Eating out preferences among young adults in Poland and Greece
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ABSTRACT
The aim of the study was to compare the eating out preferences of young adult consumers in Poland and Greece. Young adult consumers in Poland and Greece, living in the capitals of these countries, exhibited different behaviour when eating outside the home. A common feature in both countries was frequent eating out at the weekend. However, Poles more often than Greeks, ate out on weekdays as well as at weekends. In both countries, besides local dishes, young adults most often preferred North American and Italian cuisine. Greeks, more often than Poles, ate take-away dishes with their friends and families members, while Poles more often ate them alone. Young women, in both countries ate out more often than men.

1. Introduction
An increase in the frequency of eating out has been observed in many countries over the last few decades (Goffe et al., 2017; Keke & Yana, 2014). It is believed that out-of-the-home food consumption increases at the same pace as societies modernise (Diaz-Mendez & van den Broek, 2017). It has been confirmed that the increase of expenditure on eating out is a feature of income growth and social wealthiness (Lopez, 2011). Many studies explore the socio-demographic profile of consumers who eat their main meals out of the home. They focus on consumer behaviour, using objective parameters such as cost, frequency or location, while also searching for explanations for the increasing popularity of the phenomenon (Diaz-Mendez & Garcia-Espejo, 2017).

In the southern EU countries, such as Italy, Greece, Spain or France, eating out is part of the culture, while in the northern countries such meals are consumed only occasionally (Diaz-Mendez & Garcia-Espejo, 2017; Lund & Kjærnesb, 2017). However, among the most common factors driving the eating out phenomenon, are people’s incomes in relation to the national economy. The amount of money spent on food consumed outside of the home diminishes with decreasing income levels (Lachat et al., 2012; Olsen et al., 2000; Warde et al., 2017; Warde & Martens, 2000). Moreover, eating out is often associated with increased intake of energy, fat, and sugars, and poor diet quality (Affenito et al., 2012; Lachat et al., 2012). It is believed that eating out is one of the obesity-promoting behaviours (Keke & Yana, 2014). Nevertheless, eating out is becoming particularly popular among young adults especially those in urbanized areas (Larson et al., 2011; Lund & Kjærnesb, 2017).

Poland and Greece are examples of EU countries possessing similar social wealthiness but with different culinary cultures and currently experiencing different economic dynamics. During the last 10 years, Greece has suffered a serious economic crisis and has experienced a decrease of per capita income, while in Poland the economy and per capita income are still growing (Eurostat, 2019; Sakare et al., 2019; Zavaras et al., 2016). We assumed that the current dynamics of the national economy, i.e. whether it is growing or contracting, affects the frequency of eating out. Therefore, the aim of this study was to compare the eating out preferences of young adult consumers in Poland and Greece, as examples of the UE countries with a similar social wealthiness, but having different culinary cultures and economic dynamics.
2. Materials and methods

2.1. Subjects and study design

The research was carried out in May 2018 in Warsaw and Athens, the capitals of Poland and Greece. The countries were chosen based on the similar wealth (Poland and Greece belong to the less prosperous nations of the EU), the Erasmus Plus mobility, bilateral agreement between universities and scientific cooperation in the past resulted in many valuable achievements. The study examined the behaviour of 400 young adult consumers: 200 from Poland and 200 from Greece. The persons participating in the study were grouped in two age ranges: 18–24 and 25–30. The participants were selected randomly.

The research was carried out using a questionnaire consisting of 8 closed questions regarding consumers' behaviour and preferences relating to out-of-home eating and questions relating to socio-demographic factors (Table 1). Socio-demographic characteristics that may have an impact on the studied behaviour, such as age, sex, education, employment, marital status and family size, living alone or with other people, and the occurrence of any alimentary illness, were taken into account. The socio-demographic characteristics of Poles and Greeks taken part in the survey are given in Table 2. The questionnaire was prepared in English language, than authors from Greece and Poland translate it in their national languages. In Greece the Greek version and in Poland the Polish version were distributed among the study participants.

2.2. Data collection

Young adults, encountered in establishments open to the public, such as universities, shopping centres and public facilities in Warsaw and Athens, were asked to complete the questionnaire. The screening potential participants were carried out to determine whether an individual was an appropriate candidate for the study and to standardize the results obtained in both countries. Every fifth person aged 18–30 was inter-capped and asked to participate in the study. Interviewers were trained in the methodological assumptions of the study. During the completion of the questionnaire the interviewers were present to resolve any doubts that persons participating in the survey might have. On completion, the questionnaires were marked with an identification number and collected in a closed container. The survey was completely anonymous (Tomaszewksa et al., 2017).

2.3. Statistical analysis

The results were analysed statistically. All tests were made using Statistica v. 13.3 software. The calculations were made at the significance level of α = 0.05. In order to compare the behaviour of Polish and Greek consumers, the student t-test (t coefficient) was applied to out-of-home eating. The one-way ANOVA (p coefficient) test was used to interpret the impact of socio-demographic factors on consumer behaviour. Cluster analysis was used to interpret consumers preferences regarding meals consumed outside the home. Cluster analysis is a group of multivariate techniques whose primary purpose is to group objects. Its aim is to divide a set of the data about consumers preferences into groups of similar characteristics. Tukey's HSD (honestly significant difference) test was made to find means that are significantly different from each other, in our case declaration about the place and frequency eating out.

3. Results

3.1. Locations chosen for eating out

The locations chosen for eating out on weekdays and at the weekend, and the frequency with which meals were eaten out, were the subject of questions 1, 2 and 3. The answers of Poles and Greeks regarding the places they chose to eat out were significantly different, both as regards weekdays and at the weekend (Figure 1). On weekdays, Greeks most often ate at home (80.5%), while Poles split evenly (49.5% at home, 50.5% out of the home). Regarding the selection of eating outlets, significantly more Poles than Greeks ate food from food booths/kiosks (p = .000000) and street food stalls/trucks/bikes (p = .000038). Poles on weekdays did not eat at restaurants or bars, while 7% of Greeks frequented visited such establishments (p = .000127). During the weekend, both Poles and Greeks ate at home significantly less often than on weekdays. However, Greeks still significantly more often ate at home than Poles (42% and 23%, respectively, p = .000044). When eating out, Greeks most often went to bars and restaurants, and this was a significantly more frequent indication than among Poles (43% and 25%, respectively, p = .000132). In contrast, Poles most often used street food vendors, such as food booths/kiosks (30%, p = .000000). Tukey’s post hoc test showed that both in Greece and in Poland, during the week days and at the weekend, there were no significant differences between the declared places of eating away from home.

Regarding the frequency of eating outside the home, young adult Poles, more often than Greeks, ate out, although the differences were not always significant. On weekdays, the majority of Poles ate out twice (36%) or once (32%) a week (Figure 2). While most Greeks ate out only once (32%) or occasionally, hardly ever (31.5%). A common feature for Poles and Greeks was the absence of eating out every day and infrequent eating out on more than three occasions on weekdays (15.5% and 13%, respectively). The largest difference between Greeks and Poles in the frequency of eating out was found for hardly ever during the week days (Tukey’s post hoc test p = .003164).

At the weekend, most young Poles ate out once (33.5%) or twice (27.5%). On the other hand, Greeks spent the weekend eating out from time to time (39.5%) and once (32%). Poles and Greeks very rarely ate out more than 3 times over the weekend (2% and 1.5%, respectively). Sporadic (hardly ever) eating out over the weekend was reported by 13% of Poles and 10.5% of Greeks. Socio-demographic factors significantly influenced the frequency of eating out, both on weekdays and at weekends (Table 3). On weekdays, three factors significantly influenced the frequency of eating out for Poles, and one factor for Greeks. In Poland, these were: education (p = .000052), place of origin (p = .001076) and living alone or together with other people (p = .000000). Poles with only a secondary education mostly declared eating out twice on weekdays, and people with a higher education ate out only once on weekdays (20.5%). Poles coming
Table 1. Eating out survey questionnaire form.

| Question                                                                 | Options                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What kind of eating places do you choose most often? – You can mark several answers. | At the weekend: □ restaurant/bar □ food booth/kiosk                     |
| □ food booth/kiosk                                                      | □ street food stall, food truck or bike                                 |
| □ street food stall, food truck or bike                                 | □ home                                                                   |
| □ home                                                                  | At the weekend: □ hardy ever □ once □ twice □ more than 3 times         |
| □ hardy ever                                                            | □ from time to time □ once □ twice                                      |
| □ once                                                                  | □ more than 3 times                                                     |
| □ twice                                                                 | □ very often                                                             |
| □ very often                                                            | □ from time to time                                                     |
| □ hardly ever                                                           | □ never                                                                  |
| □ more often                                                            | □ from time to time                                                     |
| □ never                                                                 | □ very often                                                             |

Table 1. Cuestionario de la encuesta sobre la alimentación fuera de casa.

1. What kind of eating places do you choose most often? – You can mark several answers.
   - At the weekend: □ restaurant/bar □ food booth/kiosk
   - □ street food stall, food truck or bike □ home
   - At the weekend: □ hardy ever □ once □ twice □ more than 3 times
   - □ from time to time □ once □ twice
   - □ never

2. How often do you order takeaway dishes? – Mark one answer.
   - □ very often □ from time to time
   - □ never

3. How do you usually eat takeaway dishes? - You can mark several answers.
   - □ alone □ with family □ during events
   - □ with friends □ with colleagues from work/studies

4. What type of cuisine do you prefer the most when eating out? - You can mark several answers.
   - □ local dishes □ North American dishes □ Italian dishes
   - □ Arab / Turk dishes □ Chinese/Vietnamese dishes □ Mexican dishes
   - □ vegetarian dishes

5. How often do you eat takeaway dishes? - You can mark several answers.
   - □ alone □ with family □ during events
   - □ with friends □ with colleagues from work/studies

7. What kind of dishes do you eat most often at the place of purchase? - You can mark several answers.
   - □ pizza □ local, traditional dishes □ kebabs/gyros
   - □ pasta □ salads □ soups □ hot dogs/burgers
   - □ hot sandwich baguette casserole □ other: 

8. What kind of takeaway dishes do you purchase the most often? - You can mark several answers.
   - □ pizza □ local, traditional dishes □ kebabs/gyros
   - □ pasta □ salads □ soups □ hot dogs / burgers
   - □ hot sandwich baguette casserole □ other:

9. How often has the quality of your meal been poor? – Mark one answer.
   - □ very often □ from time to time
   - □ never

10. How often do you complain when the quality of your meal has been poor? – Mark one answer.
    - □ very often □ from time to time
    - □ never

11. What kind of quality problems do you have the most often in meals you have bought, if any? – - You can mark several answers
    - □ finding natural foreign objects (stones, seeds, pieces of bone) □ strange flavour
    - □ hot meal was not sufficiently warm □ finding mould
    - □ finding insects □ abdominal pain after meal
    - □ finding glass or other foreign objects □ finding plastic foreign objects
    - □ Poor taste of dishes □ unsightly interior decoration
    - □ price not adequate to quality □ no playground for children
    - □ poor service □ lack of cleanliness
    - □ foreign bodies found in dishes □ poor state of cutlery, plates and packages and technical equipment
    - □ poor location of restaurant □ other: 

12. About you – Mark one option in each section.
    - Age: □ 18-24 □ 25-30
    - Sex: □ female □ male
    - Marital status: □ single
    - □ family up to 3 persons □ family above 4 persons
    - Employment: □ yes □ no
    - Place of origin: □ small town till 200 000 citizens
    - □ medium city 200 000 – 500 000 citizens □ big city above 500 000 citizens
    - □ Live alone or together with other people: □ alone
    - □ with partner □ with family/friends up to 3 persons □ with family/friends above 4 persons

13. Food allergy:
    - □ yes □ no
from a big city (mainly from Warsaw) often ate out only once (15%); those coming from medium cities, more than 3 times (10%); and those living in towns, twice (15.5%). Whether or not the subject lived alone influenced the frequency of eating out: people living alone most often ate out once a week (11.5%); people living with a partner, twice (11.5%), those living together with up to 3 people, who were not partners, twice (14.5%); and with 4 people or more, once a week (8.5%).

On the other hand, among Greeks, the frequency of eating out on weekdays was significantly influenced by age ($p = .017699$). Greeks, between the ages of 18–24, most often ate out once a week (18%); and in the age 25–30 group, hardly ever (16.5%). Other socio-demographic factors did not influenced statistically on the frequency of eating out on weekdays.

In the case of eating out during the weekend, there was greater diversity and the influence of socio-demographic factors on the behaviour of Poles and Greeks could be observed. Among Poles as many as five, and among Greeks, only two, factors significantly influenced the decision

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**Table 2.** The socio-demographic characteristics of Polish and Greek young adults taking part in the survey.

**Tabla 2.** Características sociodemográficas de los jóvenes polacos y griegos que participaron en la encuesta.

| Factors                  | Variants | Poland | Greece |
|--------------------------|----------|--------|--------|
| Age                      | 18-24 lat| 51.5%  | 57%    |
|                          | 25-30    | 48.5%  | 43%    |
| Sex                      | female   | 50%    | 50%    |
|                          | male     | 50%    | 50%    |
| Food allergy             | no       | 100%   | 100%   |
|                          | yes      | 0%     | 0%     |
| Education                | secondary| 45.5%  | 40%    |
|                          | higher   | 54.5%  | 60%    |
| Marital status           | single   | 49%    | 65%    |
|                          | family up to 3 persons | 32.5% | 21% |
|                          | family above 4 persons | 18.5% | 14% |
| Employment (currently)   | yes      | 64.5%  | 28.5%  |
|                          | no       | 35.5%  | 71.5%  |
| Place of origin          | small town| 30%   | 22%    |
|                          | medium city| 28%  | 17%    |
|                          | big city | 42%    | 61%    |
| Living alone or together with other people | alone | 28% | 14% | |
|                          | with partner | 26.5% | 4.5% |
|                          | with family/friend up to 3 persons | 24.5% | 61% |
|                          | with family/friend above 4 persons | 21% | 20.5% |

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**Figure 1.** The choices made the most often by Polish and Greek young adults when eating out (a) on weekdays, (b) at the weekend.

**Figura 1.** Elecciones más frecuentes de los jóvenes adultos polacos y griegos cuando comen fuera: a) entre semana, b) los fines de semana.

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**Figure 2.** How frequently Polish and Greek young adults ate out (a) on weekdays, (b) at the weekend.

**Figura 2.** Con qué frecuencia los jóvenes adultos polacos y griegos comieron fuera (a) durante la semana, (b) durante el fin de semana.
to eat out during the weekend (Table 3). Among Poles, the factors were: age ($p = 0.002080$), sex ($p = 0.010190$), marital status ($p = 0.000000$), place of origin ($p = 0.001338$) and living alone or with other people ($p = 0.000061$).

Having a job and education level did not significantly affect the eating out frequency of Poles. Over the weekend, people aged 25–30 were more likely to eat out once or twice (37%) than the 18–24 group, who usually ate out of the home only occasionally (18.5%). Women ate out more often over the weekend than men. Most often, women ate out once (20.5%), while men ate out, only occasionally (15.5%). However, the effects of marital status and family size were significant: singles and families of over 4 people ate out at weekends less often than families of up to 3 members (i.e. marriages without children and with only 1 child). Most singles indicated that they only ate out, from time to time (18%). Eighteen percent of families of up to 3 people ate out over the weekend and only 8% of families of over 4 people. The place of origin influenced the frequency of eating out over the weekend as follows: Poles coming from big cities most often eat out over the weekend, twice (16.5%); those from medium cities, once (16%); and small towns, only occasionally (17.5%). Living together with other people also significantly influenced eating out behaviour. People living with a partner eat out most often at weekends (once – 17%). Among Greeks, there were two factors that significantly affected eating out during the weekend: gender ($p = 0.036230$) and level of education ($p = 0.034605$). As in the case of Poles, women ate out more often than men. Women most often eat out, from time to time, and once (26% and 15%), while for men the figures were 19% and 16%, respectively. The largest group among the Greek eating out over the weekend were people with higher education; they ate out, from time to time (27%) and, once (19%). Also, among Greeks with secondary education, eating out during the weekend most frequently took place, from time to time (15%) and, once (12%). In the remaining groups, no statistically significant differences were found.

In choosing a place to eat out (question 3), young Poles and Greeks were guided by different criteria (Figure 3).

In both countries, an important selection criterion was the recommendation of friends and acquaintances (Poles 55.5%, Greeks 65%). However, the least important for both Poles and Greeks (less than 20%) were: the opportunity to buy meals without allergens, the decoration of the premises and the origin of the ingredients used to prepare the meals. Statistical analysis showed that some criteria were more important in Poland than in Greece and vice versa. Significant differences were observed with respect to 7 of the 12 possible criteria. For Poles, the most important were: professional service ($p = 0.000000$), the popularity of the establishment ($p = 0.000629$), the availability of dishes without allergens ($p = 0.009496$) and the location ($p = 0.000000$). For Greeks, the most important were: the price of meal ($p = 0.000000$), the interior decoration ($p = 0.000161$) and the option of being able to order small or large portions ($p = 0.000621$).

Figure 3. The reasons of choosing particular establishments for eating out.

Figura 3. Razones para elegir determinados establecimientos para comer fuera.
3.2. *Preferences relating to meals consumed outside the home*

The study also compared the preferences of young Poles and Greeks, when consuming meals away from home, with respect to: different cuisines (question 4), the purchase of take-away meals (questions 5 and 6) and preferences for specific dishes (questions 7 and 8). In order to determine the preferences for the type of cuisine, calculations were made using cluster analysis (Figure 4).

Cluster analysis identified 4 clusters containing kinds of meals most often eaten away from home by young Poles and Greeks (Figure 4). Poles were most keen to eat North American dishes like burgers and hot dogs (cluster 4: 64%), followed by local cuisine (cluster 1: 52.5%) and Italian cooking (cluster 2: 29.5%). Least frequently eaten by Poles were meals belonging to cluster 3 (15.5%): Arabian/Turkish, Chinese/Vietnamese, Japanese, Mexican and vegetarian dishes. Greeks preferred local cuisine (cluster 1: 73%), followed by American and Italian dishes (cluster 3: 57.3%). They ate Arabian/Turkish dishes (cluster 2: 49%) slightly less often, and least frequently of all: Chinese/Vietnamese, Japanese, Mexican and vegetarian meals (cluster 4: 15.4%).

*Figure 4.* Cluster analysis diagram made on the basis of similar types of cuisine preferences among (a) Polish, and (b) Greek young adults.

*Figura 4.* Diagrama de análisis de conglomerados elaborado a partir de tipos similares de referencias culinarias entre los jóvenes adultos (a) polacos y (b) griegos.
With respect to takeaway dishes, respondents were asked about the frequency of their purchases (question 5) and how such dishes were consumed (question 6). There were no significant differences in the behaviour of Poles and Greeks regarding the frequency of buying takeaway meals. Both Poles and Greeks most often bought takeaway meals, from time to time (44.16% and 43.33%, respectively); then hardly ever (24.58% and 18.33%, respectively); very often (8.75% and 12.9%, respectively); and never (5.8% and 8.75%, respectively). On the other hand, significant differences were observed relating to the way takeaway meals were consumed. These differences were found in all variants of the answer with one exception: eating together with colleagues from work or college (16.5% and 17%, respectively).

In Poland and Greece, the largest group of consumers declared that they ate takeaway meals, e.g., in a restaurant, bar, or near to a street food vendor (question 7), and which dishes do they buy as takeaway meals and consume outside the place of purchase (question 8). Fifteen different dishes, which were typical and occur in both countries were investigated. A comparison was made of the dishes which were most often consumed by Poles and Greeks (Figure 5). In the case of dishes bought and eaten at the place of purchase, it was found that Poles and Greeks chose different dishes. In the case of 14 out of 15 dishes there were significant differences in the frequency of their consumption. Poles, considerably more often than Greeks, chose 4 out of 15 dishes. These were: kebab/gyros (37% and 24%, respectively; t = 0.004670), salads (33.5% and 18%, respectively; t = 0.000368), dumplings (8% and 3%, respectively; t = 0.018104) and hot sandwich baguette/casserole (4% and none, respectively; t = 0.002346).

However, other dishes were more often chosen by Greeks than Poles, especially souvlakia (70% and 1%, respectively; t = 0.00), pizza (58.5% and 34.5%, respectively; t = 0.000001), and hot dogs/burgers (52% and 41%, respectively; t = 0.027437). A common and similar characteristic of both young Poles and Greeks was that soups were consumed only rarely (differences not significant).

A similar degree of differentiation was observed when purchasing different kinds of takeaway dishes. At a very similar frequency level (differences not significant) Poles and Greeks bought 4 out of 15 dishes to take away: hot dogs/burgers (33.5% and 39.5%, respectively), salads (27.5% and 26.5%, respectively), sushi (13.5% and 13%, respectively) and dumplings (4.5% and 3, respectively). Poles actually bought soups more often than Greeks (31% and 2%, respectively) and hot sandwich baguette casseroles (28.5% and 4%, respectively). However, certain dishes were significantly more often bought to take out in Greece than in Poland, souvlakia (90.0% and 0.5% respectively), and pizzas (70.5% and 40%), being the most popular (Table 4). There appeared to be no relationship between socio-demographic factors and the consumption of takeaway dishes.

4. Discussion

One of the risk factors for obesity is eating out (Binkley et al., 2000; Naska et al., 2007). Many authors indicate that eating out is associated with a diet consisting of higher energy and
Table 4. Preferences of Polish and Greek young adults towards particular meals eaten out and takeaway. *Ns* – not significant.

| Dishes                   | Poland | Greece | *t* - student test coefficient | Poland | Greece | *t* - student test coefficient |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Pizza                    | 34.5   | 58.5   | 0.000000                       | 40.0   | 70.5   | 0.000000                       |
| Traditional meals        | 7.0    | 26.0   | 0.000000                       | 17.5   | 45.0   | 0.000000                       |
| Kebabs/gyros             | 37.0   | 24.0   | 0.004670                       | 16.5   | 32.0   | 0.000028                       |
| Pasta                    | 4.0    | 25.0   | 0.000000                       | 11.5   | 27.5   | 0.000004                       |
| Salads                   | 33.5   | 18.0   | 0.000368                       | 27.5   | 26.5   | ns                             |
| Soups                    | 3.0    | 2.0    | ns                             | 31.0   | 2.0    | 0.000000                       |
| Hot dogs/burgers         | 41.0   | 52.0   | 0.017243                       | 33.5   | 39.5   | ns                             |
| Hot sandwich baguette casserole | 4.5 | 0.0   | 0.002346                       | 28.5   | 4.0    | 0.000000                       |
| Sushi                    | 0.0    | 15.0   | 0.000000                       | 13.5   | 13.0   | ns                             |
| Dumplings                | 8.5    | 3.0    | 0.018104                       | 4.5    | 3.0    | ns                             |
| Squeezed juices          | 0.0    | 12.0   | 0.000000                       | 3.0    | 21.5   | 0.000000                       |
| Fruits                   | 0.0    | 2.0    | 0.0044550                      | 0.0    | 7.0    | 0.000127                       |
| Sandwiches               | 26.5   | 50.0   | 0.000001                       | 14.0   | 52.5   | 0.000000                       |
| Souvlakia/shashlik       | 1.0    | 74.0   | 0.000000                       | 0.5    | 90.0   | 0.000000                       |
| Others                   | 0.0    | 5.5    | 0.000713                       | 0.0    | 4.5    | 0.002346                       |

As discussed above, the behaviour of young Poles and Greeks when eating out was different. Both were more likely to eat out on the weekend than on weekdays. However, contrary to our expectations, Greeks significantly more often ate at home than Poles, both on weekdays and at weekends. This may result from the cultivation of the tradition of a midday break or siesta, usually between 2 pm and 5 pm, which is a part of the daily routine in Greece. Traditionally in Greece it is the time to go home, have a big meal with the family and then to sleep for an hour or two (Naska et al., 2015). In Poland there is no habit of a midday break before finishing work or classes at university; people do not go back to their homes for quiet rest and meals (Mazurek-Kusiak et al., 2019). Probably this is why this research has shown that Poles more often than Greeks eat outside the home, and if at home it is only after work. However, it should be emphasized that among the Poles surveyed definitely more people than among the Greeks had a job which meant of necessity having to eat more often outside the home. On the other hand, eating out voluntarily to a greater degree was typical of weekends, but even then it was the Poles, more often than the Greeks, that ate out, and in both groups eating at home fell by half. This indicates that at the weekend both Poles and Greeks eat out of the home more willingly than on weekdays. Regardless of this, it is worth adding that in the studies of many authors it has been shown that a siesta reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases (Bursztyn, 2013; Díaz-Gutierrez et al., 2018; Naska et al., 2007; Sayón-Orea et al., 2013). Cardiovascular diseases are very common among Polish society, and it is known that they start to develop in the period of youth (Bursztyn, 2013; Carnethon et al., 2003).

Both Poles and Greeks belong to the less prosperous nations of the EU, and this is also reflected in the choices they make when eating out. From Monday to Friday, if eating out, they mostly chose various forms of street food. On the other hand, during the weekend more people use restaurants and bars, especially in Greece, while street food still remains the main choice in Poland. Despite this, analyzing the criteria for choosing a place to eat gives interesting insights. For Greeks, the most important criterion was the price of meals, and for Poles, that the establishment should be in an attractive, fashionable location. This observation is in line with current economic trends in both countries, i.e., the economic crisis in Greece and continued economic growth in Poland. In effect, Greeks expect further falls in income levels, and are forced to look for more savings, while Poles find themselves in the opposite situation, thanks to which they can finally afford a bit of luxury in the form of eating in fashionable, and therefore more expensive places (Eurostat, 2019; Sakare et al., 2019; Zavaras et al., 2016). Teuchero and Suarez (2018) found that expenditure on eating out decreased during the worst years of the economic crisis. Although those studies concerned Spain, Greece is in a similar, or inferior, economic situation and both countries belong to the group of Mediterranean EU

saturated fat intake and lower consumption of minerals and vitamins, which can lead to excess energy and weight gain (Lachat et al., 2012; Nordström & Thunstrom, 2015; Zeng & Zeng, 2018). However, this relationship applies mostly to the consumption of so-called fast food. Regardless of the above, certainly eating out is in many cases more than just consuming foodstuffs, there are also other factors, all of which can affect food related sensations. Such factors include: the room’s décor, service, cleanliness and hygiene, the location, but above all, the company of others as an important component of sociability (Edwards, 2013; Liu & Lee Ming, 2018).

It is apparent that the frequency of eating out is dependent on latitude, for example, in the southern EU countries it is more frequent than in the Nordic countries (Díaz-Mendez & García-Espejo, 2017; Lund & Kjærnes, 2017). Many authors point out that, especially in the southern EU countries located on the Mediterranean, spending time away from home and actively participating in social life is part of the tradition and daily routine. This also applies to eating out, especially among friends; while eating together is an important factor of social integration (Díaz-Mendez & García-Espejo, 2017; Herrera-Racionero & Lizcano, 2018; Truchero & Castano Suarez, 2018). This points out that eating out is a cultural habit that is widespread among the people of southern Europe, regardless of sociodemographic factors. However, this research has shown that this is not entirely true. Young Poles eat out more often than Greeks. It can be conditioned by many factors. One of the reasons could be the long-lasting economic crisis in Greece, and in Poland the constant development of the economy and the growing wealth of society. This is partially confirmed by the results of this research, according to which in Greece nearly 70% of the young adults taking part in the study were currently unemployed, while in Poland this applied to only only 35%. The absence of a stable income can certainly affect lifestyle, including the frequency and criteria for the choice of meals when eating out. That is why, among Greeks, the main criterion was the price of dishes, while among Poles it was the location of the gastronomic establishment, preferably in a fashionable location. Health, food safety and food borne diseases issues were not important for young adults from both countries (Czarniecka-Skubina et al., 2018; Trafialek et al., 2016, 2015).
countries with a similar culinary culture. Despite the crisis, eating out is still an important component of social life in these countries. However, in recent years, in the Mediterranean countries of the EU, there has been a decline in the number of bars and other establishments for eating out (Cabiedes-Miragaya, 2017). It seems that this is related to the destructive impact of the economic crisis on small businesses such as bars, street food vendors and small restaurants.

It was also noticed that, from Monday to Friday, young people were less likely to eat out when they came from a large city, i.e. mainly from Warsaw. They are people whose family home is in this city and have the opportunity of eating at home or with their parents. However, people from smaller towns, currently living away from the family home, often ate out. On the other hand, the opposite trend was observed at weekends, when Poles coming from a big city often ate out more often than those from smaller towns. This is probably because some of the young people coming from smaller towns went back home for the weekend, and those from the big city had more time go out and use catering services at weekends. On the other hand, there were no such relationships among the Greeks, perhaps due to the habit of resting at home during a siesta, where one also eats a hearty meal (Naska et al., 2007).

Interestingly, this research showed that young women, both in Poland and in Greece, ate out more often than men. This could indicate an increase in the independence of young women in both these quite conservative societies. However, a survey of 11 EU countries, including Poland and Greece, showed that substantial eating out of the home was more common among men (Mill et al., 2018; Naska et al., 2007). Similarly, Mill et al. (2018) showed that, in the UK, eating out was more often associated with being a man. In turn, Adams et al. (2015) also in research carried out in the UK found that there were no gender differences in the consumption of meals out of the home. However, the survey of Naska et al. (2015) previously referred to, included participants over 35 years old, Mill et al. (2018) – over 30 years old and Adams et al. (2015) – younger and older subjects, while in our study only young adults were taken into consideration. Moreover, Adams et al. found that in the UK, almost one third of adults (on average taking both younger and older subjects into account) ate out once a week or more. In our study, young adults, both in Poland and Greece, ate out much often. This observation is supported by findings of Naska et al. (2015) who showed that eating out was much frequent among younger participants of the survey. It is obvious that twenty-year olds willingly go out of the home in their free time to meet friends also to eat together more often than older people. It is because eating out is more than just consuming a meal but also an important and necessary component of sociability at this age (Edwards, 2013). Eating out of in the next years of life can decrease and then increase again in old age, as was shown by Thomas and Emond (2017).

6. Conclusions

Young adult consumers in Poland and Greece, living in the capitals of these countries, exhibited different behaviour when eating outside the home. A common feature in both countries was frequent eating out at the weekend. However, Poles more often than Greeks, ate out on weekdays as well as at weekends. The frequency and criteria for choosing places to eat out were different in both countries. The most important criterion for Poles was that the establishment should be in a fashionable location, while for Greeks, it was the price of the meal. The preferences of Poles and Greeks regarding the type of cuisine were similar. In both countries, besides local dishes, young adults most often preferred North American and Italian cuisine. However, the preference for local dishes was greater among Greeks. The behaviour of Poles and Greeks regarding takeaway dishes was similar as regards the frequency of such meals, but different in terms of how they were eaten. Greeks, more often than Poles, ate takeaway dishes with their friends and family, while Poles, more often than Greeks, ate them alone. Interestingly, young women, both in Poland and Greece, more often eat out than men.

Disclosure statement

All authors declare no conflict of interest in this paper.

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