

**THE DISTRUST PARADOX: TRUST AND DISTRUST IN THE POLISH ONLINE
PRESS, CROSS-NATIONAL DATA REPORTS AND PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS,
2002-2008**

Tabitha Elizabeth Walker

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Curriculum of Russian and Eastern European Studies

Chapel Hill

2009

Approved by:

Jacqueline M. Olich

Charles Kurzman

Silvia Tomášková

©2009
Tabitha Elizabeth Walker
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

TABITHA ELIZABETH WALKER: *The Distrust Paradox: Trust and Distrust in the Polish Online Press, Cross-National Data Reports and Public Opinion Surveys, 2002-2008*
(under the direction of Jacqueline M. Olich)

Poland's overall economic, political and social situation is improving. However, in the realm of trust, the Polish press may be judging their countrymen and women too harshly. I argue that there is a disconnect between contemporary popular Polish press articles highlighting the extremely distrustful nature of Polish society and the cross-national data which prove that Poles are "in the middle of the pack" in comparison to other Eastern European countries when it comes to social trust. This disconnect, which I call the "distrust paradox," is revealed in this study by comparing online media and data sources. This "distrust paradox" is not present in the academic discourse on Poland and other transitioning societies. Poland's turbulent history accounts for a low level of trust in government, institutions, and other citizens, by Western standards. The press articles may be exaggerated, since optimism, societal trust, and general life satisfaction are all on the rise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the generosity of the Center for Slavic, Eurasian and Eastern European Studies. The Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship enabled me to continue my Polish language studies during my two years at Carolina, which were crucial to the development of this thesis. I owe a heartfelt *dziękuję* to Dr. Regina Grol for the opportunity to participate in Polish independent study sessions, during which I learned a great deal about Polish history, politics and society. I would especially like to thank my advisor, Dr. Jacqueline Olich, for her thoughtful insight, comments, and willingness to read through several drafts of this work. Dr. Charles Kurzman and Dr. Silvia Tomášková made the thesis process an enjoyable one through stimulating conversation, guidance and patience. I also thank God for the many blessings and opportunities He has given me throughout the years. I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their support and understanding during this process. To my parents, thank you for teaching me that hard work, perseverance and education can lead the way to a better future.

In memory of my grandmother

Pauline McCraw Walker

1929-2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>Hypothesis</i>	3
<i>A Note on Sources</i>	4
<i>Plan of the Paper</i>	6
CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	8
<i>The Partitions of Poland, 1772, 1793, 1795</i>	9
<i>The Jedwabne Controversy</i>	11
<i>The Rise of Communism, Resistance and Transition</i>	12
<i>Conclusion</i>	18
CHAPTER THREE: ARE POLES LESS TRUSTING THAN OTHERS?.....	19
<i>Pew Research Study on Trust Levels in Forty-Seven Countries</i>	19
<i>CBOS Report on Trust Levels in Poland, 2002-2008</i>	22
<i>The 2007 Polish Parliamentary Elections: Trust in the Voting Process Leads to Change</i>	26
<i>The Exception That Proves the Rule?</i>	30
<i>Determinants of Trust in Poland: Demographics</i>	31
<i>Conclusion</i>	32
CHAPTER FOUR: OVERVIEW OF MEDIA AND ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ON DISTRUSTING POLES.....	34
<i>Media Discourse</i>	35
<i>Academic Discourse</i>	38

<i>Lack of Civic and Political Engagement as an Indicator of a Distrustful Society</i>	39
<i>Piotr Sztompka’s Characteristics of a Distrustful Society</i>	40
<i>The Exit Option</i>	44
<i>Conclusion</i>	45
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS.....	47
<i>Cross-National Comparison to Other Eastern European Countries</i>	47
<i>Searching for Identity and Self-Definition</i>	50
<i>Distrust as a Cause for the Present State of Polish Society</i>	51
<i>Comparisons with Western European Countries Lead to Lower Perceived Trust Levels in Poland</i>	52
<i>Conclusion</i>	53
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	55
<i>Expansion of the Study for Future Research</i>	57
<i>Implications for the European Union and Transitioning Countries</i>	59
<i>Implications for Poland</i>	59
<i>Implications for Polish Journalists and Media</i>	60
<i>Lending a Helping Hand</i>	62
<i>Concluding Remarks</i>	63
APPENDIX A: Description of Article Collection.....	65
APPENDIX B: Strategies and Obstacles for Improving Trust Levels.....	66
WORKS CITED.....	72

LIST OF TABLES

1. TABLE 3.1. Responses to the Statement “Most People in Society are Trustworthy”	21
2. TABLE 3.2. Responses to the Statement “Most People in Society are Trustworthy” in Poland Compared with the United States and Five Western European Countries.....	22
3. TABLE 3.3. Trust Levels in Five Institutions in Poland in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008.....	23
4. TABLE 3.4. Distrust in and Refusal to Vote for the PiS Coalition Leaders in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections.....	28
5. TABLE 3.5. Election Results for the 2007 Polish Parliamentary Elections.....	29
6. TABLE 5.1. Number of Hits in a LexisNexis Database Search of “Social Trust” and Fifteen Eastern European Countries and Russia Between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2008.....	49

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

“Trust is a blessing. As an ideal that leads us to believe that people who are different from us are part of our moral community, trust makes us more willing to deal with people who are different from ourselves and holds us to high standards of honesty and fairness.”¹

“Listen, that’s not true. Don’t trust anybody. It’s Poland. You can’t trust anybody.”² This was the response I received from an embassy employee when I inquired about a work permit and visa to teach English in Poland. I already had the job; now it was time to tackle the “red tape” of acquiring the necessary paperwork. The embassy employee’s warning – “Don’t trust anybody” – would stay with me throughout my time in Poland. The embassy employee was not the only one who claimed that Poland is a place where people are distrustful and where trust is perceived as a flaw instead of a virtue. In Poland, lack of trust has been and is a popular topic in society, the press and academia. Readers of Polish magazines and newspapers (both online and in print) frequently encounter articles labeling Poland as distrustful and cynical, a country in which people envy their neighbors and always try to get ahead at the expense of others.

Trust – in its many forms – facilitates mutual confidence and relationships between people and their governmental, legal, and law enforcement institutions. On a worldwide scale, trust between countries promotes a more peaceful environment for us all. Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka defines trust as “the conviction that others – other people, institutions – will fulfill our

¹ Uslaner, Eric M. and Badescu, Gabriel (2004). “Honesty, Trust and Legal Norms in the Transition to Democracy: Why Bo Rothstein is Better Able to Explain Sweden than Romania,” in János Kornai, Bo Rothstein, Susan Rose-Ackerman (eds.) *Creating Social Trust in Post-Socialist Transition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

² Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Polish to English are my own.

expectations [and] meet their obligations.”³ Trusting others enables us to “put greater confidence in other people’s promises that they mean what they say,” writes political scientist Eric M. Uslaner.⁴ Russell Hardin, a political scientist and mathematician, adds, “Trust involves giving discretion to another to affect one’s interests.”⁵ Trust in others to fulfill promises, expectations and obligations is crucial to the functioning of any society. Increasing levels of trust – in the government and among citizens themselves – is necessary for the development of democracy and society in transitioning Eastern European countries, such as Poland.

Years after Poland joined the European Union in 2004, various internet journals continue to report that Poland is the most distrustful country in Europe and portray a quite negative image of society. The prevailing distrustful and cynical images people have of themselves could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. A contradiction between Poles’ perceptions and reality arises when we more closely probe cross-national data on trust levels in societies throughout Europe, especially Eastern Europe.⁶ The data indicate that trust levels in Poland do not vary widely from those observed in countries such as Ukraine, Czech Republic and Russia. Indeed, data for Poland were similar to those for Germany and Spain. Yet according to the Polish online press, Poland has the highest levels of distrust in Europe due to its unique history and Communist legacy.

³ Sztompka, Piotr (25 October 2008). “Odbudować piramidę.” *Polityka*, number 43 (2677), <http://www.polityka.pl/archive/do/registry/secure/showArticle?id=3360908>, accessed 10 March 2009.

⁴ Uslaner, Eric M. “Trust as a Moral Value,” in Castiglione, Dario, van Deth, Jan W. and Wolleb, Guglielmo (eds.) (2008). *The Handbook of Social Capital*. New York: Oxford University Press, 101. For more definitions of trust, see Niklas Luhmann (1979). *Trust and Power*. Chichester, England: Wiley Press; Bernard Barber (1983). *The Logic and Limits of Trust*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

⁵ Hardin, Russell (1993). “The Street Level Epistemology of Trust.” *Politics and Society* 21:4, 507.

⁶ I consider “Eastern Europe” to consist of fifteen countries: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Russia is a special case since it is located in both Europe and Asia. For cross-national data, see <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption> and the World Values Survey.

What are the origins of this distrust paradox? Why, when multi-country data show that while Poland may be a relatively distrustful country, it is by no means exceptional in its level of trust? In other words, why is the lack of trust portrayed as a serious moral or societal problem in the Polish online press, while cross-national research shows that other countries in the region have similarly low levels of trust? What are the reasons Poles give as to why their society is so distrustful? What is the academic discourse about trust in Poland? These are some of the questions that this paper will address. This study attempts to shed light on the prevalence of the trust issue in Polish society and the online press and compare that with the cross-national data on trust.

Hypothesis

By Western standards, Poles exhibit a relatively low level of trust. In this study, I intend to explore the apparent disconnect between Poles' self-image as reflected in online and print journals and the data which indicate that they are not extremely distrustful, but rather "in the middle of the pack" in comparison to Eastern European and even with some Western European countries. Here, we see a difference between the media's perception of the problem of trust, and the problem itself. I also offer several possible explanations as to why trust seems to be a preoccupation in the media.

An understanding of this distrust paradox offers insights into Polish society.⁷ First, we see that despite all that Poland has achieved since 1989, the country is still coping with the humiliations and oppressions of the past. Distrust in Poland is a result of many factors, many of which are historical. Popular discourse and public opinion polls offer an example of how some

⁷ For the purposes of this paper, I will focus primarily on social trust, but the data and articles used in this research also examine trust in federal and local governments, the judicial system, NGOs, charities, the Catholic Church, and law enforcement agencies.

Poles are expressing views about their country's past and future. Secondly, while the media may paint a grim picture of Polish society, Poles are becoming more trusting and more satisfied with their lives. Thirdly, examining trust levels in Polish society can help future researchers explore the same phenomenon in other Eastern European countries.

A Note on Sources

The sources used for this study include reports by Polish and international organizations and articles in online Polish newspapers and magazines. The Public Opinion Research Center (*Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej*, CBOS), established in 1982, is one of the largest and most renowned centers for public opinion research in Poland. Public opinion research became popular in Poland after 1956, when academics sought to analyze the advantages of de-Stalinization by reporting what the public “really” thought.⁸ Their data reports are currently used by the local and federal government, the media, universities and advertising agencies.⁹

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press is an independent public opinion research institution in the United States. It studies public attitudes toward politics, the press, and public policy. The Center's research is frequently used by politicians, researchers, students, journalists, and citizens. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, part of the Pew Research Center, also conducts public opinion surveys, but in an international context. The surveys, conducted in fifty-five countries so far, range from views about respondents' personal lives to the current state of the world. Established in 2001 in Washington, D.C., it has released twenty-three major reports as well as several other papers on American foreign policy, terrorism and globalization.¹⁰

⁸ Tworzecki, Hubert (2003). *Learning to Choose: Electoral Politics in East-Central Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 78.

⁹ To explore CBOS, visit their website (in Polish and English): www.cbos.pl.

¹⁰ For more information, see <http://people-press.org/> and <http://pewglobal.org/>.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is another resource cited in this study. The OSCE, the world's largest regional security organization, includes fifty-six member states in Europe, Central Asia and North America. Its tasks, among others, include: conflict prevention, crisis management, education, border control, arms management and democratization. As part of the organization's democratization activities, the OSCE observes and publishes reports before and after elections in countries. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), established in 1991 and based in Warsaw, Poland, is one of the offices within the OSCE which monitors and reports on elections.¹¹

For this paper, I primarily draw information from three online newspapers and magazines. *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Election Gazette), with a circulation of 600,000, was the first independently published daily paper in Poland. It is a national newspaper with regional elements, covering not only national issues, but local events as well. The first edition was released in May of 1989 just before Poland's first democratic elections. Adam Michnik, the editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza* since its inception, is a renowned Polish activist and intellectual. *Polityka* (Politics) is Poland's oldest weekly current affairs magazine, and is political and social in nature. The first edition of *Polityka* came out in 1957. Despite the magazine's writings against the party line, it successfully navigated the Communist period.¹² Today, its circulation ranges from 260,000 to 300,000. *Wprost* (Direct), another serious political and social magazine, has been in

¹¹ Visit the websites of the OSCE (<http://www.osce.org/>) and ODIHR (<http://www.osce.org/odihhr/>) to learn more.

¹² For a history of *Polityka*, see http://www.polityka.pl/polityka/index.jsp?place=Lead30&news_cat_id=1398&news_id=210806&layout=16&forum_id=8504&fpage=Threads&page=text.

print since 1982. Politicians, economists and lawyers often contribute articles to this weekly magazine. It has a circulation of about 300,000.¹³

Plan of the Paper

This thesis contains six chapters. In this first chapter, I describe a paradoxical phenomenon emerges in which the Polish online media describes Polish society as extremely distrusting, while cross-national data indicate that trust levels in Poland are “in the middle of the pack” when compared to results for other countries in the region. I also provide an overview of the main sources used in the study.

In chapter two, we explore the historical reasons Poles say they lack trust. I outline several historical events – some predating Communism – which cultivated an environment of suspicion and distrust, especially of outside authorities. We also notice another disconnect – between the media and popular discourse which portrays Poles as the victims of history and the counternarrative highlighting an ability to proactively mobilize, notably during the rise of Solidarity. Chapter three addresses the question of whether or not Poles are truly less trusting than others. Analysis of several surveys and data sets, notably the Pew Research Center Project and CBOS surveys, will show that results for Poland are comparable to those in the rest of Eastern Europe and that trust levels have increased since 2002.

Chapter four examines popular and academic writing about distrusting Poles. Do the stories from online Polish newspapers and magazines take both sides, or do they all claim that Poles are distrusting? What is the discourse among Polish academics about the lack of trust in Polish society? In the fifth chapter, I offer explanations as to why trust is such a significant topic

¹³ For more information on the individual Polish daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, see www.poland.gov.pl.

in the online media. A discussion of implications of the distrust paradox and possible areas for future studies follow in chapter six.

CHAPTER TWO HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“We must remind ourselves that, since the eighteenth century, Poles have tended to see themselves as a martyr nation, occupied, humiliated, and oppressed by aggressive imperial powers. Many times in modern history, whether under Russian or other foreign rule, it was a punishable offense for a Pole to refer to his own country as Poland.”¹⁴

“I don’t know of any other nation that has suffered as much as we have. It’s hard for us [Poles] because our country didn’t exist for more than a century,” a Polish friend, Magda, told me. “We are not trusting people because our country was partitioned, the Russians and Germans occupied Poland.”¹⁵ Given many of the events in Polish history, it is easy to see her point; it is necessary to note, however, that the Polish ruling class was already fragmented at the time of the partitions, and that the Polish state was severely weak even before German invasion or Soviet occupation. While a preoccupation with history may seem odd to Westerners or those not familiar with Polish culture, it is essential to understanding the discourse on trust in Poland today.

“In the Second Republic, Poles lived with a captivity complex which overlaps with the myth of the conquerors of the Red Army. Realism maintained that we should fear our stronger neighbors – the Germans as well as the Bolsheviks,” writes Stanisław Janecki in *Wprost*.¹⁶ The Polish media and Poles themselves often cite their country’s tumultuous historical experiences

¹⁴ Deak, Istvan (31 May 2001). “Heroes and Victims,” *New York Review of Books*, 48:9.

¹⁵ Knap, Magda (2007). Private Conversation, Mikołajki, Poland. I have changed this person’s name to protect her identity.

¹⁶ Janecki, Stanisław (2000). “Polski Kompleks.” *Wprost*, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/1237/POLSKI-KOMPLEKS>, accessed 21 November 2008.

when explaining the lack of trust in their society. However, when we examine Polish trust as related to history, we notice yet another disconnect. Media discourse and my conversations with many Poles evoke a sense of victimization by outside forces throughout history. However, we also see a counternarrative in Polish history – one of opposition, resistance, and uprising. Contradictory versions of Polish history abound; accepting and integrating competing historical narratives lays the foundation for societal trust by reconciling with the past.

Indeed, Poland’s history of partitions, foreign occupation and Communism does contribute to a general mistrust and fear of other countries, and even of other people. “At present, Polish [inferiority] complexes are kept in silence, but at least they are justified – by the partitions, the wiping out of the intelligentsia during World War II and the Stalinist era,” writes journalist Stanisław Janecki in *Wprost*. He clearly views past historical events as one of the reasons for Poles’ (apparently) dissatisfied and distrustful nature. He goes on to cite Communism as the main culprit: “The basis for Polish [inferiority] complexes is that fifty years of civilizational progress [during Communism] was taken away from us.”¹⁷ There seems to be an oversimplification of history exhibited by the media and by ordinary people; in reality, Polish history is much more complex.¹⁸

The Partitions of Poland: 1772, 1793, 1795

In the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth went from being one of the most progressive countries in Europe to being divided between Prussia, Russia, and Austria –

¹⁷ Janecki, Stanisław. “Polski Kompleks.” *Wprost*, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/1237/POLSKI-KOMPLEKS>, accessed 21 November 2008.

¹⁸ To explore this complexity in depth, see Davies, Norman (2005). *God’s Playground. A History of Poland in Two Volumes*. New York: Columbia University Press.

three times. In 1795 Poland disappeared off the map and ceased to exist until 1914.¹⁹ Poor foreign policy as well as ongoing rivalries between the ruling classes weakened the Commonwealth, enabling Poland's more powerful neighbors to gain more influence in her affairs. The Russians in particular wielded considerable influence.

The Russians' increasing presence in Poland was a concern to rulers of the other powers in the region. Frederick II of Prussia, worried that the Russians might attempt to seize control of Poland, proposed that Russia, Prussia and Austria divide parts of Poland among themselves. In the first partition (1772), Poland's size was reduced by almost one third. After the Polish Constitution was ratified on 3 May 1791,²⁰ Russia and Prussia were so concerned about Polish "rebellion" that they once again agreed to partition Poland a second time in 1793, diminishing Poland's size by 300,000 square kilometers – more than the size of Italy today.²¹

Two years later in 1795, the three partitioning powers agreed to divide what was left of Poland among them, and the country ceased to exist. In each case, Poles living in the areas claimed by the partitioning powers were pressured to assimilate into the culture of the ruling country, and were prohibited from exercising any type of national pride. This greatly contributed to resentment and fear, especially of Germany and Russia. The extent to which Poland's internal weaknesses at the time of the partitions played a role in her demise is open to debate, but the partitions, even today, are an emotional point of discussion for most Poles.

¹⁹ For a complete history of the Polish partitions, see Łukowski, Jerzy (1999). *The Partitions of Poland*. London: Longman Press.

²⁰ Biskupski, M.B. (2000). *The History of Poland*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 18.

²¹ Ibid.

The Jedwabne Controversy

Historian Jan Gross's book *Sąsiedzi* (Neighbors) sparked a heated and often painful debate in Poland about national identity, forgiveness and trust. In his book, he argues that many of the atrocities against the Jews were perpetrated not only by the Germans, but by Poles as well. In Jedwabne, almost the entire Jewish population was murdered, allegedly without the presence of any German forces. His conclusion that "half of the population of a small East European town murdered the other half" was shocking to most Poles, who tend to view themselves as victims of the war.²² While Poles did indeed suffer both at the hands of the Nazis and the Soviets, a deviation from this historical narrative – the murders of Jedwabne – challenges the previously held notion that Poles were not involved in atrocities against non-Poles.

The discussion which followed the publication of *Sąsiedzi* and his latest book, *Fear*,²³ has created a division between those who seek reconciliation for the past, and those who may not be prepared to accept the actions of some Poles toward their Jewish neighbors. It is still difficult for many to come to terms with the possibility that Poles could be victimizers as well as victims. In a *Polityka* article in 2001, Helga Hirsch, a German journalist, recounted a statement she heard from a seventy-year-old Pole. "We were taught as children that we Poles never harmed anyone. A partial abandonment of this morally comfortable position is very, very difficult for me."²⁴ The

²² Gross, Jan (2000). *Sąsiedzi: Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*. Sejny, Poland: Fundacja Pograniczne.

²³ *Fear* examines the presence of Anti-Semitism after the Second World War in Poland. According to Gross, Jews who returned to Poland after the war encountered extreme hostility by the Polish population; the Kielce pogrom, in which over forty Jews were killed, occurred one year after the end of the war. For more information on the Kielce pogrom, see the European Jewish Press, "Poland Marks 60th Anniversary of Kielce Pogrom Against the Jews," <http://www.ejpress.org/article/news/9420>, and Szajnok, Bożena, "The Kielce Pogrom," <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Kielce.html>, accessed 3 April 2009.

²⁴ Polonsky, Antony and Michlic, Joanna (2004). *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1.

revelation of crimes committed *by* Poles instead of against Poles may lead many to question – or even distrust – the manner in which Polish history is presented.²⁵

Reconciliation not only with the Jews, but also with Poland's neighbors to the East, has been successful. The improvement of relations among Poles, Germans, Ukrainians and Jews is indicative of gradually increasing trust and respect between the various groups. In 2001, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the president of Poland at the time, officially apologized for the crimes at Jedwabne: "I apologize in the name of those Poles whose conscience is moved by that crime. In the name of those who believe that we cannot be proud of Polish history without at the same time feeling pain and shame for the wrongs that Poles have done to others."²⁶ Indeed, the acknowledgement of the past will not only help Poles revise and reassess their national memory, it will also facilitate the regaining of trust between Poles and Jews.

The Rise of Communism, Resistance and Transition

The three allied conferences at Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam ultimately decided that Poland would be part of the Soviet sphere of influence. The most severe blows to Polish independence occurred during the last two conferences. At Yalta in February 1945, American and British leaders made feeble efforts to reassert their influence in Eastern Europe. They insisted that representatives of the supporters of the government-in-exile be included in the Warsaw government, although the Soviet Union had already recognized the Provisional

²⁵ To read about the debate surrounding Jan Gross's book, see Holc, Janine (Autumn, 2002). "Working Through Jan Gross's 'Neighbors,' *Slavic Review* 61:3, 453-459.

²⁶ Kwaśniewski, Aleksander (2001). "Address by President of Poland Aleksander Kwaśniewski at the Ceremonies in Jedwabne Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Jedwabne Tragedy on 10 July 2001," in Polonsky, Antony and Michlic, Joanna (2004) (eds.). *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 131-132.

Government of the Polish Republic (RTRP).²⁷ At Potsdam in the summer of 1945, Poland's fate was sealed. 'The Big Three' consulted with a Soviet-constructed Polish Communist delegation, after which they fixed the Polish border with Germany and approved the expulsion of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. A statement by a Polish historian sums up the feeling of resentment toward the West as a result:

The war which Britain began in defense of Poland ended in her abandonment. The democracy which the United States claimed to be defending was not protected in Warsaw. Poland gave the Western powers a bad conscience and, as a result, was marginalized even before the conflict had ended. American war propaganda rarely mentioned Poland...Roosevelt's lack of interest in protecting Poland reflected well-established American traditions.²⁸

The feeling of abandonment by the West occasionally resurfaces in Polish politics, even to this day. The 2008 Russia-Georgia crisis raised questions among Polish politicians about the missile defense shield agreement Poland signed with the United States in August of that year. Poles wondered if American influence in Polish military defense would protect Poland or antagonize Russia. Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski stated that despite signing an agreement with the United States, Poland must still exact caution. "Parchments and treaties are all very well, but we have a history in Poland of fighting alone and being left to our own devices by our allies." He added that during the Second World War, despite alliances with Britain and France, Poland had to fight Nazi Germany alone, and lost. "Then we were stabbed in the back by the Soviet Union, and that determined our fate for fifty years," Sikorski said.²⁹ However, Poland maintains close relations with the United States and is actively involved in the EU and NATO,

²⁷ Davies, Norman (2005). *God's Playground: A History of Poland, Volume II*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 364.

²⁸ Biskupski, M.B. (2000). *The History of Poland*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 119.

²⁹ Kulish, Nicholas (21 August 2008). "Georgian Crisis Brings Attitude Change to a Flush Poland," *New York Times Online*, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/21/world/europe/21poland.html?_r=1, accessed 17 March 2009.

despite the West's past treatment of Poland. This demonstrates Poland's willingness to cooperate, forgive, and trust.

For some Poles, Communism was not organically Polish; it was a foreign product, imposed on them by the Soviet Union. These sentiments greatly decreased the legitimacy of and trust in the new regime, given their past history with Russia. As the Second World War drew to a close and the Soviets occupied Poland, there was a rapid succession of governments which eventually led to a one-party state, modeled after the Soviet Union. Ultimately, a "free" election in January 1947 the Communist-led Democratic Bloc, sponsored by the Soviet Union, received 80% of the vote.³⁰ In time, the premier, Józef Cyrankiewicz, would transform Poland from a pseudo-democracy into a Soviet-style, one-party state. In 1948, Cyrankiewicz traveled to Moscow and was instructed to construct a single, ruling party by combining his own Polish Socialist Party with the Communist PPR (Polish Workers' Party). The PPR did not enjoy great popularity among the people and was lacking in significant achievements.³¹

The counternarrative begins with the rise of Solidarity in the 1980s, which indicates that Poles can trust each other enough to mobilize politically to bring about political and social change and are not always "victims of history" as the media and popular discourse may claim. In the 1980s, Poland's economy was quickly deteriorating, and price increases led to mass strikes by factory workers, tradesmen, and miners. The strikes were preceded by the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland in 1979, which had a profound effect on Poles' national psyche. His visit

³⁰ Britain, France and the United States did not approve of the January election and denounced it as failing to meet the conditions of the Potsdam Agreement.

³¹ Rothschild, Joseph and Wingfield, Nancy M. (2000). *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 79.

confirmed the “enormous capacity for ‘self-organization’ of Polish society.”³² Poles’ ability for mass mobilization would contribute greatly to the success of the Solidarity movement.

The strikes quickly spread throughout Poland, with a focal point in the port city of Gdańsk. Lech Wałęsa, an electrician who was among those fired by authorities for protesting, became the leader of the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS), later dubbed Solidarity (*Solidarność*). Solidarity also had the support of the intellectuals of the opposition, as well as the Catholic Church, and felt the cohesion of their organization was a stark contrast to the factionalism which had spread throughout the Communist regime.³³ Solidarity was unique in that it managed to bring together Poles from various socioeconomic groups and foster trust between them.

The two main successes of Solidarity, in brief, were the ability to mass mobilize the Polish population and then forcing the regime to make various concessions up until the Round Table of February 1989. At its peak, Solidarity boasted nearly 10 million members – roughly *one-third* of the entire Polish population.³⁴ Despite being forced underground during martial law in the early 1980s, Solidarity was able to maintain wide public support. Poles from all walks of life, from housewives and students to intellectuals and peasants, united with the shipyard workers at the forefront.

The enormous amount of mobilization required by Poles for Solidarity to achieve such membership is a strong indicator of mutual trust. The dire economic situation and the incompetence of the ruling party, combined with the government’s foolish decision to increase

³² Łukowski, Jerzy and Zawadzki, Hubert (2006). *A Concise History of Poland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 309.

³³ Rothschild, Joseph and Wingfield, Nancy M. (2000). *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 199.

³⁴ Biskupski, M.B. (2000). *The History of Poland*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 162.

prices, was enough to overcome any previous divisions in the society. By working together, Solidarity's large number of members wielded enough leverage to bring about considerable changes in the government.

During the rise of Solidarity, we also notice a shift in Poles' position in history. No longer were they the victims of a dominant force with no power to change the situation. They were a proactive force, challenging the regime. The Round Table negotiations led to the election of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first non-Communist prime minister in the Eastern Bloc. Wałęsa temporarily abstained from taking any type of public office. However, he won the presidential election in 1990, and continues to enjoy high levels of social trust in Poland today, almost twenty years later.³⁵

After the transition, Poles faced a difficult decade as they adjusted to the numerous changes in the government and economic sectors. The rapid changes in the 1990s also led to low levels of trust in Poland.³⁶ Fortunately, Poles' life situation slowly began to improve in the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 2008, over half of Poles surveyed (54%) stated that they were sure their lives were progressing well, and 55% stated that they felt that they had some measure of success in life.³⁷ These feelings indicate that Poles trust in not only the present, but the future state of their lives. My interviews corroborate these findings. Joanna Nowak, who

³⁵ For statistics on Poles' trust of Lech Wałęsa, see CBOS Public Opinion Poll (2009). "Zaufanie do polityków w lutym," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_029_09.PDF.

³⁶ For opinions about the changes in Poland during the 1990s, see CBOS Public Opinion Poll (May 1999). "Those Who Won and Those Who Lost – Opinions on Changes after 1989," http://cbos.pl/PL/publikacje/public_opinion/1999/05_1999.pdf, accessed 10 March 09.

³⁷ In 1989, only 28% thought that their lives were progressing well, and 29% thought they had achieved success in life. See Bogna Wciórka (December 2008). "Samopoczucie Polaków w latach 1988-2008," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_190_08.PDF, accessed 10 March 09.

came of age during and after the Second World War, was generally satisfied with the present situation in Poland:

Young people these days complain too much about Poland...they don't know what bad means! World War II, German and then Soviet occupation – now *that's* bad, my dear! I remember the war, the German soldiers...horrible! Then the Russians came – it was worse! One of them [a Russian soldier] tried to carry me off when I was a young girl. If a woman hadn't threatened to fetch her husband, I don't know what might have happened to me! And then *komuna* [Polish term for Communist period]...now it's much better, we're free, there's no war.³⁸

When I asked her if I could use our conversation for research purposes, she was enthusiastic, but asked me to change her name because she was afraid that the Germans or Russians might come after her. Her request illustrates the continuous and ever-present fears of Germany and Russia, two countries which have behaved aggressively toward Poland in the past. For her, the Communist system was an extension of Soviet occupation.

People had many aspirations for democracy and capitalism. The government and economy would be transformed by shock therapy, and the transition would be quick and painless. Democracy would restore Poland's legacy of independence. Capitalism would bring economic prosperity, jobs, and financial security. Piotr Sztompka, a Polish sociologist, summarizes this feeling well with this statement: "All that socialism promised, but never delivered, was to be realized now, in a free, democratic order."³⁹ When those in power failed to live up to these expectations, people became disillusioned and cynical with politicians, exacerbating the syndrome of distrust in authority.

³⁸ Nowak, Joanna (June 2007). Private Conversation, Olsztyn, Poland. I have changed this person's name to protect her identity.

³⁹ Sztompka, Piotr (1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 11 :1.

Conclusion

Poles can point to many historical reasons not to trust those in power. Even before Communism, the partitions and the Allies' treatment of Poland groomed them to be wary of outside powers. The three partitioning powers decided what would happen to Poland in the eighteenth century, leaving the Poles out of the decision-making process. Russian, Austrian or Prussian state structures were "perceived as something alien, imposed from the outside, and designed to serve the interests of outsiders."⁴⁰ This feeling resurfaced during the rise of Communism, but the Solidarity movement, empowered by Polish Pope John Paul II, heightened awareness for human rights and national sovereignty, providing the Poles with a source of authority other than the Communist regime.

This section has provided a brief overview of some events in Polish history which may have contributed an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. The Solidarity movement and other uprisings show a slight disparity between the popular and media discourse which stress the victimization of Poles and the ability of Solidarity to mobilize a third of the population to proactively transform Poland's government. Painful memories continue to surface as Poles come to terms with their past treatment of Jews and ethnic minorities. Recent efforts on the part of the Poles and their neighbors are indicative of the initial stages of reconciliation, resulting in a gradual restoration of trust.

⁴⁰ Tworzecki, Hubert (2008). "A disaffected new democracy? Identities, institutions and civic engagement in post-communist Poland," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41:1, 50.

CHAPTER THREE ARE POLES LESS TRUSTING THAN OTHERS?

“Would you like to visit me in Gdańsk some time? I have a daughter about your age. I’m sure she would love to meet you. And I would love to show you my city, too.”⁴¹

This section will examine the cross-national data from an April 2008 Pew Research project and CBOS public opinion poll from February 2008, showing levels of social trust over time from 2002 to 2008. The Pew Research Global Attitudes Project shows that while levels of trust in some Eastern European countries – notably Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine – have decreased significantly, Poland’s trust levels, in contrast, have changed the least and remained constant. The CBOS poll measures social trust over the past six years. Though it may come as a surprise to consumers of online and print popular media, Polish society is slowly becoming more trusting.

Pew Research Study on Trust Levels in Forty-Seven Countries

Out of the forty-seven countries involved in the Pew Research study, the Chinese and the Swedes were the most trusting (at 79% and 78%, respectively, agreeing with the statement “Most people in society are trustworthy.”) The most distrustful countries were Kenya and Kuwait, with only 25% and 27% agreeing with the same statement.⁴² The Pew Research report demonstrated that where social trust is high, crime and corruption are low. There were six Eastern European

⁴¹ Jaworska, Zofia (2006). Private conversation, Poznań, Poland. I received this invitation from her a short time after having met her on a train.

⁴² Wike, Richard and Holzwart, Kathleen. “Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low.” <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>, accessed 5 December 2008.

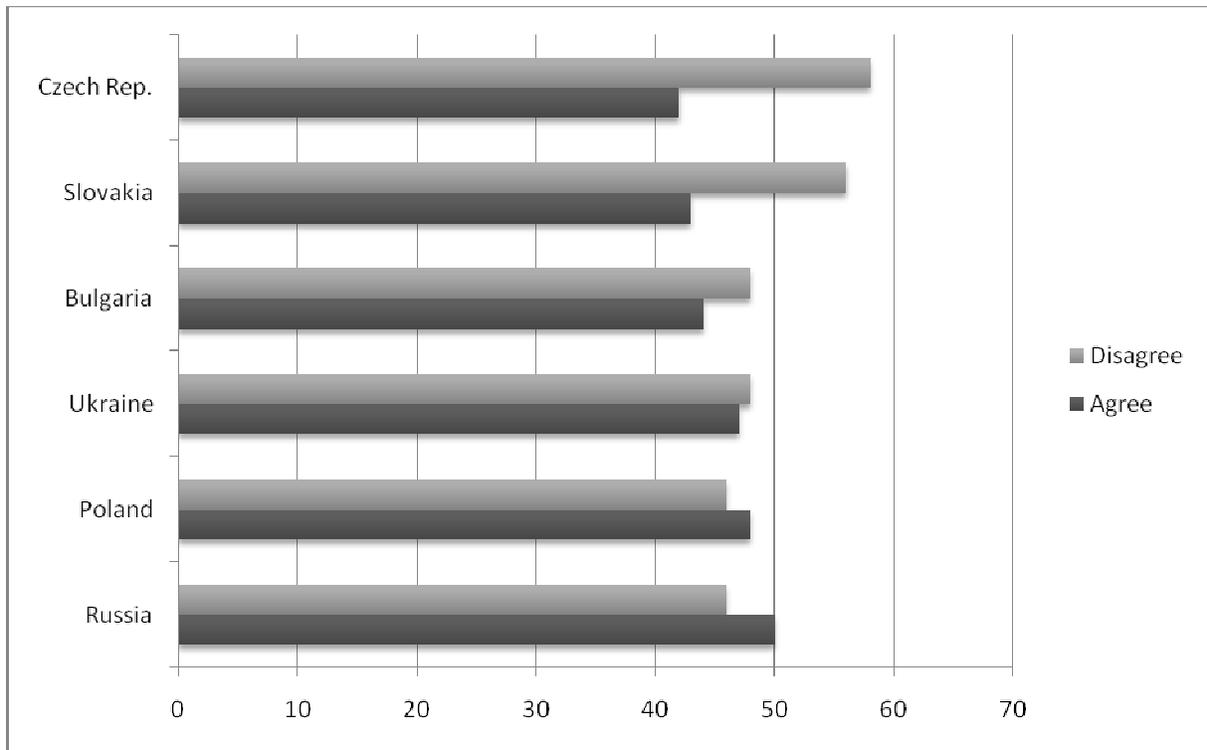
countries in the study.⁴³ As expected, in Eastern Europe, the dramatic changes brought about by the democratic transitions caused a decrease in the number of trusting people in Russia, Bulgaria and Ukraine.

While the popular press repeatedly characterizes Polish society and people as “the most distrusting in Europe,” the cross-national data show that Poland is more accurately “in the middle of the pack.”⁴⁴ To find out whether Poland is a distrustful country on a larger scale, we should compare Poland to other countries in the region. The disconnect between the rather critical nature of the Polish media toward their society emerges when we look at the results for the six Eastern European nations. Russia appears to be the most trusting; half of respondents (50%) reported that most people can be trusted. Poland fares well in comparison to Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Ukraine came in at a close second with 47%. The Czech Republic had the lowest number of trusting people (42%), therefore contradicting the claim which has been made so often in Polish media about Poles being “the most distrusting in Europe.” Surprisingly, the most distrustful people are not in Eastern Europe but in Italy, where just 41% of respondents report that they trust others.

⁴³ Those countries were Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, Russia and Ukraine.

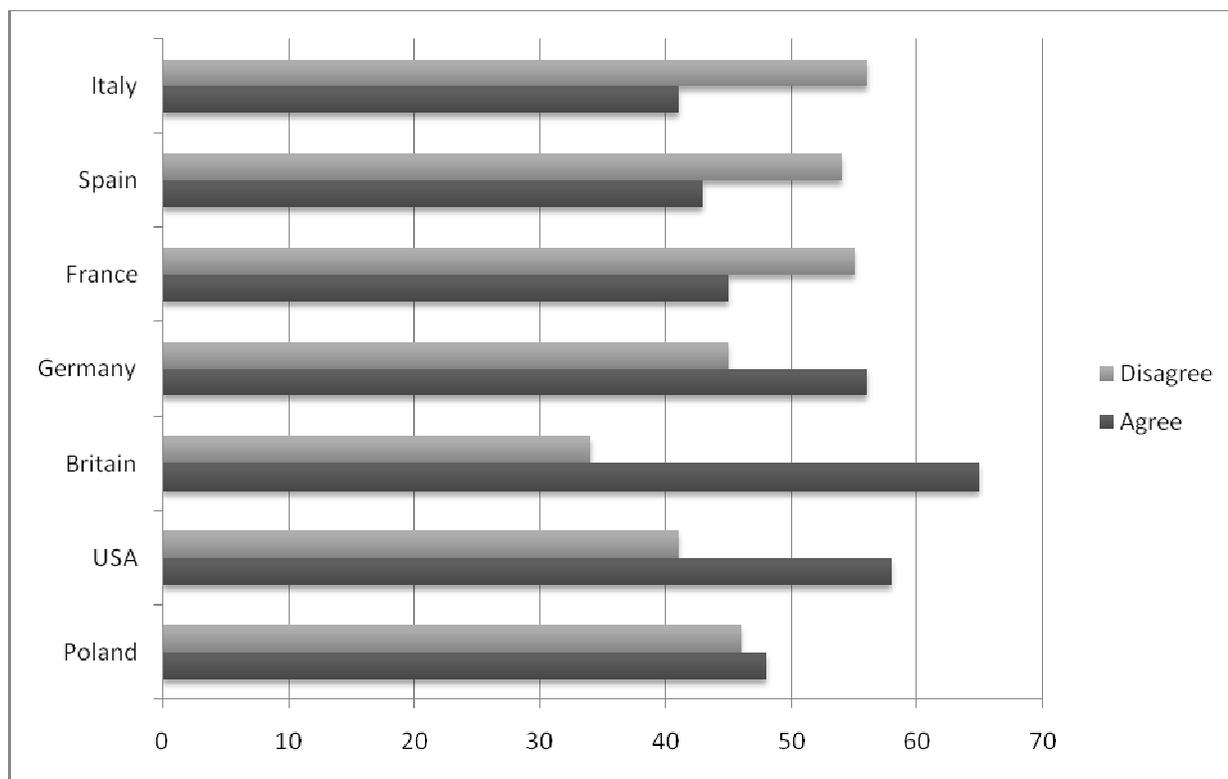
⁴⁴ Other cross-national surveys such as the European Social Survey produce conflicting information about where Poland stands on the trust-distrust continuum among European countries, but it is noteworthy that Polish media commentary focuses only on the negative data.

TABLE 3.1. Responses to the Statement “Most People in Society are Trustworthy.” Source: Pew Research Project, “Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low,” <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>.



Indeed, when we compare Poland with Western European countries, we find that their results do not vary significantly. With 48 percent of trusting people in Poland, Poles scored higher than France and Spain (45 and 43%). Poles, according to the study, are only 8% less trusting than the Germans (56%).

TABLE 3.2. Responses to the Statement “Most People in Society are Trustworthy” in Poland Compared with the United States and Five Western European Countries. Source: Pew Research Project, “Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low,” <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>



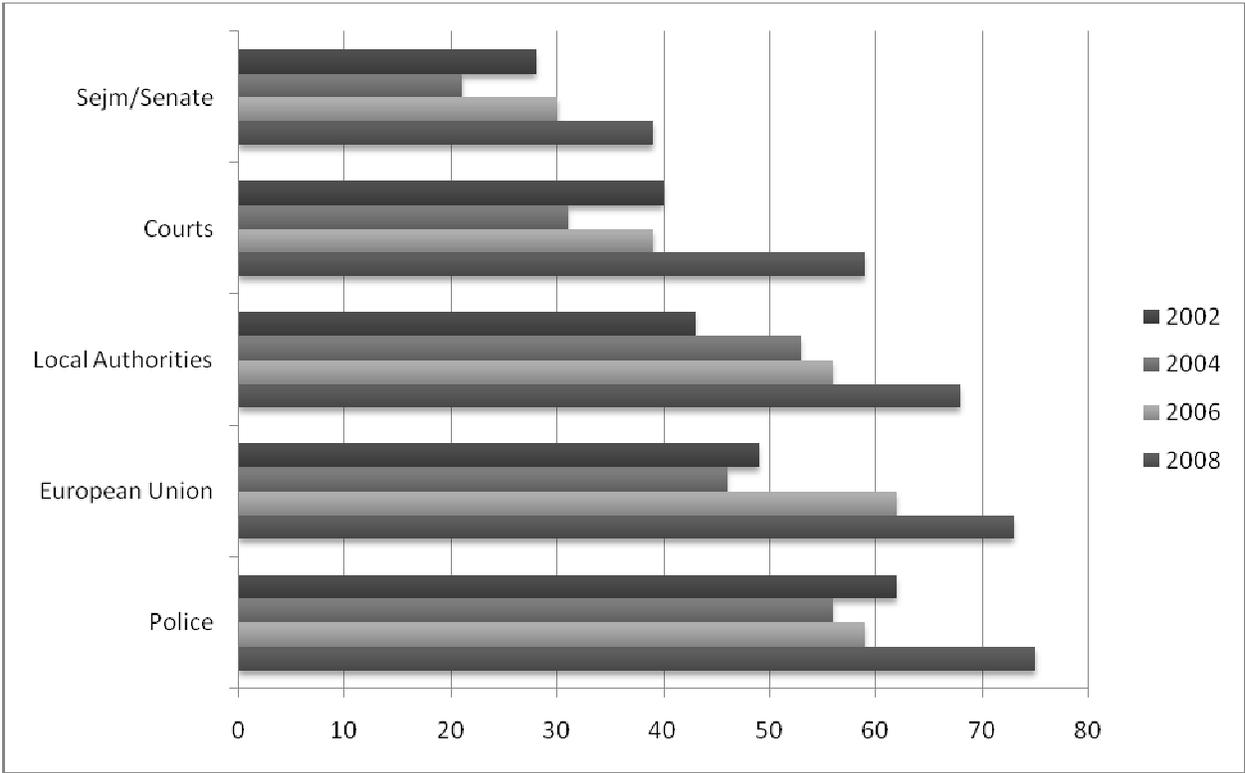
CBOS Report on Trust Levels in Poland, 2002-2008

The CBOS poll from February 2008 shows lower results for Poland than the Pew study, but it also indicates a significant decrease in the number of people who distrust. The number of people who agreed with the statement “In relations with others, one must be very careful” decreased from 79% in 2002 to 72% in 2008. Mutual trust among Poles is slowly increasing. Only 38% of Poles claimed that they trust other people, up from 33% in 2006.⁴⁵ The number of people stating “Generally, the majority of people can be trusted” increased from 19% in 2002 to 26% in 2008. Not only are Poles becoming more trusting toward other people, they are also

⁴⁵ Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (February 2008). “Zaufanie społeczne w latach 2002-2008.” http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_030_08.PDF. The percentages of 38% and 33% result from combining two categories, “I definitely trust others” and “I rather trust others.”

trusting public institutions in larger numbers. The poll asked participants to rate their trust in several institutions. For the purposes of this paper, five institutions will be included in Table 1.4: the Sejm/Senate, courts, local authorities, the European Union and the police. The results show a positive increase in the past six years.

TABLE 3.3. Trust Levels in Five Institutions in Poland in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008. Source: Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (February 2008). “Zaufanie społeczne w latach 2002-2008.” http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_030_08.PDF.



One can notice from the chart above that in 2004, trust levels in all five institutions were lower than in the previous and subsequent years. Poland’s accession to the EU occurred in 2004. Amid the changes in the infrastructures of Polish economy, politics and society resulting from EU membership, the Polish public may have felt overwhelmed and even suspicious, accounting for the drop in trust levels.

From the CBOS data, we see favorable results to support the claim that trust in public institutions is on the rise in Poland:

- Trust in local government increased from 43% to 68%
- Trust in the EU increased from 49% to 73%
- Trust in the police increased from 62% to 75%
- Trust in the courts increased from 40% to 59%
- Trust in the federal government increased from 42% to 56%⁴⁶

The data suggest that the media's allegations of distrust in Poland may be overstated.

Despite the higher levels of trust in these five institutions, it is necessary to note that most Poles still do not trust political parties – a little over half (54%) do not trust them (down from 65% in 2002 and significantly less than the 72% in 2004).⁴⁷ The Communist legacy, the lack of party diversity, and the public perception that parties do not properly represent them are all possible explanations. However, as we will see later, there is a difference between trust in political parties and trust in the political *process*.

The CBOS poll concludes that levels of social trust are slowly increasing and that trust in the private sphere (family, close friends and neighbors), as always, remains high. According to the poll, some institutions and people continue to enjoy high social trust. Traditionally, the immediate family and relatives have always been the most trusted (99% and 90% respectively declare trust).⁴⁸ Among other trusted groups are friends (88%) and co-workers (76%). The number of people declaring distrust toward strangers and the majority of society also decreased. Distrust toward the majority of society fell from 11% in 2006 to 7% in 2008, and the number of those who expressed moderate distrust toward strangers fell from 43% to 38%. The number of individuals who believe the majority of people can be trusted rose from 19% in 2006 to 26% in

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Figures are a combination of two responses, "Definitely trust" and "Rather trust."

2008. This indicates that Polish society is moving away from mutual suspicion and doubt and toward more confidence and trust. Poles, indeed, are not the most distrustful people in Europe.

Contrary to the media and common discourse about lack of trust in public institutions, certain organizations do enjoy high levels of trust. The military (84%) and police (75%), charity organizations such as Caritas (80%) are among these organizations. Some international organizations also enjoy the trust of the majority of Poles, such as the European Union (73%), UN (69%) and NATO (68%). Sixty-eight percent also trust local authorities. Here, we note the distinction between the local and the federal government. The local government is trusted more by Poles, perhaps because of greater accessibility. It is easier to meet with a city council member or mayor, for example, than a parliament member or the prime minister.

International organizations enjoy greater prestige among Poles, and therefore greater trust than domestic institutions. Membership in the EU and NATO distances Poles from their Communist bloc past and sets them on the world stage – with the powerful, wealthy Western countries to which they previously did not have access. European Union membership grants privileges for travel, economic development, work and study. Poland's EU accession in 2004 officially marked their crossing over into the European community. NATO may help Poland to feel protected from Russia. There is more incentive to trust in the EU than in the Polish government. European Union membership promised possibilities for employment and travel, and opportunities for in-country development. Most of these promises were fulfilled. Poles are now free to work, study or travel in any member country, and there are new roads, educational opportunities and study programs supported by EU funds. However, when the Polish government makes promises, sometimes those promises are not kept.

When the government does not keep its promises, however, Poles are not afraid to politically mobilize. The formation of a far-right parliamentary coalition in May of 2006 caused a significant decrease in satisfaction in the government, and Poles responded when early elections were called in October of 2007, two years ahead of schedule. In the 2007 Polish parliamentary elections, widespread dissatisfaction with the existing right-wing coalition sparked a significant increase in voter turnout to vote the coalition out of parliament. High voter turnout in 2007 is evidence of Poles' trust in the political process. Voters knew that if enough people voted, they had the power to change the nature of the government.

The 2007 Polish Parliamentary Elections: Trust in the Voting Process Leads to Change

The 2007 parliamentary elections are another example of how Poles are capable of trust. During the 2005 parliamentary elections, many people (disillusioned as usual with politics) did not concern themselves with the elections. Voter turnout was at a minimum, with only 40% of voters participating.⁴⁹ When a far-right coalition between the Law and Justice Party and two far-right wing parties formed in May of 2006,⁵⁰ Poles reacted – they did not want an extreme right-wing government. When early elections were held in October 2007, they made their voice known. Voter turnout increased from 40% in 2005 to almost 54% in 2007 – the highest voter turnout in a parliamentary election in Poland in the post-Communist era.⁵¹

During the PiS-*Samoobrona*-LPR term, numerous events occurred to cause the public's decrease in trust and satisfaction in the government. A CBOS survey conducted shortly after the

⁴⁹ Polish National Electoral Commission, Results for the 2005 Polish parliamentary election, <http://www.wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/EN/WYN/F/index.htm>, accessed 10 March 2009.

⁵⁰ The Law and Justice Party formed a coalition with *Samoobrona* (Self-Defense) and the religious extremist League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin*, LPR).

⁵¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) website, Polish Parliamentary Elections, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2255_E.htm, accessed 10 March 2009.

coalition formed stated that the low satisfaction ratings for the government were a result of the public's "rather cold reaction to the invitation of representatives of *Samoobrona* and LPR to the coalition."⁵² PiS's leaders had little experience with running the economy and even less experience with foreign policy, a major point of concern for many observers. In addition, LPR was regarded as anti-EU, and *Samoobrona* was "euroskeptic," especially when it came to policies which it viewed as disadvantageous for Poland (for example, *Samoobrona* favored renegotiation of the EU accession treaty). LPR was closely affiliated with the racist-nationalist youth organization *Młodzież Wszechpolska* (All-Polish Youth). The PiS government was also criticized of acting inappropriately toward governments of other nations and complicating EU constitution and electoral procedures. In the summer of 2007, Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński allegedly made the argument that "Poland should get more votes in European Union councils because of Polish population losses at Nazi hands during World War II."⁵³

Such events sparked concerns among liberal-minded Poles as well as members of the international community. There was fear that an extremist, xenophobic and anti-European trend was emerging in Poland. The fact that identical twin brothers possessed the two highest state positions and two extremist parties held key roles in the Sejm led to many important questions. Did *Samoobrona* and LPR's presence in the parliament mean that Poland was going toward radical extremism? Would Europe be able to trust Poland? As the leader of the new Eastern European EU states, Poland could not afford to take a step back, away from EU integration.

During the poor performance of the PiS-*Samoobrona*-LPR coalition, distrust in the three politicians leading those parties increased significantly as people were not satisfied with their

⁵² Roguska, Beata. CBOS opinion poll (May 2006). "Stosunek do rządu po otworzeniu koalicji PiS- *Samoobrona*-LPR," http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2006/K_087_06.PDF accessed 10 March 2009.

⁵³ Purvis, Andrew (23 August 2007). "Oh, Brother: Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczynski," *Time Online*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1655447,00.html>, accessed 10 March 2009.

style of government. Most Poles also did not plan to vote for Roman Giertych, Andrzej Lepper or Jarosław Kaczyński again in the 2007 elections.

TABLE 3.4. Distrust in and Refusal to Vote for the PiS Coalition Leaders in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections. Source: http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_128_07.PDF and http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_149_07.PDF.

Politician	Distrust (in %)	Refusal to vote for this politician in 2007 (in %)
Roman Giertych (LPR)	66	46
Andrzej Lepper (<i>Samoobrona</i>)	59	55
Jarosław Kaczyński (PiS)	53	34

Donald Tusk, the current Prime Minister of Poland, stated during the 2007 election campaign that “Poland cannot afford another 12 months of rows, conflicts, aggression and disgracing the country at home and abroad.”⁵⁴ Most Poles agreed and were supportive of a more centrist government, which is indicated by PO’s victory in the elections. The official OSCE report of the 2007 parliamentary elections showed that PO received 41.51% of the vote (equivalent to 209 seats in the Sejm), while PiS received 32.11% (166 seats).⁵⁵ Voter backlash – fueled by distrust in far-right wing parties – was most severe against the two far right parties of the PiS coalition. Neither *Samoobrona* nor LPR made the 5% mark for gaining seats in the Sejm. *Samoobrona* and LPR received 1.53% and 1.30% of the vote, respectively.⁵⁶ (In 2005,

⁵⁴ “Poland’s crumbling government,” *The Economist* (Online Version), 25 September 2006, http://www.economist.com/agenda/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=7960110, accessed 11 April 2008.

⁵⁵ OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report, http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2008/03/30354_en.pdf, accessed 10 March 2009.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Samoobrona received 11.41% and LPR 7.97% of the vote.)⁵⁷ The significant decrease in support for the two right-wing parties indicates greater voter dissatisfaction with their performance and unwillingness to vote them into positions of power in the new government.

TABLE 3.5. Election Results for the 2007 Polish Parliamentary Elections. Source: <http://www.wybory2007.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/EN/WYN/W/index.htm>.

Party	Number of votes	Percentage	Seats in Sejm
PO	6,701,010	41.51	209
PiS	5,183,477	32.11	166
LiD (<i>Lewica i Demokraci</i>) ⁵⁸	2,122,981	13.15	53
PSL	1,437,638	8.91	31
<i>Samoobrona</i>	247,335	1.53	0
LPR	209,171	1.30	0

The 2007 elections illustrate that Poles trust the democratic process to work, even if they historically do not have great trust toward political parties. If Poles thought that voting was useless, the voter turnout in the last election would not have been the highest in Poland’s post-Communist history. As during the Solidarity movement of the 1980s, Poles trust in the “strength in numbers” approach when it comes to making necessary changes in the government. In a recent CBOS poll, over half of Poles trust current Prime Minister Donald Tusk, and slightly less than half support his government.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Millard, Frances (2007). “The 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland.” Notes on Recent Elections, *Electoral Studies* 26: 1, 196-231.

⁵⁸ LiD (*Lewica i Demokraci*) is a leftist coalition consisting of several minor parties.

⁵⁹ Roguska, Beata. CBOS opinion poll (January 2009). “Stosunek do rządu w styczniu,” http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_009_09.PDF, accessed 15 March 2009.

The Exception That Proves the Rule?

My supervisor paid me in cash for some extra hours I worked at the English school. I went to deposit the money into my bank account, carrying the money in a white envelope which I stuffed in my pocket during the short walk to the bank. When I got to the bank, I reached into my pocket to get the envelope, only to realize it was gone. The envelope must have fallen out of my pocket. For a moment I stood in front of the bank teller, frozen, unable to say anything. The envelope contained 500 złoty (at the time, about \$163) – a large sum of money for most Poles, whose average monthly income is about 800 złoty. At that moment, a middle-aged woman came into the bank and walked up to me. She noticed I was searching my pockets. She asked me if I had lost something, and I told her I had.

“What was it?” She asked. I responded that I lost a white envelope which contained some money. “Here you go,” she replied, and handed me the envelope. All the money was still there. I was speechless. “Thank you,” I managed to say, and the woman smiled and left. I was still in shock and wanted to give her some of the money to thank her. I left the bank to look for her, but when I looked outside, she was gone.

According to the newspaper and online journal articles, such an honest act is nearly impossible in Poland. None of my friends could believe it. “I’m surprised she didn’t just take the money,” they said. “We *are* in Poland, you know.” Poles might say their fellow countrymen and women are dishonest and cannot be trusted, but given this experience, I am tempted not to be as harsh on Poles as they are on themselves. Was that lady the exception that proves the rule, or is it the few, dishonest people who are ruining the reputation of Poles, who are generally trustworthy and try to do the right thing?

Determinants of Trust in Poland: Demographics

Education level, material situation and religiosity play a role in whether Poles trust others, including family members and close friends. CBOS research indicates that well-educated, religious Poles living in above average material conditions exhibit the most trust toward family members. Poles with low income, workers and pensioners living in small towns and in rural areas are among the most distrusting. Trust in acquaintances was also affected by one's financial situation and education level, and distrust in acquaintances was declared most frequently by the unemployed, pensioners, and those with financial difficulties.⁶⁰ Trust in co-workers depended on the position of the person within the company – the lower the position, the more frequent the distrust. Students (aged 18-24) declared the most distrust toward neighbors and local parish priests; overall, young people (aged 15-29) declared the highest levels of distrust (82.70% according to a World Values Survey)⁶¹. Poles aged 50 and over seemed to be more trusting. Slightly over 21% declared “most people can be trusted” compared to 17.30% of respondents aged 15-29, and 17.50% of respondents aged 30-49.⁶²

There did not seem to be a large variation in trust levels between genders. Results from the 1999 World Values Survey and the 2006 European Social Survey yielded similar results for Polish men and women, with women being slightly more trusting than their male counterparts. The World Values Survey asked respondents, “Do you think most people can be trusted, or that you cannot be too careful?” Nearly 21% of women and almost 17% of men responded that most people can be trusted. Eighty-three percent of men stated that one cannot be too careful in

⁶⁰ Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (February 2008). “Zaufanie społeczne w latach 2002-2008.” http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_030_08.PDF.

⁶¹ World Values Survey Databank, Poland 1999, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>.

⁶² Ibid.

dealing with other people, compared to only 79% of women.⁶³ The European Social Survey posed a similar question, but also asked respondents to measure how much they trusted other people on a ten-point scale, with zero indicating that “you cannot be too careful” and ten indicating “most people can be trusted.” Results show that over 25% of females had a score of five, indicating neither a high level of distrust nor a high level of trust. Slightly over 23% of males were also at the five-point mark.⁶⁴

Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored whether cross-national data show that Poles are truly less trusting than others. Using the Pew Research study on trust, crime and corruption, we have seen that Poland is indeed not the most distrustful country in Europe as some media sources may claim. In that study, 48% of Poles surveyed stated that most people could be trusted – three points higher than France, five points higher than Spain and seven points higher than Italy, which had the lowest score at 41%. Compared within Eastern Europe, Poland is at the forefront of trusting societies.

The CBOS poll from February 2008 on the trust levels of Poles over a six-year period produced quite optimistic trends. It showed not only that social trust is growing, but also that trust in various institutions is also increasing. Trust in the European Union, the police, courts, the parliament and senate increased from 2004 to 2008. In the past two years, the television industry, the press and the military were also among those institutions able to gain more of Poles’ trust. While the family remains the most trusted of all social groups, more Poles are declaring that they can trust strangers as well. Now almost 40% of Poles share this opinion.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ European Social Survey dataset ESS3-2006, ed.3.2, <http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/>, accessed 24 March 2009.

Despite Poland's turbulent history with politics and politicians, the most recent parliamentary elections in Poland show that Poles have trust that the political *process* will work, even if the parties themselves are rather ineffective. When the far-right coalition's poor foreign policy and nationalist rhetoric threatened to damage Poland's reputation at home and abroad, Poles knew that they could replace the coalition with a more centrist and less combative party. The voter turnout in that election was the highest since Poland's transition. Poles may be disillusioned with politicians, parties and sometimes with one another, but thanks to 1989, they now live in a country where the people not only have the power to choose, but the power to change as well.

Despite the media's claims, Poles are not the most distrusting people in Europe. Nor is the society as paranoid as the media may claim. As illustrated by the quote at the beginning of this chapter, Poles are capable of trusting. The invitation to Gdańsk, extended to a foreigner on a train, contradicts the media's arguments that Poles are suspicious, distrustful, and wary of outsiders. I eventually accepted Zofia's invitation, and very much enjoyed my stay in Gdańsk and her Polish hospitality.

CHAPTER FOUR

OVERVIEW OF MEDIA AND ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ON DISTRUSTING POLES

“[The average Pole] does not trust people, institutions, the law, government employees, the wealthy, or politicians. Distrust permeates his life and his view of human nature.”⁶⁵

“Our lack of trust shows that something bad happened during the transition period, something that did not allow the creation of trust.”⁶⁶

Media discourse on distrusting Poles is omnipresent. There are frequent articles about Poles’ distrusting or cynical behavior, inferiority complex or aggressive nature. The articles do little to suggest ways to improve trust levels, and few paint an optimistic picture of Polish society. The academic discourse presents an equally dire situation, but often avoids the fatalistic tone of the online media.

The relationship between the media discourse and academic discourse is a close one. The authors of the online media articles frequently cite or reference Polish and other sociologists, psychologists, historians and political scientists. For example, Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka, author of several books and articles on the lack of trust in Poland⁶⁷, participated in an interview with a journalist from *Polityka* in 2007 and later contributed an article, “Rebuilding the

⁶⁵ Śpiewak, Paweł (19 February 2005). “Dzień z życia Polaka.” *Wprost*, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/73658/Dzien-z-zycia-Polaka/?O=73658&pg=1>, accessed 21 November 2008.

⁶⁶ Kołodziejczyk, Marcin (20 October 2007). “Ile obywatel w obywatelu.” *Polityka*, <http://www.polityka.pl/archive/do/registry/secure/showArticle?id=3356658>, accessed 20 November 2008.

⁶⁷ See Sztompka, Piotr (2007). *Zaufanie. Fundament społeczeństwa*; (1999, 2000) *Trust: A Sociological Theory*; (1996) “Trust and Emerging Democracy. Lessons from Poland,” *International Sociology* 1 (11); and (2008) “Odbudować piramidę,” *Polityka* nr. 43, 38.

Pyramid,” in October 2008. Psychologist Janusz Grzelak⁶⁸ of the University of Warsaw also participated in an interview for *Polityka*.

Media Discourse

Although the majority of the seventy-six articles consulted for this study described the distrust issue in Polish society, there were no suggestions offered to improve the situation. It is necessary to note, however, that the goal of the online media articles may not be to find a solution to the problem; rather, journalists may want to bring the problem to the attention of the readers. Nevertheless, it would be helpful at least to speculate how trust levels could be raised. The general attitude of the articles seemed to be, “We’re distrustful, but there’s nothing we can do about it.” This can be attributed to what Sztompka calls *providentialism* – a resignation to fate which is a common phenomenon found in post-Communist countries.

“It is high time that we did something about that [lack of trust], to expose our countrymen to others, inspire a spirit of community, end the culture of jealousy and suspicion fueled by politicians, especially in the last two years,”⁶⁹ writes journalist Janusz Czapiński in an article in *Wprost*, “The Republic of the Distrusting.” Yet Czapiński does not actually offer any way to achieve this goal. “There are few people in the world as distrusting as Poles,” Jacek Żakowski states in a *Polityka* article. “Distrust may be a self-contained ailment of reason or culture...it is a trait which makes life more difficult rather than easier.”⁷⁰ Again, Żakowski presents the problem

⁶⁸ See Grzelak, Janusz. (2001). “O intencjach, kontroli i zaufaniu,” in D. Doliński, B. Weigl (eds.) *Od myśli i uczuć do decyzji i działań*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Psychologii PAN, 91-110; Grzelak, J., and Wieczorkowska-Nejtardt, G. (1996). “Attitudes toward public affairs in societies in transition,” in D. Messick & W. Liebrand (eds.), *Social Dilemmas*. New York: Plenum.

⁶⁹ Czapiński, Janusz (2008). “Rzeczpospolita nieufnych.” *Wprost*, number 12/2008 (1317), <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/125760/Rzeczpospolita-nieufnych/>, accessed 21 November 2008.

⁷⁰ Żakowski, Jacek (2005). “Polak, czyli kto?” *Polityka*, <http://www.polityka.pl/polak-czyli-kto/Text01,1449,165949,1/>, accessed 8 December 2008.

to the reader without providing any possible solutions. Although public opinion polls somewhat contradict the media's claim of severe social distrust (there is a correlation between the increase in material comfort and rising trust levels), the general absence of any solution to the problem in the media seems to be widespread.

A *Newsweek Polska* cover article from October 2006, entitled “*Wściekłość Polska*” (Polish Fury), inspired my research into Polish national identity and trust. This article is critical of Polish society. The author, Zygmunt Miłoszewski, is perplexed by the anger, distrust and aggression displayed by his fellow Poles, especially given all the positive aspects of the country, specifically culture, history, and environment. Miłoszewski writes, “Is it possible that the reason for Polish *wkurzenia* (extremely aggravated nature) is dreadfully low self-esteem?” He goes on to explain that in a 2005 report in a monthly magazine called *Science* about national stereotypes, Poles thought of themselves just as poorly and stereotypically as other nations. “We rate ourselves the worst out of all nationalities in the study,”⁷¹ Miłoszewski notes sadly.

After reading the report which Miłoszewski cites, “National Character Does Not Reflect Mean Personality Trait Levels in 49 Cultures,” I realized that Miłoszewski misrepresented data to make overly negative statements about Polish society. For example, when he writes that Poles rated themselves “the worst out of all nationalities in the study,” such data are missing from the study. The goal of the study was not to discover which countries had the worst self-image, but to compare national character ratings with the results for personality scores assessed by self-reports and observer ratings.⁷²

⁷¹ Miłoszewski, Zygmunt (29 October 2006). “*Wściekłość Polska*.” *Newsweek Polska*, 43/2006, 88.

⁷² Terracciano A., Abdel-Khalek, A. M., et.al. (7 October 2005). “National Character Does Not Reflect Mean Personality Trait Levels in 49 Cultures,” *Science* 310:96, 96-100.
<http://www.sciencemag.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/cgi/content/short/310/5745/96>, accessed 5 February 2009.

The report contains no evidence to support Miłoszewski's claim that Poles think of themselves just as poorly as other nations do. In fact, the study does not address how well or how poorly people of different nations think of themselves at all. Rather, the report seeks to find correlation between observer and national character ratings, not rank which nationalities think poorly of themselves and which ones do not. Poland is briefly mentioned in the study because the observer ratings matched the national character and self ratings, but the characteristics which matched are not mentioned.⁷³ As far as observer ratings for Poland were concerned, Poland was in the group with the highest National Character Survey (NCS) scores for the personality trait "neurotic," although they did not have the highest *observer-rating* score for the same trait (Turkey did). This merely means that Poles' view of themselves greatly corresponds to outsiders' view of Poles. It does not mean that Poles rate themselves more harshly than other nationalities.

Not all of the articles were pessimistic, although none explicitly stated that Poles are becoming more trusting. In a 2008 *Wprost* article, "Why We Are Happy," Sergiusz Sachno and Agnieszka Sijka discuss the growing optimism in Poland. The improvement of Poles' material situation is one contributing factor to rising trust levels. Living in difficult times has taught Poles how to appreciate the products which were not previously available to them. "In contrast to the blasé Germans, French or British, who are accustomed to plasma television sets, video games or good musical equipment, Poles are happy about having access to those things now and it is a luxury for them."⁷⁴ No material possessions could compare to the regaining of freedom, which many Poles use to their advantage through travel, study, and intercultural communication. Poles are also very enthusiastic about opportunities for personal and professional development. Poles

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Sachno, Sergiusz and Sijka, Agnieszka (2008). Dlaczego jesteśmy szczęśliwi. *Wprost*, number 29/2008, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/134005/Dlaczego-jestesmy-szczesliwi/>, accessed 8 December 2008.

from various generations register for foreign language instruction and are eager to communicate with native speakers of English, German, French, or other languages. An increased openness to the world indicates a greater trust in others, even those of different national or linguistic traditions.

Technology also played a role in opening up Poles to the world, especially the younger generation. “New technologies helped us in getting rid of the barriers which cut us off from the rest of Europe,” says Jacek Świdorski, co-founder of the Polish internet portal o2.pl. “The young generation of Poles does not have any complexes toward people from abroad...the Internet is our window to the world, it has taken us out of our homes, encouraged us to travel, and has reached over to the growth of economic efficiency.”⁷⁵ Exposure to other countries and people reduces fear of the unknown, therefore facilitating mutual trust.

Academic Discourse

Scholars in various disciplines are concerned with trust, including sociologists, psychologists, historians, anthropologists and political scientists. For this discussion on academic discourse, I provide an overview of work by political scientist Hubert Tworzecki⁷⁶ and sociologist Piotr Sztompka. While Tworzecki’s work focuses on comparative politics, parties and elections, some of his research is relevant to my argument. His analysis of civic engagement in Poland⁷⁷ indicates that the increasing disdain Poles show for civic institutions and politics is

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Tworzecki, Hubert (2002). *Learning to Choose: Electoral Politics in East-Central Europe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Tworzecki, Hubert (1996). *Parties and Politics in Post-1989 Poland*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

⁷⁷ Tworzecki, Hubert (2008). “A Disaffected New Democracy? Identities, institutions and civic engagement in post-communist Poland,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41:1, 47-62.

indicative of high levels of distrust in the society. Trust is the main focus of Sztompka's research, and he most frequently uses Poland as his main case study.

Lack of Civic and Political Engagement as an Indicator of a Distrustful Society

Poles' lack of trust not only affects their relations with one another, but is also displayed in a wider context in civic and political life. Participation in political activities, such as signing petitions and contacting officials, is very low.⁷⁸ Distrust of political parties (54%) and the parliament (44%) is still high.⁷⁹ Tworzecki argues that the main reason for distrust in and disillusionment with political parties is the public's view that the parties "violate the trust placed in them as people's representatives."⁸⁰ People vote for parliament members or certain parties, and in the end, they do not feel represented or feel that the politicians take voters' concerns into consideration. In fact, only about one in five respondents in Tworzecki's project felt represented by any party, and when they were asked how they would describe most politicians, 77% chose 'dishonest.'⁸¹

Tworzecki notes that despite the large amount of distrust of politicians and political parties, there is solid evidence that Poles can mobilize to bring about change. He cites the example of the Solidarity movement in Poland. "We know for a fact that in 1980-1981 millions of Poles were able to mobilize for political action, create organizational structures, elect representatives and so forth," he writes. Indeed, if in the early 1980s Poles were able to have

⁷⁸ Tworzecki provides a good comparison between the political engagement of Poles and twenty-three other European countries in his 2008 article, "A Disaffected New Democracy? Identities, institutions and civic engagement in post-communist Poland," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41:1, 60.

⁷⁹ Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (February 2008). "Zaufanie społeczne w latach 2002-2008." http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_030_08.PDF.

⁸⁰ Tworzecki, Hubert (2008). "A Disaffected New Democracy? Identities, institutions and civic engagement in post-communist Poland," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41:1, 58.

⁸¹ Ibid.

enough trust in the power of the common voice to bring about political change, then there must have been some measure of trust in the society. If this is the case, then there is hope for the Polish community to revive trust in the future.

Piotr Sztompka's Characteristics of a Distrustful Society

Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka⁸² focuses on trust in his work on Polish society. Poland is used as a case study in his article, "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." Here, Sztompka not only diagnoses Poland with a "syndrome of distrust," but also lists six characteristics of a distrustful society. For this paper, four of these are examined: providentialism, corruption, ghettoization and externalization. These substitutes for trust help the society gain some sense of predictability and orderliness.

Providentialism is Sztompka's term meaning a "regression from the discourse of agency to a discourse of fate."⁸³ In other words, supernatural forces such as God or fate are thought to influence a situation; nothing can be done about it because the outcome has already been determined. The only option is to simply "wait and see." Sztompka writes that while resigning to fate may temporarily alleviate some fear or dread of an uncertain future, in the end it creates "disastrous effects – passivity and stagnation."⁸⁴ Indeed, this "wait and see" attitude is common in Poland, as well as in other Eastern European countries. When faced with an uncertain (or even certain) situation, it is common to hear "*Zobaczymy*" - "We'll see." Sztompka describes this as a "presentist orientation." While this is often the case, it is not always true. The rise of Solidarity in the 1980s is an example of how Poles did *not* resign themselves and the future of their country to

⁸² In 2007, Sztompka released his latest book on trust in Polish society: *Zaufanie. Fundament społeczeństwa*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Znak.

⁸³ Sztompka, Piotr (March 1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 1 (11), 45.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

fate. Furthermore, in the 2007 parliamentary elections, Poles mobilized and arrived at the polls in record numbers to vote the far-right coalition out of government. They knew that they could use their voice to change a political situation which was not to their liking.

The second substitute for trust is *corruption*. As the Pew Research report on trust and crime/corruption showed, in countries where social trust is low, concerns about corruption tend to be higher and vice versa.⁸⁵ While Poland's trust levels were not extremely low, concerns about corruption are still relatively high (60%).⁸⁶ Sztompka claims that corruption provides some sense of control in situations where individuals may feel they have no say in what happens. During and even after the Communist era, people often gave small gifts to doctors or bosses to ensure preferential treatment.⁸⁷ This implies, for example, that a patient could not trust a doctor with providing satisfactory service; only by giving a "gift" could he or she be certain of proper medical care at present or in the future.

Unfortunately, the cessation of corruption in East-Central European politics (including Poland) is easier said than done. There are widely reported cases of abuse of power and white collar crime among political and administrative elites, therefore increasing levels of public distrust in authority. Ministers, mayors and politicians are frequently dismissed on charges of corruption. In July of 2007, former pig farmer turned Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Agriculture, Andrzej Lepper, was dismissed after charges that he traded jobs for sexual favors. Just last year, there was a scandal involving the mayor in Olsztyn, the town where I lived and worked. Mayor Czesław Jerzy Małkowski spent over six months in jail for rape and sexually

⁸⁵ Wike, Richard and Holzgart, Kathleen. "Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low." <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>, accessed 5 Dec 2008.

⁸⁶ While all Eastern European countries included in the Pew Research survey on trust, crime, and corruption, the Czech Republic scored the highest for concern about corrupt politicians (78%).

⁸⁷ Sztompka, Piotr (March 1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 1 (11), 45.

harassing female clerks at the Olsztyn city hall. With stories like these, it is no wonder that Poles do not trust some politicians.

Ghettoization refers to the closing off and isolation of a group. This group may seem to think it is in a threatening and strange environment. “A diffused distrust in the wider society is compensated for by a strong loyalty to tribal, ethnic or familial groups, matched with xenophobia,” Sztompka writes. This type of behavior is observable in many countries, even those outside of Eastern Europe. In Poland, it is possible to run across neo-Nazis or anti-Semites, and on occasion racially motivated crimes occur, for example, the attack on Senegalese soccer player Pape Samba Ba of the Odra Opole soccer team in November 2008.⁸⁸

In a *Newsweek Polska* article about Polish aggression, the author, Zygmunt Miłoszewski, recounts a conversation he had at a party attended by highly educated doctors and architects. Apparently, even among the educated classes, anti-Semitism was present:

There weren't many of them who had only one Master's degree. One of the guests talked about his trip to Israel, the conversation moved to the topic of the Palestinian conflict...suddenly someone says that we should be happy that 'they' [i.e. the Jews] are there and not here. I ask why because I miss the multicultural Second Republic. Another replied to that: 'Be happier, boy, if it weren't for Hitler, we would all now be the slaves of the Jews. Instead of studying, you would be carrying boxes in a Jewish shop.'⁸⁹

Xenophobia has also appeared in Polish politics in recent years. Former Polish Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński of the Law and Justice Party (PiS) often appeared on the radical Catholic radio station Radio Maryja, which is also known for anti-Semitic and homophobic

⁸⁸ Ba was attacked by a teenager as he stood at an intersection; charges were filed against his assailant. For more information (in Polish): http://www.sport.pl/pilka/1,65029,6018350,Pape_Samba_Ba__Ktos_powinien_sie_zajac_walka_z_rasizmem_.html

⁸⁹ Miłoszewski, Zygmunt. (29 October 2006). “*Wściekłość Polska*” (Polish Fury). *Newsweek Polska*, 43/2006, 88.

sentiments. The station is unfortunately quite popular with the religious conservative electorate.⁹⁰ One of PiS's coalition partners in 2006, The League of Polish Families (LPR), is closely affiliated with the racist organization *Młodzież Wszechpolska*, which has been known to attack participants of tolerance marches with stones and eggs.⁹¹ A quote from PiS's 2007 party program illustrates how ghettoization can leak into politics:

In especially sensitive moments during negotiations, Poland's position on the international scene was weakened with premeditation. Poland became the target of aggressive and unfair campaigns in some media sources abroad. *We will not allow the weakening of Polish interests in foreign policy... we are afraid of the domination of the [European] Union by the strongest, most populous and most economically powerful countries.*⁹²

Finally, *externalization* emerges when people lack trust in their own society, political and economic institutions and products. They idealize the foreign, and take their trust elsewhere, usually abroad. In Poland, this is prevalent; perhaps with the exception of food, Poles do prefer Western products such as cars, clothing, and cosmetics. Young people often dream of a better life in another country, where they may idealize the standard of living or lifestyle. The “grass is greener” view may be intensified by the “selective bias of the media and lack of direct contrary evidence.”⁹³ This leads to the decision of many Poles to take the exit option, and externalize their trust.

⁹⁰ Krzemiński, Ireneusz (18 October 2005). “Wybór fundamentalny,” *Rzeczpospolita*, in Aleks Szczerbiak (2007). ‘Social Poland’ Defeats ‘Liberal Poland’? The September-October 2005 Polish Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23(2): 203-232. Based on data from the 2001 elections, Krzemiński estimated that Radio Maryja listeners comprised about 15% of the electorate in 2005.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² *Program 2007 Prawa i Sprawiedliwości*, downloaded 1 Apr 08 from <http://www.pis.org.pl/doc.php?d=unit&id=144>. Emphasis added.

⁹³ Ibid.

The Exit Option

The “grass is greener” representation of the West often leads Poles to emigrate in search of better economic and educational opportunities. This indicates a significant amount of distrust in Poland’s economic capabilities. Numbers vary, but there are an estimated 1 to 1.2 million Poles in the United Kingdom alone.⁹⁴ There are so many Poles living abroad that it has caused the unemployment rate in Poland to drop – not because of a greater availability of jobs, but because the workforce is smaller; people have found employment in other countries. For example, since Poland’s May 2004 accession to the EU, approximately 274, 000 Poles signed up for the National Registration Scheme in Great Britain – sixty-six percent of all applications from Eastern Europe.⁹⁵

On a positive note, more and more people are returning to Poland,⁹⁶ especially after discovering that sometimes life abroad is not as ideal as they had imagined. Family matters, as well as the current economic crisis, are drawing more Poles back home. In a *Polityka* article, “*Trzeci Start*” (Third Start), Edyta Repczak from Lower Silesia tells of her return to her homeland. She wanted to work abroad since she was a child, and eventually ended up in France after finishing university. She even convinced her fiancé, who had his own business, to come along. He agreed, and closed the business.

⁹⁴ Mostrous, Alexi and Seib, Christine (16 Feb 2008). “Tide Turns as Poles End Great Migration,” <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article3378877.ece>, accessed 4 March 2009; Anna Cieśla’s article “*Trzeci Start*” (2008) estimates the number of Poles in the United Kingdom to be around 1.2 million.

⁹⁵ Ibid. The National Registration Scheme, established by the British Home office in 2004, monitors the impact of Eastern European workers on the British economy. Citizens of Eastern European countries who intend to work in Britain longer than one month must register; after twelve months of continuous employment, they are eligible to apply for a residence permit and are no longer required to register. For more information, see <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/wrs/>.

⁹⁶ Precise statistics about how many Poles leave Great Britain and other EU member states do not exist because there are no embarkation and disembarkation controls on EU members.

Only once they arrived in France did they discover the harsh reality of living abroad. According to the article, the average monthly salary of a shopkeeper was 1,000 Euro. “And that’s only if you’re French,” Edyta added. She finally decided that she did not want to “degrade herself” by constantly looking for work, and returned to Poland after five months. She soon found employment in a bank with a position with promotion opportunities.⁹⁷ Kuba Godlewski, who returned with his wife from Manchester, England, was optimistic about building a life in his home country. “Since we had success there [in England], why couldn’t we succeed here too?”⁹⁸ Kuba’s optimism is evidence of Poles’ increasing trust levels in their country – that there is the same possibility for success in Poland as in Western Europe.

The presence of Sztompka’s characteristics as well as the exit option confirms the fact that Polish society is distrustful. However, that does not mean Poles cannot improve their trust levels. One valuable resource which can help Poles develop a more trusting society is the youth. People who may have been born before 1989 but were too young to have strong memories of Communism have a much weaker sense of self-limitation or resignation to fate, and are more likely to believe in the efficacy of social engagement.⁹⁹

Conclusion

The popular and academic discourse about distrusting Poles, of course, examines the subject from different viewpoints. The popular discourse seems to offer a commentary on the state of the society, even though that commentary can be quite negative. Not all the discourse is pessimistic; some journalists cite Poles’ increasing material well-being and greater appreciation for the positive changes brought on by the transition. The academic discourse analyzes particular

⁹⁷ Cieśla, Anna (8 November 2008). “Trzeci Start.” *Polityka*, number 45 (2679).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ “Polacy nie wierzą w siebie,” (2008). *Elbląg24 Online*, http://www.elblag24.pl/elblag.polacy_nie_wierza_w_siebie,15838,0,0,0.html?m=394&g=1, accessed 14 March 09.

traits which make Poland a distrustful country, and seeks to find solutions. The popular discourse also uses contact with academics in writings about social trust. Interviews with sociologists, psychologists and citations from historians help to legitimize their claims. Data are sometimes misrepresented to make the trust situation seem more severe, as was the case in the *Newsweek Polska* article.

Tworzecki's study of civic engagement offers insights into how trust affects politics. The low levels of civic and political participation are evidence that most Poles not only think it is futile to invest time in political activities; they also usually lack high trust for political parties, politicians or parliament members. Poland has lower political engagement than some of its neighbors – in the European Social Survey in 2004, 20% of Ukrainians participated in a lawful public demonstration, compared with 2% of Poles. Twenty-five percent of Slovaks, but only 10% of Poles, signed a petition – and Slovakia's percentage was three points higher than Ireland or Belgium.¹⁰⁰

Sztompka's characteristics for a distrustful society do not necessarily doom Poles to a fate full of misgivings and suspicion. There is no "quick fix" for corruption or providentialism, but Poles are already beginning to proactively transform their society from a distrusting to a trusting one, whether they realize it or not. Many émigrés are returning home, demonstrating their trust in the Polish economy and society. While it may take decades – or longer – for Poles to reach a trust level comparable to Germany or Great Britain, they have made much progress in a short span of time.

¹⁰⁰ Tworzecki, Hubert (2008). "A Disaffected New Democracy? Identities, institutions and civic engagement in post-communist Poland," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41:1, 60.

CHAPTER FIVE ANALYSIS

“Good things tend to happen in societies where people tend to trust each other – they have stronger democracies, richer economies, better health, and they suffer less often from any number of social ills...in countries where people generally trust one another, there are fewer worries about crime or corrupt political leaders.”¹⁰¹

This chapter offers analysis of the results achieved by this study. I also compare Poland’s media articles on trust to those of other Eastern European countries. We find that Poland has a higher number of articles on social trust than all countries in the region except Ukraine and Russia. The online media’s interest in the trust issue may be linked to self-definition, or to explanations for the present state of Polish society. The results which the online media articles produce may also seem worse due to frequent comparisons with Western instead of Eastern European countries.

Cross-National Comparison to Other Eastern European Countries

All of Eastern Europe, not only Poland, underwent significant political, social and economic changes after 1989. Therefore, we would expect to see a similar increase in distrust among those countries, and we may also expect to see distrust appear as a popular topic in the media of other Eastern European countries. The survey conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project on trust, crime, and corruption corroborates the argument that all former Communist bloc countries experienced a significant decrease in trust since 1991. However, a

¹⁰¹ Wike, Richard and Holzwart, Kathleen (15 April 2008). “Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low.” <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>, accessed 5 December 2008.

LexisNexis database search for media articles on social trust in fifteen Eastern European countries and Russia¹⁰² produced some interesting results.

A LexisNexis database search of “social trust” and each of the Eastern European countries in the sample was conducted for articles published between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2008.¹⁰³ The search produced results which support my argument that while Poland’s trust levels are comparable to those of other Eastern European countries, trust has become a more prominent issue in the media in Poland than in other countries in the region – with the exception of Russia and Ukraine. Table 5.1 lists the number of hits for a search of “social trust” and fifteen countries in Eastern Europe plus Russia. Ukraine had the highest number of hits (1000), and Poland and Russia followed closely with 999 hits each.

¹⁰² Countries included in the sample were Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Six of the countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine) were also involved in the Pew Research Study on trust, crime and corruption.

¹⁰³ It is unclear if the results for the LexisNexis database search are capped at 1000 hits per search; nonetheless, the database search is an indicator of the popularity of social trust topic in the media.

TABLE 5.1. Number of Hits in a LexisNexis Database Search of “Social Trust” and Fifteen Eastern European Countries and Russia Between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2008.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF HITS
Ukraine	1000
Poland	999
Russia	999
Czech Republic	872
Hungary	704
Romania	665
Serbia	493
Montenegro	409
Slovakia	382
Croatia	379
Bulgaria	369
Belarus	334
Albania	289
Macedonia	290
Slovenia	261
Bosnia-Hercegovina	189

As the table shows, the number of hits for Poland is greater than those of other Eastern European countries. While this study is confined to Poland, additional research is needed to evaluate why trust seems to be an equally popular topic in the Ukrainian and Russian media. Now that we have established that trust is more of a prevalent topic in Poland than in most other countries in the region, let us turn to some possible explanations to why that is the case and why the online media seem to have very low results for social trust in Poland.

Searching for Identity and Self-Definition

Poland has come a long way since the fall of Communism, and is often cited as one of the “success stories” of the former Eastern Bloc countries. One of Poland’s new goals is to figure out how best to represent herself in Europe since becoming an EU member state in 2004. What characteristics or traits distinguish Poland from the rest of Europe? How do Poles want to interpret their tumultuous and sometimes painful past? The media may attempt, through the debate on social trust, to answer these questions. The articles consulted for this study not only discuss trust and distrust; they also examine, in detail, the nature of Polish society and what it means to be Polish. This suggests the media is trying to find ways to represent the society to its readers.

In reconstructing Polish identity, “distrustful” is possibly one of the characteristics the media has chosen to highlight. In the *Science* study on national character and stereotypes in forty-nine cultures,¹⁰⁴ the research team found that the perceptions of national character may serve as a way to maintain a national identity. Perhaps this is why there are so many articles discussing Polish character traits, low trust levels, and social problems such as anger, aggression, and cynicism. While these articles can be very critical, perhaps it is a necessary process for discerning which characteristics are distinctively Polish.

These “distinctively Polish” characteristics are often contradictory. “Looking in the mirror... a Pole sees a socialist liberal, a permissive Catholic, an autocratic democrat, an anarchic pro-governmentalist. Those double identities disturb him... He would like to know with what and as whom he will enter Europe. But somehow he cannot decide, because he is not even able to

¹⁰⁴ See Terracciano et.al. (2005). “National Character Does Not Reflect Mean Personality Trait Levels in 49 Cultures,” *Science* 310:96, 96-100. <http://www.sciencemag.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/cgi/content/short/310/5745/96>.

understand himself.”¹⁰⁵ This was how Poles were characterized in a *Polityka* article which scrutinized various national characteristics. The same article describes what happens to Poles on the European arena. “The Pole enters Europe. With Polish fears, complexes and pride...his [inferiority] complex upholds the fact that he cannot manage in competition with the West.” It goes on to make the statement, “There are few people in the world so distrusting as Poles.”¹⁰⁶

Distrust as a Cause for the Present State of Polish Society

The media may also attempt to use lack of trust to explain the present state of Polish society. In a *Wprost* article entitled “The Republic of the Distrusting,” distrust is used to explain everything from dangerously low social capital to poor interpersonal relations. “Everything bad that we can say about the Third Republic has its roots in us,” the author, Janusz Czapiński, writes. “Poor functioning of institutions, as well as inefficient government investments...corruption, group conflict and ‘impossibilism’ which is already famous, results from the citizen’s jealousy and distrust.”¹⁰⁷ This author clearly shifts the responsibility to the citizen, instead of the government, courts or other institutions of authority. In another article in *Wprost*, “The Seven Major Polish Sins,” distrust is in second place. In that article, Rafał Ziemkiewicz states that common trust is a major component of progress, but unfortunately, “the average Pole keeps in his soul the deep distrust of a serf.”¹⁰⁸

Is it solely the responsibility of the citizen to become more trusting, or do the government, courts and economic institutions also play a role? Is the distrusting citizen the

¹⁰⁵ Żakowski, Jacek (2005). “Polak, czyli kto?” *Polityka*, <http://www.polityka.pl/polak-czyli-kto/Text01,1449,165949,1/>, accessed 8 December 2008.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Czapiński, Janusz (2008). “Rzeczpospolita nieufnych.” *Wprost*, number 12/2008 (1317), <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/125760/Rzeczpospolita-nieufnych/>, accessed 21 November 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Ziemkiewicz, Rafał (2001). “Siedem polskich grzechów głównych.” *Wprost*, number 51/52/2001 (995), <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/11871/Siedem-polskich-grzechow-glownych/>, accessed 21 November 2008.

largest barrier to Polish progress? After all, in Scandinavian countries, social trust is high – and there is less corruption and crime, and greater community spirit. These are the goals to which Poland aspires. But is it constructive for the media to compare Poland with more successful, richer nations? As we will see in the next section, comparisons with Western European countries make for lower perceived trust levels, which do not help the citizen to become more trusting.

Comparisons with Western Countries Lead to Lower Perceived Trust Levels in Poland

The online articles consulted for this study often suggest grim results for Poland regarding social trust. However, in examining the articles, I found that the reason for this is not the actual level of social trust in Poland; rather, it is the standard against which Poland is being compared. In the majority of cases, Poland is compared with *Western Europe*, not Eastern Europe. Therefore, the trust levels seem to be much lower than in reality. If the authors of the various articles compared Poland to Russia, Ukraine, or even Italy, they would find the trust levels to be normal or higher than they represent in their work. Instead, many articles compare Poland with Sweden, the Netherlands, or Ireland – some of the most trusting countries in Europe. In that case, it is not surprising that Poles seem to be extremely distrusting.

When compared with Ireland, it appears that Poland does not stand a chance. “The state of our society [regarding trust] proves that the road which Poland is taking is leading us in the direction of Greece, rather than Ireland, which is an ideal case.”¹⁰⁹ Poles supposedly have the lowest level of general trust out of all citizens of EU countries. However, when we examine the article which makes this claim, we see which countries are compared with Poland.¹¹⁰ Sweden takes first place as the most trusting country, followed by the Netherlands and Ireland.

¹⁰⁹ Czapiński, Janusz (2008). “Rzeczpospolita nieufnych.” *Wprost*, number 12/2008 (1317), <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/125760/Rzeczpospolita-nieufnych/>, accessed 21 November 2008.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* See the graph on the first page of this article for details.

Switzerland is the fourth most trusting country – although it is not in the EU. Several Western European countries follow. Only three Eastern European countries are mentioned in the comparison, and naturally, Poland is in last place. Interestingly, certain EU member states are absent from the comparison in the article, namely the Baltic countries, Bulgaria and Romania. If these countries had been added, it may have changed Poland's ranking.

Conclusion

In this analysis, we have seen how Poland differs from most countries in Eastern Europe when it comes to media coverage of trust in society. All of Eastern Europe and Russia underwent political and economic transition; low trust levels are prevalent in all cases. However, Poland is one of the few countries where social trust is such a prominent topic in the online media.

As a relatively new EU member, it is important for Poles to find their niche in the larger European community. While each person does this in his or her own way, the online media may resort to constant debate about which characteristics are Polish, what is favorable or unfavorable about these traits, or even criticism of the society as a whole. During the course of Polish history, Polish identity has been overshadowed by the culture of the partitioning, and later, occupying powers; the Soviet Union certainly had influence over the Poles during the Communist years. What cultural heritage and identity can Poland bring to the European table? Hopefully, as trust levels increase, Poles' view of themselves will also improve, enabling them to further integrate into Europe.

Explanations for the state of Polish society are abundant, and include corrupt politicians, the incorrect implementation of democracy, Communism, and a traumatic history. However, in many online press writings, a different approach is taken. Some journalists are pointing to the *Polish people themselves* as the main culprit for inadequate politics, a slow economy, and lack of

community. They say that in every successful democracy, there is a high level of social capital. One of the key ingredients for social capital is mutual trust. Without mutual trust, a democracy will become weak. Is the prevalence of the trust issue in the online media merely a “wake up call” for citizens, showing that it is time to be proactive and repair the chronic lack of trust in Polish society? Although levels of mutual trust is rising, many Poles still do not trust the government, parliament, or especially political parties. People who hold positions of public trust, such as doctors, lawyers, or mayors, are still looked upon with suspicion. Consistent effort will be required to overcome these barriers.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

“For me, a penchant for risk and constant, creative activity are an inherent matter of a full life. Of course, I could be mistaken. I must have trust, because if I didn’t have trust, I would close myself off in isolation...I find sense in life in being a better person than I was yesterday... That is my life strategy and my life has turned out well.”¹¹¹

Trust is a fundamental part of human life without which societies could not function. If members of an entire society lack trust, it not only has implications for each individual in that society, but for the wider world as well. In post-Communist Poland, low levels of trust have contributed to mutual suspicion, lack of confidence in ruling bodies, and apathy for political participation. If social trust decreases, that could affect other sectors of society, including civil society, which would have negative effects on the functioning of democracy.

This study has explored the distrust paradox – the disconnect between the Polish online media’s claims that Poland is an extremely distrustful society and the cross-national data which indicate that Poland is “in the middle of the pack” when it comes to trust in comparison to other Eastern and with some Western European countries, notably Italy and Portugal. Public opinion surveys corroborate the cross-national data findings and indicate that Polish society is steadily becoming more trusting.

Poles may point to several historical reasons to explain why they feel that they lack trust. In many instances, fear of Russia or Germany is based on prior conflicts with those countries. For example, in the midst of the 2008 Russia-Georgia crisis and the missile defense shield

¹¹¹ Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka, in interview with *Polityka*. Winnicka, Ewa (13 August 2007). “Toward trustful,” *Polityka*, <http://www.polityka.pl/towar-tlukliwy/Text01,933,226272,18/>, accessed 14 March 2009.

debate, Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski pointed not only to Poles' long-standing fear of Russia, but also past experience of abandonment by Poland's allies.¹¹² However, not all historical accounts portray Poles as the innocent victims of brutal oppressors. The controversy surrounding the treatment of Jews during the Second World War is linked to issues of exclusion and inclusion; that is, who is considered to be Polish and who is not. This raises the question of whether it is possible to trust someone who is not a member of the group, and to what extent Polish Jews could trust their Polish Catholic neighbors.

By Western standards, Poles – and other Eastern European populations – exhibit a low level of trust. Therefore, we would expect trust to be an equally popular topic in the media of other transitioning countries – but we do not. Distrust has almost become an obsession in the Polish online media, yet other online sources in other countries in the region do not seem to view trust as a major societal problem. I have suggested two possible explanations for why the Polish press seems to concentrate on the lack of trust in their society. The media may be trying to find ways to represent the society to its readers, or using distrust as a source of blame for the state of Polish society. Of course, one cannot dismiss the possibility that perhaps online articles about rampant distrust might receive a larger number of hits than articles about other topics.

The media sometimes cites or interviews psychologists and sociologists in online articles in order to make them more credible. Academics generally refrain from making strong claims about low levels of trust in society, and also suggest concrete ways to revive social trust in their work on Polish society and political life.¹¹³ They also seek to explain the lack of trust using a

¹¹² Kulish, Nicholas (21 August 2008). "Georgian Crisis Brings Attitude Change to a Flush Poland," *New York Times Online*, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/21/world/europe/21poland.html?_r=1, accessed 17 March 2009.

¹¹³ See Sztompka, Piotr (1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 11: 1, 37-62; (2007). *Zaufanie. Fundament społeczeństwa*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Znak.

variety of factors (legacy of distrusting authorities, economics, and history), and do not castigate society. The popular discourse, in contrast, only restates the problem and fails to offer any solutions. It is also quite critical of most Poles and highlights more negative than positive aspects of Polish life.

While there are strategies for improving trust levels, there must be incentives for Polish society to become more trusting.¹¹⁴ One of the largest incentives has been EU integration. Not only does belonging to the EU encourage economic growth and opportunities for employment and travel, it also includes Poland in a club of European states which are all dependent on each other. To some extent, this forces Poles to trust the Western European members of the group to include Poland in the decision-making process and to treat them as members of the West. This also means that Poles and citizens of other transitioning countries have to work to gain the trust of the West. How long this process will take is open to debate.

Expansion of the Study for Future Research

The analysis of trust levels and the media's representation of social trust in Poland is a starting point for further comparative research. Indeed, there are numerous possibilities for future studies. Russia and Ukraine would be appropriate points of comparison since trust is a popular topic in those countries as well. In such a study, the researcher could introduce several questions: What is the media discourse in Russia and Ukraine about the trust levels of their citizens? Do public opinion surveys in those countries corroborate the media's claims? What are the trends in the cross-national and media analysis data? Do Russians and Ukrainians also point to history as a reason as to why they do not trust? If so, in what context?

As a former Soviet Socialist Republic, it would be interesting to see if Ukrainians demonstrate a similar fear and distrust of Russia. One could also analyze Ukrainians' trust of

¹¹⁴ Please see Appendix B, "Strategies and Obstacles for Improving Trust Levels," for a detailed list of solutions.

Poles, given past conflicts between the two groups.¹¹⁵ In Russia, where half of respondents in the Pew Research survey reported that most people in society are trustworthy,¹¹⁶ we also see a disconnect between the data and the media. A LexisNexis database search produced an equal amount of articles about social trust in Russia and Poland.

In a wider European context, academics focusing primarily on Western Europe can use this study's results for Poland in a comparison with Italy and Portugal, two Western European countries which also exhibit relatively low social trust.¹¹⁷ The differing histories of each nation would most likely provide dissimilar source of social distrust. Since the predominant religion of all three countries is Roman Catholicism, a religious studies angle may also produce intriguing results.

A comparison between Poland and Ireland would also be in order. Ireland, like Poland, is a Roman Catholic country whose inhabitants regularly practice their religion and place a strong emphasis on family values. Ireland also has the legacy of English domination. It would be intriguing to discover if the Irish relate to the English in the same way the Poles relate to the Russians, and how that may affect the Ireland's trust toward England. In addition, there is currently a large Polish community in Ireland, so the researcher could also explore Irish trust not only toward England, but also toward Polish immigrants.

¹¹⁵ For a detailed account of Polish-Ukrainian conflict, see Copsey, Nathaniel (June 2008). "Remembrance of Things Past: the Lingering Impact of History on Contemporary Polish-Ukrainian Relations," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:4, 531-560.

¹¹⁶ Wike, Richard and Holzgart, Kathleen (15 April 2008). "Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low." <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>.

¹¹⁷ For more information, see *ibid.* and the World Values Survey, www.worldvaluessurvey.org.

Implications for the European Union and Transitioning Countries

While this study is confined to Poland, issues of trust and distrust ultimately have more far-reaching consequences. Mutual trust is necessary in effective cooperation between Western and Eastern Europe. Integration into Europe is not solely the responsibility of the transitioning countries. In order for EU countries of Eastern Europe to truly feel they are EU *members*, collaboration and trust are needed on *both* sides. Western European countries will also have to change how they view their neighbors to the East and show willingness to trust them.¹¹⁸ The West has to trust the East to follow guidelines for EU membership and Euro adoption. However, Eastern Europeans must also work hard to gain the trust of the West through responsible application of EU policy (and responsible appropriation of EU funds), successful ability to follow the organization's laws, and even by the behavior of individual citizens.

Implications for Poland

The situation facing Poles at this point is one of *choice*. Will Poles choose, individually and collectively, which characteristics they want to embrace as their own, how they will reconcile with their past, and what they want to do with the freedoms they have regained? Rising living standards and a more satisfied population have resulted in increasing trust levels; nevertheless, Poles will face a decision of *who* they want to trust, and when. Politicians and political parties must still work hard to earn the public's trust; only time will tell if they succeed in doing so. There is also the individual decision to stay in Poland or emigrate, and, once abroad, whether to remain there or return home. This also has implications of its own. The current economic crisis has perhaps caused many to reflect on the positive and negative consequences of global interdependence.

¹¹⁸ I greatly appreciate the input of Dr. Silvia Tomášková on this point.

I have previously argued that the discussion in the online media is part of a larger process, necessary to reconstruct Polish identity in an effort to figure out what position Poland is to assume in a larger European context. The choices are numerous: Poland as the leader of the new Eastern European democracies or as a nation previously oppressed by its more powerful neighbors; Poland as the descendant of a rich, thousand-year history or as a country barely able to compete with the West. Simply put, it is necessary to decide, both individually and collectively, whether Poles want to be victims or survivors, and whether they want to be in competition or collaboration with Europe.

The debate in the media and among Poles themselves is important not only to establish Poland's place in Europe, but to come to terms with a painful and complex past. Considerable discussion and reconciliation is needed to overcome, for example, the crimes at Jedwabne, or Nazi and Soviet occupation. Remaining in the past will do nothing but hinder further EU integration and cooperation with other countries.

Implications for Polish Journalists and Media

Journalists and the media play a prominent role in selecting information which is available to the public. Information can be controlled by the manipulation or omission of data, creating a false image of the issues at hand. One of the key elements of the distrust paradox in the Polish case is the presentation of information which appears to be believable, since it is sometimes "corroborated" by surveys and data. Upon further investigation, I discovered that the exact source of the information was often not referenced, or that the data cited did not support the journalist's main argument. The journalists may choose to only include that information which advances the "rampant distrust" argument, and ignore evidence which shows otherwise. In many of the articles consulted for this thesis, the accuracy of the data presented is questionable.

The distrust paradox in the media and cross-national data has its roots in the type of information journalists choose to present to their audience.

It is open to debate whether the online media checks its facts or not. The absence of statistics, properly scaled graphs, or the incorrect representation of data leads the researcher to believe that the media allows articles to be released which accomplish their goal – highlighting rampant distrust in Polish society. The contradictions and false claims which appear in some trust-related articles in this study seem to affirm that there is little proofreading or fact checking. For example, in a *Wprost* article from December 2008, “The Republic of the Distrusting,” a bar graph depicting the average earnings, trust and education levels of citizens of seventeen European countries lacks a scale for measurement. In all three categories, Poland is in last place, but the absence of a scale complicates the ability for analysis. (One may also wonder which common scale could be used to measure salary, trust and education levels.) The source for the data is cited as “European Social Survey,” but does not provide the year in which the survey was conducted. The most recent European Social Survey which asked trust-related questions took place in 2006. In addition, the graph only provides data for seventeen countries, yet the most recent European Social Survey included data for twenty-five countries.¹¹⁹ Russia and Ukraine, which exhibited slightly lower trust levels than Poland in the survey, were omitted in the graph in the *Wprost* article.¹²⁰

This example demonstrates how information can be skewed, changed or omitted to contribute to the discourse on distrusting Poles in the online media. Journalists and editors of the online media may assume that readers will not check the facts or further explore the references,

¹¹⁹ Abstract of European Social Survey dataset ESS3-2006, ed.3.2, <http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/>, accessed 24 March 2009.

¹²⁰ European Social Survey dataset ESS3-2006, ed. 3.2. for the question “Most people can be trusted or you can’t be too careful,” <http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/>.

and will just accept what is written in the articles. However, if public awareness of rising trust levels increases while the distrust topic remains popular in the media, readers may begin to notice the disconnect between reality and the media discourse. If that were to happen, distrust may be redirected toward the media and journalists for perpetuating incorrect information.

Lending a Helping Hand

The observations, experiences and people I encountered while living in Poland were the inspiration for this study. None of that would have been possible, however, without the assistance of one very trusting Pole and her family. When I returned to the United States from a semester in Poland, I became acquainted with a Polish woman named Magda during the flight. She spoke little English and had never traveled outside Europe. I helped her through passport and customs control. She introduced me to friends who were hosting her during her visit. I had many opportunities to visit them during Magda's six-month stay in the United States, and Magda and I became friends. It was an unusual friendship; not only were we from different cultural traditions and backgrounds, but we were also generations apart.

At the time, I was having difficulty with my plans to teach English in Poland. Magda called various schools and helped me fill out applications. She also volunteered to look for a job for me near her hometown in Northeastern Poland. Within three weeks of her return, Magda notified me that she had contacted an English school, and the director was very interested in hiring a native English speaker. Before I knew it, I had a job and was on the plane to Poland.

The extent to which Magda and her family trusted me was evident from the start. Magda invited me into her home, even leaving me to look after the house while she was at work. Her eldest son allowed me to borrow his car and helped me to find an apartment. The fact that they would place so much trust in a foreigner was surprising, especially considering the private-

versus-public dynamic which is common in transitioning Eastern European cultures. Indeed, the willingness to invite a non-Pole into the private world of the family is indicative of the fact that Poles are not the most distrustful people in Europe as the media claims. It is also unlikely that I would receive such invitations or assistance from strangers in other European countries, even those countries which statistically show more trusting populations.

Concluding Remarks

Consumers of online articles about rampant distrust in Polish society need not panic – Poland does not have the most distrusting society in Europe. While trust levels in the country are relatively low, they are comparable to other Eastern European and some Western European countries. Yet, we do not see trust as such a popular topic in the media of other nations in the region. This tells us that one of the few exceptional aspects of Polish distrust is how frequently the media writes about it.

It would be interesting to discover how many people are actually reading the media's articles highlighting negative aspects about Polish society and how they react to the journalists' claims. My Polish acquaintances were annoyed at the overly critical nature of the articles I mentioned during conversations about my research. "They [journalists] should write more about how we can improve our country, not complain about what is wrong with it. They are just making the problem worse," they said.¹²¹ Perhaps they are right. There must be a way for the media to bring the distrust issue to the public's attention while also releasing articles about the progress Poland has made.

The current economic downturn makes it difficult to predict how Poland's economy will handle the recession, but the return of many Poles from abroad should have some positive

¹²¹ Kowalski, Andrzej and Czerwiński, Mariusz (November 2006). Private conversation, Olsztyn, Poland. I have changed their names to protect their identity.

impacts in the future. Other choices will influence Poland's complex past and her relations with surrounding countries. Will Poles be able to achieve a balance between remembering their history, and not being limited by it? Will Poles' mutual trust levels continue to rise, leading to a happier society and thus a brighter future? *Zobaczmy* – we will see.

APPENDIX A
DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLE COLLECTION

Results for keyword search “social trust” in six online magazines and newspapers, including websites and blogs, from 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2008.

Magazine or Newspaper	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i>	–	4	1	1	–	2	8	16
<i>Newsweek Polska</i>	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2
<i>Wprost</i>	2	–	1	6	1	–	6	16
<i>Polityka</i>	–	–	2	6	3	6	18	35
<i>Nowy Dziennik</i>	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
<i>Pomorski Przegląd Gospodarczy</i>	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
<i>Websites/Blogs</i>	–	–	–	–	–	2	3	5
Total	2	4	4	13	5	11	37	76

APPENDIX B

STRATEGIES AND OBSTACLES FOR IMPROVING TRUST LEVELS

The Polish media does not seem to offer any solutions for the lack of trust in Polish society. However, academic discourse suggests several strategies and obstacles concerning the gradual improvement of trust in Polish society. The increase in life satisfaction, EU integration, and effort on the part of political elites are all necessary to regain not only mutual trust, but also trust in authority and politicians on the national level. While some of these solutions are presently occurring in Poland, others will require considerable effort and cooperation.

EU Integration and Close Ties with Western Democracies

One very important factor in curing the distrust syndrome is *close integration with Western democracies*.¹²² This is crucial since Eastern European countries in transition need assistance from countries which have experience in democracy and capitalism. Poland joined the EU in 2004, and it has helped a great deal in speeding up the country's integration into Europe. EU membership, and the Western integration it represents, gives Poles the feeling that they are part of something larger than themselves: a multi-country organization with presence on the world stage. The rotation of power between the various EU countries lessens the fear of any one country becoming dominant.

The EU has produced beneficial outcomes, as Poland is one of the most EU-friendly states in the organization, and most Poles feel that being under the "umbrella" of the EU provides them with protection, opportunities to improve the country and economic stability. Sixty-five percent of Poles support the EU, and over 70% think EU membership has benefited

¹²² Sztompka, Piotr (1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 11 :1, 59.

their country.¹²³ In addition, EU funds have improved roads, education and business opportunities. In 2006, I was able to participate in an English training project for local businessmen in Olsztyn, thanks to EU funding. Rigid EU standards force various sectors of society – from farmers and banks to the police and the school system – to change the rules and align them with those of the EU (the West). Belonging to the West provides a large incentive to improve political, economic, professional and educational life. Ultimately, this leads to a more amicable living environment, providing a basis for increasing trust levels.

Increase in Life Satisfaction

Improvement in the quality of life is necessary to increase trust within a society. The European countries with the highest trust levels coincidentally also show the highest levels of life satisfaction.¹²⁴ Fortunately, Poles' life satisfaction has also been increasing in the past few years which correspond to increasing trust levels. The Eurobarometer 70 report, released in January 2009, indicates that the number of Poles satisfied with their lives (76%) is identical to the EU average. According to a recent CBOS poll, life satisfaction has been steadily improving in Poland since 1994. In that year, slightly over 40% of respondents stated they were rather satisfied with their lives, and 11% said they were very satisfied. In 2008, life satisfaction jumped to 70% - and the number of Poles who were very satisfied almost doubled, reaching 20%.¹²⁵ For 2008, the CBOS reports the highest levels of overall life satisfaction in Poland since 1994.

¹²³ Eurobarometer 70, Autumn 2008 (January 2009). Executive Summary, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70_pl_exec.pdf, accessed 5 February 2009.

¹²⁴ For more information on those countries, see Eurobarometer 70, (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70_pl_exec.pdf) and Richard Wike and Kathleen Holzwart, "Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>.

¹²⁵ Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (January 2009). Polacy o swoim zadowoleniu z życia. Opinie z lat 1994-2008." http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_005_09.PDF, accessed 16 February 09.

Interestingly, out of the many solutions Sztompka envisioned to raise trust levels,¹²⁶ material gain was not one of them – yet it seems to be an important factor in why Poles say they are happier with their lives.

Equality Before the Law

This not only restores trust in the government, but in the legal system as well. All citizens, regardless of status, must be equal before the law and be responsible for their own actions. The constitution should clearly outline laws and the structure of political, social and legal institutions, and not allow arbitrariness or possibilities to stretch the law. Unfortunately, there is still much work to be done in this area, not only in Poland, but in other post-Communist countries as well. Most importantly, the laws must be enforced. This also must be clearly outlined in some legal code. Citizens' responsibilities should not allow for exceptions, and criminals should be punished. One positive indication that those in power are not above the law was the 2008 arrest and incarceration of former Olsztyn mayor Czesław Jerzy Małkowski.

Protection of Private Property

Citizens must feel safe in order for social trust to increase. Sztompka places a high degree of importance on ensuring the protection of private property.¹²⁷ During Communism, the state owned everything. Now that Poland is progressing, it is important to assure citizens of their right to their own property. Most Poles (85%) feel safe in their place of residence, and the more often they come in contact with various legal institutions (e.g. police, courts or notaries), the more satisfied they are with their services.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Sztompka, Piotr (1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 11 :1, 57-60.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹²⁸ Kojder, Andrzej. CBOS opinion poll (March 2008). "Kontakty z prawem, ocena instytucji prawnych i poczucie bezpieczeństwa Polaków." http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_042_08.PDF, accessed 13 March 09.

In addition, the government needs to restore trust in local currency. During communism, people often used dollars, pounds or German marks because they had more purchasing power. Today, some Poles who immigrate to Western countries and return to Poland exchange pounds, Euros or dollars to zlotys to make large purchases (or they buy some items abroad because they are cheaper there than in Poland). We can only speculate as to whether trust in the currency will increase when Poland adopts the Euro. The Polish economy is weak due to the global economic slowdown, and the zloty has lost 19% of its value against the Euro since January of this year. It was presumed that Poland would enter the two-year fixed exchange rate program necessary to adopt the Euro in 2010 or 2011, but Polish economists are now saying that the program may be too risky to enter this year. Despite this, the Polish government still hopes for Euro adoption by 2012, although most economists say Poland will be ready by 2013 at the earliest.¹²⁹

Watchdog Organizations

The government should be open to the public and more transparent. The media plays an important role in this. Independent media sources, privately owned newspapers and non-governmental data collection organizations should all collaborate to provide accurate information about the actions of the government. Simply put, information about the government should be shown to the public from outside, not inside, sources. “Watchdog” organizations, especially from other countries or international units should monitor reform, and constant monitoring and analyzing of public moods should become commonplace. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) monitor elections in Poland, publish reports, and analyze election effectiveness.

¹²⁹ McQuaid, David and Perry, Joellen (19 February 2009). “Poland Looks to the Euro.” Wall Street Journal Online, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123498793846615269.html>, accessed 25 February 2009.

While many political events still go on behind closed doors, public opinion polling has increased dramatically in Poland since the 1990s. A large deal of sources for this thesis, in fact, comes from the Polish Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS). Survey results are helpful, according to Piotr Sztompka, because they help citizens become aware of each others' feelings, and eliminates what he calls "pluralistic ignorance."¹³⁰

Pluralism

A variety of choices, from politics to consumer products and cultural life, provides diversity of experiences. Consumer choices should include local and foreign-made products. Today, there are a variety of products available for purchase, both domestically and internationally produced. Embracing any ethnic or religious minorities, such as Ukrainians, Germans or Belarusians, lessens the fear of the unknown. While Poland is a quite homogeneous society, some ethnic minorities continue to preserve their culture and pass it on to the next generation in the form of cultural clubs, church groups, and festivals. Unfortunately, other groups, like the Roma, remain marginalized. There are a variety of political parties in Poland, although there is not much difference between the platforms of most of them. Slightly over half of Poles (54%) do not trust political parties, and 32% do not trust the government.¹³¹ One significant reason for this is the Communist legacy. Perhaps with time, the government and the citizens' disposition toward it will improve.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (February 2008). "Zaufanie społeczne w latach 2002-2008." http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_030_08.PDF.

People with “Special Access” to the System Should Try to Gain Public Trust

Trust should be restored in those with special “access” to the system, such as doctors, lawyers, government clerks, mayors and politicians.¹³² People in these positions should take special care to be willing to help the public, and exhibit honesty, sincerity and concern instead of indifference or dishonesty. There should be constant evaluation of government employees and courses on how to improve workplace conditions and conduct. The hiring process for positions of “high social visibility” (such as political office) should be rigorous and highly selective.¹³³ As we have seen in previous sections, this is unfortunately still not the case in Poland, where a former leader of a racist-nationalist youth organization (Roman Giertych, Education Minister), a pig farmer (Andrzej Lepper) and twin brothers (Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński) have all held, or continue to hold, high positions in the government.

¹³² Giddens, Anthony (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 90.

¹³³ Sztompka, Piotr (1996). “Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland.” *International Sociology* 11 (1), 59.

WORKS CITED

Articles and Speeches

- Deak, Istvan (31 May 2001). "Heroes and Victims," *New York Review of Books*, 48:9.
- Hardin, Russell (1993). "The Street Level Epistemology of Trust." *Politics and Society* 21:4, 505-529.
- Millard, Frances (2007). "The 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland." *Notes on Recent Elections, Electoral Studies* 26: 1.
- Holc, Janine (Autumn, 2002). "Working Through Jan Gross's 'Neighbors,'" *Slavic Review* 61:3, 453-459.
- Krzemiński, Ireneusz (18 October 2005). "Wybór fundamentalny," *Rzeczpospolita*, in Aleks Szczerbiak (2007). 'Social Poland' Defeats 'Liberal Poland'? The September-October 2005 Polish Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23: 2, 203-232.
- Kwaśniewski, Aleksander (2001). "Address by President of Poland Aleksander Kwaśniewski at the Ceremonies in Jedwabne Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Jedwabne Tragedy on 10 July 2001," in Polonsky, Antony and Michlic, Joanna (eds.) (2004). *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 131-132.
- Szajnok, Bożena. "The Kielce Pogrom," *Intermarium* 1:3, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Kielce.html>.
- Sztompka, Piotr (1996). "Trust and Emerging Democracy: Lessons from Poland." *International Sociology* 11: 1, 37-62.
- Tarkowska, Elżbieta (1994). "The Cultural Responses to Permanent Instability," in Aldona Jawłowska and Marian Kempny (eds.) *Cultural Dilemmas of Post-Communist Societies*. Warsaw: IFiS Publishers.
- Tworzecki, Hubert (2008). "A Disaffected New Democracy? Identities, institutions and civic engagement in post-communist Poland," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41:1, 47-62.

Books

- Biskupski, M.B. (2000). *The History of Poland*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Curtis, Glenn E. (ed.) (1994). *Poland: A Case Study*. Washington, D.C. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress.

- Davies, Norman (2005). *God's Playground. A History of Poland in Two Volumes*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Davies, Norman (1986). *Heart of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gross, Jan (2000). *Sąsiedzi: Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*. Sejny, Poland: Fundacja Pograniczne.
- Jawłowska, Aldona and Kempny, Marian (eds.) (1994). *Cultural Dilemmas of Post-Communist Societies*. Warsaw: IFiS Publishers.
- Kochanowicz, Jacek (2004). "Trust, Confidence and Social Capital in Poland: A Historical Perspective," in Ivana Marková, (ed.) *Trust and Democratic Transition in Post-Communist Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Łukowski, Jerzy and Zawadzki, Hubert (2006). *The Concise History of Poland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Łukowski, Jerzy (1999). *The Partitions of Poland*. London: Longman Press.
- Polonsky, Antony and Michlic, Joanna (2004). *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Rothschild, Joseph and Wingfield, Nancy M. (2000). *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tworzecki, Hubert (2003). *Learning to Choose: Electoral Politics in East-Central Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Uslaner, Eric M. and Badescu, Gabriel (2004). "Honesty, Trust and Legal Norms in the Transition to Democracy: Why Bo Rothstein is Better Able to Explain Sweden than Romania," in János Kornai, Bo Rothstein, Susan Rose-Ackerman (eds.) *Creating Social Trust in Post-Socialist Transition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Uslaner, Eric M. (2008). "Trust as a Moral Value," in Castiglione, Dario, van Deth, Jan W. and Wolleb, Guglielmo (eds.) *The Handbook of Social Capital*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Interviews and Conversations

- Knap, Magda (2007). Private Conversation, Mikołajki, Poland.
- Kowalski, Andrzej and Czerwiński, Mariusz (November 2006). Private conversation, Olsztyn, Poland.
- Jaworska, Zofia (2006). Private Conversation, Poznań, Poland.
- Nowak, Joanna (June 2007). Interview, Olsztyn, Poland.

Media and News Articles

European Jewish Press (3 July 2006). "Poland Marks 60th Anniversary of Kielce Pogrom Against the Jews," <http://www.ejpress.org/article/news/9420>.

Janecki, Stanisław (2000). "Polski Kompleks." *Wprost*, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/1237/POLSKI-KOMPLEKS>.

Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena (5 March 2007). "Kolarska-Bobińska: Minimum Zaufania." *Polityka*, <http://www.polityka.pl/kolarska-bobinska-minimum-zaufania/Text01,1430,211837,18/>.

Kołodziejczyk, Marcin (20 October 2007). "Ile obywatel w obywatelu." *Polityka*, <http://www.polityka.pl/archive/do/registry/secure/showArticle?id=3356658>.

Kulish, Nicholas (21 August 2008). "Georgian Crisis Brings Attitude Change to a Flush Poland," *New York Times Online*, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/21/world/europe/21poland.html?_r=1

"Polacy nie wierzą w siebie," (2009). *Elbląg24 Online*, http://www.elblag24.pl/elblag,polacy_nie_wierza_w_siebie,15838,0,0,0.html?m=394&g=1

Purvis, Andrew (23 August 2007). "Oh, Brother: Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczynski," *Time Online*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1655447,00.html>.

Czapiński, Janusz (2008). "Rzeczpospolita nieufnych." *Wprost*, number 12/2008 (1317), <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/125760/Rzeczpospolita-nieufnych/>.

McQuaid, David and Perry, Joellen (19 February 2009). "Poland Looks to the Euro." *Wall Street Journal Online*, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123498793846615269.html>.

Miłoszewski, Zygmunt (29 October 2006). "Wściekłość Polska." *Newsweek Polska*, 43/2006.

"Poland's crumbling government," (25 September 2006). *The Economist Online*, http://www.economist.com/agenda/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=7960110.

Sachno, Sergiusz and Sijka, Agnieszka (2008). "Dlaczego jesteśmy szczęśliwi." *Wprost*, number 29/2008, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/134005/Dlaczego-jestesmy-szczesliwi/>.

Śpiewak, Paweł (19 February 2005). "Dzień z życia Polaka." *Wprost*, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/73658/Dzien-z-zycia-Polaka/?O=73658&pg=1>.

Sztompka, Piotr (25 October 2008). "Odbudować piramidę." *Polityka*, number 43 (2677), <http://www.polityka.pl/archive/do/registry/secure/showArticle?id=3360908>.

Ziemkiewicz, Rafał (2001). "Siedem polskich grzechów głównych." *Wprost*, number 51/52/2001 (995), <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/11871/Siedem-polskich-grzechow-glownych/>.

Public Opinion Polls and Data Reports

Boguszewski, Rafał. CBOS opinion poll (August 2008). "Pogarszające się nastroje Polaków," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_127_08.PDF

CBOS Polish Public Opinion (May 1999). "Those Who Won and Those Who Lost – Opinions on Changes after 1989," http://cbos.pl/PL/publikacje/public_opinion/1999/05_1999.pdf.

Cybulska, Agnieszka. CBOS opinion poll (September 2007). "Siła preferencji politycznych, alternatywy wyborcze i elektoraty negatywne," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_149_07.PDF.

Feliksiak, Michał. CBOS opinion poll (July 2008). "Demokracja – Oceny, Postawy, Perspektywy," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_119_08.PDF.

Kojder, Andrzej. CBOS opinion poll (March 2008). "Kontakty z prawem, ocena instytucji prawnych i poczucie bezpieczeństwa Polaków," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_042_08.PDF.

OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report, http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2008/03/30354_en.pdf.

Pankowski, Krzysztof. CBOS opinion poll (July 1999). "Pełne półki i poczucie wolności - bilans zmian w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/1999/K_115_99.PDF.

Pankowski, Krzysztof. CBOS opinion poll (December 1999). "Czesi, Węgrzy i Polacy o zmianach po roku 1989," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/1999/K_199_99.PDF.

Roguska, Beata. CBOS opinion poll (May 2006). "Stosunek do rządu po otworzeniu koalicji PiS- Samoobrona-LPR," http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2006/K_087_06.PDF.

Roguska, Beata. CBOS opinion poll (January 2009). "Stosunek do rządu w styczniu," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_009_09.PDF.

Strzeszewski, Michał. CBOS opinion poll (January 2008). "Polityk roku 2007 w Polsce i na świecie," http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_008_08.PDF.

Strzeszewski, Michał. CBOS Public Opinion Poll (December 2008). "Stosunek Polaków do innych narodów," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_193_08.PDF.

Szczepańska, Joanna. CBOS opinion poll (May 2007). "Czy można ufać ludziom," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_087_07.PDF.

Terracciano A., Abdel-Khalek, A. M., et.al. (7 October 2005). "National Character Does Not Reflect Mean Personality Trait Levels in 49 Cultures," *Science* 310:96, pp. 96-100. <http://www.sciencemag.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/cgi/content/short/310/5745/96>.

Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (February 2008). "Zaufanie społeczne w latach 2002-2008," http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_030_08.PDF.

Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (January 2009). "Polacy o swoim zadowoleniu z życia. Opinie z lat 1994-2008," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_005_09.PDF.

Wciórka, Bogna. CBOS opinion poll (December 2008). "Samopoczucie Polaków w latach 1988-2008," http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_190_08.PDF.

Wenzel, Michał. CBOS opinion poll (August 2007). “Zaufanie do polityków w sierpniu tuż przed rozwiązaniem koalicji,” http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_128_07.PDF.

Wike, Richard and Holzwart, Kathleen (15 April 2008). “Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low.” <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/799/global-social-trust-crime-corruption>.

Websites

European Social Survey <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>

Gazeta Wyborcza <http://www.gazetawyborcza.pl>

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) website, Polish Parliamentary Elections, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2255_E.htm.

Krytyka http://krytyka.org/pokaz_artykul.php?id=30

Newsweek Polska <http://www.newsweek.pl>

Polityka <http://www.polityka.pl>

Polish National Electoral Commission, Results for the 2005 Polish Parliamentary Election, <http://www.wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/EN/WYN/F/index.htm>.

Polish National Electoral Commission, Results for the 2007 Polish Parliamentary Election, <http://www.wybory2007.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/EN/WYN/W/index.htm>.

Program 2007 Prawa i Sprawiedliwości, <http://www.pis.org.pl/doc.php?d=unit&id=144>.

Rzeczpospolita <http://www.rp.pl>

World Values Survey <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>

Wprost <http://www.wprost.pl>

History of *Polityka*, http://www.polityka.pl/polityka/index.jsp?place=Lead30&news_cat_id=1398&news_id=210806&layout=16&forum_id=8504&fpage=Threads&page=text.