

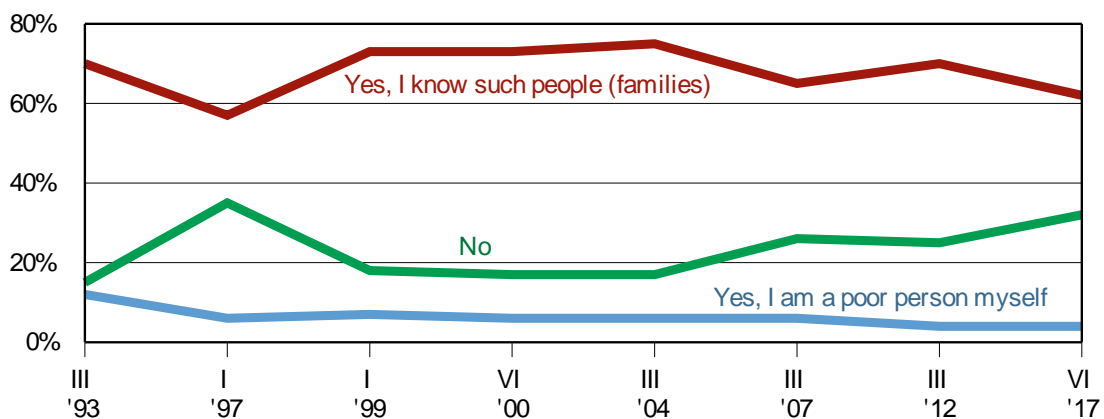
Social perception of poverty

According to data from the Central Statistical Office, from 2008 to 2015, the proportion of Poles living below the relative poverty line (marked by expenditure at 50% of average for all household) slowly but steadily decreased. Also in the monthly CBOS studies in recent years there has been a systematic improvement in the assessment of the economic situation in the country, as well as growing satisfaction with financial situation and a decrease in the subjective threat of unemployment. This is also reflected in the perception of poverty.

Most Poles claim to know poor people: 19% know one or two such persons or families, while 44% know more such people. One-third of respondents (32%) say that they do not know a single poor person, and four out of a hundred (4%) themselves identify as poor.

Compared with 2012, the percentage of respondents who know poor people or families has decreased. The value of this indicator is lower not only than in 2012, but also lower than ten years ago when we recorded a significant decline.

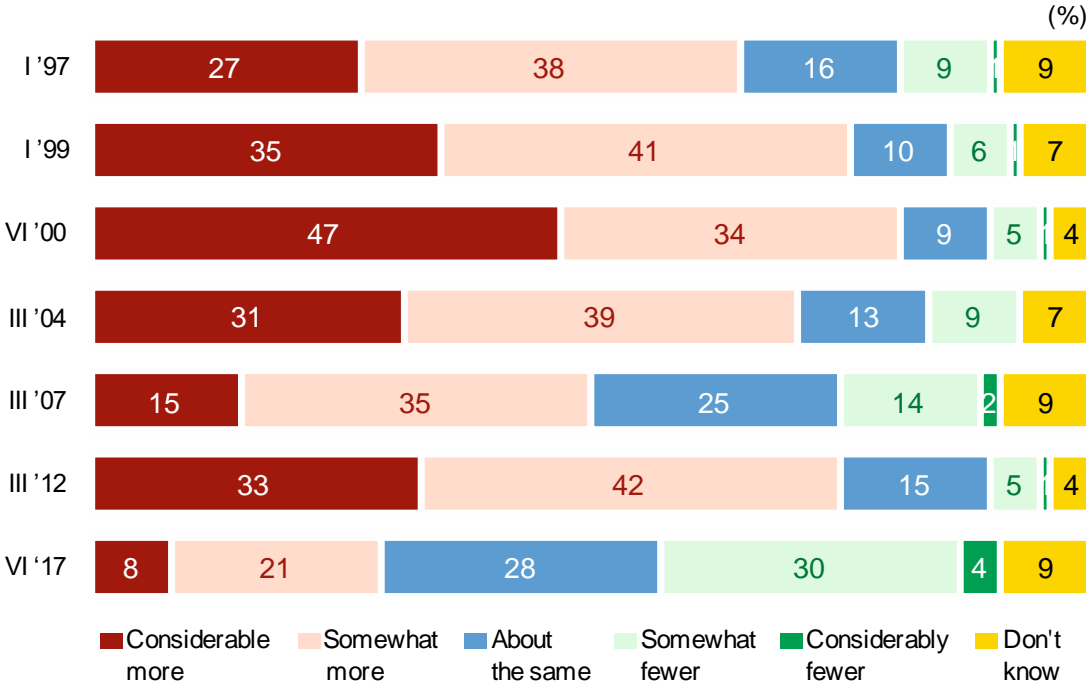
Do you know personally or in your neighbourhood a really poor person or family?



As respondents view it, about 28% of Poles are poor. The assessments if much higher when made by people who rated their own financial situation as bad (45%), those having a monthly per capita income of up to 649 PLN (39%), people with primary education (35%). On the other hand, the proportion of the poor in society is lower in the perception of people with university degree (22%) and those with highest per capita income (23%).

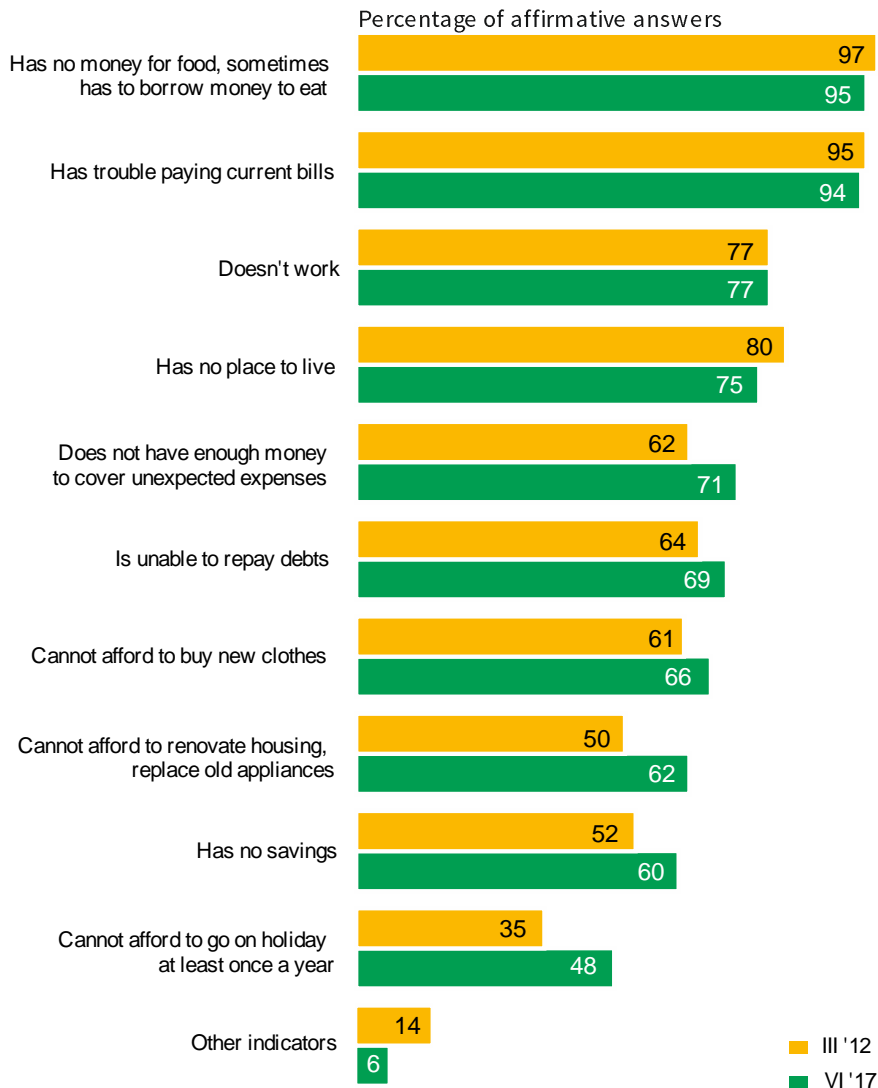
When in 2012 respondents were asked whether, in their opinion, in the next few years in Poland poverty would increase, pessimism dominated. This year we record a significant change of attitudes. At present, more than a third of respondents (34%, up 28 percentage points compared to 2012) say that in the coming years there will be fewer poor people in our country, and 28% predict no change. The percentage of pessimistic respondents decreased by 46 percentage points compared with the previous measurement and is now at 29%.

In the next few years, how many really poor people will there be in Poland compared to the present?



Criteria for characterizing someone as a poor person are now defined more broadly than 5 years ago. Changes in the perception of poverty are probably a result of the improvement in the standard of living.

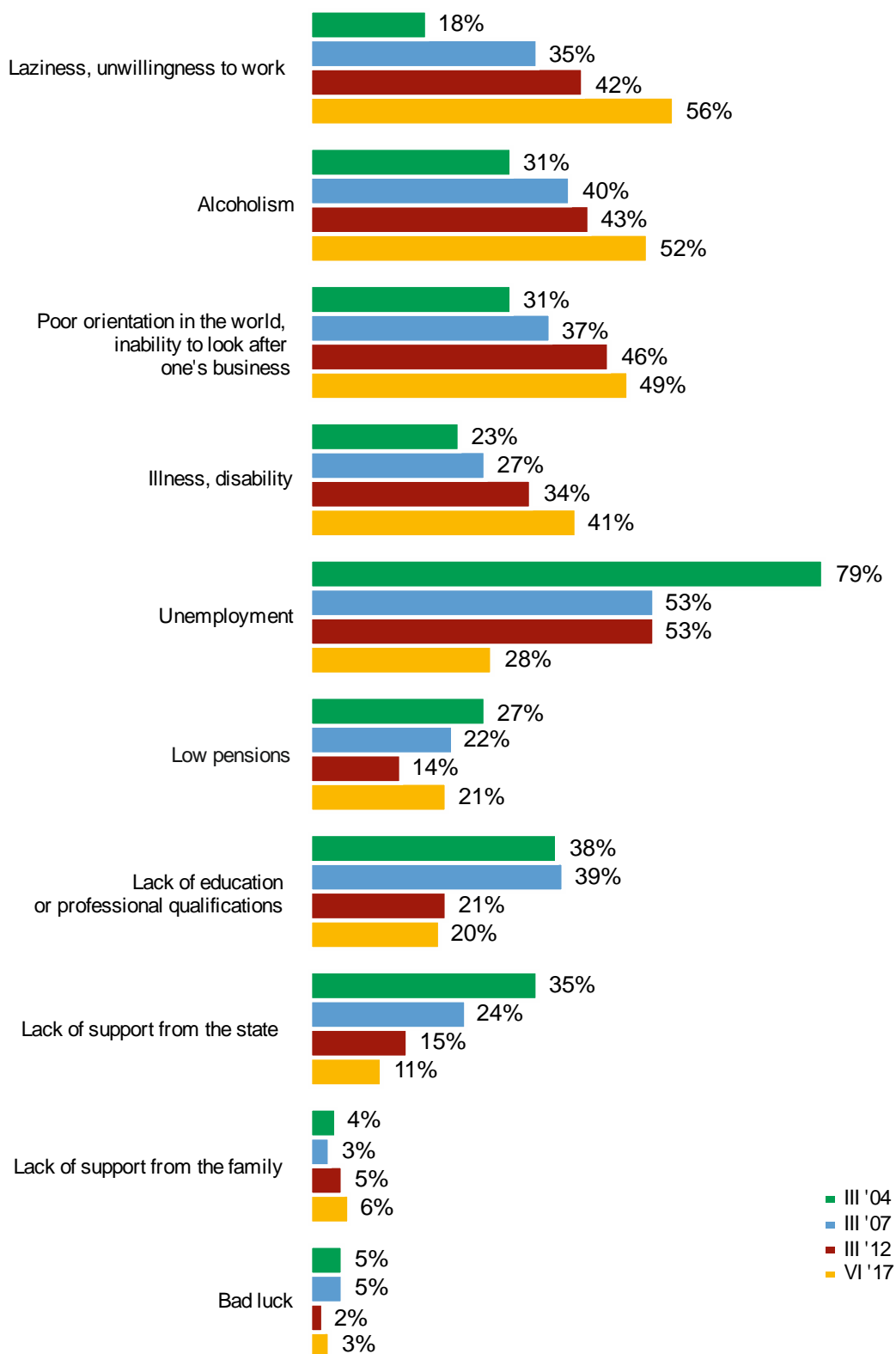
How would you describe a poor person? It is a person who...



In all previous measurements, Poles recognized unemployment as the main factor leading to poverty. In this year's survey there is a clear change in hierarchy: lack of work is only ranked fifth in the list of causes of poverty (decrease of by 25 percentage points compared to 2012). Most respondents argue that the main factor hindering exit from poverty is laziness, unwillingness to work. Next in importance are: alcoholism, poor orientation in the world and poor health (illness, disability).

The change in the hierarchy of factors was probably influenced by the improvement of the labour market situation and the decrease of unemployment. Finding a job has become easier, which has contributed to the belief that unemployment is more likely a result the unemployed person's fault, rather than external conditions.

What causes some people to be unable to exit poverty?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Perception of Poverty", June 2017. Fieldwork for national sample: June 2017, N=1020. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.