

*Bogusława Góral**

**CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF CONSUMPTION
IN POLAND IN THE ASPECT OF INTEGRATION
WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION**

1. Introduction

The potential Polish membership in the EU gives the impression that the Poles compare their standards of living with citizens of other EU countries.

However, according to B. Kolny and A. Małysa-Kaletka (2001, p. 93), it is not easy to note how much the integration processes with European structures contribute to the changes in the sphere of consumption in Poland and what is their consequence. Undoubtedly however, the changes that have taken place in the second half of the 20th century in the sphere of consumption of highly developed societies are so significant and vast that Czesław Bywalec says simply about consumption revolution (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2002, p. 129).

Consumption in the practice of socio-economic life of the previous half – century is perceived as an important stimulant of economic and social development. It has stopped to be treated as a passive effect of manufacturing processes. In the process of consumption there interlace economic, social and health problems. All of these accumulate in the structure of consumption, and must be taken into consideration when determining the model of consumption.

Providing a proper level of food consumption is a very important problem because of both economic and social reasons. Thus, a great importance is drawn not only to the amount of consumed food, but also to the structure of consumption, which altogether is an indicator of the proper food quality of the society. Socio-economic conditions, in which the households function, have a crucial influence on the differentiation of realized patterns of food consumption.

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A general economic development of many countries has led to the increase of aspiration and the development of human consumption needs. The latest have stopped to be limited to basic goods and services, but apart from food, they include accommodation conditions, health protection, education, culture and entertainment, relaxation and tourism in a bigger and bigger extent.

The aim of the hereby article is the attempt to evaluate the level of the households' Polish consumption in the aspect of integration with the UE. Taking into account the aim of the paper:

- the analysis of changes in the structure of household expenses in Poland and the UE countries was made;

- separation of characteristic features of food consumption patterns in Poland in the background of food consumption in the UE countries was attempted;

- the analysis of food consumption dynamics in Poland in the years 1995–2001 was conducted.

The basic of authority analysis of the changes in the structure of household consumption are the Central Statistical Office (GUS) household budgets data. The comparison of the level and structure of food consumption was made on the basis of food balance sheets elaborated by the FAO. Food balance sheets are elaborated in such a way that international comparisons are possible.

2. New phenomena and tendencies in the consumption sphere

In the sphere of consumption as a new phenomenon, the ecologization has appeared, which is expressed by eco-consumption, also called a green consumption. The growing awareness of maintaining natural attitude to life results in the fact that in European countries the percentage of buyers declaring purchasing or at least the intention of purchasing ecological products is very high, even these products are often more expensive. It concerns though 75% of the Germans, 73% of the French and 71% of the Spanish (Mazurek-Łopacińska 2001, p. 175). In less developed European countries, i.e. the countries of Eastern Europe, ecological awareness of the consumers is lower, which results from the lower level of education and information, lower income and a smaller offer of ecological products. The globalization of markets as well as the integration processes in Europe speed up the development of ecological awareness in these countries. In Poland the increase of interest concerning ecological food is being noticed – the study results show that in the second half of the nineties about 18% of the examined in the representative, all-Polish survey, the willingness to purchase ecological food was observed (the results of a different study even

point out 41% of the examined, who in the same survey declared their interest in healthy food; the problem, however, was based on the divergence in defining ecological products) (Berbeka 2002, p. 298).

An important phenomenon noticed in the consumption sphere in the second half of the 20th century is servicization based on the fact that at the moment in highly developed countries more than a half of households' consumption expenses are those spent on the purchase of services. The dynamic development of services became the leading section of economy. In this section there are almost 70% GDP of highly developed countries. Also about 70% of workers are those working in services (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2002, p. 131). In Poland the services are also a crucial GDP source (in 1998 in the services section there was created almost 60% of the total Polish GDP¹).

The particularly high dynamics of growth in the last decades make nonmaterial services. And exactly the phenomenon of fast growth of consumption of nonmaterial values (information, knowledge, esthetic experience, health and the improvement of self-consciousness) is defined as dematerialization of consumption.

Moreover, a still developing process of home-centrization (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2001, p. 133) – the concentration of consumption at home – is observed. In this situation home becomes not only a place of family or social life and relaxation as it has been so far, but also a good enough place to satisfy the needs that earlier had been satisfied outside, e.g. cultural or educational needs, health protection and physical recreation.

The symptomatic feature of social changes in highly developed countries in the past years is the individualization of consumption behaviour and lifestyle, and in consequence the 'escape to privacy', which altogether is called the privatization of consumption (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2001, p. 134).

The levels and structures of consumption analysis in the spatial formulation and a social-occupational and demographic profiles point at the assimilation of the patterns of consumption in supra-national scope, which is called the homogenization (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2001, pp. 136–138) of consumption. The homogenization of consumption is reflected in the creation of so-called global consumption culture, and is expressed in the trend of acquiring global products. Together with the processes of unification of consumption there appears the heterogenization (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2002, pp. 139–141) of consumption. Heterogenization means the increase of differentiation of consumption behaviour, which is the main result of the advancing democratization of bigger and bigger area of human activity and detraditionalization. It is significant that these both tendencies, naturally antagonistic, do not lead to any serious conflicts, even quite the opposite – in their own way they complement each other. To

¹ Świat w liczbach 2002, The Economist.

a great extent, heterogenization derives from the globalization processes as its own reaction to it, especially to the expansion of the negative results of globalization.

The extensive consumption observed in the last decade in highly developed countries, especially in the sphere of feeding, housing medical services, entertainment and relaxation, not justified by either biological or social and cultural needs, in the longer period may cause the increase of many pathologies, as for example the rise in morbidity, accident rate or delinquency. The warnings coming from the world of science and religion caused the appearance of the phenomenon of deconsumption (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2001, pp. 132–148), meaning conscious limitations of consumption to some rational measures. This phenomenon is connected with, so called, the instrumentalization of consumption, i.e. treating consumption not as the specific aim of life, but mainly as the means of life. Simultaneously, there is an increase of conscious rules of rational feeding and the interest in healthy food. By no means trivial role on this field falls to the mass media, which spread, created in the Western countries, the cult of youth, slim figure and good physical and psychological condition.

Undoubtedly, the most visible phenomenon observed in consumption in the recent years is the process of virtualization (Bywalec, Rudnicki 2001, pp. 138–158) of consumption, which should be understood as fulfilling the needs by means of electronic mass media, that is mainly the Internet and television. Universalizing of these mass media revolutionized the way of fulfilling many needs, especially those of a higher order, i.e. educational and cultural.

The regularities and new tendencies in the sphere of consumption cause permanent changes on its level and structure in both dimensions – micro (a household) and macro (the whole society). According to the empiric research these changes form some general regularities of the evolution of consumption. It looks as follows: together with the increase in households' wealth as well as simultaneous influence of other determinants, in global volume of consumption, the contribution of food expenses is being lowered (Engel's law), the contribution of industrial goods is growing to some level, and also the percentage of the service expanses, called the servicization of consumption is systematically growing as well. The graphic expression of these changes is presented at Fig. 1.

Analyzing the picture 1 it may be noticed that according to the, so called, three-section division of economy (food production, industrial goods production, services production) together with achieving higher stages of economic and social growth, the contribution of section I (food) is relatively decreasing, the contribution of section II (industry) is growing to some extent and then lowering, and the contribution of section III (services) is growing systematically. This division of the sphere of production has its reflection in the sphere of consumption.

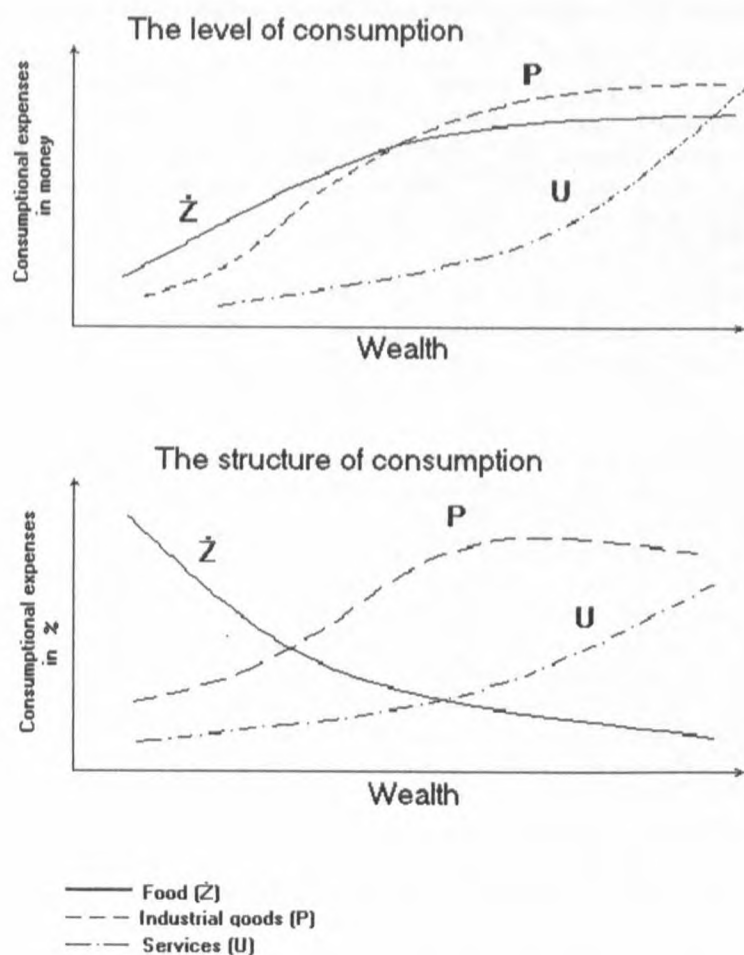


Fig. 1. Households' wealth versus the level and structure of consumption
 Source: Cz. Bywalec, L. Rudnicki 2002, p. 127.

3. Structure of consumption in Poland and the EU countries

The research of the structure of households' consumption expenditures of the ways of estimating the level of life of the whole society. The analysis of the data included in table 1 lets us claim that in the structure of Polish households' expenses some crucial changes have taken place.

Table 1. The structure of consumption in Poland and in chosen countries of the European Union (in % of total expenses)

Country	Years	Food ^a	Clothing and footwear	Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	Furnishings, household equipment	Health	Transport and communication	Education, culture ^b , restaurants and hotels
Austria	2000	15.3	6.6	19.4	8.2	3.2	15.7	24.2
Belgium	2000	16.8	5.4	22.7	5.5	3.8	17.9	15.4
Denmark	2001	17.5	4.9	28.1	5.8	2.7	13.8	16.6
Finland	2000	18.2	4.5	25.5	4.6	3.7	17.0	18.7
France	2001	17.8	4.8	23.5	6.2	3.5	17.4	17.0
Greece	2000	21.4	11.0	17.0	6.4	5.0	11.0	22.5
Spain	2000	18.5	6.5	14.1	6.0	3.4	15.3	29.4
Ireland	2000	17.2	7.1	19.2	7.1	2.5	14.8	21.9
Netherlands	1999	14.8	6.2	20.8	7.4	4.0	15.6	17.6
Germany	2000	15.6	6.4	24.5	7.2	4.0	16.9	15.4
Portugal	1999	22.5	7.9	10.6	7.5	4.7	19.8	17.9
Sweden	2001	16.7	5.4	30.6	4.8	2.4	16.2	16.3
United Kingdom	2001	14.1	5.8	18.0	6.1	1.6	16.9	25.4
Italy	2001	16.9	9.5	19.6	9.2	2.9	15.2	18.3
Poland	1994	42.6	7.1	16.5	3.8	3.5	9.2	7.1
	1996	40.9	7.0	17.4	3.9	3.6	9.9	7.2
	1998	36.8	6.7	17.6	5.3	4.2	10.5	8.0
	2000	34.7	5.7	18.2	5.3	4.5	12.5	9.4
	2001	34.0	5.3	18.8	4.9	4.5	13.1	9.4

^a Together with drinks and tobacco. ^b Together with recreation.

Source: Own calculations on the basis of *Roczniki Statystyczne GUS*, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2002, Warszawa. Poland – The European Union, GUS, Warszawa 2003.

Beginning with the analysis of the changes in the structure of Polish households' consumption, it needs to be marked that the period of transformation brought a crucial divergence between the financial possibilities of particular households (Szot 2002). We may seek the reasons of such a phenomenon, on the one hand, in the dynamic growth of the highest incomes, and on the other hand, in the lowering of the purchasing power of those economically the weakest. The observed among the Polish households polarization of people's incomes resulted in the fact that significant differences in the incomes of the examined subjects influenced the differentiation of the expenses among social groups as well as inside them. The biggest range of changes took place in the first period of reforms. It should be also stressed that the differentiation of the expenses influenced in the strongest way the households of self-employed people as well as farmers (Trzcińska 1997).

Analyzing the structure of consumption expenses of the Polish households the leading place is occupied by food expenses, in spite of the fact that in the economically developed countries they make the second or even the third place of the expenses in general (for example Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom, Italy) (Bywalec 1994, p. 54). However, the systematic decrease of Polish households' food expenses in the expenses in general is very visible. The contribution of food expenses in 1994 was oscillating on the level of 42.6% of the expenses in general, and in 2001 it was only 34.0%. Despite the fact that the tendency of the decrease of the contribution of food expenses is seen in all household groups, the percentage of contribution of these expenses depending on socio-economic type of household looks different, as shown in Tab. 2.

Table 2. The percentage of food expenses of Polish households in total expenditures by socio-economic groups in the years 1993–2001

Specification	Years								
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Households of employees	39.1	37.6	37.4	35.3	33.4	28.5	28.1	27.8	26.2
Households of employees – farmers	47.9	45.3	46.3	43.8	40.3	38.5	38.0	36.8	34.4
Households of farmers	48.8	47.7	47.2	44.3	44.5	43.5	42.9	41.7	39.4
Households of the self – employed	34.4	32.3	32.3	31.4	30.1	25.0	25.4	25.4	23.7
Households of retirees and pensioners	43.2	41.6	41.2	39.7	38.1	33.8	33.3	33.4	30.8
Households maintained from non-earned sources (other than retirement pay and pension)	48.8	47.4	48.8	47.0	44.4	36.2	38.9		

Source: Own calculations on the basis of *Budżety Gospodarstw Domowych* in 1999 year and *Roczniki Statystyczne GUS* 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2002, Warszawa.

The highest contribution of food expenses in the examined period took place in the budget of households connected with farming and next with: households maintained from non-earned sources, and households of retirees and pensioners. The households of the self-employed people and those belonging to employees spend the smallest part of their budget on food. It should be stressed that relatively high level of food expenses in the farming households' budget results mainly from the fact that in these households a high level of food consumption is being realized, but the food mainly comes from their own farmland or plots of ground. Households maintained from non-earned sources are characterized by a low level of wealth and, in consequence, the low level of expenses and food consumption.

The most crucial change in the structure of households' food consumption is the remaining tendency of the decrease of contribution of food expenses in the family budget. As long as this fact has a positive effect in richer households, it certifies of the wealth growth, however, in poorer families it forms a necessity as one of the few solutions helping to fulfill other essential needs – very often the needs of only the basic character, e.g. regular housing fees. A high contribution of food expenses in Poland in comparison to the countries of the European Union (Tab. 1) lowers the possibilities of fulfilling non-food needs.

It should be added that at the moment the expenses connected with housing make the biggest group of non-food expenses in Poland. Similarly, in other EU countries housing expenses (housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels) make even, e.g. in Sweden 30.6% of the expenses in general (in Denmark – 28.1%; Finland – 25.5%; Germany – 24.5%; France – 23.5%)².

In Poland the essential growth of expenses, so called invariable, which include renting the flat, water, electricity, heating and gas, was connected mainly with significant growth of the prices of energy carrier as well as the country's withdrawal from subsidizing the housing economy. The growth of regular fees concerned all types of households, however, it most touched the households of retirees and pensioners (22.5% of total expenditures in 2001 year)³, and next the households of employees (18.6% of total expenses in 2001 year)⁴. It was the least felt by farmers' households as they mainly live in their own premises, which means that the rent increase does not concern them so much.

A significant percentage in the structure of households' consumption in Poland and the EU countries are expenses connected with transport and communication. In the year 2000 in the EU countries the expenditures oscillated between 11% and 19.8%, while in Poland the same share made up 12.5% and was a 7.3% percentagepoint subordinate than in Portugal. But in the last decade of the pervious century the systematic growth the Polish households' expenses within this category expenses was observed. (see Tab. 3).

The expenses connected with the transport and communication are, among others, expenses connected with the purchase of cars – new or second-hand, or other means of transport; the expenses on the exploitation of means of transport, fares and baggage transport, postal fees, telecommunication and others. On the basis of the data included in table 3 we may deduct that the biggest growth of expenses from this group was noted in farming households. In households of farmers the expenses grew for about 72.4% in 2001 in comparison to 1993, whereas in the households of employees – farmers his growth reached 55%. The smallest increase in this group of expenses was noted in the households of the

² Data 2000 included in Table 1.

³ Data 2001, *Rocznik Statystyczny GUS*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 192–196.

⁴ Data 2001, *Rocznik Statystyczny GUS*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 192–196.

self-employed, although in 2001 in comparison to other households they spent 17.4% of the expenses in general on transport and communication. A gradual increase of this group's expenses in the expenses in general should be expected.

Table 3. The percentage of the expenses of Polish households as far as transport and communication is concerned in total expenses according to socio-economic groups in the years 1993–2001

Specification	Years								
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Households of employees	10.1	9.5	9.5	11.1	10.8	11.9	13.5	13.6	14.0
Households of employees – farmers	10.1	10.6	9.1	10.3	11.1	10.5	12.0	13.3	15.7
Households of farmers	8.7	9.0	9.6	10.9	10.4	9.7	12.2	12.6	15.0
Households of the self – employed	13.9	15.9	13.4	14.7	15.4	14.4	17.3	17.2	17.4
Households of retirees and pensioners	6.2	6.5	6.1	6.4	6.8	7.2	8.2	8.9	9.5
Households maintained from non-earned sources (other than retirement pay and pension)	6.2	6.0	5.3	5.6	6.0	8.0	7.8	.	.

Source: As same as Tab. 2.

In the nineties of the 20th century there was a growing tendency of Polish households' to spend money on health protection which meant, among others, the increase of prices of medical services, medicaments, cleaning products and others. This growth concerned all groups of households. However, it was mostly felt by the household of retirees and pensioners, who, because of their age spent a lot on health protection (in 2001 – 7.4% of the expenses in general)⁵. In the year 2000 among the EU countries the Greek (5%) spent the biggest amount of money on health protection (see Tab. 1).

Moreover, the limitation of the household expenses on clothing and footwear was noticed in the study of household budgets. In the case of richer households the decrease of the contribution of clothing and footwear expenses may be the result of quality changes, which are taking place consumption (Grzega 2002, p. 124). In case of low-wealthy households the decrease of this group of expenses should be understood as its specific kind of saving, necessary

⁵ Data 2001, *Rocznik Statystyczny GUS*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 192–196.

because of the increase of contribution of housing, communication and health protection expenses (see Tab. 1).

On the other hand, the increase of the expenses of all groups of Polish households in the period examined connected with fulfilling the needs of further category (expenses on culture, education, sport, recreation) may prove about the increase of the life standard of the Polish society, but unfortunately they are very often the changes registered only statistically. The contribution of the Polish households' expenses on education, culture, recreation and entertainment is still the lowest in Europe (see Tab. 1).

Analyzing the data in table 1 it may be noticed – as K. Mazurek-Łopacińska (2001, p. 179) puts it – that “[...] the existing distances in the line of consumption, dividing us from the countries of the European Union, have the best chance to defeat the employees' households as well as those which belong to the self-employed households [...]” The indicators of the contribution of food expenses in these households are only being created on the level of the indicators realized in the poorly developed countries of the Union, i.e. in Greece and Portugal.

It will be the hardest thing for farming households as well as the households of employees – farmers to overcome the existing differences because such households find it the most difficult adjust to the conditions created by the system transformation in Poland. The high contribution of food in the realized structures of consumption are accompanied by the lowest, in comparison to other socio-economic groups, contribution in the expenses on learning, culture, education, sport and recreation. It is propitious to intensifying of the delay of these households in the social development.

Comparing the empiric data included in table 1 lets us claim that in spite of crucial differences among these countries, there are countries similar to Poland in this respect, i.e. Greece or Ireland. The Polish structure of expenses differs the most from the Danish one.

4. Changes in food consumption in Poland in the background of food consumption in the EU countries

Because costs of food are dominating in the structure of consumption expenditures in Poland and in many countries of the European Union, one should also mention that there are significant differences in the level of consumption of basic food products among EU countries and between these countries and Poland. These differences are illustrated by the table 4, presenting basic plant and animal products consumption.

Table 4. Consumption in kg per capita of basic food products of plant and animal origin, as well as edible fats in Poland and in the EU countries in 1996

Countries	Cereals	Potatoes	Leguminous	Vegetables	Fruit	Sugar	Meat & meat products	Meat	Meat products	Fish	Milk	Eggs	Edible fats			
													total	animal	butter	vegetable
Poland	157.5	136.1	2.4	122.1	48.1	42.3	73.4	70.5	2.9	16.5	191.2	9.8	25.6	9.9	3.7	12.0
EU average	107.9	84.8	3.1	114.0	112.5	37.8	90.8	85.7	5.1	26.1	250.8	12.0	33.5	11.4	3.8	18.3
individually																
Austria	82.3	63.5	1.0	77.7	111.9	37.8	106.5	103.7	2.8	12.2	219.3	13.6	38.2	14.3	4.3	19.6
Belgium and Luxembourg	98.8	105.4	2.5	125.0	137.6	42.2	92.3	87.7	4.6	21.0	200.6	13.0	46.8	19.3	6.1	21.4
Denmark	108.9	67.2	0.9	82.0	83.6	46.8	103.6	102.3	1.3	23.1	233.8	13.7	33.7	24.6	2.0	7.1
Finland	73.6	66.4	1.5	68.5	83.2	37.7	67.5	65.1	2.4	34.5	349.4	10.4	22.9	7.4	6.7	8.8
France	113.8	72.5	2.1	123.5	95.9	35.1	107.3	98.0	9.3	27.9	256.2	15.9	35.2	10.0	8.7	16.5
Greece	149.6	66.1	5.2	246.1	184.4	29.3	81.8	77.8	4.0	25.6	239.8	10.6	32.7	2.3	0.8	29.6
Spain	103.3	98.6	7.3	134.4	116.0	29.3	103.3	99.5	3.8	37.1	161.1	13.9	30.8	3.6	0.3	26.9
Holland	75.5	85.9	2.7	91.5	130.1	49.8	92.3	90.2	2.1	14.6	337.5	15.0	24.9	5.7	2.1	17.1
Ireland	132.7	133.5	3.0	76.4	75.7	40.6	106.4	84.5	21.9	20.6	250.1	6.3	32.8	14.1	3.7	15.0
Germany	91.1	78.9	1.2	85.9	114.8	37.6	89.0	84.9	4.1	15.6	243.2	12.5	39.7	14.3	7.3	18.1
Portugal	127.4	135.5	4.7	161.3	124.6	32.1	85.5	79.8	5.7	58.7	175.6	8.8	30.2	10.4	1.4	18.4
Sweden	99.9	65.1	1.1	67.0	93.3	43.0	68.2	66.4	1.8	30.8	356.2	12.2	36.2	14.8	4.9	16.5
United Kingdom	96.3	110.8	4.6	88.0	83.2	39.0	76.5	73.5	3.3	20.1	234.0	10.3	25.7	6.2	3.1	16.4
Italy	157.6	37.2	5.5	168.4	141.3	28.6	90.0	86.1	3.9	23.1	254.2	12.1	34.9	8.3	2.3	24.3

Source: Food Balance Sheets. FAO, 1998.

In each country or group of the EU countries specific patterns of food consumption have formed, which should be understood as repeatable structure of consumption, particularly with regard to type of food. Much influence on shaping of these patterns have conditions of natural environment (soil, climate, access to water regions), economic factors (incomes, availability of food) and cultural (habits, customs).

In comparison to the EU countries, the pattern of food consumption in Poland is close to the one of Great Britain with regard to consumption of fats, whereas in the structure of fat's consumption the share of animal fats is higher than of vegetable fats. The level of meat consumption in Poland is significantly lower than in the EU, with simultaneous very high consumption of pork (as in case of Denmark). Consumption of poultry is much lower than in case of the EU countries. Consumption of fish is low, as in case of Holland and Great Britain. Consumption of meat is 4,4 times higher than the consumption of fish. Consumption of milk is low, as in case of Belgium and Luxemburg, the same happened with consumption of eggs, as in case of Great Britain.

Consumption of potatoes in Poland is very high, higher than in the EU countries, similar level of consumption was reached in Portugal and Ireland only. Poland belongs to the group of countries with very high consumption of cereals, as in case of Italy and Greece.

In comparison to the EU countries, the pattern of food consumption in Poland can be characterised by low consumption of beef and poultry and high consumption of pork. Consumption of fish, milk and eggs is low. Poland has the highest consumption of potatoes (in 1996 – 136,1 kg per capita annually). Consumption of cereals and sugar is high, while the consumption of fruit is particularly low. It constitutes 43% of average fruit consumption in the EU. Consumption of vegetables is higher than the EU average.

Analysis of the diagram of food consumption dynamics in 2001 shows significant changes in the structure of food consumption in Poland, in comparison to the year 1995.

General tendency of the years 1995–2001 was the drop of animal products' consumption, with simultaneous increase of consumption of majority plant products. Increase of the consumption regarded mainly fruit, eggs, meat and its products, edible fats and sugar. Whereas, the consumption of cereal, potatoes and milk decreased. Only the consumption of vegetables stayed unchanged.

There have been significant structural changes in cross-section of respective food products' groups in comparable periods. With regard to meat, the changes concerned the increase of poultry consumption and relative stabilization of pork consumption with simultaneous reduction of beef consumption. The structure of fats' consumption also changed. There was a partial substitution of butter and

animal fats by vegetable fats⁶. The changes can be also linked to the increase of significance in social education of the issue concerning the process of exchanging animal fats with vegetable fats with regard to healthy life style.

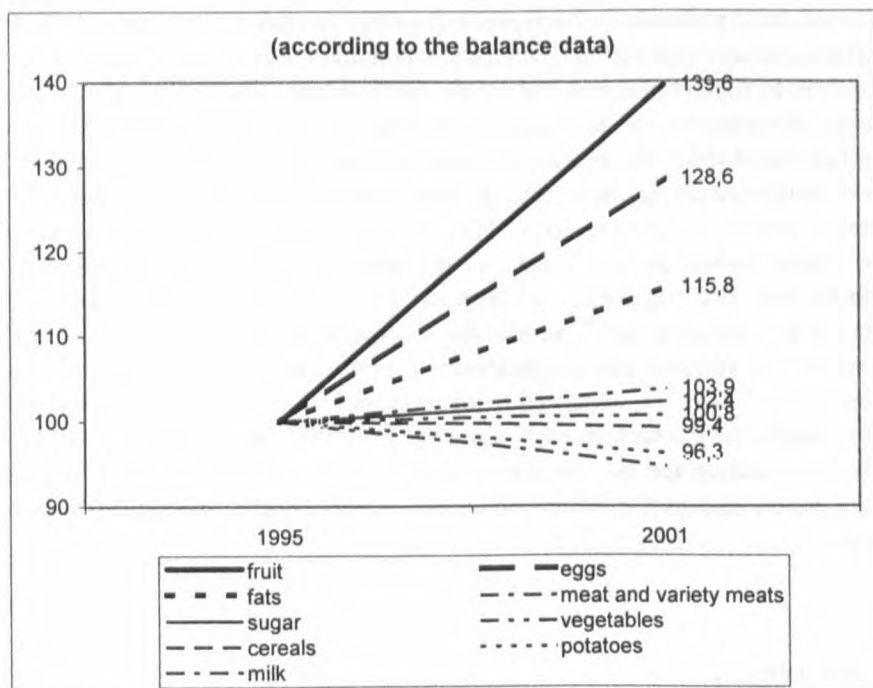


Diagram 1. Dynamics of consumption of chosen food products in Poland in the year 2001 (1995 = 100)

Source: Own calculation based on Statistical Yearbooks 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, GUS, Warszawa, relevant years.

Changes in the consumption of milk products were characterised by the decrease of liquid milk consumption while the increase of cheese, yoghurt, deserts and milk drinks consumption was observed⁷.

In the years 1995–2001, the strong upward tendency in the consumption of fruit, observed in the first half of nineties, maintained. This was influenced by the increase of supply, particularly with regard to imported fruit. In 2001, a statistical citizen of Poland consumed 39.6% more fruit than in the year 1995.

In the years 1995–2001, the consumption of potatoes decreased by 4%, also the consumption of cereals decreased by 1%, with significant changes in its

⁶ On basis of data from GUS Statistical Yearbooks 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, GUS, Warszawa (relevant years).

⁷ *Ibidem*.

structure, concerning the decrease of bakery products and flour consumption and at the same time increase of noodles consumption. Whereas, consumption of vegetables stayed unchanged in the comparable periods.

In Poland, there has been observed an increase of importance of highly processed food products in each product group as against the decrease of share of simple products, so called unary products, which is proved by detailed survey of household budgets carried out by the GUS. Moreover, results of this survey indicate the increase of consumers growing interest in consumption outside households and the increased demand for gastronomy services. Furthermore, the above mentioned phenomena indicate significant transformation of consumption pattern towards its modernisation. This transformation has positive impact also from the nutritional point of view, as it implies increase of the animal protein products, fruit and vegetables level in the diet, with simultaneous decrease of animal fats' consumption⁸. These tendencies seem to be permanent. They correspond to the well known principles of consumption growth influenced by the increase of incomes, observed in all economically developed countries of the world. Despite of the fact that in the years 2000–2001, the decrease of basic food products' consumption has been observed, it is regarded that these phenomena are temporary and in the following years we will observe the return of growth tendencies.

5. Final remarks

Growing importance of consumption in life of contemporary societies confirms variety of new trends within the area of consumption in highly developed countries.

This opinion seems to be also confirmed by the analysis of the structure of consumption costs of Polish households, where a characteristic feature is the constant downward trend in the share of food costs in household budgets, which appeared in 1993. It is also characterised by relatively high and growing share of "fixed" costs, as well as growing share of health, culture, education, sport, leisure, transport and communication costs. The share of clothing and shoes costs is constantly decreasing. The direction of those changes is in accordance with the already known principles of consumption development, influenced by the increase of incomes, observed in all economically developed countries of the world.

⁸ *Popyt na żywność. Stan i perspektywy*, Raporty Rynkowe, Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, Warszawa, 2001, p. 19–20

Despite significant difference in the costs' structure among European countries, there are countries similar to Poland with regard to that, i.e. Greece and Ireland. The biggest difference can be seen between the Polish structure of costs and the one of Denmark.

Main group of costs in the total expenditures, both in Poland and in some EU countries, consist of food costs. The pattern of food consumption in Poland, in comparison with the EU countries is characterised by very high consumption of potatoes, cereal, sugar and pork. Consumption of fruit, leguminous plants, milk and its products, fish, poultry, beef, eggs, animal fats, butter and vegetable fats is significantly lower in comparison to the average consumption in the European Union.

General tendency of food consumption dynamics in Poland in the years 1995–2001 was the drop of animal products consumptions, with simultaneous increase of most plant products. Increase of consumption concerned mainly fruit, eggs, meat and its products, which is important from the nutritional point of view.

Keeping in mind the accession of Poland to the European Union, it is important to remember the differences in wealth of respective groups of households and introduction of such an economic and social policy which allows to reduce the gap between the poorest group of Polish and analogous households of the other European Union countries.

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Bogusława Góral

ZMIANY W STRUKTURZE KONSUMPCJI W POLSCE W ASPEKCIE INTEGRACJI Z UE

Autorka artykułu opisuje nowe zjawiska i tendencje w sferze konsumpcji w drugiej połowie XX wieku, pokazując zmiany, jakie nastąpiły w strukturze konsumpcji w Polsce w aspekcie integracji z UE. Okazuje się, że kierunek tych zmian jest zgodny ze znanymi prawidłowościami rozwoju konsumpcji pod wpływem wzrostu dochodów, obserwowanymi we wszystkich gospodarczo rozwiniętych krajach świata.

Oceny poziomu konsumpcji ludności polskiej dokonano ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem konsumpcji żywności, jako że wydatki na żywność wciąż dominują w strukturze wydatków konsumpcyjnych w Polsce i wielu krajach Unii Europejskiej.