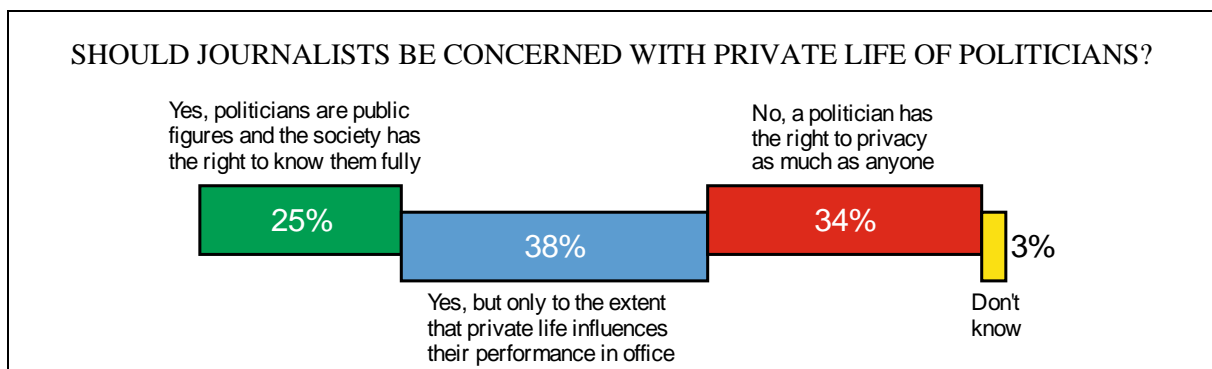
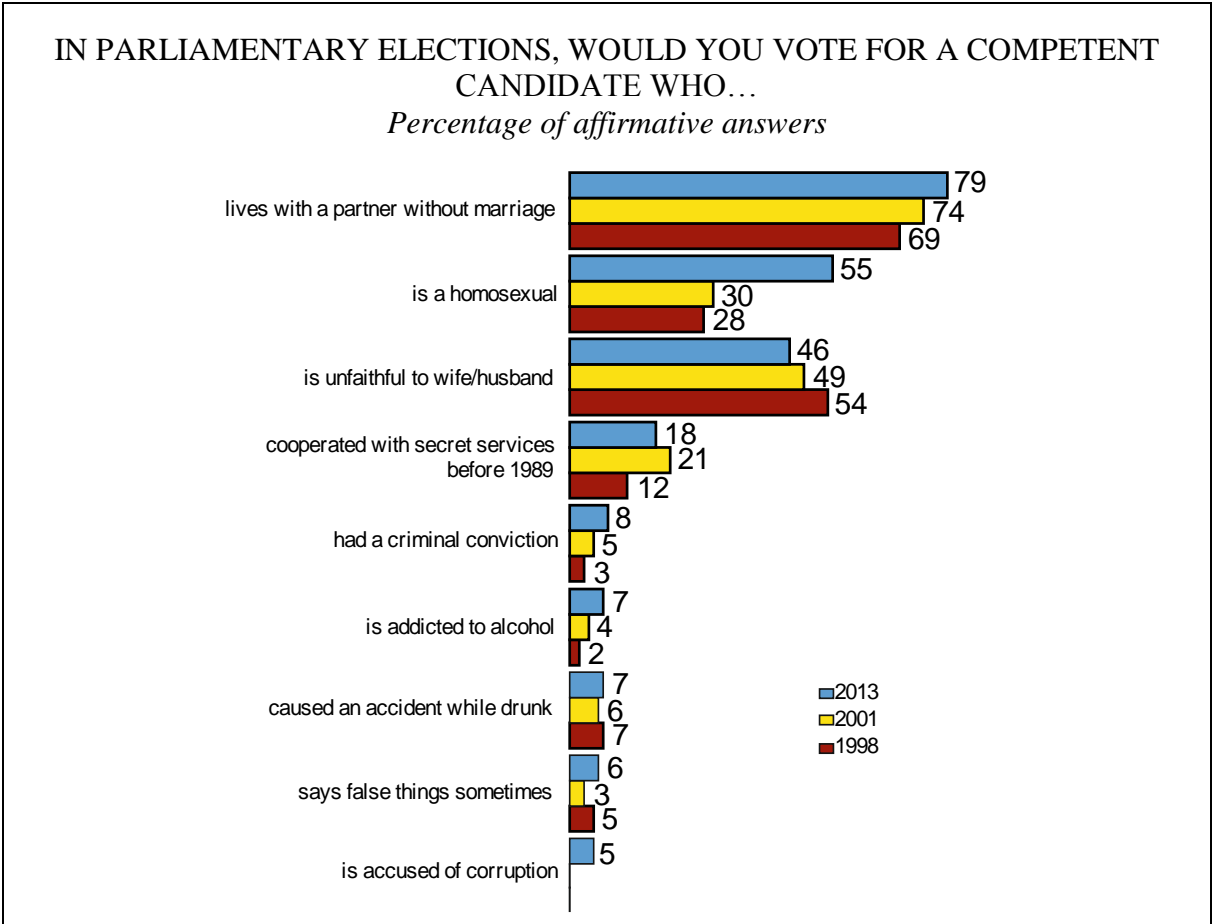


## ETHICS OF THE POLITICAL ELITE

Politicians are public figures and, as such, are under stricter social control, exercised by the mass media, among others. The scope of this control is regulated by ethical norms, rather than law, and the boundaries of journalists' access are not strictly delineated. The opinions in the society are divided. The prevailing view holds that journalists should not pry too much in the private life of political elites. About two-fifths of respondents (38%) share the view that facts from politicians' private life should be made public only to the extent that they influence their performance in office, and one-third (34%) think that they should not be disclosed at all. A quarter (25%) think that all facts about politicians, including private information, should be publically available due to the role they perform.



The study of norms and values show that a vast majority of Poles disapprove of marital infidelity, more than half do not accept homosexuality and one-third reject cohabitation without marriage. These attitudes are reflected in the expectations from politicians. Almost four-fifths would not mind voting for an unmarried candidate living with his or her partner. Over half do not care if a politician is homosexual or not. However, the opinions about infidelity are divided: almost as many respondents would support someone cheating on his or her spouse if they considered him or her a good candidate, as would reject such a person. The factors which disqualify a politician are: cooperation with the secret services during the pre-1989 period, criminal conviction, alcohol addiction or causing traffic accident under the influence of alcohol, perjury, and being suspected of corruption.



In recent years, the ethical evaluation of different aspects of politicians' life changed significantly. Informal relationships are increasingly accepted. Homosexuality is less controversial, too. On the other hand, infidelity is rejected more than before: fewer Poles would accept it in a candidate for a member of parliament.

The attitude to cooperation with secret services during the People's Republic changed only to a small extent. The proportion of persons who do not consider it an important factor is slightly larger than in the 1990s, but smaller than in 2001. With each poll, there is an increase in number of respondents ready to vote for a politician with a criminal record and for someone addicted to alcohol.

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More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Expectations from politicians: public functions and private life"*, August 2013. Fieldwork for national sample: August 2013, N=904. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.