

Jolanta Arcimowicz

Mariola Bienko

Beata Łaciak



Transformation  
of Polish habit  
and custom  
in the early  
XXI century



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Reviewers:

Dr hab MAŁGORZATA BOGUNIA-BOROWSKA

Dr hab. prof. UW WOJCIECH PAWLIK

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# Introduction

The term „custom,” despite functioning in colloquial language and being used in social sciences almost since their inception, is defined in various ways. However, in the deliberations and disputes of sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, and cultural studies, one can find some common ground. Nearly everyone is in agreement that the term has multiple meanings, that it includes repeatable or ritualised behaviours or behaviour models, that customs have a social character and pertain to the group, not individuals. There is also consensus as to the especially close or even essential ties of the customary sphere to morality. Stefan Bednarek summarises this interdependence, „custom gives behaviours a symbolic character – they are significant in the axiological sense, as well as in the semiological.”<sup>1</sup> Jacek Kurczewski, debating the relations between sociology of morality and sociology of customs and referring to the social construction of reality concept from Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann<sup>2</sup>, stated that „theory of custom is simply theory of institutionalisation, while theory of validation is the theory of moral doctrines, among others.

(...) Indeed, customs are simply institutions and moral doctrines are autonomous validations of customs. Moralisation of a custom is working out the moral doctrine which validates it.”<sup>3</sup> Barbara Klich frames it slightly differently, but also refers to the axiological aspect of custom when writing, „custom and mentality are difficult concepts to differentiate. One

1 Stefan Bednarek, *Badanie obyczaju w perspektywie kulturoznawstwa. Przykład PRL-u. ?* [Examining Customs in the Perspective of Cultural Studies. The PRL Example, in: How to Study Customs?], ed. Małgorzata Szapkowski, *Jak badać obyczaje* [How to Study Customs?] Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Errata, 2007.

2 Petera L. Berger and Thomasa Luckmann, *Spoleczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*. [Social Construction of Reality]. Polish transl. Józef Niżnik, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2010.

3 Jacek Kurczewski, *Trzy drogi do socjologii obyczajów*. [Three Paths to Sociology of Customs], in: „Societas/Communitas, nr 1/2014, p. 23

may assume that mentality is certain ideas, convictions, including religious ones, and so on; that mentality builds the sphere of axiology. The question remains however, how much is mentality building custom, and how much is custom then transforming that mentality. They are conjoined.”<sup>4</sup> Our understanding of customs will refer to the above interpretations. In the texts within this book we treat customs as daily and celebratory practices, as reproduced models of behaviour, with moral validations and the associated mentality which we attempted to discern and describe.

There is little doubt about the idea that customs are a dynamic phenomenon; however, their changes are usually examined in the long-term. As Norbert Elias claims, „It is not easy to show the dynamics of the process in a clear, visualized way, and that is because it happens so slowly, as if making baby steps, and furthermore among various deviations and fluctuations, forming smaller and bigger curves.”<sup>5</sup>

Roch Sulima examined transformations in Polish customs and noticed that they are losing their regulatory and performative character. He writes, „One could put forth the thesis that custom is substituted today by common knowledge about custom.”<sup>6</sup> Customs have ceased to be an element of group or environmental identification. „Paradoxically, it is the media-dominated popular culture, and not moral and social codices, that is becoming the native environment of functioning „custom self-knowledge” (...) Domination of media „images” and „stories of custom” without significant obligations or social sanction is a symptom of radical re-evaluation of the role of custom today”<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult not to agree with this statement. Terms such as „custom(s)” or „lifestyle” show up in media increasingly often. Nearly every magazine has advice on customs or columns devoted to various dimensions of lifestyles. There are serialised television programs or even entire channels devoted to issues of custom, websites and online forums, directed mostly toward women. Małgorzata Szpakowska emphasises that, “In the world of mass communications and especially new media, the constant increase in sources is accompanied by, an increase in the number of models. Mod-

4 Barbara Klich, *Jak badać obyczaje .Dyskusja panelowa*. [How to Study Customs. Discussion Panel] in: ed. Małgorzata Szpakowska, op. cit. p.151

5 Norbert Elias, *Przemiany obyczajów w cywilizacji Zachodu* [Transformations of Custom in Western Civilisation]. transl. Tadeusz Zabłudowski. Warszawa: PIW, 1980, p. 109

6 Roch Sulima, *Przemiany polskiego obyczaju (ostatnie dekady)* [Changes in Polish Custom (of the last decade)], in: *Tabu, etykieta, dobre obyczaje* [Taboo, Etiquette, Good manners]. ed. Piotr Kowalski. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2009, p.293

7 Ibidem. s. 293-294

ern custom is something that is developed in direct contact between individuals; a constant stream of new ideas coming toward us from all sides.”<sup>8</sup> The large number and variety of sources causes the study of customs to be rather difficult and often leading to not fully cohesive views of the issues. This is something scientists agreed on, at the conference in Łowicz in 2005, when discussing how to study contemporary customs. Andrzej Mencwel, taking part in the discussion, stated that when studying customs one may „seek the synthesis of something which has no dominant, which is diverse – indeed, showing the diversity may be a kind of synthesis. Synthesis does not mean an ideal, cohesive, homogenous description.”<sup>9</sup> Our book is to be an attempt at this kind of synthetic description of Polish customs in the early XXI century. During our research it turned out that the synthesis will be incomplete. The number of issues and areas which comprise modern Polish custom seems almost infinite. Out of necessity then, we decided on a synthesis which would consider only chosen aspects of the variety of customs. One of the significant issues for us was customary change in Poland in the early XXI century. We tried to focus foremost on what new things appear in the sphere of customs, what are the new practices, changing models or norms, and also whether there is an awareness regarding the new customs, what does it concern and how extensive is it, what role in developing this knowledge is played by personal experience, or by the media, what areas of life do dynamic customary changes apply to, to what extent are they the result of cultural appropriation or borrowing and what is considered lasting and traditional.

We studied the diversity of customs – daily, celebratory, in the private and public spheres, showing models of customary practices in chosen areas and the sources of their validation, e.g. in tradition, transfer between generations, binding community codices, in contacts with other cultures or media content. We were interested in the customs of the private, as well as the public sphere.

In our book we interpret the everyday practices of custom regarding the dinner table, kitchen, the culinary, as well as organizing family time, everyday enjoyments and celebration of special occasions. We attempt to show the diversity of customs in these areas. The study of private custom practices was complemented with studying custom in the public sphere.

8 Małgorzata Szpakowska, *Wstęp [Introduction]*, in: *Jak badać obyczaje? [How to Study Custom?]* ed. Małgorzata Szpakowska. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Errata, 2007, p. 8

9 Andrzej Mencwel, *Jak badać obyczaje. Dyskusja panelowa [How to study customs. Discussion panel]*, in: *Jak badać obyczaje?.....* p.156

As the public sphere, which anyone may potentially experience, we considered public administration offices and we used them as examples to track the customary changes, which took place in recent years, in administrative customs. The administrative officials themselves were an interesting social category. We focused not only on the customs in the workplace or the functioning of environmental codes, but due to their specific role in the state system, they were also a good source of knowledge about public, local or national models of holiday customs.

Our book is based on rich empirical material, analysis of interviews, Internet forums and blogs, press articles, television programs.

We assumed that a factor in variety of customary practices may be the place of residence, therefore we conducted the studies in four different environments: a large city in the Masovian Voivodeship (Warsaw), a medium-sized city in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship with a population over 200 thousand (Kielce), a small city in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship with a population slightly over 20 thousand (Chełmno) and in the rural *gmina* (commune) of Przemyśl. In all the locations, unstructured interviews were conducted according to availability, with residents and administrative officials of various rank (e.g. in district offices in Warsaw, in city, county and voivodeship offices in Kielce.) Studies were conducted between 2012-2014. Interviews with residents were held in the respondents' homes, the list of which was created from a random sample of addresses. Only in Warsaw were the respondents drawn from a layered sample, where 4 districts were drawn first (Mokotów, Wola, Ochota, Praga Południe), and later specific streets and addresses, where the interviews were conducted. The sample of addresses was much larger than the number of interviews conducted (there was a projected 100 interviews in each environment, while in the end there were 100 in Warsaw and Kielce each, and 103 in Chełmno and villages in Przemyśl county), because in all environments there was a fairly large percentage of refusals (from 25% to 45%). Frequent refusals are a serious problem for many studies currently conducted; unfortunately they cause the sample to become less representative. Despite the number of people that declined, thanks to the address sample we were able to reach a diverse set of respondents and obtain rich material, which was significant considering our research had a qualitative character, not statistical. Over 21 in-depth interviews were conducted with public administration officials (national and local level) in the aforementioned cities. Our respondents were employees of *gmina*, city, county, marshal and voivodeship offices.

# 1

## Transformations in custom, tradition, new trends

When describing the most typical characteristics of modern societies, sociologists usually name: their liquidity, changeability, fleeting trends, short-lived objects and styles.<sup>10</sup> This constant change also applies to custom, and the concept of new customs appears often in the works of anthropologists and sociologists.

When considering the issue of customary transformation, among the possible changes Jan Grad<sup>11</sup> names: the forming of new customary practices, reduction or expansion of customary actions while retaining their meaning, change in meaning of customary action while maintaining their form, liberalisation or solidification of customs, the emerging or disappearance of moral or worldview sanctions of custom. In this chapter, I will try to answer the question, do Poles notice customary changes after the first decade of the XXI century and what kind? I am interested in that which Małgorzata Szpakowska labelled customary self-knowledge, even though she used the term mostly to refer to spontaneous statements which revealed judgments, aspirations, preferences or fears concerning various areas of everyday life. After all, the material analysed by me was the result of an interview, but often the questions posed encouraged elaborate answers full of digressions, judgments, bio-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. Zygmunt Bauman, *Spoleczeństwo w stanie oblężenia* [*Society Under Siege*], transl. Janusz Margański, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 2006; Zygmunt Bauman, *Płynna nowoczesność* [*Liquid Modernity*], transl. Tomasz Kunz, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006.; Anthony Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość* [*Modernity and Self-identity*], transl. Alina Szulżycka, Warszawa: PWN, 2006; Ulrich Beck, *Spoleczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności* [*Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*], transl. Stanisław Cieśla, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, 2002; John Urry, *Socjologia mobilności* [*Sociology beyond Societies*], transl. Janusz Stawiński, Warszawa: PWN, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Jan Grad, *Obyczaj a moralność* [Custom and Morality]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, 1993, p. 46

graphical elements. Szpakowska studied customs based on spontaneous statements from personal documents – letters to magazine editors and diaries, and she put forth, “that which people think, and especially what they publically state about reality is at least as important as the reality itself.”<sup>12</sup> I find this hard to disagree with; the statements of our respondents are not just a reflection of their views regarding modern customs, but also show which areas are considered to be dynamically changing in custom, how they are judged, which attitudes dominate and which are rather marginal.

## Customary changes in the opinions of researchers

The clear majority of surveyed believe that our customs are undergoing various changes, only one in ten respondents does not see these transformations. Most often recognized are changes regarding interpersonal relations, family customs and sexual behaviours. In interviews, the surveyed also pointed out Poles’ changing attitudes toward religion, the Church, priests or obeying religious norms. Respondents notice two completely contrary tendencies. Some describe customary changes as decreased frequency of religious practices, the liberal treatment of religious norms and disobeying them. While others describe customary changes as religious fanaticism, attempting to introduce religious norms as universally binding rules. This way of perceiving changes connects very clearly with their subjective judgment, usually lack of acceptance of these changes. What is interesting, opinions on the matter are not differentiated by place of residence. Both residents of villages and the large city described customary changes regarding religion and the Church in a very similar way. Statements from the respondents concern very diverse observations of customs relating to religion and its place in private and social life. Some see changes in the private sphere, describing lesser adherence to religious norms in everyday and special occasion practices. These statements concur with the results of quantitative research on a nationwide sample. They show that slowly, but steadily the percentage of people who participate in public and private religious practices is decreasing, as is the number of people who declare they are religious and apply the precepts of the Church.<sup>13</sup> Some of

<sup>12</sup> Małgorzata Szpakowska, *Chcieć i mieć. Samowiedza obyczajowa w Polsce czasu przemian* [Want and Have. Customary Self-knowledge in Poland During Transformations]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo WAB, 2003, p. 12

<sup>13</sup> *Zmiany w zakresie wiary i religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II* [Changes in Scope of Poles’ Faith and Religion After Death of John Paul II], Warszawa: CBOS release, 2012, ed. Rafał Boguszewski

the surveyed point out breaking of the taboo of criticising the actions of priests, which by the way is regarded by our respondents either with acceptance, as a symptom of equal treatment of all citizens, or critically as a form of persecution of the Church and its representatives. Nationwide studies do not confirm the opinions suggesting increasing anticlericalism or the ousting of religion from the public sphere. The percentage which attributes priests high esteem is roughly 40% and has remained practically unchanged since the mid 1990s<sup>14</sup>, just as the percentage of people who accept religious symbols in public has remained steady.<sup>15</sup> These spontaneous statements clearly show that customs regarding religion or representatives of the Church are issues which have aroused much emotion and ambiguous judgments in recent years.

The smaller the city, the more noticeable the change in recent years of increasing negative behaviours in contact with others. Respondents describe this as a growing lack of kindness, jealousy, egoism, aversion to community actions. Regardless of age, respondents recall a time of a greater feeling of community, which is currently fading completely. This perception presented in spontaneous statements from our respondents is also confirmed by studies conducted on a nationwide sample. Most of the surveyed (60%) believe that by the end of the 1980s there was a fall of mutual kindness and 40% say that readiness to help others has diminished.<sup>16</sup> This issue was also recognized by researchers of custom, when summing up the first decade of transformation. Zadrożyńska wrote about contemporary ideologies of egoism which cause people to lead an uncompromising fight for their own success, wealth, recognition and “push other people to the margins of their own ambitions.”<sup>17</sup> This egoism revealing itself was also described by Szpakowska, who wrote that “this is not a universal phenomenon, in fact it is contradicted by direct declarations. However, it is noticeable enough that it cannot be simply ignored.”<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the following decade has deepened this process to the point that the conviction of egoism, lack of solidarity and disinterested envy is quite universal.

14 *Prestiż zawodów [Prestige of professions]*. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2013. ed. Agnieszka Cybulska

15 *Religia i Kościół w przestrzeni publicznej [Religion and Church in the Public Space]*. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2013. ed. Mirosława Grabowska

16 *Oceny zmian w różnych wymiarach życia społecznego i politycznego w Polsce po roku 1989 [Assessment of Changes in Various Dimensions of Social and Political Life in Poland After 1989]*. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2014. ed. Rafał Boguszewski

17 Anna Zadrożyńska, *Targowisko różności. Spojrzenie na kulturę współczesną [Marketplace of variety. A Look at Contemporary Culture]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Książkowe Twój Styl, 2001. p. 166

18 Małgorzata Szpakowska, op. cit. p. 261-262.

Statements often contained the conviction that capitalist economy, unemployment and the associated social stratification lead to mutual aversion, competition, focusing on attaining or multiplying material goods. Respondents speak of this with bitterness, often pointing out that it is a negative cost of social and political changes. Here is how they describe it: “Now there is envy, jealousy, greed. It wasn’t like this once.” (P-25, m-51)<sup>19</sup>, “Everyone only thinks about tomorrow, everyone thinks only of themselves and they just want money, nothing else matters” (Ch-18, m-26), “We do not pay attention to what is permanent and unchanging, but to material and temporary things. Like career, only money counts.” (K-91, k-44). These changes are described as a consequence of low standard of living, constant financial inadequacy and a difficult situation on the job market. The question is whether we are dealing with usage of personal observations and experiences, a certain form of rationalisation or with the adoption of a fairly common opinion, which Janusz Majcherek contests. He writes, “Too often and too quickly the odd, irrational and even wicked behaviours of Poles are explained through their supposed poverty. This is not only inaccurate, but also doubly dangerous. Firstly, it makes for too easy a justification. Secondly, it creates the illusive hope that Poles will change their way of life in accordance with a rise in their material status (...) Suggesting false, simplified explanations dismisses the need to discuss the real reasons. And thus, the chance of changes leading to improvements in the quality and standard of living in Poland is lost...”<sup>20</sup> Without resolving whether this diagnosis is true or false, it is worth noting that this is the way in which our respondents interpret the reason for the current state of things, but also do not justify such behaviours, and describe them as negative transformations of modern customs. In the realm of interpersonal relations, a significant change mentioned which is universally perceived as negative, are those behaviours and attitudes which clearly stray from commonly accepted rules of good manners, courtesy, *savoir-vivre*. Respondents see the lack of authorities and role models as the reason for this state, and inappropriate educational methods, as the younger generation’s customs are often described in this way. But there are also reflections that these negative changes apply to the entire society, not excluding its elites. The surveyed identify this as a lack of manners, a demise of customs or increasing boorishness. They point out lack of respect toward elders, the vul-

<sup>19</sup> Quotes from interviews will be marked in parentheses: first capital letter signifies name of city or gmina K – Kielce, Ch – Chełmno, W – Warszawa, P – Przemysł rural area, followed by interview number in given location, lowercase “m” or “k” means male or female respectively, the number next to it is the respondent’s age.

<sup>20</sup> Janusz Majcherek, *A to wszystko z biedy* [All from poverty]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, nr 75, 29/03/2013, p. 8



garisation of language, lack of everyday courtesy. I believe these opinions are not just proof of the ages-old conviction that cotemporary customs are worse than those of the past, even the ancients already said *o tempora o mores*, expressing their disapproval for then contemporary customs. When describing the unique history of Polish cultural models of the XX century, this is how Anna Zadrożyńska characterised our socio-cultural reality of the early XXI century, "There is therefore a new kind of socio-cultural quality.(...) This new standard consists of elements which were once present only on the margins of culture and were considered crude. Today, they are at the core and often the rule of bold, confident economic or political actions (...) They simply dominate, rule, demand. Their commonality, extensiveness and intensiveness are put on a pedestal, and raised to the rank of social behaviour models. (...) Realizations of this new, surprising, contemporary model run one of at least two courses. One of them is presented by the explicit "boor". Without scruples he exhibits egoism, neglect of his surroundings, aggression and brutality toward everyone who stands in his way, unbridled greed, even if just "on principle," for material goods and power, vulgar, primitive language expressing only his expectations, rights and intentions, "rough" manners which scare off others. (...) Meanwhile, the other, "hidden boor" is much more dangerous. Concealed beneath old manners, under a mask of cultural conventions, but with all the ruthlessness, often also consciously, he ignores norms and rules of society, property and competence."<sup>21</sup> A time of social transformations conduces a kind of disorganization of previous customary rules. The phase of changes after the Polish People's Republic (PRL) era, which was a time of deconstruction of traditional customs derived from variations of the nobility ethos, all the more so was a time of customary chaos, lack of unified models.<sup>22</sup> In this situation, various media acquire a model-forming role. Daniel Bell, when writing about American society of the latter half of the XX century, put forth that, „Sudden social changes inevitably cause confusion when it comes to the correct way of behaving or dressing. A socially mobile person does not possess ready guidance on how to live „better” than before: he gets it from cinema, television, advertising (...)

21 Anna Zadrożyńska, *Damy i galanci. O polskich zwyczajach towarzyskich* [Dames and Gallants. Of Polish Social Customs]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Książkowe Twój Styl, 2004, p. 174-175.

22 Conf. Dorota Simonides, *Obyczaj w życiu dawnego i współczesnego człowieka* [Custom in the life of the past and contemporary man]. In: *Życie po polsku czyli o przemianach obyczaju w drugiej połowie XX wieku* [Polish life – about transformations in custom in the latter half of the XX century], Łomża: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Stopka”, 1998; Roch Sulima, *Przemiany polskiego obyczaju (ostatnie dekady)* [Changes in Polish Custom (of the last decade)], in: *Tabu, etykieta, dobre obyczaje* [Taboo, Etiquette, Good manners]. ed. Piotr Kowalski. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2009

initially changes applied mostly to customs, taste and diet, sooner or later they had to begin influencing more basic models.”<sup>23</sup> I am far from the conviction that younger generations learn vulgarity, lack of manners, bad customs in relations with other people – from the media. I could easily point out media content which creates quite the opposite model. However, it is difficult not to notice the changes which had taken place in the media in recent years. Certainly one can find these things more often now in press, radio or television: boorishness, vulgar language, primitivism presented as a sign of having fun, proof of sense of humour or openness.<sup>24</sup> One could judge that the media are increasingly a reflection of reality, where these symptoms are increasingly present. Therefore we are dealing with a kind of feedback loop. For the decreasingly demanding or refined viewer, primitivism and vulgarisation are becoming a well-selling product, while simultaneously such media presentations also give socially unaccepted behaviours, simple one-season celebrities, vulgar language, a kind of seal of approval. In many circles that which is presented on television is a cultural model. Regardless of critical comments about the media, for most respondents they are a point of reference in describing and judging various phenomena. Media are criticised, blamed for all sorts of evil, but they are also believed, media examples are cited to justify one’s attitudes, sometimes treated as indicators regarding various areas of custom. The same respondents who lament the lack of respect for old age, clearly express tendencies toward the promoted cult of perennial youth, aversion to things of the past, when describing their own choices and behaviours.

Another area in which surveyed notice significant customary changes is the sphere of family life. Respondents point out the growing number of informal partnerships, the fading of multi-generational families, a clear decrease in the birth rate, later entrance into relationships, and also changing relations between spouses, parents and children. Description of customary changes in family relations is rarely devoid of judgment. Often respondents describe the same phenomena but judge them differently.

23 Daniel Bell, *Kulturowe sprzeczności kapitalizmu [The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism]*, transl. Stefan Amsterdamski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1998, p.105

24 Displays of this are not just reality show programs like *Big Brother* or *Warsaw Shore*, but pop music stars who yell “jesteście zajebięści” [similar to ‘you’re fucking great’ or ‘the shit’, though *zajebiste* due to its ubiquity has come to be considered more acceptable/less vulgar, perhaps more equivalent to ‘bad-ass’ – transl. note] to crowds during televised concerts. Or take for example the recent advertisement for the TVN schedule, where *Ugotowani [Cooked]* was promoted with a clip of a contestant judging her competitor’s work with the words, “No cóż, dupy nie urywa” [literally ‘Well, it doesn’t blow/rip your ass off. i.e. that’s nothing special, not impressive].

Some believe that contemporarily one can speak of a complete collapse of customs, a result of lack of discipline, allowing full liberty, not respecting norms. Besides these catastrophic descriptions of changes in the realm of the modern family, there are also narrations indicating positive and negative results of these transformations and such where respondents interpret the customary changes in this area as an extension of the rights of all members of the family, creation of closer and more authentic relationships, based on deep emotional ties. Customary changes in the area of family life are described as a possibility of choosing various life scenarios, creating a new model of family, more based on partnership, as well as a new model of raising children, where the most important issues are building emotional bonds and fostering education. Along with statements about customary changes in family life, conservative attitudes regarding upbringing are revealed. In spontaneous statements, respondents declare their negative attitude toward customs which force the raising of children without violence. Often the lack of punishments, including physical ones, too little discipline in family and school education, is perceived as the cause of many negative social phenomena, such as hooliganism, aggression, lack of respect for others, lack of courtesy. These kinds of judgments are not revealed too often, mostly in statements from people who believe that we are dealing with a complete collapse of family values and those that judge changes in family customs quite severely. Respondents' statements also reveal a change, though not directly, in the fading of social control in the neighbourhood or wider local sphere. It no longer applies to even the youngest, where making a comment in a situation of not obeying norms was something natural and obvious. Sometimes respondents mention their fear of chiding young people who are behaving inappropriately, or their bad experiences concerning this.

Beside the sphere of family life, respondents describe customary changes in categories of downfall, liberalisation, receding of norms, also in narrations referring to examples regarding the body, the erotic and sexuality. In the consciousness of the surveyed, noticeable changes are the hedonistic approach to sex, greater liberalism in this area in the public sphere, excessive revealing of the body, shocking with sexuality, or even as some suggest, blurring the line between that which is public and which is private or intimate, or even the demise of a feeling of shame, not only in the erotic sphere. A symptom of changes in custom which is often brought up, is the presence of the issue of homosexuality in public discourse. In descriptions of changes there are the critical judgments of this, which we recognize

from public debates. Generally, a critical tone dominates when describing transformations in erotic custom. Modern media and the adopting of customs from western culture, especially by young people, are fairly commonly blamed for the liberalisation of sexuality. Regardless of age or place of residence, the myth of the “rotten West”, full of unbridled sexuality, is quite present in the consciousness of Poles – and it is said to influence our once morally superior social customs, through media and direct contact.

Respondents notice positive aspects of customary changes in the sphere of the erotic decidedly less often. Rather, they referred to examples which also applied to this sphere, when speaking about positive transformations of custom in general, describing them as a greater openness in human contacts, an increase in tolerance, acceptance of otherness, cultural diversity. Here the reason perceived was also the greater mobility of Poles and the development of modern media. This was spoken about with clear approval however, pointing out that thanks to travel, contacts with other cultures, we become more open and tolerant as a society. Our respondents’ statements show that we have an ambivalent attitude toward customary changes regarding sex and family life, from extreme conservatism to extreme liberalism. Between them is a whole range of stances, often revealing themselves in ambivalent judgments, criticism, but coming to terms with the state of affairs or the conviction that everyone makes their choices of custom and forcing one’s judgments on someone else makes no sense. This liberalization of attitudes is also confirmed by quantitative research results. Comparing the results of CBOS studies from 2005, 2010 and 2013, it is clear that there is consistently growing consent for birth control, pre-marital sex, homosexuality and life without marriage<sup>25</sup> In a recently conducted study “nearly universal is the opinion that marriages with children may divorce with mutual consent, and marriages which unsuccessfully try to have a baby, have the right to use an in vitro procedure (85% each). Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed (63%) believe that people of both genders and various ages, who communally tan naked on the beach do not break any currently binding norms. Over half of respondents believe that homosexual couples may share a common household and raise a child – one of the lesbian’s (56%) or one of the gay man’s deceased sister’s child (52%)<sup>26</sup>. What is interesting, in all the categories of behaviours the percentage of

25 *Wartości i normy [Values and norms]*, ed. Rafał Boguszewski. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2013.

26 *Prawo a moralność – opinie o zachowaniach kontrowersyjnych społecznie [Law and Morality – Opinions About Socially Controversial Behaviours]*, ed. Natalia Hipsz. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2014, p. 3

those who declare that a certain behaviour is correct is always lower, yet regardless of their own judgments they give others the right to make individual choices. Undoubtedly, this is evidence of liberalising attitudes.

Changes noticed by the surveyed are also clearly demonstrated when they conduct generational comparisons. The answers to questions regarding similarities and differences between the lives of the respondents and their parents' lives clearly illustrated the customary changes taking place. From a private perspective they seem even more visible, than when our respondents described noticed changes of custom in our society. Very often the differences are characterized in categories of varying life style. Respondents speak of different life choices and attitudes, warmer relations with their children, more based on partnership. In these statements the changes regarding family life are usually judged positively. If respondents do notice a difference, then they believe that the model of marital-family relations which they have created in their own family is better than that of their family of origin.

An issue which often appeared in statements is the increased mobility of the surveyed, compared to their parents, which is visible in travel, or even just spending time outside the home, greater cultural and athletic activity.

It is interesting that when comparing to their parents, nearly the same number of people value their life situation negatively as positively. Some described their life as better, easier or more abundant than that of their parents, while others emphasize that their parents fared better and did not have the problems the surveyed now have. This diversity is not clearly tied to the age of respondents. Regardless of judgments, the image of modern everyday life which is revealed through these statements is marked by commercialization, shown in the constant worry about attaining funds, as well as increasing needs, lack of economic satisfaction. Bauman characterized postmodern consumer societies by writing, "The members of a consumer society differ from their ancestors in the separation of consumption from past instrumentalism, which set limits – because of the decline of "norms" and the new phenomenon of elastic "needs," consumption is free from the bonds of functionality and has been absolved of the necessity to justify itself in reference to everything except the pleasure which it brings. (...) Consumer society claims the impossibility of satisfaction and measures its own progress by constantly increasing desire."<sup>27</sup> The feelings and reflections of our

<sup>27</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Spoleczeństwo w stanie oblężenia* [Society Under Siege]. transl. Janusz Margański. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 2006, p. 212

respondents confirm these observations. Sometimes there is a note of bitterness, sometimes a conviction of the validity of this attitude. Selected quotes from respondents' statements show this very well: "Today you have to have everything. Once it was important to have a place to live, a roof over your head, but now unfortunately we are chasing after everything." (P-21, m-31), "We would be happy about every little detail, we had no demands. It was all plenty, what he had, though it was very modest. But now I see that families have to have everything right away. It is harder for these young people, who are used to all this, that anytime they have a new desire the parents rush to fulfil it, they don't do well later on in life." (Ch-28, k-77), "In the past, people would be satisfied with having their own little apartment and working and that they had, even the refrigerator there, it did not have to be full, but they lived day to day. Now one demands more." (Ch-45, m-51), "My parents do not have much, but they also do not expect much, I don't have much either, but I expect more, because we deserve it, I finished school, I have a child and I want to raise it decently, somehow." (K-24, k-26).

## Borrowing customs and the influence of other cultures

For part of the respondents a new element of custom is straying from Polish tradition and borrowing from other cultures. Respondents describe, often with critical commentary, the dying out of traditional celebration of holidays and other important occasions and taking on foreign models, mostly American, regarding either everyday or celebratory custom practices. Our interviewees notice many signs of cultural borrowing, especially the transferring of language, mostly English words and phrases. This process is described both in relation to the private and public spheres. The presence of foreign language names and phrases is perceived as most glaring in advertising, shop and services signs, and media. Besides this and new holidays – which among most often mentioned include Valentine's Day, Halloween, but also St. Patrick's – respondents notice the most customary borrowing in the field of fashion, the kitchen, increasing physical activity and ways of spending leisure time. The described cultural borrowing does not always arouse negative emotions, however. The surveyed spoke of various new customary practices with acceptance or fondness e.g. about culinary influences or Valentine's Day.

In one of the studied communities, the increasing popularity of Valentine's Day in Poland was used to promote the city. Celebrations of Val-

entine's Day in Poland have a short history and a decidedly commercial character. The media – especially television, have contributed to the popularisation of Valentine's Day. On this date in 1992, the public television “channel two” was sponsored by the Polish edition of the Harlequin publishing company and completely devoted to the holiday for several hours. Western customs associated with Valentine's were presented, as well as programs and films about love. The government of Chełmno cleverly associated the fact that the local parish holds relics of St. Valentine and built a promotional initiative for the city as a place for lovers, using EU funds not only to renovate existing monuments, but also for creating symbols of love in the urban space, associated with the patron saint of lovers. The city park was decorated with flower-beds and hedges in the shape of a heart, and a lover's bench was placed by one of the paths. A heart was also incorporated into the logo of the city, and now on February 14 the main city plaza in front of the town hall hosts a large Valentine's Day celebration, which attracts more tourists and locals each year. These kinds of initiatives are one of the many examples of contemporary processes of localising (accompanying globalisation and creolisation) or “giving meaning in local conditions to that which has come from outside the nearest cultural sphere. Connections are found between that which is foreign and that which is home-grown.”<sup>28</sup> The skillful combination of the fact of possessing relics of St. Valentine, the celebration of Valentine's Day and the promotion of tourism in the city, very clearly influenced a positive judgment of the holiday and incorporation of new holiday customs into the calendar of significant events for the residents. Most of them described Valentine's Day and its celebration with fondness, as a new, borrowed, but still accepted custom. In the statements of some respondents there was even the conviction that Valentine's Day is a holiday which is part of local tradition.

Even though most of the surveyed perceive customary changes in categories of discarding native and borrowing foreign traditions, there are also those who describe opposite tendencies, or the return to forgotten practices, rituals and chosen elements of our tradition as an element of changes in custom. They notice a slow, but increasing interest in past customs, attempts to revitalise them. Examples of actions are brought up, which refresh old practices, local ones, as well as ones inspired by media or purely commercial, though respondents often treat them as a symptom

<sup>28</sup> Bogusław Dziadzia, *Naznaczeni popkulturą. Media elektroniczne i przemiany prowincji [Marked by Pop-culture. Electronic Media and Changes in Rural Areas]*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Naukowe katedra, 2014, p. 94-95.

of return to tradition, rejuvenating and cultivating it. Regardless of the type of actions, they are usually valued positively, as a form of defending Polish identity after entering the European Union or as opposition to the flood of worthless Western European culture dominating the media. Therefore our respondents perceive these customs as new: the cherishing of regional dialects, rebirth of folk groups or traditional Polish and regional foods.

Customary changes are therefore clearly visible. Respondents attribute their sources as: capitalism bringing change in the job market, borrowing from other cultures through the opening of borders, after Poland entered the EU, and globalized popular culture accessible through the Internet and television, as well as native tradition, revitalised. A good summary of these deliberations may be the statement of one of our younger respondents, who said, "A change in custom is that we try to be like western societies as much as possible. Everything comes from the States, children are already saturated with it, more and more. Fashion, behaviour, celebrations, it all came from the States, from Germany. It definitely didn't come from us in any way, because we don't do anything new, we just parrot or refresh what once was." (Ch-44, k-20)

The other important issue brought up by people we spoke to is the need for tolerance, in various areas. Studies conducted on a nationwide sample show that the percentage of people who believe that Poland's European Union accession caused an increase in tolerance toward others has doubled (from 16% in 2005 to 32% in 2014), while at the same time the percentage of those who believe that tolerance has decreased is clearly smaller (in 2005 it was 7%, in 2014 – 20%)<sup>29</sup>. "We are not a tolerant nation. The disabled, people with Parkinson's, Down syndrome, the way people look at such a person. It irritates me so much, when people look at a disabled person with this contempt, or I don't know what to call it, this pity" (P-26, k-48), "We need some kind of general ease, like in Holland for example, where there is a general tolerance as far as dress, appearance." (K-79, m-29). In the respondents' opinions we also need an internalisation of the norm of daily order, care for the common good, good organization. When speaking about this, the people we surveyed usually referred to their own experiences and observations of customs of other nations. In confrontation with them, Polish society appears disorderly, egoistic, manifesting its lack

<sup>29</sup> 10 lat członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej [10 Years of Poland's Membership in the European Union], ed. Beata Roguska. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2014.



of interest in that which is shared. One could assume that this is the conviction characteristic of the socialism era, that that which is common is actually nobody's and thus no one is responsible for it.

## Customary displays of Polish tradition

Our respondents, regardless of whether they are willing to take on any norms or customary practices from other nations or not, agree that there are customs and elements of Polish tradition which are especially important and worth preserving. Conscious of the various definitions and disputes regarding understanding of the term "tradition", we did not define it for respondents during the interview. We assumed the common, colloquial understanding of this word. Tradition speaks of "a message, of that which has been deposited, layered upon from the past, as well as that which is good, aged, beautiful, though often covered with patina, it may be reborn, what radiates toward us from the past."<sup>30</sup> Customs are an inseparable element of tradition understood as a cultural transfer, as a "repeated structure of behaviour and models of thought in more or less the same form, through several generations or an extended time."<sup>31</sup> In analysing the statements of our respondents one can notice a certain commonality of views, but "fundamentally, we should be speaking of individually created definitions, and not one definition of cultural heritage."<sup>32</sup> Describing that which is to them especially valuable in the customary sphere of Polish tradition, the respondents referred to practices, special occasion and everyday rituals, as well as to ways of thinking, feelings, emotions associated with tradition. Half of surveyed consider the most important heritage of our tradition of customs to be the celebration of holidays, especially Christmas and Easter. In the respondents' opinions, only Polish holiday customs are so rich, varied and full of charm, and the emotions and experiences accompanying them are one of a kind. These opinions and descriptions of holiday customs as the most important elements of Polish tradition are independent of the re-

30 Ernst Bloch, *Czy istnieje przyszłość w przeszłości? [Is There Future in the Past?]*, transl. Dariusz Niklas, in: *Tradycja i nowoczesność [Tradition and Modernity]*, eds. Joanna Kurczewska, Jerzy Szacki. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czytelnik, 1984, p. 14.

31 Edward Shils, *Tradycja [Tradition]*, transl. Jerzy Szacki. In: *Tradycja i nowoczesność*, eds. Joanna Kurczewska, Jerzy Szacki. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czytelnik, 1984, p. 31-32

32 Elżbieta Nieroba, Anna Czerner, Marek S.Szczepański, *Flirty tradycji z popkulturą. Dziedzictwo kulturowe w późnej nowoczesności [Tradition Flirts with Pop-culture. Cultural Heritage in late Modernity]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2010, p. 39.

spondent's age, place of residence or their declared relationship with religion. The significance of holidays is described not just from the religious perspective, the unifying, family character of these holidays is accentuated – Christmas, and Easter, especially Christmas Eve. In Polish tradition the especially festive and lofty character of the Christmas supper and celebration of Christmas Eve is what our respondents described as the most important element of Polish custom, which should be preserved for successive generations. Respondents emphasise the especially important role of women in maintaining and passing on holiday customs. Analysis of the interviews shows an image of holidays as an important element of tradition forming Polish identity, a sense of distinctiveness among others. Durkheim emphasised this aspect of holiday customs in the simplest forms of social life, when writing, "Customs are foremost ways of a social group's periodic self-affirmation.(...) People who feel connected to each other partly because of blood ties, but even more because of common interests and traditions, gain consciousness of their spiritual unity in a group.(...) they begin to imagine this community as a very special kind of co-existence."<sup>33</sup> The communal and universal character of holiday customs causes them to be identified as the most permanent elements in our tradition. Survey studies, conducted on a national sample confirm this element of universality and permanence of holiday customs fairly clearly, especially concerning the two main holidays. The main Christmas Eve traditions are maintained by 85% to 98% of Poles and these numbers have not changed for years.<sup>34</sup> Ethnographers emphasize the specifically Polish character of this day.<sup>35</sup> It is worth pointing out however, that the spontaneous statements of our respondents bring up mostly the aesthetic and ludic holiday rituals, rarely is the religious aspect mentioned. The results of research conducted by me several years ago about holiday customs, shows fairly unambiguously the ignorance regarding meanings of religious symbols in many customary practices maintained during the Christmas and Easter periods.<sup>36</sup> Studies in European countries point out the growing secularisation of holiday

33 Emile Durkheim, *Elementarne formy życia religijnego [Elementary Forms of the Religious Life]*, transl. Anna Zadrożyńska. Warszawa: Państwowe wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990, p 371.

34 *Święta Bożego Narodzenia 2013 – komercyjne czy tradycyjne? [Christmas 2013 – commercial or traditional?]*, ed. Katarzyna Kowalczyk. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2013.

35 Conf. e.g. Barbara Ogrodowska, *Święta polskie – tradycja i obyczaj [Polish holidays – tradition and custom]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Alfa, 2000; Anna Zadrożyńska, *Świętowanie polskie [Polish Celebration]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Książkowe Twój Styl, 2002; Józef Szczypka, *Kalendarz polski [Polish Calendar]*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1980.

36 Beata Łaciak, *Obyczajowość polska czasu transformacji czyli wojna postu z karnawalem [Polish Custom of the Transformation Era, or Lent's War with Carnival]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2005.

customs in the XX century,<sup>37</sup> and pope Benedict XVI, in his book published a few years ago, debated the issue of compatibility of holiday customs with Gospel, showing several times that modern holiday customs are often not in agreement with the truth of the Gospels and they dominate over the religious meaning and experience<sup>38</sup>. Our respondents however, emphasised mostly the pageantry elements of customary practice which create the magical holiday atmosphere.

In the statements of the people we spoke to, holidays are also an important aspect of developing a family community, an inter-generational bond. Family matters are the second area of Polish tradition, apart from the holidays, perceived by the surveyed as especially important in the transfer between generations. The familial is described as customs associated with keeping up contacts with members of the family, spending everyday and holiday time together, but also as the norm of mutual help, support, with emphasis on assistance between generations. Our respondents accentuated the specifics of family relations in Polish society, where family members can count on one another, the independence of children does not mean weakening ties with their family, and the obligation toward elderly parents is to care for them and show respect. In the respondents' opinions, these are the family customs which we should be cultivating and passing on to successive generations. These statements are not particularly surprising, the results of various studies have shown that family, family happiness, for years have been very high in rankings of the most important values in our society, they are chosen by over 80% of those surveyed.<sup>39</sup> This myth of the consolidated, supportive family is very clearly embedded in various popular media content, e.g. television series.<sup>40</sup>

37 Conf. Jean Maisonneuve, *Rytuały dawne i współczesne [Rituals Past and Contemporary]*. transl. Marta Mroczek, Gdańsk: GWP, 1995; *Historia życia prywatnego [History of Private Life]*, v. 5, ed. Antoine Prost, Gerard Vincent, transl. Katarzyna Skawina, Antoni Pierchała, Edyta Trojańska, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2000.; Wolfgang Reinhard, *Życie po europejsku od czasów najdawniejszych do współczesności [The European Way of Life, from Bygone Times to Modernity]*. transl. Jacek Antkowiak, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009.

38 Benedykt XVI – cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Jezus z Nazaretu cz. 3. Dzieciństwo [Jesus of Nazareth pt. 3. Childhood]*. transl. Wiesław Szymona. Kraków: Wydawnictwo „Znak”, 2012.

39 *Wartości i normy [Values and norms]*, ed. Rafał Boguszewski. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2013.

40 Conf. Alicja Kisiełewska, *Polskie Tele-sagi – mitologie rodzinności [Polish Tele-sagas -Mythologies of Family]*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo RABID, 2009; Krzysztof Arcimowicz, *Dyskursy o płci i rodzinie w polskich telesagach. Analiza seriali obyczajowych najpopularniejszych na początku XXI wieku [Discourse about gender and family in Polish telesagas. Analysis of the most popular series of the early XXI century]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie ŻAK, 2013; Beata Łaciak, *Kwestie społeczne w polskich serialach obyczajowych – prezentacje i odbiór. Analiza socjologiczna [Social Issues in Polish Drama Serials – Presentation and Reception]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 2013.

On average, one in ten respondents (one in five, among residents of villages) describes traditional beliefs, religious practices and rituals associated with religious celebrations as a significant element of Polish tradition. Beliefs and religious customs are to the surveyed that which differentiates us from other nations, as well as that which they would like to pass on to following generations, as especially valuable, determinative of Polish identity, a sense of community. Example statements illustrate this very well: "A basic tradition is the year 966 and the baptism of Poland. And from 966 a new history of Poland began. We are after all, Roman-Catholic Poles and that is most important." (K-87, m-54), "In Polish tradition it is perhaps important that we are mostly Christians. It is definitely worth passing on this attachment to Christian values, to next generations" (W-85, k-64), "The most important traditions, are the religious ones, they are the foundation and differentiate us among other countries." (W-100, m-45), "Well, our tradition is generally based on faith. Church and religion, well they always remain somewhere in the back of your head, it's like the Church is always important somehow." (P-21, m-31).

## Historic and modern tradition

In the statements of our respondents, inter-generational tradition and the transfer between generations is also associated with patriotism and Polish history. Patriotism is defined as the feeling of pride of belonging to a nation, a bond with nation and country, working for it. Statements also emphasised the obligation to uphold customs connected with observing state holidays, mostly the hanging of national flags, but also participation in official ceremonies, either directly or following broadcasts on television.

History as a significant element of tradition was mostly brought up in the context of transfer between generations. It was pointed out that historical knowledge should be passed on to future generations, especially that which concerns the glorious pages of Poland's past, specifically concerning sacrifice and bravery during World War II.

However, there were also some statements suggesting that one should not limit Polish tradition to history, constant deliberations about it, reliving, opening up old wounds. Therefore our respondents' statements reveal a vision of historical tradition in the romanticised version referring to the fight for nation and independence, sacrifice, heroism, but also a kind of polemic with this vision. Regardless of the option chosen, our respond-

ents' statements display a kind of "mediafying" of historical memory<sup>41</sup>, because when speaking of events in Polish history worth remembering, they mostly referred to examples in literature, film and television which present that time and its heroes.

In the opinions of several percent of the people we spoke to, Polish cuisine is also something which should be preserved for future generations. Respondents argued that traditional Polish dishes are tasty, natural and thus healthy. Return to culinary roots and preserving culinary heritage are contemporarily one of the important elements of shaping regional and local tradition.<sup>42</sup> Mariola Bieńko writes about what Poles consider traditional Polish cooking and what dishes they are attached to, in one of the following chapters.

National tradition is therefore defined and described in categories of religious and secular holiday customs or everyday practices concerning family life, cuisine, social interactions. It is hard not to agree with Tim Edensor, who argues that, in the modern world, national identity is shaped by popular culture and everyday life, it is "rooted in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routine actions and practical knowledge."<sup>43</sup> Everyday and celebratory customs described by respondents are elements which form this identity, often in opposition to the customs of others, discerned either through direct contact or indirectly through media content. "In a mobile culture, where people constantly encounter otherness, customs are brought to the surface(...) When a habit is described, one must take a position on it, either rejection or tenacious attachment."<sup>44</sup> Our respondents also attempt this, either declaring themselves as supporters of the unconditional defence of that which they consider the core of Polish tradition, rejection and criticism of that which is foreign, or they treat change and the penetration of foreign cultural models as an inevitable process, but one which saddens them, or they attempt to combine

41 Bartosz Korzeniewski, *Medializacja i mediatyzacja pamięci – nośniki pamięci i ich rola w kształtowaniu pamięci przeszłości* [Medialisation and mediafication of memory – carriers of memory and their role in shaping the past], in: „Kultura Współczesna”, nr 3/2007.

42 Elżbieta Nieroba, Anna Czerner, Marek S.Szczepański, *Flirty tradycji z popkulturą. Dziedzictwo kulturowe w późnej nowoczesności* [Tradition Flirts with Pop-culture. Cultural Heritage in late Modernity]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2010.

43 Tim Edensor, *Tożsamość narodowa, kultura popularna i życie codzienne* [National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life], transl. Agata Sadza. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2004, p.32

44 *Forces of Habit: Exploring Everyday Culture*, eds. Jonas Frykman, Orvar Löfgren. Lund: Lund University Press, 1996, p. 14. qtd. in Tim Edensor, *Tożsamość narodowa, kultura popularna i życie codzienne*. [National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life]. transl. Agata Sadza. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2004.

native tradition with customs which seem pleasant to them (such as celebrating Valentine's Day), useful (such as adherence to plans, order, care for the common good in everyday actions) or make life easier (such as kindness in everyday interactions). At the same time, that which is native interfuses with that which is foreign, that which is local with that which is global. Locality, i.e. the country or specific place where one lives "is the arena on which different people's environments of meaning cross and where there is also a chance of that which is global or that which was local elsewhere taking root. At this crossroads things are constantly defining each other, so that this year's change becomes next year's consistency."<sup>45</sup> Simultaneously then, that which is lasting, invariably crosses with that which is current, disposable or short-lived. Rooted tradition mixes with "invented tradition"<sup>46</sup> and its commercial exploitation, knowledge of past and history with its media processed version. These mutual fusions of meaning are clearly shown in our respondents' statements. In the city where for only a few years a Valentine's Day festival has been organized, residents are speaking of it as of an element of borrowed, yet local tradition. The residents of Subcarpathian villages considering Polish traditions which should be passed on, mention the recently organized local pierogi celebration. The majority of people describing customary changes taking places in recent years equally often bring to light examples from their local environment, as those seen on television, and while speaking of the need to pass on knowledge about national history they point to fictional films and documentaries as the best source of this knowledge.

A special role in the modern creation of national bond is played by sports competition. "Sport is increasingly often situated in the area of the national life matrix, dominated by the media, institutionalised in schools, it is visible in many forms of culture and a daily practice for millions of citizens of a given nation. These everyday spectacle contexts constitute one of the most popular points of reference for national identity."<sup>47</sup> Athletic games are becoming the source of secular mass rituals.<sup>48</sup> In the narrations of our respondents on the subject of Polish customs and their transformations there were often themes concerning sports and fandom.

45 Ulf Hannerz, *Powiązania transnarodowe. Kultura, ludzie, miejsca* [Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places], transl. Katarzyna Franek. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2006, 46

46 Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, ed. *Tradycja wynaleziona* [The Invention of Tradition], transl. Mieczysław Godyń, Filip Godyń. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2008.

47 Tim Edensor, op. cit. p. 106.

48 conf. Jean Maisonneuve op. cit.; Martin Segalen, *Obrzędy i rytuały współczesne* [Contemporary Rites and Rituals], transl. Jacek Jan Pawlik. Warszawa: VERBINUM, 2009.

And the sports spectacle of the UEFA European Championship 2012 was referred to in many statements as a reason for national pride, an occasion to create new customs in interpersonal relations, and even ... as an element of Polish tradition worth passing on to future generations. It is worth noting, that apart from Warsaw, the other two cities studied and the rural community did not have any direct experiences with the Euros, no matches were held there, no teams which took part in the championship reside there, the only experience was following media coverage. It is hard not to notice that the European football championship taking place in Poland in 2012, similar to the Volleyball World Championship in 2014 or competitions included in the Ski Jumping World Cup organized in Zakopane for several years, were an occasion to create new communal practices of manifesting patriotism. "Sport is the domain of reproducing nation within the framework of everyday mass use. It is nationalism for everyone, one does not need to know history, complicated symbolics within higher culture, no need to recognize important figures from Polish history in order to participate in the simple string of metonymic symbols, each one of which is the utilising of some comprehensible and easily noticeable aspect of the whole which is called >>Poland<<."49

## Summary

Self-awareness of customary changes may be interpreted several ways. Firstly, one may assume that the only objective image of transformations is the one comprised of the convictions of many individuals, who referred to their own experiences and observations and described many different evolving areas of custom. One could also decide that the transformations described are those which are the most common, reinforced, which have gained a kind of legitimisation thanks to being entered into media discourse, through which they were shown to our respondents who were somehow made aware of them. One could just as well assume that our respondents spoke of transformations which arouse the most emotions, whether positive or negative and that when describing new trends they focused on that which hurts, bothers, delights them or makes them proud. I think that all these interpretations are equally valid and remembering the limitations of

49 Wojciech Józef Burszta, *Kotwice pewności. Wojny kulturowe z pop nacjonalizmem w tle [Anchors of Certainty. Cultural Wars with Pop Nationalism in the Background.]*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Iskry, , p. 103

each, it is worth asking, what is the result of these stories of changing customs. It is curious that most often the described transformations concern exactly the same areas of custom (family, religion, celebrations), which respondents would most often like to preserve in unchanged form and pass on to succeeding generations as a lasting element of Polish tradition. One could then believe, that the changes taking place, usually perceived by them as inevitable, arouse anxiety, fear of losing native identity; sometimes this is indeed articulated directly. Changing customs also bring out ambivalent moral judgments. Some consider them a symptom of liberalisation, personal freedom or emancipation from rules determined by the Church, likening customs to those which dominate in modern western countries. While others see the changes as a downfall of customs, spreading of indecent behaviours and fading of those we once valued. In this case, the blame is put on foreigners, the others threatening our sovereignty<sup>50</sup> – America, the European Union, Jews and also “other” countrymen, e.g. homosexuals, proponents of certain gender ideas<sup>51</sup>. Such suggestions, articulated more or less directly, can be found in the statements of our respondents. At the same time, the vast majority of respondents believe that we could be learning forms of social relations from other nations, especially since customary changes in the sphere of social interactions are usually valued negatively.

50 conf. Marian Golka, *Imiona wielokulturowości [Names of Multiculturalism]*. Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA, 2010

51 Since 2014 hierarchs of the Catholic Church in Poland have been arguing in homilies and media that the greatest threat to modern humans is the ideology of gender issues, interpreted as a moral evil associated with the free treatment of biological sex, and thus subversion of the natural order.



# 2

## Physiology of taste in contemporary culinary and festive customs

### 1. Culinary preferences and dietary habits in the area of social sciences

In modern industrialized societies, preparing and consuming food are perceived not just as a symptom of satisfying biological needs, but also the source of various social and cultural meanings. On one hand eating is considered in the context of a person's diet and health. On the other, the preparation and consumption of food in the home determines the division of labour according to gender and the allocation of resources. Eating does not just mean sustaining the biological machine of the body, but also specifies relations between a person and the world<sup>52</sup>.

Meals and their meaning, the act of eating and attributed functions, festive themes, images of foods are closely connected to culture. Food is an effective tool of brokering social relations, and the system of its exchange specifies the values significant to the given society. Being a nearly unnoticeable element of material culture, applied thoughtlessly in everyday practice, it becomes a significant indicator of social and cultural tendencies, ties and divisions. Besides satisfying hunger, food may also be an element marked by communication: it shows cultural regulations, magical or religious justifications and legitimisation of social stratification.

<sup>52</sup> Conf. Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *Wynaleźć codzienność [To Invent the Everyday]*, v. 2: *Mieszkać, gotować [Live, Cook]*. transl. Katarzyna Thiel-Jańczuk. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2008, p.169.

By studying the kitchen space one can analyse family life, its dynamics and alignment of relations, division of obligations between partners; one can define the forces which influence private life. Culinary customs are a strong indicator of social boundaries. That is why deliberations about food are found in the stream of historical, sociological, anthropological, ethnographical, geographical, philosophical and gender study treatises.<sup>53</sup>

The intimate, bodily act of eating is in social theory connected – through reproduction of its cultural meaning – to the macro-structural problem of social integration. Cuisine understood as the attaining of various food preparation skills, thus determines the way of “transferring from nature to culture” and also “defines the human condition and all its attributes, even those which [...] seem natural, such as mortality”.<sup>54</sup> Structuralism emphasises that eating and local cuisine is situated between nature and culture. The process of naming a wild product food and its transformation into something edible contains in it the culturalisation of nature<sup>55</sup>. In the social sciences, food is seen as a ritual act, a superindividual social fact expressing a mechanical bond<sup>56</sup>.

Analysis of the culinary theme provides an image of diverse culture discourses in the social context. As the classics of sociology have noticed, consumption practices reflect social position. Food can be perceived as a manifestation within social conflict and one of the many tools for fighting for dominance and prestige. In theories oriented more systemically and putting greater emphasis on the economic aspects of social organization, food shows up mainly as a signifier of status and class affiliation.<sup>57</sup> Thorstein Veblen showed that prestige within the framework of a certain class may be achieved through consumption of rare goods, including those associated with eating.<sup>58</sup>

53 Conf. Peter Scholliers P., *Meals, Food Narratives, and Sentiments of Belonging in Past and Present* In: Peter Scholliers (ed.), *Food, Drink and Identity. Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*. Berg, Oxford, New York 2001, p. 3-22

54 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Culinary Triangle*. In: Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik (ed.), *Food and Culture a Reader*, second edition. New York and London: Routledge, 2008, p.169.

55 Conf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Culinary Triangle*. In: Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik (ed.), *Food and Culture a Reader*, second edition. New York and London: Routledge, 2008, p.36-43

56 Conf. Émile Durkheim, *Elementarne formy życia religijnego. System totemiczny w Australii* [*Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. Totemic System in Australia*]. transl. Anna Zadrożyńska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2010.

57 Conf. Max Weber, *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo* [*Economy and Society*]. transl. Dorota Lachowska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2002.p. 637 and consecutive.

58 Conf. Thorstein Veblen, *Teoria klasy próżniaczej* [*The Theory of the Leisure Class*]. transl. Janina Frentzel-Zagórska. Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza, 2008.

Pierre Bourdieu shows in the theory of distinction, how elite taste, acquired through formal education and everyday life, serves the reproduction of social inequality. Relations of power are tied with politics of corporeality, with distinctions of taste. Bourdieu described the culinary taste in its class variants. The aesthetic worldview adopted by a certain group may become an instrument of domination of higher classes over lower ones and allows the discernment and rejection of everything outside a class. The distribution of social prestige is proportionate to obeying rules of good taste. Etiquette plays a key role in building the identity of elites. Though there is a hierarchy of consumed products, higher classes in the kitchen move the accent from the material itself to the way of presenting and serving food.<sup>59</sup>

Elite taste is the taste of moderation, abundance is a trait of folk cuisine. Bourgeoisie constructs its identity through aesthetic choices. It values delicacy and positions itself in opposition to vulgarity.<sup>60</sup> Veblen points out that, “the requirement that a noble-born person consume without limitations and only goods of the highest quality is closely tied to the requirement that he know how to consume in the appropriate manner.”<sup>61</sup> Georg Simmel framed eating as control of that which is individual, low, antisocial, its form is subject to “stylistic, aesthetic and superindividual rules.”<sup>62</sup> Simmel argued that it is allowed to have “an individual way of walking, dressing, speaking and all other behaviours, but an individual way of eating would be something out of place; it would not only be internally contradictory, but inappropriate in the realm of values, if the rules of a higher order were to be applied to a lower field, belonging to a completely different dimension, where these rules do not apply, but rather become suspended in a void.”<sup>63</sup> Social control of eating, “civilising appetite” is a special case of control of intimacy. In Norbert Elias’ work the process of civilisation consists of curbing urges and increasing self-control. Strictness characterises etiquette of serving and consuming meals. Elias analyses the ways of behaving at the table and the civilisation process in Europe. As a result of forming internalised shame, just as in the case of sexuality and excretion, eating is secondarily classified as an intimate act<sup>64</sup>.

59 Conf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Dystynkcja. Społeczna krytyka władzy sądzienia*. transl. Piotr Biłos. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe „Scholar”, 2005.

60 Conf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Dystynkcja. Społeczna krytyka władzy sądzienia [Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste]*. transl. Piotr Biłos. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe „Scholar”, 2005, p. 155.

61 Thorstein Veblen, op. cit. p.65-66

62 Georg Simmel, *Socjologia posiłku [Sociology of the Meal]*. In: Georg Simmel, *Most i drzwi. Wybór esejów [Bridges and Doors. Selected essays]*. transl. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2006, p.275.

63 Ibidem, p.279.

64 Conf. Norbert Elias, *Przemiany obyczajów w cywilizacji Zachodu [Transformations of Custom in Western Civilisation]*. transl. Tadeusz Zabłudowski. Warszawa: PIW, 1980.

Eating, in its bodily, but also its social aspect, is on the line between the internal and external. It becomes an area of special symbolic tension and potential threat to order. Like all borderline objects and acts it creates fear and summons the need for regulation. Mary Douglas treats eating as a source of laws, rules of co-existence: "Similar to sex, consuming food has a social factor, as well as a biological one. Therefore, food categories code social events."<sup>65</sup> In this perspective, "every meal is a structured social event, which constructs further events about itself."<sup>66</sup>

Roland Barthes in his semiotic analyses of specific meals and drinks shows that food identifies, just like language and religion, and thus also naturally differentiates. One may, like Barthes, treat eating as a kind of system of communication, signalling models of social behaviours. Meals are institutions, which contain a set of notions, dreams, tastes, choices and values.<sup>67</sup> In linguistic analysis the discursive character of cooking as a culture code is emphasised. It formalises everyday practices into stable models, creating a basis for group consciousness. Jürgen Habermas emphasises the significance of taste as a criterion of inclusion in the bourgeois public sphere. Cafes in XVIII-century Europe became a space for meetings and conversation outside the home.<sup>68</sup> In the anthropological approach to cuisine as a culture of eating within a society, the analysis concerns specific ingredients and technology of cooking just as much as the common attitudes and beliefs regarding the correct, healthy and tasty meal.

Eating as an important part of human life appears in historic narration beginning with ancient times, however only in the 1920s did it become the subject of "new history of culture" studies. Members of the French school *Annales* included eating within research of history of everyday life, justifying that it is an integral part of social and economic structure in the same degree as other cultural practices. Jean-Louis Flandrin, along with Françoise Sabban and Maurice Aymard noticed the intellectual value of symbolic and social analysis of eating as a cultural system. Thanks to their descriptions of culinary practices, cookbooks, medical sources from different eras and areas of civilization, near the end of the XX century the history of

65 Mary Douglas, *Ukryte znaczenia. Wybrane szkice antropologiczne [Implicit meanings. Essays in Anthropology]*. transl. Ewa Klekot. Kęty: Wydawnictwo Marek Derewicki, 2007, p.335.

66 Ibidem, p.347.

67 Conf. Roland Barthes, *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*. In: Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik (ed.), *Food and Culture a Reader*, second edition. New York and London: Routledge 2008, p. 20-27.

68 Conf. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturalne przeobrażenia sfery publicznej [Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere]*, transl. Wanda Lipnik, Małgorzata Łukasiewicz. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2007.

eating moved from areas of interesting anecdote to the field of serious scientific study. Presently, historians observe the changes of culinary practices in three areas: circulation of texts regarding eating, tastes and cooking practices.<sup>69</sup>

## 2. Rules and functions of eating – between daily routine and hedonistic celebration

For humans, rules regarding consuming food are an important means of constructing reality. These rules are an allegory of social meanings, the way in which people give order to the physical, mental and symbolic worlds. In Simmel's interpretation, "The plate symbolizes order, which for the needs of the individual rations that which is owed him, but also does not allow him to reach outside the determined limits."<sup>70</sup>

Table 1. Rules regarding preparation and consumption of meals as interpreted by respondents in four cities/towns, in order by frequency of mention

Rules regarding preparation and consumption of meals as interpreted by respondents in four cities/towns	Number of statements
1. Traditional Polish cuisine	Number
2. Healthy and flavourful food	66
3. Communal consumption of meals	52
4. Specific times and pattern of eating meals	42
5. Woman's dominating role in the kitchen	35
6. Inviting guests and eating and cooking at home	26
7. Culture of behaviour at the table	17
8. Economy of eating	10
9. Aesthetics and hygiene of preparing and eating meals	8

The number of statements considered in all tables within this chapter refers to 406 interviews.

69 Conf. Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Cultural Histories of Food*. In: Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 41-60.

70 Georg Simmel, *Sociologia posilku...op.cit.*, p.277.

Based on the surveyed persons' statements regarding customs of cooking and food, one can create, according to the frequency of associations provided, a list of basic rules they uphold in their lives, in this area. In the declarations of the surveyed, the cooking must be in accordance with Polish tradition, food which is flavourful and healthy and consumed in the company of family and friends, loved ones. Meals, cooked and consumed mostly at home, take place according to a timetable agreed upon in the family. The person responsible for culinary practices is decidedly the woman. The respondents try to obey the rules of cultured behaviour at the table, celebrating, observing holidays with consideration of financial capabilities.

97 people asked about customs regarding eating and cooking pointed to a lack of any kind of rules which they could live by in this area of reality. There is even surprise in statements, that one can link rules with the trivial area of consuming meals: *Rules? Just eat, that's it* (P-4, k-75). The subjects combine lack of rules with little engagement in that sphere of everyday life: (...) *We don't pay much attention to it* (K-10, m-57); *There is nothing special. Customs? In cooking?* (Ch-72, k-29). In Chełmno and the Przemysł area villages, less of the respondents indicate the lack of rules, than in Warsaw or Kielce.

Generally, the studied persons would like to pass on rules regarding preparing and consuming meals to successive generations. The smaller the city/town, the proportionally larger the pool of mentioned rules which applied to children. Women commented on this matter decidedly more often, as well as people of both genders older than 40, who had children or grandchildren. Only some of the surveyed do not believe in this type of socialisation. Older subjects are convinced that young people do not expect this kind of cultural transfer at all. Part of the surveyed group believes that the message is not necessary, because the young generation determines its own rules. By contrast, younger subjects either do not know what they could pass on to children in the realm of cooking and consuming meals in the future, or they are not in favour of imposing anything. Men are the majority in the group refraining from passing on rules, while among people who are convinced of the necessity to transfer culinary culture the vast majority are women.

Table 2. Functions of eating as interpreted by subjects from four locations (cities/towns/villages), in order by frequency of mention

Functions of eating in the interpretation of subjects from four locations	Number of statements
1. Pleasure/flavour	85
2. Integration	68
3. Satisfying hunger	59
4. Health, strengthening	28
5. Tasting/celebrating/aesthetics	13
6. Discovering new flavours	9

When it comes to the functions which eating fulfils in life, the surveyed are mostly oriented toward experiencing pleasure, tasting meals in the company of familiars. The basic issue of satisfying hunger goes hand in hand with the healthful, vital functions of food. The satisfying of a need to celebrate meals and discover new flavours definitely plays a smaller role in the expectations of the surveyed men and women.

The practical aspect of the act of eating, and the fact that it is a required foundation for nearly everything we do, places the basic aspects of this area of life in the sphere of necessity and routine. Eating is such an obvious manifestation of biological existence, that the surveyed lose sight of its deeper meaning. 18 people from Warszawa, Kielce and Chełmno indicated no functions of eating. The opinion that food has only the role of satisfying hunger, found more supporters among residents of the Przemyśl area villages. In the subjects' statements, food is reduced to just the function of biological survival. The surveyed from the small town and village emphasise that food is meant to give the strength needed for work.

Series of meanings extending beyond the sphere of physiology move the banal activity of consuming into the wider system of communication. The transmitters are the appearance and diversity of the meal, as well as the ceremony, its preparation, presentation, reception. Then the meaning of food becomes representation and expression. Subjects perceive eating in the category of holiday, characterised by celebration of meals: *In eating, I like the celebration of a meal, serving, eating slowly, savouring* (W-92, m-32); *I am a bit of a sybarite. I like being a guest, I like to host and I believe that (...) when one sits at the table, one should be washed, dressed and then (...) eating is a pleasure* (K-38, k-60); *(...) it's a matter of organising your own time, to eat long, slowly (...) and savour it, that is important* (P-48, m-43).

The word “kuchnia” [cuisine, cooking, kitchen] contains the rules of cooking (which ingredients to choose, how they should be combined and what methods to use), rules of eating (who should eat what, when and with whom), as well as the rules of serving (how to serve and in what order). These three sets of rules create potential for many possible combinations and a conscious respect of a specific and unchangeable canon of norms, which forms the basis for an idea about higher forms of culinary practice.<sup>71</sup> These images, in the case of the studied group, are concentrated around three areas of reality: tradition, healthy and flavourful diet, building community and gender roles.

### 3. Tradition versus modernity

#### 3.1 Traditional Polish cuisine

Old Polish cooking was based on simple meals made from harvested crops (millet, rye, wheat), wild game, farmed meat, and fruit, herbs and spices obtained through gathering. It was recognized foremost by its liberal use of salt and ever-present groats and grains. It was characterised by meals with high calorie content and consuming beer and mead as a basic drink, as opposed to wine, popular in southern and western Europe. It is hard to speak of Polish national cuisine, because dishes such as e.g. *bigos*, *rosół*, or *barszcz* (meat and cabbage stew, broth, borscht) were also known in neighbouring countries. Polish cooking was differentiated by consuming groats, beer and mead, however the same products were also popular among southern or eastern Slavs. Some specific traits of Polish cooking were determined by the products available, e.g. in Poland, vinegar or beer was added to meat, while in the West, wine was preferred.<sup>72</sup> The base for the court kitchen of the Piast dynasty was wild game, birds and fish. Beef, veal and horsemeat were consumed. For beverages, chronicles name milk, wine, beer, mead and kvass. Onions, berries, nuts, roots and mushrooms were used in the kitchen.<sup>73</sup> An important part of the Jagiellonian diet was meat,

71 Conf. Barry William Higman, *Historia żywności. Jak żywność zmieniała świat* [How Food Made History]. transl. Anna Kunicka, Wydawnictwo Aletheia, Warszawa 2012, p.264.

72 Lidia Korczak, *Wiekі średnie* [Middle Ages] In: Andrzej Chwalba (ed.), *Obyczaje w Polsce. Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych* [Customs in Poland. From Middle Ages to Modern Times]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2004, p. 60.

73 Conf. Agnieszka Teterycz-Puzio, *Kronikarzy rozkosze stołu: przyjemność – umiar – czy niezbędna potrzeba? Jedzenie w świetle wybranych kronik środkowoeuropejskich z XI-XIV wieku* [Chroniclers bliss of the table: pleasure – moderation – or essential need?]. In: Beata Możejko, Ewa Baryłewska-Szymańska (ed.), *Historia naturalna jedzenia. Między antyką a XIX wiekiem* [Natural History of Food. Between Antiquity and the XIX Century]. Gdańsk: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Gdańska, Uniwersytet Gdański, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2012, p.42.



fresh, salted and smoked fish, soup, bread, cake, pierogi and cheese. They also ate vegetables, fruit and mushrooms.<sup>74</sup>

In the XVII century steward's book, a detailed list of the most valued grocery products in the court of Jan III Sobieski, the most often mentioned was meat: beef, veal, lamb, various poultry: capon (castrated roosters), duck, goose, dove and turkey, the least often served was pork (except pork fat/bacon) and wild fowl (hazel grouse, black grouse, partridge), rabbit. Fish dishes were popular, and as side dishes, grain products were mentioned, groats, flours and vegetables, eggs, fats, vinegar, salt, various additions to meat and fish. Occasionally vegetables and fruits were eaten, there was fear of eating them raw. Salt, vinegar, sugar and "roots" were basic spices. To drink, they served beer (with fish) and wine.<sup>75</sup>

Due to the long and strict period of fasting in Catholic countries, one of the most important traits of Polish cooking was a large amount of different fish dishes. Polish cuisine was indeed valued in Europe for mastery in preparing sophisticated dishes from mostly freshwater fish. Whale, dolphin and other sea mammals were also considered fish.<sup>76</sup>

We know only some of the dishes typical for traditional Polish cooking. What Poles eat today is the result of centuries of dietary choices. After the Polish-Lithuanian union (1569), Lithuanian dishes made it onto Polish tables. During Zygmunt I Stary's [Sigismund I of Poland] reign (1506-1548), mostly Italian cuisine dominated on royal and magnate's tables. Oriental influences were clearly defined during Jan III Sobieski's reign (1674-1696). Flavour, based on butter (French cuisine) was then considered one of the main and most valued sensations of taste. When August II and August III ruled (1697-1763) potatoes appeared in Polish cuisine for good. Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764-1795) was a French cuisine enthusiast, while not straying away from traditional Polish dishes. During the partition of Poland, the influences of Russian and Austrian cuisine were marked, and Poles were not too keen on Prussian cooking.<sup>77</sup>

74 Conf. Jerzy Sperka, *Dwóர் pierwszych Jagiellonów a tajniki średniowiecznej kuchni [The Two First Jagiellonians and the Secrets of Medieval Cooking]*. In: Beata Możejko, Ewa Barylewska-Szymańska (ed.), *Historia naturalna jedzenia...op.cit.* p. 64-66.

75 Conf. Jarosław Dumanowski, *Jan III i kuchnia [John III and Cuisine]* In: Jarosław Dumanowski (ed.), *Polskie zabytki kulinarne [Polish Culinary Monuments]*, v. IV: Jarosław Dumanowski, Maciej Próba i Łukasz Truściński (ed.), *Księga szafarska dworu Jana III Sobieskiego 1695-1696 [John III Sobieski Court Steward's Book]*. Warszawa: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2013, p. 16-31

76 Conf. Jarosław Dumanowski, Andrzej Pawlas, Jerzy Poznański, *Sekrety kuchmistrzowskie Stanisława Czernieckiego [Chef's Secrets of Stanisław Czerniecki]*. Warszawa: Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, 2010, p. 137-138.

77 Conf. Maria Lemnis, Henryk Vitry, *W staropolskiej kuchni i przy polskim stole [In an Old-Polish Kitchen at an Old Polish Table]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1979, p. 136-137.

Among the rules which influence the style of cooking and consuming foods, subjects in all cities listed a conscious menu selection based on traditional Polish cuisine, as the first. Women and men emphasise fondness for traditional Polish meals. Memories are important in the sphere of flavour preferences, and culinary memory develops based on them. The surveyed miss the flavours of their childhood, which are usually connected to traditional, Polish cooking. As for the preference for traditional meals, a generational difference was visible within the studied group: (...) *we still cook similarly to our children, I don't think up anything new, I like cooking like it was done in the past, so some kind of thick soup during the week, a two-course meal on Sunday, three with desert* (Ch-71, k-70); *I don't like my daughter's and son in law's cooking, they cook like for a diet, light, I do it more traditional* (W-19, k-62). Older subjects associate the young generation with promotion of foreign trends in native culinary tradition: *Young people are fussy, they eat that sushi* (P-72, k-75); (...) *lately my daughter, it's just sushi and sushi. I ate it once, nothing special, I prefer potato pancakes* (W-96, m-72); (...) *the young ones it's just fries, kebab and all those fast foods, but I don't eat that, don't buy it* (Ch-40, k-63).

In each of the surveyed locations, a basic rule declared by both younger and older subjects of both sexes, is including *rosół* [broth, chicken soup] in the Sunday menu. This stems from family tradition: *It was always like this and that's just our tradition. Rosół on Sunday* (K-36, k-64); (...) *I can't imagine a Sunday without rosół. That would be tough* (P-38, m-21); (...) *for sure – rosół on Sunday, 90 percent of the time* (P-58, m-29). Broth, in the declarations of older, as well as younger subjects, is the most defined symbol of holiday culinary customs. The declared weight of this symbol is the more significant, the smaller the community from which the surveyed come. Older women emphasise the art of cooking this particular soup<sup>78</sup>: (...) *good rosół cooked on beef is a masterpiece* (K-38, k-60); (...) *there have to be different kinds of meat mixed* (P-75, k-70). The elementary rules of composing a traditional menu is the presence of meat in everyday, and especially Sunday meals. Not eating meat as a rule appears rarely and in the statements of subjects from the big or medium city.

In the studied group the basic set of recipes is based on traditional Polish cooking. Subjects would like for what happens in the kitchen and at the table, i.e. cooking and consuming, to be considered as a way of con-

78 Lucyna Ćwierczakiewiczowa, *365 obiadów za 5 złotych z dodatkiem 120 obiadów postnych bez ryb [365 dinners for 5 złotych and 120 fast-day dinners without fish]*. Self-published by the author, printed Warszawa: Drukarnia Aleksandra Pajewskiego, 1871.

tinuing and developing family tradition in the area of culinary practices. Polish cuisine should be treated as a metaphor for socio-cultural processes. Gordon Matthews puts forth that, „All nations, to some degree, think up a culinary tradition to legitimize their existence. Belief in cultural community, bond, rooted in tradition, serves to justify nation and state.”<sup>79</sup> The flavours taken from home are often the most vivid memory of all that which is associated with the small homeland. „Among Polish cultural symbols, apart from Chopin, Jasna Góra and the battle at Grunwald, there is also kielbasa [sausage] and pierogi”<sup>80</sup>

### 3.2 Fasting

The Method of nourishment was always seen as a certain system of sacrifices and fasting. The medieval menu was in accordance with the Church calendar. Until 1248, Lent in Poland lasted nine weeks. According to Thietmar’s account, his contemporary, Bolesław Chrobry ordered the knocking out of teeth of those who did not abstain from eating meat. The old Polish Lent, based on the Catholic rules of qualitative fasting, ordered one to abstain, on certain days, not only from eating meat, but also milk, butter, cheeses and eggs. This made Polish customs much more strict than the sacrifices of Catholics from Germany, France or Italy. A devout Catholic from XVII-century Poland fasted for nearly half the year. One was to not eat meat on Fridays, on the eve of the major holidays and during the so-called dry days (three days each quarter). This periodic, obligatory diet greatly limited a meal. Vegetables, groats, sour rye soup and fish is what remained.<sup>81</sup> The preparation of meals for periods of fasting was remarkably developed in Polish cooking. The variety of recipes in combination with the innovation of cooks made the difficult time of sacrifice bearable. Foreigners were surprised by the sumptuousness, variety and number of Lent meals.<sup>82</sup>

Modern studies show that fasting is becoming an increasingly individual and private matter. 54 percent of Poles do not limit themselves in

79 Gordon Matthews, *Supermarket kultury. Kultura globalna a tożsamość jednostki [Global Culture/Individual Identity. Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket.]*, transl. Ewa Klekot, PIW, Warszawa 2005, p.56.

80 Justyna Straczuk, *Cmentarz i stół. Pogranicze prawosławno-katolickie w Polsce i na Białorusi [Cemetery and table. Orthodox-Catholic Borderlands in Poland and Belarus]*, Monografie na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013, p.180.

81 Conf. Lidia Korczak, *Wieki średnie* in: Andrzej Chwalba (ed.), *Obyczaje w Polsce...* op.cit., p. 56-57.

82 Conf. Jarosław Dumanowski, *Jan III i kuchnia* In: Jarosław Dumanowski (ed.), *Polskie zabytki kulinarne*, v. IV: Jarosław Dumanowski, Maciej Próba i Łukasz Truściński (ed.), *Księga szafarska...* op.cit., p. 31-34.

eating, they eat as much as they wish, 43 percent try to control what they eat.<sup>83</sup> The traditional taboo in Poland toward periods of fasting determined by the Catholic church is weakening. The number of people who strictly observe abstinence from meat on days determined by the Church is systematically declining.<sup>84</sup>

A special place for fasting in the culinary tradition may still be noticed in the statements of residents of the small town and villages. The rule of abstaining from eating meat on Fridays is emphasised: *Friday is fast-day, so it's hard for the kids, but I try for them to not eat meat* (P-86, k-57); *My mom did it like that, and I've just got used to it, that (...) you can eat meat all week, but on Friday – absolutely not* (P-101, k-56); (...) *traditionally, on Friday (...) we try to not overdo it with the meats, or not eat it at all...* (P-14, m-50); (...) *Friday is fasting – you get up in years, but you've got to keep up the tradition: pierogi, dumplings with cheese, borscht with taters* (P-77, m-77).

In the opinions of the surveyed women from Przemyśl area villages, food requires the respecting of an order, discipline and certain values. The subjects' abstaining from meat consumption is written into Polish religious customs: (...) *one fasts on Fridays and Christmas Eve. (...) most do not eat meat, but I know some that do, not a sin I guess, a sin like that is not a sin, right* (P-103, k-33); *On Friday there are fast-day meals. Though now there really wouldn't be anything to confess anymore* (laughter) (P-84, k-75).

The study confirms that eating is a social sign. Diets and eating habits are associated in the surveyed people's statements of religion and morality.

### 1.3. Rules of conduct at the table

The rules of the ceremony which is the meal are codified. The imperative category regulating behaviour at the table is good manners. In every era, eating is associated with the question of elementary rules of courtesy. In times of the Roman empire, guests vomited from too much drink and overeating; belching at the table was completely decent and civil, like in Arabic culture. Emperor Claudius even issued a special edict allowing the emission of various sounds during meals. A designated slave dispense,

83 Conf. *Zachowania i nawyki żywieniowe Polaków [Behaviours and dietary habits of Poles]*, ed. Katarzyna Wądołowska, Warszawa, CBOS release 2010.

84 Conf. „Czas świąteczny” czy „czas codzienny” – o tradycjach wielkopostnych i wielkanocnych oraz świętowaniu w niedziele [„Holiday time” or „everyday time” – about Lent and Easter traditions and celebrating on Sunday], ed. Katarzyna Kowalczyk, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2010.

urinals and serviced guests who defecated publicly.<sup>85</sup> Romans wiped dirty, greasy hands after feasts on the hair of slaves.<sup>86</sup>

In medieval times, the rules of conduct at the table were fairly simple: overeating was frowned upon, as was searching for better pieces, taking overly large portions, placing bitten foods on the serving dish, spitting out or eating what had already fallen from your mouth. One was to wipe ones mouth, entertain women with conversation and offer them the dishes with better pieces.<sup>87</sup> In books regarding courtesy and manners, the subjects of passing gas came up invariably. Just like today, that behaviour then was not tolerated in decent company.<sup>88</sup>

Since the end of the XIV century, there was a search for commonality in manners and tastes, which would bond co-feasters. Handbooks of medieval *civilité*, which should be called “books of courtesy”, spoke of the customs applicable at the table, condemned expressions of gluttony, excitement, messiness and lack of respect for fellow diners.<sup>89</sup> Hosts should strive to have clean tablecloths, silverware, flatware and sanitary dishes: water to wash one’s hands and prepare a place for intimate needs. Guests are not allowed to wipe their hands or nose on the tablecloth, pick their teeth, lick knives, put their fingers into the salt dishes, throw bones under the table. They should also refrain from making noises with their mouth, spitting, drinking with mouth full, and foremost, from complaining about the taste or quality of the dishes. The most important thing is to feast in the company of the appropriate people.<sup>90</sup> In descriptions of farmer’s, rural rules of conduct at the table, manners seem to be non-existent, which disqualifies – people without rules are of a worse sort, they are closer to nature and thus outside of culture.

Eating was a social ritual, each of the feasters played a specifically defined role and had to carefully watch his behaviour: wash hands before eating, not eat too quickly, not place his elbows on the table, sit up straight,

85 Conf. Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *Historia naturalna i moralna jedzenia [Moral and Natural History of Food]*. transl. A. B. Matusiak, M. Ochab. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2002, p. 257.

86 Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did. A Sourcebook in Roman Social History*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 79.

87 Conf. Lidia Korczak, *Wieki średnie*. In: Andrzej Chwalba (ed.), *Obyczaje w Polsce...op.cit.*, p. 62.

88 Conf. Reay Tannahill, *Food in History*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1973, p. 231.

89 Conf. Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Wyróżnienie smaku [Discerning Taste]*. transl. Krystyna Osińska-Boska. In: Roger Chartier (ed.), *Historia życia prywatnego [A History of Private Life]*, v.3: *Od renesansu do oświecenia [Passions of the Renaissance]*. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1999, p. 277.

90 Conf. Anna Pancer, *Mile złego początki, czyli co jādali i co szkodziło zdrowiu czeskich Luksemburgów [Good beginnings to bad things – what the Czech Luxembourgs ate and what harmed their health]*. In: Beata Możejko, Ewa Barylewska-Szymańska (ed.), *Historia naturalna jedzenia...op.cit.,...* p. 53.

not fall asleep, not belch.<sup>91</sup> Offenses against good dining customs, which were mentioned by authors of books from the XIX century, definitely included indulging one's own stomach. One could not eat hastily. Meals were accompanied by conversation, but good manners dictated not to speak with one's mouth full.<sup>92</sup> Eating should be done quietly, without noises, without leaving leftovers on the plates or crumbs on the tablecloth. One may not read at the table, because this is a habit unpleasant to one's surroundings.<sup>93</sup> Most of the rules described are still current in modern culinary practices.

"Good manners" at the table are values based on an aesthetic-affective code. In the cities and villages studied, food is important foremost, as an item of consumption, to a lesser degree as a result of the creation of aesthetics of daily life. Communal meals are not always a question of etiquette or convention, sometimes they are actually a conscious provocation, straying from binding rules: (...) *we break the rules (...) we eat tasty things in bed* (W-14, k-22); *It's all chill with me* (laughter). *Preferably I'd eat from a pot with a spoon* (K-75, k-64); *There are no rules. We are one of those people that will eat with their hand if possible; when you are hungry* (Ch-98, m-60).

Most statements regarding cultured behaviour at the table were noted during interviews with residents of Warsaw and Kielce who had a higher education: *We don't read during meals, when someone is eating with us* (W-18, k-24); *One has to hold the silverware correctly, maintain the rules of conversation (...) and savoir vivre at the table, so not belching and not slurping, and waiting to eat until everyone has been seated at the table* (W-22; k-28); *I don't usually talk on the phone during meals* (K-3, m-20); *It's not like, I take my plate and we watch television* (K-5, k-37).

Older subjects relate the rules of behaviour at the table only to children: *Children always have to wash their hands before and wait until everyone sits at the table, then the meal begins (...). They have to wait until everyone stands, they always say thank you* (Ch-40, k-63); *my siblings and I, when we were children, our parents taught us to not speak with our mouths full (...)* (Ch-67, k-63); *children should not sit at the table at parties* (P-23, m-64).

91 Conf. Philippe Aries, *Historia dzieciństwa. Dziecko i rodzina w czasach Ancien régime'u*. transl. Maryna Ochab. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Aletheia, 2010, p. 294-298.

92 Conf. Philippe Aries, *Historia dzieciństwa. Dziecko i rodzina w czasach Ancien régime'u [The Child and Family Life in the Old Régime]*. transl. Maryna Ochab. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Aletheia, 2010, p. 270-271.

93 Conf. Maria Barbasiewicz, *Dobre maniery w przedwojennej Polsce [Good Manners in Pre-War Poland]*. Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy PWN, 2013, p. 161-162.

Part of the etiquette is religious custom at the table: *From time to time, in the case of holidays, we pray before the meal* (W-87, k-29); *Back when I was little, I had to say a prayer, or make the sign of the cross before every meal* (K-8, m-32); *We say “smacznego”* [something like *bon appetite*, or “enjoy your meal” – transl. note] *and we make the sign of the cross. That comes from our childhood home. From grandma* (Ch-75, m-51).

Bourdieu wrote about the need to make a meal a *social ceremonial*, affirmation of the dish, ethical and aesthetical sophistication.<sup>94</sup> Cherishing rules of behaviour at the table, which stem from tradition, builds relations and bonds in the family, creates a common set of values. Just as Bourdieu stated, the refined way of eating in the subjects' statements is characterised by: expectancy, delay, prohibition, discretion, self-control. Similarly, forms of interactions borrowed from Simmel, stemming from imitation, aspirations, decorum, distance and fashion, we find in behaviours regarding culture of behaviour at the table in the studied group.

## 1. Healthy food versus tasty food

### 4.1. Healthy food, therefore associated with discipline

Bourdieu considered the diversity of consumption as an important element of habitus.<sup>95</sup> Studies prove that care for healthy and hygienic nourishment grows along with quality of life, level of education and urbanisation rate. There is a close relationship between that which a certain family may purchase as a daily meal, that which they consider flavourful, and that which they consider good for their health.<sup>96</sup> Consciousness of a healthy life style is a significant element of culinary culture. Survey study results regarding dietary behaviours and habits in Poland suggest that the vast majority of Polish people, in their own judgment, eat healthy (69%) or even very healthy (7%). CBOS first studied this matter in 1998 and since then answers have not changed significantly.<sup>97</sup>

The group of Poles who pay attention to what they eat is growing. And not in the sense of culinary hedonism, but foremost regarding healthy diet. Research surveys on dietary trends show that nearly 80 percent of Poles buy varied products, based on the food pyramid. Not just low-cal-

94 Conf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Dystynkcja...*op.cit., p. 247-248.

95 Pierre Bourdieu, *Dystynkcja...*op.cit., p. 224.

96 Conf. Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *Wynaleźć codzienność...*op.cit., p. 170.

97 Conf. *Czy dobrze się odżywiamy [Do we eat well]*, ed. Macieja Falkowska Warszawa, CBOS release, 1998.

rie products are considered healthy, but increasingly often also those which were produced in ecological farms.<sup>98</sup> As for the rules passed on to children, subjects in all locations named the issue of healthy food as first. The quality of food is connected with freshness, which is associated with health and connectedness to nature: *I have one rule – I never buy fruit and vegetables in supermarkets, only in local farmers markets or eco-markets (W-90, k-56); First of all, ecological, eating fruit and vegetables without preservatives, obviously, vegetables from a private garden or plot (P-62, k-48).*

According to TNS survey studies from March 2014, 78 percent of Poles believe that food is an area of human life which should be natural and thus they do not accept processed foods. Poles are sceptical toward food which is ready to be served (65%), minced/ground (38%) or frozen (30%), considering it artificial.<sup>99</sup> The women surveyed praise healthy, or rather self-prepared foods.

In the past, religious taboo determined knowledge regarding health, presently that place is taken by rational rules of a healthy diet and they greatly determine the choice of certain foods and avoidance of others. Subjects mostly objected to eating fast foods, firstly because of the potential health risks, and not the loss of a ritual, lack of ceremony, and the speed with which one consumes it.

#### 4.2 Tasty food, therefore associated with pleasure

The act of eating is one of the most reliable sources of pleasure, strongly physiologically associated with basic human emotions. Being satiated brings pleasure, enjoyment, happiness; hunger arouses fear, hate, anger.<sup>100</sup> Taste is the one sense, which in order to function, needs the cooperation of smell, taste, sight and hearing. Therefore, tasting is just as much a physical feeling, as it is an intellectual act, result of analysis and conscious perception.<sup>101</sup> Besides the physical satisfaction coming from satisfying hunger, man also feels the intellectual joy of gluttony. Anthelme Brillat-Savarin stated that

98 Conf. Ipsos report *Trendy w zwyczajach żywieniowych* is a study conducted since 2006, regarding changes in Polish dietary habits. The study is conducted on a representative sample of Poles (825 people). The last survey was done in 2012 <http://www.ipsos.pl/> (accessed: 24.11.2014)

99 Conf. TNS research commissioned by KFC 21.03-26.03.2014, on a random, representative nationwide sample of 100 residents of Poland, aged over 15. [www.wprost.pl/.../Wybory-Polakow-naturalnosc-przedewszystkim](http://www.wprost.pl/.../Wybory-Polakow-naturalnosc-przedewszystkim) (date of access: 6.12.2014)

100 Conf. Jonathan Turner, Jan E. Stets, *Socjologia emocji [The Sociology of Emotions]*. transl. Marta Bucholc. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009, p. 89 and consecutive, 227 and consecutive.

101 Conf. Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *Historia naturalna...op.cit.*, p. 484.



the Creator gave us appetite as incentive, affirmed it with taste and rewarded it with pleasure. It is nothing more than putting things which taste good, before those which taste bad. "Being a gourmet is the passionate, rationalised and confirmed, with through habit, creates a tendency to give primacy to things which please the taste."<sup>102</sup> In the studied group, a very important element of experiencing pleasure is the taste of dishes: *Eating gives pleasure. We eat what tastes good to us.* (Ch-72, k-29); (...) *we try to eat flavourfully, we like to savour the food, so we pick and choose flavours, perfect them* (P-98, k-70); (...) *Eating makes you feel good* (W-10, m-26).

Nigel Slater, a popular British journalist and culinary critic argues that people who lead a life regularly deprived of the experienced bliss of cooking, lose one of the biggest sensual pleasures, which one can experience without removing clothes, he included: touching, smelling, licking, sucking, biting, tasting and swallowing.<sup>103</sup> The subjects point out the sensual, even erotic effect of eating: *It stimulates the senses a lot* (Ch-96, k-30); (...) *when we eat and our taste buds are teased so nicely, what I call a ¾ orgasm, that's nice* (K-64, m-52); (...) *eating releases endorphins* (W-2, m-25). The surveyed mention a mutual influence of the senses and emotions in the context of eating.

## 5. Community versus individualism

### 5.1. Culinary social community

Eating, besides taste sensations, is meant to lead to integration of the participants of the meeting at the table. Being an epicure, as Brillat-Savarin argues, "is the support of social life, it gradually widens the circle of welcome, allowing people of various standing to meet, the conversation livens and wears away the virtual inequality."<sup>104</sup> The subjects' opinion is that the pleasure of eating is connected with being in company. Eating and drinking together is an occasion to manifest and cultivate solidarity within broadly understood privacy. The smaller the town, the proportionally more surveyed declared that they take meals in the company of others. In the Przemysł area, there are twice as many such declarations as in Warsaw.

102 Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Fizjologia smaku albo Medytacje o gastronomii doskonałej* [*Physiology of Taste: Or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*]. transl. Joanna Guze, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973, p. 97.

103 Nigel Slater, *Appetite*. London: Fourth Estate Classic House, 2000.

104 Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Fizjologia smaku...*op.cit., p.103.

In the studied group, common meals are the best occasion for all sorts of mutual integration. Within the studied group, the community aspect is declared mostly by people with a higher education, more often women than men. The smaller the town, the more people notice more benefits than drawbacks to eating together. In Przemyśl region villages, twice as many surveyed point to these benefits, compared to the group studied in Warsaw. With age, the conviction that there are specific benefits coming from communal dining grows. Women emphasise more of these positive aspects than men. On the side of advantages of dining together, subjects give the primary spot to the possibility of building a community, and conversation being its basic element.

In ancient Rome, in light of the rules of civility, it was better to kill a man, than turn down his invitation to dinner. Dinner parties (invitation dinners) in the XIX century were indicators of position in the middle class; once a month they opened their private home and family life to strangers. This applied to the higher class even more frequently – once a week.<sup>105</sup> Brillat-Savarin noted that he who brings in friends, but did not care for the meal itself they will be served, is not worthy of friendship. Meetings at the table are, in the declarations of the subjects, a specific occasion to tighten social bonds.

As most studies on the subject show, people do not like to eat alone, “among all the rewards, which eating provides, those symbolically and emotionally most important are associated with being in the company of others and sharing meals.”<sup>106</sup> Subjects in all of the studied locations prefer meals with company to eating alone, due to the greater pleasure felt. Opinions vary as to whether one eats more or less in company, but there is no doubt that communal consumption improves the taste of meals and is conducive to celebrating eating, the ceremonial character of the meal.

Reflections on feasting may take place on various levels, because communal dining says plenty about man, culture and values. One also can't forget that it is just a regular, joyful experience of existence. Eating, according to the surveyed, should most of all be a joy, sometimes simple, sometimes very refined: *I do not like to eat alone, it is so sad, left like a dog. Even a dog has someone looking in his bowl (W-49, k-50); (...) eating alone, just looking at the telly, what's the point (Ch-75, m-51).*

105 Conf. Roy Strong, *Feast. A History of Grand Eating*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002, p. 293-295.

106 Alan Warde, Lydia Martens, *Mile spotkania przy stole [The Enjoyment of Meal Events]*, in: Piotr Sztompka, Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska (ed.), *Socjologia codzienności [Sociology of the Everyday]*, transl. Paulina Polak, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2008, p. 386.

Men dominate among the few people who do not see any difference between eating meals alone and in company, not paying any special attention to eating in general: *Eat something quick and get it over with* (W-88, m-54); (...) *I never gave it much thought, for me it's no difference. For me food is not a priority. I eat to live, not live to eat* (P-84, m-54).

## 5.2. Culinary community of family meals

Many studies confirm that food plays an important role in forming family identity.<sup>107</sup> In the studied group, the common consumption of meals is an element of home life, uniting people bound by blood at the table. The motive of meals eaten together, after healthy food and tradition, is the third most important rule of culinary guidelines to transfer to children. The main proponents of family meeting at the table are women. Most of the subjects declare that the meals consumed by them, dinners especially, have a family character.

For majority of residents in post-war Poland, part of the familiar world was the home cooking, standing in opposition to mass gastronomy. Most of those eating outside the home went to employee cafeterias, a small group would be in fast-service bars, an outing to the restaurant occurred a few times a year.<sup>108</sup> According to CBOS research from 2010, 90 percent of the surveyed consume their main, warm, weekday meal at home. On Saturdays and Sundays just 3 percent of respondents eat outside their home.<sup>109</sup> According to research surveys regarding dietary habits, 69% of Poles eat meals away from home at least from time to time, 94% at their family's or friend's house.<sup>110</sup> Within the research group, eating is perceived as an institution, thanks to which the home lasts. In Chełmno and Przemysł area villages the basic place of meal consumption is the home. The table, like the kitchen, designate the special places in the material and symbolic sense, the centre of a safe space, a place of close contacts.

Surveyed spouses had at least one occasion during the day to meet at a common meal: *I like to sit with my wife in the morning, drink a coffee, good times* (K-83, m-27). Women usually wait for their husbands with the meal: (...) *I practically don't eat alone, I always wait for my husband* (K-8, k-27); *I won't start*

107 Conf. Peter Scholliers P., *Meals, Food Narratives, and Sentiments of Belonging in Past and Present*. In: Peter Scholliers (ed.), *Food, Drink and Identity...*op.cit., p. 3-22.

108 Conf. Błażej Brzostek, *PRL na widelcu [The PRL on a Fork]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Baobab, 2010, p. 320- 322.

109 Conf. *Zachowania i nawyki żywieniowe Polaków...*op.cit.

110 <http://www.ipsos.pl/> (date of access: 24.11.2014)

without my husband (...) (K-25, k-62); I wait for my husband, with dinner, even if it's a fairly long time (K-60, k-26). Older married couples emphasise that eating together is a privilege of older age and retirement: *I eat with my husband. Ever since we've been retired* (W-41, k-74); *We're alone with my husband in the apartment now, the kids have moved out. My husband was taught that he won't eat without me* (K-73, k-66); *During the meal my wife sits on one stool, I sit on the other stool. (...) and I look at my wife, and she looks at me* (P-83, m-81).

Common meals are the main ritual encouraging the family to meet every day at the table. Subjects from Kielce, Chełmno and Przemyśl region emphasise the special kind of community: *And you can steal each other's food. And stick my fingers in Maniek's plate a bit* (Ch-56, k-23); *Then I'm happier than if I had the whole family at the table* (P-49, k-42).

### 5.3. Common and separate home meals

In the ludic folk customs, the rule of three basic meals subordinate to the daily scenario of three periods of passage represented the temporal cosmic order. The morning meal was the first sacrificial gift, a sign of entering the unit into the community, while the evening one was the last, with the projection of a recreation of life after sleep, the symbolic death, coded within it. While the noontime meal written into this timetable took on the special quality as a signal of the highest sacrality. Through ritualisation of the act of eating then, a magical barrier was formed, preventing access to unclean powers, spirits, which would have caused the meal to not function as the strengthening and preservation of life, but would only be a waste of food, because evil forces would be fed from it.<sup>111</sup>

Most Romans ate three meals a day. The main meal was late in the evening.<sup>112</sup> In the middle ages one would usually eat two regular meals (10 in the morning and 6 in the evening).<sup>113</sup> In the Polish noble court the rhythm of regular days was determined by meal times; it was carefully observed that everyone sit at the table without delay: "Breakfast was at seven thirty, at eight we went to classes. Dinner – one p.m. on the dot."<sup>114</sup> In the country one would get up early. The head of the household ate breakfast first –

111 Anna Brzozowska-Krajka, „Kto popija i pojada, to mu się dobrze uklada” *Ludowa etykieta konsumpcyjna* [“Who eats and drinks, fares well”. Folk consumption etiquette]. In: Piotr Kowalski (ed.), *Oczywisty urok biesiadowania* [The Obvious Appeal of Revelry]. Wrocław: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Polonistyki Wrocławskiej, 1998, p.78-80.

112 Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did...* op.cit., p. 79.

113 Conf. Anna Pancer, *Mile złego początku...* op.cit., p.49.

114 Barbara Caillot Dubus, Marcin Brzeziński, *Adam i Jadwiga Czartoryscy. Fotografie i wspomnienia* [Adam and Jadwiga Czartoryski. Photographs and Memories]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2013, p.28.

before going to the office or the farm. Somewhat later, the table would be occupied by the wife and children – they would soon go on to their tasks. In aristocratic families of the XIX and XX century, breakfast in the morning would be served to everyone individually in their quarters. The only full, basic meal was dinner at five in the afternoon. At nine in the evening people gathered for tea and biscuits.<sup>115</sup> In pre-war Poland, dinner was around noon. When there were guests, tea or coffee would be served in the drawing room after dinner in the dining room. In the evening one would sit down for supper.<sup>116</sup> At some courts, especially when there were guests, meals turned into all-day feasts, late breakfast was barely done and dinner was already being prepared, soon after then there was tea (evening snack), and supper shortly after.

In the past it was believed that preserving regularity of eating promotes health, similar to sleep. Presently, one in five Poles does not eat breakfast in the morning, and one in four does not have time for three meals a day.<sup>117</sup> In western culture there is talk of disintegration of the family in the context of straying from communal meals in the home, which currently are not that different from meals in fast food restaurants. Families had already stopped eating lunch together in the forties, and breakfasts in the fifties. Today the evening meal has met with the same fate.<sup>118</sup>

In Chełmno and Przemysł villages, more so than in Warsaw and Kielce, the way of organizing, and the logistics of consuming meals count. For women who take care of this sphere of the household reality, the specific times and plan of meals matter significantly more than to men. This ritualised model finds acceptance with both older and younger subjects: *We have a family that eats everything according to the clock. They eat breakfast at 9, then dinner at 2 p.m. and supper at 6, everything is on time and everyone eats together, I really like that (...)* (P-36, k-19); *Eating, bathroom habits and prayer are personal, and having coffee breakfast, dinner and watching the news with my husband are rituals* (P-62, k-48).

From the statements of older people with a higher education surveyed, it follows that in the past, the times of meals were more rigorously obeyed in the schedules of the household residents: *There were timing rules. Dinner*

115 Conf. Maria Małgorzata of Radziwiłł Franciszkowa Potocka (ed. Eligiusz Kozłowski), *Z moich wspomnień (Pamiętnik) [From My Memories (Journal)]*. Łomianki: Wydawnictwo LTW, 2010, p. 56-57.

116 Conf. Maria Barbasiewicz, *Dobre maniere...* op.cit., p. 135.

117 Conf. *Zachowania i nawyki żywieniowe Polaków...* op.cit.;

118 Conf. George Ritzer, *McDonaldyzacja społeczeństwa [The McDonaldization of Society]*. transl. Sławomir Magala, Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA, 1999, p. 229.

*was always at two (...) (W-56, m-65); (...) I remember, from my younger, childhood years (...) steady hours of meals. (...) if you went to anyone's house at the same hour, you knew they were having dinner. I liked that in the past. Now that's gone. Kids had a set rhythm and they snacked, there was no problem with obesity (Ch-46, k-56).*

In all locations, the surveyed emphasised that they eat alone during weekdays, and together with the family on weekends. Eating together accompanies the most important events in the subjects' lives. Residents of Przemysł region villages point out that common meals are associated with Sunday dinners in the company of the wider family circle: *If it's with the children, then only on Sundays (P-19, k-80); During the week it varies. If I'm hungry, then I take something to eat. On Sunday there is a set time for dinner together. In the morning to church, (...) and then at half eleven – family time (P-98, k-70).* Sometimes the women in villages, who serve other home-dwellers at the table, do not eat with everyone else: *I usually eat breakfast with my sons. Unless there are more people, they need extra helpings, then I eat on the run (P-68, k-48); (...) Yes, well because I eat last, by myself, I have to serve my husband first (...) (P-37, k-48).* On the Internet, breakfast is one of the favourite themes of culinary photos on Instagram, and in the declarations of the surveyed it's the loneliest meal of the day. Many subjects declared that they usually eat their evening meal while watching a television program. Similarly to Western culture, where the times of meals are planned as to coincide with the program times, the meal and the show thus function together as an integral element of passing time in the home.<sup>119</sup>

The meaning of the common meal is different for single people, living outside the family home. In their case, eating has been reduced to the basic function of consuming nourishment alone, with some attention paid to how it helps the health of the individual. Single people usually eat alone on a daily basis, together – at work or invited to a meal with family or friends.

#### 5.4. Eating alone

Eating alone used to be an expression of public isolation. Presently, eating meals away from a table, without a tablecloth, silverware or without etiquette and most importantly, in the absence of company, raises the importance of haste and destroys the ethical ties of post-industrial society. People eat while

<sup>119</sup> Conf. David Morley, *Przestrzenie domu: media, mobilność, tożsamość [Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity]*, transl. Jolanta Mach. Warszawa, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, p.107.

completing other tasks at home, on the streets at work, at school or university. The quick snack on the run confirms the regress of culinary customs. Dining rituals are reduced to a simple meal before the television screen. In the studied group, lonesome diners were usually single males or females, divorcees and widows or widowers over the age of 50.

Eating alone results from the individual preferences of the surveyed: *By myself, unless dad comes back, but then I also eat alone, because I don't like eating with him* (W-30, k-19); *I don't even ever eat with my children, because I don't like eating with them* (P-54, k-84); For some, it is without consequence how they eat: *It makes no difference to me. However it turns out. (...) if I'm hungry, then I go to the kitchen and makes myself some sandwiches, french fries or there's something in the pot. I don't mind either way, whether I eat alone, or with someone* (K-29, m-26). Eating alone may be determined by technical aspects, division of household labour: *We eat separately, because I eat when I'm feeding my daughter, and my husband eats when he comes home from work* (K-24, k-26), convenience: *(...) only I like to eat lying down. I watch TV then, or the stock-markets* (K-39, m-59) or a need for privacy: *I prefer to eat alone, I eat how I like, no one is looking at me* (K-75, k-64). Women from large cities declare that eating alone is due to the fact that they are on a diet: *I eat mostly on the run, not that I complain of a lack of time, but like most women, I'm on a diet* (W-42, k-30).

Eating alone within full families usually is a result of workload: *I always eat alone, no one is ever around. My wife comes back, then... it's four and that's too late for me* (P-20, m-55); *Alone mostly, because my daughters work, my son is by himself, they go to work, and I stay by myself* (P-90, m-68). Sometimes, in full families, the parents do not eat together with the growing children: *I don't even remember when we ate a meal together at home. (...) Even if the wife makes dinner (...), the kids then take their plate and go to their rooms* (Ch-48, m-53); *I noticed that my children no longer pay attention to how we eat, because you could be calling them forever to come to dinner, and they say they'll eat later, or they want to eat in front of the television. If I don't let them, then they sulk* (W-36, k-47).

Not eating together in a marriage is an expression of disagreement, conflict: *(...) if my wife angers me, then I take my food here and eat, you know – I buzz off* (P-72, m-64). Some subjects emphasise that eating alone was an element of family tradition, and they did not work out the habit in the past, of eating together with other family members.

The theme of eating alone at work appears only among residents of Warsaw and Kielce: *I take my dinner to work with me* (W-84, m-69); (...)

you eat “lunches” and usually quickly. Especially at work, you often don’t have time and you are forced to eat in a hurry, for example at the computer, getting your keyboard dirty (W-92, m-32); I often eat my lunch alone, because my colleagues have gone. I fold out the newspaper, there’s music on the radio – a little RMF. And it’s cool beans (K-11, m-56).

Subjects point out the differences in judgments of eating alone and with a group. In statements which underline the positive aspects of eating alone, the pursuit of individualism is visible: *There is a difference, because when I eat alone I have more influence on what I eat and how much, I don’t have to adjust to others* (W-3, k-23); *The difference is that in company you have to talk and by myself I can read* (W-18, k-24); (...) *in company you kind of have to take care of the person you’re eating with, but when I’m alone then I can think through some things* (W-19, k-62); *I prefer to eat alone, because then I eat in peace and how I want* (W-45, k-20); (...) *I prefer by myself, because then I watch a movie and no one bothers me* (K-26, m-27). Subjects, usually young men, perceive the necessity of behaving in a cultured manner in the company of fellow diners as a limiting of their freedom: (...) *you have to behave in front of your friends. By myself I don’t, and that’s that. But with your friends you have to know how to eat* (P-28, m-18); (...) *Alone you just gobble it up and pay no mind to etiquette* (P-58, m-29); *When I eat alone, then I feel more at ease, I don’t have to worry. But with someone, then you know, you have to remain correct* (K-75, k-64).

The community culinary customs declared by the surveyed reflect the changing eating habits in Poland. Less and less families are sitting at the table together, but “fast” food “out” has not become the generally accepted life style choice of the subjects, especially in smaller towns and villages. The priority of the family group is still the traditional home-cooked dinner. Despite prognosis of the demise of home food, most subjects still eat meals at home. Cooking for family and friends has been discovered as a way of spending free time, as art, potential for creation, self-realisation. According to the surveyed persons’ declarations, they want to eat together, but it is usually the woman who cooks.

The most important culture function of eating is communication. Brillat-Savarin counted the many reasons for which eating is an especially plentiful and reliable source of pleasure. People of every age may enjoy it at any time and in any circumstances. It never gets boring. We feel a natural attraction to food twice or three times a day. It is especially pleasant if we are savouring it in the company of other people, however it may also cheer us up when we are alone. It leaves lasting memories. We also know that it



has a good influence on our mood. Even waiting for food can be pleasant, as long as it does not turn into strong hunger. All these elements have appeared in the declarations of people from Warsaw, Kielce, Chełmno and Przemyśl.

## 6. Gender, hierarchy versus partnership

The kitchen is considered a gendered and gendering place. For women it is a basic area of socialisation and culturalisation. Working together in the kitchen was one of the main channels of transferring women's culture: women working together could exchange views, opinions, work out standards of work, through conversation and gossip local norms regarding a good housewife were formed, a good wife and mother. The kitchen was traditionally the domain of women, but in many noble homes, not only the richest ones, it was in good form to keep a chef, and in the early XIX century a female cook as well. The tasks that a lady from a noble home was responsible for were the supervision of the staff, controlling purchases and expenses, setting the *menu*. Women kept safe the keys to the medicine cabinet, pantry, closets with reserves and preserves, at the table they poured soup and carved the meat.<sup>120</sup> Women gathered recipes, either through buying cookbooks or writing them down in special notebooks, the recipes received from friends and neighbours for specialties, creating homemade cookbooks, which were like women's autobiographies and at the same time archives of family life.<sup>121</sup>

Some ladies from nobler gentry were not only not versed in cooking, but also in the rules of keeping a house, "the most important person in the house was the cook. (...) The better or worse existence of all the residents was dependent on her will."<sup>122</sup> During the twenty year inter-war period, women were encouraged to personally prepare meals without the help of a cook and servant, accenting the health and budget benefits, as well as the pleasure of cooking itself.<sup>123</sup> During the PRL era, cooking was foremost

120 Conf. Małgorzata Karpińska, *Zapach i smak Polski. Emigracyjne kobiece gotowanie [Taste and Smell of Poland. Emigrant Women's Cooking]*. In: Katarzyna Sierakowska and Grażyna Wyder (ed.), *Kobieta w gospodarstwie domowym. Ziemie polskie na tle porównawczym [Woman in the household. Polish lands comparatively]*. Zielona Góra: Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2012, p. 32-33.

121 Conf. Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

122 Jadwiga Waydel Dmochowska, *Jeszcze o dawnej Warszawie [Still About Old Warsaw]*. Warszawa: PIW, 1960, p.204.

123 Conf. Anna Kwiatek, *Sublokatorski kąpiel, kawalerska kuchnia, dom społeczny, czyli gospodarstwo domowe kobiety samotnej w świetle prasy kobiecej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego [Subletting a corner, bachelor's kitchen, social home, or the household of a single woman in light of inter-war press for women]*. In: Katarzyna Sierakowska and Grażyna Wyder (ed.), *Kobieta w gospodarstwie domowym...op.cit.*, p. 232.

done by women. Though, in the early post-war years there were postulates close to feminism which suggested the cooperation of men in household tasks, but the thesis of women's smaller motivation for career work was repeated tirelessly, because their minds will still always focus on the home.<sup>124</sup> In the Soviet Union it was believed that the destruction of the idea of home cooked food is necessary, in order to liberate women from the prison of the kitchen. In the new apartment complexes, flats were built without kitchens. They were to be replaced by workplace cafeterias.<sup>125</sup>

Modern studies of children concerning eating, reveal the difference between girls and boys. Boys, when interpreting these stories more often use symbols of violence and aggression, they mostly associated food with devouring. For girls however, the basic association with food is cooking and feeding.<sup>126</sup>

In every location the older respondents, married and aged 55 or above, expressed the conviction of a division of responsibilities in the sphere of cooking meals in the family. Mostly, the surveyed men assign the women the active role in the kitchen, which results from tradition. In their interpretation, the real leader in the kitchen is the wife: *I don't touch the cooking, the wife prepares everything* (W-4, m-63); *My wife is the boss in the kitchen* (Ch-59, m-78). In most statements the men express admiration for the culinary skills of their life partner: *Things to do with food, that's my wife's domain, who unlike ladies who got married and burnt water, has always cooked very well and still does. I am full of admiration for her* (W-78, m-66); *My wife cooks great and quickly* (K-1, m-81); *But my wife is the specialist. She prepares delicious dinners* (K-33, m-68).

Women mostly take into account the preferences of husbands and other "boys" in the family, when cooking: (...) *my husband is real soupy, that's why there's usually some good old soup* (W-97, k-65); *My son-in-law loves my herring with pickle and onion, he loves karpotka [a kind of cream pie – transl. note], so I always make it for him* (Ch-69, k-57); (...) *And we often have pork cutlet, because my husband likes it* (Ch-99, k-42); *I cook vegetarian dishes, because the boys aren't fond of meat* (P-68, k-48); *For my little grandson we often make blended soups – pumpkin with croutons* (W-97,

124 Conf. Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, *Zmiany w gospodarstwie domowym okresu PRL* [Changes in the Household of the PRL Era]. In: Katarzyna Sierakowska, Grażyna Wyder (ed.). *Kobieta w gospodarstwie domowym...* op.cit., p. 324.

125 Conf. Irina Głuszczenko, *Sowiety od kuchni. Mikojan i radziecka gastronomia* [Soviets from the Kitchen. Mikojan and Soviet Gastronomy]. transl. Mikołaj Przybylski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2012, p. 59.

126 Conf. Carole M. Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body. Gender, Meaning and Power*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999, p. 154.

k-65). Especially for young wives, the important rule is to satisfy the culinary wants of the husband: *Because of him, I cook more Polish food more often, always with extra meat and mostly two-course dinners* (W-33, k-25); *My husband likes żurek [sour rye soup], so that's a soup that is served at our house more often* (K-60, k-26); (...) *we can't have cinnamon, because my husband can't* (Ch-56, k-23); *At my house there's got to be a dinner for the husband. My husband works physically* (K-24, k-26).

In the studied group, differences in culinary preferences usually run along the gender line: *my boyfriend, he really likes cheese and I don't. He eats everything that has cheese in it and I don't, so it sounds strange, but I don't like to eat with him, because that cheese stinks* (W-48, k-34); *I like to eat honey, jams, cheeses the most, but my wife likes sausage* (K-1, m-81); (...) *I love rosół [meat broth], he can't stand it* (Ch-22, k-22).

Feeding is one of the most important channels of socialisation and forming the personality of a child. In the interpretation of the subjects, the role of the woman in culinary culture, since her earliest years, is quite obvious. It is the woman who is responsible for passing on that special value of this sphere of private life to children: *I tried to pass on to them, that food is important. But I don't know if I managed* (K-76, k-66); *I would like to instil in my children a respect for bread and food* (W-33, k-25). In this discourse, apart from the sphere of imponderables, she is also tasked with the day to day issues of caring for order and hygiene: (...) *so that children are able to get pleasure from things which maybe aren't that great, e.g. doing dishes or lugging groceries* (Ch-50, k-38); *I'll pass on to my kids that, if they care about tidiness, the kitchen will be theirs* (Ch-8, k-29).

Women from Chełmno and the areas around Przemysł are most decided when declaring the key role of women in transferring culinary traditions, making themselves responsible for teaching their daughters the culinary arts: *My daughter learned from me, cooks like me, often calls for advice* (Ch-6, k-49); *I taught my daughter since she was little, how to cook what and how to season* (P-53, k-72); (...) *My daughter often calls from England and cooks over the phone with me (...) usually gulasz* (K-96, k-61). In the opinions of the studied women, the basic source of generational transfer of culinary culture rules are other women: (...) *I would like to learn to cook like my mom* (P-36, k-19); *I try to do it like my mother did. At least on Christmas Eve or Easter* (...) (Ch-69, k-57); (...) *I cook like my mom, my grandma* (P-61, k-38); The culinary community of women is visible in statements: *My kid has a knack for it. Thanks to her I started cooking other dishes than our traditional ones. My little girl ... she is the Master Cook in our family!* (W-90, k-56).

In the small town and rural areas a source for rules regarding cooking very often cited by women is their own experience, gaining knowledge and practical solutions independently, without the help of others. Among the studied women, a popular source of recipes outside the family, is the Internet and televised culinary programs: (...) *Gordon Ramsey, I learn a lot from him (...)* we draw a lot from culinary programs (P-25, k-47); *I watch Okrasa, I like his things, or Ewa Wachowicz' show and often when I want to cook something, but aren't quite sure how, then I turn it on, I search, look on the Internet, of course, I have the comments underneath – I check to see if the opinions are positive, because sometimes there are gaffes. (...)* I'll grab something from that show "Pytanie na śniadanie" ["Questions for breakfast", a morning talk show] (P-78, k-40). Fairly often women indicate inspirations coming from cookbooks, specialist culinary press, less often from blogs about cooking.

Women in the surveyed group usually identify with the role of the fulfilled housewife: *Only I cook, the kitchen is mine* (Ch-8, k-29); *When I'm baking a cake, then the guys know they're not to be messing around in the kitchen* (Ch-47, k-52). In their reflection regarding the kitchen, there is *voluptas culinaria*, or the bliss associated with the skill of preparing meals. Cooking is an important element of female community, it plays an important role in socialisation to the traditional models of "woman – good housewife". Especially in Chełmno and Przemysł, everything is a display of individual abilities. For these women, it is important, however, that cooking not be treated as a sad obligation, but to always find a kind of joy in the task. In the statements of the surveyed, a high level of pleasure is associated with the cooking process itself, exceeding even the pleasure from eating.

In our culture, cooking is a basic sign of care, sharing food during meals is one of the main forms of social contact, for which women feel responsible. For the studied women, cooking is much more than a regular household chore: (...) *-serving someone, that's just a pleasure. I can bake, I can cook, if I have someone to cook for* (K-95, ??-73); (...) *preparing a meal for others is fun* (Ch-1, k-25); (...) *food is in some way a source of joy – if my husband says that it's a delicious dinner* (Ch-68, k-72).

Within the studied group, a group of women stands out, who declare a lack of skills, as well as satisfaction in the culinary sphere: (...) *I've got no talent when it comes to cooking* (Ch-88, k-45); (...) *I don't have a very developed taste yet, (...)* for example beef, my husband seasons it himself (...) (Ch-51, k-30); (...) *I made rosół and put the noodles directly in it, had to throw everything away because I wouldn't admit that I don't know that you cook the pasta separately*

[laughter] (P-78, k-40); *I never liked to cook – it takes up an awful amount of time! And I don't have many culinary skills* (W-90, k-56).

Men usually exhibit their own culinary skills in the scope of specific dishes: *I know how to cook and once when I had to cook, then I knew how to do everything. Pasta, cabbage and chicken in the slow cooker* (K-1, m-81); (...) *I cook sometimes. Spaghetti, cutlets with potatoes, some simple soups I can cook as well* (K-58, m-22); *Once I made sponge cake. (...) I made these fried pancakes, like racuchy. The kind with yeast, for example. Now my wife, has moved me away from the kitchen* (K-67, m-51); *Rosół, bigos, tripe. Those are my favourite, but I also make them very well* (K-68, m-32); (...) *I make liqueurs* (K-69, m-68); *I like to cook some soup. Even my woman can't make one like that!* (P-20, m-55).

Cooking is traditionally the domain of women. Western studies show that only men who ever from responsibility of everyday cooking, saw food as a pleasant hobby.<sup>127</sup> Increasingly, more men see preparing meals not only as a chore, but also as a pleasant form of spending their free time.<sup>128</sup> In the studied group, men communicate that they know the secrets of the art of cooking. Women from the medium and small city confirm the men's culinary ability.

The aesthetisation of everyday life in the area of arranging the process of consumption is visible in women's approach to culinary practices. Women from cities often emphasised the necessity of keeping up the aesthetics and the proper atmosphere of sharing a meal. Men pay less attention to the aesthetic qualities of eating: (...) *It's nice when it looks good or something, but don't overdo it* (K-84, m-28).

Only women from Warsaw and Chełmno pointed out cleanliness and hygiene as an important rule of preparing dishes: *Everything has to be clean. It has to be brought to perfection. Those are the rules I took from home* (Ch-87, k-57); (...) *you wash the vegetables and rinse the meat. You have to have a clean table, clean dishes and when you wash the pots you need to wipe them dry before putting them in the cupboard* (W-41, k-74); (...) *when I come into someone's kitchen, my first instinct is to look at the stove and the rags. If they're not so great, then I'm already nauseous. (...) right away I imagine what the meal will be like* (Ch-69, k-57).

In the surveyed group, culinary practices are gendered, i.e. marked by the category of social and cultural gender. The biological, existential vital-

<sup>127</sup> Conf. Frances Short, *Kitchen Secrets: The Meaning of Cooking in Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg, 2006. p.78.

<sup>128</sup> Conf. Isabelle de Solier, *Food and the Self. Consumption, Production and Material Culture*. Bloomsbury, London, New York 2013. p. 129.

ity of food and the associated universality and natural aspect make the act of preparing and consuming food a basic frame of everyday experience for the studied women. In every location the number of women pointing out rules associated with cooking and eating clearly exceeds the number of men speaking on the matter.

According to universal opinion among both genders in the studied group, women are identified and emotionally tied to culinary practices to a greater degree than men. In the woman's experience, the kitchen shows a tendency to satisfy basic needs of the household residents: security and love. Providing or serving food is meant to be a demonstration of feelings, fondness, a sign of closeness. In the cases of some women the tasks are an occasion to possess the culinary space for themselves exclusively and a realm of competition with the man. In the declarations of older women without career jobs, there is still a visible logic of "offering a gift" by preparing food, which once emphasised the woman's non-financial input into family life.<sup>129</sup> Younger, professionally engaged women, who live in the city, do not declare that strong a need of the unpaid "gift" of meals in a situation where the traditional role of the man as the main or sole provider of the family has lost validity within the household.

## 7. Eating practices

### 7.1. Everyday home menu

"We are what we eat", the phrase assigned to Ludwig Feuerbach, the XIX century German philosopher. The foods consumed, their quality and amount always were an important fragment of social practice. Judging from what buy, we cook and eat we are nearly the same as our parents. The only radical change in comparison to the PRL period, is not needing to stockpile food. During the last quarter of a century, Poles have revolutionised not just the political system, but also the kitchen. From simple consumers of food they have changed into connoisseurs of food. A GUS report shows that Poles are buying less food, but spending more and more on it, paying attention to the quality of the products. Compared to the 1990s, the consumption of potatoes, bread, flour, beef, sugar and animal fats has

129 Conf. Alan Warde, *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*. London: Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1997, p.147; Debbie Kemmer, *Tradition and Change in Domestic Roles and Food Preparation*. "Sociology" May 2000, vol. 34, no. 2, p. 323-333.

decreased, while the consumption of pasta, yogurts, vegetables, exotic fruit, mineral water has clearly increased. Instytut Ekonomiki Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej [the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics] reported that the average Polish person eats a monthly amount of 5,5 kg of meat, including nearly 2,5 kg of cold cuts, 0,5 kg of fish, 4,8 kg of bread, 3,5 litres of milk, nearly a kilogram of cheese, 13 eggs, nearly 2 kg of sugar and nearly 4 kg of fruit and 10 kg of vegetables.<sup>130</sup> Meat is still a staple element of a meal and a necessary component of diet. Poles prefer red meat: pork, beef, as well as chicken. Nearly one in three Poles eats meat and meat products daily, and two-thirds eat it several times a week. Fish are rare in the daily diet. The consumption of fish is 10 times less than that of meat – one in four respondents declares consuming fish more often than once a week. The amount of fish consumed is half the consumption in the “old” countries of the European Union. Poles are eating less and less fish, this habit only changes before Christmas, when 95% cultivate the tradition of eating Christmas Eve carp.<sup>131</sup>

Table 3. Subjects' word association connected with the everyday household menu, according to frequency of mention

Word associations			
Warszawa	Kielce	Chełmno	Przemysł
Meat (21)	Meat (21)	Meat (30)	Meat (45)
Chicken (12)	Chicken (15)	Chicken (30)	Chicken (18)
Cutlets (2)	Cutlets (5)	Cutlets (12)	Cutlets (9)
Fried pork chops(7)	Fried pork chops (13)	Fried pork chops (21)	Fried pork chops (12)
Frikadeller (5)	Frikadeller (6)	Frikadeller (9)	Frikadeller (11)
Cabbage roll (3)	Bigos [hunter's stew] (6)	Cabbage roll (11)	Cabbage roll (24)
Tripe	Goulash (5)	Zrazy [meat roulade] (10)	Bigos (7)
Cold cuts	Cabbage roll (4)	Goulash (8)	Tripe (6)
Soups (10)	Tripe (2)	Meatballs (6)	Schnitzel (4)
Rosół [meat broth] (8)	Steak tartare (2)	Bigos (4)	Gulasz (3)
Tomato soup (8)	Zrazy (2)	Meatballs (2)	Zrazy (3)

130 Conf. <http://www.egospodarka.pl/58559.html> (date of access: 24.11.2014)

131 Conf. <http://www.egospodarka.pl/tematy/zwyczajne-zywniowe-Polakow> (date of access: 24.11.2014)

Borscht (3)	Meatballs (2)	Tripe	Cold cuts (10)
Pickle soup (3)	Schnitzel	Golonka [ham hock]	Soups (19)
Vegetable soup (2)	Lunch meats (10)	Lunch meats (5)	Rosół (43)
Bean soup (2)	Soups (14)	Soups (8)	Borscht(23)
Pea soup	Rosół (17)	Tomato soup (18)	Tomato soup (13)
Żurek [sour rye soup]	Tomato soup (8)	Rosół (16)	Vegetable soup (12)
Chłodnik	Vegetable soup (4)	Pea soup (10)	Żurek (11)
Cabbage soup	Pea soup (4)	Pickle soup (10)	Pickle soup (7)
Vegetables (8)	Borscht (4)	Vegetable soup (9)	Krupnik (7)
Salads / slaws (10)	Żurek (4)	Bean soup (5)	Cabbage soup (4)
Potatoes (6)	Krupnik (4)	Cauliflower soup (5)	Cauliflower soup (2)
Sauces (2)	Zalewajka (3)	Meatball soup <sup>1</sup> (2)	Bean soup (2)
Dania wegetariańskie	Pickle soup (2)	Borscht (2)	Kartoflanka [potato soup] (2)
Owoce (5)	Bean soup (2)	Żurek (2)	Pea soup (2)
Makarony (13)	Mushroom soup (2)	Czernina <sup>2</sup> (2)	Sorrel soup(2)
Eggs (4)	Fruit soup	Kartoflanka	Mushroom soup (2)
Pancakes (3)	Sorrel soup	Parzybroda/parzucha <sup>3</sup>	Broccoli soup
Dumplings (2)	Cabbage soup	Fruit soup	Hungarian soup
Flat-cakes (2)	Vegetables (10)	Turnip soup	Vegetables (6)
Lasagne	Salads/slaws (5)	Vegetables (8)	Salads/slaws (11)
Pizza	Potatoes (15)	Salads/slaws (17)	Potatoes (25)
Casseroles	Sauces (13)	Potatoes (18)	Vegetarian dishes (5)
Groats	Baked beans (5)	Sauces (8)	Letcho (2)
Rice	Letcho	Baked beans (2)	Cabbage (5)
Oatmeal	Cabbage (5)	Letcho	Cucumber salad (4)
Fish (2)	Fruit (5)	Cabbage (8)	Fruit (3)
Herring	Pasta (16)	Cucumber salad (6)	Pasta (8)
Sushi	Eggs (43)	Fruit (2)	Eggs (3)
Cheese (2)	Pierogi (13)	Pasta (12)	Pierogi (75)
Bread (3)	Pancakes (4)	Eggs (9)	Pancakes (14)
Sweets	Dumplings (2)	Pierogi (5)	Dumplings (18)
Cakes	Fried flat-cakes (2)	Pancakes (7)	Potato cakes(4)



Ice cream	Lasagne	Dumplings (3)	Flat-cakes (4)
Milk	Casseroles (2)	Potato pancakes (3)	Proziaki <sup>4</sup> (5)
Tea	Groats (9)	Flat-cakes (3)	Lasagne
Polish cuisine	Rice (8)	Lasagne	Pizza (3)
Italian cuisine	Fish (5)	Pizza (3)	Groats (5)
Chinese cuisine	Herring (2)	Casseroles (3)	Rice (6)
	Cheese (4)	Groats (3)	Fish (14)
	Bread	Rice (2)	Cheese (13)
	Cakes (4)	Fish (13)	Bread (3)
	Jam/honey(3)	Herring	Cakes (8)
	Compote (3)	Cheese (2)	Ice cream
	Home-made liquers/ wines (2)	Bread (4)	Milk
	Polish cuisine	Cakes (16)	Compote (3)
		Home-made fruit preserves (3)	Polish cuisine
		Milk	
		Compote (3)	
		Polish cuisine	

Numbers in parentheses show the number of associations with given product in declarations of the surveyed. Lack of parentheses signifies one association.

Home cooking belongs to those areas of national heritage where one grows into the culinary culture of a country earliest and most emotionally. Analysing the answers to the question regarding meals consumed most often, one could get the impression that the subjects in each location declare the dinner menu as the most typical at their house. Starting in Warsaw and ending with Przemyśl, the number one association most frequently mentioned in declarations, is meat (mostly chicken). In all studied cities/towns and villages, the majority of people declared themselves “carnivorous”. Among proponents of meat, the majority are older subjects, mostly men. In Warsaw, the survey participants eat beef, veal, turkey – baked and fried. In Kielce, Chełmno and Przemyśl, the set of meat dishes is enriched with a larger selection of poultry, ribs, liver, pork chuck, bigos, goulash, zrazy, schnitzel, meatballs, bitki, klopsy, tartare, golonka, steaks. In the smaller towns, the meat dishes are served with a

larger amount of sauces, roux, the obligatory dinner dish is pork cutlet, more popular than minced – meat cotlets [frikadeller]. The smaller the town, the more popular cabbage rolls are.

In Warsaw, the number of declarations comparable to meat is for dishes where the main ingredient is pasta. They are named twice as often as potatoes. In the smaller towns and villages the popularity of potatoes grows proportionately. In Chełmno and Przemysł area villages a significant element of the diet are potato casseroles, potato pancakes and dumplings of various kinds: pyzy, kopytka, kluski śląskie, paluszki ziemniaczane, łazanki. In Warsaw, among soups, rosół and tomato soup dominate. Apart from that: pickle soup, borscht, bean soup, vegetable soup, sour rye, cabbage, pea soup, chłodnik [cold borscht with cream]. This is a fairly modest range compared to other cities, considering both the number of choices and types of soups. Soup propositions in smaller towns are expanded with krupnik, kartoflanka, zalewajka (the equivalent of white borscht/sour rye), mushroom, champignon mushroom, fruit, sorrel, cauliflower, broccoli. In Chełmno, a unique proposition compared to other cities is rutabaga soup, meatball soup, parzybroda (or *parzucha*, a kind of savoy cabbage soup) and especially czernina (broth with duck blood soup). Czernina was known as *czarna polewka* (“black soup”) already in ancient times. Athenians considered it especially distasteful. In old Poland it was served to a bachelor, to refuse his marriage proposal; Adam Mickiewicz mentions it in “Pan Tadeusz”, which was served to Jacek Soplica.

In Przemysł area villages *soups on heavy cream* are preferred. Within regional tradition there are several types of red borscht: Ukrainian borscht, with *uszka*, with *kolduny* [types of dumplings]. A choice characteristic only for Przemysł is “Hungarian soup”: (...) *it's made from chuck (neck and shoulder), e.g. fried with onion, later you add various coloured peppers, white button mushrooms, covered in water and thickened with flour* (P-78, k-40). In Przemysł, subjects used neologisms to identify soups: borscht with rags (chard) and nylon soup (with groats). Residents of the villages do not identify any specific regional dish: *Here, society in the Subcarpathian, especially near the border, they're migrants from Ukraine and there are people who already have lived here and their dishes have mixed. (...) There is no specific (...) dish* (P-40, k-62).

A real favourite among all soups is rosół (soup on meat-based broth). Its popularity and choice as a Sunday soup, most often eaten in Kielce and Chełmno, is twice as that in Warsaw, and five times that of Przemysł areas: *On Sunday we like to eat, despite the hot weather, some rosół. A house that doesn't smell of rosół and cake on Sunday is unacceptable* (K-62, k-45); *The*

*favourite for everybody is rosół, it's a kind of soup that could be eaten all the time* (Ch-103, k-79).

In all the surveyed locations, vegetables are an important menu item, especially made into slaws and salads, in Chełmno the subjects mention a traditional homemade vegetable salad. In Kielce, Chełmno, and Przemysł a popular vegetable is cabbage, beans, and among vegetable dishes: cucumber salad, letcho stew, baked beans. Most fruits are eaten daily in Warsaw, Kielce, less in Chełmno and Przemysł. Older subjects who are retired, in Kielce, Chełmno and Przemysł villages, use their own garden and plot crops in the kitchen, and make preserves for the winter.

Vegetarian dishes are not typically an element of the menu, declared only by subjects from Warsaw and Przemysł. Grain products, apart from declarations from surveyed in Kielce and Przemysł, are rare. The daily diet is supplemented by, infrequently mentioned in Warsaw, but appearing more often in menus from smaller towns, flour products, and among them kluski (dumplings), placki, naleśniki (crepes/pancakes), croquettes, racuchy (called "proziaki" in Przemysł).

Pierogi are a foundation of cooking in the Kielce area, and especially around Przemysł, where the subjects list their most varied offering: pierogi with cabbage, "Russian" pierogi (w/ cheese and potatoes), with potatoes, with meat, with groats, with fruit.

Polish traditional cooking in the household menu is a conscious choice, the surveyed consider it a heritage, or even privilege. This style of cooking finds more proponents in smaller towns, it is associated with specific dishes, mostly meat based. In the statements of subjects from larger cities, changes in culinary habits are visible, or at least in the associated aspirations. Increasing knowledge regarding the quality of ingredients, arouses curiosity and goes hand in hand with the desire to experiment. Creating a new dish is straying away from tradition, from existing models, a tiny, but not insignificant exercising of freedom. Readiness to try new taste sensations and experiment in the kitchen is declared exclusively by subjects from large and middle-sized cities. Often the reasons for culinary experiments are children: *It's changed now, because my daughter has moved in for a while, who cooks for me, very interesting things – spinach and things. It used to be more traditional* (W-71, m-54); *My child taught me to eat dishes without potatoes, which I'm not too fond of, and I'm grateful for that. Quiches, casseroles, lasagne, pasta with extras* (W-90, k-56); (...) *I learn from my daughter, she often makes casseroles and other such nonsense* (K-77, k-55); *Mostly Polish cuisine, but little culinary novelties as well... it happens... mostly my daughters will mess around* (P-99, m-53).

In recent years there has been an increase interest in convenience foods, which are used to compose entire meals from elements. In the past, commercial alternatives to homemade food did not catch on, as it was considered that they lead to appropriation of family life and loss of family autonomy.<sup>132</sup> Poles buy easily accessible semi-ready products and full, ready to serve meals. Not many people use delivery of such dishes to their home, 75% do not order them at all or nearly at all.<sup>133</sup> Poles do not have the habit of ordering ready meals to their home. 50% never order such meals, and 25% declare that they order ready meals less than once a month. It is usually pizza (89%), decidedly less often – kebab (13%), sometimes “Chinese”, pierogi, chicken or home-style meals. One in twenty people regularly orders (once a week) takeout, which is consumed at home then.<sup>134</sup>

Studied residents of cities emphasise culinary preferences for simple, mostly inexpensive and quick to prepare foods: *What do I cook? Mostly what is pretty quick to make* (W-90, k-56); *We often eat casseroles, (...) cause it makes itself quickly* (K-4, k-20); *Back in the day you'd make a base for żurek, fold pierogi. Now I have everything in packages. I pour in water and it's ready. I do it this way, because it's (...) cheaper than homemade and less time and effort* (K-25, k-62); *Soups, most often and the easiest* (Ch-15, k-50).

Subjects in Warsaw and Kielce more often are guided by the quality of products: *We pay attention to the quality of products* (W-68, k-40); *I also don't scrimp on food* (K-76, k-66), while in smaller towns, especially in Przemyśl area villages, their relation to price: *I cook what I can afford* (P-3, k-74); *(...) everything depends on the budget* (P-42, k-45); *Everyone cooks what they can afford* (P-100, k-70).

Subjects rarely consume meals outside the house. According to survey studies regarding the dietary habits of Poles, 81% visit pizzerias, 74% fast food restaurants, 73% *zapiiekanki* [open faced toasted cheese sandwiches] stands, and 73% popular “kebab” places. At the tail end are sushi bars, which are frequented by one in four people eating outside their home. The number of people declaring restaurant outings has decreased.<sup>135</sup>

Within the studied group, young people, mostly residents of cities, usually single, cook at home less often. They eat out, at fast food places or use catering.

132 Conf. Alan Warde, *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*, London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997, p.154.

133 Conf. *Zachowania i nawyki żywieniowe Polaków...* op.cit..

134 Conf. <http://www.egospodarka.pl/tematy/zwyczajy-zywieniowe-Polakow> (date of access: 24.11.2014)

135 Conf. <http://www.ipsos.pl/> (date of access: 24.11.2014)

Though all of us live in local environments, the worlds experienced for most of us are actually global.<sup>136</sup> In the statements of subjects from cities, we see the context of contemporary, fast food culture and its basic traits, such as mass volume, speed, value, rationality. Young adults know how to prepare Italians, pastas, are glad to heat up their dinner in the microwave, and leave folding pierogi and frying pork cutlets to their parents and grandparents. In the studied group the “cup o’ soup” transforms the oppressive labour of women in the kitchen.

Presently an important factor in creating a national cuisine seems to be commercialisation, globalisation, which creates increasing problems with the authenticity of such cuisine, since the purpose of it is to adapt to the demand and taste of the target consumers. Most often on the tables of the surveyed we will see rosół, pork cutlet with potatoes and slaw, perceived as a symbol of Polish traditional cooking. The declared diet is monotonous, fatty, full of products with low nutrition values, not guaranteeing healthy attitudes and dietary habits. Even young people indicate these same dishes as their favourite. This shows the huge significance of habits and preferences brought from one’s family home.

## 7.2. Culinary dreams

One of the most common symptoms of globalisation, in Poland also, is contact with culturally or nationally different dishes. In modern culture, taste has undergone culturalisation, reflection, it has ceased to become obvious, acquired through inheritance and thus naturally accessible to everyone.<sup>137</sup> As Bourdieu claims, the value which shapes tastes and thus imposes specific practices, is always that which is rare, luxurious and inaccessible. The menus of designer restaurants offer spoiled fish, cheeses with live larva, fried tarantulas, duck embryos, yak penises, for people refined and experienced enough to fully appreciate the craft of this kind of food. That which we consider tasty and refined is dependent on culture, trends and the times in which we live.

<sup>136</sup> Conf. Anthony Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość [Modernity and Self-identity]*, transl. Alina Szulżycka, Warszawa: PWN, 2002, p. 256-257.

<sup>137</sup> Conf. Katarzyna Leńska-Bąk, *O pokarmach, smakach i utraconych znaczeniach. Historia kultury sub speciaie culinaria [About foods, tastes and lost meanings. History of culture sub speciaie culinaria]*. Opole: Opolskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, Uniwersytet Opolski, 2010, p.62.

Table 4. Subjects' word associations connected with dishes which they have not eaten, but would like to try, according to frequency of mention

Word associations			
Warszawa	Kielce	Chełmno	Przemysł
Seafood (8)	Seafood (8)	Seafood (14)	Seafood (15)
Prawns (4)	Crab (3)	Prawns (6)	Octopus (5)
Lobster (2)	Shellfish (3)	Shellfish (4)	Prawns (3)
Crab	Prawns (2)	Squid (3)	Oysters (3)
Squid	Octopus (2)	Lobster (3)	Crab
Octopus	Squid	Octopus (3)	Lobster
Snails (5)	Lobster	Crab (2)	Snails (5)
Crayfish	Snails (5)	Oysters (2)	Frog legs (5)
Frog legs	Frog legs (4)	Snails (6)	Crayfish (2)
Exotic fish (3)	Snails (3)	Frog legs (5)	Sushi
Sushi (5)	Crayfish	Crayfish	Exotic fish (2)
Caviar	Sushi (6)	Sushi (5)	Stuffed pig
Blood soup (2)	Caviar (2)	Caviar (4)	Haggis <sup>5</sup>
Pheasant broth	Kebab (2)	Kebab	Asian insects <sup>6</sup>
Baked snake	Lamb	Horse meat	Exotic fruit
Moose meat	Hungarian goulash	Reindeer meat	Truffles
Dog meat <sup>7</sup>	Moussaka <sup>8</sup>	Shark meat	Asian cuisine
Krupniok (blood sausage) <sup>9</sup>	Insects	Italian style beef	Chinese cuisine
Roasted ants and crickets	Shark fin soup <sup>10</sup>	Roast duck	African cuisine
Honey baked ants	Udon soup <sup>11</sup>	Chicken in chocolate	Italian cuisine
Wasabi <sup>12</sup>	Asparagus (2)	Spring rolls <sup>13</sup>	French cuisine
Capers	Exotic fruit	Grilled foods (2)	
Avocado	French cheese	Asian insects <sup>14</sup> (3)	
Pomegranate	Italian cuisine (3)	Rutabaga soup	
Papaya	Japanese cuisine (2)	Tofu <sup>15</sup>	
Durian <sup>16</sup>	Asian cuisine	Pomegranate	
Truffles	Chinese cuisine	Coconut	

Silesian dumplings	Vietnamese cuisine	Chestnuts
Blini <sup>17</sup>	Thai cuisine	Bulgarian cuisine
Cepelinai (kartacze) <sup>18</sup>	Indian cuisine	
Kanapka Elvisa Presleya <sup>19</sup>	Arabian cuisine	
Marzipan cake with strawberries	Greek cuisine	
Japanese cuisine (2)	Spanish cuisine	
Italian cuisine (2)	French cuisine	
Kresy (borderlands) cuisine (2)	Russian cuisine	
Hungarian cuisine	Polish regional cuisine	
Indian cuisine	Molecular gastronomy <sup>20</sup>	
Arabian cuisine		
Mexican cuisine		
Polish regional cuisine		
Warsaw cuisine		
Molecular gastronomy		
Beer		
Tequila		

Numbers in parentheses show the number of associations with given product in declarations of the surveyed. Lack of parentheses signifies one association.

While Brillat-Savarin argues that the “fortunes of nations depend on their way of eating”<sup>138</sup>, for a certain part of those surveyed, culinary matters themselves are neither interesting or worth reflecting over: *Where did you think up that question, I don’t know what I’d eat* (P-61, k-38).

Subjects from Chelmino and Przemyśl have less culinary dreams than subjects from Warsaw and Kielce. In every town the first association with a dish that the surveyed never ate, but would like to try, was seafood. Prawns, lobsters, crabs, squid (calamari), shellfish, oysters, octopus, shark meat were mentioned in subjects’ statements. Exotic fish, sushi, caviar and snails, frogs or rather frog legs and crayfish were also popular. Subjects wishes in each location also included “bugs”.

<sup>138</sup> Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Fizjologia smaku...* op.cit., p.8.

What all subjects have in common is the desire to try fruits and vegetables which are exotic, in their view. In Warsaw these are: durian fruit, papaya, pomegranate, avocado, capers; in Kielce: asparagus; in Chełmno: pomegranate, coconut, chestnuts; in Przemyśl: coconuts and the less exotic spinach. Truffles appeared in Warsaw and Przemyśl. In the unique set in each town there were also meat dishes, in Warsaw: baked snake, moose meat, dog meat, wasabi; in Kielce: lamb, kebab, Hungarian goulash, moussaka; in Chełmno: kebab, horsemeat, reindeer meat, baked duck, chicken in chocolate, Italian beef, spring rolls; in Przemyśl: stuffed pig, Haggis, krupniok. On the list of wished for dishes there were also soups not eaten regularly: pheasant broth, czernina (blood soup), rutabaga soup. Subjects from Warsaw had not eaten Silesian dumplings, blini, kartacze, and alcohol appeared only on their list: beer and tequila, and a desert: marzipan cake with strawberries.

For subjects from rural areas the question about dishes they would like to try was a surprise. They admitted they had not thought about it before, but they were sure that they would try something “exotic”: *A seafood thing, I don't know what it's called. Some kind of crayfish or something (P-28, m-18); Oh, maybe something more fancy, octopus or something like that, something more foreign, fancy (P-36, k-10); There is probably something like that, I know, they advertise it. Maybe I would try oysters, I'm stumped, I don't know. One hasn't been abroad, though now I go to Biedronka they have more and more products (P-46, k-63).*

All the surveyed people, when speaking of “exotic food”, emphasise that it is best to eat it in the country of its origin: like snails and cheese, then strictly in French, lamb in Turkey, spaghetti in Italy, bugs in Asia. This is especially visible in the statements of people with a higher education, who travelled the world or would like to take a culinary trip. For subjects who do not have travel experiences, eating foreign dishes is a kind of substitute for travel. When they order gyros, they feel like they are in Greece, and the kebab transfers them to Arab countries. For these people the media has become a culinary inspiration: *I want to eat a layer cake from marzipan, all marzipan with strawberries, like they show in one of the TV programs (W-32, m-40); When I watch Travel or Discovery channel there is this group of six, who travel which travels all around the world and they eat... it looks so beautiful, that you want to try it. (K-64, m-52); (...) when that Okrasa cooks, I could eat everything he makes (Ch-83, k-65); (...) when you watch culinary programs, then for sure you would want to try all that (P-102, k-38).*

The smaller the town, the fewer the statements there are indicating that subjects wish for a specific dish. Some of the surveyed state outright,



that they have no such needs or dreams. *I don't want to eat anything I don't know* (P-3, k-74); *Mary Queen of Poland! I don't think I have any inkling. Ah, forget it! Give me a break!* (...) (P-20, m-55).

Answers about the lack of culinary wishes are polarised between two positions. The first is based on the conviction that the subjects have already eaten everything they desired. It is also occasion to boast of what they already ate: (...) *I've eaten oysters, crabs, mussels and others. What else... that's more exotic. I eat sushi sometimes* (W-95, k-65); *I have eaten frogs, I ate crabs, I ate shellfish, I ate snails and Japanese food, the only thing I don't like is sushi* (W-72, k-75); (...) *I have travelled in my lifetime a bit, so I don't especially have any wants, because I've eaten oysters already, some mussels too. I've had my share of caviar* (W-66, m-80); *I tried shark meat once and frankly I was disappointed. Nothing special* (K-44, k-39); (...) *I've eaten so much already! Seafood, all that craziness* (P-16, k-56).

The fact that someone was abroad or additionally ate some dishes which, in their mind, belongs to exotic "craziness," affirms the opinion that they have already eaten everything. This applies even to very young people. Subjects who had no occasion to travel abroad, explain that they can eat everything here, in their own country: *I cannot think of anything that I would like to eat, but could not buy or get it somewhere* (W-64, m-51); (...) *I can buy whatever I have the craving for* (K-21, m-62); (...) *if someone has the desire, then everything is in stores* (...) (Ch-79, k-50).

The other polar conviction is that subjects do not have culinary dreams, because they have never decided to eat any specific "unfamiliar" dish: (...) *all those seafood flavours, somehow I don't have the guts. The appearance kind of puts me off. I don't know how to go about it* (W-85, k-64); *I don't eat those bugs either, or snails, come on. No, no "owoce morza" [fruits of the sea] for me, I eat Polish fruit* (Ch-82, k-70); *I've never eaten sushi, but I would like to try it, I look at how they prepare it and it's all raw* (Ch-100, m-82); (...) *my husband told me that squid tastes like silicone so somehow I don't feel any urge* (Ch-47, k-52).

Subjects' statements show that food touches on cultural borders and taboo, rooted reflexes of distaste or fears. According to Julia Kristeva<sup>139</sup>, the most basic and archaic form of loathing is repulsion from food: (...) *octopus looks disgusting* (K-46, k-69); *I don't want to try any snails, shellfish. (...) when I see it on television it jars me* (Ch-60, k-70); *I don't want to eat prawns. Bleh* (K-29, m-26); (...) *there are dishes that everyone eats, but I can't*

139 Conf. Julia Kristeva, *Potęga obrzydzenia. Esej o wstręcie* [Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection]. transl. Maciej Falski. Kraków: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2007.

bring myself to do it, like seafood... it stinks to me (W-91, k-63); (...) when I watch travel shows and see how they eat locust or snake then it mostly repulses me (W-87, k-29); (...) when I look at seafood, it just makes me nauseous (K-15, k-67); (...) I have never eaten prawns, it really puts me off, a lot (K-78, k-69); (...) I haven't eaten seafood, the smell alone pushes me away (P-102, k-38). Every dietary practice is tangled up in a web of drives (attraction or repulsion) in relation to smells, colours and forms, and also consistency.<sup>140</sup>

In statements about products which they would like to eat, the value of local flavours is accented, those most willingly consumed in the region of origin. Subjects from most cities sample dishes of exotic cuisine, try out new flavours, bring home recipes from their travels. The barrier declared in smaller towns is the excessive price of exotic meals: *Tons of people eat what they can afford, that's the truth. A bunch of people can't afford to buy something, only in places like Biedronka and other muck* (K-86, m-58); (...) *seafood, caviar, which is not cheap, you know (...)* I mostly won't allow myself to get it. *But I am curious how they taste* (Ch-81, k-29).

After a period of fascination with exotic foods, Poles return to their roots. They remember dishes from rutabaga and parsnip. It seems that subjects from Chełmno and Przemyśl never really strayed from these roots. "Home-grown" food defines their identity. It is not associated with a ban on "foreigner food," but rather with a defined preference for the local menu. Meals typical for "exotic" countries, mostly China or Japan, and Arab countries are, within the studied group, accepted as desired and attractive, but also rejected as odd, or even repulsive in taste.

In the statements of surveyed from cities as well as villages, one may find a postmodernistic way of looking at cuisine. In the area of meals which they would like to try, they mix products, combine flavours. Dishes from various regions are collected in one cuisine under the guise of Polish fusion. Food, which in the convictions of women and men, should be original, varied, but at the same time in agreement with flavours of the family home.

### 7.3. Popular culinary trends in the immediate environment

The dominating class in Poland, due to short history and lack of continuity and rooting, have not fully developed specific eating customs, which are part of the dominating classes of western European countries, described by Bourdieu. The imitative character of Polish modernisation is largely

140 Conf. Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *Wynaleźć codzienność ...op.cit.*, p.170.

reduced to copying western lifestyles and models of consumption. Customs and values are copied from the western cultural production class, which in recent years has been intensively creating models of food consumption. A trait of modern society is the unification of consumption models, while on the other hand this uniformity is associated with intensification of actions directed toward a search for identity, "expressing yourself".<sup>141</sup> In Polish society, along with a unification of lifestyles, there is a process of unification of methods of eating.<sup>142</sup> The Globalisation of food has a close relation to the fragmentation of culture and identity.

Table 5. Subjects' word associations connected to the most popular dishes in their immediate environment, according to frequency of mention

Word associations			
Warszawa	Kielce	Chełmno	Przemysł
Sushi (26)	Fast food (2)	Fast food (2)	Pierogi (24)
Fast food (2)	Kebab (9)	Kebab (8)	Russian („ruskie”) pierogi (9)
Kebab (7)	pizza (7)	pizza (7)	Pierogi with cabbage (8)
pizza (6)	Chicken fries	Hamburgers (2)	Pierogi with meat (2)
Hamburgers (2)	Spaghetti (2)	Chips (2)	Pierogi with spinach (2)
Belgian fries	Seafood (2)	Zapiekanki (grilled cheese/casserole)	Pierogi with buckwheat (2)
Hot dogs	Prawns/shrimp (2)	Crisps	Pierogi with lentils (2)
Tapas <sup>21</sup>	Crab	Spaghetti (2)	Pierogi with fruit
Nachos <sup>22</sup>	Sushi	Seafood (3)	Kebab (6)
Spaghetti (3)	Beef Stroganoff	Krewetki (2)	pizza (6)
Prawns/shrimp (2)	Honey chicken wings	Shellfish	Chips
Bitki wołowe (stewed beef)	Moussaka	Sushi	Spaghetti (4)
Roasted meats	Bigos (hunter's stew) (2)	Salmon	Salmon
White sausage	Tripe (2)	Ryba po grecku („greek fish")	Marinated fish
Bigos	Pork cutlet (3)	Bigos (6)	Cabbage rolls (8)
Cabbage rolls	Ham hock	Cabbage rolls (4)	Bigos (7)

141 Conf. George Ritzer, *Mcdonaldyzacja społeczeństwa...*op.cit.

142 Conf. Katarzyna Leńska-Bąk, *O pokarmach, smakach...*op.cit., p. 122.

Pork cutlets (4)	Cabbage rolls	Tripe (2)	Tripe (2)
Pork in gelatin	Grilled dishes (4)	Pork cutlet (16)	Pork cutlet (6)
Baked beans	Stuffed peppers	Chicken dishes (6)	Fried ground beef (2)
Pierogi (2)	Vegetable salads (4)	Fried ground beef	Chicken dishes (4)
Salmon	Rosół (3)	Meatballs	Grilled dishes (2)
Fondue <sup>23</sup>	Tomato soup	Steaks	Spinach (2)
Olive oil	Red borscht	Grilled dishes (3)	Cabbage (2)
Oliwki	Zalewajka (a kind of sour rye soup with potatoes)	Vegetable salads (10)	Potato dumplings (4)
Spices	Szarlotka (apple cake)	Homemade vegetable salad (6)	Potato pancakes (3)
Dishes with spinach (2)	Wine (2)	Fruit salads	Pancakes
Vegetable dishes (3)	Beer	Letcho	Croquettes
Tomato soup (2)	Polish cuisine (3)	Lasagne	Racuchy (deep fried pancakes)
Pickle soup	Spanish cuisine	Rucola	Proziaki (soda flatbread)
Mexican soup		Spinach	Feta cheese
Eco-products (2)		Rosół (3)	Rosół (18)
Muffins		Meatball soup (3)	Borscht (11)
Tea		„Zagraj” soup	Hungarian soup (4)
Beer		Czernina (blood soup)	Żurek (sour rye soup) (2)
Chinese cuisine (4)		Parzucha (cabbage soup)	Tomato soup
Italian cuisine (2)		Potato dumplings (3)	Bean soup
Vietnamese cuisine		Groats	Pea soup
Turkish cuisine		Puff pastry	Cauliflower soup
Pakistani cuisine		Squeezed juices	
		Polish cuisine	

Numbers in parentheses show the number of associations with a given product in subjects' declarations. Lack of parentheses signifies one association.

It is difficult to clearly define meals considered trendy or popular by subjects in each location. There is a wide and varied offer of various dishes. In Warsaw, sushi definitely dominates on the list of “fashionable” meals, distancing kebab and pizza. Subjects consider sushi to be one of the most refined but also most pauperised dishes. Though Varsovians spend time in sushi places, it is indeed

sushi that is met with the most criticism among surveyed subjects of the city: *I don't like it, but I'll admit that when I had my birthday I ordered it to the office. Sushi was chosen unanimously (W-80, m-40); (...) at the moment that awful sushi is in style. When I speak to people who ate pork cutlets with cabbage all their lives, and fatty meals, now when you ask them, it's sushi (W-94, m-70).*

Sushi does not appear at all in the statements of residents of Przemyśl, and in Chełmno and Kielce it is only named once. According to subjects in Kielce, the most popular items are kebab, pizza and vegetable salads. In Chełmno: a slightly different order: salads, kebab then pizza. In Przemyśl the most popular dishes are taken directly from a homemade meal: pierogi, rosół and cabbage rolls. *There's even a Pierogi Holiday in July, held since several years ago, and a pierogi folding competition. It is held at the stadium here in Ostrów, or another gmina town. (P-14, m-50).*

Subjects from Warsaw mention the changeability and variety of culinary tendencies: *(...) all the time, something is in style, then that trend passes. (...) sushi had its moment, various pastas had its time, then there was a return to traditional, heavy, Polish cooking. Because normally there are health aspects and how much time one can devote to cooking (W-60, k-61); I know. At some point there was a trend for muffins. Now it's tapas. But what's fashionable at the moment exactly, I don't know (W-62, m-25).*

In Warsaw, the set of popular meals is mostly drawn from the public sphere, the occasion to try them is associated with eating out, thus the popularity of fast foods, seafood, and Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese, Pakistani, Turkish cuisines, with the exclusion of Polish.

In Kielce and Chełmno, dishes made from partly processed products are popular, but with a greater backing from elements of Polish "home cooking". Spaghetti (also called pastas, *makarony*) drawn from Italian cooking is significantly popular among subjects, but pork cutlets, ground beef, cabbage rolls, bigos, tripe and soups are also "in fashion". In Chełmno, regional soups are mentioned, such as meatball soup (*klopsówka*), the local "zagraj" soup: *(...) it's water, herbs, potatoes, dumplings, sausage and add some vinegar to taste (Ch-93, k-53)*, cabbage soup. In Przemyśl villages we find the richest selection of soups with rosół and variations of borscht in the lead. Dumplings (*kluski*) are also the most popular there, including the regional gray dumplings, *proziaki*. The familiar cabbage takes the place of Mediterranean salads and spinach with soft cheese. This is partly due to the renaissance of regionality; some dishes, through their association with Polish tradition and local history are undergoing nobilitation. Traditional dishes are in a way written into *regional cooking* (Ch-6, k-49).

One may get the impression that that which subjects define as traditional Polish cooking, has a political, even national significance, while exotic flavours seem to be an element of a kind of “collecting of sensations”. Consuming seafood, sushi, pizza, spaghetti or kebab is considered, especially in cities, as a form of celebrating the richness of international cuisine. These meals have constructively melded with the everyday lifestyle of the surveyed. In the statements of both women and men, regarding food products popular in their environment, a mix of flavours from various cultures is visible. This is an expression of the globalisation of the way of eating in the face of the cultural diversity of foods. The number and fluctuation of eating trends, and what follows, a huge pool of “fashionable” dishes, is written into the new lifestyle, based on an increasing “speeding up of the everyday”, as well as the significant dispersing of everyday activities. We are dealing with the cultural phenomena of decontextualization and fragmentation.<sup>143</sup>

In reference to that which subjects eat daily, what they would like to eat, or what they consider a popular dish is marked with a certain repeatability of the example dishes given. As Norbert Elias argued, individual sensual sensitivity fundamentally has a very social character.

## 8. Study reflections

The interviews presented display the most intimate, but also the most fundamental aspect of everyday life of a group of subjects living in a large, medium or small town and in the country. Food has turned out to be a vehicle of meaning in the area of status, identity, aesthetic and ethical values, an element of ritual, an indicator of lifestyle, or finally, an indicator of the accumulation of knowledge and creativity of the studied men and women.

The meanings given by subjects, which culinary practices they carry with them, play out on several levels – they may fulfil the functions associated with representation or expression, but also with nourishment and taste. Bourdieu argued that consumption reflects hierarchical and competitive aspects of systems of social classification, which make entertainment and pastimes social indicators. Food in the described study does not indicate the differentiation of social classes, but within the group it shows hi-

<sup>143</sup> Conf. Zbyszko Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności [Popular culture and youth identity]*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2013, p. 99.

erarchy of the sexes and generations. Perceiving differences in the way of eating, types of food, rules of dining etiquette also applies to place of residence. Gaining skills and a philosophy of creative cooking, knowledge about food and the art of speaking about it from an aesthetic standpoint has a greater instrumental value for women and generally younger subjects, being proof of them possessing and developing culinary social capital.

The observed similarities in culinary customs in all studied locations are the result of tradition passed on to succeeding generations, as an important element of cultural capital. In the kitchens of subjects from larger cities, recipes such as beets with lavender or strawberries with rucola and *kindziuk* (Lithuanian sausage) have found a home for good, but the subjects' statements show that at home they are culinary patriots. In the opinions of the surveyed, Polish cooking is the best, though not everyone believes that it is also the healthiest. Only younger subjects from large or medium sized cities are innovators, cooking lasagne at home and preparing Mediterranean salads, eating sushi on the town. But even for them, the best dinner is that which their mothers cook, meaning *rosół*, potatoes, pork cutlet. The majority of younger and older subjects of both genders are proponents of innovative cooking, simple techniques, following the season, a product, a mood. A sophisticated recipe is useful from time to time to make an impression on the guests, but it is that traditional cooking, familiar for years, that gives that feeling of security and is the source of tradition and seems essential in the everyday.

In the everyday reality described by the subjects, of preparing, serving and consuming meals, there are some visible changes in the position and role of the woman, man and child in the family. On one hand, interviews show the autonomy and personal freedom of individuals, on the other, the growing declarative culinary value of family community. In the opinion of western researchers, the kitchen and table have ceased to build family ties in an obvious way, however our interviewees do not confirm the fading of conversations at the table, forced out by the viewing of television during meals, or generally speaking, the disappearing role of meals as a bonding agent in family life. For the studied men and women, communal cooking and eating in the private sphere is a basic indicator of bonds and belonging. In the studied group, eating is done alone and passively in the case of lonely and overworked people. In families with small children, mutual meals are prevented by work, as the children develop the situation is worse, and after retiring and the children leaving home, married couples return to eating together and value these meals as a kind of daily ritual.

The consumption of food in the public sphere turned out to not be a popular form of spending free time, only among young people from large or medium cities is it an important means of maintaining social networks. The daily life of surveyed women and any holidays or celebrations are focused around acquiring, preparing and consuming food. An important aspect of home cooking is the construction of an “offered gift” from the prepared food. The symbolic meaning of preparing meals and the eating itself points to the large role of women in reproducing family relations. The increased tempo of life causes many subjects to state that the ease of preparation and short time in the kitchen is important to them. In the declarations of the studied women, regardless of age or place of residence, one can clearly observe a connection between *edendi delectatio*, or the pleasure of eating, and *voluptas culinaria* – the pleasure associated with the skill of preparing dishes.

Eating habits change very slowly. That which is eaten by the surveyed is influenced not only by their taste, preferences, current culinary trends or tradition, but also price, income, availability of products in the market place and their quality. We may speak however, of a “democratisation of the table,” being a unification of culinary habits and the dissemination of a type of thinking about food and the role of meals in everyday and holiday life, in all of the studied locations. Jan Stanisław Bystron, who characterised customs, wrote that in old Poland people would eat a lot “from necessity, from habit, from boredom, for entertainment, for company, for show. There was also thought about food, there was discourse on the subject, various culinary experiments were tried.”<sup>144</sup> This diagnosis could be applied perfectly to the image presented by subjects from large, medium and small cities in Poland of the XXI century.

## Conclusion

Home cooking, understood as a sphere of privacy and “bustling about” typical for women, tends to be less valued and described less often than transformations in the public sphere. Rarely is this area treated as a separate subject which could be the object of in-depth analysis. For years, sociologists have been searching for recognition in the world of science for a field of study as non-prestigious as cooking. In the early 1960s, Barthes was

<sup>144</sup> Jan Stanisław Bystron, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce, wiek XVI-XVIII [History of custom in old Poland, XVI-XVIII century]*, volume II. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976, p. 479.



sorry to point out, “We do not notice our own food, or what’s worse, we assume it is insignificant. Even for researchers, or especially for them, the subject of food is associated with banality and brings up a feeling of guilt.”<sup>145</sup> Half a century later, the issue of culinary practices in scientific analysis has decidedly gained in attractiveness, but in popular opinion, food is still situated on the elementary most level of daily life, the level of highest inevitability and most looked down upon.<sup>146</sup> During the interviews, some of the subjects expressed doubt as to whether the subject of everyday eating habits is even worth mentioning, which are to them nothing especially interesting: *Usually I eat a roll with cheese. I hardly cook anything* (W-44, k-33); (... *whatever’s around, that’s a meal* (Ch-103, k-79); *Me, I only eat when I have to* (...) (P-72, m-64); *I can not eat all day and it doesn’t phase me* (...) (P-74, k-60); (... *I eat* ...) *mostly out of boredom* (W-19, k-62). They do not ponder flavours, colours, smells, the appearance of consumed meals. Food, in their view, is not nourishment for the senses, but only a source of energy, necessary for life.

As it was well said, “only an intelligent man knows how to eat.”<sup>147</sup> For most of the subjects, food was an object worthy of cognitive and aesthetic reflection. They eagerly shared their opinions, recipes, the secrets of their own kitchens. In interviews carrying a great deal of emotion, they used diminutive forms of the names of their favourite dishes. In the studied group, a hedonistic approach to food dominates: (...) *how I love to eat well!* (Ch-5, k-71); (...) *sometimes I’m willing to devote even half a day to prepare myself something good* (P-2, m-24). During interviews the subjects, especially in smaller towns, encouraged sampling the home-baked cake, liqueur, or the just-cooked soup. Some of them were euphoric at the very thought of food: *I love, love it. I love to eat* (Ch-21, m-63); *Bigos. Oh Jesus – bigos.* (Ch-21 m-63).

Acquiring, preparing, eating food belong to the basic activities, conditions and displays of social life. Eating is a universal medium which brings to light the wide range of cultural practices. Due to its universal experience, eating can be used to display things which have nothing to do with satisfying physical hunger. What is eaten, how it is eaten, how meals are prepared, the time and place of consumption reflect the social connotations of culinary practices. The tale of eating is a tale of culture and customs. It is also a tale about the most natural, prosaic aspect of a human being’s everyday life.

145 Roland Barthes, *Toward Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, in: Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik (ed.), *Food and Culture...op.cit.*, p.21.

146 Conf. Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *Wynaleźć codzienność...op.cit.*, p.144.

147 Brillat-Savarin Anthelme, *Fizjologia smaku...op.cit.*, p.8.



# 3

## Culinary fascinations in popular culture

### 1. Sense and nonsense in gastronomy

Foods, the method of preparing, serving and consuming meals are an element of everyday practice, and also function as symbols in socio-cultural reality. For thousands of years, the search for food has helped to shape development in society. Even before the invention of the kitchen, defined as an “improvement in nourishment”, the Neolithic man used his ingenuity to change the harvest from the earth, already improved through farming, into easy to consume and palatable foods, being early processes of rational eating.<sup>148</sup> The changing models of acquiring and consuming meals quickly became a significant element of the stigmatising of man – his material and social status. For historians, the idea of “cuisine” is born with organised society, when food began to be prepared according to specified norms, created through the tradition of certain social or ethnic groups. The traditions depend on natural resources linked to the climate, soil and wildlife, but are also in accordance with a way of thinking, religious taboo and tastes specific to each community. Cooking is a cultural system defining which ingredients taken from nature are edible; how they can be acquired, eaten or processed in order to consume; what flavours to reach for to increase the attractiveness of food and what rules to obey when eating.<sup>149</sup>

Communal dining is a microcosm of society. A feast is a pleasure, amusement, as well as instruction for human action which satisfies in the

<sup>148</sup> Conf. Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *Historia naturalna i moralna jedzenia [Moral and Natural History of Food]*, transl. A. B. Matusiak, M. Ochab. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2002, p. 205.

<sup>149</sup> Conf. Barry William Higman, *Historia żywności. Jak żywność zmieniła świat [How Food Made History]*, transl. Anna Kunicka, Wydawnictwo Aletheia, Warszawa 2012, p. 265.

same degree that it stimulates building relations and developing bonds.<sup>150</sup> The table is a source of unity and community, but can also affirm social diversity, divide people into categories, or even exclude them. Feasts and banquets with music and dancing played the part of an important social ritual. To this day, communal feasting in every social system largely portrays the status and hierarchy of participants.<sup>151</sup>

Ancient Greeks admired the Persians for their opulent lifestyle and the description of royal feasting ceremonies, aptly called the “Persian table” by Thucydides. In Greece there were wedding marathons with an abundance of food, with the participation of 100-person choirs, and performances by naked acrobats. Women dressed up in flowers, dishes brought in by processions, and countless slaves gave these events more an aesthetic than consumptive character. It was a form of theatrical display of culinary ceremony. In time, professional artists were employed: actors, singers, jesters, not to mention transvestites, dancers, gladiators, clowns and developmentally disabled dwarves. In Rome, Caligula enjoyed feasts during which there were tortures and beheadings of young soldiers. Cesar Claudius invited 600 people at a time to parties.<sup>152</sup> The Roman leader and politician Lucius Licinius Lucullus was known as a sybarite and gourmand, once called the greatest glutton of ancient history, he would stun Rome of that time with his feasts of the most expensive and sophisticated dishes. “Lucullan feasts” became a proverb for extreme forms of banquets.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, during the Middle Ages, the Church accompanied the western elites in the “process of civilising appetite,” stigmatising the glutton and praising the gourmet. During the Renaissance, ancient texts were discovered anew, once again there was acceptance for giving into the pleasures of eating and drinking. In the XVII and XVIII centuries in France there was a new image of gluttony, the pleasures of the table became a trait of the elegant man. Searching for delicate dishes, appreciating tidbits, the art of discerning tasty morsels and getting pleasure from expounding on the subject were since then praised as a display of good manners and upbringing. Good taste was elevated to the rank of social status indicator.<sup>153</sup>

Culinary art, called “gastronomy” appeared in Greece, but the word itself was formed in the early XIX century by French lawyer Joseph Ber-

150 Conf. Martin Jones, *Feast. Why Humans Share Food*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

151 Conf. Roy Strong, *Feast. A History of Grand Eating*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002, p. 9.

152 *Ibidem*, p. 36-37.

153 Conf. Florent Quellier, *Łakomstwo. Historia grzechu głównego [Gluttony. History of a Cardinal Sin]*, transl. Beata Spieralska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Bellona, 2013., p.101, p.128.

choux, who combined two Greek words: *gaster* (stomach) and *nomos* (rule). “Gastronome” signified a lover of refined dishes, but also someone who obeyed scientific rules of eating – the word “nomos” suggested the existence of special knowledge.<sup>154</sup> Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, living through the turn of the XVIII and XIX centuries, French politician and writer, in his culinary treatise “Physiology of taste, or meditations on perfect gastronomy”, contained the foundations of this domain. Honoré de Balzac considered the book one of the greatest works in the French language. For Brillat-Savarin, being a true gourmand was courtesy, art/craft and something which one could attain through extended learning and very careful, methodical investigations. Gastronomy remained a field reserved for the wealthy. Food became an element of an elaborate and universal theatrical production. The inability to behave appropriately at the table and lack of knowledge in matters of the kitchen swiftly demasked a simpleton and nouveau riche.<sup>155</sup> The bourgeoisie and aristocracy longing for luxury put additional barriers before people from lower classes, who would strive to join them in the area of culinary mastery. Rules regarding food became not a unifying, inclusive factor, but an excluding one. The elegant gourmet is defined by good manners and the art of conversation, the knowledge of specialist language drawn from culinary literature. High gastronomy affirmed its superiority through instructions contained in cookbooks regarding rules of conduct at the table, defining obligations of the host and guests. Guidebooks for the bourgeois described every gesture at the table, advised what position of the legs and arms to take during eating, how to conduct pleasant conversation, turn away when coughing or sneezing, how to cut the meat on a woman’s plate.<sup>156</sup> Most of these instructions endure today. The rules of conduct at a business lunch are certainly not a XX century discovery.

Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat claims that French gastronomy became a kind of religion.<sup>157</sup> Certainly included in the fellowship of the arts, it differentiates *haute cuisine* and regular food, similarly to separating fine art and decorations for the household. The word *cuisine* (kitchen/cooking) is French and it is the French who claim the most achievements in the field, elevating its finest products to the rank of *haute cuisine* (or *grande cuisine* – high cooking), carefully differentiated from *la cuisine bourgeoise* (home

154 Ibidem, p.12-13.

155 Conf. Brillat-Savarin Anthelme, *Fizjologia smaku...* op.cit

156 Conf. Roy Strong, *Feast...* op.cit., p. 111.

157 Conf. Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *Historia naturalna i moralna jedzenia...* op.cit., p. 12.

cooking). For the French, *cuisine* means kitchen, as well as the style of cooking used therein, determined by the *cuisinier*, the chef.<sup>158</sup>

The beginning of the XIX century saw the emergence of culinary critics, who described restaurants worthy of recommendation in almanacs. The first restaurant in Paris was opened in 1766, for the weak and sickly. The practice of eating outside the home, in the public sphere, began after the French revolution. Nineteenth century restaurants were an arena of the art of good food and gastronomy an arena of critical aesthetic debate.<sup>159</sup> While the distinction of upper classes was confirmed by expensive, sophisticated cuisine, in the middle and working classes democracy and solidarity were symbolised by fish and chips. Today, communal meals in restaurants and clubs are still an important element of building class identity. The person who eats only local products, who knows about wines, can judge and compare the menus of restaurants, invests in himself, his character, possesses status and power.<sup>160</sup>

Modern restaurants, on the one hand are an element of globalised culture, on the other they fulfil the role of upholding locality.<sup>161</sup> Representing the ethos of cities, regions, ethnic groups and nations, they have become a significant symbol of the post-modern world. They uphold the identity of people and places, they are “centres of consumption” with food as an increasingly important part of city life<sup>162</sup>. Many young people around the world give up their jobs in corporations, in order to test themselves in the position of restaurateur, setting up cafes, restaurants or breakfast eateries. They also invest in mobile restaurants (street food), because there are more and more festivals and culinary events. Restaurants provide not just food, but also emotions; the feeling of familiarity between employees and customers in the recently very popular “home-cooked dinners” market is highly valued. Amateur restaurateurs organise supper clubs, or “illegal” pop-up restaurants. They display their menus on Internet forums or Facebook and instruct how to make reservations. Guests usually compete for a dozen or so places. The dinner may take place at

158 Conf. Barry William Higman, *Historia żywności...op.cit.*, p. 264.

159 Conf. Roy Strong, *Feast...op.cit.*, p. 287.

160 Conf. Andrew P. Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

161 Conf. David Beriss and David Sutton, *Restaurants, Ideal Postmodern Institutions* p. 1-13 In: David Beriss and David Sutton (ed.), *The Restaurants Book. Ethnographies of Where We Eat*. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers, 2007, p. 1-3.

162 Conf. David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat*. London: Routledge, 1997, s. 143.

home, but also in a warehouse, workshop, flower shop or the roof of a skyscraper.

Expectations toward contemporary feasting do not stray much from the goals set for ancient Greek symposiums. Though paying homage to sacral beings is no longer a key element, but providing oral pleasure, experiencing spirituality, or searching for commonality of views during disputes is still a mostly universal need for communal diners.

## 2. Kitchen and cooks, the large and small theatres of culinary performance

In cultural ethnography, restaurants, bars, night clubs are called “large theatres”, while the household kitchen and table is the “small theatre” of culinary performance.<sup>163</sup> The home kitchen is a basic space for meals – it is there that all processes connected with storing, preparing and processing food take place, as well as with planning, consuming and cleaning up after a meal. It is a room rich with many social and cultural meanings.

The kitchen space was long an isolated area. Food was defined as a social event, while cooking was a household task performed alone. Even though the kitchen is a private space, then it is significantly influenced by various ideas, trends and ideologies. The furnishings of a kitchen in a city house during the Middle Ages did not allow for sophisticated dishes, so when guests arrived, ready meals were bought from the local inn.<sup>164</sup> During the Renaissance, the need to clearly separate the space where meals were prepared and the place for the feast was born.<sup>165</sup>

In wealthy manors and palaces, the kitchen remained a separated area designated only for the preparation of meals, it was found in the annex due to the “stench and disorder”. Only in the XIX century did the kitchen appear as an integral part of the home.<sup>166</sup> In cities it was usually separated from the remaining parts of the house or flat. In lavish villas and spacious apartments, the kitchen was located where the servants quarters were – in the basement or a segment with a separate entrance and always far enough

163 Conf. Eve Jochnowitz, *From Khatchapuri to Gefilte Fish. Dining Out and Spectacle in Russian Jewish New York*, In: David Beriss and David Sutton (ed.), *The Restaurants Book...op.cit.*, p.116.

164 Conf. Philippe Ariès, *Historia dzieciństwa.. op.cit.*

165 Conf. Silvia Malaguzzi, *Wokół stołu [Food and Feasting]*. transl. Ewa Morka. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Arkady, 2009, p. 74.

166 Conf. Maciej Rydel, *Dwór – polska tożsamość [The Court – Polish Identity]*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, 2012, p. 128.

so that the noises and smells of the kitchen would not reach the area occupied by the landlord. Meanwhile, in a labourer's or administrative worker's family home the kitchen usually also fulfilled the functions of a day room, and at night an extra bedroom.<sup>167</sup> In modern times the larger part of home and family life moves to the kitchen. Household kitchens are connected with dining rooms.

From being an everyday art, in which women specialised, cooking became an ennobling activity. The task was always considered very simple with the exception of rare cases where it reached the highest form of perfection or refinement, in the hands of masters of cooking, who were and are mostly men. Known modern chefs are like designers in the field of fashion, architecture or interior decoration, who place their "signature" on dishes offered in the most expensive restaurants of global high society.<sup>168</sup> They are not interested in a diner, but a unique restaurant, like e.g. *Noma* in Copenhagen, or *El Bulli* in Barcelona, honoured with prestigious awards of international gastronomy.

The most distinguished chefs look for inspiration, invent compositions of tastes and colours which stray from previous convention in order to surprise the guests of the restaurant. Catalanian Ferran Adria, called the most creative chef in history, self-taught, brought the idea of deconstruction into the kitchen, which changes the form and state of matter of a product, while maintaining its original flavour. He is the inventor of such culinary techniques as cooking in liquid nitrogen and sterification, i.e. transforming products into imitation caviar. In his restaurant, which is said to transgress the boundaries of cuisine and culture, one may try peas in the form of foam, liquid shrimp, caviar made from melon. Asked if taste is most important in cooking, he says that rather it is about the emotions connected with trying something new.<sup>169</sup>

Admitting to enrolment in a gastronomy school is no longer a reason to be embarrassed. The stereotype held up for ages in Poland, is that a cook is an overweight man in a stained apron. Today, if you really want to have something to say in the culinary field, you have to continually learn and perfect your skill. Wojciech Modest Amaro, the first Polish recipient of a

167 Conf. Maja Łozińska, *Smaki dwudziestolecia. Zwyczaje kulinarne, bale, bankiety* [Tastes of the twenty years. Culinary habits, balls, banquets]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2011, p. 62-64.

168 Conf. Anna Nacher, *Rubierze kultury popularnej, Popkultura w świecie przepływów* [Borders of Popular Culture, Pop-culture in the World of Flow]. Poznań: Galeria Miejska Arsenal, 2012, p. 290-291.

169 Conf. Tomasz Czech, Aleksandra Lipczak speak with Ferran Adria, *Gorąca żelatyna* [Hot Gelatin]. „Polityka” Nr 21, 18.05-24.05.2011, p. 88.



star from the Michelin “Main Cities of Europe” culinary guide, assures that he has to know not only botany and chemistry, but also be a hunter, psychologist, a nutritionist. He creates a kind of culinary laboratory, from which he “serves moments”, e.g. smoked trout covered in leek powder with a twisted crisp in raspberry powder, or vegetable confetti marinated in knapweed vinegar. Another moment is created by pierogi with goat cheese in a translucent jacket made of beet, floating in a deconstructed sour rye soup made of kvass and smoked plum.<sup>170</sup>

It is considered in good form to hire the chef of a fine restaurant for a private party, or *private cooking*. Cooks are something like artists, they treat what is on the plate as a work of art. In the most refined *haute cuisine* in the world, true culinary works are created, for example, celery composed with birch fungi, powdered horseradish, a kvass glaze, or rooster comb in tempura. During the experimental workshops of world cooks *Cook it Raw*, the Polish national dish was a soup from fermented prunes covered in a web of cotton candy and boletus mushroom ice cream.

In the restaurant’s menu not everyone is searching for chocolate flavoured herring or pasta in a spray can, a sufficient culinary adventure for most gourmets may be bull testicles in chocolate with pepper or thymus in caramel sauce. Consumption of a bison stomach may also be an unforgettable sensation, due to the taste of straw and meadow in the tripe, it is something magical, as chefs claim.<sup>171</sup> In the area of molecular gastronomy, physics-chefs and chemist-chefs create new combinations of flavours and consistencies through their experiments. These compositions amaze but also shock and are considered by many traditionalists as a disgrace to true, traditional cooking.

Food enthusiasts and connoisseurs. e.g. professional chefs or food technologists are fascinated with the method of “foodpairing”. This is an inventive method for perfecting food and combining it into ideal and sometimes fairly surprising sets of flavours. This method is based on choosing ingredients based on their common traits, mostly aroma. Among examples of atypical combinations which turned out to be a culinary success one could name: coffee and garlic, mandarins and thyme, cucumber and edible violet; banana and parsley; maracuya and oysters, roast lamb and strawberries or feta and ginger.<sup>172</sup>

170 Conf. Aleksandra Krzyżaniak-Gumowska, *Momenty z Amaro [Moments with Amaro]*, „Newsweek” 13/2013 25-31.03.13, p.42-44

171 Conf. Agnieszka Kozak speaks with Aleksander Baron, *Mięsożerca [Meat-eater]*, „Wysokie Obcasy”, Saturday, August 16, 2014, Nr 32, p.38-39.

172 <http://www.kuchniaplus.pl/kuchnioteka/artykuly/foodpairing> (date of access: 6.12.2014)

Food is historical matter. Chefs are opening restaurants where they reproduce flavours of dishes from 200, 300 years ago. They collect old cookbooks and search for recipes from the past, old methods of cooking, baking, pickling, dehydrating. They attempt to revitalise old flavours by reproducing e.g. dishes and drinks which have disappeared from the culinary map of the world. *Discovery Channel* presents scientific programs on the subject of food, culinary archaeology, ancient recipes of the Greeks and Romans. In museums all over the world, groups of specialised cooks are present live preparations of forgotten dishes from past eras.<sup>173</sup>

Cooking is becoming an innovative art. New professions in the culinary field are arising, one of them is *diet coaching*. The uniqueness of this method is that it does not just concentrate on composing menus, counting calories and losing kilograms, but on understanding one's dietary needs. The essence of the *diet coach's* task is bringing up the client's motivation to develop his/her competence in a new, healthy way of eating, which will suit their lifestyle. At the other extremity is the food hunter. Travelling the world, looking for new ingredients, which he then sells to known chefs. "I'm like an external hard drive of new flavours for them," Mark Brownstein explains, international celebrity in the field of food hunting, working in Germany and Austria. He claims that he ate one of the "most horrid things" in all his career, in Poland: "Fish sow, or the sperm of a herring, was a challenge for me. It was an effort to swallow," he admitted.<sup>174</sup>

### 3. Literature not just for cooks

Food, cuisine and taste create a specific language, which, when deciphered, may allow a better understanding of the past. Historians are not just interested in the reproduction of forgotten products in complicated laboratory processes, but in the capturing of changes which various cultures have undergone over the ages. One of the inseparable elements is also culinary taste. In the 1980s, French historian Jean-Louis Flandrin began publicising articles about the history of cooking, noticing fascinating material in the chronicles of eating to do with history of culture, art, aesthetics, religion, and also images of the world, health and social hierarchy. Old culinary recipes turned out to be treatises about diet, health, fasting, pleasure, good

173 Conf. Maciej Okraszewski and Barbara Pietruszczak, *Koleje sosu [The history of sauce]*. „Polityka” Nr 4, 22.01-28.01.2014, p. 81-83.

174 Aleksandra Więcka, *Łowca smaków [Taste Hunter]*. „Wysokie Obcasy”, Saturday, January 11, 2014, Nr 2, p. 4.

taste and elegance. Seemingly trivial kitchen recipes concealed the spirit of the era within, told of old sensitivity and aesthetic, allowed one to observe the changes in attitude toward religion and analyse methods of demonstrating local identity.

For Flandrin, in his studies of history of food, taste was very important, based on preferences of people from the past. As we know, permanent, unchanging, objective taste does not exist. Caviar, a synonym for luxury today, was mostly used as feed for poultry in medieval times. In Spain it was believed that Aztec chocolate was only suitable for pigs. In-depth study of old culinary recipes allowed Flandrin to notice that as a result of long-term exchange of information, skills and ideas, instructions for baking, cooking or frying form various styles, appropriate to specific eras, and create complicated culinary systems. Cooking recipes turned out to be significant cultural texts. The change in the ideal beauty of women in the XVI and XVII century is, according to Flandrin, associated with the appearance of sauces based on butter, olive, sugar, in place of the sour tastes of the Middle Ages. Slim medieval beauties were replaced by well built, plump models for Rubens.<sup>175</sup>

Culinary recipes and permanent rules of consuming are important resources of human knowledge. Jack Goody considered cookbooks as technology of the intellect, having an influence on the development of civilisation. These documents determine the social hierarchy through order of dishes, seating people at the table. Cookbooks are a way of aspiring to a higher class, transferring foreign ideas onto native territory, they allow the consolidation of community, marking of one's status, registering the past or achieving artistic sensations.<sup>176</sup>

In Athens the observing of diet was worth more than prayers to the gods.<sup>177</sup> The sublime Greek culinary art was described in at least 30 treatises, written by men. They contained diet, health and exercises as basic themes, in the same degree as recipes for specific dishes. The Greeks discovered cooking as one of the basic skills and arts of human life, and gave

175 Conf. Sydney Watts, *Food and the Annales School* p. 3-22 In: Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

176 Conf. Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 129-35, 140-43; Jack Goody, *The Recipe, the Prescription and the Experiment* In: Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik (ed.), *Food and Culture a Reader*, second edition. New York and London: Routledge, 2008, p. 78-90.

177 Conf. Jean-Marie Pradier, *Ciało widowiskowe. Etnosocjologia sztuk widowiskowych [Spectacular Bod. Ethnoscenology of Spectacle Arts]*. transl. Kinga Bierwiazzonek. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012, p. 129.

birth to literature of gastronomy. Its' father was Mithaecus of Sicily, author of the first cookbook; he lived in the second half of the V century B.C. Other Sicilians continued Mithaecus' work: Heracleides of Syracuse and Glaucos of Lokoroi, proponents of the view that not slaves should take care of the culinary art, but free-born men. During the Hellenistic era between the III and I centuries B.C., some of the popular ones included Agis, Dionysus, Kriton, Acesias, Pantaleon, Parmenion from Rodos. Poets and literary writers also wrote about the culinary arts.<sup>178</sup>

The most known author of Roman culinary literature was Marcus Gavius, known as Apicius, born in the times of Tiberius. He devoted all his life and wealth to inventing extraordinary dishes and organising equally special and magnificent feasts, which changed into orgies of eating and sex. He left 10 volumes of the first Roman cookbook *De re conquinaria*, containing 500 recipes. Apicius invented a method for preparing goose liver, he also valued the specific taste of dishes made from flamingo tongues, peacocks, nightingales, from combs taken off live roosters and from the heels of camels.<sup>179</sup>

The prototypes for modern cookbooks were the medieval household books, written by hand, passed on for generations in wealthy families. They contained recipes useful in maintaining a household, as well as descriptions of the feasts that honoured the good name and splendour of the owners of the house.<sup>180</sup> In bygone centuries, the knowledge of secrets of good cooking mostly belonged to secret knowledge, known only to selected masters of the cooking arts and talented housewives. The kitchen book understood as a collection of culinary recipes was already known in ancient culture, but the beginning of social popularity for these kinds of collections is dated to the late XVI century. Cookbooks, which replaced the medieval manuscripts, became influential texts in the XVII century, determining culinary fashions. Official, public culinary discourse develops spectacularly in European culture at the turn of the XVIII and XIX century, when gastronomy began to constitute itself as a theoretical code of culinary practice.

While French cookbooks were written and intended for men – professionals, the English ones – were more often written by women profession-

178 Conf. Roy Strong, *Feast...op.cit.*, p.10-11.

179 Conf. Apicius, *O sztuce kulinarnej ksiąg dziesięć [Ten Volumes of Culinary Art]*. transl. Ireneusz Mikołajczyk, Sławomir Wyszomirski. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2012, p. 6-8.

180 Conf. Andrzej K. Kuropatnicki, *Food & Drink in the Household of English Nobility in the 15th and 16th Centuries. Procurement. Preparation. Service and Consumption*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 2012, p. 186.

als for housewives.<sup>181</sup> In Poland women wrote “culinary treasure chests” containing recipes for the specialty of the house. Advice on seasoning meals was accompanied by the note “do it to your master’s taste.”<sup>182</sup> In the XVII century, “economies” were popular, a kind of guidebook or encyclopaedia which collected information needed to manage a manor with advice regarding the kitchen and cooking.<sup>183</sup>

The oldest Polish, written culinary recipe belongs to Mikołaj Rej, who in his 1567 work “Żywot człowieka poczciwego” [Life of an Honest Man] noted the recipe for *ćwikła* [beets with horseradish]. During the reign of Jan III Sobieski, three of the oldest known Polish cookbooks were created: Stanisław Czerniecki’s “Compendium ferculorum, or the collected dishes of the court of Cracovian voivode, prince Aleksander Michał Lubomirski”, which was published in Kraków in 1682. His second book from 1697 is “Court, magnificence, dignity and the rule of the Enlightened Prince JM of the Roman State (...) Stanisław, Count in Wiśnicz and Jarosław Lubomirski”. A valuable volume from this period was also the handwritten “Very good fashion of cooking various confections” written by an anonymous cook associated with the court of Katarzyna Radziwiłł in the 1680s. These texts described the cuisine still rooted in medieval culinary tradition with its penchant for spicy, exotic seasonings, using sugar as an addition to meat and fish, rigorous fasting and, a tendency toward contrasting flavours. Published one hundred years after Czerniecki’s book, Wojciech Wincent Wielądko’s book, “Perfect cook” was only a translation of the French title popular in all Europe, *La Cuisinière bourgeoise* by Menon.<sup>184</sup> Throughout 1682-1821 Czerniecki’s book was a real bestseller, around 20 editions were issued.<sup>185</sup>

The remarkable popularity of French cookbooks contributed to bringing culinary art in the 1650s to the rank of one of the fine arts. *Le cuisinier françois* („French cook”) from 1651, written by François Pierre

181 Conf. Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, p. 64-101.

182 Joanna Pietrzak-Thébault, *Przepis na książkę, czyli tryumf nouvelle cuisine [Recipe for a Book. Or the Triumph of Nouvelle Cuisine]*. In: Maja Pawłowska, Tomasz Wysłobocki (ed.), *Pharmacopea. Uzależnienia, obsesje, konflikty [Pharmacopea. Addictions, Obsessions. Conflicts]*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2013, p. 109.

183 Conf. Maja and Jan Łoziński (pl. Łozińscy), *Historia polskiego smaku. Kuchnia, stół, obyczaje [History of Polish Taste. Kitchen, Table, Manners]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012, p. 70.

184 Conf. Jarosław Dumanowski, Andrzej Pawlas, Jerzy Poznański, *Sekrety kuchmistrzowskie Stanisława Czernieckiego [Chef’s Secrets of Stanisław Czerniecki]*. Warszawa: Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, 2010, p. 25-26.

185 Many of the Polish cookbooks did not survive, e.g. *Kuchmistrzostwo* or *Kucharstwo* – a lost cookbook likely published by Florian Ungler in the XVI century. Published in fragments by Zygmunt Wolski in 1891 and dated to the early XVI century.

de La Varenne, chef of marquis d'Uxelles, is considered the most important culinary treatise of the period. The book had a great impact on cuisine, nourishment, sensitivity and culture of, first, the elites, later also wider social groups in Europe and around the world. The author created a new type of culinary culture, tearing away from the flavours of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, and also standing in contradiction to culinary baroque. It replaced pepper with herbs. The mild, unified, simple and natural taste of local products became a value in cuisine. Under the guise of apparent simplicity in this new aristocratic cuisine was hidden the complicated craft and extended knowledge of the master cooks. French cooks in Europe became wanted arbiters of good taste, and French cuisine, the products associated with it and a new canon of culinary art – an important part of European aristocratic culture, next to French fashion, language, art and literature.<sup>186</sup>

In the middle of the XVIII century a specialised market came to be, of cooking advice in print, which also contained medical knowledge, because eating and medicine were perceived as elements of one system. The XIX century saw an even greater popularity of cookbooks. Lucyna Ćwierczakiewiczowa earned 80 thousand rubles from her book “365 dinners for five złoty”, first published in 1858.<sup>187</sup> That amount could have bought her an entire town house in Warsaw. Her book exceeded the popularity and number of editions of Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz's work. In the XX century, books emphasising education in the area of preparing meals were especially useful for emancipated women, who went to school and did not have the opportunity to learn the secrets of cooking the traditional way, from their mothers. Therefore many books were directly addressed toward young newly married women.

Cookbooks were sometimes an official propaganda tool, such as the Soviet bestseller *The Book of Tasty and Healthy Food* by Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan. At over 400 pages, the book was treated on par with the classic works of Marxism and Leninism or required reading in schools. First published in 1939, it was reprinted fourteen times, in the USSR, it sold in the millions and nearly every family had one.<sup>188</sup>

186 Conf. Jarosław Dumanowski, *Jan III i kuchnia [John III and Cuisine]* In: Jarosław Dumanowski (ed.), *Polskie zabytki kulinarne [Polish Culinary Monuments]*. v. IV: Jarosław Dumanowski, Maciej Próba i Łukasz Truściński (ed.), *Księga szafarska dworu Jana III Sobieskiego 1695-1696 [John III Sobieski Court Steward's Book]*. Warszawa: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2013, p. 11.

187 Conf. Lucyna Ćwierczakiewiczowa, op. cit.

188 Conf. Irina Głuszczenko, op. cit., p. 125,129.

Treatises regarding food and cooking, regardless of period, represent culinary customs, the logic of dishes, but also the budgetary constraints of a household, the situation on the market, they express views on class, hierarchy and national status, they constitute lifestyle through food, dining. Modern cookbooks differ from old ones however. The style of the genre has changed. Recipes used today do not make one think of statements such as, “take two maids, let them cream three-score eggs...,” or “crayfish like to be thrown live into boiling water.”<sup>189</sup> The repertoire of dishes and required products has changed, kitchen utensils and devices have changed, as have dietary norms, flavour standards and culinary custom.

Cookbooks are not just addressed toward housewives. Bookshops are being opened around the world, devoted solely to culinary publishing for connoisseurs searching for unique dishes. The bestsellers list also features culinary-travel literature, encouraging one to consume places and culinary culture in various parts of the world. There are also thematic cookbooks devoted to the cuisine of famous people or inspired by television series. A history of world literature from the kitchen are recipes for deboned chickens stuffed à la Marquis de Sade, eggs with tarragon à la Jane Austen, tiramisu à la Marcel Proust or quick miso soup according to Kafka.<sup>190</sup> For fans of “Game of Thrones” there is a collection of recipes “A Feast of Ice and Fire”, while the story-inspired “The Sopranos Family Cookbook” invites one into an Italian kitchen with characters from the series. Another interesting phenomenon is *gurume manga*, i.e. Japanese and Korean comics about filleting fish, harvesting wine and culinary adventures.

Modern cookbooks are not just a source of practical information useful in the kitchen. A high level of aesthetisation of the kitchen and the culinary is attractive to viewers/readers, grabbing attention with perfectly shot, sensual photographs of food, sometimes called “gastronomic masturbation.”<sup>191</sup> Album-style hardcover editions of cookbooks more often find their place in the bedroom or drawing room than in the kitchen.

189 Conf. Stanisław Czerniecki, *Compedium Ferculorum albo zebranie potraw*. compiled and published by Jarosław Dumanowski, Magdalena Spychaj, Monumenta Poloniae Culinaria, Polskie Zabytki Kulinarne, v. I edited by Jarosław Dumanowski, 2009.

190 Conf. Mark Crick, *Zupa Franza Kafki. Historia literatury światowej w 14 przepisach kulinarnych [Kafka's Soup. A Complete History of World Literature in 14 Recipes]*. transl. Anna Bańkowska. Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2007.

191 Conf. Irina Głuszczenko, op.cit., p. 139.

#### 4. Culinary television

Survey studies in European countries have shown that television programs are the second source, behind books, of culinary education for adults.<sup>192</sup> The creation of the American channel, Food Network in 1993 initiated foodie culture, a culture of lovers of food and strengthened the position of cooking shows to an unprecedented scale within the entertainment industry. Presently, any television station worthy of its position on the global market must have at least one culinary program in its schedule. Cooking was made into a show, and cooks into a phenomenon of entertainment television, not culinary art. Researchers on the subject claim that post-war culinary television moved the accent from education and information toward a new kind of religion.<sup>193</sup> Modern cooking shows promote the idea that one can become a better person by learning to cook and consuming specific dishes. Food has become a fashionable method of expressing yourself and an important element of lifestyle. Channels devoted to food and cooking break barriers between elite taste and popular culture, snobbism and populism, work and leisure time. The meal is no longer an expression of home care for others, it is a pleasure, entertainment.

Initially, the hosts of these programs were women, but gradually men began to engage in culinary television as viewers and hosts, opening the doors to the next format of a show based on competition and a charismatic host. An element of struggle and sport was brought into the women's vision of the kitchen.<sup>194</sup> In the screenplays of these programs, where the host is a man, hierarchy is important, as well as absolute obedience and extreme methods of managing a team. Co-workers are required to show absolute devotion. Cooking in the male version for television can be a struggle with your own psyche. Often, culinary stars curse and do not refrain from sexist remarks. Anthony Bourdain, known from the show "No Reservations," describes in his book "Kill Grill" the behind-the-scenes functioning of the gastronomy market, the torment which new cooks have to go through in order to gain the favour of senior cooks.<sup>195</sup> The author

192 Conf. Isabelle de Solier, *Food and the Self: Consumption, Production and Material Culture*. London, New York: Bloomsbury 2013, p. 123.

193 Conf. Signe Rousseau, *Food Media: Celebrity Chefs and the Politics of Everyday Interference*. London: Berg Publishers, London 2012, p. 13,17.

194 Conf. Peter Naccarato and Kathleen Lebesco, *Culinary Capital*. London, New York: Berg Publishers, 2012, p. 62.

195 Conf. Anthony Bourdain, *Kill Grill, restauracja od kuchni*. transl. Jacek Konieczny. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2008



claims that reading the book may scare away the subtler of the gourmets from ever visiting a restaurant again. In “Hell’s Kitchen”, Gordon Ramsey is the chef-restaurateur and perfectionist with a hair-trigger temper, who “eliminates” the foot soldier-cooks in a harsh competition. A celebrity-chef may become an expert in the positive sense of the word. The boyish, frank Jamie Oliver with his unkempt hair and cockney accent creates himself out to be a social activist with a mission. He founded a chain of restaurants, where he teaches the cooking profession to youth from young offenders institutions, young drug abusers, alcoholics. He also formed a foundation which helps at-risk youth. When he was involved in a campaign promoting the humanitarian slaughter of chickens, he killed one on air, according to regulations, in order to demonstrate the cruelty of the slaughter. He is fighting for children to never be sold fast food in schools.<sup>196</sup>

Hosts of culinary programs have to be more showmen than cooks. Grace, passion and personality is what counts. Nigella Lawson is the British author of culinary programs and books, known for her joyful but also sensual approach to cooking. The British Oxford graduate with an impeccable accent promotes home cooking, persuading, especially women, that weaknesses (indulging) are just as healthy as beta carotene.<sup>197</sup> Chefs accuse her of being unprofessional, while viewers clearly do not mind. In her case, cooking skill has secondary significance.

Culinary television in the XXI century is something more than cooking, today it shows the sensual aspect of food and the fun coming from it. In media culture, there is the phenomenon of “food porn.” Nigella Lawson licking sauce off her fingers on air, led to her having the nickname “queen of food porn,” whose cooking is like a prelude to an orgy. In both of these formats there is a lot of voyeurism: we watch others in situations in which we wouldn’t always want to be seen. Culinary television is like sex – part of our everyday life – in form or in content, like food, it excites the pleasure centres of our brain. Just like with pornography, we are behind a screen and cannot touch the viewed objects.<sup>198</sup> On Facebook there are plenty of photographs of meals in perverse compositions of food. Food porn appears in cookbooks and in culinary television, because their basic function is firstly to stimulate, seduce, and least of all to educate.<sup>199</sup>

196 Conf. [www.jamieoliver.com/](http://www.jamieoliver.com/) (date of access: 6.12.2014)

197 Conf. <http://www.nigellalawson.pl/strona/nigella.php>. (date of access: 6.12.2014).

198 Conf. Kathleen Collins, *Watching What We Eat. The Evolution of Television Cooking Shows*. New York, London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009, p. 188-191

199 The Asian variation of culinary porno is also shown through the Internet. The stars of *mok-bang* (that

## 5. Culinary blogosphere

Cooking became a fascination partly independent of practice. We experience sensory pleasure even when our participation is virtual. The popularity of Internet sites with recipes and culinary blogs reveals the massive interest in cooking shown by global Internet users. Today, the Internet is the largest cookbook and the easiest to use. A culinary blog is a very extensive collection of recipes published by its creator(s), usually appropriate to the time of year, approaching holidays or the choice of fruits and vegetables which are in season.

Search engines feature lists of blogs, which group themselves under collective signs/names, for example by the recipes in which they specialise. Culinary blogs which contain thousands of recipes belong to the most popular online. The Polish record holder is *kwestiasmaku.com*, which exceeds a million users monthly.<sup>200</sup>

An analysis of Polish blog titles proved very interesting. Authors often sign the blog with their name, sometimes surname: *Malina's Baking*, *Adrian's Dirty Wok*; *Mariola's culinary fantasies*, *Dusiowa in the kitchen*, *Kasinka's cooking*; *Christopher's Culinary Card*, *Culinary Mania*. The basic level of operating is the kitchen: *Wszystko od kuchni* [Everything from the kitchen – *od kuchni* is a phrase which can mean 'behind the scenes, backstage, revealed etc.]; *In my little kitchen*; *kitchen refuge*; *Land of good cooking* [the Polish *kuchnia* can mean "kitchen," the physical place, as well as "cuisine" or cooking, e.g. *kuchnia chińska* – Chinese cuisine – transl. note]; *Through the kitchen doors*; *Kitchen and dining room*. Authors often associate with home cooking in a family environment: *Family in the kitchen*; *Eating as a family*; *Tasty home*; *young wifey's blog*; *Smell of home*; *Crisis housewife*; *No place like mom's*; *From my Granny's kitchen*; *Home restaurant*. Among bloggers there are also fans of specific regions of the world: *Kitchen by the Atlantic*; *My Tuscany*; *bosko-bo-włosko* [divine because Italian]; *Food in Warsaw*; *English Tidbits*; *India on a plate*; *Greek flavors*; *Greek life*; *Tastes of Brazil*. The names

is the name for the phenomenon in South Korea) sit before their computers and turn on their online cameras, access the appropriate site and begin a transmission, during which they eat large amounts of food, live "on air", while also speaking to viewers. Fans of Internet "gluttons" can comment on the events and give virtual tokens called balloons, which are exchanged into real currency.

<sup>200</sup> On the list at <http://polskieblogikulinarne.blogspot.com/> (date of access: 6.12.2014) there are 4350 blogs, and 5228 on the <http://durszlak.pl> forum (date of access: 6.12.2014). Popular and award-winning culinary blogs include, in France – Clotilde Dusoulier (*Chocolate & Zuchimi*), in the USA – Molly Wizenberg (*Orangette*), in the UK – Niamh Shields (*Eat like a Girl*), in Australia – Sandra Reynolds (*The \$120 Food Challenge*). The most popular one in America is Julie Powell (*The Julie/Julia Project*) documenting the realisation of Julia Child's recipes.

of products in the title sometimes indicate a narrow specialisation of the author's blog: *Whole wheat cakes*; *Dumplings on gas*; *My pancaketown*; *Sandwicheri*; *The world smells of szarlotka* [apple cake]; *Cupcakes & Muffins*; *From potato field*; *chocoholic*. An often used word in this category is the name of spices or herbs: *Herb in the kitchen*; *Vanilla and Cinnamon*; *Basil's kitchen*, *Curry and turmeric*; *Cinnamon house*; *Vanilla essence*, *pinch of salt*.

The title reveals the blog author's dietary choices: *glutenfreeinwarsaw*; *Bake something healthier!*; *DietarySister!*; *Yum in vegetarian!*; *Fit Sisters*; *Vegan wedding*; *Without sugar and flour*. The title also hints at the recipient: *Student's little pot*; *Student at the stove*; *KidInTheKitchen*; *Job MOM*; *Reggae, veganism and fighting addictions*; *hungry and allergic*; *Mama Allergika Gotuje MAG* [Allergic kids' Mom Cooks].

A central term in the titles of blogs is taste: *Delicious eats*; *Modern Taste*; *One hundred flavours*; *passion of taste*; *Matter of taste*; *Poetry of taste*; *Cocquetry of Taste*; *Tasted*; *Blissful flavours*; *Scrumptious*. Blog creators hint at specific taste sensations: *SALTY-SWEET*; *crunchy*; *caramel*; *Sweet and peppered*; *sweet DISHES*; *Lime flavoured*. Eating and tasting is associated with the author's passion, but foremost with great sensual pleasure: *Fun & Taste*, *Delish!*; *Yum yum*; *It's delicious*; *Pleasure area*; *my passions*; *I Love Pots*; *Absolutelyappetising!*; *Moments of bliss*; *For love of food*; *Food Cook Love*; *Fascinated*; *For love of cooking*; *Cooking with your heart*; *Searching for happiness*; *Let happiness devour you*.

Sometimes this is a pleasure which can be achieved through supernatural forces: *My Delicious Seventh Heaven*; *Tasty Paradise*; *Lavender Sky*; *Muffin Skies*; *Sweet sky*; *Angels in the kitchen*; *Miracles and marvels*. Food and cooking is associated with a certain secret, wizardry, magic: *U Gohy Czaryhy* [At Goha the Witch's], *Enchanted Skillet*; *Czary-gary in the kitchen* [czarymary – abracadabra; gary – pots and pans]; *Kitchen Witchery*; *Witches' cauldron*; *Sweet, magical, with a cherry on top*; *Magical kitchen*; *The magic of cooking*. Sometimes one is invited to visit blogs by fictional culinary beings: *Cookie Monstress*; *Cookie Monster*, *Subdue the kitchen monster*.

Titles often reflect gender contexts of cooking: *Masz babo placek* [there's your pie, old woman; An old phrase of exclamation, used in sudden surprise or dismay] *Businesswoman in the kitchen*; *guy with a knife*; *Guy on a Plate*; *Guy in the Qitchen*; *Miss Tasty*; *Sweet little cook*; *Beauty cooks and tests*; *Steam-cookerman*; *Ditzy in the kitchen*; *Mechanic in the kitchen*; *Man and Woman of the House*; *Facet od kuchni* [kitchen guy / the secrets of a guy] *Młodzieżowe babeczki* [Young/youthful *babeczki*, which can mean 'ladies, gals', but also 'muffins, cakes']; *Faceci do Garów* [Guys to the pots / Guys get back in the

kitchen]; *Black-haired in the kitchen*; *No shame in a man in the kitchen*; *What a gal!!!*; *Mother, wife and cook...* .

The titles of blogs display erotic metaphors in the kitchen: *Nie Pieprz* [Don't pepper / Don't fuck], *Eat me!*; *PIN-UP CAKE*; *flirt with cooking*; *stay for breakfast*; *kitchen play*; *pink kitchen*; *My cookie*; *I want to be your hen*; *Kamasutra of cooking*.

Blog titles are occasions to create interesting culinary neologisms: *Kuchning*; *Burczobrzechno* [Rumblebellyville]; *Gotowaniomania* [Cookmania]; *Przepisnik Agnieszki*; *Smakowisko*; *kuchniokracja* [kitchenocracy]; *Garnkomania* [Potmania]; *Kuchmismasz* [*miszmasz* – hodgepodge, chaos]; *Ciachomania* [*ciacho* – cookie]; *Jedzeniomania* [*jedzenie* – eating/food]; *Kaszomania* [*kasza* – groats]; *Poradniczanka*; *Ciasteczkolandia* [Cookieland]; *Mniamuśne*. Equally interesting lexically are titles which refer to texts of popular culture: *From the diary of a young cook* [reference to title of 1975-1981 radio sketch show]; *A Fish called Marta*; *Catcher in the kitchen*; *Chatka Pychatka* [a play on *The House at Pooh Corner*]; *Time for a little something*; *Kitchen Ninja*; *Red Hot Chili Cake*; *Blog skrytozercy*; *Sweet roll in the city*; *Chochełką po łapkach* [play on Polish title for *Spy Hard* film]; *Licensed to cook*.

Bloggers also do not avoid references to slang phrases, jargon: *Siekierą po jajach* [Axe to the eggs, *jaja* being the slang equivalent of balls, nuts]; *Zjedź to ziom* [Eat this homie]; *Dobra zagrycha u Krychy i Zdzicha* [Good zakuski/appetisers at Christine and Zdzisław's]; *coś tam, coś tam* [something, something]; *Uwaga kotlet się jara!* [Watch out the cutlet's on fire!]. Looking at the titles of blogs, we go on an interesting journey, sometimes falling into a lofty tone: *In cooking we trust*, we can also feel a bit surrealistic, visiting *The green eye in the soup*, and sometimes we are *Just eating*.

The elements of blog content which are equally important as the written word, are the images. Food is becoming increasingly exciting through its visualisation online. There is a trend of photographing meals – those prepared at home, as well as those ordered in restaurants. Food is one of the favourite subjects of photographs on Instagram, and also a great way to promote a culinary blog, restaurant, or the photographer itself. Instafood is one of the most popular hashtags on Instagram. It is not just a trend, but a global phenomenon, which has countless discussions, articles and various analyses devoted to it. There are workshops on culinary mobile photography for Instagram users.

The recipes posted on blogs are often the ABCs of cooking: how to cook a goose, make chickpea paste, carrot cake. The recipes, with precise instructions, are easy to execute even for the beginners, inexperienced cook.

By providing them, the authors of blogs are opening the doors to their kitchen, in light of the professed rules, that the art of cooking is not about the suspicious-minded hiding of secrets, but about sharing them, passing them on, a nearly gossip-like spreading of tricks and techniques. Blogs also serve culinary inspiration, they are a source of new ideas for dishes, often not previously tried in practice, and they surprise with novel solutions. The community creating the culinary blogosphere includes the authors, their readers and commentators. Blog creators, very often present information about other culinary blogs which are important or interesting to them, which they themselves visit, read and recommend. In the background to the shared recipes one may notice the specifics of the cultural space and references to various contexts of Polish life, private and public. In culinary-travel or culinary-lifestyle blogs, recipes are interwoven with accounts of trips or scenes of everyday life. The blog's author refers to her/his own life experiences, sometimes local or family tradition, but most of all he himself plays the role of pop-culture celebrity and creator of specific dishes or flavours.<sup>201</sup> Sometimes, bloggers host television programs, cooperate with foundations, cook commercially or at parties for friends, publish books, hold culinary workshops, start cooking schools.

There are international awards for the best culinary blogs with separate nominations in categories of images and other content. Good blogs provide knowledge, inspire the imagination and can amuse, though not all of them in the positive sense, however. Culinary blogs are a product of pop-culture, which gives participants the possibility of choosing and interpreting, and a freedom in the ways of reading and understanding various cultural messages. Restaurant blogs have a remarkable force in shaping tastes and consumer behaviours. French chef Bernard Loiseau committed suicide after scathing criticism of his restaurant in the culinary blogosphere.

## 6. Creators of taste and regular bread eaters

Diane Ackerman notices that our attitude to food is a reflection of the way in which we perceive the world and how we enter relations with other people.<sup>202</sup> Culinary critics are sceptical of irrational culinary phobias: al-

201 Conf. Katarzyna Orszulak-Dudkowska, *Blogi kulinarne a tradycja folklorystyczna [Culinary Blogs and Folk Tradition]*, in: Piotr Grochowski (ed.), *Netlor. Wiedza cyfrowych tubylców [Netlor. Digital Knowledge of the Indigenous]*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013, p. 252-253.

202 Conf. Diane Ackerman, *Historia naturalna zmysłów [Natural History of the Senses]*. transl. Krystyna Chmielowa. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1994

lergies, vegetarianism, new exotic flavours, obesity, genetic modification of food, safe, health food. Around these phobias new norms and practices are formed, creating culinary capital. This capital allows people to uphold their identity and maintain the status of a good citizen.<sup>203</sup>

Members of culinary “new tribes” feel that they form a cultural community, have a mental link. The platform for these relations are culinary practices. In the tribe, as a kind of group, one may find a “common sensitivity”, that which is “emotionally common is everything.”<sup>204</sup> This sensitivity creates a specific habit, a climate which forms the glue of tribalism, the ecstasy of the everyday. Eating high quality food makes a regular consumer into a foodie. Foodies is a fashionable, quickly spreading, global social trend, gathering people who want to eat consciously and believe they can thus change the world. On the Internet, they exchange recommendations, where to eat well and healthfully, where to buy valuable products, they exchange recipes. This is a counterbalance to the cheap junk food flooding the market.

Foodie is also a kind of identity, which has become popular in post-modern societies of Great Britain, America and Australia. The term “foodie”, which first appeared in 1982, referred to a “culinary poser”, who used sophisticated culinary consumption as a symbol of social status and class stratification. Eating has become opium for the stylised social class. Foodies cook sophisticated dishes at home, and in the public sphere they become critics and culinary bloggers. Their activity takes on an ethical character. The kitchen is a basic space for them, where they can create and transform their identity through the practices of cooking.

Studies show that gastronomic education within this group refers to the material culture of eating. Besides skills in cooking and tasting, it also contains knowledge about restaurants, chefs, ingredients, producers, suppliers, the history of food, culinary media. It is also the skill of photographing food, writing culinary reviews, as well as designing blogs.<sup>205</sup> Some say that foodies are flamboyant consumers and egoistical gluttons, others argue that being a foodie is a form of collective life in late modernity, a way of fighting for a feeling of purpose.<sup>206</sup> The foodie movement, or the big city love for the culinary is set in contrast to another group, called chowhounds.

203 Conf. Peter Naccarato and Kathleen Lebesco, *Culinary Capital...*op.cit., p.11.

204 Michel Maffesoli, *Czas plemion. Schyłek indywidualizmu w społeczeństwach ponowoczesnych [The Time of the Tribes. The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society]*, transl. Marta Bucholc. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008, p. 45.

205 Conf. Isabelle de Solier, *Food and the Self...*op.cit., p.31.

206 Ibidem, p.172.

They are omnivorous contesters, creators of taste who designate new trends. That which they discover in the area of food may become fashionable and expensive in a few years. Foodies are knowledgeable about food but also imitators of the current gastronomic trends, they value conformism, they search for culinary capital through the opinions of experts. They discover the joy of cooking in a way which Lawson promotes, „I shop and cook basically the same way in which I eat – with greedy conformism.”<sup>207</sup> Chowhounds build their group identity through rejecting the choices of exclusive culinary elites and risking a wide range of kitchen experiments. Compared to foodies they are more democratic and „authentic” participants of the modern culinary scene.<sup>208</sup>

Another group are the freegans, who emphasise the massive and pointless waste of food and negligence of everything related to its production: the suffering of animals, human labour, resources, contamination of the environment. These “refuse-eaters by choice” eat food that has been discarded as rubbish. Freeganism is not just free food. It is a lifestyle, attitude, which refuses the priorities set by a consumer society and the lifestyle which comes from accepting those priorities. “Dumpster diving” separates them from the existing system, and is also part of the broader life outside that system.<sup>209</sup>

Participation in modern culinary culture has the characteristic that allows people otherwise unconnected to easily find themselves at the same table. In that potential, as Georg Simmel claimed in 1910, lies the huge social significance of the meal.<sup>210</sup> In many European cities amateur cooking foundations organise culinary courses which end with a communal meal.<sup>211</sup> In New York lofts, bloggers who promote slow food and organic products organise a monthly Sunday Supper. People unknown to each other meet up to cook together.

Among culinary communities there is also a trend for “flavour searchers”, foragers who collect food in meadows, angle their own fish. They may specialise in “wild foods” such as kai pen (river algae from Laos), meh ken (high altitude mountain peppers), honey from wild citrus, dried bael fruit. The Polish movement of city eaters is gathering a growing number of

207 <http://www.nigellalawson.pl/strona/nigella.php>. (date of access: 6.12.2014).

208 Conf. José Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*, Routledge, New York 2010, p.55.

209 Conf. Peter Singer, Jim Mason, *Etyka a to, co jemy [The Ethics of What We Eat]*. transl. Elżbieta de Lazari. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, 2012, p. 410-411.

210 Conf. Georg Simmel, op.cit., p. 272-282.

211 Conf. WWW.ffcuisineamateur.org (date of access: 4.12.2014)

proponents. They see a metropolis as a wild city, overgrown with edible plants and fruits. Gathering them is not an ideology, they do it for the pleasure of the search, and later consuming the prized result in the form of preserves. In the “wild urban kitchen” there are recipes for e.g. ground-ivy (*lechoma hederacea*), wild carrot, Jerusalem artichoke or crab of the woods (*laetiporus sulphureus*).<sup>212</sup> “Culinary workshops for wild food” are popular; they promote dishes made of edible wild plants, for example candy made of sweet flag, fries from marsh woundwort, “cabbage rolls” from coltsfoot, or cooked acorns<sup>213</sup>. The Polish “Bug-eater’s manual” recommends eating grasshoppers, snails, earthworms, caterpillars.<sup>214</sup>

Participants of culinary communities look for flavours, aromas, discoveries in food. Tasting exotic dishes may be the goal, but may also be a method of discovering another culture, language, way of life. Under the label of culinary tourism are the offers of specialised travel bureaus which offer relevant trips, or the many vacation cooking courses, oenology courses, festivals of products, culinary trails or bicycle trips around vineyards and breweries. Foodie tourists taste foods in Vietnam, Thailand, China – roasted or candied insects and larvae, live jumping prawns, meat of snake, turtle, squirrel, bat, dogs bred for meat. A popular dish among gourmets are the penises of various mammals, e.g. seals. Blood to drink is also served, drained from a snake killed before the diners, and a beating heart to swallow. In Spain, tourists geared toward an unusual flavour composition may drink a cocktail from bull testicles, and in France one may try meat stuffed pig anus. A travelling gourmet talks to the owners of family restaurants, buys local products at rural markets. His taste is a tool in discovering the world. He may travel tens of miles to directly purchase from the producer, a goat cheese, *oscypki* [smoked sheep cheese], truffles, calamari, piranhas. He cooks for friends, serves them new flavours, as if showing photographs from a trip.

“Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are”<sup>215</sup>, Brillat-Savarin wrote in the early XIX century, presenting short characterisations of various kinds of gourmets. He divided them into those “by fate” whose tendency to savour is simply in their genes, those “by trade” including in that group financiers, writers, princes.

212 Conf. Marta Mazuś, *Miastożercy [City-eaters]*, „Polityka” 2.07-8.07.2014, p. 102

213 Conf. Łukasz Łuczaj, *Dzikie rośliny jadalne Polski. Przewodnik survivalowy [Wild Edible Plants of Poland. Survival Guide]*. Krosno: Krośnieńska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 2013

214 Conf. Łukasz Łuczaj, *Podręcznik robakożercy, czyli jadalne bezkręgowce Środkowej Europy [Bug-eaters Guide, Edible Invertebrates of Central Europe]*. Krosno: Wydawnictwo Chemigrafia, 2005.

215 Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Fizjologia smaku...op.cit.*, p.8



Polish market research and studies of the gastronomy culture try to discern the modern types of gourmets. In a 2004 survey of Poles' eating, basic groups of food consumers were differentiated. They are: the traditionalists (32%), technologists (18%), sybarites (19%), searchers (16%) and gorgers (14%). Traditionalists are emotionally connected to traditional Polish cuisine and its standard dishes, prepared usually from basic ingredients. This group does not accept either semi-prepared foods or processed ready meals. In other groups, culinary experiments and convenience foods are a basic element of cuisine.<sup>216</sup>

Observing the modern culinary scene, one could conclude that there is a clear hierarchy of taste from snobbish groups which consume refined (over-intellectualised) products and culinary practices, up to the communities open to less exclusive, rather eclectic practices. This is an expression of social distinction and search for culinary capital. By defining what should and should not be eaten, cuisine allows members of a society to define their identity. By eating "the right foods" we become part of a group, by eating "the wrong" food we become outsiders. Similar to language, cuisine is a medium through which social groups create their specific identity.<sup>217</sup>

## 7. Pop-cultural levels of the culinary scene

Food, dietary habits, culinary culture and its associations with civilisation shaped tastes, flavours and tendencies, thanks to which food became clearly linked with different religions, the development of technology, as well as the variety of interpersonal relations. Joseph Epstein has been following displays of culinary snobbism since the 70s, among which he names culinary travels, interest in ethnic cuisine, the development of vegetarianism, obsession with healthy food and growing interest in tastes, diet and nourishment.<sup>218</sup> In the markets of consumer societies exclusivity of one taste or choice is not promoted, the variety of flavours and experiences is.

Culinary matters influence people in the spiritual and metaphysical sphere. In Japanese culinary art, food may embody beauty, morality, emotions even when it is not intended for consumption.<sup>219</sup> Professional and

<sup>216</sup> Pentor report 2004, *Zwyczajne żywieniowe Polaków [Dietary habits of Poles]*. Knorr report [www.pentor.pl](http://www.pentor.pl) (date of access: 10.11.2006)

<sup>217</sup> Conf. Warren Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry, 1966-1988*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989, p. 44.

<sup>218</sup> Conf. Joseph Epstein, *Snobbery: The American Version*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002, p. 217.

<sup>219</sup> Conf. Eric C. Rath, *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

popular interest in food is expressed in the area of modern narrative and visual arts. The attributes of food are considered applied, decorative art. The American performance artist Karen Finley rubs her body with spices and sticky substances. Janine Antoni's work *Gnaw* (1992) represents giant blocks of chocolate and pork fat, which she sculpted using her teeth and tongue. The Canadian artist Jany Sterbak's piece *Meat Chair* resembles a great pile of meat formed into a lounge chair. The same artist in 1987 showed a work entitled *Making of Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*.<sup>220</sup> A segment of clothing sewn from sixty pounds of raw meat was draped onto a sitting model. During the exhibition the meat rotted before the viewers' eyes.

Another snobbish side of the culinary art is *design culinaire*, or food design, a niche discipline, a cross between chemistry, biology, physics, art, aesthetics and gastronomy. All over the world there are seminars, conferences, related to designing food, with avant-garde gastronomy equipment and gadgets "for kitchen and table." In specialty shops one can buy an edible wedding dress, sewn from pressed rhubarb, a bracelet from processed strawberry pulp.

The purchase of food becomes a form of exclusive hunting, a romantic but also snobbish activity. Once, fresh local food was considered simple and demotic. We observe the return to searching for fresh, natural, local food as a modern moral value. Rachel Laudan calls this "culinary luddism," in contrast to purchasing processed food at the supermarket, i.e. "culinary modernism."<sup>220</sup> This is the newest trend in large cities, which is becoming a political declaration. That which was, until now, considered archaic and rustic, became fashionable on urban tables. In striving for freshness and the natural, we attempt to eliminate seasonality, but when buying lettuce in the winter, it is worth considering the technological, environmental and social cost of that measure.<sup>221</sup>

Cuisine is a philosophy while also one of the forms of passing on energy and feelings. Cooking creates an oasis of slowness. In the very nature of communal cooking and eating is the potential of bonding between people. Around the table are made popular values such as spending time together, friendly conversations, hospitality, giving and mutual sharing of recipes, advice regarding cooking. It is worth betting on that which is sur-

220 Rachel Laudan, *Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love New, Fast, Processed Food*, „Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies”, Vol. 1, No 1 (Winter 2001), p. 36.

221 Conf. Susanne Freidberg, *Fresh. A Perishable History*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.

prising in the kitchen, what requires time and dedication, e.g. to prepare a present for your friends in the form of homemade pumpkin peanut butter, plum jam with lavender or inviting guests to a collective feast with a homemade rosemary and chili jelly, ginger carrot chutney, sweet balsamic vinegar beets. This is an advanced level of consumption, proof of good welfare. Members of the middle and upper classes want to emphasise their identity in this way, their roots, history, their uncommon, original image. Cooking today is not just a level of the everyday, but also a snobbish skill or a category of entertainment. Culinary bloggers, critics and cooks encourage communal play with food. Thus, new, peculiar social communities arise, focused around a culinary phenomenon.

The preparation of food has become an element of pop culture. It fulfils requirements: it is liked by many, contains popular content, is closely tied to commercialism and also deals with social divisions. The social contexts in which eating often takes place make it even more of a public act. British press tycoon Alfred Lord Northcliffe used to say to his reporters, that if they want to arouse universal interest, they must rely on four topics: crime, love, money and food. But only the last of those has a basic and universal significance.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Conf. J. Lee Thompson, *Northcliffe: Press Baron in Politics 1895-1922*. London: John Murray Publishers, 2001.



# 4

## Diversity of everyday and holiday customs

Differentiating that of the everyday and that of holidays, special occasions in studying customs, seems a most obvious division. Most studies regarding customs, regardless of whether they are by ethnographers, sociologists or historians, are indeed focused on these two basic dimensions.<sup>223</sup> Even more publications are devoted to holiday customs, and detailed analysis of those rituals and symbolic meanings. Our research interest was rather more focused on getting to know everyday customary practices regarding the organisation of everyday time and discerning how holiday time is understood and what customary practices are tied to it.

In recent decades the issue of the everyday in sociology has clearly gained significance and become the subject of many interesting analyses. Piotr Sztompka proposes to call this current the third sociology and writes that, it is “sociology focused on the everyday and addressed to regular people.”<sup>224</sup> Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska analysed the reasons for this shift in sociology toward the everyday, and named several: the pace of changes

<sup>223</sup> Conf. e.g. Jan Stanisław Bystron, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce, wiek XVI-XVIII [History of custom in old Poland, XVI-XVIII century]*, volume II. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976; Marcin Czerwiński, *Przemiany obyczaju [Transformations of Custom]*. Warszawa: PIW, 1972; Bożena Krzywobłocka, *Stare i nowe obyczaje [Customs, Old and New]*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Związków Zawodowych, 1986; Zbigniew Kuchowicz, *Obyczaje staropolskie XVII-XVIII w. [Old-Polish Customs in the XVII-XCVIII Centuries]*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1975; *Kultura dnia codziennego i świątecznego w rodzinie [Everyday and Holiday Culture in the Family]*. ed. Leon Dyczewski OFMConv Dariusz Wadowski. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 1998; Andrzej Chwalba (ed.), *Obyczaje w Polsce. Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych [Customs in Poland. From Middle Ages to Modern Times]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2004; *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach [Polish Customs. XX Century in Short Entries]*. ed. Małgorzata Szpakowska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2008.

<sup>224</sup> Piotr Sztompka, *Zycie codzienne – temat najnowszej socjologii [Everyday Life – Subject of New Sociology]*. In: *Socjologia codzienności*, ed. Piotr Sztompka, Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2008, p. 30.

and pluralism of the social world, which are difficult to enter into great systemic theories, the global economic crisis, the dynamic increase of knowledge and its rapid expiration, weariness toward narrations incomprehensible to recipients and finally, new forms of expression and communication, which allows for new research methods.<sup>225</sup> The study of custom fits well into interest in that which will not submit to broad generalisations and systemic theories. Despite creating a typology of certain everyday customs, we must also remember the significant diversity within certain types. This chapter is an attempt at forming a typology of everyday customs, while also showing their diversity, customary niches or new, arising trends.

## Everyday custom

Sociologists who write about the everyday agree, that it is currently very diverse, which is a result of both the influence of life situation which determines certain choices, as well as the massive range of options to choose from.<sup>226</sup> “It is hard to speak about the everyday life of Poles as if speaking about certain states or typical, dominant behaviours. It is very diverse, much more so than in the recent past, when, on the one hand the high level of employment and social “organisation”, and on the other, the economy of shortage and average income determined the behaviours and standards of life also in its’ everyday dimension.”<sup>227</sup> This diversity is revealed also in the issues of everyday customs regarding the organisation of one’s day, ways of spending time and various activities throughout the day. The environment, understood as a place of residence does not differentiate these customs to a greater degree. Small, medium cities and villages seem quite alike, significant difference mostly apply to the big city. That does not mean, of course, that there is no diversity within the customs of residents of the other environments, but the categories of difference in all three are similar. If one were to attempt to create certain simplified models, then based on the analysed interviews one could differentiate several main

225 Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska, *Codziennosc i społeczne konteksty życia codziennego [The Everyday and Social Contexts of Daily Life]*. In: *Barwy codzienności. Analiza socjologiczna [Colors of the Everyday. Sociological Analysis]*. ed. Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, 2009.

226 Anthony Giddens, *Nowoczesność.....*

227 Leszek Kazimierz Gilejko, *Życie codzienne Polaków w drugiej dekadzie transformacji [Daily Life of Poles in Second Decade of the Transformation]*. In: *Życie codzienne Polaków na przełomie XX i XXI w. [Daily Life on Poles in the Turn of the XX and XXI Centuries]*. ed. Roch Sulima. Łomża: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Stopka”, 2003, p. 15

models of custom. I dubbed them: passive-retired, passive-stationary, church-religious, active-diversified, passionate and youthful. In all environments, two models of everyday custom dominate – the “passive-retired” and “passive-stationary”. The first of those is represented not by all retired people and not just them, often also the unemployed, women on maternity leave, housewives. It usually consists of an ordered schedule of everyday household chores, spending most time at home, limited social contacts. Activity outside the home during leisure time includes walks and not too frequent meetings with family. Pleasures and pastimes include solving crossword puzzles, reading popular literature, more often press, which mostly consists of tabloids and local newspapers. An important element of everyday life is television and radio, often used as a backdrop for various tasks. If the choice is intentional however, then Polish radio “channel one” dominates, or local stations which play mostly music, also younger people mostly choose music stations, the others choose news channels (TVN24 or Superstacja<sup>228</sup>) and sports, entertainment and series accessible on nationwide channels (TVP, TVN, Polsat).

Realisation of this model of custom is influenced by lesser health, as well as care over children or grandchildren, an older or ill member of the family. Very often reduction of daily activity is motivated by low income, which in the subjects’ own opinions excludes them from various potential activities, from socialising to various ways of spending free time. Often our respondents apply various rationalisations in describing their everyday customs, but we also see statements such as, “Nobody wants to know poor people these days. People hide, avoid contact with others.” (Ch-21, m-63), “What else do I have left, mostly on television I can see some foreign countries, exotic places, because I can’t afford trips.” (K-24, k-26). Of course, within this simplified model we can notice a lot of diversity, e.g. regarding individual interests and media preferences, reading of books or complete rejection of them, as well as the genre of literature chosen.

The model of “passive-stationary” custom applies to people of varied ages, education level or current career; what they have in common is having more constant responsibilities, they are working or studying, sometimes they are linked by both these tasks, or despite retirement or unemployment they have steady responsibilities outside the home (e.g. they walk grandchildren to school or preschool, own a summer home, work at home etc.).

<sup>228</sup> Information channels which present news all day, political commentary and interviews. Superstacja has a somewhat more tabloid-like character.

They devote a large part of the day to work, after which they fulfil household chores (more often women) and parental obligations (both women and men). They prefer passive rest and entertainment in the home, i.e. reading press or books, listening to radio, watching television, surfing the Internet (definitely more frequent than in the previous model), watching films online or computer games. Most prefer afternoon-evening contact with television, usually choosing specific programs, but there are also those who present a critical attitude toward television, which takes one's time by offering primitive, uninteresting entertainment. It is also worth noticing that respondents' statements display a good knowledge of television programs, so perhaps this criticism is only declarative, stemming from the conviction that watching television is a form of entertainment that does little to support one's development, while other activities, such as e.g. reading, are judged very positively. In this model of custom, working on a plot garden is a very frequent element. The smaller the town, the more popular this custom is. In the large city, only 5% of surveyed mention working on a plot; in medium sized cities this value increases to 12%, and in small cities 23% of our respondents spoke of their plot/summer home as their life passion, favourite activity, something which organises their time, provides pleasure and relaxation. In rural environments also, among residents not living from farming, who do not have a field, tending to their garden is an often cultivated custom. What garden plot owners have in common is usually quite an emotional attitude toward it, while the function it fulfils is also a differentiating element. The custom of spending time at the summer plot outside the city, may satisfy the yearning to be in touch with nature, to relax, for physical activity, but may also be a form of productive use of time, supporting the household with one's own harvest. Respondents' statements show this diversity very well.

Among both those realising the "passive-retired" model and the "passive-stationary" model there are some people with specific passions which they can realise in the comfort of their home. In the case of men this is DIY, though not very popular actually, while culinary passions dominate among women, and respondents speak of them thus: "Let me put it this way, my craze is cooking, I rest in the kitchen, when I'm stressed, I go to the kitchen and relieve my stress there. I live it, I think up things, make them and really enjoy it. I watch cooking shows" (Ch-69, k-57) ; "Usually, I'm on the Internet in my free time and looking for some recipes, because I like to cook. So I kind of think up new things like that." (Ch-81, k-29); "My hobby is baking. I can bake every day, but I don't have to eat it. I like



making all kinds of cakes, the baked ones and those served cold, all kinds, artistic cakes, in the shape of a castle, a crocodile, a hedgehog, a first communion book, I like doing that.” (P-52, k-34); “I love watching cooking shows and sometimes even when I want to rest I turn on a culinary program. I write things down from some, cook them, others I file away in my virtual cookbook.” (W-67, k-29).

The other form of activity are crafts, needlework – sewing, crocheting, knitting, quilting, which are sometimes treated as a pleasant customary practice, sometimes as a custom associated with necessity. Handiwork, sewing from scratch, or re-sewing older things becomes a source of extra income or a way of dealing with the inability to buy new things.

Beside practices realised in the home, the everyday customs of our subjects are diversified through specific passions to which they occasionally devote time. Usually this is activity during free time, a form of relaxation, an expression of individual interests. Our respondents spoke about fishing, numismatics, sailing, painting, painting on glass, esotericism or World War II history. In this case, a lack of financial resources is also perceived as a major limitation. It turns out that it is difficult to find entertainment which does not require any expenditure, and for this segment of the surveyed even a small expense devoted to it is impossible.

In all environments, one can discern, nearly exclusively among older people, a model of “church-religious” customs, which include frequent religious practices, various prayers as systematic, everyday practices and listening to Radio Maryja, watching *Telewizja Trwam*.<sup>229</sup> Sometimes this is also combined with participation in pilgrimages organised by a parish and activity in Church prayer groups, which is more frequently mentioned by residents of rural and small town environments. All people realising the “church-religious” customary model are of senior age, within the surveyed population no person younger than sixty was engaged in religious movements tied to the Church, though there were a few younger respondents who emphasised their bond with religion and mentioned their activity in the church choir or taking part in pilgrimages as important practices in their free time. Studying members of religious communities shows that people who participate in them, of varied age, level of education or professional position, devote a lot of time in their daily customary practices to prayer, reading and reflecting on the Gospel, prayer meetings with others,

<sup>229</sup> *Radio Maryja* and *Telewizja Trwam* are two social-religious stations run by Redemptorists, which clearly promote a nationalist and xenophobic ideology.

retreats, courses, religious workshops serving self-improvement and reaching further levels of initiation.<sup>230</sup>

The model seen decidedly more often in the large city than in other environments is the “active-diversified” customary model. Its common traits are: social relations both with family and outside of it, combining various kinds of activity – career work with extra training, courses, self-betterment, helping children with other forms of organising time and fairly varied interests and individual passions. This category mostly contains professionally active, better educated people, with a stable career and a certain group of retired people with higher education and a somewhat better financial situation. Subjects who realise this model, usually do so individually, and in a planned manner; they choose television programs to view, books or magazines, they also use computers more often and in more varied ways, using the Internet, they participate in online forums, publish their own blogs, play games on and offline. Usually they combine these activities with their individual interests. Realisation of this model is slightly different in small cities of varying size, the types of activities realised also vary.

Among people in this category we will most often find those who systemically take part in physical activity, sports, travel for tourism and recreation. In general, people who mentioned any kind of physical activity are more numerous in larger cities (21-25%) than in small cities or villages (14%). However, in all environments we find enthusiasts for whom a significant element of everyday custom is physical activity, sport or conditioning, usually they participate in more than one type of sport, they do it regularly and prefer active pastimes. Though various forms of physical activity are equally often declared by women and men, it is young men who dominate among sports enthusiasts. Frequency of tourism-recreation activities is also very clearly correlated with place of residence, the larger the city, the larger the percentage of those who talk about their travel habits. Among our respondents living in rural areas there was not a single person like this. Residents of the large city spoke of tourism and recreation most often (12%) describing it as a significant element of vacation customs and others. Apart from that, not many respondents spoke of tourism as their passion, usually emphasising specific individual preferences, describ-

230 Ewelina Pękała, *Wspólnota Chrystusa Zmartwychwstałego „Galilea” w misji Kościoła katolickiego – studium socjologiczne Winnicy Warszawa [Community of Christ Resurrected “Galilea” in the Mission of the Catholic Church – Sociological Study of Winnica Warszawa]*. Unpublished master’s thesis written under the guidance of Beata Laciak. Warszawa: ISNS UW, 2014

ing favourite places. The vast majority of respondents who spoke about their voyages are conventional-individual or collective tourists, very few are tourists drifters or discoverers.<sup>231</sup> There was no one among our respondents who mentioned e.g. couch surfing, where participants are perhaps drifting tourists in the greatest degree, according to E. Cohen's description, because when travelling they live with acquaintances met through the Internet, they discover new places from their perspective, often participating for a short time in the host's everyday life, getting to know their home, family, customs, favourite places, home cooking or restaurants chosen by them, visiting not just places described in tourist guidebooks, but also those which the host wishes to show them. In 2010, 35 thousand Poles were registered on the Couchsurfing website.<sup>232</sup> Małgorzata Szpakowska analysed Polish customs of the 1990s and wrote, "(...) evidence of change in standards is the commonality of travelling. Journals and letters to the editor clearly show that the world has truly opened up for us. It is quite striking: complaints of poverty and signs of lack are accompanied by stories of travel abroad, and for pleasure: clear evidence that travelling has ceased to be an indicator of luxury. It is something that is worth talking about, but also within the realm of possibility."<sup>233</sup> Our studies, as well as nationwide qualitative studies<sup>234</sup>, do not indicate a universality of travel for tourism. Only a small percentage of our respondents travel for pleasure, while a great number of people travel for other reasons and goals, and nearly every interview contained some information about a family member or friend who had worked or is working abroad. Definitely, the methods of tourist travel have also changed, compared with the 1990s. Beside trips organised for groups and individuals, the number of non-standard travellers is growing. In recent years, the number of Internet forums devoted to these kinds of travels has increased greatly. People there exchange experiences of travel to the most varied, often very distant or exotic places. They describe their impressions, but also share other information about tourist attractions, local customs, ways of travelling there, finding accommodation, prices, local transport etc. Usually such voyages are not a single experience, but a

231 Eric Cohen, *Toward a Sociology Of International Tourism*, "Social Research", vol. 39, Nr 1, 1972.

232 Agata Ziółkowska, *Couchsurfing jako nowy sposób podróżowania we współczesnym świecie- analiza doświadczeń polskiej społeczności Couchsurferów [Couchsurfing as a new way of travelling in the modern world – analysis of experiences in Polish Couchsurfing community]*. Unpublished master's thesis written under the guidance of Beata Łaciak. Warszawa: ISNS UW, 2010.

233 Małgorzata Szpakowska, *Chcieć i mieć...* p. 205

234 *Wyjazdy wypoczynkowe Polaków w 2013 roku i plany na 2014 [Poles' Vacation Trips in 2013 and Plans for 2014]*. ed. Barbara Badora. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2014.

constant custom of such travels, discovering new places, often inaccessible to conventional tourists.

In all studied environments one may differentiate the “youthful-amusement” customary model, which is characterised by a weaker bond with family, lack of stable employment (often because of continuing education), a lot of activity in the virtual world, relatively less frequent access to television, frequent contacts with friends and acquaintances, interest in music and sport, though rarely actively pursued, spending time outside the house in pubs, night clubs, at sporting events.

Sometimes a passion becomes the most important activity around which everyday practices focus, a significant element of individual identity. Our respondents' narration reveals a model of “enthusiast customs” separating them from the others, independent of demographics such as age, gender, education, occupation or place of residence. Among those representing this model are people highly varied in this sense, but also varied in the passions which focus their customary practices. The large majority of respondents speaking of their life passions describe real activities, only some additionally mention their participation in Internet forums, which are a platform for forming relations with other like-minded individuals. Analysing Internet forums prompts the reflection, that perhaps now there is no area of everyday activity which cannot connect people in discussion, exchange of experiences, creating virtual communities.<sup>235</sup> Internet forums feature the discussions of enthusiasts of automobiles and their specific brands, ecology, bodybuilding, minimalism, marathons, freestyle, motorcycles, travel, etc. The virtual space is becoming an area where various enthusiasts meet others similar to them, and with time these relations transfer to contacts in the real world, or even formalisation of the group. Sometimes though, the Internet is just an additional space for exchanging experiences and forming contacts between people who previously created more or less formalised groups realising their interests in the real world.

An environmental difference visible in interviews is also the variation of customs regarding treatment of animals in rural areas and in the city.

235 Conf. e.g. *Wielka sieć. E-seje z socjologii Internetu [Great Web. Sociology of the Internet E-ssays]*, ed. Jacek Kurczewski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2006; Ewa Grzeszczyk, *Kultura fanów w Internecie [Culture of Fans Online]*. In: „Societas/Communitas”, nr 1(9)/ 2010; Marcin Bartnicki, *Forum internetowe jako forma instytucjonalizacji zbiorowości religijnej. Instytucjonalizacja satanizmu w Polsce [Internet Forums as a Form of Institutionalising Religious Collectives. Institutionalisation of Satanism in Poland]*. In: „Societas/Communitas”, nr 1(9)/ 2010.

This issue was not a subject in the interviews, but in cities the topic of pets appeared in many respondents' statements, who spoke of their pupils when describing everyday customs, free time, trips, or even limited social relations, in which the animal is compensation. It is difficult to say more regarding customs of animal treatment in various environments based on the acquired material, but certainly residents of villages do not pay as much attention to their four-legged friends. Only in urban narrations the household cat, dog or canary determine the rhythm of everyday life and fulfil a role of emotional support in their owner's solitude. Statements did not show animals to be an element of the owner's social position,<sup>236</sup> especially since people from various social categories mentioned their household pets (retired people, unemployed, students, businessmen, university professors). The statements reveal an image of the pet as a member of the family or at least a substitute for social relations, to which warm feelings are transferred, whose needs are considered. Subjects talked of forced physical activity associated with taking the dog for walks, emotional ties with one's pet, the daily rhythm marked by meals, walks or play with the animal, or of the choice of place and form of vacationing dictated by the fact of having a pet. Certainly though, the customs associated with caring for a pet are clearly varied also among urban animal owners. Though our respondents did not mention this in interviews (I must remind you however, that the topic was not prompted in this study), but analysis of media content and websites clearly shows this variation. A significant varying issue is not just the choice of species or breed, but the ideological basis for the choice of animal. In media content and pro-ecological environments, as well as on many forums devoted to animals, care for homeless animals and limiting of reproduction is very clearly promoted. Breeders of purebred or especially pedigree dogs are proponents of entirely different customs. Additionally, the diversity of customs associated with pets is influenced by one's wallet. The market for animal-related products is massive and steadily growing. One can therefore have a dog or cat and allocate limited funds only for its upkeep and possible medical care, but one may also provide the animal with a diverse, specialised diet, toys and gadgets, lodging in an animal hotel or the care of a pet sitter during vacation, clothing, training and courses, exercise, psychological care, grooming and cosmetic services, or even a SPA with relax-

236 Katarzyna Podlaszewska, *O pozycji społecznej czworonogiem podkreślonej [About Social Position Emphasised with Pets]*, in: *Na pokaz. O konsumeryzmie w kapitalizmie bez kapitału [For Show. Consumerism in Capitalism without Capital]*. ed. Tomasz Szlendak and Krzysztof Pietrowicz. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2004.

ing music. Of course the majority of these specialised services are accessible in cities, especially larger ones. Analysis of offers in Warsaw shows that the consumer market for animals is thriving and creating more and more needs, generating huge costs for pet maintenance.<sup>237</sup>

## Models of holiday custom

A lot of studies, especially ethnographical, have been devoted to holiday custom – Polish as well. Part of them focus mostly on holidays determined by the liturgical calendar, other articles describe customs regarding rituals of passage, significant moments in the cycle of human life. “The holiday is an extraordinary time.”<sup>238</sup> Anna Zadrożyńska writes and argues that the key elements of a holiday are ceremonies and rituals stemming from religious-magical beliefs and imaginings of the universe, while Jacques Heers believes that the “The holiday is foremost an occasion to have fun (...) often having no other goal than the fun itself.(...) Holiday is also a reflection of society.”<sup>239</sup> Our studies confirm both opinions and ways of understanding holidays. Our goal was not to discover rituals connected with holidays, celebratory time in the annual cycle or human life cycle. Rather, we were interested in recapturing that which people define as holiday/special occasion time, what holiday occasions they celebrate, what forms of celebration or amusement are associated with them. Regardless of declared attitude toward religion, nearly all those surveyed (with the exception of two Jehovah’s witnesses) named chiefly the main religious holidays of the year, Christmas and Easter, as holiday times. Our respondents also named state holidays among special occasions, but usually these were not associated with any special celebration or customs in their families, they were treated mostly as days off from work. The only custom named by respondents, especially those living in standalone houses, was hanging of the national flag. Subjects emphasised that this was a significant practice for them, one which aroused emotions, treated not just as a citizen’s obligation, but as an individual display of patriotism. Decidedly more often however, respondents referred to the key religious holidays, rites of passage such as baptism,

237 Julia Turewicz, *Zwierzęta domowe jako nowa grupa konsumentów* [Pets as a new target group.], unpublished master’s thesis, written under the guidance of Beata Łaciak. Warszawa: ISNS UW, 2010..

238 Anna Zadrożyńska, *Świętowanie polskie...*, p.11

239 Jacques Heers, *Święta głupców i karnawały* [Festival of Fools and Carnivals]. transl. Grażyna Majcher. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Marabut, 1995, p.6-7

marriage or first communion, and to secular and private cyclical holidays. In the case of holiday customs there is some environmental differentiation. In small town environments, decidedly more often than in others, people dismiss various forms of social contact and limit holiday meetings to the closest family, during the main Christmas and Easter holidays. Celebration of other occasions, such as name day, birthdays or wedding anniversaries are given up or largely reduced, mostly due to financial reasons. Respondents with low income, low education, unemployed, retired or on benefits, often emphasise that various forms of social gatherings are too much of a financial burden for them.

Regardless of place of residence, a common custom when celebrating various occasions is forgoing presents. Explanations that buying presents is troublesome or obliges to reciprocate are less frequent, usually financial circumstances are mentioned. If presents are recalled, then usually symbolic, practical ones. In rural environments there is mention of giving money instead of presents, or sometimes a kind of collection, gathered from the family for the celebrant, so that he may purchase something for the sum. Not only is this not seen as inappropriate, but our respondents even explain that this is the most beneficial solution, which pleases everyone. The large city differs greatly from other environments; residents usually declare that celebrating various holiday occasions is associated with giving gifts. Their significance is accented, even if symbolic, not very costly, the majority consider them an inherent element of holiday custom. Persons with a higher education and good employment situation more frequently described celebrating various holidays not just within the family circle, but also among friends. In their narrations they emphasise that holidays are tied with more extravagant parties, obligatory gifts. In the rural environment also, private celebrations are more often connected with meetings not just within family, but also with the participation of neighbours, friends. In all environments, regardless of respondents' material standing, everyone spoke of presents, sometimes quite costly ones, for baptism, first communion or a wedding. Even more popular than gifts of items, is offering money on these occasions, often respondents described this as an environmental or familial customary norm. Subjects from different environments state that thanks to ease of communication, holiday celebration is limited to greetings over the telephone or through Internet. In smaller towns and villages, celebration is rarely organised outside the home, sometimes eighteenth birthdays or first communion parties are held in restaurants, mostly only weddings, but equally frequently at wedding

reception halls. Respondents in Warsaw also rarely mentioned private celebrations outside the home, somewhat more often first communion parties or occasional meetings with friends are held in outside establishments. Birthday or name day meetings with a grill cookout are very popular in the small town and villages, and they have a less formal character. Though research shows that the frequency of restaurant visits has grown in our society, social gatherings outside the home are still mostly attended by residents of large agglomerations, young people. "Regardless of where social gatherings associated with food take place, a significant determinant is the economic situation of the subjects: those that are worse off participate in them much less frequently (especially in those associated with going to bars, cafes or restaurants) than people in good or even average financial standing..."<sup>240</sup>

The dominant custom is to independently organise annual holidays and private celebrations, so the menu for these occasions is also prepared at home. Very rarely is there information about serving guests ready, purchased dishes, orders from catering companies. In these few cases respondents describe not their own behaviour, but someone of the family, usually attaching a critical commentary. Based on the interviews one may assume that the customary norm is to prepare a celebratory dinner at home or invite guests to a gastronomic establishment, serving a bought cake is acceptable, though the clear majority emphasises that for the holidays, birthdays, name days or wedding anniversaries one prepares home-made cakes. A special occasion menu is also necessary. In our respondents' narrations this is usually a two course dinner, with appetisers and the obligatory desert, cake, sometimes a layer cake with icing. Mostly traditional Polish cuisine is served, with *rosół*, cutlets, a roast with potatoes, salads, croquettes, dumplings, gelatines, and cakes: cheesecake, poppy seed cake and fruit cakes. Apart from tradition, individualism in the kitchen is revealed, usually in the form of single borrowings from other nations' dishes, introducing new dishes or deserts, with recipes learned from the media, mostly television or Internet. Enriching Polish servings with novel items is usually associated with travels, steady contact with another culture, e.g. as a result of temporary emigration or marriage with a foreign person. Usually it is introduced by the generation of 30-40 year-olds. The preference for Polish cuisine is confirmed both by studies conducted on a na-

<sup>240</sup> *Zachowania żywieniowe Polaków [Dietary Behaviours of Poles]*, ed. Michał Feliksiak. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2014, p. 11



tionwide sample, as well as respondents' replies to more detailed questions regarding culinary preferences.<sup>241</sup> A few years ago, nationwide studies showed that the most frequent dream dinner for Poles was *rosół* with noodles, pork cutlet with potatoes and slaw, ice cream or cake for desert.<sup>242</sup> Those same studies indicate that younger, better educated respondents, in better financial situations, are more likely to choose dishes from foreign cuisine. Our subjects' stories of holiday menus show that culinary preferences are slowly changing, though the discernible difference is very often a different choice of meat dish, other than pork cutlet.

In every environment there is a small percentage of people who declare that celebrating various occasions in their family has great significance, they strive for it to be a special time, they care for the decor, menu, presents, creating family holiday customs, striving to maintain tradition or simply using models from media, at least in preparing surprise parties, especially for major birthdays or wedding anniversaries. Everyone describing celebrating as an important element of customs has a university or high school education, and is usually professionally active. People in this category, significantly more frequently than others, also mention social relations with friends or colleagues from work when describing celebration of private holidays. Reduction of holiday customs is tied to older age, low income and conflict-prone relations in the nuclear or extended family.

From subjects' statements one may conclude that the celebration of name day is just as popular as birthday celebrations, while those who celebrate name day annually, celebrate at least eighteenth birthdays and other major ones in a ceremonious way, fiftieth, seventieth, seventy-fifth and wedding anniversaries – silver, thirty or forty year anniversaries. Feasts, parties and gift giving, for some of the surveyed, are special occasion customs which accompany specific days of the calendar, celebrating the mother, father, children, grandfather or grandmother. Usually such days are observed in a small family circle. In the family group, though somewhat expanded, one celebrates rituals of passage – baptism, first communion, weddings and funerals. None of our respondents mentioned anything about celebrating a divorce (though there were divorced people in our sample), no one spoke of divorce parties as a new or borrowed custom. One ought to notice however, that since 2007 a divorce convention is held in Poland,

<sup>241</sup> Conf. Marioli Bieńko's chapter in this book

<sup>242</sup> *Upodobania kulinarne, nawyki żywieniowe i zachowania konsumenckie Polaków [Polish Culinary Preferences, Dietary Habits and Consumer Behaviours]*. ed. Joanna Michalska. Warszawa: CBOS release, 2005.

which presents services such as lawyers, psychologists, mediators, private investigators, and also companies, increasing in number, which organise divorce parties. In 2011 the Warsaw market already had over a dozen such companies, soliciting clients, their owners convinced that like other western customs, this one will slowly become popular at least in large cities, among well educated, high-earning people – parties and other divorce attractions with various created rituals emphasising the change and beginning of a new stage in life.<sup>243</sup>

Independent of the realised model of everyday and holiday customs, there is a striking conviction in very many of the statements, about the economic determinism regarding everyday and special occasion customary practice. Our respondents emphasised that lack of work, lack of financial resources has a limiting influence on the organisation of their day, ways of spending time, pleasures and entertainment, or the way of celebrating important holiday occasions. Many researchers of poverty in Poland concentrate on lifestyle associated with limited consumption.<sup>244</sup> The results of our study show however, that various forms of customary self-denial, caused by economic factors (not just those regarding consumption) are a fairly universal experience and apply to not only the poorest population.

## Celebrating at work

Elements of modern custom also include various special occasion activities organised by employers, in the workplace or outside of it. In our study, residents of villages did not have this experience at all, and varied ceremonies were mentioned only by higher educated people, with jobs requiring specialised qualifications, definitely most often residents of the large city. In smaller cities there are annual integration meetings combined with a

243 Agnieszka Pietrzak, *Przyjęcia rozwodowe jako obrzęd przejścia: charakterystyka, postrzeganie i przyszłość zjawiska w kontekście polskiej rzeczywistości*. Unpublished master's thesis written under the guidance of Beata Laciak. Warszawa: ISNS UW, 2011.

244 Arkadiusz Karwacki, *Konsumpcja wyrzeczeń? Wzory i uwarunkowania konsumpcji w życiu osób o ograniczonych kapitałach* [Consumption of Sacrifice? Models and conditions of consumption in the life of people with limited capital]. In: *Co nas łączy, co nas dzieli?* [What Bonds Us, What Divides Us?]. ed. Janusz Mucha, Ewa Narkiewicz-Niedbalec, Maria Zielińska. Zielona Góra: Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2008; Marian Golka, *Spektakl konsumpcji i biedy* [Spectacle of Consumption and Poverty]. In: *W cywilizacji konsumpcji* [In the Civilisation of Consumption]. ed. Marian Golka. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, 2004; *Zrozumieć biednego. O dawnej i obecnej biedzie w Polsce* [Understanding the Indigent. About Past and Current Poverty in Poland]. ed. Elżbieta Tarkowska. Warszawa: Typografia, 2000.

festival, dance party, refreshments or invitation to a performance (musical, cabaret/comedy). These kinds of special occasion practices are reported by administrative workers, social workers, teachers and sales people. In a large city these work events include employees from various fields, everyone mentions two categories of these meetings – before Christmas and for company anniversaries. The celebrations described are a meeting at work with special occasion catering or an outing to a reserved location, sometimes this is combined with invitation to a concert, somewhat less frequently with a bonus or gifts from the employer. In the entire study group, of over 400 surveyed people from different environments, no one talked about an out of town (excursion) company event. Research shows however, that business tourism in recent years is becoming an important custom for companies, which organise both luxurious motivational voyages for its employees, often as a form of reward, and luxury trips for the most important business clients, to establish a relationship, strengthen it, and finally to obtain loyalty. The fact that not one of the subjects mentioned such experiences may indicate a lack of them, or just as easily, an unwillingness to talk about them. Taking advantage of such trips, especially when one is a client of a given company (e.g. a doctor who is a client of a pharmaceutical company) is often treated as morally ambiguous. The beneficiaries of this new corporate custom are usually people who have reached occupational success. A study conducted at one incentive travel agency<sup>245</sup> shows that the majority are clients of the automobile sector, financial, banking, insurance, mobile network operators, and retail, mostly grocery, cosmetics and chemicals. The scenarios prepared by companies organising such trips are increasingly elaborate, and the destinations no less exotic. Voyages were organised to European countries, but also to North America, South-East Asia, Africa. “The destinations which were in demand in 2012 were: China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, USA, Argentina, Armenia, Dubai, Egypt, Scotland, Sicily and a cruise in the Mediterranean.(...) There is a noticeable trend of choosing outlying and lesser known areas, e.g. Crimea, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech, Scotland, Georgia, Armenia, which due to short flight time and lesser travel cost allow the providing of various attractive solutions upon arrival.”<sup>246</sup> Research lets us

<sup>245</sup> An incentive travel agency organises trips combined with various kinds of specific attractions. These trips are paid for by companies in order to boost sales, strengthen relationships, and in the long-term build loyalty between the company and its clients or contractors.

<sup>246</sup> Urszula Nowak, *Incentive travel jako naturalny efekt rozwoju turystyki oraz nowa aktywność społeczna w Polsce po 1989 roku, na przykładzie działalności agencji incentive travel „X”* [Incentive travel as a natural result of the

capture the variation in company customs. Most of the interviewees did not participate in any parties organised by an employer, only some mentioned invitations to a concert, a communal grill party or a pre-Christmas party, while only a small fraction can count on a trip of several days or over a week to attractive places, sometimes with the possibility of taking one's partner, and always combined with a series of tourism, cultural and social enjoyments.

## Social awareness of variation in custom

Descriptions of the chosen aspects of everyday and special occasion custom show its variety and individualisation. When attempting to see the whole of the research material in question, one may state that, that which our respondents have in common in the sphere of holiday custom, is mostly the occasions which prompt celebration. Individual ways of celebrating fit within the general customary model, but are quite diverse, dependent on subjects' demographic traits, as well as their independent choices. In the case of everyday custom, a certain common (though not entirely universal) practice is the use of television, but the time spent in front of the television, taste displayed in the choice of channels and programs, as well as other activities which viewing is combined with are all very individual issues. In the choice of everyday customary practices a significant role is played not just by age, gender, education, family situation, professional activity or lack thereof. Customary choices are also a reflection of life values, aspirations, moral attitudes or worldview.

In modern studies of social variation, an increasing role is assigned to class affiliation, designated not just by traditional indicators, such as market position, occupation or education, but cultural factors such as lifestyles, preferences, consumption models. In the now classic work of Pierre Bourdieu<sup>247</sup>, he argues that the most important role in social differentiation is cultural and economic capital, which becomes a basis for a class system. While in Poland Tomasz Szlendak writes, "as a result of the increasing stratification, (...) there are no lifestyles assigned to specific, traditionally differentiated social classes.(...) Effectively, society is an archipelago of small

*development of Tourism and New Social Activity in Poland after 1989, exemplified by the operation of incentive travel agency "X"*. Unpublished master's thesis written under the guidance of Beata Łaciak. Warszawa: ISNS UW, 2013, p.63

<sup>247</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Dystynkcje...*

social-islands, where a separate life is led, with a separate style of dress, private and public behaviour, flirting, disciplining children, moving, with separate interior decoration and different house pets, fed different foods.<sup>248</sup> Our study, as we have argued in the previous chapters, confirms the idea of a high diversity of customs and their irrelevance to social categories defined by classic demographic traits. We thought suitable the question, is this variation of customs also an element of social self-consciousness. Searching for an answer, we asked our respondents to describe society and its differences, groups and categories, which in their opinion exist in Poland. Questions in the interview were not suggestive in any way, we wanted to see if and how often the divisions and differentiations functioning in the subjects' consciousness would refer to different customs, lifestyles or consumption styles. We found the results interesting, and sometimes surprising. The respondents stated that the main criterion of social divisions is income and general material state, possessions. Many statements show that financial resources influence, or even determine customs, consumption, the way of spending free time, relations with others. Classic demographic traits such as age, education, place of residence are named as differentiating traits. In the opinions of the surveyed, what currently divides Poles is also attitude toward religion and Church, described as a division into religious and atheist, as well as an equally dichotomous separation into those who listen to *Radio Maryja*, watch *Telewizja Trwam*, accept this ideological media content, and everyone else. This criterion is also associated with another described by respondents, i.e. differing political views, especially sympathising with one of the two main parties in conflict (the ruling *Platforma Obywatelska* and the main opposition party – *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*). In subjects' statements these two issues are sometimes combined.

Only a few consider the main criterion of social differences to be varying everyday customs, and as social categories they describe people who are connected by similar taste, ways of spending free time, mutual interests or passions. As you can see, customs are indirectly or directly associated with being a significant differentiating element in society. For most, models of consumption, interpersonal relations, spending time, entertainment and pleasures are variables dependent on the level of income,

248 Tomasz Szlendak *O stylach życia w mozaikowym społeczeństwie (od których zależeć będzie rozwój gospodarczy)* [Lifestyles in a Mosaic Society (Which Will Influence Economic Development)]. In: *Polskie style życia. Między miastem a wsią* [Polish Lifestyles. Between the City and the Country]. ed. Beata Łaciak. Gdańsk: Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, 2010, p.14

treated as the most important criterion of separation. Similar to attitudes, views and moral judgments, which are considered variable according to age, education or place of residence. Criteria which are viewed as dividing society, independently of demographics, are ties with religion, political views and individualised customs. The diversity of Polish society in social self-consciousness is very clearly visible, but as the results of our studies show, it does not always apply to customs.

# 5

## The everyday and the special occasion of customary administration practices – dress code and the Americanisation of offices

### Introduction

Clothing always expresses something. People dress differently for the everyday and differently for holidays, Anna Zadrożyńska writes, adding that in the past the differences in clothing appeared between various layers of society, but also within those layers. Sometimes, one would try to change one's position in the hierarchy with a change of clothing, or attempt to falsify certain information with it.<sup>249</sup> Publications devoted to customary changes during the period of transformation emphasise that the press and television media devote more and more space to work clothing. Many pieces of advice on the subject, Beata Łaciak writes, show that requirements of dress in Poland are fairly new, and the customary rules in this regard have not been fully adapted<sup>250</sup>. Proof that knowledge regarding appropriate dress at work is insufficient is that e.g. in the media there are many advertisements for courses, training, educational programs, which teach one how to dress and appear professional. An interest in dress code is also a fairly new trend in public administrative offices and a term which administration adapted from business language and corporate customs. Administrative actions modelled on those of large corporations or private companies, e.g. rationalisation of costs

249 A. Zadrożyńska, *Po co nam konwenanse. Damy i Galanci [Forget Convention. Dames and Gallants]*. Warszawa: Wyd. Twój Styl, 2004.

250 B. Łaciak, *Obyczajowość polska...* p. 158.

and pressure put on the quality of services offered (privatisation, commercialisation, competition), are oriented toward a citizen-client as a recipient of services approach, or openness to cooperation with the outside world, these are elements characteristic of administrative reforms from the 70s, connected with the idea of New Public Management<sup>251</sup>; in Poland they began during the early transformation period. The questions of administrative image, building of trust toward public officials, and an emphasis on the citizen's service role of the administration have begun to be prioritised equally to efficiency of operation. In time, also the rule regarding administrative workers' outfits became the subject of codices, rules and directives, and information about uniform dress among employees was no longer treated as humorous or absurd (only in 2004 journalists of one local paper considered that printing information about the introduction of uniform outfits for office workers in the magistrate would be a good April Fool's Day joke)<sup>252</sup>. What is more, there are now shows presenting office fashion, special collections are designed which maintain the rules of elegance, while allowing an emphasis on the individuality of the worker.<sup>253</sup> Dress code is also associated with another term and practice which has been adapted by administration from corporate habits. That is casual Friday, or the permittance of coming to work in a less formal outfit, more casual or sporty, than on the other days of the week. "Casual Friday" (sometimes called *jeans Friday*) is a new phenomenon in Polish administrative offices. Other new words in office terminology include "business attire," meaning a formal outfit, or rather attire in the highest degree of formalisation required in the case of certain positions and career situations, as well as "business smart" – an outfit not as formal, while certainly not casual. In our studies we focused on administrative *savoir-vivre*, including formal and informal rules, which apply in administrative offices in relation to professional attire, employee knowledge regarding the "correct" and "appropriate" administrative dress, as well as their opinions about whether the rules of dress code are upheld. A thread which appeared in respondents' statements emphasising changes in administrative *savoir-vivre* is the "Americanisation" of offices, characterised by e.g. by the partner-like treatment of clients and the less formal, more open relations between workers. The general observation which comes to mind after analysing the research mate-

251 Further reading: M. Kulesza, D. Sześciło, *Polityka administracyjna i zarządzanie publiczne*. Warszawa 2013.

252 <http://www.poznan.pl/mim/hc/news,1016/juz-wkrotce-jednolite-stroje-dla-urzednikow,1503.html>

253 See: *Urzędniku, ubierz się! [Admin. Worker, Get Dressed!]*

[http://www.nowiny24.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20111027/MAGAZYNDOMOWY\\_02/472637075](http://www.nowiny24.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20111027/MAGAZYNDOMOWY_02/472637075), added: 27.10. 2011.



rial is that office workers are increasingly aware of the rank and image significance of the office outfit, usually they also know basic rules of dress code, but they interpret them in varied ways and apply them with varied results. In local government administration offices the rules of dress code are less rigorously obeyed than in offices of state government administration (e.g. voivodeship offices), while in large cities a certain ease or randomness in interpretation of the rules of external appearance is greater than in small and medium cities.

## 2. About dress code and obeying it administrative workers

Knowledge of the fact that certain rules regarding “correct” and “appropriate” office attire exist is fairly common among respondents. Every official declared that he/she knows the rules and tries to obey them. The words, “neat, clean, elegant” were repeated like a mantra, were complemented by statements which make the administrative workers’ dress code more understandable. Details of the rule of “neat, clean, smart/elegant” usually mean, in the case of women: lack of deep necklines, a ban on short skirts, camisoles and tank tops, jeans, thongs (flip-flops); as for colours, it is emphasised that they should be toned down. Usually more rules were named concerning appearance of female workers than male workers. This is likely due to the feminisation of Polish public administration – women form 70% of administrative workers, and Poland belongs to the top OECD countries in this regard (since 1995 there was a 20% increase in the number of women hired in public administration); also among persons holding higher positions in government administration, women hold just over half (50,2%); they also dominate in civil service (65%). A greater emphasis on the attire of female administrative workers may also be a result of the conviction that men have decidedly less freedom in putting together their work outfit. In the case of men, usually a ban on wearing sandals and t-shirts is mentioned. Desirable elements included a classic, long-sleeve collared shirt, suit pants and a blazer, and in the case of higher level and management positions this is believed to be the only admissible option. Office workers rarely mentioned “casual Friday” in statements. Most likely, casual Friday was not known in the offices we surveyed, or respondents did not see the need to emphasise the existence of a particular “fashion” day, because in many offices there is a certain freedom in choosing one’s work attire – you could say that in this regard every day resembles casual Friday. The following quotes are an exemplification of the expectations and requirements of administrative workers relating to official, office attire:

- „I always knew that one should look neat, clean, smart... you need an outfit that won't scare people away. No low-cut tops, not too short. That's what I follow, anyway” (R1)
- “I think, and I am fairly conservative in this matter, an office worker should wear toned down colours, not low necklines... as far as women, definitely no cleavage. They should look normal. Not like talking to clients in a t-shirt, I wouldn't want to be dealing with an official in a t-shirt myself. No tank-tops, no sandals either, though I know people wear them, I do too, though I know you should not. Your shoulders should also be covered” (R2)

Some statements pointed out that although the general rule of “neat, clean, elegant” should apply to all workers, obeying a strict canon of attire is especially important in the case of people who deal with clients, as well as those who are in management positions:

- „It depends on who we are talking about, because I cannot imagine the chief executive appearing in a t-shirt. But why not the IT worker, who sits at a computer all day? The ladies in reception, who often deal with clients downstairs – I think they should obey a dress code, but others? I think that your outfit should be adjusted to your position and workplace. You don't go to a wedding dressed for a football match, or to an evening party like for a game” (R8)
- “I think that in places where you deal with clients, in customer service for example, then it may be a good solution to have even uniform outfits, but not in the entire office...” (R10)

An initiative worth mentioning here, was one taken by a local government office which, in 2005, introduced uniform blazers and suits for workers in their Customer Service Bureau. This solution was considered practical and significant from a PR standpoint, and also accepted by employees, but was quickly abandoned due to lack of explicit legal regulations which would allow the funding of this kind of attire: “In the Customer Service Bureau, uniform attire, blazers and suits for employees, were in force for a time, but the lack of unambiguous legal regulations regarding the purchases of such clothing made continuing the endeavour impossible. This was a very practical solution, however. Female employees chose the style and fabric themselves, which was then sewn into dress suits. The outfits were very presentable and employees were happy with the solution – Secretary of Dzierżoniów City Office.”<sup>254</sup> The issue of regulations, including

<sup>254</sup> See: *Dress code, czyli jak się nosisz, tak cię piszq...* [Dress Code, What You Wear is How You're Seen]. „Poradnik Urzędnika. Pismo Nowoczesnej Administracji”. Nr 2/2007, wyd. publiczni.pl, p. 48.

the possibility of administering city funds for the purchase of employee outfits was also brought up by other offices: “Years ago, when there were work outfits, a query was sent to the Department of Public Administration, MSWiA (Ministry of Interior and Administration), asking whether the action was justified and whether city funds could be used. In response we received a written document which stated that this action could compromise the discipline of public finance, and for this and other reasons, we resigned the idea of employee uniforms in the Customer Service Bureau.”<sup>255</sup> Currently, judging by the aforementioned actions of the county *starostwo* [eldership] in Gniezno and other offices, legal regulations are no longer an obstacle to uniform attire, especially in customer service offices. The idea of uniforms arouses some controversy in the administrative workers’ community and sometimes there are various forms of protest: “When I put on a uniform, I feel like I’m losing my individuality. I cannot look fashionable, so I grow tired of those bland office uniforms”, a dissatisfied employee complains. For several days, the employees of the Voivodeship Office in Łódź have been protesting. The form of protest was thought up by Robert Barabasz, chief of the “Solidarność” labour union for the office. Administrative workers are coming to work in thongs, Bermuda shorts, and tank tops. In this way, they are demanding a 500 PLN raise. “Presently, we cannot afford to buy elegant clothing. A suit costs at least 400 PLN, and with this kind of exploitation of clothing, you have to change them often”, the workers complain in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.<sup>256</sup> Among our respondents, the idea of uniform outfits also raised some reservations:

- “Neat, clean and without some kind of flamboyant elegance, sure. Without any tattered t-shirts or sweatpants. But recently there was an idea to buy us uniform scarves or something. It’s possible this idea is still processing in some minds, whether or not to introduce it. But it brings up reservations in people, because that kind of uniforming, well... It doesn’t bring up very positive associations and people are not fans of solutions like that. But meanwhile, there are stricter requirements for people who are in the windows, do customer service, then of course, the image of the office has to have some kind of dignity. They probably have more bans and directives there. I’m not sure what they are, but I’m sure they are written somewhere”. (R13)

255 *Krój służbowy [Professional Cut]*, Klub Samorządowy PAP

<http://samorzad.pap.pl/depesza/146201.wiadomosci/dep/65051/Kroj-sluzbowy>, 2010-01-28

256 <http://www.pajpress.com.pl/tit/archiwum/2008/tit31-2008/opinieo1.htm>

Uniform dress for public administration workers is sometimes also contested as a remnant of the PRL (Polish People's Republic) era and its office fashion. A symbol of this era and the ruling canon of office dress for the time, are the white blouse and navy (or dark) skirt – both elements are a kind of modification of the school uniform. Old fashioned customs and habits are still very strong, especially among senior members of staff, in the opinions of some respondents. Female respondents framed their observations regarding the old style in the following way:

- “Most of my workers have been working much longer than me, and I see that they have plenty of rules, as far as aesthetics and style of dress are concerned, with traces of the old, when the white blouse and navy blue skirt were the rule, loosely speaking of course. Once, this aesthetic was in force in all administrative offices and applied to clients as well. Because I see our older clients, they come here wearing a suit and tie. It's that old elegance, former influence and habit. And I see that with my older employees, that this style of dress is still the norm for them. Not a two piece dress suit, but those white blouses and some sort of smart skirt, they are just used to that. Though maybe they try to open up somehow, to newer trends, but the habit is stronger” (R<sub>4</sub>)
- “Here, the majority are men. And they definitely do not wear suits... usually they wear regular pants and sweaters, but there are a few older people, who you can tell, they have been working in administrative offices for very long... they have blazers, suit pants, sometimes ties, that is just what they are accustomed to...” (R<sub>11</sub>)

Respondents were asked where they draw knowledge regarding rules or regulations, which are in force relating to administrative dress. Besides workers in Warsaw and the voivodeship office of one city, most respondents did not point out or had trouble remembering a document where the rules of administrative dress code were written. This is all the more surprising, because in all of the surveyed offices there were internal regulations in place which mentioned clothing, even if in a general manner. It seems that informal rules in effect in administrative offices, as well as common sense knowledge – some respondents spoke of “life wisdom” – and the models adopted through socialisation fulfil the function of fashion guideposts, much more so than written administrative instructions. Some respondents mentioned that they learned administrative fashion from other employees. Some indicated general instructions passed on by superiors, when they were beginning work in an office. Others claimed that they did not have to absorb the office dress code, because it is common, accessible knowledge and anyone who

received a proper education at home, knows what belongs to the canon of appropriate, correct clothing in an administrative office as well:

- “There is no particular written set of rules. When an administrative official begins work, he receives general rules, especially when having contact with clients. It is taught that ladies should not have low-cut blouses to their waist, any loud prints, generally it’s best if it’s a blouse and skirt. No jeans, but some wear them, because ladies in the windows are nicely dressed as much as they are seen, so from the waist up” (R18)
- “There are no arrangements, but you know it needs to be neat. People definitely pay more attention to clothing now. Once, this was a few years ago, I heard that we could not wear jeans. It was simply suggested to us, that not so much. I think that every one of us knows now, that we should not wear too short a skirt, it’s not really proper in an office. We already know that ourselves. And no low necklines, either” (R3)
- There are no written rules. We all tell each other that and it’s obeyed informally. But we were also in one of the first offices to introduce ISO, and I think it was written there somewhere, it was worded somehow – adequately to the position you hold. So that there aren’t any kind of provocative outfits, but also that men don’t walk around in shorts and sandals, which to me is so normal, that I don’t know why you have to write it down. But I don’t know in what form that was written. (R8)

Usually supervisors were also indicated as those who should inform others of what the administrative clothing set should look like, as well as execute obedience in light of the given rules. Respondents somehow assumed in advance that supervisors have the right to decide what is, and what is not proper office attire:

- “Generally, people who somehow stray from the so-called norm are frowned upon. Anything that grabs your attention, if anyone looks provocative, they can count on the boss pointing it out. However, the same goes for people who do not take care of themselves, that look neglected. Once I heard the mayor say to one lady that you can wear slippers at home, not in a public office. This is a workplace, so we try to keep things prim and ironed. As for style, as you can see by looking at us – a lot of freedom. When it comes to employees from the back room, so to speak, because we are not on the front line, we do not deal with customers, petitioners.” (R12)
- There aren’t any written rules, but the Secretary often pointed out directly, that we cannot wear camisoles or tank-tops, and have bare shoulders. I think that’s normal, that it’s a serious institution, people come... I don’t know, it’s just accepted, it’s normal” (R3)

- I know that our director, she got so mad once, that she asked all the ladies in and said, no jeans – faded, dirty, no tank-tops and I see that the girls took it to heart. Once the Mayor had a deputy, he's gone now, there is an HR lady, but it's still hard to get all the ladies together and tell them what is right. The chief of the department where employees deal with clients on a daily basis also thought about a move like this – getting everyone together and telling them, if not writing down rules, that you can't e.g. wear glittery fake nails or low-cut tops and not to discriminate – men can't wear sandals, but nothing happened with that" (R6)

It's good when supervisors know the rules of dress code, discuss them with employees, even better if the good taste and propriety, good manners of the supervisors functions as a kind of fashion (administrative) beacon for the employees. Counting on the management or supervisors in this matter is also one of the corporate rules, which is, "Dress according to your company's requirements. If the company has no dress code policy, dress in the same manner as senior management".<sup>257</sup> Sometimes supervisors simply count on the employee's own sense of aesthetics and good manners and with this trust in the knowledge and sensibility of their subordinates they justify the lack of specific dress code rules in the administrative office. In other cases, however, supervisors prefer to complement the employees' knowledge, and organise *savoir-vivre* training conducted by specialised companies:

- "I'll start with the fact that our Secretary is really making an effort and we had several professional courses – regarding administrative ethics, appearance, behaviour, conversation with clients. It's true. I have been an administrative worker so many years, it just turned out that way, that my entire career, right after university I became a public servant. I would judge myself as a good official. I always knew that you need to look neat, clean, elegant... it has to be an outfit that does not intimidate. Not low-cut, not too short. At least, that's what I do and a lot has changed in the *gmina* in this time, since management has been working on it. It's been pretty varied in the past" (R1)
- "Sometimes we have training and some element is always about official dress code" (R7)

Respondents' convictions that employees usually know how to dress at work seem to be contradicted by the observations of clients, as well as some of the justifications for restrictions put in place regarding dress (e.g. in care for the image of the office and comments made by clients, the decision has been made to introduce uniform dress...). In the summary of re-

<sup>257</sup> See: *Essential Office Etiquette*, February/March 2012, p. 31

search conducted in 2009, in 20 cities, we read that one of the main sins of Polish administration is the “frivolous clothing of administrative office workers”. Authors of the article write however, that this is not a serious sin, “(...) because many of us are still not bothered by an official’s lack of tie, or colourful blouse. It is something else, however, if they are too revealing. ‘When the office worker rose from her chair, her clothing spilled some flesh’, one surveyor noted this statement from a disgruntled client in Radom.”<sup>258</sup> One of the local editions of *Gazeta Wyborcza* wrote, “Everyday, in the Gdańsk magistrate one can see a fashion review: from elegantly dressed presidents, to mini-skirts, high boots and pounds of jewellery which some of the workers wear. There can be no restrictions, however. “I can’t command anything, because the workers will call on freedom guaranteed by the constitution”, the city secretary of Gdańsk said. She admitted to periodically sending letters to department directors asking them to remind employees that they need to appear clean-cut.”<sup>259</sup> The studies we conducted also show that obeying the administrative dress code varies. Knowledge of the general rules, or even information that there are some informal “fashion” instructions in the office, does not mean that they are observed. The rationalisations made by respondents or justification of infringements of the set rules, were often accompanied by comments that the situation is still better than in the past, that the official’s outfit is paid more attention to, that more often than not it is the subject of internal control. Often respondents point to external conditions, e.g. weather, high temperatures, lack of air conditioning etc. as unsympathetic to rigid obeying of the rules:

- “It has been varied, but also the temperature here has a large impact. It is very hot. We don’t have air conditioning and it is difficult for us to demand that our employees wear stockings, covered backs and dress suits. We strive for the ladies to be well dressed, but it is what it is.” (R1)
- “It gets completely out of hand, especially with the ladies, when it’s hot. I tried to say something, more than once, when I was younger, but it was awkward, but now it’s... I’m at an age now, where that young lady who was here [a secretary] is my daughter’s age and I speak to her by name [“na ty”, without using formal, polite speech, forms – transl. note], we are a bit motherly to these girls, so I say, Kaśka when will you dress properly, but to point something out to an older or not much younger woman is difficult...” (R6)

258 N. Mazur, *Siedem grzechów polskich urzędników [Seven Deadly Sins of Polish Administration Workers]*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 19/03/2009, p. 8.

259 R. Jocher, *Mini i pochodne niemile widziane [Mini-skirts and the Like, Not Welcome]*, „Gazeta Morska” nr 93, addition do „Gazety Wyborczej”, Gdańsk, 2001/04/20, p. 2.

Some statements emphasised that administrative dress code is most of all a requirement characteristic for offices which hold a higher position in the administrative structure (e.g. ministries, voivodship, marshal's offices); in this way the fashion (less formal) specifics of a given institution were justified or explained away:

- "For us here, it's not like in central or marshal's offices, where it's just suits, because they have that procedure, that you don't go to work otherwise, that every man is in a suit, and every woman in a jacket. Here it's accepted that suits are worn only by the higher ups, the rest just need to be neat and presentable" (R8)

There were also opinions that the rigorous adherence to rules regarding clothing "dehumanises" the office and the employees, and greater ease and freedom (e.g. a mini skirt, red lipstick, extravagant hairstyle) are normal, especially when it comes to administrative workers in big city offices and in the case of young employees. Official dress code is not the only term that public administration adapted from the private sector and large corporations. The word "Americanisation" appeared in the officials' statements when they described customary changes taking place in recent years.

### 3. "Americanisation" of public offices?

In publications devoted to public administration reforms after 1989, the term appearing most often is "Europeanisation", understood both as introduction of similar institutional solutions in different EU countries, as well as common values, including the unification of ethical and professional standards.<sup>260</sup> In the opinions of officials, "Europeanisation" is also the visible "civilising" of administration, i.e. better infrastructure, better organisation of labour, professionalism and more openness to the client. Positive changes in this area are also noticed by citizens, when they evaluate the functioning of public offices (CBOS 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008)<sup>261</sup>. In the in-

<sup>260</sup> Further reading, see also: G. Rydlewski, *Problemy europeizacji administracji publicznej [Problems of Europeanisation in Public Administration]*, „Służba Cywilna”, Nr 3/2005. Jolanta Arcimowicz, *Unia Europejska w opiniach urzędników państwowych [European Union in the Opinions of National Employees]*. In: J. Kurczewska, H. Bojar (ed.) *Wyciskanie Brukselki? O europeizacji społeczności lokalnych na pograniczach [Squeezing Brussel Sprouts? Europeanisation of Local Societies on Borderlands]*. Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2010.

<sup>261</sup> Conf. *Jacy jesteście? Zaufanie Polaków do ludzi i instytucji publicznych oraz gotowość do współpracy [What are we like? Poles' trust in people and public institutions, and readiness to cooperate]*. Ed. Bogna Wciórka, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2002; *Opinie na temat funkcjonowania urzędów w Polsce. Raport z badania sondażowego dla Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji [Survey report for Ministry of the Interior and Administration]*. Warszawa, CBOS release, 2006; *Z wizytą w urzędzie – doświadczenia związane z załatwianiem spraw urzędowych [Visiting a public office – experiences associated with taking care of administrative matters]*, ed. Rafał



terviews we conducted however, administration workers would use the term “Americanisation” when they wanted to describe the character of transformations in internal relations, and between the organisation (public office) and the external (clients). A display of “Americanisation” of relations between workers is, in the respondents’ opinions, the increasingly popular form of referring to people on a first name basis, in the case of people working within one team, but also toward superiors:

• “Etiquette like in the past is no more, and you can allow yourself more now, some silliness, because I don’t know what the common knowledge is, imaginings, stereotypes, but here it’s just normal people, who are performing some duties, work. I think at a university or anywhere it is similar. And if people know and like each other, then it’s normal that they mess around and joke, and it’s not too formal. I see that the tendency is to go by first names [“*na ty*”]. For me it was the first time I was on a first name basis with the boss, but it wasn’t my initiative. I’m not necessarily pleased with it. But it all functions based on circles. The head of the smallest department, he works more on this familiarity rule. And the wider the circle, the more formal relations are. If you work with someone more often, then there is this tendency to Americanise relations. I like it, using first name and handling matters plain and simple, normal like. And not all fancy... “doctor”, “professor, sir”, “would mother like some tea”. (R10)

Using polite forms is one of the elements of administrative *savoir-vivre* also regulated by ethics codices or internal organisation regulations. And though there are rules reminding officials to use the forms “*pan*”, “*pani*” [mister and misses, in this case more equivalent to sir / madame] in contact with clients, co-workers and superiors, e.g. “An official obeys the rules of good manners toward citizens, colleagues, employees and superiors. The officials’ language should be clear, comprehensible, observing the rules of Polish culture and grammar. It is unacceptable to raise one’s voice, as well as, to refer to citizens, employees or superiors indirectly, or without the proper forms, “*pan*”, “*pani*”. It is unacceptable to criticise citizens, co-workers or superiors”<sup>262</sup>, it turns out that a more direct and flexible use of polite forms is increasingly popular among officials. “Americanisation”

Boguszewski, Warszawa: CBOS release, 2007; *O urzędach i urzędnikach w Polsce [About administrative offices and workers in Poland]*, ed. Rafał Boguszewski, Warszawa: CBOS release, 2007; *Oceny sytuacji i stosunek do władz lokalnych [Assessment of the situation and attitude toward local government]*, ed. Krzysztof Zagórski, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2008.

262 See: *Kodeks etyki pracowników Urzędu Miasta i Gminy w Polczynie-Zdroju*, [http://umig.polczynzdroj.ibip.pl/public/get\\_file\\_contents.php?id=121208](http://umig.polczynzdroj.ibip.pl/public/get_file_contents.php?id=121208)

which brings in its “titular” egalitarianism and stretches the formalism of polite phrases, can also be synonymous with offices being more open to the external environment, as well as changes in approaching the clients. After all, the word “client” – refers directly to market terminology and new public management, where client satisfaction measures quality of services – it has replaced *petent* [suppliant, applicant, petitioner], who during the PRL era was looked down upon and had to beseech the official to take up the case or offer a resolution. In fact, Jerzy Stembrowicz wrote even then, in the 70s, that the citizen in the administrative office has ceased to be a suppliant, i.e. an intruder, and he has become the stakeholder, “user”, being the official’s partner, but only in recent years the word “client” has become common in offices, which has also influence, the workers attitudes:

- The official’s style of work has changed a lot. I have been working 20 years. The official is no longer tsar and god. Today we’ve arrived at the point where the majority of workers has full awareness of their role. Generally, most know they are fulfilling a service role, though there are still cases, like in any environment. You can also see that in our clients, who know the office from those casual opinions. And when they come and are kindly and professionally assisted, then they are very surprised. Especially older folks, who remember the old days. To them, this is America. Everything has improved. And the result are departments of customer service, which make this contact easier. People are specifically trained and know how to converse. Another new things is openness to disabled people, blind, deaf. Some officials know sign language. We are no longer an office cut off from our client, our building is near the street, among apartments. Although there is a customer service department, when clients walk in the halls and stairs, then an employee will ask if they can help. They used to walk by indifferently, but now they ask, talk to people.” (R18)

Closing the topic of “Americanisation”, it is also worth mentioning other visible changes in official habits regarding *savoir-vivre*. Workers did not mention them in the context of Americanisms, but the idea of social media was born in the US (the first appeared in the mid-1990s). Respondents pointed out employee activity on such portals (e.g. Nasza Klasa, Facebook, Google+, Twitter) as a new element of everyday office life. The Internet, especially Web 2.0 services enabled a new way of communication between Internet users, i.e. building contacts through creating lists of acquaintances, inviting friends or exchanging information between users. Blogs, discussion groups or indeed social media have created a new platform for exchange of information, knowledge, entertainment and contacts. In

Poland the first social site – Grono.net was released in 2004, currently among the most popular are Nk.pl (formerly nasza-klasa.pl) with 12 M users and Facebook with 8 M accounts. CBOS research from 2012 shows that over one-third of adults in Poland has at least one social media account, and among Internet users they are the majority (60%) – most Internet users also declare activity on these sites (CBOS 2012, p. 12)<sup>263</sup>. The popularity of social media sites and the possibility of maintaining nearly constant communication between network users, including at work, has caused, the creation of certain restrictions in offices, e.g. limiting employee access or blocking of certain sites, services, pages.

• There was a situation when Nasza Klasa appeared, it was like the plague, whichever room you went in, it was a quick getaway from the website. It was a problem – not just because it happened during work hours, or someone had an account, but because of the potential limitations of use – in published statuses, photographs. When the mayor found out, then IT just blocked Nasza Klasa. In the general codices, it is written how a local government employee should behave, but it's a delicate matter, because if he is blogging about say, a conversation and everything is well, within the limits..., though of course it is difficult to say where those limits are?" (R 5)

The problem described by officials of using Internet during work hours for private matters (e.g. using social media, playing video games, making purchases online, viewing web pages, YouTube) has not only been given a name – cyberslacking, cyberloafing, but also many studies devoted to it.<sup>264</sup> The words translated into Polish [*cyberpróżniactwo, internetowe lenistwo, cyberlenistwo* etc.] shows the phenomenon common not only in Poland and not just in the administrative workplace. Studies conducted in 2008 by Gemius SA show that nearly all employees (93%) use the Internet at work, for their private affairs – usually to check e-mail (79%), read/view websites (73%), use messengers or shop at online stores (34%)<sup>265</sup>. Most also believe that there is nothing wrong with this, especially when surfing the Web does not interfere with work duties (74%), or even provides a desired break at work, a moment of rest, relaxation (57%); the majority also believe that this behaviour is normal, because everyone who has Internet access at work, does it (50%). Less than one-third of respondents considered this

263 *Korzystanie z Internetu [Using the Internet]*, ed. Michał Feliksiak, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2012, p. 12.

264 Walter Block, *Cyberslacking, Business Ethics and Managerial Economics*. "Journal of Business Ethics", Vol. 33, No. 225-234, 2001, K. Garrett, J. Danziger, N. James, *On Cyberslacking: Workplace Status and Personal Internet Use at Work*. "CyberPsychology & Behavior". June, Vol. 11, No. 3/2008.

265 See: *Cyberslacking po polsku [Cyberslacking in Polish]*, press release. January 24, 2008, Gemius SA.

behaviour dishonest toward the employer (31%). In our studies, officials also pointed out another aspect of being active on social media, that is the possibility of breaching rules of ethical behaviour, when publishing information online (private photos, statuses, comments) hurts the image of the institution. In this way, respondents also added to the catalogue of administrative *savoir-vivre* – what should not be done by an official active on social media, e.g. publication of photos which should only be in private albums. The comments of officials are in accordance with PR experts' recommendations, which advise taking greater care online, especially when one is, or wishes to be, a public official, the employee of a corporation. Information posted online forms the image of a person, but may also be perceived as important, characteristic or significant to the image of the company or institution which that person represents.

## Conclusion

Maria Ossowska assessed the personal model of a citizen of a democratic country in the late 1940s, and emphasised *aesthetic sensitivity*, or a virtue which when realised, expresses respect for other people, as well as care for one's own image.<sup>266</sup> The introduction of dress code, being one of the elements of this official *savoir-vivre* allows the shaping of the aesthetic sensitivity of employees, as well as expression of it in a professional environment. PRL bureaucracy, with all its political accents, reinforced the negative models of behaviour and, the negative social image of the public official workforce. The transformation era is characterised by growing disparity between the common citizens' negative judgments of the functioning of administrative offices and workers, and the increasingly positive opinions and assessments of people who have direct contact with offices and officials.<sup>267</sup> "Poles' personal experiences associated with taking care of various bureaucratic tasks are generally more positive. Even though the knowledge, competence of public officials and the regularity of finalising formalities are appreciated by clients, as far as courteous treatment, a kind attitude and focus on the person being helped and his/her matters, there should be some improvement", we read in a CBOS report.<sup>268</sup> Poles notice that public

266 Maria Ossowska, *O człowieku, nauce i moralności [About Man, Science and Morality]*. Warszawa: Wyd. PWN, 1983, p. 355.

267 See: *Z wizytą w urzędzie – doświadczenia związane z załatwianiem spraw urzędowych [Visiting a Public Office – Experiences in Dealing with Administrative Matters]*, ed. Rafał Boguszowski, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2007.

268 *Obywatel w urzędzie [Citizen in an Administration Office]*, ed. Barbara Badora, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2012.

administration and is undergoing reform, adjusted to the structures and requirements of the EU, is changing. Public offices, like companies, fight for prestigious certificates of quality, which confirm the high standards of services offered, social trust, and promote the positive image of public administration. The website of one voivodeship office reads: "(...) introduction of ISO is meant to influence e.g. the development of an objective, correct image of the office externally, and serve to promote it."<sup>269</sup> ISO norms, and actions taken by offices to fulfil the high standards of service, were also mentioned by respondents in the context of requirements regarding an employee's appearance. Actions serving to create image are a fairly new area, not just of administrative reality, but social life as well. A professional appearance of the workforce has become, next to competence and efficiency, another measure of its Europeanisation. In an increasing number of offices, the appearance of employees is specified in internal regulations and ethics codes. Guidebooks are published on administrative dress code, there is much literature on the subject of modern *savoir-vivre*, including rules applying at work<sup>270</sup> – one of the publications strictly regards public administration officials,<sup>271</sup> and typing *savoir-vivre* into the google.pl search engine results in 430 thousand links to web pages containing the term. There are professional consulting companies which deal with shaping image, and public offices hire them; there are also administrative fashion shows. These are changes noticed by officials and as our study results shows, also appreciated by clients. Within this positive picture one can also point out elements which prevent us from calling the administrative "fashion" revolution a finished process. Publications regarding customary changes during the transformation period point out that customary models about e.g. appropriate outfits for work are popularised models, but

269 [www.uw.opole.pl](http://www.uw.opole.pl)

270 Cezary Ikanowicz, *Etykieta samorządowca [Administration Worker's Etiquette]*. Warszawa: Agencja TNOIK, 2002.

271 E.g. Cezary Ikanowicz, *Protokół w życiu codziennym biznesmena, (savoir vivre) [Protocol in a Businessman's Daily Life, (savoir vivre)]*. Warszawa: Agencja Promocji Turystyki MART, 1998; *Protokół dyplomatyczny w życiu menedżera [Manager's Diplomatic Protocol]*. Warszawa: Polskie Zrzeszenie Hoteli, 2004; Stanisław Krajski, *Savoir vivre. Podręcznik w pilnych potrzebach [Savoir Vivre. Emergency Handbook]*. Warszawa: Agencja SGK, 2006; *Savoir vivre jako sztuka życia. Filozofia savoir vivre [Savoir Vivre as the Art of Life. Philosophy of Savoir Vivre]*. Warszawa: Agencja SGK, 2007; *Savoir vivre – 250 problemów [Savoir Vivre – 250 Problems]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo św. Tomasza z Akwinu, 2008; Edward Pietkiewicz, *Dobre obyczaje [Good Manners]*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Związków Zawodowych, 1987; *Etykieta menedżera, czyli sztuka dobrych manier w prowadzeniu interesów [Manager's Etiquette, Or the Art of Good Manners in Business]*. Warszawa: Lettrex, 1990; *Savoir-vivre dzisiaj [Savoir-vivre Today]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1990; *Savoir-vivre dla każdego [Savoir-vivre for Everyone]*. Warszawa: Świat Książki, 1997; Henryk R. Żuchowski, *Słownik savoir-vivre dla pana [Savoir-vivre Glossary for the Gentleman]*. Lublin: Polihymnia, 1995.

their absorption is still quite limited.<sup>272</sup> This also applies to administrative dress code. Firstly, despite the growing number of offices which are formalising the rules of appearance for employees, preparing guidelines, guidebooks, or organising training for administrative etiquette, knowledge of official dress code is minor and not cohesive. Executing rules regarding dress is mostly based on sanctions applied spontaneously, e.g. joking comments, mockery, irony. The low effectiveness of environmental pressure is confirmed by respondents' statements; they mentioned administrative dress code not just being breached, but also the difficulty with executing the "neat, clean, elegant" rules, e.g. they named the employee's age as a barrier between informal control – it is simply not proper to reprimand older colleagues, the *status quo* is also sanctioned in this way. Definitely no extreme is appropriate – be it either uniform outfits for all workers, or total freedom in choosing elements of dress, especially when the employer is a public institution. Between extremes, however, there is an open space for community (administrative) discourse, which apart from the requirements of fashion, elegance, issues of expressing individuality or freedom of choice, should also take into account elements such as the culture of the organisation and image of the office, public administration or even country, in the broader sense. There is a lack of environmental discussion about dress code, while regulations introduced arbitrarily by management are met with employee protest. Secondly, knowledge about dress code, though common in reference to general rules, is still limited mostly to clothing. Respondents foremost noticed those elements, in a way leaving other elements of appearance outside the sphere of organisation or colleague control (jewellery, accessories, make-up, hair, etc.). Thirdly, interpretation and realisation of the dress code rules, shows that there is significant randomness and freedom in choice of everyday office clothing – which grows, the lower a given employee's position is in the administrative hierarchy, as well as the structural position of the specific office itself. The exception to the rule is the attire of officials in offices which receive clients, who are increasingly often required to wear uniforms. The conviction that a formal outfit is the calling card of ministerial officials, or employees of central offices, or that it is reserved for people in managerial positions, is in a way a justification for the less formal attire of other employees. Freedom in choosing clothing has its limits however – any form of extravagance or lack of modesty is forbidden. The case of a woman being fired from office, because

272 B. Łaciak, *Obyczajowość polska...*, p. 198.

her clothing was, to superiors, a form of manifesting religious beliefs (before being dismissed, she was first moved to a position where she did not deal with clients), shows that apart from extravagance and lack of modesty, another rule was attached – a ban on manifesting or externalising religious beliefs in the workplace, through dress or its elements. “The employee dismissed from a Marshall’s office complained that she was discriminated against after converting to Islam. She claims, superiors did not like it when she came to work wearing a headscarf and long skirt. The prosecutor’s office is conducting an investigation. (...) I converted to Islam in 2008. According to the rules of my religion, I came to work wearing a scarf which covered my hair, and long, dark skirts. Then all hell broke loose, they started looking for reasons to discredit me – the woman recounts, asking to remain anonymous.”<sup>273</sup> Internet comments beneath the article show that religious symbols in public offices, or their presence in the form of clothing, especially when concerning symbols other than those of Catholic religion, are not easily accepted in Poland.<sup>274</sup> The aforementioned case of the employee of one office and the reactions of her superiors to manifesting a non-Catholic religion is an example of officials’ reinterpretation of existing rules and specifying boundaries which cannot be exceeded in office fashion. In many Western European countries, discussions on what is the definition of ostentatious manifestation of religious beliefs (e.g. wearing a burka, or headscarf) have been taking place for over ten years. Various legal resolutions and limitations are being introduced (France, Belgium, Germany), decisions are made by the European Court of Human Rights. In Poland, as the chosen example shows, the discussion is just starting. Officials outfits, today as in the past, are to be free of extravagance – classical, toned down, without loud colours or frivolity, in many offices the style still ground in the PRL-era skirt and blouse. And the last comment associated with changes which officials recognised. The Americanising of relations between office employees, as well as between the office and outside world, understood not just as greater freedom in applying polite forms (sir, madame) but most of all as an opening up toward clients. This is a new model of public administration functioning, in which the office employee has the

273 J. Kędracki, *Urzędniczka przeszła na Islam. Prokuratura bada, czy jej zwolnienie jest dyskryminacją religijną* [Public Official Converts to Islam. Prosecutor Probes Religious Discrimination in Dismissal] „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 04.06.2014

[http://wyborcza.pl/1,134154,16090078,Urzedniczka\\_przeszla\\_na\\_islam\\_\\_Prokuratura\\_bada\\_czy.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,134154,16090078,Urzedniczka_przeszla_na_islam__Prokuratura_bada_czy.html) (date of access: 26.06.2015)

274 <http://polskaligaobrony.org.pl/kielce-urzedniczka-wyznania-muzulmanskiego-zwolniona-urzedumarszalkowskiego/> (date of access: 27.06.2015)

awareness of representing a segment of the institutional structure of the country, which has an ancillary character for the citizens. It is worth mentioning here, the words of Leon Petrażycki about the “subservient power”, its meaning is expressed in caring for the good of others that are under its authority, in caring for the common good of society. “General society-serving power, above which there is no hierarchically higher power, so that the subject of this authority is obliged to properly execute their power and generally care for the good of the population, i.e. only subordinates or the appropriate social group (...) we would call the highest social power”<sup>275</sup>. Leon Petrażycki confronted “subservient power” with “master’s power”, or an authority which exploits the obedience and abilities of its subordinates to its own ends and personal interests. The postulate of “subservient power” realised by the post-transformation public administration, is also becoming a component of officer’s attitudes, who are increasingly often treating clients subjectively, they are kind and helpful to them. And this is one of the most important modern customary changes, which has happened in administrative reality, which is noticed and appreciated by clients.

<sup>275</sup> Petrażycki, Leon, *Teoria prawa i państwa w związku z teorią moralności* [*Theories of Law and State in Relation to Morality Theory*]. Warszawa: PWN, 1959, p. 292.





# Public and private administrative celebration in Poland

## Introduction

Leon Dyczewski writes, “Celebrating is a natural human tendency and a correlate of social life, and the holiday, a permanent element of culture.”<sup>276</sup> Each culture creates various models of ritualising public and private life in the form of specific habits, customs, ceremonies and holidays. They fulfil the function of cultural symbols for a given society, which nurtures and develops them based on tradition. Each new era also creates holidays and rituals appropriate to its character, content and symbolism.<sup>277</sup> Usually in the process of their creation there is the simultaneous assimilation of previous ritual forms and the creation of new ritualisations. Sometimes, there is a battle between old and new traditions, old and new habits, customs. The forming of the *Trzecia Rzeczpospolita* (Third Republic), being a pause between the old and new socio-political order, initiated a process of assimilating old and creating new social-cultural symbols appropriate to the needs of the state restructured after 1989. New state holidays, anniversaries important for Poland, became an area of conflict – the subject of political disputes, social protests and administrative dilemmas, e.g. the government of Warsaw has been attempting for several years to have the observation of National Independence Day, November 11, occur with as little conflict as possible, between the participants of the “*Razem dla Niepodległej*” [To-

<sup>276</sup> Leon Dyczewski, *Święto i jego kulturotwórcza rola* [The Holiday and Its Culture Creating Role], „Kultura i Społeczeństwo”, nr 4/2012, p. 3.

<sup>277</sup> Leonard Pełka, *Polski rok obrzędowy* [The Polish Ceremonial Year]. Warszawa: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1980, p. 11.

gether for Independent] co-organised by the President of Poland, the “*Marsz Niepodległości*” [Independence March] (organised by *Ruch Narodowy* [National Movement]) and participants of anti-fascist demonstrations. CBOS studies conducted during the mid 1990s show that Poles created, fairly quickly, a division of state holidays into the correct and incorrect, communist and independence-led, necessary and unnecessary, e.g. Labour Day, celebrated by the communist government and opulently observed during the PRL era, has become of little significance to Poles. A kind of de-sanctifying of the celebration of May 1 is associated with the conviction that it is a communist holiday, and in fact not even a popular one, observed mostly by people with left-wing views.<sup>278279</sup> Meanwhile some state holidays were added to the calendar after 1989, some of which returned as traditional holidays in Poland celebrated after regaining independence (e.g. May 3rd Constitution Day, National Independence Day – November 11th), others commemorated events celebrated in secret from the communist government (e.g. August 1, September 17), even others paid tribute to the victims of Stalinist terror and communist rule (e.g. National Memorial Day for “Banished Soldiers”, Memorial Day for Victims of Martial Law).

May 3rd Constitution Day (created in 1919 and reinstated in 1990) and National Independence Day currently are, and were in the 1990s, the national holidays most frequently named by Poles – in 1999, 92% of respondents pointed out the anniversary of the May 3rd enactment of the constitution, and 89% the anniversary of regained independence. These are also the national holidays considered most important by Poles – in 1999 over 1/3 of respondents marked May 3rd as the most important Polish holiday, and 30% indicated observance of November 11th.<sup>280</sup> Research conducted by CBOS in 2008 shows that opinions regarding the main anniversaries and state holidays have been established in society: “The most important holidays for Polish people are the anniversary of the May 3rd constitution and National Independence Day – November 11th,” we read in a CBOS release.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, studies show that the people with right leaning views give special significance to Independence Day while left-wing respondents consider May 3rd and November 11th equally important to anniversaries associated with World War II (May 9th – Victoria Day and

278 *Niech się święci 1 maja?* [May the First of May be Blessed?] Warszawa: CBOS release, 1997

279 *Ibidem*.

280 *Święto Niepodległości i inne święta państwowe w świadomości społecznej* [Independence Day and Other National Holidays in Social Consciousness]. Warszawa: TNS OBOP, November 1999.

281 *Święto Niepodległości* [Independence Day], ed. Michał Feliksiak, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2008.

September 1st – the anniversary of the beginning of World War II). We must add that declarations of support for national holidays and awareness of their meaning, and tradition, or national identity, do not signify active participation in the commemorating ceremonies, e.g. half o Poles (51%) admit that they do not celebrate Independence Day in a significant way, they treat it as a day off work. The most popular forms of celebrating are, however: taking part in holy mass (26%) and hanging of the national flag (15%); participation in public ceremonies is declared by only 10% of surveyed – nearly the same amount of people (9%) emphasise that they have a more festive dinner at home on November 11th.<sup>282</sup> Besides November 11 and May 3, there are other national holidays introduced after 1989 which commemorate important historical events in Poland (they are not national work-free days). Some of them include: *Święto Wojska Polskiego* or Armed Forces Day (established in 1992, a non-working holiday because it coincides with The Assumption of Mary, celebrated August 15th), Veteran's Day (established 1997, observed September 1st), *Dzień Flagi Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Flag Day] (established in 2004, observed May 2nd), Pope John Paul II Day (enacted in 2005, observed October 16th), Solidarity and Freedom Day (established 2005, observed August 31st), National Warsaw Uprising Memorial Day (a national holiday since 2009, observed August 1st), National Memorial Day for "Banished Soldiers" (national holiday since 2001, observed March 1st). The catalogue of important anniversaries and holidays is complemented by days with a public holiday character, e.g. Day of the Polish Underground State from 1998, Local Government Day from 2000, Memorial Day for Victims of Martial Law from 2002, or Memorial Day for Victims of the Katyń Massacre, enacted in 2007. The associated ceremonies are organised by public administration offices, central or local. The index of national holidays, anniversaries and observances is still discussed and updated, e.g. in April 2014, The Parliamentary Club "*Solidarna Polska*" put forth an initiative to introduce a new state holiday, in order to celebrate the canonisation of Pope John Paul II (April 27th). The PMs did not manage to get support for the initiative, which does not mean the discussion in parliament is closed on the issue.<sup>283</sup>

National holidays enacted after 1989 recreated the holiday calendar rejected during the PRL era, complementing it with new holidays and cer-

<sup>282</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>283</sup> *Przepadł projekt ws. nowego święta państwowego. Zabrakło solidarności w Solidarnej Polsce. [Initiative for New National Holiday Fails. Lack of Unity in Solidarity Poland, [www.http://niezalezna.pl/53758-przepadl-projekt-ws-nowego-swiet-panstwowego-zabraklo-solidarnosci-w-solidarnej-polsce](http://niezalezna.pl/53758-przepadl-projekt-ws-nowego-swiet-panstwowego-zabraklo-solidarnosci-w-solidarnej-polsce).*

emonies. Old habits are being reinstated, e.g. wearing a national ribbon (a custom resurrected by President Lech Kaczyński for the observance of May 2nd, 3rd, and November 11th gained many adopters and imitators) and new ones are being created, e.g. citizens placing the national flag on residential buildings for various national holidays is becoming increasingly popular (PRL legislation long kept strict limitations on use of the national flag by private persons, and illegitimate users of it were subject to a year in jail and a fine. Regulations introduced in 2004 now state that anyone may use the national colours and symbols of the Polish Republic, when they want to emphasise in this way, important ceremonies or events, keeping in mind the reverence and dignity owed national symbols).<sup>284</sup> National symbolism associated with the Second Polish Republic is also being recovered, e.g. the introduced crowned eagle in the Polish emblem is based on the pre-war version. New forms of official state rituals are developing and being established, where use of religious symbols is a permanent element, Catholic Church hierarchs' participation in ceremonies, as well as holding *Holy mass for the intention of homeland* (August 15th is a special day when national and Church holidays have practically a common ceremony). The borderline of 1989 designates not just the beginning of changes in the index of observed national holidays, but also opens a new chapter of public celebration, in which free manifestation is possible, of the attitudes and convictions regarding events and historical facts important for Poland. It is also a reference point for the social judgment of previous and current important anniversaries, as well as old and new national holidays.

We asked employees of gmina, city, county, marshal and voivodeship offices, about national holidays and other ceremonies considered in the administrative calendar. We did not offer subjects a ready catalogue of holidays and ceremonies, but asked them to name and describe those which are currently observed in offices, according to their own intuition and knowledge. What is more, we asked officials with a long work history in public administration (people hired before 1989) to compare between "old" and current administrative celebration. Respondents' statements were assigned to one of two categories: public celebration – this catalogue is formed by the mentioned holidays and national anniversaries, professional holidays, local holidays and festive days. Their traits are that they:

284 Art. 5 *Ustawa o godle, barwach i hymnie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz o pieczęciach państwowych* [Act regarding coat of arms, colors and national anthem in Poland and official seals], dated November 2, 2005, DZ. U. Nr 235, Poz. 2000.

(1) have been formally established by e.g. national or local government; (2) they are organised for employees; (3) they are organised or co-organised by the administrative office for the local community. We have also included church holidays into public administrative celebration, because respondents also named them as official ceremonies organised in offices. The other category is private celebration – these are the unofficial ceremonies mentioned by respondents, observed within a co-worker circle (e.g. name days, birthdays, Valentine's). This group also includes various parties, events, organised for employees, e.g. bonding, team building meetings or trips; sometimes family members also participate (the few situations when the respondents' private and professional spheres overlap). The image built based on interviews allows answers to questions regarding the actual calendar of administrative holidays, what the modern forms of public and private administrative celebration are, what customs are practiced, as well as what has changed in administrative celebration.

## 1. Public administrative celebration

From the list of national holidays associated with observing events, dates, periods especially important in history and social memory, two holidays were mentioned most often: Independence Day and May 3rd Constitution Day. These are national holidays for which the main celebration is prepared by national government, e.g. Independence Day begins with a mass in the Field Cathedral in Warsaw, in the presence of the president and government officials, national distinctions are given in the Presidential palace, there is a ceremonial changing of the guard on Piłsudski Plaza, reefs are placed on the Grave of the Unknown Soldier, there is also a march. A new ritual in national custom is the march "Together for [the] Independent", organised by the president's office. Ceremonial observances of national holidays also take place in the communities studied by us, and national offices are the organisers or co-organisers. Active participants in the ceremony include social organisations, public entities (e.g. schools, military units), as well as priests and local parishes. Tying observation of national holidays with religious symbols has a long tradition in Poland. The PRL era was atypical in this sense, when the official calendar of national holidays had an instrumental function and served the secularisation of social life.<sup>285</sup>

<sup>285</sup> Leonard Pełka, *Polski rok obrzędowy [The Polish Ceremonial Year]*. Warszawa: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1980, p. 67, 79

E.g. some church holidays were removed from the calendar, eliminating their status as non-working days, the process of desacralising public space progressed, removing religious symbols from public institutions and religion from public schools. It is worth recalling at this point, that until the 1980s the only mass transmitted via radio was the Midnight Mass, and the first regular national radio transmission of Sunday mass for the ill was introduced in 1980.<sup>286</sup> In the Third Republic we see the phenomenon of a kind re-sacralisation of public space, i.e. introducing (reinstating) religious content into national rituals and ceremonies. The May 3rd and November 11th celebrations described by respondents, especially in small and medium cities and *gminy* [pl. of *gmina*] have a para-religious form. In most statements the element of “holy mass”, “field mass” or “mass for the intention of Homeland”, as well the participation of priests, Catholic Church hierarchs in national holiday ceremonies were present. Very often subjects also indicated participation between the *gmina* or city office and the local parish when organising national holiday observances:

- “Independence Day is very important, flowers are laid and there is a mass at our church. There are also meetings with veterans. Usually the mayor or one of the employees takes part, in these official ceremonies it’s usually them. The most important holidays are May 3rd and November 11th, first of May is gone now. There is also August 15th, but unfortunately I don’t know what happens, to be honest, because that’s like a vacation time.”(R15)
- Well of course November 11th and the enactment of the constitution of May 3rd, usually all observances are led by the Department of Culture or the Promotions Department. We cooperate with the church in our parish, often these are mutual ceremonies.”(R15)

Among national holidays and anniversaries, respondents mentioned a few other dates: March 1st – “Banished Soldiers” Day, August 1st – National Warsaw Uprising Memorial Day, August 31st – Solidarity and Freedom Day (officials simply refer to it as the “Solidarity” holiday), but also May 1st, May 2nd, May 9th, August 15th, September 1st and 17th. Not all offices observe them equally ceremoniously as the main national holidays, but in some of them the new holidays are given special significance due to the history of a given place or event associated with it (e.g. National Warsaw Uprising Memorial Day observances are an integral part of the national holiday in Warsaw offices in Wola and Mokotów boroughs/

<sup>286</sup> Grzegorz Łęcicki, *Media katolickie w III Rzeczypospolitej [Catholic Media in the III Republic of Poland]* „Kultura-Media-Teologia”, Warszawa: 2010, p. 118.

districts). While officials in Kielce pointed out ceremonies for “Banished Soldiers” Memorial Day, emphasising that it is a new, important ceremony, for which the model of public observance is now being developed. It is also worth mentioning the May 1st holiday noted by officials, which is treated as a day off work. There are no ceremonies organised or co-organised by administrative offices: “May third, yes. But nothing on the first...”, one of the employees claimed. May 1st, like the July 22nd anniversary of the PKWN manifesto observed during the PRL, was brought up by subjects when speaking of the differences between “old” and “new” administrative celebration. In the respondents’ opinions there is currently no pressure from the superiors or community to participate in observances of May 1st, which was a normal practice during the PRL era. The form of observance has changed fundamentally as well. The former participation in colourful processions and “assemblies in honour of...” has been replaced by taking part in organised festivities, cultural events; often one also spends May 1st at home or goes on a *majówka* [May trip] with the family:

- “I worked in an administrative office before ‘89. It’s changed in the sense that now there is no obligation. Before, there maybe wasn’t a legal obligation, but it was like »it would be nice if everyone were present on May 1st«. May 3rd wasn’t even mentioned. May 1st has fallen out of celebration now. No one remembers July 22nd now, either”. (R9)
- Now on May 1st you usually sit at home, because there are no rallies. Those who can, take advantage of the long weekend and go somewhere, if the weather is nice you go on a *majówka*. At work we make use of it that you can take a vacation day in the middle, because of May 3rd and you go”. (R19)

The other significant element which officials pointed out in comparing past and current national holidays, is the observance of events and historical facts which were frowned upon or forbidden by PRL government, e.g. September 17th and August 1st. Restoring historical memory, the symbolic dimension of resurrected holidays and anniversaries, is a repeated topic in officials’ statements, when listing national holidays and associated ceremonies introduced after 1989. In the case of national holidays, the rule is offices organising external ceremonies for residents to participate in; sometimes the observance has an “internal” part, i.e. prepared for administrative employees and invited guests (if the holiday is a non-working day, then the “internal” ceremony is held earlier). In the calendar of administrative holidays there was also mention of local holidays. Some of them commemorate historical events important to a specific community, city or region, others promote a

given city or region. Local holidays, including the “city days” mentioned by respondents, e.g. Kielce Days, Chełmno Days, created an opportunity to present various achievements of the city and government, to inspire social initiatives and mobilise residents. Often the organised ceremony has the form of a festival with a rich cultural offering:

- “We have Kielce Days, that is in the scope of the president and he really cares about it. It has the formula of showing off and presenting attractive products from the region, Sienkiewicza street was used for this, there are stalls built all along the street, where they show regional dishes, whatever the village housewives’ association makes etc. – on a daily basis our access to that is very limited. They also present regional *świętokrzyskie* outfits, all complemented with some artistic performances”. (R9)

Respondents also mentioned the *dożynki* [harvest festival] which take place in late August and early September. *Dożynki* are organised or co-organised by local government. The culmination of regional celebrations (gmina, county, voivodeship) is the harvest festival organised by the office of the President of Poland. We must note here, that after 1989 there was a return to this pre-war tradition of observing the holiday in Spala – it was established by president Ignacy Mościcki in 1927. Since 2009, the presidential *dożynki* are a regular element which closes the cycle of regional celebrations.

The catalogue of holidays observed in administrative offices also includes professional holidays. They are described in publications as habits, rituals and holidays associated with an individual’s affiliation with a certain occupation or employee group.<sup>287</sup> The first group includes e.g. ceremonies connected with taking up a certain vocation, assigning of rank and professional titles, observance of professional anniversaries, ceremonies associated with professional holidays. The other group consists of customs associated with e.g. admittance to one’s first job, anniversaries of long-term employment in a given institution, farewells for retiring employees. Such professional holidays include the Civil Service Day and Local Government Day mentioned by respondents – commonly called Local official day. The first holiday, introduced in 2000, is observed on November 11th. Meanwhile, Local Government Day is observed May 27th and commemorates the first local government elections in 1990 (a holiday introduced in the year 2000). Though respondents did not speak of this, it is worth mentioning that in 2006 the Holy See accepted the local officials’ pleas and confirmed “St.

<sup>287</sup> Leonard Pelka, op. cit., p. 79.



Kinga as the heavenly Patron” of local government officials and employees.<sup>288</sup> Local official day is accompanied by the choosing of “Local Government Official of the Year” and the vote includes the nominations of councilmen, *wójt*, mayors and city presidents. In administrative offices there are also celebrated employee holidays. Respondents mostly spoke of those associated with employee retirement. The official farewell for an employee, given by the government heads, includes a low-key meeting in the company of co-workers. It is worth noting, that retired employees are also invited to participate in official celebrations organised by the office, as well as informal events and meetings, e.g. recreational, integration events (trips, bonfires).

## 2. Christmas and Easter in administrative offices – “a small celebration”?

Christmas and Easter are, for many Poles the most important holidays of the year. Most cultivate the customs associated with them, for the majority they also have a religious and family aspect.<sup>289</sup> The tradition of observing Christmas and Easter at work does not have a long history in Poland. Before the year 1989, as respondents mentioned, there were Christmas symbols in the offices, i.e. a Christmas tree or table decoration for Christmas Day. The custom of giving each other Christmas wishes was also maintained, but official ceremonies for employees were organised only on New Year’s Eve. Beata Łaciak writes about how the holidays are currently observed in various companies, offices; “The custom of organising a Christmas party has been brought over to Poland by western companies and it is usually they who cultivate it. Early Christmas parties at work have a varied character depending on the size of the company, usually these are low-key meetings of colleagues with Christmas Eve dishes, exchange of wishes, greetings, and carol singing.”<sup>290</sup> In the studied administrative offices as well, Christmas and Easter are special times, but the celebrations described by respondents are far from low-key, informal meetings. The organised holiday events include the employees, as well as invited guests from outside, e.g. representatives of other offices, social organisations,

<sup>288</sup> *Święta Kinga patronką samorządowców* [St. Kinga Patron of Local Government].

<http://www.katolik.pl/swieta-kinga-patronka-samorzadowcow,20780,794,news.html>

<sup>289</sup> *Święta Bożego Narodzenia*. [Christmas Holidays], ed. Magdalena Gwiazda, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2011.  
<sup>290</sup> B. Łaciak, *Obyczajowość polska* .... p. 151.

priests, hierarchs of the Catholic Church. “Old” Christmas customs are cultivated, e.g. decorating a tree, but new ones are also developing and being established, such as an office Christmas Eve and breaking communion wafer, with Christmas dishes and a collective prayer. During Easter the celebrations are similar, but Christmas ornaments turn into Easter decorations, and breaking of the wafer is replaced by splitting an egg; fast-day meals are prepared or ordered (catering). One of the respondents emphasised that for the Easter dinner the priest blessed the dishes “by the way of the employee meeting”, he also encourages employees to take part in the competition for prettiest Easter basket, organised by the parish (under patronage from the city government):

- “There is a Christmas get-together. It is organised by the mayor and he invites representatives of all institutions, organisations, associations from all over the district. Well, that’s about 160 people. And these are representatives of different institutions, they are police and *straż miejska* [municipal police], people from housing cooperatives, residents’ associations, representatives of housing councils, veteran’s organisations. Of course also medical professionals, all the units which cooperate with us, also those who take part in any charity campaigns. If it’s Christmas Eve, we split a communion wafer, if it’s an Easter party then we divide an egg. It’s also tradition that a priest from our parish is with us. We hire a catering company which is meant to prepare refreshments and of course decorate the tables. As far as Christmas trees go, there is usually one in such places. Generally, there are ornaments in the office everywhere, either trees or decorations. The tables are prepared so the priest e.g. during Easter can bless the eggs.” (R18)

Only in one statement was it emphasised that “large” parties for Christmas and Easter happen sporadically and the organised ceremonies run a low-key course, i.e. they take place in rooms with a small group of co-workers. Similarly, only one subject admitted that in accordance with the mayor’s decision, instead of Christmas in the office a New year’s meeting will be organised:

- There are these nice holidays, Christmas and all that, but the mayor decided not to do that. So in our office we will have a New Year’s meeting. We wish each other the best, there is no awkwardness with the wafer, because everyone knows it’s more of a personal thing. And we walk down to the largest room – the mayor gives us season’s greetings. There is coffee, cake, but if the departments want then they have a low-key thing, meet up, so they can wish each other well, sit down... even though we work on Christmas Eve.” (R19)

The above statement does not correspond with many others in fact, but with the subjects' reservations toward celebrating religious holidays at work. In the respondents' opinions, religion belongs to the private sphere and should not be displayed in public offices:

- “As far as holidays such as Christmas Eve or Easter, then definitely not, because we are a public office and religion should be the private matter of each person; there should be separation. I think we should set an example for some kind of constitutional rule outside. I am also speaking about the example of our department – now there is not much pressure resulting from convictions or beliefs, but from the need to present the department well, compared with the rest of the office. There is no pressure to go, in spite of one's beliefs, to that hall and participate in all those magical rituals. I noticed that, but it depends on the top brass. As far as customary, I haven't notice, because it's too short a time.” (R11)

The conducted interviews show that observing Christmas and Easter holidays at work, along with the associated traditions, religious symbolism, but also elements of religious ritual (e.g. praying together), has been well established into the calendar of administrative ceremonies and administrative celebrating. It is telling, that in no statement was there the issue of giving wishes or celebrating holidays other than Catholic. Though the regulations state that employees who are followers of other non-Catholic religions may request exemption from work for that holiday timeframe, in accordance with their chosen religion, but in offices surveyed by us there was no mention of saints, celebrating or Christmas wishes given to followers of other religions. Statements emphasised that there is no pressure from “on high” to participate in the meetings organised during holidays, that taking part in ceremonies is voluntary. “Taking part in holidays,” Leon Dyczewski writes, “is on the one hand, something voluntary, on the other it is an obligation, even a kind of constraint. Because who opts out of celebration, also breaks out of the group, the community, and risks its sanctions.”<sup>291</sup> There are no “superior” precepts like in the PRL, to do with observing national holidays (May 1st, July 22nd), but one may find oneself under pressure from the environment which is celebrating a given holiday(s), and most cultivate traditions associated with the Catholic faith. Therefore, every official must solve for himself the dilemma of participating in Christmas and Easter celebrations organised at work.

<sup>291</sup> Leon Dyczewski, *Święto i jego kulturotwórcza...*, p. 12.

### 3. Private administrative celebration

In publications devoted to the subject of custom changes throughout the transformation in Poland one may read that celebration of name day is becoming less popular. “To be sure, the custom has survived” Beata Łaciak writes, “but today more attention is paid to the ceremony not obstructing fulfilment of obligations, that it is modest and without alcohol.”<sup>292</sup> In family relations, among acquaintances, it is still a very important day which is remembered and communally observed – the vast majority of Poles (88%) declare that they participate in family ceremonies such as name days and birthdays.<sup>293</sup> The interviews conducted by us also show that celebrating name day has not just survived in administrative offices, but the custom is doing well, especially in small towns, cities and *gminy* (pl.). Birthdays are also celebrated, but they are not too popular. The form of celebrating these days has changed however, while environmental peer pressure to organize a name day party at work has decreased. Firstly, progressively less often are these boisterous celebrations, in which nearly all employees take part – this form was true for name day meetings in offices located in small towns, employing few people. Currently, the custom of celebrating name day is limited to a small group of co-workers. The exception to this rule are the name days of bosses and superiors, observed especially ceremoniously in rural areas and small towns, but there is less and less occurrence of them being a nearly “official holiday” – with ceremony, employee delegations, flowers and presents. Traditionally, on this day, cookies, various cakes, coffee and flowers reign supreme. Spaces in the agency – offices, conference rooms – are turned into reception rooms; some of the employees are delegated to take care of potential clients. There is practically no incidence of alcohol being served in offices during name day celebrations, which was mentioned by respondents comparing “old” and “current” celebration. Public opinion polls from 2010 also confirm these observations, where 88% of surveyed declared that they never drink alcohol during professional meetings.<sup>294</sup> Secondly, currently it is increasingly common to leave the celebrant the choice, the possibility of deciding whether they want to have their name day at work. As I have mentioned, environmental pressure associated with organising a name day meeting is also decreasing. Some-

292 Beata Łaciak, *Obyczajowość polska* ..... p. 151.

293 *Postawy wobec alkoholu [Attitudes Toward Alcohol]*, ed. Micha Feliksiak, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2010, p. 8.

294 *Postawy wobec alkoholu [Attitudes Toward Alcohol]*, ed. Micha Feliksiak, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2010, p. 8.

times the person of interest simply takes the day off. “Running away” from name day celebration at work is visible most of all among employees of offices in large cities. In their statements there were also comments that name days are not celebrated at work anymore:

- Name days used to be big, but thank goodness, we have moved away from that, because it was almost like a duty. These poor saps, because that’s what we should call them, came to work at six even, with cake, sandwiches, various drinks, because that’s what it was like then. It was an awful day for the celebrant, and because those pilgrimages that antailed. Truthfully, you’d get zero work done. And you know, the worst part is, it was somehow tolerated by clients as well: Aha, celebrating name day!« It was completely warped and I mean, thank goodness we’ve moved away from that. If someone needs to wish someone well on the occasions, then go right ahead, but the birthday- name day boy or girl does not have to bring anything to eat and no one does it”. (R9)

Sometimes respondents also emphasised that mostly older employees – with “bygone” habits and customs – support and uphold the tradition of celebrating name day at work. And one last note. Respondents mentioned collective celebration of name days outside the office, so inviting friends to pubs, cafes, restaurants. This is not as popular as celebrating name day in the office, but more often now this kind of communal “external” celebration takes place. It is worth adding here, that though celebrating name days at work in Poland has a long tradition, it was only after 1989 that there was a massive increase in the number of guidebooks which advised employees how to behave with regards to various professional ceremonies e.g. is buying a name day present for a superior appropriate or not, do we have the obligation to chip in for a present for the celebrant, is it alright to not participate in a name day party organised in the workplace? Extensive literature on the subject applies mostly to business etiquette, but many tips refer directly to office behaviours and habits. PR specialists advise e.g. that the name day ceremony be short and not disorganise work for others, to not overdo it with refreshments and buy only a small gift for the celebrant. In an online compendium created by a PR specialist we read, “It is in good form to invite one’s closest acquaintances from work during lunch break for a little something at a bar, if it is nearby, or meeting up with them after work for a name day round. Friendly relations should not transfer to the professional plane and influence the honesty or reliability of fulfilling one’s duties. That is in very bad form. And to conclude, one more comment regarding good taste. Bringing to work roasts or salads which we would

offer guests at home, is proof of lack of proper behaviour patterns, even if their taste is blissful. One should also show moderation with sweets. Homemade baked goods, if that is the challenge we are up for, ought to be only a nice gesture, not a culinary display. Let those remain the domain of culinary TV celebrities. Opulence and sophistication should be applied in appropriate circumstances, because truffles eaten at a desk lose their flavour.”<sup>295</sup> Recommendations in foreign travel *savoir vivre* guides sound similar, e.g. “If the custom exists in the office [celebrating birthdays], do not give up celebrating them. Just follow some advice as to how to survive that day, “A common practice is for the birthday person’s co-workers to provide a cake and a small in-office party. Flowers from the boss are also a nice touch. A birthday card for a co-worker celebrating his special day is always considerate, but birthday gifts are never required in business. An executive may choose to give small gifts to special staffers, such as a long-time secretary. There is no need for employees to give gifts to the boss, unless the working relationship has extended over many years or the employee is socially close to the boss and his family” (*The Etiquette of Office Occasions*)<sup>296</sup>.

Private administrative celebration, or rather festivity, also takes the form of bonding trips, integration meetings. There is the element of “old” custom among them, such as employees travelling together to pick mushrooms, but also new practices, e.g. trips abroad. When reading the offers of various agencies organising team building outings, then the parties or events described by administrative workers seem quite conventional in comparison. Respondents did not mention e.g. spa trips, massages, mud baths or parties on the water; the workers’ descriptions also did not mention the newest team building trends, e.g. trips with elements of survival and extreme sports or wellness type vacations (a form of excursion considering not just sport and entertainment, but also workshops and lectures which reinforce new health habits – “employees surrounded by nature learn the rules of a healthy diet, go through a mindfulness and stress reduc-

295 M. Murzańska-Potasińska, *Imieniny w pracy – jak je przeżyć?* [How to Survive Name Day at Work?] <http://www.rossnet.pl/Artykul/Imieniny-w-pracy-jak-je-przezyc,197952#>

296 *The Etiquette of Office Occasions*, [http://www.officemanagertoday.com/res/files/WP-\(Business\\_Etiquette\)The\\_Etiquette\\_of\\_Office\\_Occasions.doc](http://www.officemanagertoday.com/res/files/WP-(Business_Etiquette)The_Etiquette_of_Office_Occasions.doc).

and 14 *Tips on Business Etiquette: Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers*, Special Report 2012 from <http://www.BusinessManagementDaily.com> <http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/res/BMD/Free-Reports/BusinessEtiquette101.pdf>

tion course”).<sup>297</sup> In the studied offices, bonding meetings usually take the form of a bonfire or grill together, accompanied by dancing and beer drinking. There are also other forms of recreation, such as paintball, karaoke, or a night at the bowling alley. Sometimes members of the families take part in organised meetings, but this is no rule:

- “We have trips together, but it varies according to the employees’ moods. Now we had these one day get-togethers outside the office. A grill, beer. There is a centre here nearby, actually became more of an equestrian place. They have good food. But sometimes we took trips overnight. Also, once we went to shoot at the shooting range. So it was a competition. Besides, when that time for mushrooms comes, then we get a bus, galoshes, 6 in the morning and let’s go. And the whole bus, me with it, because I like it, and when we collect those mushrooms. Everyone sets down their basket. We take some firewood, tinder and we make a fire.” (R19)

Regardless of whether team building outings take the form of trips abroad, or just a bonfire or grill in a rural inn, the main goal of those meetings doesn’t change, and that’s building an official *esprit de corps*, strengthening team bonds, and shaping identification and sense of belonging to the group. Wrapping up the topic of private celebration, one needs to mention Valentine’s. It is described as a new holiday custom, borrowed from English-language culture, which gives the opportunity to express fondness for colleagues<sup>298</sup>, or an example of “(...) secular humanism, which accepts the “ritual” pagan promiscuity – sexual freedom. (...) The attraction of this exceptionally commercialised holiday are cards with clearly defined content, and even children are encouraged to send them. Of course this is a fallacy and moving attention away from the custom of sending greetings for Christian holidays.”<sup>299</sup> CBOS research shows that Valentine’s Day has firmly established itself in the calendar of observed holidays, and in Poland, awareness of it is nearly universal – only 4% of Poles in 2002 never heard about Valentine’s Day.<sup>300</sup> Public opinion polls conducted over a decade later (2013) confirmed earlier results; they are also accompanied by the

297 See: Wyjazdy integracyjne – sposób na poprawę atmosfery w firmie czy niepotrzebny wydatek? [Team Building Excursions – A Way to Improve the Atmosphere in a Company or Needless Expense?] [http://rynekpracy.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria\\_glowna.37/wpis.521](http://rynekpracy.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria_glowna.37/wpis.521)

298 Beata Łaciak, *Obyczajowość polska ...*, p. 153.

299 Ireneusy Celary, *Obrzędowość świecka jako wyzwanie dla życia duszpastersko-liturgicznego* [Secular ceremony as a challenge for pastoral-liturgical life], „Śląskie studia historyczno-teologiczne”, v. 36, dated 1/2003, p. 163.

300 See: *O walentynkach i innych świętach* [About Valentine’s and Other Holidays], ed. Anna Grudniewicz, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2002, p. 1, 3.

claim that “the custom of celebrating Valentine’s has lastingly entered Polish customs.”<sup>301</sup> A few respondents spoke of Valentine’s Day being observed in offices, also not many named Women’s Day, which currently has the character of private celebration, i.e. there are no official ceremonies associated with it. The fact that the holiday is still remembered however, proves its strong roots in culture. Survey studies confirm this, e.g. in 2002. Women’s Day took third place – behind Mother’s Day and Children’s Day – among holidays which respondents indicated as closest to them (the choices were: Mother’s Day, Children’s Day, Grandmother’s Day, Women’s Day, Valentine’s Day).<sup>302</sup> In our studies, Women’s Day returned in respondents’ statements mostly as a memory of older official, showy ceremonies:

- Women’s Day was celebrated once, not anymore. There’s no ceremonial rally like there used to be...” (R5)

- We have Women’s Day and men buy us flowers, and we buy them some cake; we meet here in the lunch room, exchange wishes, greetings, we talk, actually it doesn’t last long, later we get back to our work. For me it’s a nice ritual, but it’s fading”. (R2)

Most likely, Women’s Day has met the same fate as the grandly celebrated May 1st during the PRL. Women’s Day is remembered, the custom of giving female employees flowers is practiced in offices, but the official observance and accompanying rallies are a thing of the past. Another relic of the past are traditions associated with celebrating together with co-workers, various achievements, e.g. a promotion, a raise, an anniversary bonus. As one of the respondents pointed out, “Good riddance, that we stopped that drinking for every kind of award, promotion and raise, because once it was a holy obligation. You got a raise – you have to buy. And your first paycheck goes to refreshments for your colleagues. It’s a good thing we went away from that. That’s gone” (R9)

301 Walentynki 2013 [Valentine’s Day 2013], ed. Barbara Badora, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2013..

302 O walentynkach i innych świętach, [About Valentine’s and Other Holidays], ed. Anna Grudniewicz, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2002, p. 3.



## Conclusion

Publications devoted to customary changes in modern Poland emphasise the increasing secularisation and commercialisation of social life. Leon Dyczewski writes, “A desacralisation of religious holidays is taking place. On religious and national holidays, giant sales warehouses bring in increasing numbers of people, in many circles perhaps more than churches and plazas during official public and state ceremonies. This carries the risk of blurring the line between celebration and leisure time. The process is helped along by the deepening divide between *sacrum* and *profanum* in public and private life, a clear separation of national holidays from religious ones. However, the question arises, can you live without a holiday and for how long?”<sup>303</sup> Studies conducted in administrative offices show that in the public sphere, instead of a deep divide between *sacrum* and *profanum*, we are clearly dealing with their interfusion and the observances of national and state holidays, especially in *gminy*, small and medium towns, have the character of a para-religious holiday. There was almost no statement that did not mention the presence of priests, Church hierarchs among the participants or co-organisers of public, national holidays. The clergy are also present during celebration of local holidays, e.g. one of the respondents stressed that the bishop, along with members of government opened the song festival held during celebrations of “city days”. On some administrative offices, national flags are hung not just during national holidays, but also during religious holidays. “We work tightly here with our parish, so it happens that even for Church holidays, for the bishop’s arrival, the administration office is decorated with flags... every holiday... and definitely during all national holidays. Now, we just open the song festival with the bishop

<sup>303</sup> Leon Dyczewski, *Święto i jego kulturotwórcza...*, p. 22.

as well.” (R19) There was almost no instance of Christmas and Easter holidays not being mentioned as official ceremonies organised in public offices. They are linked with elements of religious ritual and custom usually not present in public institutions, such as splitting the communion wafer during Christmas, sharing the Easter egg, praying together. In this context the question, how long can you live without a holiday?, may bring astonishment. Observance of state and national holidays, as well as the accompanying customs, habits, rituals, seem to be saturated with religious content and symbols. This is the first significant element of change which has taken place in administrative and official celebration after 1989. It fits with the logic of transformations, where a specific model of state-Church relations has been worked out, growing out of Polish tradition and reality, but definitely straying from the tradition of separation. “It fits within the broadly understood separation paradigm, but also clearly rejects the idea of reducing the Church to an institution of the private sphere. The model not only gained the approval of the majority of Poles and provided social peace in the 1990s, but in its essence was developed with no small effort from the left, and thus – as it seems – had the traits of a real consensus.”<sup>304</sup> We are aware that the results of our research in several communities are not representative of the whole country and rather show a certain tendency, but information about celebration of national holidays in other towns seems to confirm our observations, or even sharpen certain phenomena, such as e.g. authorities backing out of ceremonial observances and sort of transferring national holidays onto the institution of the Church. The following information posted on one local website shows the essence of the observed changes: “Not just in Gryfin, but also in other *gminy* of our county, the local community observes May 3rd Constitution Day. The initiators are usually priests and some local governments. There is practically no church today that does not hold a mass for the Homeland. While in the seats of the specific *gminy* today’s holiday is mostly attempted to be ignored. Often the administrative-parish observances are combined, as we can see from the websites of specific administrative offices. E.g. Banie – the Gmina Office in Banie has taken a day off on May 2nd, and also treated today without obligation. Similar to Trzcіńsko Zdrój, where there is no mention of the holiday on the gmina website. Moryń wants to attract

304 Sławomir Sowiński (ed.), *Obecność Kościoła katolickiego w sferze publicznej demokratycznego państwa prawa. Przykład współczesnej Polski [Presence of the Catholic Church in public sphere of a legal democratic state. Examples in contemporary Poland]*. Warszawa: Instytut Politologii UKSW, 2013, p. 63.

tourists, but not during national holidays. They propose no events on the 2nd or even the 3rd of May.”<sup>305</sup>

Reclaiming the past through new ritualisations, return to so-called “normality”, i.e. before the PRL era, is a strong legitimisation for the currently forming models of ritualisation of public life. “Old” national holidays are returning and new ones are introduced, which shape the knowledge and social attitudes toward significant events in Poland. Bringing back historical memory, including the symbolic aspect of resurrected holidays and anniversaries, as well as commemorating events ignored in the catalogue of PRL observances, is the second indisputable display of evolution which has taken place in the calendar of national holidays and special days. The third important point is the change in character of some ceremonies which are in fact national holidays (May 1st), but in actuality they are deprived of state support and social interest. The outline of holidays and national ceremonies built after 1989 – adjusted in character, content and symbolism to the needs of the new, reconstructed state – has superseded communist holidays from public space and social memory, removing them from the calendar or through a kind of desacralisation. Presently, May 3rd and November 11th national holidays are the best known and closest for the majority of Poles. However, even they, being a significant element of historical politics after 1989, have become part of the argument about social memory, interpretation of the past, as well as a basis for legitimisation of new government. Observances of November 11th, as well as December 13th show not only the strong division associated with “reclaiming” social memory, but different interpretations of dates and events and the related convictions about the moral right to hold power now and *in spe*. The kind of revolution which has taken place in the calendar of national holidays and associated ceremonies, are accompanied by the small evolutions visible in administrative private celebration at work and forms of spending free time together. What is proper, and what is unacceptable in office *savoir vivre*, regarding various employee celebrations (e.g. name days, birthdays, team building trips), is the subject of increasing numbers of books, guides, websites; specialist courses are held. And this is the next visible element of changes in administrative celebration, which have been subject to external assessment and customary recommendations like never before. Revolution in public administrative celebration and the slow evolution of

305 See: Jak (nie)świętują w powiecie [How They (Don't) Celebrate in the County]. igryfino.pl. Accessed 03.05.2013, 09:35, <http://igryfino.pl/>

employee habits are currently parallel processes, which are changing administrative offices, while also being a reflection of social changes taking place, also in the sphere of customs.

## Summary

Our analysis reveals an image of habits developed by several contradictory realms. I would contain them in the following polar opposite pairs: liberal-conservative, traditional-modern, native (national) models-openness to other cultures, religious-secular, generality-individualism. The vast majority of habits mark various points on the continuum defined by these dimensions, though one may also identify polar attitudes. In many aspects of daily habits regarding sexuality, marital relations and family there is a liberalization of common practices, as well as the judgment of these behaviours.

Our respondents were critical of modern liberalization of sexual habits, what they perceived to be excessive tolerance of other sexual orientations, but when describing changes in custom, many of them also mentioned increasing tolerance and liberalization of judgment and their expectation that such changes would take place. Though a conservative attitude toward raising the younger generation was often revealed, more often we heard voices speaking of the benefits of a liberal upbringing, based on intimacy, an emotional relationship with the child and respect for its' needs.

Most of our interviewees described various habits associated with using new technologies; however the most common custom today, which organizes our daily time is still watching television, which can currently be considered quite a traditional medium. Contemporary habits also include having a good knowledge of the modern world, an interest in our surroundings, paying greater attention to physical fitness, and an ecological awareness backed by specific actions. Despite many years of low voter turnout and weak citizens' activism<sup>306</sup>, there is no lack of interest in politics – quite the contrary. The results of our interviews clearly confirm this. Very often our respondents referred to matters regarding politics when answering various questions about habit; therefore one of the basic social divisions

306 *Aktywność społeczna Polaków [Poles' social activity]*, ed. Barbara Badora, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2014.

which they perceive, is the political divide surrounding the two main, conflicting parties. Also, when speaking about usage of the Internet or television, our respondents most often talked about news and current affairs programmes and following the news or reading press online. Even those who declared a dislike for politics often pointed out that they follow current affairs in order to stay up to date with significant events. An active, healthy lifestyle and caring for physical and mental fitness are still minority habits in our society. Nationwide research shows, however, that the percentage of people taking up various physical activities is growing.<sup>307</sup> Awareness of this being part of current social norms is certainly on the rise, even though we often find various Polish excuses and rationalizations for not realizing it. A healthy way of life, as well as pro-ecology actions are clearly habits promoted in the media, though it is reasonable to say that the registered rise in awareness very slowly transfers to concrete practices.

One can see that these are areas of clashing traditional habits and new models of behaviour. Traditionalism is clearly shown when it comes to culinary habits and celebrating major holidays. What is also visible is the rebirth or construction of local or national traditions, based on historical elements and those being created currently. Ties to habits of nobility, folk customs and models functioning in the II Republic are especially common. History and tradition are a reservoir which is drawn from quite liberally, in combination with new trends. In social consciousness these “invented traditions” begin to function as an element of local or national identity and historical heritage. This phenomenon has been previously described by sociologists and anthropologists and our research only confirms how common it is. The clash between traditionalism and the modern is also seen in the area of administrative habit. The example of work attire clearly shows that though there are often customary norms, their interpretation can be quite free and their realization is far from obvious.

307 cf. *Zdrowie i zdrowy styl życia w Polsce* [Health and healthy lifestyle in Poland], ed. Rafał Boguszewski, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2007; *Aktywność fizyczna Polaków* [Poles and physical activity], ed. Małgorzata Omyła-Rudzka, Warszawa, CBOS release, 2013; Elżbieta Nieroba, Anna Czerner, Marek S. Szczepański, *Flirty tradycji z popkulturą. Dziedzictwo kulturowe w późnej nowoczesności* [Tradition flirts with popculture. Cultural legacy in the late modern era], Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2010; Waldemar Kuligowski, *Antropologia współczesności. Wiele światów, jedno miejsce* [Modern anthropology. Many worlds, one place], Kraków, Wydawnictwo Prac Naukowych UNIVERSITAS, 2007; Elżbieta Tarkowska, *Popularne sposoby upamiętniania przeszłości, czyli głos w dyskusji na temat detradycjonalizacji / retradycjonalizacji obyczajowości* [Popular ways of memorialising the past, or a voice in the discussion about detraditionalisation / retraditionalisation of custom], in *Obyczajowość polska początku XXI wieku – w procesie przemian* [Polish custom in early XXI century – process of transformation], ed. Beata Łaciak, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 2014.

Opposition: native models versus openness to other cultures often takes the form of setting Polish (*polskość* or “Polishness”) against European or American influences. Modern customs rarely take the form of extreme cosmopolitanism or radical nationalism. Based on the narration of our respondents, one could place their habits in various points on the continuum between these polar opposites.

Native habit models are associated with celebrating Christmas and Easter, the norm of absolute care for the family, help for all its members, as well as family-feasts, religious or patriotic customs. Contact with other cultures confirms our belief that our holiday or culinary customs are superior and we should preserve, nurture and pass them on to others, not allowing them to be destroyed by external influences.

Convictions that Polish customs need defending are accompanied by opinions of needing to learn from other nations and take in their models of daily habits, especially those concerning social interactions. Indiscriminate imitation and automatic borrowing regarding holidays, English terms in business and services or language in general, arouse criticism. Often, various unaccepted changes in habit are interpreted by our entering the European Union and a greater openness towards American culture, which as respondents suggest, has altered taste in the realms of consumption, dress, entertainment and pleasure. At the same time, changes in administrative (public servant) habits are regarded as positive, and a symptom of Americanisation. Those who interact with administrative organs usually speak of noticeable changes in custom regarding client-official relations, especially in comparison to habits of the PRL (Polish People’s Republic) era and these changes appear to be favourable.

Contemporary Polish customs may also be graded on the continuum between religious and secular. These two realms appear in almost all areas of our research. The main religious holidays throughout the year influence celebratory habits, regardless of variety in the worldview. In media content, the religious point of view and the stance of the Catholic Church is referred to in nearly all matters regarding habit and custom. Members of the Church very often appear as experts on not just religious issues but widely understood everyday and celebratory customs. Religion in the public sphere is even more visible in holiday situations. Beginning various official and public ceremonies with holy mass or with the participation of church dignitaries is a customary norm. Our research shows that very often during celebrations the presence of religion and Church representatives is much more visible on a local, rather than a national level. Pre-

holiday meetings in public offices, during which clergymen pray, bless administrative workers or even their private Easter baskets, are a common practice. Similarly: the presence of Church representatives during every state holiday or the blessing of every public structure. This growing presence of religious custom in the public sphere is accompanied by a slow but visible secularisation in the private sphere. Our research reveals ambivalence toward these changes, as well as two extreme attitudes. Most often in their statements, our respondents suggest a tie to religion, respect for John Paul II or the incumbent Pope Francis, the significance of religion in our culture, the emphasis on religious aspects in holiday customs; but they also mention a lack of acceptance for certain aspects of Church teachings and criticise certain actions of the Church as an institution. There are a decidedly smaller number of those who declare a strong bond with religion and the Church, participate actively in their parish, devote time daily to prayer and other religious practices. A fairly small group also declared themselves as non-believers. Persons with anti-clerical attitudes are also worth mentioning; they do not inform of their stance on religious beliefs, but are very critical of the Church and its representatives.

Habit and custom have a social character, which means not just that they are formed in relations with others, but also that no custom can exist without a collective which considers it valid, realizes it and evaluates it morally. This suggests that in the case of customs, we are always dealing with certain common, repeatable practices, models or norms. In the modern world this commonality rarely means all members of a society subject themselves to certain customs unconditionally. Norbert Elias ascertained, „Along with increasing diversity in society and the result, which is an individualisation of its members (...) differentiating one person from the rest becomes something which is placed especially high on the social value scale. In such societies, differing from others in one way or another becomes a personal ideal.”<sup>308</sup> This element of individualisation of habit also appeared in our respondents' narration – the need to differentiate oneself through personal choices regarding culinary tastes, ways of spending everyday or holiday time and developing one's own, specific passions and interests. Stating “I am not typical, because ...”, „we celebrate uniquely...”, „I am searching for something different/new/less common/of my own...” is a statement often expressed by individuals in this random sample population. Just as

308 Norbert Elias, *Spoleczeństwo jednostek* [*Society of individuals*], transl. Janusz Stawiński, Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Naukowe PWN, 2008, p. 167

in the past one's social status was demonstrated by ostentatious consumption<sup>309</sup>, today one gets the impression that, independent of environment or social standing, it is increasingly important to emphasise one's individuality with an atypical passion, membership in a niche group, exotic travel, ways of spending leisure time different from others, or even with an original outfit or hairstyle. Increasingly often modern „individualisations” are becoming superficial or derivative, as argued by Tomasz Szlendak.<sup>310</sup>

The realms being described, which define this continuum allowing differentiation of modern Polish customs do not form a cohesive image at all. Contrary to assumptions, traditionalism is not always paired with conservatism or religiousness. The results of our research show several possible variants in this matter, and it is further complicated when considering various areas of habit. One can be, for example, a secular traditionalist in one area, a modern supporter of native ideals in another, or a liberal open to other cultures in yet another and such combinations do emerge from our respondents' narration. “For we are living in a time of pluralism of models, significant ease in demonstrating individuality and (almost) full tolerance for various deviations from what was once norm.”<sup>311</sup>

Apart from a description and analysis of modern Polish habits, the second important matter in our research was following the changes in custom considering the perspective of the participants of those transformations.

Transformations of contemporary habits are their liberalisation in the area of erotic and family life, as well as the decline of worldview sanctioning. A noticeable change is also the commercialisation of holiday customs, especially those within the cycle of human life, connected to rites of passage, which are very often associated with costly gifts, significant expenditure for celebrating the occasion. While private holiday customs have been reduced, especially for individuals, in some circles, so have those concerning the most important holidays of the year. The last dozen or so years have also brought a very clear formalisation of customs in the workplace. Specific regulations regarding attire and in some cases its complete unification, standards of relations with the client and sometimes also anonymous verification, have been introduced in most service and retail institutions,

309 Thorstein Veblen, *Teoria klasy próżniaczej* [*The Theory of the Leisure Class*], transl. Janina Frentzel-Zagórska. Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza, 2008.

310 Tomasz Szlendak, *Ostentacja jako norma. O polskim, masowym wyjściu z szafy i performansie jako obyczajowym nakazie dla każdego* [*Ostentation as norm. Regarding the massive Polish coming out and performance as a customary mandate for everyone*], in „Societas/Communitas”, nr 1/2014.

311 Stefan Bednarek, *Jak jeść bezę?* [*How to eat meringue*], in *Tabu, etykieta, dobre obyczaje* [*Taboo, ethics, good manners*], ed. Piotr Kowalski, Wrocław, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2009, p. 311.



as well as various levels of administrative offices. In the public sphere there is a visible sacralisation of holiday customs. One can certainly notice the formation of new practices. New habits are especially visible in the virtual sphere. Our research shows that many social interactions have moved there or begin in the virtual world, from meeting people for matrimonial purposes, to forming communities, which sometimes constitute and formalize themselves as social movements or associations. Internet websites and blogs have a model-creating significance, also in the area of everyday customs, besides it is the virtual space that is a particular area of valorisation of the everyday. Through sharing information about daily, commonplace practices with others, habits are given significance and sometimes provoke comments or discussion about the subject. One may ascertain that the virtual sphere is also realizing practices which have faded, been largely reduced<sup>312</sup> or labelled taboo in everyday relations<sup>313</sup>.

Both the Internet and older media such as television or press may be considered significant model forming environments in the area of everyday custom and habit, though surely we can notice a kind of feeding back between the customary changes and their media presentation. The media show either what is common and therefore may be popular, or that which is new, sensational and thus arouses interest. The customs created in the media are then a certain skewed reflection of what is currently happening in a given field in society. At the same time, media presentations give significance to the displayed trends, new movements, which may have a model forming impact. The second, equally important source of changes in custom is the young generation, which has been a rather natural occurrence since early modern society. Contemporarily, however, highly dynamic changes in technology, which the young are adept at dealing with, cause the scale of this generation's model-creating force to be much greater. The third important matter, only partly connected to the previous one,

312 Jolanta Arcimowicz, *Zwyczajne pogrzebowe online – e-nekropolie i wirtualne miejsca pamięci* [Online funeral rituals – e-necropolises and virtual memorial sites], in *Obyczajowość polska początku XXI wieku – w procesie przemian*, [Polish custom in early XXI century – process of transformation] ed. Beata Laciak, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo akademickie Żak, 2014.

313 Cf. Paweł Bieńka, Wojciech Szumowski, *Jak traktować ludzi sikających na środku ulicy w samo południe?* [How to treat people urinating in the street Midway], in *Życie po polsku czyli o przemianach obyczaju w drugiej połowie XX wieku* [Polish life – about transformations in custom in the latter half of the XX century], Łomża: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Stopka”, 1998; Jolanta Klimczak-Ziółek, Monika Gnieciak, *Internet jako miejsce kreacji i ekspresji kultury mniejszości seksualnej. Studium przypadku: portal Kobiety Kobietom* [Internet as a place of creation and expression for sexual minority culture. Case study: Kobiety Kobietom website], in *Agora czy Hyde Park? Internet jako przestrzeń społeczna grup mniejszościowych* [Agora or Hyde Park? The Internet as a social space for minority groups], ed. Lucja Kaprańska, Bożena Pactwa, Kraków, Wydawnictwo NOMOS, 2010.

is the generally increasing mobility of society. When describing customary changes, borrowing from other cultures, or habits which we should adopt, more often than the media, our respondents cited personal experience and observation from travel (for tourism, professionally, to work, to visit family – from their own or someone else's experience) and contacts with other cultures.

Taking all this into account, one may assume that our habits and customs will develop between various polar positions, but mostly with increasing tendencies similar to those in Western culture.

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- (Footnotes)
- 1 Soup based on a vegetable broth with potatoes, after adding pork and poultry meatballs it creates a one-pot dinner dish. Dish characteristic for Kuyavian-Pomeranian region cuisine.
  - 2 *Czernina, czarnina, czarna polewka, czarna zalewajka* or *szara polewka* (in Lesser Poland) a soup, which basic ingredients include broth i blood of duck or chicken, rabbit, less often from piglet. In the past, goose blood was also used, with added sugar, vinegar to prevent the blood from clotting. Czarnina is served with dumplings, home-made pasta, pyzy or boiled potatoes. Czernina kaszubska and czarnina kujawska are included in national traditional dishes.
  - 3 Soup from sweet cabbage and potatoes, typical for traditional Greater Poland cuisine.
  - 4 Proziaki (soda bread) are round or square cakes/flatbread from wheat flour or rye-wheat flour, eggs, sour cream, water, salt or sugar with added "proza" (baking soda), which come from the Subcarpathian region. Made on a hotplate or frying pan.
  - 5 Scottish specialty, made of sheep offal (liver, heart, lungs), mixed with onion, oats, fat and spices, sewn and stewed inside a sheep's stomach.
  - 6 In South-East Asia one can eat e.g. **locust, mealworm, zophobas, silkworm larvae, spiders, stick insects, hornets, ladybugs**. There are increasing numbers of restaurants around the world which serve insects, one of them in Warsaw. Fashionable snacks include e.g. ant lollipops, insect crisps, scorpion in chocolate, curried crickets, honey enriched with hornet saliva, baked tarantula.
  - 7 Opening of the first restaurant in Poland which served dog meat in 2014 was met with sharp criticism.

- 8 Gree cuisine dish, baked eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and ground meat.
- 9 A meat product made of barley, blood and offal: liver, lungs, pork skins, fat. Silesian krupniok is a culinary product from the Opolian Silesia region, entered into the ministerial List of Traditional Products.
- 10 In the People's Republic of China, it is forbidden to serve shark fin soup at official government dinners and meetings, since 2014. Ecology organisations have been battling the cruel procedure for years, which leaves sharks put back into the sea with their valuable fin removed, left to a slow death.
- 11 Udon is a type of thick wheat pasta from Japan.
- 12 Japanese horseradish, a type of plant from the cabbage family.
- 13 Spring "croquettes" with meat or shrimp and vegetable filling, wrapped in rice paper, usually served as an appetiser with various dipping sauces. A popular dish in China and South-East Asia. The common name in Poland – "sajgonki", mostly refers to the Vietnamese version, more popular locally.
- 14 The Asian tradition of eating insects and larvae is becoming popular in Europe. Insects are healthy and inexpensive to farm. Popular European bistros offer a separate insect menu.
- 15 Soy "cheese" made from soy milk, low in calories and without cholesterol. A common ingredient in original oriental and European dishes, with meat, vegetarian or vegan.
- 16 Durian, a pungent fruit found in Indonesia and South-East Asia.
- 17 Yeast pancakes, made from buckwheat or wheat flour. Traditional dish in Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian cuisine.
- 18 Potato or flour and potato dumplings, mostly with meat (also called *cepeliny*), but also mushrooms, pickled cabbage or even cheese, regional dish very popular in north-eastern Poland.
- 19 Toast with peanut butter and banana was among Elvis Presley's favourite sandwiches (some sources state that they also contained bacon).
- 20 "Molecular gastronomy" (also called creative cooking) is a way of preparing food, pioneered by sir Benjamin Thompson, who lived in the XVIII and XIX centuries. The term was coined in 1988 as the result of cooperation between Hungarian physicist Nicholas Kurti and French chemist Herve This. It is a type of cuisine which makes use of scientific knowledge about cooking. The goal is to break boundaries, search for new sensations, original combinations of flavours, aromas and consistencies in dishes, e.g. pasta which looks like whipped cream, olives in capsules, ice cream which tastes like scrambled eggs or salmon steak in the form of a soufflé cake.
- 21 Small snacks served hot or cold, usually with drinks, in bars in Spain; made from various ingredients: vegetables, meat, seafood, eggs etc.
- 22 Small pieces of tortilla covered with melted cheese, served with meat, peppers, beans, olives, potatoes, salsa, guacamole, cream.
- 23 Dish made from hot cheese and white wine. Usually eaten in a group, directly from the pot, by dipping skewered bread or vegetables in the cheese.







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