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8 Poland

Citizens and democratic politics

Renata Siemienska

Introduction

Poland, similar to other countries in central and eastern Europe, is still facing problems related to consolidating democracy and a free market economy. For almost half a century, from World War II until after the end of the 1980s, an idealized image of democracy emerged in Polish civil society. However, the ideal and the reality did not match. Many of those who expected a democratic and economic paradise after 1990 were deeply disappointed by the day-to-day reality of the emerging democratic regime. Standards of living declined steadily, the share of citizens with incomes far below the social minimum continued to rise, unemployment rates were increasing and services offered by the Polish welfare state continued to decrease. Whereas objective economic development was on the increase, subjective perceptions did not seem to match this perception.

This chapter focuses on the question of the preferred type of social, economic and political order and the processes linked to it by different groups in Polish society since 1990. This question will be discussed in light of theories proposed and empirical findings. This chapter's analyses are mainly based on data generated in the second half of the 1990s by the World Values Survey (1997, 1999) describing political value-orientations and current political behavior. However, data from the 1980s are also included when available.

I am going to discuss results of regression analyses for dependent variables measuring selected attitudes considered as being characteristic for democratic societies (see Inglehart 1997; Fuchs and Klingemann 2000; see also the discussion below). The independent variables are chosen in accordance with earlier empirical results pointing to their significance in explaining political value orientations and attitudes prevalent in different segments of society. These include age, gender, level of formal education, economic status, religious activity, trust in others, interest in politics and social value orientations. The last section of the chapter focuses on differences in attitudes and behaviors that are related to the respondents' value hierarchy and his or her position regarding the democracy-autocracy index.

There is a continuing discussion among political scientists on the definition of democracy. A variety of political systems, whose institutions function differently and create different relations between the elites and masses (Lijphart 1984; Dahl 1989; Huntington 1991) share certain characteristics that other political systems do not possess. The most important system attribute here is the legitimization of authority by free and open elections (Sartori 1994).

Similarly it is stressed that the source of any government's legitimation – democratic or otherwise – is its effectiveness (Lipset 1960; Huntington 1991). It is argued that even a government legitimized by elections may lose support when it proves to be ineffective, particularly in its economic policies. Analyses conducted in recent years with data from various countries allow the conclusion that, while economic growth does not automatically create a pluralistic society (one of the constitutive characteristics of democracy), it does increase the living standards of citizens. This in turn has a positive effect on levels of education and, thus, creates a positive condition for the implementation and functioning of democratic structures and institutions, and their support from civil society (Lipset *et al.* 1993). However, some authors point to different strategies to advance reforms:

Reform-oriented governments can insulate themselves from popular demands and impose economic policies from above. Or, trying to mobilize support for reform programs, they can seek to orchestrate consensus by engaging in widespread concertation with parties, unions, and other organizations. [...] A reform policy is not one that emerges from broad participation, from a consensus among all the affected interests, from compromises.

(Przeworski 1991: 183)

Another source of diversity is the type of the economic system linked to a particular democratic polity. Economists have often stressed that democratic states can co-exist with various types of economic systems.

In addition, various authors have pointed out that the popular definition of democracy, as majority rule, does not do justice to the many other forms of democracy (see Sartori 1987; Lijphart 1991; O'Donnell 1994). Lijphart, for example, proposed a distinction between a "majority" and a "consensus" type of democracy. While, in the majoritarian type, political power is concentrated in the hands of the majority, in consensus democracy power is shared by the various factions of a polity (Lijphart 1991).

The preceding notes have highlighted only some variations of the concept of democracy and the controversies surrounding its defining characteristics, as well as the conditions that enable its creation and persistence. Moreover, democratic regimes may change over time, something that is also true for western, "stable" democracies (Kaase and Newton

1995). Even more important, the very concept of democracy may also undergo changing interpretations (Inglehart 1990; Siemienska 1996; 2000a, b). These changes reflect the political culture of the respective societies and are a result of political knowledge and philosophy, as well as cognition, attitudes and values. Thus, attitudes toward the political system and the concepts involved may primarily be (1) cognitive – that is, the result of conviction, information and analysis; (2) affective – that is, being a result of acceptance, aversion or indifference; and/or (3) evaluative – that is, being a result of moral convictions (Almond 1980).

In their analytical model for analyzing democracies, Fuchs and Klingemann (2006) distinguish three hierarchically structured levels, namely political culture, political structure and political process. The top-most level is that of political culture, whose constitutive elements are the fundamental values of a democracy. The next level is that of political structure, which consists of the democratic system of government of a country. The political process is concerned with the realization of the collective goals of a community by the actors.

In addition, these authors identify four types of democratic communities that they define along two dimensions: "The one dimension addresses the fundamental question who bears the principal responsibility for shaping and determining a person's life. The other dimension is concerned with the just as fundamental question of how relations between individuals should be" (Fuchs and Klingemann 2002: 24). The types of the resulting, ideal-typical democratic communities are presented in Table 8.1.

The experiences of recent years lead us to conclude that the process of transformation from autocracy to democracy is much more complicated than previously thought. It seems to depend on many factors, both of a physical (e.g. lack of private capital that prevents rapid privatization of business), as well as of a mental nature (e.g. the individual hardships that are a correlate of transformation processes). In fact, people in places like Poland were not aware of the modal political and economic mechanisms that govern traditional democracies. This led to the formation of very unrealistic images and expectations, especially with regard to future prosperity. It quickly showed that it was not possible to keep elements of the previous system which were considered positive (e.g. relative economic

Table 8.1 Types of democratic communities

Relationship with others	Responsibility for one's own fate	
	Self	State
Competition	Libertarian	Liberal
Cooperation (solidarity)	Republican	Socialist

equality via a secure minimal income) and similarly gain income opportunities characteristic for a capitalist economy. In addition, it turned out that not all of the post-communist countries were attaining the same level of stability characteristic of western democracies.

A political system's stability depends on many factors, particularly its level of legitimization. Democratic legitimization requires acceptance of the rules of the game by both the majority of citizens and the ruling elite (Linz 1978). However, as mentioned above, citizens' evaluation of any existing system also depends on its performance. In addition, the length of time a stable democratic system exists is another important source of its legitimization.

New democracies, which emerged in the early 1990s, were therefore confronted with many problems. They are developing democratic rules of the game with different results. In most, the degree of acceptance of the new rules of the game deteriorated because of a perceived decline of the economy and its gloomy prospects. Huntington (1996) points out that the readiness to accept democratic rules of the game and free market mechanisms is, in addition, determined by the type of the cultural context to which a country belongs. As he suggests, the situation in Europe is more heterogeneous than is often believed, since the division after World War II into non-communist western Europe and the communist eastern Europe did not much coincide with older cultural divisions. According to this hypothesis, the ability to adapt to a western model of politics and economics is greater in those post-communist countries that formerly belonged to the Catholic and Protestant states than to those dominated by Orthodox or Islamic culture. These differences were already highlighted in studies conducted in the early 1990s (Inglehart 1997).

An overview of Polish political and economic transformation during the 1990s

More than a decade has passed since the elections of 1989 – the turning point in Poland's political history. The last ten years were a period of confrontation between citizens' expectations and Polish reality, both with respect to the political as well as the economic system. These years brought substantial changes in the structure of the political landscape. However, during the first years the situation seemed to be clear cut: on the one hand, there was the old establishment, composed of the Polish United Workers Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*; later *Social Democracy of Polish Republic – Socjaldemokracja Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej*), the trade unions and various other closely tied organizations and political parties. On the other hand, there was the opposition camp, which grew strong in the 1980s, and in which the main part was played by *Solidarity*. *Solidarity* was a trade union, but in addition to employees from various sectors of the national economy, it attracted politicians and intellectuals

who opposed the communist system. The division between two political camps also reflected a division between "us" (the society) and "them" (the authority of the previous system). Over the ensuing years, however, this dichotomous cleavage dissolved. The breakdown was particularly notable on the right-hand side of the political divide. Parties emerged that emphasized their ties with the Catholic Church. Other parties emphasized their allegiance to the liberal side of the spectrum and still others stressed national traditions. In 1991, one could count approximately 200 political parties of which, however, only a small number had any impact on the structure of the political arena. In the 1991 parliamentary election, representatives of 29 political parties and groups were elected to parliament. The electoral law, which did not set proper hurdles for parties and party coalitions to enter parliament, allowed for such a situation.

The composition of 1993 parliament, however, changed drastically. This was mainly the result of a changed electoral law, which stipulated a minimum support of at least 5 percent of the valid votes cast. In addition, the political spectrum of the left consolidated. The Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD*) was formed, which united various parties, trade unions and non-governmental organizations with a left-wing orientation and sometimes with a communist genealogy. In this period, right-wing groups and parties, despite serious efforts, could not agree to form an electoral coalition, therefore votes cast for them (one-third of the valid votes cast) were wasted and none of these parties entered parliament. In part the shift of votes to the left was also influenced by the citizens' disappointment with the political and economic performance of governments in the first years of the decade.

Over the next years, the Polish right learned lessons from the defeat in 1993 and consolidated. In the 1997 elections, the number of political parties had decreased significantly. In this election, basically two coalitions were competing for political power. There was the left-wing post-communist Democratic Left Alliance coalition (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD*) and the right-wing Election Action Solidarity coalition (*Akcja Wyborcza Solidarnosc – AWS*). There were also several smaller political parties, including groups representing the German community. The election campaign was held under the motto of a struggle between two historically constituted political forces, the "post-communists" on the one hand, and the "former Solidarity camp" on the other. Although both coalitions obtained an almost equal number of votes in the elections, none reached an absolute majority. A coalition government was formed by the AWS with the Union of Freedom (*Unia Wolności – UW*) (a party from the Solidarity camp, although some of the leading activists had been PUPP members in the past). The fact that coalitions (AWS and SLD) have been the main actors in the political arena had specific consequences later on. Their leaders were forced to reach compromises and consensus. The problems arising from this necessity were particularly evident in the AWS. They

resulted in changing party affiliations of parliamentarians, the formation of new factions inside the AWS, or in turning former party members into "independents." We might add here that the strength of political parties in Poland depends not so much on the number of actual members, but on how many people will vote for a proposed item of legislation in parliament. This situation is similar to that observed in other countries with only a brief period of democratic rule (e.g. Spain).

A typical feature of these two strongest political actors (AWS and SLD) is that trade union members played an important role in both coalitions. Thus, both tried to compete with one another in advocating demands for the protection of union members' interests. These interests are frequently defined as preserving the status quo, and if changes are unavoidable they want to attain the best possible deal for those employees who are likely to lose their jobs. For example, in the case of AWS, the Association of Catholic Families (Stowarzyszenie Rodzin Katolickich), strongly supported by the Church, has played an important role in this regard.

The necessity and direction of political and economic changes is based on internal and external preconditions. Internal preconditions include the transformation from a centralized economy, based on state-ownership (where effectiveness was measured more by the realization of ideological and political goals than by economic rationality) into a free market economy with its own criteria of success and failure. External preconditions include the expectations of the European Union and the adaptation to its *aquis communautaire*.

The agricultural sector poses a specific problem for Poland. The economic situation of rural inhabitants in the years before 1989 was not unbearable as a result of a combination of subsistence economy on the one hand, and relatively favorable political conditions on the other. That said, the centralized political and economic system, and an agricultural policy which did not take a clear position on the question of whether the agricultural sector should or should not remain in private hands (an exception in central and eastern Europe), seriously limited individual initiative. The lack of opportunities preserved an agricultural structure and contributed to the apathy of the individual farmer.

In the 1990s, farmers' incomes decreased to a greater extent than those of other sectors, not the least as a result of the lack of competitiveness of Polish agriculture compared to the more profitable and greatly subsidized agriculture of the European Union countries (Hausner and Marody 1999). Politicians talk a great deal about the need to restructure Polish agriculture; about its anachronistic character preserved over the last decades; about the lack of "human capital," i.e. educated people, who would be able to take part in transforming agriculture and the countryside into a worthwhile living and working environment. Peasants' parties, however, are against such reforms; they demand a policy that protects agriculture in its present form.

Democracy and democratic performance

Support of democratic rule

The change of the political system in 1989 included a fundamental change to the conception of the state and its mechanisms. The authoritarian regime had been replaced by a system in which elections, negotiations and conflicts among interest groups, and plurality of political orientations, became a reality. Such a system was basically unknown to a society which, for half a century, had experienced nothing but the highly centralized communist state.

Despite the pauperization of a significant share of the population during the 1990s, with national unemployment rates at about 12 percent, reaching up to 20 percent in some regions in 1997, 68.1 percent strongly agree or agree that "democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government," 8.9 percent disagree and 23 percent of the respondents remain undecided. The acceptance of democracy mainly depends on the level of formal education and the respondents' level of interest in politics (Table 8.2). Respondents with a higher level of formal education, and people with a higher level of interest in politics, more frequently believe democracy to be superior to other systems. The individual economic situation does not play a role here. In total, the variables considered in the regression model, however, explain only a relatively small part of the variance: $R^2 = 0.05$.

A more complex democracy-autocracy index is constructed by combining an index summarizing democratic attitudes with one measuring autocratic attitudes as described in the introductory chapter. Results show that, in 1999, a majority of respondents (54.8 percent), qualified as "weak democrats," while 13.3 percent were "undecided," that is, they neither supported a democratic nor an autocratic political regime. A total

Table 8.2 Predictors for the respondents' level of acceptance of democracy. Multiple regression model (standardized regression coefficients)

Independent variables	Beta
Sex	0.05
Age	0.06
Attendance of religious services	-0.02
Mat-postmat	0.03
Education	-0.23***
Family savings	0.09
Adjusted R^2	0.07

Notes

Index based on questions cited above. Minimum 3, maximum 12. Mean = 8.47, st. deviation 1.98.

*** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 8.3 Democracy-autocracy index (%)

Strong democrats	16.9
Democrats	54.8
Undecided citizens	13.3
Autocrats	15.0
Total	100.0

Source: WVS 1999.

of 16.9 percent of citizens fit the requirements for "strong democrats," and 15 percent had to be characterized as "autocrats." Respondents with a higher level of formal education tend to be more in favor of democracy as a form of government than respondents with a lower level of formal education ($r = -0.24$, $p < 0.000$). Apparently the level of formal education is the only differentiating factor; age distinguishes respondents in this respect to a much lesser degree ($r = 0.06$, $p < 0.03$). Church attendance and gender exhibit no influence.

Believing in the superiority of democracy as an ideal does not imply being blind to its actual flaws. Only agreement with the statement "In democracy, the economic system runs badly" correlates negatively with the respondents' positive evaluation of democracy in general ($r = -0.136$, $p < 0.000$). There is no statistically significant correlation between the respondents' position toward the statements "Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling" and "Democracies aren't any good at maintaining order," and their general evaluation of democracy as a form of government. This might indicate that the respondents are well aware of the discrepancy between democracy as an ideal and its actual performance in Polish politics.

Effectiveness of democratic rule

Some 46.7 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement "In democracy, the economic system runs badly." An overwhelming majority agreed that "Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling" and that "Democracies aren't any good at maintaining order" (83.2 percent and 75.7 percent respectively). The respondents' positions toward these statements were significantly correlated (correlation values between all three opinions range from 0.480 up to 0.721 with $p < 0.000$).

The evaluation of effectiveness of democratic rule is correlated with the level of formal education: respondents with a higher level of formal education evaluate the performance of the regime more positively (Table 8.4).

The economic situation of the respondent is also statistically important. Respondents with a lower income level frequently evaluated the democratic performance more negatively. Trust in institutions is of no influence here. However, a lack of trust in international institutions (the

Table 8.4 Predictors for the respondents' perception of the effectiveness of democratic rule (index); multiple regression model (standardized regression coefficients)

Independent variables	Beta
Sex	0.05
Age	0.06
Attendance of religious services	-0.02
Mat-postmat	0.03
Education	-0.23***
Family savings	0.09**
Adjusted R^2	0.07

Notes

Index based on questions cited above. Minimum 3, maximum 12. Mean = 8.47, st. deviation 1.98.

*** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$.

European Union and the United Nations) was correlated with an unfavorable evaluation of the effectiveness of democratic rule ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.000$). Apparently the respondents perceive these institutions as the external forces impacting on the new political and economic order.

Conception of the state

Priority of self-responsibility

Respondents were asked to indicate whether citizens should be responsible for their own welfare, or whether they think it is the state's responsibility to provide welfare. The level of agreement with the statements "The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for" and "People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves" was measured on a ten-point scale, where 1-4 was treated as a clear preference for the first statement, while 7-10 was taken as a clear preference for the latter.

A total of 41.7 percent of Poles indicated that "The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for," while 36.2 percent preferred the option "People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves." The respondents' choices were consistent with their attitude toward people's influence on decisions affecting their own lives. Among those who were in favor of broad government responsibility, 48 percent saw no reason for enlarging people's influence, while 30.2 percent nevertheless wanted to influence decisions that affect their own lives. Among those who were convinced that "people should take more responsibility to provide for themselves," the proportions were the reversed: 30.8 percent did not wish to enlarge citizens' influence, while 58 percent indicated the opposite conviction.

A strong correlation also exists between agreement with the statement "People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves" and the opinion that "Private ownership of business and industry should be increased" ($r=0.40$, $p<0.000$). In addition, a positive attitude toward self-responsibility also correlated with a positive evaluation of the effectiveness of democratic rule ($r=0.21$, $p<0.000$). Supporters of self-responsibility are not distinguished from supporters of state responsibility by their attitudes toward governmental and administrative institutions, but they tend to express a higher level of trust in institutions of the public sphere ($r=0.15$, $p<0.000$). They have taken part, or are considering the possibility of taking part, in various types of political action. In addition they belong to the respondents with a higher level of formal education ($r=0.28$, $p<0.000$), to the younger generation ($r=0.12$, $p<0.000$), they are interested in politics ($r=0.16$, $p<0.000$) and exhibit a post-materialist orientation to a greater extent than respondents who advocate state responsibility ($r=0.13$, $p<0.000$).

Private or state ownership of business?

The structure of ownership of the means of production and services in Poland underwent substantial changes in the 1990s. Bankruptcies of state-owned plants, their privatization and the foundation of new companies with foreign and partly Polish capital changed not only the economy but also seriously affected the situation of the employees. In February 1997, 58.1 percent of the labor force was employed in the private sector. At the same time the unemployment rate rose up to 12.8 percent.

Respondents were asked to indicate on a ten-point scale whether they would prefer that private ownership of business and industry was increased, or whether government ownership would be the better solution. Of those polled, 21.9 percent believed that private ownership of business and industry should increase, while 37.7 percent were convinced that the government should own business and industry.

With regard to the question of management, however, only 24.4 percent favored the position that the government should appoint the managers. A large share of the respondents (44.3 percent) believed that both owners and employees should appoint managers together. Only 14.8 percent of the respondents were willing to leave management decisions to the owners alone. Roughly the same share (16.5 percent) expressed the opinion that the employees should own the business and should appoint managers.

Changes in the structure of business ownership and management are most acceptable for respondents with a higher level of formal education, a higher level of interest in politics, and a post-materialist orientation. It is worth discussing two other variables that are also statistically significant independent variables. These are gender and the economic situation of

Table 8.5 Predictors of the respondents' choice between private and state ownership and types of management; multiple regression models (standardized regression coefficients)

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Private vs. state ownership (beta)</i>	<i>Type of management (beta)</i>
Gender	0.10**	0.07*
Age	0.06*	0.06
Attendance of religious services	-0.04	-0.06
Mat-postmat	0.05*	0.09**
Education	-0.25***	-0.18***
Family savings	0.09**	0.09
Interest in politics (index)	-0.19***	-0.11***
Trust in other people	-0.03	0.06*
Adjusted R ²	0.17	0.10

Note

*** $p<0.000$; ** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$.

the respondent. According to earlier studies, women were found to favor governmental ownership of business more frequently and preferred jointly appointed managers on a slightly higher level than men did. Respondents with a lower income level also preferred a strong role for the state in business ownership and management. This attitude reflects their vulnerable position in the labor market since they are most likely to lose their jobs first after privatization. In addition, these respondents tended to reject a need for an increase of citizens' influence on political decisions.

The share of respondents opting for privatization of ownership and management decisions was 31 percent and, thus, the lowest among the countries of central and eastern Europe, except Slovakia, where the proportion was as low as 23 percent.

Confidence in institutions

Citizens' confidence in institutions is one important factor that stabilizes a democratic system; more generally, it contributes to the stability of any political system. Absence of such confidence resulted in Poland's crisis of the early 1980s. The start of the transformation toward democracy in the early 1990s led to the creation of new institutions that enjoyed high levels of trust at first. However, these levels have tended to drop over the course of the last decade.

In the beginning of 1997, political parties enjoyed the lowest level of confidence (only 12.8 percent trusted parties a "great deal" and "quite a lot"). Parties were followed by trade unions, with 29.9 percent approval rates. The share of respondents trusting government, parliament and the civil service was in the range of 30–40 percent. The next category consisted of the legal system, the police, major companies, as well as the press

and TV with a level of confidence between 45 percent and 55 percent. The Church (67.4 percent) and the armed forces (79.5 percent), however, were trusted by a majority of respondents. The latter enjoys traditionally high levels of confidence, while the Church was less trusted, compared to the early 1980s (Jasińska and Siemińska 1983).

Environmental organizations and the women's movement are new phenomena that emerged after 1989. A large share of respondents expressed confidence in these organizations: 78.5 percent trust the environmental protection movement and 54.2 percent trust the women's movement, but neither plays an important role in the political arena.

Confidence in international organizations is at relatively high levels: 61 percent of the respondents expressed confidence in the European Union, and 67.5 percent in the United Nations.

The respondents' attitudes toward various types of governmental and administrative institutions and international organizations are quite consistent. There are two groups of citizens, one trusting and the other not trusting. This is reflected in the pattern of correlations. Almost all items are positively correlated and the correlations are statistically significant at the 0.000 level. The exceptions are the low correlations between confidence in the Church and confidence in the parliament, the environmental movement, international organizations and in major companies (although statistically significant, $p < 0.001$). Another exception is the lack

Table 8.6 Predictors of indexes of confidence in governmental institutions, administrative institutions and public organizations; multiple regression models (standardized regression coefficients)

Independent variables	Confidence		
	Governmental institutions (beta)	Administrative institutions (beta)	Public organizations (beta)
Gender	-0.03	-0.02	0.06
Age	0.05	0.11**	0.08*
Attendance of religious services	-0.01	-0.10**	-0.27***
Mat-postmat	0.05	0.02	-0.05
Education	-0.07	-0.17***	-0.18***
Family savings	-0.03	-0.02	0.07
Interest in politics (index)	0.14***	0.05	0.08*
Trust in people	-0.06	-0.05	-0.02
Adjusted R^2	0.02	0.06	0.13

Notes
Description of indices: index of confidence in governmental institutions: minimum 3, maximum 12; mean = 6.26, st. dev. = 1.89. Index of confidence in administrative organizations: minimum 4, maximum 16; mean = 10.35, st. dev. = 2.22. Index of confidence in organizations in the public sphere: minimum 2, maximum 8; mean 5.42, st. dev. = 1.54.
*** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

of a statistically significant correlation between confidence in labor unions and confidence in the parliament and the legal system.

The set of socio-demographic social predictors used in the analyses explains the respondents' greater level of confidence in institutions of the public sphere than in administrative and governmental institutions. The variable which distinguishes trusting respondents from those who do not trust governmental institutions is interest in politics – those more interested express higher levels of confidence. For the two remaining indices, the respondents' level of education is the decisive predictor in that the lower the level of formal education, the higher the level of confidence. Furthermore, frequency of the attendance to religious services and age are indicators of greater confidence.

Citizens and civil society

Tolerance

There is widespread agreement among researchers of democracy that tolerance is one of the pillars upon which democracy rests. Once internalized, this virtue enables citizens to cope with the diversity of lifestyles that are characteristic of modern pluralistic society.

Several studies conducted at the beginning of the 1990s indicated that the post-communist societies of central and eastern Europe were characterized by less tolerance than their west European counterparts (Broek and Moor 1993). However, a more detailed analysis revealed a far more differentiated picture. Over the past few years, the level of tolerance has increased in Poland. In 1990 and 1994, tolerance and respect for other people was valued by 75 percent of the respondents as one of the qualities that children should be taught at home. In 1997, this percentage rose to 82 percent.

Age, level of formal education and interest in politics are important predictors of tolerance and social trust. Younger respondents, with a higher level of formal education and interest in politics, attach a higher value to tolerance than the elderly, respondents with a lower level of formal education and low interest in politics. In addition, gender turned out to be of some significance: women have more esteem for tolerance than men.

Some behaviors and lifestyles lead to controversy in most societies. These include homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce. As previous cross-cultural studies (see Inglehart 1997) have shown, attitudes toward these issues have changed over the years, gaining more acceptance particularly in traditional democracies. This does not mean that they are accepted everywhere to the same degree, or that the process is linear. After periods of increasing acceptance, some might meet again with a strong negative reaction on the part of the society or/and certain groups

Table 8.7 Predictors of importance of tolerance and trust in others; multiple regression models (standardized regression coefficients)

Independent variables	Perceived importance of tolerance (beta)	Trust in others (beta)
Gender	-0.11***	0.00
Age	0.11***	-0.08*
Attendance of religious services	0.01	0.03
Mat-postmat	0.04	0.02
Education	-0.14***	-0.13***
Family savings	0.02	0.04
Interest in politics (index)	-0.11***	-0.05
Trust in people	-0.01	-
Adjusted R ²	0.07	0.02

Note

*** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

or factions of the political elite. Post-communist societies, and particularly Poland, provide a good example. The dominance of the Catholic Church, which always played an important role not only as a religious, but also as a political institution, was further strengthened by democratization (however, with a simultaneous decrease of citizens' confidence in it). This has led to an enforcement of legal restrictions for some of the issues, such as abortion or divorce (by introducing the institution of separation).

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of acceptance for homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce on a ten-point scale. Scores between 1-3 points were treated as rejection of these behaviors, while scores between 8-10 points expressed acceptance. A total of 78.8 percent of the respondents considered prostitution as not justifiable, and the same is true for 70.6 percent of the respondents when it comes to homosexuality. Of those polled, 56.8 percent rejected abortion and 38.6 percent rejected divorce. Acceptance of prostitution was indicated by 3.5 percent of respondents, 8.2 percent accepted homosexuality, 12 percent abortion and 17.6 percent divorce. The respondents' attitudes toward all four issues are strongly correlated ($p < 0.000$). The correlation between the attitude toward homosexuality and prostitution is particularly high ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.000$); the same is true for the correlation between attitudes toward abortion and divorce ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.000$). The remaining correlations range between 0.32 and 0.39.

When we configure the respondents in four groups by level of acceptance, it turns out that 46.9 percent of the respondents consider all of the behaviors in question as not justifiable, while only 6.4 percent accept all four issues as justifiable. The degree of acceptance is related to some extent to political values and party preferences (Table 8.8). With regard to the latter, the party adherents also differed the most were, on the one

Table 8.8 Level of acceptance of homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce (index) and priority of political values (%)

Priority of political values**	Level of acceptance for homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce (index)*				Total
	(1) Never justifiable (4-11)	(2) Some justifiable (12-19)	(3) Some justifiable (20-7)	(4) Always justifiable (28-36)	
Values never chosen	49.8	31.3	15.9	3.0	100
One value chosen	47.6	29.8	15.3	7.3	100
Two values chosen	44.7	31.5	17.5	6.2	100
Three (all) values chosen	43.6	23.1	17.9	15.4	100
Total	46.9	30.5	16.3	6.4	100

Notes

* Index: Minimum 4, maximum 36; based on four questions on the acceptance of homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce, scale: 1 (never justifiable) to 10 (always justifiable).

** Priority for "Giving people more say in important government decisions," "Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities" and "Protecting freedom of speech." A detailed description of the index is given in the paragraph "Priority of political values" (page 00).

hand, potential AWS voters, of whom 62.8 percent consider the behaviors in questions as never justifiable and only 2.3 percent regard them as always justifiable; while this relation is 28.1 percent and 9.2 percent for potential SLD voters.

The most important predictor variables of ethical tolerance are shown in Table 8.9. Younger respondents who rarely attend religious services and are more educated are more likely to be tolerant regarding the above-mentioned types of behavior. The pattern of relationships is the same as found in other countries with the exception of materialist–post-materialist values which play a significantly less important role in Poland (Inglehart 1997).

The belief that tolerance is an important virtue that should be taught to children strongly correlates with the acceptance of homosexuality ($r=0.11$, $p<0.000$) and divorce ($r=0.10$, $p<0.000$). This correlation is less strong in the case of prostitution ($r=0.07$, $p<0.01$) and abortion ($r=0.08$, $p<0.01$).

Trust in other citizens

Only 17.9 percent of the respondents believed that most people can be trusted. Only the respondents' level of formal education is of importance here: the higher the achieved level of formal education, the more likely the respondent is to express trust in other people. Age is of less importance and no other variable seems to have an influence on interpersonal social trust in Poland (see Table 8.7).

Attitudes toward immigrants

A definite majority of Poles favors a restricted immigration policy. Only 6 percent believe that immigration should not be restricted at all ("Let

Table 8.9 Predictors of the respondents' level of acceptance of homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce (index); multiple regression model (standardized regression coefficients)

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Sex	0.08
Age	-0.20***
Attendance of religious services	0.28***
Mat-postmat	-0.02
Education	0.14***
Family savings	-0.08**
Political interest (index)	0.02
Adjusted R^2	0.18

Note

*** $p<0.000$; ** $p<0.01$.

anyone come who wants to"); 27.7 percent of the respondents think that immigrant should "come as long as there are jobs available," 51.4 percent are in favor of introducing strict limits on the number of immigrants and 14.9 percent want to prohibit immigration completely.

It is common sense to believe that tolerance and trust in others should be important conditions for a positive attitude toward immigrants. Instead, both variables turned out to be less important preconditions than other socio-demographic variables. It is true, however, that people who trust others and want to teach tolerance to their children have slightly more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Siemieniska 2001).

A higher level of formal education, younger age and a higher level of interest in politics are important predictors for a liberal attitude toward immigration. A high frequency of attending religious services has the opposite effect – respondents attending church more frequently tend to express a more restrictive attitude.

Citizens and democratic politics

Political involvement

The existence of civil society plays a key role in promoting and shaping a democratic system. It is defined as the sum of citizens' collective self-organized activities in the space between the governmental and economic sphere (see Habermas 1984; Walzer 1995; Young 1999). These activities potentially limit both economic and administrative powers.

As Putnam points out in his survey on local government in Italy, the

Table 8.10 Predictors of attitudes toward immigrants (index); multiple regression model (standardized regression coefficients)

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Gender	0.05
Age	0.14***
Attendance of religious services	-0.09**
Mat-postmat	0.03
Education	-0.15***
Family savings	0.01
Interest in politics (index)	-0.07*
Trust in other people	0.05
Child qual: tolerance	0.01
Adjusted R^2	0.08

Notes

Index based on the questions discussed in the preceding section. Minimum -1, maximum +1.

*** $p<0.000$; ** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$.

absence or marginalization of civil structures hinders the effectiveness and persistence of democratic institutions and processes:

The success in overcoming the dilemmas of collective action and self-destruction of opportunism, which are revealed by these dilemmas, depend upon the wide social context, within which a specific game is played. Voluntary cooperation is easier within a society which has inherited a significant social capital in the form of norms of mutuality and a network of civic involvement. [...] It pertains to such features of social organization as trust, norms and relations, which may increase the effectiveness of the society, making it easier to coordinate action.

(Putnam 1993: 258)

Another important by-product of a civil society was emphasized by Etzioni-Halevy:

An important indicator of the public opinion in a democratic system is the ability to force the elites to become sensitive to social interests [...] The autonomy in itself cannot provide this sensibility, but rivalry of elites will make them seek support among the public, in order to maintain their position and to achieve their objectives.

(Etzioni-Halevy 1993)

Other surveys indicate that values and belief systems of elites are correlated with values and belief systems prevalent in the respective society, although they are not identical. Elites are products of societies, from which they have originated, but their systems of values are not copies of those of "average" citizens (see Inglehart 1990; Siemienska 2000a).

We will discuss several types of civil and political activities in Poland. We will show that the high level of mobilization in the 1980s did not remain stable after 1989. Moreover, this level is lower than in other post-communist countries, as well as in traditional democracies.

Interest in politics

In accordance with the Putnam model, we assume that citizens should be interested in politics since this will enable them to understand and take part in local and national decision-making and, more generally, to act competently within the public sphere.

The hypothesis that traditional democracies host a larger share of citizens seriously interested in politics than new democracies was not confirmed in previous surveys (WVS 1990-3). Rather, it might be the case that citizens become active in particular situations, especially when they are dissatisfied with the political regime. Surveys from the early 1990s have

shown that in South Korea, South Africa, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Poland more respondents reported politics to play a "very important" or "quite important" role in their life than, for example, respondents in Switzerland, Austria, France, Italy or Belgium, not to mention the relatively new democracies of Spain or Portugal. Polish society was highly politicized during the 1980s. This period started with the formation of Solidarity, and ended with the 1989 parliamentary elections. All of this led to a change of the political system. This development started a phase in which politics did not matter as much as it did before. In 1990, 42 percent of the respondents indicated that politics played a "very important" or "important" role in their lives, while in 1997 this proportion decreased to 30 percent. This trend was also reflected in the frequency of discussion of political issues among peers. Consider that, in 1990, 83 percent of the respondents said that they frequently discussed political matters with friends, while in 1997 only 18 percent did so. It also may be reflected in the level of the respondents' interest in politics. In 1990, 49 percent of respondents reported that they were "very interested" or "somewhat interested," while this percentage declined to 42.1 percent in 1997 and 42.8 percent in 1999. This development was also mirrored in other post-communist countries with considerably lower levels of interest in politics than in traditional democracies (e.g. 64.2 percent in the USA, 77.9 percent in West Germany). Apparently interest in politics springs from various sources. Sometimes it is a result of a current economic and/or political situation; sometimes it is a persisting element of a long tradition of political culture.

Interest in politics depends mainly on the respondent's level of formal education and gender. Respondents with a higher level of formal education, men, respondents with a post-materialist orientation, older people, and the less religious expressed higher levels of interest in politics. The respondents' economic situation (measured by self-declared saving capacity) did not play a part here (Table 8.11).

Table 8.11 Predictors of political interest (index) in 1997; multiple regression model (standardized regression coefficients)

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Sex	-0.20***
Age	0.09**
Attendance of religious services	0.07**
Mat-postmat	-0.09**
Education	0.30***
Family savings	0.01
Adjusted R^2	0.13

Notes

*** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Index based on the questions discussed in the preceding section. Minimum = 3, maximum = 9; mean = 5.39, st. dev. = 1.49.

Priority of political values

Longitudinal studies on the development of value and belief systems in Western countries indicate that many of the observed changes are a result of rapid economic development and the expansion of the welfare state after World War II. Inglehart (1990; 1997) suggests that societies are moving from materialist values, typical for a phase of "modernization," to patterns that can be characterized as "post-modern." He defines materialist values as values that emphasize economic and physical security while "post-materialist" values emphasize self-expression and the quality of life.

Post-materialist are not non-Materialists, still less are they anti-Materialists. The term "Post-materialist" denotes a set of goals that are emphasized after people have attained material security, and because they have attained materialist security.

(Inglehart, 1997: 35)

Inglehart considers the rise of post-materialist values to be partially responsible for the decline of state socialist regimes. However, the relationship seems to be more complicated because the prevalence and change of values and belief systems is determined by several other factors on the societal as well as the individual level.

The value orientation of the Polish respondents was measured by Inglehart's four-item battery. The respondent was asked to select the two most important goals that should be realized during the next decade. The four-item battery included two materialist goals – "maintaining order in the nation" and "fighting rising prices" – and two post-materialist goals – "giving people more say in important government decisions" and "protecting freedom of speech" (Inglehart 1977, 1990, 1997). From 1980 to 1984 the distribution of these values remained stable in Polish. However, a shift toward material values was observed in 1990 after the breakdown of the socialist system. This pattern persisted practically unchanged during the 1990s.

The political mobilization of Polish society in the 1980s occurred in a period of deep political, moral and economic crisis. It was also connected

Table 8.12 Materialist–post-materialist orientation of Polish society (%)

Year	Orientation		
	Materialist	Mix	Post-materialist
1980	22	62	16
1984	33	52	15
1990	31	59	10
1997	40	55	5

to the general limitation of civil liberties. Solidarity's demands reflected the popular value patterns in the 1980s, since this movement encompassed ten million people. Since the early 1990s, however, Poles had the impression that freedom of speech was safely attained. In contrast, "seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities" and "giving people more say in important government decisions" (Table 8.13) remained important goals in the 1980s, even after the democratic transformation. Apparently citizens thought that co-determination was not sufficiently implemented in various societal and political spheres after 1990.

These value orientations are strongly correlated (Pearson's r level of correlation significance $p < 0.000$). They are used to create the "priority of citizens' values" index (the mean of the index is 1.24, st. dev. 0.803; minimum 0, maximum 3) which basically taps an emancipative values dimension. The respondents who did not mention any of these items as particularly important values numbered 19 percent, 41 percent mentioned one, 35 percent mentioned two and 4 percent referred to all three values as important goals. Multiple regression analysis demonstrates that age is the strongest predictor and the only one which is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.000$), followed by the index of interest in politics, education, frequency of attending religious services, gender and the family's financial situation (R^2 0.045). Younger people, men, those more interested in politics, with a higher level of formal education and a lower frequency of church attendance, mention these values more frequently as important.

Political participation**Voting**

In studies on the performance of democratic regimes, the role of elections is usually emphasized as the fundamental way to influence elites and their actions (see Schmitter and Karl 1991). Furthermore, free and fair

Table 8.13 Priority of citizens' values (%)

	1980*	1984*	1990	1997
"Giving people more say in important government decisions"	22	18	27	21
"Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities"	39	30	16	29
Protecting freedom of speech	17	13	6	4

Source: Sieminska 1988.

elections are considered to be a basic element of a democratic regime. That said, some authors point out that secret elections or referenda are a form of collective tyranny of the majority over the individual and/or minorities. The latter, assumed to act rationally, should realize that he or she votes only for the pleasure of expressing their opinion, since the ability to influence the result, which is the total of all votes, is equal to zero (see Pettit 1999). However, even these authors do not believe that voting and referenda should be eliminated but, rather, supplemented. Putting this issue aside, it is necessary to realize that the problem is especially important for new democracies, where voting norms have not yet been internalized, and faith in the effectiveness of one's vote is rather low.

The level of participation in parliamentary elections in Poland is quite small. In 1991, turnout was 43.2 percent and in 1993, 52.1 percent went to the polls. This proportion decreased even more in 1997 to 47.9 percent and reached a dismal 46.3 percent in 2001. Similarly, in the local government elections of 1990, 42.3 percent of voters went to cast a ballot. In 1994, this share decreased to 33.8 percent. Older persons with a higher level of formal education were more likely to vote. Support of the different parties or party coalitions in January 1997 – that is, more than six months before the next parliamentary elections – is shown in Table 8.14.

In the 1997 survey, 18.0 percent of respondents declared that they would not take part in the elections, and 19.9 percent were undecided. Actually the percentage of non-voters was almost twice as high, a finding that substantiates the hypothesis that the respondents' intentions are not

Table 8.14 Potential electorates for the most important political parties in February 1997 (WVS survey) and votes in the elections to the Sejm (lower chamber of Polish parliament), September 21, 1997 (%)

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Potential electorates of parties in February 1997</i>	<i>Votes in the 1997 elections to Sejm, September 21**</i>
Election Action–Solidarity (AWS)	24.0	33.83
Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD)	17.3	27.13
Union of Freedom (UW)	6.0	13.37
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	12.0	7.31
Movement of Rebuilt of Poland (ROP)	5.5	5.56
Labor Union (UP)	7.1	4.74*

Notes
Names of political parties: Election Action "Solidarity" – Akcja Wyborcza "Solidarnosc" (AWS); Alliance of Democratic Left – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (SLD); Union of Freedom – Unia Wolności (UW); Polish Peasant Party – Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL); Movement of Rebuilt of Poland – Ruch Odbudowy Polski (ROP); Labor Union – Unia Pracy (UP).

* The Labor Union did not win seats in the parliament because it missed the threshold of 5 percent of votes. The German Minority – as a minority – got two seats (receiving 0.706 percent of votes).

** Source: Monitor Polski No. 64 from 30 September, 1997.

automatically identical with their future behavior (Aronson 1992; van Deth and Scarbrough 1995). It would be too rash to regard the undecided citizens as mere non-voters. In a situation of the emergence and evolution of a party system, those who are not planning to vote may also be regarded as a particularly interesting group. It is hard to determine whether the reason for not voting is lack of interest in politics, or a negative attitude toward the current policy supply in the political arena. However, survey results indicate that at least a large part of non-voters are not very interested in politics. Among those who did not plan to vote, 31 percent indicated a complete lack of interest in politics, while only 1.2 percent stated that they were very interested. But, we repeat once more that the lack of interest in politics might also result from the respondents' poor opinion about current governmental performance. In addition, non-voters also opt more often for a protective role of the state and indicate lower levels of confidence in government.

Protest as a form of political participation

Unconventional forms of political participation have become more and more popular in western societies since the 1970s (see Barnes *et al.* 1979). Dissenting citizens frequently tried to influence political elites to act in accordance with their interests by resorting to modes of participation beyond voting. Various forms of protest, which used to be regarded as unconventional, such as signing petitions, boycotts or illegal strikes, were gradually regarded as "conventional" and integrated in the repertoire of legitimate political actions (Inglehart 1997). On the other hand, elections showed lower rates of turnout in many countries, including traditional democracies.

Surveys in traditional democracies indicate that this process is becoming consolidated, especially among the higher-educated younger generation. The situation in post-communist countries, and particularly in Poland, is slightly different. The high level of protest actions in the last decades made protesting a basic mode of participation from the very beginning. However, according to national surveys, the number of respondents who state that they have taken part in unconventional forms of political protest is relatively small. In total, 20.4 percent said that they had signed petitions, 5.5 percent had taken part in boycotts, 9.8 percent had demonstrated, 4.1 percent had participated in strikes and 2.2 percent had occupied buildings. Participation in those forms of protest is not strongly correlated.

Similarly, a majority of the respondents (57 percent) declared that they might take part in one or more forms of protest. A multiple regression analysis shows that the factors, which impact on the readiness to participate, include age, interest in politics, trust in people, level of formal education and gender (listed according to the size of the standardized

Table 8.15 Predictors of readiness to protest (index I "might," index II "never"); multiple regression models (standardized regression coefficients)

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Index I (beta)</i>	<i>Index II (beta)</i>
Sex	-0.07*	0.08**
Age	-0.20***	0.22***
Attendance of religious services	-0.01	0.01
Mat-postmat	-0.03	0.06*
Education	0.08*	-0.16***
Family savings	0.004	0.02
Interest in politics (index)	0.18***	-0.24***
Trust in people	-0.09**	0.07*
Adjusted R^2	0.11	0.20

Notes
Index I "might protest": minimum 1, maximum 6; mean 2.19, st. dev. 1.39. Index II "never protest": minimum 1, maximum 6; mean 4.13, st. dev. 1.72.

*** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

regression coefficients which are all statistically significant). Younger people, men, those more interested in politics, those expressing a higher level of interpersonal trust and having a higher level of formal education, more frequently declared a possible participation in various forms of protest activities.

A larger share of respondents express a strong disinclination to participate in protests ("never") and a comparatively low proportion indicate that they are at least theoretically willing to participate ("might"). With regard to Index I (possible future participation), 11.8 percent considered all suggested forms of protest as possible modes of participation; 28.2 percent expressed that they might never participate in any of these forms.

Index II is based on "never" responses, and shows a similar pattern of relationships as Index I. Respondents not interested in politics, older, with a lower level of formal education, women and with a lower level of interpersonal trust, are most likely to reject all forms of unconventional political action.

It turned out that the current economic situation of the respondent, measured as the family's ability to save, did not play a statistically significant role in explaining participation. The same is true for the frequency of attending religious services. However, a more detailed analysis shows that the economically weakest respondents (those who had to borrow money to make ends meet) are least inclined to take part in signing petitions, demonstrations and strikes. However this is not true for participating in boycotts and occupying buildings.

The readiness to protest distinguishes the supporters of different political parties. Supporters of post-communist parties (Alliance of Democratic Left – SLD, National Party of Retirees and Pensioners/Partia Emerytów i

Rencistów – KPEiR and Polish Peasant Party/Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL) are less ready to participate in any type of protest than supporters of the "new" parties. The disinclination to participate in unconventional political action is also connected with a disinclination to vote: 56.4 percent of potential non-voters would not take part in any form of protest (Index I), and 42.3 percent definitely reject ("never") unconventional forms of political action (Index II).

Despite the existing tradition of mass participation in political protests, which distinguished Poles during the 1980s from other citizens of central and eastern Europe, at the end of the 1990s Poles participated in protests only as often as, for example, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians or Bulgarians (about 10 percent in all five countries), and even two times less often than Romanians. The protest frequency of the Romanians is closer to that of the United States (15.6 percent), Norway (26.1 percent) or both parts of Germany (West: 25.7 percent; East: 21.9 percent). Respondents from these countries also participated significantly more often in boycotts (about 20 percent) than Poles (5.5 percent in 1997 and 4.3 percent in 1999).

Apparently Poland's participation boom, although it is more deeply rooted than in other central east European countries, came down to a similar low level in the 1990s, after the transformation had started and at least some achievements seemed to be safe.

Active membership in voluntary organizations

According to the *Statistical Yearbook*, membership in voluntary organizations is not very high in Poland (1997). This is definitely an inheritance from the communist regime, when compulsory membership in various organizations was common practice. Only 0.6 percent of the respondents consider themselves to be active members, and a further 0.5 percent report themselves to be passive members of political parties or associations. A considerably higher share were member of trade unions (9.6 percent), of whom 1.8 percent consider themselves to be active. The events of the last 20 years, the fact that "Solidarity," and later the National Agreement of Trade Unions/Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych – OPZZ (communist trade unions) became important actors in the political arena and play a significant role in the economic sphere, apparently helps them to attract quite a large number of people. Membership in political parties is correlated with membership in trade unions ($r = 0.107$, $p < 0.000$).

In total, the number of active members remains stable and low – 13.9 percent in 1997 and in 1999, and this figure is lower than in other central and eastern Europe countries as well as in traditional democracies. The number of active members in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria is twice as high as in Poland. The share of active

members in Norway and the eastern part of Germany exceeds the Polish share by four times while the US share was five times higher.

Are values and attitudes toward democracy and the liberal economy consistent?

The overall level of political interest is an indicator that differentiates democratic communities at the level of process, while the perception of the effectiveness of a democratic regime does so on the structural level (Fuchs and Klingemann 2000). Both variables are strongly correlated with attitudes that are considered characteristic of traditional (old) democracies. However, Poles did not express high levels of confidence in Polish institutions and that clearly distinguishes the society from many western societies (Inglehart 1997). Cognitive patterns prevalent in Polish society are very similar to those found in western democracies, but citizens' lack of confidence in institutions makes governing more difficult. However, similar problems for some western countries are also reported (Putnam 1993; Dalton 2002). It is also true that, in contrast to western societies, more general value orientations hardly correlate with values and attitudes analyzed here (see also Inglehart 1997). The exception is the materialist-post-materialist orientation (Inglehart 1990; 1997), which correlates significantly with the political priorities index. The latter is not surprising because the political priorities index is based on the same variables as are used for the construction of the materialist-post-materialist index.

Similarities and differences between democrats and autocrats

The democracy-autocracy typology implies that democrats embrace a set of political values very different from those preferred by autocrats. To what degree and where can we observe these differences (Table 8.17)?

Polish democrats and autocrats differ in many respects. First of all, more democrats favor a broader concept of self-responsibility. Democrats also more often disagree with the statements, "In democracy, the economic system runs badly," "Democracies are indecisive and do too much squabbling" and "Democracies aren't good in maintaining order." Strong democrats are more interested in politics and consider it to be more important than weak democrats, undecided citizens and autocrats. However, following the news on television (not shown in Table 8.17) is common for all respondents. This indicates that watching TV is at least partially part of the phenomena of "being a viewer," and does not necessarily indicate an interest in politics. In addition, democrats participated more often in various types of protest and also express their willingness to participate more often than autocrats and undecided citizens.

Table 8.16 Pearson's correlation coefficients between selected attitudes characteristic for democratic communities

	Political priorities (index)	Political interest (index)	Effectiveness of democratic system (index)
Political priorities (index)	—	—	—
Political interest (index) (p)	—	—	—
Effectiveness of democratic system (c)	—	-0.11*	-0.11*
Confidence in governmental institutions (index) (s)	—	0.14***	—
Confidence in administrative institutions (index) (s)	—	—	—
Confidence in public sphere institutions (index) (s)	—	—	—
Confidence in international institutions (index) (s)	0.11**	0.15***	-0.20***
Private ownership of business (s)	—	-0.25***	0.30***
Self-responsibility (c)	—	0.16***	-0.21***
Protest ("never") index	-0.13***	-0.33***	0.14***
Protest ("might") index	0.09*	0.25***	—
Ethic tolerance (c)	—	0.11**	-0.18***
Immigration policy (c)	—	-0.16***	0.19***
Materialist-post-materialist orientation (c)	-0.79***	-0.12***	—
Sex	—	-0.17***	—
Age	-0.20***	—	0.12***
Attendance of religious services	—	0.10**	—
Education	0.12***	0.29***	-0.25***

Notes

Significant correlations: *** $p < 0.000$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.
(c) - cultural level, (p) - process level, (s) - structural level.

Table 8.17 Political interest and attitudes of democrats and autocrats (%)

	<i>Typology democrats-autocrats</i>			
	<i>1 strong democrats</i>	<i>2 weak democrats</i>	<i>3 undecided citizens</i>	<i>4 autocrats</i>
<i>Democ:bad econ</i>				
1 strongly agree	4.2	7.1	16.7	17.2
2 agree	14.5	38.0	55.2	59.8
3 disagree	65.7	50.1	27.1	18.0
4 strongly disagree	15.7	4.8	1.0	4.9
<i>Democ:indecision</i>				
1 strongly agree	17.9	22.0	22.3	38.8
2 agree	46.4	58.8	68.0	47.5
3 disagree	30.7	17.8	4.9	7.9
4 strongly disagree	5.0	1.4	4.9	5.8
<i>Democ:no order</i>				
1 strongly agree	17.3	19.0	26.0	38.1
2 agree	27.2	48.7	63.0	50.7
3 disagree	48.0	29.6	6.0	6.7
4 strongly disagree	7.5	2.7	5.0	4.5
<i>Politics important</i>				
1 very	12.2	5.7	4.1	5.0
2 rather	32.6	25.9	14.5	21.3
3 not very	43.1	46.8	43.4	36.3
4 not at all	12.2	21.5	37.9	37.5
<i>Political interest</i>				
1 very	16.3	5.4	2.1	2.5
2 some	42.9	38.0	26.7	32.1
3 not very	22.8	35.2	32.2	27.2
4 not at all	17.9	21.4	39.0	38.3
<i>Sign petition</i>				
1 done	33.9	21.8	9.7	14.2
2 might	29.5	30.3	20.1	23.5
3 never	36.6	47.9	70.1	62.3
<i>Join boycott</i>				
1 done	6.6	4.2	4.2	2.4
2 might	29.0	24.8	15.4	15.2
3 never	64.5	71.0	80.4	82.3
<i>Attend demonstration</i>				
1 done	13.0	9.5	5.5	4.3
2 might	34.2	31.7	22.1	25.6
3 never	52.7	58.8	72.4	70.1
<i>Responsibility</i>				
1 government	22.0	34.4	47.2	46.3
2 center	41.2	41.1	29.6	31.3
3 people	36.8	24.5	23.2	22.5
<i>People trusted</i>				
1 trusted	26.8	17.4	12.6	17.7
2 careful	73.2	82.6	87.4	82.3
No answer	80.0	77.2	69.2	67.7

Conclusion

Authors who compare countries with different historical and cultural backgrounds usually emphasize that socialist (communist) societies tend to be more oriented toward cooperation and solidarity than western societies (Fuchs and Klingemann 2000). The latter combine various features of liberal democracies between a libertarian or republican type of regime (such as the Anglo-Saxon states) and a liberal welfare state (such as Germany or the Scandinavian countries). Libertarian and republican democracies are characterized by a high level of citizen activities and participation, in part as a result of the limited role of the state in the provision of welfare.

In Poland, we observe differences in the attitudes and behaviors of democrats and autocrats. The nature of these differences is congruent with the differences hypothesized by the typology. A majority of strong democrats disagree with negative attitudes toward democracy, while autocrats – but also weak democrats and undecided citizens – disagree with these statements to a lesser extent. The same division between strong democrats on the one hand and the other three categories on the other was observed with regard to importance and interest in politics. Attitudes toward citizens' self-responsibility and interpersonal trust do not distinguish strong democrats from the other three groups as much as political values. Level of education is the most important socio-demographic factor differentiating between the categories of the democracy-autocracy index. Strong democrats usually belong to the group of respondents with a higher level of formal education.

Results of our analysis indicate that civil participation is not very widespread in Poland. It might be the case that Polish civil society, which supported a large mass protest movement during the 1980s, was based on ethical motivations which do not square well with the pragmatic and compromise-seeking orientations needed for participation in today's political life.

Our findings regarding value-orientations are in accordance with Inglehart's hypothesis of value change in modern societies. The independent variables that predict different value orientations best are the level of formal education, age and the level of interest in politics. The economic situation of the respondent's family is related to the perception of the effectiveness of democratic rule, preferences with regard to business ownership and management and tolerance. More general attitudes toward democracy do not seem to be influenced by individual-level economic variables. The materialist-post-materialist value orientation is of modest influence, and seems to be undergoing a process of transformation and crystallization.¹ The distribution of materialist and post-materialist values has a complex background, due to Poland's history and the political rebellion of Polish society against the socialist regime in the 1980s. This led to a

particular relation between ethical motives and political action which – as we have mentioned above – after 1990 might prove to be incongruent with everyday political life in a democracy, which demands pragmatic moves and compromise within a given legal framework, rather than the great vision necessary to overthrow an autocratic political regime. However, the structural changes in Polish society and in the political and institutional landscape, the increase of citizens with a higher level of formal education and the rise of a generation that was not socialized under the communist rule leads us to conclude with a rather optimistic outlook regarding the support for democratic norms and values exhibited by the Polish citizenry.

Note

- 1 The same is true for the economic situation of the respondents. This is even more surprising if we take into account that the level of economic polarization of Polish society increased sharply after 1990.

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9 Latvia

Democracy as an abstract value

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Introduction

Latvian society experienced multiple serious changes in the twentieth century. As a consequence, children were reared within one set of social and political norms and were forced to adapt to new values and modes of social behavior as adults. The recent transition processes once more affected the whole of society's and citizens' belief systems. Postmodern and materialist values co-exist, with the former becoming increasingly popular among the younger generation since the beginning of the 1990s. In general, the belief systems of the youngest cohorts resemble those of the elderly, i.e. these individuals are closer to their grandparents than to their parents. The latter were raised under Soviet rule, while the elderly spent their childhood and adolescence in an independent Latvia (1918-40), like their grandchildren.

During the late 1980s, political participation increased substantially. Such a participation "boom" was observed in all ex-socialist countries, since this was the first chance to freely express dissenting political opinions. Levels of participation remained high until 1991, when the reforms actually began. After 1991, political action was replaced by passivity and political apathy. What are the reasons for this development?

All previous reforms were aimed at the establishment of political institutions and the development of a legal and administrative system. Many resources were devoted to this goal, i.e. institutional interests were placed before individual needs. As a result, macroeconomic indicators showed a stable and improving economic performance, while individual living standards decreased. The share of poor households is still rising. According to the official doctrine, individual welfare is the responsibility of the individual and not an issue of social politics. However, people believe that the main reasons for decreasing living standards are of a macroeconomic nature and thus cannot be influenced by the individual.

The Latvian situation fits Offe's (1996: 45) description:

As macro events have assumed an incredible speed, the painful task of patient waiting falls upon the individuals. They must quickly adapt themselves to the new circumstances and then be ready to wait for a