



**Budapest Business School**  
College of Commerce, Catering  
and Tourism

**A Comparative Study of Russia and Hungary:  
Generational differences in their approach towards healthy eating**

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**AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Catering and Hotel Management at the Budapest Business School has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution. This thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research; it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged. I understand that my thesis may be made available to the public.

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## ABSTRACT

One of the prerequisites of health is a modern, healthy diet, thus the evolution of our diet cannot be insignificant either for the population as such, or for the individual. With the rise of obesity, and common eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia – eating itself is a topic in need of discussion. Modern, healthy eating is closely related to material (income, food-production, selection) and personal conditions (eating habits, knowledge, taste). The guarantee for these material conditions is the recently-forming governmental and national policies regarding quality of life, also involving nutrition. In the wake of technological advance, decreased physical activity lowered the caloric needs of the population.

The X, Y, and Z generations represent 74 % of the US's population. Several studies have been conducted about generational differences in the West; however, the Generation Gap is less widely researched in Central and Eastern Europe. I was curious to find out if a similar segmentation existed in Hungary and Russia, to better understand our own food consumption. To expand on the literature I have designed a questionnaire for my primary research in order to investigate the main differences between dietary habits among the different generations living in Budapest and St. Petersburg. The questions were aimed at mapping out these habits and the respondents' attitude towards food. Some questions concerned the material, while the others the personal conditions mentioned above.

My research revealed that the history of the two nations greatly influenced the eating habits we can observe today, as history seemed to have shaped the approach to and the role of food in peoples lives. In addition, I found that the differences were not as great as I had expected them to be, so further on I put greater emphasis on the social and cultural changes occurring in the past 20 years, after the fall of the USSR. Probably the most important finding is that while price seems to be the most powerful influencing factor in the process of food selection, the younger generation has formed a completely new attitude towards food. I believe that we are at a cultural turning point in the world of nutrition. Food acquired new meaning: self-expression. Parallel to the changing ideas about health and beauty, the “holy Trinity” of beauty, health and nutrition has become one of the most profitable industries in the world.

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## LIST OF TABLES

1. table - Annual per capita quantity of food consumption, 2010.....	25
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## LIST OF FIGURES

1. image - Life expectancy at birth in Europe, source: mapsofworld.com .....	10
2. image - Food Pyramid, source: roteskreuz.at.....	13
3. image - Frequency of variety of foods consumption, source: Fanta Trendriport.....	28
4. image - Men's responses on who cooks in the family, source: own research .....	36
5. image - frequency of eating at restaurants among different age groups .....	37
6. image - Associations with food quality - source: IOM ANKETOLOG (www.iom.anketolog.ru).....	42
7. image - Health Conscious Eating among Boys and Girls, source: Fanta Trendriport .....	44
8. image - Satisfaction with diet, source: own .....	46
9. image - Influencing factors during food selection, source: IOM ANKETOLOG .....	51
10. image - Frequency of ready-made food consumption in Russia, source: own .....	52
11. image - People who eat differently than their parents, source: own .....	52
12. image - Money as a limiting factor on eating habits.....	54
13. image - Ready-made Food Consumption in Hungary.....	54
14. image - Amount of weekly exercise in different age groups .....	55
15. image - Body image in the adult population of Hungary.....	56
16. image - Dieting of Hungarian Adults.....	56

# CONTENTS

<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY</b> .....	<b>Hiba! A könyvjelező nem létezik.</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	v
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	vi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	vi
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	2
<b>2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> .....	7
<b>2.1 Definition of health</b> .....	7
<b>2.2. The correlation between health and lifestyle</b> .....	8
2.2.1. The state of health in Russia .....	9
2.2.2. The state of health in Hungary .....	9
<b>2.3. Health-conscious diet</b> .....	10
<b>2.4. The evolution of dietary guidelines</b> .....	11
<b>2.5. Dietary recommendations</b> .....	12
<b>2.6. Russian history of food</b> .....	14
2.6.1. Ancient Russian cuisine: IX-XVth century.....	15
2.6.2. Petrovian cuisine: end of the 1200 – 1860s .....	17
2.6.3. All-Russian and Soviet cuisine: XIXth century. – Today .....	18
<b>2.7. Hungarian history of food</b> .....	19
2.7.1. Nomadic past .....	20
2.7.2. King Matthias.....	20
2.7.3. XVIIth century .....	21
2.7.4. XIXth century – today.....	22
<b>2.6. Changes in diet and meal patterns</b> .....	23
2.6.1. Diet change in Russia.....	24
2.6.2. Diet change in Hungary .....	25
<b>2.7. Eating habits</b> .....	26



2.7.1. Eating habits in Russia.....	26
2.7.2. Eating habits in Hungary.....	27
<b>2.8. Food choice motives .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3. OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>4. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>4.1. Examining the generation gaps.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>5. RESULTS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>5.1. Contrasting Socialism with Democracy .....</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1.1. Age group classifications and general findings .....	35
<b>5.1.1.1. Russia .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5.2. Lifestyle of comfort .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>5.3. Food selection process.....</b>	<b>50</b>
5.3.1. Russia.....	50
5.3.2. Hungary.....	53
<b>6. DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>7. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>63</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of good nutrition is nothing new. Back in 400 B.C., Hippocrates said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." (Chishti, 1988) Today, more information is being produced and introduced to the general public than ever before, who, in turn are educating themselves on nutrition from magazines, the internet and television programs. Scientists, sportsmen and journalists are no longer the sole authority on what a "healthy" diet should consist of. New recipes are available to the average citizen. People are expanding their diets and experimenting with new flavors. Exercise enthusiasts are counting "macros", young girls are tracking calories, some are following the Atkins diet, and many advocate the benefits of the "Paleolithic diet". In one form or another, we are all ruled by some form of a diet.

Overall, the Russian diet can provide many essential nutrients. However, the diet in Russian households is often not nutritionally adequate, which can lead to nutrient deficiencies and inadequate growth (FAO Corporate Document Repository, n.a.). The traditional Russian diet is:

- high in saturated fats
- high in sodium
- low in fruits and vegetables.

Recent immigrants (to Western countries) from Russia may suffer some nutritional deficiencies due to the inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables. The majority of the population in Russia generally eats 3 hearty meals per day, with the largest meal being lunch. Bread, salad or soup made from beets (borscht), cabbage, fish, and kasha (buckwheat porridge) are staple foods at mealtimes. Snacking is rare; however, traditionally an array of appetizers (zakuski) starts the meal. These may range from 2 simple dishes, such as pickled herring and cucumbers in sour cream, to an entire table spread of sandwiches, caviar, pickled vegetables and hot meat dishes. Bread is served with butter and a small bowl of salt for dipping. A common daily diet might only include a small amount of meat and vegetables (made into a thin stew), noodles, hot

kasha and rice. A drink called compote made from rehydrated fruit and sugar is a common beverage, along with caffeinated tea and coffee.

Similarly, in Hungary, according to the First Hungarian Food and Nutrition Policy 2004 (European Commission, 2009), the actual dietary risk factors were the following: high energy levels, fats, cholesterol, sugars and an insufficient intake of micronutrients, such as vitamin E, potassium or calcium. Modern gastronomy is supported by scientists, doctors, chemists, biologists, who keep researching the human body and its needs, coming up with some important findings. In the younger generation healthy eating is becoming more and more widespread. According to the Coca Cola Research (Coca Cola, 2009), half of the Hungarian students are health conscious when it comes to eating. They try to control their food intake, but seem to have difficulty due to certain external factors, as well as a massive distrust towards food producers, which gives ground to several conspiracy theories.

With obesity and body image disorders - like anorexia, bulimia or binge eating - on the rise, nutrition and eating as such is a topic that needs to be discussed. Clearly articulated programs of nutrition have started to develop quite recently in many countries, and began to shape a healthy nutrition policy at the national or regional level. However, there is little information about how people of different ages relate to food and eating as a function of health.

Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X and Baby Boomers total about 74 percent of the US population - and make up the bulk of today's foodservice consumers. New research has shown that a generational gap exists in the eating habits of Americans (Mather, 2013). While the question of a generational gap is widely researched in the Western countries, there is hardly any information about it in the former Eastern Bloc countries. I was curious to find out if such a distinction exists within Hungary and Russia, so that I can get a better insight into the needs related to and the trends arising in our own food consumption.

I start from the assumption that Hungary and Russia will have many similarities regarding eating habits and similar ideas of what a healthy diet consisted of, since they look back on a quite similar history. However, I expect to find that across the generations changes in approach will be observed. For example, it is stereotypical to believe that young people today eat fast food all the time, do not sleep enough, or spend their money on alcohol instead. However, it has been shown that 86 % of 20-25 year olds in Hungary eat home-made meals and about half of them cook for themselves (Coca Cola, 2009).

I will be looking at nutrition from two vantage points: how the history and culture of a country provides a basic understanding of nutrition, and how eating trends are evolving today in different age groups. Countries in Eastern Europe, Russia, Hungary and the CIS countries season many of their dishes with similar ingredients: onions, mushrooms, sour cream, yoghurt and paprika, especially stews and soups. All of these came to the region with the spice caravans when traders and merchants travelling from Baghdad to Venice would break for a rest in Georgia. It is not surprising to find a lot of recipes using potatoes, barley, oats and rye, since Russia is the world's largest producer of these crops. The fertile plains along the Danube River yield potatoes, beets, barley and corn. The history of healthy eating is rooted in Antiquity. Many different patterns and customs can be observed regarding eating and life. In Ancient Greece and Rome the word „Hygiene” appeared, which then became part of the medical sciences. In Germany, France and Russia in the 19-20th century physical education was pushed in the front line of everyday life. This was greatly influenced by the need for young, physically able men to be drafted into the army. In the USSR, schools started to teach subjects such as „Hygiene in everyday life”, Valeology among others around the 70s and 80s. Today these courses are no longer in the curriculum. After the fall of the Soviet Union, a lot has changed. Western influence had poured into the country: fitness clubs were opened, new foods became available, bringing along a whole new lifestyle. Schools started to teach some courses about nutrition once again. People either copied Westerners (eating out at McDonalds, absorbing western brands and mannerisms), or turned towards their own history.

I will focus specifically on how different generations view healthy eating, and how cultural changes are affecting eating habits in Hungary and modern Russia, 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Up to this day we can observe some negative reactions to basic ideas and principles about food, which is a result of the Soviet era, when - due to the loss of perspective during difficult times - people were not interested in such “nonsense” and unimportant problems as “healthy” eating anymore. As an example of the government’s propaganda for “healthy foods” we may list the extensive use of oil and butter in foods. Due to the deficit in food products, they tried to supplement the energy intake of people by introducing high-calorie foods into the diet. We can observe the effects of promoting fats in such a way today in the stores: there are “high fat” butters, milk products with over 6% fat, high-fat mayonnaise. This might also be a reason for the popularity of McDonalds in the country. Hungarian cuisine also needs more vitamins, and awareness must be raised regarding calorie theories and nutrition. To fight illnesses and disease caused by malnutrition or an unbalanced diet, we need to educate ourselves and it would be of great significance if the Hungarian diet contributed to the development of a healthy and strong population.

We will work our way through the culture of nutrition, draw parallels between Russia and Hungary, and make a connection between the history and social circumstances of the two countries, to get an overview of how people feel about food and a healthy lifestyle. Our presumption is that there will be great differences in regard to what is considered healthy or beneficial by the people belonging to different age groups. Seemingly food plays several roles in our lives. One of them is self-expression, a sign of belonging to a certain group of people. This new role of food is apparent especially in St. Petersburg, but also in Budapest. While many women try new diets and methods, it is important to note that there is still an understanding of health as the manifestation of a fit body. Some studies have shown that once a body image has been established, it does not change significantly throughout the years. This means that satisfaction with one’s own bodyweight stays roughly constant.

This would not be surprising, since different stages in life have different nutritional requirements, and the younger generation is more easily influenced by external information. Within the various age groups we are likely to find advocates of different “fad diets”, depending on what the individual reads or where he gets his information from. Without prejudice to individual differences and age groups, we are expecting to find that the mentalities of the people, as well as their history and geographical location will greatly influence how often, how much and with whom people eat (while trying to stay healthy). Also, we have to take into consideration such limitations regarding eating habits, as time and money. For both Russia and Hungary, I believe spending amounts in relation to income and meal frequencies will be similar. Since both countries are traditionally family-oriented, I speculate that lunch or dinner will play a greater role in a family’s life than in western cultures. Special attention will be given to the investigation of different generations’ views on food consumption.

The aim of the historical and literary overview of dietary habits is to:

- examine and analyze the key changes that formed the nutritional habits of Russians and Hungarians in different historical periods
- show the historical importance of relationship to food, based on a historical analysis of the specific eating habits
- define what role national mentality plays in selecting food products
- determine whether all age groups are eating optimally, and give recommendations about what can be done to improve health (“you are what you eat”).

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In the light of my research objectives, the review of literature will address the topic of the development of the national cuisines and healthy eating, as well as demonstrating the generation gaps. However, it must be pointed out that the bulk of studies on the topic, focus specifically on the medicinal aspect of nutrition, as opposed to the relationship towards food selection and consumption. Therefore, the research considers concepts developed for social psychology and applies them to dietology and nutrition.

### **2.1 Definition of health**

As health appears to be one of the most important factors in previous research (Marmot, 1996), we had prioritized the link between food and health from the viewpoint of the buyers. There is no general definition for health, as it has such an expansive meaning. During my research, people have described it quite differently – health is when nothing hurts. Back in the 40-s health meant “being well adapted to physical and social surroundings, while evolving harmoniously.” However, I will relate to the concept of health from now on as it is defined in the founding papers of the WHO: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, 1946). This definition encompasses the understanding that modern conditions require an increased capacity of health and intellectual endurance from youth. In the wake of scientific and technological advancement, today’s man is defined and valued by his level of education, professional qualifications, skills and health.

## **2.2. The correlation between health and lifestyle**

The question of health plays an important role in the system of social values and priorities of the people. As we know, low birthrates, the high mortality rate and the lower life expectancy of the Russian population have reached a dangerous level. The unfavorable demographic situation is forcing national initiatives and programs to preserve health, especially of the younger generations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that premature deaths are caused by a non-ideal lifestyle in 43% of the cases, by an unhealthy environment in 23%, by genetics in 25% of the cases, and only 11% is caused in appropriate medical conditions. According to Dr. Tim Armstrong, prevention is the best way to fight disease. He suggests thirty minutes of physical activity each day to reduce the risk of a heart attack by 50%, as well as increasing fruit and vegetable intake (Armstrong, 2009).

Evidently there are many more factors that affect our health and are part of our lifestyle. Our daily routine, for example the type of work we participate in and the people surrounding us. Furthermore, our genes, spiritual and mental health, educational level and our behavior also influence our well-being.

It is not enough to individually try to preserve our health; many external factors influence us in our success. Economic conditions (our financials, the market) our physical surroundings (home, workplace), social surroundings (family, friends, acquaintances) and our culture (values, knowledge, priorities) all influence us in maintaining and improving our health.

As we are constantly in motion as a living organism, exercise is of utmost importance. It has been proven, by a report prepared for the European Commission, that more than one third of people under age 65 die from coronary heart disease in relation to bad nutrition, and by following a balanced diet cancer could be avoided 30-40 % of the time (WHO, 2001).



### 2.2.1. The state of health in Russia

After the fall of the Soviet Union, life expectancy dramatically dropped in the Eastern Block (Marmot, 1996). From 1964, a reform had begun in Russia. Life expectancy for males decreased to 61.7 years. Under the rule of Gorbachev (1988-1991), in part due to his strict regulations on alcohol (it was in fact a ban) the average life expectancy for men had risen to 65. But again, by the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it had dropped to a mere 58 years (Marmot, 1996).

The reasons for such statistics regarding life expectancy in Russia are well known. Several researches carried out by sociologists show that communicable diseases, stress and difficult social conditions are only partly the reason for early deaths (Feachem, 1995) (Cockerham, 1997); (Cockerham, 1999) (Hertzman, 1995). The primary reason is said to be a non-healthy lifestyle in the post-Soviet countries (Cockerham, 1997) (Cockerham, 1999) (Ginter, 1997); (Skakkeback, 1995) (Ostrowska, 2001). The literature on the Russian lifestyle tells us about overdosing on alcohol, smoking, consuming fats as well as underdeveloped physical education (Cockerham, 1999) (Paluso, 2000). Such a lifestyle is most apparent among working class men.

### 2.2.2. The state of health in Hungary

“Inter-country comparable overweight and obesity estimates from 2008 (1) show that 61.5% of the adult population (> 20 years old) in Hungary was overweight and 27.6% was obese. The prevalence of overweight was higher among men (67.8%) than women (56.1%). The proportion of men and women that were obese was 27.6% in each case. Adulthood obesity prevalence forecasts (2010–2030) predict that in 2020 20% of men and 21% of women will be obese. By 2030, the model predicts that 20% of both men and women will be obese”(WHO, 2010).

If we compare estimated average age in the European countries, we will find that Hungary is low on the list. We can see that there is a clearly defined line between the East and the West regarding life expectancy. Hungarian males can expect to live to 70-75 years, Russians even less, while Great Britain or Germany have indicators of 80-85 years (ill.1). However, we cannot analyze the health situation merely by looking at the

mortality rates of the countries, other health and lifestyle-related information is also needed.



*Ill. 1 - Life expectancy at birth in Europe, source: mapsofworld.com*

### 2.3. Health-conscious diet

The structure and character of our daily diet changes from generation to generation. Personal experience and the history of gastronomy can help us understand how eating is interrelated with our traditions and culture. A health-conscious lifestyle is the result of actively being selective in the activities we engage in and the foods we eat. These involve restraining ourselves in tobacco and alcohol use, following a well-balanced diet and doing some sort of physical activity on a daily basis. Attempts have been made to educate the population so as to encourage health. “The health of the nation is the base of the country’s safety” [Presidential Decree of the RF 17/12/1997, Concept of the national safety of the Russian Federation].

As a result of the 1997 WHO conference “Food, nutrition and politics of eating” that took place in Moscow, it was established that a new regulation or guideline should be created that takes into account availability of food, education on nutrition, safety and regulation of production. In other words, economic and social reforms are needed in relation to Russia’s food culture. The biggest challenge seems to be that citizens are not aware of scientific findings on the matter. It also happens, that:

- they are aware but do not understand
- they seem to understand, but misunderstand the content
- understand but are not convinced
- or understand but do not care.

Which confirms that social programs should be geared keeping in mind the objective and not specializing on gender, age or ethnicity.

#### **2.4. The evolution of dietary guidelines**

Even Pythagoras understood the importance of self-restriction when he said “No one man mustn’t cross their measures, neither in food nor drink” (Cocchi, 1757). Socrates advised to “beware of the foods and drinks that encourage you to eat more than what your hunger requires. We do not exist in order to eat, rather we eat to exist.” (Morgan, 2011)

The first dietary guideline was published in 1894 by Dr. Wilbur Olin Atwater as a farmer’s bulletin. It also focused on moderation, variety and proportion (United States Department of Agriculture, 1999). Later on, when vitamins were discovered, the “Basic 7” Food Groups model was proposed in the USA during WWII, that would help families eat nutritionally and stay within the restriction of rationing during the war. In 1992, The Food Pyramid was introduced with a very high carbohydrate intake and minimal fats, still without scientific evidence of its legitimacy. The goal was to reduce obesity and disease, but it had failed its purpose. Today 26% of Americans are obese as opposed to 13% in 1960, while the rate of diabetes has tripled (Cook, 2014).

It is understood that recommendations and guidelines were being updated parallel to the new discoveries made in science to ideally cover the nutritional needs of the people. However, there are examples in history, when the governments were forced to propagate false information and manipulate it in order to keep up caloric intake in harsh conditions.

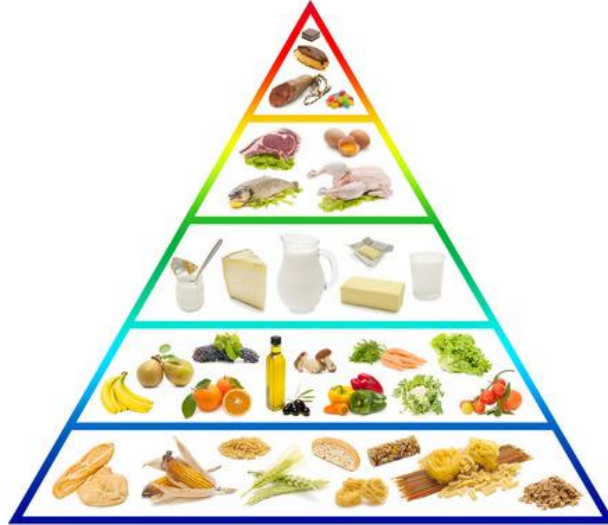
In the past few years increased interest has been shown towards nutrition and a healthy lifestyle, including a well-balanced diet supporting this. This may be a contribution of medical advancement, which has reformed the way we think of our traditional foods and dietary habits. More information is available on the internet than ever before. Cooking became a hobby rather than a chore, and people can explore new tastes and national cuisines. So, the concept of dietary recommendations has evolved into advising people and providing them with up-to-date and relevant information.

## **2.5. Dietary recommendations**

The RDA, or recommended daily amount of substances change from individual to individual. However, there are several generic guidelines that help navigate the caloric and macronutrient needs. The central NII (Russia (Scientific Research Institutes (NII), the transliteration of the Russian language abbreviation for (nauchno-issledovatel'skiy institut, научно-исследовательский институт) and RAMN (Russian Academy of Medical Sciences) deals with the structure of diet in Russia. In the past few years, research was conducted on the satiation of vitamins and minerals in the daily diet. It was shown that a large percentage of the population is deficient in many of the essential nutrients, dietary fibers, polyunsaturated fats and other macronutrients (FAO Corporate Document Repository, n.a.).

During my research I found that many Russians were not familiar with the classical food pyramid (ill. 2.), while the concept of a balanced diet is not at all a foreign idea for them. The nutritional pyramid is a visual illustration of different types of foods in proportion to what we should be eating in what quantities. How to read the pyramid? We select foods from the different sections of the pyramid according to our taste and

then combine them, keeping the ratios of different food types to what is described. There is no one product that fulfils every need of the human body, as a result our diet must consist of a variety of different foods which allows us to consume the nutrients we need.



*Ill. 2 - Food Pyramid, source: roteskreuz.at*

It is clear that the lower a food type is on the pyramid, the more of it we must consume in our everyday meals. The same way, foods on the top of the pyramid should only be eaten in moderation. There are many types of this pyramid, but all of them allow us to draw the same conclusions:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Eat less meat and animal products (dairy, eggs etc.)
- Limit the consumption of sweets and alcohol
- Choose a balanced portion

The WHO makes the following 5 recommendations with respect to both populations and individuals:

- Eat roughly the same amount of calories that your body is using. A healthy weight is a balance between energy consumed and energy that is 'burnt off'.

- Increase the consumption of plant foods, particularly fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains and nuts.
- Limit the intake of fats, and prefer less unhealthy unsaturated fats to saturated fats and trans fats.
- Limit the intake of sugar. A 2003 report recommends less than 10% simple sugars.
- Limit salt / sodium consumption from all sources and ensure that salt is iodized.

Other recommendations include:

- Essential micronutrients such as vitamins and certain minerals.
- Avoiding directly poisonous (e.g. heavy metals) and carcinogenic (e.g. benzene) substances.
- Avoiding foods contaminated by human pathogens (e.g. E. coli, tapeworm eggs).

(World Health Organization, 2003)

## **2.6. Russian history of food**

Russian cuisine has a centuries-long history. Just like any other nations', it has formed under the influence of climate, geography and history. The image that we would consider to be typically Russian food – borsch, bread, cabbage, meatballs, vodka etc. only appeared during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, specifically in the 40's and 60's parallel to the first cookbooks in Russia. To understand how the culture of eating and its habits were formed it is necessary to investigate the advancements in food technology and cultural changes throughout history, which will allow us to see how rich the history of the national cuisine is and how long the story of its culture is. It includes humble, earthy cooking as well as very elaborate dishes. In Russia, the climate impacts agriculture and thus, the foods people eat. The European part of Russia enjoys many grains and vegetables, but the foods here are far different from those in the sunny Mediterranean. The harsh winter, dry climate and short growing season limits what can be raised. Consequently, people preserve their harvest in the form of pickles, cheeses,

yoghurt, sour cream, dried mushrooms and smoked meats. Root vegetables, such as potatoes, beets and horseradish favor cool weather so they can also be found in excess. Similar foods are eaten throughout Siberia, where the weather conditions are extremely difficult for food production (Durand, 1922).

#### 2.6.1. Ancient Russian cuisine: IX-XVth century

In ancient times, food consumption was strictly regulated by belief (religion) and traditions. The typical menu was made up of different soups and grains, which were quick and easy to grow and harvest in difficult natural conditions, such as cold weather. In the times' chronicles they write about how much the daily lives of the people were regulated and affected by the climate. The following lines describe a 4-year cycle from the Chronicles of Novgorod 1017-1471 (Anon., 1914):

*“1125... In that year there was a strong storm, with hail and thunder... it drowned a herd of strong cows in Volkhov, and hardly did it spare any alive.*

*1127... And in the autumn, the frost killed all the crops and there was hunger during the winter*

*1128... The year was cruel, people ate leaves, birch wood mixed with crushed husks and straw. Some ate buttercups, horse flesh, so many died from hunger, their bodies on the streets, on the marketplace and the roads and everywhere... fathers and mothers put their children in small boats as a gift to merchants (for slaves), or betrayed them by death.”*

When the weather would allow it, people grew millet, oats, buckwheat and rye, from which they then baked sour bread, pancakes and cooked kasha (porridge). White bread, made from wheat flour, appeared only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as up until the acquisition of Kazan' and Astrakhan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century only a small part of Russia had a welcome climate for wheat, so people did not use it. White bread appeared in the daily diet along with pirogi and other pastries. The dependence on different sorts of grains

forced the peasants to come up with new applications to vary their meals. These grains allowed not only to have a balanced diet, but they also provided a healthy and nutritious meal. Russians baked different kinds of breads with ground meat, mushrooms and other toppings. Kasha (porridge) is still widely consumed and people eat many varieties of it. Between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, kasha counted as a mass ritualistic meal. They celebrated different religious holidays and fed great amounts of people with it. In time, the word “kasha” acquired the meaning “meal” and different modes of preparation were invented. People today prepare kasha from buckwheat in milk or water, served with sausages, made from rice or corn, wheat or semolina flavored to their specific tastes.

Alongside bread and different grains, Russians ate varieties of soups. One of the most basic meals of the time was schi. Schi is made of cabbage, and depending on how ceremonial the event was or how influential a family prepared it, meat and vegetables with different spices could be added to it. But in every family soup was served before the meal. Often, goose neck was the only main course, cooked in the soup. It is clear that in a climate where winter temperatures can reach -30, -35 degrees Celsius, people need to eat something hot. Soup satisfies the need for warmth, comforts and satiates, and it also tastes good. Borscht and fish soup count as staples in the Russian diet as well. Even though borscht (beet soup) came from the Ukrainians, it is considered to be traditionally Russian. No doubt about it, borscht is the favorite of all the soups – there are hundreds of recipes, some containing beans or sausages – but all have beets in them. Traditionally, borscht is eaten with sour cream.

Those peasants who owned some land and animals could eat meat and milk products throughout the year. These were occasionally consumed in their raw form. From milk they made cheese, cottage cheese (tvorog), kefir and other sour milk products. Kefir came to Russia from the Caucasian mountains, subsequently people started to drink it with other sour milk products such as ryazhenka, bifidok, acidofilin and kumis. These kinds of foods were considered to be healthy for the human body by our ancestors as well. They also used sour horse milk (kumis) as an additive in their foods. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Pravoslav church declared the horse as an impure animal, the use of kumis dropped. It is important to mention that many of the days



throughout the year counted as fasting days. Basically this meant isolation and restrictions on food variety in the daily diet of the people. This changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the entrance of different salads, generally, made of one type of vegetable (tomatoes, cucumbers, beets etc.). It is apparent that many of the traditional foods that are popular and famous today were already known in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. During this period the main influence on dietary habits was exerted by the climate and social conditions. The first Russian tables presented the following: borscht, bread, kasha and cottage cheese.

#### 2.6.2. Petrovian cuisine: end of the 1200 – 1860s

During the reign of Peter the Great, French cooks were drawn into the country, which led to a great expansion and diversification of recipes and new types of foods. French, Austrian and British cooks became so popular that they took the places of Russian cooks. This is the time when ground meat appears among many other foods (kotlets, casseroles, pastes, roulette). Non-Russian, Swedish, German, French soups appear (creamy, vegetable, grated). And probably the most significant newcomer is the potato.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a strong shift in the dietary habits of Moscow's population due to changing social circumstances. After the Polish-Swedish intervention (1605), aristocrats began to import from abroad. If social status was reflected before in the amount of food one ate, now the selection of food became the indicator of wealth. Boyars and the social elite felt a need to stand out from the "simple people". They drank Greek and French wines, ate exotic fruits and consumed products from Europe and Asia. During this time we can observe the divergence of official Russian and national cuisines. This process did not take long. In Moscow, all food products were sold on an open market, which meant anyone who could afford them could buy rare and exotic products. Chinese tea for example appeared in the imperial court in the year 1638, but appeared on the open market only years later in 1674. As the people in the bottom layers of society now had the opportunity to buy the exact same foods as aristocrats, the latter started ordering new types of foods from abroad, made according to new and more

complex recipes. This included many strange cuts of meat and different types of sour soups alongside with new desserts.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the greatest influence came from the Tatar cuisines: raisins, watermelon and lemons with tea became part of the ordinary table. Other influences came from the West, namely beef, pork, solyanka (a cabbage soup) and different kinds of jam were introduced to the diet. This is how a quick change in taste happened in the aristocracy, while due to distrust in the higher levels of society peasants did not adapt to the new culture of eating. They did not try to integrate new foods or technologies into their daily life, so the potato only became the staple of Russian cuisine seventy years later. The introduction of new food preparation methods from France brought along a whole new set of dishes and accessories.

A sharp turning point in the history of the Russian diet was the Patriotic war of 1812. With the rise of patriotism, a newly found interest leads us back towards the traditional national cuisine (Advantour, -).

### 2.6.3. All-Russian and Soviet cuisine: XIXth century. – Today

With rising interest in the national cuisine, Russians became more educated in the culinary arts. In the 1870s the railroad system improved, as a result new foods from the Caucasian mountains, Siberian pelmeni and products from the rims of Russia were transported to the city center. After the revolution of 1918 the relationship of citizens to the state had drastically changed. Many restaurants were converted to social diners, mess halls citing large quantities of wasted foods in these establishments as a problem. The city organized a “big kitchen” which served to feed the people. Between 1918 and 1919 these establishments tripled in number and served about 1 million people. Within the plans of effectiveness and a dream of a utopian society the government “freed” women of their household chores, opened state diners where children, women and the working class could eat together. Many sources indicate that this step stirred some commotion within the community, who wanted to return the importance of homemade food.

In the course of these events, underground restaurants opened up to serve tasty, hearty homemade meals for an affordable price. Not many of them conformed to the standards of healthy eating. There was no ventilation, while there were a lot of people, dirt and uncleanliness which resulted in the spreading of different illnesses such as camp fever. Even cafés for the clerks suffered from an excess of customers and lack of space.

After the unsuccessful attempts to develop the country, Stalin took over power in 1924. His goal was to equal the United States in industrial production. He had to buy weapons, machines, invest in technology and bring in engineers from abroad. These investments were financed with the money the country received from the export of crops. Millions of tons of crops were sold, millions of people were suffering from hunger. After the collectivization and nationalization of agriculture, when private ownership was eliminated, personal households were demolished, it was necessary to farm again; production levels dropped, as there was no incentive to perform any more for their own benefit.

A big and final push in the development of Russian cuisine came along in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Revolutions and wars were fought and the constant terror changed the relationship with food for millions. Collectivization led to the destruction of peasant traditions and reformed Russian agriculture for a long time. One of the biggest problems after World War II. was the deficiency in food supplies. Although quality and variety have improved significantly since that time, the question of nutrition still stays unsolved in modern Russia (Burggraf, et al., 2014).

## **2.7. Hungarian history of food**

Eastern Europe, including Hungary, is known for its diversity in national cuisines. The rulers and armies of the Roman, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian empires introduced their own foods and customs to the Slavic-speaking people, including those now in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

### 2.7.1. Nomadic past

Little information is preserved from the nomadic period of the Magyars, but many factors lead us to believe that the Hungarian culinary arts originate from the Caucasian region and can be dated back to 800 AD. Peoples close to the Hungarian ethnicity have been cooking stews made from beans and corn. Soups, similar to the goulash, made of meat and vegetables, were also known in the region. The predecessor of stuffed cabbage may have been some sort of meat puree wrapped in grape leaves. The Hungarian mentality calls for celebration after every notable event, most often by having a feast with all sorts of foods and drinks. There was no deficit in celebration, a child's birth, weddings, successful conquests etc. After settling in the country, Álmos and the other tribes continued to live a semi-nomadic lifestyle. As the country was rich in natural resources, fish, wild animals and fruits, this was no problem. During the time when Hungary became a kingdom, some sort of structure started to form regulating food and dining. Not many sources were preserved, but a few are still intact from which we learn that already under St. Stephen, pubs/bars were regulated by law in the city of Esztergom (ca.1000). (Bakó, et al., 1997).

### 2.7.2. King Matthias

We have more information available about the Hungarian national cuisine and its development from the time of King Matthias. According to some of his biographies, food served in the royal palace was abundant and diverse. The Carpathian basin was said to be rich in food products and had a favorable climate, which encouraged culinary arts to progress rapidly. Matthias's wife, Beatrix – who was of Italian origin - did not want to leave behind her beloved foods and introduced Renaissance cuisine to the country. Together, they imported cheeses, onion, garlic, dill and chestnut. All of the chefs were Hungarian, who liked to cook with sauces. Typical of the time were spicy foods made in big pots, with stew sauces.

The most well-known spice and staple of the Hungarian cooking is paprika. Interestingly, though, it was not known before the 15th century, and so it was not used in any of the dishes. Use of paprika is mentioned in 1586 in a book, as a spice used in

Spain instead of pepper. The most important changes that the Turks brought into the country, alongside paprika, is that the consumption of grains grew a lot, while meat was eaten less often. Eastern spices, coffee and fruits were delicacies of the time. People generally ate two meals a day, one in the morning and one early evening. This regime of eating was kept from the middle ages up until the 17th century, when the tendency changed to having three meals a day. Soups were uncommon, instead cooked beef was eaten as an appetizer with horseradish or cabbage. A lot had changed by the 18th century: for example, the fork was invented, so people no longer had to use their hands to eat (Bakó, et al., 1997).

### 2.7.3. XVIIth century

The 17th century is the most prominent time of changes in the history of Hungarian eating habits. From two meals a day, people started to eat three whole meals. The changes were most observable within the elite and upper class, and the tempo of change followed their lifestyles. At a point in time, the first meal was consumed only past noon, which called for a third meal in the day, and breakfast was born. The trinity of breakfast, lunch and dinner brought along the appearance of hot drinks such as coffee and tea, chocolates and bread as a side dish. As a French influence soup is served in many households eaten from a bowl with a spoon. Forks are used to consume the other meals, as etiquette dictates. Square tables are replaced by a much friendlier, round shape. In 1695 the first Hungarian cookbook is printed in Kolozsvár with 264 recipes. We can see from the variety that Hungarian cuisine is indeed rich. A lot of recipes include fish and meats, while they exclude corn and paprika as they were viewed as foods of despair. Kasha also started to be excluded from the diet of the upper class, which significantly reduced the use of barley and millet. Newly found vegetables, tomatoes and pumpkins started to appear in households, and later in the 19th century, the potato as well. Cooking bacon and preserving its fat, as well as „breeding” certain dishes dripped into the culture from the top down. These techniques originated from the French cooking style and came to us through Vienna (Bakó, et al., 1997).

#### 2.7.4. XIXth century – today

The culture of cooking develops in regions where the soil is fertile and the climate is favorable for produce. The most influential period in the development of Hungarian cuisine is around the 19th, 20th centuries, when the previous century's master chefs aligned traditional Hungarian flavors with the more sophisticated international preferences. They were the ones who created the uniqueness of Hungarian culinary art, by taking the French methods and interpreting them in the local context, thus perfecting it to world standard.

Many industrial and technological reforms were implemented, which affected eating habits as well. The invention of the train enabled people to transport foods quickly. The kitchens in homes were also affected. New appliances, lighting and equipment were modernized. Sugar was still a rarity, only used by the nobility, but many cakes and pastries appear in Hungary, thanks to the Austrian influence. Coffee is being drunk in most households and lunch consists of some sort of meat with a side dish or bread. Potatoes are favored, but while the poorer eat it as a main dish, higher society prefers to eat it as a side dish or in salads.

Urbanization poses a challenge towards food production and trade. At the turn of the century, most changes occur in technology that brings about economic and social change, which in turn lead to the changing role of the food market. The period is characterized by diverse, cheap food selection. There is an increase in the consumption of dairy products and rice, while alcohol consumption seems to decrease. There are no new foods introduced, but millet and barley disappear completely. By the end of the 19th century, middle-class nutrition is simplified dramatically. Breakfast consists of coffee with milk, some pastry, butter, jam. This change in simplicity was necessary, due to the lack of workers and time; doctors also warned about burnout and the first followers of the reform diet preached the golden rule of: *Eat breakfast like a king, eat lunch like a citizen and dinner like a beggar.*

What is important to note when talking about the development of the culture of food in Hungary, that for many years little attention had been given to frugal food preparation. The French chef Escoffier proposed some methods to reduce waste, and

published them in his book “Guide Culinaire”. When browsing through the old cookbooks, it is apparent that we could easily save lots of fat, eggs, spices. Modern gastronomy is supported by the scientists such as doctors, chemists, biologists, who constantly research the human body and its needs and make great findings. Hungarian cuisine needs more vitamins, calorie theories and knowledge about nutrition. To fight illnesses and disease caused by malnutrition or an unbalanced diet, we need to educate ourselves. It would be of great significance if the Hungarian diet supported the development of a healthy and strong population (Bakó, et al., 1997).

## **2.6. Changes in diet and meal patterns**

To identify the selection process we will need to investigate first of all the availability of certain foods in the respective countries and look at the trends in eating and food preference. We have many sources available at hand, such as Nutritional Guidelines for the Hungarian Adult Population or the WHO’s dietary recommendations. As our focus is on the sociological aspect of food selection, we will be using a previous study carried out in Norway (Voldnes, 2006) that investigates how much influence Russians have over their health. A similar study had been conducted by GfK Hungária in 2009 about the eating habits of the Hungarian population, which we will rely on.

Research shows that conscious food selection has reached both Hungary and Russia, but unfortunately only a small percent of the population take their health in their own hands (GfK, 2009) (Voldnes, 2006). The general trends seem to be that more people are eating at home than before, and supper is gaining importance among the meals. More conscious choices are made when buying foods, prescribed diets are becoming widespread and the fitness lifestyle is slowly creeping into the Eastern Bloc. The food industry is poised for a major shift, as increased focus on healthy living habits are changing consumer behavior. As a result, demand for healthy dishes and fresh ingredients are on the rise—threatening fast food companies that don’t adapt their menus to include healthier choices.

### 2.6.1. Diet change in Russia

Overall, the Russian diet can provide many essential nutrients. However, the diet in Russian households is often not nutritionally adequate, which can lead to nutrient deficiencies and inadequate growth. A common diet might only include a small amount of meat and vegetables (made into a thin stew) noodles, hot kasha and rice. A drink called compote made from rehydrated fruit and sugar is a common beverage, as is caffeinated tea and coffee. The traditional Russian diet is:

- high in saturated fats
- high in sodium
- low in fruits and vegetables – Recent immigrants from Russia to Western countries may suffer some nutritional deficiencies due to inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables.

In March 2006 a research was conducted on the topic of what people thought of eating today and 20 years earlier in Russia. After analyzing the data, we can conclude the following (Voldnes, 2006):

About one fourth (26%) of the population said that what they ate had improved in the past 3 years, while 13 % reported a decrease in food quality. The rest (61%) did not observe a change of any kind regarding their diet. Those who had noticed a positive change had explained it as follows: about 14% attributed it to the fact that the selection of products had gotten wider, so food items such as juice, fruits, milk, dairy products, meat, vegetables and fish were more available. Most of the respondents eat 3 times a day (breakfast in the morning, a snack during the day, and „lunch” in the evening). For many, lunch is the second and most important meal of the day (in many Western countries we would name this supper) (Voldnes, 2006). They also noted the improved financial situation and better quality of food products as a source of improvement. On the other hand, those who reported a decrease in the quality of their diet had listed low disposable income among their reasons. They buy less meat and dairy products.



### 2.6.2. Diet change in Hungary

The past 20 years have brought about constant changes in Hungarian dietary habits. Food consumption had been affected significantly by the 2008 economic crisis, which also shows in the eating habits of the people. Still, household spending seems to grow constantly.

As compared to earlier data, pasta is preferred by 5% of the people. The consumption of other products made of flour, such as bread, has changed in a positive direction in terms of healthy eating. Brown bread is eaten in larger quantities by urban, more educated and higher earner women – possibly more interested in healthy eating. However, men above 60, having only elementary school education never consume rye bread. Meat and meat products are consumed in larger quantities, as well as yoghurts and other milk products. Fruits and vegetables in total have also become a more popular choice (table 1).

#### Annual per capita quantity of food consumed, 2010\*

(kg)

Denomination	Deciles				
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bread	49.2	47.2	44.2	42.6	44.0
Rolls	6.2	7.4	8.1	8.6	9.9
Other cereals	25.4	24.0	26.2	28.0	31.9
<b>Cereals, total</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>78.5</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>85.8</b>
<b>Meat and meat products, total</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>53.7</b>
Fish	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.9	1.0
Fish products	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
Fish and fish products	0.7	0.6	1.1	1.2	1.3

Table 1 - Annual per capita quantity of food consumed, 2010

Milk (litre)	37.1	39.4	45.8	48.5	54.6
Yoghurt, sour cream, kefir (litre)	6.1	7.6	9.1	9.4	10.7
Cheese	2.6	2.8	4.0	4.3	5.3
Lard and fat	2.6	3.6	3.8	3.3	4.3
<b>Fat, bacon, total</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>17.5</b>
<b>Fruits, total</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>34.1</b>
<b>Vegetables and potatoes, total</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>66.8</b>	<b>77.3</b>

(Data obtained from the Central Statistics Office report, 2010) edited by: me

## 2.7. Eating habits

### 2.7.1. Eating habits in Russia

The economic downfall by the end of socialism brought along a lower standard of living and significant changes in the social insurance programs, while the unhealthy lifestyle continued to prevail (Cockerham, 1999) (Dmitrieva, 2001). According to Medvedev (Medvedev, 2000), we cannot take into account only the economic factors when explaining death rates; it is inevitable to consider, before all, the national inequalities of nutrition and lifestyle as main factors.

Russian food culture changed significantly from 1960. The cuisine progressively shifted towards using more sugar and meat instead of potatoes and cereals. By 1990 already more than 36% of food energy was made up of fats. This leads us to staple the Russian cuisine as the „fattiest” in the world” [Popkin et al, 1997]. Please note that men, in general, consume about 50% more fats than women do, whose diet, in return, must be deemed healthier [Shapiro 1995]. Thus, a negative lifestyle is more characteristic for men.

In the 20th century, while life expectancy was on the rise in Europe, in Russia it was declining. Scientists came to the realization that this effect was due to chronic illnesses, related to alcoholism and malnutrition [Leon et al, 1997]. As a result of the

introduction of the free market there was little control over the price and types of meats offered to the public, which resulted in the extensive consumption of fatty meats such as meatballs, sausages and other processed meat products.

In 1997, the ratio of obese people in Moscow reached 55% (National Research Council, Committee on Population, 1997). As a governmental standard, the daily intake of proteins recommended in the Soviet Union was twice as much as in the USA at the time. Alongside this, people do not move enough, do not exercise and this leads to obesity (Matilainen, 1994).

In the past few years, varied eating became trendy. The English Telegraph writes that after the Communist era, with the rise of variety on the food market, Russians started to gain weight and 38% of the population of Moscow was overweight in 2008 (Pravda, 2010).

The majority of the population of Russia generally eats 3 hearty meals per day, with the largest meal at lunch. Bread, salad or soup made from beets (Borscht), cabbage, fish, and kasha (buckwheat porridge) are staple foods at mealtimes. Snacking is rare; however, traditionally an array of appetizers (zakuski) starts the meal. These may range from 2 simple dishes such as pickled herring and cucumbers in sour cream to an entire table spread of sandwiches, caviar, pickled vegetables and hot meat dishes. Bread is served with butter and a small bowl of salt for dipping.

Weekend meals show a difference. Breakfast is typically consumed late, and “more exciting” foods are prepared by the women in the family (Ivanova, 2011).

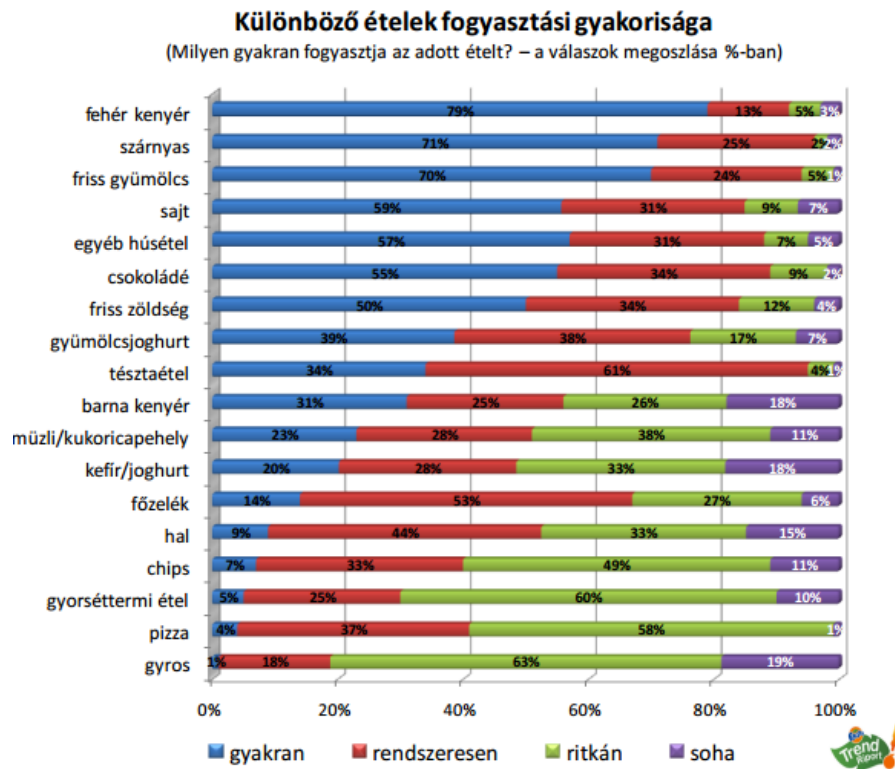
### 2.7.2. Eating habits in Hungary

The timing of meals is greatly influenced by time restrictions and workplace dining (Gfk, 2009). The above report indicates that those actively seeking a job eat a warm meal at home more often than their counterparts. This leads us to believe that having a quick sandwich at the workplace is a common occurrence.

About half of the population eats three meals a day and – disregarding extremes – eating 2-5 times is quite ordinary. Time spent cooking had reduced compared to

previous years, while the preference for homemade meals hasn't, from which we can conclude that eating out in restaurants and cafés has become more affordable.

Taste preferences have not changed much over the years. Chicken is still the leader in meat preference in the layer of society ranking higher socially. The Fanta Trend Report surveyed how often people eat what (ill.3.) (Coca Cola, 2009): The leading food products are still white bread, poultry, fruits, cheese and vegetables, while fast foods, fish, chips and traditional stews are on the bottom of the list. Pasta seems to be a constant favorite. Yoghurts, fish and street food are avoided by some.



*Ill. 3 – Consumption frequency of a variety of foods, source: Fanta Trend Report*

A classification of seven layers has been made by Gfk., to characterize eating habits depending on social status. Interestingly, traditional foods and coffee consumption

increase as we go downwards on this scale, and a special category is formed by students who consume alcohol excessively.

The conclusion was that a typical Hungarian diet lacks fiber and some essential vitamins, while it is high in fat and rich in calories. It consists of 50% cereals and fats, 25% fish, eggs, dairy and meat products, 10% sugars and vegetables (Gfk, 2009).

## **2.8. Food choice motives**

In 1991 the Soviet Union disintegrated, which led to the modernization of production trying to follow the West. McDonald's became extremely popular in Russia. Many Russians, even in difficult circumstances, preferred local products they went to the market for traditional foods – cabbage, potatoes, carrots, sour cream, apples, etc. These products, used mainly to make borscht and also other varieties of traditional Russian meals which have lost their previous popularity due to the social changes in modern Russia.

In the past few years Russians have started to spend less on food products. According to the sociology report of the Yuriy Levada Analytical Centre, in 1992, 63% of the participants reported that they spend almost all of their money on food, while in 2008 only 14 %. At the same time, the number of people who spend less than half of their budget on food had grown – writes (Anon., 2008) Kommersant magazine.

In previous studies health, price, familiarity, weight control and sensory appeal seemed to be the greatest concerns during food selection, while no one mentioned ethical concerns.

With the appearance of high-speed internet, the younger generation (under 30) is discovering exotic flavors and recipes previously unknown in the country. Along with the new abundance of options, a new abundance of problems have arisen: eating disorders, body image complexes and food allergies. And as numerous sources of information can be found online, there are conflicting opinions about what a good diet

is. Food evolution has reached the top of the pyramid. It is no longer about physical, emotional or even social needs. It revolves around self-expression and status.

The next logical step for food is to back down: re-focusing on the bottom layers and communicating a new down-to-earthness. Manufacturers and marketers have already started to embrace this. It feels, however, like a short-term vision of food. How then can food producers create value, which has a positive effect on people's food culture or nutrition? And more importantly, how can we challenge our own food behavior?

First, let's look at the basics. In simple terms, every choice we make for a meal is the factor of three criteria: identity, convenience and well-being. With these in mind we find our daily answer to the question "Should I have a burger or cook a veggie stew tonight?" Today, this decision is made almost exclusively between two aspects of the food process: shopping and cooking. Here lie all the cumulated efforts of food marketers. The other half of the food chain remains in the dark: the origin of food in the beginning, and the disposal of waste at the end.

Embracing the whole food process can impact the choices we make for our daily meals. It also offers opportunity for producers to create long-term value for food beyond marketing. From 'nose to tail', as well as 'production to waste',

### 3. OBJECTIVES

The goal of the primary research is to make a comparative analysis of generational attitudes on the role of nutrition in Russia and Hungary. To achieve this, I set the following objectives:

- give a relevant historical overview of the country and determine its effect on people's attitude towards food
- define healthy eating and its presence in Russia and Hungary
- examine generation gaps
- examine how culture and personal values influence eating habits
- understand how globalization has affected food consumption: expression of self in the kitchen
- compare and analyze the results of our findings
- determine whether all age groups are eating optimally and give recommendations about what can be done to improve health (you are what you eat).

To fulfil the objectives set, I have looked to answer the following questions.

The first and foremost question is in regards to behavior towards food. I wanted to discover how a Russian and a Hungarian person feel about their diet in relation to their health, and what influences them. I designed my questionnaire to gather information about things such as how often they eat, with whom, what they consider as traditional/national foods etc.

As to fulfilling the second objective – to identify peoples' food selection process and the influences – I asked the question: What information do you use when purchasing food items? (price, quality, production, expiration date).

Finally – the goal of my research – I needed to identify the differences between generations in food preference.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

Besides secondary research, I have applied primary research tools.

As most previous studies were linked to food consumption and consumer behaviorism, I reviewed the national and international literatures of both Hungary and Russia.

The structure and character of our daily diet changes from generation to generation. The phenomena under investigation were studied by adopting a convergent parallel design. To explore the greatest differences among the generations and their views on eating today, I carried out an individual research based on over 200 participants' answers both in Russia and Hungary, by using on-line questionnaires (appendix 1) and semi-structured, face to face interviews. To my best knowledge, no such research has been carried out in Russia or Hungary before. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity, revealing only their age and gender.

The questions were designed, mostly to investigate people's relationship with food. Some questions aimed to reveal personal knowledge about nutrition. I took care to put together a questionnaire that encompassed most nutritional guidelines and supported a health-improving attitude.

### **4.1. Examining the generation gaps**

I assumed that due to the harsh changes during the past 20 years, food preference and eating habits have changed from generation to generation. To differentiate among the generations, several theories had been written that define three hallmarks to start out from: (1) perceived belonging, (2) common knowledge and beliefs, (3) similar history (Neil Howe, 2000). To illustrate the values of the different generations, I will rely on previous studies, such as the Yankelovich report (J. Walker Smith, 1998).

Using the information drawn from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the respondents were divided into five groups based on their age. For the classification I followed the guidelines set in the book "Valeology: scientific method, 1995":



- 65+: elderly generation that grew up in the 60-70s. A cultural paradigm shift can be observed within the group, with a change in the relationship towards food. They were deprived of many foods during the Soviet regime, but now are able to buy imported products from the West;
- 56-65: Generation X. They are much more comfortable with technology, diversity and global awareness than any previous generation. X-ers are the first generation to grow up with cd's, remote controls and computers. Their circle of friends likely includes people from other cultures and they are one of the first generations to benefit from easier world travel and access to world-wide current events.
- 36-45: Millennials. They have the reputation of being the toughest generation to manage. They grew up in a culturally diverse school and play environment, are tech-savvy, enthusiastic, self-centered, confident, well networked and achievement-oriented. Millennials are one of the best-educated generations in history.
- 25-35: The first stage of adulthood. Most of them are on the verge of creating a family and have already started their independent lives. They are beginning to eat independently of their parents, cook for themselves and their new families. This group is still in search of their selves, they have yet to create their own habits, especially with regard to eating. Changes occur in their bodies, their metabolism slows down, less hormones are produced etc.
- 18-24: Students – they are very busy with classes and exams. Party a lot, sleep only very little. During the day they have to rely on something quick to satiate their hunger, which limits their options.

I have analyzed the results manually and will present them in the following chapter.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Contrasting Socialism with Democracy

I received 136 responses for my questionnaires, with 30.33 % of the respondents male and the rest (69.7%) female. All of our previously defined age groups were represented, but generally the younger, 18-24 age group was more likely to fill in the questionnaire online, thus generating more answers. Followed by the 25-35 year olds, 36-45 and so on, ultimately having had to manually have the oldest generation fill out the responses 65+. All of the groups were represented by at least 20 respondents.

Let us divide them into 2 groups, as I found an immediate difference:

- „socialist type” (who grew up during the Soviet Union)
- „modern type” (after the fall of the Union).

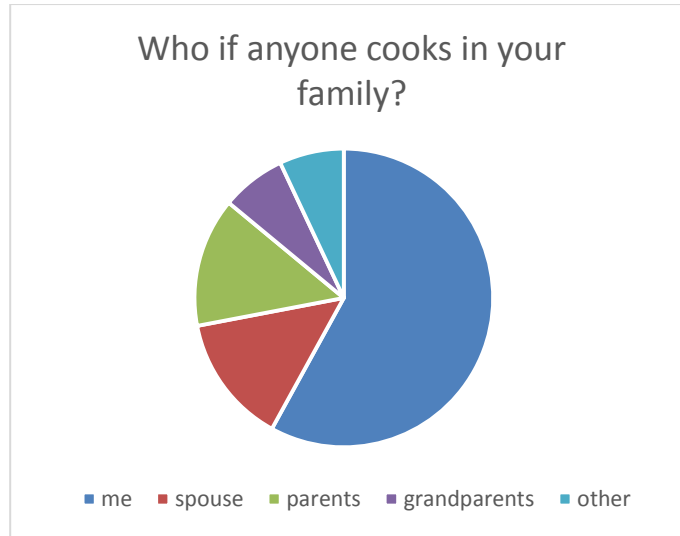
The socialist type of people reflect the older generation and their thinking, such as holding on to the values propagated during the USSR. The second group, or the modern type shows a tendency towards leading a more active life including sports. Being a part of the first group decreases the probability of being actively engaged in some sort of sport activity by 48%. The most active are men, singles and youngsters according to our data. Ranking second are those who earn above the average, while only 21 % of the people exercise for feeling good. In Hungary these numbers differ somewhat with 17% not engaging in exercise and 53% exercising every 3-4 days, followed by 21% doing some sort of sport activity 3-5 times a week. 17% also reported being ashamed of how their bodies look, 57% felt somewhat confident, while the rest felt confident. 70% of the people had been on a diet before. The main goals of exercising were to lose/maintain weight or gain muscle, strength, fitness. Cardio, jogging and strength training were the most popular forms of exercise, followed by functional training, aerobics and sports performance. Body building does not seem to be a popular workout goal.

Socialism is not linked to being overweight by any means, but women and elderly people are more prone to gain additional bodyweight. Excess weight is also observed among young married couples, especially with higher expenses. The modern group rates its own health much higher than socialists, regardless of the high mortality rates.

Ideology is one of the most important factors to a healthy lifestyle. However, to identify the role of ideology in everyday life and how it plays a role in forming a healthy lifestyle, a larger-scale research would be needed. I propose to research the role of ideology in preserving/improving health within the limits of a given lifestyle.

#### 5.1.1. Age group classifications and general findings

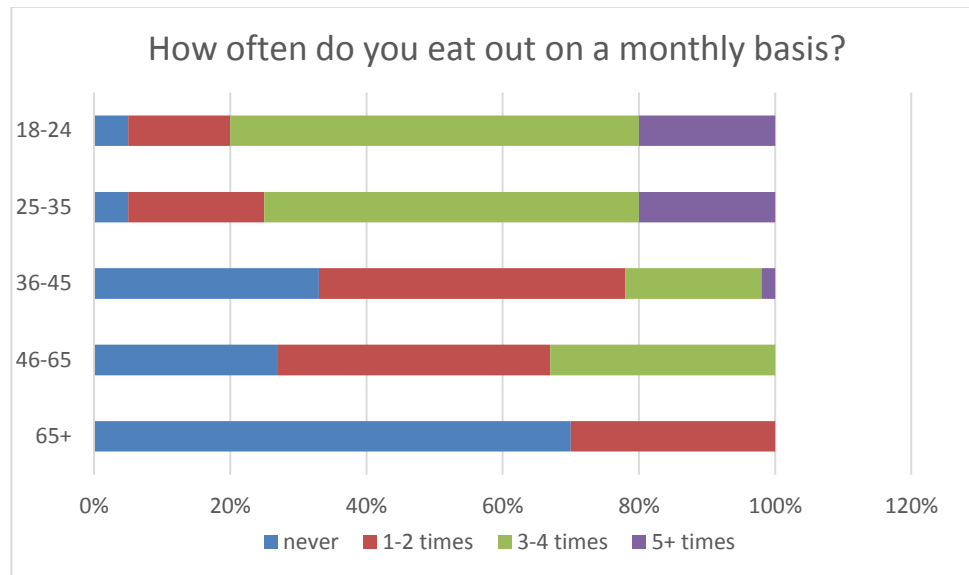
I have found that there are many similarities within the groups of each country, and it is possible to make generalizations according to the age groups based on the data. For example, men cook less often; they are served meals by their spouses, children or parents, depending on their individual situation. Typically, men in the 65+ group do not take responsibility for the preparation or the planning of meals, but they do help with buying the ingredients. It is not uncommon for them to get some outside help, eg. A caretaker, lunch delivery service etc. As we move towards the younger age groups, I observed that more boys cooked and prepared food for themselves, however, we do not have any information as to what they are preparing (img.4)



*Image 4 - Men's responses on who cooks in the family, source: own research*

What foods we eat is heavily influenced by external factors, such as availability, price, taste, brand recognition and so on. I tried to identify the most important influencing factors for each age group. I found that the most important influencing factor when selecting food products was the quality of the product, as opposed to the price, which came in second for the oldest generation. All the other groups reported price as the most important factor, followed by value for money and expiration date.

And while price plays a heavy role when shopping, it does not deter the respondents from enjoying a nice meal in a restaurant occasionally. It is well illustrated that, with age, the frequency of going out decreases. This might be due to lower income, less energy to go out, or the fact that this was the age group who considered mealtimes to be the most social, and value home-made foods. This is an important finding, because going out to restaurants is in correlation with being overweight. We do not know the ingredients served, the portions are larger than needed and we have no control over our environment. The perception of having paid for the food leads people to consume it all, since they paid for it. It has further been found that couples, who eat together often are more prone to gaining additional weight, especially the ladies. However this risk was reduced by 2-4% with every extra year spent on education.



*Ill. 5 - frequency of eating at restaurants in the different age groups*

The 65+ age group reported (70%) not consuming ready-made foods, while 80% of the rest of the people either have ready-made foods sometimes, or most of the time. It seems that out of necessity the elder generation is more

conscious about what they eat to preserve their health. Most of these people follow a strict medical diet, while the only other significant dieters were the students, 57% of whom follows some sort of diet. They exercise daily, limit the amount and types of food they eat, and read the nutritional labels. Nutrition was top-rated in the list of health preserving attitudes, while alcohol came in at the bottom.

Not only the elder population, but girls in general were more health conscious. They were more probable to report conscious selection of the products they consume. Such specifications were avoiding fatty foods, eating bio products, tracking calories and avoiding artificial additives. From this result, I came to the conclusion that the conception of health is strongly related with having a slim figure. So it became necessary to look into the relationship of being slim and health.

There is a saying that goes something like „the body is the map of the mind”. In Hungarian we use „Ép testben ép lélek”, which translates to „A healthy body holds a healthy soul”. It is interesting how language reflects the attitude towards our question. I have found that Russian typically try to regulate their bodyweight by restriction of calories and eating smaller portions, going on diets, while Hungarians are engaging in exercise for weight loss. There seems to be a general consensus in the understanding that having a fit and able body (in Hungary) means health. While in Russia there is a great disparity in the different generations' approach: the word „hudoy” = slim, represents something bad, unhealthy. If a Russian lady were to comment on your physique as „hudoy”, you should take that as something to worry about. On the other hand, the younger generations clearly associate health with a slim figure.

Finally, I have found that in general people are satisfied with their dietary habits but still would eat differently if money was not an issue. Furthermore, household spending on food items, despite the 2008 economic crisis, has

increased over the past few years while the amount of foods eaten has decreased. This leads me to conclude that quality of food products is gaining importance; people are eating less but better quality, fresher, organic produce. And this trend, if not followed by the fast-food industry could lead to difficulties. We are now observing this trend in action: wraps, „fresh”, healthy, organic, local, „high-quality” are words that are popping up in the advertisements.

### 5.1.1. Russia

There is a Russian saying:

Eat breakfast yourself,  
Share dinner with a friend,  
But give supper to your enemy!

This still holds very true today, as the majority of people during our research seem to value their traditions and are very family-oriented. A very common approach to one’s eating throughout the day is as follows:

The first meal of the day, **Завтрак** (breakfast), is usually composed by something light. Many Russians simply eat bread with cheese and ham (*бутерброд* – buterbrod) and coffee or tea. However, there is a strong work ethic in Russia and many people believe that, to work hard, one must eat well otherwise he/she will be very tired. This means adding to the breakfast: *блины* (bliny), thin pancakes that typically lack a leavening agent and are similar to crêpes usually made with butter and any kind of flour, from wheat and buckwheat to oatmeal and millet (although wheat is currently the most popular), omelettes or sandwiches. Kasha (*каша*), a type of porridge, traditionally thought of as peasant food, is also common. For young children, *каша* is a great meal and actually you can find it ready with berries added to make it “more tasty”. But you can find the typical eggs and sausages on rare occasions, or also cottage cheese dumplings.

**Обед** is the real lunch and the largest meal of the day. Russians don't have fixed times and they usually have this meal between 1 and 3 p.m. Soup is a very important component of Russian cuisine. One can start eating the most traditional Russian soup borscht (*борщи*) or shi (*Щи*, or any other soups for a starter. Borsht is made with beetroot as the main ingredient, with a beef or pork broth including potatoes and beets, but may also contain carrots and peppers. Borsht was a dish prepared throughout the entire USSR, and you can find a lot of different variants of this dish. After that, typically some sort of meat dish will be served (meatballs, meatloaf, cooked or fried meat etc.) with cabbage and potatoes on the side, and some sort of salad.

The last meal of the day, **Ужин**, is traditionally a much smaller meal than **Обед** and is often only a simple plate of bread, meats and vegetables. It is common to take a cup of tea at the end of the day, eat some sweets or jam and talk with your family in the kitchen about the day. We should not forget to speak about bread: bread has always played a central role in Russian cuisine. Heavy rye, dark, bread is always the most popular bread. We know that, for generations, white bread was considered preferable for the richest people. Now you can find white bread everywhere and it's also cheaper than black.

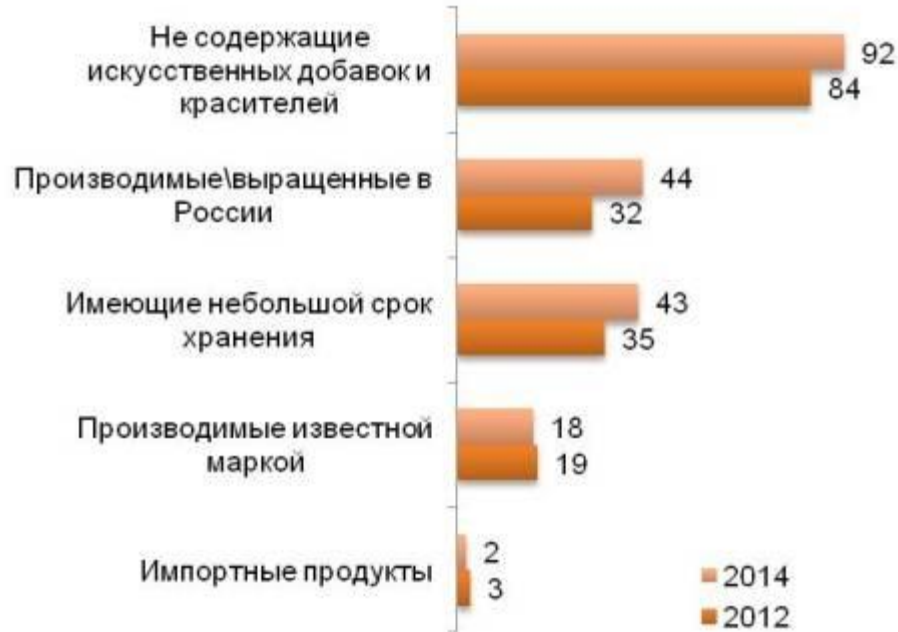
From my survey it became apparent that there is a difference among younger and older generations not only in the foods that they consume, but also in the social structure of their events, such as lunch and dinner. Eating dinner at home with your family is not as important for the younger generations; they eat out more often, but as in the saying – with friends. They usually do not follow the traditional structure of a typical meal, but they prefer one meal, which is a great change from socialist times. Understandably, people have less time nowadays and the convenience of just popping into a fast-food chain and grabbing a bite overrode the traditional dining style.

Most of the respondents eat 3 times a day (breakfast in the morning, a snack during the day and „lunch” in the evening). For many, lunch is the second and most important meal of the day (in many Western countries we would name this supper). Lunch and dinner are perceived as social events by almost 80% of the respondents, while 22 % said



it was not at all social. We should note that 20% of the respondents also reported that they live alone. It is interesting to see that many people tried to explain why they ate supper so late (6-10pm) – they work late hours, then an hour on the metro etc. Obviously, people think about their eating habits, they are aware of some guidelines and read about the topic. It appears that, for this reason, people tend to skip meals: „I don't have time to eat something or I simply forget to eat for days". It is apparent that conscious food selection plays a role in the life of this age group. However, interestingly many of the respondents consumed only very little amounts of water throughout the day. This may be linked to the fact that tap water is not drinkable and people somehow feel that buying water is an unnecessary luxury. In turn, tea is preferred by many, which is drunk on its own, with meals or snacks.

I asked three questions to gather information to compare eating in the Soviet-era with today. Many Russians' quality of eating is better today (24%), 40% agreed that it is worse than it was and 13 % did not see a difference, while 23% could not answer the question. Half of the respondents, mostly the elder generation (65% above 55) reported that food products today are of lower quality than they used to be. 18% feel it had improved, and 17% do not know. At the same time, 79% of the people noticed that the selection and availability of food in the stores had improved by the means of higher production levels, open market and competition. 6% think it is the other way around. 92% of the respondents associated quality food products with not having any artificial additives and a shorter expiration date. Further associations included nationally grown (i.e. not imported), or being a product of a well-known brand.



*Ill. 6. - Associations with food quality - source: IOM ANKETOLOG (www.iom.anketolog.ru)*

Besides the improvement in food quality, many people agree that it is not because there is more food, but because there are less buyers (10%) and that fake products are widespread (4%). Some say there are more products in the stores today, because they are not being exported.

Many stated that it was necessary to eat less in recent times due to increased prices, even though the selection is wider than before. This idea seems to be the result of anxiety in the transitional generation (60-70 years), who had lived an adult life during the existence of the USSR. However, many people are buying more fruits and vegetables as they are more available. This holds true for both the young and the older generations.

New products have appeared in the households that had previously not been available, like exotic fruits, salads, spices among many other things. Still, one woman (age 57) said that everything was better in the USSR: „I bought my produce directly from the farmers themselves, it was fresh and higher in quality”.

„Hidden behind the Iron Curtain, the superstructure of healthy living largely passed Russia by; the glossy magazine articles about the dangers of salt and the use of artificial additives or the obsession with fitness that are so prevalent in the West are only now arriving in Russia” (Fedotova, 2010). From an article, written by Natalya Fedotova in The Telegraph, we learned about how the healthy lifestyle, lead by the organic food industry, was dripping into Russians conscious lives.

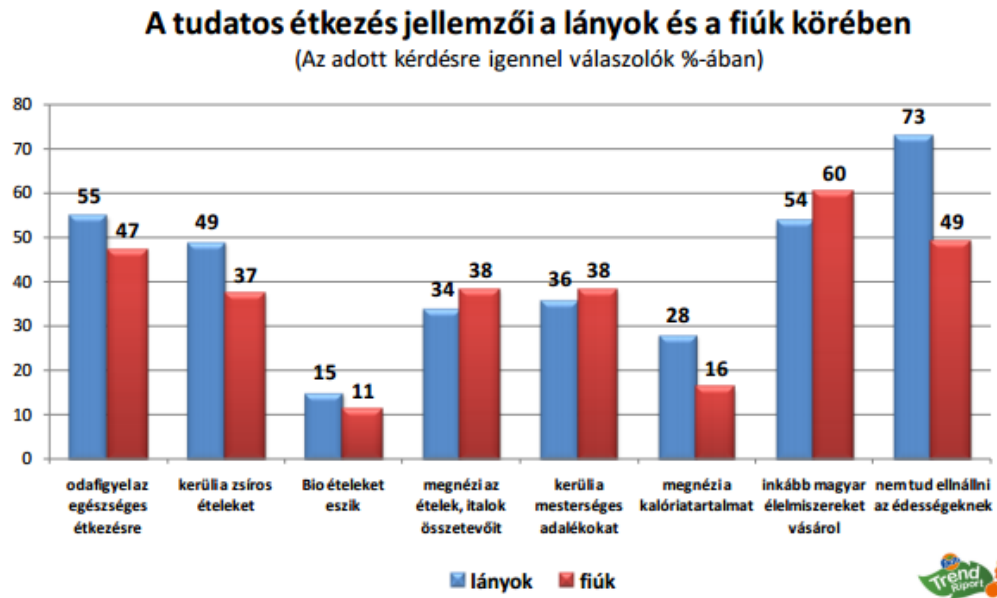
Those seeking a healthier lifestyle decided that the easiest way to achieve their goal was through bio products and organic food. 66% of Russians are ready to pay more for fresher, organic products. Market research company Nielsen found in a study last autumn that one in two Russians have already tried such organic products.

Andrei Khodus, director of the Non-Commercial Partnership on the Development of Organic and Biodynamic Farming, says the organic food market is still in its infancy, but a growing number of Russian health food products are appearing. "The demand for imported bio-products is down, but the demand for Russian-cultivated ones is up. As a result, Russian production of bio-products for the domestic markets is also growing," he says.

"Manufacturers make lots of claims, mostly aimed at increasing profits; no precise criteria, adopted by everyone, have been established," says Mr Khodus. In some sectors, the amount of "phoney" health food is as high as 60-70 % of the market – this might give ground to the conspiracy theories we have discovered and the distrust of the people toward food products. During the recent economic "Russian consumers became less interested in health food products because of their high cost compared to lower-quality (and less wholesome) equivalents," says Komkova, a consultant in the retail training group, Serviceman Training & Consulting.. Part of the success of organic food is that few Russians make any distinction between "healthy", "natural" and "organic" foods. Most food is either imported and bought in an expensive supermarket, or is fresh and bought in the local open-air market or „rynok”. Indeed, until recently half of Russia's entire agricultural produce was grown in the back gardens of the dacha, and almost all of

Russia's fast food comes from the West. Luckily, the government has developed programs to increase trust in the state and their food products.

Girls tend to be more conscious about the quality and health benefits of any product – including organic – (Ill. 7.), as mentioned in the Fanta Trend Reportt as well (Coca Cola, 2009). They are more likely to avoid fatty foods, eat bio products, and track calories. At the same time, boys are much better at avoiding sweets and artificial sweeteners and they also read nutritional labels. The same findings were also true for the Russian students.



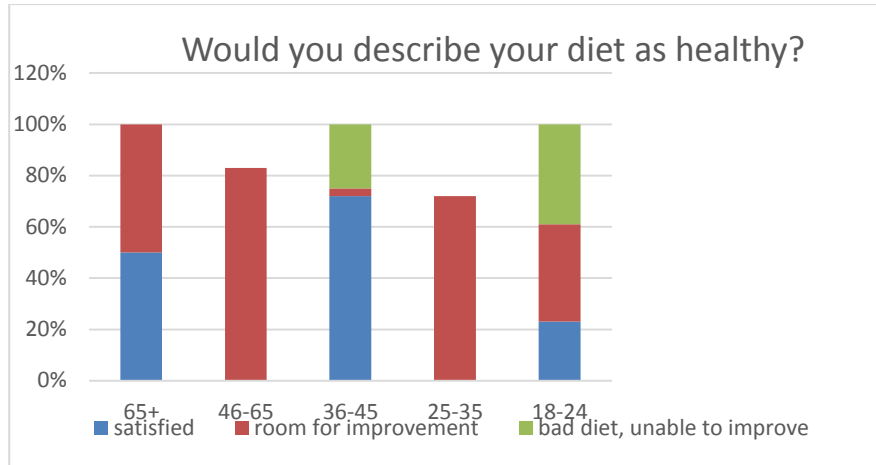
*Ill. 7 – Health-Conscious Eating among Boys and Girls, source: Fanta Trend Report*

While some of the respondents noted a change in the quality in food products during the past few years, most of them did not mention a significant change. However, half of the population seems to be dissatisfied by the high prices and relatively low quality of foods, and are concerned about the future as meat, bread, milk and fish become more expensive.

I found that many people pay attention to their weight and appearance – especially the younger generation, and women in general. They tend to snack throughout the day (chocolates, chips etc.). Most of them eat very little amounts of food, and try to avoid carbohydrates. Sport did not seem to be an important factor in maintaining health and an ideal bodyweight.

### **5.1.2. Hungary**

Typically we, Hungarians consume 3-4 meals a day including snacks, but 20% of the respondents either eat less frequently or more than 5 meals a day. It is clear that the Hungarian cuisine is still very popular, especially among the older generations. However, the diets of the people seem to be too monotonous, and high in fats. As the WHO study pointed out, the Hungarian diet is high in salt, which results in a large number of people with coronary heart disease and a spreading of obesity, as well. From a study made by the Hungarian National Food and Nutritional Institute (Országos Élelmezés- és Táplálkozástudományi Intézet) I learned that in the case of women being overweight strongly depends on educational level. The more educated an individual, the less probable it is for her to be overweight. In numbers, while 72% of overweight people had finished only elementary education, those with a college education were reported to be only 43% (OETI, 2010). Based on my own research, from the Hungarian population 68 % would describe their eating habits as healthy; however, 80% think there is room for improvement and 9 % would change their diet if they had the possibility. While half of the respondents felt that they had total control over what and when they ate, only a small percentage reported to be responsible for the meals. Interestingly, while this OÉTI study found that almost two thirds of the adult population was overweight, only one fifth reported their diet as unhealthy.



*Ill. 8 - Satisfaction with diet, source: own*

This leads us to believe that many are not aware that they might be eating in a way that is detrimental to their health. As typically it is either them or their parents who prepare the meals, a general education in a health-conscious attitude is missing from the population.

Traditionally, Hungarians eat five smaller meals daily: breakfast, tízórai (a mid-morning snack), lunch, uzsonna (a mid-afternoon snack) and supper. Breakfast may consist of some cold cuts on bread, or something sweet like jelly or honey and milk/tea.

65+	46-65	36-45	25-35	18-24
they eat coldcuts and bread for breakfast	cereal and coldcuts are most popular	they don't eat breakfast or have eggs/sausages or coldcuts	cereal, eggs/sausages	cereal, coldcuts, porridge

There is some snacking during the day, and for lunch people mostly eat soup, a main course of meat and a side dish, and sometimes, dessert. Supper is typically light and a

cold dish, which could be a sandwich or leftovers from lunch. Lunch is traditionally the most important meal of the day, and is often shared by friends or family.

According to the Central Statistics Office of Hungary, we have been eating less of almost every food product in the past few years, only more potatoes (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2014). We also know that, with age, statistically we eat more meat, fruit, cereal. And while many young people live at home with their parents and do not need to spend money on food, I found that they did not eat the same foods as their parents do. The Gfk survey's latest analysis shows that the majority of the Hungarians are eating regularly, but only ten percent pays attention to healthy nutrition consciously. One of the main expectations is for food to be prepared quickly. Six out of ten people do not see anything wrong with semi-finished foods and considers anxiety about chemicals in food products as excessive (Gfk, 2009) .

A diet rich in red meat, animal fat and carbohydrates continues to be part of the Hungarian lifestyle, and despite increasing dietary awareness, consumers' eating habits have not changed. Further contributing to the population's health problem is their lack of physical activity. Although sport is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education, the great majority of people stop exercising the moment they leave school. Until recently, the Hungarian government and health organisations did little to promote physical activity and healthier living. However, thanks to improving economic conditions and rising living standards, more time and resources are being devoted to health issues. It is now widely recognised that the health status of Hungarians is poor, and that the government must promote physical activity if this is to change. Consequently, there has been a rise in the number of programs organized to encourage physical activity in Hungary. Apparently, the young generation is changing their habits regarding meals and are cooking for themselves or going out for food with their friends, relatives etc.

Finances are one of the biggest factors in food selection and eating habits. The majority of the respondents spend 200-300 euros on food monthly, followed by 36% who spend less than 200. 300,400 and 500 euro food budgets were reported by 10% of total respondents. The price of food products greatly influence consumer decisions even

if by only a couple hundred forints, which leads to lower- quality foods and often junk food. Despite recent involvement by the government to improve the population’s attitude towards health, several obstacles to changing dietary habits remain. The traditional Hungarian diet is followed by much of the population and as part of the culture it is very difficult to change. Moreover, healthier food comes with a higher price tag, making healthy eating a luxury that the majority of the population still cannot afford.

When asked about buying healthy products, the different age groups prioritized some factors differently. The older generation indicated a preference for accessibility, health and price, while younger people thought of health and taste as more important qualities.

65+	46-65	36-45	25-35	18-24
health and balance are the main considerations when buying healthy food	accessibility, health and price were the main considerations when buying healthy foods	accessibility, health and price	health, taste, accessibility	taste, price and health

Over the next ten years we expect the demand for higher quality, healthy products to grow, forcing prices down and making wholegrain and organic foods a more affordable option to the general public.

## 5.2. Lifestyle of comfort

Comfort and simplicity have become the motto of our modern lives. It is not hard to observe how easily accessible and “to-go” (takeaway) products have become part of our daily lives. The paradigm shift is observed in my study and is reflected in the answers we have received from the respondents.



I asked: „How often do you eat pre-cooked meals or fast food” Most people of the older generation replied not often or never in both countries. The younger generations, however, had responses ranging from „never” to „all the time”. We compared the answers to this question with the results of „How much control do you have in when and what you eat”. It turned out that those who ate more pre-packed meals often stated that they were more in control of their eating habits. Mostly students, who already look after themselves, do not have either the time, or the patience to prepare food from raw ingredients, and as a result end up consuming ready-made foods. It turned out that in Russia more students are looking after themselves than in Hungary, which leads to a greater level of independence and also concern for the future. Russian students’ outlook on the future influences their decision-making process, leading them towards a ‘survival’ way of thinking about food. They look for the cheapest, most fulfilling foods that can be quickly and easily prepared – such as instant grechka, kasha, breads, noodles etc. In Hungary, on the other hand, students are being fed at home, or prepare meals for themselves as they have apartments, and most respondents did not live in dormitories. The older generation more often has the money to spend on food, but does not have the time often, and so they rely on some sort of external help.

Students tend to read the nutritional label on foods and eat differently than their own parents. A higher ratio of the younger population eats home-made foods. Two other large segments are those who cook for themselves and those who eat fast foods. Generally speaking, the parents and the respondents prepare the foods in the family, in rare cases (less than 10% of the total) grandparents, spouses or other acquaintances prepare the meals. 80% of the Hungarian population would eat differently if money was not an issue, and only one fifth replied that they would not change their eating habits. A little over half of the people treat themselves to a meal out at a restaurant once or twice a month, the others seem to either not go out at all, or go out more often than 5 times a month.

Another reason for not trying new products might be that there is significant distrust towards the Western world from the older generation; they tend not to buy the unfamiliar. „It is full of food coloring and unknown substances” – they say.

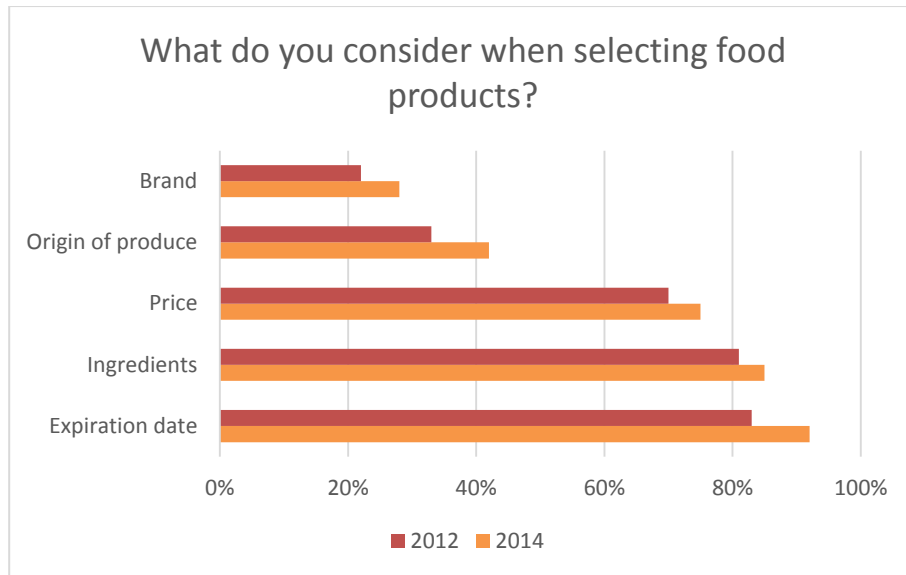
When looking at the responsibilities people take on regarding the meals, food shopping is by far the top responsibility. Planning meals is also something most people take part in, while preparing the meals themselves was most often cited as something they did not partake in.

### **5.3. Food selection process**

To understand the variables in the selection process I designed a question to refer to different qualities of food (quality, expiration date, packaging, price etc.). It was more difficult to establish a relationship between health and food products from my study's point of view. The most cited factors of selection were: price, whether it was healthy, and various subjective criteria (packaging, taste, freshness) respectively. Other factors included weight control and the producer.

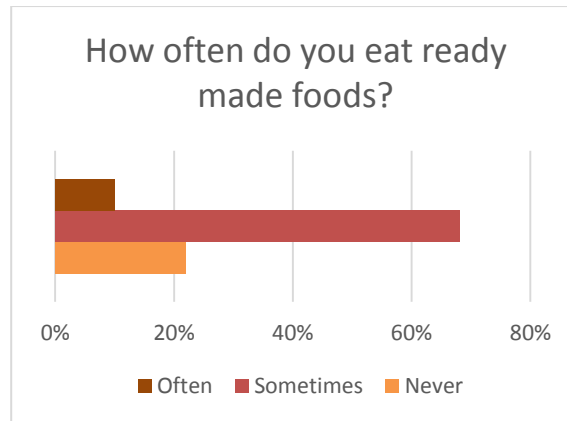
#### **5.3.1. Russia**

The most important factor in the food selection process was, according to my individual research, with no doubt price. Everyone from the socialist group have marked price as the most important factor in purchasing food, while from the modern group half of the participants did not mention price. The latter had preferred quality and taste over everything else, but this does not mean that people are looking for the cheapest options: they select the best value for money, according to their budget and what they consider to be of good quality. Health was also an important factor; it turned out that health has a strong correlation with bodyweight: the participants in my survey try to avoid foods that make them gain weight. The preference of whole and natural products is also related to the dimension of health. Almost everyone cares if the food products they buy have artificial substances in them. If we compare these data with the ones produced by IOM-ANKETOLOG (ANKETOLOG, 2014), then we will see that the influencing factors are very similar.



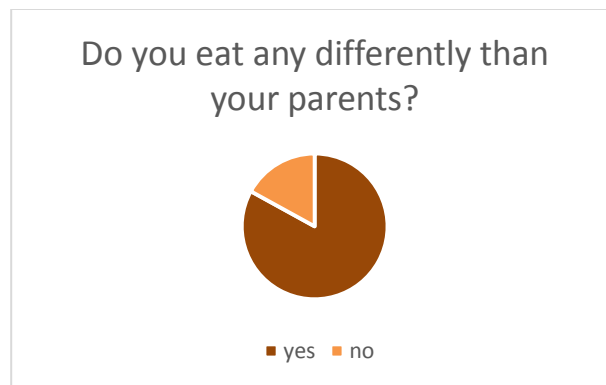
*Ill. 9 - Influencing factors during food selection, source: IOM ANKETOLOG*

In the next question I tried to get some information on how people relate to certain products. Is it important for Russians to know what ingredients there are in a certain food product, how many calories, do they read the labels on the packaging? Relating to this, I feel that it is inevitable to broaden our classification. It turns out that people under 50 read the labels and eat differently than their parents. People above 50, in general, are not interested in the nutritional value of a product, and eat as their parents did. People also seem to eat ready-made food quite often. 68.6% reported that occasionally they indulged in the convenience of ready-made food, 22% agreed in never to have consumed such foods, while 3% did it all the time.



*Ill. 10 - Frequency of ready-made food consumption in Russia, source: own*

As I assumed, there is a significant difference in the number of people who eat differently than their parents. 83% do not follow the same style of eating.



*Ill. 11 - People who eat differently than their parents, source: own*

A new question arose unexpectedly about the branding of such products. Mostly all participants agree that the brand of food they buy is good, their parents also like it so there is no need to try anything else. It is more apparent in the ranks of the older generation: one grandmother (82) went to a different store, because they did not have the bread she always buys.

I made the participants think about the relationship between food and health. Everyone agreed that there was a relationship between the two. One woman (28), after thinking hard, responded „there might be”. Fresh produce is considered healthy

according to our subjects. Some people said that there was no such thing as harmful food and that our body needed everything – but in moderation. Allergies also came up as a discussion topic, and I found that, surprisingly, the people who did not have any food allergies were twice as many as those who did. However, more people follow a specific diet than do not. One fifth of those asked said they followed a gluten-free diet; this was followed by prescribed medical diets, milk-free, vegetarian, paleo, whole-grain and egg-free diets.

Bodyweight and a slim figure are associated by many with health in Russia. The obvious relationship between food and health is that if I eat a lot of wheat products, I get fat. So I try to avoid such foods – said a woman of 50 years. 75% gets their information on healthy food from the internet or friends and relatives (13%). The rest basically does not get any information, or uses magazines and other sources. Radio was not represented at all.

In general, fish, vegetables, fruits, juice, dairy products and meat were considered to be healthy foods. However, many people did not know why;” they say it’s healthy” – they said. Only a few people mentioned nuts, porridge, honey, or foods with a high vitamin and mineral content.

### 5.3.2. Hungary

The food selection process is influenced by different factors in the different age groups in Hungary. It appears that while the elderly place great emphasis on food quality, as we get to the younger age groups price becomes of more importance. The group of people aged 36-45 also considered expiration date as an important factor. From 45 up, only about half of the people would eat differently if money was not an issue for them; however, from the group 18-45 more than 80% would change their dietary habits if money was not an issue for them.



*Ill. 12 - Money as a limiting factor on eating habits*

As we see, the majority would eat differently if money was not an issue. But how are they eating now? In order to find out, I asked about the frequency of their consuming ready-made foods.

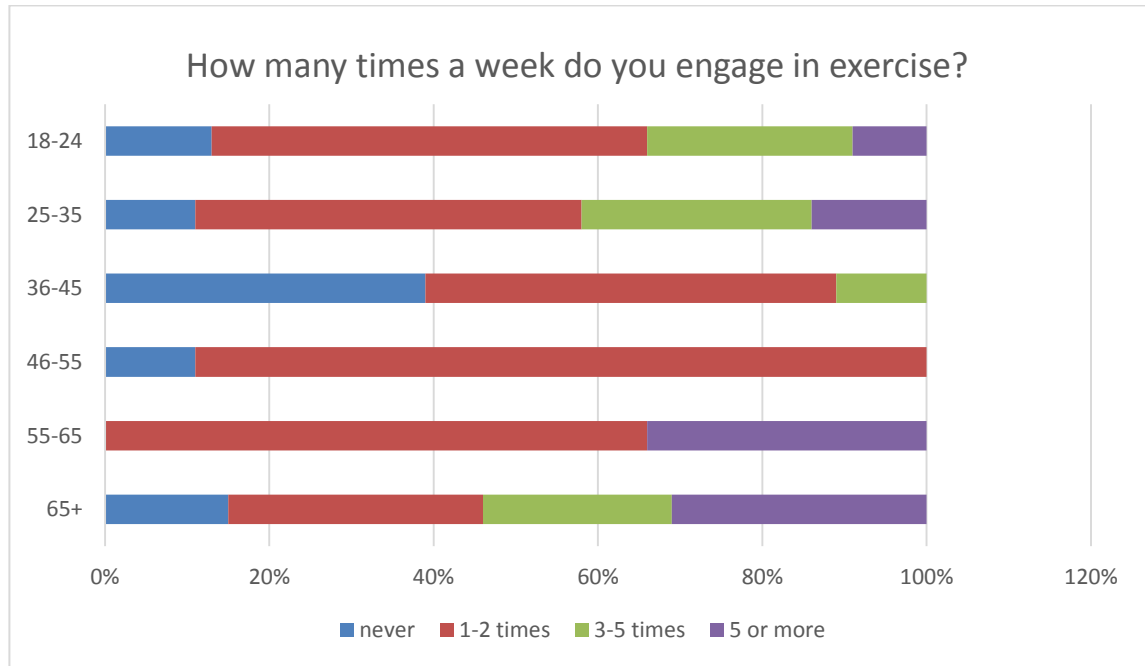


*Ill. 13 – Consumption of ready-made foods in Hungary*

Hungarian people are not confident saying that they have total control over what and when they eat; rather they have reported to have „some” or „pretty good control” in their eating habits. Respondents were in agreement on the question of keeping an eye on

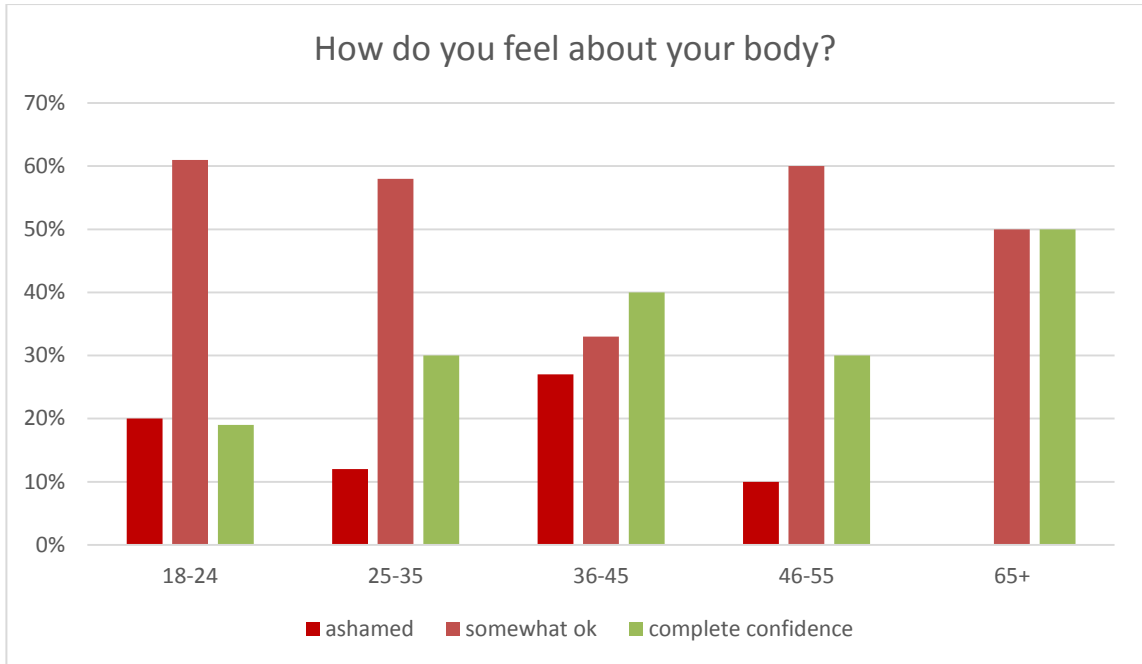
bodyweight. Only around 10% thought it was not something important to do. 57% of the respondents follow some sort of prescribed diet.

It is obvious that health plays a role in people's daily lives. Their thoughts revolve around staying healthy or improving their health. It seems that – as opposed to Russia, where wholegrain products are the way to go – Hungarians believe in exercise. 90% of the respondents engage in some sort of exercise, most often with the intention of weight loss or stress relief.



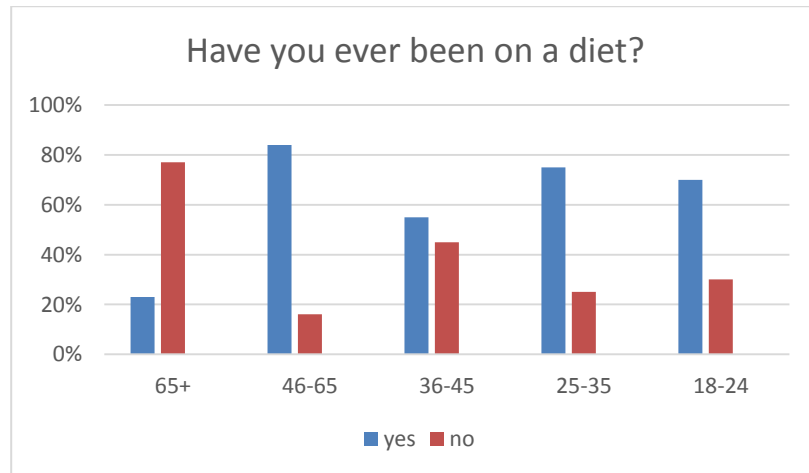
*Ill.14 - Amount of weekly exercise in different age groups*

If we were to generalize, we would have to say that Hungarians as a nation are stressed and not satisfied with their bodies. I asked questions about body image and found interesting results:



*Ill 15 - Body image in the adult population of Hungary*

We are not satisfied about the way we eat, about the way we look, and there is no evidence to suggest that people are rationally changing their lifestyles to improve their health. Half the people skip breakfast, but they count calories and carbohydrates. And many people have been on a diet:



*Ill 16 - Dieting among Hungarian adults*



## 6. DISCUSSION

The economic downfall by the end of socialism brought along a lower standard of living and significant changes in the social assurance programs, while the unhealthy lifestyle continued to prosper [Cockerham 1999; Dmitrieva 2001; Medviedev 2000]. According to Medviedev, we cannot take into account only the economic factors when explaining death rates, it is inevitable to consider, before all, the national inequalities of nutrition and lifestyle as main factors.

The variety of foods and the diet was restricted during the Soviet period, especially in the winter, and physical exercise was not one of the main free-time activities of the nation. One woman (56) said: „What is the point in exercise? You buy a gym membership and then you eat more. It is more money”. It is clear that still today, many hold strong beliefs about exercise not being a priority. According to my research, foreign students coming to Russia for a year-long study abroad program lose 5-10 kg of their bodyweight on average. Russians relate to this with a positive attitude: „You lost weight – you look good”, but when they do not like it, it is your problem: „Why do you go about so much?”

With the appearance of „new Russians” – who made quick and easy money during the change of regime in the 20th century – a new period began in the relationship towards food. Quality and the brand of foods and drinks, alongside overconsumption in expensive and prestigious restaurants have become the norm. The first steps towards self-actualization through food and your body were made back in the 90s. The elite separated themselves from the poor, through various tastes in food, the understanding of wines and exotic dishes. Here I would like to note, that I think it would be interesting to carry out a study to investigate what youngsters are spending their money on.

Mortality rates among these new Russians were characterized by their intensity, which would lead one to think that the rich die quicker. These important businessmen, managers and so forth started to hire bodyguards in order to prevent the numerous

murder attempts at them. Most often, these bodyguards were former commando or retired military athletes. As coaches, they encouraged their bosses to stay in shape, work out in the mornings and lead an active lifestyle. The first fitness centers opened under M.S. Gorbachev. These „kachalki”, where you could pump iron, served as the gathering spot for aggressive teens, which resulted in occasional fistfights. Later on, under the rule of Boris Yeltzin, these „punks” realized the potential of being in good strength as a good source of income, by getting hired as bodyguards. And the training had begun.

Around the 60s, a communal interest towards fitness was established, as well as health and the mood. Everyday problems appeared once again in people’s lives. The working class attended sanatorium with their families, they travelled south to the mountains, visited baths and enjoyed the healing effects of nature and fresh air. This form of medical tourism was a means to forget the problems at home.

All of this changed after the collapse of the USSR. Employers did not send their workforce to such places, and people did not have enough money to afford a similar vacation. So, as a result people started building their weekend homes – „dachas” – just outside of the city, often on waterfronts. They could enjoy the fresh air and the proximity to nature once again, and to invoke the memories of the baths, most of these dachas had homemade saunas in their back yards. Free time in the 90s was spent out at the dachas, watching TV, and travelling to the sea.

While many fitness establishments were opened in the larger cities, people turned towards them with distrust. The general concept was that visiting a fitness club was no more than an expensive hobby, and fitness was only a means for producing aesthetic bodies. High prices and their attitude towards exercise lead people to avoid such places. While the Russians did not expect much in terms of beauty and usefulness from fitness clubs, they were very much obsessed with beauty and their appearance. In 1995 the first Russian book was published on the topic of cosmetic surgery. The ideal body image had changed step by step: the previous Venus-like figure (wide hips and curves) turned into a seductive, playful girl. Women were contrasted with girls, cities with villages. The ideal male body also changed. Short hair, broad shoulders and strong hands became symbols of independence and self-maintenance.

Today, in the 21st century, the idea of beauty is changing yet again: we must invest in our bodies and health, as it defines our well-being.

I believe that Russians do not have enough control over their own health for the following reasons:

1. The effects of the Soviet past: the government and the party did not encourage activities in the field
2. Only few opportunities
3. Tradition of comradery among men: friends drink and smoke together
4. Predominant belief that the „state will take care of us”.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Health and healthy nutrition is ever more popular today. There are articles being written about new diets and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. What to eat in order to strengthen our immune system and to get fit. In the younger generation, healthy eating is becoming more and more widespread, along with discussions of the topic. New eating disorders have also appeared in Russia, previously not known, such as anorexia and bulimia. This was a shock to many, and it was difficult to adapt.

I explored the basis of the traditional foods, clarified the most important turning points in the history of the cuisines (ancient cuisine, 17th century, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Soviet and post-Soviet times) and came to the conclusion that tradition is an important element in any study discussing food. Afterwards I looked at the more modern methodology regarding food and eating. I analyzed several different definitions of healthy nutrition and selected the one that would be useful for my study, after which I contrasted reality with an ideal nutritional meal.

As the result of my research we see how the Russian and Hungarian cuisines and culinary habits have formed throughout the centuries. Many variables influenced likes

and dislikes, such as the mentality of an era, social circumstances or personal preferences, of course. It turned out that the difference among age groups relating to food is smaller than what I had expected. So, further on, I put greater emphasis on investigating how attitude towards food changed in the past 20 years, after the fall of the USSR. Taking into account that each individual has specific nutritional needs based on their age, gender, bodyweight, upbringing and lifestyle, we dedicated a chapter to analyzing these data.

In the age classification I defined five groups: students, young adults, Millennials, Gen X-ers, and elder. In the literature they also write about different age groups – children, students, 1st and 2nd category adults (below and over 35) and people of old age (above 80). Due to the fact that certain age groups do not have the capability to select what they would like to eat, I have excluded them from the study.

It is apparent that there is a difference among younger and older generations not only in the foods that they consume, but also in the social structure of their events, such as lunch and dinner.

Elders tend to be a generation that is greatly influenced by what is around them and are prime consumers of foods that support their health and wellness goals as they age. With a focus on vitality, they turn to food, beverages and supplements to increase their longevity and quality of life. Their product choices also directly relate to the values they learned growing up.

Generation X is interested in foods that can help them maintain their energy and relieve stress during busy days, and they search for clear, easy-to-understand food labels. As quality and value are important factors in Generation Xers' food choices, it has been shown that this generation spends more per month on groceries than any other generation. Gen X-ers are also highly concerned with convenience and prefer minimal preparation at meal/snack time.

Millennials typically don't eat three "square meals" a day, and their eating habits have influenced restaurants in many ways. Many restaurants are now open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer menus combining foods traditionally served only at breakfast,

lunch and dinner. The words “fresh” and “simple ingredients” also appeal to this generation, as health is a major focus in Millennials’ lives. However, price still plays a large role in food choices, and they aren’t as brand loyal as previous generations. Millennials enjoy cooking and are adventurous with it, as they are more likely than other groups to consider themselves “foodies” and “cooking enthusiasts” who love to try new, exciting, ethnic flavors.

Students consider eating dinner at home with your family as not too important, they eat out more often. They usually do not follow the structure of a traditional meal (soup and main dish), but they prefer one meal, which is a great change from socialist times. Price appears to be the most important factor in their food selection, but this does not mean that people are looking for the cheapest options: they select the best value for money, according to their budget and what they consider to be of good quality. Health and taste also proved to be important factors; it turned out that health has a strong correlation with bodyweight: the participants try to avoid foods that make them gain weight. Preference for whole and natural products is also related to health. Almost everyone cares if the food products they buy have artificial substances in them.

## 8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Like much research, this study is not free from limitations. In particular, because of the limited quantitative sample size, the results cannot be generalized although they allow to shed some light on a topic that deserves further research. Furthermore, it was not possible for me to apply sophisticated statistical analyses that would have allowed me to highlight the relationship between mentality, culture, opportunity and food preference.

Since the topic of this research has not been investigated in previous studies to my best knowledge, further research is needed. Despite the study's limitations, its contribution is valuable in that it is the first attempt at studying the generational attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle in the context of the Russia and Hungary.

I believe that Russia has come to a new period in the world of nutrition. With the fast rate of globalization, the opportunities and influence of other countries can be observed in the bigger cities. Russia takes a unique place in-between modernity and tradition. Thanks to its geography there is a harsh contrast of past and future, like the taiga of Siberia opposed to the skyscrapers of Moscow-city. It would be interesting to study how tradition preserves a country from integrating into the mass of the so-called developed countries. From my study's point of view it would be interesting to compare the pace of development with other countries, as well as the countryside.

Seemingly food plays several roles in our lives. One of them is self-expression, a sign of belonging to a certain group of people, which will always be central to human behavior. A wise man once said, and I strongly believe in this: "The body is the map of the mind."

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## APPENDIX

- Neme/ sex:
- Kora/ age:
- Ki főz a családban/ Who cooks in the family?
- Mi befolyásolja a legjobban az élelmiszerek kiválasztásában / What influences you most in the food selection process? (Tegye sorrendbe a legfontosabbtól kezdve/ Put it in order starting from the most important)
  - ár/ price
  - minőség/ quality
  - lejárati dátuma/ expiration date
  - ár-érték arány/ price-value
  - egyéb/ other
- Másként étkezne-e, hogyha a pénz nem számítana/ Would you eat any differently if money was not an issue?
- Átlagosan havi hány alkalommal jár étterembe/ How many times a month on average do you go out to eat?
- Milyen gyakran fogyaszt készételeket/ How often do you consume ready-made foods? (húzza alá a megfelelőt/ select the appropriate answer)
  - soha/ never
  - néha/ sometimes
  - általában/ usually
  - mindig/ always
- Mennyi vizet fogyaszt naponta/ How much water do you consume daily? (literben megadva/ given in liters)
- Hány alkalommal eszik egy nap/ How many times a day do you eat?
- Mennyire van beleszólása abba, hogy mit és mikor eszik/ How much control do you have over what and when you eat? (Húzza alá a megfelelőt!)
  - semennyire/ none
  - valamennyire/ some
  - nagyon/ a lot
  - csakis rajtam múlik/ total control
- Mennyire tartja társasági eseménynek az ebédet és a vacsorát/ How much of a social event are lunch and dinner? (Húzza alá a megfelelőt!/ select the appropriate)
  - egyáltalán nem/ not at all
  - valamennyire/ somewhat
  - nagyon társaságinak tartom/ very much social
- Mennyire tartja fontosnak, hogy odafigyeljünk a testsúlyunkra/ How important is it to keep an eye on our weight?
  - nem fontos/ not important
  - valamennyire fontos/ somewhat
  - nagyon fontos/ very important
- Van-e valamilyen ételallergiája/ Do you have any food allergies?
- Máshogy étkezik-e Ön, mint a szülei/ Do you eat any differently than your parents?
- Szed-e vitaminokat/ Do you take vitamin supplements?

- Elolvassa-e az ételcímkeket/ Do you read nutritional labels?
- Mit tesz Ön az egészségének megőrzéséért/ What are the most important factor in health-preservation? Állítsa sorrendbe az alábbiakat 1-től 5-ig/ Rate the following from 1-5 (kezdje a legfontosabbal, 1-es)
  - sport/ exercise
  - alvás/ sleep
  - nem dohányzás/ not smoking
  - alkohol mellőzése/ no alcohol
  - helyes táplálkozás/ healthy eating
- Egyedül él/ Do you live alone?
- Követ-e jelenleg valamilyen speciális diétát/ Do you currently follow any special diet? Milyet/ What kind?
- Értékelje 1-től 4-ig a következőkben való szerepvállalását/ Rate your role in the following from 1-4 (1: nem veszek részt, 2: van amikor részt veszek, 3: általában én csinálom, 4: mindig én csinálom/ 1: i do not take part, 2: sometimes I take part, 3: I usually do it, 4: I always do it)
  - bevásárlás/ shopping
  - menü megtervezése/ planning the menu
- ételek elkészítése/ preparing the meals
- Mi a legmagasabb iskolai végzettsége/ What is your highest level of education? Húzza alá!
  - általános iskola/ elementary school
  - gimnázium/szakközépiskola / high school
  - egyetem/főiskola / college, university
  - PhD
- A saját táplálkozási szokásait egészségesnek mondaná-e / Would you describe your eating habits as healthy?
- Meg van-e elégedve a saját táplálkozási szokásaival/ Are you satisfied with your current eating habits? Húzza alá a megfelelőt!
  - nem, de nincs lehetőségem változtatni rajta / no but I do not have opportunity to change
  - van még min javítani / there is room for improvement
  - teljesen meg vagyok elégedve/ totally satisfied

- Euróban megadva mekkora összeget költ havi szinten élelmiszerre/ How much do you spend on food monthly in euros? (1 euro = 300 Ft.)
- Mely szempontok a legfontosabbak az Ön számára egészséges élelmiszerek vásárlásakor/ What are the most important factors when buying healthy food? Állítsa fontossági sorrendbe / put them in order!
  - elérhetőség/ availability
  - egészség megőrzése/ health preservation
  - ár, akciók / price, promotions
  - íz / taste
  - csomagolás/ packaging
  - környezettudatosság/ eco-friendliness
- Milyen forrásokból tájékozódik az egészséges étkezéssel kapcsolatban/ Where do you get your information from on healthy eating? (pl. tv, újság, barátok stb.)
- Heti szinten hány alkalommal végez sporttevékenységet/ How many times a week do you engage in exercise?
- Milyen céllal sportol / What is your main goal for exercise? Válassza ki a megfelelőt/ select the appropriate answer!
  - testsúlycsökkentés, karbantartás / weight loss, maintenance
  - stressz levezetése / stress reduction
  - élvezet/ enjoyment
  - erő-, izom-, kondíciófejlesztés/ building strength, muscle, fitness
  - egyéb/ other
- Milyen sporttevékenységet végez/ What type of sport activity do you engage in?
- Hogyan viszonyul a testéhez/ How do you feel about your body?
  - szégyenlem a testem/ I am ashamed of my body
  - valamennyire elégedett vagyok/ I feel somewhat confident
  - teljesen jól érzem magam a bőrömben/ I am completely confident
- Szokott reggelizni/ Do you ever skip breakfast?
- Tipikusan mit fogyaszt reggelire/ What do you typically eat for breakfast?
- Rendszeresen, adott időpontban étkezik/ Do you have a specific time for each meal?
- Mennyire tartja fontosnak az alábbiakat nyomon követni a napi étkezésben/ How important is it to track the following? Értékelje (1: nagyon fontos / very important, 4: egyáltalán nem fontos/ not at all important)
  - kalóriamennyiség/ calories
  - zsír/ fats
  - szénhidrátok/ carbohydrates
  - ételmi rost/ dietary fiber
  - makroelemek, pl. vitaminok/ macronutrients, eg. vitamins
- Fogókúrázott valaha/ Have you ever been on a diet?
- Melyik a kedvenc nemzeti konyhája/ What is your favorite international cuisine? (pl. kínai, thai, olasz stb./ eg. Chinese, Thai, Italian, etc.)

**Dissertation Proposal Report**

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<b>Academic Supervisor</b>	<b>Papp Judit</b>

<b>Proposed Topic Area</b>	<b>Gastronomy</b>
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<b>Proposed Title</b>	<b>Generation Gap in the diet: A comparative analysis on Hungary's and Russia's take on healthy eating.</b>
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<b>Hypothesis</b> One sentence positive causal relationship	We believe that eating habits reflect on the culture of each generation, who will be considered as imagined communities for the purpose of the research
<b>Aim of Dissertation</b> One sentence	Set up a comparative analysis of different generation's view on the role of nutrition in Russia and Hungary
<b>Objective 1</b> Related to literature review one sentence 2.2	To give relevant historical overviews of each country to determine its affect on people's attitude towards food
<b>Objective 2</b> Related to literature review one sentence 2.3	To define healthy eating and its presence in Eastern Europe
<b>Objective 3</b> Related to primary research one sentence 5.2	To establish generational gaps
<b>Objective 4</b> Related to primary research one sentence 5.3	To compare and analyze the results of our findings
<b>Objective 5</b> Related to expected conclusion one sentence 6.2	To determine whether, the traditional diet has to be updated

<b>Proposed Primary Research Instruments</b>	<b>Questionnaires</b>
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Bud  
apes

t, 2014.05.19

Academic Supervisor

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