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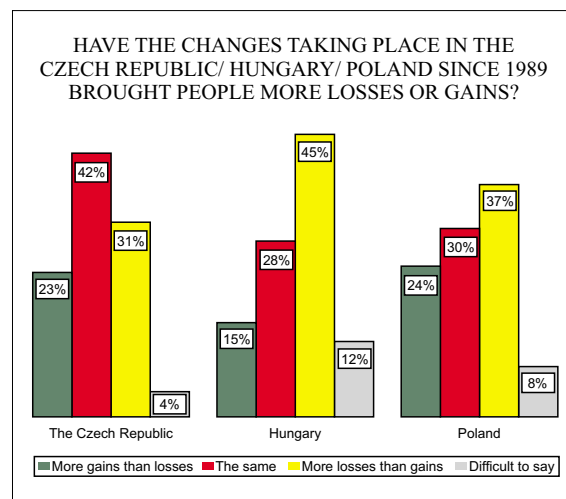
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WAS IT WORTHWHILE? - THE POLES, CZECHS AND HUNGARIANS ON THE CHANGES OF THE LAST DECADE

We recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, which is regarded as the symbolic beginning of geopolitical changes in our part of Europe. From a historical perspective, how do Poles evaluate the sense of the change that started then? How do our opinions compare with those of our neighbours who have gone through the same transition from real socialism to a market economy? A recent survey conducted by CBOS and surveys conducted in Hungary (TARKI) and the Czech Republic (IVVM) try to answer these questions.

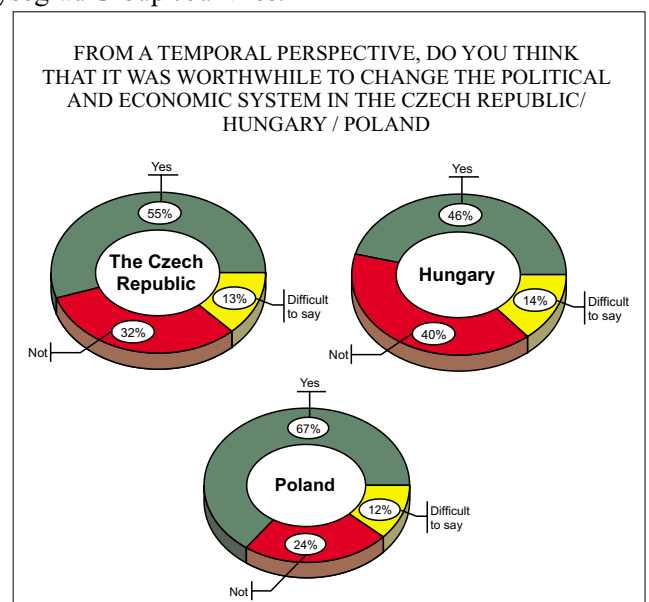
The opinions of Poles analysed over a longer period show that respondents do not agree as to the balance of the changes that have taken place since 1989. Almost two-fifths of respondents believe that the changes that began after 1989 generally brought the Polish people more losses than gains. However, a majority believe that gains and losses associated with the changes are at least equal. One-fifth believe that there are more gains than losses. As compared with the opinions of the citizens of other "Vysegrad Triangle" countries (the Czech Republic and Hungary), the opinions of Poles are not the worst. Hungarians evaluate the changes taking place in their country the least favourably, while among the Poles and Czechs the level of optimistic opinions is the same. However, the general balance is rather negative in these countries as well. A larger part of respondents believe that the changes taking place since 1989 have brought people more losses than gains.



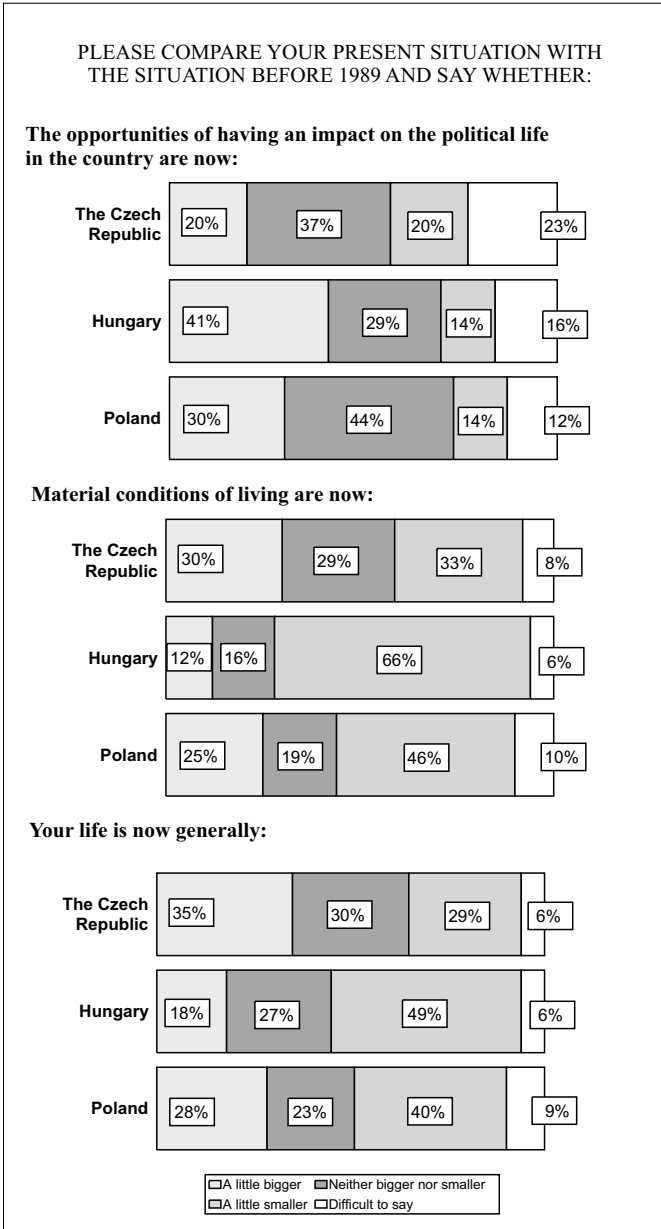
However, the vast majority of Poles (over two-thirds), asked to evaluate the changes from a historical perspective, say that it was worthwhile to start political and economic transformation ten years ago. Only a quarter of respondents question the sense of the efforts of the last decade. Although the present opinions of Poles on this matter are a little less optimistic than four years ago, they are still exceptionally positive as compared with the opinions of the citizens of the other Vysegrad Group countries.

Among the three nations discussed here, the Hungarians seem to suffer the most as a result of the changes of the last decade. Their evaluation of the economic changes is much worse than the opinions of the residents of the other two countries, and a vast majority of Hungarians believe that their material conditions of living have deteriorated. They are also the most pessimistic about the situation on the job market. Their evaluations of the changes in their personal situation and personal life are also the most negative. They question their present prosperity as compared with that of ten years ago the most frequently; also, they observe that the situation has changed for the worse, as far as safety is concerned,

optimistic than four years ago, they are still exceptionally positive as compared with the opinions of the citizens of the other Vysegrad Group countries.



more often than the residents of the other two countries. At the same time, they evaluate the previous economic system, i.e. socialism, more positively than the Poles and Czechs. Interestingly enough, in spite of their pessimism, the Hungarians appreciate the political changes the most. They notice that citizens have more opportunities to participate in public life (politics and local affairs) now than before 1989 relatively more frequently than respondents from other countries.



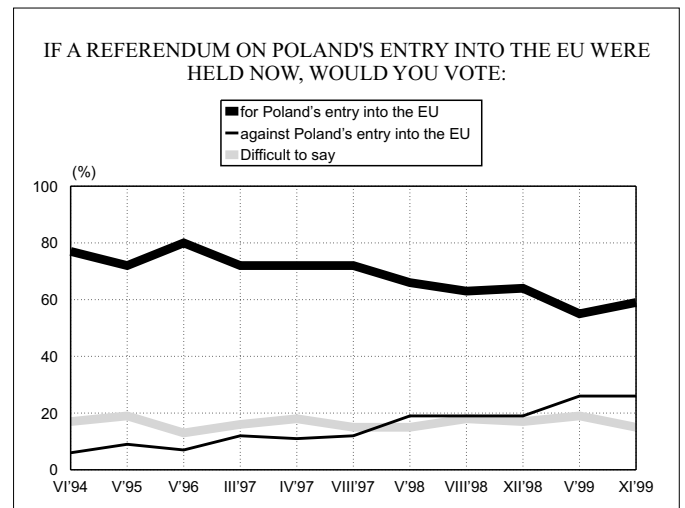
In contrast, the Czechs are the least frustrated by their economic situation. Their opinions on the changes in the material conditions of living are more positive than the opinions of Hungarians and Poles. They also evaluate the chances of finding a job relatively better (although still not very well). They appreciate the possibility of free travel the most, and are the most optimistic in their evaluations of personal prosperity. They are the only nation to express satisfaction with the changes that have taken place in their lives after 1989 slightly more frequently than dissatisfaction.

The opinions of Poles are more divided than those of the Czechs and Hungarians. Despite a rather negative balance of change, more Poles believe that it was worthwhile to undertake the effort of political and economic transformation than the residents of the other two countries. At the same time, the Poles appreciate the changes in civil rights the most, particularly the possibility of expressing one's opinions in an open way. However, taking into consideration one's personal situation and leaving the historical perspective aside, a larger part of Poles are more dissatisfied than satisfied with the changes. They believe that their material situation has deteriorated and the chances of finding a job have fallen dramatically as compared with the situation before 1989.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The Czechs, Hungarians and Poles on the changes after 1989", December 1999.

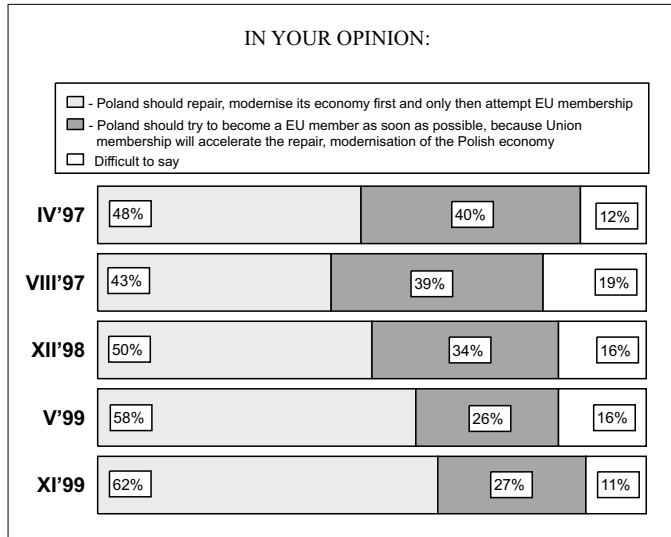
SUPPORT FOR POLAND'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

In recent years we have noted a decrease in the support of Poles for our integration with the European Union. The November opinion poll shows that this tendency has weakened a little, at least temporarily. During the last six months social support for Poland's membership in the EU has increased a little, but it still is lower than in previous years. Presently almost three-fifths of respondents opt for integration with the EU and a quarter are against it.

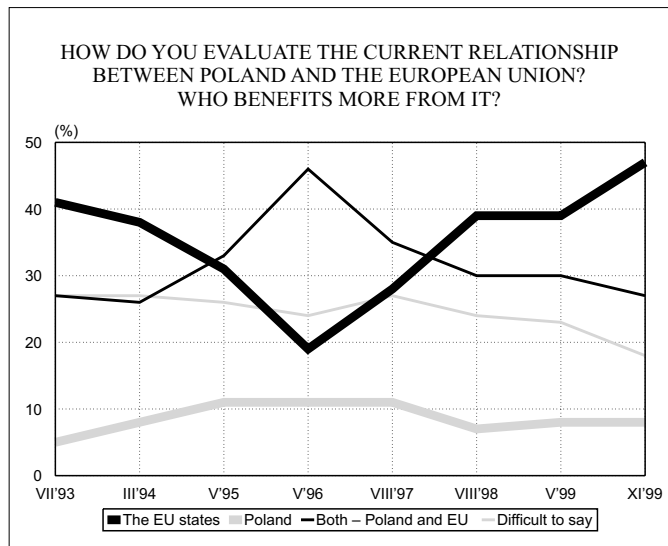


In spite of the fact that support for the idea of integration is still high, it seems that doubts associated with it are on the increase. The ups and downs of the negotiation process, during which we are confronted with the expectations and requirements of the Union, encourage doubts and fears as to whether we will be able to satisfy them. At the same time, we are more and more concerned about the competitiveness of the Polish economy and the trade balance. The growing fears in this respect seem to be associated with the foreign trade deficit, which has been growing in recent years. This deficit is also present in our trade with the EU countries.

As a result, the Poles are more and more convinced that our country is not yet ready for integration, and that our access to the EU should be preceded by further major modernisation of the national economy. Moreover, future benefits connected with the integration are less and less clear.



As compared with December 1998, the expectations that Poland should adopt a firm and rigid approach to negotiating the conditions of our entry into the EU have become stronger. Almost two-fifths of respondents (38%) opt for such an approach even if it delays our access. Only a tenth (10%) accept a compromising approach, if it were to speed up the process of Poland's entry into the EU.

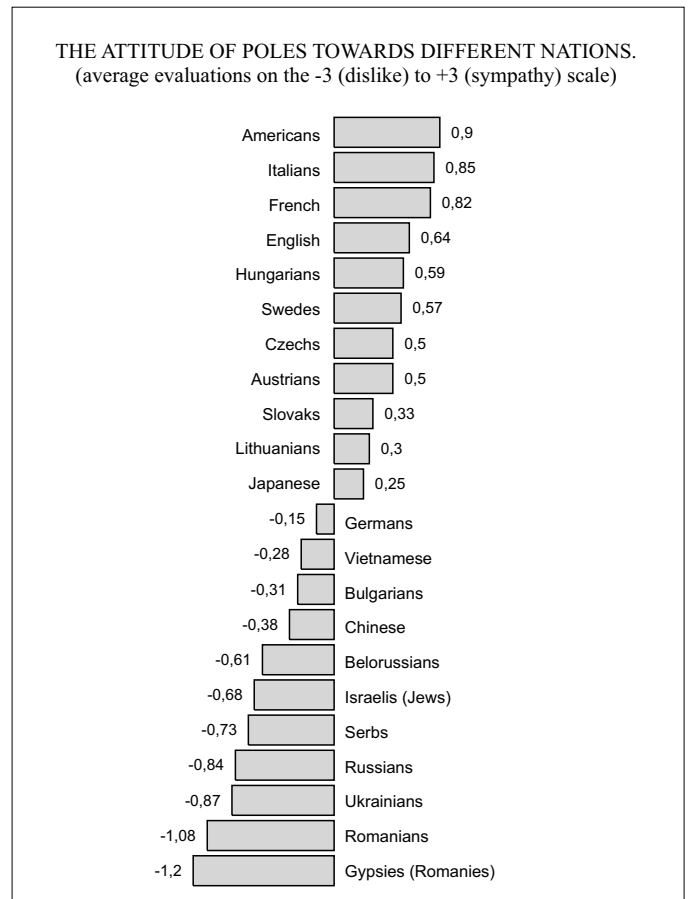


More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Support for Poland's integration with the European Union", November 1999.

ATTITUDES TO OTHER NATIONS

The sympathies of Poles reflect our history. Generally speaking, the Poles' feelings about other nations

are characterised by dislike towards the East (at least partly associated with our history) and sympathy for the West (probably associated with our aspirations). Poles like the Americans, French and Italians the most - over half of respondents declare that they like these nationalities. Sympathy also prevails in our feelings towards the English, Hungarians, Czechs, Swedes, Austrians, Slovaks and Japanese, but it is declared by less than half of respondents. The Gypsies (Romanies) and Romanians are disliked the most by Poles. At least half of respondents declare their dislike towards our Eastern neighbours: Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians.

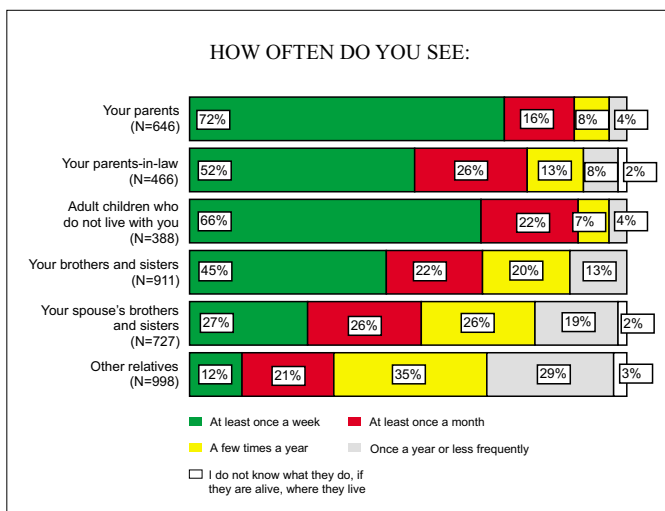


Compared with the results of the surveys conducted in previous years, the likes and dislikes of Poles for other nations have not changed significantly. However, looking over the past two or three years, it may be observed that the emotional distance to the West (in a wide sense) is increasing. This is reflected by a decrease in the level of declared sympathy and a growing indifference towards the representatives of highly developed countries; it is true about all the Western European nations listed above, as well as the Americans and Japanese. At the same time, looking over a slightly longer period, it may be observed that our attitude towards Gypsies (Romanies), Romanians and Ukrainians, i.e. the nationalities that we generally dislike the most, has improved a little. A change for the better in our feelings for Lithuanians, Slovaks, Czechs and Hungarians should also be noted.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Sympathy and dislike towards other nations", November 1999.

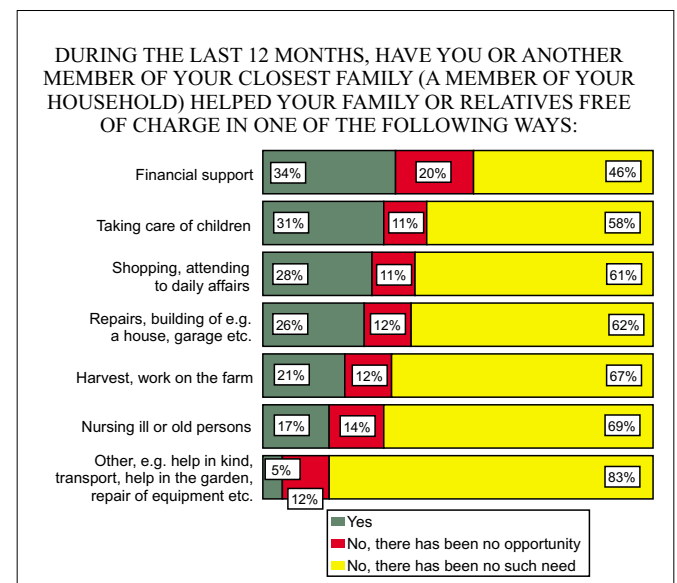
IN THE FAMILY CIRCLE

In Polish tradition and culture, family ties are among the most precious values. The surveys show that, according to the Poles' declarations, the family, children and home are the most important goals in life, regardless of age and social status. The respondents' answers show that meetings with parents, parents-in-law and children living on their own are a part of our daily life and almost a daily routine. Rare contact or a lack of contact with immediate family is an exception. Territorial proximity certainly makes frequent contact with the closest family easier. As many as 70% of respondents declare that most members of their immediate family live relatively close to one another in the same town or village, commune (*gmina*) or at least in villages or towns located quite close to each other.



Most respondents declare that they are related to the members of their closer and more distant family not only by blood, but also by close friendship. Almost two-thirds (62%) of Poles claim that they maintain friendly relations with at least five members of their family. Almost one-third (31%) maintain close relations with an even larger group of relatives - over six persons.

A vast majority of respondents (85%) say that their relationship with the members of their close and more distant family is at least proper. Only 15% of respondents admit to having conflicts and disagreements with their relatives. One in twenty has an argument with more than one person. The most frequent reasons for family conflicts include disagreements concerning the philosophy of life, resulting from differences in the accepted standards, religious or political views (25% of conflicts), as well as disagreements over financial matters: inheritance, property divisions (23%). Conflicts arising from weakening family ties are less frequent. The reasons include a lack of acceptance, a loss of contact, etc., or even breaking contact as a result of separation or divorce (12% each). Every tenth family conflict is associated with certain features of human character (egoism, greed, difficult personality) and one in eleven is caused by alcohol abuse by one of the parties involved.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS reports "In the family circle", "Are we threatened by loneliness in a crowd of other people", November 1999.

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

- Opinions on private and state-owned enterprises
- About the "New Beginning" programme and the ways of improving the functioning of the government
- Parents' expenses on education of children at school age
- Corruption in public life
- ZUS and its debtors
- Opinions on the retirement age of women and men
- Changes in psychological profiles of political party electorates
- What should the amount of teachers' remuneration depend on
- Political party preferences in November
- The attitude to the government and the evaluation of the work of public institutions
- Social moods in November
- Trust in politicians in November

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