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# BUDET – Research Report

## ***Research was carried out by:***

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*Youthnet Hellas – Athens, Greece*

*Közgazdasági Politechnikum Alternatív Gimnázium – Budapest, Hungary*

*A.D.E.L. - Association for Development, Education and Labour – Stropkóv, Slovakia*

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## ***Introduction***

### *About the project*

After the transition of the Southern European countries in the 1970s and of the Central European countries at the end of 1980s from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems and the enlargement of the European Union, threatening phenomena have appeared on stage: instead of further consolidation of democracy, illiberal, populist and extreme political tendencies have gained ground. Citizens seem to have forgotten about the morals of the past totalitarian regimes and are indifferent towards political and civil society activities.

The project examines civic participation and democratic ownership in 5 European countries: Germany (GDR), Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia in the last decade of totalitarian regimes, concentrating on specific fields in each country and making video interviews with senior activists that have been involved in:

1. fight for free speech, samizdat in Hungary,
2. Solidarity Trade Union in Poland,
3. democratic movements helped by the Catholic and Lutheran Churches - in Slovakia and Germany (GDR),
4. strikes and mass demonstrations at universities - in Greece.

A national and transnational civil dialogue is to be fostered about the fight for freedom and democracy under totalitarian regimes in the past and about the threats to democratic achievements, civil rights, counterbalances in the present.

Our project concentrates on the movements of the '80s in the Central-Eastern European countries, while in Greece on the protests at the beginning of the '70s.

In the frame of the project over 250 respondents filled in an online questionnaire dealing with questions, such as transition to democracy, life during socialism (in case of Greece: the military junta) and after the fall of the regime. This report will summarize the answers first in the whole sample and then additional dimensions will be shown which were not asked in all countries.

### *The sample*

Prior to analysing the results, a short overview of the respondents' socio-demographic background is presented. The sampling was done by the organizations involved in each country with snowball method<sup>1</sup>, hence the final result is not representative by any means to the given societies. Furthermore, there were 50 respondents from Poland, Greece and Germany, while in Hungary there were 56 and in Slovakia 57.

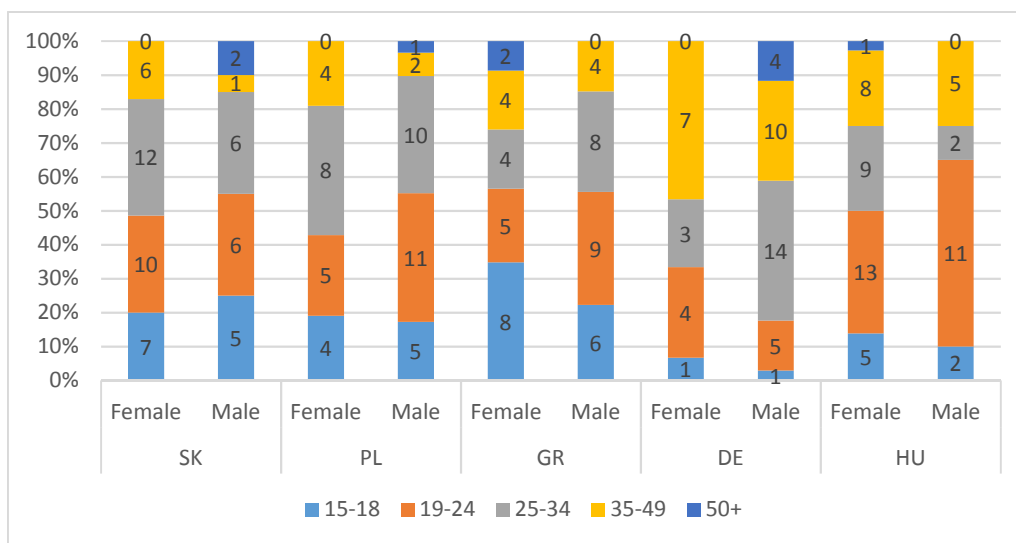
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<sup>1</sup> It is a sampling method where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances.



Regarding their gender distribution and the age they were in at the time of the transition, the countries differ from each other. While in Slovakia and Hungary more females filled in the questionnaire, in Poland, Greece and Germany the males were in majority. The most frequent age groups across the sample are 19-24, 25-34 and 35-49, while the youngest and eldest groups are in minority. Respondents who were between 19 and 24 at the time of the transition are the most frequent in Hungary among both genders, in the other four countries it differs by gender.

*Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by country, age at the time of transition and gender, N=260<sup>2</sup>*



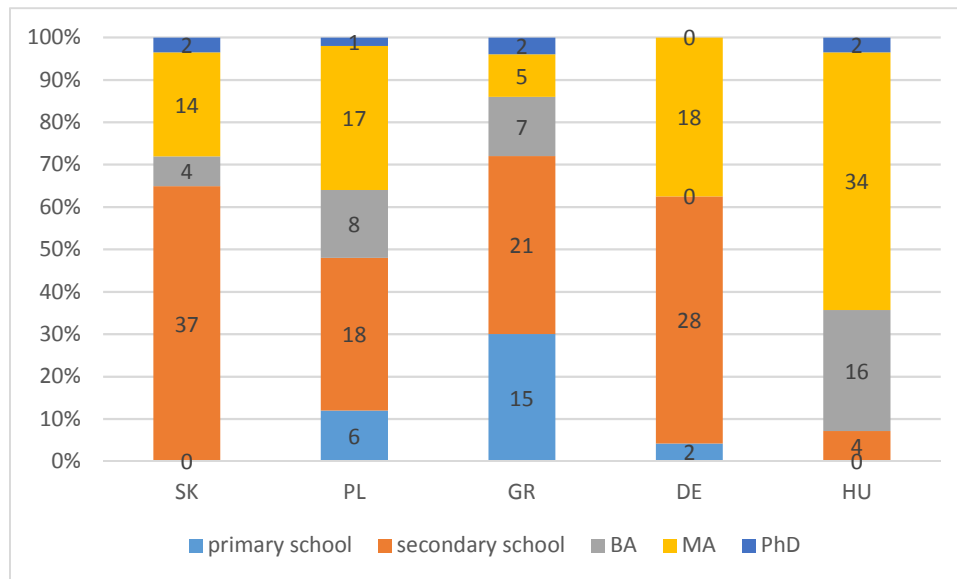
Concerning their highest education, in the Slovak, Polish and German samples the most frequent categories are secondary school and MA respectively (with differences in ratio), while in Hungary most respondents hold an MA and then comes secondary school degree. Greece represents the lowest educational profile in this research. Their present profession ranges from heavy physical work to highly skilled workers.

In order to understand the Greek country-specific questions and answers, here is a short introduction to its historical background:

<sup>2</sup> Number of respondents for the given question. In many cases it is less than the total (263) due to the missing answers.

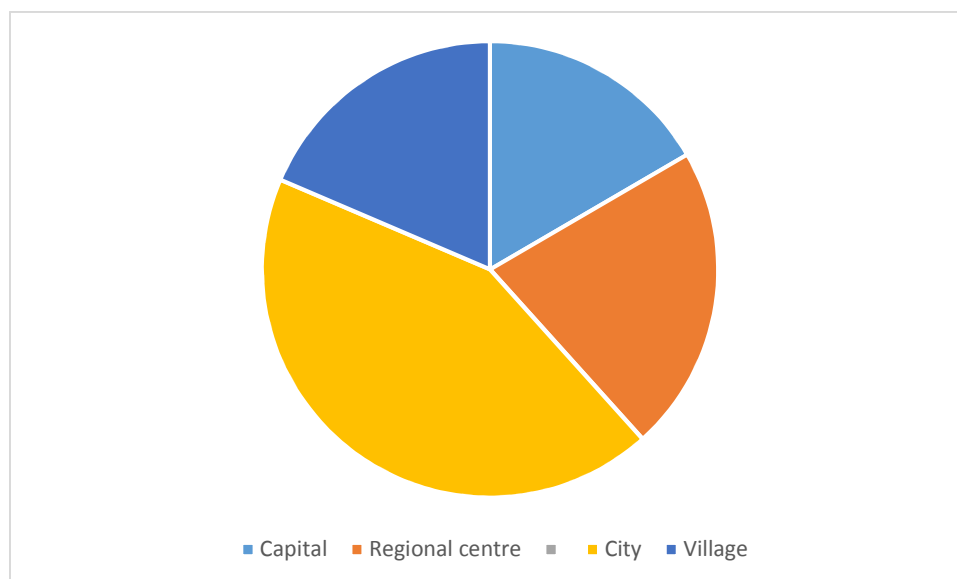


Figure 2: Distribution by highest education and country, N=261



And the last characteristic taken into account is the type of settlement they live in now which can be an indicator of one’s socio-economic status: it is usually higher in bigger settlements. By far, most of the respondents live in big cities. The next biggest category is regional centre and then with villages and the capital following closely. However, the respondents were asked about their residence differently in each country and it does not show their type of settlement in the period surveyed so there might have been changes in it since then, e.g. lots of people moved from the capital to small towns and villages.

Figure 3: Respondents’ type of settlement, N=253



To conclude, the whole sample is rather heterogeneous along these characteristics. (Furthermore, we will see more differences in the country by country analysis section.)



## **Overall results**

The questionnaire is divided into three main blocks. The first deals with everyday life in the 80's; the second focuses on the resistance movements of the 80's and the third asks about the democratic transition and its evaluation. As the questionnaires differ in some cases by country (adjusting some questions to the context), in the next section only those answers will be presented which appeared in at least 4 countries.

### ***1st block: Everyday life in the 80's (Eastern Europe) / in 1967-74 (Greece)***

The first section is about the general atmosphere of the given context: how the respondents lived their lives, what the strictest limitations were. The three main issues touched upon were trust, travelling and household products. In order to understand the level of totalitarianism, these fields of life show well how freely one could live. Trust relates to the question of freedom in general.

#### **A/ TRUST**

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate very well the big gap between trusting the authorities and one's surrounding. While the big majority of the whole sample (except the Germans who did not have this question) trusted their surroundings completely or to a large extent, half of the sample did not trust the authorities at all or only a little bit. This implies that one had to be careful who they shared information with and how they behaved in public.

In socialist countries, the system was based on the communist party-state's total control of everything — economic, social, religious, cultural, and above all political — and refused to allow any alternative view to its own. Society's opposition required enormous effort and courage so it was represented by a small number of individuals who were willing to take the risk of prison or physical harm in support of basic human rights.

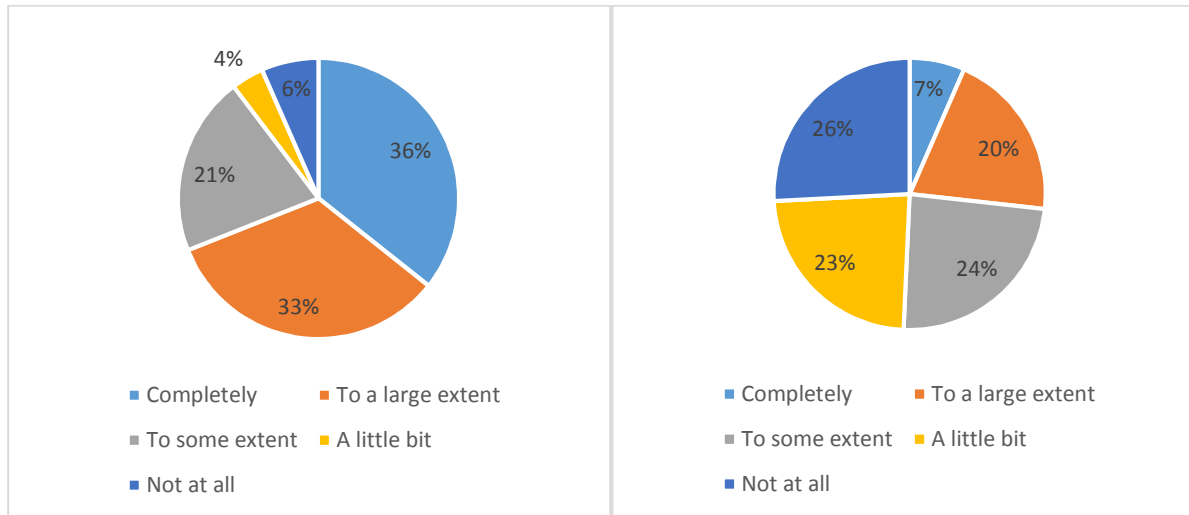
Although in the given period the authoritarian "state-socialist" system became less rigid than it used to be in the 1950s, there was a huge network of informers maintained in these countries. Secret services operated by the authoritarian regimes had a long tradition in the Central and Eastern European region, but after 1945 the new state security services were based on the Soviet model and they exceeded their predecessors both in brutality and extensiveness. They were the following: Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit) in the GDR, Służba Bezpieczeństwa in Poland, ŠtB (Štátna Bezpečnosť) in Czecho-Slovakia and ÁVH (Államvédelmi Hatóság) in Hungary, which changed for III/III Bureau. Often by blackmailing or forcing them, everyday people acted as paid or voluntary secret agents, at their workplaces, public events or when meeting their friends: they had to write reports about comments and opinions against the regime. This network of espionage was the largest in the GDR where one had to be careful of what they say not just in public areas but at home as well. There were Stasi agents among neighbours, friends, even relatives. Stasi, as the most professional secret service in socialist countries, had about 91 thousand paid 'full time' employees among the 16 million inhabitants of the GDR and hundreds of thousands of spies reporting about their fellows. It even had almost 200 thousand agents in the Federal Republic.



Criticising the regime could have and often had serious consequences: official warnings at workplaces, loss of their jobs, unemployment due to occupational bans, restrictions on free movement, police interrogation, law suit or even imprisonment. Although these consequences had to be borne by a relatively small number of people, the public were aware of the dangers of any opposition. So people learnt to mind their own business and not politics.

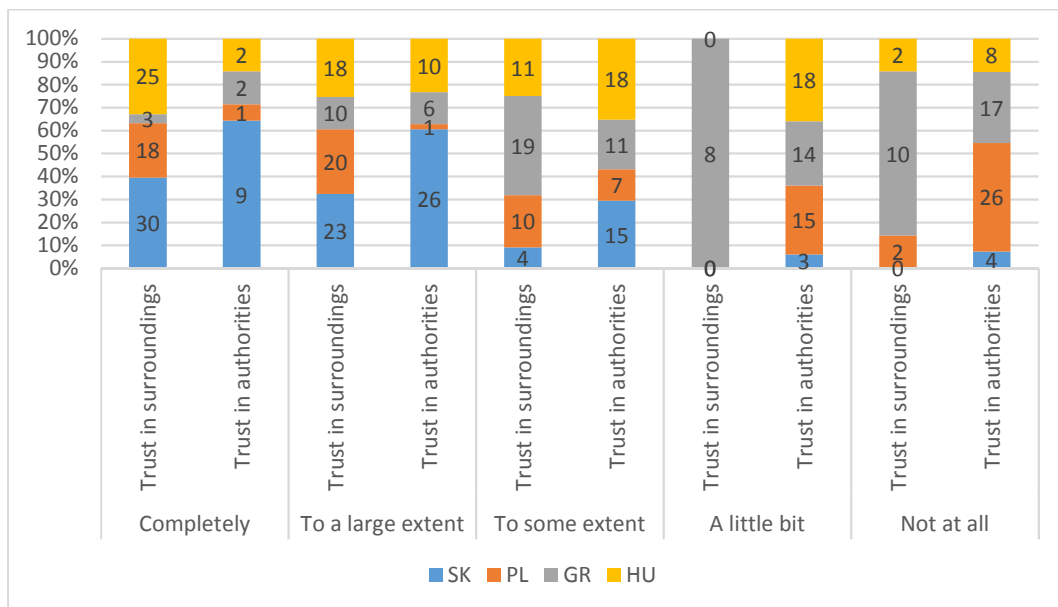
Figure 4: To what extent did you trust your close surroundings (family members, friends, etc.)? N=213

Figure 5: To what extent did you trust authorities? N=213



Breaking down the answers by nationality, Figure 6 shows that Greeks had the lowest level of trust in both cases and Slovaks the highest. Hungarians trusted their surroundings much more than authorities but still more than the Poles.

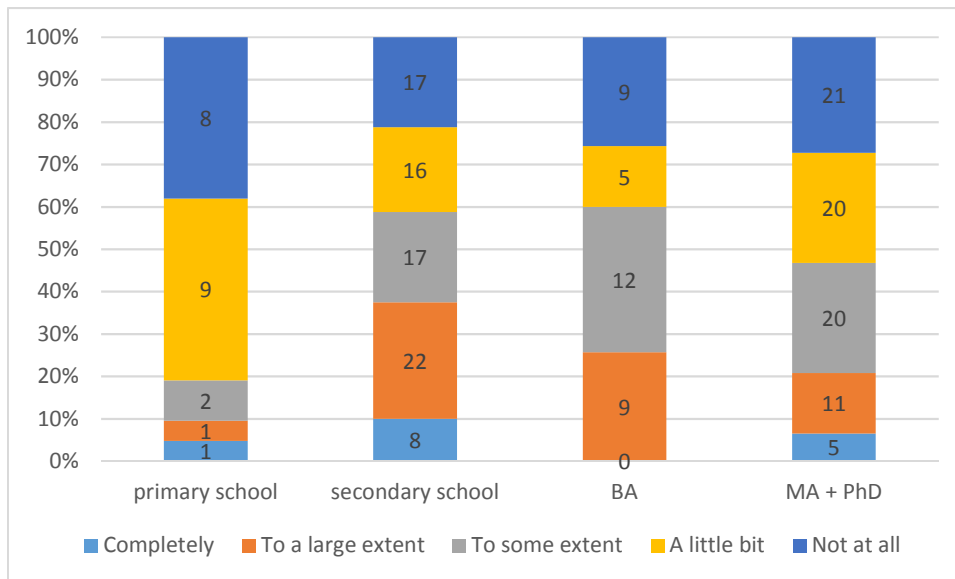
Figure 6: Level of trust by nationality, N=213





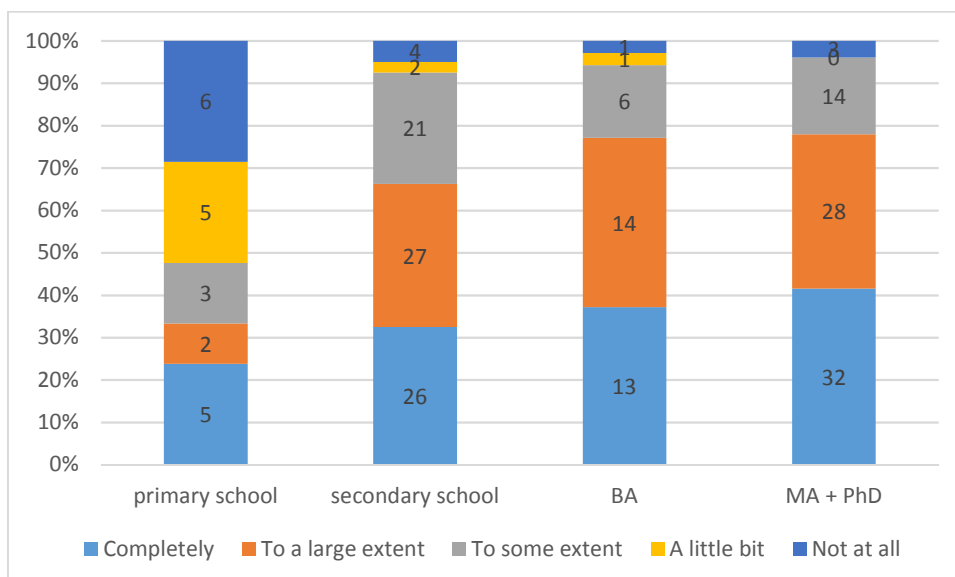
The issue of trust in institutions is usually correlating with one's level of education. The correlation is usually negative: the more educated someone is, the less confidence they have. This sample differs a little from this tendency. The respondents with lowest education were more suspicious towards the authorities than the next group (people with secondary school). But from then on the level of trust decreases: the higher degree one had, the more suspicious they became.

Figure 7: Trusting the authorities and level of education, N=213



Reversely, trusting one's surrounding increased with education in the sample.

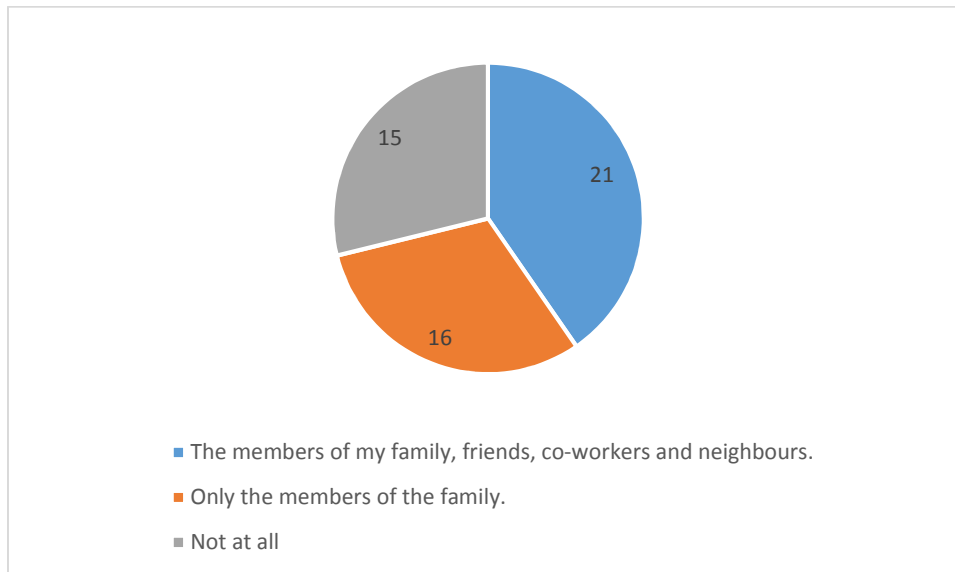
Figure 8: Trusting one's surrounding by level of education, N=213



Trust among the German participants was measured differently. We can see that a big majority only trusted the closest surroundings or no one. Interestingly, quite a significant minority did not trust anyone, which differs from the rest of the sample (except the Greeks).



*Figure 9: To what extent did you trust your close surroundings in talking about political issues?*







## **B/ TRAVELLING**

The next question deals with travelling: the issue of freedom and possibility of movement. For people from socialist countries (Poland, Slovakia and Hungary in the sample<sup>3</sup>) it was easier to travel to other socialist countries than to Western Europe, which also depended on one's profession, position, political views, etc.

In Greece there were no restrictions about travelling abroad and young people could even go to study abroad. However, the amount of money taken or sent abroad was limited. There was a black market for dollars and gold coins.

For the citizens of socialist countries, travelling abroad was not part of their civil rights but a privilege. With its policy about passports and currency, the state could determine who and on what conditions was allowed to travel. Authorities were afraid that people travelling to a Western country, would not return home. Permission had to be obtained and was often denied due to "state interest". This procedure lasted for months and the workplace/school had to give its consent as well. In case someone got permission, they had to apply for a visa too at the local embassies of the Western countries. Finally, they were allowed to get access to foreign currency from the state – but in limited number. So people either got support from their relatives living in Western countries or they could purchase foreign currency at the black market, which was strictly forbidden and punished. Individual tourists usually took gas and food from home not to spend too much money abroad.

Travel agencies also organised trips to Western countries and it was easier to join them than to arrange an individual trip. However, participants were usually monitored by agents in order to avoid their "escape" from the group. In spite of this, several people did not return home.

Despite prohibition of certain goods, "shopping tourism" was very popular: East-German bed linen, Czech shoes and Polish jazz vinyls were taken to other countries even for sale.

There was passport and customs control between countries on both sides of the border. It was a rather frightening procedure with uniformed, armed officers.

GDR - they needed a visa from the police to Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, while from 1972 they did not need a visa to Czecho-Slovakia and from 1972 to 1980 to Poland. It was easier to get a permission for trips organised by travel agencies. People under 65 could ask for permit for travelling to Western countries but their requests were usually rejected by the Stasi. After 1964, pensioners were allowed such travels once a year. The attempt of illegal crossing the border was considered a serious criminal offense and the guard at the border had a fire command. Hundreds of people died at the border between East and West Germany.

Czecho-Slovakia - travelling abroad was prohibited after 1968, except for those with a service passport. Visiting relatives in another country was allowed in case these relatives were not "suspicious", like emigrants of the Dubcek era.

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<sup>3</sup> Germans did not have this question either.

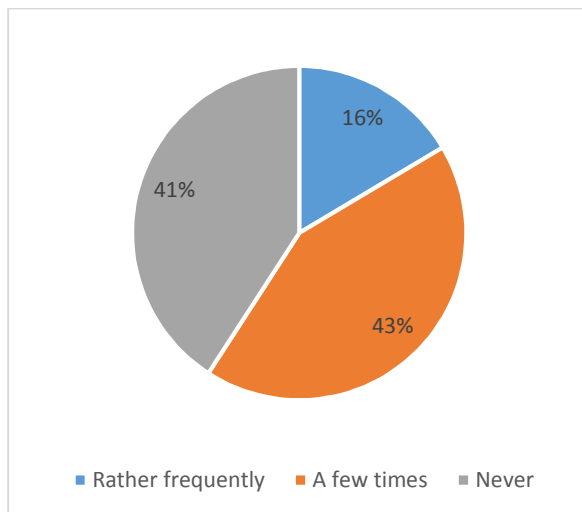


Poland – travelling was relatively free before the Martial Law was introduced in 1981 by Jaruzelski. No permission or passport was needed for travelling to socialist countries but the amount of foreign currency was restricted. Although the permission of the Ministry of Home Office was needed, those who got financial support from a relative living in a Western European country or in the USA, had their own bank accounts in foreign currency and could use their money for travelling.

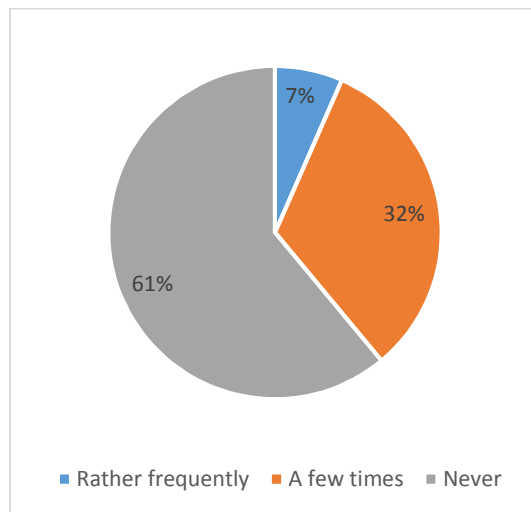
Hungary - there were two types of passports for the public between 1972 and 1984: the red one allowed people to travel to socialist countries and the blue one to Western countries. Applying for the red one was less bureaucratic because travelling to socialist countries was generally not restricted with the exception of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. People could apply for a blue “tourist” passport every 3<sup>rd</sup> year, unless they had a letter of invitation from a relative in a Western country. The application also needed the support of the local trade union and communist party representatives. 70 dollars was the maximum amount of foreign currency they could have for a trip if travelling as a tourist and 50 dollars if travelling to a relative. Visas were also needed to all Western countries, except to Austria from 1978. Right before the transition, in 1988 a unified “world passport” was issued for all countries but the amount of foreign currency still remained restricted.

Figures 10 and 11 seem to confirm the facts mentioned above. While the majority did not travel to Western European (non-socialist) countries, they did visit other socialist countries.

*Figure 10: Did you travel to (other) socialist countries? N=213*



*Figure 11: Did you travel to Western European (non-socialist) countries? N=213*

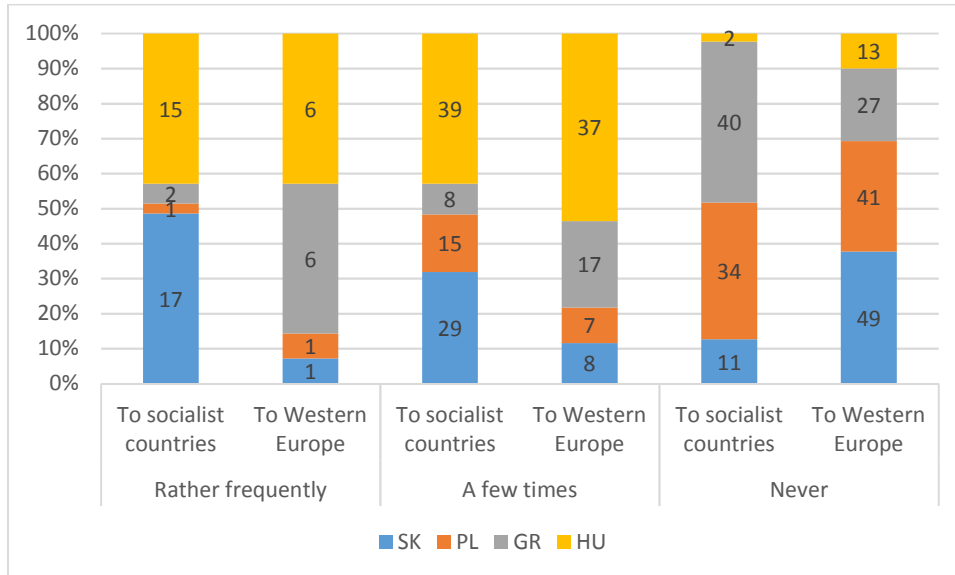


By looking at Figure 12, we can see that Slovaks and Hungarians were travelling the most to other socialist countries, but Hungarians also travelled to Western Europe, albeit less often. (This fits the concept of “goulash communism”, “the happiest barrack” which implies that Hungary was a little bit more liberal compared to other socialist countries.) Greeks seem to travel to Western Europe more often than to socialist countries, which is logical in the light of the fact that it was not part of the socialist block. Therefore, their purpose of travelling differed. For the Greeks it was in both cases a holiday or a work-related trip, whereas the



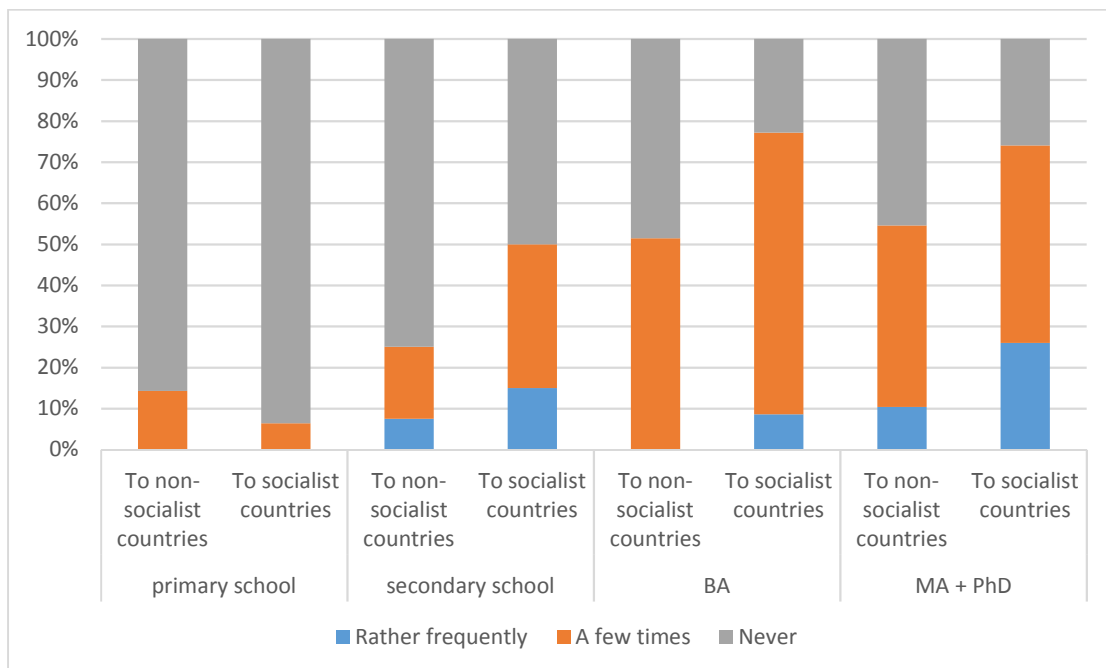
respondents from ex-socialist countries added family visits, shopping (especially when going to the West, but not only) and school trips or student exchanges to socialist countries.

Figure 12: Travelling to socialist and non-socialist countries by nationality, N=213



Travelling is usually determined by one's socio-economic background, although in a non-democratic setting to a smaller extent. One's educational level is one of the indicators of socio-economic status. In this sample, education seems to correlate with travelling to both socialist and non-socialist countries: the higher education one has, the more likely they travelled abroad at least once.

Figure 13: Travelling to non-socialist and socialist countries by educational level, N=213





## C/ HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

In the next section respondents were asked about the accessibility of products. These questions were meant to measure the market which in socialist countries was based on a shortage economy, i.e. the accessible products were much more limited than in capitalist democracies where the market is free/competitive. In case of a car, for instance, people often had to wait for years before they could actually get the vehicle they had ordered. With everyday household appliances it was different but it is true that the accessibility was limited. There were two questions asked from the respondents: which products were the most common in their household and which goods were more difficult to get.

Overall, it seems that the households were equipped with the basics, such as TV, washing machine, car and refrigerator. However, it is possible that the question was understood differently in the different countries since food products also appear in the answers.

Looking at Figure 15, we can detect what were the missing products according to this sample. As we can see, car was mentioned in the first place, which could be due to the long time one had to wait for it and to the lack of different, mostly Western brands. (Some respondents mentioned Trabant or Lada as the most typical cars.) Food, especially (Southern) fruits<sup>4</sup>, meat and flour were also missing products along with (fashionable) clothes and books. These findings match with the literature.

*Figure 15: The most 50 frequently mentioned words regarding the question “Which products were most difficult to get? Name three.” N=736*



Looking at the words by country, we can find that the answers differ a lot. While in Poland mostly food products (meat, flour, fruits and sugar), toilet paper and medicine were the hardest to get, Greeks mentioned books and in general that nothing was missing,<sup>5</sup> while Hungarians could not get cars, clothes and banana easily and for Slovaks it was the fruits, car, electronics and jeans.

<sup>4</sup> The tag cloud tool handles the words separately, hence combined words are not shown as one.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4.



*Table 1: The most frequent words by country appearing at least 10 times in the whole sample*

Word	Frequency	%	Slovak	Polish	Hungarian	Greek	German
car	46	6,27	10	0	21	0	15
meat	30	4,09	4	23	1	0	2
fruits	26	3,54	14	1	8	0	3
banana	24	3,27	6	0	10	0	8
clothes	24	3,27	6	2	15	0	1
books	22	3,00	0	0	0	18	4
electronics	16	2,18	7	0	5	0	4
nothing	14	1,91	0	0	2	12	0
sugar	14	1,91	1	13	0	0	0
Toilet paper	14	1,91	4	9	1	0	0
flour	13	1,77	0	13	0	0	0
food	12	1,63	1	1	3	0	7
jeans	12	1,63	7	0	5	0	0
good	11	1,50	1	1	6	0	3
medicines	11	1,50	0	11	0	0	0
TV	11	1,50	5	0	3	0	3
Southern (fruits)	10	1,36	4	0	6	0	0
tools	10	1,36	0	0	4	0	6

In socialist countries, Western products were considered of higher quality and prestige but expensive and difficult to obtain, e.g. jeans were smuggled and could be bought at the black market. However, supply of goods was different in the countries described: in Poland there was a shortage even of everyday goods, like food after 1981 so a system of rationing with food tickets was introduced and people could buy more food at the black market at extremely high prices. On the other hand, in the GDR and Czecho-Slovakia the supply of basic products and food was safe and cheap but the selection and quality was usually poor. It was Hungary where the selection was relatively the largest, together with a safe supply.

An organisation, called COMECON (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance), was established among socialist countries in order to coordinate the list and quantity of goods to be produced and exchanged in the member countries. So Hungary did not produce cars but had to import it from other members of COMECON, that's why people had to wait for long years for buying one. Nevertheless, in the GDR it also took years to buy a car, although they had their own production.

'Shopping tourism' among socialist countries was extremely popular because people who could afford to travel abroad, tried to purchase goods, missing at home, partly for their own households, partly for sale.



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In each socialist country there were special chains of shops selling Western goods for Western currency, like Pewex in Poland, Tuzex in Czecho-Slovakia, Intershop in the GDR and Konsumex/Intertourist shops in Hungary.

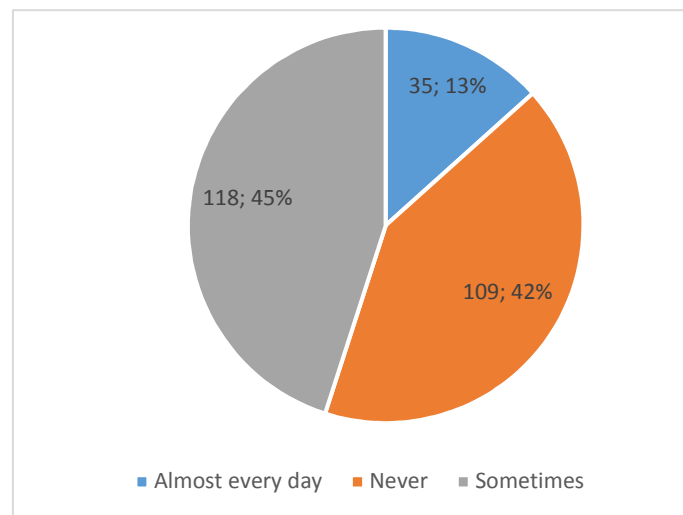
Finally, we should also mention the individual export-import by Polish tourists in Hungary: they sold household goods produced in Poland at a cheap price and took home food products available in Hungary.



## D/ MEDIA

The last question in the section was whether they listened to Radio Free Europe (or the Greek programme of Deutsche Welle). For people in the socialist countries, this channel was an important means to listen to news outside the socialist block. As it becomes clear from Figure 16, there were only a very few respondents who listened to it every day. The rest of the respondents are almost equally distributed between never and sometimes. The main reason for this was that Radio Free Europe was announced to be illegal to listen to this channel and posed sanctions on those who still did. Listening to it was also tried to be prevented by regularly and effectively bothering its broadcast so that it could hardly be understood. Of course in the 1980s it was not so dangerous to listen to it as in the 1950s but people still remembered that it was forbidden.

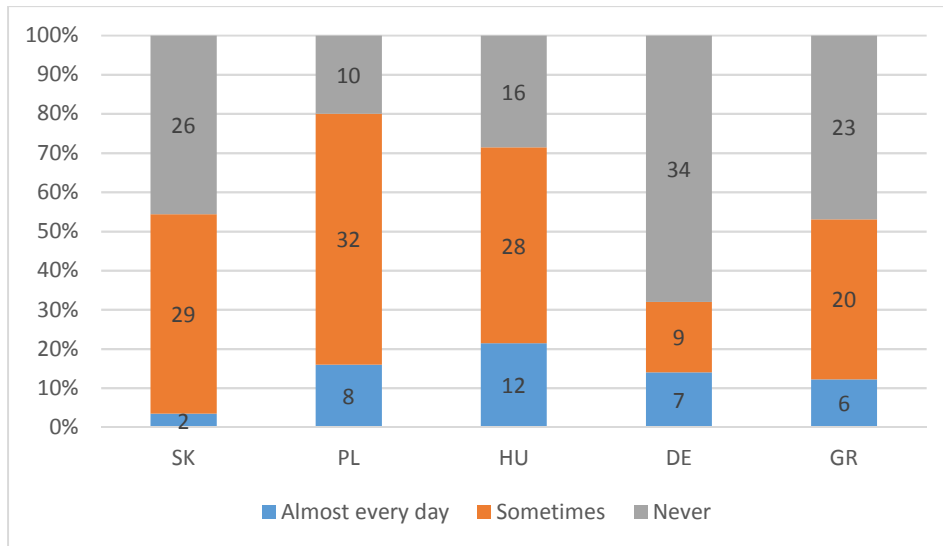
Figure 16: Did you or your family listen to Radio Free Europe/Greek Deutsche Welle? N=262



If we look at Figure 17, we can find some differences among the countries. While in Germany (GDR) most respondents never listened to this radio channel, it was the most listened among the Hungarian respondents, mainly because this was the only connection with the West, which meant news and information about those relatives who had fled from Hungary during the 1940s and in 1956. Radio Free Europe also broadcasted about the current news of the Socialist Block so those who still remained interested in politics could get proper information. In the GDR anyone could listen to dozens of radio stations and watch several TV channels broadcasting in West Germany and most people did so every day.



Figure 17: Did you or your family listen to Radio Free Europe/Greek Deutsche Welle? N=262



All in all, we can conclude that our research shows both the different and common characteristics of everyday life in the given countries, especially within the socialist block.



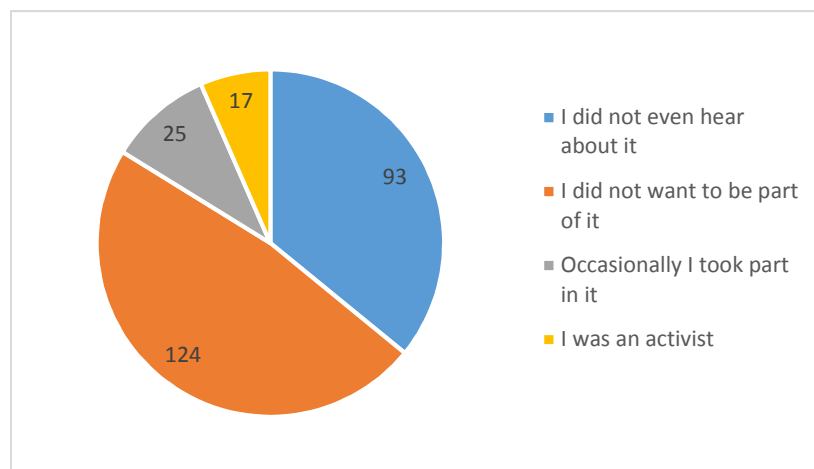


## **2nd block: Samizdat, civic resistance in the '80s (Eastern Europe) / in 1967-74 (Greece)**

The second block deals with the issue of resistance in the 1980s and in 1967-74 (Greece). As it took different forms in each country, it will be analysed in more details below.

There were two questions which are common in all the questionnaires: one about the attitude of the respondent to resistance and another one trying to evaluate how informed the respondents are about the resistance in other countries. Figure 18 illustrates that a big part of the respondents did not hear about the resistance in their own countries and the majority did not want to take part in it.

*Figure 18: How did you relate to civic resistance? N=259*



If we look at the answers by country, we can find big differences. The Slovak respondents were the least active: no one participated in the protests. The Greeks and Germans are the next among whom there were only a few who took part sometimes. Among the Polish respondents there were a few who were activists and the Hungarians were the most active. Not taking part in the resistance includes those who did not even hear about it. This ratio was the highest among the Germans and the Slovaks. If we look at the age groups of the respondents, it is hardly surprising. The majority of them were in their childhood in the last decade of the totalitarian regime and they had very few connections to the opposition. It is very common that younger generations have not even heard of these historical events.

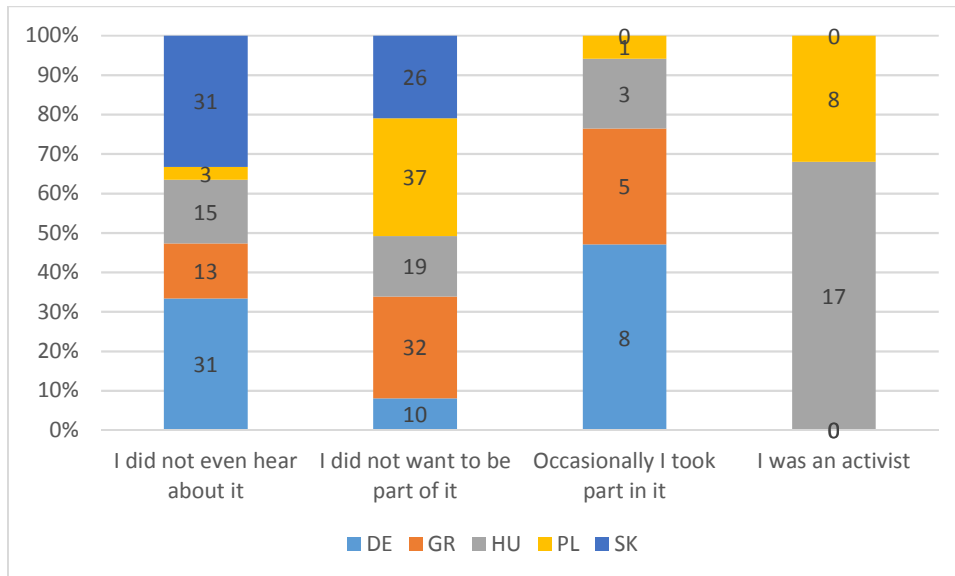
There were very few people involved in the civic resistance in the '80s and they had to face serious consequences, differing from country to country. In Hungary the system was a bit looser but the most active members of the democratic opposition were often dismissed from their jobs. In the GDR they were imprisoned and/or expelled from the country, while in Czecho-Slovakia they were also imprisoned. In Poland Solidarity Trade Union had 2 million members and after the introduction of Martial Law, thousands were arrested and sent to internment camps. However, underground resistance survived and there was a unique collaboration between workers and intellectuals, the latter also supporting the arrested or dismissed activists. So there was a social network built by intellectuals where each activist could count on the support and solidarity of the others. (See its description in the country-specific part.)



In the GDR there were also mass demonstrations in Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin in the autumn of 1989. They took place on Mondays from week to week. Their preludes were the activities of the groups helped by the East German Lutheran Church, the groups fighting for civil rights and the environmental groups.

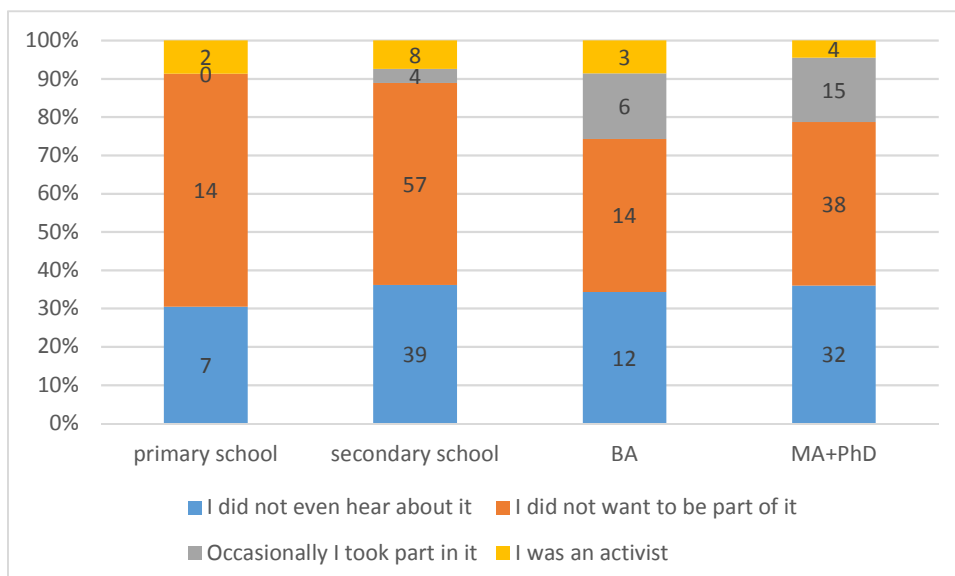
During the Greek military junta, thousands of communists or suspects were imprisoned or sent to internal exile on islands.

Figure 19: How did you relate to civic resistance? N=259



Resistance in different countries was represented mostly by intellectuals and young university students. Looking at their educational level (Figure 20), we can see a slight increase in activity with the increase of education but this tendency is not clear in the sample. Surprisingly, not being informed about the resistance does not decrease with higher education.

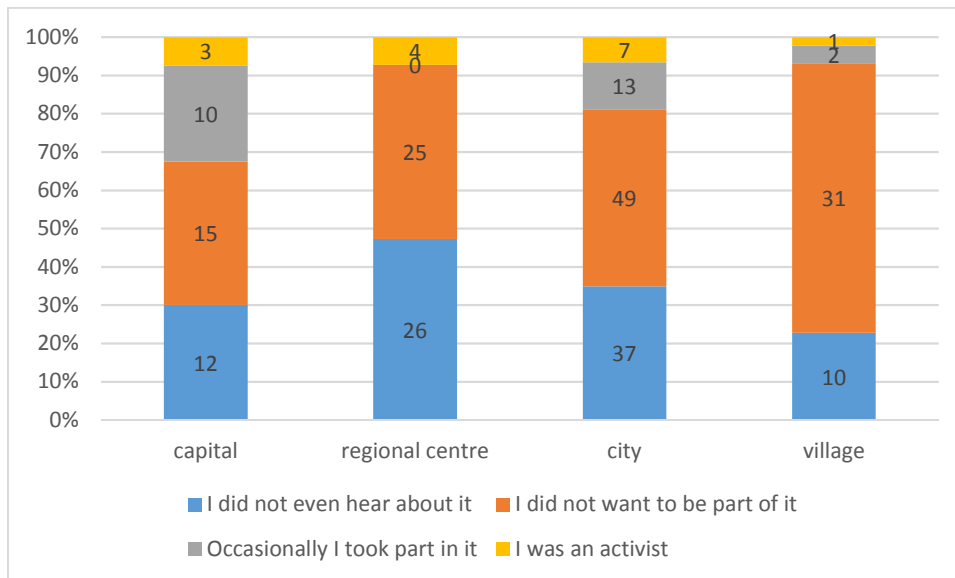
Figure 20: Attitude towards the resistance by educational level, N=255





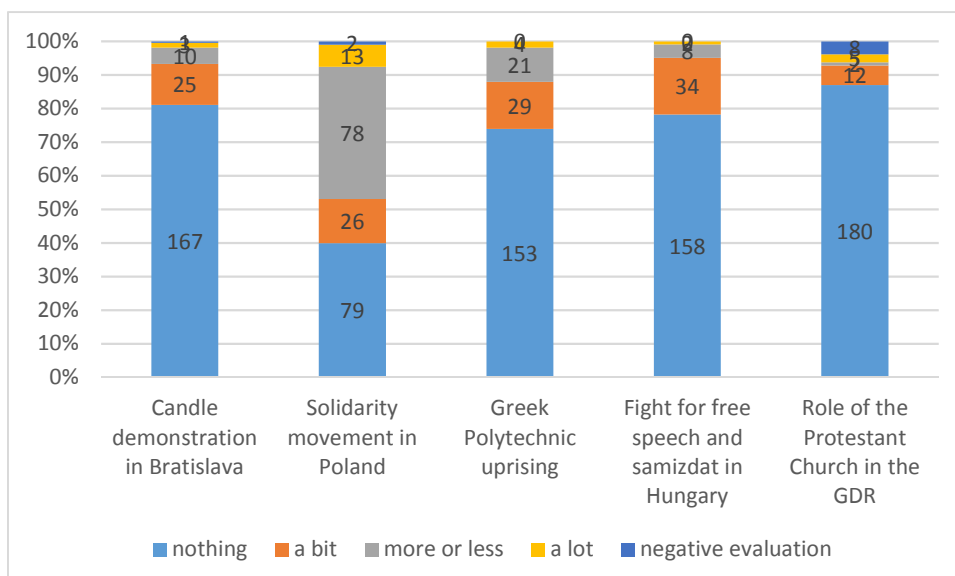
The tendency is not clear either when we look at the answers by type of settlements. We can see from Figure 21 that activism in the capital is slightly bigger and among the village respondents the reluctance to participate is higher. The latter might be due to the fact that people might be more intimidated by power in a smaller settlement where the neighbours can see their activities.

Figure 21: Attitude towards the resistance by type of settlement, N=245



As for measuring the knowledge about other countries' resistance, Figure 22 shows very well that apart from the Polish Solidarity movement, the respondents are not well informed. However, the question was not always clear whether it refers to the time of the resistance or what they know about it now. It was mentioned in the answers in a few cases. Furthermore, sometimes they wrote an extensive answer, sometimes they just wrote "a bit" which is rather subjective.

Figure 22: What do you know about...? N = 206, 198, 207, 202, 207





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The Slovak demonstration was mostly known to the German respondents and a few Hungarians. The Hungarians and the Germans seemed to be the most informed about the Polish movement, but a few Slovaks knew about it as well. The Greek uprising was known by the Germans, Hungarians and the Poles. The Hungarian fight for free speech and samizdat was mostly known by the Germans and the Poles. And the role of the German Protestant Church was mostly known by Hungarians. Conversely, the Hungarians and the Germans<sup>6</sup> are the most informed about these resistances altogether and then the Poles. Interestingly, there is no connection between being an activist and being informed about the other cases. One would assume that these come hand in hand mainly because of historic examples.

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<sup>6</sup> However, it must be added that the German questions were closed-ended, therefore their analysis should not be compared to the others.

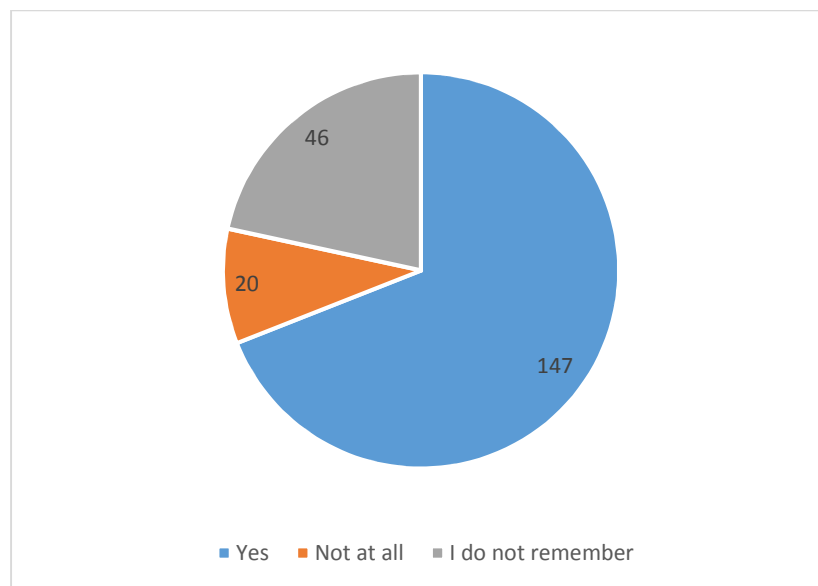


### **3rd block: Democratic transition and its evaluation**

The last block aimed at understanding how the change affected their lives and how they viewed the transition to democracy altogether.

The first question was whether they felt that the events could lead to democratic transition. As Figure 23 illustrates, most respondents felt that there would be a change due to the events taking place in their respective countries. There is no significant difference between the countries. Poles and Greeks remember less than others.

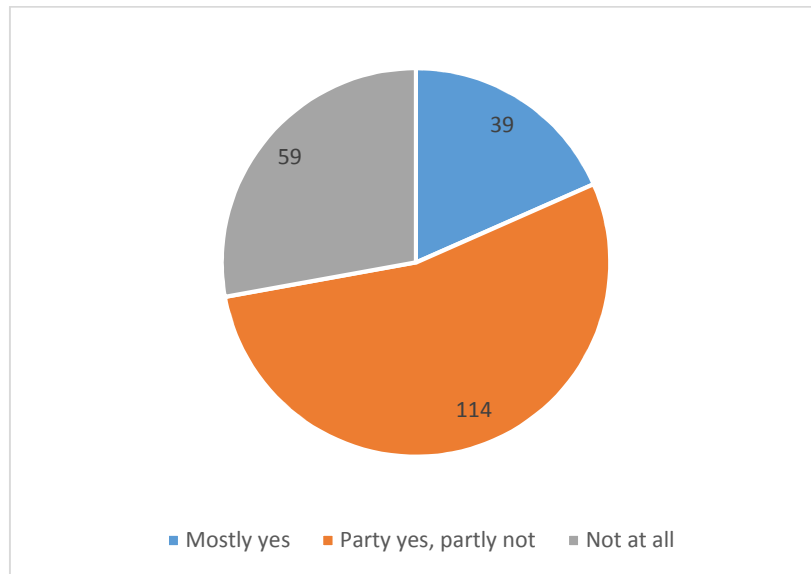
*Figure 23: Did you feel the events and changes could lead to a democratic transition? N=263*



The second question directly asked whether their hopes and expectations have been fulfilled. While the majority answered with a 'yes and no' combination, a significant amount seems to be disappointed and a smaller minority feels optimistic about it.

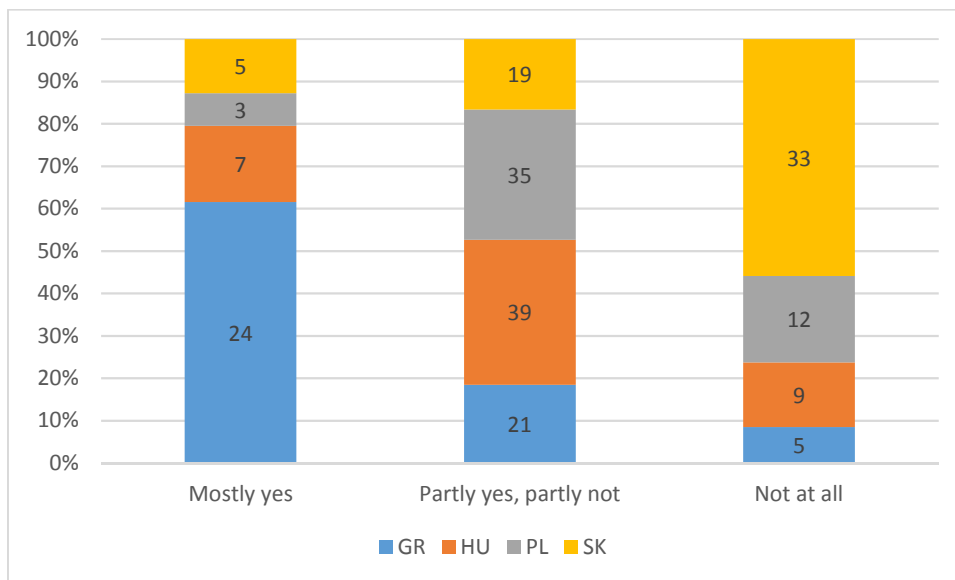


Figure 24: Have your hopes and expectations been fulfilled about the democratic transition?  
N=212



Looking at Figure 25, it is clear that the Greeks are the most satisfied and the Slovaks are the least. Hungarians and Poles have a rather balanced view.

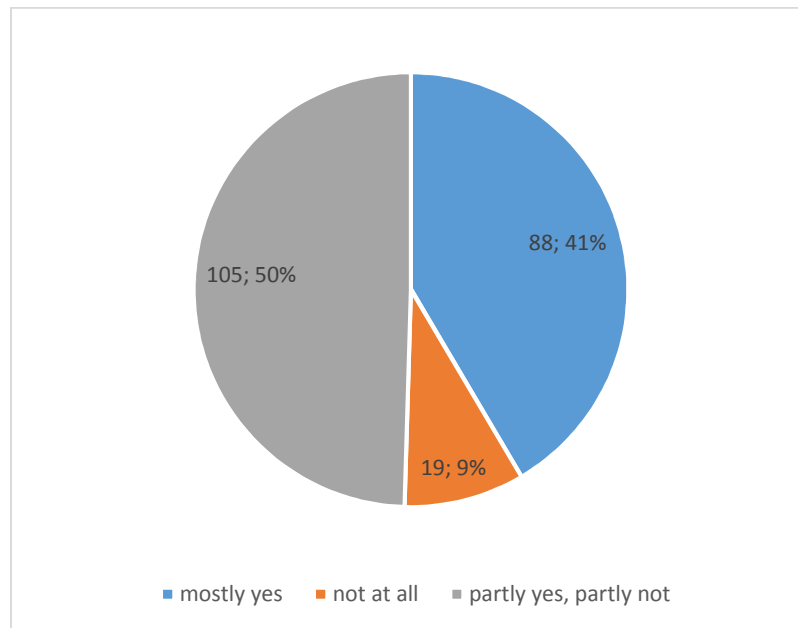
Figure 25: Have your hopes and expectations been fulfilled about the democratic transition?  
By country, N=212



Strongly connected to the previous question, respondents were asked whether their lives have changed since the democratic transition. As Figure 26 shows, half of them claimed that it did in some way and did not in other ways and a big majority of the other half said mostly yes. The answers did not vary among the different groups.

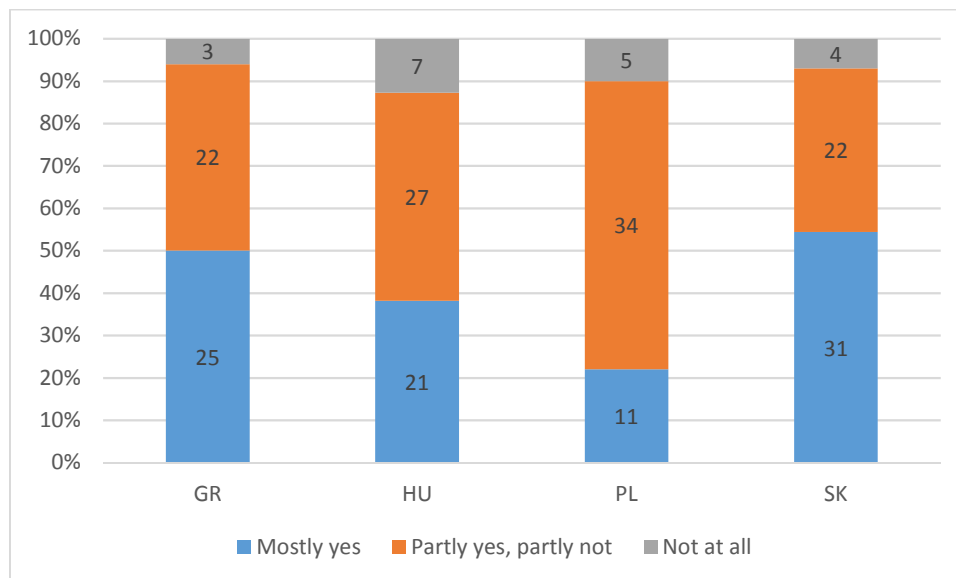


Figure 26: Has your everyday life changed since the democratic transition? N=212



By looking at the distribution by country, it is clear that Slovaks, then Greeks and Hungarians experienced change in bigger proportions and Poles the least.

Figure 27: Has your everyday life changed since the democratic transition? By country, N=212

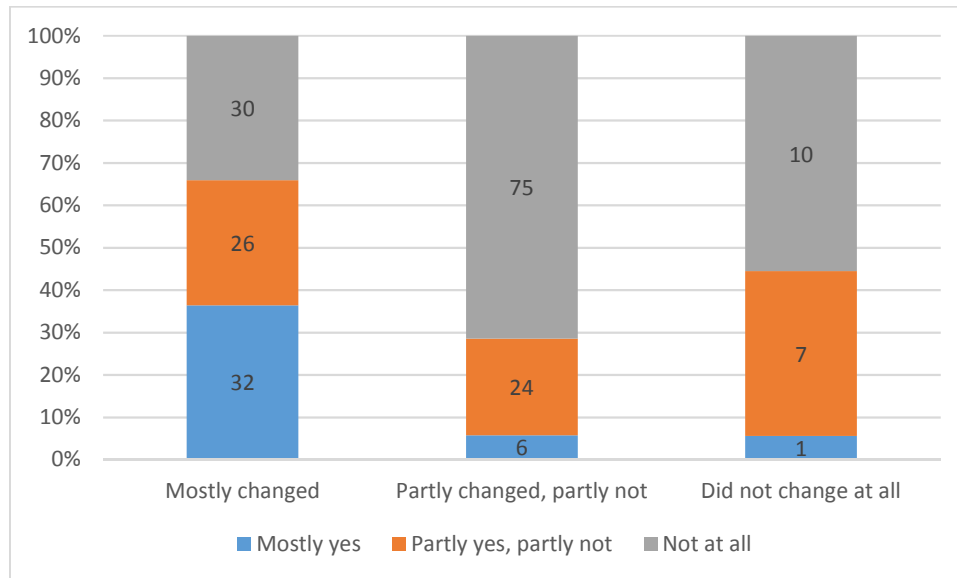


To see whether there is indeed a connection between having experienced a change in one's life and having one's expectation fulfilled, Figure 28 illustrates the answers of the two questions combined. Even those who experienced some changes in their lives do not evaluate the transition to democracy unambiguously positively. Approximately one third had their hopes and expectations fulfilled, one third is disappointed in the change and a bit less than one third gave a fifty-fifty answer. Those who experienced change but only partially mostly evaluate democratic transition in a negative way. They are the most disappointed group and



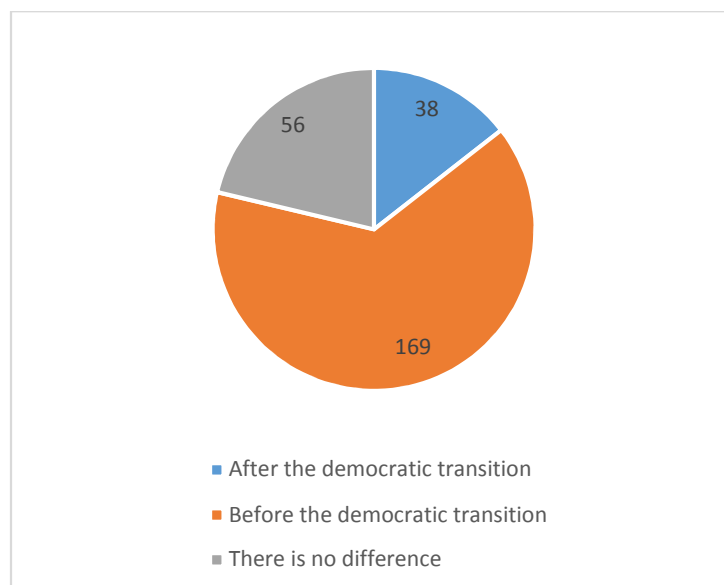
the ones who did not experience any change at all are in minority and among them the majority is pessimistic. The lack of a clear connection between the two questions might be because having experienced a change could refer to something negative as well.

Figure 28: Having experienced change by having fulfilled expectations, N=191



Regarding the job market, the respondents were asked when it was easier to find a job: before or after the transition to democracy. According to a big majority, it was easier before the democratic transition. One fifth believes that there is no difference and only a minority finds it easier after the transition.

Figure 29: When was it easier to find a job (corresponding to your education)<sup>7</sup>? N=263



<sup>7</sup> The question was asked without this addition in the Hungarian, German and Greek cases.

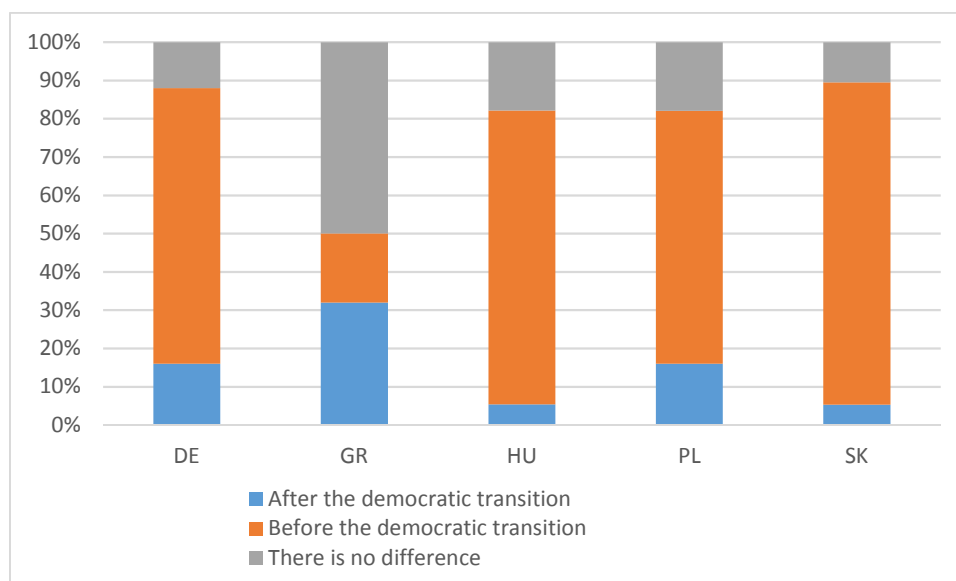




Looking at the same answers by nationality, we can see that only the Greeks differ from the pattern. The reason might be the lack of socialism. In socialist countries there was no unemployment and people, especially looking back after 25 years, might feel that it was more secure than now. However, it would only partially explain the Slovak and Polish answers, namely that they could find a job more easily but not necessarily corresponding to their education.

As officially there was no unemployment in socialist countries before the transition, moreover, having no workplace was severely punished, everyone had a job. Education and a higher degree was not really evaluated and the legal salary of doctors, teachers and other white collar workers could be at the same level as that of the blue collars or even less than of miners and other heavy industrial workers. On the other hand, after the democratic transition the whole situation changed fundamentally: factories and mines were closed down, hundreds of thousands of people with lower education became unemployed and it was very difficult to find a job without a degree.

Figure 30: When was it easier to find a job (corresponding to your education)? By country, N=263





### ***COUNTRY BY COUNTRY ANALYSIS***

In the last part, the answers will be presented (by country) to questions which are either country-specific or were simply left out from some other countries.

#### **Greece**

In order to understand the Greek country-specific questions and answers, here is a short introduction to its historical background:

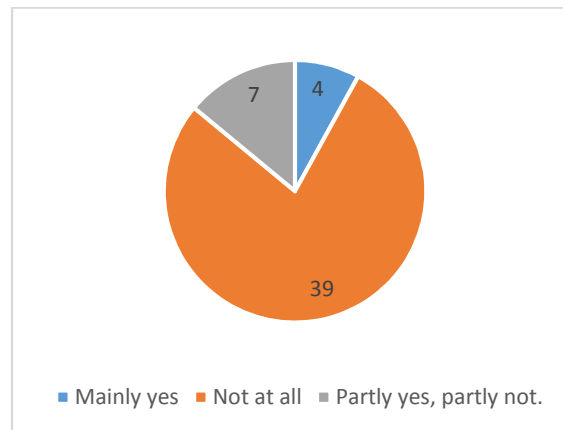
The military coup happened during a crisis: in 1963, the so called Center Coalition won the elections and formed a new government; which led to a steady reaction from the anti-communist forces that had been in power since the end of the Civil War. There was also an attempt from the newly crowned king to make the government act according to his commands. Considering the Cold War era, these forces looked at the strengthened and unified left as a threat. Andreas Papandreou, the son of the Center Coalition leader, George Papandreou, had Marxist ideas and was a member of this government. His actions also contributed to the military coup.

Colonels, who had been active in the Civil War and fervent anti-communists, played a central role during the military junta. There was allegedly a support from the US government, which has never been proved. The military junta succeeded in establishing its regime due to the turmoil of the previous period, distrust of the parliamentary system and lack of resistance. The junta also introduced some populist measures, like freeing farmers from their debts, who thus became its supporter. Policies also followed to gain the support of the business class. In the first years, there was a fight between moderate and authoritarian forces within the junta but eventually Papadopoulos succeeded in being proclaimed President of the Republic and calling a referendum to legalize the regime. The protests against the junta culminated in the uprising at the Polytechnic School in 1973 and finally in the downfall of the junta in the summer of 1974.

In the 1st block of our survey, one question directly asked whether life was better/worse/the same during the totalitarian regime. As Figure 31 shows, a big majority of the respondents said that life was not at all better in those years and only a minority think otherwise. It goes hand in hand with the result, namely that Greeks were the most optimistic about the transition to democracy.

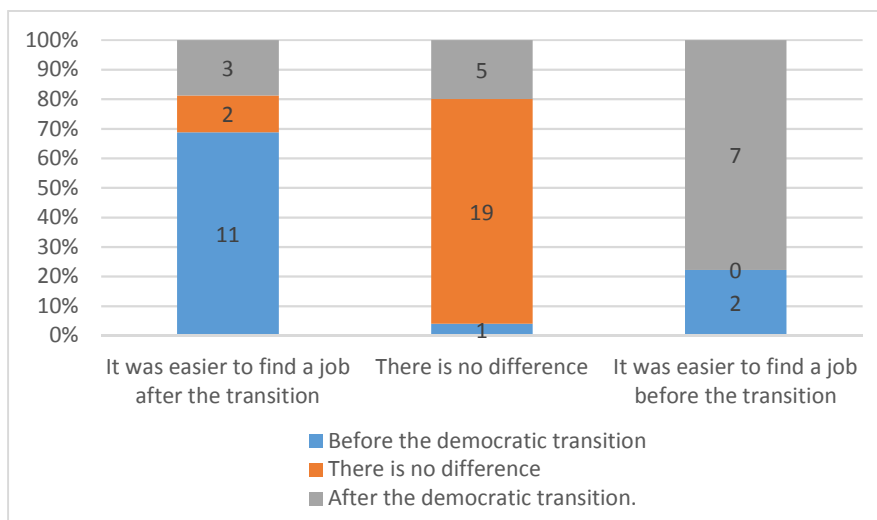


Figure 31: Do you think life was better during military junta? N=50



From the third block (evaluation of the democratic transition and its aftermath), the question was whether unemployment was higher or lower during those years. This might be strongly connected with the overall evaluation of the regime as well as when it was easier to find a job. However, it does not correlate with the former answers. Even those who think that life was not at all better during the regime, might believe that unemployment was still lower or there is no difference. On the contrary, there seems to be a logical connection between unemployment and finding a job according to respondents' opinion: those who believe that it was easier to find a job after the transition also think that unemployment was higher during the military junta; conversely, those who think it was easier to find a job then, believe that unemployment is higher after the democratic transition, and those (the majority) who said there is no difference in finding a job between the two eras believe that unemployment is/was more or less the same as well.

Figure 32: When do you think unemployment was higher? N=50





## Poland

Before analysing the country-specific questions and answers in Poland, let's see the short description of Solidarity Trade Union:

In July 1980, significant increases in the prices of food products became a huge problem for the society and workers began to strike showing social dissatisfaction.

Anna Walentynowicz, a crane operator and activist was fired at the Gdańsk Shipyard in August 1980 because of her participation in the "illegal trade union". This management decision enraged the workers of the Shipyard, who staged a strike action to demand her return to work. Their leader was Lech Wałęsa, a former shipyard worker who had been dismissed in 1976. The strike committee demanded to take both Walentynowicz and Wałęsa back to work, as well as to respect the workers' rights to be trade union members. Due to Radio Free Europe broadcasts and participating workers, news about the Solidarity movement quickly spread. Within days, over 200 factories and enterprises joined the strike committee.

At the end of August, representatives of the workers and the government signed an agreement, known as the August or Gdańsk agreement, which guaranteed most of the workers' demands, including the right to strike.

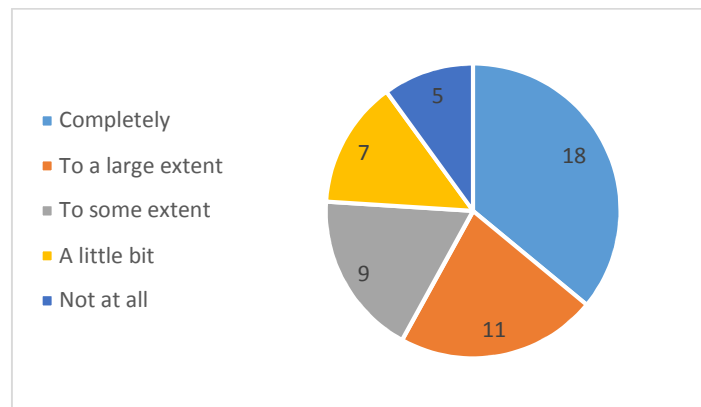
Encouraged by the success of the August strikes, on September 17 workers' representatives, including Lech Wałęsa, formed a nationwide labour union named "NSZZ Solidarność" (Solidarity Trade Union). It was the first trade union not controlled by the communist party in a country of the Soviet bloc. It had almost 10 million members in September 1981, which was one third of the total working-age population in Poland at that time. It is considered to have contributed significantly to the downfall of communism.

Over 20 Inter-factory Founding Committees of free trade unions merged into the Solidarity Trade Union at the Solidarity's First National Congress, in September 1981. They elected Wałęsa president and adopted the program of the "Self-governing Republic". Solidarity was transformed from a trade union into a social movement or more specifically, a revolutionary movement.

Regarding the first block, two extra questions were asked among the Polish respondents. One, whether they think being the member of the Communist Party was an advantage or not. As Figure 33 clearly shows, most of the respondents answered positively and only very few rejected the idea completely.



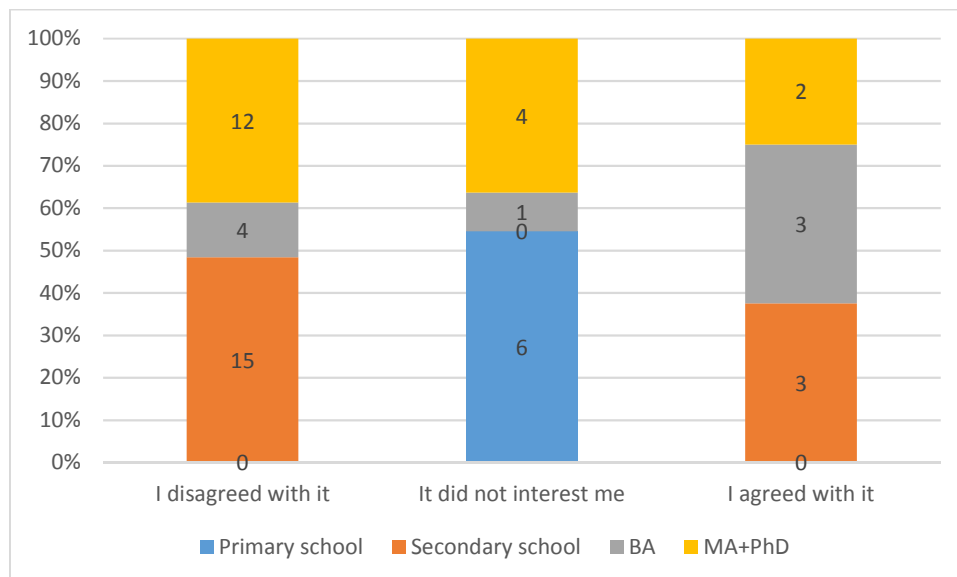
Figure 33: Do you think that being a member of the Communist Party was an advantage?  
N=50



The other question asked whether they had access to products from Western European countries. Most respondents (37) gave negative answer to this question.

In the second block the first question asked about the overall attitude towards the socialist ideology. While the majority did not embrace this ideology, the answers differed by educational level. The most educated mostly disagreed with it, whereas respondents with only 8 grades did not care about the topic.

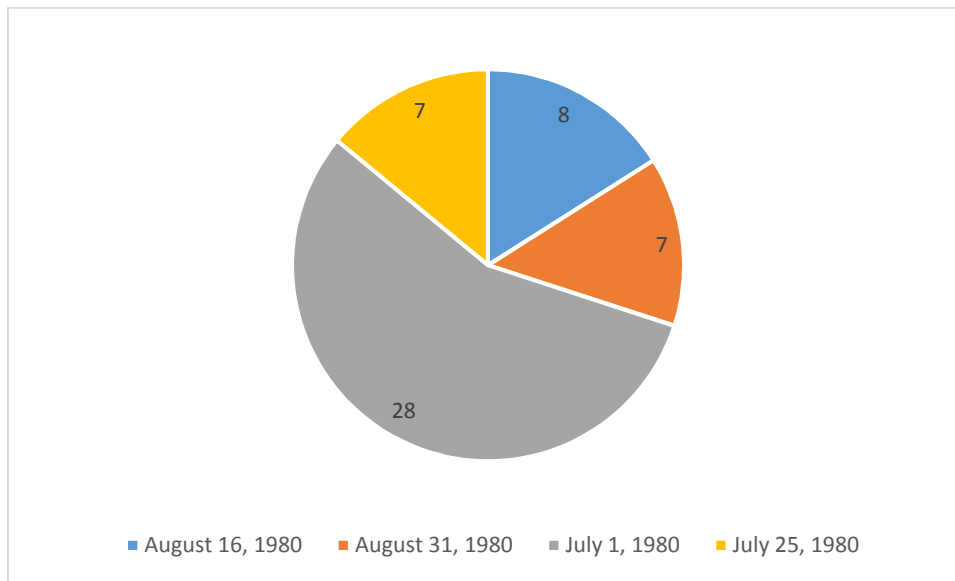
Figure 34: Attitude towards the communist ideology by educational level, N=50



And there were a few questions regarding the resistance. One of them is about factual knowledge. Figure 35 shows that the majority knew when the first strike broke out. However, the others are not completely wrong either: they could all tell the year and as a lot of things were happening in the country and it is not obvious for everyone which was the first.

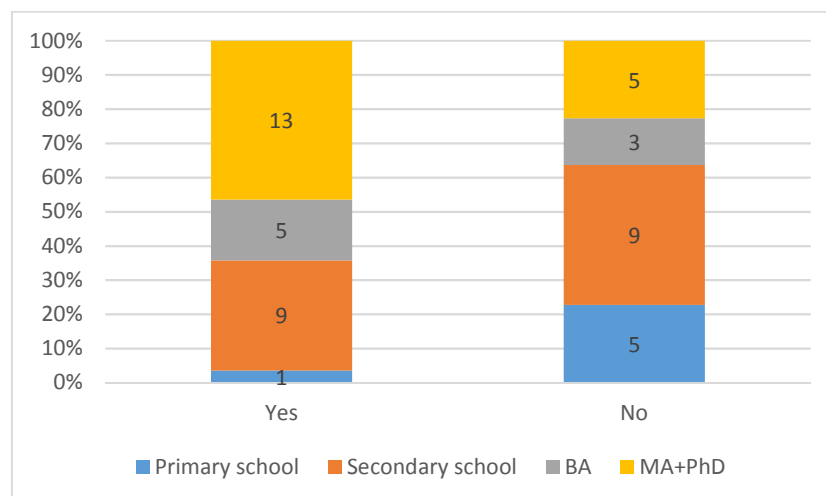


Figure 35: Do you remember when the first strikes broke out in Poland? N=50



Another question asked how they found out about the Solidarity movement. The answers varied. 16 and 14 respondents knew about it from friends and from underground information sources, 10 from the public media and 9 from the family (and one from all). This implies that all respondents knew about the movement. The next question revealed that approximately half of the respondents knew some activist of the movement and the rest did not (some of them because they were too young, very few were not interested and the others did not specify the reason). While the type of settlement did not show a big difference in knowing some activist or not (because of the high ratio of city-dwellers), education seems to have an effect (at least in this sample). Those who had an acquaintance from the movement seem to have higher educational level than those who did not.

Figure 36: Knowing someone personally from the Solidarity movement by education, N=50



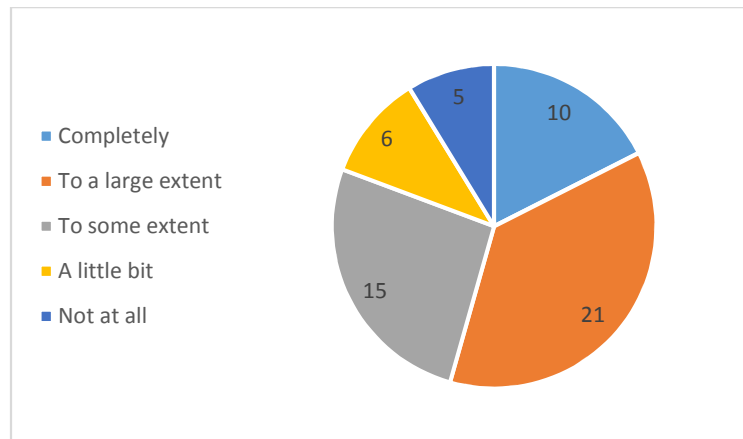
From the third block the extra question deals with corruption. Half of them said that there is no difference between the level of corruption before and after the transition. One fourth said that it was bigger and the other fourth claimed the opposite.



## Slovakia

The extra questions in the Slovak questionnaire are similar to the Polish ones. From the first block one of them is about the advantage of being a party member. As Figure 37 illustrates, the majority agreed with the question and only a small minority disagreed with it completely.

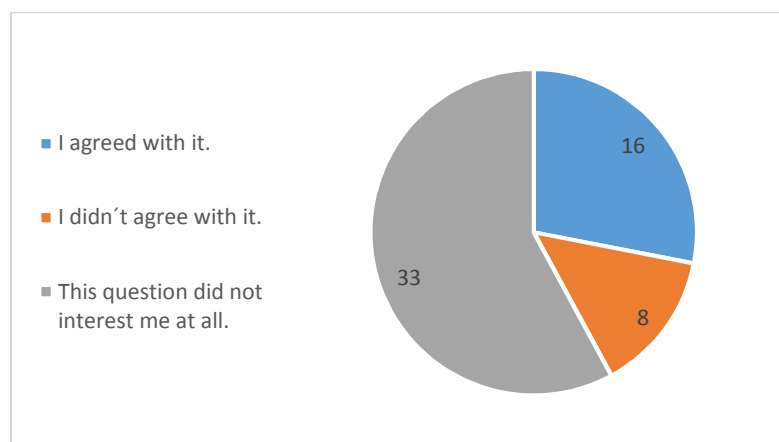
*Figure 37: Do you think that being a member of the Communist Party was an advantage?  
N=57*



The next question is about having access to Western products. The big majority of the sample did not have. Those who had access mentioned clothing, food (specifically products from Tuzex) and electronics.

From the second block, the first question covers the overall attitude towards the socialist ideology. As Figure 38 shows, the majority was not interested in this question and one third agreed with it. This goes hand in hand with the result which showed that the Slovaks were the least active in the resistance and knew very little of the different resistances in the other countries. It seems that this sample consisted mostly of people who were rather indifferent towards and during the whole era.

*Figure 38: How did you relate to the communist/socialist ideology? N=57*



The next questions elaborated on the resistance from different perspectives. In the light of the answers to the previous question (namely that many were indifferent regarding the



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socialist ideology in general), it is not surprising that the majority did not hear about the resistance of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches and those who did so were not interested in taking part. In other words, this sample has only very few (5) activists and very few (8) who knew activists from the church. Furthermore, 40 percent of the sample did not hear about the Candle Demonstration in Bratislava, most of whom finished only high school.

And from the last block the question of corruption was asked. Four fifth of the respondents do not think that corruption has decreased since the democratic transition.





## Hungary

In the Hungarian questionnaire, similar issues were asked but not all. From the first block the extra question was only about the access to Western products. Conversely, to Slovaks and Poles, two thirds of the Hungarians had access to them. Furthermore, most of those (85 percent) who did have access to such products travelled to Western Europe. The products mentioned were special food, clothing, electronics, cosmetics and cultural objects (books, vinyls, etc.).

Regarding the resistance, the Hungarian sample differs in some regards which can be due to the different nature of the resistance. For example, more than half of the sample was consuming samizdat and 96 percent knew what it is exactly (it was manifested in their answers). This might be due to the biased sample: Hungarians on average have a higher socio-economic status. They are the most educated in the sample and the ratio of the capital-dwellers is also much higher. Also, Hungary's history was different in the 1980s from the other socialist countries, because János Kádár, the first secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, fought a two-front war. He wanted to answer the expectations of the Soviet Union and also get some loan from the Western countries to maintain the "goulash communism". So, as we have mentioned earlier, the whole system was less rigid and usually reading samizdat did not have strict consequences.

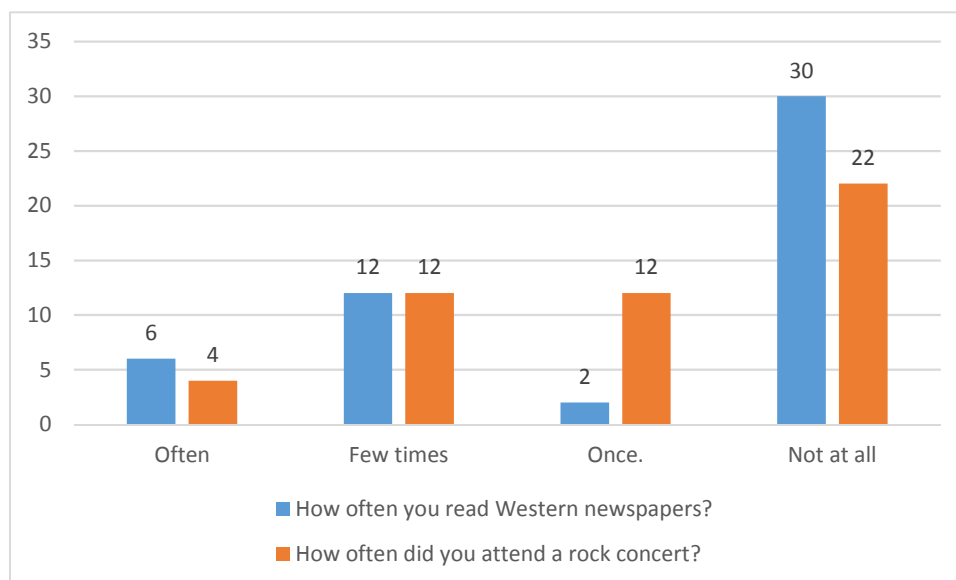
Regarding unemployment and the difficulty of finding a job in one's profession seems to correlate strongly in this sample. 75 per cent think that unemployment is bigger after the democratic transition and that it was easier to find a job before. Of course this opinion meets the reality as there was no unemployment before the transition and it is much more difficult to find a job without higher education nowadays (see it before).



## Germany (GDR)

The German questionnaire focused much more on the youth and its subculture. Mainly because if it comes to actions such as revolutions, for instance, it is always the young who initiate them. The subculture has a great influence on these youngsters, because the messages they convey aim them in the first place. Also, being involved with illegal cultural activities is also some kind of resistance. The first questions deal with access to Western newspapers and attending rock concerts. These two activities were similarly regarded as doing something against the system. As Figure 39 shows, both activities had similar popularity in the sample. The majority did not have access to Western newspaper, and a big proportion went to a rock concert only once or not at all. Only a minority had copies, either frequently or a few times and the same is true for rock concerts. However, the respondents only partially overlap: those who do neither coincide in many cases, but those who subscribed to Western newspapers were not the ones attending rock concerts every month. Additionally, there were 11 people in the sample who owned at least one samizdat (journals/periodicals, novels or anthology).

Figure 39: Access to newspapers and attending a rock concert, N=50



Having relatives in West Germany could have influenced all the resistance activities, but the sample shows that there is no connection between relatives in the West and participating in a protest, reading samizdat, etc.



### ***Conclusion***

As it became clear from the analysis, the findings do not always coincide with the literature (in some cases it demonstrated the contrary). This – in big part – is due to the non-representativeness of the sample and to ambiguous questions, which was emphasized throughout the text. However, in some cases there might be other reasons for it as well which would be worth being investigated.

Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a similar research surrounding the same topic but with the same and clear questions in each participating country, based on a representative sample. Then further analysis could be carried on and the drawn conclusion will have much better chances of revealing the truth.