SUSTAINABLE HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION: STATE AND PERSPECTIVES IN LITHUANIA

R. Dagiliūtė & G. Liobikienė
Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Presented by N.Mžavanadzė, Central European University, Hungary

Sustainable consumption'2008, Hungary

Structure of presentation

- Introduction
- Data and methodology
- Results:
  - Current trends of consumption
  - Consumers' attitudes and behaviour
- Conclusions

Introduction

- One of the most challenging and vital **policy debates** of our time.
- Household consumption is a **major cause** of increased environmental pressure.
- **Difficulties** in dealing with household sector: **dispersed but significant** sector, **many** decision-makers, environmental impact of each household is relatively **small**
- Household sector contributes to the **environmental problems** like climate change, air pollution, water pollution, and waste generation.
- Countries with transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe face the challenge of **Western consumption culture** impact.
- **The aim** of this study was to evaluate the main **changes of consumption patterns** (housing, mobility) in the household sector and prevailing **consumer attitudes and behaviour** in Lithuania, a typical post-Soviet country in transition.

Data and methods

1. Data of Lithuanian Statistical Office, Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat)
   - Time span 1995 – 2006
2. Quota sample structured survey in 2006
   - 343 respondents (52.6 % female and 47.4 % male)
   - Overall scale of consumers' attitudes and behaviour towards environment (Crombach α=0, 68)
   - Interrelationship analysis (Contingency and Kendall's τ_b correlation coefficients)

Household expenditure structure

- Lithuanian structure becomes **more similar to that of EU**.

- Though consumption for housing and mobility in Lithuania is **still smaller than in EU.** Compared to 1996, households in Lithuania tend to spend more for housing, mobility, recreation and leisure activities.

Final energy, electricity, thermal energy and water consumption, waste generation per capita and number of personal cars per 1000 inhabitants

- During the analyzed period overall final **energy consumption decreased by 7 %, water consumption by 44 %, and waste generation by 9 %.**
- From 2000 **thermal energy consumption increased by 7 %, electricity consumption by 45 %, waste generation by 6 %, final energy 8 %.**
- Between 1996 and 2006, the number of personal **cars per 1000 inhabitants grew nearly 2.5 times.**

Drivers of household consumption

- **Income** increased by 63 %
- **Household size** decreased by 15 % while per capita **living area** increased by 21%.
- **Ownership of home appliances** increased by 83 %, **electronic and communication tools** increased nearly twofold

Ranking of personal values (1 –most important, 9 – least important)

Emphasis on welfare and social security

Determinants for purchasing products

Only 13.7 % of respondents pay attention to the **environmentally friendly characteristics of the product** then purchasing it.
Price and efficiency - the most important factors for purchasing of products
Majority is willing to pay up to 10% for **eco-labeled** products

Changes in consumption during last five years

More than a half of respondents declared that in the last five years their **consumption increased** and the most significant was increase in number of **home appliances** (81.4 %)

Interrelationship between environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviour and socio-economic factors

Factor	Correlation	
	τ_b	p
Incomes	**0,189**	**0,002**
Age	**-0,225**	**0,000**
Education	0,044	0,46
Children	**0,134**	**0,028**
Household size	0,003	0,96
	c	
Marital status	0,162	0,502
Sex	0,082	0,511
Type of housing	0,207	0,36

- **Lower income - more sustainable lifestyle.**
- **Elderly saves more, young - consume more (travel, clothing. appliances)**
- **Household with a relatively higher number of children consume more electricity, generate more waste.**

Conclusions

- Recently growing personal mobility, final energy, thermal energy and especially electricity consumption indicates **growing environmental pressure from household sector** and threaten sustainability goals in Lithuania.
- Though different socio-economic factors are influencing sustainable attitudes and behaviour, survey results indicate that **consumption patterns are mostly determined by economical aspects** in Lithuania.
- Environmental education and information, eco-labelling together with provided infrastructure and appropriate other policy measures could **help to reshape consumption** to the more sustainable one.
- Project of renewed Lithuanian National **Strategy of Sustainable Development** and development of **National Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production** creates possibilities not only to put sustainable consumption to the political agenda, but together with the **Program of Education for Sustainable Development** to foster environmental consciousness of society in Lithuania.

Thank you!

r.dagiliute@gmf.vdu.lt
g.liobikiene@gmf.vdu.lt