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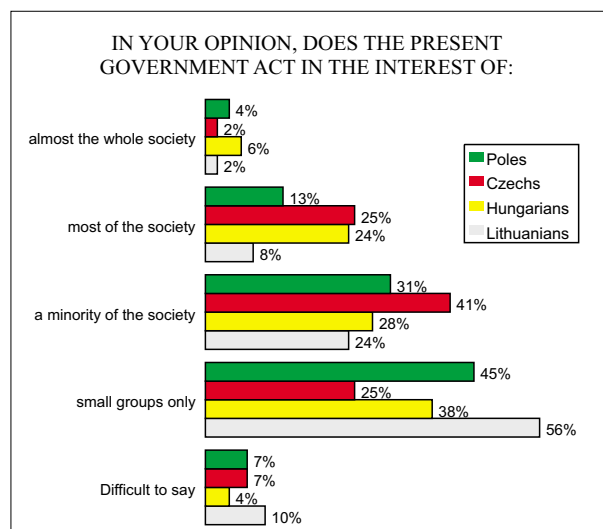
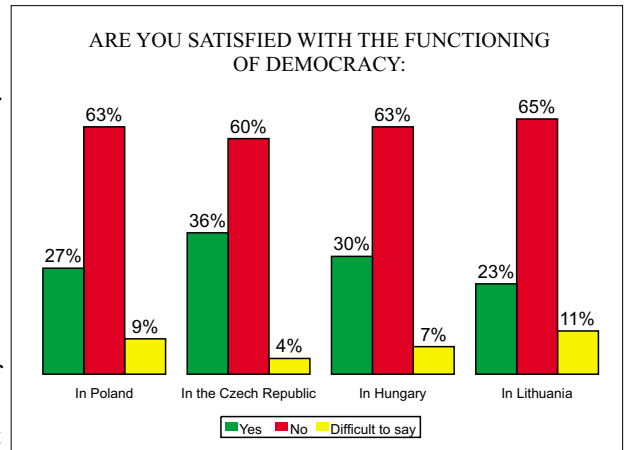
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OUR DEMOCRACIES

The change of the political system in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania took place roughly at the same time. The way of these Central European countries to democracy was similar, although due to their different political tradition, as well as a different starting point (Lithuania was not an independent state until 1991) we cannot say that it was the same.

After ten years of democracy, dissatisfaction with the functioning of this system prevails among the citizens of all four countries. One can say that in each of these countries expectations associated with the change of the system were higher than the chances for their fulfilment.



The Czechs are relatively the most satisfied with their democracy. The current functioning of the democratic system gained the least acceptance in Lithuania.

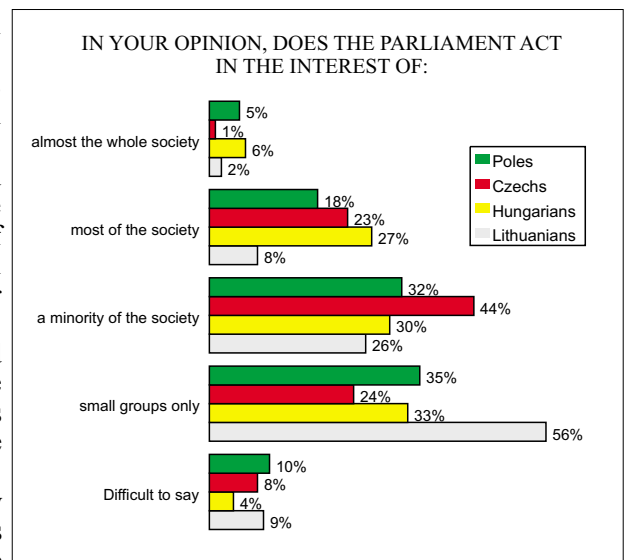
The governments of the countries discussed here are not evaluated positively, either. None of the cabinets was regarded by the public opinion as acting in the interest of most citizens. The feeling that the interests of ordinary citizens are not represented by the state administration is the strongest in Lithuania and Poland. Over half of the Lithuanians believe that the government of Andrius Kubilius acts in the interest of some social groups only. 45% of Poles think the same about Jerzy Buzek's government. The

governments of Victor Orban in Hungary and Milos Zeman in the Czech Republic are evaluated relatively better.

The legislatures are evaluated similarly to the governments. The representativeness of the parliament is evaluated relatively the highest in Hungary.

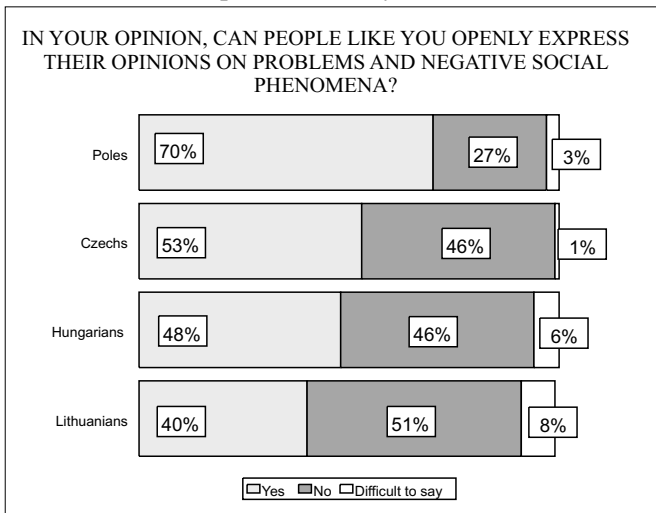
Local authorities are identified as institutions much closer to the citizens. 51% of the Czechs and 52% of Hungarians believe that the local authorities act in the interest of most or almost all residents of the country. Almost two-fifths of Poles (39%) and one-third of Lithuanians (32%) share this opinion. Of the four countries compared here, Lithuanians have the worst opinion on their local authorities.

Dissatisfaction with democracy and a feeling that the citizens' interests are poorly represented both by the



executive and legislative authorities are associated with a low level of perceived influence of citizens on the affairs of the state. In all countries discussed here most respondents do not believe that ordinary people can have influence on solving general problems that their countries face. The Hungarians (17%) and Poles (13%) feel that they are able to influence the way the problems of the society as a whole are solved a little more frequently than the Lithuanians and Czechs (7%). The influence of citizens on local affairs is evaluated a little higher. The feeling of having influence on local affairs is the strongest in Poland (39%). It is a little less common in Hungary (35%) and the Czech Republic (30%). The citizens' participation in power on the local level is evaluated the lowest in Lithuania (17%).

People cannot feel that they have influence on the way their country is ruled unless they are able to express their individual opinions on difficult problems and negative sides of social life. The citizens of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania evaluate the situation in this respect differently.



The Poles and Hungarians evaluate their freedom of expression the highest. The residents of Hungary and Lithuania evaluate their possibilities in this respect less optimistically.

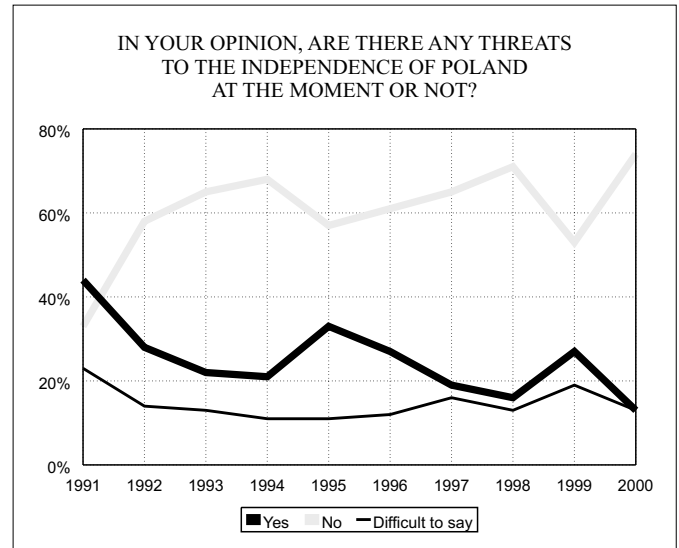
More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS reports "Evaluation of the functioning of democracy in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania", "The state and the citizens' interests in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania", June 2000. Surveys in other countries were conducted by: IVVM in the Czech Republic, TARKI in Hungary, VILMORUS in Lithuania.

OPINIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION OF POLAND

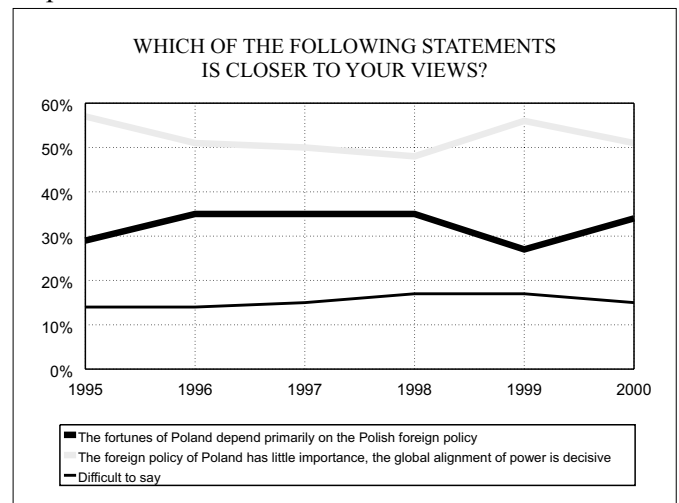
Almost half of Poles (45%) believe that the position of Poland on the international scene is stable. At the same time, after a temporary decrease during the intervention in Kosovo last year, the percentage of those who believe that our country is safe increased to the highest level ever recorded (74%).

In the group of persons who notice the threats to our independence Russia was most frequently mentioned

as a potential source of threat (it was indicated by 6% of all respondents). 2% of all respondents regard Germany as a potential source of such a threat. Other neighbours of Poland were only occasionally mentioned in this context. It should be noted that a relatively small, but noticeable group of respondents (4%) regard a loss of economic independence as the greatest threat to the sovereignty of our country. They mention selling out the national property, too large inflow of foreign capital and growing economic dependence on the West.

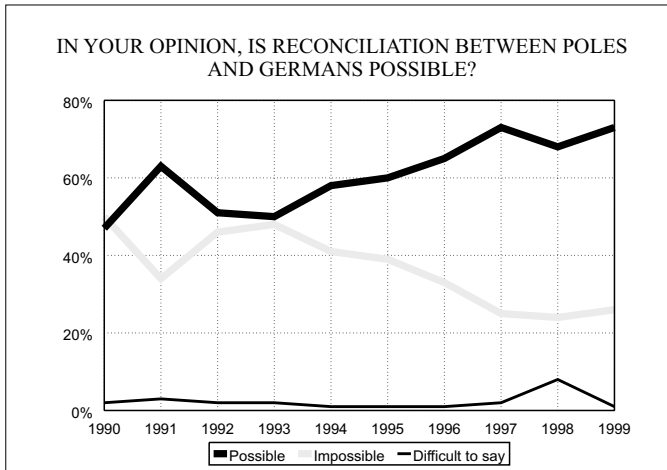


In spite of the fact that respondents generally do not see any threats to the independence of our country, most of them share the opinion that the Polish foreign policy does not sufficiently protect our interests (44% of critical opinions). At the same time, over half of respondents believe that our possibilities in this respect are very limited anyway, as the fortunes of Poland depend primarily on the global alignment of power and the policy of the successive governments of Poland is much less important.

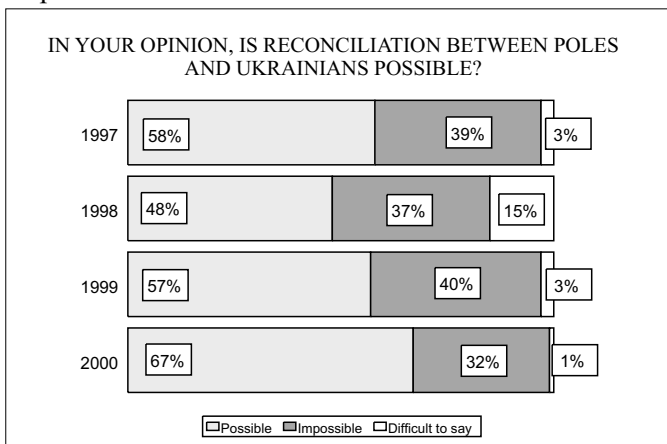


Polish current relations with three largest neighbours: Germany, Russia and Ukraine are particularly affected by the recent history. At the same time, permanent Polish-German and Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, as well as friendly and equal relations with Russia, are crucial for the future of these countries.

According to the surveys conducted to date, for a few years now Poles have seen Germany as one of the most desirable partners not only in the field of economy and politics, but also in the military area. At the same time, after a short period of slight decline, the number of those who believe that Polish-German reconciliation is possible is growing again.



The future of Polish-Ukrainian relations is perceived less optimistically, but still the opinion that reconciliation is possible prevails. It should be noticed that the difference between the evaluations of the future Polish-German and Polish-Ukrainian relations is gradually shrinking since 1997, when we first asked our respondents about Polish-Ukrainian relations.



Despite the fears that Russia will try to regain influence in our region, a definite majority of respondents (69%) believe that friendly and equal relations with Russia are possible. Less than one-third of respondents (29%) doubt that.

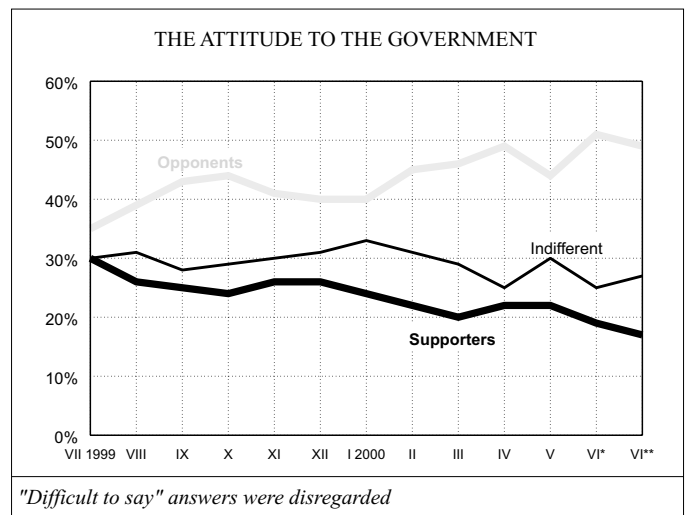
More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The situation of Poland on the international scene in the public opinion", June 2000.

ABOUT THE OLD AND NEW GOVERNMENT OF JERZY BUZEK

The government formed by the AWS-UW coalition, which ruled until recently, was in power longer

than any other Polish cabinet after 1989. At the same time, during the final stage of its functioning, it obtained the worst and longest-lasting evaluations of all governments. What was the reason for such bad opinions on that government? The most frequently indicated mistakes of the AWS-UW government concern systemic reforms: the reform of the public school system, health care and pension system. In the respondents' opinion, these reforms were badly prepared or implemented in a too large dose. The reform of the public health service obtained by far the worst evaluations.

As many as 44% of respondents said that they could not see any achievements of Jerzy Buzek's government. Another 23% were unable to indicate any achievements of that government. Only one-third of respondents were able to indicate achievements that they regarded as undisputed success of the government. The most frequently indicated ones are the entry of Poland into NATO and the launch of system reforms. However, generally the reforms were treated as a failure twice as frequently than as a success. On the whole, the number of respondents who indicated mistakes and failures of Jerzy Buzek's government was more than two and a half times as big as the number of those who pointed to its achievements.

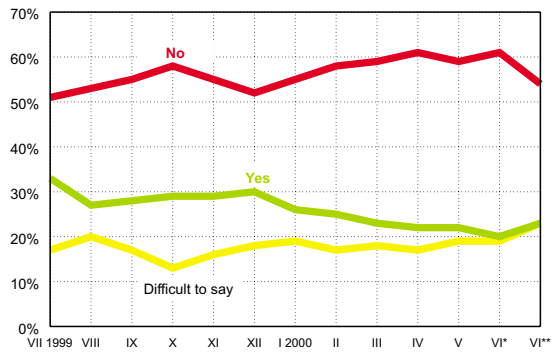


"Difficult to say" answers were disregarded

The break-up of the AWS-UW coalition and the formation of a minority government by the AWS alone has not as yet brought any changes in the public opinion. The level of support for the new government is similar to the support for the previous coalition government. At the same time, the evaluations of Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek have improved a little and the number of persons who do not accept him as the Prime Minister has decreased.

Less than one-third of respondents (30%) expect that the present minority government will survive until next autumn, i.e. until the end of the full four-year term of the Parliament. Over two-fifths predict a shorter life of the cabinet - namely until next spring (17%) or even until the end of the year 2000 (another 26%). Only one in nine respondents would be disappointed and one-third would be satisfied, if the AWS government resigned. In the opinion of almost half of respondents (47%), the best solution for Poland would be to hold early parliamentary elections. Only 7% regard the formation of a minority government as a good solution in current situation.

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE FACT THAT JERZY BUZEK IS THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT?

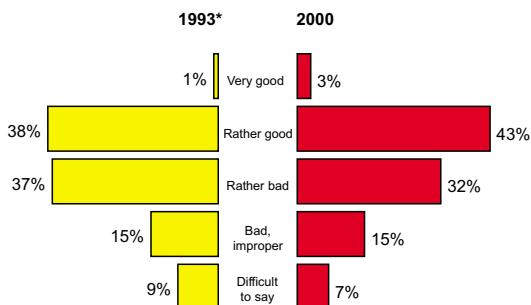


More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report: "The achievements and failures of the AWS-UW coalition government", "The attitude to the minority AWS government", June 2000.

THE ATTITUDE TO DISABLED PERSONS

The number of those who believe that most Poles treat disabled persons well is more or less equal to the number of those who believe that the disabled are usually treated badly. However, the respondents perceive prevailing social attitude to disabled persons as better than seven years ago.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF MOST PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY TOWARDS THE DISABLED?

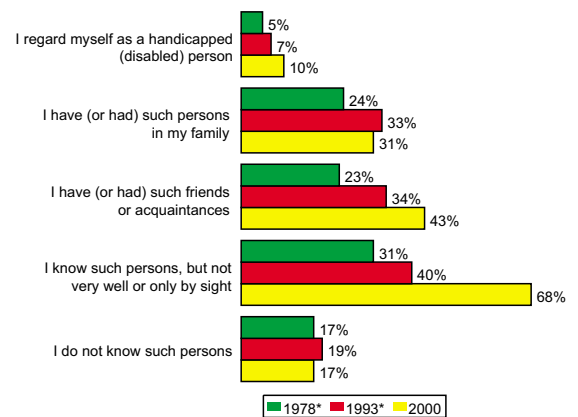


*Research conducted in CBOS by Antonina Ostrowska. Polish Academy of Sciences

Integration of disabled persons with the rest of the society is accepted by more Poles now than a few years ago. Now more frequently than in the past respondents are against the establishment of special workplaces for the disabled. Most believe that this problem should be solved by creating positions for disabled workers in ordinary workplaces.

In the respondents' opinion, the disabled should be supported and taken care of in everyday life by their families in the first place (93%), then by medical staff (74%) and social workers (71%). Friends and acquaintances (25%) and religious organisations (14%) were mentioned less frequently. Over two-thirds of respondents (69%) declared their willingness to help a disabled neighbour. However, only a small percentage (6%) said that they actually provided such help.

HAVE YOU MET ANY HANDICAPPED PERSONS, PERSONS DISABLED AS A RESULT OF ILLNESS OR ANY OTHER OCCURRENCE?



*Research conducted in CBOS by Antonina Ostrowska. Polish Academy of Sciences

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The attitudes towards the disabled", June 2000.

Acknowledgement

The data concerning public attitudes to the European Union, presented in "Polish Public Opinion", May 2000, are from the surveys conducted by IVVM (Czech Republic), TARKI (Hungary), VILMORUS (Lithuania), CBOS (Poland) and KIIS (Ukraine). The editors apologise for omitting this information in the May issue.

In addition to the bulletins referred to above, the following have been published recently (in Polish):

- Portraits of presidential candidates
- Opinions on trade unions
- Evaluation of the functioning of the health care reform
- Support for presidential candidates at the beginning of the election campaign
- Four reforms in the social opinion
- Candidates in the presidential elections: negative electorates, election alternatives, the hypothetical second round
- Social moods during the AWS-UW coalition crisis
- Opinions on trade unions
- Opinions on the results of the state administration reform

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