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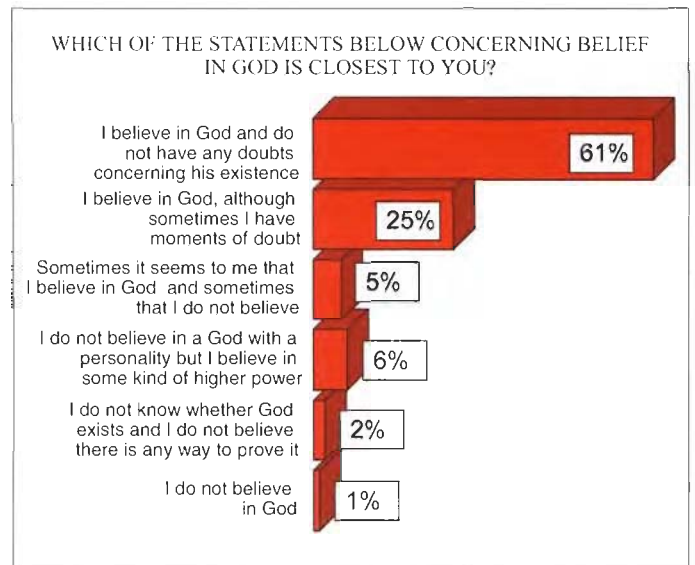
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POLES' RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Poles are generally assumed to be among those nations for whom religion has an exceptional significance. In this context people speak of both a high level of religiosity and the specific ties, rooted in tradition, linking the Polish nation to the Church. On the basis of the declarations of respondents, one can say that Poles really are very religious. In April '97 over 95% of respondents said they were believers, of whom one in seven described their faith as deep. Just one in twenty Poles see themselves as non-believers. Calling oneself a believer does not say much about the type or intensity of one's faith, neither does it say anything about what is actually believed in. We asked respondents about the strength and character of their faith - do they see themselves as people believing in God without any doubts at all, do they have moments of doubts or breakdown, or is their faith outside of the Christian canon and orthodoxy and do they believe, for instance, only in some kind of higher power.



According to the declarations of those polled, just less than two thirds of Poles believe in God and do not have any doubts concerning his existence. One quarter of the respondents sometimes have doubts, but this does not change their general conviction that they are believers. One in twenty people are uncertain of their faith to a greater or lesser degree - they are just as often convinced that they believe in God as they experience doubts. One in seventeen declare that they do not believe in God as a person but only in a certain kind of higher power.

A characteristic feature of Polish religiosity is the more frequent participation of believers in religious ceremonies than in other countries. According to the declarations of April '97 over half of adult Poles (58%) take part in religious practices once a week or more.

Deliberations concerning life and the existence of good and evil, both in the individual and the social spheres, usually belong to the key elements of religious systems differentiating specific religions even within Christianity. In Catholicism good is achievable on Earth - and so we have the institution of confession and the cult of the saints. It seems, that convictions concerning the rebirth of good and its attainability for each person belong to those beliefs which have been very strongly internalised by Poles - as many as 82% of the respondents declared their belief in the final triumph of good over evil.

Stating their attitudes to chosen elements from the Catholic canon, the largest part of those polled declared their belief in the Last Judgement (77%) and in the immortality of the human soul (76%). Only slightly fewer respondents believe in life after death (71%) and heaven (72%) and also that we are burdened at birth with original sin (70%). An equally significant percentage of those polled believe in pre-destination - something which is not in accordance with orthodox faith. Relatively fewer people declared their belief in the resurrection of the dead before the Final Judgement (67%), in miracles (62%) and in the existence of hell (59%).

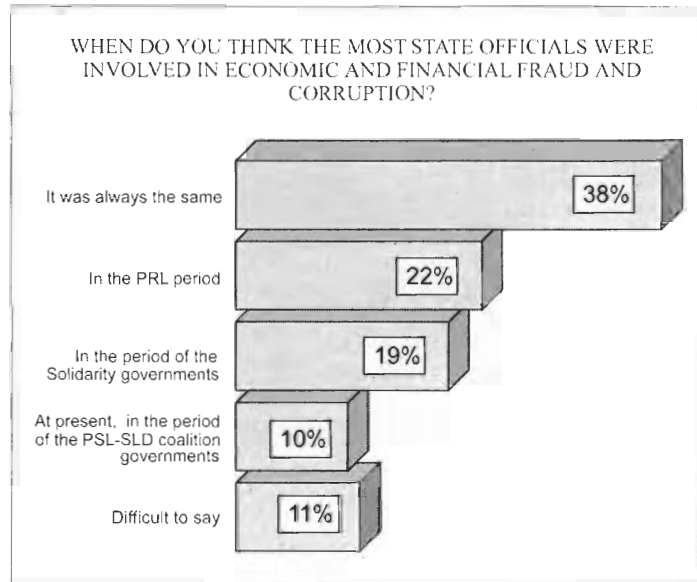
Relatively many Poles are not completely conscious of their declarations concerning faith - they do not completely share the convictions which constitute the Catholic canon. One in five respondents do not believe in life after death and heaven, nor do they believe in original sin. Almost one in four said they did not believe in resurrection and almost one on three in miracles or the existence of hell. In a situation where the convictions of a significant group of respondents are incoherent it is not surprising that as many as one third of the respondents declared a belief in reincarnation and also in animals having souls - things which have nothing in common with Catholicism.

The above opinions may constitute a kind of confirmation of the theory concerning selective religiousness as the type of religiosity expressed by a certain part of Polish society. The selectivity of a faith is supposed to be based on the fact that specific elements of the moral-dogmatic system which constitute the teachings of the Church are not treated coherently, but a choice is made of only those elements which are easier to accept and which do not clash with the norms adhered to in the practice of everyday life.

Source: CBOS bulletin "Poles' religious beliefs", May '97.

THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION

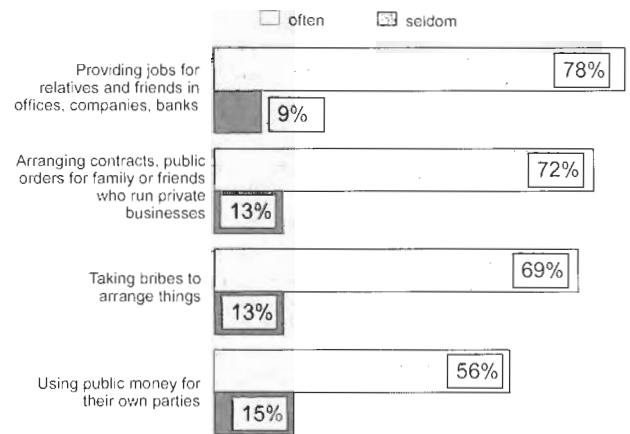
The Sejm is coming to the end of its work on a bill aimed at preventing corruption in the state apparatus. In this context it is interesting how the public sees the level of demoralisation in the state apparatus in various periods of post-war Poland - with especial emphasis on those who currently constitute the power elite.



A significant percentage of respondents do not link the level of corruption in the state apparatus with a specific period. The predominant group (38%) thinks that "it was always the same", when it comes to the number of highly placed state officials involved in economic and financial fraud and corruption. According to one quarter of the public the scale of fraud involving public money was always the same. Somewhat more people (28%) also think that no particular period stands out in the category of ease of committing crimes of fraud.

Compared with February '95 the public's assessment of the honesty of the incumbent senior state officials has significantly improved. This expresses itself as a decrease (from 26% to 10%) in the number of people suspecting them of economic and financial fraud and corruption. The number of respondents convinced that fraud exists on a large scale during the SLD-PSL coalition governments has decreased to the same degree (from 22% to 8%) as has the number thinking that the present period is characterised by an especially easy situation for committing fraud (from 25% to 9%).

DO YOU THINK THAT STATE OFFICIALS ARE INVOLVED IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:



The reply "Difficult to say" was omitted

In the last two years the awareness has clearly grown of a significant level of corruption in the state apparatus of the PRL (Communist Poland) (from 9% to 22%) and of a large scale of fraud and embezzlement of public funds in that period (from 18% to 29%). Also, the conviction that the PRL system encouraged the perpetration of fraud and embezzlement has almost doubled (from 14% to 26%). However opinions on the state apparatus during the period of the Solidarity governments has not changed in that time. In the category of the involvement of high state officials in economic and financial fraud and corruption it is currently seen almost as critically as the PRL apparatus (19% compared to 22%). Similarly close is the public assessment of the ease of perpetrating fraud or misuse of funds in both these periods (24% compared to 26%). Respondents clearly more often indicate however that public money was more frequently embezzled and stolen during the PRL (29%) than in the period of the Solidarity governments (21%).

The assessment of the level of demoralisation of state officials in various periods depends above all on the political orientation of those polled. Speaking generally, right-wing views are linked to a critical perception of the PRL state apparatus, on the other hand identification with the left inclines people to accuse the Solidarity governments above all of demoralisation.

The present state apparatus is perceived by the majority of respondents as being dishonest, corrupt and marked by nepotism. Although in reality one in ten Poles say that corruption at the summit of power has reached its apogee right now - during the SLD-PSL governments - over half the respondents think that at present many high state officials gain benefits from the public posts they hold. The majority of respondents think that it is not uncommon in this milieu for relatives and acquaintances to be given lucrative posts and for it to be made easier for them to win contracts and public orders. Over two thirds of those polled are of the opinion that high state officials often take bribes and over half think that public money is used to finance their parties.

Source: CBOS bulletin "On the public perception of corruption", May '97.

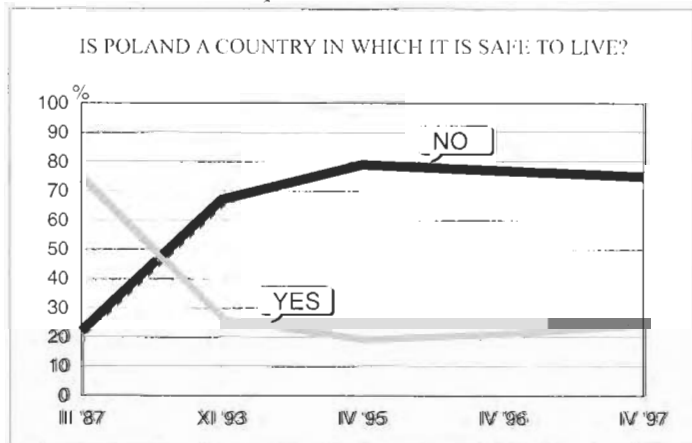
IS IT SAFE TO LIVE IN POLAND? UNDERAGE CRIME AND ATTITUDES TO THE DEATH PENALTY

The growing crime wave in Poland which we have observed in recent years may be influencing the growing feeling that Poles' personal safety is under threat. CBOS has been monitoring this problem for years.

A large majority (75%) of respondents express the conviction that living in Poland is not safe today. From spring '95 we have however been observing a small - although progressively larger from year to year - improvement of our country's image in this regard. The feeling of threat is decidedly in the majority in all socio-demographic groups, however it is most common among the inhabitants of big cities.

Despite the fact that three quarters of the respondents think that living in Poland is not safe, almost as many think of their place of residence as being safe and peaceful. This is probably explained by the fact that assessments concerning the whole country are formed mainly under the influence of information coming from the mass media which are above all interested in especially drastic examples of crime. Opinions concerning people's place of residence on the other hand reflect mainly direct daily experience.

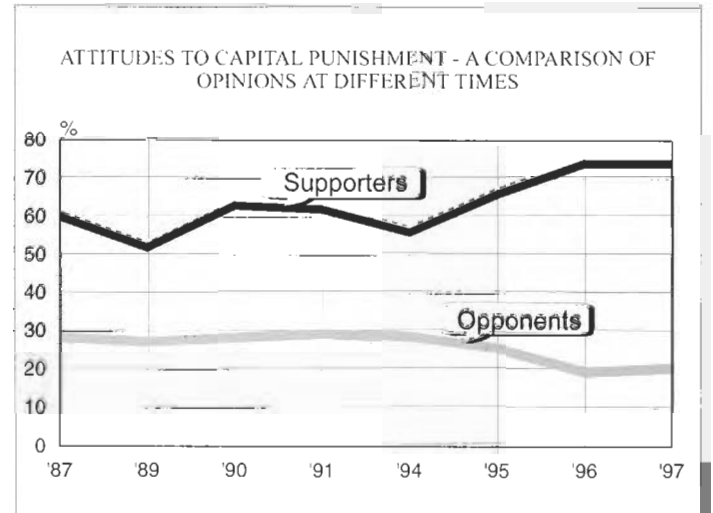
The feeling of safety in one's place of residence is all the smaller, the greater the town the respondent lives in. Village and small town dwellers describe their own local area as safe and peaceful more often than others.



Almost two thirds of those polled are afraid that they may become victims of crime. The feeling of personal threat is more than three times more often seen among people assessing the level of safety in their place of residence as being low than among those who live in places assessed as being safe and peaceful.

In recent months public opinion has been shaken by news of numerous murders committed by very young people. A decided majority of the public are afraid or even certain that the number of these kinds of crimes will increase, seeing them as part of a growing trend. The legal system or the system of police investigation is most often seen to be to blame for this state of affairs. Almost one in seven respondents think that the growing youth crime wave is connected with the indulgence of the

judiciary towards underage criminals, too low sentences and, in the opinion of a not much smaller group, with too lenient laws. Just as frequently people spoke of a general feeling of impunity among young people. One in four said the responsibility for this lay with the family - for bringing up children badly, devoting too little attention to them. Almost as often the blame was apportioned to the functioning of the social system in the circumstances of the process of transformation, indicating above all poverty and unemployment. Among the most frequent categories of replies was also blaming the mass media, especially television. The respondents drew attention to the presence of violence in television programmes and their propagation of bad models of behaviour.



New legislation is intended to lower the age threshold from which the young perpetrators of the most serious crimes would be as answerable as adults. The respondents were not unanimous on the stipulation of this age limit. However only one in ten respondents think that this limit should be set at 18 years of age. More or less half the respondents think, on the other hand, that people of 15 years of age and younger should be fully answerable before the law, almost one third favoured the answerability of 16 year olds.

In Poland there is currently a moratorium on capital punishment, and the new criminal code would definitively abolish it. However our society tends to be quite severe and the number of supporters of capital punishment always significantly outweighed the opponents. That is how things stand today as well. It is however worth stressing that insofar as the number of supporters of the maintenance of capital punishment has risen in recent years, from last year we have noted a stabilisation of views on this matter.

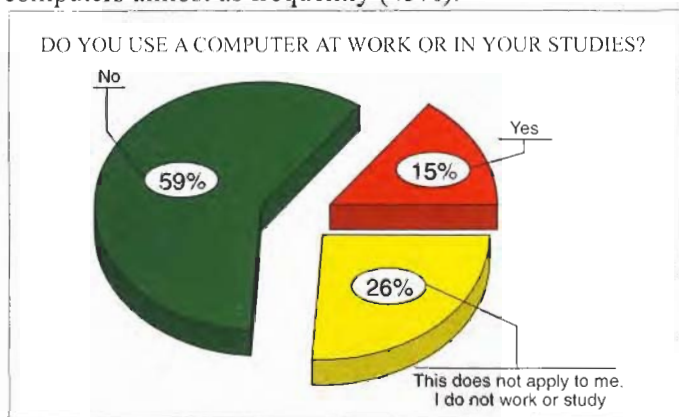
Opponents of capital punishment are relatively mostly numerous in the Solidarity Election Action electorate, which also has the fewest number of supporters. The most unanimous supporters of capital punishment were to be found among Union of Labour sympathisers. Somewhat less clearly but also above average were the number of those favouring capital punishment among PSL, ROP and SLD supporters.

Source: CBOS bulletin "Is it safe to live in Poland? Underage crime and attitudes to capital punishment", May '97.

POLES AND COMPUTERS

For some years computers have progressively more accompanied Poles at work and at home. Even people who do not use them personally meet with them in public departments. It is therefore worth answering the question, how many of us use computers in our everyday lives.? How important is the computer for people who use it?

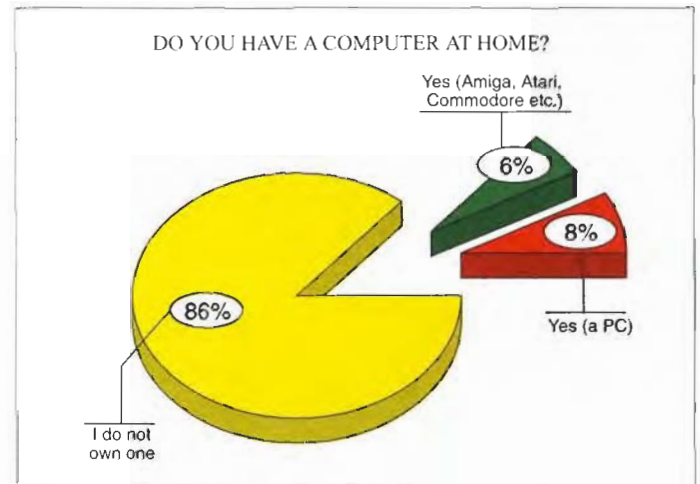
According to the declarations of respondents, almost one in seven adult Poles use a computer at work or in their studies. It seems however that this is equipment which in Poland is somewhat elitist - at work computers are used chiefly by better educated people and those in the highest posts, management staff and the intelligentsia (56%) and lower level white collar workers (47%). School students and students have contact with computers almost as frequently (43%).



Computer users most often work with word processors and databases, they make use of calculating (bookkeeping) programs and spreadsheets somewhat less often. Significantly fewer of those polled say they use graphics and engineering programs, however a relatively numerous group of people use specialist software created for the needs of specific industries or firms.

Poles using the computer at work or in their studies appreciate its role. They have almost unanimously accepted that this equipment is useful to them in what they are doing, and over half of them even described it as being absolutely necessary. The assessment of the usefulness of the computer does not depend on the character of the work done - among people using this equipment the opinion that it is necessary or useful dominates in all job categories.

Owning a computer at home was declared by 14% of the respondents. In large part this is equipment such as the Amiga, Atari or Commodore etc. The PC class of home computers is owned by 8% of the respondents. Equipment of this kind can be found much more often than the average in the homes of managerial staff and the intelligentsia (29%), private entrepreneurs (28%), people with a higher education (26%) and those on the highest incomes (22%). Home computer users are above all young people, school students and students. Those who use computers at work more often than average use them at home. Almost two fifths of home computer owners declare that they also allow more distant relatives and friends to use them.



Poles use their home computers mainly for entertainment purposes. Almost all computer owners play computer games more or less often. Only 8% of people in this group claim that their computers are never used for this. At the same time none of the computer owners use them only for games. Management staff, the intelligentsia and people with a higher education use computers for other purposes - at work and during studies - more often than others.

One in 20 respondents declare that they have the opportunity of accessing the Internet. Most of these people (57%) can use the Internet at work or in their studies, half as many (27%) have access to it through a friend's computer. A small number of respondents (13% in this group) is hooked up to the Internet via their home computer.

Source: CBOS bulletin "Poles and Computers", May '97.

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

Let's celebrate Mayday?
Tax returns
Attitudes to the government in April
Assessments of public institutions
In Solidarity with the Gdansk Shipyard
Financial pyramids - social reactions and the scale of the phenomenon
The sale of a phenomenon
Have we decided yet who to vote for? "Second choice" parties
The functioning of democracy in Poland. Views on the constitution before the referendum to confirm it

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