

# GLOBALISATION AND ALIMENTARY CONSUMPTION: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC CRITERIA IN THE CASE OF GREECE (1957-2005)

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## Abstract

*In this paper we examine the alimentary consumption in Greece, from a socio-economic perspective. The reference years discussed span the period from 1957 to 2005. Emphasis is given on the recent years of globalisation, and the radical changes that have almost brought about an alimentary crisis. Our study tries to contribute to the understanding of the causes behind those changes of the alimentary patterns and their consequences. This takes place through the analysis of economic aspects of the consumption patterns of different economic-vocational layers of the population. We also try to understand the relevance of other social processes.*

JEL Classification: E21, Q11, M31

**Key words:** economic variables, «globalisation», consumption, dietary patterns.

## Introduction

There are not any existing academic studies investigating the post-war alimentary consumption of different economic layers of the Greek population from an economic perspective per se. However mention is made on this topic from studies examining consumer behavior and economic demand of a specific product or a category of products (Kevork 1962, Drakatos 1963, Eksarhos 1977, Karapostolis 1979, 1983, Katsouyanni et al. 1989, Michalopoulos and, Demoussis 2001, Lazaridis 2003). A major data source on the subject matter is the annual Household Budget Surveys conducted by the National Statistical Service of Greece (H.B.S. 1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05).

**Table 1. Alimentary Consumption Patterns in Greece, 1957-2005, (%).**

|    | Alimentary Categories              | H.B.S.<br>'57/58 | H.B.S.<br>'63/64 | H.B.S.<br>1974 | H.B.S.<br>'81/82 | H.B.S.<br>'87/88 | H.B.S.<br>'93/94 | H.B.S.<br>'98/99 | H.B.S.<br>'04/05 |
|----|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1  | Cereal                             | 15,6             | 16,9             | 9,7            | 8,6              | 8,8              | 10,0             | 8,7              | 8,6              |
| 2  | Meat                               | 16,1             | 14,6             | 25,9           | 26,7             | 23,2             | 20,2             | 15,1             | 14,4             |
| 3  | Fish                               | 5,3              | 6,5              | 4,5            | 5,0              | 4,7              | 5,0              | 5,1              | 5,4              |
| 4  | Oils and fat                       | 11,1             | 10,2             | 8,5            | 6,6              | 4,8              | 4,2              | 3,5              | 3,6              |
| 5  | Dairy                              | 12,1             | 8,1              | 11,6           | 11,9             | 12,6             | 13,0             | 12,0             | 12,0             |
| 6  | Vegetable                          | 10,0             | 8,8              | 9,9            | 8,8              | 8,2              | 8,4              | 8,1              | 7,5              |
| 7  | Fruit                              | 8,0              | 5,1              | 7,9            | 7,1              | 7,6              | 6,3              | 5,4              | 4,9              |
| 8  | Sugar-based, pastries.             | 6,4              | 8,3              | 6,8            | 4,8              | 5,3              | 4,7              | 4,0              | 4,2              |
| 9  | Other food                         | 0,9              | 1,1              | 1,3            | 0,6              | 0,9              | 0,9              | 0,6              | 0,9              |
| 10 | Expenditure on food away from home | 12,3             | 12,8             | 8,9            | 17,4             | 21,1             | 24,4             | 33,7             | 34,7             |

|    | <b>Alimentary Categories</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'57/58</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'63/64</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>1974</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'81/82</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'87/88</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'93/94</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'98/99</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'04/05</b> |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11 | <i>Non-alcoholic drinks*</i> | 2,1                      | 7,6                      | 5,0                    | 2,3                      | 2,8                      | 3,0                      | 3,7                      | 3,7                      |
|    | <i>Total</i>                 | 100                      | 100                      | 100                    | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |

\*(including ice-creams in H.B.S. 1957/58).

*Data Source: ESYE, H.B.S. 1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05.*

The qualitative description and analysis of the alimentary consumption of each demographic category that takes place here highlights the similarities, differences, convergence and divergence existing among these socio-economic classes both in the same time period and diachronically. In that manner we manage a more complete description of the examined alimentation patterns by stressing: existing particularities; the extent and intensity of observed behaviours; and the demographic classes that lead and/or follow the introduction of those alimentary consumption changes. By doing so we set the socio-economic grounds for understanding, explaining, and interpreting the causes that formulated the specific consumption patterns and their redevelopment in the examined period (see table 1).

In contemporary societies food is not a simple utilitarian product but “goods...are inputs and in which the output is a collection of characteristics” (Lancaster 1966: 133, Georgakopoulos and Thomson 2005, Georgakopoulos et al. 2006, Georgakopoulos et al. 2008). In addition alimentation patterns evolve within a fluid and constantly changing socio-economic environment that affects their development (Deaton 1992: 104).

### **The alimentary consumption of different economic layers of the population**

The description and analysis of the alimentation of the different economic layers of the Greek population highlight the differences existing in the respective consuming behaviour; differences between: a) specific income categories of the population for the same time period; b) within the same income classes for different time frames; but mainly between c) the population classes that instigate and lead those changes and d) the directions towards those changes lead to.

During the traditional alimentary era of the 50s and 60s (Sotiropoulos et al. 2008) there was a predominance of the higher income earning layers of the population in the consumption of the recently introduced meat-based food products, and away from home expenditure. Despite this, however, changes in the structure of traditional alimentation were not as radical as they have been in the 90s and 00s.

In the last two decades expenditure away from home consists of half of the total alimentary expenditure of the high earning layers of the population. Only meat-based and dairy products maintain a 10% participation approximately in the total alimentary expenditure; all other food categories have shrunk to very small percentages of participation (see table 2).

**Table 2. Alimentary Expenditure of the Higher Income Earning Layers of the Greek Population, 1957 – 2005, (%)**

|    | <b>Alimentary Categories</b>              | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'57/58</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'63/64</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>1974</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'81/82</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'87/88</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'93/94</b> | <b>H.B.S.'98/99</b> | <b>H.B.S.<br/>'04/05</b> |
|----|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | <i>Cereal</i>                             | 9,8                      | 19,5                     | 5,4                    | 6,3                      | 6,6                      | 8,4                      | 5,9                 | 6,5                      |
| 2  | <i>Meat</i>                               | 19,9                     | 18,7                     | 22,2                   | 24,4                     | 21,8                     | 19,1                     | 11,6                | 12,6                     |
| 3  | <i>Fish</i>                               | 5,8                      | 3,9                      | 3,3                    | 4,4                      | 4,2                      | 4,9                      | 4,7                 | 5,2                      |
| 4  | <i>Oils</i>                               | 8,7                      | 13,2                     | 16,4                   | 8,8                      | 3,5                      | 3,8                      | 2,3                 | 3,2                      |
| 5  | <i>Dairy</i>                              | 11,5                     | 7,6                      | 9,8                    | 11,7                     | 11,2                     | 12,0                     | 9,2                 | 9,8                      |
| 6  | <i>Vegetable</i>                          | 12,1                     | 5,7                      | 5,8                    | 6,7                      | 6,3                      | 7,0                      | 5,4                 | 5,5                      |
| 7  | <i>Fruit</i>                              | 5,6                      | 5,4                      | 6,7                    | 7,2                      | 7,0                      | 6,0                      | 4,2                 | 4,1                      |
| 8  | <i>Sugar-based, pastries.</i>             | 6,6                      | 9,2                      | 7,4                    | 5,1                      | 5,7                      | 5,1                      | 3,9                 | 3,9                      |
| 9  | <i>Expenditure on food away from home</i> | 16,9                     | 14,9                     | 17,7                   | 22,5                     | 29,8                     | 29,6                     | 49,1                | 45,9                     |
| 10 | <i>Non-alcoholic drinks</i>               | 0,7                      | 1,1                      | 1,6                    | 1,1                      | 1,8                      | 2,1                      | 2,0                 | 3,4                      |

|    | <b>Alimentary Categories</b> | <b>H.B.S. '57/58</b> | <b>H.B.S. '63/64</b> | <b>H.B.S. 1974</b> | <b>H.B.S. '81/82</b> | <b>H.B.S. '87/88</b> | <b>H.B.S. '93/94</b> | <b>H.B.S. '98/99</b> | <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b> |
|----|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 11 | <i>Other food</i>            | 2,4                  | 0,7                  | 3,6                | 1,7                  | 2,1                  | 1,9                  | 1,6                  | 0,8                  |
|    | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           |

*Data Source: ESYE, H.B.S.1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05*

In contrast, alimentary consumption patterns of the lower income-earning layers of the population (see table 3) have changed very little in the last fifty years (there has been a small increase on meat-based products, dairy, and away from home expenditure with a corresponding small decrease on the plant-based food categories of the traditional alimentation). Food expenses away from home absorb less than 10% of total alimentary costs, whereas expenditure on bread, cereal-based food, meat, and dairy products are at much higher levels (greater than 14%).

Thus it appears that higher-earners tend to adopt the international alimentary behaviour patterns (Herpin and Verger 2000: 47, Sotiropoulos et al. 2008), whereas lower earners only slightly change their food consuming behaviour during these years.

**Table 3. Alimentary Expenditure of the Lower Income Earning Layers of the Greek Population, 1957 – 2005, (%)**

|    | <b>Alimentary Categories</b>              | <b>H.B.S. '57/58</b> | <b>H.B.S. '63/64</b> | <b>H.B.S. 1974</b> | <b>H.B.S. '81/82</b> | <b>H.B.S. '87/88</b> | <b>H.B.S. '93/94</b> | <b>H.B.S. '98/99</b> | <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b> |
|----|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1  | <i>Cereal</i>                             | 21,9                 | 19,6                 | 23,7               | 15,5                 | 14,6                 | 17,5                 | 16,3                 | 14,3                 |
| 2  | <i>Meat</i>                               | 13,1                 | 9,1                  | 18,9               | 27,3                 | 21,9                 | 20,2                 | 17,6                 | 16,5                 |
| 3  | <i>Fish</i>                               | 4,7                  | 11,7                 | 6,4                | 8,7                  | 6,7                  | 5,3                  | 7,7                  | 6,6                  |
| 4  | <i>Oil</i>                                | 13,3                 | 11,0                 | 4,7                | 3,4                  | 6,4                  | 7,3                  | 6,2                  | 6,8                  |
| 5  | <i>Dairy</i>                              | 10,9                 | 4,6                  | 8,1                | 10,4                 | 13,9                 | 17,2                 | 16,9                 | 17,1                 |
| 6  | <i>Vegetable</i>                          | 14,2                 | 14,8                 | 13,9               | 9,7                  | 10,7                 | 11,5                 | 11,8                 | 12,4                 |
| 7  | <i>Fruit</i>                              | 4,0                  | 4,4                  | 6,7                | 7,0                  | 9,3                  | 7,2                  | 7,0                  | 7,3                  |
| 8  | <i>Sugar-based, pastries</i>              | 7,2                  | 11,1                 | 6,7                | 4,2                  | 3,9                  | 3,3                  | 3,1                  | 4,7                  |
| 9  | <i>Expenditure on food away from home</i> | 7,1                  | 8,7                  | 5,8                | 10,0                 | 9,9                  | 7,0                  | 9,4                  | 9,9                  |
| 10 | <i>Non-alcoholic drinks</i>               | 0,1                  | 2,6                  | 1,4                | 0,6                  | 0,8                  | 1,3                  | 1,2                  | 3,7                  |
| 11 | <i>Other food</i>                         | 3,4                  | 2,4                  | 3,6                | 3,1                  | 1,9                  | 2,1                  | 2,9                  | 0,8                  |
|    | <b>Total</b>                              | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           | <b>100</b>           |

*Data Source: ESYE, H.B.S.1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05*

The above argument is of particular importance if linked with an examination of the undergone level of treatment of different alimentary categories through an analysis of the technical features of that processing (Sotiropoulos and Ntemousis 2002: 463). If technical criteria (agricultural/industrial – see Sotiropoulos et al. 2008) are considered (see table 1.3), the alimentary consumption of higher income earning layers of the population could be characterised as based on «the processing of animal based ingredients» in the 70s, as «tertiarised» after the 80s (H.B.S.1987/88), and as consumption «away from home» after the end of the 90s. On the contrary, the alimentary habits of the lower income-earning layers of the population never truly left their rural features behind, even though there has been a weakening in the dietary participation of the plant-based in favour of animal-based food ingredients over the years.

**Table 4. Consumption Structure of Cereal, Meat, and Legume-Vegetable Based Products in Higher and Lower Income Earners, 1957 – 2005, (%)**

|               | <b>Lower Income Layers</b> |                      | <b>Higher Income Layers</b> |                      |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
|               | <b>H.B.S. '57/58</b>       | <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b> | <b>H.B.S. '57/58</b>        | <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b> |
| <b>Cereal</b> |                            |                      |                             |                      |
| <i>Bread</i>  | 66,1                       | 57,6                 | 63,5                        | 42,9                 |

|                                                   | <b>Lower Income Layers</b> |                      | <b>Higher Income Layers</b> |                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
|                                                   | <b>H.B.S. '57/58</b>       | <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b> | <b>H.B.S. '57/58</b>        | <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b> |
| <i>Flour - based</i>                              | 10,8                       | 4,1                  | 5,9                         | 3,5                  |
| <i>Processed Cereal</i>                           | 15,2                       | 31,6                 | 23,2                        | 47,7                 |
| <i>Rice</i>                                       | 7,9                        | 6,7                  | 7,4                         | 5,9                  |
| <b>Meat</b>                                       |                            |                      |                             |                      |
| <i>Beef</i>                                       | 10,3                       | 0,6                  | 4,9                         | 0,8                  |
| <i>Veal</i>                                       | 32,8                       | 39,3                 | 42,6                        | 39,7                 |
| <i>Total (Beef + Veal)</i>                        | 43,1                       | 39,9                 | 47,5                        | 40,5                 |
| <i>Sheep and Goat meat</i>                        | 11,8                       | 2,0                  | 0,8                         | 0,8                  |
| <i>Lamb and Kid meat</i>                          | 25,0                       | 12,8                 | 30,3                        | 15,4                 |
| <i>Total (Sheep + Lamb)</i>                       | 36,8                       | 14,8                 | 31,1                        | 16,4                 |
| <i>Pork</i>                                       | 2,9                        | 14,2                 | 1,1                         | 14,6                 |
| <i>Poultry</i>                                    | 8,3                        | 23,3                 | 11,3                        | 13,6                 |
| <i>Frozen Meat</i>                                | 4,4                        | 0,8                  | 1,5                         | 0,8                  |
| <i>Processed Meat</i>                             | 2,5                        | 6,7                  | 4,4                         | 12,9                 |
| <i>Other Meat,<br/>(organs, intestines, etc.)</i> | 2,0                        | 1,7                  | 2,9                         | 2,3                  |
| <b>Legumes-Vegetables</b>                         |                            |                      |                             |                      |
| <i>Legumes</i>                                    | 17,2                       | 9,4                  | 7,4                         | 4,9                  |
| <i>Potatoes</i>                                   | 17,2                       | 17,6                 | 14,7                        | 14,5                 |
| <i>Fresh Vegetables*</i>                          | 66,1                       | 57,7                 | 77,9                        | 59,5                 |
| <i>Processed Vegetables,<br/>(tomato paste)</i>   |                            | 11,1                 |                             | 17,5                 |

\* including tomato paste in H.B.S.1957/58.

Data Source: ESYE, H.B.S.1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05

Consumption structure of cereal, meat, legumes, vegetables and away from home expenditure is indicative. In the cereal category, rural products decrease their participation in the total consumption with a corresponding increase of industrialised-processed products. Flour and rice have a decreased participation in all different income earning layers of the population. A similar trend is noted for bread (a traditional rural-based processed product), especially for the higher earning layers, whereas processed neo-industrialised products (rusks, biscuits, etc.) significantly increase their appearance in the alimentation of all income earning classes by more than doubling their participation. The same alimentary behaviour is observed for processed meat-based products and vegetables. Higher earners (this includes average income levels and above and it applies as a general rule for all industrialised-processed products consumption) appear to have the highest preference levels of neo-industrialised products.

Traditional food categories (legumes, lamb-kid, other meat products such as animal organs, intestines, etc.) and fresh vegetables have a diachronic decrease in all income classes. Older animal meat products (beef, sheep, goat) and frozen meat are almost not consumed anymore especially by higher income categories of the population. In contrast some non-traditional (for the Greek context) alimentation based on potatoes, pork, and poultry («the poor's' meat» according to the popular French tradition) increase its participation in the dietary patterns of lower income earners.

On the basis of this information we argue in this paper that the alimentary environment constantly changes. There are strong differences in the alimentation of the same economic layers/classes of the population over time but also between different economic layers for the same time period. It is indicative for example the case of expenditure away from home (table 5). In the case of lower earnings layers, traditional cafes (kafenias) have always absorbed most of the costs associated with this expenditure. This is in total contrast with the behaviour of the higher income layers. Major proportions of the latter population spend more in restaurants for example and not in traditional cafes. However this picture is being altered (decreasing) in later years even though expenditure of the lower income layers in kafenia tends to increase. The above differences indicate particularities existing in the alimentary micro-environments of the respective economic layers of the population.

**Table 5. Cost Structure of Expenditure Away From Home For Lower And Higher Income Classes, 1957/58 and 2004/05, (%).**

| <b>H.B.S. 1957/58</b>                     | <b>All Households</b> | <b>Lower Income Classes</b> | <b>Higher Income Classes</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Expenditure on food away from home</i> | 100                   | 100                         | 100                          |
| <i>Restaurants</i>                        | 56,4                  | 42,8                        | 64,8                         |
| <i>Cafes (kafenía)</i>                    | 43,6                  | 57,2                        | 35,2                         |
| <b>H.B.S. 2004/05</b>                     |                       |                             |                              |
| <i>Expenditure on food away from home</i> | 100                   | 100                         | 100                          |
| <i>Restaurants</i>                        | 47,8                  | 27,6                        | 57,8                         |
| <i>Cafes (kafenía)</i>                    | 52,2                  | 72,4                        | 42,2                         |

*Data Source: ESYE, H.B.S.1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05.*

These alimentary environments can be described both by quantitative measures (the part of the income spent on alimentation away from home) and qualitative indicators. In the latter case for example the cost of a meal in a restaurant is much higher than the cost of a cup of coffee or a drink in a traditional cafe (kafenio). That (in accordance to data from the H.B.S. surveys) would mean many more visits in a cafe than in a restaurant in order to equalise those two cost categories. This would have implications for the amount of time spent in the premises, related activities and associations in the restaurant or in the cafe. These different dimensions are significant when examining the alimentary environments away from home and additional research is required for their description. Existing differences could have a widespread character highlighting significant divergences in the inter-layer features of the population's alimentation (and food consumption in general) in Greece on the basis of income earning characteristics (see table 6.a, β). The associated proportionate relationships (for example 1 to 5 approximately or greater, between higher and lower earners) may also be indicative of the existence of special features of these alimentary environments.

**Table 6a.b. Consumption and Alimentation (in Drachmas - 1957/58 and in Euro - 2004/05) and Percentages per H.B.S.. Economic Criteria.**

| <b>H.B.S. '57/58*</b>                         | <b>All Households</b> | <b>Up to 249</b> | <b>250-449</b> | <b>450-799</b> | <b>800-1.099</b> | <b>1.100-1.599</b> | <b>1.600 &amp; above</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Purchasing Expenditure (in Drachmas)    | 860,9                 | 304,2            | 519,9          | 761,3          | 1.082,60         | 1.337,90           | 2.275,80                 |
| Alimentation (in Drachmas)                    | 349,8                 | 156,2            | 247,6          | 340,8          | 435,9            | 499,8              | 694,5                    |
| Alimentation/Total Purchasing Expenditure (%) | 40,6                  | 51,3             | 47,6           | 44,8           | 40,3             | 37,4               | 30,5                     |

*\*In H.B.S. of 1957/58 and 1963/64 the data refer to «Weekly Revenues in Drachmas», whereas from 1974 - 1999 mention is made on «Total Monthly Purchasing Expenditure of Households».*

| <b>H.B.S. '04/05</b>                          | <b>All Households</b> | <b>Up to €750</b> | <b>€751-€1100</b> | <b>€1101-€1450</b> | <b>€1451-€1800</b> | <b>€1801-€2200</b> | <b>€2201-€2800</b> | <b>€2801-€3500</b> | <b>€3501 &amp; above</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Purchasing Expenditure (€)              | 1792,28               | 380,65            | 689,19            | 1011,33            | 1308,61            | 1632,78            | 2072,51            | 2582,95            | 4237,08                  |
| Alimentation (€)                              | 469,35                | 139,63            | 234,67            | 320,6              | 392,34             | 470,08             | 564,5              | 667,91             | 890,9                    |
| Alimentation/Total Purchasing Expenditure (%) | 26,2                  | 36,7              | 34,1              | 31,7               | 30,0               | 28,8               | 27,2               | 25,9               | 21,0                     |

*Data Source: ESYE, H.B.S.1957/58, 1963/64, 1974, 1981/82, 1987/88, 1993/94, 1998/99, 2004/05*

## Conclusions

The examination of alimentary consumption in post-war Greece using economic criteria demonstrates the changeable character of dietary behaviour both: a) over time; and b) within the identified different economic layers of the population:

a) During the 50s and 60s food consumption was taking place in the household with traditional, plant-based, rural products. Past the 70s and after the 80s alimentation is based on industrialised-processed, «away from home», meat-based food. b) Since the 50s several economic layers of the population start differentiating their dietary patterns (directors, self-employed professionals, employers, and higher income earning layers in general) and they are followed from other layers adopting at a greater or lesser extent and at different rates and priorities, the formers' behavior.

Alimentation has a different weighting in the consumption patterns of different economic classes of the population over time. The former has a smaller proportionate participation in the consumption expenditure of higher economic/social-status layers in contrast to what is observed for lower-earning classes. The diachronic character of this alimentary behaviour insinuates a greater significance on the impact economic-vocational attributes can have in affecting dietary patterns of consumption and for this reason a more systematic and specialized examination of this phenomenon is needed.

There is an observed gradual increase in the consumption of processed meat-based products both inside the household and «away from home» with a simultaneous decrease in the consumption of traditional, plant-based, localized, rural products. These generalized (western-origin) tendencies have been noted in the international literature since the 1980s and are widely known as «uniformisation» or «globalisation» of the dietary consumption patterns (see for example Galibert 1988, Fischler 1990). Similar reflections/problematisations are being made in the economic (Malassis 1986: 323) and biomedical science (Renaud 1995: 21, Trichopoulou 1989, 1997, 2000) literature.

The convergence of the traditional/local alimentary consumption patterns of postwar Greece to the international/western-origin ones and the «uniformisation» tendencies observed, involve all the different social-status layers of the population. This convergence takes place at different rates and forms. However this observation does not seem to apply if revenue criteria are examined since lower earners seem to maintain the traditional alimentary characteristics of the 50s.

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