Social Cohesion
in times of crisis
[The Greek case]

Brussels, 17 December 2012, European Parliament

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Survey Presentation by Metron Analysis

Economy & Psychology on an Individual Level Perceptions, Behavior & Attitudes Wave III

Survey Identity

- **Commissioned by:** Centre for European Studies ASBL
- **Type of survey:** 3rd Wave of Tracking Quantitative National Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing Survey using a Structured Questionnaire
- **Sampling method:** Simple Randomized Sampling selection through the telephone directory of the Hellenic Telecommunications Organization
- **Sample size: 1.001** Persons Aged 18 Years and Above
- **Fieldwork period: 26-30 November 2012**
- **Weightings:** with regards to Gender, Age, Urbanity and Region

METRON ANALYSIS is a member of ESOMAR and AGMORC.

Aspects of the crisis in personal and social life

- Everyone agrees that the crisis that hit Greece found Greek society totally unprepared, with the exception of very few 'informed and in-the-know' citizens.
- CES in collaboration with the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy commissioned Metron Analysis to systematically monitor aspects of the crisis and mainly the psychological impact on citizens' personal life, in three survey waves covering the crucial year of 2012.
- Today we present the third and last wave of this project. Apart from the monitoring through time of aspects of the psychological climate and the comparative data that we have, we have added some additional questions in order to investigate more aspects of *social cohesion*. Because the big question is:

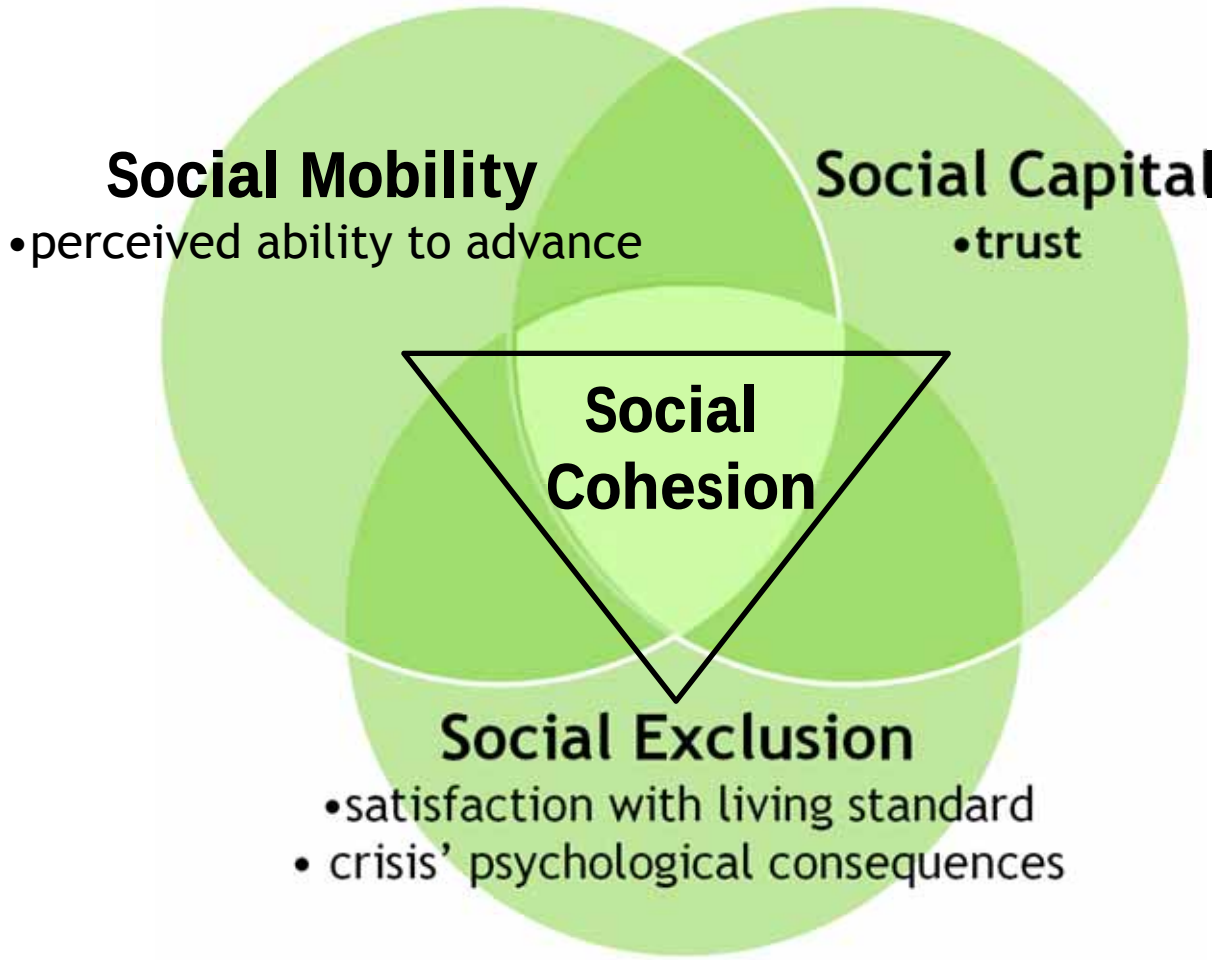
whether society will overcome the crisis or whether the crisis will dismantle society

The social cohesion triangle

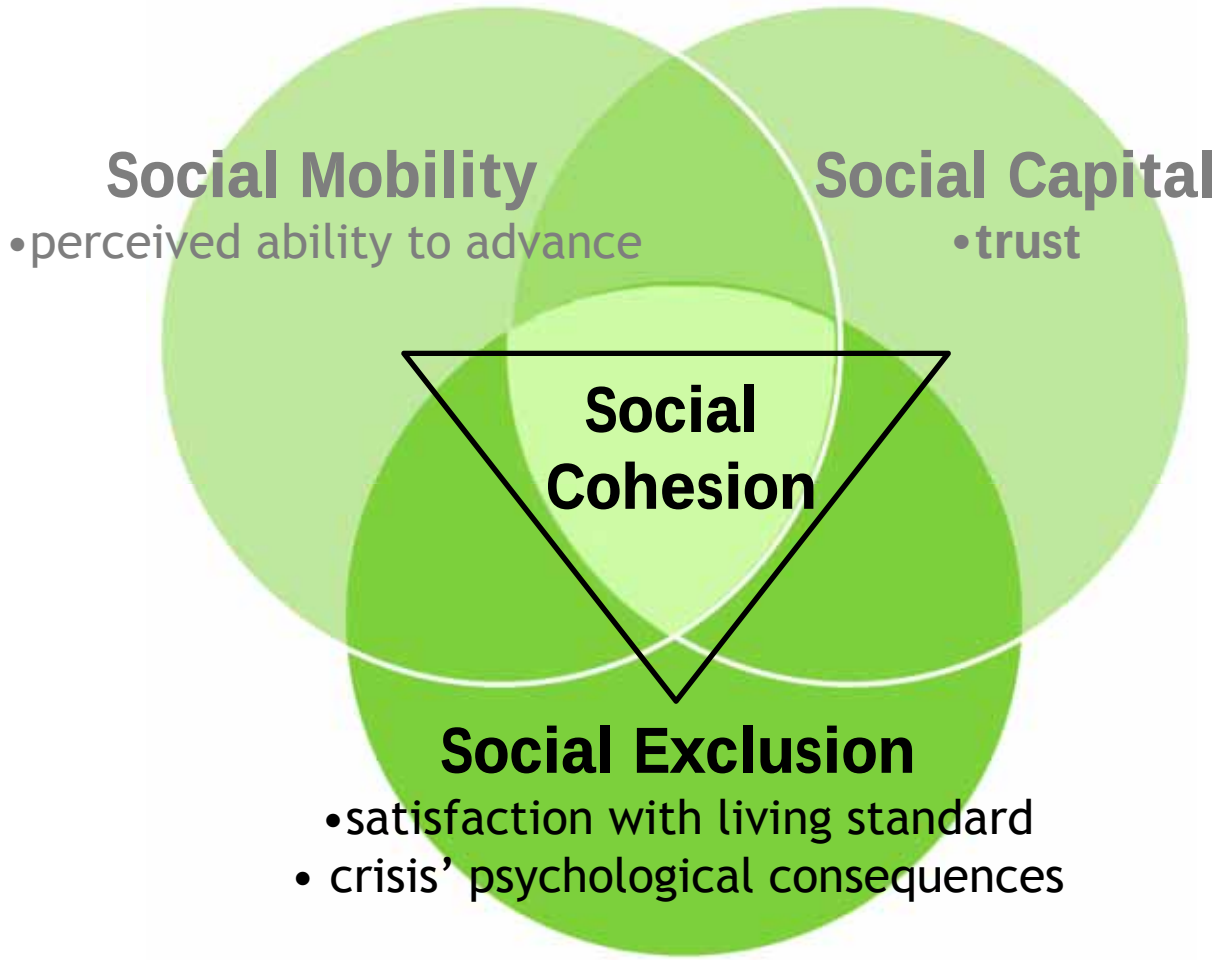
- It is known that there is no commonly accepted and strict definition of social cohesion. Neither of course a commonly accepted way to measure it, especially for phenomena such as the debt crisis that hit Greece and other countries of the euro area.
- However, for the needs of this project we have accepted the OESD[1] approach regarding the «triangle» of social cohesion and we somewhat expanded the basic aspect of our topic which is the impact of the crisis on citizens' quality of life and psychology.
- What follows is a schematic representation of the social cohesion triangle and the themes/issues that we investigated in the current research programme.

1. International Conference on Social Cohesion and Development 20.01.2011

Social cohesion triangle

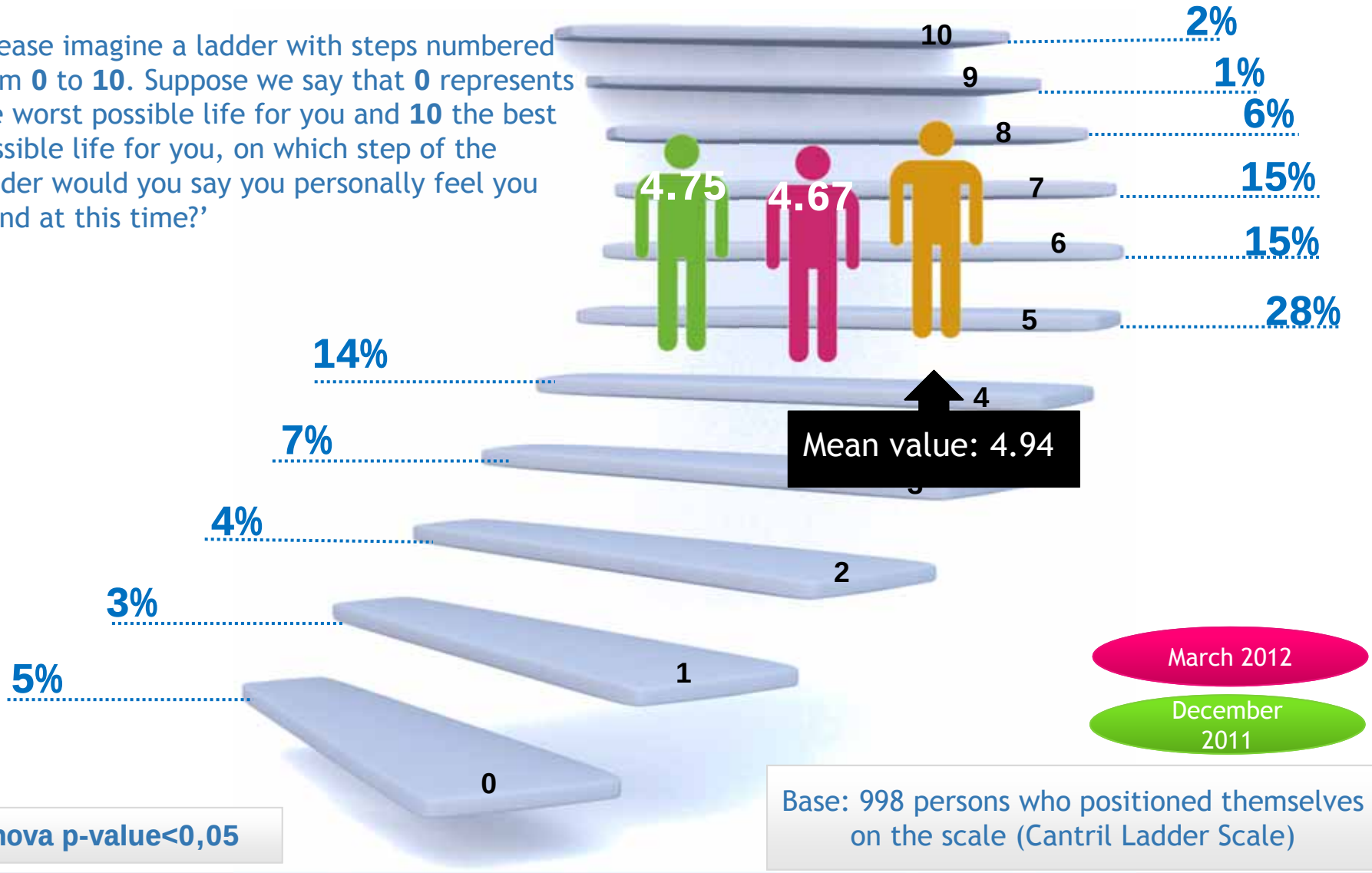


Social exclusion



One out of three evaluate the present situation of their life as below average. However, since last March there is a recovery…

‘Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from **0** to **10**. Suppose we say that **0** represents the worst possible life for you and **10** the best possible life for you, on which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?’

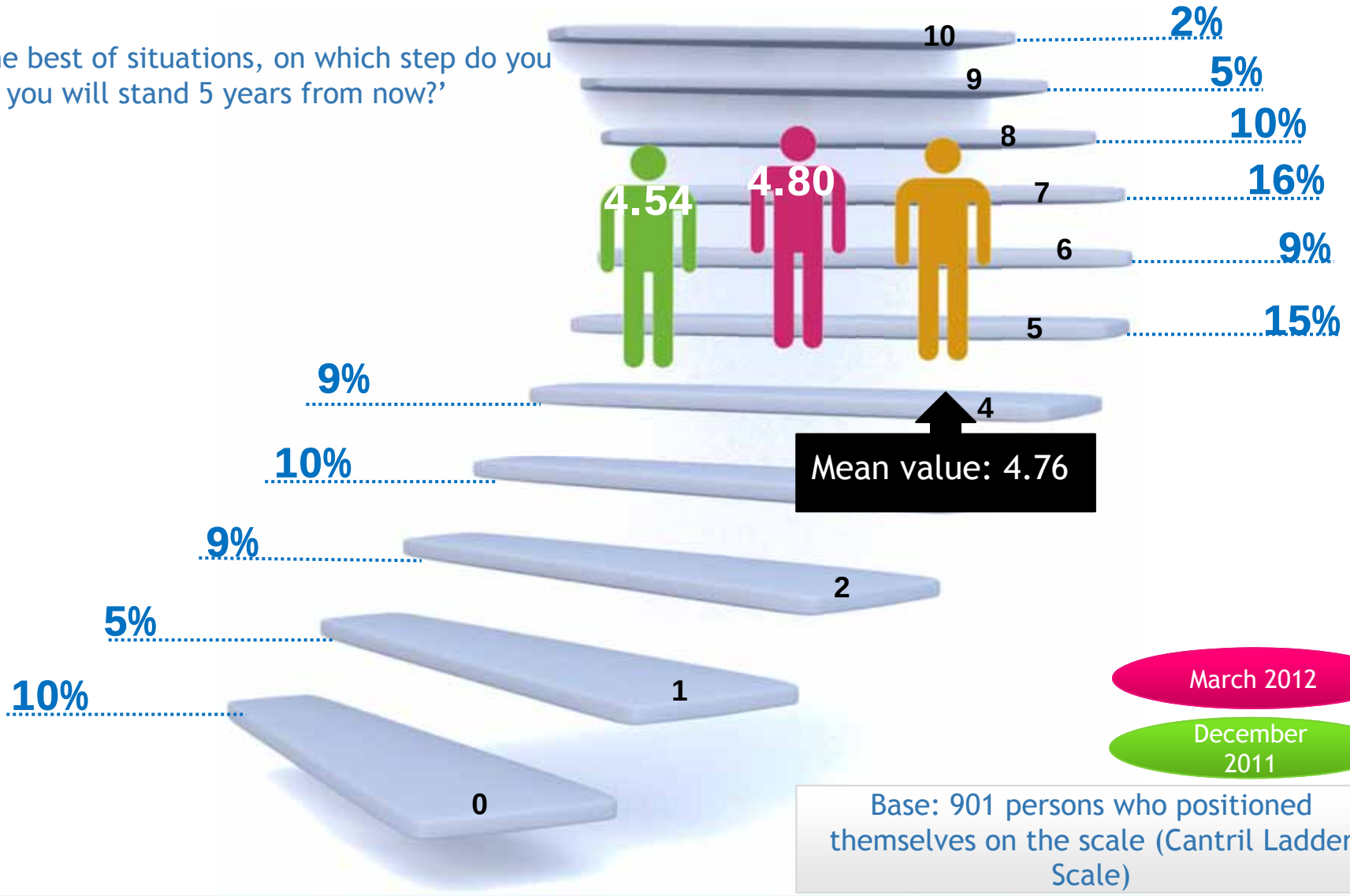


Anova p-value<0,05

Base: 998 persons who positioned themselves on the scale (Cantril Ladder Scale)

Evaluations of the personal position in the future (after 5 years) remain on the same levels, suggesting uncertainty about the course of events…

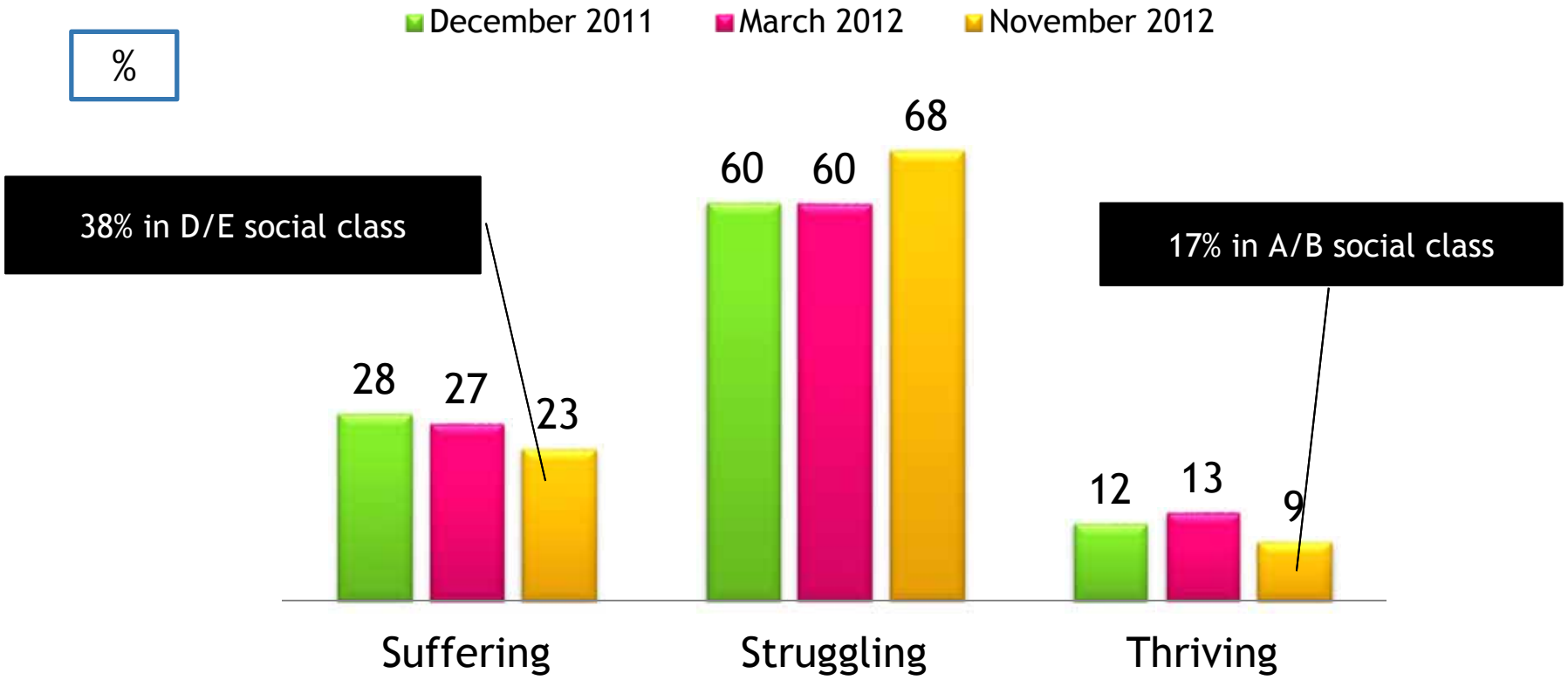
'In the best of situations, on which step do you think you will stand 5 years from now?'



Base: 901 persons who positioned themselves on the scale (Cantril Ladder Scale)

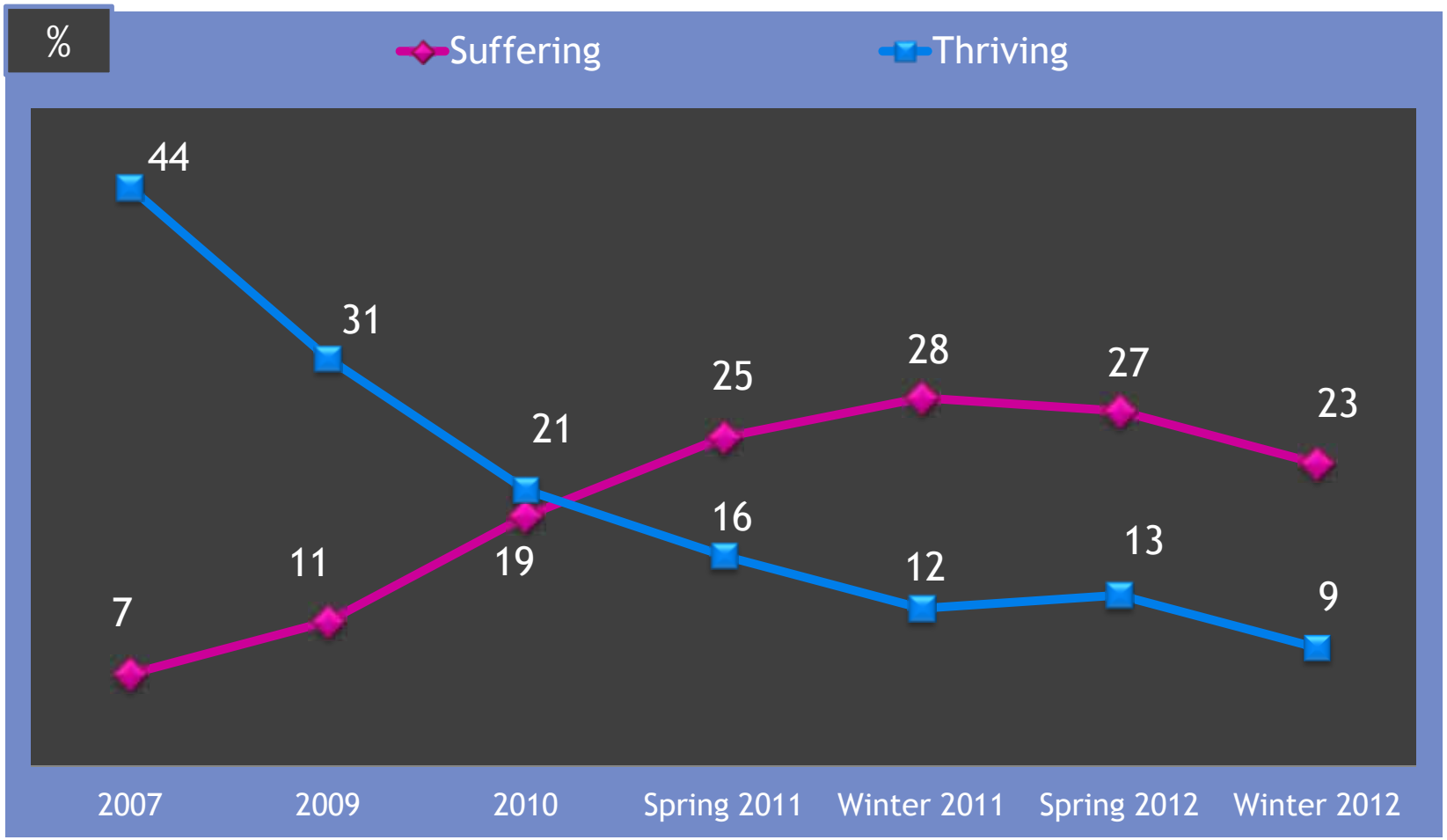
The percentage of those who feel as ‘suffering’ shows, for the first time after a long period, a slight decline. At the same time, intense uncertainty about the future leads to the reduction of those who feel as ‘thriving’…

The ‘Life Evaluation’ Index results from the two previous questions (present life evaluation and evaluation of life in five years) as follows: respondents who rate their present life with 7 and above and their future life with 8 and above are defined as ‘thriving’, respondents who rate their present and future life with 4 and below are defined as ‘suffering’ and all the rest are defined as ‘struggling’.



Base: 901 persons who positioned themselves on the scales

The balance (thriving-suffering) remains on the same negative levels (-14%) as last March…



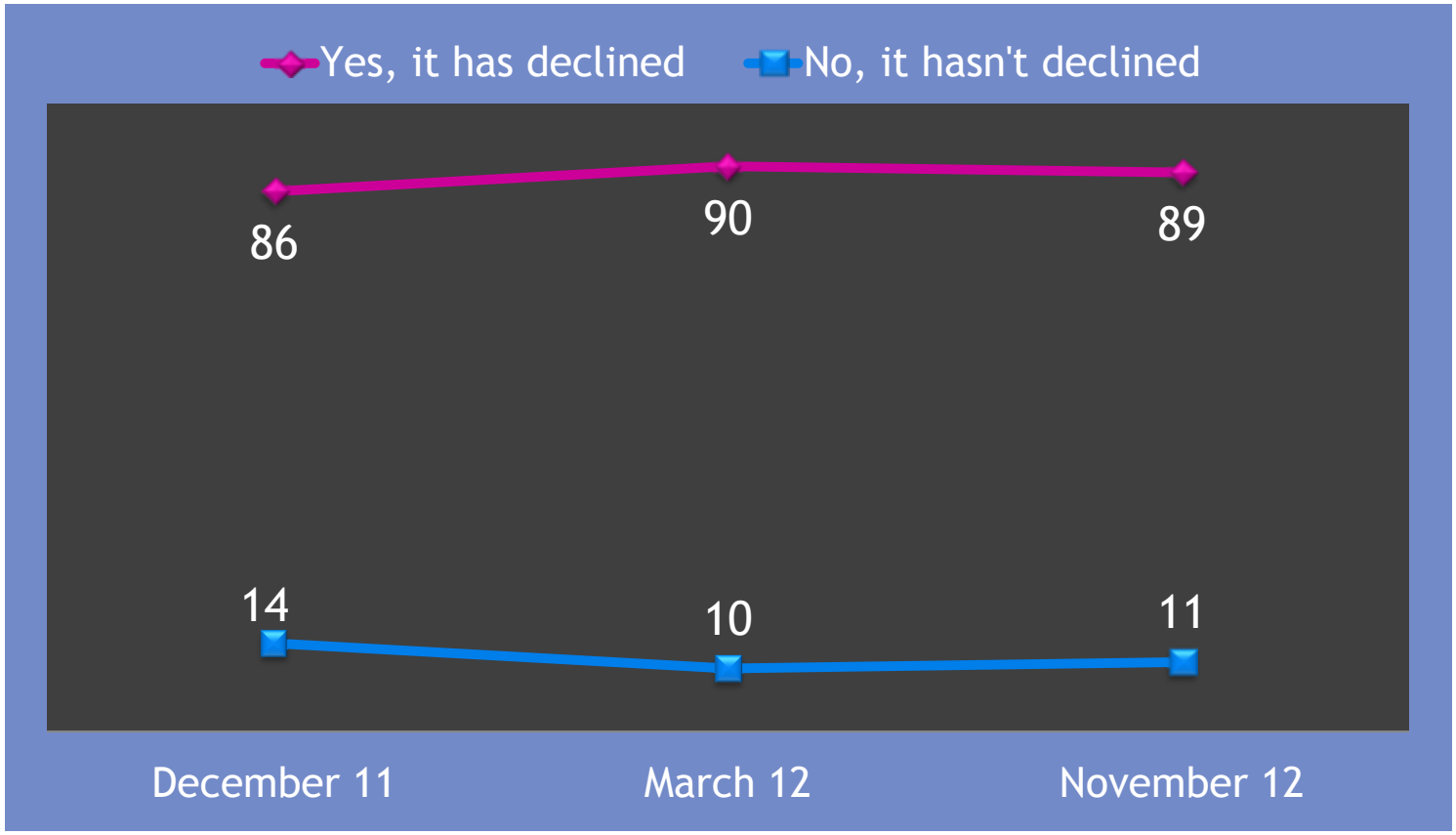
Source of comparative data: Manchin, A. (2011, September 25th). “In Greece, "Suffering" Up Sharply to 25%” & Metron Analysis survey, December 2011, March 2012

The crisis environment

The decrease in income in the last year is almost universal and remained at stable levels (89%)

%

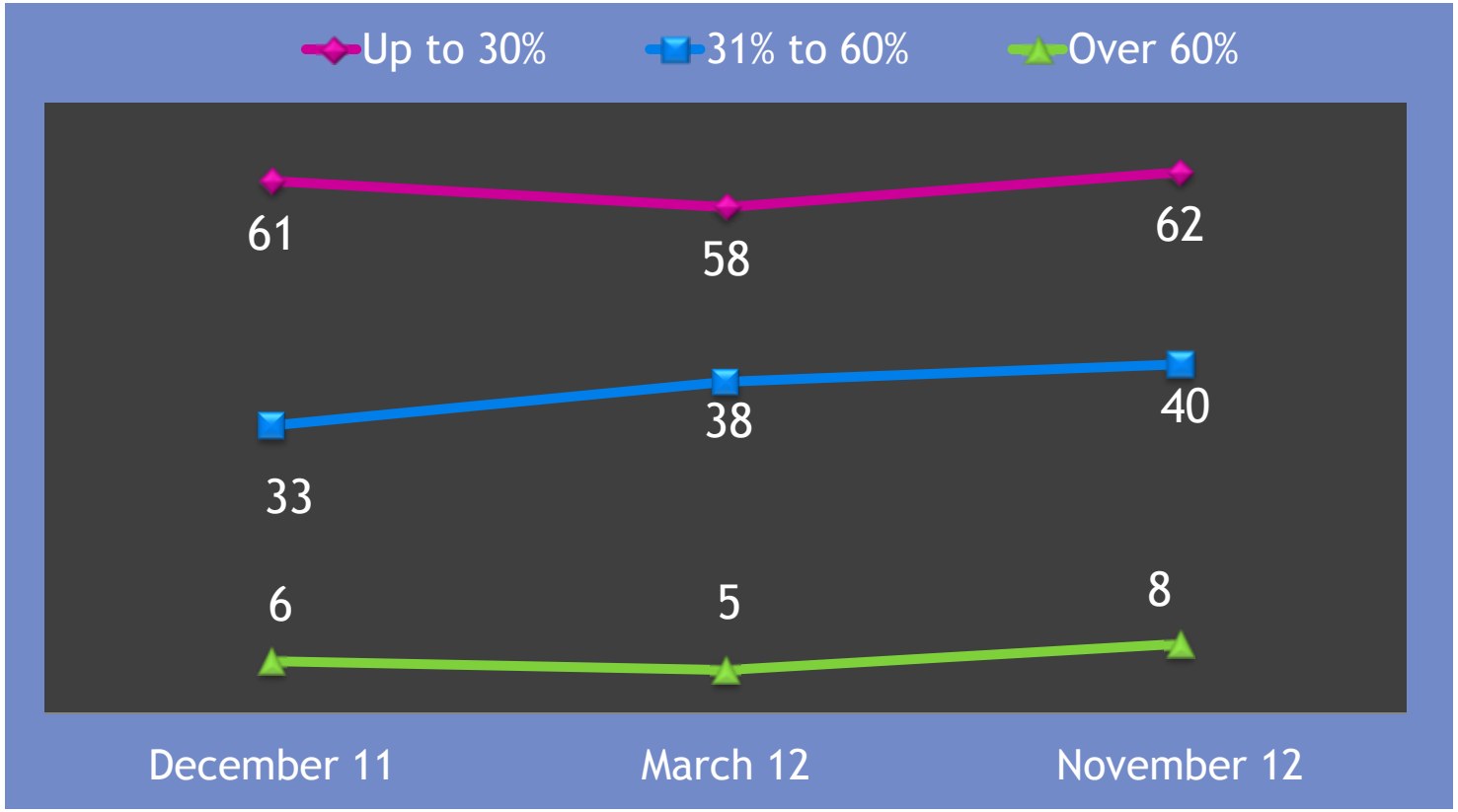
‘Compared to one year ago, has you monthly family income suffered any decline?’



Moreover, one in two (48%) states that he/she has losses over 30%...

%

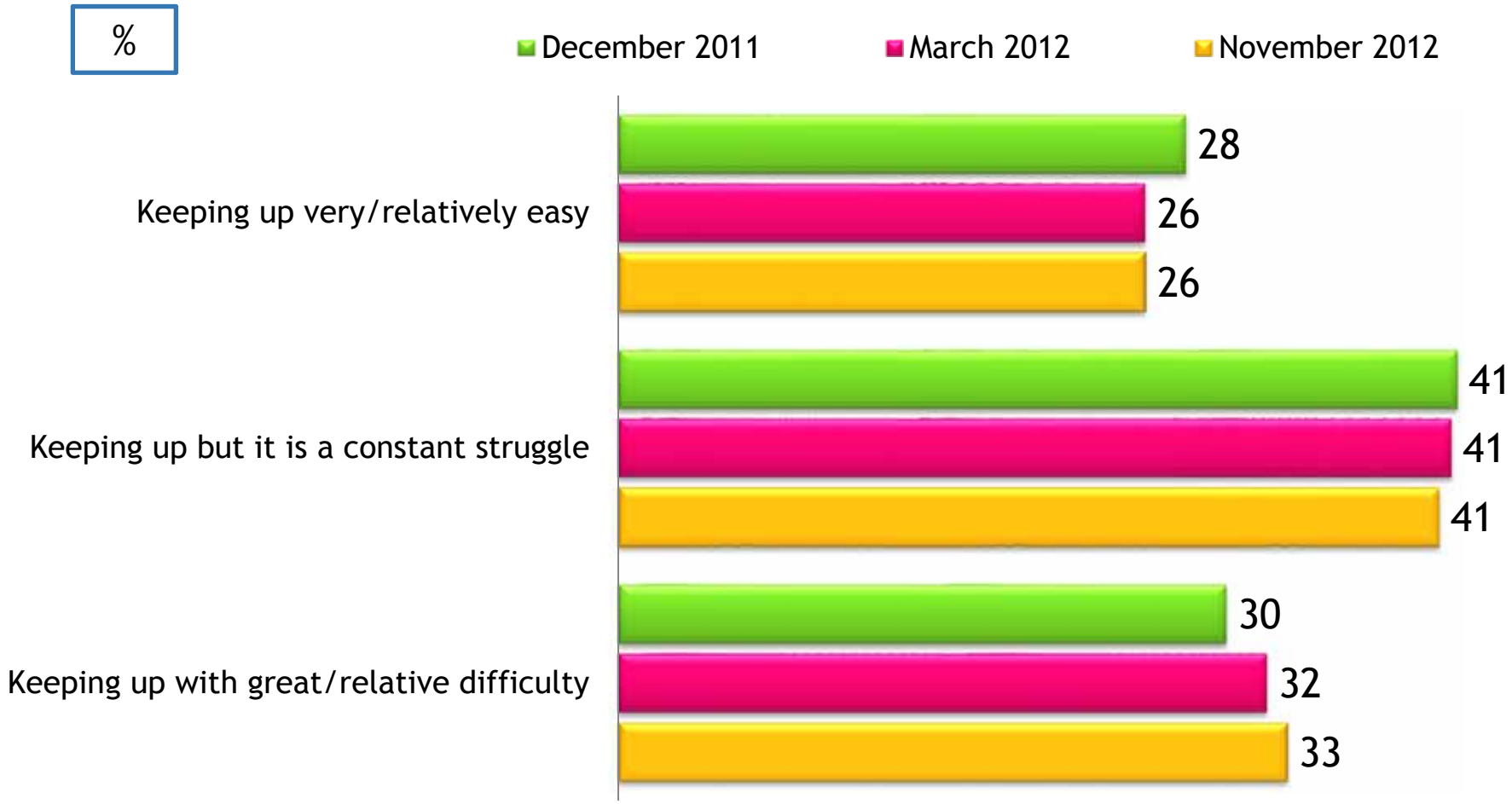
'Decline percentage'



Base: 834 persons whose family income has suffered a decline

…as a result one out of three households (33%) does not meet its obligations…

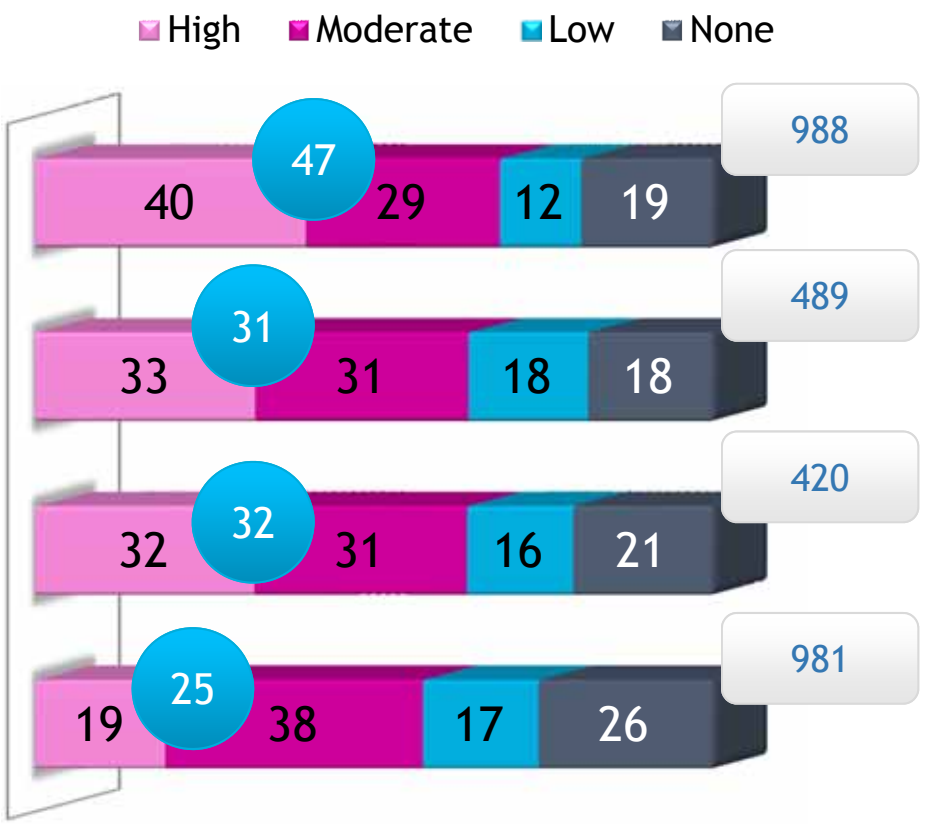
'Which of the following best describes how your household is keeping up with all its bills and credit commitments at present?'



Households which may not be able to meet their obligations in the near future are more than double than the average European percentage!

'Looking at the next 12 months, would you say there is a high risk, a moderate risk, a low risk or no risk at all of falling behind with…?'

%



EU27
12/2011

EUROBAROMETER

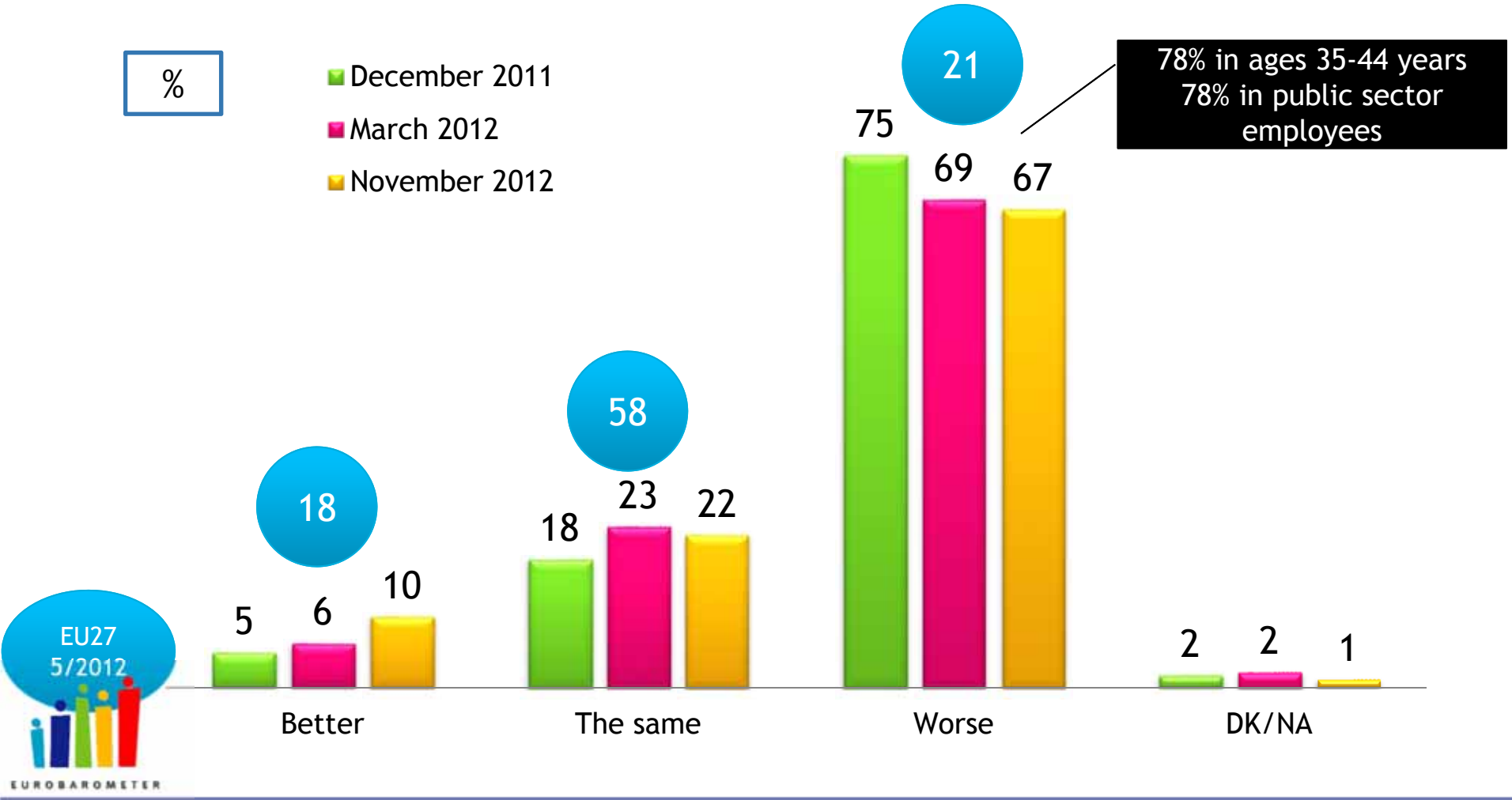
Base: persons who have responded to each one of the above scenarios

Data through time remain almost unchanged

	December 11	March 12	November 12
Being able to cope with an unexpected expense of €1,000			
High/Moderate	66	70	69
Low	13	12	12
None	21	19	19
Paying their rent or mortgage on time			
High/Moderate	61	63	64
Low	18	18	18
None	21	19	18
Repaying consumer loans (such as loans to buy electrical appliances, furniture,etc.) on time			
High/Moderate	63	63	63
Low	14	16	16
None	24	21	21
Paying ordinary bills or buying food or other daily consumer items			
High/Moderate	54	59	57
Low	19	16	17
None	27	26	26

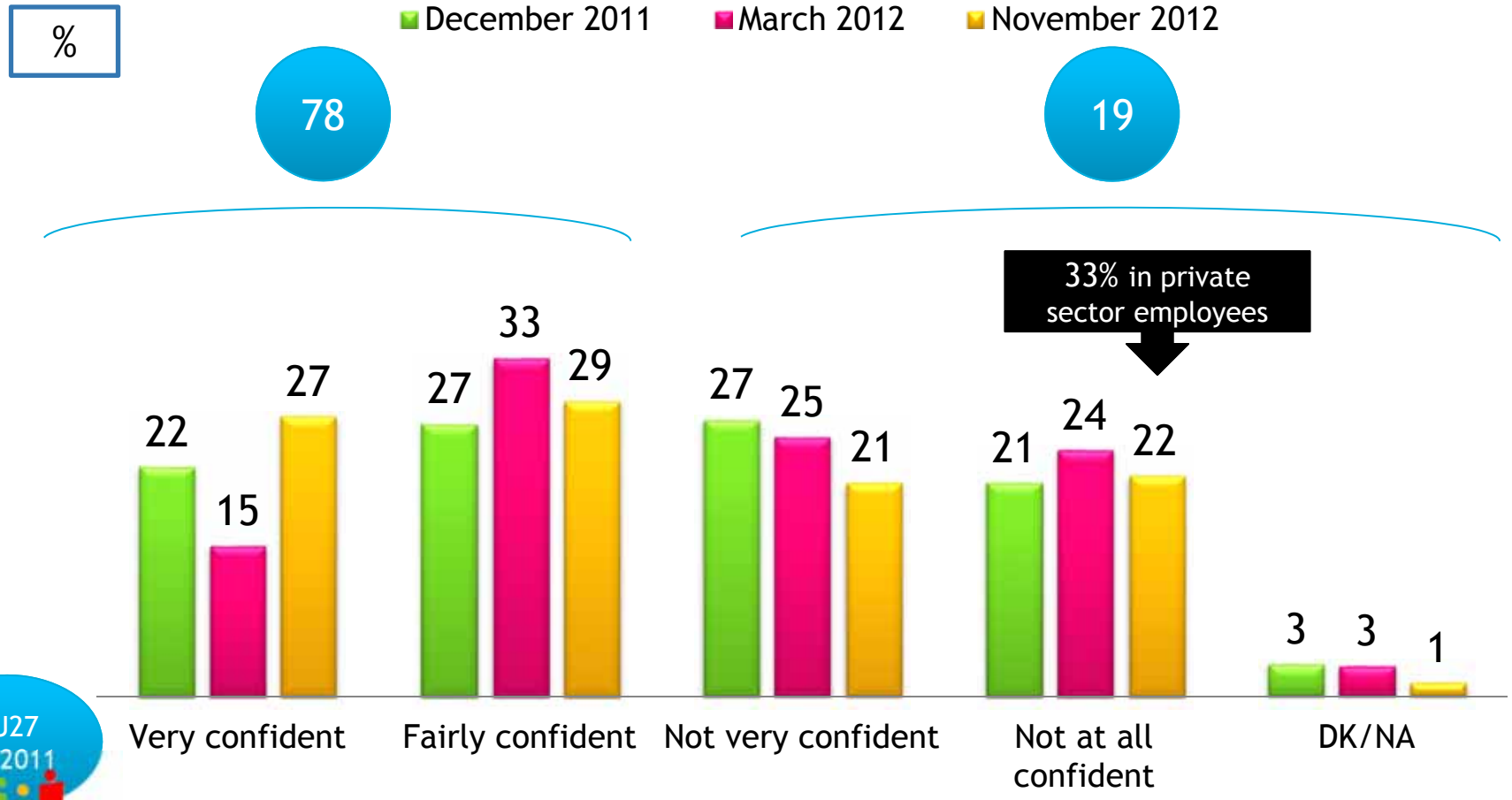
Moreover, those who estimate that things will get worse in the next year remain at high levels (67%) reflecting the feeling of insecurity about the future of households as well…

'What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to the financial situation of your household?'



Despite the sharp rise in unemployment, the percentage of employees who feel uncertain whether they will keep their job in the next year remains high (43%)

'How confident would you say you are in your ability to keep your job in the next 12 months?'



EU27 11/2011

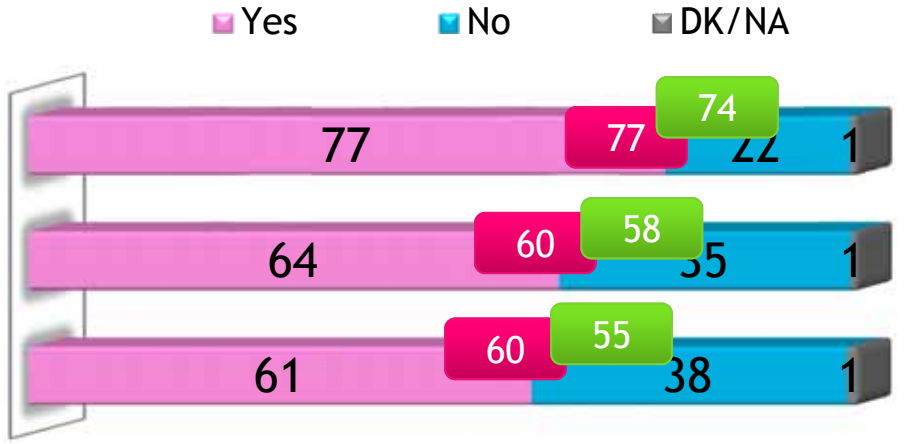
EUROBAROMETER

Base: 428 employees

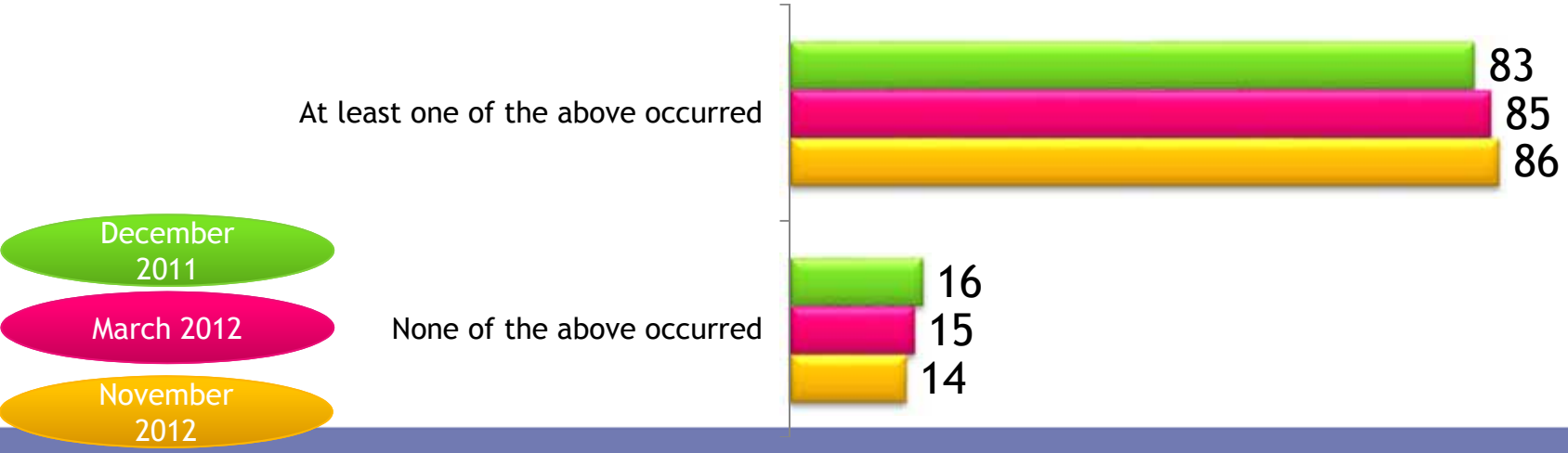
These conditions also form a frame of reduced productivity. The feeling of inactivity has intensified…

'During the last 4 weeks, did you experience any of the following problems regarding your daily activities, as a result of your emotional/ psychological state (like because you were feeling sad or anxious, etc.)?'

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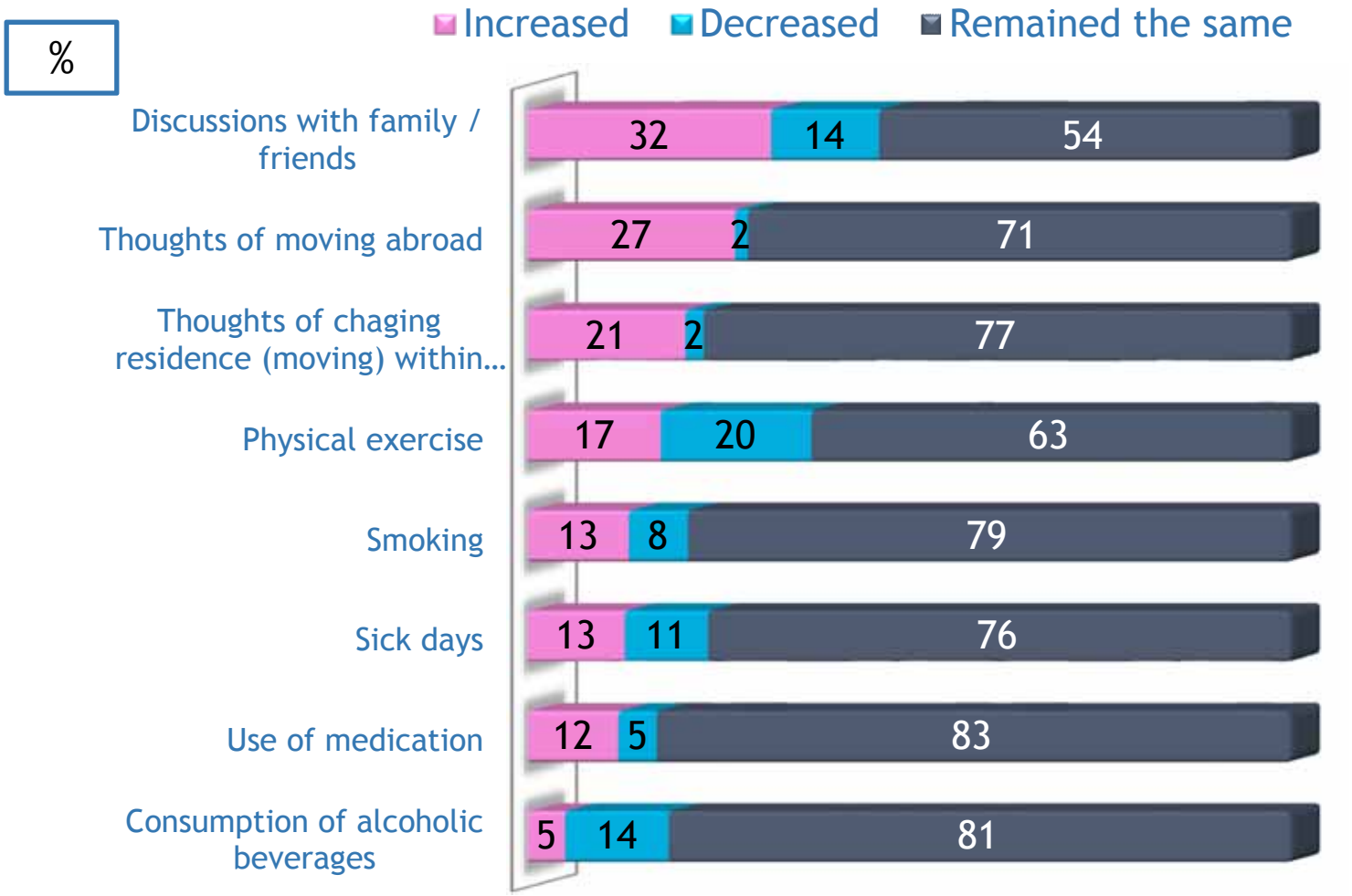


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…while the tendency to leave remains strong…

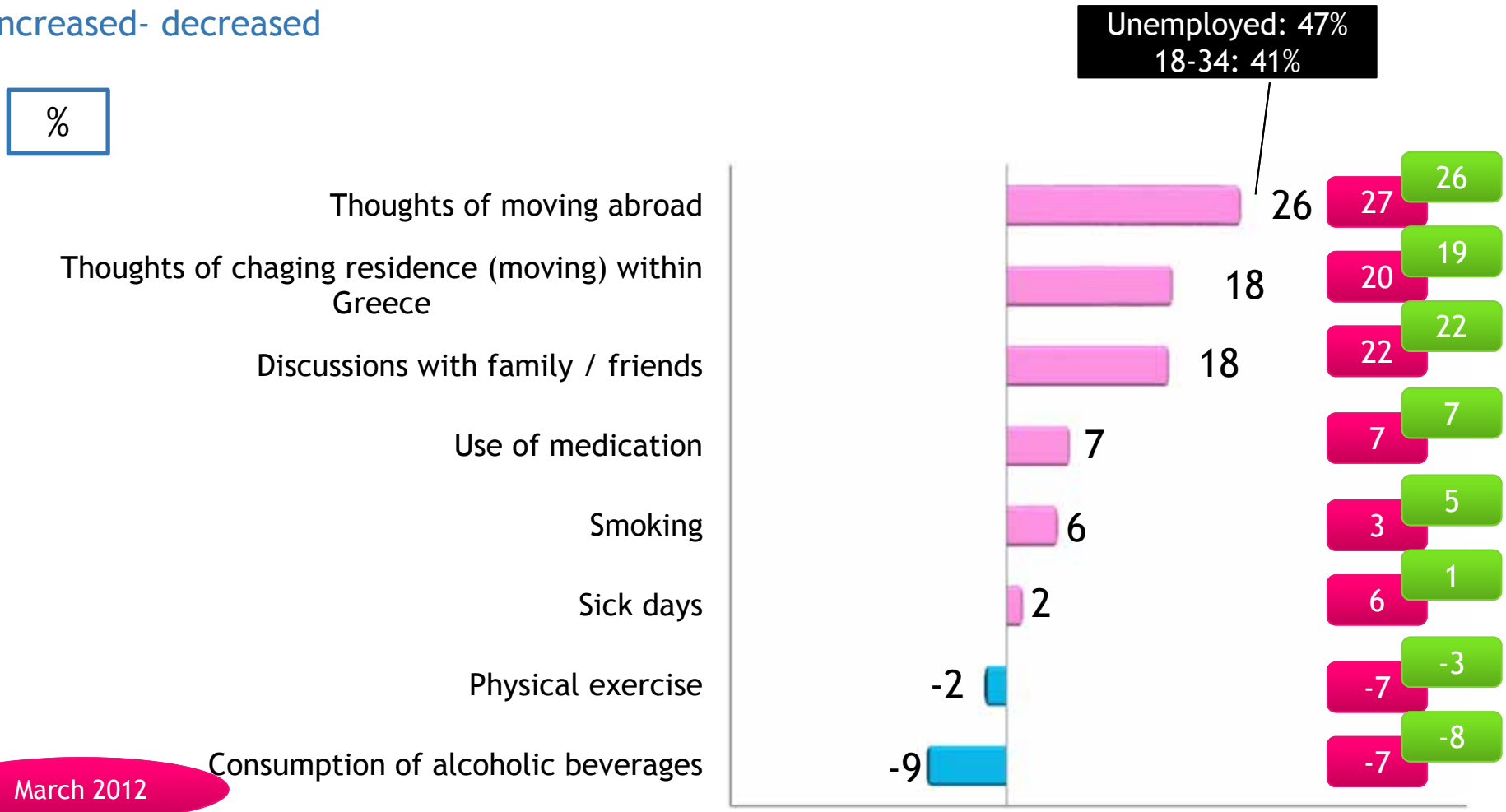
‘I will now read out to you a series of behaviours/ thoughts and I would like you to tell me if, in comparison to one year ago, these behaviours/ thoughts have increased, decreased or remained the same.’



In particular, the tendency of emigrating from the country remains strong…

Balance
Increased- decreased

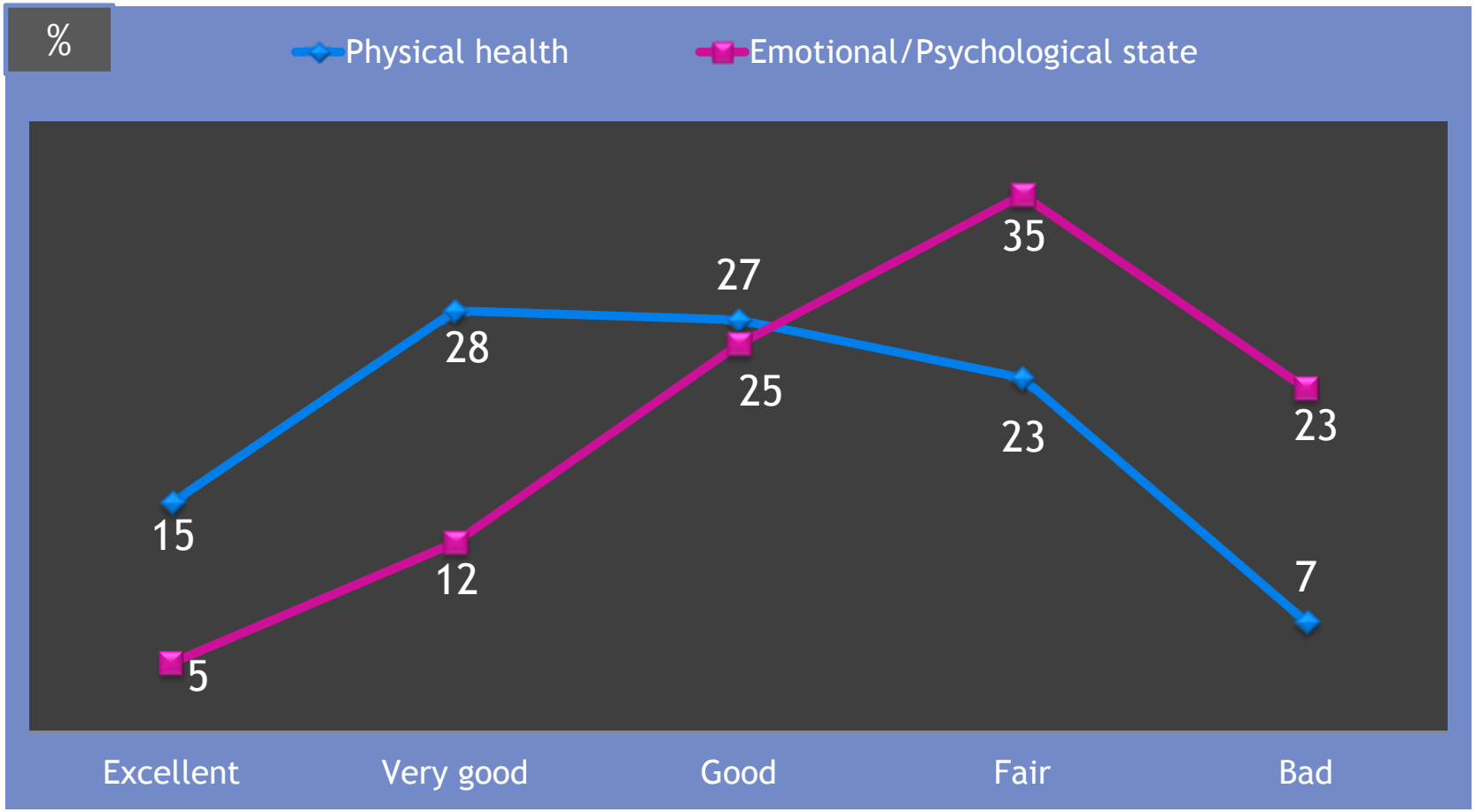
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The psychological aspect of the crisis…

Comparing perceived physical health with psychological state we find that in conditions of crisis, the latter is particularly aggravated

'In general, would you say that your physical health is...?'
'On a more emotional / psychological level, would you say that you feel...?'

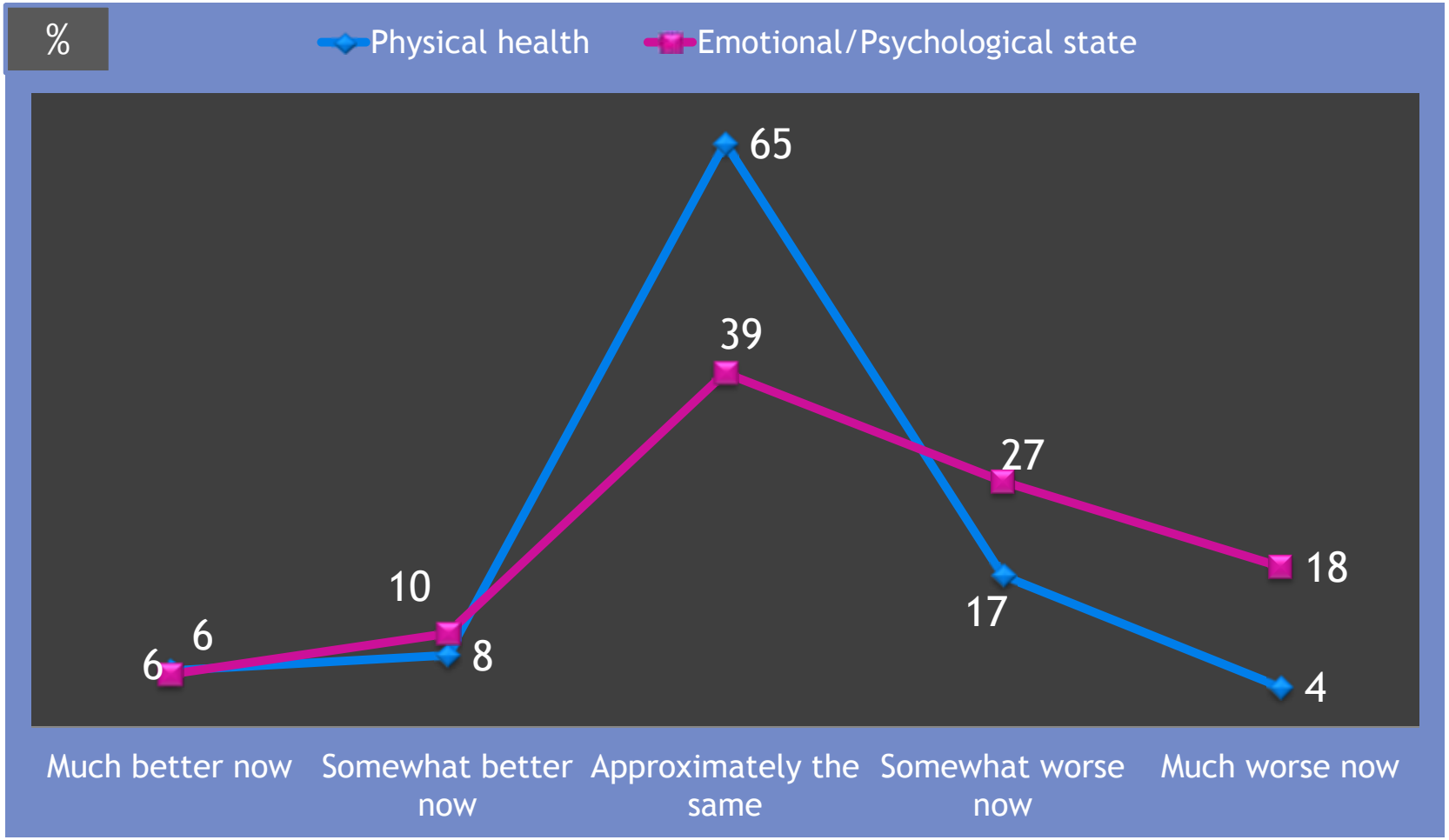


This phenomenon is now stable through time

	December 11	March 12	November 12
Physical health			
Excellent/Very good	39	41	43
Good	33	29	27
Fair/Bad	28	30	30
Emotional/psychological state			
Excellent/Very good	16	17	17
Good	25	23	25
Fair/Bad	60	60	58

…and it is clearly associated with the crisis environment…

‘Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your physical health today?’
‘And compared to one year ago, emotionally/ psychologically do you feel…?’



The psychological state is strongly correlated with the ability to meet financial obligations…

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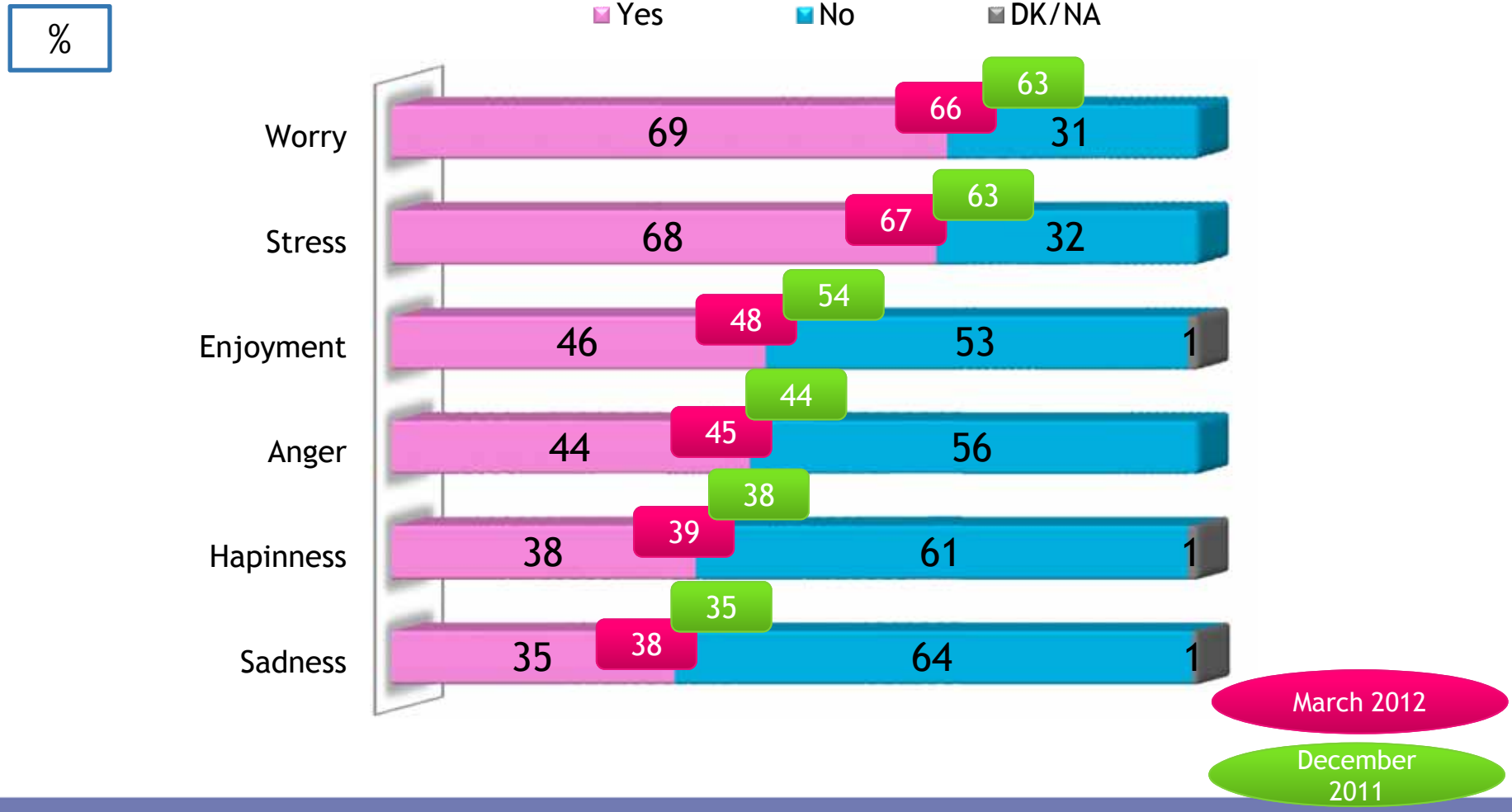
Ability to meet financial obligations

Psychological / Emotional state	Total	Keeping up very/relatively easy	Keeping up but it is a constant struggle	Keeping up with great/relative difficulty
Excellent/Very good	17	**27**	13	13
Good	25	35	28	16
Fair/Bad	58	38	59	**71**

:Statistically significant differences

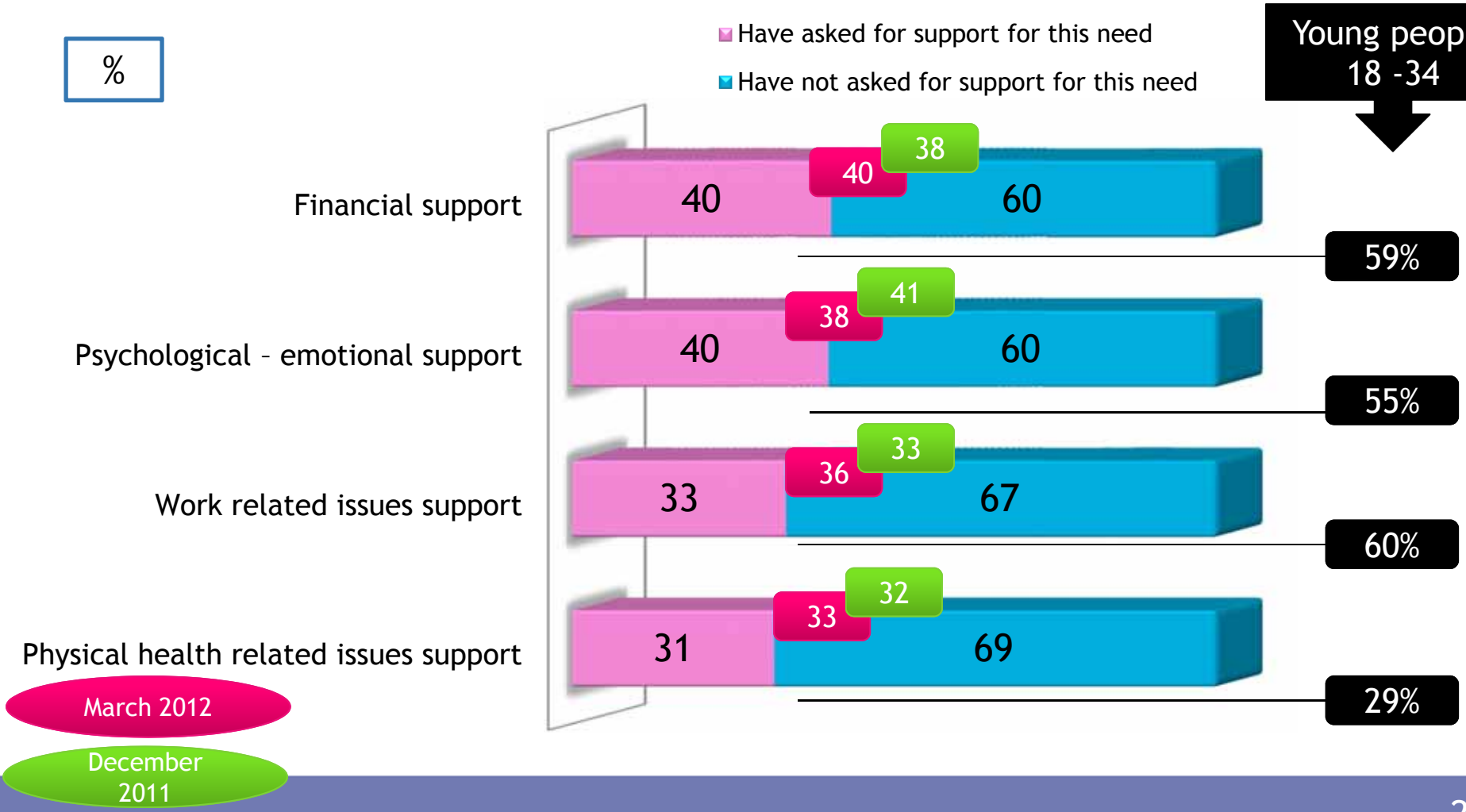
Eight out of ten (80%) feel anxiety (69%) or stress (68%) on a daily basis

‘Now, please think about yesterday, from the morning until the end of the day. Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday?’



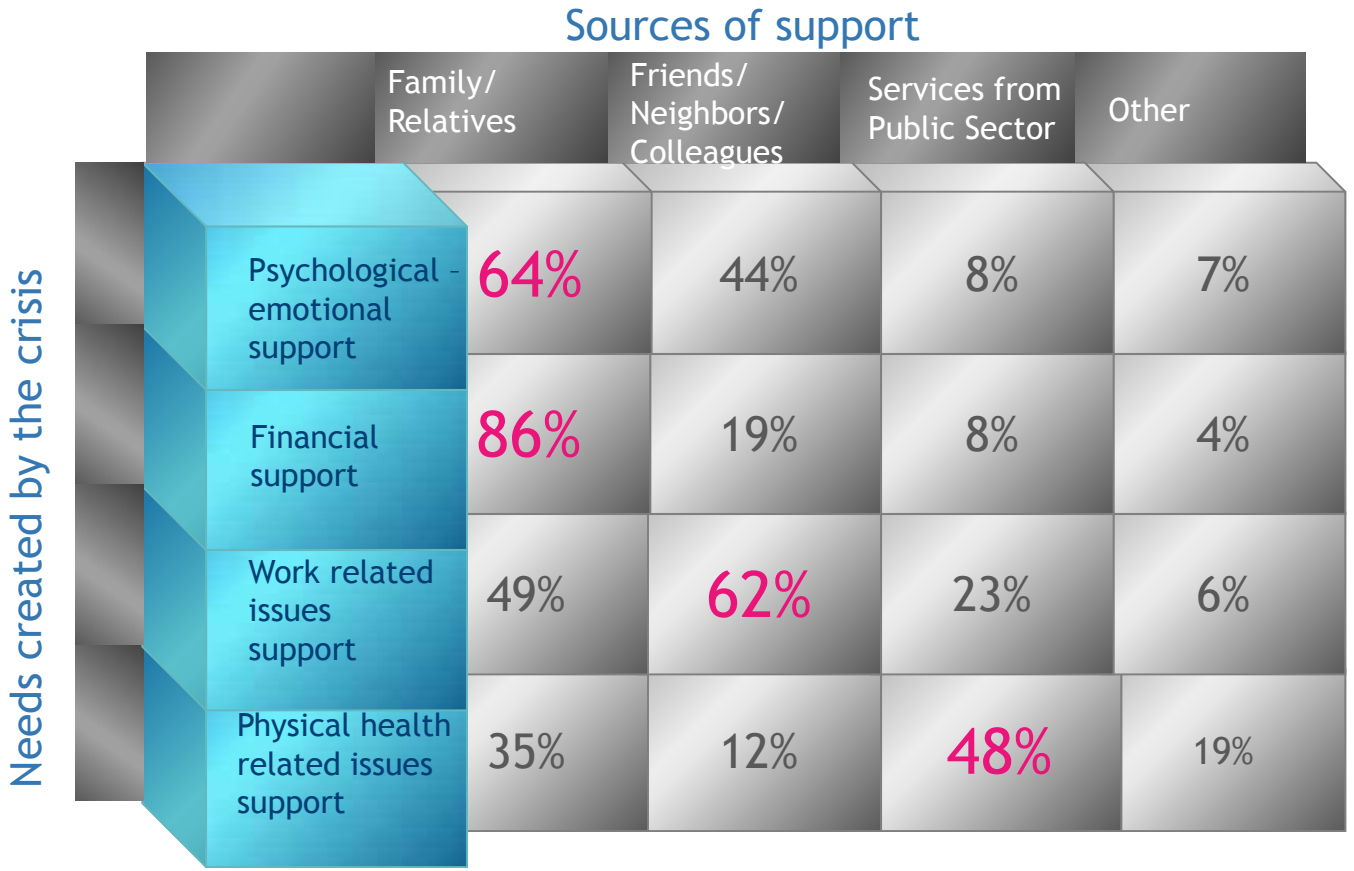
The psychological aggravation increases the need for support and especially support of younger people…

‘The financial crisis creates a series of needs. I would like to ask you, for each one of the needs I am going to read out to you, whether you have asked for any support?’



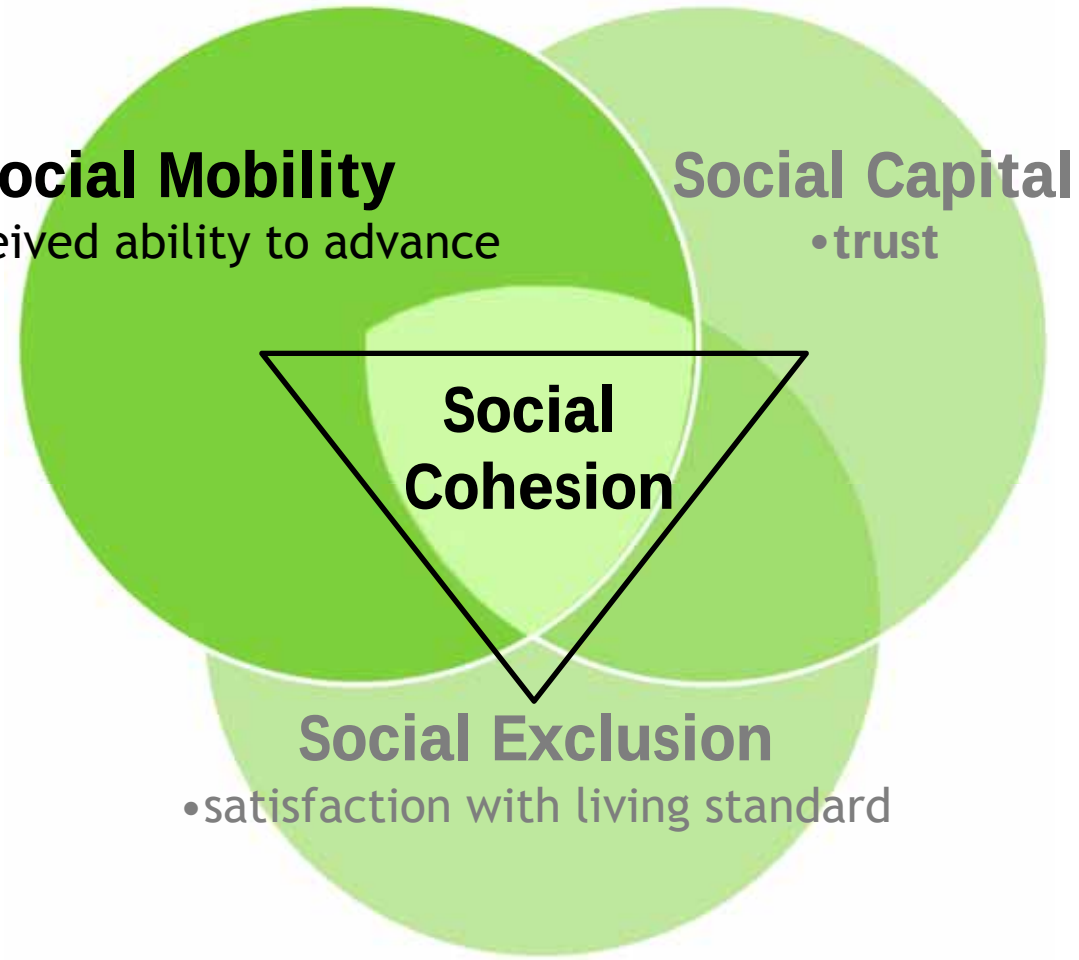
…people turn for support mainly to family and friends…

The financial crisis creates a series of needs. I would like to ask you, for each one of the needs I am going to read out to you, whether you have asked for any support?'



Base: persons who have asked for support

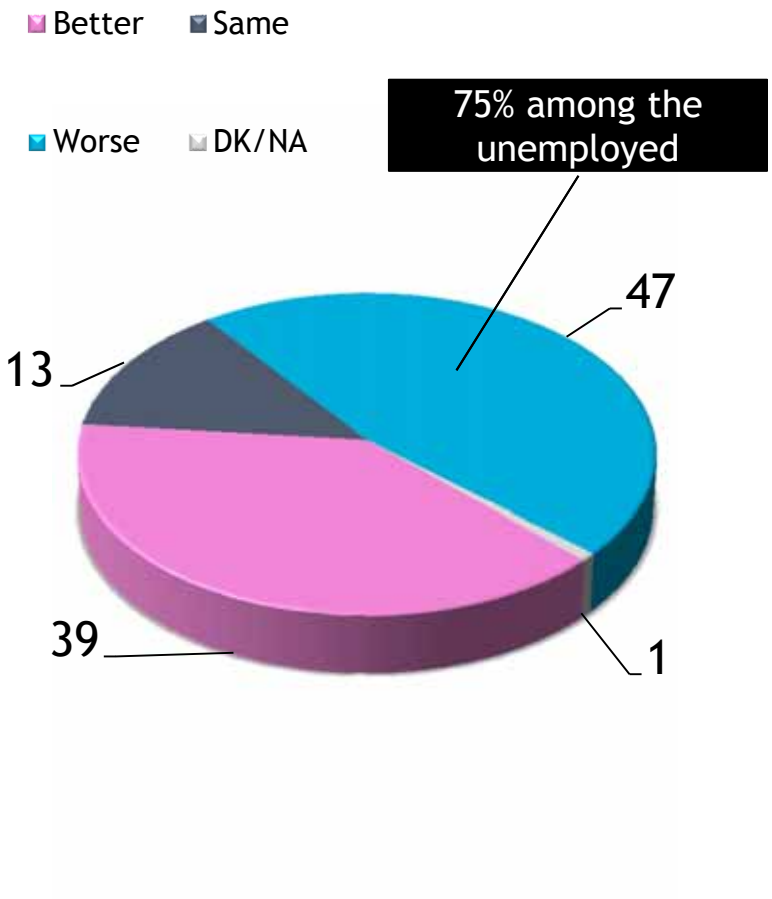
Social mobility : comparing to the past…

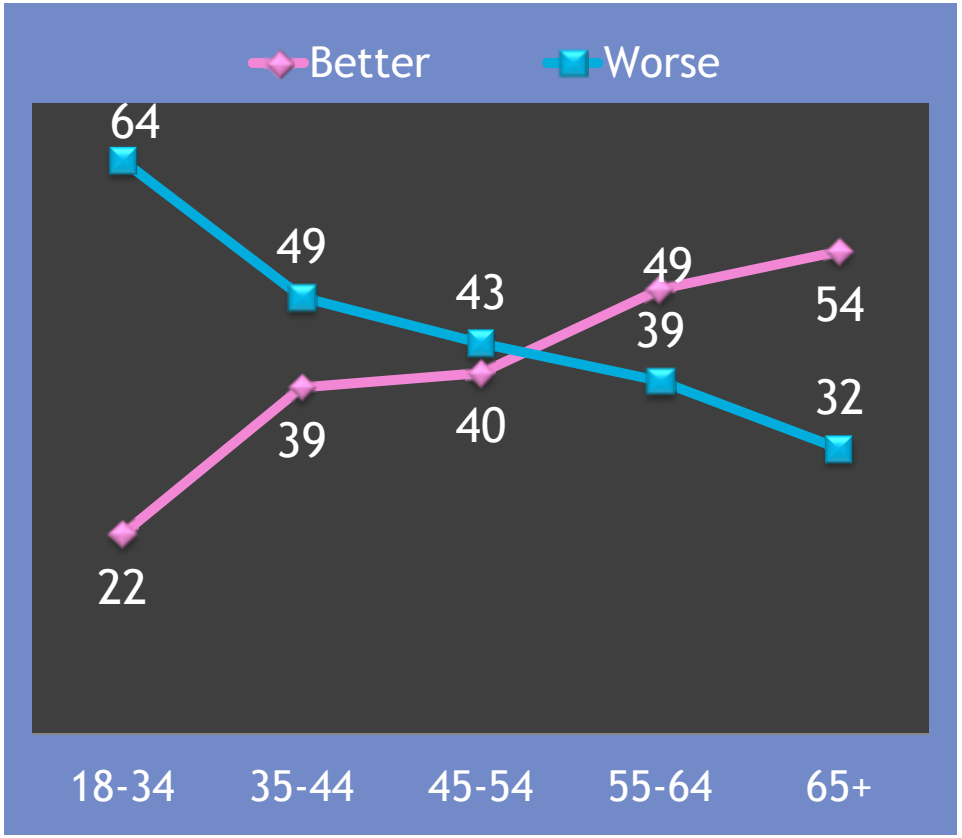


Almost 1 out of 2 think that that they are in a worse position than their parents… the generation gap is obvious

%

‘Thinking about your parents’ position and life, would you say that you are today in a better position, in the same position or in a worse position?’

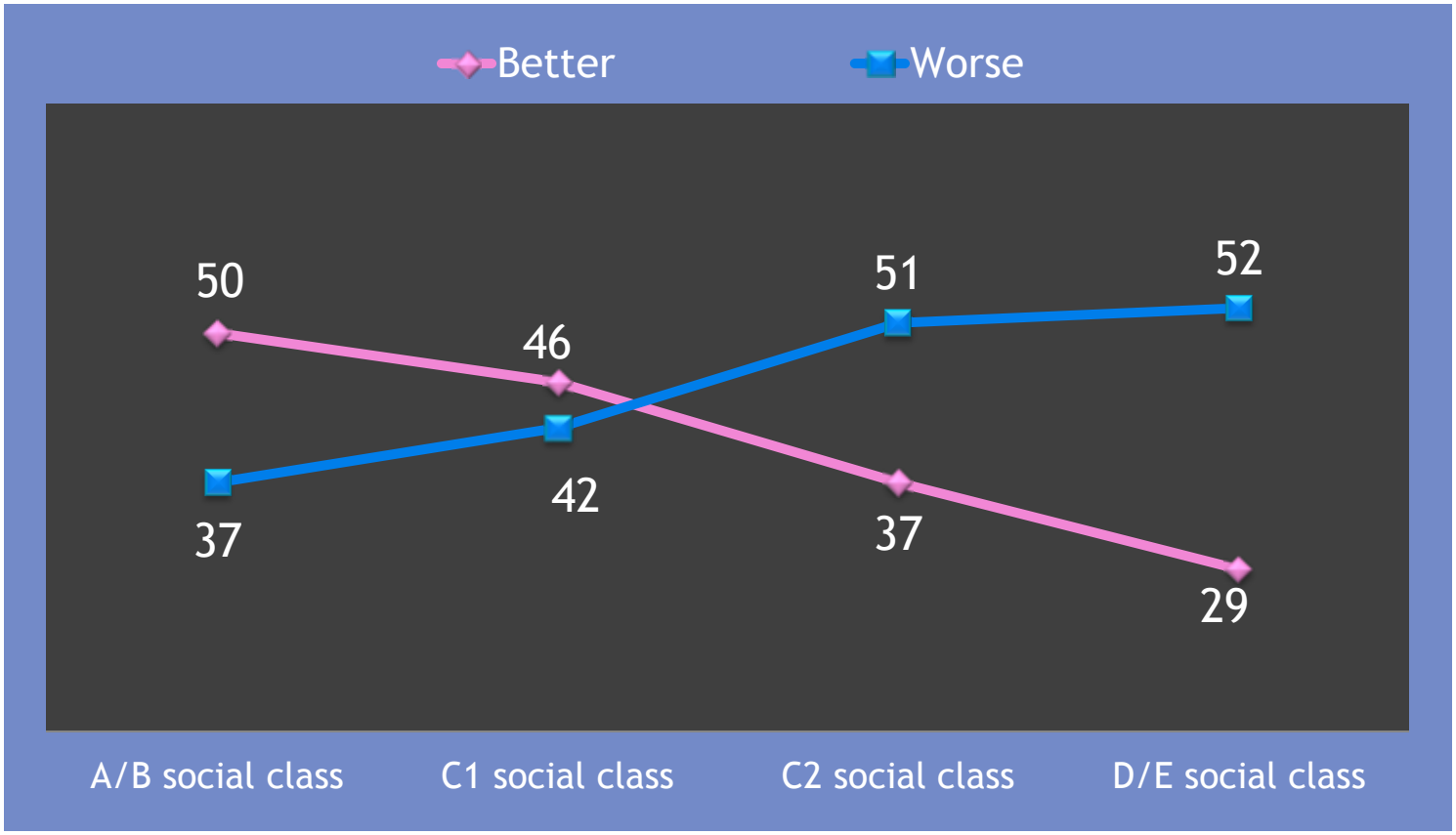




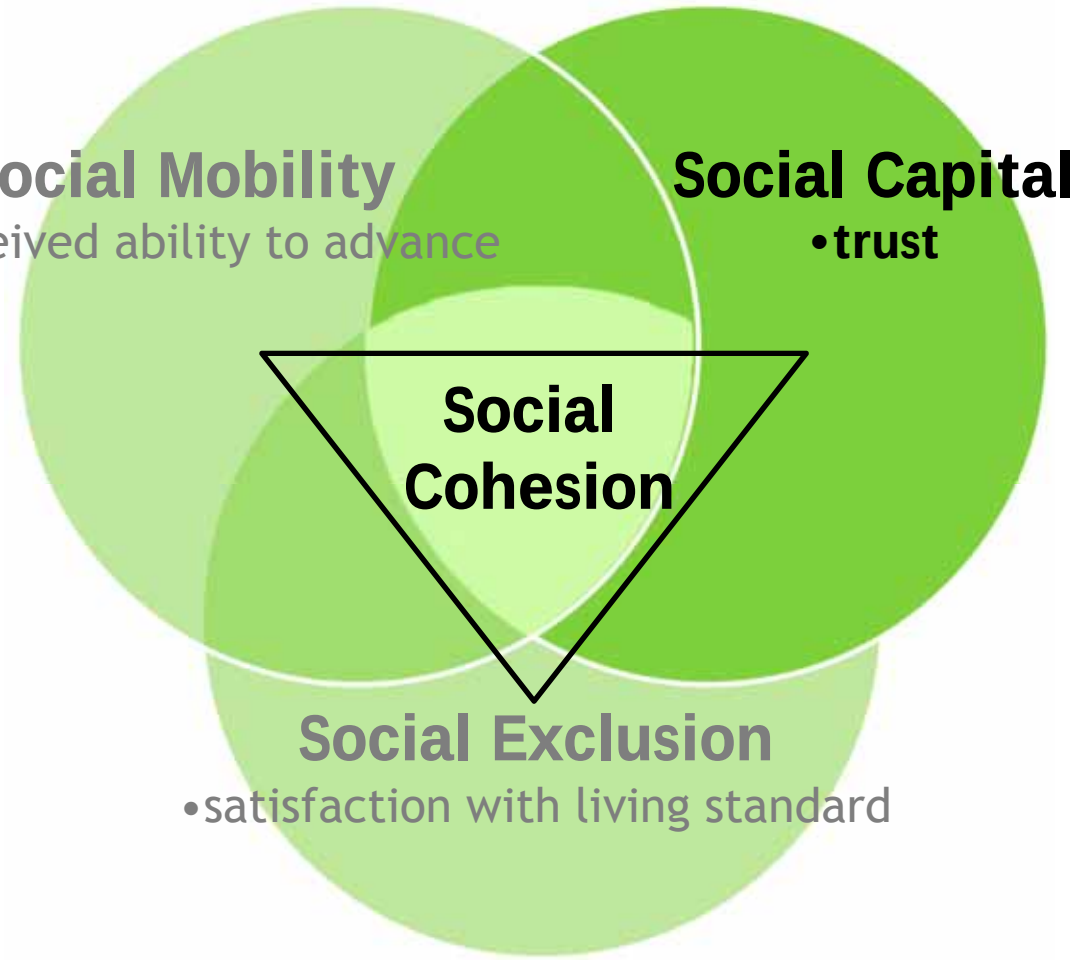
…and so is the social gap

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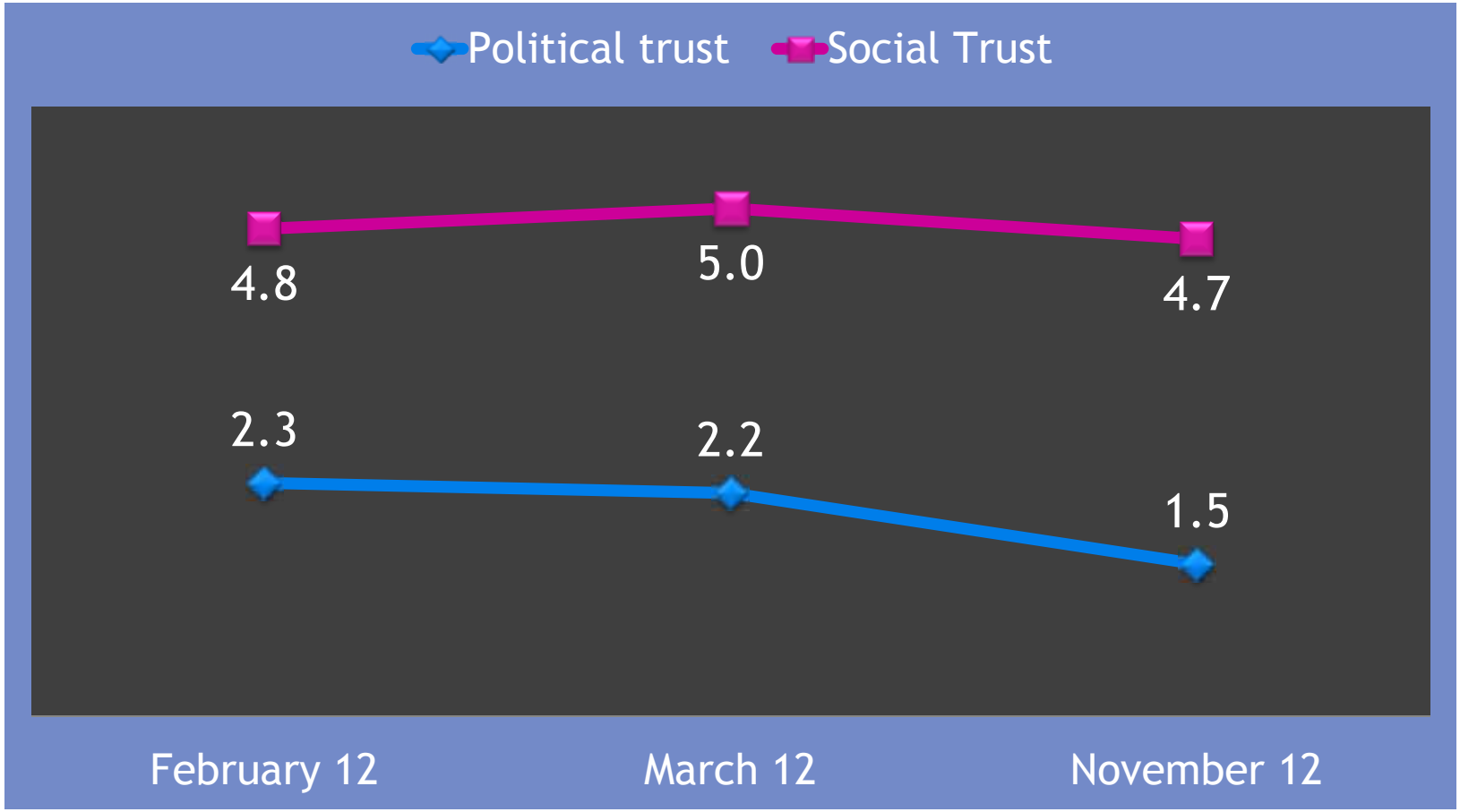
‘Thinking about your parents’ position and life, would you say that you are today in a better position, in the same position or in a worse position?’



Social capital : trust



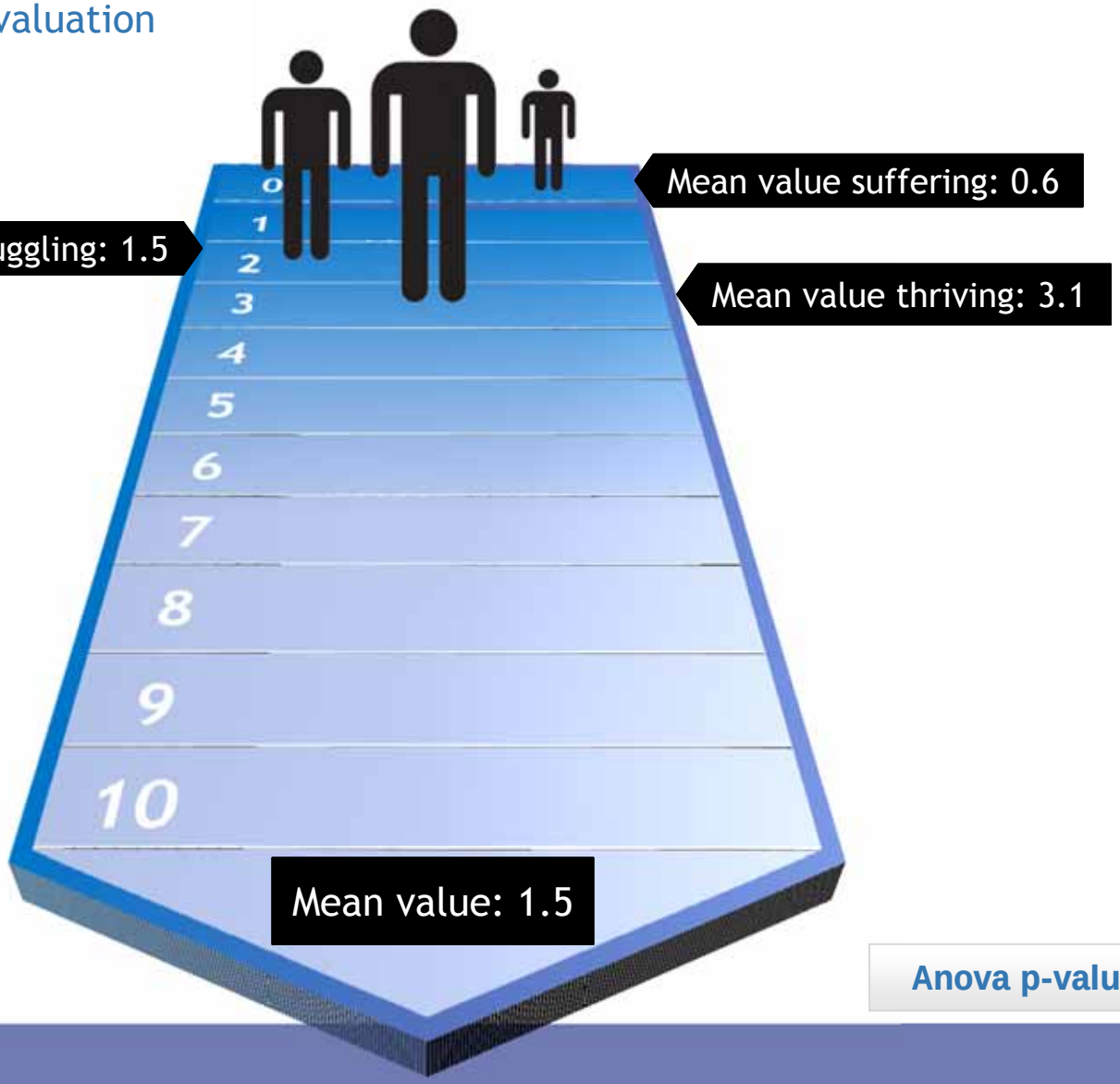
Political and Social Trust
(Data through time-Mean Values)



Source: Metron Analysis database

Political trust is absolutely associated with life evaluation and connected to the crisis

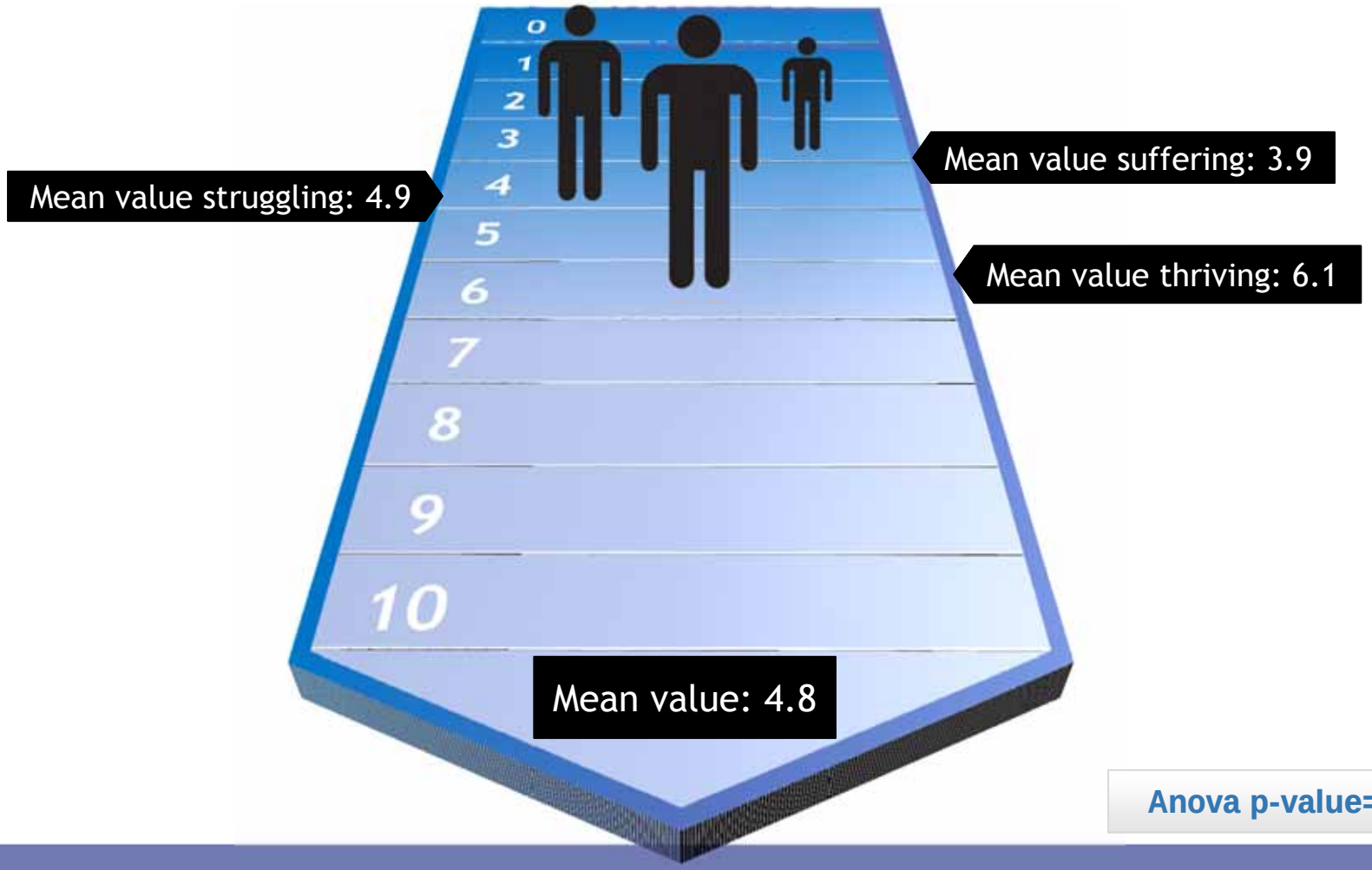
Political trust per life evaluation
- Mean values



Anova p-value=0,000

The same conclusion applies to social trust as well

Social trust per life evaluation – Mean values



Anova p-value=0,000

Comments…

Social cohesion in Greece is threatened

- Uncertainty, the lack of perspective, everyday difficulties in meeting needs, many of which are inelastic in character, are psychologically exhausting society and make living an ‘unpleasant’ affair, full of anxiety and stress.
- The monitoring over time of the psychological climate and also of the citizens’ everyday difficulties, is summarized as follows:
  - The crisis has settled in the country permanently and is now feeding itself back. It leads to social exclusion, especially for young people who seek escape in emigration and temporary support from family and friends.
  - Social mobility exists, but the movement is backward and not forward. The generation gap is widening.
  - Social and political trust are further reduced, especially in those groups that suffer the most. So, social and political trust and the crisis are in a feedback loop.

The crisis has deepened more. People's present situation is further aggravated…

- The survey findings shows that people are capable of 'learning' from the crisis and can survive despite difficulties. However, what they cannot yet control is concern for the future. The uncertainty destabilizes them even more, than the difficulties that they experience.
- Especially, young people, feel excluded, unable to find a personal way out and hence a way to social participation.
- Is there hope?
  - ✓ Yes, if the future becomes less uncertain.
  - ✓ Yes, if effective policies to support young people are promoted.
  - ✓ Yes, if the political system stops weakening the social and political trust with its rhetoric and its practices.

Annex

Social & Political Trust

- Social trust is measured by the mean value of answers on a scale of 0 to 10 that result from the question:

  'Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust people that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please express your opinion on a scale where 0 means no trust in people and 10 means absolute trust in people'.

- Political trust is measured by the mean value of answers on a scale of 0 to 10 that result from the question :

  'How much do you trust the Greek Parliament? Please express your opinion on a scale where 0 means no trust in the Parliament and 10 means absolute trust in the Parliament'.

Social class

- Social class results from combining the answers to the questions regarding the education level and the occupation of the household's chief income earner.

  - A/B: upper social class
  - C1: middle to high social class
  - C2: middle to low social class
  - D/E: lower social class

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