

IN THIS ISSUE:

- WILL IT GET ANY BETTER? EVALUATION OF CURRENT MATERIAL LIVING CONDITIONS IN POLAND, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, LITHUANIA AND HUNGARY
- POOR RATINGS FOR THE GOVERNMENT
- FEELING OF INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS
- OPINIONS CONCERNING REPRIVATISATION

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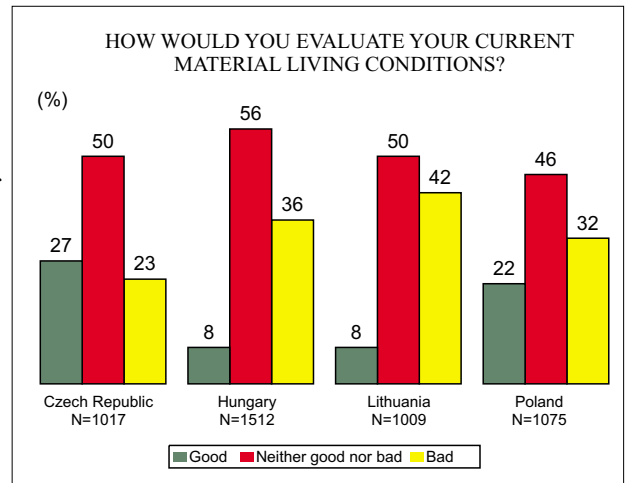
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WILL IT GET ANY BETTER? EVALUATION OF CURRENT MATERIAL LIVING CONDITIONS IN POLAND, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, LITHUANIA AND HUNGARY

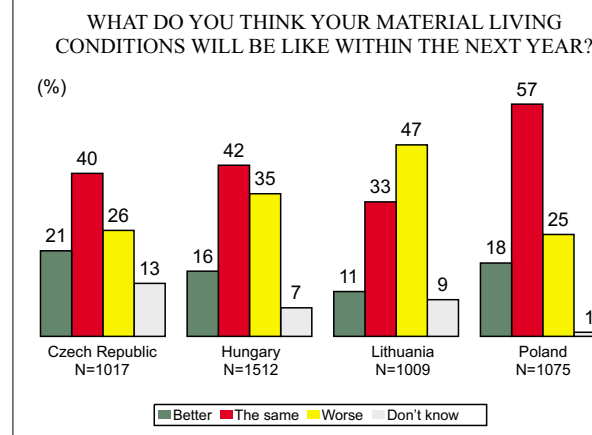
In many ways Central Europe may be described as a burgeoning region: its population has well-developed consumer aspirations but is still unable to satisfy them fully. Dissatisfaction with current material living conditions prevails in each of the societies covered by this study.

Those most satisfied with their material standards of living are the Czechs. As with elsewhere, the majority of respondents rate their own material situation as average, i.e. neither good nor bad. Unlike the remaining societies, however, the Czechs are slightly more often satisfied than dissatisfied with their material situation. In terms of satisfaction with their standards of living, the Poles come second. The Hungarians, on the other hand, are much less content with their current situation: not only do they rate their current material situation more negatively than the Poles, and particularly the Czechs, but they are



also very seldom satisfied with the standards of living they have achieved so far. An equally small proportion of Lithuanian respondents declare satisfaction with current material living conditions. They are most often of the four nations dissatisfied with their living conditions.

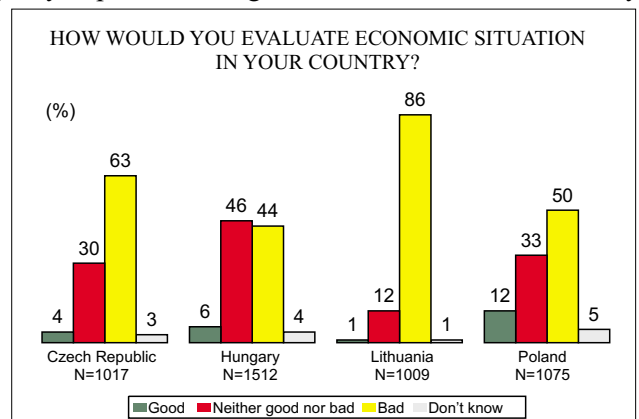
In all four countries respondents tend to rate the chances of improving their material living conditions within the coming year pessimistically rather than optimistically. The Czechs are both most optimistic and most satisfied with their current material



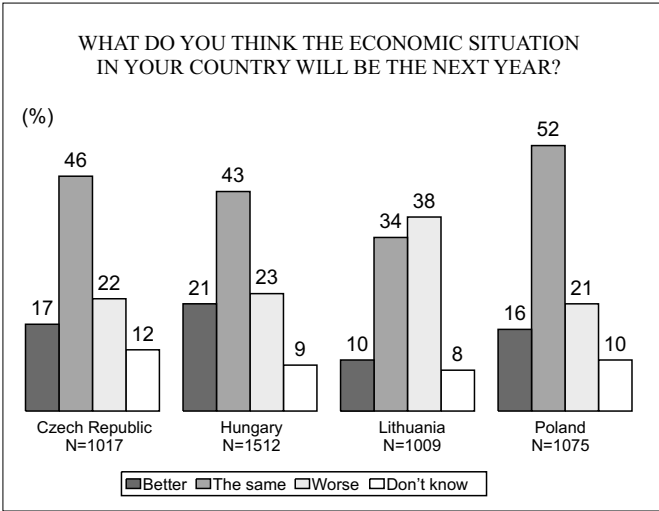
situation. But even among them more respondents expect their living conditions to deteriorate rather than improve, whereas the majority expect no changes at all. Lithuanians are clearly more pessimistic than three others nations.

Ratings of the development of the economic situation in general are not good either. Regardless of the country, only a negligible proportion of respondents expressed their positive evaluation of economy. The proportion of positive evaluations was largest in Poland and smallest in Lithuania and the Czech Republic.

Lithuanians are the most pessimistic of the four nations about the future of their economy.



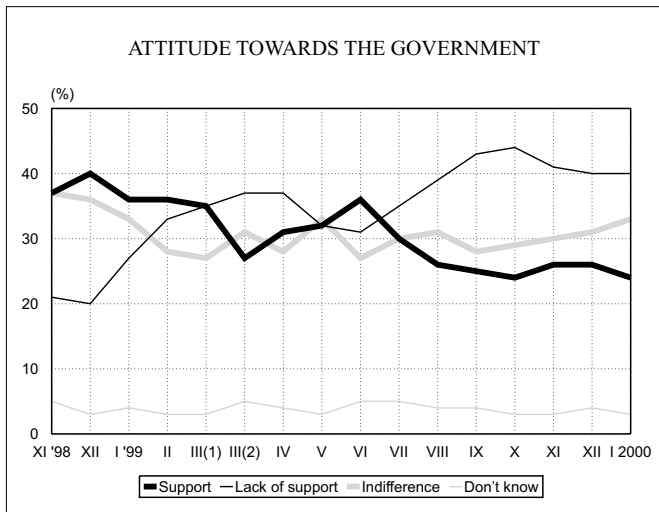
Remaining three countries do not differ very much in this respect, Hungarians being a bit more optimistic than Poles and Czechs.



More about this in CBOS Report "Evaluation of the Economic Situation and Material Living Conditions", February 2000.

POOR RATINGS FOR THE GOVERNMENT

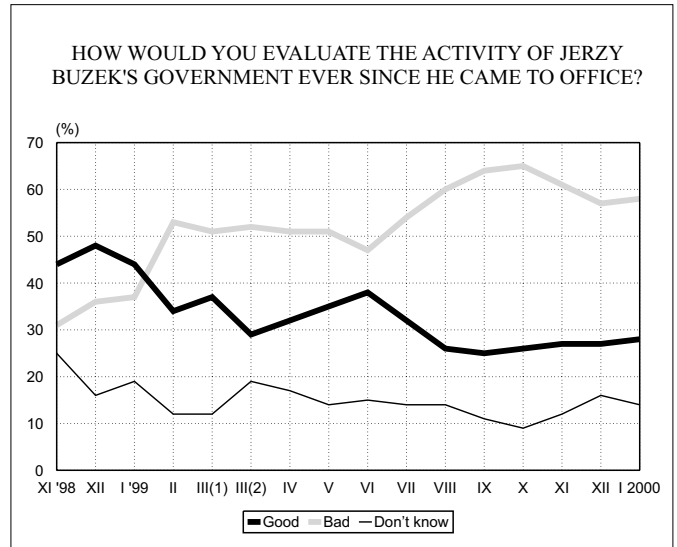
For the last six months Jerzy Buzek's cabinet has been receiving very poor ratings in public opinion polls. Significantly fewer respondents declare support for the Government than lack of support. In January 2000 two respondents in five declared disapproval of Buzek's cabinet, whereas fewer than one in four declared their support.



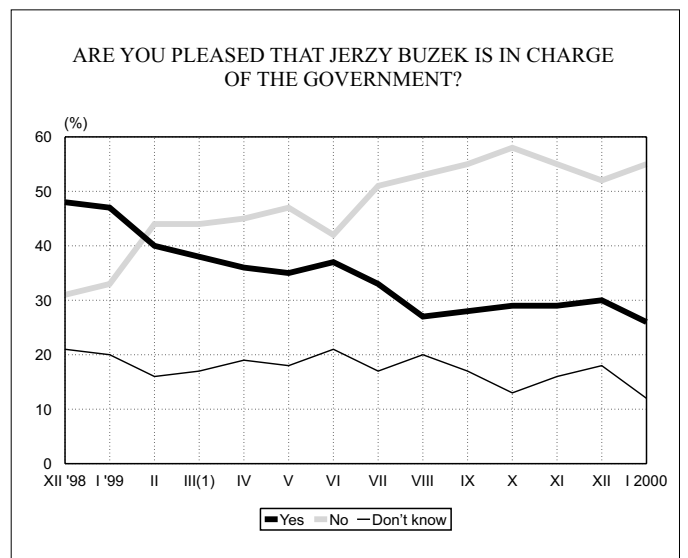
Support for the government increases with level of education but even in the most educated segment of respondents the government has more opponents than supporters. Buzek's cabinet enjoys relatively greater support among urban respondents from large cities, respondents with the highest income and those who are satisfied with their own material living conditions.

The government's effectiveness continues to be rated very critically. Twice as many respondents are critical of the activity of Jerzy Buzek's cabinet (58%) as those who evaluate the cabinet favourably (26%).

The government's economic policy continues to evoke negative ratings. The vast majority of respondents (62%) believe that this policy holds no promise of improvement of the nation's economy whereas only 26% of respondents believe that the government's economic policy will lead to economic improvement.



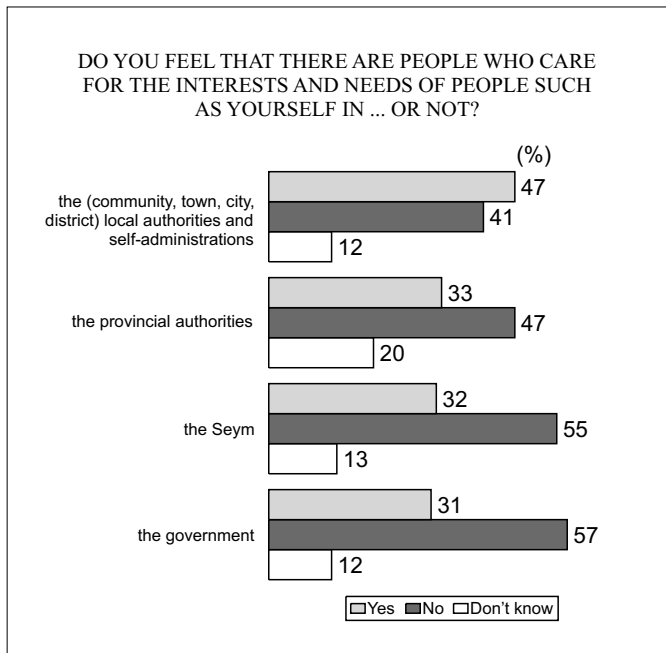
After a brief period of improvement over the last few months, Jerzy Buzek's ratings as Prime Minister have once again deteriorated slightly. This deterioration is manifested in both the smaller proportion of positive ratings and the larger proportion of negative ratings. As for today, the Prime Minister's disapproval rate is double his approval rate. Just slightly over a quarter of respondents (26%) declare approval of the Prime Minister. The rate of satisfaction with Jerzy Buzek as Prime Minister is presently the lowest ever.



More on this in CBOS Report "Attitudes Towards the Government", January 2000. Sample size 1075.

FEELING OF INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

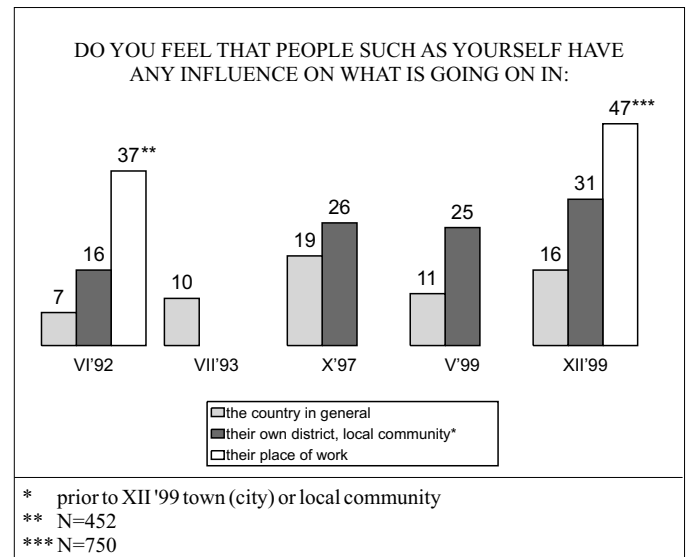
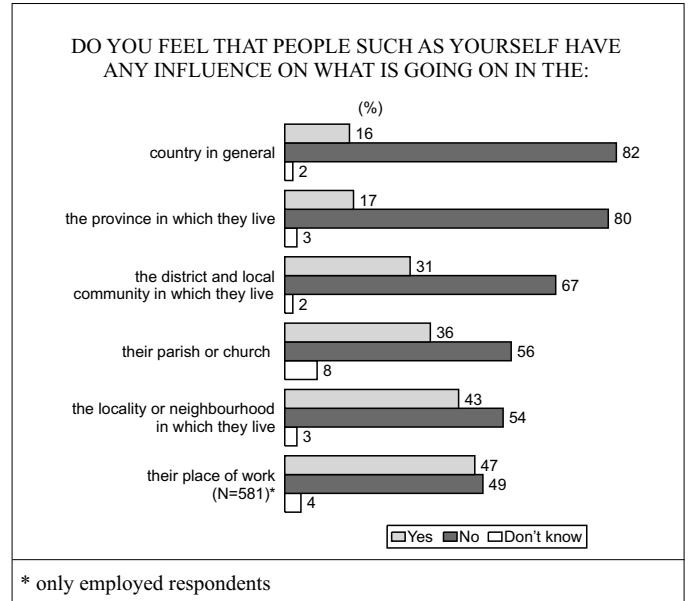
The majority of Poles do not feel that politicians currently in charge of the country sufficiently represent their interests. The institutions accused of lack of sufficient care for public needs are the central authorities the government, and also, to a lesser degree, the provincial authorities. It is only at the level of the local authorities, i.e. the ones closest to the citizens, that the prevailing opinion tends to be that they include people who care for the interests of ordinary citizens.



Generally speaking the lower level of government and administration, the less people feel that the authorities neglect their interests and needs.

One of the principal predictors of such a feeling is the negative rating of one's own material situation. Another, albeit weaker one, is identification with the political Left and an inclination towards the most important opposition party, i.e., the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). As far as socio-occupational status is concerned, farmers, the unemployed, unskilled workers and pensioners are the ones who feel most deeply abandoned by the authorities. School pupils and college students, on the other hand, are least likely to manifest such opinions.

Dissatisfaction with the State authorities goes hand in hand with feelings of lack of political empowerment. Only 16% of respondents feel that they have some influence on what is going on in the country, whereas the vast majority of respondents feel the opposite. Respondents have a greater sense of control of local affairs: at the level of their own district and local community, parish or church, and particularly at the level of their own neighbourhood and workplace.



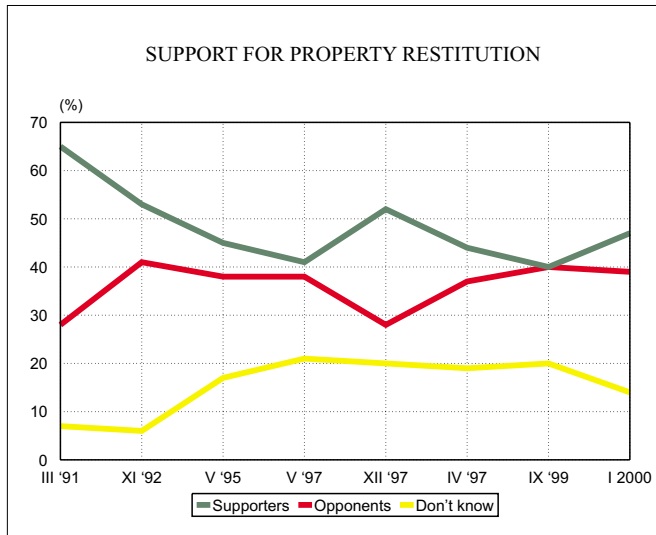
More on this in CBOS Report "Sense of Representation of Interests and Control of Public Affairs", January 2000. Sample size 1522.

OPINIONS CONCERNING REPRIVATISATION

Reprivatisation has not yet begun in Poland on a significant scale and the parliamentary debate on the governmental reprivatisation bill has stimulated intense emotions and considerable discontent in ex-owners. When the amendment were suggested that persons not currently holding Polish citizenship or living in Poland would not be entitled to property restitution, the discussion has spread to other countries as well. Only recently, the US Congress Commission on European Security and Co-operation sent a letter criticising this amendment.

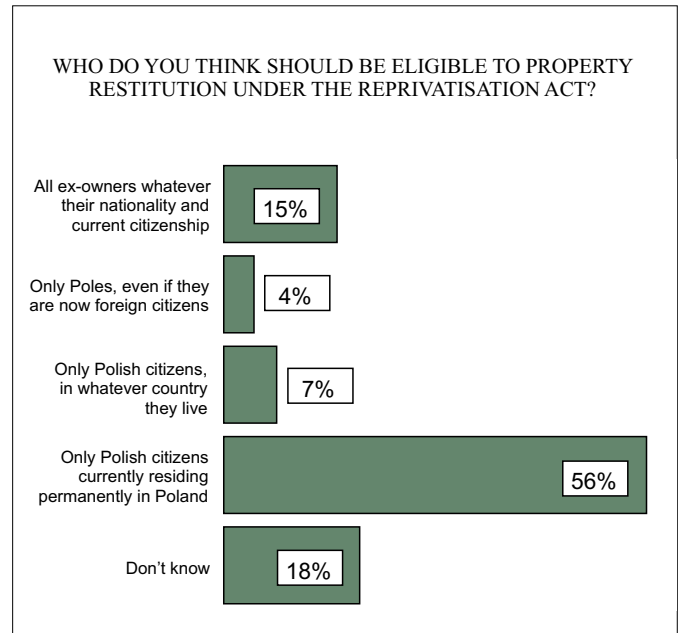
At the beginning of the transformation the Poles expressed considerable support for reprivatisation. Gradually, however, the number of supporters began to

decline, whereas more respondents than before (up to 21%) were unable to define their opinion on the issue. The increased support for reprivatization observed within the last few months may suggest that the Poles are tired of waiting for it and hope that passing of the act will bring to a close the ten-year debate on property restitution and the mode of its implementation.



Over fifty percent of the respondents, supporters and opponents of reprivatization together, endorse the opinion that only Polish citizens with permanent residence in Poland should be eligible to restitution, should the right to it be granted at all. A further 7% express the opinion that all Polish citizens, irrespective of place of residence, should be eligible. Finally, 15% of respondents express the opinion that all ex-owners should be eligible, whatever their nationality and current citizenship.

The impossible to implement notion that only people of Polish nationality, irrespective of their current citizenship, should have the right to regain their property is supported by a negligible number of respondents (4% only). It has to be stressed that one of the most frequent arguments against reprivatization put forward by its opponents is the risk of expropriation of the national heritage by foreigners and Poles living abroad, were they to be eligible to restitution (cf. CBOS Report "Opinions Concerning Reprivatization", October '99).



More on this in CBOS Report "Opinions Concerning Reprivatization", January 2000. Sample size 1075.

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

- "Our Memories of Family History"
- "Poles on Advertising Commercials"
- "Opinions and Prognoses Concerning Inflation and Real Income: Czechs and Poles"
- "Lucky or Unlucky? Poles' Mental Well-being 1999"
- "Mental illness: Social Stereotype and Distance"
- "Opinions on the AWS-UW Coalition"
- "Opinions on the Social Reforms: One Year After"
- "Secondary School Pupils on Paid Work and Money"
- "Perception of Social Conflicts"
- "Women in the Army"
- "On Parliamentary Deputies who Vote Contrary to their Club"

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