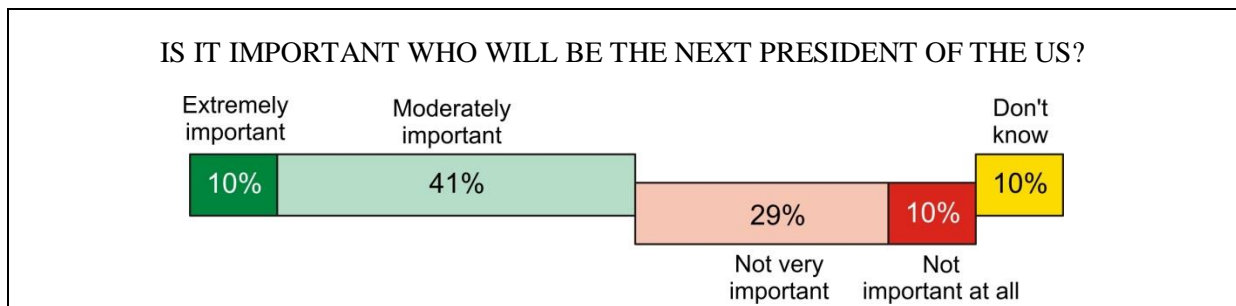
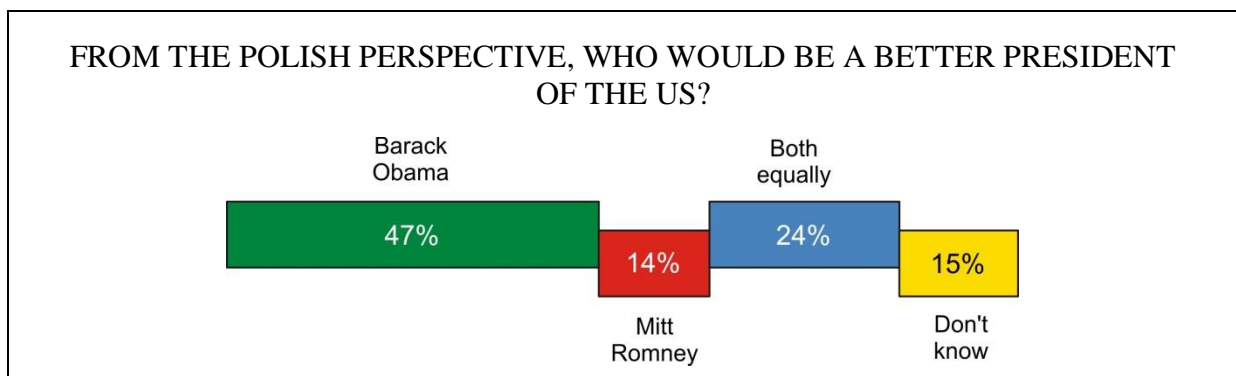


## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE USA AND THE POLISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

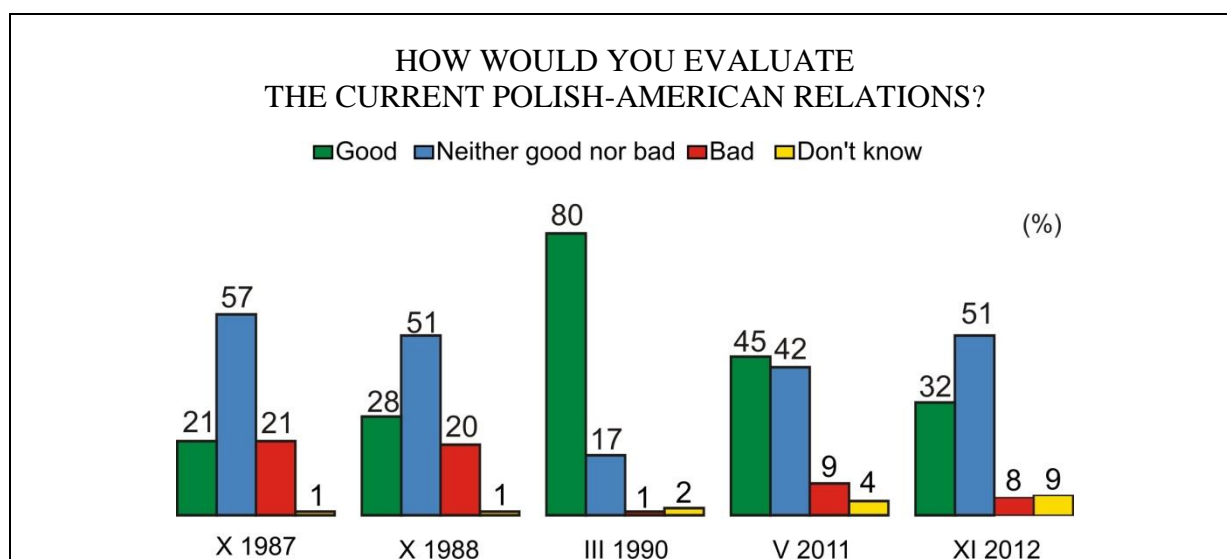
The majority of Poles (51%) share the opinion that it is important who will be in office as president of the United States. A smaller group (39%) believe that the outcome of the last US elections is not important.



From the Polish perspective, Barack Obama from the Democratic Party, who won the election, would be a better alternative than his opponent from the Republican Party (47% to 14%). Almost a quarter (24%) think that it would not make any difference.



Polish-American relations have been the topic of CBOS research for a long time. Before 1989, the majority of Poles evaluated the relations between these two countries as average: neither good nor bad. Although the People's Republic was a part of the political bloc subordinated to the USSR, at the end of the former system (towards the end of the 1980s) relations with the US, the key member of NATO, were more often described as good than bad. The crucial moment in international relations was the period of systemic transition in Eastern Europe. It was reflected in the public opinion on Polish-American relations. The US not only supported the democratic transition, but also maintained intensive contacts with Poland on the highest level. In July 1989, president George H.W. Bush visited Poland, meeting both the Communist government and the leaders of Solidarity movement, whose candidates were successful in the first parliamentary elections after the Round Table agreement, held on 4 June 1989. Subsequently, Lech Wałęsa, the leader of Solidarity, was enthusiastically received in the USA. As the third person in US history, he addressed a joint session of both chambers of Congress. In March 1990, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Prime Minister, paid a visit to the USA. In a survey conducted during that time, a vast majority (80%) considered the Polish-American relations as good, a small group (17%) had mixed emotions, and only 1% thought they were bad. The extremely positive opinions can be attributed to the formal change in alliances and to the hopes pinned on the US.



Subsequent years brought disappointment. One of the contentious issues which clearly deteriorated bilateral relations was the lingering requirement for Polish citizens to obtain visas to travel to the USA. At present, the public opinion on bilateral relations is only slightly better than before systemic transformation in Poland. The Polish-American relations are usually

evaluated ambivalently: the majority (51%) think they are neither good nor bad. About a third (32%) consider them good, while 8% think they are bad.

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More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Presidential elections in the USA, Polish-American relations and the global influence of the USA"*, November 2012. Fieldwork for national sample: November 2012, N=952. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.