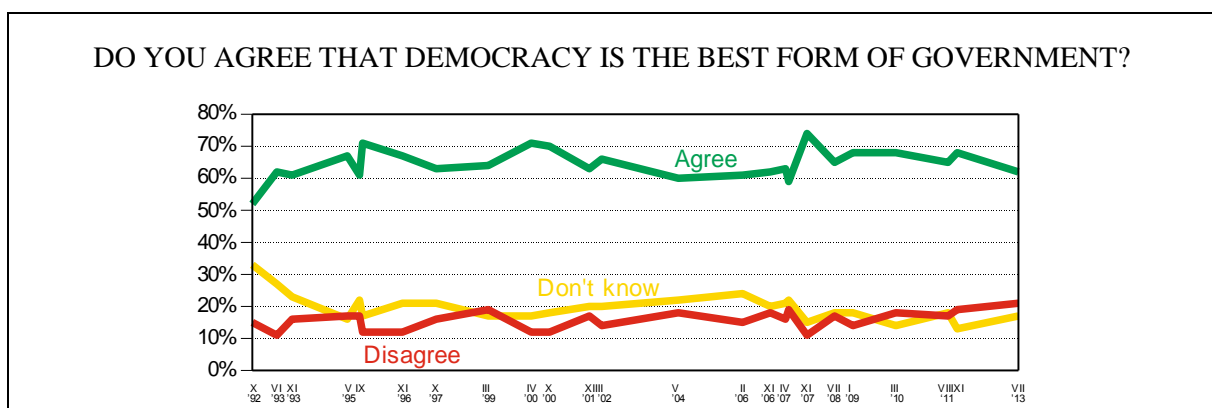


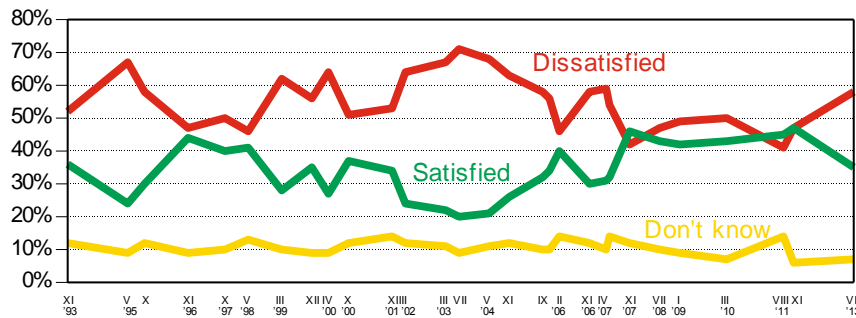
## ATTITUDE TO DEMOCRACY

Since the early 1990s, when attitudes to democracy started being measured, the majority consider it to be the best form of government. At present, over three-fifths (62%) believe it to be superior to other forms of rule. Attitudes to democracy are relatively stable, but some variation can be noted. In the last two years, the number of respondents unequivocally convinced about the superiority of democracy declined.



Although the majority consider democracy to be the best political system, the evaluation of its functioning in Poland is ambivalent and less positive. At present, almost three-fifths (58%) are dissatisfied with democratic practice. This means that, in the last two years, the criticism has increased markedly, which is probably a partial result of disenchantment with the current coalition government led by the Civic Platform.

## SATISFACTION WITH THE FUNCTIONING OF DEMOCRACY IN POLAND

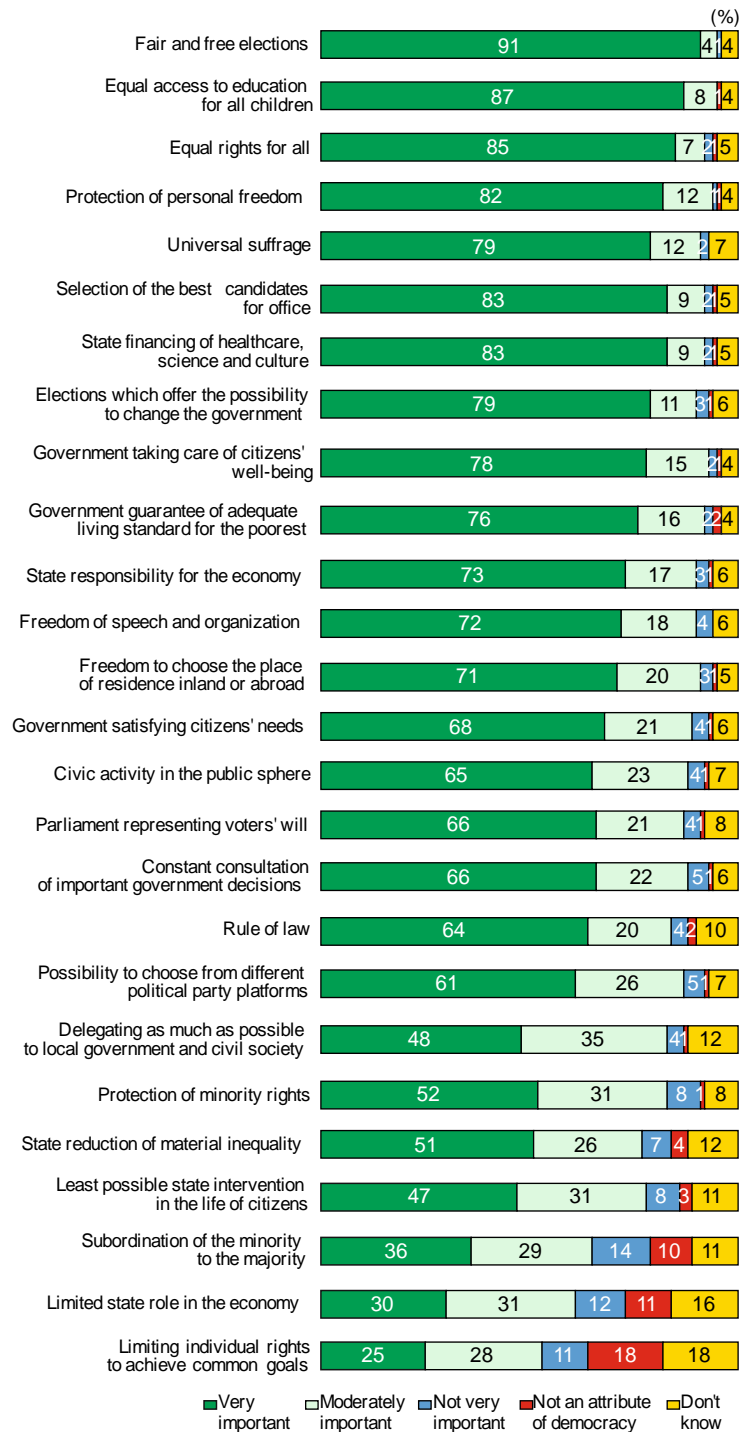


In the narrow sense, democracy means that there are competitive elections of political representatives. However, it is usually understood more broadly, as a set of socio-political values and norms. The attributes most commonly associated with democracy are: free and fair elections, universal suffrage, the possibility to replace the government and the selection of the best candidates for office. Respondents also mention different aspects of equality, both equal legal rights and equal access to education, as well as protection of personal freedom. The economic aspects of the functioning of the democratic state are considered as very important: state financing of healthcare, science and culture, protecting the well-being of citizens, providing adequate living standard for the poorest, and state responsibility for the economy. Seven in ten citizens consider it important for democracy to have guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom to organize and the liberty to choose the place of residence inland or abroad.

Two-thirds of Poles consider as fundamental for democracy such qualities as: government satisfying the needs of all citizens, constant social consultation of major policies, parliamentary representation of the will of voters, rule of law and civic activity in the public sphere. A slightly smaller group mention the possibility to choose between competing electoral party platforms.

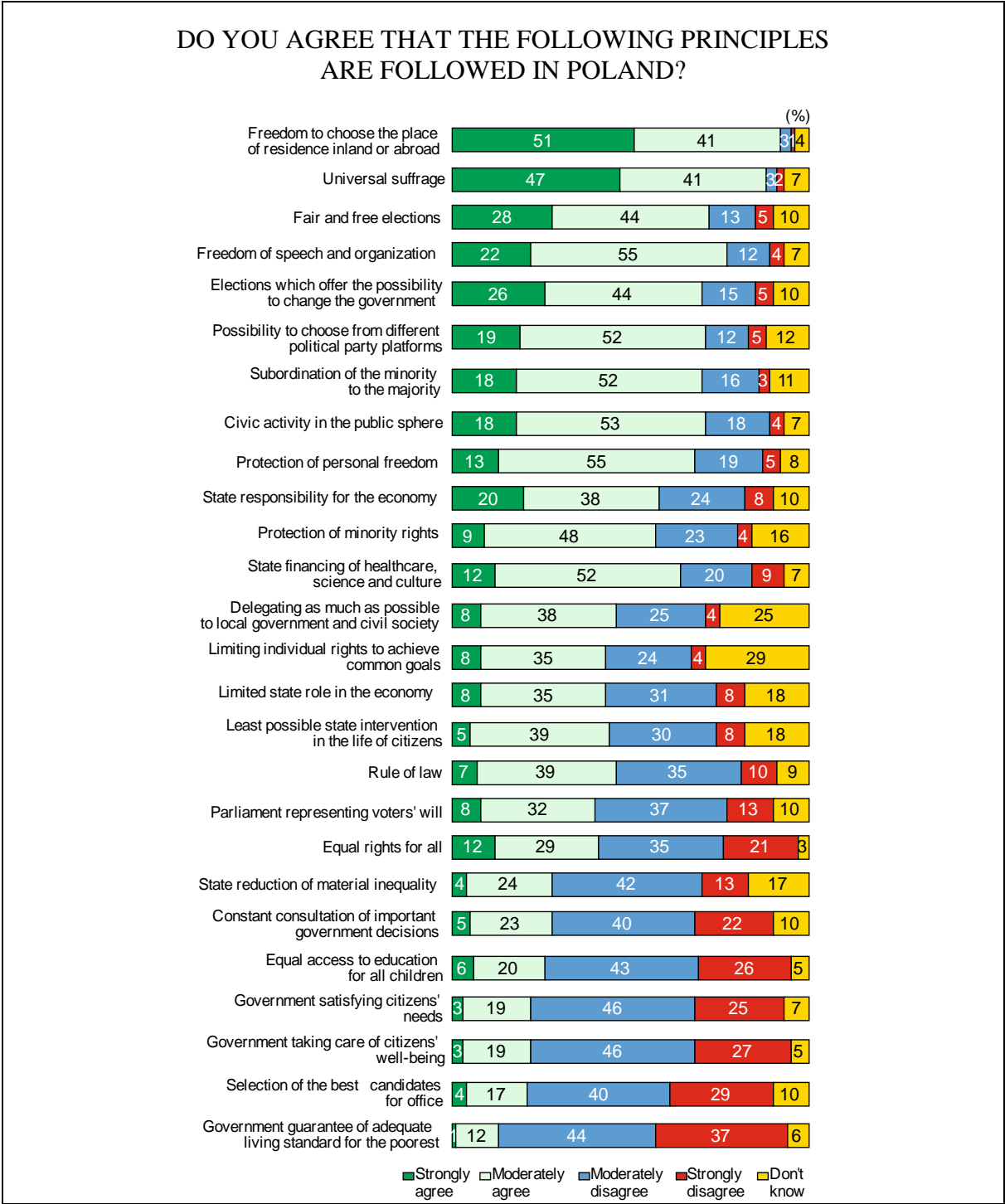
The aspects of democracy related to the constraints on the power of the state are seen as less important. They include such qualities as delegating as much as possible to the local government and reducing state intervention in the people's life and in the economy. Half of respondents consider as important the protection of minority rights and reducing inequality in living standard. If democracy implies restricting certain liberties, as in subordinating the minority to the will of the majority or the individual to the political community, it is far less frequently considered as crucial.

## WHICH ATTRIBUTES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE STATE TO BE CONSIDERED DEMOCRATIC?



In public opinion, some of the most important principles of the democratic system are reflected in reality. This applies in particular to guarantees of personal freedom, freedom of speech and organization, the procedural aspects of democracy (elections), and state responsibility for the economy.

The majority of respondents think that such fundamental democratic principles as representing voters' opinion by parliament and giving the citizens voice through public consultations are not fulfilled. Respondents tend to question the existence of equal rights for everyone, equal access to education, the qualifications of the ruling elites, government's concern about the well-being of all citizens, and for the poorest in particular.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Attitude to democracy", September 2013. Fieldwork for national sample: July 2013, N=1005. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.