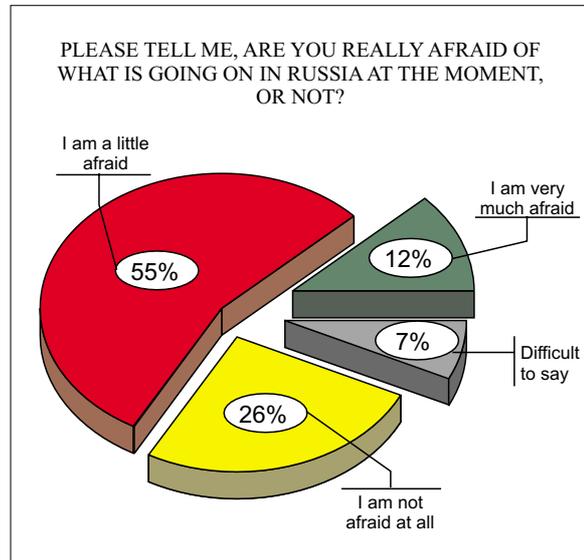


IN THIS ISSUE:

- ARE WE THREATENED BY THE RUSSIAN CRISIS?
- THE STATE AND THE MARKET
- BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY A PICTURE OF CHANGES IN POLES' ACTIVITIES DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS
- ABOUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL POLAND

ARE WE THREATENED BY THE RUSSIAN CRISIS?



Despite the geographical proximity of Russia and the importance of this country in the recent history of Poland, the anxiety raised by its economic collapse and other signs of crisis has been rather moderate so far. Only one in eight respondents claims that he/she is very much afraid of what is going on in Russia, while one in four does not feel any fears in connection with the Russian crisis.

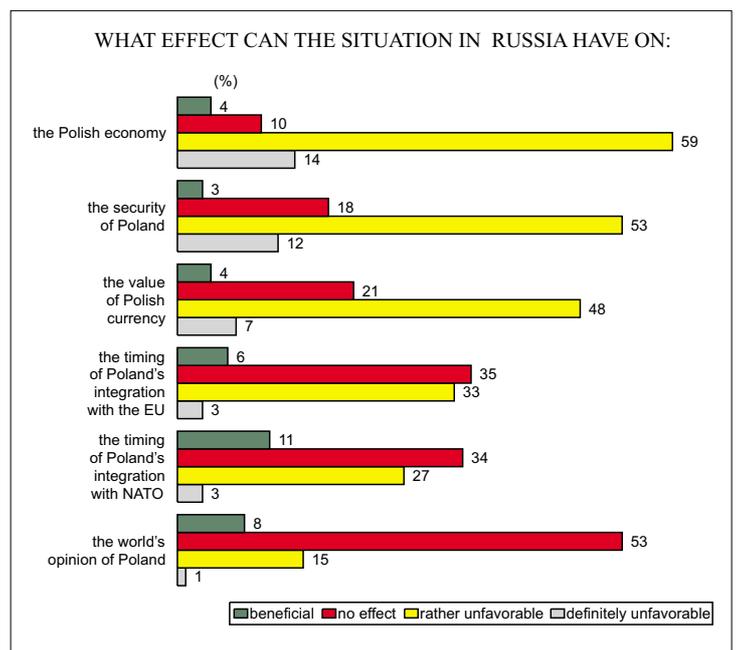
The respondents' opinions on the current situation of Poland on the international scene are a further proof of the fact that the ongoing crisis, which, to a greater or lesser extent, affects most countries beyond our Eastern border, does not cause major concern in our society. Compared to

the opinions expressed four months ago (i.e. in the period immediately preceding the Russian crisis), the group of respondents who believe that the international situation of Poland is the same as a year ago has grown. It means that during the Russian crisis only very few respondents can find reasons to believe that the situation has become worse.

Nevertheless, in the respondents' opinion the events currently taking place in Russia may have an adverse effect on certain aspects of our international situation. These aspects are primarily the state of our economy, as well as national security. A smaller group of respondents believe that it may delay the process of Poland's integration with the EU and NATO. Alternatively, one in nine respondents even expects that the situation in Russia may accelerate Poland's entry into NATO.

Comments on recent developments in Russia now and then include the hypotheses that the political and economic crisis may turn this country away from the process of building

democracy towards some kind of dictatorship. These fears have been common among Poles for a few years now the group of respondents who view this (pessimistic) prognosis as more realistic has always been larger than the group of those believing in Russia's progress towards democracy. However, while after the presidential elections in Russia a certain increase of optimism related to the transformation of this country has been observed, the present events stimulated a decrease in the number of optimists.



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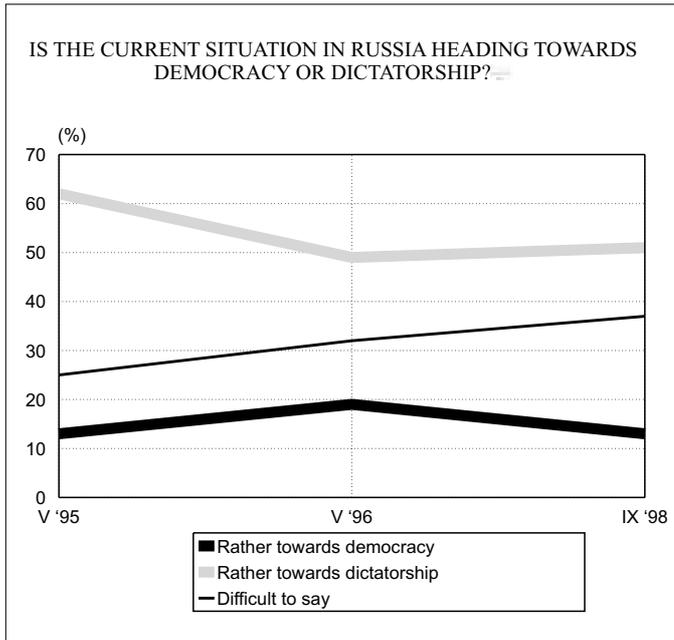
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More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report: "Poles on the Russian crisis", October '98.

THE STATE AND THE MARKET

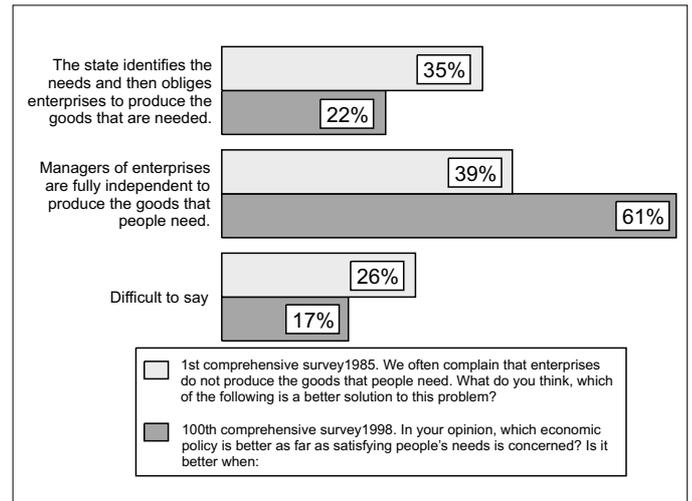
CBOS has recently executed its hundredth "comprehensive" survey, i.e. a survey of Poles' views and opinions on different, more or less up-to-date issues, which is usually conducted once a month. In order to celebrate this "internal" anniversary we decided to repeat one of the questions from the first such survey conducted in March/April 1985 in a slightly modified form.

We confronted our respondents with a dilemma that the so-called reformers, who were trying to improve the functioning of the centrally managed socialist economy, once faced. Who should decide what products and what quantities are to be produced by enterprises: the state and central authorities or the managers of particular companies on the basis of their own knowledge of the market and its needs?

The answers to these questions show that a certain evolution of social awareness has taken place, but they do not prove that the principles of the market economy are fully rooted in the minds of Poles. On the one hand, during the thirteen years following our first comprehensive survey, the percentage of respondents who believe in the superiority of the market economy over central planning has grown considerably. On the other hand, it is surprising that after almost ten years of free market economy in our country more than a fifth of respondents are still convinced that it is better when the state identifies people's needs and decides what particular enterprises should produce.

It seems that the belief in the effectiveness of the state as far as the identification of social needs is

concerned does not merely result from a nostalgia for the socialist past, because it is not directly related to the age of a respondent. This opinion is as common among the youngest respondents (up to the age of 24), who have grown up in the free market environment, as in the whole population. The belief discussed here is the most popular among persons approaching retirement (aged 55-64), residents of the smallest towns, less educated persons, those with the lowest incomes, working on their private farms or in the state sector. More than a third of farmers (34%) are convinced that the state should identify needs and then manage the economy accordingly.



It is possible that the present support for interventionism is a reaction to the state's withdrawal from interference in different spheres of social life. As a result of the reduction of the state's presence, many people have lost the feeling of safety. They feel particularly lonely, left to their own devices and exposed to the rules of the market economy, understood as the law of the jungle. Therefore, despite the memories of constant shortages of goods and the permanent economic crisis which was a part of the so-called real socialism, a large part of the Polish society still misses the state control of life, including the economic aspects. It should be stressed, however, that apart from this group, a large majority of Poles value the market economy and believe that the market offers the best ways of identifying people's needs and satisfying them.

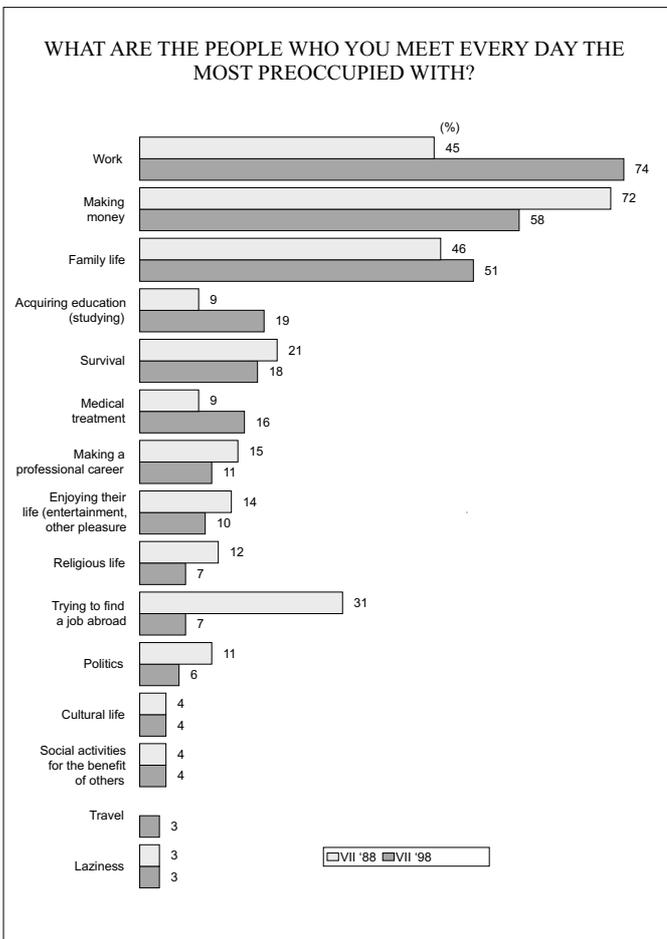
More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The state and the market Poles' views after 13 years", October '98.

BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY A PICTURE OF CHANGES IN POLES' ACTIVITIES DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS

Poles' own views of their activities are dominated by two basic spheres of life family and work. Taking care about health, making money, and the sphere referred to as

"survival" occupy further positions. Other spheres of life, including as important as gaining education or religious life, are nothing more than a background. According to respondents, cultural or social activities are marginal spheres of their life. In spite of fundamental political, economic and social changes which have taken place during the last ten years, the self-portrait of Poles' activities remains stable.

More interesting changes can be observed in the "portrait" of Poles' activities, i.e. a picture derived from an analysis of a projective question concerning Poles in general. Having compared the answers with opinions expressed ten years ago one may say that Poles now devote more of their energy to professional work and study. Education, which in 1988 was hardly ever mentioned, has now become one of the most important elements of activity. At the same time, activities aimed solely at making money, ten years ago considered to have the highest priority by Poles, have lost their top position.



The last decade has also brought a considerable increase of professional aspirations and a slightly smaller increase of aspirations connected with education. At the same time the importance of aspirations related to social status and financial situation, as well as those connected with housing conditions, has decreased significantly. As compared to 1988, the percentage of Poles whose desires

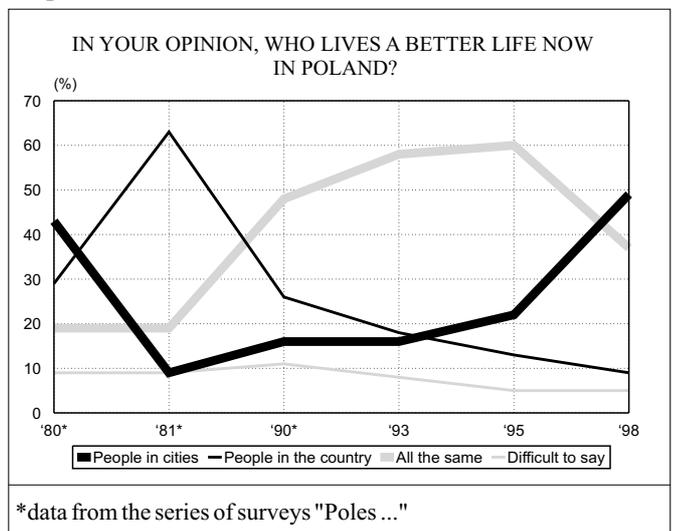
and aims for the next 5-10 years are limited to private and family life has dropped.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Self-portrait of the social environment of Poles in 1988 and 1998", October '98.

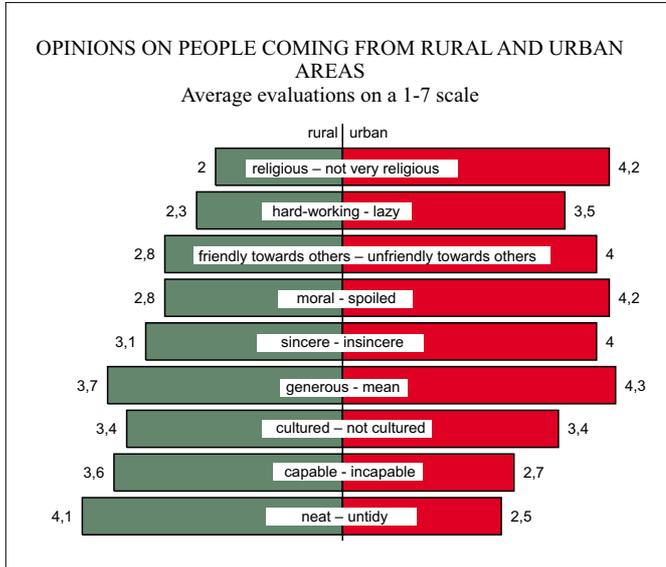
ABOUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL POLAND

According to demographic data, the majority of Polish society has its roots in rural areas. Over half of Poles come from peasant families. 57% of respondents acknowledge their rural origin, compared to 43% of those who declare that they come from urban areas. However, as a result of post-war processes of urbanization and migrations most Poles now live in cities. Residents of rural areas make up over 37% of our respondents, compared to almost 63% of city dwellers, which is roughly consistent with the proportion of rural and urban population in Poland. Further analysis of this data reveals that the vast majority of those living in the country (90%) were born there, while only 63% of the adult population of cities actually come from cities. The percentage of persons coming from rural areas is the highest in the smallest towns (up to 20,000).

The perception of living conditions in cities and in the country has changed fundamentally during the last three years. Three years ago the opinion that life is the same everywhere, regardless of the place of residence, prevailed. Now, to the contrary, the majority opinion is that the standard of living is higher in cities. The feeling of a relative deterioration of living conditions in rural areas is accompanied by the growing conviction that rural Poland is being neglected by the central authorities. The opinion that rural Poland is not vulnerable to crises is less frequent than a few years ago, but still shared by most respondents.



In the opinion of most respondents, residents of rural areas have fewer possibilities of achieving a high social position than those who come from cities. The reason for this is their place of residence. Similarly, their opportunities to develop personal talents and interests or acquire education are smaller.

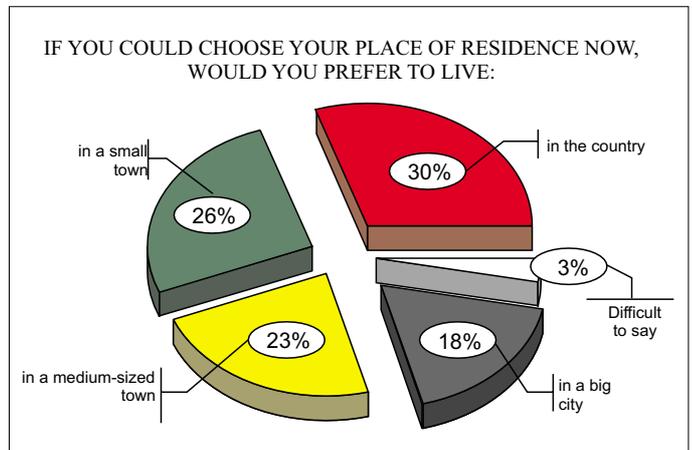


The cultural stereotype of rural Poland is deeply rooted and remains stable. In the respondents' opinion, the countryside means respect for tradition and Polish customs. Furthermore, it is not associated with underdevelopment and ignorance any longer. The social portrait of a person living in the country exhibits virtues making up the traditional peasant ethos: religiousness, moral principles, hard work. Those who live in rural areas are also perceived to be better as far as relationships with other people are concerned. According to respondents, they are characterized by such virtues as a friendly attitude

towards others, sincerity and generosity to a greater extent than city dwellers. The portrait of residents of urban areas is less positive. Such characteristics as taking care of one's own interests and the ability to succeed are among the more distinctive features of this portrait.

Expressions such as "healthy lifestyle" and "daily effort and hard work" are associated by respondents with rural life more than with urban life. On the other hand, such expressions as "nerves and rus" and "interesting life" are in their opinion more suitable to describe urban life. "Uncertainty of the future and what the next day will bring" is in the respondents' opinion equally characteristic of rural and urban life.

It is interesting that despite the differences in opinions on the difficulties and conditions of rural life, over half of Poles would prefer to live in the country or at least in a small town if they could choose. Only less than one in five would choose a big city.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The social perception of rural Poland", October '98.

In addition to the bulletins referred to above, the following have been published recently:

- Interest in local, national and international issues
- Information policy of the government
- Summer holidays '98
- Opinions on the tax system
- Parents' expenses on the education of school-aged children
- Savings and purchases
- Political party preferences after the local elections
- Trust in politicians in September
- Political party preferences in September
- Evaluation of the activity of selected public institutions
- Reactions to the events connected with President Clinton's affair
- Social moods after summer holidays
- Poles on the elections to local self-government
- Opinions on the government

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