

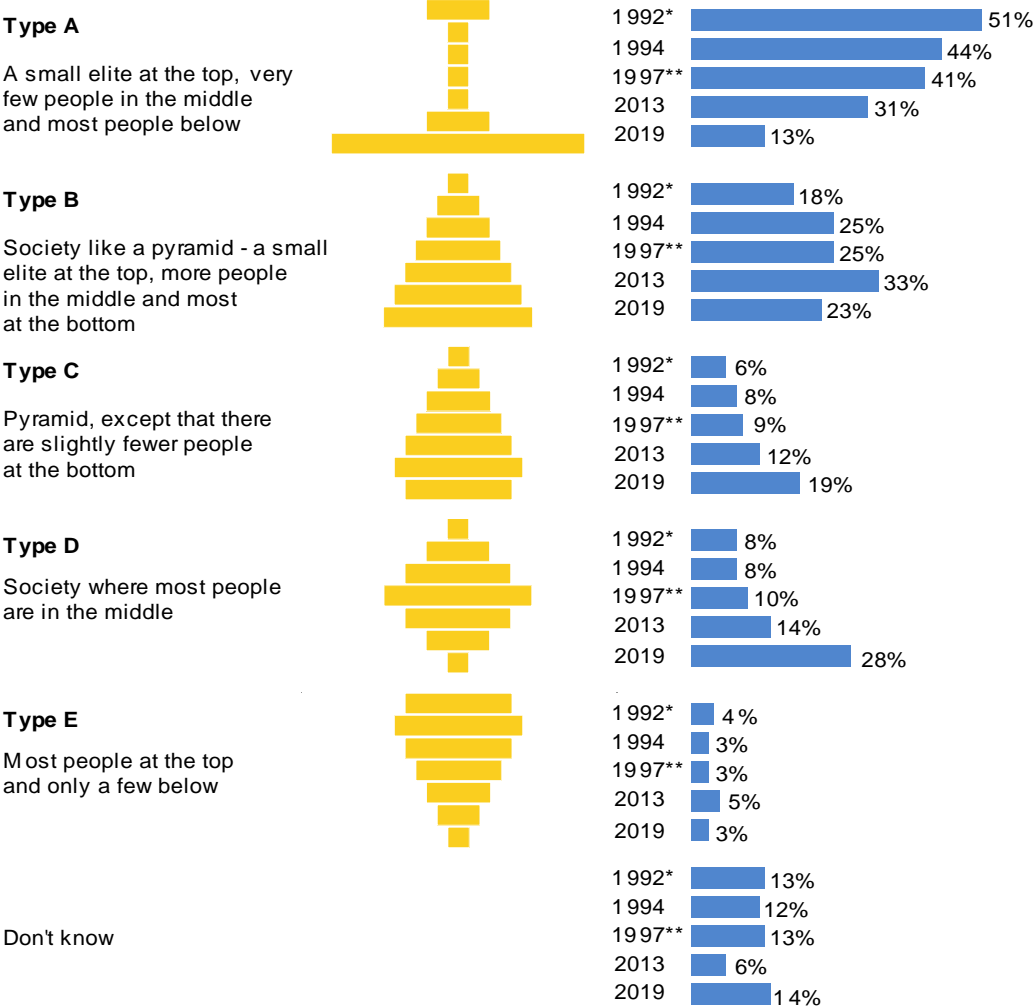
Perception of social structure

Recent years have been a period of rapid improvement in the living conditions of Poles. Disposable income per person increased from 1,299 PLN in 2013 to 1,693 PLN in 2018, and the minimum wage increased from 1,600 PLN (pre-tax) to 2,250 PLN in 2019 (currently it is 2,600 PLN). Three years ago, a minimum hourly rate was introduced, which also increases dynamically - in 2017 it was 13 PLN (pre-tax), in 2019 it was 14.7 PLN, and currently it is 17 PLN. The unemployment rate has also dropped significantly in recent years. In September 2013, the registered unemployment rate reached 13%, while in November 2019 it was 5.1%. In addition, the Family 500 plus program has been operating since April 2016, under which parents or guardians receive parental benefit in the amount of 500 PLN per child. Initially, the income criterion for the first child was in force, from July 2019 the benefit is granted to all children. The improvement of objective indicators is reflected in the subjective perception of material position. In recent years, the assessment of the material conditions of households, perceptions of the condition of workplaces and the situation on the labour market have improved significantly. A noticeable improvement in living conditions has changed the perception of social structure.

For the first time in the history of CBOS research, the most frequently chosen model for describing society is the one in which the largest is the medium layer (type D). Still, people perceiving society in this way belong to a minority (28%), and a significant group of respondents (42% in total) believe that social structure is best represented by pyramid-like models, in which the layers below are more numerous (type B and type C). Currently, less frequently than six years ago and far less often than in the nineties, a model resembling a column with a very broad base crowned with capital (type A, 13%) is chosen to describe society. It presents a society with high contrasts, with most people occupying the lowest stratum.

Types of societies:

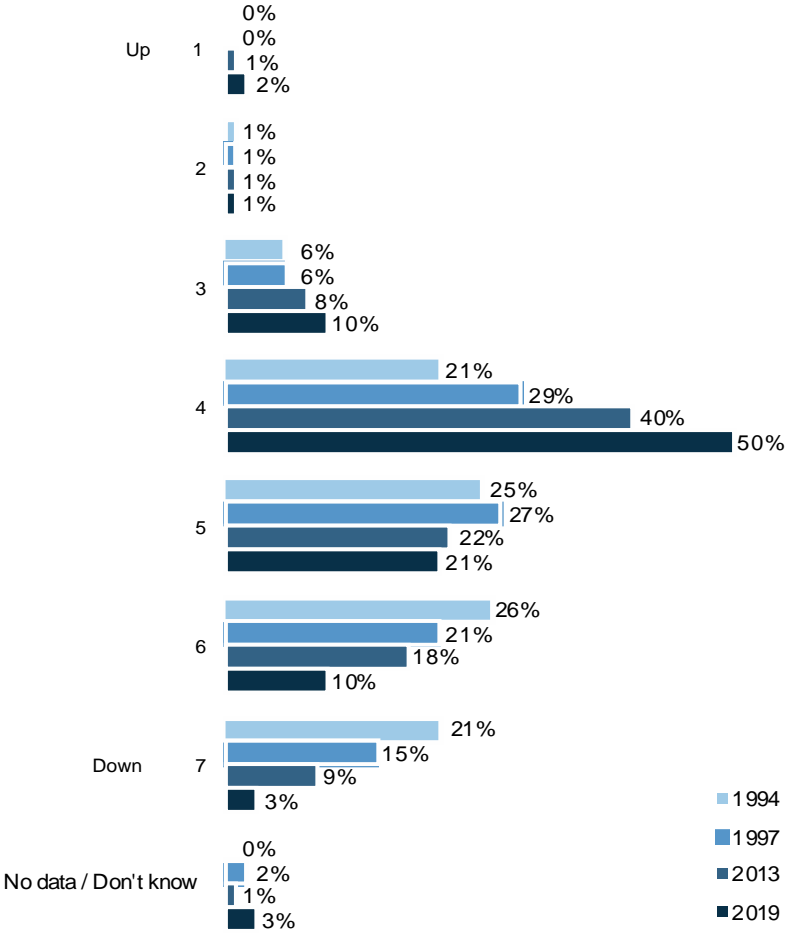
What kind of society is Poland today - which drawing is the closest to it?



* data from comparative research of the International Social Survey Program
 ** Data from the study of the Australian National University and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Over the past six years, the perception of one's own place in the social structure has improved significantly. Half of respondents (10 percentage points more than in 2013 and 29 points more than in 1994) place themselves and their family in the middle of the social ladder. The others are much more often below, than above the middle (34% vs. 13%). It is worth noting that numerical prevalence of self-placement below the middle over self-placement above has been gradually decreasing since we have monitored this issue. In 1994 there were ten times more people subjectively situated below the middle than above, three years later there were nine times more, in 2013 nearly five times, and now about three times more.

Where would you place yourself and your family: above, somewhere in the middle or below?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Perception of Social Structure", January 2019. Fieldwork for national sample: November 2019, N=944. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.