

Economic Imagination and Support For Parliamentary Democracy In Poland

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Abstract

Purpose: The article introduces a concept of the economic imagination, describes economic public attitudes and discusses the character of the contemporary economic imagination of Poles.

Methodology: Representative survey conducted on the stratified random sample of 1022 adult respondents by means of CAPI (computer assisted personal interview). Statistical analysis of data.

Findings: The features perceived by public as economically beneficial to the entire economy, particular enterprises and individuals have been ranked by the representative survey and statistically grouped into more general clusters. Those considered as good for the economy are grouped into such factors as “investment and competition”, “statism (etatism)” and “progressive taxation”. The features considered as beneficial for the enterprises are grouped into “human, social and economic capital”, “law obedience and good social relations” and “limited free market”. Personal characteristics perceived as beneficial for individual’s economic success are grouped into “honesty, perseverance and good social relations”, “skills and diligence” and “nepotism and instrumentalism”. Intensity as well as determinants of such general value loaded convictions, and their impact on acceptance of democracy have been revealed as well.

The implications: Economic imagination has to be analysed as an important factor of socio-economic system’s legitimization.

Originality: Distinction and empirical definition of economic attitudinal syndromes at three different levels: macro-economic, enterprise and individual constitute a novelty in socio-economic research. Discussion of their determinants and wider implications constitute a new contribution to the theory of social legitimization.

Keywords: economic imagination, free market, democracy, liberalism, interventionism, attitudes

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Opening Remarks

The notion of the “economic imagination” is a transposition of the title of a well-known book by C.W. Mills: “The Sociological Imagination” (1959). Economic imagination differs from the sociological one not only in its scope. Life of a contemporary society, also in the economic context, is no longer governed by uniform and consistent systems of values, standards and ideas. Instead we are witnessing a number of loosely connected subsystems, which can and should be empirically defined. Each such subsystem contains its unique and untranslatable code of meanings and evaluations distinguishing it from others and determining modes of behaviour (Ziółkowski, 2004). In this context, the economic imagination should be understood as an area of social awareness including ideas on “what is, and what should be the purpose of economy, how it operates and how it should operate, what are, and what should be the relations of subordination and interdependence among different groups taking part in the management process, adjudicating what is right, wise and equitable. Economic imagination is something more than just commonplace economic knowledge moulded from bits and pieces of academic science obtained from different sources, combined with economic news and comments broadcasted by mass media. The fundamental factors taking part in shaping of this section of social awareness include direct observations and experience of individuals and teams, moral and religious concerns, political attitudes and everyday human emotions: anger, hope, bitterness, discouragement and fear. Therefore, it is an unusually heterogeneous, changeable and inconsistent mix. Nonetheless, social psychologists commonly cherish a well-documented opinion that people strongly crave for internal consistency and mutual compatibility of their beliefs. Therefore, certain parts of economic imagination tend to verify others to ensure better consistency of the entire system of thought.” (Koźmiński, 1982, s. 8). However, more interesting than consistency of economic imagination is the co-occurrence of certain elements which are regarded as mutually conflicting. Our aim is to reconstruct configurations of various elements of economic imagination concerning national economy, enterprises and individuals, to look at its consistence and its relation to pro-democracy attitudes. There are no comparable data to repeat such an analysis for other countries, so our results reconstruct the way of economic thinking of the Poles.

So understood economic imagination obviously contains axiological and postulative components. Hence, it is not surprising that it has spurred a number of speculations, or even ideological disputes. “Neoliberals”, “neocorporatists”, “statists”, “socialists” or other “prophets” make references to the so-called *vox populi*, and to apparently prevailing attitudes, opinions and views on economic management processes, but seldom know what people really think.

It seems rather obvious that economic imagination can be treated as a specific indicator, or “touchstone” and, at the same time, a precondition for the transformation and shaping of the market economy, which – as it was rightly observed in the 1st half of the 20thc by Karl Polanyi (1957, s. 57) – calls for the emergence of the “market-oriented society”. Functioning of the market must be legitimised by the society. Its social consequences such as diversification of social strata,

mechanisms of shaping and “circulation” of the elites, institutionalisation of property and trade, role of money, etc. must be approved of. The market also needs its “qualified economic actors” whose actions would reflect at least partial understanding of its mechanisms, thus making them predictable and rational within predefined limits.

The role of economic imagination in management processes seems to be relatively obvious. First of all, it defines (or, at least helps to define) political preferences, including an attitude towards democracy. The best evidence was the recent (fortunately, only partially and temporarily successful) attempt at juxtaposing the so-called “solidary Poland” with the “liberal” one. Secondly, economic imagination shapes strategies and behaviours of individual and collective economic actors: consumers and households; entrepreneurs and enterprises; investors; self-governments and central state authorities which try to “pamper” the public opinion in hopes of succeeding in elections. Hence, both diagnosing the level of economic imagination of a given society and its particular groups, and the recognition of its determinants, are of much relevance. Thirdly, economic imagination is a peculiar kind of “software” which allows for processing continuously incoming information i.e. for better or poorer understanding of the surrounding world by economic actors, and, hence, determining their strategies and chances to succeed.

Before starting an empirical study, the core components of the notion of “economic imagination”, which could be assessed by measurable indicators, had to be identified.

- First of all, economic imagination depends on the level of trust which determines all transaction costs and processes, attitudes towards property or investments (including personal efforts and commitment) and savings. According to Fukuyama (1997), Sztompka (2007) and many other authors, trust is the cornerstone of the democratic “management society” and the mainspring of development. Several empirical research have pointed out to powerful correlations existing between the level of trust, on the one hand, and the quality of democracy and its ratings, on the other (e.g. Słomczyński and Janicka, 2009). However, according to some, the majority of economic relationships are based on distrust (e.g. Zaheer, NcEvily and Perone, 1998). All in all, “trust as such” is barely ever measurable in practice. Instead it should rather be viewed in the context of specific institutions (i.e. the state, market, parliamentary democracy, self-government, banks, judicial system), mechanisms (e.g. scientific, technological and educational progress, competition, state interventions, tax progression), social roles (e.g. managers, entrepreneurs, civil servants, physicians) or, finally, individual organisations and persons. Trust is also connected with an expectation of specific results (i.e. economic development, professional and financial success of an individual or business success an enterprise). It is like “betting upon” other people’s actions (behaviours), either directly or indirectly (Sztompka, 2007, p. 69–70).
- Secondly, people hardly ever remain indifferent towards economy and its mechanisms, since these factors substantially affect their individual and collective histories, successes and defeats, or even tragedies. That is why attitudes towards economy and its mechanisms often

assume the form of ideological self-identification. According to this principle, people define themselves as “communists”, “socialists”, “liberals”, “left-“ or “right-wingers”, etc. The actual perceptions and emotional burden of such “self-identification labels” and their behavioural consequences are a separate issue. They affect both the way in which the roles of various “economic agents” – such as employers, investors, local authorities, government agencies, financial brokers etc. – are performed, and political activity.

- Thirdly, another key element of economic imagination are the perceived determinants of economic success of countries, enterprises, regions or individuals. Such perceptions basically serve two types of functions: on the one hand, they present a unique “success recipe” by providing guidelines (both at individual and collective levels), and on the other, they help to alleviate cognitive dissonance in case of failures, and offer various “justifications” or “excuses”.
- Fourthly and finally, what is important for everyone interested in long-term shaping the behaviour of economic actors, are the factors determining economic imagination: both the objective ones (i.e. age, gender, education, income, place of residence, etc.) and, perhaps most importantly, the connections between views and convictions i.e. awareness-based determinants of relatively consistent clusters of economic views.

In our study, we tried to touch upon all the issues discussed above, even though we mainly focused on items three and four.

| The Starting Point

We are obviously aware of the fact that even though the very concept of economic imagination has not been, with only few exceptions (Kostera, 1996), applied in empirical studies or in theoretical analyses, the subject matter presented above was the topic of studies and analyses conducted by Polish sociologists, economists and political scientists mainly specialising in systemic transformation processes. We will try to briefly summarise their conclusions, mainly focusing on those which have been empirically grounded, but disregarding all postulative programmes and ideological divagations. It will be a concise, fragmentary and, to a large extent, subjective presentation which should, by no means, be read as a comprehensive and holistic description.

What strikes us the most is heterogeneousness, changeability and sometimes an apparent inconsistency of specific components of economic imagination (in terms of their temporal perspectives, subject matter and social groups). For example, since mid-90s numerous analyses have shown a considerable and almost systematic increase in satisfaction of Poles with the quality of life and income (e.g. Koralewicz and Zagórski, 2009; Zagórski, 2010). Śpiewak in his slightly earlier paper (2005, p. 178) referred to the “studies over self-perception of Poles which have shown that nearly half of respondents (46 percent) believe that their positions on the social ladder have not changed, 17 and 38 percent of them feel that they have advanced, or have been degraded,

respectively”. Even if we assume that the sense of advancement and satisfaction are the two different issues, it is difficult to view them as being completely unrelated. The only explanation of their inconsistency would be the time shift or “autonomy” of both subjective reactions. There is a number of similar examples serving to prove that, especially at the time of transformation, the study of social awareness may bring about inconsistent findings and premature overgeneralisations. All in all, we will take our best efforts to avoid arriving at contradictory or rash conclusions, while discussing contradictory public opinions.

The majority of commentators of empirical studies devoted to economic imagination components agree that contemporary Poles cherish ambivalent opinions about the two key regulators of economic life i.e. the market and the democratic system. “Both these institutions are highly valued, but at the same time, their operations cause dissatisfaction. However, their certain operating dimensions have been assessed favourably” (Cichomski, Kozek and Morawski, 2001, p. 164). The acceptance of the market and democracy, which are regarded as inseparable and indispensable regulators of complex modern societies (Morawski, 1991) appeared very quickly, together with the systemic change, and then its level stabilised or even slightly dropped down – in some dimensions at least – over subsequent years (Frentzel-Zagórska and Zagórski, 1993; Kolarska-Bobińska, 1994; Badora and Wenzel, 2000). A good example of this phenomenon are the income differences whose acceptance from the perspective of general economic benefits has increased right after the systemic transformation and somewhat dropped down afterwards. Even though Poles approve of such inequality as a driver of economic development, at the same time, and to a greater extent, they also believe that the gaps are too immense and ought to be reduced (Falkowska and Wciórka, 2000; Wenzel and Zagórski, 2005). While accepting the widening revenue gaps, they simultaneously believe that such gaps actually grow much faster than acceptable (Kelley and Zagórski, 2005). This is an explanation for the apparent inconsistency between the approval of inequalities that are typical of free market, and egalitarian claims for reduction of such inequalities.

We are also witnessing a sustaining gap between the constantly high level of acceptance of democracy perceived as an ideal system, and changeable but rather negative assessments of the current functioning of Poland’s democracy and its key institutions (Strzeszewski and Wenzel, 2000; Zagórski, 2001; 2010; Roguska, 2007). A similar inconsistency in the field of economy was noticed by Federowicz (2004, p. 67), who divided the studied population into: “satisfied market supporters”, “dissatisfied market supporters” and “dissatisfied market opponents”. Of topmost importance for economy is the second group, whose members are aware of malfunctioning of the market, but at the same time, regard it as the most fundamental guarantee of the proper functioning of the entire economic “system”.

The correlations (or an absence thereof) existing between evaluations of the current functioning of the political and economic system and legitimisation of such system a perfect unity, as well as between views about its specific aspects, constitute an important component of the social

awareness, which calls for more detailed empirical studies. This issue will be the topic of the majority of our analyses presented herein.

Identification of the correlations existing between social and political orientations, on the one hand, and economic views, on the other, was the object of comparative research conducted in post-communist countries. Jershina (1999, p. 196–197) has formulated several conclusions of this research:

1. Leftism, authoritarianism and nationalism correlate negatively with entrepreneurship, but do not represent strong antinomies.
2. The entrepreneurship levels are relatively equal across all countries, with the highest scores reported in Poland and Romania. This factor is neither determined by the reforming processes, nor by individual traits such as age or education.
3. Age and education do not determine the prevalence of entrepreneurship among the elites. This correlation is only dimly marked when we look at the whole society: younger and better educated individuals tend to be somewhat more venturesome.
4. The elites are considerably less leftish and slightly more venturesome. In this respect, the attitudes represented by societies and elites within nations seem to converge.
5. Among the four social segments – i.e. change protagonists, passive experts and quiet citizens – the protagonists are generally less leftish, less authoritarian and more venturesome.

An interesting analytical outlook on attitudes, views and opinions on the functioning of economy has been presented by Morawski (Cichomski, Kozek and Morawski, 2001, p. 166–167). “Neither the conflict-based, nor cooperative perspective would be, in my opinion, really appropriate for analysing the situation in Poland. Therefore, applying a game-based perspective appears to me as being more adequate”. The game would allow both for cooperation and conflict, depending on the actual situation and strategy chosen by its participants. In terms of its results, one party’s victory would not necessarily have to imply the other party’s loss. It is assumed that the majority of participants accept the “no loss, no gain” principle. The relative game participation pressure depends on the two types of factors i.e. mental inclination to take risk and look for “extraordinary” wins (entrepreneurship) the need to receive at least minimum gratification enabling survival at a socially accepted level (Kozmiński and Zawisłak, 1982, p. 70–71). The rules of the game are constantly evaluated by its participants, and changed, if necessary. Both participating in the game, and controlling it entail uncertainty and risk. Hence, of key importance is the level of understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game, but also its uncertainty and risk, and most of all, the awareness of its goal. All these aspects call for empirical recognition.

To summarise the above ruminations on the current state of knowledge about perceptions of contemporary Poles, it can be added that it would be worthwhile to apply an empirical tool in order to arrange and ensemble such views into a whole. The notion and concept of economic imagination seem to provide such opportunities:

- First of all, they allow for identifying the key components of economic imagination i.e. views, opinions and attitudes towards economic success of individuals, enterprises and the whole society;

- Secondly, they imply looking for correlations between such components, and measuring the power of such correlations i.e. identification of certain orientations and modes (clusters) of economic thoughts.

The results obtained in the course of such studies may be subject to various interpretations, also from the point of view of the game, which may facilitate identification of orientations and strategies of specific economic agents.

Research Description

The analysed data was derived from a representative survey. The set of questions about the perceived benefits for the entire national economy, specific enterprises and individuals was incorporated into a monthly CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center, Warsaw) research on “Current Problems and Events” in March 2010, conducted on a stratified random sample including 1022 adult respondents. The survey was conducted by the means of CAPI (Computer Assisted Individual Interview). If necessary, the analyses were also based upon responses to other questions contained in the same CBOS survey and standard socio-demographic data.

| Results

Factors perceived as beneficial to economy

The question about the factors which are perceived by general public as beneficial to economy referred to seventeen attributes, all of which being more frequently viewed by Poles as beneficial than unbeneficial. However, these attributes differed from one another in terms of frequency of their positive and negative assessments.

The respondents were asked whether specific features of economy are beneficial to its functioning. There were five possible replies: “always beneficial”, “more frequently beneficial than unbeneficial”; “sometimes beneficial and sometimes unbeneficial”; “more frequently unbeneficial” and “always unbeneficial”. A number of respondents who did not cherish any opinions in this area responded: “difficult to say”.

Since many attributes listed in the survey are relatively uncontroversial, we have assumed that the proportions of extremely positive answers (“always beneficial”) are the most indicative of diversification of views. When analysing such data, it is also advisable to use an indicator specifying to what extent the number of positive answers – both extreme and balanced ones – prevails over negative assessments. The high value of this relative indicator, which does not take into account ambivalent (intermediate) and “difficult to say” answers, communicates rather uncontroversial character, and at the same time, high level of acceptance of a given standpoint.

Table 1 | Features of economy perceived as beneficial to its development

Features	Always beneficial (%)	Proportion of "beneficial" ^{a)} to "detrimental" ^{b)} answers
Substantial investments into scientific and technical development	57	84.0
Government investments	43	24.7
Domestic private business investments	41	24.7
Foreign investments (influx of foreign capital)	33	10.8
Increase in private savings	32	9.4
Strong connections with global economy	31	12.4
Independence from foreign economies	31	5.7
Strong competition between enterprises	30	9.1
Reducing income inequalities in the society	30	7.8
High taxation of most prosperous enterprises/individuals	30	4.7
State support of less successful enterprises and industries	28	7.8
High taxation of most profitable enterprises	25	3.1
Higher private spending on consumer goods and services	24	3.5
Substantial state expenditure on welfare purposes	24	3.3
State ownership of enterprises	18	1.8
State control of economic processes	16	2.4
Minimum of state control over economy	13	1.6

^{a)} Always beneficial, or more frequently beneficial than detrimental.
^{b)} Always detrimental, or more frequently detrimental than beneficial.

The overall majority of Poles (57%) consider substantial expenditure in the area of science and technology as always beneficial to economic growth. This ratio soars up to 84% if we add the answers: "more frequently beneficial than unbeneficial". Due to the fact that only 1% of respondents regarded substantial expenditure in the area of science and technology as more frequently unbeneficial than beneficial, and nobody considered them as always unbeneficial, the relative indicator was exceptionally high i.e. 84.0 (84:1). This result should be kept in mind especially in the context of very low actual investments into R&D and new technologies in Poland, as compared to other well-developed free market economies.

The following three attributes most frequently considered as always beneficial to economy include public, private domestic and foreign investments. The foreign investments are however perceived as more controversial than domestic ones.

Poles are also aware of economic benefits stemming from the increase in private savings. The views about international integrations are more polarised. Nearly one-third of all respondents believe that strong connections with global economy are always beneficial. However, opinions that the maximum independence from foreign economies is always beneficial, are equally widespread.

Powerful competition, which comes next, enjoys nearly the same level of approval as various aspects of national interventionism (levelling income gaps, support of less thriving enterprises or industries by the state, higher taxation of the wealthiest individuals and businesses and substantial welfare spending). Both competition and various aspects of interventionism are regarded as always beneficial to economy by 24–30% of all respondents. The increase in consumer spending has been rated similarly.

The least frequently mentioned economic benefits included state ownership of enterprises and the leading role of the state in the economic system, as well as extreme liberalism understood as the minimalist role of the state in economic management. However, even these attributes of an economic system are almost twice more frequently viewed as beneficial than unbeneficial.

On average, neither extreme statism, nor liberalism have been definitely rejected by Poles, although such views are not highly popular. The most widespread are convictions of economic benefits stemming from high investments into science, as well as investments made by domestic, or foreign-based entities.

The economic attributes cannot be easily grouped into uniform categories by the frequencies of appreciating their role in economic development. Nonetheless, such grouping is possible by means of a factor analysis based on correlations between attributes (see Table 2).

Mutual correlations between individual views allow us to distinguish three general dimensions of attitudes towards economy. This distinction was done by factor analysis (more particularly by principal component analysis with varimax rotation). The first general dimension (factor, composite concept) concerns a conviction that high investment outlays, including those intended for scientific R&D purposes, as well as free competition, are beneficial to economy. The second area encompasses a number of statist and pro-welfare views which favourably see the state's interventions into economic processes, its redistributive role aiming at minimising social differences and allocating substantial resources for welfare purposes. The third group of opinions emphasises the need for high progressive taxation, both in the case of enterprises and individuals. A small number out of all attributes analysed in the study have not been included into any general domain, since opinions about their impacts upon economy did not visibly correlate with opinions about the remaining attributes.

Table 2 | Composite (generalised) dimensions of the features perceived as beneficial to economic development (Results of factor analysis)

Factor I Investments and competition		Factor II Statism		Factor III Progressive taxation	
Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}	Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}	Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}
High private domestic business investments	.84	State control of economy	.67	High taxation of most profitable enterprises	.84
High foreign investments (influx of foreign capital)	.76	State support of less successful enterprises and industries	.67	High taxation of most prosperous individuals	.82
State investments	.65	State ownership of enterprises	.66	-	-
Substantial investments into scientific and technical development	.54	Substantial state expenditure on welfare	.64	-	-
Strong competition between enterprises	.53	Reduction of income inequalities in the society	.61	-	-

^{a)} Pearson's correlation coefficients between the features and general dimensions (factors)

Factors perceived as beneficial to enterprises

Just like in the case of attributes beneficial to the entire economy, we also asked about the attributes that were perceived as beneficial to individual enterprises. The features of an enterprise perceived as beneficial to its operations may differ from those features which are viewed as beneficial to the entire economy.

The great majority of respondents believe that such attributes as education, skills and creativity of employees and managers are always beneficial to an enterprise. Such opinions are cherished by 70% of Poles.

Such attributes as: commitment and engagement of staff, easy access to domestic and international markets, modern technology / organisational structure and effective advertising have been described as always beneficial only slightly less frequently. Nearly no one perceives such attributes as unbeneficial, and ca. two-thirds of all respondents claim that they are always beneficial.

The third group of positive attributes of an enterprise includes identification of employees with their workplace and full compliance with the binding regulations. These features are immediately followed by the size of the owned capital and accessibility of loans. Ca. half of all Poles regard such attributes as beneficial for enterprises.

Table 3 | Features of enterprises perceived as beneficial to their successful functioning

Features	Always beneficial (%)	Proportion of "beneficial" ^{a)} to "detrimental" ^{b)} answers
Education and high qualification of employees	74	91.0
Well-developed managerial skills	71	91.0
Employees' abilities and inventiveness	72	90.0
Owners' and managers' skills and inventiveness	70	90.0
Commitment and engagement of employees	66	88.0
Easy access to domestic and international markets	65	88.0
Use of modern technological and organisational solutions	64	87.0
Effective advertising and promotion	64	86.0
Employees' identification with their workplace	51	40.5
Size of the capital owned	50	25.7
Full compliance with the binding regulations	48	39.0
Easy access to loans	47	25.7
Positive relationships between company's owners/managers, public administration, workers and politicians	42	11.9
Participation of employees and trade unions in management	33	7.1
Inclination to take risks by owners/managers	15	5.5
State influence on operations of enterprise	19	1.9
Limitation of competition between enterprises	17	0.9
Limitation of the employees' salaries	10	0.4

^{a)} Always beneficial, or more frequently beneficial than detrimental.
^{b)} Always detrimental, or more frequently detrimental than beneficial.

The influence of the state upon an enterprise and limitation of competition have been most rarely indicated as beneficial to enterprises. This confirms the argument about the weak support of the state interventionism in Poland formulated on the basis of views about the entire economy. At the same time, Poles do not see any benefits that could be derived by enterprises from limitation of employee salaries. Limitation of salaries has been perceived nearly twice as frequently as unbeneficial than beneficial.

The factor analysis allows for reconstructing general, diversified, but at the same time, internally consistent views on operations of an enterprise, just like in the case of the views on the entire economy.

Table 4 | Composite (generalised) dimensions of the features perceived as beneficial to successful functioning of enterprises (results of factor analysis)

<i>Factor I</i> Human, social and economic capital		<i>Factor II</i> Law obedience and good relationships with employees and authorities		<i>Factor III</i> Absence of free market	
Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}	Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}	Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}
Employees' abilities and inventiveness	.84	Participation of employees and trade unions in management	.72	Limitation of employees' salaries	.75
Commitment and engagement of staff	.85	Full compliance with the binding regulations	.71	Limitation of competition between enterprises	.70
Owners' and managers' abilities and inventiveness	.87	Good relationships between owners/managers, workers, public administration, and politicians	.63	State influence upon operations of an enterprise	.62
Well-developed managerial skills	.71	-	-	-	-
Employees' identification with their workplace	.69	-	-	-	-
Size of the capital owned	0.66	-	-	-	-
Effective advertising and promotion	.65	-	-	-	-
Education and high qualification of employees	.59	-	-	-	-

^{a)} Pearson's correlation coefficients between the features and general dimensions (factors).

The first generalised syndrome (dimension) of views on the attributes beneficial to an enterprise may be labelled as the appreciation of human, social and economic capital. It consists in perceiving such corporate attributes as high education and skills of employees and managers, identification of employees with their workplace and the size of capital as beneficial. The second internally correlated group of attributes perceived as beneficial to an enterprise is more diversified. It includes participation of employees in management processes, full regulatory compliance and good relations with administration workers and politicians. All these attributes are characteristic for the trilateral system of labour relations (i.e. employer, employees and the state). The third group includes state interventionism and – quite surprisingly – limitation of employee salaries. Hence, in the light of the past political history, such system may be described as a socialist or anti-free market one.

Factors perceived as beneficial in view of personal success

Poles highly appreciate education and science. High investments into scientific and technical development are most frequently regarded as beneficial to economy. Education and broadly defined

qualifications of employees and managers are ranked the highest among all factors ensuring the proper operations of enterprises, while education and qualifications improvement have been ranked as the second and third attributes guaranteeing personal success, according to the respondents. The ability to cope in various situations has been mentioned only slightly more often. The subsequently ranked attributes include a number of positive personal traits such as: diligence, persistence and honesty.

Table 5 | Features perceived as beneficial to personal success

Features	Always beneficial (%)	Proportion of "beneficial" ^{a)} to "detrimental" ^{b)} answers
Ability to cope well in different situations	85	97.0
Good education	84	95.0
Extra professional trainings	83	96.0
Diligence	80	95.0
Perseverance and ability to overcome challenges	76	96.0
Honesty	72	89.0
Being in good terms with one's acquaintances and colleagues	63	92.0
Being in good terms with one's superiors	63	92.0
Achievement attitude	63	89.0
Ability to show oneself in a positive light	61	89.0
Influential acquaintances	61	43.5
Helping others	57	87.0
Good social background	45	23.0
Ability to circumvent law	39	4.9
Being focused upon one's own interests	34	5.6
Social/political activity	33	9.2

^{a)} Always beneficial, or more frequently beneficial than detrimental.

^{b)} Always detrimental, or more frequently detrimental than beneficial.

The subsequent factors which, according to the respondents, facilitate personal success are: good relations with one's acquaintances, colleagues and superiors. Insignificantly fewer respondents emphasise an importance of being go-ahead, capable of self-promotion and having influential acquaintances.

Such attribute as 'helping others' has been ranked relatively low and followed by such factors as: good social background, ability to circumvent law and taking care of own interests.

A demonstrative trait of Polish thinking is the fact that the lowest rank of all factors which, according to respondents, contribute to personal success has been attained by social or political activity.

Similarly to attributes perceived as beneficial to the entire economy and individual enterprises, personal success factors have been divided into three separate categories in the course of the factor analysis.

Table 6 | Composite (generalised) dimensions of the features perceived as beneficial to personal success (results of factor analysis)

<i>Factor I</i> Honesty, perseverance, achievement attitude, good interpersonal relations		<i>Factor II</i> Qualifications and diligence		<i>Factor III</i> Nepotism and instrumentalism	
Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}	Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}	Features	Factor loadings ^{a)}
Helping others	.71	Extra professional trainings	.82	Being focused on one's own interests	.70
Perseverance and ability to overcome challenges	.71	Good education	.81	Influential acquaintances	.69
Being in good terms with one's superiors	.68	Ability to cope well in different situations	.63	Good social background	.64
Ability to show oneself in a positive light	.64	Diligence	.61	Ability to circumvent law	.63
Honesty	.61	-	-	Social/political activity	.49
Being in good terms with one's acquaintances and colleagues	.59	-	-	-	-
Achievement attitude	.54	-	-	-	-

^{a)} Pearson's correlation coefficients between the features and general dimensions (factors)

The first category includes positive personal traits and the ability to build good interpersonal relations. The second category covers high qualifications, skills and diligence. Finally, the third one encompasses such traits as nepotism, instrumental treatment of law, social and political activity.

Intensity of opinions constituting complex elements of economic imagination

The respondents evaluated particular features of economy, enterprises and individuals using a 5-point scale where 5 meant: "always beneficial", 1 denoted: "always unbeneficial", 3 denoted a neutral response: "sometimes beneficial, sometimes unbeneficial", while 4 and 2 stood for less extreme positive and negative ratings. This method allowed for calculation of mean values of variables included into general factors specified above. We have used this method instead of computing "factor scores", because the latter do not allow to compare the means which are set at zero.

Table 7 | Values^{a)} of composite indexes (factors) of the economic, corporate and personal attributes perceived as beneficial (scale 1–5)

Factors perceived as beneficial to economy		Factors perceived as beneficial to enterprises		Factors perceived as beneficial for personal success	
Factors	Points	Factors	Points	Factors	Points
Investments and competition	4.12	Human, social and economic capital	4.55	Qualifications and diligence	4.79
Progressive taxation	3.73	Law obedience and good relations with employees and authorities	4.13	Honesty, perseverance, go-ahead attitude, good interpersonal relations	4.56
Statism	3.63	Absence of free market	2.92	Nepotism and instrumentalism	4.04

^{a)} The mean number of points awarded to all features included into index (factor) using a 5 point scale from 1 (always detrimental) to 5 (always beneficial).

Heavy investments (including those for scientific and technical development) and free competition constitute two complex features perceived as most beneficial for the entire economy, while such outcomes of these investments as human, social and economic capital are perceived as most beneficial for individual enterprises. Consistent with these is perception of high skills and diligence, i.e. the core features of human capital, as the most beneficial for individual's success. Thus, substantial consistency of economic imagination occurs on all three levels (general economy, enterprises and individuals). Such factors as positive relations with staff and authorities and respecting law on the enterprise level and good relations with people, honesty, persistence and achievement motivation on individual level are appreciated not much less than the previously mentioned factors. Apparently, Poles understand the importance of human and social capital in general. The redistributive and interventional role of the state, represented by such complex factors such as progressive taxation and social statism, is also accepted as beneficial for economy, but to a smaller degree. While the ratings of the previously discussed factors exceeded 4 and approached the extremely positive end of the scale, the values of both "anti-liberal" factors related to the entire economy are below 4, thus only slightly exceeded the ambivalent centre. Limitations of the free market for the enterprises attained the lowest ratings. In this case, the ratio fell down below the neutral 3, which indicates a weak but still visible tendency to reject rather such limitations.

Liberalism vs conservatism and left vs right

It might be assumed that views on economy largely depend on more general ideological standpoints which divide the politics between left and right or liberalism and conservatism. Such divisions are constantly applied to describe the political scene and the system of attitudes despite a number of the objections raised by theorists and researchers. Multidimensional character of such divisions, which tends to be artificially simplified in order to arrive at a polarised description of the reality, as well as poor understanding of such notions, have been often highlighted

by the critics. Moreover, these divisions and their underlying concepts are poorly understood by majority of people. Many people are incapable of locating themselves on these two ideological dimensions, either regarding them as inadequate, or just failing to understand their meaning. Moreover, the concept of “liberalism” has different meaning in Europe and America, but – of course – that does not affect survey results obtained in Poland.

The number of people who fail to understand such notions as left and right-wing, and especially, liberalism and conservatism is even higher than the number of those who are unable to self-identify themselves in these respects. The ideological offensive carried out in Poland by conservative right-wingers and by those economists who are convinced – especially after the most recent financial crisis – about the need for state interventionism, caused a substantial group of Poles to consider ‘liberalism’ as nearly a dirty word. However, they do not highly esteem conservatism, either. That is partly related to misunderstanding the meanings of these concepts. A substantial proportion of Poles are unable to name characteristic features of a liberal society. For half of them, liberalism entails treating freedom, human rights, tolerance and minority rights as fundamental. Nevertheless, as many as one-third are not sure whether such features are typical of a liberal society, and more than 15% believe that this is not so. Also nearly half of all Poles think that liberalism stands for the reduced state intervention in economy, the freedom of multiplying wealth and the limited welfare system. However, also in this case about one-third of respondents are not sure whether this is the case and about one-fifth of them think the opposite. A slightly smaller group connect liberalism with extreme permissiveness, which is particularly condemned by conservative Church supporters. They believe that liberalism stands for approval of pornography, sexual freedom, unrestricted abortion, gay marriages, and the like. Only about one-third of people think that liberalism involves supporting business and employers on the cost of employees and the rest of society, as well as the weak influence of trade unions on economic matters, particularly the incomes.

Table 8 | What comes to your mind when thinking of “liberalism”? Which of the attributes mentioned below are typical of liberal societies, and which are not? Percentage proportions

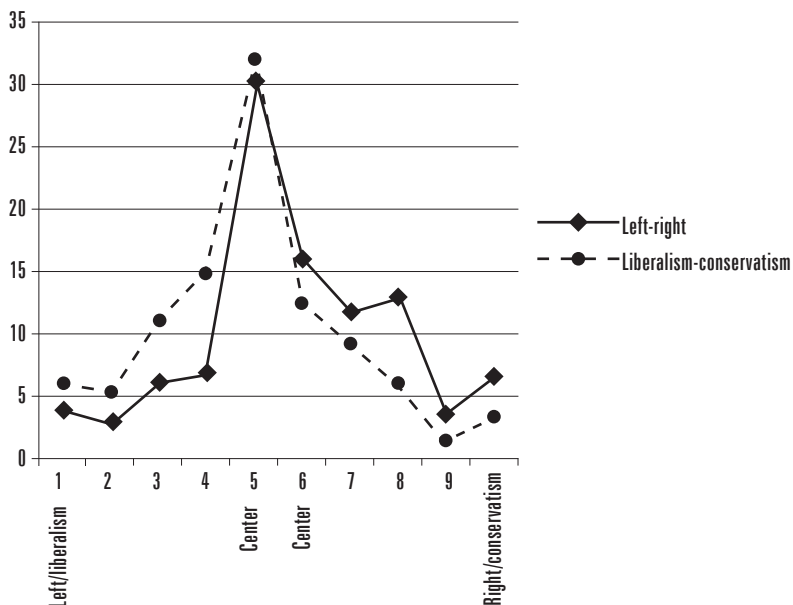
Attributes of a society	Yes – it is a characteristic feature of liberalism	No – it is not a characteristic feature of liberalism	Difficult to say	Total
Treating personal freedoms as fundamental values, emphasis on human rights, tolerance and minority rights	50	17	33	100
Minimisation of state engagement in economy, unrestricted freedom to grow rich, few social benefits	47	21	32	100
Moral and ethical permissiveness (e.g. accepting pornography, sexual freedom, unrestricted right of abortion, gay marriages, etc.)	44	22	34	100
Support of business and employers at the expense of employees and the entire society	36	30	34	100
Weak influence of trade unions on economy and wages	35	29	36	100

Although a substantial number of respondents are unable to define liberalism, many of them are aware of its dualist, political and economic character. They regard civic liberties, immediately followed by free market, as its defining features.

Other studies have shown that the left-right distinction is also often perceived from a dualist perspective. Its political, ideological and cultural aspects are distinguished from economic ones. From political and ideological viewpoints, the left wing is seen as associated with the past undemocratic and statist system of the so-called state socialism, while the right wing generates the opposite association despite its actually statist and paternalistic inclinations. In the cultural context, the political right is perceived as cherishing national and conservative values, while the left wing is believed to disregard them.

We have asked the respondents to place their views on ten-point scales from political left to right and from liberalism to conservatism. As expected, 18% and 22% of them were unable to locate their views on the first and the second scale, respectively. Further analysis will pertain only to those capable of doing so. We regarded the respondents falling into the two intermediate points of the scale (5 and 6) as centrists, and grouped the remaining ones on the left or right and liberal or conservative in accordance with their declarations on one or the other side of the scales.

Figure 1 | Self-identification on left-right and liberalism-conservatism dimensions



Nearly half of respondents capable of providing answers (46% and 45%) positioned themselves at the centres of the scales. However, while the number of right-wingers substantially prevailed over left-wingers (35% vs 19%), declared conservatives were substantially less numerous than liberals (18% vs 37%). Poles are neither much fond of the extreme political left, nor of the extreme conservatism.

At the same time, it is worth observing that while liberals divide themselves almost equally into left-wing, centre and right-wing supporters, the majority of conservatives describe themselves as right-wingers and left conservatism constitute a very rare combination of stances (see Table 9).

Table 9 | Interdependencies between self-identifications on left-right and liberalism-conservatism scales. Percentages^{a)}

	Liberalism (1–4)	Centre (5–6)	Conservatism (7–10)	Total
Left (1–4)	12	5	2	19
Centre (5–6)	14	27	5	46
Right (7–10)	11	13	11	35
Total	37	45	18	100

^{a)} Due the fact that all respondents unable to self-identify their standpoints on either left-right or liberalism-conservatism scales were excluded from calculating the percentages, the marginal values of the table slightly differ from the percentages presented in Figure 1.

To sum up these descriptive analyses, we may conclude that members of the Polish society find it much easier to arrive at different opinions on specific economic subjects, than to define their more general political affinities and to understand the meanings thereof. Perhaps they are not very keen on “political labels” and are generally unwilling to wear them or to analyse their meanings, regardless of the views on specific issues.

Determinants of views on economy

When analysing the correlations between views on economy, we have assumed a hierarchical nature of their interrelations. According to this assumption, the views of more detailed issues influence more general standpoints. Thus, it should be investigated how the convictions about the features supposedly beneficial for the individuals affect the views on what is good for the enterprises, and how these two types of opinions affect the views on the entire economy. Obviously, such an ordering of impacts constitutes only a research presumption, since the reverse ordering of such correlations can be also imagined. This presumption has been supplemented with the proposition that economic views are shaped by self-identifications with left or right and liberalism or conservatism and by the mode of understanding the liberalism. Apart from the less general views, such socio-demographic variables as gender, education, income and religiousness³ are included as independent variables into regression models defining the impacts upon more general standpoints.

³ For the sake of simplification, statistically insignificant independent variables, such as gender and age in tables 10 and 11, education (numbers of years typical of each level) in Table 10, and income in Table 11 have been omitted though they were controlled for in the equations. Linear regression model analysis (o.l.s.) with pairwise deletion of missing data was applied.

Table 10 | Determinants of views about factors perceived as beneficial for enterprises (standardised “β” linear regression coefficients)

Independent variables a)	Dependent variables		
	Human, social and economic capital	Law obedience, good relations with staff / authorities	Limitation of free market
Religiousness	-0.03	0.19**	-0.01
Personal income	0.05	-0.21**	-0.11
<i>Political self-identifications</i>			
Liberalism - conservatism	-0.06	-0.09	0.06
Left–right	0.04	0.02	0.16*
<i>Factors perceived as beneficial to personal success:</i>			
Honesty, perseverance, achievement attitude, good interpersonal relations	0.27**	0.17*	-0.05
Qualifications and diligence	0.49**	0.13*	-0.19**
Nepotism, instrumentalism	-0.04	0.19**	0.30**
<i>Understanding of liberalism:</i>			
Freedom, tolerance and human rights	0.01	-0.02	-0.03
Free market economy (low impact of the state, low welfare spending)	0.01	-0.06	-0.10
Ethical, philosophical and moral freedoms	-0.09	-0.01	-0.06
Support of business and employers at the expense of employees and the entire society	-0.06	-0.04	0.18**
Weak trade unions	0.05	-0.05	-0.04
R ² (proportion of explained variance)	0.44	0.32	0.28
*) Significant at 0.05 level **) Significant at 0.01 level			

As we remember, high human, social and economic capital was most frequently recognised as beneficial for the enterprises. Such recognition is independent of socio-demographic features, ideological self-identification and understanding of liberalism. However, it depends on the factors which are perceived as beneficial to individuals. These include, first of all, perceived benefits stemming from personal skills and diligence, and also – to a smaller but still substantial extent – honesty, persistency, achievement attitudes and good interpersonal relations. That indicates a general appreciation of human capital as economically beneficial to people and to enterprises.

The awareness of benefits stemming from good trilateral (neo-corporatist) relations between employers, employees and authorities; from participation of staff in the management processes

and from compliance with law also depends on the aforementioned views on personality traits. The fact strikes, however, that the appreciation of law obedience and good relations within an enterprise are strengthened by the perception of nepotism as a personal success factor, while being not affected by one's political self-identification or understanding of liberalism. Nonetheless, the appreciation of law and good trilateral industrial relations is positively affected by religiousness and negatively by high personal income.

Self-placement on the right side of political spectrum significantly determines the belief that limitation of free market is beneficial for the proper functioning of enterprises. Polish "right-wingers" are, therefore, much more against free market than "left-wingers". This relation suggests that political and cultural factors are more important than economic ones in dividing the Polish political scene into right and left wing.

Opposition to free market is also reinforced by perceived benefits supposedly derived from nepotism, and weakened by the conviction that high qualifications and diligence are beneficial traits. Even though, surprisingly, self-identification with liberalism or conservatism does not influence the attitudes to free market, the anti-market attitudes are visibly strengthened by the conviction that liberalism involves supporting businesses and employers at the expense of employees and society as a whole.

Let us now focus on determinants of opinions about the entire economy. High investments, those in the field of R&D included, and strong competition are most frequently recognised by Poles as beneficial for economic development, regardless of their socio-demographic features or political self-identification. In accordance with our assumptions, perceiving investments and competition as important for economy strongly depends on the views about operations of enterprises.

The most powerful determinant of recognition of the importance of investments and competition for the entire economy is the perceived significance of human, social and economic capital for individual enterprises. Investments and economic competition are also more appreciated from macro-economic viewpoint by those who believe that personal success mostly depends on honesty, persistence, achievement motivation and ability to maintain good relations with others. Appreciation of good trilateral relations and compliance with law at the enterprise level also positively influence the beliefs that high investment and competition are good for the economy as a whole. Meanwhile, this positive opinion on investment and competition is diminished by convictions that limitation of free market is beneficial to enterprises, or that liberalism mainly stands for permissiveness in the area of morality and customs.

State interventionism, combined with significant welfare spending and reduction of social inequalities, is regarded as beneficial to the entire economy more by the poorly educated as well as by those convinced that limitation of free market and development of neo-corporatist relations

are beneficial to enterprises. The approval of statism, welfare state and inequalities reduction is negatively affected by the defining liberalism in free market rather than socio-cultural categories.

Table 11 | Determinants of views about factors perceived as beneficial for development of the national economy a (standardised “ β ” linear regression coefficients) b

Independent variables ^{a)}	Dependent variables		
	Investments and competition	Statism	Progressive taxes
Years of schooling	-0.12	-0.15*	-0.08
<i>Political self-identification</i>			
Liberalism – conservatism	-0.06	0.04	-0.04
Left – right	0.10	0.09	0.01
<i>Factors perceived as beneficial to personal success:</i>			
Honesty, perseverance, achievement attitude, good interpersonal relations	0.18**	0.14*	-0.13
Qualifications and diligence	0.04	0.11	-0.06
Nepotism and instrumentalism	-0.06	-0.08	0.02
<i>Factors perceived as beneficial to corporate development:</i>			
Human, social and economic capital	0.35**	-0.11	0.21**
Compliance with law, good relations with authorities / staff	0.11	0.19**	0.01
Limitation of free market	-0.19**	0.34**	0.23**
<i>Understanding of liberalism:</i>			
Freedom, tolerance and human rights	0.14*	0.07	-0.03
Free market economy (low impact of the state, little welfare spending)	0.06	-0.13*	-0.07
Moral, philosophical and ethical freedoms	-0.17**	0.01	0.02
Support of business and employers at the expense of employees and the entire society	0.04	0.09	-0.03
Weak trade unions	0.07	-0.05	-0.03
R ²	0.42	0.45	0.23
*) Significant at 0.05 level **) Significant at 0.01 level			

Just like the support for statism, the perceived beneficial function of progressive taxation in economy as a whole is associated with the view that enterprises would take advantage of limitation of free market and that their success depend mainly on human, social and economic capital. Apparently, the people fail to understand that progressive taxes are not consistent with increasing human end economic capital.

Economic views and support for democracy

Free market can develop not only in democratic countries, as exemplified by China or Vietnam. On the other hand, several profoundly democratic countries are characterised by strong statist elements in their economy, most frequently in various forms of trilateral neo-corporatist relations and welfare state. However, in most cases, democracy is combined with free market, and state interventionism with authoritarian political systems. We should keep in mind that corporatism used to be a nearly-defining feature of fascism, especially in its Italian, Spanish and Portuguese forms, and that central planning used to be an inherent attribute of communism. Therefore, we may venture an opinion that in a post-socialist society, such as Poland, powerful connections between the support of parliamentary democracy and economic views exist.

Apart from the variables used above, we have also assumed the trust in political institutions to be one of determinants of pro-democratic attitude. Political trust, calculated here as an average level of confidence in president, political parties and parliament, positively affects the support for democracy as a desired system, while this democratic attitude is determined neither by socio-democratic characteristics, nor by the views on what is beneficial for individuals and enterprises.

The support for parliamentary democracy as the best political system for Poland is considerably reinforced by identifications with right wing, rather than left one (although neither with liberalism, nor conservatism), and by perceiving high economic, human and social capital, investments and strong competition as beneficial to economic development. Another important determinant of the democratic attitude is defining liberalism in positive terms as civic freedom, tolerance and human rights, while perceiving it as moral permissiveness diminishes support for democratic political system.

Conclusions and Interpretations

Staniszki (2001, p. 253) summarises her analysis of post-communism with: *“longing for rationality, which would only be possible to satisfy after finding instruments for metaregulation and, what is even more important – its axiological foundations!”*. However, she seems to forget a certain “trifle” i.e. rational social awareness, including rational economic imagination. The results of our survey present a nation of citizens capable of thinking rationally about the basic aspects of economic activity. Let us again summarise the key trains of thought.

The three empirically distinguished factors believed by Poles to be beneficial for the country's economic development can be ordered as follows in terms of their perceived importance:

- (1) investments (private, public and foreign, those in the field of science and technology included) and powerful competition;
- (2) state interventionism and elimination of excessive inequalities;
- (3) progressive taxation.

Table 12 | Determinants of recognition of parliamentary democracy as the best political system for Poland (Standardised “ β ” linear regression coefficients) b

Independent variables ^c	Regression coefficient
Political trust ^c	0.12*
Political self-identifications	
Liberalism – conservatism	-0.05
Left vs right wing	0.19**
<i>Factors perceived as beneficial to personal success:</i>	
Honesty, perseverance, achievement attitude, good interpersonal relations	0.04
Qualifications and diligence	-0.05
Nepotism and instrumentalism	-0.10
<i>Factors perceived as beneficial for corporate development</i>	
Human, social and economic capital	0.12*
Law obedience, good relationships with authorities / staff	0.08
Limitation of free market	-0.07
<i>Factors perceived as beneficial to economic development:</i>	
Investments and competition	0.18*
Statism	-0.01
Progressive taxes	-0.03
<i>Understanding of liberalism:</i>	
Freedom, tolerance and human rights	0.14*
Free market (no interventionism, little welfare spending)	0.06
Moral, philosophical and ethical permissiveness	-0.17*
Support of business and employers at the expense of employees and the entire society	0.04
Weak trade unions	-0.04
R ² (proportion of explained variance)	0.42
<p>a) The support for democracy calculated as a mean value of convictions that democracy is the best for Poland, and that parties and the Parliament are needed for governing. b) O.L.s. regression, pairwise deletion of missing data.</p> <p>b) For the sake of simplification, statistically insignificant independent variables such as gender, education (years of schooling typical of specific levels), age and income are not shown. ** Significant at .01 level. * Significant at .05 level.</p>	

Even though investments and competition have been assessed more favourably than interventionism and progressive taxes, the index values of all these factors exceed the neutral point of the scale, so the level of their support exceeds that of their rejection.

To some “old-school” economists and economic sociologists, accustomed to ideological thinking and uncompromising juxtapositions of “market” with the “state”, such state of mind of the society may appear inconsistent if not internally contradictory. However, one only needs to read such works as “Washington Consensus Reconsidered” (Serra and Stiglitz, 2008) to see that this is a nearly textbook example of the set of policies supplementing each other in their not extreme forms and recommended by the most outstanding economists. This policies include also the progressive taxation, if used in a manner limiting its negative impacts upon capitalisation of enterprises but decreasing social differences which obstruct development, as proposed by John Wiliamson (2008, p. 28–29) the author associated in the 1990s with extreme liberalism of the “Washington Consensus”.

The ideas about factors that facilitate success of enterprises are rational as well. They can be subdivided into the three groups, two of them more often approved than disapproved:

- (1) human, social and economic capital which covers owner’s and manager’s skills, qualifications, personal connections and commitment of employees and financial capital;
- (2) neo-corporatist participation of employees and trade unions in management processes, good relationships with authorities and compliance with law;
- (3) limitation of competition and earnings.

Only the third factor is characterised by the index value approximating the neutral point on the scale, which indicates ambivalent views with a slight rejection tendency.

The convictions about features beneficial for personal success seem to be derived from observation of the surrounding world. They can be also grouped in three broader categories:

- (1) honesty, perseverance, achievement attitude, good relationships with people;
- (2) qualifications, diligence, enterprise;
- (3) egoism, influential acquaintances, nepotism.

The token of rational thinking about personal success and carrier is the lowest position of the third, egoistic-nepotistic syndrome. However, the values of all three indexes suggest the prevailing acceptance of all of them. The fact that the value of egoistic-nepotistic index exceeds the neutral point is alarming.

It should be emphasised that according to Poles the key factors of development of the entire economy, and individual enterprises, include investments into all three types of capital (economic, social and human) in conditions of free competition. Neither statism, nor liberalism are valued very highly, albeit they are not rejected. Hence, economic imagination encompasses the perceived need for maintaining adequate proportions between specific elements of liberal and statist system without rejecting either of them in total.

The Polish society is characterised by a relatively low level of political self-identification. A large number of people can not locate themselves on the scales from left to right and from liberalism to conservatism. Centrist self-identifications are dominant and there is a disapproval of extreme stances. Such status of awareness may be connected with the low level of political activity. Though confirmed by several other research, this still appears to be quite surprising, considering that pro-democratic attitudes are quite widespread. Two not mutually exclusive hypotheses may explain this paradox:

- (1) Poles are so preoccupied with their daily affairs, most of all with striving for economic success or survival, that neither they have time for politics, especially in its extreme forms, nor they wish to be politically labelled;
- (2) The “mass media hype” makes the politics, especially its relations with economy, life and work conditions, too difficult to understand.

It should be emphasised that right wing supporters rather than left wing ones are more strongly convinced that limitation of free market is good for the enterprises. Here we are dealing with the “right wing statism” as opposite to “left wing liberalism” on the level of enterprises. Interestingly, the “right wing statist” syndrome is reinforced by the conviction of substantial importance of nepotism and instrumentalism for individual success, and perceptions of liberalism as a system supporting business at the expense of society, especially employees. This syndrome is negatively correlated with the conviction that qualifications and diligence, followed by honesty, perseverance, achievement attitude and good interpersonal relations are important for personal success. It is worth to note that individual self-definitions in terms of liberalism or conservatism are completely irrelevant from this point of view.

Determinants of attitudes and opinions concerning the entire economy look somewhat differently. In this case, both self-identifications in terms of liberalism-conservatism, and left-right are irrelevant. Statism in the economy as a whole is of course reinforced by the aforementioned similar attitude concerning operations of single enterprises, and by the conviction that good relationships of managers with authorities and employees as well as observance of law would inure to enterprise's benefit. The approval of statism is most negatively affected by the level of economic and correct economic understanding of liberalism as a system limiting impacts of the state and welfare expenditure.

Political scientists, sociologists and economists often refer to the notion of “free market democracy”. As a consequence, the question about connections between different elements and types of economic imagination and support for democratic system is well justified. Contrary to the expectations, such connections appear to be quite feeble, which is a relevant and interesting finding of the study. However, if they occur, they constitute the logical wholeness.

The belief that parliamentary democracy is the best political system for Poland is reinforced by the trust in political institutions and by the right rather than the left self-identification, while

self-identifications in terms of liberalism or conservatism have turned out to be completely irrelevant in this respect. Out of three factors perceived as beneficial to the development of the entire economy, only the conviction that that high investments and strong competition are beneficial is positively connected with the support of democracy. Pro-democracy attitude is also strengthened by the belief that high human, social and economic capital are beneficial for the enterprises. It is also reinforced by the positive perception of liberalism in political, rather than economic categories, as a system promoting freedom, tolerance and human rights.

Finally, let us attempt to look at the obtained findings using a game metaphor:

1. Both market and (if necessary) state interventionism are deeply rooted in social awareness as commonly accepted rules of the game (Carruthers, Babb, 2000, p. 7–10). This means that the society has come to terms with uncertainty and risk, but on the other hand, tries to limit them.
2. Which rules (market vs statist ones) are applied, when and in which areas, is determined by the “game about the game” at the higher level of gaming supervision.
3. Human, social, intellectual and financial capital are at stake. This is what we are gaming with and for.
4. The nature of the game is dynamic: its aim is to counterbalance conflicting powers and tendencies which constantly cause imbalance (Carpenter, 2002).

A prominent Polish thinker, Władysław Tatarkiewicz (2010, p. 88), has said a century ago in a speech delivered on 25 June 1910 before members of the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv: “Pragmatism is a fertile attitude in the case of the natural vision of the world. It is also a theory which applies pure and critical tools; combats natural dogmatism, distinguishes what belongs to reality, thus preparing the ground for rational notions”. As a society and a nation Poles found it difficult to accomplish this assignment during the traumatic century after this opinion was expressed, but apparently are on their way to do so, with small exceptions, nowadays.

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