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TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT

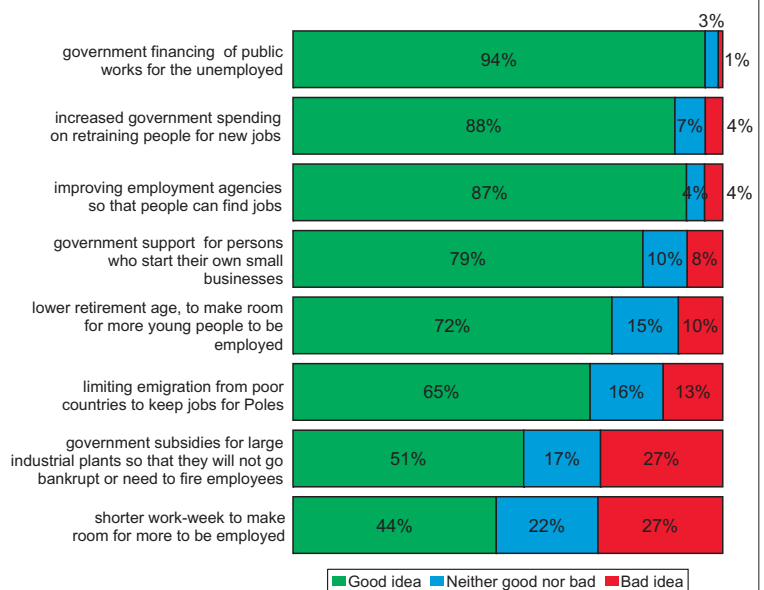
Empirical research shows that unemployment is almost unanimously considered to be among the most acute social problems in Poland. The unemployment rate remains very high and, in public perception, there are few prospects for its reduction. Therefore, a large number of people support any measure that may relieve the situation on the labour market. Most proposed ways of combating unemployment were supported by a majority of respondents.

Although economists doubt that public works can be an effective avenue to economically sustainable employment, the Polish society supports them almost unanimously. Vast majorities are in favour of increased government spending on retraining schemes and on subsidies to fledgling small businesses. Support for subsidies for ineffective industry in danger of bankruptcy is much lower (51%).

Of the two possibilities of work-sharing, lowering the retirement age to let more young people into the labour market enjoys a much stronger support (72%) than shortening the workweek to make room for more to be employed (44%). The latter was the only measure supported by a minority of respondents.

A majority of the population believe that jobs can be gained if immigration from lower-income countries is limited.

DO YOU THINK THAT INTRODUCING THE FOLLOWING MEASURES IS A GOOD OR BAD IDEA?

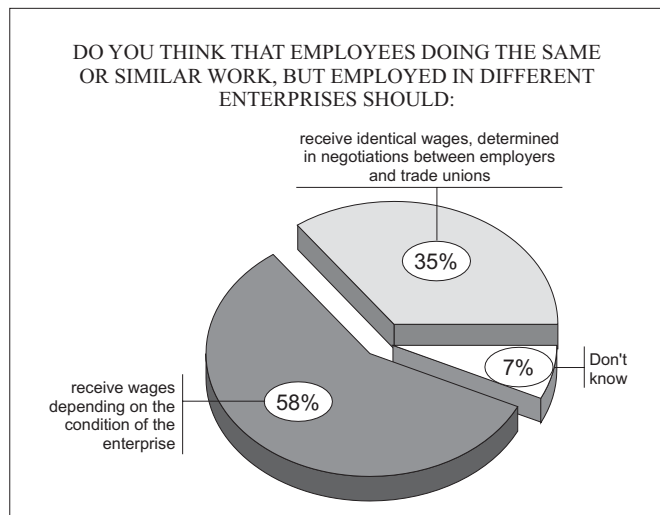


Answers originally on an 11-point scale. 'Don't know' answers omitted

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The transformation of ownership structure in the Polish economy is along the path from state-owned to private, with some employee participation in privatisation, but very limited employee role in enterprise management. At the same time, wage negotiations tend to be highly decentralised in comparison with most West European economies, and sectoral collective agreements cover a small proportion of the workforce. The NORPOL research shows that the Polish society expects a more participatory model of industrial relations, but is, on the whole, satisfied with the decentralised wage bargaining.

The majority of respondents in the poll (58%) believe that wages should be determined on the level of the enterprise, while a little over one-third agree with the view that sectoral collective labour agreements between trade unions and organisations of employers ought to result in wage levels binding for everyone.

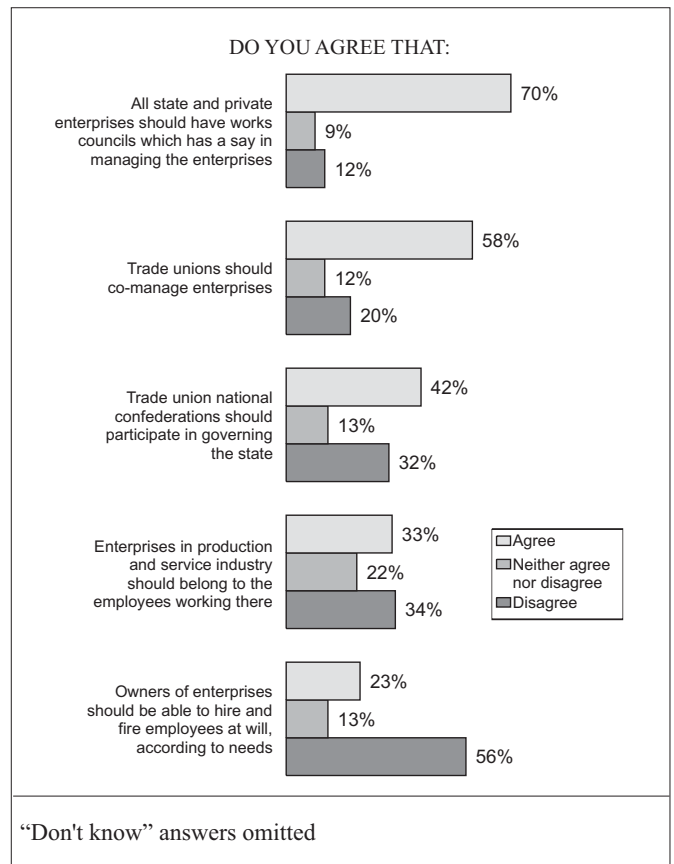


The support for a strong participatory role of employees in the enterprise is expressed by most Polish people. A vast majority (70%) believe that both state and private enterprises should have works councils which would have a say in managing the enterprises. Such institutions are a fixture of the industrial relations systems in many EU countries, and also exist in transnational corporations (the European Works Councils), but play only a very limited role in Poland. There is also a high level of support (58%) for the role of trade unions in co-managing the enterprises.

The Polish public opinion is much more sceptical about the role of employee organizations on the national level. While a plurality agree that trade union confederations should participate in governing the state, a large segment of the society (one-third, overall)

disagree. Respondents are also sceptical about employee ownership of workplaces: groups of equal size agree and disagree with the principle that enterprises in production and service industry should belong to the employees working there.

A majority of respondents disagree with the principle of the liberal labour market: they do not think that owners of enterprises should be able to hire and fire employees at will, according to needs.



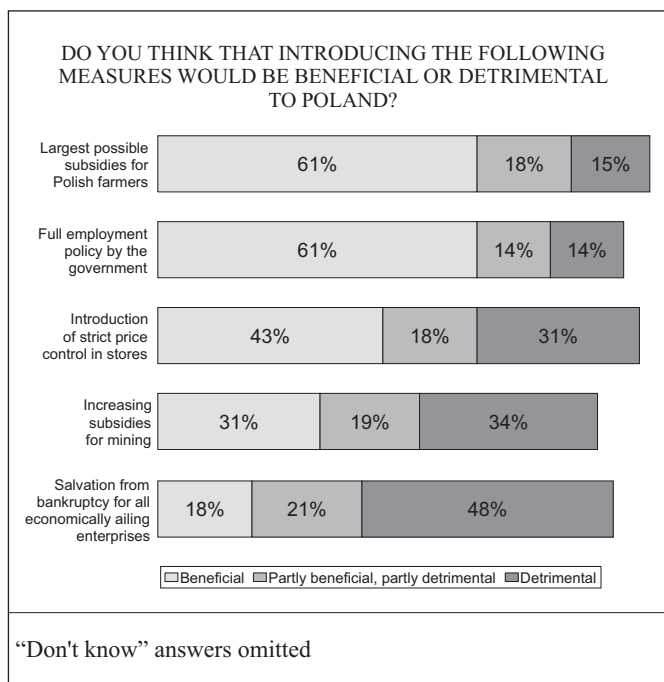
POPULISM, LEFT- AND RIGHT-WING

The political scene is undergoing a rapid reconfiguration, and populist parties are among the beneficiaries of the process. In order to gauge the potential for their development, we asked the public to express their opinion on several issues that are used by these parties to appeal to the electorate. Populism in Poland has two forms: the left-wing kind appeals to the nostalgia for the socialist past and calls for statist economic policies and strong welfare "safety net". The right-wing brand advocates culturally conservative policies. Some political movements embrace both kinds at the same time.

There is high support for a strong role of the state in agricultural and employment policy. A majority of three-fifths believe that it would be beneficial for Poland to give the farmers largest possible subsidies, and a similar majority of respondents (61%) supports a government policy of full employment.

Although regulation of prices of almost all goods was lifted 15 years ago and the inflation is low, still more than two-fifths of respondents support strict price controls in stores while less than a third think badly of such a measure.

Using public money on inefficient industry is, on the other hand, considered harmful rather than good. Increasing subsidies for the mining industry is considered beneficial by less than one-third of respondents whereas a slightly larger group finds it detrimental. About half of all adults in Poland think that it would be harmful for the country to save all enterprises under threat of bankruptcy.

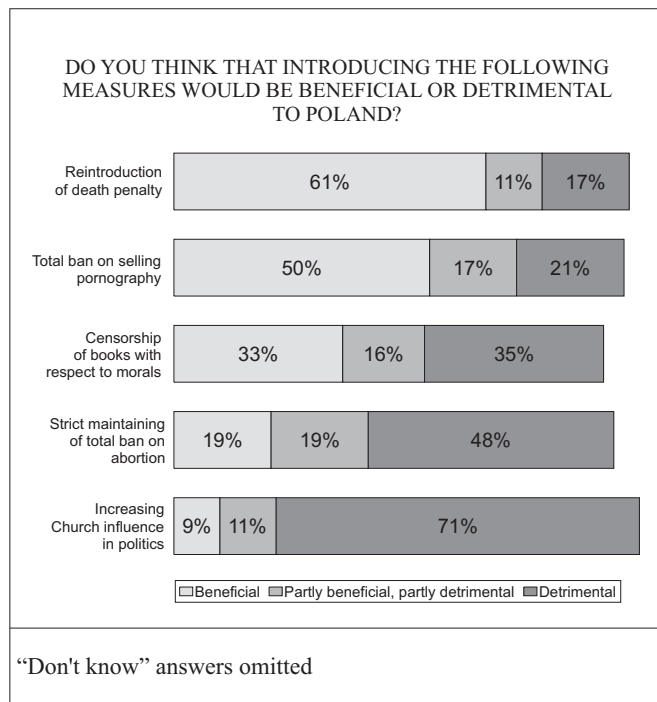


Abolishing death penalty was not welcomed by the society, and there is still a broad majority wishing for it to be brought back. Three-fifths think it would be good for this country, while 17% believe the opposite.

Half of all adult people would find it good to ban all pornography (but we do not know what they believe constitutes pornography). Almost equal percentages of respondents believe censorship of books with respect to morals would be good (33%) as bad (35%).

Strict maintaining of the total ban on abortion is considered detrimental by almost half of adults. There is very little support for the increased role of the Church in

political affairs: 9% would think it good for Poland, 71% would think it bad.

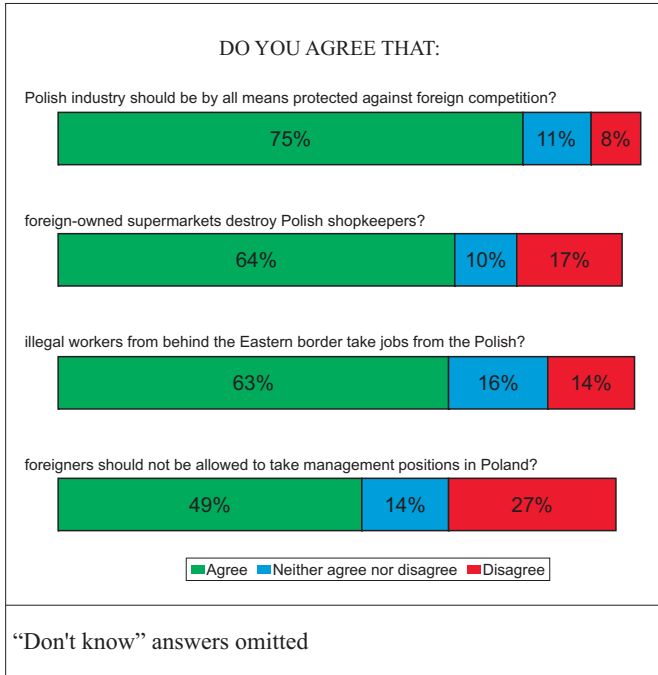


XENOPHOBIA AND THREAT FROM ABROAD

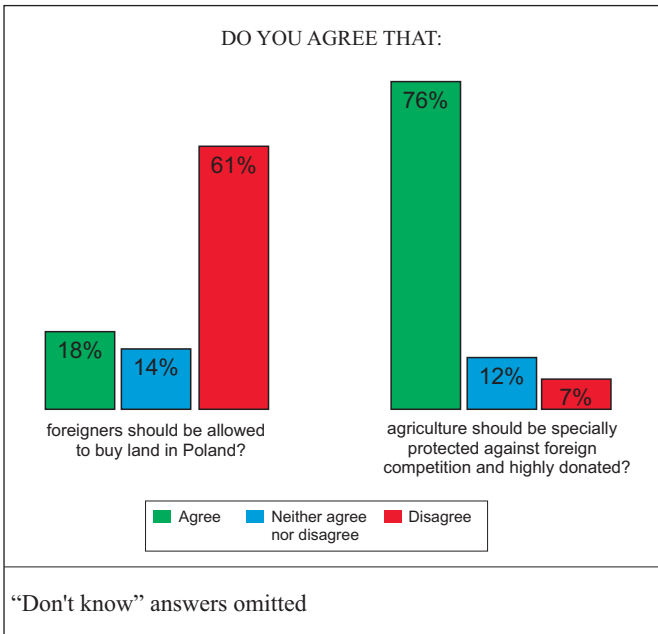
The increasing opening up of Poland to the world has not occurred without turbulences. The fears caused by the process mostly concern the economy. The opening up, while clearly appreciated for the prospects it gives to the Polish people, is also perceived as a threat to some businesses. Migration from the countries further to the East of this country is seen as a danger to workplaces. Sometimes foreign influence is seen as a threat to our culture and values, but this type of fear is not as widespread.

Foreign competition is clearly seen as a threat to the Polish business, big and small. Three-quarters of respondents believe that native industry should be by all means protected against foreign competition. A slightly smaller, but still sizeable majority of 64% are afraid that foreign-owned supermarkets destroy Polish shopkeepers. A plurality of respondents (49%) do not think it right to give decision-making power in enterprises to foreigners.

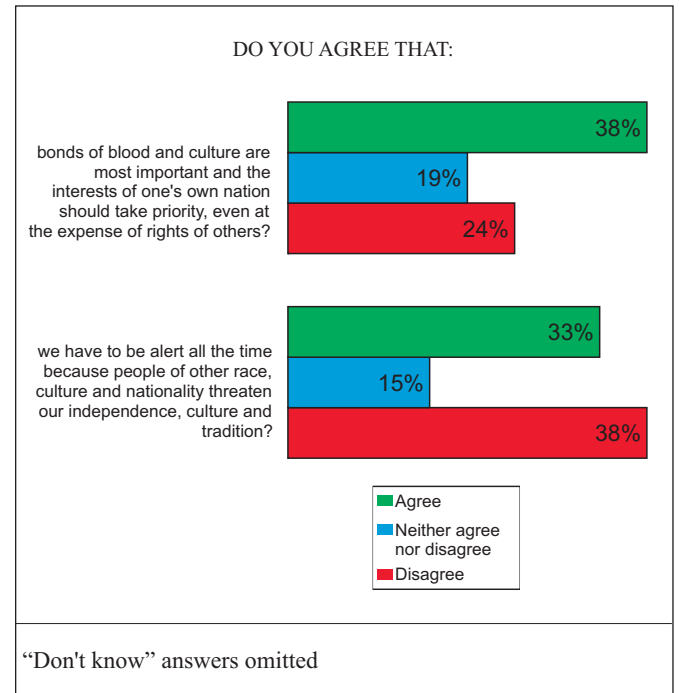
A large majority of adult people think illegal workers from behind the Eastern border take jobs from the Polish people, thus mirroring the fears expressed by the public opinion in the 'old' EU about the countries that entered it now.



Agriculture is an area where symbolic/cultural and economic considerations strongly interact, and where foreign influence is viewed with particular suspicion. A majority of 61% flatly disagree with the idea of foreigners buying land in Poland, while three-quarters think that agriculture should receive special protection against foreign competition and high subsidies.



Xenophobia, while clearly a phenomenon present in the Polish society, is confined to a minority of the people. Foreign influence is perceived as a threat to Polish culture and tradition by one-third of adults. For 38%, the ethnic ties are the most important, and the interests of one's own nation should take priority even to the detriment of rights of others.



The research cited here was a panel survey. The fieldwork was 26.02-4.03.2004 (N=1458) for the first wave and 24-31.03.2004 (N=920) for the second wave.

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