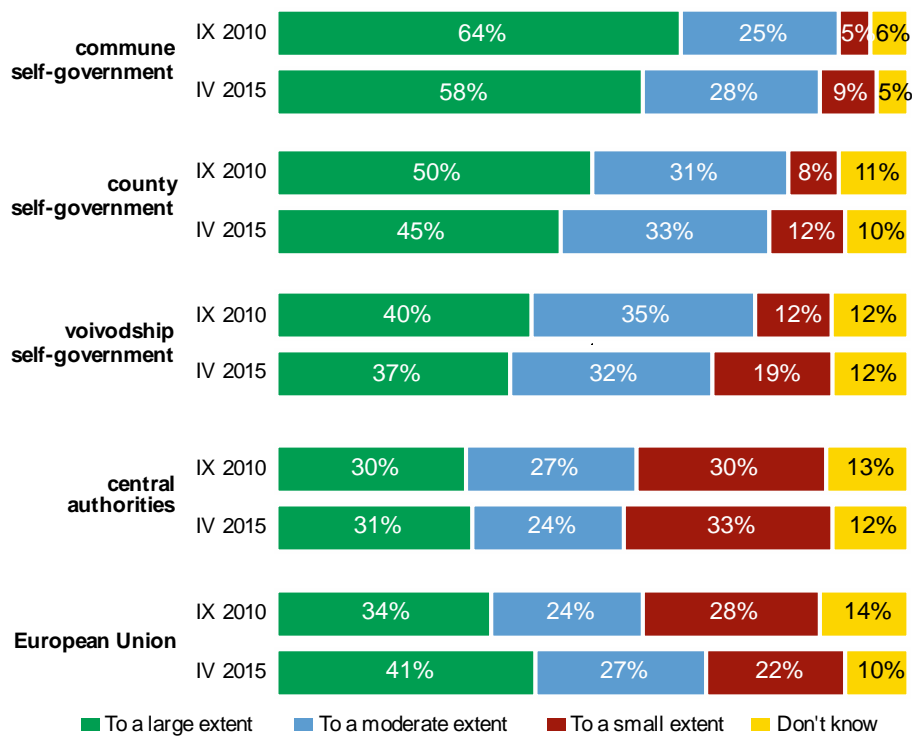


Social evaluation of local self-government

Twenty-five years ago, local self-government was restored by Sejm after an interval that lasted half a century. Soon afterwards, in May 1990, first elections to the commune (gmina) councils were held. In 1999, the reform of administration introduced three levels of local government: counties (powiat) were called into existence and the number of voivodships was reduced from 49 to 16. These changes, among others, were supposed to build civiness: engagement and self-organisation which would make it possible to diagnose and fulfil the needs of local communities.

To what extent does the development of your town or village depend on...

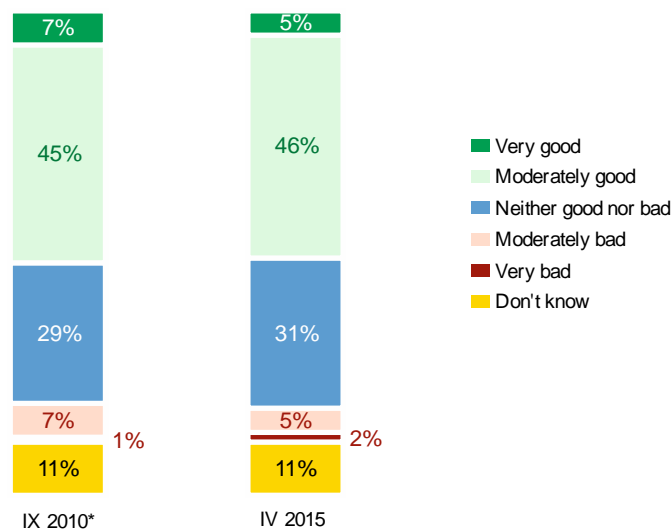


In public opinion, local situation depends on the lowest-level structures to the greatest extent, i.e. the commune. The role of county and voivodship self-government is seen as far

less important. The perceived role of central authorities is even less significant. It is interesting to note that, in public opinion, the European Union plays a bigger role in the development of the local Poland than the central government. It is probably related to changes related to the implementation of programs supported by EU funds, e.g. building infrastructure.

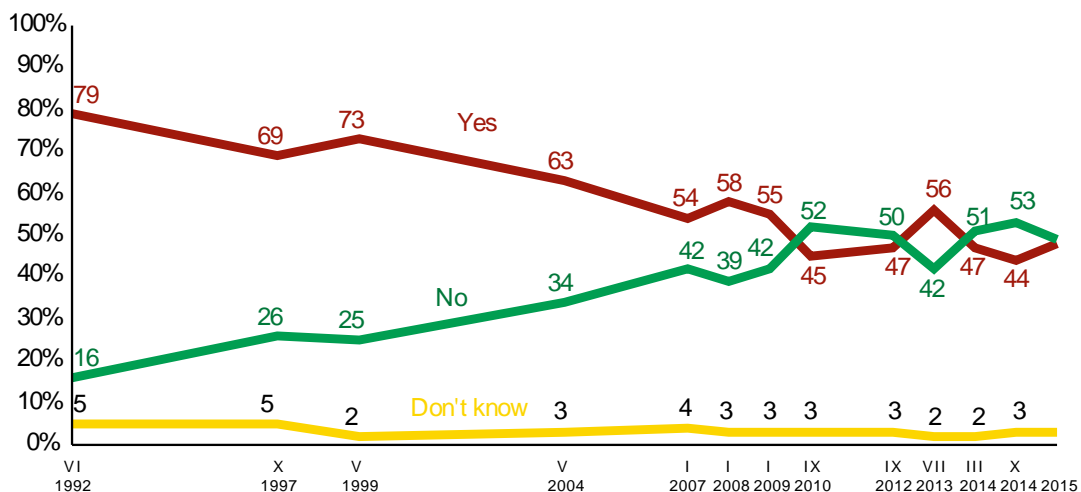
After 25 years of self-government, half of respondents have a positive opinion about its performance. One-third are ambivalent, and only a few evaluate it negatively.

How, on balance, do you evaluate the performance of local self-government?



In twenty years following the systemic change until the end of the first decade of 21st century, the subjective influence on local affairs strengthened. Since 2010, the proportion of respondents who think that people like them have influence on the affairs of their town or commune has remained stable. About half of respondents share this view.

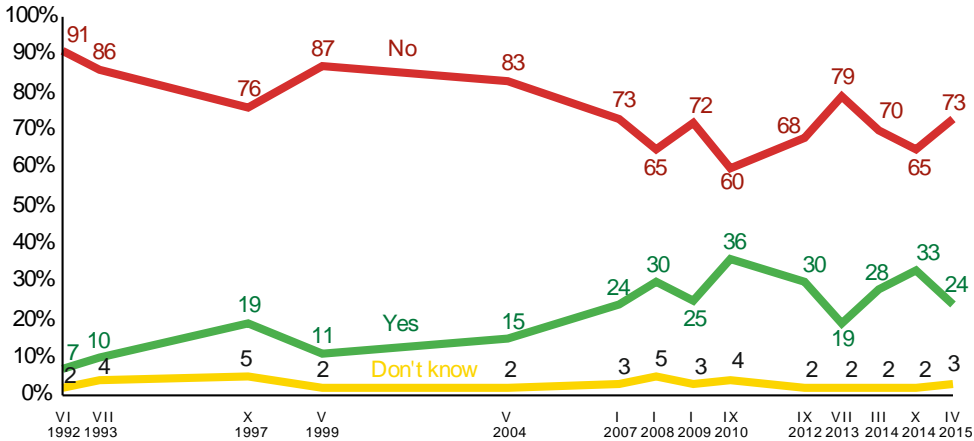
Do people like you have influence on the situation in your town or commune?



The strongest determinants of civic subjectivity are education and material standard of living. Wealthier and better-educated respondents are much more frequently convinced that their needs and opinions are important for local authorities. The feeling of civic agency is also stronger among youngest respondents (18 to 34 years old) and among residents of biggest cities with population of at least 500,000.

While a large group of Poles feel that they are able to influence the affairs of their town or commune, there remains widespread conviction about the lack of influence on the situation in Poland as a whole. Although opinions have greatly improved since the 1990s, the levels of this indicator of influence remain low. At present, a quarter (24%) of respondents are convinced that they have influence on the situation in Poland.

Do people like you have influence on the situation in Poland?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "25 years of civic state. Social evaluation of local self-government", May 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: April 2015; N=1027. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland