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**PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF
SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND
DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION
IN BULGARIA**

Key Issue

- ❑ Changes in public representations of social inequality and social justice in Bulgarian society
 - ❑ Their relation to the support of democracy and market economy
 - ❑ Their relation to democratic consolidation of Bulgarian society during the period of social transformation
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Sources

- Comparison of the Bulgarian data from the EUREQUAL project (2007, N=1000) with data from a survey, which was carried out at the beginning of the social changes in the countries of CEE (1993, N = 1932) coordinated by Oxford University.
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Topics

1. Social self identification and perception of social structure
 2. Public representations of social inequality and social justice
 3. Social inequality and democratic consolidation of society
 4. Social inequality and social institutions
 5. Social expectations and strategies of coping with the consequences of social inequality
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Perceived social groups standard of living compared to five years ago

	Fallen		About the same		Risen	
	1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
Manual workers	66	46	11	30	10	13
Entrepreneurs	6	7	5	65	60	24
Managers	7	4	11	13	61	66
Intelligentsia	31	15	21	24	23	47
Office workers	38	18	14	33	18	34
Peasants	65	58	25	27	8	4

Perceived level of the standard of living in Bulgaria compared with five years ago

Fallen		Stayed about the same		Risen	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
71	39	8	34	7	20

Perceived level of the standard of living of the household compared with five years ago

Fallen		Stayed about the same		Risen	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
75	44	14	38	9	16

Expected level of the standard of living of social groups in five years time

	Lower		About the same		Higher	
	1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
Manual workers	29	17	26	33	21	34
Entrepreneurs	2	2	7	15	60	62
Managers	1	1	9	14	60	65
Intelligentsia	5	2	21	16	40	63
Office workers	8	3	27	24	32	54
Peasants	15	21	25	36	24	25

Ordinary working people get their fair share of the nation's wealth

Agree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
18	4	60	82	10	9

There is one law for the rich and one for the poor

Agree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
66	86	15	4	12	8

Democracy is the best system for governing Bulgaria

Supporter		Opponent		Neither supporter nor opponent	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
56	47	21	29	16	17

Evaluation of the actual practice of democracy in Bulgaria

Positively		Negatively		Neither positively nor negatively	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
25	23	45	51	22	22

Market economy is the best system for Bulgaria

Supporter		Opponent		Neither supporter nor opponent	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
60	51	16	26	15	16

The government acts for the benefit of the majority of the society

Agree		Disagree	
1993	2007	1993	2007
43	16	40	81

Elected officials don't care much what ordinary people think

Agree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
71	86	7	4	13	10

Bulgarian institutions which have played the biggest role in working to (2007)

	Reduce social inequalities	Increase social inequalities
Political parties	15	47
The President/ government	22	17
Trade unions	12	1
Churches	1	0
Civic organizations	7	1
Mass media	5	3
Other	3	2
Don't know	35	29

What this country needs to resolve its economic problems is a government with a strong hand

Agree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
76	83	6	4	8	2

Expected changes in the standard of living in Bulgaria in the next five years

Will fall		Will rise		Will stay about the same	
1993	2007	1993	2007	1993	2007
28	15	24	40	21	39

The most likely option to increase the individual standard of living

	1993	2007
Starting one's own business	13	6
Moving to another area	1	1
Moving to another country	3	7
Getting promotion	3	3
Working longer hours	9	8
Getting a new job	10	8
Getting a new qualification	3	3
Continuing with what one is doing now	11	14
No way of increasing standard of living	47	50

Attitudes of the Bulgarians to the European institutions

	1993	2007
European institutions have been supportive of our country	20	33
European institutions have been interfering in our affairs and using our difficulties for their own advantage	46	34
In between	19	22
Don't know	16	11

The long-term policy of Bulgaria as member of the EU should be to:

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Leave the European Union	4
Stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU's powers	17
Leave things as they are	19
Stay in the EU and try to increase the EU's powers	19
Work for the formation of a single European government	24
Don't know	17

Conclusions

- The comparative analysis of the results of the EUREQUAL project reveals negative tendencies in the changes of public representation of Bulgarians concerning social inequality and social justice as a potential source of social conflicts and of undermining the democratic consolidation of society as well as of strengthening of authoritarian attitudes. These trends in public representations are worth analyzing by the national and European institutions in order to develop positive attitudes and promote active strategies for coping with the consequences of social inequality.
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Thank you!

