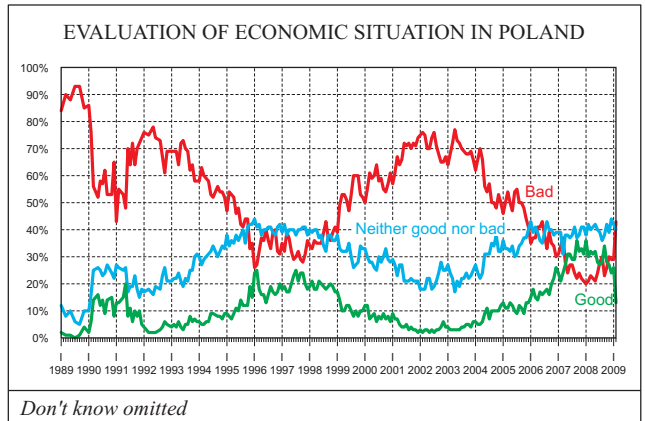


CONTENTS:

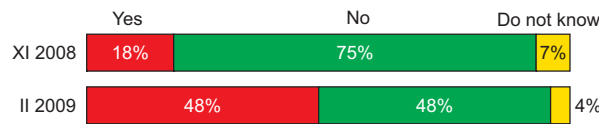
- REACTIONS TO ECONOMIC CRISIS
- OPINIONS ABOUT THE PERIOD 1989-2009
- OPINIONS ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM IN EUROPE
- EVALUATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT

REACTIONS TO ECONOMIC CRISIS

The Polish people have understood the magnitude of the global economic crisis and they have begun to worry about its consequences for this country. In January, the social mood was still good, but in recent weeks it has deteriorated significantly. In February, both the general evaluation of the situation in Poland and the evaluation of the economy deteriorated. There are more pessimists than in January, as



HAVE YOU OR YOUR HOUSEHOLD EXPERIENCED CONSEQUENCES OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS?



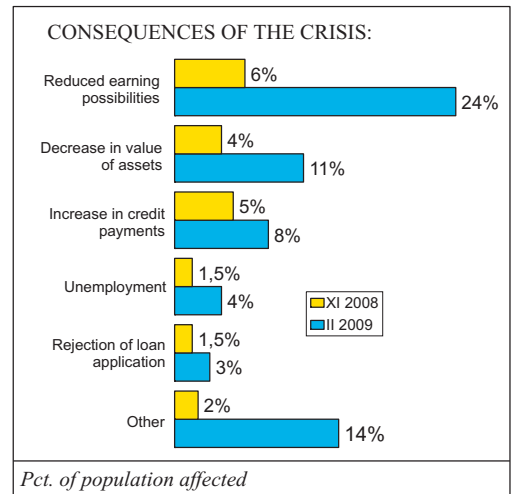
far as the economic prospects for this year are concerned.

Although the drop is probably due to the spreading knowledge about the consequences of economic slowdown in Poland and around the world, and not to

change in living conditions, some effects on the individual level have already been experienced.

More and more people admit that they have felt the effects of the global financial and economic crisis. At present, about half of all adults admit experiencing its consequences. Three months ago less than one in five did.

The most commonly mentioned consequence of the crisis is the diminishing of earning possibilities and, in consequence, a drop of income. In the last three months, the number of people noting this effect has increased four-fold. The second most commonly mentioned effect is the drop in value of assets, e.g. stock or investment fund. Compared with Nov. 2008, there has been a three-fold growth. This rise in credit payments is less noticeable, probably due to the fact that increased payments are tied primarily to loans denominated in foreign currency.



The most frequent defensive strategy in the present situation is the reduction of expenses. Every fifth respondent (21%) declares that he or she cancelled a purchase requiring significant expense due to the information about the global crisis. In the last three months, the popularity of this measure increased two times. One in nine adult Poles (11%, almost two times more than in Nov. 2008) resigned from taking a loan for fear of not being able to pay it back. The other actions taken to alleviate the effects of the crisis were mentioned less often, and their frequency has not increased since Nov. 2008.

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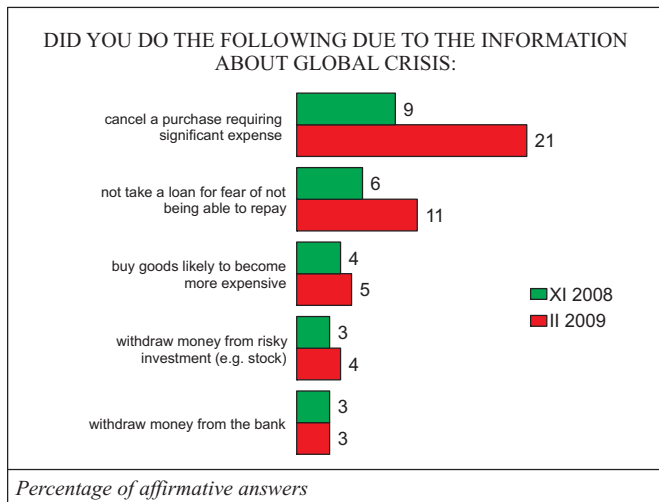
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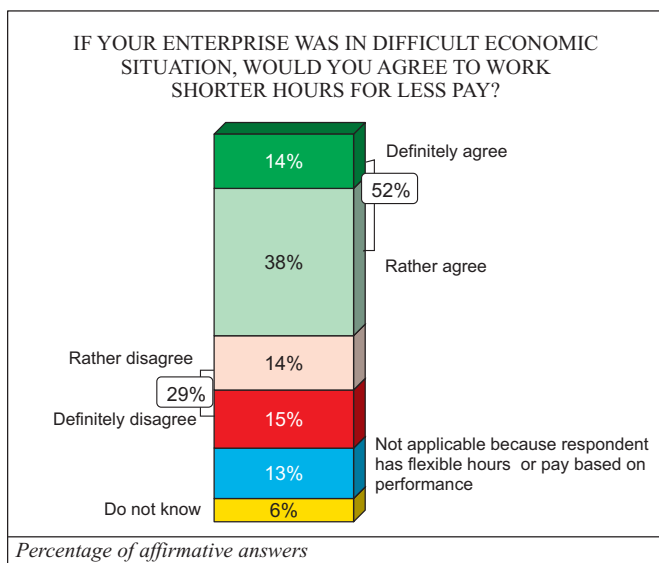
Translated by
Michał Wenzel

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Unemployment has started to grow. In connection with that, the government is planning to reform the labour law to allow for greater working time flexibility in enterprises. Temporary reduction in working hours would be associated with the proportional reduction in pay. Most employees with fixed working time would agree to work shorter hours for less pay if the enterprise found itself in difficult economic conditions.



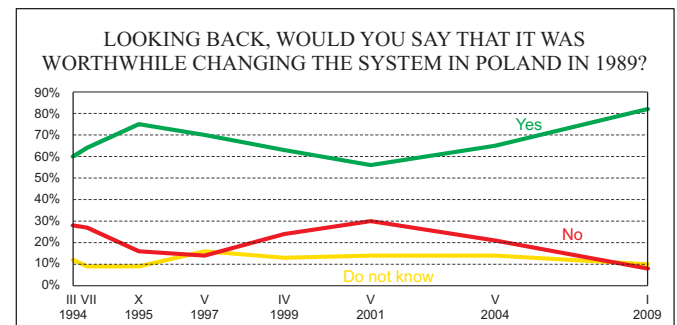
More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish *Reactions to Economic Crisis*, Feb. 2008. Fieldwork: Feb. 2008, N=1048. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

OPINIONS ABOUT THE PERIOD 1989-2009

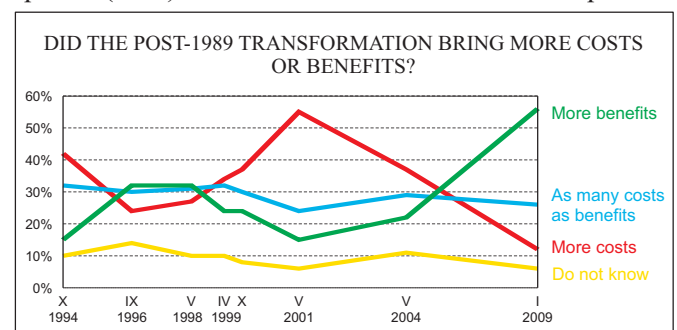
Twenty years ago the systemic transformation in Poland began. In Feb. 1989, the Round Table negotiations between the representatives of the government and opposition were started. The agreement between the government and the opposition paved way for the

removal of the Polish United Workers' Party from power, the formation of the first non-communist government in Central and Eastern Europe, and implementation of political and economic reforms. The difficulties associated with the initial phase of the transformation (the collapse of many enterprises, the emergence of unemployment, which was unknown until then, and high inflation) caused the initial enthusiasm for change to subside quickly. Although the Polish people never doubted the sense of systemic transformation, the cost-and-benefit balance was not always positive in public opinion.

Twenty years after transformation started, the acceptance of systemic change in Poland is higher than ever before, starting from the first half of the 1990s. Over four-fifths of all Poles (82%) are convinced that it was worthwhile changing the system 20 years ago. Only 8% are dissatisfied with the fact that that the political system was changed.



For the first time in our research, a majority of Poles (56%) believe that in the systemic transformation benefits outweighed the costs, while in the opinion of 12% the overall balance is negative. Slightly more than a quarter (26%) believe that costs and benefits are equal.

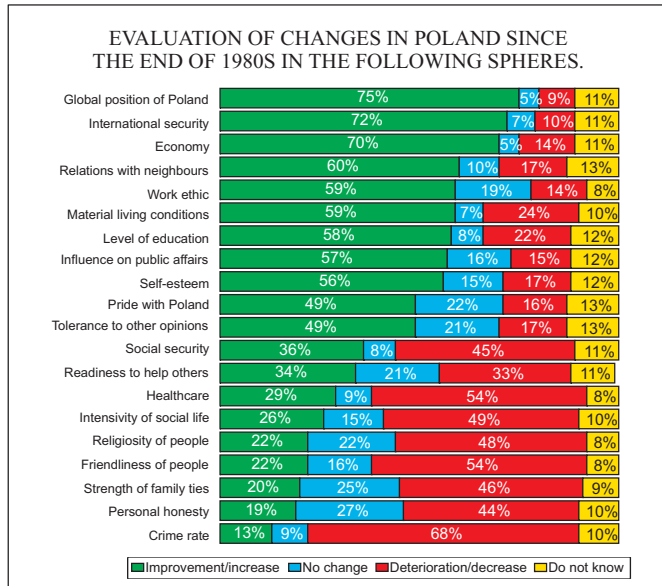


The record level of satisfaction with systemic transformation is probably due to the fact that a large number of Poles have experienced an improvement in their living conditions in recent years. In Jan. 2009, the evaluation of material living conditions was the highest ever recorded.

In the public opinion, systemic transformation had positive effects in some, but not all, spheres of life. Respondents think that the international situation of

Poland greatly improved: its global position, security, and relations with its neighbours. The state of the economy and material living conditions have improved in the last 20 years. The public opinion believes that, as a nation, we work harder and we are better educated. We also have more influence on public affairs. Another commonly mentioned effect of the change is the improved self-esteem and increased pride in our country.

The perceived changes for the worse are in the spheres of public safety, interpersonal relations and religiosity.

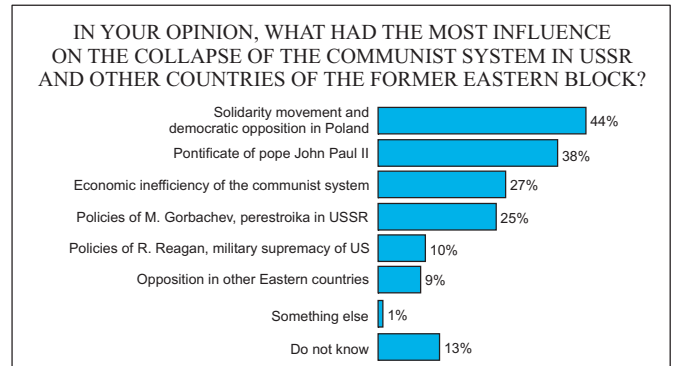


More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in *Polish Opinions About the Period 1989-2009 and 1989-2009: Evaluation of Different Dimensions of Social and Political Transformation in Poland*, Feb. 2008. Fieldwork: Jan. 2008, N=1089. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

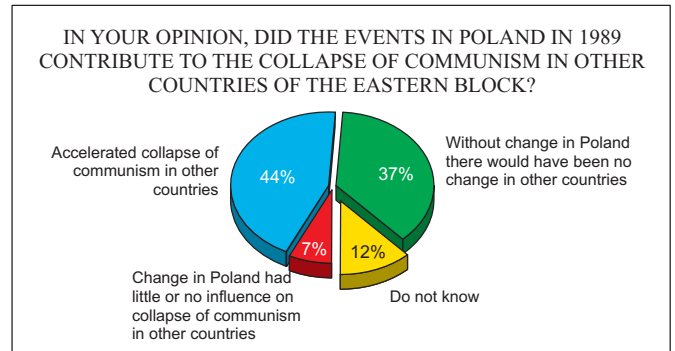
OPINIONS ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM IN EUROPE

The Polish history of the last centuries is, for a large part, a history of failed attempts to liberate the country from foreign influence and regain independence. The 1989 transformation and the appreciation of the achievement of Poland since then have enabled the Polish people, more than at any time before, to feel the subjects of history, co-authors of democratic changes not only in Poland, but in the whole of this part of Europe. In Polish public opinion, the activity of the Solidarity movement and the pontificate of pope John Paul II decided about the collapse of communism and subsequent events in Central and Eastern Europe more than anything else. The other commonly mentioned causes of systemic transformation were the economic inefficiency of the communist system

and the policy of Mikhail Gorbachev, the architect of perestroika in the USSR. Polish people attach lesser importance to the contribution of US president Ronald Reagan, and democratic opposition in other countries of the Eastern block.



In the public opinion, without the events taking place in Poland in 1989, communism in other Eastern block countries would have collapsed later, if at all. A plurality of respondents (44%) believe that the change in Poland was a catalyst for the change in other communist countries. Close to two-fifths (37%) think that the 1989 events in Poland not only accelerated the process of transformation in the Eastern block, but that they were a necessary condition for the collapse of communism in this part of Europe. Only rarely (7%) do respondents express the opinion that the Polish 1989 events had little or no influence on the developments in other countries of the Eastern block.



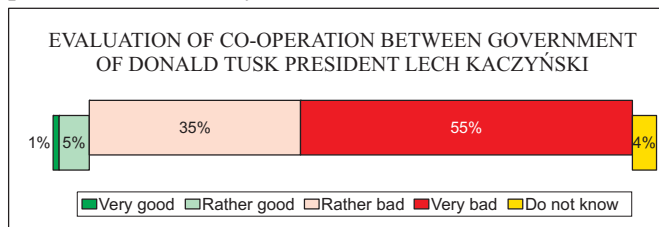
More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in *Polish Opinions About the Fall of Communism and Main Actors of Change*, Feb. 2008. Fieldwork: Jan. 2008, N=1089. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

EVALUATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT

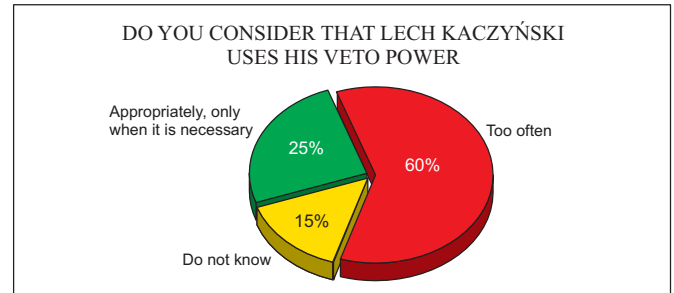
During the 14 months of functioning of the government of Donald Tusk, its co-operation with the president, who comes from a competing political grouping, has been difficult. Apart from petty insolence

and differences over evaluation of particular politicians, among the best-known conflicts was the controversy over who should represent Poland in the European Unit summit meeting in Brussels in Autumn 2008. The conflict also stretched to law-making and affected very important drafts of laws reforming various aspects of social life according to the electoral program of the party which won the election. Although the government has abandoned its most controversial projects, it is often unable to complete the legislative procedure of the laws it prepared. In several cases, the president vetoed legislation passed by parliament, for instance in case of healthcare reform.

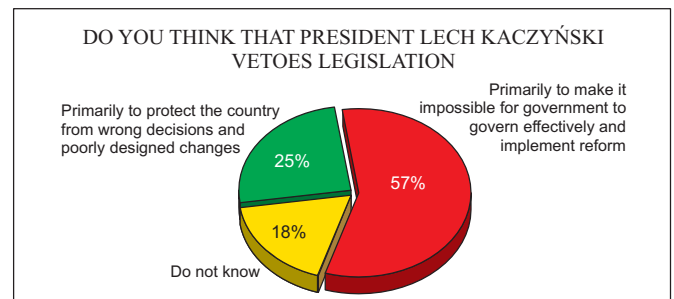
At present, almost all Poles consider the co-operation between the government of Donald Tusk and president Lech Kaczyński to be bad.



Polish people are mostly critical in their opinions about presidential vetoes to legislation prepared by the government and passed by parliament, and to the way he uses this constitutional competence. The majority think that Lech Kaczyński uses his veto power too often, while a quarter believe that he uses it appropriately and refuses to sign laws only when it is necessary.



Respondents tend to ascribe political, rather than substantive intentions to president's treatment of government-drafted legislation. Over half of them share the opinion that Lech Kaczyński, when he vetoes government proposals, is mostly guided by the political strategy of his political circle, and he wants to make it impossible for the PO-PSL (Citizens' Platform-Polish Peasant Party) coalition to govern effectively and implement reforms.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in *Polish Opinions About the Relations Between President and Government*, Feb. 2008. Fieldwork: Jan. 2008, N=1089. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

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

- ◆ 20th Anniversary of the Round Table Agreement
- ◆ What Changed in the Lifestyle of the Polish People in the Last 20 Years
- ◆ Functioning of Democracy in Poland
- ◆ Who is the Best Politician and Prime Minister of the Independent Poland
- ◆ Party Preferences in February
- ◆ Experience in Opposition Before 1989
- ◆ Attitude to Government in February
- ◆ Opinions About the Past 20 Years
- ◆ Social Moods in February
- ◆ Trust in Politicians in February
- ◆ Evaluation of the Activity of President, Parliament and National Bank of Poland
- ◆ Costs and Benefits of the 1989-2009 Transformation in Poland

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