Attitudes about Governance and Environmental Issues in Burgas and Kameno Obshtini, July 1993
by
John Pickles
and
Caedmon Staddon
RESEARCH PAPER 9413

John Pickles
Department of Geography
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506-0027

Caedmon Staddon
Department of Geography
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506-0027

June 1994

ABSTRACT: This research paper presents summary results and findings of a 1993 survey of citizen attitudes towards changing patterns of governance and environmental regulation in the obstini (counties) of Bourgas and Kameno. The paper deals specifically with perceptions of environmental quality, judgments about the relative importance of economic development and environmental quality, perceptions of the effectiveness of and level of citizen access to government offices and regulatory agencies, and assessments of the general well-being of residents in the region during the period 1989-1993.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: This survey was conducted with the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, "Program on Peace and International Cooperation," and the National Science Foundation.
1. Introduction to the 1993 Social Survey:

This survey is part of a three year multi-stage research initiative on the environmental implications of political and economic restructuring in Bulgaria. A similar survey was conducted during July 1992, and both instruments were designed with other similar surveys in Bulgaria, and the former socialist bloc in mind (cf. Hahn 1993; Triska and Babic 1980). By touching on several interrelated aspects of governance and environmental perception the survey process has accumulated a great deal of information on:

  a) perceptions of environmental quality;
  b) attitudes towards the trade-offs implicit in public discourses that pit economic
development against environmental quality;
  c) perceptions of the efficacy, legitimacy and appropriate scope and scale of governance;
  d) relations between citizens and different parts of the state apparatus and;
  e) perceived well-being of residents of the survey area.

The data collected is both quantitative (Likert scales, etc.) and qualitative (open ended questions), and is being used along side interview and other data types in a reflexive manner to more fully investigate the basic research themes (Flammersley and Atkinson 1983).

The survey was conducted in six distinct municipalities and villages in Burgas and Kameno Obshtinti\(^1\) (see Map 1) during a two week period in July 1993. The survey sites were chosen in order to collect data from several different types of places (see Map 2):

- **Burgas**: downtown core of the largest urban place in the region (approx. 225,000 population, 1992);
- **Meden Rudnik**: a large suburb of Burgas, located to the south of the central district, but very near the Black Sea port facilities;
- **Dolno Ezerovo**: a relatively small town administratively absorbed by Burgas, that functions largely as a bedroom community for workers at the nearby petrochemical plant “Neftochim”;
- **Gorno Ezerovo**: an agricultural village across Burgas Lake from Dolno Ezerovo and Neftochim;
- **Kameno**: the central place of the obshtina adjoining Burgas Obshtina to the west, very near to Neftochim, but with a very different history of relations with the plant;
- **Bulgarovo**: a small agricultural village located between Kameno and Dolno Ezerovo.

Once the appropriate areal units had been identified, a quasi-random “transect” method of sampling was chosen to select survey respondents at each of the six locations (Dixon and Leach 1984: 26; Crano and Brewer 1986). Surveyors were directed to approach persons present in a carefully managed cross section of specific sites (cafes, parks, public buildings, workplaces). In some cases the survey team procured special permission to conduct surveys in normally closed sites (usually work places). Preliminary analysis of the respondents suggests that a high level of correspondence with the general population has been achieved. A total of 169 surveys were completed in these six localities.

In the pages that follow the basic results of the 1993 survey are presented in an easy to read descriptive format. Much of the information is contained in a series of Likert scales, which have been grouped into grids that list response possibilities across the top of the page and the questions/statements themselves along the left side of the page. All results are reported as percentages of the total responses to each question. Reported also are the total responses for each question.

Special thanks go out to those who conducted the survey: Zoia Mateeva, Mariana Nikolova, and Vassil Vassilov of the Institute for Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia.

\(^1\) An “obshtina” is roughly the equivalent of an American “county.” Burgas Obshtina is by far the largest of the two in population, and is centred on the coastal city of Burgas. Kameno Obshtina adjoins Burgas Obshtina to the west and is centred on the town of Kameno.
1. Basic Information/Context

Male respondents: 74 (43.8%)
Female respondents: 90 (53.3%)
No information: 5 (2.9%)

Total number of respondents: 169 (100%)

Mean Age (years): 36.7
SD: 1.1
Mode: 28.0
Median: 34.5
Min: 13
Max: 80

2. Geographical Coverage

Burgas: 73
Meden Rudnick: 21
Kamen: 26
Dolno Ezerovo: 22
Gorno Ezerovo: 21
misc²: 6

TOTAL.: 169

3. How long have you lived in this town/village?

Mean (years): 25.8
SD: 1.1
Mode: 15
Median: 25
Min: 1
Max: 70

² A small number of survey respondents were from places other than the study region.
2. On the division of powers:

In this section of the survey we explore general opinions about and perceptions of the division of political powers in Bulgaria. All of the questions are about the relative concentration of powers at different spatial scales (national, regional, local), the perceived distinction between elected government and the civil service (bureaucracy), and the relations between citizens themselves and different levels of government.

Likert scales were chosen as the appropriate measuring technique because the intent was to determine respondents' level of agreement or affinity with carefully constructed statements about different types and orders of government activity. Other sections of the survey investigate respondents' actual knowledge of and participation in government processes and activities.

In some respects the results obtained for this set of questions are not surprising:

* By and large respondents indicate that they feel local levels of government are more effective than regional or national bodies, and that issues affecting the lives of citizens ought to be decided at the local level.

* Respondents also suggest that political power should not be diffused as much as they presently perceive it to be; they clearly suggest that more power ought to be concentrated in the local level, which they feel is both more effective and more representative.

* Comparison across several of the questions suggests also that respondents have a nuanced understanding of the ability of different levels of government to deal with specific sorts of issues and problems.

* Rejected rather sharply are the notions that citizens should not oppose the decisions of their elected representatives, and that political decision makers are somehow sacrosanct.

* Even in hypothetical emergency, or "high stakes," situations many respondents disagreed with the suggestion that executive power should be exercised exclusive of consultation with other groups.

* Interestingly there was no consensus on the effect of the present number of political parties on political conditions in Bulgaria.

More interesting than the results themselves are their implications for our overall understanding of democratisation and social change in former socialist states. Put succinctly, these survey results suggest that Bulgarian respondents believe democratisation to be much more than an institutional and electoral phenomenon. Against the preoccupation with national level political elites, institutions and elections prevalent in much of the literature (Huntington 1992; McSweeney and Tempest 1993), the survey results affirm the critical importance of the local level, of political culture, and therefore of analyses situated in the context of the real time events and processes as experienced by individuals and immediately accessible collectivities.

The 1992 survey together with recent research by others (cf. Regulsk, 1993) had suggested that perceptions of government and environmental issues might be correlated with the gender and age of respondents. Cross tabulations of some of the questions in this section, however, do not reveal any marked variation by gender. Nor do simple correlation analyses reveal any significant correlation between response pattern and age. Still, though these preliminary results do not immediately support early hypotheses about the relations between
gender, age and response pattern, firm conclusions must await more detailed analyses of these and other research results.\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL % (#)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The concentration of political power in the national government is undoubtedly best for managing Bulgarian affairs.</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>100.0(^4) (169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 All issues that influence the quality of citizens’ lives should be decided at the town or obshtina level.</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>100.0 (169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Problems of industrial pollution cannot be properly understood or managed by the town or obshtina councils.</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>100.0 (167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 The town council better represents the interests of the people than does the national government in Sofia.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.0 (168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 The civil service (the bureaucracy) already has too much power and is largely unaccountable to the electorate.</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>100.0 (118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 In dealing with cases of environmental pollution, the Mayor’s foremost responsibility is to act, not to waste time in consultations with citizens.</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>100.0 (166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 The local civil service (the bureaucracy) is better able to understand and deal effectively with problems of industrial pollution than are the elected members of government.</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>100.0 (165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 The existence of more than two or three political parties in Bulgaria gets in the way of effective and democratic government.</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>100.0 (167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Citizens should not oppose the decisions of those they elect to political office</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>100.0 (167)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) Chin (1993) reports a similar inability to find strong correlations between socio-demographic variables and political attitudes.

\(^4\) Rows may not sum exactly to 100.0% due to rounding.
3. Efficacy of New Political Structures:

In this section the survey explored respondents’ perceptions about “political efficacy.” This complex concept was operationalised in terms of the following kind of more specific questions:

* Which levels and/or branches of government do respondents consider the most/least effective?
* What is the relative importance accorded to different branches?
* Will these perceptions vary with respect to the spatial scale of government specified, or with respect to the type of issue chosen?

Of course, given the generality of some questions and the hypothetical nature of others, these results cannot be interpreted as a straightforward assessment of popular support for the present government. Rather, these results inform analysis of the emerging structures themselves as they are perceived and experienced by residents of Burgas and Kameno obshtini.

Surprising here is the finding that respondents showed a high degree of dissatisfaction with all levels of government, informing us that they do not vest their “trust” in any level of government and have a very low opinion of the competence of nearly all political decision makers. In contrast, the 1992 survey reported by Chin (1993) found a relatively high level of political trust in several Bulgarian institutions, including the “Army”, the “Presidency,” “Radio” and “Television.” Respondents were also extremely dissatisfied with the decisions taken by government officials, seeing them as largely “incorrect.”

Having said this however, respondents did consistently choose three agencies/offices from a list of fourteen in the context of resolving four hypothetical problem scenarios. The “Mayor’s Office,” the “Regional Environmental Inspectorate,” and “An Environmental Group Like Ecoglasnost” were overwhelmingly favoured. Perhaps this is not surprising given both the localisation and the issue specificity of these choices compared with most of the others. Knowledge about them is presumably greater, as is the real potential for citizens to actually reach them. We have also found that respondents favourably assess the present obshtina administration.

These results are consistent with those presented in the previous section in several respects. Most clearly, respondents confirm their relatively higher level of political trust in local organs of governance, though the overall ratings of all agencies are quite low. The general assumption, implicit in much of the research literature, that political trust and legitimacy will be regenerated as a direct function of free and fair elections is clearly not borne out here. After all, by mid 1992 Bulgaria had had two national elections (in June 1990 and October 1991) which were generally acknowledged to have been “free and fair” (Garber 1992; Koulov 1994). Instead, certain scale effects of social and political change appear to be manifesting themselves: the popular commitment to opening up the political process (“democratisation”) is being understood as first and foremost a local level affair. Concomitantly perhaps, citizens appear to be abandoning participation in national level politics. Local agencies, including non-governmental organisations, are apparently understood as the most legitimate and most potentially effective organs of governance.

Perhaps these results are a product of a partial grassroots democratisation and liberalisation of Bulgarian society that has actually been constrained by the top-down character of post-1989 political change, as characterised by the prevalence of neocorporatist decision making structures such as the “Trilateral Committees,” and the governing coalitions. Alternatively, it may be that the real extent and character of local-central relations under socialism was always more significant than generally acknowledged by western

---

5 See the discussion of “political efficacy” and related terms in Birch (1993). Here “political efficacy” is taken to refer to respondents assessment to the abilities of political actors and institutions to perform effectively.
researchers, and are hence predisposed to fill new political roles. In either case, the relations between democratisation and the formation of new spatial scales of political activity becomes a central issue.

3.1 In which of the following levels of government do you have the most trust?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Government</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Government</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Government</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*100.0% (169)*

3.2 In your opinion, what proportion of those elected to local government are capable of governing well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All of Them</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Majority</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Half</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A minority</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of Them</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*100.0% (169)*

---

Western researchers have generally contended that local levels of governance were only, to a greater or lesser degree, "transmission belts" of central government demands. See the essays in Nelson (1980) and Jacobs (1983) for a further discussion of local government in socialist systems.
3.3 Faced with several hypothetical scenarios, please indicate which SINGLE office from the list below would be most likely to render effective assistance. Please write the number corresponding to the organisation or office you choose in the spaces provided beside each of the scenarios.

**Scenario A:** you discover toxic materials on land newly restored to you. \( (N=160) \)

**Scenario B:** airborne pollution causes your children's eyes to sting. \( (N=154) \)

**Scenario C:** the school is unable to afford sufficient heat in the winter time. \( (N=151) \)

**Scenario D:** if the government announced that it would allow citizens to choose one organisation to be in charge of community environmental protection, which one organisation or office would you choose to take this responsibility. \( (N=148) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mayor's Office</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social Welfare and Pensions</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Regional Environmental Inspectorate</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Offices of a political party</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An environmental group like Ecoglasnost</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Government Offices in Burgas</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Government Ministries in Sofia</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. An international organisation such as the US EPA</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The President of Bulgaria's office</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My representative to the National Assembly</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I would oppose any single organis'n having this respons.</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. No one, this would not be a problem</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I would deal with it myself</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>100%*</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3.4 What proportion of the decisions made by elected local government officials are satisfactory or correct in your view?

1. All of them                      \( 3.1 \% \)
2. Most of them (more than half)    \( 14.3 \% \)
3. Some of them (less than half)    \( 44.7 \% \)
4. None                             \( 37.9 \% \)

**-------**

\( 100.0 \% \ (161) \)
4. Limits to Government: legitimacy/illegitimacy:

In this section of the survey we explore popular attitudes about the legitimate roles and responsibilities of government regarding social provision and private enterprise. At issue here is the legitimacy of certain relations between government, private enterprise, and civil society, not the efficacy of government actions.\(^7\) Consequently, the questions in this section have an explicitly normative cast ("government has no right"; "the local council should have...", etc.) In part this section also touches on the perceived role of government in the mediation between social/collective and civil/private rights of action, though this issue is taken up more thoroughly in Section 6. Here the focus is squarely on the legitimacy of government's intervention in the private sphere.

While almost 50% of respondents agree or agree strongly that "government has no right to control private enterprise,"\(^1\) fully 50% agree or agree strongly that "many industries can only be properly managed by government."\(^5\) Though this may at first glance seem to be something of a contradiction, it should be observed that the two questions differ in their level of specificity: the former being an general statement of principle, the latter tacitly inviting respondents to think of a specific industry or industries which ought to be regulated or more closely regulated. Given the preoccupation with pollution in the obshtrina, and the anxiety felt by many over the vulnerability of their livelihoods, these results seem to make sense. Respondents support the principle of an autonomous private sphere, while at the same time supporting wholeheartedly extensive government intervention of a "strategic" nature.

Again, the questions in this section reconfirm the relatively high level of political legitimacy enjoyed by local government, in this case regarding control over private enterprises \(^2\). At the same time, almost 70% of respondents claim they would not oppose a hypothetical increase in taxes earmarked for "cleaning up environmental pollution."\(^4\) These results combine a deep concern for the state of the environment with an expressed belief in the legitimacy (if not "political efficacy," see Section 2) of local government action on this issue.

Sounding a theme which will be discussed further in Section 6, over 90% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that "central government [must] provide support for those citizens who are unable to make ends meet on their own." Not only is there still a high level of legitimacy for government intervention in economic activities, but this is conjoined with an overwhelming consensus that one of government's primary duties is social provision. Some analysts (Brown 1988; McIntyre 1988:139ff) might point to the putatively relatively high level of "collective consciousness" among Bulgarians for an explanation of this result. However, again this public spiritedness is probably motivated just as much by the high levels of income vulnerability: 27.2% of respondents report that they were unemployed, and fully 60% report monthly incomes of less than $110 (USD).

---

\(^7\) Following general usage "legitimacy" is understood to mean the degree to which actors will acquiesce without physical or other compulsion, to the exercise of power by others (cf. Rigby and Feher 1982; Birch 1993).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1 Government has no right to control private enterprise.</th>
<th>23.9</th>
<th>35.3</th>
<th>11.4</th>
<th>22.8</th>
<th>6.6</th>
<th>100.0 (167)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2 The local council should have more power to control private enterprises in its jurisdiction.</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>100.0 (165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 It is important that local and central governments provide support for those citizens who are unable to make ends meet on their own.</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>100.0 (166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 If it was proposed that taxes had to be raised to pay specifically for cleaning up industrial pollution, I would not oppose the plan.</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>100.0 (167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Many industries can only be properly managed by government.</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100.0 (163)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 The local council should have more power to control enterprises in its jurisdiction.
5. Government, the Citizenry and Other Collective Actors:

In the last section the major issue was the political “legitimacy” of certain types of government action, and in the next section the issue involves the perceived role of government in mediating the articulations between social and civil rights. The questions in this section bridge between these two sections by investigating the relations between government institutions, citizens and other collective actors (such as community organisations or NGOs) in the political process. The five questions in this section speak directly to an important set of analytical and theoretical questions:

* what is the perceived degree of separation between private actors and public institutions?
* what are the common norms regarding appropriate citizen participation in government?
* what are the perceived roles of non governmental organisations and other manifestations of “civil society”?

Overall there is strong support for the claims that government should be open to the input of “local community, church and environmental groups,” and that it is important for citizens to participate in the political process (#5.1; #5.5). Mainstream models of democratisation would certainly anticipate these results, bespeaking as they do the “opening up” of previously closed, elitist and secretive political structures; the “reemergence” of civil society (Poznanski 1993; Huntington 1992).

However the majority of respondents also indicated that their own individual potential to intervene in even local political process was severely circumscribed. Fully 80% of respondents claim that their only recourse in the event of governmental non-performance “is to vote them out of office at the next election,” and 65% believe that local government official don’t “care much about what people like me think” (#5.2). We should also point out that these expressions of alienation from government seem consonant with results presented in other sections of the survey (e.g. Section 2).

These results pose something of a conundrum for the “mainstream models of democratisation” because while the expected normative commitments -to organisations within civil society and direct participation- are present (cf. #5.1, #5.5), respondents nevertheless think that their actual interventions in local governance are a waste of time. Moreover, fully one third of respondents agree that government should be left alone to govern (but cf. #2.6 and #2.9). The problem here is that expressed normative commitments to political participation (beyond voting) are apparently matched by neither perceptions of individual efficacy nor by actual political participation (Section 7). One possible explanation for this anomaly lies in the phenomenon of “political culture” (Almond and Verba 1963; Staddon 1993). After all, it may be that while Bulgarians are pleased to have substantially altered their structures of government since 1989, they remain firmly enmeshed in a political culture of relative passivity and withdrawal from political affairs. Indeed, the apparent lack of general knowledge about, or participation in, major NGOs or local clubs and associations also suggests a certain degree of lingering (?) passivity and/or alienation.8

One must be careful about the conclusions drawn from these results, however since studies in Western European and North American states have consistently shown similar levels of political alienation and withdrawal amongst populations that have never experienced state-socialist government (Almond and Verba 1963). Moreover, it is also possible that those questions in the survey which seek to elicit norms are falling prey to a “survey effect” occasioned by the historical use of opinion surveys by the former regime (cf. Connor and Gittelman 1977). And, it needs to be emphasised that the “culturalist” explanation of research results is itself currently a subject of some debate (Dixon and Leach 1984; Ostroot and Snyder 1985; Veenhoven 1987).

8 Burgas Field Notes 1992; 1993
5.1 In developing policies to solve pollution problems local government officials should work closely with local community, church and environmental groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 I don't think local government officials care much about what people like me think about pollution problems in my obshtina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Once a Local Council is elected, it will be most effective if citizens leave it alone to carry out its work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 If elected officials fail to deal with important problems like industrial pollution, the only recourse for citizens is to vote them out of office at the next election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 It is crucial for good and democratic government that citizens participate in special interest groups on important issues such as environmental pollution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Once a Local Council is elected, it will be most effective if citizens leave it alone to carry out its work.
6. Social and Civil Rights:

It is quite clear from the results of this portion of the survey that respondents view social provision as absolutely fundamental to good government (#6.1). As in other sections of the survey (cf. Section 2), respondents consistently refuse the opportunity to place civil rights of individual action ahead of social rights of collective action (and provision). The results of #6.4 and #6.5 are nicely consistent on this point: issues of collective provision (health care, environment, housing and wage support) are ranked as both the most important (#6.4) and as the least expendable (#6.5). Though it is common for western observers to claim that civil rights are the spearhead of democratisation in Eastern Europe (e.g. Huntington, 1992), and that social rights are therefore part of the ‘ancien régime’, the survey results presented here suggest that Bulgarians themselves perceive things rather differently. Analytically it remains an open question just how the Bulgarian experience of democratisation and economic liberalisation will articulate with an entrenched collectivist ethic.

The one exception to this interpretation is #6.2, where respondents were much more evenly divided across the whole range of responses to the bipolar question:

It is more important that government protect the individual’s right to do as s/he pleases than it is that government should concern itself with the collective rights of particular groups (e.g. pensioners).

One might expect that this distribution could be correlated with other social variables contained within the data set, such as gender, age and income. In principle one might expect that individuals with relatively high incomes would tend to agree more strongly than others with this statement. As well, given that the predominant part in Bulgarian domestic activities, including care and assistance for others, generally fell on the shoulders of women, one might also anticipate a greater degree of female disagreement here (McIntyre 1988). However, as with results reported earlier, preliminary investigations have revealed no significant correlations of this nature.

When given the opportunity to choose the most important and least important tasks of government, there is a high degree of consistency in the results: respondents choose to retain programs oriented towards social rights and discontinue those oriented towards private, market rights. Indeed, there is perfect symmetry between those programs judged the three most important and those judged the three least important. Thinking beyond the survey for a moment, this reveals something of a divergence between Bulgarian respondents, who stress medical care, environmental protection and housing as the most important tasks of government, and political elites who champion land reform, privatisation and financial reform. A survey conducted by a Bulgarian NGO during April 1992 confirms this tendency to prioritise right of social provision over civil rights of action: three of the five most popular decisions taken by the UDF during its fourth annual convention pertain to social provision.

These results are confirmed in Section 7 of the survey where respondents are asked to distinguish between the “top priority tasks” for local and national government. For both levels of government “environment” is by far the most important issue, followed by “unemployment,” “economic reform,” “crime,” and “urban management” issues. Respondents do make clear distinctions between the appropriate tasks of local versus central government, though the priority of social/collective issues is for the most part maintained at both levels.

9 See Kolankiewicz (1993) on the importance of this distinction.
10 It may even be plausible to argue that this collective mindedness could be a contingent factor which greatly exacerbates the sort of conflict between democratisation and marketisation examined by Adam Przeworski (1991).
11 Respondents were asked to rank the recent policy resolutions of the UDF. The following issues were the top five, in order: Crime (general), Pensions, Health System, Streamline Laws, Crime (money laundering). All of these were ranked as more important than privatisation and deregulation of banking.
6.1 Government should be responsible for ensuring that all citizens achieve certain basic living standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>% ( #)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>100.0 (167)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 It is more important that government protect the individual's right to do as s/he pleases than it is that government should concern itself with the collective rights of particular groups (e.g. pensioners).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>% ( #)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>100.0 (165)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 From the following list, please select and rank the FIVE most important tasks of government for you and your community. (Results listed in descending order by number of "votes" cast)

1. Medical Care 159
2. 8. Environmental Protection 130
3. 5. Housing 106
4. 6. Wage support programmes 82
5. 10. Childcare 75
6. 2. Primary Education 71
7. 4. Roads and Sewers 57
8. 3. Land Reform 41
9. 7. Privatisation of State Enterprises 23
9. 9. Liberalisation of Banking 5

* 96 non-responses of 8150 total possible.

6.5 If you were informed that the government had to close down some services and programmes, which of the following would YOU propose to eliminate? (Results listed in descending order by number of "votes" cast)

9. Liberalisation of Banking 113
7. 8. Environmental Protection 86
3. 4. Roads and Sewers 70
9. 5. Housing 44
4. 3. Land Reform 42
6. 2. Primary Education 37
2. 10. Childcare 31
5. 8. Environmental Protection 30
8. 1. Medical Care 8
1. 7. Privatisation of State Enterprises 1

* 383 non-responses of 8150 total possible.
7. Political Knowledge and Participation:

In this section we present survey results pertaining to the levels of political knowledge and actual political participation of respondents. This section complements earlier sections that focused on perceptions, beliefs and interpretations of events, rather than on actual involvement in, or knowledge of, them.

Overall we found that the levels of political knowledge were lower than we would have expected given the apparently high levels of popular politicisation in Bulgaria since 1989. While nearly all respondents correctly identified the current president of Bulgaria (Zhelyu Zhelev), far fewer correctly identified the parties that form the current Bulgarian government. Moreover, very few respondents claimed to know more than “a little” about several locally, nationally and internationally led environmental initiatives or political groups, such as the Bulgarian environmental movement cum political party “Ecoglasnost,” or the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFE). Additionally, more than 80% of respondents claimed to attend public meetings of the local council “hardly at all.”

All of this is somewhat surprising given the great emphasis respondents have placed on the political importance of environmental issues in Burgas obshina, and upon the importance of actual involvement in the newly opened up political institutions. Again, in this section as in the last, it may be that we are documenting the pragmatic withdrawal of Bulgarians from a political process that, while more open than before 1989, is perceived by them as largely discredited and ineffectual. This, combined with the lack of immediate access, possibly explains the general dissatisfaction with national politics. We wonder what this would mean for the party structure of national government - is the establishment of a substantial political “middle” a national response to social disaffection?

Questions #7.7 and #7.8 reveal that Bulgarians view environmental problems as the most important problems facing both local and national governments. Beyond that commonality, the charts show that respondents perceive of local service provision as the most important role of local government. They also perceive that issues of social-collective provision (Health, Education, etc.) are the most important at the national level. Again, issues such as “privatisation” and “banking reform” were mentioned by respondents only occasionally, despite their preponderance in the national media. Finally, “Crime” appears to have emerged as a key concern of citizens, one that they insist must be managed by all levels of government.

Interestingly, unlike Czechs surveyed in the summer of 1993, Bulgarians did not identify any ethnic populations as significant problems demanding government action (Pavlínek, Pickles and Staddon 1994). Elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe ethnic rivalries and tensions are mounting; against guest worker populations in Germany, the Hungarian minority in Romania, throughout former Yugoslavia, and involving the Roma (“Gypsy”) population virtually everywhere (Paul Hockenos 1994). A recent survey of ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe has suggested that of all these nations, Bulgaria is one of the most tranquil, least likely to fracture along ethnic lines (Englebrekt 1994).

---

12 This impression comes from, among other things, the frequency of popular demonstrations on various issues in Sofia and around the country during summer 1993.

13 Since December 1992 there has been a coalition between the Bulgarian Socialist Party, (BSP) and the predominantly ethnic Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms, (MRF).

14 It is worth remembering that political culture studies in the United States have repeatedly shown that though most Americans believe that participation is important, few actually do participate beyond elections (Almond and Verba 1963; Verba and Almond 1980).

15 One might choose to date the beginnings of this “middle” to the so called “group of 20,” UDF delegates to the Grand National Assembly who broke ranks with their party to support the new 1991 Constitution promulgated by the majority BSP. Since that time Bulgaria has seen a continual splintering of political parties, especially the UDF, into more moderate, and more radical factions (see Koulov 1994).
7.1 Which political party (or parties) form(s) the current national government of Bulgaria?

7.2 Please indicate your level of knowledge about the following programmes or organisations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Know a Great Deal</th>
<th>Know Something</th>
<th>Know only a little</th>
<th>Not Known</th>
<th>TOTAL % (#)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. the PHARE programme:</td>
<td>4.2 %</td>
<td>15.1 %</td>
<td>25.9 %</td>
<td>54.8 %</td>
<td>100.0 (166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the new environmental “passport” program</td>
<td>1.3 %</td>
<td>2.6 %</td>
<td>6.9 %</td>
<td>89.4 %</td>
<td>100.0 (161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. the 1991 Constitution of Bulgaria:</td>
<td>10.9 %</td>
<td>16.4 %</td>
<td>27.9 %</td>
<td>44.8 %</td>
<td>100.0 (166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. the Tripartite Commission for Social Harmony:</td>
<td>3.0 %</td>
<td>15.2 %</td>
<td>23.2 %</td>
<td>58.5 %</td>
<td>100.0 (164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights:</td>
<td>2.4 %</td>
<td>12.0 %</td>
<td>26.5 %</td>
<td>59.0 %</td>
<td>100.0 (166)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 How often do you attend public meetings of the Local Council or its subcommittees?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Most of the Time</td>
<td>3.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some of the Time</td>
<td>1.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Now and Then (rarely)</td>
<td>9.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hardly at All</td>
<td>85.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

16 PHARE is a funding programme for environmental initiatives managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the environmental “passport” programme is an initiative of Bourgas local government; the “Tripartite Commission for Social Harmony” is a national cooperative and consultative council bringing together enterprise managers and private business people, government, and trades union leaders; the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights is one of Bulgaria’s first NGOs, currently involved in popular education and electoral mobilisation.
7.4 Could you tell us the names of the following political figures:
- the President of Bulgaria: Correct: 91.0 % Incorrect: 3.0 % Don't Know: 6.0 %
  TOTAL= 100.0 % (166)
- Minister of the Environment: Correct: 9.1% Incorrect: 0.1% Don't Know: 90.8%
  TOTAL= 100.0 % (164)

7.6 Do you know of an example of a former government or party official who has used his/her position to benefit from the privatisation of state enterprises?

Yes 33.1  No 20.5  Don't Know 46.4  TOTAL= 100.0 (166)

7.7 What should be the top priority tasks for the NATIONAL government?

7.8 What should be the top priority tasks for LOCAL government?
8. Socio-economic Status:

In this section we present information pertaining to the socio-economic well being of survey respondents. This information was collected both to get a sense of socio-economic well being, and to provide data which could be used to help explain other survey responses patterns.

While a majority of survey respondents were employed at the time of the survey (July 1993), a clear majority of respondents also claimed a monthly income less than 2500 lev (approximately $100 USD at then prevailing exchange rates). More than two thirds claimed to own their own dwelling, while only half claimed to operate an automobile “regularly.” This latter result is especially interesting since fuel prices has been completely deregulated, thus giving an indication of how Bulgarians are coping in a sector without price protection or consumption support programmes.

The 1992 survey determined that “informal” agricultural production (at country houses and family small holdings) remains quite important for the fulfillment of the domestic consumption budget (Staddon and Pickles 1994). Given the low level of money income and rapidly rising consumer prices, these somewhat unique (compared to Western capitalist nations) urban-rural linkages are likely to remain highly important.

Interestingly, while most respondents (68%) have had, or expect to have, agricultural land restituted to them, fewer than 12% have had or expect urban (commercial) properties to be restored to them. This may to some extent reflect the agricultural small holder basis of pre-socialist Bulgarian society; urban areas in eastern Bulgaria are very largely a product of the socialist period (McIntyre 1988; Danta 1993).

The last item in this section (#8.10), and on the survey, presents respondents’ own descriptions of health complaints linked to environmental pollution in the Burgas region. The only generalisation that is warranted on the basis of this information at this time is that the vast majority of complaints are respiratory and gastro-intestinal in nature. Research by Pickles (1993) is probing the specific linkages between environmental pollution and health.
8.1 Are you currently employed?  
Yes 72.8 %  
No 27.2 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (169)

8.2 Are any other members of your household unemployed?  
Yes 34.4 %  
No 65.6 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (163)

8.3 Are you a member of any trade union?  
Yes 23.2 %  
No 76.8 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (164)

8.4 Have you had, or are you or your family currently expecting land to be restored to you?  
Yes 70.6 %  
No 20.2 %  
Don't Know 9.2 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (163)

8.5 a) Have you or any member of your family had commercial property to be restored to you?  
Yes 11.3 %  
No 82.7 %  
Don't Know 6 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (168)

b) Are you or any member of your family currently expecting commercial property to be restored to you?  
Yes 16.8 %  
No 73.7 %  
Don't Know 9.6 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (167)

8.6 In order to assess well being, we would like to get an estimate of your average monthly income from all sources. Please circle the category into which your average monthly income falls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lev/month</th>
<th></th>
<th>lev/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 1500</td>
<td>26.3 %</td>
<td>3500 - 4999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 - 1999</td>
<td>16.8 %</td>
<td>5000 - 5999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2499</td>
<td>17.4 %</td>
<td>5500 - 5999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500 - 2999</td>
<td>7.8 %</td>
<td>6000 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 - 3499</td>
<td>10.2 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL = 100.0 % (167)

8.7 Indicate your highest level of educational attainment.

1. Primary  
0.6 %  
2. Secondary  
13.5 %  
3. Postsecondary  
85.9 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (169)

8.8 Do you own your own home?  
Yes 69.3 %  
No 30.7 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (166)

8.9 Do you own and operate regularly a motor vehicle?  
Yes 50.0 %  
No 50.0 %  
TOTAL = 100.0 % (166)
8.10 Please list below any health problems you or any member of your family have had which you believe to have been the result of environmental pollution. (Each response is separated by a semi-colon).

- Lung cancer; asthma; chronic bronchitis; asthma, bronchitis; her younger daughter has a distortion in her left eye; bronchial asthma; chronic bronchitis and allergies; wife suffers migraines and I suffer headaches and my daughter suffers bronchitis; bronchitis, kidneys, high blood pressure, allergies, cirrhosis; lung diseases; headaches, high blood pressure, allergies, bronchitis, liver and kidneys; bronchitis, liver, kidneys, and high blood pressure; cardio-myopathy; bilateral bronchial pneumonia in 6 year old child; ptosis renis, pielonephritis, chronic. 2. broncho-pneumonia, chronic. 3. the night pee of children; both my children have allergies; high blood pressure, heart beat, weakness, lack of appetite, and many other things; diabetes and lung cancer; husband had heart stroke; entire family has allergies; we suppose but we are not sure; It has not shown up, but we all in Burgas are sick; 1. conjunctivitis because of sea water pollution. 2. salmonellosis. 3. allergies, especially in summer; bronchial asthma; my son has bronchial disease; my children all have allergies; hepatitis viralis; children have allergies; bronchial asthma; heart complaints; my mother - high blood pressure and heart problem; allergies and high blood pressure.; allergies; breathing problems and allergies; ecological allergies; common cold, difficulty breathing because of NXX air pollution; allergy and breathing problems; bronchial asthma and proved allergy to micro-organisms in the air and home dust; 1. bronchial asthma. 2. breathing problem. 3. skin irritation; The Burgas region is the industrial ghetto of Bulgaria. Let the Sofia governors give interfering to our nature. By no means should be let them do it in the future without taking into consideration the opinion of the local government; allergic coughts from the polluted air by NXX; chronic bronchitis; bronchial asthma; allergy; paralysis of the body occurring in infants; lung bronchial asthma; liver disease after 22 years of service at NXX. Now retired because f disease (47 year old woman); chronic lung disease; 1. lung diseases. 2. kidneys. 3. headaches; My father has low blood access to his lower limbs as a result of 22 years service at NXX.; my father has heart disease. Mother has allergy. Me teeth problems.; kidney disease; My older son (6 yrs) chronic bronchitis and chronic pneumonia. Younger son (5 yrs) asthma, bronchitis, laryngitis; chronic liver.; My children are constantly sick, taking antibiotics almost every month. This is due to the environmental pollution; allergies; bad quality of water leading to hepatitis.; bronchial asthma; Kidney problems with advice to change climate and water; spastic bronchitis; spastic bronchitis.; Often occurring infections of the breathing systems. Systematical bronchitis.; Eyes illness. Sore eyes.; A 3 day old baby died.; My parents suffer asthma.; Somebody is suffering meningitis.; Air causes illness most often.; Bronchitis; None; Numerous crises.; No; My mother suffers allergy. We all suffer bad teeth.; Allergy of the whole family. Gastric ulcer. Headaches.; My grandchildren. one has asthma. Second suffers immune system weakness.; Bronchitis.; 25 years of service at the ethylene plant of NXX - diabetes and teeth problems.; I suffer asthma and high blood pressure.; Bilious complaint.; Kidney diseases and baldness; Allergy, bronchial pneumonia, rash.; Allergy, itching, rash.; My child suffers bronchitis very often.; 1. Unemployment. 2. Housing. 3. Environmental Protection.; My daughter has chronic bronchitis. My son has allergies.; Bronchial asthma; Lung diseases.; My wife works at NXX and she and other women suffer much from the air pollution. My wife suffers from teeth problems and double chin disease. Why don't you make this survey with NXX workers?; Bronchitis, basedes disease; I am sure that we have been affected and this has its impact on our bodies, but it has not shown up yet thank god.; Migraine.; Basesdes disease after the Chernobyl disaster.; My husband got ulcer. He works at NXX;
References


