

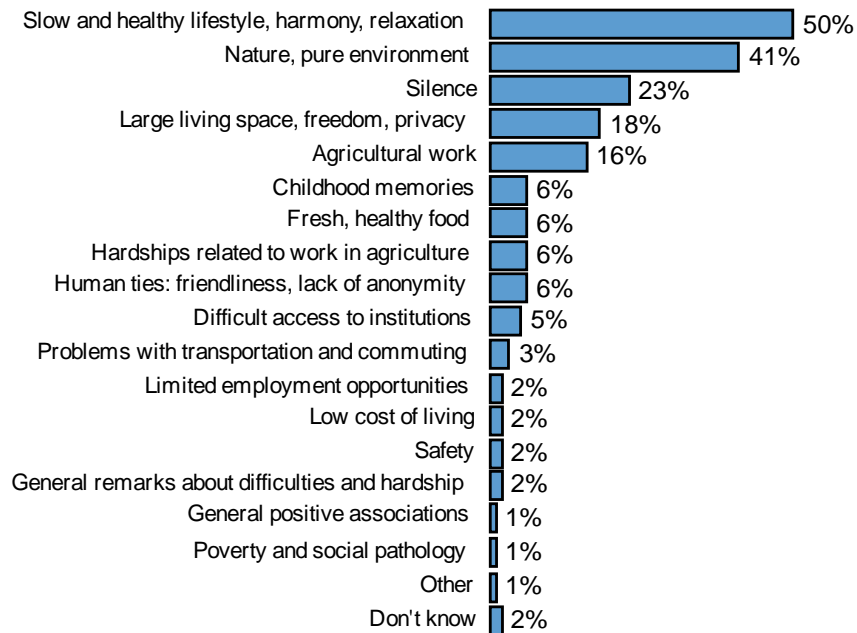
COUNTRYSIDE AND PREFERENCES FOR PLACE OF RESIDENCE

The societal image of the countryside is positive, overall. The first association with rural areas is pure nature (41%): natural landscape, rustling trees and humming birds. Many people associate the countryside with silence (23%) and quiet life: slow pace of living, harmony and stabilization (50%). One-fifth associate rural areas with vast expanses, comfortable living space, freedom and privacy (18%). For some, rural areas are primarily fresh and healthy food (6%) and less costly life (2%). Some people (6%) mention close relations with family and neighbours and lack of anonymity, unheard of elsewhere. For 2% rural life is synonymous with safety.

Although Poles have, in general, positive associations with the countryside, some of them do note specific problems affecting the rural population. Respondents mention hard work and unregulated hours (6%) and difficulties arising from life away from cities: limited access to institutions (5%), commuting problems (3%), limited employment opportunities (2%) and generally worse prospects relative to urban population (2%).

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND?

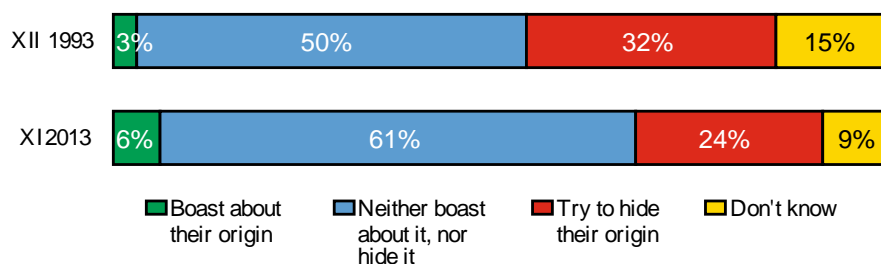
Answers to an open-ended question



Some respondents (6%) reach back in memory to their childhood, remembering their home and family. One-sixth (16%) associate rural area with different type of work, i.e. agriculture. Only very few people (1%) think of villages as pockets of poverty, or a synonym of social pathology.

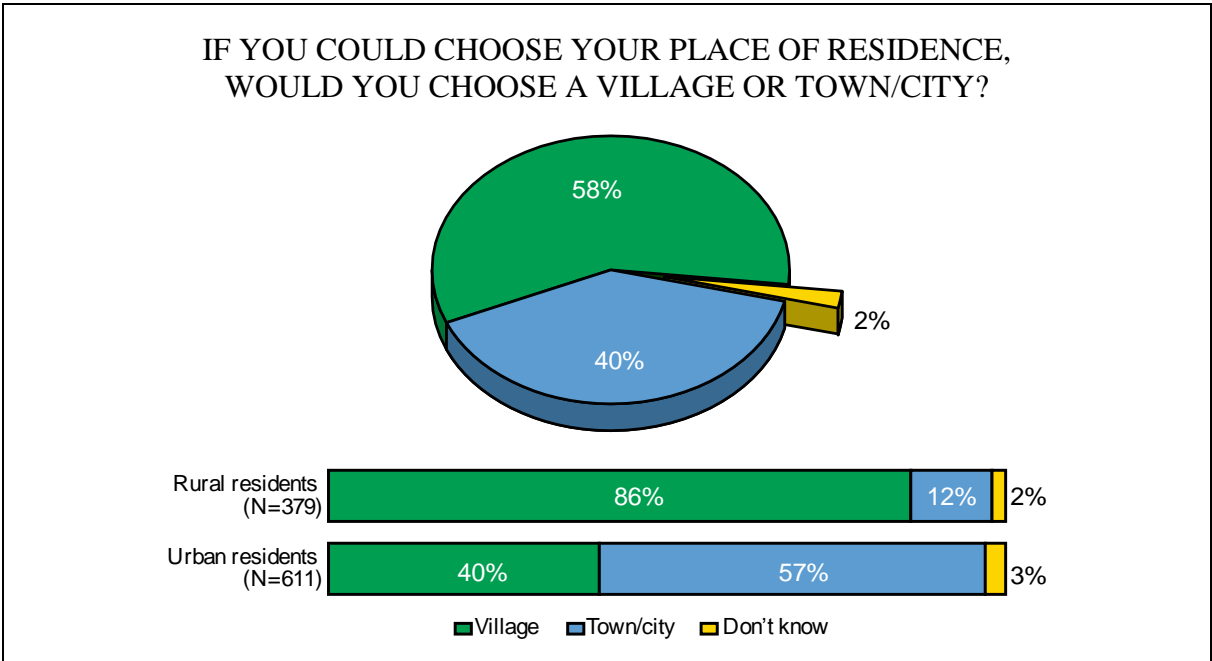
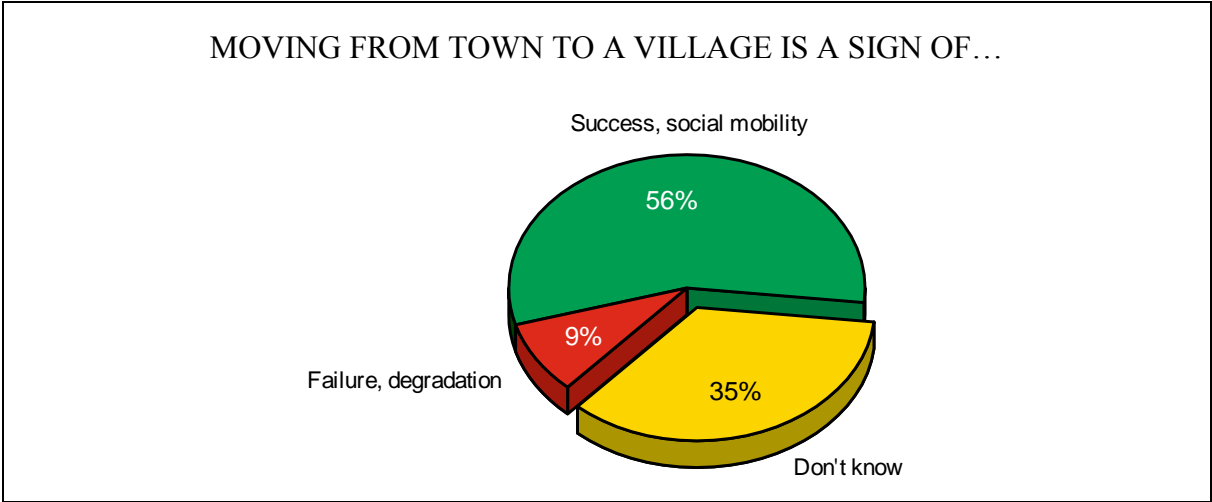
Living out of town is now better appreciated than 20 years ago. Three-fifths of respondents (61%) think that people coming from rural areas neither boast about their origin nor hide it, while a quarter (24%) think that they are ashamed of where they come from. In the last twenty years, the proportion of respondents convinced that people from the countryside are ashamed of it fell by 8 points, with a corresponding rise in the proportion of people who think there is no stigma attached to rural origin (a 14-point increase from 53% to 67%).

IN YOUR OPINION, PEOPLE WHO MOVED FROM A VILLAGE TO TOWN USUALLY...



For the majority of respondents (56%), moving out of town is a sign of success and social mobility. A similar group (58%) declare that, given a choice, they would rather live in a village than town. Urban residents are more willing to change the place of residence.

Apparently, the vision of a house in the countryside does not appeal to people who associate moving out of town with success, i.e. the wealthiest and best educated. These people prefer living in towns or cities. Apart from the rural population, living in a village is attractive for those lower on the social ladder, i.e. people in bad material living conditions and poorly educated.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Stereotypes about rural Poland", January 2014. Fieldwork for national sample: November 2013, N=990. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.