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ETHICS OF POLITICIANS

A politician is one of these professions which are associated by the society with particularly strict ethical requirements. They concern, however, mainly the professional sphere. Most respondents believe that private life of politicians should not be the subject of media interest, hence the society should not be interested in it, as far as it does not affect professional conduct of a politician. Nearly one in three of respondents agree that journalists should not be interested in private life of politicians, who, like other people, have the right to privacy. One quarter of respondents believe that because of their public role private life of politicians should be known to the society.

Because the private sphere is excluded from the interest of the public opinion, i.e. it is separated from the public activity of a politician, politicians are generally evaluated and verified with regard to their competence and not to their personal and family situation. The considerable majority of respondents declare that they would vote for a divorced politician or one who has an informal relationship. In the opinion of over half of respondents, even marital infidelity

does not disqualify a politician as far as he/she is competent and has necessary skills.

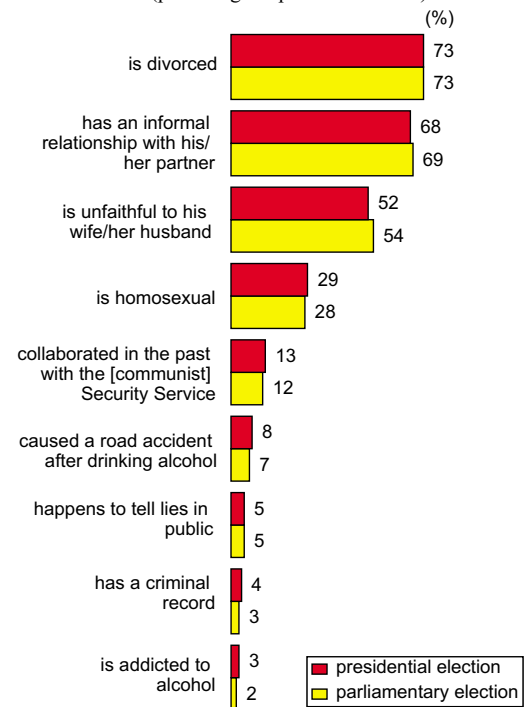
However, a situation changes if a politician represents a different sexual orientation. Two thirds of respondents decide not to vote for such a politician despite his/her competence. On the other hand, more than one in four of respondents would not mind homosexuality of a politician.

In all other situations presented to respondents, where competence of a politician could be in conflict with his/her ethical standing, respondents' opinions were almost unanimous. Over three quarters of respondents would not vote for collaborators of the communist special service. It was also common to reject a candidate who tells lies in public, caused a road accident after drinking alcohol, has a criminal record or is addicted to alcohol, even if professional qualifications of this person are high. It should be stressed that the discussed moral requirements relate to the whole political class and they to the same extent concern the head of the state as members of parliament.

The respondents' declarations concerning the private sphere of politicians' life: their family situation or sexual preferences, are differentiated first of all by the religiousness of respondents measured by the frequency of participation in religious practices. The more frequently a respondent takes part in religious practices, the more importance he/she attaches to private life of politicians. Respondents' expectations from politicians in this sphere are also modified by their socio-demographic characteristics. Generally speaking, young persons living in big cities and persons with higher occupational and material status require less from politicians with regard to meeting ethical and moral standards in their private life. Older respondents, inhabitants of villages, respondents with primary education and persons with the lowest income are stricter in this respect.

WOULD YOU VOTE IN A ELECTION FOR A POLITICIAN WHOSE COMPETENCE AND SKILLS YOU VALUE HIGHLY, BUT WHO, AS YOU KNOW:

(percentage of positive answers)



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Ethics of politicians", March '98.

ARE POLES SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIVES?

In one of our recent surveys we asked respondents to estimate the level of their satisfaction with different aspects of their life. They were asked to evaluate several issues, related both to private and public sphere of their life.

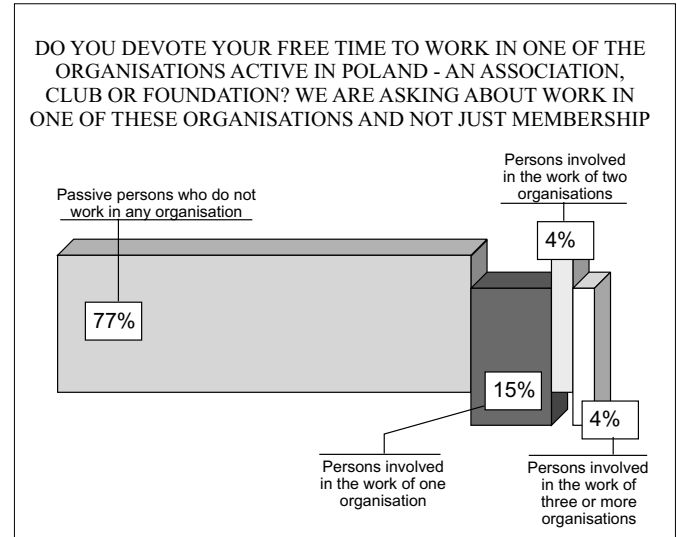
Respondents are satisfied first of all with those areas which are connected with their family life. Marriage brings the most satisfaction - almost three quarters of married Poles of both sexes declare satisfaction in this respect. The level of acceptance of other family relations is only slightly lower. Almost half of Poles are also very satisfied with their circle of friends and social life. The considerable majority of respondents are satisfied with their housing conditions and the appearance of the town or village where they live. However, this level of satisfaction is lower than in the case of the issues connected with family life. Satisfaction prevails over dissatisfaction in the evaluations of professional life and the state of health of respondents, as well as in their general evaluation of the quality of life. Respondents are less happy with their material standard of living, the state of the environment in the place where they live and the activity of political parties or groupings which they supported in the last parliamentary elections. The remaining questions concerning public life - the evaluation of the situation of the state, the national economy or, first of all, the morals of the Polish society - rather cause dissatisfaction. Poles are not satisfied with those aspects of life which relate to the future - they are critical about the measures they have taken to protect their future and about the prospects for the future of their children.

Generally speaking, Poles are less satisfied with their life than Americans, but differences in the declared level of satisfaction are not big. Significantly lower satisfaction was declared in a few areas of life only, while in the other areas it is comparable to that declared by Americans in the spring '97. The structure of answers is very similar. Both Americans and Poles are satisfied first of all with their family life, while the issues connected with public life cause more dissatisfaction. The biggest differences concern the evaluations of future financial security - as opposed to Poles, most Americans positively evaluate this aspect of life. Poles are also less satisfied with their standard of living and the quality of life in general, as well as with their housing conditions and state of health. As compared to Americans, they also more frequently declare the lack of satisfaction with the prospects for the future of their children. Similarities concern first of all the level of satisfaction with marriage, professional and social life, and even the state of the environment in the place of residence declared by both nations. Moreover, Poles and Americans evaluate the general moral condition of their societies and the state of their national economies equally negatively.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Are Poles satisfied with their life?", March '98.

SOCIAL ACTIVITY OF POLES

We presented to our respondents a list of different social organisations existing in Poland and asked them if they devote their free time to work in any of them.



Active, collective involvement in particular areas of social life is almost a marginal phenomenon in Poland. Low level of declared participation in the work of specific organisations seems to confirm the argument, expressed both in scientific studies and press articles, that the contemporary Polish society is passive. Poles are relatively the most willing to engage in voluntary work for schools or education (4.5%) or their parish (3.6%). The next areas of social activity, as far as the level of involvement is concerned, are trade unions and voluntary fire service, as well as other rescue organisations (3% each). We are also relatively willing to devote our free time to work in associations of gardeners, breeders, fishermen and hunters (2.4%). Sports and tourist organisations are more or less equally attractive. The percentage of respondents active in youth organisations is as low as the percentage of those active in the organisations of pensioners or veterans (1% each type). The "top ten" organisations, i.e. the ones with the relatively biggest number of supporters, include charities as well, which altogether involve around 3% of respondents. On the other hand, the surprisingly low level of involvement in the work of local self-government is worth stressing, as well as the complete lack of interest in active participation in political parties or associations.

Higher than average involvement in voluntary work in some areas (schools, education) is characteristic first of all of the representatives of managerial staff and intelligentsia, persons who take part in religious practices a few times a week (religious and church organisations), employees of the state sector (trade unions) and farmers (voluntary fire service).

We developed a general index of collective social activity, irrespective of the organisations in which respondents work. For this purpose we divided them into the following groups: the passive, who are not

involved in any organisation; those who work in one organisation; those who work in two organisations; and persons who devote their time to work in three or more organisations.

Although the vast majority of Poles are not involved in any organisation, in the light of this index the Polish society seems considerably less passive. Almost one quarter declare that they devote their time to voluntary work, including 15% who work for one organisation and 8% who work for two or more organisations. Higher education and high occupational status, as well as the interest in politics, readiness to take part in elections and participation in the last parliamentary elections encourage social activity. On the other hand, low education and professional qualifications, unemployment, bad material conditions of living and political passiveness clearly discourage involvement in voluntary work.

During the last eight years the involvement of Poles in the work for different social organisations has increased, although this change is gradual and evolutionary. It should be stressed that it is accompanied by the growing feeling of citizens that they have influence on the affairs of the country and their place of residence, observed in the years 1993-1997.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Collective social activity of Poles", March '98.

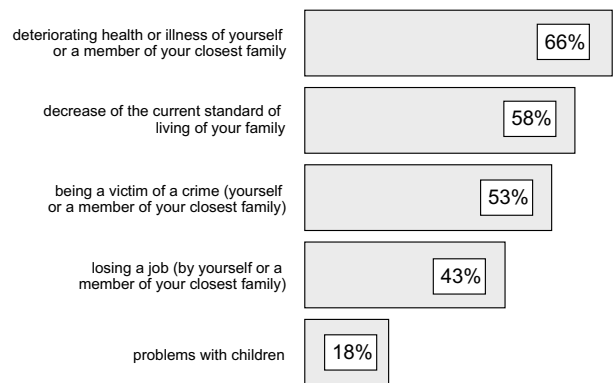
CONCERNS AND ANXIETIES OF POLES

There are many problems which can make us worry, feel anxious or threatened, even if they do not directly concern us or our nearest and dearest. We chose a few of such problems, which can be a source of concern about ourselves or our closest family. They were related to health problems, decrease of the standard of living, losing a job, fear of being a victim of a crime, problems with children. Respondents said about each of these problems to what extent it is for them a source of fear and concern about themselves and their closest family.

Taking into consideration the five problems mentioned above, respondents are the most concerned about the state of their health and that of other members of their closest family. Women feel this kind of anxiety more frequently than men; while young people (up to 35 years of age) feel it considerably less frequently than other groups. The worse the respondents' self-evaluation of their material conditions of living, the more frequent the fear of illness in the family.

The second most common source of anxiety is the fear that the respondents' current standard of living will decrease. This anxiety differs according to the socio-demographic group the most: it is the least frequent in the below 24 age group, a little more frequent among respondents aged 25 to 34, and it significantly increases over the age of 35. Persons who are dissatisfied with their present material situation are much more frequently worried that their standard of living will decrease than those who are satisfied with their present standard of living.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF: (PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE ANSWERS IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL SAMPLE)



Worries connected with the standard of living are only slightly more common than the fear of being a victim of a crime. As far as this fear is concerned, differences between socio-demographic groups are relatively small. In comparison with other groups it is felt more frequently by women, inhabitants of big cities and persons with the lowest income.

Half of the working respondents or those who have working persons in their closest circle are afraid of losing a job. The lower the income of respondents and the evaluation of their material conditions of living, the more frequently they feel this kind of fear.

According to the respondents' declarations, problems with children are the least common source of fear among the problems discussed here. One quarter of the respondents with children are afraid of those problems. This kind of anxiety is more common among persons dissatisfied with their material conditions of living.

Respondents were also asked to assess the level of threat presented (in their opinion) to our country by problems related to crime, unemployment, environmental issues, low moral standards of the society and incompetent government. All these problems were regarded by the majority of respondents as a threat to our country. Crime is perceived as the most serious threat (68%).

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Concerns and anxieties of Poles", March '98.

THE EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT COALITION AWS - UW

In February '98, nearly 100 days after the coalition government of Jerzy Buzek was appointed, we asked Poles about their opinion on the cooperation of the AWS (the Solidarity Election Action) and the UW (the Freedom Union) in the coalition. Another important aspect of the assessment of the first period of activity of the government is the answer to the question whether those who voted for the groupings forming the

government coalition are convinced that they are fulfilling the promises made during the election campaign.

According to almost two thirds of respondents, the groupings forming the present government coalition, i.e. the AWS and the UW, represent different views on the most important issues for the country. Only a little less than one in five of respondents believe that there are no significant differences between them at least as far as the priorities are concerned.

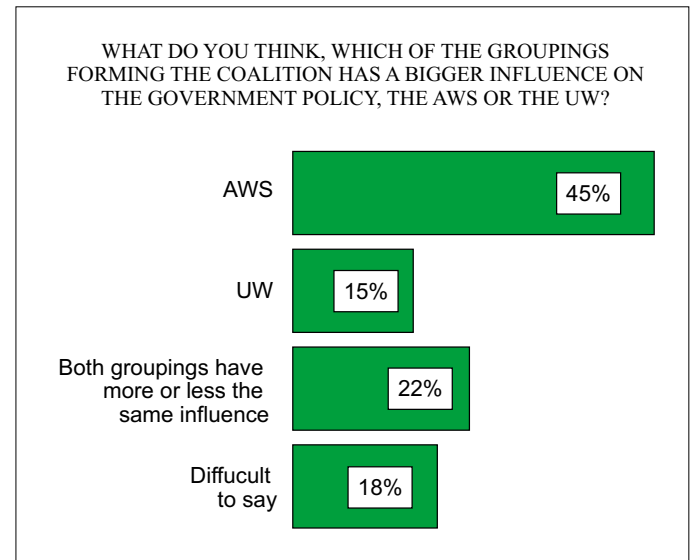
Despite the common opinion about the differences between the programmes of the ruling parties, views on the quality of cooperation between the AWS and the UW in the coalition are predominantly positive. Over two fifths of respondents share the opinion that both groupings cooperate well. The opinions on this matter depend first of all on the attitude to this government and political views of respondents.

In the respondents' opinion, the AWS has significantly more power in Jerzy Buzek's government. According to over two fifths of respondents, this grouping has more influence on the government policy than the UW. Nearly one in seven of respondents says that Leszek Balcerowicz's party has more influence on the decisions made by the government. Over one in five of respondents are of opinion that both groupings have more or less the same influence on the government policy.

Nearly half of respondents are disappointed with the results achieved by the AWS-UW government coalition so far and claim that the coalition rules worse than they expected. More than one in four of respondents evaluate the performance of the coalition and the way the ruling parties execute their power as consistent with their expectations. Only one in twenty believes that the coalition rules better than he/ she expected.

The evaluations of the results of the government's work are conditioned first of all by the present political divisions. Strong opponents of the government and followers of the SLD and the PSL are

the most critical. Although they are more tolerant and moderate in their critical opinions, even supporters of the ruling parties on the whole believe that the government coalition has not fulfilled their hopes so far.



The feeling of disappointment is accompanied by the belief that the ruling parties are not fulfilling their pre-election promises. It concerns first of all the AWS - almost two thirds of respondents accuse this grouping of giving up its declarations made during the election campaign, and only one fifth of respondents are of opinion that it is fulfilling its promises.

The second member of the coalition - the UW - is the subject of such accusations a little less frequently, but even in the case of this party the balance is definitely negative (over half of respondents are disappointed, compared to over a quarter of those who have no reservations).

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The evaluation of the performance of the government coalition AWS-UW", March '98.

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

On the knowledge of terms used in the media.

Political party preferences in February '98.

Social moods in February.

Evaluations of the performance of public institutions.

New border regulations - first reactions and evaluations.

Interest in winter sports. Opinions on the plans to organise winter Olympics in Zakopane.

The attitude to Jerzy Buzek's government after 100 days of its activity.

The evaluation of the performance of the government coalition AWS - UW.

Consumer durables owned by the members of Polish society.

Administrative reform of the country - social knowledge and attitude.

Cars in households.

Political party preferences in March '98.

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