Tax optimization of individuals in the context of savings and investing money by bank deposits and T-bonds in Poland

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***Abstract*— Savings and investing money are key issues for personal finances, strongly corresponding to the economies of developed countries, where citizens have the opportunity not only to settle their liabilities on an ongoing basis from their income, but also to accumulate funds for future plans. They may be aimed at both savings and investment purposes, the degree of risk of which varies depending on the selection of the financial instrument. The paper focuses on the assessment of the profitability of deposits and treasury bonds, in relation to the preferences of Polish customers of commercial banks, under proposed changes in the limitation of capital gains tax.**

Keywords— tax optimization capital gains tax, bank deposit, treasury bonds, investment, money savings.

I. INTRODUCTION

In times of prices volatility, the role of financial instruments is constantly growing. They limit economic phenomena that are unfavorable for the management of one's own funds, enabling additional income generated, among others, by: from the capital held or investments made, both short-term and long-term. In developed countries, bank customers often accumulate their funds. And financial planning appears to be one of the elements used to achieve them (Kotliński 2022, p. 61). Some of them are allocated to the accumulation (allocation) of financial resources for the future, e.g. pension insurance, implementation of plans, e.g. foreign trips, education and training, or investment needs, e.g. for the purchase of real estate or starting one's own business. Their scope, which results from the determination (willingness) of bank customers to invest funds in the form of savings, e.g. on bank deposits or savings accounts, depends on the degree of potential return, but also on the time horizon (the period of time for which the funds are "frozen"), the size of the planned future investment and finally the risk. Therefore, it seems right to diversify, i.e. diversify the portfolio of assets towards their allocation in such a way that the investment risk is limited as much as possible and the assets themselves are retained in the possibly unchanged (not reduced) value (Tarczyńska-Łuniewska, 2013).

It is worth pointing out that every client who invests or deposit savings is a taxpayer of personal income tax so he or she is interested in tax optimization. This is not about circumventing tax law, but about using all procedures permitted by law to obtain the greatest possible benefits through savings in tax liabilities. . Tax optimization is an activity that will reduce the fiscal burden, thanks to which the bank's client retains more financial resources, which he can allocate for further development in making investment decisions.

The paper aims is to identify and classify the basic forms of savings and investing money by commercial bank customers, as well as to examine the relationship between investing and savings in post-pandemic times, but also to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What is the difference between money savings and money investing in the context of resource allocation scheme for individuals?

Q2: Does the type of investment determine the degree of potential risk and what are the factors determining it?

Q3: How may the planned changes in polish capital gains tax affect money savings?

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Q4: How are Poles' savings shaped in the context of uniform structure of balanced investment portfolio?

Q5: How will changes in tax law affect the individual tax optimization of a commercial bank clients?

As a part of the structure of the paper, the research agenda includes a review of the source literature in finance and analysis of the current data on the reference interest rates of the National Bank of Poland, in the context of inflation changes and preferences for savings and accumulating funds by Poles as individual bank clients, including proposed legislative changes in taxes.

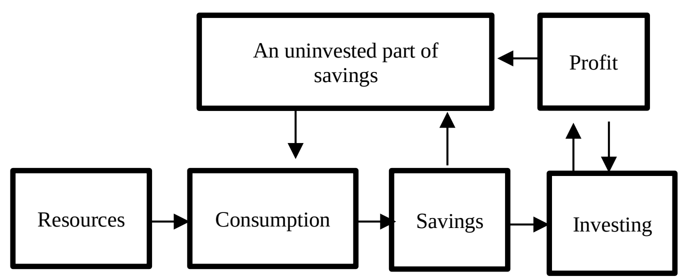
II. MONEY SAVINGS AND MONEY INVESTING

Money investing and savings are one of the most basic concepts of finance and banking. Although their intention is to multiply and relocate the existing capital, these concepts are not synonymous, because savings is not the same as investing. Saving is defined as the process of regularly setting aside a specific, usually small, part of one's income in order to accumulate it towards possible future expenses. Such funds are most often placed in a dedicated savings account to serve their owners to cover current, planned or unplanned expenses (Investing, 2019, p. 9). In practice, they are supervised by banks because they enjoy the highest degree of security over the entrusted assets. Saving is based on treating financial resources as a kind of reserve that helps in settling liabilities in the short term. This is particularly important for those bank customers who decide to divide their savings into several smaller ones, with different time horizons, thanks to which, if necessary, some of them can be withdrawn.

Investing is a process of transferring specific resources to implement a specific investment option, which is based on the expectation of obtaining a positive rate of return. It does not have to be strictly measurable, but may be based on non-financial factors, e.g. gaining experience, education (investments in human capital) (Majewska-Bielecka, 2014). A return that is uncertain due to the variability of the environment and its factors, e.g. market fluctuations (Maginn, Tuttle, McLeavey, Pinto, 2007, p. 14). Hence, there may be a real negative rate of return on capital. In this sense, investing differs from saving in that saving, as a rule, does not involve any greater risk. It is used, as already mentioned, to settle current liabilities by putting them aside, most often in a separate savings account. Investing, on the other hand, involves risk and is more appropriate for achieving large financial goals, with a simultaneous potential higher rate of return. The logic of making savings and investment decisions indicates that since saving is for short-term purposes, after creating an appropriate savings financial reserve, it is possible to transfer part of the accumulated savings funds to investments, which are most often long-term in nature (Dittmann, 2020, p. 25). These may be investments characterized by a higher degree of security, with a relatively lower return, e.g. bonds, as well as a lower degree of security, with a relatively higher return, e.g. shares of companies in emerging markets.

The concepts of "savings" and "investing" correspond to the word "diversification", which describes all activities aimed at diversifying the existing product range, most often production or services, in order to reduce the risk of a business (Karasiewicz, 2013, p. 355). However, in the context of the paper, the closest conceptual meaning will be assigned to a narrower term, i.e. "investment portfolio diversification" or "basket trade" (Zalewski, 2008, p. 9). This concept can be identified with a strategy in which an investor (saver, or rentier) relocates his or her resources by investing them in various asset classes, packages of funds and shares, in various market and geographic sectors, or other financial instruments, e.g. derivatives, in order to reduce investment risk. Such relocation is used to construct an individual investment portfolio bringing together various assets (stocks, bonds, funds, gold, precious metals, works of art, real estate) by expecting to maximize return while minimizing risk. The pattern of creating this structure is based on the assumption that after excluding consumption, resources become a source for generating savings, which can then be used for the investment process (Fatuła, 2015). Figure 1 indicates a sequential resource allocation scheme.

FIGURE 1. SEQUENTIAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION SCHEME OF AN INDIVIDUAL



Source: author's own studies.

An investment selection process is measured taking into account primarily return, risk and liquidity. However, while the concept of return and risk seems to be measurable, liquidity is a highly intuitive concept because money deposited in a bank account is characterized by higher liquidity than funds accumulated on a bank term deposit, which cannot be losslessly converted into cash (it is most often associated with loss of profit) (Patena, Cwynar, 2010, p. 29). Therefore, when planning resources - understood as disposable income, they can first be recognized in the form of consumption, e.g. for current needs and expenses, and the remaining part, constituting the surplus of revenues over expenses in the period, can be allocated to savings. The part separated from savings can, in turn, be allocated to investments (the investment profit is the basis for further investments) or the uninvested part of the investment can be used again for consumption.

Bank deposits (sometimes called "standards") are the most basic option for depositing funds by the bank's clients (both individual and business). Under the contract, the client undertakes to pay a specific sum of money and keep it for a specified period of time, in exchange for the bank returning it after that time, along with interest resulting from the interest rate. Interest resulting from the interest rate increases the capital paid by the customer. Withdrawal of funds from the deposit before its completion usually results in the full amount of the principal being returned to the client, but without interest. Bank deposits are one of the most important savings products and are important for the functioning of the bank itself. They constitute a sui generis loan granted to the bank by the client himself. This is because the funds paid by the customer can be used to conduct current activities, e.g. granting loans. The interest awarded to the client after successful completion of the deposit constitutes a special "payment" for the funds granted. Deposits are established for various periods of time. Usually from one month to a year (short-term deposits) and exceeding one year (long-term deposits) (Toborek-Mazur, 2010, p. 148). Moreover, in practice, there is also a division into renewable deposits, in which after the end of the deposit period, the deposit is automatically extended for another specified period, and non-renewable deposits, which end after the specified period of their duration. Funds deposited in a bank deposit (but also in treasury bonds) are guaranteed by the Bank Guarantee Fund, up to the PLN equivalent of EUR 100,000 (Górska, Kuchciński, 2024, p. 110).

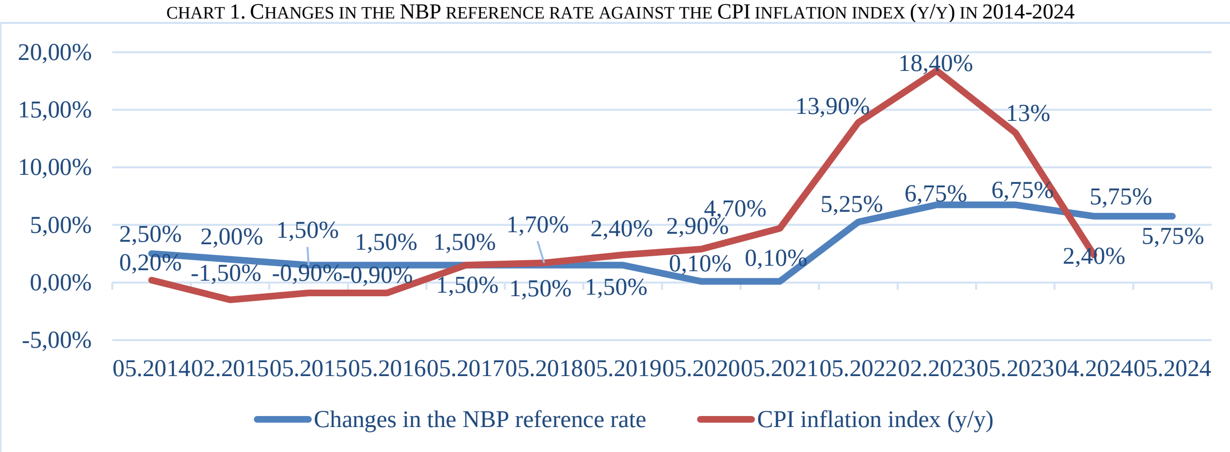
"Dedicated" deposits are deposits intended for a specific group of customers, e.g. new customers, as promotional deposits, or as deposits for premium customers. Promotional deposits often have higher interest rates than standard deposits, but they are limited in the form of either a short deposit period, e.g. several months, or are limited to a specific amount of money. Premium deposits are deposits for private banking clients who often have higher or negotiated interest rates (negotiated deposits). For example: if the interest rate on standard deposits is within the range of 0.5%-4%, the interest rate on "dedicated" deposits may reach 6-8%. However, the interest rates on deposits depend on many factors, including: the bank's offer and its demand for cash, inflation, interest rates, etc.

Deposits with a fund and investing deposits are types of deposits based on a mixed system, i.e. one in which a term deposit is combined with an investment fund (Dyl, 2012, p. 52). In the case of a deposit with a fund, part of the funds, e.g. in the proportion of 30:70 or 50:50, is transferred to a deposit with a standard or promotional (increased) deposit, and the remaining part to the investment fund (Ziomek, 2010, p. 27). Most often, in practice, fund deposit offers are created in such a way that the duration of part of the funds transferred to the deposit is shorter than the period of the remaining part at the investment fund's disposal. For example, a deposit offer with a fund may consist of a three-month deposit and a one-year investment in an investment fund. In the event of early withdrawal of money from the fund, a fee is often charged as a percentage of the amount deposited. Although fund deposits and investing deposits carry an increased investment risk (only the part deposited in a bank deposit is guaranteed by the Bank Guarantee Fund), they enable achieving a higher general interest rate on the deposit than in the case of standard deposits. Because the investment part is transferred to a fund that invests the funds obtained in this way in alternative products, through the diversification mechanism, and the savings part is transferred to a deposit with a higher than standard interest rate. Therefore, the condition for concluding a deposit agreement with the fund is to sign and pay for the so-called purchase order. participation units, with one of the selected sub-funds. The choice of subfund determines the amount of risk incurred, the time horizon, but also the potential return on investment. Investing (investment) deposits work similarly to fund deposits, but the mechanism of payments and the division into the deposit and investment part changes. In a deposit that invests every month, a selected part, e.g. 1/6 of the initial value of the deposit, goes to the investment fund.

Treasury bonds are type of debt securities issued by the State Treasury, or more precisely, by the Minister of Finance (Jagielnicki, 2013, p. 23). Treasury bonds are among the safest instruments, but it should be remembered that this security depends on the stability of a given country. Not every country is able to guarantee the stability of repayment (bond redemption) to the same extent. Treasury bonds are not susceptible to market fluctuations, so they are very popular, although they offer interest rates competitive to bank deposits, which is generally lower than other more "aggressive" market instruments. It should be added, however, that in the perspective of more than one year, treasury bonds are often more advantageous than deposits. This means getting a higher return on your investment. This is due to the fact that the longer the horizon of treasury bonds, the more favorable the interest rate. Currently, in Poland there are floating-interest bonds: one and two years, fixed-interest bonds: three-month and three-year, and inflation-indexed bonds: four-year and ten-year, and for beneficiaries of the program implemented under the Act of February 11, 2016 on state aid in raising children, also - six-year-old and twelve years old.

The reference interest rate determines the interest rate at which the central bank sells short-term securities (money bills) to commercial banks. Chart 1 presents a summary of changes in the NBP reference rate in the years 2014 - 2024 along with the level of inflation on a year-to-year basis. As chart 1 shows, the reference rate has changed significantly in the last 10 years under study, i.e. in the period from May 2014 to May 2024. The lowest recorded reading was noticeable in the period from May 2020 to September 2021, while the highest was noticeable in the period from September 2022 to July 2023. The level of inflation in the examined periods also changed and was in the range of -1.5 % in February 2015, to nearly 18.4% in February 2023. Low interest rates in 2020-2021 were caused by the fight against the negative economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. The NBP's policy at that time was aimed at stimulating the economy after the pandemic. In autumn 2021, in response to rapidly rising inflation, the central bank decided to make large increases in interest rates, up to 6.75% in mid-2023, a value unheard of in Poland for over a dozen years. The last such reading was recorded in November 2002. From October 2023, the main NBP reference interest rate is 5.75% and is higher than the inflation readings. The stabilizing trend in interest rates is likely to continue in the second half of 2024.

CHART 1. CHANGES IN THE NBP REFERENCE RATE AGAINST THE CPI INFLATION INDEX (Y/Y) IN 2014-2024



Source: author's own studies based on data collected from NBP and GUS.

The financial policy pursued by the Monetary Policy Council has a direct impact on changes in the NBP reference rate. A high reference rate means higher loan installments repaid based on the WIBOR rate plus margin. This applies in particular to variable-rate loans, i.e. most loans taken out in Poland. At the same time, higher reference rates are beneficial for entities accumulating their savings on bank deposits, as well as for bondholders, in particular for those who hold floating-rate bonds, e.g. two-year ones. The lower the reference rate, the lower the loan installments, because a decrease in the interest rate leads to a decrease in the WIBOR rate, and thus a decrease in the cost of debt, but at the same time a lower interest rate on deposits. The high interest rate has a positive effect on the strengthening of the currency - the Polish zloty. This means that the prices of imported goods may fall during periods of high interest rates, which affects inflation as the prices of inflation-generating goods, such as oil and gas, fall. Changes in the reference rate therefore affect not only the value of inflation, but also affect creditworthiness and relatively weaker or stronger demand for loans and other financial instruments.

III. WAYS OF SAVINGS MONEY BY POLES IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA AND THE PROSPECT OF REDUCING CAPITAL GAINS TAX

Tax policy is related to the functioning of many different financial instruments enabling the collection and investment of funds. In the context of individual saving or investing, this phenomenon can be described as individual tax optimization. The purpose of such a process is to determine tax savings. Most often, they take place through planning by selecting the best financial option in the context of the undertaken activities. They also concern the possibility of taking advantage of various reliefs or exemptions, of course in accordance with the law. Therefore, the authors indicate that the goal of individual tax optimization will be the selection of saving or investing measures that will bring the owner a profit with the lowest possible tax burden, i.e. minimizing these burdens (Etel, 2015, p. 276). It may involve the use of instruments that provide freedom from capital gains tax, e.g. IKE (pl. Indywidualne Konto Emerytalne) or IKZE (pl. Indywidualne Konto Zabezpieczenia Emerytalnego), or the use of tax-free amounts. Individual tax optimization is the source of investment planning of individuals, which, in the context of this study, can be identified with the selection of appropriate forms of saving or investing by commercial bank customers.

The capital gains tax was introduced in 2002. It does not function as a separate act, but is an element of the Personal Income Tax Act. Initially, its rate was 20% and only applied to interest on savings accumulated on bank deposits. However, two years after the tax amendment was introduced, income related to capital investments was also subject to tax. The rate was then reduced to 19%. The tax covers capital gains (Antkiewicz, 2021).

Calculating the capital gains tax is simple and using the example of a traditional bank deposit, it can be concluded that from the gross value of the capital gain - which is the product of the initial value of the deposit and the interest rate per year (according to the period for which the deposit is established) - an amount should be deducted tax. The value thus created can be defined as the net value, and this value most often, after the end of the deposit, returns to the bank account from which the deposit was established. The longer the saving time horizon, the greater the capital gain. Capital gains tax does not require the capital provider's participation in his tax settlement, because this tax is paid automatically by the bank (financial institution) and does not require the submission of any tax returns. A similar mechanism applies to the purchase of treasury bonds. However, it is not the same in all cases. Within investment funds, the tax is collected only when a profit is made and until 2023 it was settled by TFI. From 2024, there was a change in which it became possible to offset profits and losses from investment funds and combine them with profits (losses) from other financial instruments. Taxpayers who have suffered a loss may settle it over the next five calendar years (assuming a profit). However, the amount of reduction cannot exceed 50% of the amount of loss in any year.

The interest rate on deposits depends on the level of inflation. Since 2022, there has been an ongoing discussion in the political and economic public space about the liquidation or limitation of capital gains tax by introducing a tax-free amount. It should be noted that the "Belka" tax was introduced as a temporary solution, mainly for budgetary purposes. Supporters of maintaining the tax point to the revenues it brings to the budget. In the initial years of its operation, the profit was approximately PLN 1-2 billion, in later years it was approximately PLN 3-4 billion. Currently (at the beginning of the 2020s) it amounts to approximately PLN 5-7 billion. In 2023, it was as much as PLN 9 billion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that despite the increase in budget revenues, the share of this tax among other tax revenues is still relatively small. Moreover, the high impact in 2023 was dictated primarily by a significant increase in interest rates, curbing inflation, and secondly by an increase in the volume of savings on accounts, which resulted from an increase in wages and an increased propensity of bank customers to save. According to research conducted by the National Debt Register "Savings Barometer 2023", nearly half of Poles do not save, although 78% have money saved in various amounts. About 20% have small savings not exceeding PLN 5,000, while 23% have savings up to PLN 20,000 (Supernak, 2024).

The interest rate on deposits and treasury bonds, which also includes the amount of income from capital gains tax, is a fundamental issue for shaping trends in the accumulation of cash. The above can be illustrated with the following example. In March 2024, the average interest rate on deposits according to data from the National Bank of Poland was 4.3%. Taking into account this index, for a deposit of PLN 20,000 paid into an annual deposit, the interest would amount to PLN 860. After deducting 19% tax, the net profit would amount to PLN 696.60. Taking into account the level of consumer inflation of 2.0% year on year at that time, this means that funds deposited in such a bank deposit would bring a slight but real profit. However, if the client made a deposit with an interest rate lower than the consumer inflation rate, or slightly lower, then after deducting tax, it would turn out that his funds would lose their real value. The amount of capital gains tax affects not only the amount of potential profit, but also the willingness of customers to make deposits or buy bonds. However, this is an incomplete statement, because investors, as well as savers, often take into account potential risk in their financial decisions, which constitutes a kind of investment benchmark. The rate of return on investment in this sense should correspond to the risk-free rate. RFR determines the level of return on investment that is free, and therefore not burdened with risk (Epstein, Nach, Bragg, 2011, p. 462). It is worth remembering that every investment involves risk. This risk depends on the choice of a given instrument, as well as the market in which it operates, its characteristics, e.g. bank deposit, or time horizon. The above statement can also be applied to the real interest rates on deposits. According to Expander Polska data, the real interest rate on deposits according to the end date of the annual deposit, taking into account inflation and tax, in the periods from 2016 to 2023 (excluding the short period in 2019 and 2014-2015) was negative (Sadowski, 2024). This means that bank deposits in periods of negative readings did not allow their clients to earn money. In 2024, the positive, although decreasing, trend in deposit interest rates continues (Wysota, 2024). However, the prospect of rising inflation may again bring a loss in real terms, so the implementation of changes in the taxation of capital gains tax can be seen as a mechanism to secure the profitability of investing funds in a bank deposit or through treasury bonds.

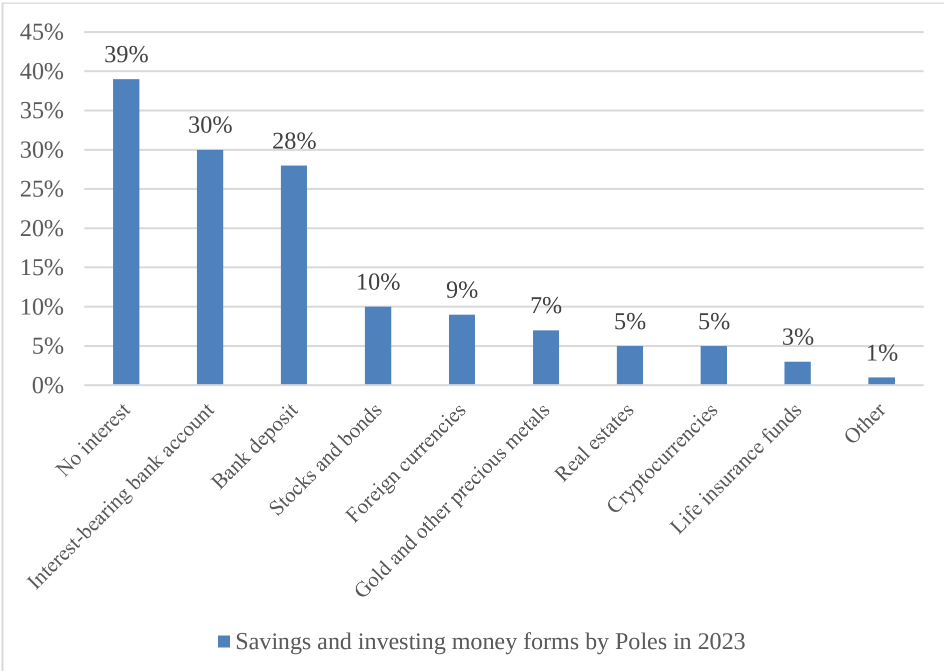
The profitability of each investment understood in this way should be measured by comparing the rate of expected return on the investment with the risk-free rate (Jaszczuk, 2024). This applies in particular to markets that are more susceptible to fluctuations and volatility, e.g. the stock market, than the treasury bond market. Therefore, a rational investor will assume that if the rate of return is lower than the risk-free rate, he will resign from the investment, while if it is higher, he will consider whether the surplus created is economically attractive enough for him to justify the possible risk.

The investment model shown in Figure 1 is exemplary because it is based on bank deposits and treasury bonds. It should be emphasized once again that the investor has the opportunity to select various instruments - not only through a bank. Therefore, its investment portfolio may be more or less decentralized. However, the meaning of the structure is retained regardless of the selection, because it consists of the accumulation of periodic and non-periodic profits. As the chart 2 shows, nearly 40% of respondents do not save at all, and 63% indicate insufficient income as the main reason. It is also important that some households have outstanding debts, e.g. loans, which often constitute a heavy burden on the budget. However, about 70% of respondents who save choose interest-bearing bank (savings) accounts, bank deposits or stocks and bonds. 9% of respondents invest in foreign currencies, 7% in gold and other precious metals. Respondents invest the least in real estate and cryptocurrencies - 5% each, and in life insurance packages combined with a capital fund - 3%. About 1% invest their funds in other ways. Comparing the above data, it can be noticed that slightly higher values were recorded in the report "Oszczędności i długi Polaków" conducted by CBOS. It shows that 46% of respondents declare that their households have no savings, while declarations of having savings are noticeable among the better-off (approximately 83% of respondents with per capita income above PLN 4,000 or more compared to 30% of those with income below PLN 1,499 per person). At the same time, people with higher (73%) and secondary (58%) education have the greatest savings. The level of education, as well as knowledge of financial instruments, are important in saving decisions (CBOS, 2023). According to the BlueMedia study "Finanse Polaków w czasach pandemii. Badanie postaw i opinii" shows that nearly 60% of those who save do so to secure their future (BlueMedia, 2021). Moreover, banks are characterized by the highest degree of trust in investing. In 2022, it was 62%, while trust in companies - mainly technological ones - was less than 40%.

By analyzing this issue, a certain regularity (model) can be applied, which the author proposes to present in the following way. The bank client has income from work and other similar sources (periodic profits, e.g. monthly) in his bank account. In this way, current financial resources are created, which are then reduced as a result of covering current liabilities (expenses).

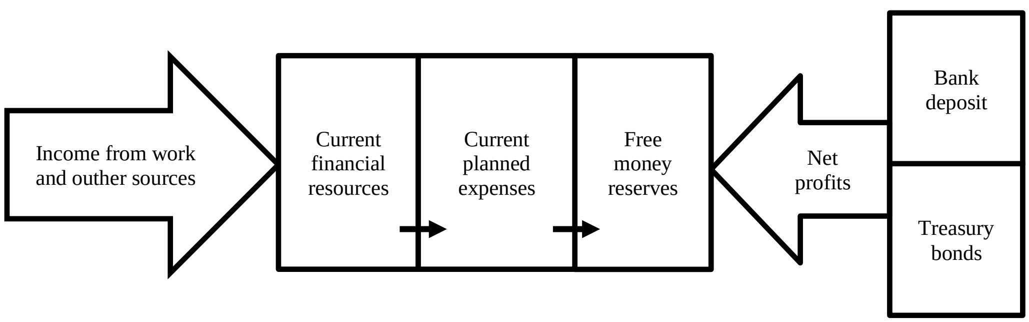
The difference in these values (current financial resources and expenses) creates free reserves, which can then be allocated to investments or savings. Moreover, the profit from savings and investments also generates additional values of free reserves. However, these are aperiodic profits because their size and period of impact depend on a given investment or form of saving.

CHART 2. WAYS OF SAVINGS AND INVESTING MONEY BY POLES IN 2023



Source: author's own studies based on „Barometr oszczędności 2023" Krajowy Rejestr Długów

FIGURE 2. INVESTING AND SAVINGS MONEY MODEL OF INDIVIDUALS



Source: author's own studies.

In the proposed model presented at Figure 2, these are bank deposits and treasury bonds. However, an investor's individual investment portfolio may look completely different, e.g. include investments in funds, works of art or real estate. The resulting net profits (surplus over the initial value) will generate further additional reserves that can be reused and invested in the future. According to the author, this phenomenon can be called "profit rollover". The designation of flows as proposed in Figure 2 distinguishes income obtained from work and other similar sources, e.g. from business activity, from income from assets. It is worth noting that the income obtained from deposits or bonds does not always appear in fixed, cyclical periods, but, for example, results from the structure of a given asset (the profit from a half-year deposit will appear after half a year, the profit from two-year bonds will be periodic, monthly) (Litwińczuk, 2013, p. 34).

Currently, work is still underway to introduce a tax limitation in the form of introducing a tax-free amount resulting from the product of the NBP deposit rate on the last day of the third quarter of the year preceding the tax year and the amount of the investment base estimated at PLN 100,000. PLN (in 2024, the tax-free amount would amount to PLN 5,250) (Kuchta, 2024). This means that below this amount, the earned capital gain would not be taxed, while above it, it will constitute the difference between the earned capital gain and the tax-free amount. Therefore, if the established limit is exceeded, tax will be paid on the excess over the established tax-free amount. An additional condition is that the investment lasts at least one year and that the funds are deposited in one, separate savings package, kept separately for bonds and bank deposits (Siemończyk, 2024). The above can be presented by comparing the previously proposed example, taking into account the current taxation and taking into account the proposed tax-free amount, depending on the amount of the deposit.

TABLE 1. SIMULATION OF THE AMOUNT OF NET PROFIT ASSUMING THE CURRENT AMOUNT OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PROPOSED TAX FREE AMOUNT, ACCORDING TO ESTIMATES FOR 2024 [IN PLN].

	According to present tax regulations		According to proposed tax allowance	
Type of calculation	I	II	III	IV
Deposit amount	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000
Deposit duration	1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year
Interest rate per annum	4,3%	7%	4,3%	7%
Gross profit	4300,00	7000,00	4300,00	7000,00
Tax allowance	n/d	n/d	5250,00	5250,00
The difference between gross profit and tax allowance	n/d	n/d	-950,00	1750,00
Tax amount (19%)	817,00	1330,00	0,00*	332,50
Net profit	3483,00	5670,00	4300,00	6667,50

Source: author's own studies.

* The difference between the gross profit and the tax-free amount is PLN -950, because the gross profit is lower than the tax-free amount. Therefore, according to the proposed changes, tax would not be withheld.

The simulation presented in Table 1 uses the proposed tax-free amount and its amount in 2024 if the tax limitation were in place, i.e. PLN 5,250 (for an investment of up to PLN 100,000 lasting at least one year). As can be seen, in the case of the regulations currently in force, the net profit from the annual bank deposit in the case of variant I would amount to PLN 3,483.00, while in variant II with a higher interest rate it would be PLN 5,670.00. At the same time, if the capital gains tax limitation was applied at a given tax-free amount, then in variant III the net profit would amount to PLN 4,300.00 (taxation would not occur). The difference between the tax-free amount and the lower gross profit is PLN 950. However, in the case of variant IV, a tax-free amount would apply, which would reduce the amount of taxation. The net profit would then amount to PLN 6,667.50. The difference between variants I and III is PLN 817.00, and between variants II and IV - PLN 997.50. The additional financial benefit thus created would be attributed to the saver over the entire saving period.

In the case of income from capital investments, e.g. sale of shares on the stock exchange, an amount of income that would be exempt from taxation is to be introduced (Siudaj, Pipała, 2024). Although the proposed changes are still under consultation and may change, the direction of these changes should be assessed positively, because changes in the "Belka" tax are necessary to increase the attractiveness of financial investments compared to other forms of saving and investing, e.g. purchasing real estate. It should be noted, however, that the proposed exemption threshold is low, and the restriction of depositing funds in one separate savings package of bonds or deposits, although it will limit the possibility of diversifying financial resources, will force customers to associate with one financial institution. Moreover, attention should be paid to the degree of complexity of the proposed solutions compared to the existing ones. However, the overall benefits, security and lower risk, especially for those investors and savers for whom the return on investment would not be significant, may be a better argument for choosing bank or state (Treasury bonds) forms of saving and investment. This is even more important because most people who invest their funds collect or invest them in banking products.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Savings and investing money are some of the basic concepts of both individual and collective finance. They are related to processes that often take place in mature and developed economies, in which citizens (customers of financial institutions) have the opportunity to manage their accumulated funds. The richer the society, the higher the propensity to invest. This results from the improvement of the quality of life, wealth and individual needs of individuals, e.g. the need for self-fulfillment, through saved assets.

There are many different forms of investing and saving, among which bank deposits and treasury bonds are of great importance. They do not require high investments, because you can start saving with small amounts. And their relative simplicity and acceptable (generally low) risk encourage many people. It is also a more common investment alternative to real estate investments, especially apartments and land in large cities, which have been popular in recent years.

In answer to the first question (Q1), it should be emphasized once again that investing is not the same as saving. Saving is about systematically setting aside a certain amount of income for future expenses, both planned and unplanned, or for achieving short-term or long-term goals. Saving differs from investing in that saving, as a rule, does not focus on increasing capital, but on preserving it without major risk. In the case of investing, the investor focuses on relocating funds into those assets that may bring profits but also losses in the foreseeable time horizon, e.g. one year. You should also remember about your current expenses and consumption. To sum up, it can be noted that the aspects that differentiate saving from investing will depend on aspects such as: goal, expected profit, potential risk, degree of liquidity and the so-called investment awareness, i.e., on the one hand, the readiness to give up consumption in favor of either saving (accumulating) or investing funds, and, on the other hand, the degree of knowledge about saving and investing. Saving does not require specialist knowledge, but investments often require the selection of a specific sub-fund or investment portfolio, which requires knowledge and characteristics of a given financial instrument or the specificity of the market in which it operates.

Answering the second question (Q2), the degree of risk depends on the choice of form of investment (saving). Treasury bonds or bank deposits have different risks than investing in shares of companies on emerging markets, investing in raw materials or cryptocurrencies. The degree of maturity of funds, the payback period and the uncertainty resulting from fluctuations in geographically different markets, e.g. Polish ones, are also different. The level of risk also depends on the knowledge one has, so people with higher education and higher earnings most often decide to save and invest. Moreover, the determining factor is also the available resource, the expected rate of return or the time horizon for allocating funds.

In answer to the third question (Q3), it should be noted that any decision of the state authorities that aims to reduce the tax burden on capital gains will be beneficial from the investors' point of view. It means a higher potential return on investment resulting from a reduction in the amount of tax paid. In the case presented in this article, the difference in profit on an annual bank deposit of PLN 100,000 with an interest rate of 7% per annum between the existing and proposed solutions would amount to PLN 997.50. The increase in revenues from capital gains tax, noticeable in recent years, reconsiders the justification for eliminating this tax, but its reduction, in the author's opinion, is not only justified, but even necessary, to increase the attractiveness of investing funds in ways other than real estate, which most often generate a higher return. investment. However, they are not and should not be treated as the exclusive investment source. Moreover, the shape of the proposed changes seems to be correct but complicated in application. There are other simpler forms of limiting this tax, e.g. reducing the tax to e.g. 15% or applying exemptions, e.g. for treasury bonds. Regardless, however, the general direction of work on reducing this tax can be considered beneficial from the investor's perspective.

Answering to the fourth question (Q4), it can be noted that nearly 40% do not save, and the main reason is the insufficient level of income that the respondents could allocate for investment and savings purposes. At the same time, nearly 70% of those surveyed according to the " Barometr oszczędności 2023" report use banking services or stocks and bonds. Based on the research included in the article, we can agree with the statement that the Polish investor is conservative. This means focusing primarily on risk-mitigating instruments. However, some investors spread the risk by deciding to invest their funds in more "aggressive" instruments, e.g. shares of emerging markets, cryptocurrencies, etc.

As the capital gains tax applies largely to funds invested in bank accounts and bonds, but also to company shares, its projected reduction through the introduction of a variable tax-free amount will not only result in maintaining a higher level of return (lower tax means higher profit), but also will also have a positive impact on customers' willingness to make further savings. It may also encourage less wealthy customers to systematically save funds, e.g. in savings accounts, which are "more liquid" compared to bank deposits and enable relatively free exchange of accumulated funds.

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