

## TENDENCIES IN EATING HABITS CAUSED BY THE CHANGE OF HOUSING STRUCTURE IN HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY

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### ABSTRACT

Lifestyle can be shortly described like this: how do we live? Specific features can be experienced in the housing conditions, in the economic structure, in the way we do our work, in the way of living and finally, in changes that touched traditions and eating habits, too.

In this essay we are focusing on the following fields: mass migration into town due to the disappearance of farmsteads as a special settlement form, and analysis of changes involving eating habits caused by the sporadic moving out of town today.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

We are examining the period from the middle of the last century up today. We are aiming to analyse the eating habits in connection with the changes in the housing structure and conditions. Some determining factors have to be underlined to get a full picture of the necessities created between town-dwellers and people who live on farmsteads.

These are the following:

- Important changes in housing conditions (moving to town, to a detached house, to a block of flats, or to a flat without a pantry from farmsteads)
- Statistic data concerning household utensils (for example, refrigerator)
- Infiltration of networks of chain of stores into the traditional shops
- Special eating habits in case of the youth and the intellectuals
- Change in eating habits generated by the growing number of the elderly.

What are we seeking the answer to? First of all, how did the above mentioned factors influence, alter the way of eating? Secondly, what is expected in our modern world from the protectors of the national traditions and customs?

### 2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

In our research work we were assisted by the surveys made by the City Council of Hódmezővásárhely, secondary specific literature and personal encounters; data collection was done in the empirical form.

### 3. THEORITICAL APPROACH OF THE MAIN SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CHANGES THAT HAVE AN EFFECT ON LIFESTYLE

Manner of life is the relatively constant system of people's everyday life which is shaped to fulfil their necessities and which involves:

1. the problem of „how do we live?” and
2. the one of „how should we live?”.

These questions cannot be answered without recognising the way of living realized by the mass and types of „how do we live”, but at the same time the present cannot be formed or altered if we do not know what direction to take, if we do not have a conception about „how to live”. (Farkas 1977)

### 4. HOW DO WE LIVE? HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

Customs, habits and ideals are of double-sided. Customs can be conservative conventions and positive traditions. Ideals also can carry positive energies and inactive desires to escape from present reality.

What has become a custom is a strong pillar of the everyday culture. If we did not have an ideal for the lifestyle, the present would easily remain alone closed into conventions and it could become a conservative force, without the model of „how to live”.

The lifestyle model of „how to live” is not an abstract, future ideal. It is a type that influences present and it is imbued with the values of future. It realizes the present values, although not because of its wide-spread feature but because it has peculiarities referring to future tendencies. It is a special self-realization. The more it becomes useful for others, the more it becomes important for life.

In the present social-economic conditions the question of consumption model is very actual the importance of its examination has a growing tendency. In our everyday routine, in our environment examinations concerning consumption are getting more vivid.

When thorough changes are planned to be accomplished in the production structure, it concerns the consumption, too. There are tendencies in consumption which make production more dynamic. Dynamic feature of certain necessities motivates modernization which proves the mutual connection between production and consumption.

Where the standard of living has started to rise, the food consumption is increasing at a rapid pace until food requirements are fulfilled at a certain level.

Nowadays, examinations on the structure of consumption are highlighted, first of all, the ones on foods which are more valuable from the point of view of nourishment and physiology, while proportion of industrially processed foods, which contain additives and flavour-intensifiers, is increasing.

Analysing the structure of the Hungarian food consumption it can be said that positive changes have started in our country, composition of food demand is changing. Changes can be seen in Table 1. The year 1989 was chosen because it was the quantitative peak in



the Hungarian food consumption, then tendencies are shown with data of the year 2000, and finally data of the year 2004 are presented.

*Table 1 Consumption of food and consumer goods in Hungary in three highlighted years  
(Source: 'Élelmiszerek és tápanyagfogyasztás 2004', calculations based on statistic (KSH) data)*

Name	Data on consumption			Changes (%)		
	1989.	2000.	2004.	2000/ 1989	2004/ 1989	2004/ 2000
<b>Foodstuffs(kg/person/year)</b>						
Meat products	78,2	70,2	68,8	89,8	88,0	98,0
Fish	2,8	3,0	3,4	107,1	121,4	113,3
Dairy products	189,6	160,6	155,2	84,7	81,8	96,6
Egg	20,2	15,3	16,7	75,7	82,7	109,2
Fats, oil	39,2	39,0	39,0	99,5	99,5	100,0
-animal	28,7	21,0	19,5	73,2	67,9	92,9
- vegetable	10,5	18,0	19,5	171,4	185,7	108,3
Cereals	112,2	94,1	89,2	83,9	79,5	94,8
Potato	55,2	64,0	68,0	115,9	123,2	106,3
Sugar	40,9	33,6	33,2	82,1	81,1	98,8
Vegetable, fruit	159,6	217,7	211,4	136,4	132,5	97,1
<b>Consumer goods</b>						
Wine, l	22,8	28,3	32,7	124,1	143,4	115,5
Beer, l	104,0	71,6	73,2	68,8	70,4	102,2
Spirits, l	5,0	3,2	3,6	64,0	72,0	112,5
Coffee, kg	2,6	2,8	2,7	107,7	103,8	96,4
Tea, dkg	12,6	20,3	31,9	161,1	253,2	157,1
Tobacco, kg	2,2	1,5	1,4	68,2	63,6	93,3

Between 1989 and 2004 positive changes have started in the food consumption structure of the Hungarian population. In this period intake of food moved toward the alimentary recommendations thus adjusting to the structure of consumption in the developed countries. We have to add that the solvent demand had an important role in this process. It can be established that consumption of vegetables, fruit, vegetable oil and potato have increased. Use of animal fats has significantly decreased but our country still shows the highest value among the European countries. Besides, consumption of sugar and certain consumer goods (beer, tobacco, and spirits) have considerably lessened. These improving tendencies are weakened by the essentially low consumption level of fish, dairy products and meat products (Panyor 2007).

Comparing data of the year 2004 to the consumption data of the year 2000, a stagnation of greater significance in improvement can be seen, so the positive tendency until 2000 seems to stop. There are economic factors in the background.

Comparing to other countries of the EU Hungary is among the last ones regarding consumption of fish, dairy products, vegetables and fruit. It is the first in the use of animal fats which is basically responsible for different metabolic diseases and insufficiency of nourishment.

The favourable life expectations of the inhabitants of the Scandinavian countries are in strict connection with the lifestyle, the clean environment and good eating habits. In the Mediterranean countries consumption of vegetable oil, fish, vegetables and fruit is high so positive eating habits are typical. Both regions can be set as examples for Hungary, this

way we can find a lot of positive examples to change the eating habits in our country (Szakály 2004).

In addition, it is important to mention that proportion of those who follow a healthy diet is fairly low. According to the data of GFK HUNGÁRIA (2006), only 13% of the population eats healthily.

## 5. THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES OF CHANGES IN THE EATING HABITS OF PEOPLE LIVING ON FARMSTEADS AND IN TOWN

If we shortly look back in time, about 7.000 farm numbers were allocated in Hódmezővásárhely until 1950. According to the data of the City's Register of Title Deeds, nowadays the number of farmsteads which still take part in the agricultural production hardly reaches 400. Enormous lands have become empty. Liquidation of farmsteads was started in the 1950's then it accelerated from the 1960's.

In the first part of the 20th century – according to certain opinions- the system of farms was a kind of surviving feudalism where not only developing model farmers lived but also smallholders, farm hands, landless agrarian workers whose number were constantly growing. In other opinions this form of settlement is nothing else than a certain way of living where housing, workplace, land and cattle rising coincided with each other. Some food was produced right around the house which then the farmers either sold in the marketplace or used for their own sake. The number of farms was decreased with collectivisation, their population moved to the nearby settlements, people who stayed produced for their own alimentation on the lands around their house.

In the inner city areas shortage of flats increased which was aimed to solve by building flats of small ground-space. Members of the co-operatives who lived in town were taken to their workplaces, to the surrounding lands, 10-20 km away from their homes.

There was such a dramatic and rapid change in the housing structure around the town that the farmer of Hódmezővásárhely had not imagined before. He had not thought that it could be possible to produce in other way than from the farmhouse built on the land itself where all the products, and equipment, tools can be found.

*Table 2 Farmstead as home and workplace  
(Source: Szentí 2005)*

Number of outskirt districts	Number of dwellings in the outskirts	Number of people in the outskirts	Number of traditional farmsteads	Number of deserted farmsteads	Number of farmsteads inhabited periodically	Number of farmsteads where cattle is raised	Number of people who raise cattle
1.	66	137	63	16	2	38	113
2.	43	109	43	4	1	4	4
3.	84	223	80	1	-	-	-
4.	45	144	45	-	-	26	97
5.	59	185	59	-	-	19	53
6.	97	237	94	4	-	70	182
7.	55	118	55	11	2	-	-
8.	81	233	81	1	-	-	-
9.	118	303	117	19	1	-	-
10.	100	205	94	11	1	41	100
11.	59	154	59	3	-	-	-
<b>Altogether</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>2048</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>549</b>



Table 2 shows the data of the survey made by the City Council of Hódmezővásárhely. The outskirts of the town are divided into 11 districts where about 2000 inhabitants live. The number of deserted farmhouses is quite high, due to the above mentioned process. In most farms only as many cattle are raised as many are enough either to complement the lower salaries, aids, allowances or to meet their own needs. (Present essay does not examine the agricultural production of small businessmen, or agricultural stock corporations.)

Survey made by the rural constables in October, 2005 examined the everyday life of the inhabitants of the outskirts from a different aspect. The questionnaires were filled in by people who live in 650 farmhouses, official residences or closed lands. It can be seen in Table 3 that people in the outskirts live typically in farmhouses the number of which reaches 600. Proportion of those who live on farms out of necessity is fairly significant, besides, 12% of the inquired ones moved to the farms for agricultural reasons. Tradition is an important motivating factor: if parents and grandparents lived on farms the next generation choose this way of living, too. The number of those who cannot move to town because of bread-and-butter worries should be mentioned, as well. 65% of the inquired cultivate lands in properties in the outskirts but only 30% of them gain their living from the produced goods.

*Table 3 Some characteristics regarding the way of choosing residence  
(Source: Kószó 2004)*

Type of the outskirt	Num ber of prope rties in the outsk irts	Live on farm out of necessity	Moved to farm by choice	Moved to farm to cultivate lands	Do not want to move to town	Cannot move to town	Live on the land	
					His/her parents, grandparents lived on farm		Can get along	Cannot get along
Farmstead	587	60	46	71	336	74	117	263
Official residence	38	16	1	-	19	2	2	15
Closed land	25	15	4	3	2	1	-	4
Altogether	650	91	51	74	357	77	119	282

In the 1950s people on farms had their grain milled, they baked their home-made bread in oven once a week. The housewife was proud of her nice, light bread, while town-dwellers bought their bread at the baker's. In the last half a century people both on farms and in towns buy their needs from a wide variety of bread at the baker's and in shops.

In the past pigs, poultry were raised in the yards of the houses both on farms and in towns. On farms families were independent regarding the meat, while in towns they were partly independent. They stuck and processed the pigs at home; a part of the meat got smoked, while the other part was preserved at the house. The wide-spread use of refrigerators from the mid-80's brought important changes which today means 100% degree of supply, what is more in most houses there are more fridges and deep freezers. The use of refrigerators together with moving to town reduced the consumption of smoked goods and meat fried in fat. Long time ago „mangalica” pigs and bacon pigs were stuck, too. From the 1960's it was impossible to get „mangalica” pigs and it was necessary to get permission to stick

sheep. Actually the private butchers had to close down. Only a little beef and no veal at all was available at shops.

Nowadays those who live in the detached houses of towns and even those who are somehow linked to the village or farmhouses do not stick pigs, they buy the fresh meat for cooking in shops, mainly in super- and hypermarkets.

Poultry (chicken, goose, duck, turkey, guinea-fowl) was raised on farms, a part of which was sold in markets. Chickens were raised in towns, too. Today poultry is bought in shops, mostly in the form of semi-processed or ready-made products.

The peasants, agricultural and industrial workers consumed more meat and bacon and less vegetables. Those who lived on farms could not imagine lunch without some soup; they could make more than twenty different kinds of it (Nagy 1975). They cooked as much as they could eat the very day because they could not store it.

They had bacon, milk, cottage cheese, eggs and cheese for breakfast and dinner with radishes and chives. They said that 'there are more days than sausages' so they eat them very rarely. Today these eating habits are typical to the older generation. The new generations, the intellectuals who live in towns have more vegetables, cold dishes, grilled food, pizzas, hamburgers and different cold cuts, while they need less and less soup and stew.

The number of those who buy fresh milk directly from the houses is quite low, the majority of the population consumes products made in factories and sold in trade. There is a wide range of cheese, yoghurt, butter, margarine, though we buy less of them than it should be necessary for the healthy diet.

Today housewives do not knead paste; lots of different kinds of ready-made pastas can be bought which are produced in factories. Bakery products are widely sold everywhere, too, and pastry-making has improved a lot. These products are more and more popular with the youth who live in towns thus pressing back the home-made, original and traditional cakes.

Consumption of mineral water (still or soda water) and soft drinks has spread, as well, the majority of which contain more artificial and additive materials. Some decades ago it was not typical in case of people living on farms to drink either soda water or soft drinks. They consumed natural water and fruit syrups made at home.

There is an important change even in case of vegetable crops, too. Who has a garden is fully or partly independent today. However, the majority of population either in town or on farm does not often have a kitchen garden. They buy the vegetables in marketplace, in shopping centres or at the greengrocer's. Long ago it was impossible to get first-fruits in winter, today vegetable supply is continuous. In supermarkets vegetables are always available for the population. It is a typical tendency that vegetable and fruit consumption is growing among town-dwellers, the youth and the intellectuals while it is less typical in case of people who live on farms.

Long ago it was natural to preserve fruits, vegetables for winter, it is out-of-date today. Only elder grandmothers do it and it remained important for those who prefer natural, home-like flavours to the ones of uncertain origin made in factories.

It was natural to make home-made pickled cabbage on farms; it was consumed throughout the winter. Today it is made in factories and bought in the form of conserves or at the greengrocer's.



By the 1960s factory canteens had been developed both in industrial and agricultural firms so workers could have cooked dishes at their workplaces. Today it is taken over by enterprises in some places but only few people can get this service.

Network of catering children has been developed which provides children with cooked meals – according to their age- in kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools. This task is managed by different enterprises.

A lot of private catering units have been established, each of them offer customers weekly menu bars which can be consumed locally or delivered to the house, and at weekends the guests can help themselves as much as they want to for a fixed price.

Meals made in oven or in stew-pots, barbecue, vegetarian dishes and dietary kitchen are reviving now. In case of certain costumer groups consumption of „mangalica” pig, grey cattle, veal and sheep can be experienced.

Lifestyle has significantly changed the essence of which is to promote conditions of healthy way of living by realizing a modern structure of consumption. It is aimed to stop overfeeding and the high level of consumption of alcohol. Diffusion of modern hygienic conditions and habits, formation of health behaviour adequate to the modern health culture belong to this field of interest, too.

## 6. SUMMARY

The Hungarian cuisine was formed by people who work hard, who live carefully but when they celebrate something these people make a sacrifice preserving traditions and motivating boldly (Szakál 1985). Nowadays more modern, more conscious eating habits have an important role in forces which form new prospective and in the everyday routine of the scientific-technical revolution.

During the last fifty years the world changed a lot, there were changes in consumption, as we have shown, indicating the formation of a more modern way of living which is much debated regarding preservation of health.

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