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Half of Russians Consider Themselves To Be Poor, Study Finds

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Volunteers form the St. Tatiana church serve free meals for homeless people inside a warm tent provided by the Russian Orthodox church in Moscow, Jan. 5, 2016. **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP**

Half of Russians believe that they are poor — even though under 15 percent officially qualify as impoverished, a new study has concluded.

Researchers at Russia's Higher School of Economics found that 50.4 percent of Russians think that they are living in poverty. That number is three times higher than the actual poverty statistics.

The Federal State Statistics Service estimates the number of Russians living in poverty at 13.5 percent.

But the authors of the Higher School of Economics study say that, while poverty is measured by income rates, many Russians who live above the poverty line but struggle to afford housing also consider themselves to be poor. The study found that educated Russians, especially women, are increasingly labelling themselves as poor.

Around 20.3 million Russians earned less than the officially measured subsistence wage between January and September 2016.

Currently the subsistence wage for Moscow stands at 15,092 rubles ($260) per month.

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