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I n t r o d u c t i o n .

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The analysis of public opinion polls presents a number of difficulties of methodological and substantial nature. The merits are connected mainly with the subject of analysis, whereas the methodological aspect relates to the issues documents are reports on public opinion polls conducted by the two most connected with the method of analysis of materials gathered. Basic analytical renowned Polish polling institutes, namely Public Opinion Research Institute (OBOP) and Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS). It is necessary to add a certain technical remark here, namely that the time of publication will be indicated next to the descriptions of opinion polls' results, whereas while presenting their content I will strive to indicate the actual time when such polls were conducted (insofar as it is possible to be established). We will also refer to opinion polls conducted by other polling centres, as well as to research that was occasionally conducted by other institutions. Another kind of problem is a question regarding the nature of questionnaires that constituted a tool used in research.

To what extent are the results of opinion polls achieved in different periods comparable? Looking at empirical results one may conclude that it is rather impossible to collect a fully comparable material for the entire period of the 1990s, mainly due to the fact that the problem of Poland joining NATO began to engross the attention of the society as late as in the second half of 1992.

As it was not the subject of a general public debate, politicians approached the matter very carefully as well. One should remember that political transformations that took place in Poland (before and after the elections on June 6, 1989) were progressing in an unchanged international formal arrangement. There was still the Council for Mutual Economic Aid, so was the Warsaw Treaty Organisation; and although discussions were held on far-reaching changes as to the transformation of those organisations, no respectable politician would give a signal then for their dissolution.

One should also remember that 1989 saw the beginning of the period of transformation, and even where it had already happened people did not fully believe that such changes were irreversible. After all, there were political forces in all the countries "leaving socialism" (of different number and strength) that were interested in preventing the so-called "relapse of capitalism". The best example that illustrates the dramatic changes are transformation events in Romania and Moscow connected with "Janajew's coup d'etat".

Therefore, while analysing opinions of the Polish public we will strive to present this international context and explain to what extent events outside Poland influenced the fluctuations of public opinion, as well as what the attitudes of post-socialist countries' societies were. Two political beings were of particular importance for the course of Polish public opinion functioning, namely Russia on the one hand, and creation of the so-called "Visegrad Triangle" (in 1993) on the other. Since the time of emergence of "ideas" regarding the former Warsaw Treaty Organisation countries joining NATO, Russia has been their strong opponent. One may say that only at the beginning of 2001 statements voiced by Russian politicians could indicate that Russian political elite has acknowledged the fact and in a sense ceased opposing it. Throughout the major part of the 1990s, however, the relations between Russia and Poland were tense due to, among other things, Polish intentions. Especially the first reactions of the representatives of Russian political elite were nearly hysterical. One may even propose a thesis that the issue of former Warsaw Treaty Organisation countries joining NATO integrated, quite uncommonly, various groups on the Russian political scene (that were normally at variance with one another). Even Michail Gorbachov, perceived as one of the more practical of Russian politicians, did not conceal his discontent with that fact.

"Visegrad Triangle", in turn, was an important event in connection with the accession process of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (subsequently the Czech Republic). That fact referred both to the co-operation, and mutual political support on the way to NATO. At the same time there was an unofficial competition within that "Triangle" as to the degree of army preparedness for the integration process with NATO. In that period one witnessed a kind of competition as to in which country the support of the public opinion for the idea of integration with NATO was stronger. This was supposed to constitute (in the opinion of some of the politicians) an

important argument should the three countries not be admitted to NATO at the same time, but in a specified order.

I. Public opinion – elements of theory.

Discussions regarding theoretical issues connected with public opinion seem to have more deeply been absorbing scientific circles only recently. Previously one focused, to a larger extent, on the empirical side, becoming sometimes fascinated by opinion *polling*.

The object of controversy is the very fact of public opinion emergence. The range of concepts such as "public opinion" and "social opinion" has not entirely been clarified, either. Some authors, while describing the functioning of public opinion, negate also its existence in totalitarian regimes. These are just a few of the issues arousing controversy that are connected with theoretical aspects of public opinion. Let us try to address at least those indicated ones.

1. Public opinion vs. social opinion.

As it has already been mentioned, many controversies are aroused by the very concept of public opinion. Even more numerous discussions accompany the relations that occur between the concepts of "public opinion" and "social opinion" (Młyniec 1998: 171-172). The subject of scientific discussions is also the role that public opinion plays in democracy, and the question of its presence in totalitarianism (Sartori: 128). Many authors treat these concepts as synonymous, which considerably blurs the boundaries between the political and the non-political. Opinions have been voiced recently establishing new planes that differentiate those concepts. One may encounter views that perceive social opinion as "*the collection of individual opinions expressed by people on a given subject*" (T. Goban-Klass 1997: 85), whereas public opinion as "*judgements expressed publicly and defended in a controversial and socially important matter*".

The concept of social opinion has a much wider range relating to the nature of the subjective factor (social groups that it refers to), but first of all the range of objective factor (i.e. areas of human activity: politics, economy, culture, upbringing,

education, etc.). This refers to all the phenomena and processes that can be encountered in social life. On the other hand, **public opinion:**

- 1. relates to communities and social groups**
- 2. is shaped as a result of social contacts**
- 3. relates to controversial issues in the field of politics**
- 4. is expressed by articulation**
- 5. is subjectively sovereign**

It seems that the most concise way of presenting the problem was that adopted by G. Sartori: *“In summary – public opinion is first of all a political concept.”* (Sartori 1994: 117).

Summing up these considerations regarding the range of public opinion and social opinion concepts one may distinguish the following standpoints:

- ▣ expressed by those who perceive public and social opinion as synonyms (e.g. M. Howiecki 1997: 52)
- ▣ and those who notice differences between public opinion and social opinion.

In that case two subsequent options emerge:

- 1** when authors attribute the concept of social opinion to those who participate in social debate without the intervention of media, while associating the concept of public opinion with the appearance of technical media that made social opinion public (Ch. Tylor).
- 2** the second standpoint sees the criterion of division in the objective aspect: public opinion will relate to the area of politics (G. Sartorii 1994: 117, although his opinion seems not to be fully consistent, which I intend to demonstrate below), whereas social opinion would relate to all the remaining areas.

While continuing those theoretical considerations let us take a look at the views of a classic, W. Lippman. He laid a lot of emphasis on the external nature of public opinion, the fact of its articulation, irrespective of the form thereof. The importance of manifesting one's attitudes and views in order to include them in public opinion is several times highlighted by T. Goban-Klas (1998).

It is truly an important problem, especially in the context of existence of the so-called "concealed public opinion". Such thesis was formulated by V.O. Key. One has to admit that he also constructed a coherent definition corresponding with that concept believing that public opinion means "*such private judgements that the governing authorities in their opinion should reckon with*". Public opinion described in such a way pushes the problem of articulation into the background.

2. Analytic and synthetic approach to public opinion.

In the **subjective** approach to public opinion Ch. Tylor and G. Sartori, among others, believe that it is acquired only in democratic systems through discussions in which media play the part of a mediator. Whereas the opinion that is "*void of reflection, mediation or criticism*" is described by them as the opinion "*among people*" (the "*general one*"), acquired only through interpersonal contacts. The **objective** approach is the standpoint of F. Ryszko who believes that public opinion is "*an emotional response or reflection on political activities*", as well as that of W. Lamentowicz saying about "*public issues of controversial nature*". A similar case is with the analytic and synthetic approach to public opinion. **Analytic** approach is presented by Albert Vann Dicey who believes that public opinion is "*a general name for opinions shared by a certain number of individuals*". It seems, however, that much closer to the truth is Charles Cooley (**synthetic approach**) who described public opinion as "*not so much an aggregate of individual opinions, but an organisation, a collective product of communication and social interaction*". Public opinion is a **pluralistic phenomenon**, which justifies discussing only those views that are present within public opinion.

3. Problems with articulation of opinions.

Apart from the problem created by the relations between public and social opinion, there is another difficulty regarding an important, although sometimes ignored by certain authors, issue of articulation of views by the citizens. *Without enabling people to express their political views they will remain political consciousness at the very most.* Indeed, some authors use the concept of "concealed public opinion" (Key 1961: 26), but I believe that this concept makes the boundaries between consciousness and that kind of public opinion disappear. If the majority of authors assume that articulation of one's views is a necessary factor contributing to

the emergence of public opinion, then the absence of such a factor brings the very definition of "concealed public opinion" in question. Formulation adopted by V.O. Key may be plausible to a certain degree when confronted with the definition of public opinion by that author where he says that these are "*such private judgements that the governing authorities in their opinion should reckon with*". (Key: 49). Let us continue, however, with the previously presented definition of public opinion that is consistent with the standpoint of the majority of respondents.

4. Public opinion in democratic and non-democratic systems

Some authors undertake efforts aimed at establishing when and in connection with what conditions public opinion emerged. Let us remind the opinions of G. Sartori and Ch. Tylor who clearly differentiate the concept of public opinion distinguishing the opinion "among people" (only widespread) and "by people" (i.e. formulated by them) (Sartori 1994: 128), or "general" and "public" (Tylor 1996: 24). The former appears in a non-democratic society where according to G. Sartori the society is an object. The latter is present in democratic systems. Similar criteria are applied by Tylor while establishing the nature of opinion. Designations and arguments used by Tylor are, in terms of concepts, based on similar substantial foundations.

The first one is a "general opinion" or "opinion of the human kind" that according to the author is:

A. void of reflection,

1. adopted without discussion or criticism,
2. passively implanted in every subsequent generation.

Whereas in the second designation one emphasises that public opinion is:

B. a result of reflection,

1. emerges as a result of discussion,
2. reflects an actively achieved consensus (Tylor 1996: 24).

It could be possible to agree with the authors that "opinion among people" or "general opinion" can be found mainly in a country with the most radical form of totalitarianism. But it is difficult to accept that opinion as a general rule bearing in mind that political systems (including also the totalitarian ones) undergo the so-called

"waving". The "waving" process is connected with the changing degree of a given political system's repressiveness (in different periods of time the reach and range of violence or pressure exerted by the state was undergoing changes). Another criterion of assessment of socialist countries' political systems was relative repressiveness resulting from the fact that the intensity of use of measures that socialist countries had at their disposal was different in, for instance, Poland, Romania, the USSR, or China.

Ch. Tylor uses an argument connected with pedagogics: he believed that general opinion was, among other things, a result of opinions being implanted in the subsequent generation without any reflection. Firstly, this void of any reflection implanting is always a part of socialising processes (even though such a process assumes activity of the subject, some of the 'resources' are still acquired in an unconscious way). Secondly, the assessment of the degree of reflectiveness or not in a society and - in addition - in a distant past is a rather subjective problem. Opinions expressed by J. Habermas, G. Sartori or Ch. Tylor present the problem of public opinion in a way that allows for a quite distinct division into *general* and *public opinion*. Let us try to ask several questions and attempt finding answers to them. What is it that conditions the emergence of public opinion? Is it the number of media that extend the area of discussion both in terms of quantity and quality? This is the conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the statement that "it is obvious that the emergence of public opinion requires certain infrastructure. First printed materials had to appear that were circulated by numerous independent sources" (Tylor 1996: 25). Such a view could be acceptable provided that we acknowledge the historical and evolutionary nature of public opinion development, i.e. acknowledge that this phenomenon was parallel to civilisation changes in all the spheres and consisted in the qualitative "congestion" through the aforementioned development of civilisation with all consequences thereof. First there were mainly interpersonal contacts because they were the primary means ensuring the transfer of ideas. The exchange of those views and their development, however, frequently took place without the intention or participation of the original author. The thoughts that he expressed started "living" on their own. They were subject to approval or criticism, enhanced or weakened the opinions of those that they reached. They contributed to the creation of a new

theoretical and practical quality that, although limited by the number of subjects participating in debates, was nevertheless present.

Numerous authors emphasise the important role that capitalistic transformations played in the shaping of public opinion. Liberalism in the economic sphere came together with the freedom of speech ("capitalism of print") and extension of the range of political rights. The following were counted among them: "...*open, non-secret parliamentary debates, general trials, freedom of opinion and press. Following the example of England (with its „public opinion government“)*..." (Schmidt 1993: 148). It could be possible to agree with some authors maintaining that "opinion among people" or the "general one" can be found mainly in a country with the most radical form of totalitarianism. But it is difficult to accept that opinion as a general rule taking into consideration that political systems (including also the totalitarian ones) undergo "waving". The "waving" process is connected, among other things, with the changing degree of a given political system's repressive ness (in different periods of time the reach and range of violence or pressure exerted by the state underwent changes and transformations). Another criterion of assessment of socialist countries' political systems was relative repressive ness resulting from the fact that the intensity of use of the measures of repression and constraint that socialist states had at their disposal was different in, for instance, Poland, Romania, the USSR, or China and Cambodia.

Evaluating what happened with the public in socialist states, Ch. Tylor uses the argument connected with socialisation (pedagogies). He believes that general opinion was, among other things, a result of opinions being implanted in the subsequent generation without any reflection. Firstly, this void of any reflection implanting is always a part of socialising processes (even though such process assumes activity of the subject, some of the 'resources' are still acquired in an unconscious way). Secondly, the assessment of the degree of reflective ness or not in a society and - in addition - in a distant past is a rather subjective problem. Ch. Tylor's opinions could be deemed correct only in a situation when we assume that we have to do with the Orwell-like totalitarian system. As I have already mentioned, this "inculcation of opinions" in real socialism was conducted in a differentiated way. It was different in Poland, the USSR or China, and even in those countries changes were taking place

also in time. Accepting Ch. Tylor's point of view it would be difficult to explain how the disassembly of the entire system came about. Unless we assume that we owe the collapse of real socialism to Security Services of those states. Such "ideas" occurred to people in connection with the results of the vetting process in Poland.

Let us try to ask several questions and attempt to find answers to them. What is it that determines the emergence of public opinion? Is it the quantity of media that extends the area of discussion both in terms of quantity and quality? This is the conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of Ch. Tylor's statement that "it is obvious that the emergence of public opinion requires certain infrastructure. First printed materials had to appear that were circulated by numerous independent sources." Acknowledgement that this phenomenon was parallel to civilisation changes in all the spheres and consisted in the qualitative "congestion" through the aforementioned development of civilisation (with all consequences thereof) is true, but it does not explain when it was that public opinion emerged. How does the process of public opinion emergence look like in terms of quantity and quality? What is that boundary if we propose a thesis about the role of printing as an element that determines the emergence of public opinion? Undoubtedly, first these were mainly interpersonal contacts because they were the primary means ensuring the transfer of ideas and views. The exchange of those views and their development, however, frequently took place without the intention or participation of the original author. The thoughts that he expressed started "living" on their own. They were subject to approval or criticism, enhanced or weakened the opinions of those that they reached. They contributed to the creation of a new theoretical and practical quality that, although limited by the number of subjects participating in debates, was nevertheless present.

5. Dispute about the origin of public opinion.

Some authors undertake efforts aimed at establishing when and in connection with what conditions public opinion emerged. Such an unequivocal standpoint can be found among those expressed by T. Goban-Klas (1998: 357) "*mass media are not necessary for the emergence of public opinion; simpler, interpersonal media are sufficient, but the combination of mass and interpersonal media is the most effective*

one for the emergence of public opinion” - I must admit that I fully agree with such a view.

For the supporters of the thesis connected with the existence of general opinion the emergence of public opinion is inseparably connected with the introduction of technical media into the communication process. Some of the authors believe that writing was such a medium whose appearance led to the objectivisation of the process of transmission, and especially that of perception. After all, the person who wrote something had practically no influence on who will read that text. Other authors believe that only the appearance of such electronic carriers as radio, film, television introduced fast and truly ‘mass’ media of social communication into the public life (in the case of writing this was of a more limited nature).

Some of the authors that take part in this discussion try to associate the emergence of public opinion with the socio-economic and political development. They believe that public opinion appeared when capitalistic production relations were established. And the key factor that this new formation introduced was freedom permitting free movement of people and, consequently, of opinions. The development of capitalistic relations was parallelly accompanied by the development of democracy. Liberalism (and in particular the principles of *laissez faire*) in the economic sphere was accompanied by the freedom of speech (*“capitalism of print”*) and the extension of the range of political rights. Schmidt (1993: 148) counted among them *“...open, non-secret parliamentary debates, general trials, freedom of opinion and press. Following the example of England (with its „public opinion government”)...”*. The democratic mechanism is, after all, inseparably connected with active participation of public opinion in the political life.

The lack of boundary between opinions that are shaped without the participation of technical media and those that are shaped with that participation induces us to seek some other ways of delimitation between social and public opinion, or the public and general one. Let us collect again the objections presented above. One may ask a question as to which medium and at what time caused that the *“opinion among people”* or the *“general one”* became public opinion. Was it the print? The first book? Newspaper? Or is it the quantitative factor, that matters, i.e. the dissemination among the masses of both books and newspapers? Such an approach makes the problem even

more complicated as there arises a question about what quantity determines the change of quality. Therefore, trying to break that deadlock that the aforementioned proposal regarding differentiation between public and social opinion leads to I suggest moving that boundary to the subjective plane. **Expressed in that way, public opinion would be connected with the articulation of views and communication in the field of politics. Whereas everything else that is not, or not yet, political would belong to social opinion.**

Let us return to G. Sartori's dilemmas regarding the existence, or not, of public opinion in repressive political systems, where we deal with *opinion among people* spread only among them and emerging in political systems where an individual is treated objectively, and opinion *by people* emerging in the democratic society. We could ask a question whether the United States in the period of the so-called "McCarthyism" (1953-1955) ceased to be a democratic state. Was public opinion functioning at that time? Similar questions can be asked about Poland. Was Poland not, in 1956, in the 1970s or in the second half of the 1980s, and especially during the years 1988-89 a totalitarian state? Undoubtedly the United States, in the aforementioned period, were a democratic state with the functioning public opinion. We can find out about the dilemmas of that period in the United States from publications by Samuel Stouffer who based his study mainly on public opinion polls regarding the attitude of the American public towards communism, anticommunism and civil liberties. A significant supplement are also publications prepared by Paul Lazarsfeld who was also engaged in the research of phenomena connected with McCarthyism. His studies focused on the attitude of academic circles towards those political activities.

It should similarly univocally be acknowledged that the political system of the Polish People's Republic had all the theoretical characteristics of a totalitarian state (however, in the relevant literature one may encounter opinions in which periodisation of the Polish socialism is made using such definitions as semi-totalitarianism or autocracy). These definitions indicate that the assessment of the extent to which Polish People's Republic system was totalitarian gives rise to numerous discussions and major controversies. Those definitions, in particular, indicate that there were periods in the history of the Polish People's Republic in

which the operation of totalitarian state mechanisms was considerably limited. Undoubtedly one of the major arguments testifying to it was the functioning of public opinion. Thus, it is possible to state that public opinion also underwent 'waving'. Between 1945 and 1989 we had periods of its (i.e. public opinion's) almost entire disappearance, through the limitation of the freedom of expression to freedom that was practically unlimited. Although the latter arouses more and more numerous doubts, especially in the context of media expansion at the end of the 20th century. Therefore criteria applied by G. Sartori, although quite clear-cut, do not (in my opinion) entirely clarify the doubts. One should emphasise that any attempts at the adoption of an unambiguous interpretation describing the emergence of public opinion and conditions of its functioning would be extremely difficult. It seems that the process is much more complicated and requires numerous factors to be considered by those who deal with the theory of public opinion.

At the same time no one has specified what the minimum level or quantity of individual articulated views is that can be referred to as constituting public opinion. I entirely support the standpoint of A. Gramsci who writes that *"of course elements of public opinion were always present, even in Asian satrapies, but public opinion as we understand it now has come into existence on the eve of the fall of absolute monarchies, in the period of new bourgeoisie class struggling for political hegemony and power"* (Gramsci). Above, we have also raised a problem where (among others) G. Sartori deemed media to be the major factor creating public opinion. **We will rather assume that all the examples of behaviour in the field of politics adopted by the governed that consist in the expression of attitude towards the government will constitute an expression of public opinion – both the verbal and non-verbal ones, including the use of technical media.** What is also important, taking into consideration a factor connected with the subjectivity of individuals, groups and institutions, is the authenticity – sovereignty (as the authors of one of the definitions emphasise) of the articulation of opinions. That is why the definition takes account of the issue of sovereignty, as well as the necessity of articulation.

The fact of the totalitarian state taking control over all the media and the lack of democratic mechanisms (mainly elections) seems to be the key factor stimulating the public behaviour. The level of criticism contained in the opinions expressed by

citizens is inversely proportional to the degree of the system's repressive ness. The government used to frequently indicate the "topics" on which criticism was permissible, and those on which it was not. It seems that the channel through which that information reached the society was the censorship that did it by means of the so-called "censorship records". Looking at the Polish political arena one could draw conclusions as to which names and topics were put "on the Index", and which were released.

While totalitarianism constitutes a significant barrier in the free formulation and expression of public opinion, democracy enables an optimum development of this sphere of political life. Factors that limit that development are weaknesses (deficiencies) of democratic mechanisms, or conscious manipulations that happen to take place in various areas of political systems, including democratic ones as well.

This is the opinion shared by Michel Foucault who attributes a destructive role in the confrontation with, among other things, public opinion to the government. He believes that the society does not control the state by means of public opinion. To his mind it is the government that is the major subject of the society subjugation, which is done by means of disciplining measures or manipulations connected, among others, with instrumental use of opinion polling results or individual behaviour. Public opinion and civic society, on the other hand, are reduced to the sphere of power, self-disciplining techniques and certain strategies, which questions the meaning or essence of those two areas of societies' functioning.

6. Public opinion or public opinions?

Let us ask ourselves next questions. Is public opinion a phenomenon that is "...an element of one debate aiming at a common conclusion" (Ch.Tylor 1996: 25)? How should we interpret the problem of public opinion scattering and its pluralistic nature? Shall we treat the views of citizens accepting a budgetary act as public opinion or as a view that constitutes only a part of public opinion, whereas the remaining space would be filled with different standpoints, from partial criticism to total negation? Bearing in mind that political issues can never lead to 100% uniformity of views in a large community, public opinion would be of pluralistic nature. In that case the sentence: *Public opinion supports the draft budgetary act...* would be incorrect. The

correct evaluation of public opinion would be expressed by the following sentence:
The predominant standpoint within public opinion is the support for that act.

Another of the indicated problems refers to the division of opinion in the society into two phases. If we assume that the essence of the process of public opinion shaping is the exchange of views between the members of the "authorities' performance" audience, then we should be consistent. Evaluation of political authority, or its particular actions, e.g. in the Middle Ages, was based on the opinions that appeared in various circles. There is no doubt that those who participated in such a debate were relatively few (compared to the present day), but no author uses the quantitative factor as an argument in the discussion depreciating public opinion. Nowadays, in some countries, public opinion (in terms of quantity) is relatively not bigger than that from the remotest past. This fact does not lead to the negation of public opinion existence, either. If it is not the quantitative factor that is a problem here, then maybe it is a qualitative one. The authors mentioned above put forward an argument relating to the quality of discussions held within the framework of public opinion shaping. Inclusion of the problem of discussion quality in the criteria makes that point of reference even more moving.

7. Public opinion vs. political consciousness.

In this connection a problem of relation between the concepts of public opinion and political consciousness arises, unless we assume that consciousness is only an intellectual factor, whereas concealed public opinion constitutes a concept similar to attitude, containing - apart from the intellectual factor - also an affective and behavioural element.

The relationship between social consciousness and social opinion consists in the fact that those two concepts potentially have a common part, namely the object of interests. Potentially, because social opinion will cover only those issues that constitute an object of controversy. In either case it objectively covers all the issues that come within the spectrum of human interest. Therefore public opinion forms a part of social opinion just like political consciousness forms a part of social consciousness, whereas the relationship between opinion and consciousness is the same as the one between theory and practice. Opinion may be an expression of

consciousness (although it does not have to) whereas individually, at the same time, no reverse relationship occurs.

The above remarks induce us to take a look at public opinion development from a certain perspective. Therefore assuming that the development of such a phenomenon as public opinion is of historical nature, we can distinguish:

1. Prehistorical period – that was connected with the emergence of political authority and, consequently, the opinion on its functioning.

2. Ancient period that covers the time when the exchange of goods, conquests as well as the development of political mechanisms (among others that of democracy and, consequently, of public debate) undoubtedly contributed to the making of views and opinions public.

3. Middle Ages and Renaissance when a significant step in the process of public opinion shaping was the appearance of wide-spread common religions (combining *sacrum* and *profanum*), again – democratic institutions (parliament), urban development as well as invention and development of printing.

4. Period of revolutions and reforms that characterises the societies' taking the direct path towards capitalism and, consequently, the appearance of the idea of "sovereignty of people", further development of parliamentarism, secularisation of authorities, considerable migration movements (connected with the development of colonialism), as well as dissemination of an important communication medium, namely the newspaper.

5. Industrial period (beginning in the middle of the 19th century) means universality of parliamentary forms, extension of electoral rights, emergence of mass movements and political parties, appearance of railways, automobiles, steamers, telegraph and telephone, dissemination of education.

6. Post-industrial period that has the following characteristics: dynamism of political and economic changes in the 20th century, especially the quantitative and qualitative development of countries; mass appearance of general elections, referenda, as well as principles based on parliamentarism and democracy that have become a political standard; appearance of radio, television, Internet and satellite communication.

The public market has been taking its form since the time when authority other than that resulting from family ties only appeared in human relationships. In the course of transformation of social, economic and political relationships this market has been developing and improving.

II. Polish public opinion 1989-1999 and NATO.

I believe that while trying to describe this relationship one should divide the decade of 1990s into two periods. The first period would cover the years 1989-1993 when Poland was still a member of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, while even after the formal break-up of that alliance soldiers of the Soviet Army were stationed within the territory of Poland. The second period comprises Poland's joining the programme "Partnership for Peace", and also the dissemination of a conviction in the society and within the major political forces that the strategic goal of the Polish foreign policy, society and state is Poland's membership in NATO.

1. Poland leaves the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

Agreements that were reached at the "Round Table" provided for an evolutionary nature of political changes that Poland was to undergo. One agreed to the transformation process being spread over the years, mainly due to the fact of Poland's presence in the economic structures of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid and the military ones of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. It was never expected after the victory of the "Solidarity" that the entire political situation both in Poland and in the Central and Eastern Europe would undergo such a radicalisation and acceleration.

Already in August 1989 the Government of Romania proposed that the member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation should hold out a "brotherly hand" to Poland. During the visit of Michail Gorbachev to Bonn in July 1989 Helmut Kohl said that "the key problem of European safety remains a considerable supremacy of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation in conventional armaments. Whereas that problem should be solved by the reduction thereof." At the end of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid meeting held in January 1989 in Vienna 23 countries being the members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO signed a document in which

it was established that disarmament negotiations would be initiated in March in Vienna. In February 1989 the Warsaw Treaty Organisation revealed, for the first time, the information on its weapons. It turned out that the countries of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation had 7,233 thousand soldiers at their disposal (of which the USSR had 2.5 million soldiers up to Ural Mountains). The important thing in 1989, from the point of view of future relations with NATO, was the fact that those who spoke before the NATO's Eastern Europe Committee were Polish parliamentarians. That contact was largely communicated and commented upon also by the Polish press, as this visit was of a symbolic nature then and initiated a journey ended in 1999.

The first ministerial meeting was held in March 1990 during the visit of the minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Krzysztof Skubiszewski to NATO Headquarters. Further contacts were a consequence of the historic London declaration made at the meeting of the heads of NATO countries and governments on 5-6 July 1990. It proposed "the creation of partnership relations" through the establishment of direct contacts and the political dialogue, as well as through the development of military co-operation aimed at the enhancement of stability in Europe as a whole. Regular contacts were established in August 1990, whereas in September that year Manfred Woerner, Secretary-General of NATO visited Poland. Dissolution of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (July 1991) did not prompt NATO leaders to present greater readiness or political will to treat the proposal regarding admission of new countries seriously. The response to Polish suggestions were non-committal answers that did not preclude any future option. Therefore, similarly to Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government, also the Cabinet of Jan Krzysztof Bielecki did not officially regard NATO membership as a real political goal, although the conviction about the necessity of joining NATO was constantly growing, both within the Polish elite and the society. Among the Polish political class one may distinguish two major options: representatives of the right wing (e.g. Centre Alliance) loudly demanded, both domestically and in their contacts with West-European politicians, that Poland be admitted to NATO. Representatives of the Centre, on the other hand, (e.g. Democratic Union) took a realistic stand accepting conditions that the Western Europe was guided by. Some parties, e.g. Labour Union, shared the opinions of the Centre, while postcommunist parties were at that time

readjusting their views on the issue of alliances (having numerous reservations as to our membership in that Organisation).

One should state that the society, functioning within the framework of a socialist system, while expressing its opinions on the international situation was frequently influenced by the contemporary propaganda. Numerous examples can be found to confirm the thesis about the existence of the so-called "false consciousness" presented by Polish public opinion. The above can be attested to by the table 1. below.

Data published relating to the actual size and quality of armaments in both blocs would indicate that the conviction about NATO's supremacy was erroneous or at least relative. Those convictions, to a large extent, determined opinions formulated by the respondents in that period while expressing their attitude towards NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

On whose side is the military supremacy? (%)

No.	Answers	VI 1988	XII 1989	VI 1990
1	both organisations are more or less equally powerful	43	32	35
2	on the side of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation armed forces	7	10	8
3	on the side of NATO armed forces	16	19	29
4	difficult to say	34	39	28

Table 1. OBOP June 1990

In September 1990 CBOS asked a question relating to, among other things, the thirteen elements that, in the respondents' opinion, would be decisive of the Poland's "return to Europe". Those elements included the observance of civil rights, convertibility of Polish zloty, democratic elections, ability to leave the country, etc. In this set of issues the following were also present: Poland's resignation from the Warsaw Treaty Organisation membership (38,9% of indications, 12th place in the ranking) and Accession to NATO (21% of indications and 13th place – the last one).

What is important is that issues placed at the top of the ranking received over 80% of indications. This makes us see the importance of those problems for the contemporary society. Taking the opportunity one may indicate that from among social and demographic features that affected the opinions connected with the “Return to Europe” and consequently accession to NATO, two turned out to be of particular importance, namely gender and wealth. Our joining NATO was of much less importance to women than it was to men. Rise in income also increased the degree of acceptance: from 31,6% when declaring that the income is “*the lowest*” to 52,0% when it is “*the highest*”. It should repeatedly be emphasised that at that time the vast proportion of Polish public opinion did not as yet show particular interest in the problem of integration with NATO and the European Union.

If we were to indicate which element, from among the factors connected with safety and changes in the military sphere, was the most significant one to public opinion in Poland, then it would be the Red Army. It was its presence that could already at that time significantly affect the attitudes of Poles. In the report on research announced by CBOS in April 1990 it can be noticed that 43% of respondents would be “*always pleased*” to hear about the retreat of Soviet army from Poland, 19% responded to the ‘idea’: “*with discontent*”, whereas 37,5% could not unequivocally describe their feelings. During that same research 61% of Poles, just like in previous years, said that Poland should remain in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

When [...] should the Soviet Union withdraw its troops from Poland? (%)

No.	Answers	Supporters of the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation	Opponents of the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation
1	Immediately	73	60
2	After the retreat of troops from Germany	18	23
3	I am against the retreat	17	7
4	Difficult to say	7	10

Table 2. CBOS March 1991

Simultaneously it was a period when the “transformation of consciousness” began and therefore, among others, the number of people perceiving the USSR as an ally began then to drop significantly. Confirmation of those trends can be found in the answers that were given to the following question (Table 2).

Also in March 1991 OBOP, for the first time, touched the subject of the Treaty Organisation’s liquidation asking respondents a question as to whether “The liquidation of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation structures is favourable for Poland or not.” As many as 57% of respondents believed that it would be favourable for Poland, whereas 20% said that it would be unfavourable. Similar number of respondents, i.e. 23% were unable to take a univocal stand and replied that it was “difficult to say”. It has to be indicated, though, that the highest number of supporters of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation’s dissolution was among people with university education (75%), whereas among people with elementary education this group constituted 52%, and among those with basic vocational education - 51%. At the same time a question was also asked whether the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation would increase the safety or not. The number of respondents who believed that it would increase the level of safety amounted to 19%, while 37% were of the opinion that it would decrease the safety, and 29% of respondents said that the level of safety would remain unchanged (19% had no clear opinion on that matter). Similar question was asked of Poles by CBOS in March 1991 during research that we have already analysed. In this case the degree of certainty turned out to be even higher. When asked: “*Should the*



Illustration 1. CBOS March 1991

Warsaw Treaty Organisation be liquidated?”, as many as 64% of respondents gave an affirmative answer. 26% said that the Treaty Organisation should continue its Questions that are asked of respondents gain new aspects when they are preceded by questions of a basic nature. In May 1992 CBOS asked a question as to what kind of an organisation NATO was. Respondents had three answers to choose from: “*an international economic association*”, “*military alliance*” and “*one of the institutions subordinated to the United Nations Organisation*”. Two-thirds of the respondents identified NATO correctly.

Questions also began to appear that placed NATO as our ally or even depicted Poland as a country integrated with the Alliance. When asked “*What policy is currently [...] the most favourable one in order to ensure Poland’s safety*”, 35% respondents answered that it was *an alliance with NATO*, 35% were of the opinion that *we should not enter into any alliance*, whereas 9% of respondents were *for alliances with individual countries* and 20% *had no explicit opinions* on that matter. Public opinion polls became present also in newspapers and weekly magazines. The most frequent ones were single questions that were supposed to reveal public opinions on a given subject. Such an opinion poll was published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Respondents were asked a question: “*Should Poland strive for the membership in NATO?*” In this case as many as 77% of respondents gave an affirmative answer to that question whereas only 10% were against that option (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31.03.1992). This result however may raise certain objections due to the fact that *Gazeta Wyborcza* did not give any information as to: Who conducted the poll? On what sample? Using what technique? The only guarantee of the presented data reliability can be the “publisher’s reputation”. It seems, however, that the results find their confirmation in OBOP research that already in 1992 asked a question connected with Polish NATO-related aspirations (Table 3). In this case, from the very beginning the respondents expressed a firm standpoint with respect to our political aspirations. As it can be seen in the table below, the tendency in the years 1992-1995 was rather steady – the results indicate that the support for NATO accession is expressed by over three-fourths of the population.

In the case of this research the strongest pro-NATO tendencies are again connected with the level of education and the age: the younger the person and the higher the education, the strongest the will to join NATO.

Do you agree that Poland should strive for NATO membership? (%)

No.	Answer	Indications by dates of polls							
		III. '92		X. '93		II. '94		VI-VII 95	
1.	Definitely yes	30	77	38	81	39	79	38	76
2.	Rather yes	47		43		40		38	
3.	Rather no	7	10	5	7	5	7	9	11
4.	Definitely no	3		2		2		3	
5.	Difficult to say	13		12		14		12	

Table 3. OBOP March 1999

Politicians of that period were more and more willingly discussing the issue of Poland joining (or not) NATO. Particular publicity (mainly on account of the person) was given to the proposal of Lech Wałęsa, the then President of the Republic of Poland. He presented an idea of forming “NATO-bis”. This proposal consisted in organising Central and Eastern European countries in an association under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. This association would gather countries of the region awaiting their admission to (the real) NATO. Within the framework of NATO-bis military forces would be organised, based on those countries, that would be able to counteract conflicts in that region. The proposal, apart from numerous press publications, did not raise any practical interest among “respectable politicians”. Let the comment be an opinion expressed by Prof. Jadwiga Staniszkis who, in an interview for *Tygodnik Solidarność*, said that the election of Bill Clinton to be the President of the United States was more favourable for Poland than the election of George Bush who was a supporter of treating the Central European countries as a buffer between NATO and the countries that emerged after the break-up of the USSR (including Russia in particular). Prof. J. Staniszkis commented upon that “buffer” idea in the following way: “[...] *They tried to exert*

influence on the defence and foreign policy, the example of which is Belvedere concept of NATO-bis, a naive conception of buffer idea [...] This is going to end now. Clinton's adviser for Eastern Europe is the Czech, Madeline Albright - the disciple of Zbigniew Brzezinski. She wrote a book on Poland in which she largely criticised the idea of Poland as a buffer zone".

One of the aspects of public opinion perception of the Polish army was the problem connected with the introduction of civil control over the forces. The resistance of many officers, and in particular that of the staff of generals in relation to "laymen – civilians" was also used by the politicians. Some perceived the staff of officers almost as a postcommunist "inheritance" that cannot be changed in any way. Others, by manipulating the feelings expressed by officers, tried to present themselves as defenders of the army's autonomy against the attempts of civilians. Alliances that were formed on that occasion frequently ran across political formations. As an exemplification of those options let us quote statements that were characteristic of the two options. J. Kaczyński, the representative of the former one believed that there were forces in Belvedere whose aim was *"to maintain and protect communist systems in the army, make relationship with NATO difficult in order to be able then to form a joint commanding staff of postsocialist states' armies"* (Tygodnik Solidarność II). The latter point of view finds its reflection in the statements of the then Minister of National Defence, Mr. P. Kołodziejczyk. When asked, in an interview that was published in the weekly magazine entitled Wprost, *"What do you think about politicians who demand the quickest possible accession to NATO"* he said that *"They do not understand that nobody can fit a square peg to the round hole. We are not an equal partner for NATO and we cannot afford to become one soon."* Those political options reflected, in a sense, public opinion views on the pace and the accession process itself. The number of those who were in favour of Poland joining NATO was systematically growing while the opponents of that idea among politicians were becoming fewer and fewer. The thing that caused many disputes within the political class in relation to this subject was the pace of that integration.

But also in this matter the difference of opinion was becoming less and less visible. One may presume that politicians adapted themselves to the public opinion views, because otherwise their situation would be very difficult, all the more so as

1993 was the year of elections. This situation concerns especially the left wing that had a chance to take over. Its leaders were aware that they could not ignore the growing support for the idea of Poland's accession to NATO. Because there is no doubt that still as late as in the autumn 1993 the left wing electorate's approval of our membership in NATO was much lower than that of people who declared to have right-wing views (although taking the Polish political scene into consideration the very declaration of having "left-wing" or "right-wing" views may not be entirely credible).

***What policy is currently the most favourable one in order
to ensure Poland's safety? (%)***

The most favourable policy for Poland's safety is	Views declared			
	left-wing	centrist	right-wing	undefined
Neutrality	18	12	10	15
Accession to NATO	61	63	73	39
Other alliances	13	12	9	8
Difficult to say	8	13	8	38

Table 4. CBOS August 1993

As it can be seen the differences are not significant, but nevertheless noticeable. A confirmation of opinions gathered can also constitute answers to the question on what could ensure Poland's safety.

One may say that it is an 'indirect' declaration indicating the pro-NATO nature of the opinions presented above. This results from the fact that in that period there was no other important military structure (after the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation) that Poland could integrate with. And the formation of other organisations was impossible, which the history of "NATO-bis" idea (as mentioned above) only confirms.

One could ask a question whether the motive of pro-NATO declarations is the true sympathy or political calculation. Searching for answers to this question one

should take a look at the attitude of Poles towards individual (or at least major) countries that are members of NATO. Undoubtedly the key position is taken here by Germany. And in this case one can see that declarations of "affection" for a part do not forejudge emotions regarding the whole. Despite undoubtedly numerous efforts and geopolitical changes the attitude of Poles towards the Germans could in 1993 be described as characterised by a good deal of scepticism, distrust or hostility. What proves the above are declarations of Poles made while answering the question: "*Do you believe that as a result of the unification of Germany the situation of Poland has, generally speaking: improved?*" 19% answered yes, whereas 31% said that "*the situation has remained unchanged*". The most significant percentage, however, are those who maintain that the situation of Poland and Poles "*has deteriorated*" – 39% (CBOS September 1993). One should add that similar figures were achieved in 1992, so it seems that opinions became stabilised.

Analysing the results of opinion polls one may notice a highly significant fact, namely that the more approving attitude is connected with the education. The higher its level, the fewer stereotypes, myths, phobias, etc. Differences are significant and amount to around 20% between the declarations made by people with elementary and university education. As one can see Poles did not trust politicians. Political experiences of the past 200 years at least partially justify that scepticism. One should say that the flow of time had rather increased that distrust because a similar question asked in 1994 (CBOS - February) brought as many as 57% of affirmative answers to the question: "*Is it possible that NATO countries agree with Russia about Poland behind its back?*". Friendly attitude towards the West was that time assumed by 19% of respondents. Similarly sceptical opinions were expressed by the respondents in 1993 with respect to a guarantee that in the case of threat to our independence NATO countries "*will not come to our aid*" – that view was shared by 47% of respondents. Only 4% believed that the West *will surely come to our aid*, while 25% answered "*rather yes*" (CBOS November 1993). Figures similar to those from 1993 were achieved in 1995 (CBOS January 1995); Polish public opinion was still rather cautious with respect to the possibility of NATO aid. When asked "*Do you think that if Russia aims at the subordination of Poland, Poland can count on Western countries*

aid or not?”, 42% of respondents answered “No” whereas 36% were inclined to trust Western partners, saying “Yes” (22% had no opinion).

Generally speaking, has the situation of Poland as a result of the unification of Germany:

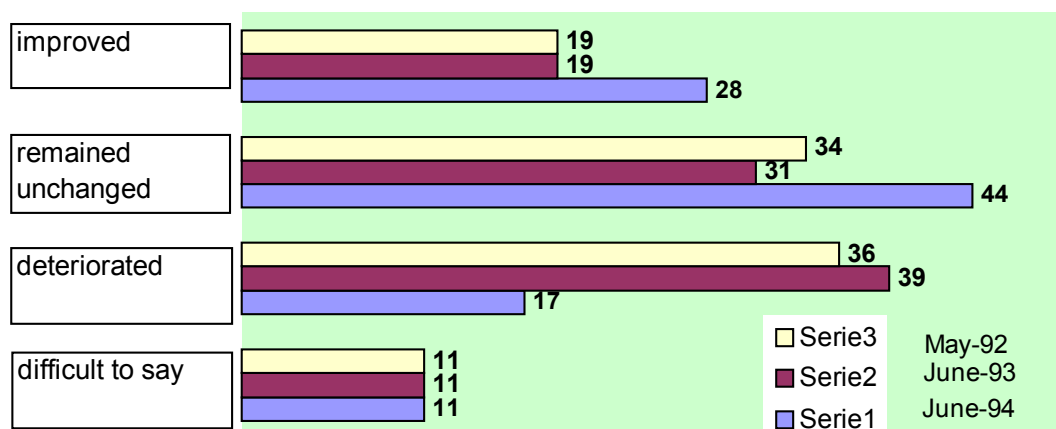


Illustration 2. CBOS September 94

This threat is perceived mainly to be posed by Russia, but also Germany (especially after unification). In the case of Germany it seems that the fear is connected with the economic domination (expansion) rather than the military one. One was aware of the economic power that Germany had been before 1990, whereas the collapse of the Berlin Wall brought about the situation in which we became a neighbour of the country that dominated not only in terms of economy, but also population and territory. When in the course of two years it turned out that it had no negative consequences, the situation occasioned an evolution of public opinion, which became visible already in 1994. The fact that proportions in the estimation of threats to our independence changed can be ascertained when we take a look at the Illustration 3.

One can say that threats to our independence are increasingly noticed rather in the East than in the West. Among external threats the most frequently mentioned ones were those posed by Russia and the former USSR countries (as many as 48% of indications). Such an attitude resulted, among other things, from the fact that, firstly, the situation in the East was still unpredictable. Secondly, Russia - in particular - had begun to display the so-called ”power tendencies” (openly opposing, among others, the

intention of admitting former Warsaw Treaty Organisation countries to NATO). Thirdly, in the political consciousness of Poles there is a stereotype (determined by historical experience) connected with Russia, but also certain political realism: participation in the annexation of Polish territory for over 130 years, as well as experiences relating to the period of Polish-Soviet war, or, finally, those from World War II. It is no secret that the preservation of socialist regimes was possible only with the political and military control by the Red Army and Soviet politicians.

One has to acknowledge that mutual relationships of Poland and NATO (before we joined that organisation) were strongly determined by our relationship with Russia, which found its full reflection in public opinion. However, certain differences in perceiving the position of Russia, and particularly the way it should be treated, did occur. They resolved themselves mainly into the level of radicalism between political class (that showed greater conservatism) and public opinion. Russian was (and still largely is) perceived mainly through its power aspirations, which manifested itself, among other things, in the fact that in political, economic, military (which the war in Chechnya proved) and civilisation terms Russia endeavoured to restore the ethos that already was a substitute of "magnificence gone". Russia had lost its position on the international scene. This situation resulted in its becoming a very difficult partner in international relationships. Hence the occasional spectacular gestures that were supposed to show the international community *"that this bear is not toothless, hairless and sick, but is still able to bite"*

What kind of relationship is Russia anxious to establish with Poland?

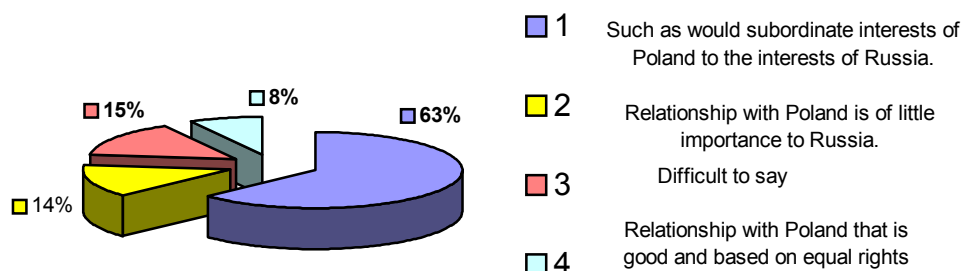


Illustration 3. CBOS January 1995

and hit with his paw”. Adding to this picture the lack of coherence in the field of foreign policy of Russia and unconventional personalities of Russian politicians these elements present a picture of the situation that emerged at the beginning of the 1990s. Let us see how Polish public opinion perceived the determinants of Polish – Russian relationship. Symptomatic is the fact that the highest percentage is that of people who believe that the reason of Russia’s objection (as to our accession to NATO) is the wish to rebuild its former sphere of influence in Poland. Such a stand (as it is evident from Illustration 4) is taken by people with university education, as well as those who declare much interest in politics. Thus, the increase of competence among the public results in the increase of criticism. Such a thesis has to prompt another reflection of a more general nature, namely that the approval of politicians’ activities would result, in a sense, from unawareness and ignorance (?!). On the

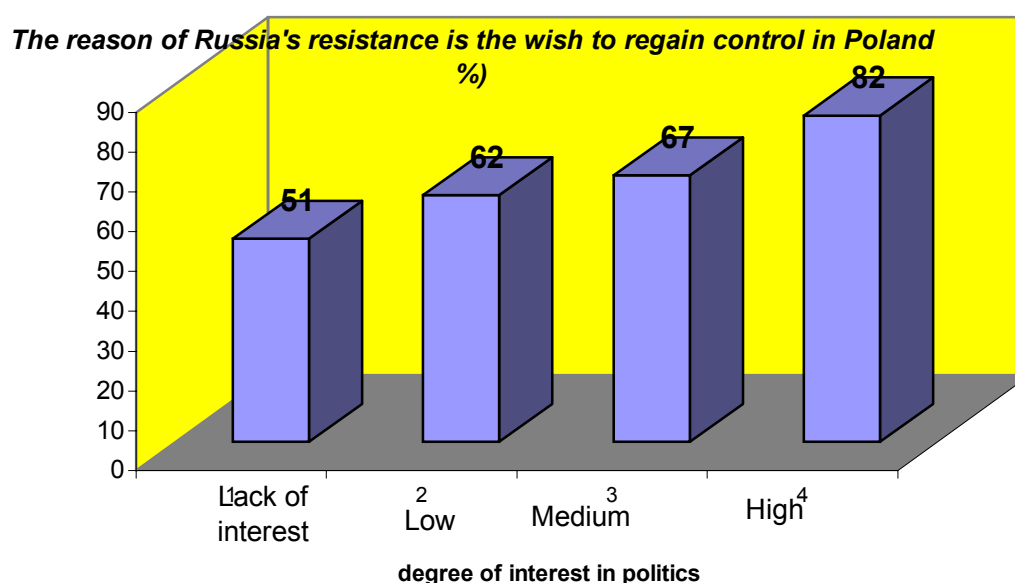


Illustration 4. CBOS January 1995

whole, this opinion is accepted, while the difference between the developed democracy and the one "still in its infancy" consists in the fact that in the former the prevailing voice of public opinion determines political choices made.

2. Poland in “Partnership for Peace” programme.

A. Poles on their way to NATO

The discussion that was held both in Poland and on the international scene relating to the possibility of NATO enlargement took another shape upon the introduction and implementation of the programme called “Partnership for Peace”. Politicians as well as public opinion began noticing that the perspective of integration was not only a media element, but a real one, too. It found its reflection in the degree of support given by the society to the idea of integration with NATO. In 1994 two major Polish *polling* institutes, i.e. CBOS and OBOP conducted opinion polls asking direct questions to the respondents: “*Should Poland aim at the accession to NATO?*” (OBOP March 1994). The second institute, CBOS (July 1994) asked the following question: “*If referendum was held in Poland on the accession of Poland to NATO, would you vote?*”. Univocal nature of questions and an answer composed of three variants allows us to compare that material, which in the author’s opinion confirms the credibility of results achieved.

Level of approval for the idea of Poland joining NATO. (%)

No.	Name of the institute and the wording of the question	Yes (For)	No (Against)	Difficult to say
1	Should Poland aim at the accession to NATO (OBOP March 1994)	79	7	14
2	If referendum was held in Poland on the accession of Poland to NATO, would you vote (CBOS BS 120/106. July 1994)	75	10	15

Table 5.

One could say that the degree of determination within public opinion did not give important politicians any chance to contest that option. Therefore, especially within the left wing, voices that questioned the purposefulness of Polish aspirations had considerably died out. Although opinions similar to those of Prof. Stanisław Ehrlich still continued to appear: “*No French or American soldier will fight for*

Białystok or Przemyśl - at the very most they can do business there. We have an opportunity of acquiring the status of a neutral state.” (Wprost 1994). Only some of the political class did at that time the so-called ”thinking aloud” connected with possibilities (including the time-related ones, i.e. a probable date of NATO accession) and adaptation of Polish Army to that operation. As it can be inferred from the example above, the comparison of results achieved by both polling institutes only confirms the firm attitudes predominant within public opinion. Questions that were asked frequently had a different level of generality. Some of them, however, required the respondents to make a very univocal declaration – one had to take a decision. The degree of determination as to the support for pro-NATO aspirations was measured in subsequent years as well, using the “referendum” question quoted above. Thus, it was possible to make a comparison allowing, and reliably so, to make a thorough analysis of public opinion of that time. Since 1994 the percentage of people supporting the idea of Poland joining NATO has not dropped below 75%.

Should referendum be held in Poland on the accession of Poland to NATO, would you vote (%):

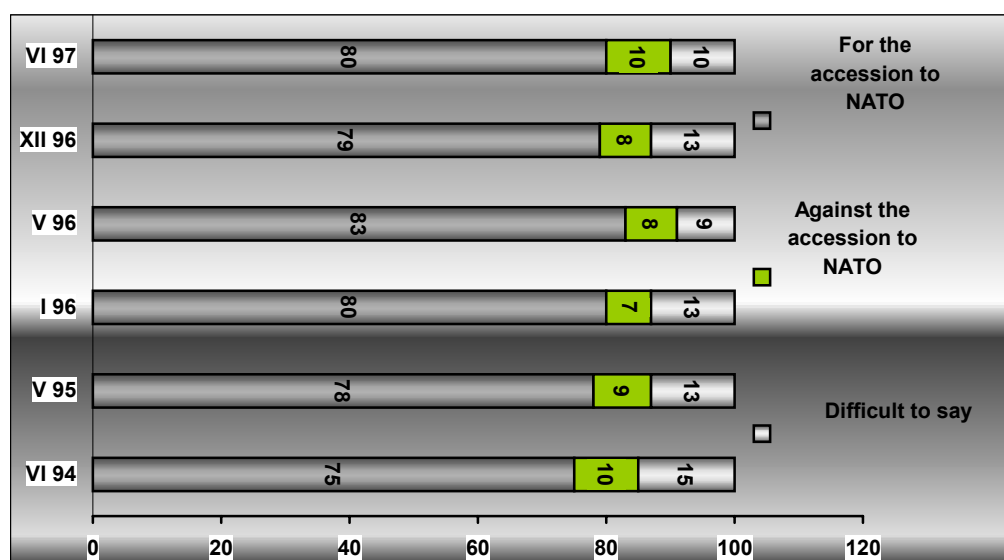


Illustration 5. CBOS - BS 90/90. July 1997

Similar question was asked of respondents by Marketing Research Centre INDICATOR (Rzeczpospolita 1998). As for those who would oppose our joining

NATO while taking part in the referendum, that group reached 10%, which was similar to the results achieved by CBOS in its research. Significant differences related to the number of undecided people - 26%. That difference, by the force of events, had to influence the group that would vote for the accession to NATO: it amounted to 64%. That research was conducted in May 1998 on a random sample of 979 people, which is the minimum provided by opinion polling standards.

Public opinion polls, however, indicate a decided political will to join NATO presented by a considerable part of the society. Discrepancies regarding the level of support concern the period of 1990-1992. As it has already been emphasised, fully comparable data from various *polling* institutes are difficult to be achieved, but taking into consideration the merits of the questions as well as several objections it turns out that there are certain possibilities of making a comparison. Results that have been achieved by CBOS and OBOP since 1994 do not raise any fundamental methodological doubts and seem to be comparable (at least internally). It follows from them that the support for NATO remained at the level of 70 -85%. It was only on the eve of joining NATO that declining tendencies appeared, when the issue of integration with the Alliance had already formally been settled. At the same time Poland's membership in NATO gains less support when the respondents make themselves aware of various consequences of that step. As of 1997 the percentage of respondents supporting the accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation had begun to decrease, reaching 65% at the beginning of 1999. The next growing tendency, in turn, is connected with NATO intervention in Yugoslavia (?!).

Trying to identify the reasons of those declining tendencies one should take numerous factors into consideration, without limiting oneself to the rational ones only. The major factor is undoubtedly the Balkan conflict that aroused controversies among the public. The second factor, in my opinion, is the psychological one. As long as the perspective of joining NATO was of a hypothetical nature, support was not connected with any responsibility; when the perspective started to become reality the enthusiasm may have been quenched. That decrease resulted in a fact that on 6-8 February 1999 the support amounted to 63%, while polls repeated two weeks later gave the result of 67% (OBOP[1] March 1999). Let me remind you that in March 1999 the support for Poland joining NATO was expressed by 60% of those

questioned (CBOS 35/99 March 1999). As you can see the results are similar, but considerably lower than those achieved in the years 1993-98. This is connected firstly with the Balkan campaign, and secondly with some of the society becoming aware that NATO membership means certain profits, but also specific conditions and obligations whose fulfilment would be monitored by the allies from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The major verifying element of "the level of optimism", however, seems to be the Balkan conflict.

In certain periods public opinion polling institutes asked respondents the same questions. Owing to this, nowadays we have an opportunity to make a thorough study of the views expressed by Polish society, and their evolution within public opinion. Having at one's disposal data that are the results of opinion polls one can make comparative analyses that give the most interesting results. One may also find out what the facts that cause a given *public opinion waving* really are.

The aim of Poland's membership in NATO, apart from factors connected with the satisfaction of Poles' aspirations and their sense of being a member of the "Western Civilisation", was mainly political. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation membership was supposed to provide Poles with a feeling of safety, whereas NATO was to gain an important ally, thus extending the area that would become "predictable". At the same time it was assumed that NATO membership would minimise the risk connected with a given country becoming involved in an internal or external conflict. A circumstance that was usually not articulated, but constituted an important element of public opinion in postsocialist states was fear of attempts at the restoration of political influence by Russia. The reasons of such an attitude were, among other things, loud protests coming from Moscow relating to any activities aimed at enlarging NATO by the inclusion of former socialist states' territories. We have presented the anxiety of Polish society using the results of opinion polls, and we will resume discussing them in the following subsection.

B. Poles strengthen in themselves the feeling of safety.

All and any discussions relating to NATO, in particular the wish expressed by Poland and Poles to become a part of the Alliance, or the participation in "Partnership for Peace" programme are inseparably connected with the feeling of safety. This value,

that every politician has to reckon with, has become a major motivating factor to take such a keen interest in the integration with political structures of the Western countries. Poland, for geo-political and historical reasons, had to seek allies, whereas NATO is a political formation that can and even (according to Poles) should guarantee such safety.

The first period of transition was characterised by a strong feeling of threat (See the Illustration). The intersection of "fear" and "hope" lines in 1992 gave rise to a steady tendency, despite noticeable "swings" that can sometimes be occasioned by some quite spectacular event, as for example terrorist attacks that take place during the research and, in addition, in a certain proximity to respondents. If at the beginning of the 1990s NATO was of no fundamental importance especially to the feeling of external safety, then as of 1994 it has surely become a part of this process. This thesis arises from the fact that NATO countries separated themselves from any attempted suggestions about the possibility of becoming a guarantee of safety for Poland and other countries of the region. And the results of polls indicate that the major part of

Is the independence of Poland threatened at the moment, or not? (%)

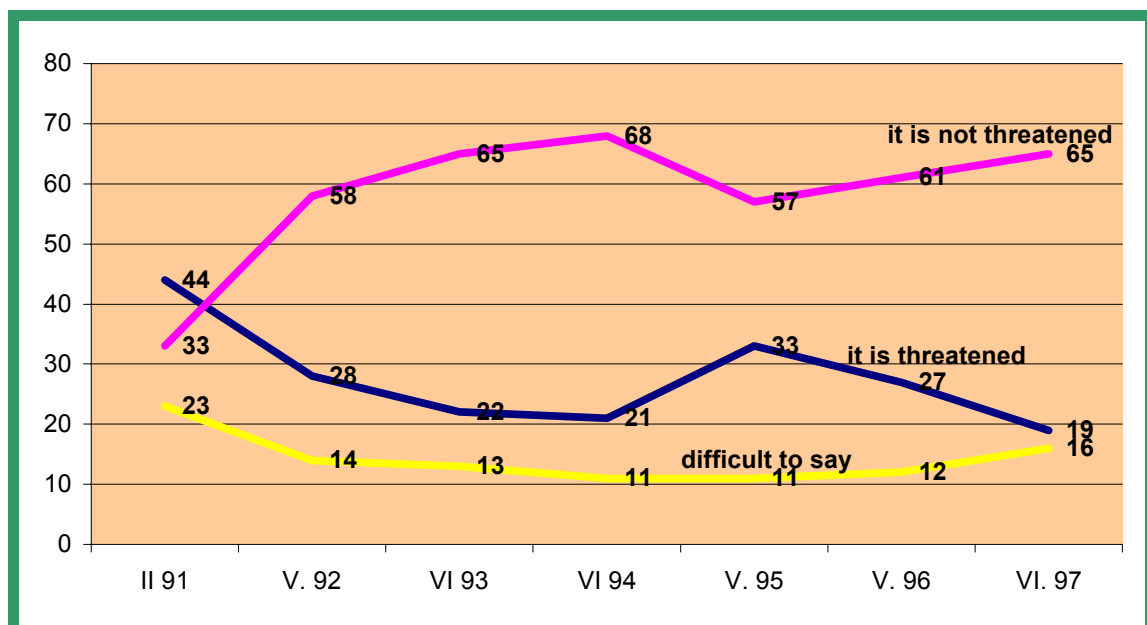


Illustration 6. CBOS - BS 107/107. September 1997

public opinion was aware of that fact. Since March 1999 that participation in safety guarantees is unquestionable and undoubtedly constitutes a warranty that such a tendency shall keep up, simultaneously hoping that NATO will not be forced to prove it.

It is generally impossible for the opinion polls to univocally determine the elements that influence the structure of changes of public opinion. We can usually draw some more or less probable conclusions based on the indications of respondents or our knowledge of circumstances in which the poll was conducted. If opinion poll on the functioning of administration was taken both in stable and extreme circumstances, then one could frequently obtain some entirely different results. If it had been conducted in Wrocław in August, right after the flood when the major part of the city was under water, then analysing the responses without that piece of information we could draw some not entirely accurate conclusions. Therefore this feeling of safety is a result of many factors, both of internal and external nature. When we strive to determine, for instance, what makes us feel threatened, then we usually try to find a single source that evokes such a feeling. This particular regularity is also known by politicians who sometimes manage to set that mechanism in motion. It is food for various political extremisms that offer public opinion some simple recipes. Antidotes against threats or lack of feeling of safety are arguments of racial, ethnic, religious, ideological, etc. nature. As it has already been mentioned the process of various social groups and the society as a whole becoming convinced that our (i.e. Poland's and Poles') aim is the integration with NATO was spread over a certain period of time.

However, already since 1993 a conviction has been established in the political consciousness of Poles that the most effective means of becoming safe is striving for NATO membership. When in 1993 "that idea" exceeded 50% of its supporters the percentage of people approving such a course of action has not dropped below 60% ever since. Let us take a look at the diagram above (Illustration 7).

This summary presentation depicts how this univocal opinion began to dominate within Polish public opinion after 1993. The *public opinion waving* that has already been mentioned showed only slight differences. Amplitude in the answers within individual "questions" was rather insignificant and if present at all, it usually had a specific tendency (growing or declining one). Undoubtedly the most impressive

to look at in the diagram is the increase of public opinion support for the ideas of *“increasing safety through the admission of Poland to NATO”*. Analysing the specified parameters, such as age, gender or political views one may observe that - taking account of those attributes - a similar differentiation of judgements took place.

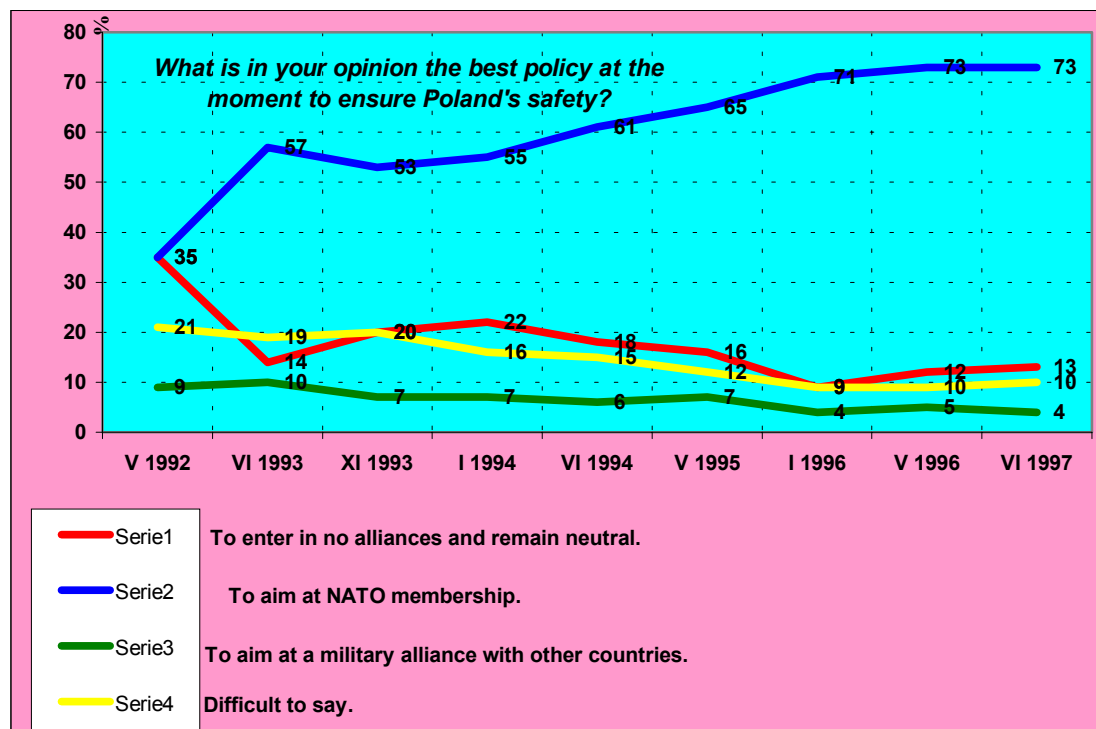


Illustration 7. CBOS - BS 150/126. September 1995; BS 89/96. June 1996; BS 90/90. July 1997

There also appeared certain tendency that was connected first of all with age. Within the group aged 24 or less the rate of support amounted to as much as 84%, whereas among people aged 65 plus it amounted to 61%. That comparison is even more striking when we take the profession of respondents into account. In the group of students the rate of support amounted to as much as 93%, whereas among pensioners it amounted to only 62%. It might be slightly surprising to find out that political affiliation to the left or the right wing resulted in a difference of only 7 points.

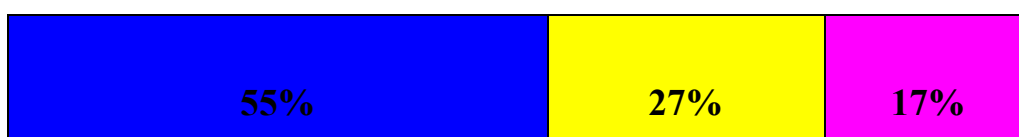
Those issues contributed to the fact that the assessment of profit and loss balance changed. As it can be seen in the diagram below opinions formulated while discussing chart no. 5 find more than just their confirmation, whereas questions that were asked of respondents do not raise any doubts as to what the main reason of the

change in views on the effects of integration with NATO was. Although one should not forget that after all we are still talking about the level exceeding 50%. Respondents continued to believe that the balance was definitely favourable; what changed was, as I have already mentioned, only the scale of support.

*Which of the following statements is closest to your views
on Poland joining NATO? Joining NATO*



I. 98



II. 99




-  - will rather secure peace and safety for Poland
-  - will rather increase the possibility of Poland becoming involved in an armed conflict
-  - difficult to say

Illustration 8 CBOS-BS 28 February 1999

The feeling of safety can be checked as at "today" and "tomorrow" – the latter option was selected by the authors who in the OBOP questionnaire (Illustration 8) suggested to look at the issue of safety in the perspective of the next ten years; the questions referred to the increase of the feeling of safety on the one hand, and its loss on the other. One may only regret that research on that issue was initiated only as late as in 1997 when the tension in the Balkan Peninsula probably changed in a sense the nature of opinions.

Taking account of the results achieved NATO is undoubtedly perceived as a formation that can effectively protect its members. This seems obvious, whereas the percentage of people who believe that there is some external menace to us undoubtedly arouses reflection. It is symptomatic that in the years 1997-1999 this number remained unchanged. Even the latest research that was conducted in February when our membership in NATO was already decided has not brought any changes. The interpretation of this fact may be of a twofold nature: either Poland - in the consciousness of its citizens - was under NATO's protective "umbrella" the moment it entered the "Partnership for Peace" programme, or another way to explain this sequence of data is to assume that the accession to NATO "went unnoticed", as for that fragment of reality, by the compatriots. The fact of obtaining the safety guarantee

Taking account of the international situation and power arrangement in the world can Poland, within the next, say ten years have a feeling of safety, or should it rather be afraid of any country or countries? (%)

No.	Answer	Indications of respondents by dates of opinion polls.							
		VI. 1997		II. 1998		II.1999		II 1999	
1.	It can definitely have the feeling of safety	14	61	17	67	16	67	17	65
2.	It can more or less have the feeling of safety	47		44		51		48	
3.	It should rather be afraid	25	28	26	26	23	26	22	24
4.	It should definitely be afraid	3		2		3		2	
5.	Difficult to say	11		11		7		11	

Table. 6. OBOP March 1999

through the inclusion in the NATO's framework did not in itself convince the unconvinced that the aim of this organisation was to increase the safety of its

members. Poland was admitted to NATO only in March, whereas the question was not so much about the "here and now", but about the prospect of ten years.

This time we undoubtedly come across an important historical threshold. This situation offers an opportunity of quite a precise (for opinion polling) analysis of the complicated character of opinions, attitudes, and factors that influence their changes. In connection with events taking place in the Balkans certain frustrations arise among some of the public opinion that, as one may presume, result from the discord between the conviction as to what is right and the thing that should be done. Those views became best visible in connection with an answer to the following question (Table 7). As it can be noticed a considerable part of public opinion fully accepts the fact of Poland joining NATO, while at the same time noticing the place that Poland occupies in "that line". One can see that the entire flow of opinions comprised those who had univocal views on our position in connection with joining NATO. The undecided placed within the "difficult to say" group did not practically undergo any quantitative

***Which of the following statements is closest to your views
on Poland joining NATO?(%)***

No	Answer	Indications by dates of opinion polls		
		I '98	VI '98	II '99
1.	NATO membership will rather be a guarantee of Poland's independence	56	49	41
2.	NATO membership will rather be a new form of Poland's submission to another foreign world-power	30	36	42
3.	Difficult to say	14	15	16

Table 7. CBOS–BS 28 February 1999

changes. This situation makes us aware that contrary to frequent complaints about political choices that are made by the Polish electorate (which after all constitutes

public opinion, even if not the active, then at least the potential one), these are in some cases based on rationality. One would like to ask a question of that over 10-30 % group that votes for NATO being convinced that in a sense it takes away from them (us) the sovereignty, what the alternative rational solution was. Let us repeat that in February 1999 the degree of approval for our NATO-related aspirations amounted to 67% in OBOP research, and 51% in CBOS polls.

C. Poles on "Partnership for Peace" programme.

The concept of "Partnership for Peace" was supposed to bring the countries that emerged after the break-up of the "Eastern bloc" closer to NATO procedures and standards. One had also started to see that the countries that joined this programme became, to some extent, an element of construction of a new political and military order in Europe. Those political assumptions were similarly interpreted by public opinion. In 1994 CBOS (July) asked citizens twice: "*Will the admission of Poland and other postsocialist countries to NATO become an element of stabilisation and peace?*", or whether the contrary will happen. In January and June almost 70% of respondents believed that the admission of those countries to NATO would increase the chances for stabilisation and peace. It is important that the stabilising role that participation in the aforementioned programme had resulted in for the Central Europe was noticed and confirmed by Polish public opinion. This general point of view found its reflection in research conducted in March 1994 by another polling institute (OBOP, March). To the question: "*Does Partnership for Peace increase Poland's safety?*" 66 % of respondents gave an affirmative answer. Thus, the inclusion of the Central and Eastern European countries to the "Programme" resulted in the increase of the feeling of safety – at least among the Poles.

Simultaneously, with the signature of the "Partnership for Peace" accession document by Mr. Waldemar Pawlak (the then Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland) the support and belief of public opinion in the possibility of a quicker accession to NATO increased. In January 1994 (CBOS) 33% of respondents were of the opinion that the participation in the "Programme" gave us a chance for NATO membership. As a consequence of the opening of numerous communication channels the level of knowledge about the "Programme" itself began to increase among the

public opinion. What real chances for NATO membership does the participation in "Partnership for Peace" give? This resulted in a situation where, as I have already mentioned, at the beginning of June that year 46% of respondents said that it was a chance for joining NATO.

Participation in the "Partnership for Peace" programme was largely connected with the co-operation at various levels of commanding staff, participation in joint military exercises, etc. Those tasks were meant to bring about a situation where the accession of Poland and other countries would take place in the circumstances of full compatibility of individual elements that were crucial for the efficient functioning. One could say that a certain proportion of the Polish public opinion (which we have already mentioned) treated accession to NATO in a rather hypothetical way, as if the issue under consideration was not a military structure with all the consequences thereof. One of the issues that triggered a strong reaction of the public was Polish soldiers' participation in various military actions.

What is your opinion on the use of Polish soldiers abroad?

Are you in favour of Polish soldier's being sent abroad to the areas of

No.	Answers	Indications of respondents by dates of opinion polls			
		June 1998		October 1998	
1	I strongly support it	9	42	10	36
2	I rather support it	33		26	
3	I don't care	8		10	
4	I rather don't support it	25	43	24	47
5	I definitely don't support it	18		23	
6	Difficult to say	7		7	

Table 8. CBOS – BS 151/151. November 1998

In October 1998 this general question began to have a very specific dimension. Situation in Yugoslavia contributed to the fact that those hypothetical considerations referred, in a presumed way, to reality. This phenomenon can be noticed on the basis of comparative research conducted by CBOS. In October 1998

37% of respondents were in favour of the participation of Polish soldiers in the mission in Kosovo, whereas in the poll conducted on 26-29 March 1999 this support dropped to 32%. On the other hand, the number of people opposing the idea amounted to 54% in March 1999. This "negative group" increased by 12% from October 1998 to March 1999 (CBOS - BS/53. April 1999). The same questions asked two weeks later by CBOS canvassers (BS/64 8-13 April) gave similar results ($\pm 2\%$). The more so because in the autumn 1998 it was not known yet what the nature of that participation of Polish soldiers would be: whether in a peacekeeping mission to preserve the "fruit of (possible) victory", or in combat.

That problem became more specific in 1999 (as it follows from OBOP research). At that time, in March (30-31) and April (17-19), OBOP asked the respondents about their attitude towards those problems. From among four identical questions that were asked, in two cases the approval diminished. In the first case it decreased from 18% to 16% for the most radical idea mentioning the participation of Polish soldiers in combat. In the second one the support for the standpoint: "*no, Poland should not send soldiers at all*" dropped from 28% to 24%. At the same time the support for the idea of Polish army participation in armed forces if it did not have to take part in combat increased from 13% to 17%. The second option that saw the increase of support was the participation of soldiers in peacekeeping activities after the end of a conflict. Among the parameters that considerably influenced answers one should enumerate education, interest in politics, attitude to religion and financial situation. Let us analyse that dependence by taking into consideration one of the four questions – the most radical one saying that Poland should send its soldiers even if they had to fight. Affirmative answer to that question was given by 10% of people with elementary education and 32% with university degree. People declaring that "*they take no interest at all*" in politics - 11%, those who "*rather take no interest*" - 14%, whereas those who "*are very interested*" - 23%. People who said that they were "*believing Christians and practising Catholics*" accepted such an action in 13%, those who "*believe but do not practise*" - in 25%, whereas "*the unreligious ones*" – in 43%. In the case of this criterion and the question (statement) saying that soldiers should participate in missions, but only the peacekeeping ones consisting in some order-

related activities, believing Christians accepted that form primarily in 46%, whereas the unreligious people only in 25%.

D. Youth on NATO

Such results prompt us to give special attention to the group that from the point of view of the future consolidation of relationships within the alliance is probably of the most crucial importance, namely the youth. During our participation in the "Partnership for Peace" programme on 13-22 April CBOS conducted opinion polls that covered the group of 1275 students of the final grades of postprimary schools. The feature that immediately draws attention is the distribution of opinions regarding the interest in problems relating to the aspirations of Poland to join NATO.

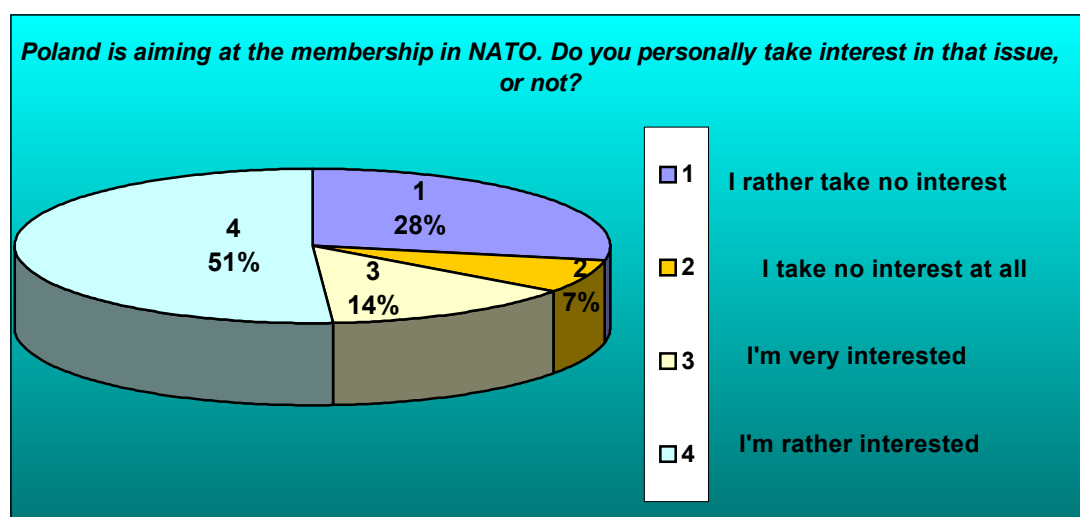


Illustration 9. CBOS – BS 109/107. July 1996

It turns out that a special group, due to its size, constitute those who declare a more or less marked political indifference. As many as 35% of answers constitute those that refer to the statements "I take no interest at all" and "I rather take no interest in it". This group constitutes an element that most visibly distinguishes the population of young people from the remainder of the society. Among the young the number of individuals giving that answer is decidedly higher. It is difficult to univocally interpret this fact. One point of view could consist in the statement that young people are generally inclined to ignore the problems of "the adults" frequently wishing to

ostentatiously cut themselves off the world they take no interest in, mainly for psychological, axiological and cultural reasons. The second way of interpretation could accuse the young with ignorance resulting from the lack of knowledge. The third point of view, in turn, could be of a more optimistic nature, namely that young people are not interested in problems connected with NATO, our (Polish) aspirations and the significance of that issue, not for the reasons of their aversion to politics, but because Poland is sovereign, because they are able to travel around the world without any restrictions, because if there are wars somewhere, they take place far away from our borders, and because generally they think that these are not their problems.

At the same time Poland, due to its religious and ethnic structure that shows the highest uniformity in Europe, is void of many potential trouble spots. Since they do not feel threatened in any way, some of the young show no interest in that

***What is, in your opinion, the most favourable policy at the moment
to ensure Poland's safety? (%)***

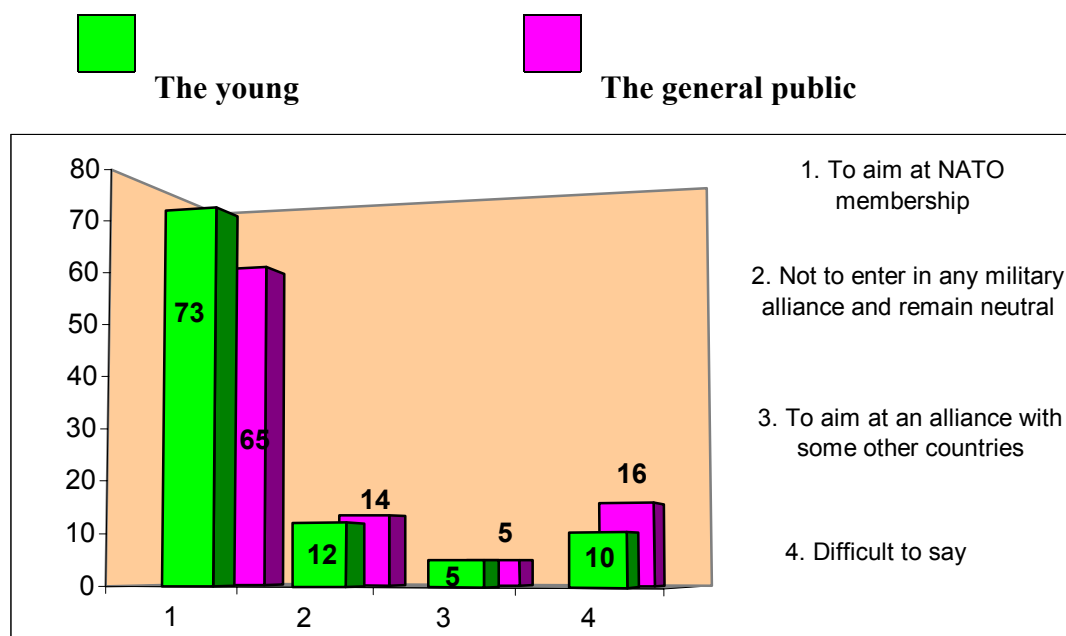


Illustration 10. CBOS – BS 109/197. July 1996

subject. It seems highly probable because it generally finds its confirmation in connection with research regarding other problems. People (I have the so-called average

citizens in mind) that for instance do not normally have any contact with for example pathological phenomena such as domestic violence, alcoholism, the drug habit, theft or corruption usually can properly assess the extent of those phenomena only when they happen to have at least the slightest experience of those matters. The reflection of the tendencies discussed is the following opinion(illustration 10).

As it can be seen in the diagram above, it is the increase of that "difficult to say" group rather than decrease in the number of people who were in favour of joining NATO. Which, as it can be noticed, does not change the fact that the pro-NATO option is pretty strong also among the young. Taking into account the parameters that largely determined the views of young people we can see that these included gender, type of school (e.g. basic vocational school or high school), interest in politics and the kind of

Poland is aiming at NATO membership.

Do you personally take interest in this matter, or not? (%)

L	Personal details	Yes	No
P	Total	64	36
1.	<i>Gender:</i>		
	Men	72	28
	Women	53	47
2.	<i>Type of school:</i>		
	Secondary school of general education	74	26
	Secondary technical school	69	31
	Secondary school of vocational education	61	39
	Basic vocational school	59	41
3.	<i>Interest in politics:</i>		
	Strong	94	6
	Average	73	27
	Weak or none	35	65
4.	<i>What kind of student do you consider yourself?</i>		
	With bad marks (D and C)	60	40
	With good marks (B)	67	33
	With excellent marks (A)	73	27

Table 9. CBOS – BS 109/107. July 1996

student that a given person considers himself or herself to be (with good or bad marks). These options are presented in the Table below that contains answers to the following question (Table 9.

E. Army takes the floor.

Research regarding the problem of safety, and in particular the intention of Poland to join NATO, covered two social sub-groups. We have already presented the views of one of them, whereas the second one constituted officers. Undoubtedly the attitude of that group, its opinions are of special importance. After all we treat differently an answer to the question about, for instance, the degree of modernity of the army given by civilians that have nothing to do with the army, than we treat the answer given by officers and soldiers themselves. Of particular importance are especially the evaluations relating to the merits of those areas that, by the force of events, are best known to that portion of the society. One became to take special interest in the opinions of that group only when the programme "Partnership for Peace" was launched. Since 1994 the military circles have begun to be quite regularly monitored. It has to be acknowledged that NATO "Programme" was at that time approached with a certain dose of scepticism. Talking about "Partnership for Peace" one even made a kind of a paraphrase saying "Partnership for being left in peace". Some circles, especially among the cadre, continued to treat NATO itself with certain scepticism, whereas there was a group of officers who believed that this programme was in a sense "a bone" thrown to the group of countries demanding to be admitted to NATO in order to give them "something" that would constitute a certain substitute for the real membership.

Scepticism resulting from the way the military circles looked at the "Partnership for Peace" programme practically continued throughout the entire period of its functioning. The results of opinion polls presented below indicate that the Programme was perceived as an undertaking that was supposed to bring profit mainly to NATO countries instead of those that it was aimed at.

In comparison to the initial research the opinion as to the benefits derived by various political formations has considerably changed. Still, in 1997 when the prospect of joining NATO seemed to be quite real, especially for "Visegrad Group" countries,

the percentage of people among the cadre that would notice any benefits for the pre-accession countries decreased most radically. And yet, in July 1997 the membership of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary in NATO was already decided. However, a considerable part of the cadre still believed that maybe not so much the United State as the Western Europe was the main beneficiary of that process. It was exactly the position of the U.S. that underwent a change, and a most visible one, too. An interesting "sociological object" is also a group of officers (although it has to be admitted that it was not a big one) that subscribe to the thesis that "Partnership for Peace" benefits "nobody". A question that was asked of the officers related to the following: *Is that Programme the best solution in the field of ensuring the European safety?* If we treat the answers "rather yes" and "yes" jointly as the

***Whose interests does that programme, in your opinion, support
in the best way? (%)***

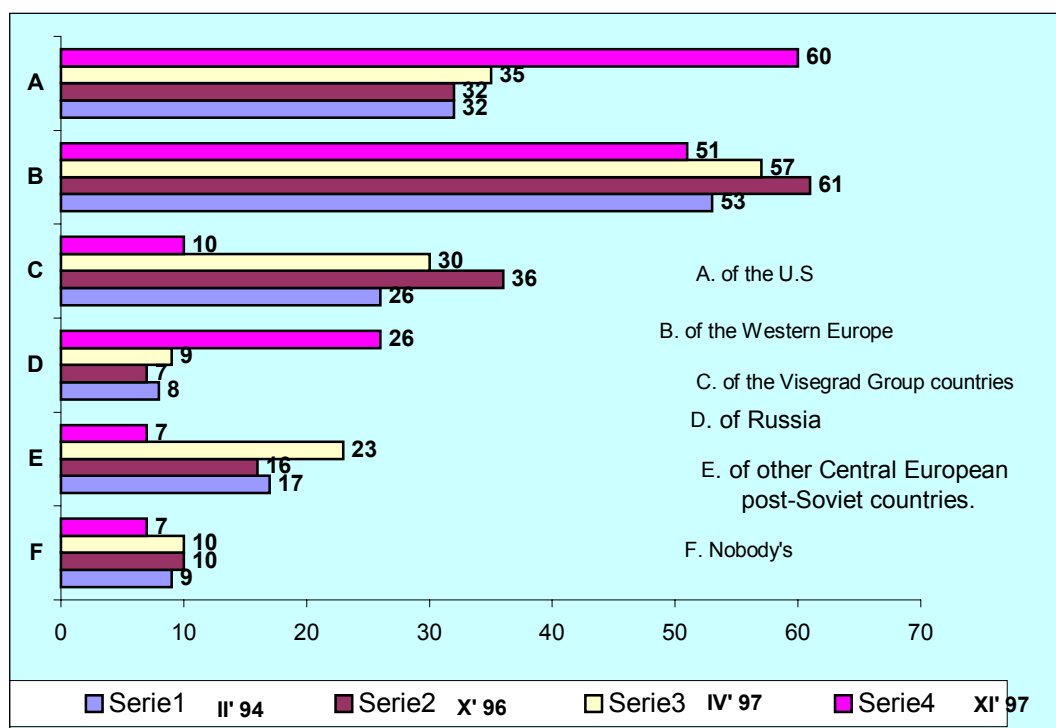


Illustration 11. S. Jarmuszko (1999: 41)

affirmative ones and those "rather not" and "not" as the negative ones then in February 1994 50% of respondents answered in the affirmative while 37 % answered

in the negative. In November 1997 77% of respondents gave affirmative answers whereas 14% gave negative replies. As it can be seen it is a significant change of attitudes towards that concept among officers. The increase of support took place not only because of the intellectual factor, i.e. better knowledge of the programme or a more impartial evaluation. Taking into account the opinions that were formulated about the Army, its financial, technical, technological, organisational and ethical condition one may suppose that some of the officers treated the participation of Poland, and particularly that of its army, in the Partnership for Peace in an instrumental way. It was expected that our co-operation within the framework of the Programme and aiming at NATO membership would cause the flow of money. That money was supposed to enable the activation of processes adapting our army to NATO standards. It was also expected that the situation would force the authorities to financially reinforce the army and would eliminate those phenomena that were regarded as negative ones and such that could prevent the integration. Such an attitude was justified in the autumn 1997, as the United States allocated financial resources to the countries aiming at membership, i.e. to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, whereas the introduction of NATO Normalisation Standards (STANG-s) made everyone aware that there was no way of 'wangling' or 'letting it be'.

As we have mentioned before research was conducted that related not only to the issues connected with NATO, but concerned also the evaluation of the Polish army. The research covered not only officers, but also soldiers in basic military service. They were asked, among others, the same question that CBOS asked in its polls: *"If referendum was held on the accession to NATO, would you vote"* - 64% were for, 10% would be against and 26% of soldiers found it difficult to take a stand (Polska Zbrojna No. 15, April 1998: 4). These data are in a sense similar to the ones that were collected in the nation-wide research. The differences arise mainly from the specificity of the group that basic military service soldiers constitute. Its nature is marked by such data as age: usually around 18-24 and education: mainly elementary and basic vocational one. This results in a particularly high percentage of "difficult to say" replies (in nation-wide research this number of answers among people with elementary education amounted to 18%, whereas that

among people with secondary and university education reached 5% and 2% respectively - CBOS July 1997).

What is your general opinion about the situation of the Polish army?

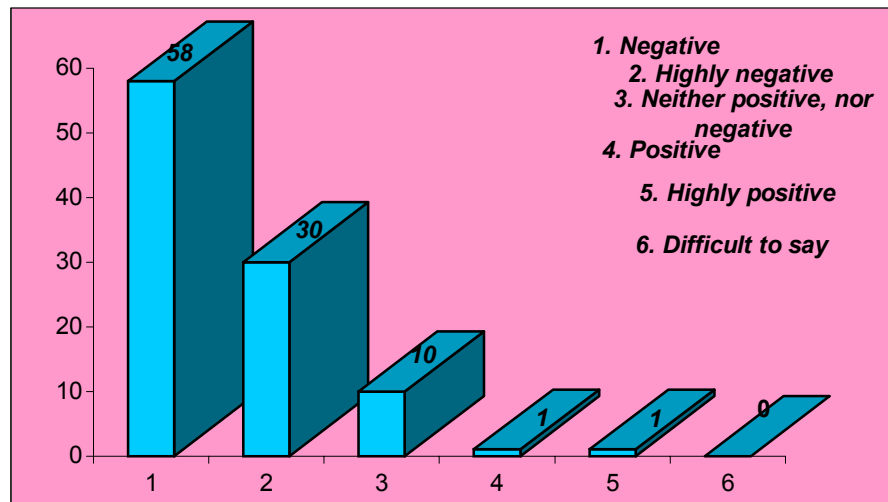


Illustration 12. Polska Zbrojna No. 40 October 1998:

Similar 4 relations can be noticed while looking at the replies accepting Polish pro-NATO aspirations. In nation-wide research the group with elementary education that said "yes" amounted to 69% (to remind you: among soldiers it was 64%), while among people with secondary and university education the results were 82% and 91% respectively. Soldiers in basic military service showed high criticism with respect to the "condition" of the Polish Army. The first of the questions relating to those issues was as follows(Illustration 12).

If we summed up the replies testifying to positive and negative opinions, we would achieve a rather pessimistic picture. Such a breakdown would indicate that 88% of soldiers are of a negative opinion about the condition of the Polish army while positive opinions are formulated only by 2%, which is practically below the 3% margin that is assumed to constitute the statistical error. Similar criticism of soldiers referred also to the armament of the unit in which they serve. In that case summing up the two negative answers we achieve 71% of soldiers who believe that their unit is "very poorly or poorly" armed with war weapons (Polska Zbrojna No. 46 November 1998: 4). Whereas to the question "Do you think that Polish military potential is at the

moment sufficient with respect to the degree of threats to our safety?” as many as 88% of respondents said, as in the case of the former question, that is was “*not sufficient*”.

Coming back to the issues directly relating to NATO, 54% of soldiers found it quite easy to give an affirmative reply to the question: “*Would you accept the subordination of Polish troops to NATO command?*” 37%, however, would rather be against it (Polska Zbrojna No.18 May 1998). Another symptomatic phenomenon (apart from the criticism) that can be observed while analysing the replies given by soldiers is the minimum amount of “*difficult to say*” opinions. This in turn would testify in a sense to the competence of soldiers with respect to the questions asked of them, but first of all to their emotional involvement.

F. Integration with NATO as an element of political stabilisation in Europe.

Integration processes connected with ideas of Euro-Atlantic integration brought results that were both objective and subjective. Apart from increasing the feeling of safety in the opinion of the public, the other area where one can notice effects of that integration are processes increasing that safety in an objective way. If the latter factor is of less interest to us (it might be much more so to strategists, staff officers or authors of military doctrine), the subjective factor, i.e. the consciousness in the case of public opinion description is much more interesting. Therefore we will not concern ourselves with objective factors of integration.

Let us take a look, firstly, at the degree to which Poland’s feeling of safety increases, mainly according to Polish public opinion, and secondly, to what extent integration processes influence the increase of the feeling of safety in Europe and the Central European region, again mainly according to Polish public opinion. Both issues found their reflection in research conducted by polling institutions. CBOS, quoted above, researched that issue in the years 1994 – 1999.

Studying the indications of respondents one is undoubtedly surprised by the result achieved in 1999. Despite the fact that still more than a half of respondents perceive our membership in NATO as a stabilising factor, the drop by 8% in that “optimism factor” has to arouse reflection. Explanation seem relatively simple – the situation connected with the preparation of the action against Serbia (we will give more attention to that event later). The polarisation of public opinion connected with

Serbian actions in Kosovo also offers some explanation as to the changes that took place in the respondents' minds. We have already mentioned that changes may take place in public opinion as a result of events that make some of the public change what seemed to be their fixed views. Such an event was undoubtedly the situation that occurred in the former Yugoslavia. Change of views connected with that situation found its confirmation also in the way of perceiving advantages that Poland would gain through the integration with NATO.

In the situation where NATO was a military organisation that practically never engaged its army in offensive actions, in public consciousness it was a defensive mechanism that was known to be powerful but never let us find out how it looked like in practice. One should specifically emphasise the controversy of that fact for public intervention of NATO army in Serbia aroused numerous controversies of political, military, legal and international, as well as civilisation, ethical and religious nature.

***Which of the following statements does more closely correspond with
Your opinion on Poland's accession to NATO? (%)***

No.	Answer	Indications by dates of opinion polls				
		I'94	I'96	I'97	I'98	II'99
1.	Accession of Poland to NATO shall rather contribute to the enhancement of peace and stabilisation in Europe	59	66	68	65	57
2.	Accession of Poland to NATO shall rather contribute to the enhancement of tensions and uncertainty in Europe	16	14	17	16	21
3.	Difficult to say	25	20	15	19	22

Table 10. CBOS – BS 28 February 1999

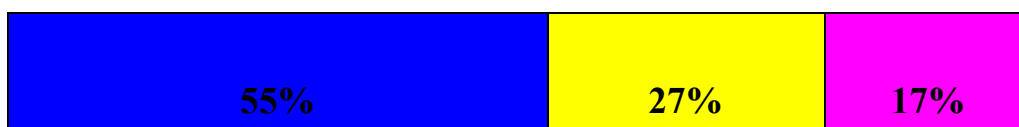
These issues made people change their evaluations of the profit and loss balance. As you can see in the diagram below opinions that were formulated while discussing Table 8 find something more than just confirmation. Questions that were asked of

respondents and replies to them leave no doubt as to the major reason of the change of views on integration with NATO. Although one should not forget that we still operate at the level of over 50%. The respondents were also of the opinion that the balance was definitely favourable; what changed was, as I have already mentioned, only the scale of support.

Concurrence of two significant events, i.e. accession of Poland to NATO and initiation of NATO's armed intervention in the Balkans resulted in numerous changes and, what follows, interesting observations. Such extreme situations monitored by polling centres make it possible to track the evolution of large social groups' opinions caused by political facts. In connection with events in the Balkans there appear certain frustrations among a portion of the public opinion that may be attributed to the discord between what is right and what should be done. These views became best visible in connection with the answer to the question: (Illustration 13).

Which of the following statements does more closely correspond with ;your opinion on Poland's accession to NATO? Accession to NATO

I. 1998



II. 1999



- will rather secure peace and safety for Poland
- will rather increase the possibility of Poland becoming involved in an armed conflict
- difficult to say

Illustration 13 CBOS – BS/ 28 February 1999

As it can be seen the vast proportion of public opinion fully accepts Poland's accession to NATO being aware, however, what the place of Poland in "that line" is. One can notice that the entire flow of opinions comprised those who had univocal views on our position in connection with joining NATO. The undecided placed within the "difficult to say" group did not practically undergo any quantitative changes. This situation makes us become aware that contrary to frequent complaints about political choices that are made by the Polish electorate (which after all constitutes public opinion, even if not the active, then at least the potential one), these choices are in some cases based on rationality. One would like to ask a question of that over 10-30 % group (according to the same research by CBOS 51% of respondents are in favour of accession to NATO, whereas according to OBOP research conducted in February 1999 as well, the affirmative answer was given by 67%) that votes for NATO while being convinced that in a sense it takes away from them (us) the sovereignty, what the alternative rational solution was.

**Which of the following statements does most closely correspond with your views
on Poland joining NATO?(%)**

No	Answer	Indications by dates of opinion polls		
		I '98	VI '98	II '99
1.	NATO membership will rather be a guarantee of Poland's independence	56	49	41
2.	NATO membership will rather be a new form of Poland's submission to another foreign world-power	30	36	42
3.	Difficult to say	14	15	16

Table 11. CBOS – BS/28 February 1999

G. Poland – Russia and other post-Soviet countries.

Poland's presence in NATO has always been determined - whether in an articulated, or alleged way - in the context of its 'presence' near Germany and Russia. If there was any threat it was primarily that posed by Russia to Poland and not the other way round. The dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation resulted in the lack of the feeling of safety among all the former signatories thereto. When Central European countries began looking for a guarantor of their safety, Russia tried to preserve "the remains of its former position". This manifested itself mainly in vigorous protests relating to the aspirations of former Warsaw Treaty Organisation countries. As I have mentioned before, in their calculations Poland as well as NATO - while negotiating - had to take into consideration the presence of Russia, its opinions and interests. It concerned - to a greater extent - politicians than, as it can be inferred from the results of research, the public opinion. The change after 1989 took place rapidly and radically, which raises a number of questions as to the credibility of previous declarations made by the public.

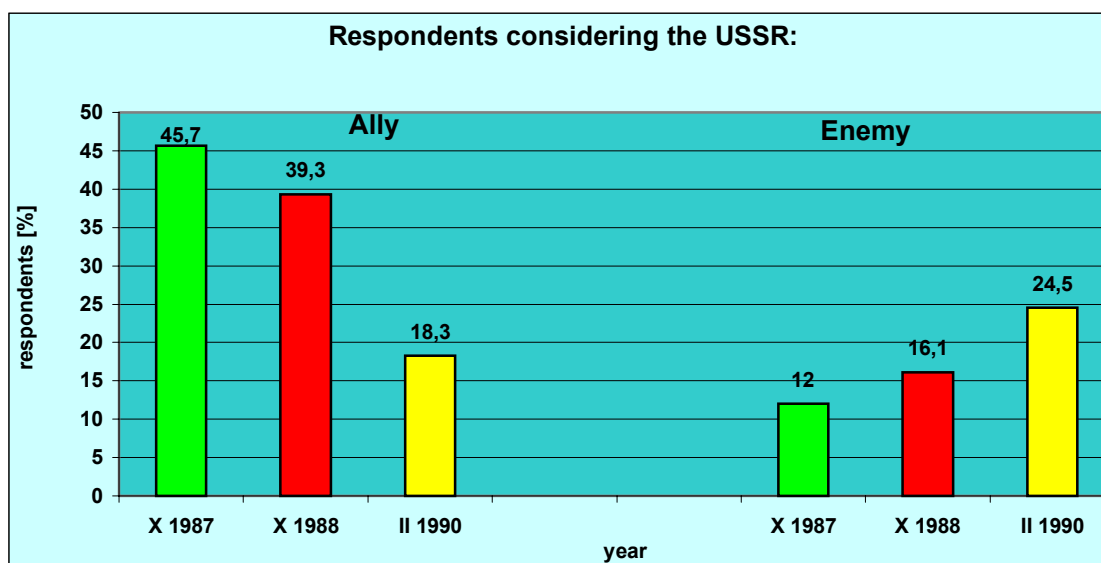


Illustration 14. CBOS – BS/193/37. April 1990

Polish public opinion generally noticed this special role played by Russia and drew conclusions that were determined, among others, by historical events. In the declarations of the vast proportion of public opinion the role played by the USSR changed diametrically within the period of three years. Simultaneously, in 1990

another important phenomenon occurred, namely those who regarded Russia as an enemy began to be in the majority. With the progress of time this tendency grew even stronger. In 1997 the following question was asked Looking at the above table one may even venture to say that in the consciousness of Poles Russia actually became the primary and the only threat. The scale of that threat found its confirmation among the cadre of the Polish Army. In the opinion poll conducted in 1994 75% of officers saw the primary threat to Poland in Russia and that quantity displayed a growing tendency because in the polls conducted in 1993 such an opinion had been expressed by 56% of respondents (A. Sakson 1998: 77). It can be seen that, in practice, Poles worry mainly about the peace at the eastern border. Not earlier than several years ago opinions voiced were totally different. In 1993 (CBOS BS/181/146. November), while answering a similar question where more countries could be indicated, the respondents were of a firm opinion that the biggest threat was posed by Germany - 56% (Russia received 30% of indications).

What are the current "external threats" to the independence of our country?

1.	Russia.....	40%
2.	General statement "Eastern neighbours", "ex-Soviet countries" etc. ...	11%
3.	Germany.....	6%
4.	Ukraine.....	4%
5.	"neighbours", "bordering countries" – no definite indications.....	3%
6.	general indications, such as: "geopolitical location of Poland", "unrest in the world", "there is threat from everywhere" etc.....	3%
7.	Poland's accession to NATO.....	2%

Table 12. CBOS – BS 107/107. September 1997

The interesting thing is that at that time the bigger threat was also seen as being presented by Ukraine - 42%. As I have already mentioned within several years these views underwent a serious "restructuring". The remaining of our neighbouring countries were in principle not perceived as posing real threat to Poland. As it can be

noticed in the above table the major threat according to the vast proportion of public opinion was posed by Russia, whereas post-Soviet countries were ranked second at that time. Similar problem became an object of interest to the Public Research Centre in Sopot. In 1995 respondents asked by that institution indicated five countries that in their opinion could present threat to Poland. Two-thirds of respondents indicated Russia, whereas 38% were afraid of Germany and 35% saw the source of danger in Ukraine. Belarus as a threat was perceived by 7% of respondents, whereas Lithuania by 6% (A. Sakson 1998: 77).

In the years 1992-1995 CBOS researched the public opinion perception of the break-up of the USSR (Illustration 15). As it can be seen this fact underwent an evident evolution within public opinion. Between 1992 and 1995 changes took place that turned the proportions upside down. In 1995 the number of people who believed that it was a positive phenomenon increased from 21% to 42%, whereas the number of people who were of a contrary opinion dropped from 47% to 23%. At the same time the most significant change took place in the case of radical answers; statements such as *"difficult to say"* and *"it remained unchanged"* showed considerable stability.

Do you believe that as a result of the break-up of the USSR into numerous independent countries the situation of Poland, generally speaking?

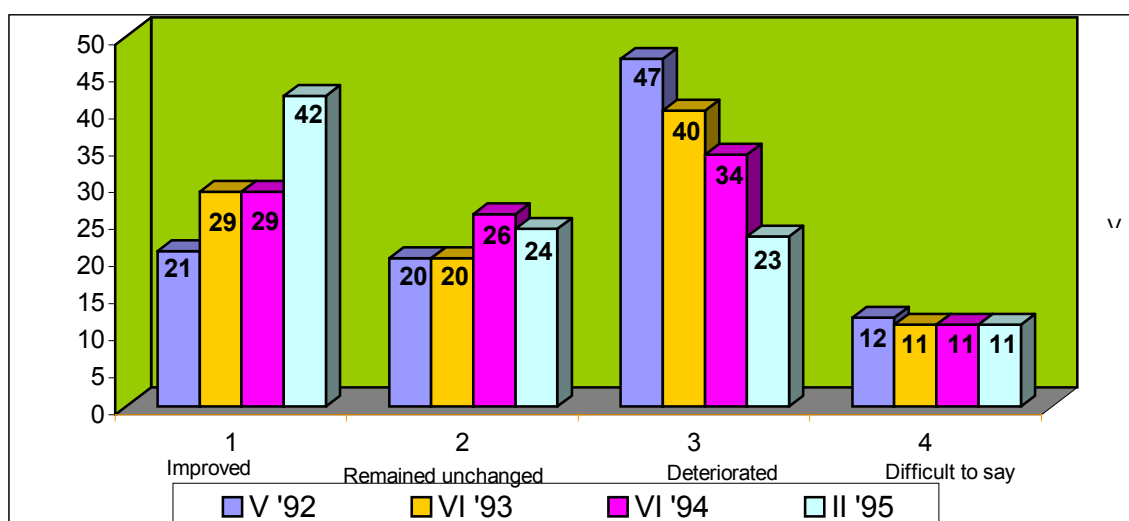


Illustration 15. CBOS – BS/39/32/95. February 1995

As it can be inferred from Table 12 (September 1997), creation of new countries east of Poland was ranked second in terms of threat by the respondents. Initial pessimistic moods, as already mentioned, underwent a significant modification, which does not change the fact that some of the neighbours evoke, greater or smaller, but still fear. Undoubtedly the major anxiety is caused by Belarus and its unconventional leader. The accession of Belarus to the Commonwealth of Independent Countries was, in particular, deemed an unfavourable event by 43% of respondents in 1995. Some of the respondents, i.e. 24% regarded that fact as an insignificant one.

The major influence on the views expressed in the opinion polls regarding the aforementioned threats was exerted by education. In the case of questions about the threat posed by the Commonwealth of Independent Countries also 36% of people with elementary education deemed that fact unfavourable for Poland, whereas among people with university education as many as 48% evaluated (that objectively unfavourable fact for Poland) as negative, in accordance with political realities, thus being undoubtedly nearer the truth.

Similar scepticism was shown by the respondents towards Ukraine and Ukrainians. In CBOS research from August 1998 (BS 104/104), when asked about the prospects of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation in June 1998, 48% of respondents said that *"it is rather and absolutely possible"*, whereas 37 % of respondents believed that unfortunately *"it is rather and absolutely impossible"*. Compared to 1997 the number of those who optimistically looked at the possibility of reconciliation with our Eastern neighbour dropped by as many as 12%, whereas the number of opponents remained practically at the stable level of 39%. Although that research did not refer to the question of safety or military problems in Polish-Ukrainian relationships, but the replies indicate potential barriers and attitudes in the relations between the communities of Poland and Ukraine. It does not change the fact that Polish politicians started to treat the relationship with Ukraine in an ostentatiously warm manner (especially A. Kwaśniewski), emphasising the importance of good relationship between our countries, saying at every occasion that we were a *"bridge to Europe"* for Ukraine and perceived ourselves in such a role. Similar statement was made, among others, by B. Geremek: *"From our point of view it is important that relationship between NATO and Ukraine*

should be determined in a process parallel to the negotiations between NATO and Russia. This is compliant with Polish foreign policy, which we have expressed for many years”. (Życie 19. 05. 1997).

Looking at the answers evaluating Polish – German and Polish – Russian relationships one can see that emotional attitudes find their reflection also in the opinions on safety. All types of phobias and stereotypes that have been accumulating for years between the nations are currently reflected, as it can be seen, in the consciousness and attitudes of public opinion. It is a result of certain mechanisms that are of an objective nature and result from the confrontation of large social groups that differ from one another and, consequently, often have divergent interests.

***”Never in your life will a German become a Pole’s friend”
is true or not? (%)***

No.	Education	I agree	I disagree	Difficult to say
1.	elementary	69	24	7
2.	basic vocational	65	31	4
3.	secondary	61	35	4
4.	university	41	57	2

Table 13. CBOS – BS 137/113. September 1993

Authors of an opinion poll questionnaire used, as a motto of one of the questions, a saying that was supposed to illustrate the depth of Polish – German animosities. Respondents were to estimate to what extent the saying (Table 13.).

This comparison, as I have mentioned, is highly significant. Firstly, it cannot be denied that the saying quoted in the question is an exemplification of the stereotype concerning Germans and the “centuries-old“ hostility between Poles and Germans. The results, however, indicate in a conclusive way what the importance of knowledge gained in the course of education is for the overcoming of those phobias. This also confirms a scientific thesis regarding the measures that should be applied in order to overcome stereotypes. Secondly, what draws attention is the difference between the results achieved in responses of people with university education and those with the

elementary or secondary one. The difference between the answers given by respondents with elementary and secondary education is almost twice as small as that between people with secondary and university education. It would be hard to achieve some more conclusive evidence as to the necessity of raising and extending the level of education. Education proves to be the most efficient factor that overcomes prejudice, stereotypes and myths. It has to be acknowledged that Poles showed a lot of scepticism (realism?) in their pro-NATO declarations. It found its reflection in the opinions on the relationship between NATO and Russia, especially in the context of our joining NATO. This thesis is demonstrated by Illustration 16.

***Do you consider it possible that NATO countries agree with Russia
about Poland behind its back? (%)***

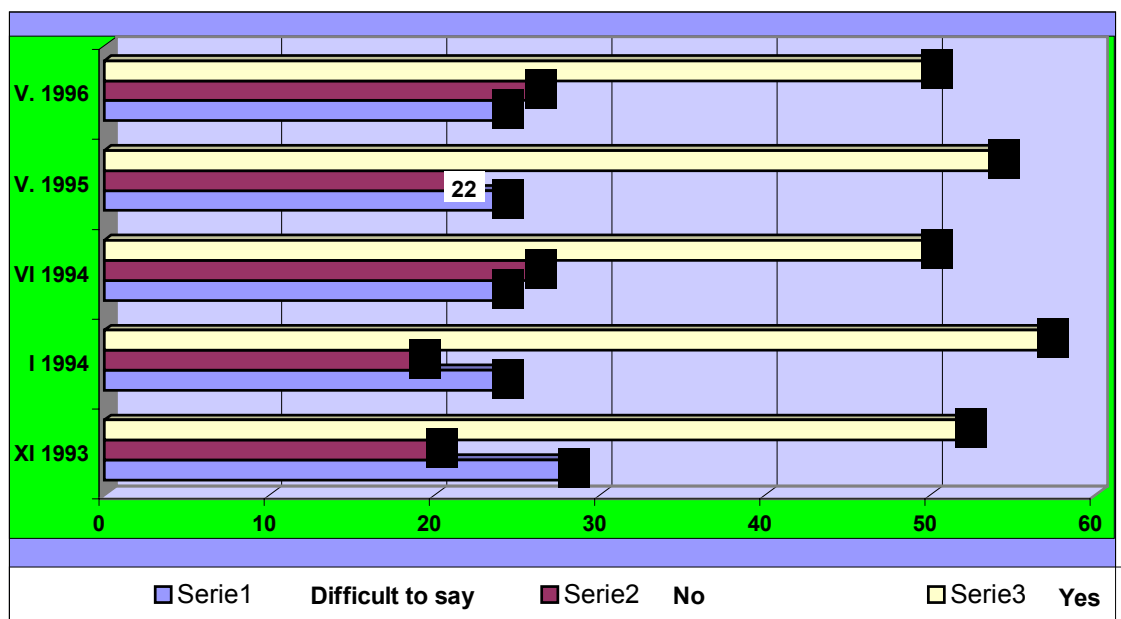


Illustration 16 CBOS – BS 120/106. July 1994; CBOS - BS 103/101. July 1996.

As you can see Poles do not trust the so-called Western politicians. Political experience of the past 200 years at least partially explains that scepticism. It has to be acknowledged that the lapse of time rather contributed to the increase of such distrust.

That scepticism towards NATO and Russia underwent certain modifications in the course of time, but was nevertheless maintained; one may say that the value of distrust did not drop below 50%. Those theses find their confirmation in the activities and declarations of Western politicians as well. Many of them, both in the Eastern and Western Europe and in 2001 as well, continue to form sceptical opinions as to the behaviour of their Western colleagues, because these politicians frequently use arguments that are similar to those used several years ago. This time they do and say that with respect to other candidates on the occasion of subsequent attempts at NATO enlargement. Such activities concern especially the post-Soviet countries. Generally it is difficult to hear such univocal declarations that would indicate the existence of Russian syndrome or complex. However, when we take a look at public opinion polls in Poland we will see that such fears, or Russian complex, do have a bearing on politics and politicians and are perceived as such by public opinion. No denials can help here because this policy is perceived in exactly such a way.

The words of Vaclav Havel at the conference held in Bratislava on 11. 05. 2001 devoted to, among other things, the issues connected with NATO enlargement (which decision is to be taken at the summit in Prague in 2002) can serve as an exemplification of that thesis: *"Contrary to numerous politicians who behave towards Russia in an obsequious and insincere way, in a misconceived interest of preserving peace and friendship with that country, I believe that – for the sake of real friendship with Russia – one should negotiate with it as with an equal partner and tell the whole truth, even if not too pleasant one.* (Gazeta Wyborcza 2001). As it can be seen Vaclav Havel, in his views, comes closer to the predominant voices within public opinion than some of the Western politicians do. In 1994 those views were shared by a vast proportion of Polish public opinion that took a firm stand while evaluating the attitude of certain countries in 1994 (Illustration 17).

Poles turned out to be particularly sensitive (as it could be expected) about their sovereignty. As we know Russia raised objections as to the accession of Poland to NATO as soon as Polish politicians began to officially express such a will. Vast majority of respondents believe that Russia should not voice its opinions as to alliances formed by Poland at all. Such views were formulated by 83% of respondents (only 5% chose an answer *"yes, Russia may express its opinion on that matter"*).

Do the United States care mainly about:

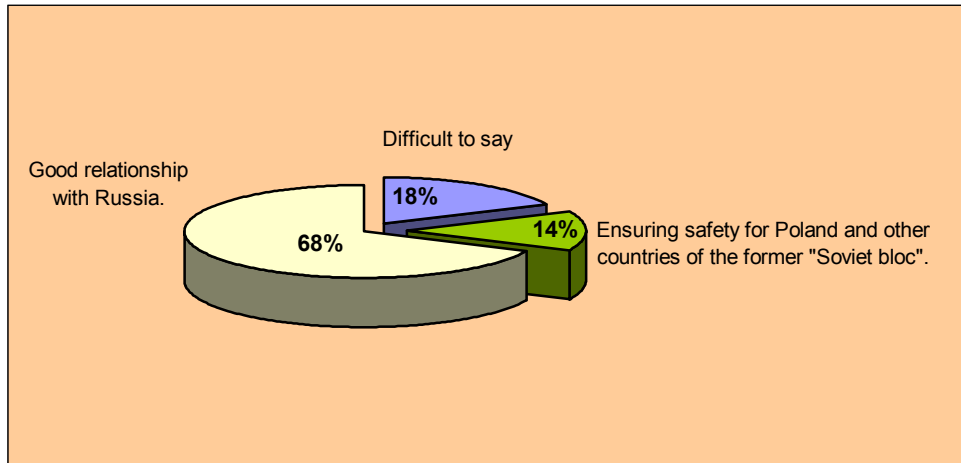


Illustration 17. CBOS – BS/17/14. February 1994

The majority also think that Poland should not take Russia's standpoint into consideration. As for the opinions on that subject, the more decided ones are those formulated by young people under 24 years of age (82%), than those expressed by older people, over 65 years of age, who would only in 53% be inclined to say that Poland should ignore the stand that Russia takes on our NATO aspirations. Similar relationships occur if we take into consideration the criterion of education. The number of people in favour of this view increases with the level of education – from 60% in the group with elementary education up to 81% among people with university education (CBOS – BS/181/146 November 1993).

Special role of Russia resulting from the past and connected also with the nature of relationship between those having power in Kremlin and the Central European countries arouses constant fear of public opinion not only in Poland, but also in the remaining postsocialist states. Some of the Russian politicians find it very difficult to accept the situation where Russia ceased to be a world power. All the more so as this country is incapable of coping with its own internal problems in practically any area. An argument testifying to the fact that the standpoint of Russian politicians had to be irritating is the discord between the views of political class and those of the Russian public opinion. As for the attitude of the Russian public toward the danger connected with Poland joining NATO, 64% has no view on that subject.

Only 18% see the danger whereas the same percentage notices none (A. Sakson 1998: 78). Such views of the public opinion contradict, as I have said, the official attitude of authorities. This in turn presents a threat by indicating the autonomy of the political class with respect to their own nation. It has to be admitted that such a conclusion comes to mind while observing the Russian political scene: a normal manipulatory procedure can be at work here consisting in the frightening of one's own nation with *"the approach of NATO towards Russian borders"*. From the military point of view this issue is of marginal importance now. The discord between the authorities and citizens comes with no particular surprise in that case. Remarks that could be made with respect to the public itself would concern three issues. Firstly, the accession of Poland to NATO is of no significance to the Russian society, especially bearing in mind the contemporary technology. Secondly, it may result from the lack of information on that subject. Thirdly, the opinions expressed may arise from the subconscious temperance while giving univocal answers to controversial questions.

***Will Russia - in the nearest future - aim at rebuilding
its sphere of influence in our part of Europe?(%)***

No.	Answers	Indications by dates of opinion polls							
		VI'93	VI' 94	V'95	V '96	VI'97	VI'98	II'99	II '00
1.	Yes	39	53	72	69	63	59	53	60
2.	No	39	26	14	13	19	20	23	22
3.	Difficult to say	22	21	14	18	17	21	24	18

Table 14. CBOS – BS/28 February 1999

Military, political, ethnic, religious, financial, etc. problems all cause that the world is constantly looking at Russia with fear. In the 1990s there was a permanent fear within the Polish society connected with Russian tendencies to regain the position that the Soviet Union used to have in the Central Europe. In 1995 respondents asked by CBOS (BS/149/125 July 1995) in 62% believed that the

situation in Russia evolved towards dictatorship rather than democracy (13%). This indicates the conviction that there were strong autocratic tendencies in this country.

One may notice an interesting phenomenon that is the relationship between the opinion on a given subject and the level of interest in the social and political life. Respondents were asked a question regarding the degree of their reading habit regarding newspapers that was then correlated with replies regarding the directions of democratisation in Russia. The relationship between the ability to evaluate the situation and that reading habit is striking. This was particularly visible with *"difficult to say"* answers. People reading newspapers every day showed lack of determination in 16%. Whereas those who read them *"2-3 times a week"* replied *"difficult to say"* in 25%; such an answer was given by 21% of respondents reading only *"Saturday and Sunday issues"*; those who read *"rarely"* replied *"difficult to say"* in 31%; and the major percentage, i.e. 37% of the undecided ones were people who admitted that they did not read newspapers at all (CBOS BS/151/151 November 1998).

H. Poland in the "Visegrad Triangle"

In 1991 a conference was held in Berlin gathering parliamentarians of NATO, neutral and postcommunist states. Delegates from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary expressed at that conference their willingness to join NATO (we still had to do with political presence of the USSR at that time). Countries being the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation acknowledged the declaration of accession. Polish press quoted the reaction of Western politicians, including among others *Gazeta Wyborcza* that quoted after Reuters the statement by NATO diplomat who said that *"They perceive us as a guarantor of stabilisation in Europe, perhaps the only one, but our capacity is limited."* According to Reuters *"NATO guarantees of safety to such countries as Poland or Romania are out of the question, because none of the NATO countries would consent to give such assurance as it could be deemed a provocation in respect of the Soviet Union"* (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 18. 02. 1991). Let the headlines in the press at that time testify to the moods of some of the Polish public: *"Cold NATO"* or *"EU and NATO await summer days"* (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 14. 07. 91).

Reserve of Western politicians had many reasons. One should be aware that the support, or its lack, for the idea of NATO extension over the former socialist states depended on the political interests of individual countries. The objection raised

by Western politicians sometimes was an element of internal political struggle. Such opinions were quoted, among others, by Gazeta Wyborcza (August 1996) when during a convention of democrats the delegates were asked about their attitudes towards Polish aspirations to NATO. The vast majority were "for", whereas a dozen or so people who showed a cautious attitude asked about the tax consequences for American citizens and the extent to which that fact would affect the relationship between the U.S. and Russia. People were generally aware, both in Poland and in the West, that despite declarations that Russia would not tell "us" what NATO was to do, the majority – in an implied meaning – took that aspect of the question into consideration. Zbigniew Brzeziński commented on those dilemmas of the Western diplomatic service: *"I have never had any doubts that if the West takes a firm stand Russia will change its opinion and arrive at the conclusion that agreement is favourable for it. This is – as I believe – happening at the moment. The question arises instead as to what the extent of concessions to Russia is going to be. What is NATO ready to sacrifice for the sake of an amiable agreement with Moscow. If those concessions were connected with the granting of an informal status of alliance member to Russia with simultaneous more formal limitation of the status of new members, it would be really dangerous."* (Wprost 15. 03. 1997). This generally friendly attitude started to be predominant around 1992-1993.

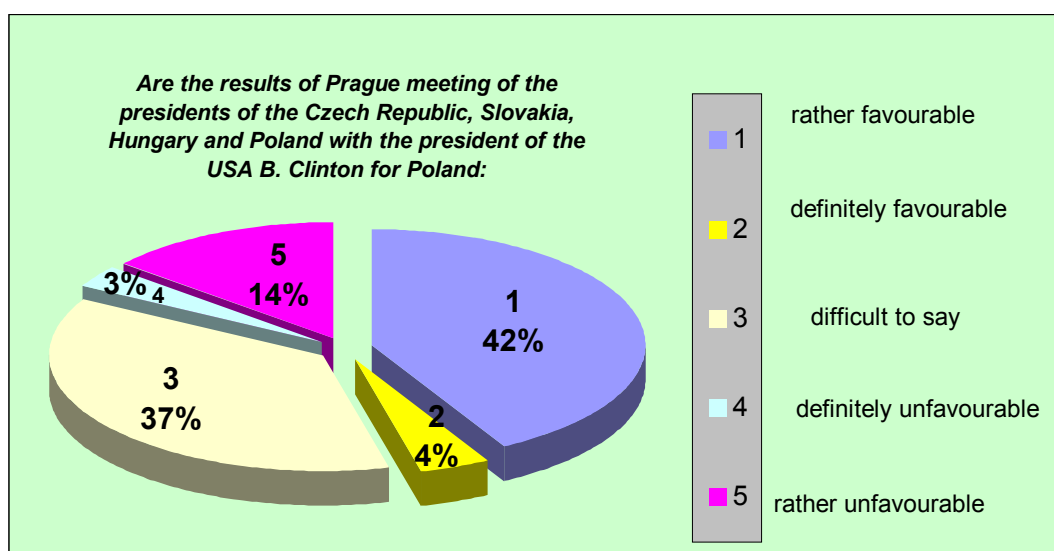


Illustration 18. CBOS – BS/17/14. February 19

Therefore countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary judged that by forming a certain political structure their *lobbying* in respect of joining NATO would become more effective. The “Visegrad Triangle” became an important integrating factor, as well as the political formation with clearly stated political aims that has become a point of reference for many politicians. Politicians of the “Triangle” acted as a group and were negotiated with also as a group. This made international contacts more efficient, too. Public opinion also began to notice the advantages of the fact of such a political formation’s existence. Therefore it was not surprising that Bill Clinton met with the leaders of the “Visegrad Triangle”. The effects of that meeting, according to Polish public opinion, are presented in the diagram below.

What undoubtedly draws our attention is the group replying *difficult to say*; the motivation to give such an answer is something that we can but guess. These might be people who know little about the “Triangle”, but also people who are aware of the consultative, structural and political nature of that platform. It is not a formation that has any kind of a formalised mechanism at its disposal – to a greater extent it is based on moral obligations. First of all it was recognised that all four countries had a specific political interest to carry into effect on the basis of the “Triangle”. In this case we come to deal with a specific political fact the consequences whereof do not necessarily need to be of material nature. Besides one should not wonder that 37% of respondents replied that it was “*difficult to say*” something about the benefits to Poland. Meetings of that kind create atmosphere, allow politicians not only to exchange views, but also to get to know each other in person. And these kinds of “results” are of a quite relative nature. Poles however, while asked about their attitude towards the co-operation within the framework of the “Triangle” show firm support. In 1995 CBOS asked a question regarding the attitude to that political initiative of the Central European countries (Table). As it can be noticed, the degree of support can be described as “nearing euphoria”. Only the idea of creating a “defensive alliance” was approached with certain dose of reserve. In this case NATO aspirations of the Visegrad Group countries might have affected the content of answers given to the following question (Table 14).

Certain group of the Polish society still maintain the conviction in their minds that everybody uses us, betrays us, dislikes, persecutes, etc. It is an attitude that arouses interest because public opinion in countries that happened to be in exactly the same situation as Poland evaluated it in a totally different way. In 1994 instead of an "open arms" welcome with respect to, among others, Poland NATO proposed to postcommunist countries the "Partnership for Peace" programme. Major part of public opinion received it with bitterness. Such feelings had already been voiced before by some of the Polish intellectual establishment. Similar tone is that of a statement by Bronisław Misztal, professor of sociology of politics at the Catholic University of America in Washington: *"For the Europeans the admission of Poland*

Visegrad Group countries are sometimes mentioned, [...].

Do you think that the following would be favourable or unfavourable from the point of view of the interests of Poland:

No.	Answers	Respondents' indications (%)		
		favourable	unfavourable	Difficult to say
1.	close business co-operation between those countries	85	4	11
2.	close political co-operation between those countries	81	6	13
3.	defensive alliance formed by those countries	76	9	15

Table 15. CBOS BS/177/152. October 1995

to NATO would have a symbolic meaning – it would close the balance of injustice done to Poles, nonperformed agreements and partitions. The delay of decision on admission of Poland to NATO can mean the decrease of chances for such a fact taking place" (Rzeczpospolita 11.06.1996). It has to be admitted that this statement fitted perfectly into the beliefs of Polish public opinion at that time. In that

period some of the public opinion believed that that programme would not be a phase of adaptation, but a substitute allowing to keep other countries outside NATO for a long time. In a way NATO countries are also to blame because they were not accurate enough in determining the function that the Partnership was to fulfil.

In February 1994 OBOP measured the attitude of public opinion towards the decision of Western countries' governments denying Poland and other countries an immediate admission to NATO. The following question was asked: *In connection with the refusal to admit Poland to NATO opinions are spread that the West has betrayed Poland and other Central European countries. Do you agree with such an opinion, or not?* As many as 41% of respondents gave an affirmative answer to such a question, 36% said that they did not agree with such an opinion while 23% of respondents had no opinion at all. This indicates an existing sense of betrayal and, what follows, certain frustration awakened by that belief. Let us quote the results of research conducted in the Central European countries:

If we do not become NATO members within the next five years, would it be because we do not meet requirements, or because the West does not want us?

No	Country	We do not meet requirements.	The West does not want us.
1	Bulgaria	32	35
2	The Czech Republic	45	26
3	Poland	32 x	48 x
4	Romania	46	29
5	Slovakia	47	25
6	Slovenia	46	38
7	Hungary	61 x	22x

Table 16. OBOP – BS/120/106. February 1994

These results evidently show our "sense of wrong". The most evident differences in the assessment of one's own activities can be seen in the attitudes of Hungarians and Poles. That result makes it undoubtedly worth reflecting on the mental state of the Polish society. The surprise is additionally increased by the result achieved during

research in 1996, when the public were asked about their views on the Polish Army. Let us take a look at the results (Illustration 19).

The criticism of respondents that in 67% said that the condition of the Polish Army differs, to a larger or smaller extent, from the standards of modernity is a mild form of evaluation of the reality. This expression results from a similar estimation that was made by soldiers and officers (see subsection "Army takes the floor"). It (the criticism) seems to contradict the argumentation arising from Table 16. On the basis of comparison of those two opinion polls it would seem that the delay in our admission to NATO had nothing to do with the condition of the Polish Army, but

How could you describe the Polish Army? Is it:

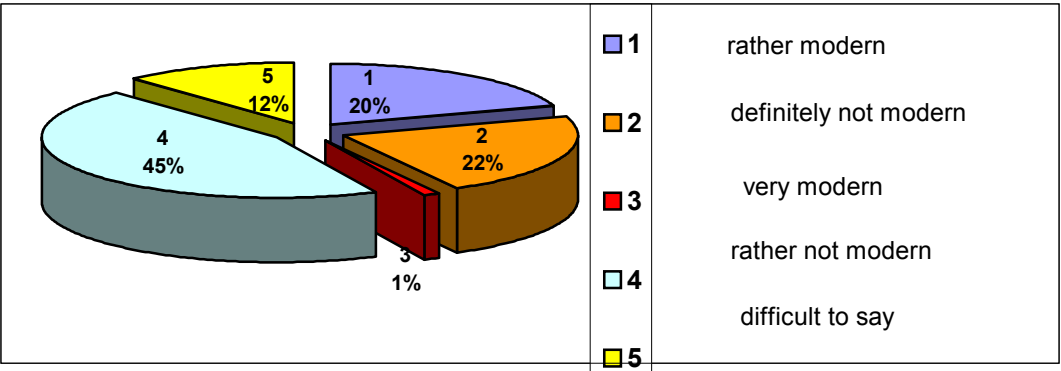


Illustration 19 CBOS – BS 103/101. July 1996

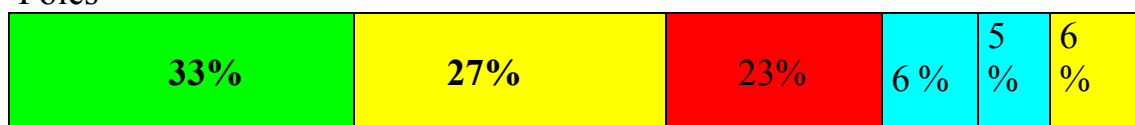
resulted mainly from somewhat irrational motives? Respondents would seek money for the modernisation of the Polish Army mainly in the reduction of the Civil Service, withdrawal of subsidies for the insolvent state-owned enterprises (mines, railways, steelworks, etc.), as well as in subsidies granted to farmers.

On the eve of the three Visegrad Triangle countries' joining NATO, i.e. in February two public opinion polling institutes: Polish CBOS and Hungarian TÁRKI asked their citizens identical questions. Results may both arouse satisfaction and make one smile as the uniformity of replies was in the case of some questions quite surprising.

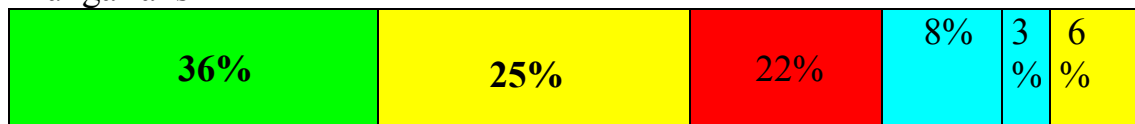
Adding up the affirmative and negative responses we would achieve almost identical numbers of supporters (Poland: 60%, Hungary: 61%) as well as opponents (Poland and Hungary 11% each) among Poles and Hungarians. Simultaneously one may state that this determination of the majority of Poles and Hungarians is rooted in this case in political realities. Over 40% of both Poles and Hungarians are aware of practical limitations of the army sovereignty that are connected with the membership in NATO. Moreover, neither Poles, nor Hungarians forget the role and the potential with which they are heading for NATO.

In March Poland and Hungary will officially be admitted to NATO; do you personally support the accession of Poland and Hungary to NATO, or do you oppose it? (%)

Poles



Hungarians



Legend:

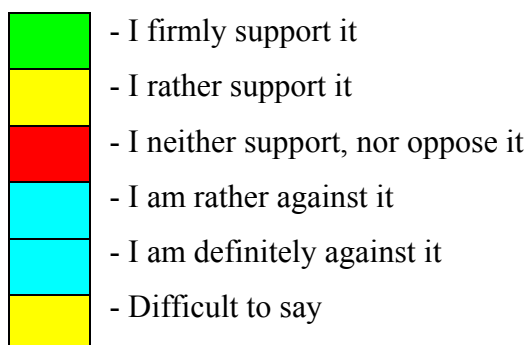


Illustration 20. CBOS – BS/35. March 1999

Official admission of the Visegrad Triangle countries to NATO took place two weeks before the commencement of NATO forces' action against Serbia. This peculiar "baptism of fire" largely influenced the way of perceiving our membership in

that organisation. As I have mentioned on the occasion of previously formulated opinions, we generally judge differently "when the problem is far away from us", and tend to form different opinions when a given phenomenon may occur or occurs near us. The strongest influence on the content of our estimations is exerted first of all by personal experience. If we discuss issues connected with NATO countries' intervention and our participation in that undertaking, we must remember that it personally affected, after all, only a small proportion of public opinion. One may estimate this situation in the best way when one's own interests are violated. Such a question was asked of Poles by CBOS, of Hungarians by TÁRKI, and of Czechs by IVVN – research was conducted in January and February 2000. Firstly, in the same

***Which of the statements does most closely correspond with your
views in connection with the accession of Poland and Hungary to NATO:***

	<i>Poles</i>	<i>Hungarians</i>
1. Accession to NATO will rather be a guarantee of independence of Poland and Hungary	41%	40% -
2. Accession to NATO will rather be a new form of submission of Poland and Hungary to a foreign world-power.	42%	47%
3. Difficult to say	17%	13%

Table 16. CBOS - BS/35. March 1999

period of the previous year respondents in those countries were asked the same questions. Secondly, in March fell the first anniversary of those countries joining NATO. The questions referred first of all to the support, or lack thereof, for (this time already) the presence of the Visegrad Triangle countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Constancy that the public of those three countries presented is worthy of admiration. Support of Poles and Hungarians amounted to over 60%, and the Czechs also showed the stability of "feelings for NATO". However, in the case of the Czech public opinion we all the time have to do with a considerably higher

scepticism. Thus, among the Czechs the degree of acceptance with respect to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation membership continued to amount to 49% in 1999 and 50% in 2000 (CBOS –BS/45 March 2000). Positive aspects of NATO membership are generally estimated by Czechs at the level that is by around 10-15% lower than that adopted by Poles and Hungarians. In the research discussed only one issue had the same level of acceptance, namely the acknowledgement that *"NATO membership contributes to the increase of peace and stabilisation in Europe"*: Poles - 63%, Hungarians - 59% and Czechs - 56%.

One of the basic problems that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation currently faces is the problem of its further extension. "Visegrad Triangle" countries, as its equal members will now participate in the decision making process. Therefore, it is interesting what the public in those countries think about the possibility of other Central and Eastern European countries joining NATO (Illustration 19). It turns out that Poles are the greatest supporters of NATO's extension to the East. Over a half of respondents declare their support for NATO accession of each of the seven countries of our region enumerated in the list. The highest number, i.e. three-quarters of respondents would indicate Slovakia, whereas two-thirds – Lithuania and Estonia. Public opinion in all the three countries seems to be most sceptical with respect to NATO membership for Ukraine and Romania. One can say that the greatest restraint in that respect "traditionally" show the Czechs.

I. The will to enlarge NATO among the members of this organisation

The will to enlarge NATO among the members of this organisation may result from particular interests of those countries' societies. Czechs and Hungarians represent countries and nations that are not big, and it might be the fear of marginalisation that makes them show restraint. The above remarks concern the situation where Visegrad Triangle countries will also participate in the admission process of new members. Let us take a look at public opinion and views of Western politicians voiced with respect to the aspirations of, among others, Poland to join NATO. The more so because one should be aware that the ones who take decisions on those issues are politicians. It has to be admitted,

Do you consider it favourable that the following countries should join NATO? (%)

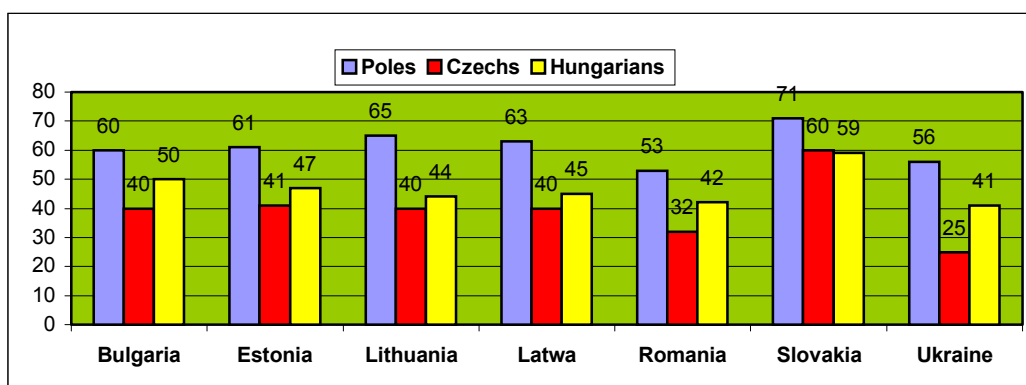


Illustration 21 CBOS - BS/45 March 2001

however, that in this case Western politicians' opinions largely corresponded with the views of the vast proportion of public opinion. Support for Poland did not arouse many objections in the major NATO countries. On 14-20 September 1996, within the framework of PIPA Programme at the University of Maryland, research was conducted on a random group of 1214 Americans, taking account of their declared political sympathies. 64% of the Democrats and 60% of the Republicans were "for" the admission of new members to NATO (Gazeta Wyborcza 15.10.1996).

Support for Poland (%).

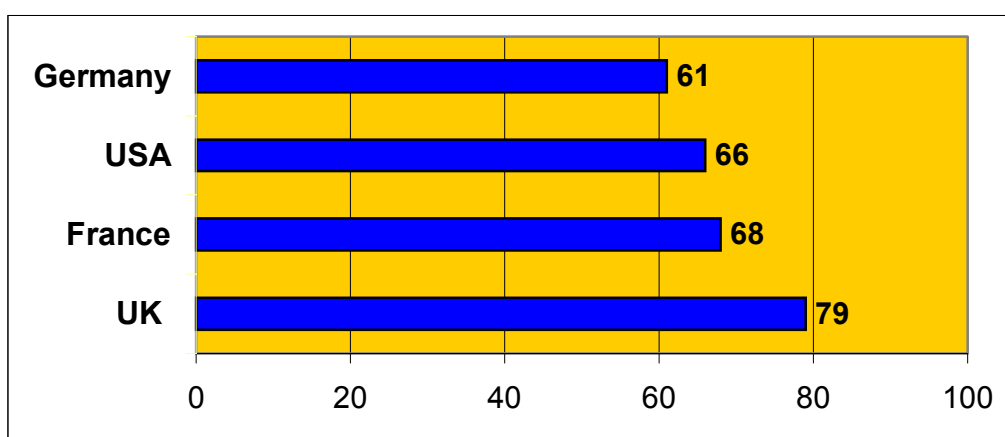


Illustration 22. Polityka 5. 10. 1996

As for other opinion polls (quoted by the same source) during which the following question was asked: "Are you in favour of the admission of such countries, as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to NATO?", 62% of respondents expressed their approval, whereas 29% were against, and 9% had no opinion on that matter.

Germans turned out to be the most restrained ones. At the same time it turned out that the greatest supporters of the idea of Poland joining NATO were the English. The surprise arises from the fact that the English are suspected, in the so-called "common consciousness", of isolationist tendencies.

3. Poland in NATO – hopes and reality.

Expectations connected with Poland's admission to NATO relate to various spheres of social life. In practice, it would be difficult to find a sphere of life that would not, at least partially, be connected with that fact, from the military issues connected with the improvement of army organisation, its armament, training, technical culture, etc. to economic and psychological ones. While discussing numerous problems in the present study reference was made to those hopes and expectations. Shortly before the official admission of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to NATO, OBOP asked about the effects that our membership in the Alliance would have (Table 17).

Generally speaking, the above table indicates great optimism. The extent to which it corresponds with the present and future situation is undoubtedly debatable. Especially the influence of integration with NATO on Polish economy brings results that are quite contrary to the expectations. There are opinions that evidently take no account of the consequences of integration. Among such one may include issues connected with the "limitation of the independence of the Polish army". Those who believe (for instance) that it does not affect the sovereignty of the army seem to be wrong because every formation of that kind limits the independence of decision processes of a given political entity. Undoubtedly, however, what is important is an answer to the question whether it is a result of the given entity's consent to subordination in a voluntary way, or against will. This, however, does not change the

essence of the phenomenon that the limitation of independence is. It seems that - taking actual benefits into account - effects can be achieved in items 10-12.

Do you think that the admission of Poland to NATO will result in the following, or not? (%)

N o.	Answer	Yes	No	No opini on
1.	Increase in the export of armaments manufactured in Poland	36	38	26
2.	Increase of taxes and deterioration of living conditions	47	32	21
3.	Limitation of independence of the Polish Army	50	29	21
4.	Better opportunities for the Polish armaments industry	53	26	21
5.	Increase of foreign subsidies for the modernisation of Polish army	62	19	19
6.	Allied troops being stationed in our country	66	14	20
7.	Enhancement of Poland's position on the international scene	74	11	15
8.	Increase of budgetary expenses on army	78	7	15
9.	Polish soldiers being sent abroad, to the areas of conflict	79	8	13
10.	Increase of safety through the inclusion of Poland into the Western countries' framework of defence	79	8	13
11.	Reinforcement of the Polish army through the modernisation of armaments	82	5	13
12.	Reinforcement of the Polish army through the improvement of training	83	5	12

Table 17. OBOP – BS/45. March 1999

In the case of other issues high percentage of affirmative answers confirms the awareness that such situations will take place. This relates to, among others, such cases as "sending Polish soldiers abroad, to the areas of conflict" or "increase of budgetary expenses on army". Issues concerning the consequences of integration with NATO have been the subject of research already since April 1997. It should be stated that choices made by the respondents during previous opinion polls do not differ from

those made in February 1999 (the differences are contained within the statistical error limits).

***Does Poland, in its relationships with other countries,
sufficiently protect its interests? (%)***

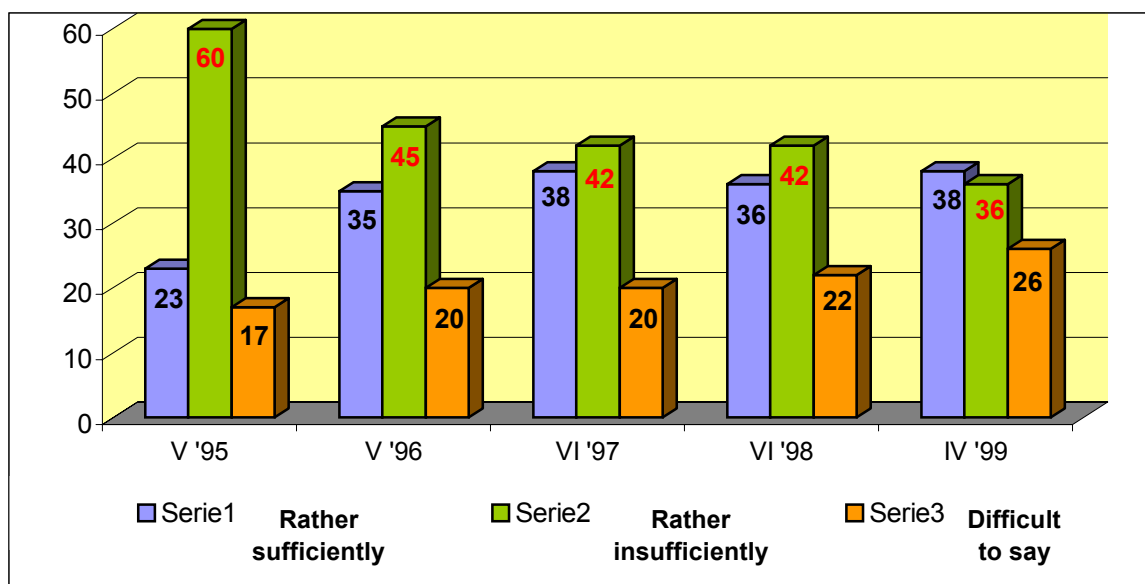


Illustration 23 CBOS – BS/93 June 1999

From the data displayed in Illustration 23 one may draw an obvious conclusion that the closer to NATO, the more doubts as to the protection of (Poland's and Poles') own interests. In this case scepticism was not connected with a single spectacular event, like for instance the intervention in Yugoslavia. The tendency, as it can be stated while looking at the diagram, is steady. The second conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of this attitude is the opposite tendency that appears among people who find it difficult to form a univocal opinion. Whereas the intervention of NATO in Yugoslavia and our participation in that action strongly influenced the opinions relating to the safety of Poland. Owing to the fact that OBOP took the polls at about two weeks' interval and asked identical questions one can make a comparative analysis. The relationship between the nature of reply and the events that the poll referred to raises hardly any doubts.

The feeling of safety decreased significantly and, as it can be seen, at all the levels: Polish, European and the world one. This situation did not make it possible to

detect any regularity as to the features of the social status. What could be seen was mainly the chaotic nature of answers. The only criteria that were of any significance there were political views (the degree of support for the left wing) and the level of interest in politics. 34% of those with leftist tendencies believed that that conflict constituted a threat to Poland. Representatives of the right wing expressed such fears only in 20%; similar relations occur in the case of Europe and the world. The scale moves from left-wing ideas, through central left-wing and central right-wing ones to the right-wing views.

Do you think that the war in Yugoslavia may present a threat to Poland? (%)

No.	Issues	Indications by dates of opinion polls and choices made.							
		Definitely YES		Rather YES		Rather NO		Definitely NO	
1	Safety of Poland	19	23	44	50	24	19	5	2
2	European Safety	22	27	55	54	12	11	2	1
3	World Safety	16	23	46	48	22	20	5	3

Legend: 30-31. 03. 1999

17-19. 04. 1999

Table 18. OBOP – BS/64 April 1999

Previous statements regarding a considerable pluralism of views on the situation in Serbia find their reflection in subsequent polls conducted in that ‘hot period’ (15-17.05.1999) by OBOP. Polish public opinion puts major blame for permitting the outbreak of war on Yugoslavian Government: two-thirds of respondents believe that it had done little or nothing at all to prevent war, despite having such opportunities. Particularly interesting are the remaining replies, namely 59% of respondents put the blame for the conflict on Russian Government, and 55% -

on Serbian nation. The most interesting is the fact that 31% put the blame on Albanians from Kosovo and that as many as 29% were certain that NATO "did nothing" or "little, although could have done more" to prevent the war. Although in the opinion of Poles the major culprit is the government of Yugoslavia, only 25% of respondents believe that NATO countries' governments did everything they could to prevent the outbreak of war. In July that year CBOS asked a similar question. Results achieved by those two polling institutes significantly differ from each other. The question asked of people polled by OBOP related directly to those responsible for the conflict. It is, however, difficult to compare them in a direct way, as the questions were similar to each other only in terms of their scope. In an open question those direct culprits were many (Table 19).

***Who, in your opinion, bears the major responsibility for
the conflict in Kosovo?***

No.	Categorisation of answers.	Results (%)
1	Slobodan Milosevic	44
2	Serbians. Serbia. Yugoslavia	12
3	Government, authorities, "leaders" of Serbia and Yugoslavia	8
4	Both sides of the conflict, "everyone"	7
5	NATO	3
6	The United States and Bill Clinton	2
7	Albanians, Kosovo Liberation Army	2
8	Russia	2
9	General statements, e.g. "political alliances", "fight for influence"	1
10	Other or unclear ones	3
11	Difficult to say	25

Table 19. CBOS – BS/121 July 1999

As it can be seen from the table above the problem of blame has in this case been solved by the considerable part of respondents. However, if we add "Serbians" as well as the "Government" and "leaders" to "S. Milosevic", then this

group accumulates 64% of indications. Using a similar operation with respect to the so-called “Western world” and adding the results: “NATO” and “*the United States and B. Clinton*” we achieve 5%. However, the fact that respondents found the war difficult to take a univocal stand on is attested to in the best way by the number of people who replied that it was “*difficult to say*”. Opinion polls connected with NATO intervention in Yugoslavia bring a number of results that can both surprise and astonish. Among such surprising opinions one may count for instance the continuing high level of acceptance with respect to our membership in NATO, despite sceptical and critical opinions regarding the intervention itself. Between February and June 1999 OBOP asked six times the question: “*Generally speaking are you for or against our membership in NATO?*”. During the polls on 6-8 February 63% of respondents expressed their approval, in March those results increased to 65-67%, to reach 70% in April and May (OBOP June 1999). And yet during those same polls conducted on 30-31 May the opponents (46%) of the military intervention outnumbered the supporters (44% -?!).

Final effects of NATO intervention in the Balkans are also - in the estimations of public opinion - of a similarly ambiguous nature.

***Do you think that the present situation in Kosovo indicates
that NATO has won the war with Yugoslavia?***

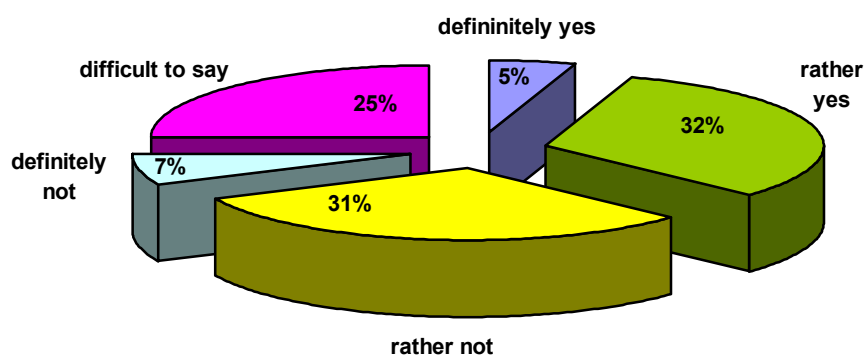


Illustration 24 OBOP – BS/121. July 1999

NATO victory during the armed intervention in Yugoslavia took place mainly in the opinion of the biggest cities inhabitants (56%) and people with central – right-wing (48%), or right-wing views (47%). Whereas the conviction that NATO did not win the war was most frequently expressed by respondents with left-wing (48%), or central – left-wing ideas (52% - OBOP July 1999).

Conclusion

One should state that since 1989 the idea of joining NATO has had a considerable group of supporters. As for their political position, in the initial period the division into the right wing (supporters) and the left wing (opponents and sceptics) was quite distinct. In the course of time, around 1993 in practice, these differences had been minimised and in the opinion polls were contained within the limits of statistical error. Although it is rather impossible for different opinion polling institutes to ask the same questions, the similar meaning of those questions should bring similar answers. It has to be acknowledged that in the initial period the major polling centres sometimes achieved results that displayed a somewhat bigger discrepancy. It did not result from the application of different techniques, content of questions or adopted tolerance arising from the so-called statistical errors. One thing that does not raise any major doubts is the fact that public opinion displayed greater determination in aiming at the integration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation than the contemporary political class did.

At the same time numerous attitudes and views appeared among the Polish public opinion that were of an ambivalent nature. They frequently arose from the confrontation of historical experience, stereotypes and phobias with political reality, and often also from ignorance or the so-called “false consciousness”. Therefore sometimes we could witness the co-existence of fears and hopes in the minds of individual people.

Polish public opinion frequently displayed views that were rather difficult to be logically interpreted. In the years 1991 – 1998 the level of support for the idea of joining NATO practically oscillated around 80%. At the same time one expressed, for

instance, an aversion to the participation in military operations of NATO, as if those issues were to be dealt with by other members, expressing for instance fears that this step might involve Poland in armed conflicts. Undoubtedly there is little coherence here, especially that it is known that public opinion undergoes *waving* mainly under the influence of current political facts, or pseudo-facts (e.g. media ones). In this connection it is easy to imagine situations where the attitude of Polish society and individual people towards NATO will undergo changes depending on whether this organisation provides safety, or the major effect of that step, i.e. joining NATO is going to be the participation of Polish soldiers in interventionist actions in the areas of political conflicts. Simultaneously one has to state that some of the public opinion showed considerable realism with respect to, e.g. NATO – Russia relationship, or benefits that it would bring to the development of various spheres of life, such as - for instance - economy. Armaments industry, despite the change in our position towards NATO, still seems to be on the downward path, being effectively eliminated from the market by the military industry of the member states.

The final remark would concern the sore point on the Polish way to NATO, i.e. the relationships within the triangle Poland – Russia – NATO. Public opinion noticed that problem, as well as its significance. Opinions voiced by the public indicated that dodges, concessions or, as V. Havel puts it, excessive submission of politicians with respect to political ‘gestures’ of Russians did raise its objection. What also irritated was a kind of hypocrisy of mainly Western (but not only) politicians *“that the opinion of Russia will not affect the decisions of sovereign countries and organisations”*. Public opinion noticed those fears and activities that were undoubtedly dictated by the attitude of Kremlin.

The fact that the Polish society displayed the greatest determination in aiming at the integration with political structures of the West fills us with optimism. The best illustration of that attitude are comparative polls conducted in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.

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