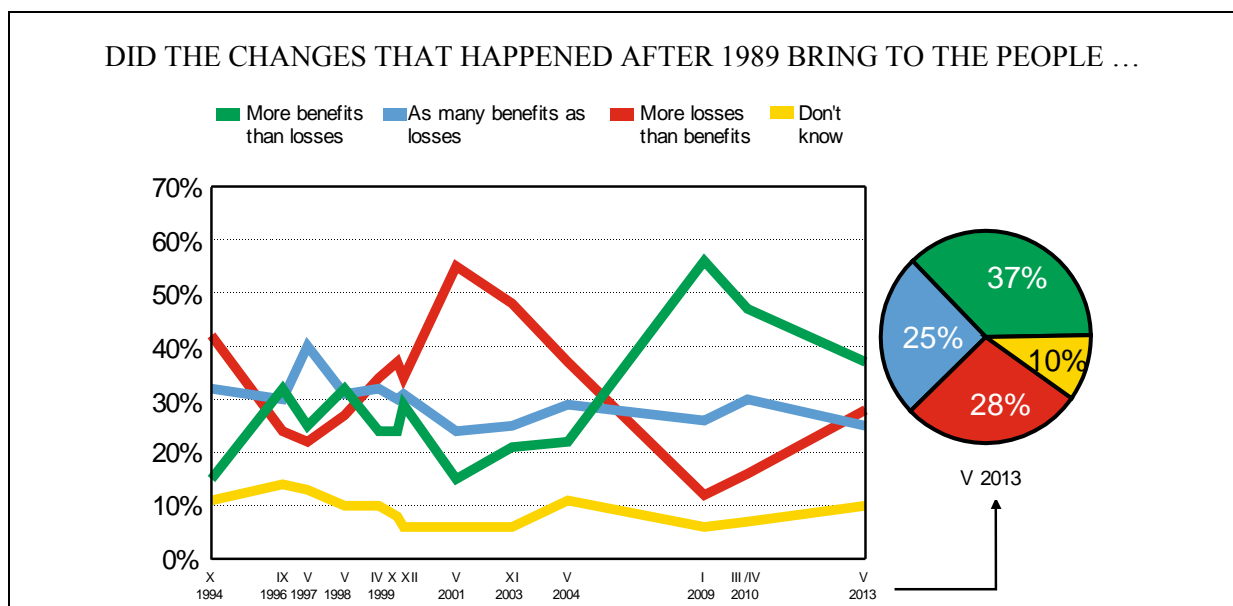


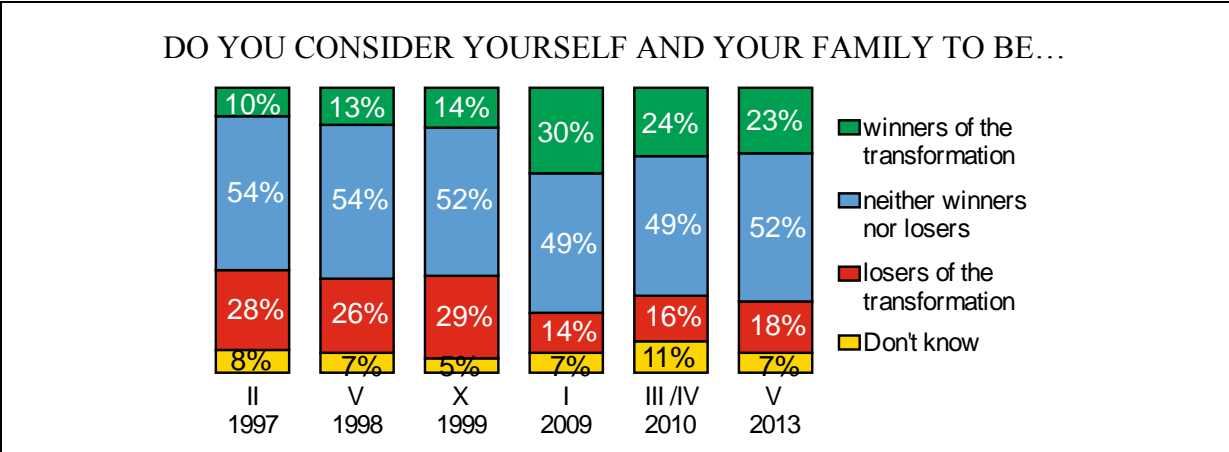
EVALUATION OF THE POST-1989 TRANSFORMATION

Twenty-four years ago, in June 1989, semi-free parliamentary elections were held in Poland. As a result of their outcome, Poland became the first Eastern bloc country in which representatives of the democratic opposition had genuine influence on government.

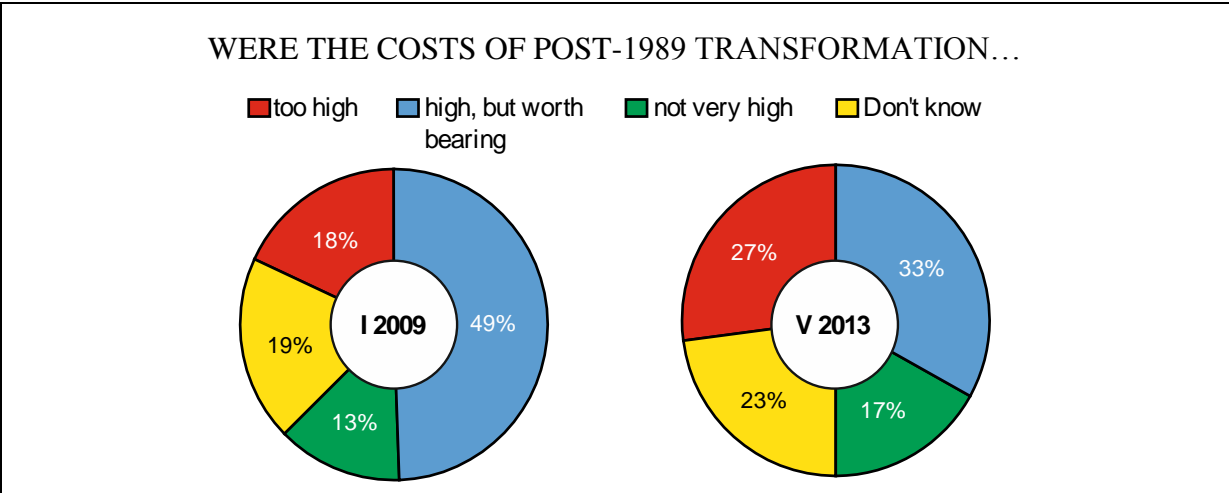
The evaluation of the consequences of transformation changed with the development of the socio-economic situation. At present, it is divided. The plurality (37%) think that the post-1989 changes brought more benefits than losses. However, this opinion is now much less widespread than in 2009 (a 19-point drop), which was a record year in terms of evaluation of transformation effects. The deteriorating mood is indicated by the rising number of people thinking that it brought more losses than benefits (28%, 16 percentage points more than in 2009). A quarter of respondents think that the balance of costs and benefits is equal.



The social consequences of the post-1989 changes are evaluated through the lens of individual experience. A large section of the society (52%) think that the transition had no influence on their life or on their families. About a quarter (23%) consider themselves to be the beneficiaries of the change, while less than one-fifth (18%) think they lost. Even in 2009, when the evaluations of the transformation were the best so far, only about a third of Poles (30%) considered themselves to be the winners of the transition.

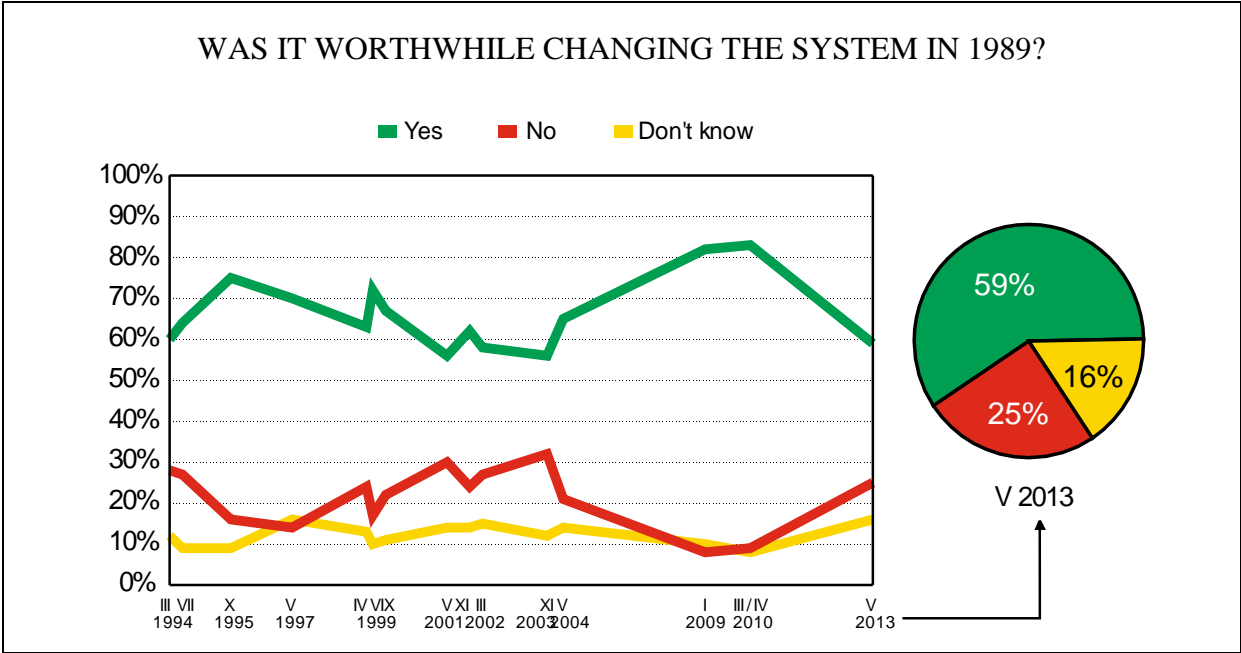


The majority (60%) think that the cost of the transformation was high, and some even think it was excessive (27%). Such opinions prevailed even in 2009, when the evaluation of the transformation was the best since 1989. At that time almost half of Poles thought the burden was worth bearing, while now they are more skeptical.



Among the groups who think that the costs of the transformation were too high considering its results are: the unemployed (41%) and, in general, people dissatisfied with the material living conditions of their households (38%). The view that the costs were excessive is frequently shared by people who were over 30 in 1989 (37%).

In spite of the criticism towards the result of the 1989 systemic transformation, Poles do not doubt that it was worthwhile implementing. Even when negative evaluation of its consequences prevailed, most respondents believed that the system should have been changed. At the end of the previous decade this view was almost universal. At present fewer people subscribe to it (59%), but they are still much more numerous than the respondents unconvinced about the need to change the system in 1989.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Was it worthwhile changing the system? Societal evaluation of the post-1989 transformation"*, June 2013. Fieldwork for national sample: May 2013, N=1101. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.